CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®

WORLDVIEW STUDY BIBLE

FAITHFUL AND TRUE

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THE WORLDVIEW STUDY BIBLE

CSB CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®

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NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

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The apostle Paul calls followers of Jesus to renew their minds and to offer themselves as living sacrifices to him (Rm 12:1-2). Similarly, the apostle Peter calls believers to prepare their minds for action (1Pt 1:13). These exhortations form the foundation for learning to think Christianly about life and about the world. This is the beginning of worldview thinking.

Immersed in our pluralistic and secular society, Christians often find it difficult to think carefully and coherently about how the Christian faith affects all aspects of life. We fail to connect what we hear on Sunday with what we do on Monday. This disconnect especially affects our consideration of the deepest questions regarding the purpose and nature of human life. At stake is the way we understand the world God has called us to serve.

Christians around the globe recognize there is a great spiritual battle raging for the hearts and minds of men and women. Believers find themselves in a cosmic struggle between Christian truth and a morally indifferent culture. This study Bible is intended to help Christians make progress in developing a Christian worldview that will help them learn to think in a Christian manner and to live out the truth of the Christian faith.

The reality is that everyone has a worldview. Some worldviews are incoherent, attempting to bring together a smorgasbord of options from a collection of different worldviews. An examined and thoughtful worldview, however, is more than a private personal viewpoint; it is a comprehensive life system that seeks to answer the basic questions of life. A Christian worldview is not just one's personal faith expression, not just a theory; it is an all-encompassing way of life, applicable to all spheres of life.

More than a century ago, James Orr, in *The Christian View of God and the World*, contended that there is a definite Christian view of all things, which has a character, coherence, and unity of its own, and stands in sharp contrast with counter theories and speculations. The notes and articles found in this study Bible are based on a Christian view of things that bears not only upon the spiritual sphere, but also on the whole of life and thought.

Those who have worked together over the past five years to bring together this project join us in praying that the Lord will use this reference work to help Christians hear afresh the words of Jesus from what is known as the Great Commandment (Mt 22:36-40). In this passage, we learn that Jesus calls on his followers to love God not only with hearts and souls, but also with our minds. The words of Jesus refer to a wholehearted devotion to God with every aspect of

our being, from whatever angle we choose to consider it—emotionally, volitionally, or cognitively. This kind of love for God results in taking every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ (2Co 10:5), a total devotion to Christian thinking and living. We pray that the *CSB Worldview Study Bible* will serve Christians well, enabling them to see life from a Christian vantage point, thinking with the mind of Christ.

There are more than 125 contributors to this work, who serve at more than fifty different institutions, organizations, and churches. They come from North America and other parts of the globe. Coming from these diverse backgrounds, they share a commitment to the inspiration, truthfulness, and authority of God's Word as well as to the importance of developing a Christian worldview.

At the core of a Christian worldview is the truth that Jesus Christ's life and death revealed God's love for the world. Moreover, his sinless sacrifice delivered sinners from their alienation and reconciled and restored sinners from estrangement to full fellowship and inheritance in the household of God. Jesus's death on the cross for the sins of the world is the basis for the call to everyone everywhere to place their faith in him to be reconciled to God. Central to this Christian worldview message is the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1Co 15:3-4). The resurrection establishes Jesus's lordship and deity, as well as guaranteeing the salvation of sinners (Rm 1:3-4; 4:24-25). The resurrection provides new life for believers, enabling them to see, think, and live anew.

The contributors to this study Bible also recognize that developing a Christian worldview is an ever-advancing process in which Christian convictions increasingly shape our participation in culture. Thus a Christian worldview offers a new way of thinking, seeing, and doing based on a new way of being.

In this sense, this study Bible is distinctive. It is not only a study Bible that offers an exposition on the verses and themes of Scripture, but also includes numerous articles that consider many implications and applications of the Bible's teaching for all aspects of life. Together these study notes and articles attempt to amplify the meaning of the biblical and theological foundations of a Christian worldview, seeking to help believers take every thought captive to Jesus Christ. The notes and articles begin with the affirmation of God as Creator and Redeemer, recognizing that Christian worldview thinking is not only soteriological, but also cosmological as well. The contributors share a commitment to the sovereignty of the triune God over the whole cosmos, in all spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible, which is the essence of Christian worldview thinking. It is the prayer of each contributor to this project that all of us and all who read and study this Bible will be grown in the grace and

us and all who read and study this Bible will be grown in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and continue to make progress in learning to take every thought captive to the lordship of Jesus Christ in order to serve and edify others, which is a high calling indeed.

We want to thank Thom Rainer and the leadership team at LifeWay Christian Resources and B&H Publishers for their support during the time that this project has been developed. We express our thanksgiving and our gratitude for many through the years who have helped us to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning and implications of a Christian worldview and trust that this work reflects faithfully their influence on our lives. We offer our gratitude for each contributor, and particularly we offer thanks to Con Campbell, Eric Tully, Ray Clendenen, and Jeremy Howard for their participation in this effort. Ultimately, we trust that this work will help to encourage and edify believers, will strengthen the church, will support the advancement of the gospel to the nations, and will bring glory to our great and majestic God.

Soli Deo Gloria

David S. Dockery and Trevin K. Wax,
General Editors

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE®

The Bible is God's revelation to humanity. It is our only source for completely reliable information about God, what happens when we die, and where history is headed. The Bible reveals these things because it is God's inspired Word, inerrant in the original manuscripts. Bible translation brings God's Word from the ancient languages (Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic) into today's world. In dependence on God's Spirit to accomplish this sacred task, the CSB Translation Oversight Committee and Holman Bible Publishers present the Christian Standard Bible.

TEXTUAL BASE OF THE CSB

The textual base for the New Testament (NT) is the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition, and the United Bible Societies' *Greek New Testament*, 5th corrected edition. The text for the Old Testament (OT) is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th edition.

Where there are significant differences among Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek manuscripts, the translators follow what they believe is the original reading and indicate the main alternative(s) in footnotes. The CSBuses the traditional verse divisions found in most Protestant Bibles.

GOALS OF THIS TRANSLATION

- Provide English-speaking people worldwide with an accurate translation in contemporary English.
- Provide an accurate translation for personal study, sermon preparation, private devotions, and memorization.
- Provide a text that is clear and understandable, suitable for public reading, and shareable so that all may access its life-giving message.
- Affirm the authority of Scripture and champion its absolute truth against skeptical viewpoints.

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY OF THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD BIBLE

Most discussions of Bible translations speak of two opposite approaches: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. This terminology is meaningful, but Bible translations cannot be neatly sorted into these two categories. There is room for another category of translation philosophy that capitalizes on the strengths of the other two.

1. Formal Equivalence:

Often called “word-for-word” (or “literal”) translation, the principle of formal equivalence seeks as nearly as possible to preserve the structure of the original language. It seeks to represent each word of the original text with an exact equivalent word in the translation so that the reader can see word for word what the original human author wrote. The merits of this approach include its consistency with the conviction that the Holy Spirit did inspire the very words of Scripture in the original manuscripts. It also provides the English Bible student some access to the structure of the text in the original language. Formal equivalence can achieve accuracy to the degree that English has an exact equivalent for each word and that the grammatical patterns of the original language can be reproduced in understandable English. However, it can sometimes result in awkward, if not incomprehensible, English or in a misunderstanding of the author’s intent. The literal rendering of ancient idioms is especially difficult.

2. Dynamic or Functional Equivalence:

Often called “thought-for-thought” translation, the principle of dynamic equivalence rejects as misguided the attempt to preserve the structure of the original language. It proceeds by extracting the meaning of a text from its form and then translating that meaning so that it makes the same impact on modern readers that the ancient text made on its original readers. Strengths of this approach include a high degree of clarity and readability, especially in places where the original is difficult to render word for word. It also acknowledges that accurate and effective translation may require interpretation. However, the meaning of a text cannot always be neatly separated from its form, nor can it always be precisely determined. A biblical author may have intended multiple meanings, but these may be lost with the elimination of normal structures. In striving for readability, dynamic equivalence also sometimes overlooks and loses some of the less prominent elements of meaning. Furthermore, lack of formal correspondence to the original makes it difficult to verify accuracy and thus can affect the usefulness of the translation for in-depth Bible study.

3. Optimal Equivalence:

In practice, translations are seldom if ever purely formal or dynamic but favor one theory of Bible translation or the other to varying degrees. Optimal equivalence as a translation philosophy recognizes that form cannot always be neatly separated from meaning and should not be changed unless comprehension demands it. The primary goal of translation is to convey the sense of the original with as much clarity as the original text and the translation language permit. Optimal equivalence appreciates the goals of formal equivalence but also recognizes its limitations.

Optimal equivalence starts with an exhaustive analysis of the text at every level (word, phrase, clause, sentence, discourse) in the original language to determine its original meaning and intention (or purpose). Then, relying on the latest and best language tools and experts, the nearest corresponding semantic and linguistic equivalents are used to convey as much of the information and intention of the original text with as much clarity and readability as possible. This process assures the maximum transfer of both the words and the thoughts contained in the original.

The CSB uses optimal equivalence as its translation philosophy. In the many places throughout the Bible where a word-for-word rendering is understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used. The Christian Standard Bible places equal value on fidelity to the original and readability for a modern audience, resulting in a translation that achieves both goals.

THE GENDER LANGUAGE USE IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

The goal of the translators of the Christian Standard Bible has not been to promote a cultural ideology but to translate the Bible faithfully. Recognizing modern usage of English, the CSB regularly translates the plural of the Greek word ανθρωπος (“man”) as “people” instead of “men,” and occasionally the singular as “one,” “someone,” or “everyone,” when the supporting pronouns in the original languages validate such a translation. While the CSB avoids using “he” or “him” unnecessarily, the translation does not restructure sentences to avoid them when they are in the text.

HISTORY OF THE CSB

After several years of preliminary development, Holman Bible Publishers, the oldest Bible publisher in North America, assembled an international, interdenominational team of one hundred scholars, editors, stylists, and proofreaders, all of whom were committed to biblical inerrancy. Outside

consultants and reviewers contributed valuable suggestions from their areas of expertise. Working from the original languages, an executive team of translators edited, polished, and reviewed the final manuscript, which was first published as the Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) in 2004.

A standing committee was also formed to maintain the HCSB translation and look for ways to improve readability without compromising accuracy. As with the original translation team, the committee that prepared this revision of the HCSB, renamed the Christian Standard Bible, is international and interdenominational, comprising evangelical scholars who honor the inspiration and authority of God's written Word.

TRADITIONAL FEATURES FOUND IN THE CSB

In keeping with a long line of Bible publications, the CSB has retained a number of features found in traditional Bibles:

1. Traditional theological vocabulary (for example, *justification*, *sanctification*, *redemption*) has been retained since such terms have no other translation equivalent that adequately communicates their exact meaning.

2. Traditional spellings of names and places found in most Bibles have been used to make the CSBcompatible with most Bible study tools.

3. Some editions of the CSBwill print the words of Christ in red letters to help readers easily locate the spoken words of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Descriptive headings, printed above each section of Scripture, help readers quickly identify the contents of that section.

5. OT passages quoted in the NT are indicated. In the CSB, they are set in boldface type.

HOW THE NAMES OF GOD ARE TRANSLATED

The Christian Standard Bible consistently translates the Hebrew names for God as follows:

HEBREW ORIGINAL:	CSB ENGLISH:
Elohim	God
YHWH (Yahweh)	LORD
Adonai	Lord

Adonai Yahweh	Lord GOD
Yahweh Sabaoth	LORD of Armies
El Shaddai	God Almighty

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes are used to show readers how the original biblical language has been understood in the CSB.

1. Old Testament (OT) Textual Footnotes

OT textual notes show important differences among Hebrew (Hb) manuscripts and ancient OT versions, such as the Septuagint and the Vulgate. See the list of abbreviations on page XIX for a list of other ancient versions used.

Some OT textual notes (like NT textual notes) give only an alternate textual reading. However, other OT textual notes also give the support for the reading chosen by the editors as well as for the alternate textual reading. For example, the CSBtext of Psalm 12:7 reads,

> You, LORD, will guard us;
> you will protect us[A] from this generation forever.

The textual footnote for this verse reads,

[A] **12:7** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *him*

The textual note in this example means that there are two different readings found in the Hebrew manuscripts: some manuscripts read *us* and others read *him*. The CSBtranslators chose the reading *us*, which is also found in the Septuagint (LXX), and placed the other Hebrew reading *him* in the footnote.

Two other kinds OT textual notes are

Alt Hb tradition reads ____
: a variation given by scribes in the Hebrew manuscript tradition (known as *Kethiv*/*Qere* and *Tiqqune Sopherim* readings)

Hb uncertain
: when it is unclear what the original Hebrew text was

2. New Testament (NT) Textual Footnotes

NT textual notes indicate significant differences among Greek manuscripts (mss) and are normally indicated in one of three ways:

Other mss read _____
Other mss add _____
Other mss omit _____

In the NT, some textual footnotes that use the word “add” or “omit” also have square brackets before and after the corresponding verses in the biblical text. Examples of this use of square brackets are Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53–8:11.

3. Other Kinds of Footnotes

Lit _____	a more literal rendering in English of the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek text
Or _____	an alternate or less likely English translation of the same Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek text
=	an abbreviation for “it means” or “it is equivalent to”
Hb, Aramaic, Gk	the actual Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word is given using equivalent English letters
Hb obscure	the existing Hebrew text is especially difficult to translate
emend(ed) to _____	the original Hebrew text is so difficult to translate that competent scholars have conjectured or inferred a restoration of the original text based on the context, probable root meanings of the words, and uses in comparative languages

In some editions of the CSB, additional footnotes clarify the meaning of certain biblical texts or explain biblical history, persons, customs, places, activities, and measurements. Cross references are given for parallel passages or passages with similar wording, and in the NT, for passages quoted from the OT.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CSB BIBLES

AD	In the year of our Lord
aka	also known as
Akk	Akkadian
alt	alternate
a.m.	from midnight until noon
ANET	Ancient Near Eastern Texts, 3rd edn., James B. Pritchard, ed. (Princeton, 1969)
Ant.	Antiquities—a history of the Jewish people by Josephus
Aq	Aquila
BC	before Christ
c.	century
ca	circa
chap(s).	chapter(s)
cp.	compare
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
e.g.	for example
Eng	English
esp.	especially
etc.	etcetera
ff.	following
Gk	Greek
Hb	Hebrew
i.e.	that is
Jer	Latin translation of Psalms by Jerome
Lat	Latin
Lit/lit or lit.	Literally/literally
LXX	Septuagint—an ancient translation of the Old Testament into Greek
MT	Masoretic Text
NT	New Testament
ms(s)	manuscript(s)
OT	Old Testament
p., pp.	page, pages
p.m.	from noon until midnight
pl or pl.	plural
Ps(s)	Psalm(s)
Sam	Samaritan Pentateuch
sg or sg.	singular
Sir	Sirach
Sym	Symmachus
Syr	Syriac
Tg	Targum
Theod	Theodotian

v., vv.	verse, verses
Vg	Vulgate—an ancient translation of the Bible into Latin
vol(s).	volume(s)
vs.	versus
x	times

AN INTRODUCTION TO A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

I can't forget the shoes. Piles and piles of them filled the room. Of all the gruesome images I saw at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, that room filled with shoes from Jewish victims is the one thing I can't forget. I think about the people who once owned those shoes, and I mourn the human lives lost in a vortex of unspeakable evil.

The tragedy of the Holocaust reminds me of something I heard as a high school student: ideas have consequences. Adolf Hitler did not come out of nowhere. Before there was the Holocaust, decades of philosophical theories advocating superior races were presented, nationalistic laws were written, and the use of eugenics to weed out inferior peoples arose. Throw in a dash of "survival of the fittest" from Darwinism and perhaps the pursuit of raw power from nihilism and eventually humankind was poised to arrive in the concentration camp—a horrifying concoction built on various falsehoods.

Ideas do indeed have consequences. But sometimes those consequences are beautiful, as in the early days of Christianity when plagues would sweep through cities in the Roman Empire. While many Roman citizens chose to abandon family and friends and flee the city to escape contamination, early Christians stayed behind to nurse the sick. Because of their belief in a Savior who sacrificed himself for others, they were content to give their lives as well.

CHRISTIANITY IN A WORLD OF -ISMS

Capitalism. Socialism. Postmodernism. Consumerism. Relativism. Pluralism. All sorts of -isms exist in our world, each representing a different outlook on humanity, each with different opinions about the way societies should function and how people should behave. Each of these began with an idea.

Some Christians shrug off any effort to study philosophies and "isms." They say things like, "I don't worry myself with what other people think about the world. I just read my Bible and try to do what it says." This line of thinking sounds humble and restrained, but it is far from the mentality of a missionary. If we are to be biblical Christians, we must read the Bible in order to read the culture. It's important that we as a sent people evaluate the -isms of this world in light of God's unchanging revelation. In other words, we read the Bible first so we will know how to read world news next.

We also read the Bible to know how to engage people around us with the

gospel. To be good missionaries, we need to have our own minds formed by the Scriptures, and at the same time, we need to understand how people think—the people we've been called to reach. That's why we need to be familiar with the big questions of life and the big debates in our world.

THREE REASONS A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW MATTERS

A worldview is the lens through which a person looks at the world. At the center of a worldview are the ultimate beliefs an individual holds, foundational convictions that seem so obvious that the one holding them seldom thinks much about them. Each of us has a view of the world. And so do the people around us —even if they've never given much thought to it.

I have terrible eyesight and have needed corrective lenses since I was in the first grade. Every morning, I put contacts into my eyes so I can see clearly. A worldview is like a contact lens: it's the way we view the world. I don't give a lot of thought to my contacts throughout the day. I don't look at them when they're in my eyes. I look through them and see the world. Similarly, we look through worldviews and interpret the world around us.

1. A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW MATTERS BECAUSE IT SETS US APART FROM THE WORLD (RM 12:1-2).

"Christians must be different from the world." Whenever we hear this statement in sermons or read it in books, we usually think about our behavior, right? We nod our heads and think, *Yes, our actions must set us apart!*

But there's another application of this statement that is equally important. Christians must be different from the world in the way we think. Our thinking must also set us apart. Yes, our actions ought to make us stand out from the world. But at an even deeper level, our thought processes should be different as well because actions follow thoughts.

Let's take a look at Romans 12:1-2, a turning point in the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans."Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

In chapter 12, Paul launched into specific instructions about how to live. In other words, in light of all that has gone before, in light of God's promises and the salvation he has provided through his Son, we Christians are told to "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice."

You may question the use of the word “bodies” here. Aren’t we talking about worldviews? Doesn’t that involve our minds? Yes. And notice how spiritual transformation includes both. In verse 1, Paul wrote that we must offer our bodies. In verse 2, he wrote that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Mind and matter. Physical and immaterial. Thinking and behavior. Paul didn’t just say, “Think rightly.” Neither did he simply say, “Behave rightly.” Paul knew the gospel transforms both our thoughts and our actions.

If we are to keep from being conformed to this age, we’ve got to understand the connection between thoughts and deeds. Paul connected them, and so should we.

What does it look like to be conformed to this age? To think in a worldly fashion? The Bible has the answers. It shows us not only what a Christian worldview looks like, but also wrong worldviews and how they lead us astray.

In the book of Job, we see how a false worldview results in false comfort. Job was a righteous man who went through a severe trial. Along the way, he was “comforted” by his friends, each of whom accused Job of having sinned. The friends shared a worldview that said, “Everything happens because of cause and effect. Do bad things, and bad things will happen to you. Do good things, and good things will happen to you.” This worldview was the lens through which they viewed Job’s suffering. The book of Job challenges this perspective in light of an all-powerful, all-wise God who permits things to happen that are beyond our understanding.

Consider Ecclesiastes in the OT. Much of this book expresses the worldview of “life under the sun,” a life without meaning and purpose in the face of death. The author does end the book with an affirmation of a biblical worldview, but much of the poetry is written from the perspective that death is the only thing we humans can anticipate. Though he had amassed great wealth and power, the author knew everything was indeed meaningless apart from the existence of God. And in reflecting on “life under the sun,” he wrote a book that helps us understand the mind-set and worldview of someone who lives as though this life is all there is.

Or consider Paul’s lengthy discourse on the resurrection of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15. “If the dead are not raised, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die,” he wrote in verse 32. In other words, a life of hedonism—the pursuit of pleasure—is acceptable *unless* the claims at the center of Christianity are true. If Christ has been raised, then there is something more important than immediate pleasure and comfort. Paul contrasted a hedonistic philosophy with Christianity.

The Bible consistently presents a Christian view of the world. Along the way,

The Bible consistently presents a Christian view of the world. Along the way, the biblical authors interacted with and contradicted unbiblical worldviews. We ought to be skilled in doing the same. Developing a Christian worldview will keep us from being conformed to this world.

There is a missional orientation to our nonconformity. Worldviews matter because people matter. Seeking to understand someone with whom we disagree is a way of loving our neighbor. It doesn't mean we accept every point of view as valid, right, or helpful. Neither does it mean we paper over our differences. We must never conform. But it does mean that we will listen and learn like missionaries seeking to understand the culture we are trying to reach. If we are to "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice," we must live in light of the mercies of God, understand our role as Christ's ambassadors to the world, and answer his call to bear witness to him and his work.

2. A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW MATTERS BECAUSE IT AIDS OUR SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (RM 12:2A).

A Christian worldview is important because it sets us apart from the world. But there's another reason why a Christian worldview matters: thinking as a Christian is part of the process of sanctification (being made holy). It is an important part of embracing our new identity in Christ. Notice Romans 12:2 "Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

This verse points us back to Romans 1, where Paul laid out the dire situation of humanity before a holy God. There he wrote, "For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools. . . . They exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Rm 1:21-22,25).

This passage shows us what happens when we exchange the truth of God for lies. Our minds are darkened, and then we engage in sinful behavior—as is evidenced in Paul's list of sinful attitudes and actions: greed, envy, murder, sexual immorality, *etc.* (vv. 29-31).

But in Romans 12, the situation is gloriously reversed! Because of Christ's work, our minds are being renewed. No longer are we senseless sinners living in the dark. Instead, we are redeemed people living in the light of Christ's resurrection. We also live in the light of his regenerating work in our hearts. Through the Spirit, God is changing us, conforming us—not to the world but into the image of his Son. By the mercies of God, we have been given a new identity.

What we think about ourselves matters. It also affects the way we see the world. That's why thinking as a Christian is a key part of your identity as a

world. That's why thinking as a Christian is a key part of your identity as a follower of Christ. If we have been called the children of God, then surely our new identity should affect the way we think and act.

As a parent, I am proud of my son when I see him growing and maturing. There have been times when, out of a sense of responsibility and love, he has left his toys to go check on his little sister. It warms my heart to see my nine-year-old showing signs of maturity as he grows. In the same way, God is pleased to see us thinking and acting as his children. We bring him pleasure through our obedience (Rm 12:2)—even though we often falter, stumble, and fall. It's true that we don't always think clearly. Our sanctification is indeed a process, and it is still incomplete. Yet God delights in seeing his children love him with their minds. He loves to see us embrace the new identity he has given us.

Worldviews provide answers to the fundamental questions of life. How did we get here? Why are we here? Who is in control of the world? Where are we going? What has gone wrong with the planet? What is the solution? People may not ask these questions consciously, but the way they answer such things in their own minds will shape the way they live.

Consider the example of a schoolteacher who goes to work every day convinced that the biggest problem in the world is ignorance. Lack of education leads to crime and is the source of human sorrow. If the world's biggest problem is ignorance, what is the solution? Education, of course! Salvation comes through learning.

A Christian teacher, by contrast, will see that ignorance may contribute to human suffering, but it's not the ultimate cause of the problem. According to the Bible, human sorrow comes from sin—our rebellion against God. Sin is the big problem, and salvation through Christ's atoning death and resurrection is the solution. At the end of the day, the solution is Jesus, not more education.

The answers to worldview questions lead to different outlooks on life. The way you diagnose the world's problem necessarily affects what you believe to be the solution. That's why it's important to have our minds renewed by the power of the Spirit as we study the Scriptures together. We must see the world through the eyes of biblical revelation.

The psalmist wrote, "The revelation of your words brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced" (Ps 119:130). Ultimately, if we have understanding, it's not just because we have attained a natural level of maturity but because we've benefited from God's revelation. Being transformed by the renewing of your mind won't happen apart from God's Spirit working through God's Word. We need the Spirit to illuminate the meaning of the Bible so that

we are able to find our place in God's great story of redemption.

3. A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW MATTERS BECAUSE IT HELPS US KNOW HOW TO LIVE (RM 12:2B).

Romans 12:2 makes it plain what the purpose of our spiritual transformation is. It allows us to "discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God."

I mentioned earlier how a worldview is like having contact lenses. What if I put on my contact lenses in the morning and then went back to bed to stare at the ceiling all day? That would be pointless. A waste of my lenses. The purpose of wearing contacts is to see clearly throughout the day as I go about the tasks assigned to me. In the same way, the point of developing a Christian worldview is not so I can stare into space, comforted by my good vision. The point of seeing is that I then walk in a biblical way, according to my new identity in Christ.

Sometimes Christians wish the Bible were simpler, a quick and easy guide that lays out every step of obedience. To be sure, the Bible has lots of do's and don'ts. But God didn't choose to detail specific commands for every possible situation we might find ourselves in.

What the Bible does give us is a grand narrative that focuses our attention on Jesus Christ and his gospel. In this story of redemption, we glean principles for living according to our new identity in him. Once we understand our general role in the plan and providence of God, we are called to exercise biblical wisdom in making everyday decisions.

God left us with something better than a simple list of commands. He gave us renewed minds that—through the power of his Spirit—will be able to discern what actions we should take. He is seeking to transform us so that we can determine God's will in particular situations where explicit instructions are not spelled out in Scripture.

Knowing how to apply the Bible in specific situations is one of the goals of developing a Christian worldview. We see an example of this in 1 Chronicles 12, where we find a list of King David's supporters. As the author listed the soldiers, he wrote of one tribe, "From the Issacharites, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do" (v. 32). In the context of this passage, this tribe's understanding was that David should be made king over all Israel. They knew what Israel should do because they "understood the times" and who was the rightful king.

In a similar way, we as Christians must understand the times in order to know what to do. We believe Jesus is the rightful King over all the world. And this

truth necessarily influences our actions. A Christian worldview is developed in light of who God is and what he has done to reconcile the world to himself.

CONCLUSION

What does it mean to live according to our new identity in Christ? First, we must demolish strongholds and false ideas as we cast down the idols we make of ourselves (2Co 10:4-5). Then, in ongoing repentance and faith, we seek to view the world through biblical eyes. We are the citizens of Christ's kingdom. We are those who have been reborn by his Spirit and are inching ever so slowly toward maturity, driven by our hope in the final resurrection.

The more we think as Christians, the more we will have the heart of Christ. That's why we are called to summon others on behalf of the King.

Trevin K. Wax

THE CRISIS OF THE CHRISTIAN MIND

In 1995, Thomas Cahill released the provocatively titled book, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. Cahill contended that "Ireland had one moment of unblemished glory . . . as the Roman Empire fell, as all through Europe matted, unwashed barbarians descended on the Roman cities, looting artifacts and burning books, the Irish, who were just learning to read and write, took up the great labor of copying all of Western literature" (p. 3).

Missionary-minded Irish monks later brought what had been preserved on their isolated island back to the continent, re-founding European civilization. And that, Cahill concludes, is how the Irish saved civilization.

But there is more at hand in Cahill's study than meets the eye. Beyond the loss of Latin literature and the development of the great national European literatures that an illiterate Europe would not have established, Cahill notes that something else would have perished in the West had it not been for the Irish: "the habits of the mind that encourage thought."

WHY WOULD THIS MATTER?

Cahill continues his assessment: "When Islam began its medieval expansion, it would have encountered scant resistance to its plans—just scattered tribes of animists, ready for a new identity" (pp. 193-194). Without a robust mind to engage the onslaught—and a Christian one at that—the West would have been under the crescent instead of the cross.

The habits of the mind have never mattered more than they do today. As Winston Churchill presciently stated in his address to Harvard University in 1943, "The empires of the future are the empires of the mind." Oxford theologian Alister McGrath, reflecting on Churchill's address, notes that Churchill's point was that a great transition was taking place in Western culture, with immense implications for all who live in it. The powers of the new world would not be nation-states, as with empires past, but ideologies. It would now be ideas, not nations, that would captivate and conquer in the future. The starting point for the conquest of the world would now be the human mind (*The Twilight of Atheism*, p. xi).

But this time, we may need more than the Irish to save us.

"We may talk of 'conquering' the world for Christ. But what sort of 'conquest' do we mean?" asks John Stott. "Not a victory by force of arms. . . . This is a battle of ideas" (*Your Mind Matters: The Place of the Mind in the*

Christian Life, pp. 20-21). Yet there are surprisingly few warriors. Those who follow Christ have too often retreated into personal piety and good works, or as one BBC commentator said, Christians have too often offered mere "feelings" and "philanthropy." Speaking specifically to the challenge raised by Islam, he added that what is needed was more "hard thinking" applied to the issues of the day.

What remains to be seen is whether there will be any hard thinkers to do the work. The peril of our day is that when a Christian mind is most needed, Christians express little need for the mind, and as a result, even less resolve to develop it. There is even a perception that an undeveloped mind is more virtuous than one prepared for battle. Richard Hofstadter, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, identified "the evangelical spirit" as one of the prime sources of American anti-intellectualism. He points out that for many Christians, humble ignorance is a far more noble quality than a cultivated mind (pp. 55-80).

Such devaluation of the intellect is a recent development within the annals of Christian history. While Christians have long struggled with the role and place of reason, that the mind itself mattered has been unquestioned until now. Even the early church father Tertullian (ca AD 160–220)—who had little use for philosophy and was famed for his question, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?"—never questioned the importance of the mind (*On the Proscription of Heretics* 6, 3:246). Tertullian's conviction was that Greek philosophy had little to offer in terms of informing the contours of Christian thought, akin to the apostle Paul's quip to the Corinthian church that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men (1Co 1:25). But Tertullian, as well as Paul, would have held in complete disdain any anti-intellectualism that celebrated an undeveloped mind.

Deep within the worldview of the biblical authors, and equally within the minds of the earliest church fathers, was the understanding that to be fully human is to think. To this day we call ourselves a race of Homo sapiens, which means "thinking beings." This is not simply a scientific classification; it is a spiritual one. We were made in God's image, and one of the most precious and noble dynamics within that image is the ability to think. It is one of the most sacred reflections of the divine image. It is also foundational to our interaction with God. As God himself implored through the prophet Isaiah, "Come, let us settle this" (Is 1:18).

Jesus made it clear that our minds are integral to life lived in relationship with God. When summarizing human devotion to God as involving heart, soul, and

God. When summarizing human devotion to God as involving heart, soul, and strength, Jesus added "and mind" to the original wording of Deuteronomy. It's as though he wanted there to be no doubt that when contemplating the comprehensive nature of commitment and relationship with God, our intellect would not be overlooked. The apostle Paul contended that our very transformation as Christians is dependent on whether our minds are engaged in an ongoing process of renewal in light of Christ (Rm 12:2-3).

This is all the more reason to be stunned by the words of Harry Blamires, a student of C. S. Lewis at Oxford, who claimed that "there is no longer a Christian mind." A Christian ethic, a Christian practice, a Christian spirituality, yes—but not a Christian mind (*The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?*, p. 3). More recently, historian Mark Noll concurred, suggesting that the scandal of the evangelical mind is that there is not much of an evangelical mind. "If evangelicals do not take seriously the larger world of the intellect, we say, in effect, that we want our minds to be shaped by the conventions of our modern universities and the assumptions of Madison Avenue, instead of by God and the servants of God" (*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, p. 34).

Even if we do not lose our own minds, we will certainly lose the minds of others. This is the double-edged threat of our day; apart from developing and thinking with a Christian mind-set, we will either be taken captive by the myriad of worldviews contending for our attention, or we will fail to make the Christian voice heard and considered above the din. Either we begin to think or we lose the fight.

It is essential to develop our minds in light of a biblical worldview that is then used to think Christianly about the world. From this we will be able to respond to the culture in which we live, and we will be better equipped to help the culture to respond to the Christ we follow. This was the clarion call of the apostle Paul, who reminded the Corinthian church that "we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, . . . We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, as we take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2Co 10:3-5).

James Emery White

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Is there anything you can think of which is indispensable to your personal identity? Perhaps your hometown, family, or friends come to mind. While these are important aspects of what it means to be you, they do not travel physically with you everywhere you go. They are not present during those private moments while you are sitting in your room. But one thing sticks closer to you than your own reputation: it is your worldview.

The term *worldview* has been around for a long time. First employed by philosopher Immanuel Kant, the concept of worldview (from the German word *Weltanschauung*) took on new significance for Christians with the publication of James Orr's book, *The Christian View of God and the World*. But it has only been recently that Christians have taken interest in worldview studies as an essential task in the mandate to become serious Christian thinkers.

There are two main ways in which people employ the term *worldview*. One is philosophical; the other, sociological.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEFINITION

Although numerous good definitions for *worldview* might be offered for the philosophical sense of the term, I find the late philosopher Ronald Nash's concise wording to be superior: "A worldview is a conceptual scheme by which we consciously or unconsciously. . . interpret and judge reality." Notice the total scope indicated by the language. Our worldview acts upon both our conscious and unconscious impressions about everything around us.

If you have ever met someone who had a blind spot (anything from continuous body odor to an annoying personal habit), you know that we humans are not always aware of our own weaknesses. Our blind spots extend to our beliefs about reality, and since we are incapable of going it alone on our own wisdom, or even the collective wisdom of a community (with corporate blind spots), we must rely on an objective truth teller. This truth teller is God, the Creator of reality. He alone can steady our rudder in the sea of competing worldviews.

In broad terms, a worldview that is Christian examines cultural data and locates them within a pattern of belief that is consistent with the sacred text of Scripture, but also with the broader Christian intellectual tradition. In other words, whenever we encounter an idea, we ask whether the issue relates variously to how God created the world, how humans through sin have corrupted

variously to how God created the world, how humans through sin have corrupted the world, or how the world through the work of Jesus Christ is in the process of being redeemed and restored.

Developing a Christian worldview is important for the Christ-follower because it tempers the way we interact with and assess the fallen world in which we live. Some Christians fall into the trap of being shocked about beliefs that secular persons express on a given issue. We must remember that worldviews serve the function of eyeglasses, helping a person to focus on the world around him in a meaningful way. Think of a trip to your local optometrist's office: you are asked to stare at a chart without the aid of corrective lenses. With each new lens, you are asked to choose either A or B. By the time you are finished, you see clearly. Without help, you may struggle to see at all.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL DEFINITION

The sociological definition of *worldview* recognizes that all conceptual systems are embedded in the culture. Think about the old Palmolive commercial on television: in it, a woman sits in a salon while getting her nails done. Her stylist, Madge, sits across from her, praising how wonderful Palmolive dishwashing liquid is and how gentle it is on the hands. Inevitably, the woman says to Madge, "I can't wait to try Palmolive!" Madge looks down at the woman's hands, which are immersed in a tub of liquid: "You're already soaking in it."

For all of the discussions Christians hold about "engaging culture," the reality is that long before we started thinking strategy, culture had already engaged us. Our society has a worldview all its own, which operates on our open imaginations, desires, and wills constantly. Worldviews also act like filters: they are totalizing and jealous. They are variously subtle, overt, systemic, systematic, faithful, or insidious.

A synonym for worldview is ideology. As Karl Marx wrote in *Das Kapital*, at the heart of every ideology is the following idea: "They do not know it, but they are doing it [anyway]." Ideology is unaware of its own presuppositions. Those in its sway naively believe that their way of thinking is the product of reason or science—when in fact deeply hidden background beliefs are at work.

For this reason, it is both right and wrong to speak of a "Christian worldview." If by that expression one means to say that biblical theology provides a comprehensive way of thinking and living, then yes, by all means we want to affirm the term. On the other hand, it is crucial not to confuse Christianity with being just another worldview standing alongside other culturally embedded worldviews.

As Yale scholar Lamin Sanneh has argued, whenever the question "Whose

religion is Christianity?" is asked, the answer comes back: no one culture holds sway over Christianity; it transcends every time, culture, race, and nationality. In this sense, it is unique among other world religions. The gospel stands outside a culture, critiquing it with the resources of the biblical text, and always addressing its sinful desires and deepest aspirations. As theologian Harry Lee Poe observes, "Every culture has a question that only the Bible can answer. Listen for the question."

CHRISTIANS AND HOLISTIC THINKING

If you are not sensitive about the centrality of worldviews to the way people live, you will be an uninformed—and potentially dangerous—Christian evangelist. Unfortunately, too many well-meaning Christians have tried to share their faith with a non-Christian only to offend unnecessarily the person they are trying to reach. In other cases, a simple evangelistic inquiry turns ugly when the non-Christian turns out to be an articulate and intelligent defender of their own beliefs. Frankly, if you as a Christ-follower fail to understand the importance of worldviews, you might well do more harm than good.

This remark is not meant to frighten anyone away from being passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the world. Nor am I trying to say that sharing one's faith is a task reserved only for Christian intellectuals. The gospel message is simple and clear, and it can be accepted with childlike faith. Still, every believer has a responsibility to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, a task that our Lord himself referred to as an issue of not only the heart but of the mind (Mt 22:37). Biblical worldview thinking, like discipleship, is a lifelong art that must be consistently practiced and studied, to be done well.

Worldview thinking opposes compartmentalization. There are not spiritual truths that can be divorced from daily life. Everything must be integrated into a whole. As Howard Ahmanson has so ably put it, "We worship a God who creates universes for a living. He did not set the sun, moon, and stars in their courses and then retire to go into full time Christian ministry."

Christ is Lord over everything. It is all one whole. Our job is to find out how to fit all of the pieces together in a broken world. In short, everything matters if anything matters at all. Minds awake, through faith and discipleship, can make real progress in understanding both how we should think and live in this confusing and wonderful world.

Gregory A. Thornbury

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

Rightly understanding the Bible is foundational for building a Christian worldview. God gave us his Word that we might "view" appropriately God's world, God himself, and God's purposes for us. He wants us to think well and live well (Dt 6:4-9; Mt 7:24), but we cannot think or live what we do not understand. Thus, sound biblical interpretation is foundational for anyone who wants to live under the lordship of Christ. In 2 Timothy 2:15 we read, "Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth." This means that sound interpretation is laudable, that misinterpretation is possible, and that interpreters are held accountable.

BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION: A "CONVERSATION"

Think of biblical interpretation as playing part in a conversation, for in the Bible God has chosen human language as the medium through which to communicate with us. John Calvin said that God has talked "baby talk" to us, getting on our level to communicate in a medium we could understand and to which we might respond. When someone speaks to us, we want to listen, understand, and respond to what that person is saying. This integrated paradigm fits well how Scripture speaks about our interaction with God's Word.

"Understanding" stands at the heart of biblical interpretation, but we are not simply after intellectual knowledge. Rather, biblical interpretation should be approached relationally, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we cultivate a posture of listening to God, grasping what he wants us to know, and living out his will. In Ezra's day, when the law of God was read before the people, they "listened attentively to the book of the law" (Neh 8:3), the Levites "explained the law to the people . . . translating and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was read" (8:7-8), and the people responded to the words of the law with mourning and celebration (8:9-12).

LEARNING TO LISTEN

We must listen well, for we cannot understand or live what we do not hear. Since we are dealing with a written text, we could also use the image of "seeing" what is in the text. So biblical interpretation begins with a close reading of the text, and it helps to read a text multiple times, perhaps in various translations, to hear or see the contours, the nuances of the particulars in a passage. This means we need to slow down and read carefully. We should also pray, "Open my eyes

so that I may contemplate wondrous things from your instruction" (Ps 119:18).

UNDERSTANDING WORDS IN CONTEXT

Once we have begun to hear or see the various aspects of the text, we need sound practices to understand the significance of what we are encountering, and this means we will be working with words. Since God has given us his Word in words, our interpretation will be governed in part by the way words work.

First, words work through representation, the collection of letters functioning as a symbol that represents something. For example, the Hebrew word for "bread" is לֶחֶם (*lechem*). You have to understand that that particular group of letters, in that order, refer to bread in order to interpret the word—and the passage—correctly. So as we encounter the words in a given Bible translation, we need to get at the Hebrew or Greek words behind the word or words we are studying.

Second, words are flexible. As we study biblical words (or the words of any language), we find that most words have a range of possible meanings or things they represent. This is called a "semantic range." Thus, an important aspect of biblical interpretation involves getting at the various possible meanings of a word. In English, for instance, the word "hand" has a broad semantic range: the word could refer to "help," "applause," a worker on a ranch, the minute hand on a clock, and about a dozen other actions or items. In Greek, χάρις (*charis*) has a number of different meanings, including "grace," "thanks," "gift," "attractiveness," "charm," or "favor." So interpretation involves seeking to understand, among the various possible meanings of a word at a particular time and place, how an author intended a word to be understood. At Ephesians 2:8, for instance, χάρις should be translated in terms of God's "grace" or "gracious care": "For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift." We seek to grasp the appropriate meaning of a word based on how the author uses the word in context.

This brings us to a third and final point concerning how words work: words work on the basis of context. Context refers to circumstances that form the setting for a passage of Scripture by which that passage can be rightly understood. At least four types of context affect our understanding of a text.

1. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical context refers to events recorded in Scripture or events that form the backdrop for the biblical story. For instance, at 2 Samuel 6, King David, along with thirty thousand warriors, is moving the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem.

The ark has been placed on a cart; the cart hits a pothole; the ark begins to tip over; Uzzah reaches out to steady it; and Uzzah is struck dead by God. Read apart from historical context, this passage may lead someone to understand God as capricious for zapping a person who was just trying to help! Yet, one cannot interpret well the death of Uzzah apart from the giving of the law in broader Jewish history. In Numbers 4 we read that God had given specific instructions for the transport of the ark (and other artifacts of the tabernacle), specifically instructing the priests that anyone who touched the ark would die. In short, Uzzah died because David did not know and carry out the law's clear instructions.

2. CULTURAL CONTEXT

Cultural context has to do with attitudes, patterns of behavior, or expressions of a particular society, which affect right understanding of a passage. In Acts 4 the priests and Sadducees confronted Peter and John because "they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead." Why was that a problem? From the broader culture of the time, we understand that the priests —most of whom were Sadducees—did not believe in resurrection. So, teaching about the resurrection contradicted their teaching and authority. No wonder they were upset.

3. LITERARY CONTEXT

Literary context involves how a word or passage fits and functions in a book or a group of books, or in the Bible as a whole. No word works well in isolation. For instance, at the most immediate level of literary context, biblical interpretation involves dynamics of grammar and syntax. At 2 Corinthians 3:3 Paul speaks of the Corinthian church figuratively, saying that they are a "letter" of recommendation before a watching world. The Greek word Χριστοῦ (*Christou*) is in the genitive case and could be interpreted in various ways. Is Paul saying that the Corinthians are a letter "about Christ," or that they are a letter "of Christ," that is, with Christ as the source or originator of the letter? Based on the immediate context, the latter is probably correct, since the broader passage focuses on the "production" of this letter. Good commentaries can help us understand grammar and broader issues of context.

4. Theological Context

Theological context refers to how a word or passage fits in the tapestry of theological themes in the story of the Bible as a whole. For example, when Paul says that Jesus is "our Passover lamb" in 1 Corinthians 5:7, we have to read his statement in light of the inauguration of the Passover celebration in Exodus 12,

as well as Jesus's death at Passover during the final days of his ministry on earth (Jn 13:1).

THE GOAL OF INTERPRETATION

Biblical interpretation does not end with listening and understanding, for the goal of biblical interpretation has always been responding to Scripture. We are not seeking to master the text but to be mastered by it. As we live faithfully in biblical community, we are part of that extended interpretive community founded by Jesus. He taught us to interpret and live the Scriptures in light of himself, his ministry, his death, and his resurrection (e.g., Lk 24:25-27). We must read the Scriptures under the lordship of Christ, seeking to live out his purposes for us in the world.

George H. Guthrie

BIBLICAL INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY

The Bible is uniquely inspired by God. This truth has unified the church through the centuries. Like the early Jewish communities, the early church accepted the divine inspiration of the OT. They accepted the same books as in the Jewish canon of the first century, though they are arranged in a different order in the Christian canon.

The church also believes that God inspired the twenty-seven books of the NT. Though some of the books were disputed initially and many writings of the second through the fourth centuries were excluded, eventually the church recognized the canon as we now have it.

INSPIRATION IN SCRIPTURE

The doctrine of divine inspiration comes from the Bible itself. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is inspired by God" (2Tm 3:16). The word *inspired* means "God breathed." It stresses God's initiative, investing the books with unique power and relevance. The apostle Peter also affirmed inspiration, claiming that the Holy Spirit moved the ancient writers to write what God intended (1Pt 1:10-12). These texts refer primarily to the OT, but Peter includes some NT books as well, identifying Paul's writings as Scripture (2Pt 3:16).

Historically, the church has also affirmed that the "God-breathed" Scriptures are inerrant. Though the word *inerrancy* was not always used, the idea now embraced by it predominated. The term *inerrancy* came into vogue in the early 1900s, in response to skeptical challenges to the integrity and, therefore, the authority of Scripture. It is best to combine the doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy.

WHAT IS INSPIRATION?

Inspiration/Inerrancy may be defined this way: "God so orchestrated the circumstances of the writing of Holy Scripture that every word participates in its context to communicate exactly what God intends. Since the words come from God, they are inerrant. That is, they are authoritative in what they teach and accurate in what they record. They are the ultimate authority for the believer's faith and practice."

Several important implications occur here. First, God orchestrated the circumstances of writing. God used various personalities (at least thirty-nine writers) reflecting on different circumstances (over a period of fifteen hundred years). The personalities of writers are not violated; rather, they are highlighted. Reading the Bible in the original languages dramatically reveals differences in style of writing and literary devices. Each book was written with a specific

historical context in its background. God did not dictate the Bible. Rather, individuals wrote exactly what and how they wished. Yet God orchestrated the various events and personalities to produce exactly what he wanted (Lk 1:1-4).

Second, every word of Scripture has significance. Inspiration is plenary verbal. Words function in literary contexts to bring meaning. While no word of Scripture can be isolated from its context and have God-inspired meaning, every context would be shaped differently without the precise words used. Thus, each word was selected by both the human writer and the Holy Spirit to communicate God's truth.

Third, the Bible is authoritative in what it teaches and accurate in what it records. Biblical truth is developed in intricate literary processes. Sections of narrative and biography, in particular, describe events necessary to build the truth Scripture develops by employing them, but the Bible does not always affirm them as true. Such is the case with the "wisdom" shared by Job's three friends. The writer accurately described their speeches, but the friends are wrong in applying their thoughts to Job's situation. The Bible is authoritative in that it accurately records these events and words. What the Bible teaches, however, has supreme authority. The reader must carefully study to determine what the Bible actually teaches.

Fourth, the Bible has authority in faith and practice. It shapes what we believe and how we live.

Fifth, the inerrancy of the Bible refers to the original manuscripts of the various texts. Over time, as people copied the manuscripts, some variant readings occurred. Scholars know where (and what texts) and how the variations likely occurred. Variations occur in handwritten materials in every type of literature. One cannot expect copies to be inerrant, given the human tendency to miscopy on occasion. Scholars have found approximately five thousand, eight hundred manuscripts of the NT alone (most are of parts of books), and there are many variant readings among them. Through the process of textual criticism, however, we can construct the most likely readings of the original manuscripts.

OBJECTIONS TO INERRANCY

Sometimes people question biblical inerrancy because they claim we do not have the original manuscripts and therefore it is a meaningless issue. In response, several points should be made.

First, even in modern times people want to be quoted on what they actually said or wrote, not on how people quote (or misquote) them. Each appeals to the original versions of their texts. The same should be true of the Bible.

Second, most likely we do have the readings of the original manuscripts. It is unlikely that we have the texts actually penned by Paul, for example, but we do have multiple accurate witnesses to it.

Third, with all the manuscripts available, no doctrine or significant aspect of Christian truth is at stake. No doctrine depends on one biblical reference by itself.

JESUS ON SCRIPTURE

There are various ways of describing and defending inspiration and inerrancy. Corresponding to various epistemologies, scholars have taken different approaches to affirming the integrity of the Bible, each with merit and success. For example, rationalists will defend the Bible because it makes the most sense of reality to the mind. It is rational. Presuppositionalists will look to the consistent logic and non-contradictory nature of Scripture to affirm it. Empiricalists will focus on the resurrection of Jesus and the correspondence to historical verification principles to affirm the Bible. History, in that view, is the way to determine the real events of the past. Experientialists will point to the personal and corporate changes of life that correspond to the Bible's teaching about godliness. Thus, they find it true in their own experiences.

The most fruitful approach is to look to the teaching of Jesus. His resurrection verifies his claim to deity; therefore, what he taught must be accepted as true. Jesus affirmed every portion of Scripture as accurate and infallible (Jn 10:35; Mt 5:17-18). He also referred to major persons and historical events, even affirming those that are most troubling to skeptical minds. As examples of these events, see the Creation of Humans (Gn 2–3; Mt 19:4); Cain Murdering Abel (Gn 4; Mt 23:35); The Flood and Noah (Gn 7; Mt 24:37); The Flood (Gn 7; Lk 17:27); The Destruction of Sodom (Gn 19; Lk 17:29); The Burning Bush (Ex 3:6; Mt 22:32); Lifting Up the Serpent of Brass (Nm 21:9; Jn 3:14); Healing of Naaman by Elisha (2Kg 5; Lk 4:27); and Jonah's Ministry to Nineveh (Jnh 3:5; Mt 12:41). As examples of persons, see Adam and Eve (Mt 19:4); Cain and Abel (Mt 23:35); Lot (Lk 17:28); David (Mt 12:3); Queen of Sheba (Mt 12:42); Solomon (Mt 12:3); and Naaman (Lk 4:27).

Jesus based arguments on the precise nature of words and language in the OT. For example, in Matthew 22:32 he explained that God is the God of the living—even though those he mentioned as living were deceased from man's viewpoint. In Matthew 22:44 he shed light on the complex relationship between David and the heir and Messiah he anticipated. Jesus predicted that God will continue to inspire through his apostles, thus predicting the inspiration of NT books (Jn 14:26; 16:13).

14:26; 16:13).

Because of challenges to the integrity of the Bible and the need to teach truths to successive generations, conservative theologians have been forced to formalize their views of inspiration. Today, the most widely accepted statement is the 1978 Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy; it's the product of hundreds of conservative thinkers.

The doctrine of biblical inerrancy has multiple positive implications. Two are noteworthy but representative of others.

IN THE BELIEVER'S LIFE

The believer must have confidence that in the Bible "thus says the Lord." A clear and strong bibliology provides that basis.

IN THE HERMENEUTICAL/EXEGETICAL TASK

The person who has a predisposition of inerrancy often approaches the text differently. Without twisting the text or fabricating conclusions, the biblical inerrantist has two primary motivations. First, he wishes to discern accurately what God desires of his creation, seeking to know God's will and to walk with him joyfully. Second, he wants to discern the meaning of the text. Those who expect errors often find them, frequently shortcutting the exegetical process by not seeking resolutions. Those who expect harmony and accuracy search to find how the text has integrity. Without abusing the Bible, they often find resolutions to difficulties and reinforce their faith in Scripture and the God who gave it.

Richard R. Melick

WHAT IS A HUMAN?

America's founders explained their rebellion against the British crown by appealing to a particular view of the human: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness" (*Declaration of Independence).*

Today there is little agreement about what human rights, dignity, and equality entail, and few remember just how tedious these concepts have proven to be. Throughout most of history, some lives were considered dispensable, and oppression was justified by aspirations to power, claims of ethnic or familial superiority, and economic disparities.

Humans come from different cultures, genders, and ethnicities. We do not possess the same abilities. These obvious differences make the answers to the important questions about life anything but self-evident.

Do allhumans have value, or just some?

Are we distinct from the animals?

Is dignity shared by every member of the human race, or is it dependent on gender, ethnicity, or abilities?

Is our humanity fixed, or is it culturally determined?

As important as determining how people should behave is settling on what people are. Different visions about what it means to be human compete in the marketplace of ideas. These notions, when lived out in the real world, have serious consequences for individuals, communities, nations, and entire cultures.

HUMANITY AND OTHER WORLDVIEWS

Non-Christian worldviews fail to ground the concepts of human dignity, value, and universal rights. *Naturalistic* worldviews such as atheism, Marxism, and secularism deny anything that is spiritual or metaphysical. Because all that is has resulted from natural, mindless physical processes, spiritual beliefs are fantasies that, like all human behaviors, result from chemical processes occurring in the brain.

In this view of reality, no Creator exists to endow special status to humans. Therefore, there is nothing *intrinsic* about humans that establishes their equality, dignity, or value. Instead, for naturalistic worldviews, there are only *extrinsic* realities, like appearance and abilities, to distinguish us from other humans, or even from "other animals."

Transcendental worldviews, such as Hinduism, certain forms of Buddhism, and New Age, understand all living things to be part of the impersonal spiritual oneness that is ultimate reality. Many of these religions hold to reincarnation, in which to be human is to be merely an expression of life trapped in the cycle of birth and rebirth along the journey to losing individual existence and rejoining the universal oneness to which we all ultimately belong. Humans, according to transcendental worldviews, are "divine" but ultimately not distinct from—and certainly no more valuable than—any other living thing.

Postmodernists deny that humans are able to know who we are. According to this view, everyone is trapped by perspectives shaped by culture. Categories that describe human nature, behavior, or roles—such as male, female, intelligent, leader, upper class, impoverished, antisocial, married, productive, etc.—are socially determined. In its more pessimistic forms, postmodernism despairs that humans can ever find meaning and purpose. In its less pessimistic forms, postmodernism ends in relativism, in which no individual or culture is allowed to judge any other.

Islam understands God to be so remote and far removed from anything in the universe that he cannot share his attributes. In Islam, humans only relate to God in service. Because God has not given of himself in creating humans, human dignity depends on obedience. Thus, the follower of God and the non-follower do not share equal rights or value.

HUMANITY AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

The Old and New Testaments, however, present an entirely different vision of what it means to be human. First, the creation of humans is the pinnacle of the biblical creation narrative. Of all the things God made, only humans bear his image. Many atheist thinkers, like Friedrich Nietzsche, recognized that only the biblical vision of *imago Dei* (the image of God) grounds universal human dignity, value, and rights.

Biblical scholars offer three different, but complementary views of the *imago Dei.* The *functional* view suggests that humans resemble God in what we are able to do. Like God, humans create, reason, love, and imagine. This theory describes what results from the *imago Dei* more than it does what the *imago Dei* is. For example, someone unable to reason or create due to injury or disability still bears God's image.

The *relational* view emphasizes the Trinitarian nature of God as the key to understanding humanity. The Bible describes the eternal community that exists between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Unlike in Islam, where the idea of God

as Trinity is considered idolatrous blasphemy, God doesn't merely *do* relationships. He is, by nature, a relationship.

The *representative* view clarifies the unique role God bestowed on humans in the world. They are to rule over all he made, filling and subduing the earth, effectively continuing the creative work from which God rested (Gn 1:26-31). That God, *the* Sovereign, made humans sovereign over his world is unique to Christianity.

Unlike most other religious and cultural frameworks of the ancient world, the biblical creation story describes both male and female as representatives of God. Before we meet Eve, the first woman, the Bible is explicit that the status of image bearer applies to both genders (Gn 1:27), and it is a role not shared with the animal kingdom. Still, the Genesis account does not present male and female as identical. They are complementary. Alone, man is unable to accomplish his God-given task of filling and subduing the earth (Gn 2:18). With woman, God provides a helper for man uniquely suitable and distinct from man (Gn 2:20-24).

The significance of the *imago Dei* is underscored by how the Bible describes the fall of humanity. Not only are humans separated from God and each other by sin, but the entire creation is in "the bondage to decay" (Rm 8:21). Thorns, pain, frustration, and death infect the cosmos because of Adam's disobedience.

Finally and ultimately, human dignity is secured by the incarnation. That God became man in the person of Jesus Christ, C.S. Lewis wrote in *Miracles*, "was the central event in the history of the earth—the very thing that the whole story has been about."

HUMANITY REDEEMED

Among the earliest and most persistent heresies condemned by the church is Gnosticism, which teaches that anything physical, including the human body, is evil. When mixed with Christianity, Gnosticism proclaimed that God could not have taken on human flesh without being corrupted. In response, the church upheld that Jesus Christ was both fully God and fully man. Jesus physically rose from the dead, Paul proclaimed, or else our faith is "worthless" (1Co 15:17).

If Jesus was not corrupted by taking on the flesh of humanity, then our humanity can be made new. The NT authors describe the effect of Christ's work with "re" words: redeem, restore, reconcile, and renew. "Re" words imply the reversal of the corruption of sin. In Christ, the dignity, value, and rights given to humanity by God are restored, not lost. As Thomas Howard wrote, "The Incarnation takes all that properly belongs to our humanity and delivers it back to us, redeemed. . . . All the dancing and feasting and processing and singing and

building and sculpting and baking and merrymaking that belong to us, and that were stolen away into the service of false gods, are returned to us in the Gospel" (*Evangelical is Not Enough: Worship of God in Liturgy and Sacrament*, Ignatius Press, 1984, pp. 36-37).

John Stonestreet

SPEAKING TO A NON-CHRISTIAN ABOUT JESUS

Abraham Kuyper once said that there is not a square inch of creation where Jesus, as the sovereign Lord, does not declare, “That is mine.” When Christians share the gospel of the kingdom with unbelievers, this is in part what we are sharing with them. Jesus Christ owns it all by right as Creator; he is the agent by which all things came into existence (Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). He also owns it all by right as Redeemer; he has purchased sinners from every nation with his blood (Ac 20:28; 1Co 6:20; 7:23; Heb 9:12; 1Pt 1:18-19; Rv 5:9). Every Christian has the privilege and responsibility of sharing the fullness of Christ with unbelievers and bringing the message of his lordship over all creation and his loving redemption to all peoples.

As Christians share the message of Jesus in the marketplace, academy, and neighborhood, they bear witness to God’s purposes in creation and to his love in redemption through Jesus Christ. In the Bible the church utilized many ways to communicate the message of Christ to unbelievers: proclamation (Ac 2:14-42), persuasion (Ac 28:23), teaching (Ac 19:9), and conversation (Jn 3:1-21; Ac 8:26-40).

Rather than provide a formula or step-by-step method of how to speak to a non-Christian about Jesus, this article will establish some key biblical principles to guide Christians in how they can share Christ with unbelievers. Effectively speaking to unbelievers about Jesus involves sharing Christ personally through testimony, appropriately in context, substantially through content, and powerfully through the Holy Spirit.

PERSONALLY THROUGH TESTIMONY

One of the most effective means of sharing Jesus with unbelievers is through personal testimony. The apostle John highlights “the word of their testimony” as one dimension to Christian witness in the world and a key factor in Christian victory over the enemy (Rv 12:11). The testimonial connects with people’s universal interest in personal stories and communicates powerfully the message of Christ through the transformed lives of those who know him. The apostles were eyewitnesses to the glory of Jesus in his earthly life, death on a cross, and of his resurrection. Jesus commissioned them and the church to be his witnesses “to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8). In Acts, Peter and John exemplify the compelling nature of personal testimony when, even in the face of opposition, they could not “stop speaking about what [they] have seen and heard” (Ac 4:20).

they could not "stop speaking about what [they] have seen and heard" (Ac 4:20). The message of Jesus Christ changes lives and prepares those he transforms to be living witnesses to the power and mercy of God to redeem lost sinners. In this way, he uniquely suits us to be his ambassadors in a world without Christ. Each Christian has a personal testimony to share concerning God's love in Jesus.

The NT speaks of the power of personal testimony through ordinary people whose lives had been radically altered by Jesus. In his earthly ministry, he transformed the lives of many who became great witnesses for him. Jesus cast out multiple demons from a man in the country of the Gerasenes. Understandably, the man did not want to leave Jesus but follow him in his travels. Jesus, however, said to him, "'Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.' So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed" (Mk 5:19-20). Jesus encountered the woman of Samaria at a well in midday and demonstrated his messiahship and divine status by declaration and supernatural knowledge of her life. Due to her conversion and subsequent testimony, many believed in Jesus. John 4:39 tells us, "Now many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of what the woman said when she testified, 'He told me everything I ever did.'" In like manner, God desires to use every Christian to share the "word of their testimony" with unbelievers.

Christians can learn from examples in the NT that personal testimony involves being prepared to share about our lives before Christ, the circumstances of our conversions to Christ, and what our lives were like after coming to know him. Paul was real, open, and honest about what Christ had done for him (Ac 21:40–22:22; 1Co 15:9-10; Gl 1:13-17). Most importantly, he centered his own personal story in Jesus Christ so that the gospel was made plain and the essential elements of Jesus Christ's person and work were revealed. The Christian testimony is an important means to share Christ fully with others. God does not hold believers accountable for the response they get from unbelievers; only he can change the heart. Christ gives us a stewardship of the gospel, however, and calls us to bear witness to him personally through testimony, appropriately in context, substantially through content, and powerfully through the Holy Spirit.

APPROPRIATELY IN CONTEXT

Christians should share Jesus appropriately in context with unbelievers. Knowledge of the background, culture, and worldview of one's audience assists Christians in meaningfully sharing about Christ. Demographics are changing and peoples from all over the world are now neighbors to evangelical churches

across America, especially in the larger urban centers. Christians, therefore, must increase their "CIQ"—Cultural Intelligence Quotient—in order to successfully and meaningfully share Jesus with others.

Paul adapted his method of sharing Christ with unbelievers based on the audience. When Paul entered the synagogues, he preached Christ (the Messiah) to the Jews from the Hebrew Scriptures; he sought to persuade them that Jesus is the Messiah (Ac 9:19-22; 18:4; 28:23). This method also extended to God-fearers, those who were not ethnic Jews but converts to Judaism who had some knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. Philip approached the God-fearing Ethiopian in this manner when the man was reading Isaiah 53 (Ac 8:26-40). Philip asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading. Then using Isaiah 53, Philip preached Christ to the eunuch, who was subsequently baptized as evidence of his repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ.

It is always appropriate to use Scripture passages when speaking to unbelievers about Jesus, especially to those who have been exposed to varying expressions of Christianity. World-renowned evangelist Billy Graham often prefaced his evangelistic preaching points with "the Bible says." It is through Scripture that we know Jesus Christ—both who he is and what he came to do. God reveals in the Bible the message he charges us to bear to an unbelieving world.

Paul adapted his method (but not his message) when he shared Christ with Greeks. In Acts 17, Paul addressed a group of Greek intellectuals who had no understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures and limited knowledge of the new Christian witness. Paul took as his departure point the statue dedicated to an unknown god and proclaimed to them the identity of the One true and living God. Paul established foundational truths about God as Creator and provider of all humankind, the nature of idolatry and sin, and then the universal call of God to repentance and faith in Christ. Missionaries today use a similar method in evangelizing unreached people groups; it's called Creation to Christ, and in it key stories are told from the Old Testament to the New Testament, culminating with a central focus on the person and work of Jesus.

Sharing Christ in today's world involves understanding the worldview of the people we are seeking to reach. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9:22, "I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some." The post-Christian and pluralistic West, including North America, increasingly reflects similarities with the Greco-Roman environment of Paul's day. The Christian's task, therefore, involves an ability to talk with people where they are without compromising the message of the cross. The next section will provide

without compromising the message of the cross. The next section will provide some biblical handles to move through the message of the gospel with unbelievers.

SUBSTANTIALLY THROUGH CONTENT

A clear presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ will involve a reference point to God as Creator and Judge, humanity's fall into sin and the resulting consequences, the love of God expressed in the sending of his Son to die for the sins of the world and thereby provide redemption for his fallen creation, the glorious resurrection of Christ, and God's willingness to receive into his family all who repent from their sins and believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

When speaking to unbelievers about Jesus, we must remember that they must first sense their need for Christ before seeking a solution. Essential elements of the gospel message include a clear statement of God as Creator who holds all people accountable, and a clear presentation of the universality of sin that helps people see their need for salvation. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rm 3:23). All are born dead in sin and are thus under the just judgment of a holy God (Eph 2:2-3). All are captive under sin, having no human means of escape (Gl 3:22). God has declared that "there is no one righteous, not even one" (Rm 3:10). "No one seeks after God" (Rm 3:11). As a result, "the wages of sin" are both physical and spiritual "death," involving an eternal separation from God (Rm 6:23). All people apart from Christ have no hope and are "without God in world" (Eph 2:12). As a result, no person can save themself through "good works" or religion (Rm 3:19-20). Salvation is not achieved through what humans do but by resting in the faith of what God has done for humankind through Jesus Christ (Eph 2:8-9). No other way of salvation exists—only Jesus Christ (Ac 4:12; Jn 14:6).

In order to faithfully and effectively share Christ with unbelievers, Christians must share certain facts about Jesus and the gospel message. In Scripture we often find brief summary statements of the gospel that can aid us in presenting the core of the gospel. For instance, Paul offers this brief and substantial Christ-centered summary in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4: "For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

Nearly all people acknowledge the historical figure of Jesus, though there is much misunderstanding concerning him. To begin a conversation with an unbeliever, Christians can follow the example of Jesus with his disciples and ask people what they think about Jesus Christ (Mt 16:13-15). Jesus is the divine Son

of God, and as such, equal with God. He became man in order to live the perfectly righteous life that we failed to live and to die a substitutionary death in the place of guilty sinners, diverting to himself the just judgment of the holy God against our sin. Jesus Christ primarily came to die in our place, taking the wrath of God against sin in himself in order to inaugurate his work of new creation (Rm 3:24-25; 2Co 5:17). He who knew no sin became sin "so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2Co 5:21). The cross is central to explaining the good news of God's salvation and communicating all of the essential elements of Jesus Christ's identity.

Ultimately, Christians must share the message of the cross and resurrection in order to effectively share Jesus with others. Every conversation about Christ should drive quickly to the cross and resurrection. Paul focused on "Jesus Christ and him crucified" as the core of his gospel message to unbelievers and so should we (1Co 2:2). The cross presents Jesus Christ as a justice-seeking and justice-satisfying God. In a generation increasingly consumed with a passion for social justice, the message of the cross speaks of God's justice. God is perfectly just and demands a just and equal payment for the rebellion of humankind from humankind. The Father sent the Son in the power of the Holy Spirit to satisfy God's righteous justice against the rebellion of man through the Son's death on a cross and subsequent resurrection. In doing so, he has demonstrated his love by quenching his divine wrath and now offers the fruits of his mercy to all who will receive it as a gift by faith (Rm 6:23).

Our witness to Christ explains that his cross and resurrection eternally uphold and proclaim the message of God's justice, mercy, and victory. The cross puts the love of God on full display and the resurrection, his power. Some draw the conclusion that because "God is love" (1Jn 4:8), he would never punish sinners. The cross of Jesus Christ, however, demonstrates God's love in that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rm 5:8). He thus compassionately offers a rescue plan to the undeserving. The love of God is expressed through the death of Christ without compromising the justice of his divine holiness against sin. God provided a sin-bearer, his divine Son, in order to meet his holy demands against sinners (Is 53:4-6). In meeting his own demands through the cross of Christ, he provides a great redemption and victory over sin, death, and the devil through the resurrection.

As the cornerstone of Christian hope, the resurrection must factor into conversations about Jesus Christ. The resurrection culminates Christ's work of redemption and authenticates his messianic sonship (Rm 1:4). It reminds us that those who trust in him will be raised to eternal life. The message of the church

those who trust in him will be raised to eternal life. The message of the church is, “He is risen!” The resurrection of Jesus distinguishes the Christian faith from all other world religions and their grave-bound founders. Belief in the resurrection is essential for a confession that leads to salvation (Rm 10:9).

Paul states in Romans 1:16 that “the gospel . . . is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.” The gospel is centered in the person and work of Jesus Christ and is the agent of salvation for those who believe. Our testimonies should be a conduit for the gospel. The gospel is good news, but we must understand and communicate the nature and substance of the good news in ways appropriate to our context.

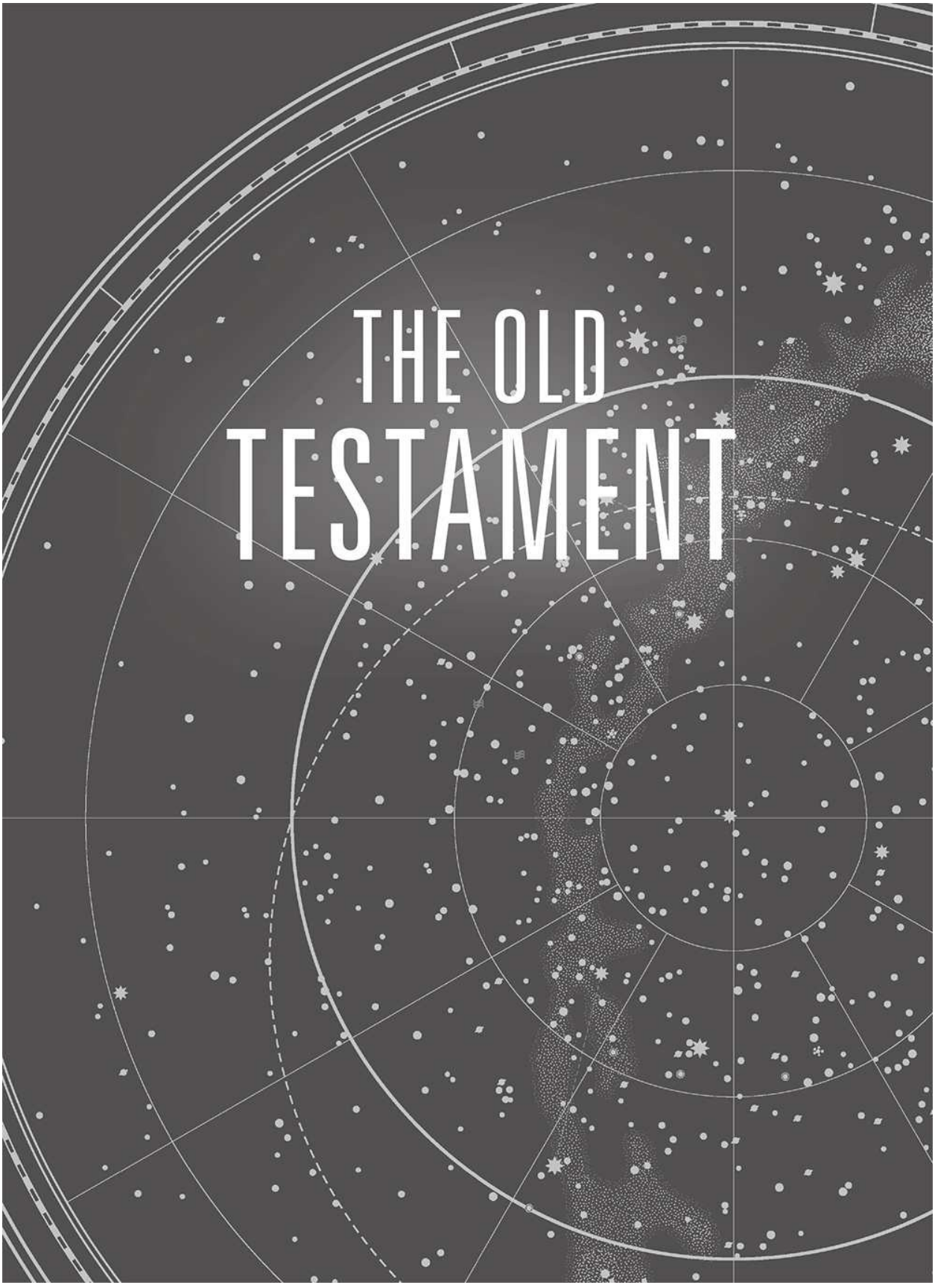
POWERFULLY THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT

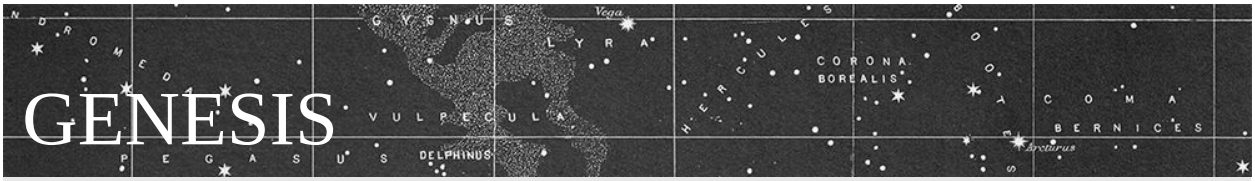
God calls Christians to engage in a supernatural task to utilize all of who we are to share all of who he is. He gives us his Holy Spirit to effectively empower us to speak to others about Jesus. Christ commands his followers to bear witness to him to the ends of the earth and gives us the power through the Holy Spirit to accomplish this fundamental task; “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Ac 1:8).

Without God’s power through the Holy Spirit at work in them, Christians would never desire or attempt to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Evidence of the filling of the Spirit is bold proclamation of Jesus (Ac 4:31). The Spirit, whom Joel promised for Jewish believers, is the same Spirit poured out on believing Gentiles: “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high” (Lk 24:46-49).

Christians are completely dependent on the Holy Spirit to give us power, understanding, sensitivity, and wisdom to share Christ fruitfully with others. We are also dependent on the Holy Spirit to apply the message to the human heart. Christ told his disciples that the Holy Spirit “will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment” (Jn 16:8). As we speak to unbelievers about Jesus, let us be mindful to share him personally through testimony, appropriately in context, substantially through content, and powerfully through the Holy Spirit.

John D. Massey


THE OLD
TESTAMENT



GENESIS

INTRODUCTION

The book of Genesis is the great book of beginnings in the Bible. True to the meanings of its Hebrew and Greek names (Hb *bere'shith,* "In Beginning" [based on 1:1]; Gk *Geneseos,* "Of Birth" [based on 2:4]), Genesis permits us to view the beginning of a multitude of realities that shape our daily existence: the creation of the universe and the planet earth; the origins of plant and animal life; and the origins of humans, marriage, families, nations, industry, artistic expression, religious ritual, prophecy, sin, law, crime, conflict, punishment, and death.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Since pre-Christian times authorship of the Torah, the five books that include the book of Genesis, has been attributed to Moses, an enormously influential Israelite leader from the second millennium BC with an aristocratic Egyptian background. Even though Genesis is technically anonymous, both the Old and New Testaments unanimously recognize Moses as the Torah's author (Jos 8:35; 23:6; 1Kg 2:3; 8:9; 2Kg 14:6; 23:25; 2Ch 23:18; 25:4; 30:16; 34:14; 35:12; Ezr 3:2; 6:18; Neh 8:1; 9:14; Dn 9:11,13; Mal 4:4; Mk 12:19,26; Lk 2:22; 20:28; 24:44; Jn 1:17,45; 7:19; Ac 13:39; 15:21; 28:23; Rm 10:5; 1Co 9:9; Heb 10:28). At the same time, evidence in Genesis suggests that minor editorial changes dating to ancient times have been inserted into the text. Examples include the mention of "Dan" (14:14), a city that was not named until the days of the judges (Jdg 18:29), and the use of a phrase that assumed the existence of Israelite kings (Gn 36:31).

BACKGROUND: The Torah (a Hebrew term for law) was seen as one unit until at least the second century BC Sometime prior to the birth of Christ, the Torah was divided into five separate books, later referred to as the Pentateuch (lit "five vessels"). Genesis, the first book of the Torah, provides both the universal history of humankind and the patriarchal history of the nation of Israel. The first section (chaps. 1–11) is a general history commonly called the "primeval history," showing how all humanity descended from one couple and became sinners. The second section (chaps. 12–50) is a more specific history commonly referred to as the "patriarchal history," focusing on the covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants: Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob's twelve sons. Genesis unfolds God's plan to bless and redeem humanity through Abraham's descendants. The book concludes with the events that led to the Israelites being in the land of Egypt.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Genesis lays the groundwork for everything else we read and experience in Scripture. Through Genesis we understand where we came from, how we got in the fallen state we are in, and the beginnings of God's gracious work on our behalf. Genesis unfolds God's original purpose for humanity.

Genesis provides the foundation from which we understand God's covenant with Israel that was established with the giving of the Law. For the Israelite community, the stories of the origins of humanity, sin, and the covenant relationship with God helped them understand why God gave them the Law.

STRUCTURE

Genesis is chiefly a narrative. From a narrative standpoint, God is the only true hero of the Bible, and the book of Genesis has the distinct privilege of introducing him. God is the first subject of a verb in the book

and is mentioned more frequently than any other character in the Bible. The content of the first eleven chapters is distinct from the patriarchal stories in chapters 12–50. The primary literary device is the catchphrase “these are the family records.” The phrase is broader in meaning than simply “generation,” and refers more to a narrative account. This was a common practice in ancient Near East writings. This phrase also serves as a link between the key person in the previous narrative and the one anticipated in the next section. Genesis could be described as historical genealogy, which ties together creation and human history in one continuum.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Genesis reveals God first as Creator. He is righteous in his commands, and he judges when humankind disobeys him. Genesis further reveals God as the One who makes his covenant with undeserving people (see Gn 15:1-6). The first promise of Christ is given in Genesis 3:15; the Spirit of God is mentioned in Genesis 1:2 and 6:3.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Genesis shows the glory of humanity by emphasizing that mankind alone of all creation was made in “the image of God” (Gn 1:27). On the other hand, Genesis shows the shame of humanity by recounting three incidents involving the whole race: the fall, the flood, and Babel. All three events portray humans as sinners in need of a Savior.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Genesis introduces critical truths about salvation developed in later parts of Scripture. In particular, the incident of the death of a ram instead of Isaac points to a substitutionary understanding of sacrifice. Further, the New Testament makes much of Abram as a pattern of salvation for all the redeemed: “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness” (Gn 15:6).

GENESIS TIMELINE

2200 BC

JOB 2100?–1900?

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

11th Dynasty of Egypt 2134–1991

Earliest pottery in South America **2200**

Construction of Ziggurat at Ur in Sumer **2100**

Abraham moves from Haran to Canaan. **2091**

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah **2085**

God's covenant with Abraham **2081?**

Ishmael born **2080?**

2000 BC

ISAAC 2066–1886

3rd Dynasty of Ur 2113–2006

Contraceptives are developed in Egypt. **2000**

Chinese create first zoo, Park of Intelligence. **2000**

Babylonians and Egyptians divide days into hours, minutes, and seconds. **2000**

Mesopotamians learn to solve quadratic equations. **2000**

Code of medical ethics, Mesopotamia **2000**

Courier systems of communication are developed in both China and Egypt. **2000**

1900 BC

JACOB 2006–1859

12th Dynasty of Egypt 1991–1786

Benjamin is born; Rachel dies. **1900**

Potter's wheel is introduced to Crete. **1900**

Use of the sail in the Aegean **1900**

Egyptian town of El Lahun gives evidence of town planning with streets at right angles. **1900**

Mesopotamian mathematicians discover what later came to be called the Pythagorean theorem. **1900**

1800 BC

JOSEPH 1915-1805

Joseph sold into Egypt **1898**

Khnumhotep II, an architect of Pharaoh Amenemhet II, develops encryption. **1900**

Musical theory, Mesopotamia **1800**

Multiplication tables, Mesopotamia **1800**

Babylonians develop catalog of stars and planets. **800**

Book of the Dead, Egypt **1800**

Horses are introduced in Egypt. **1800**

Wooden plows, Scandinavia **1800**

THE CREATION

1 In the beginning † God created the heavens and the earth. † †
2 Now the earth was formless and empty, † darkness covered the
surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the
surface of the waters. † 3 Then God said, "Let there be light," † and there was
light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the

darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” There was an evening, and there was a morning: one day.
6 Then God said, “Let there be an expanse between the waters, separating water from water.” † 7 So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above the expanse. † And it was so. 8 God called the expanse “sky.” † Evening came and then morning: the second day.
9 Then God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered into one place, † and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry land “earth,” and the gathering of the water he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds.” † And it was so. 12 The earth produced vegetation: seed-bearing plants according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 Evening came and then morning: the third day.
14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night. They will serve as signs † for seasons † and for days and years. † 15 They will be lights in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth.” And it was so. 16 God made the two great lights — the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night — as well as the stars. † 17 God placed them in the expanse of the sky to provide light on the earth, 18 to rule the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. † And God saw that it was good. 19 Evening came and then morning: the fourth day.
20 Then God said, “Let the water swarm with † living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” 21 So God created the large sea-creatures † and every living creature that moves and swarms in the water, † according to their kinds. He also created every winged creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them: “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.” † 23 Evening came and then morning: the fifth day.
24 Then God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to

their kinds." And it was so. [25] So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

MODELS FOR RELATING SCRIPTURE AND SCIENCE

Both the Scriptures and science have a story to tell. From the creeds and systematic theology that result from study of Scripture, we have the metanarrative (grand, all-encompassing story) of God as Creator who prepared and sustains a pleasant world for humans. Both that world and its inhabitants have come under a curse due to sin, the Bible teaches, but history will end in the triumphant return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The current metanarrative of science is the story of the Big Bang, drawing on evidence from physics that suggests that about 13.7 billion years ago space and time appeared instantaneously from nothing in an infinitely small and infinitely hot singularity. As the universe expanded and cooled, there appeared atoms, stars, galaxies, planets, life, and finally humans.

CONCORDISM AND NONCONCORDISM

The many approaches that biblical and scientific scholars have used to relate Scripture and science can be collected into two overarching approaches: concordism and nonconcordism.

Concordism is derived from the word "concord," which means harmony or agreement between persons, groups, or things. Scholars who favor concordism believe that exegesis (interpretation) of the Scriptures reveals a message that is in harmony with correct understandings of modern science. This means that any time the Bible addresses a science-related issue, it does so with full accuracy. Concordism is sometimes expressed in terms of the two books of God (nature and Scripture), which will be in harmony when both are properly interpreted.

The nonconcordist model does not see a harmony between the biblical testimony and the well-supported conclusions of science. Nonconcordists believe this lack of harmony is due to the fact that in Scripture God never sought to speak in terms of literally correct science but instead chose to speak in accordance with ancient non-scientific ways of describing nature. Nonconcordists who are not Christians would likely say that the Bible tried but failed to speak accurately about scientific topics. In the first approach, the Bible's failure to speak with scientific accuracy is taken as the expected result of God speaking in a comprehensible manner to people living prior to the scientific revolution. In the second approach, the Bible's failure to speak with scientific accuracy is seen as proof that the Bible does not have a divine author—a skeptical viewpoint that unreasonably expects God to speak in accordance with his full knowledge rather than using "baby talk" when speaking to finite, historically-situated humans.

VARIETIES OF CONCORDISM

There are many types of concordism, with a major dividing issue being the meaning of the Hebrew word for "day" (*yom*) in Genesis (1:3,8,13,19,23,31; 2:2). One group, known as creation science or young earth creationism (YEC), interprets *yom* in Genesis to mean a literal twenty-four-hour day. This stance is closely tied to "evening" and "morning" being referenced alongside each use of "day" in the opening creation

narrative. Advocates of the young-earth view attempt to find harmony between this exegesis and the narrative of science. The YEC approach requires major modification to the standard scientific understanding of the fields of astronomy, physics, biology, and geology. Australian-born Ken Ham promotes YEC through his organization, Answers in Genesis. One of their staple beliefs is that science must be submitted to a literal reading of Genesis.

Another group, known as creationism or old earth creationism (OEC), adopts a different understanding of the word *yom*, which leads them to conclude that in the Genesis creation accounts it refers to a period of time longer than twenty-four hours. According to the OEC approach, each creation day was a long period of time that involved many acts of creation by God. The non-literal use of "day" in Genesis 2:4, where it refers to the "day" in which God "made the earth and the heavens," is a key textual basis for claiming that "day" does not always refer to a twenty-four-hour period. The OEC approach sees more harmony with standard scientific understanding of the history of the universe than does the YEC approach, though it resists the naturalistic presuppositions that often creep into popular science theories. Canadian-born astronomer Hugh Ross is a leading promoter of OEC through his organization, Reasons to Believe. Staple beliefs of this and other OEC organizations include that science is not made futile by our fall into sin and that the Bible actually contains allusions or hints to scientific truths such as the Big Bang and an ancient earth.

VARIETIES OF NONCONCORDISM

The nonconcordist approach results from a different exegesis of the Scriptures, which states that the Bible's intention is not to teach science but that the Bible uses the language of science and natural history to aid our understanding of spiritual truths.

The *framework view* is a nonconcordist approach that proposes that the days of Genesis are literary devices used to convey important truths about purpose and ultimate origin. In this view, God's creative activity as recounted in Genesis is arranged in a topical, non-sequential manner and does not intend to make any claims about the age of the universe. The six creation days form a symmetrically arranged, topical account of creation, set in two triads with similar activities in each triad. God is seen creating three kingdoms in the first triad: Day One (Gn 1:3-5), light; Day Two (Gn 1:6-8), sea and sky; and Day Three (Gn 1:9-13), earth and plants. In the second triad, God populates these kingdoms with their rulers: Day Four (Gn 1:14-19), luminaries; Day Five (Gn 1:20-23), fish and birds; and Day Six (Gn 1:24-31), animals and mankind. Finally, Day Seven (Gn 2:1-3) is a Sabbath for the Creator King. Some see this triad arrangement in the seven-lamp menorah of the Jewish temple (Ex 25:31-40).

In summary, the framework view holds that the narrative of Genesis is not meant to provide a literal scientific account of God's creative methods, nor the time frame in which he created. Rather, it asserts that Genesis was intended to combat polytheism and pantheism. The message is that God is the Creator of all things; questions about how or when he created are seen as irrelevant. The late American theologian and OT scholar Meredith G. Kline was a proponent of the framework view.

Another nonconcordist approach is called *complementarity*, which states that science and theology complement each other to provide a complete picture of reality. Science and theology do not rival each other but, when properly interpreted, provide valid information about the same thing. Science may have a rational narrative for the history of the universe, for instance, but cannot explain why the laws underlying this narrative are fine-tuned for humans. The spiritual truth of the creation narrative in Genesis completes this picture of nature by providing a framework to understand the fine-tuning in terms of the creative and providential work of a loving God. English physicist and theologian John Polkinghorne promoted complementarity in his writings.

SUMMARY

Each of the above models of relating Scripture and science are held by devout Christians. Some scholars even hold views that draw on several of the models. This side of eternity, we will probably never acquire enough knowledge to know indisputably the best way to relate these two great ways of knowing (Scripture

and science). As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, but then face to face. Now [we] know in part, but then [we] will know fully, as [we are] fully known.”

JIMMY H. DAVIS

26 Then God said, “Let us † make man † in † our image, according to our likeness. † They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, † and the creatures that crawl † on the earth.” †

27 So God created man in his own image; he created him in † the image of God;
he created them male and female. †

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, † and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls † on the earth.” 29 God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, † 30 for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth — everything having the breath of life in it — I have given † every green plant for food.” † And it was so. 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. † Evening came and then morning: the sixth day.

1:1 Or *created the universe* **1:8** Or *“heavens.”* **1:14** Or *for the appointed times* **1:20** Lit *with swarms of* **1:21** Or *created sea monsters* **1:26** Or *human beings* ; Hb *'adam*, also in v. 27 **1:26** Or *as* **1:26** Syr reads *sky, and over every animal of the land* **1:26** Or *scurry* **1:27** Or *man as his own image; he created him as* **1:28** Or *and all scurrying animals* **1:30** *I have given* added for clarity

1:1 Ps 90:2; 102:12; Is 40:21; Jn 1:1-3; Eph 3:21 **1:1** Neh 9:6; Is 40:12-14; 43:7; Jr 10:12-16; Am 4:13; Rm 1:25; 1Co 11:9; Col 1:16; Rv 4:11 **1:2** Jr 4:23 **1:2** Jb 26:13; 33:4; Ps 33:6; 104:30 **1:3** 2Co 4:6 **1:6** Is 44:24; Jr 10:12 **1:7** Ps 148:4 **1:9** Jb 38:8-11; Ps 33:7; 136:6; Jr 5:22; 2Pt 3:5 **1:11** Ps 65:9-13; 104:14 **1:14** Jr 10:2 **1:14** Ps 104:19 **1:16** Dt 4:19; Ps 136:7-9; Is 40:26 **1:18** Jr 31:35 **1:21** Ps 104:25-28 **1:22** Gn 8:17; 9:1 **1:26** Gn 3:22; 11:7 **1:26** Gn 5:1,3; 9:6; Rm 8:29; 1Co 11:7; 15:49; 2Co 3:18; 4:4; Eph 4:24; Col 1:15; Jms 3:9 **1:26** Gn 9:2; Ps 8:6-8; Jms 3:7 **1:27** Gn 5:2; Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6 **1:28** Gn 9:1,7 **1:29** Gn 9:3; Ps 104:14-15; 136:25; 145:15-16 **1:30** Ps 147:9 **1:31** 1Tm 4:4

1:1 The Bible starts appropriately: **In the beginning.** The universe **(the heavens and the earth)** has not always existed. Rather, it came to be because an all-powerful God created it (see “The Role of Presuppositions in Knowledge,” *p. 1330*). This God is not an impersonal force or energy but a personal being who speaks (vv. 3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26), sees (vv. 4,10,12,18,21,25), and acts purposefully here in Genesis 1 and throughout Scripture (see “Monism, Pantheism, and Panentheism,” *p. 1335*). These actions contrast God with idols, which are mute, blind, and powerless (Is 44:9-20; Hab 2:18-19). Other ancient creation stories and related texts from the ancient Near East share some common elements with Genesis 1:

the mention of waters, stars, and sea creatures, as well as reference to divine acts of naming and separating. Nevertheless, the account here is distinct from these texts in several ways: (1) God exists outside of creation; he is not a member of the natural order; (2) God acts with absolute power and authority; there is no primeval battle between the gods as exists in many ancient Near Eastern accounts; (3) God makes everything "good" whereas in the ancient Near Eastern accounts, sin, struggle, and death exist from the beginning; (4) God acts alone as there is no other god; and (5) there is a mention of "the Spirit of God" in verse 2. See also "The Existence of God," *p. 849*.

Genesis is part of the larger work known as the Pentateuch (Gn through Dt). This work not only speaks of "the beginning" but also of things that will happen "in the last days" (lit Gn 49:1; Nm 24:14; Dt 4:30; 31:29). Although most of what the Pentateuch discusses takes place during the time period that spans creation (Gn 1) to Moses's death (Dt 34), its prophetic vision extends all the way to "the last days," which center on the coming of the Messiah (Gn 49:8-12; Nm 24:17). In another passage that looks forward to the end, the Pentateuch celebrates that "the LORD will reign forever and ever" (Ex 15:18). Thus, the vision of the Pentateuch is broad, encompassing things from start to end.

1:25-31 The climax of these seven days was the creation of man (see "What Is a Human?" *p.XXXIII*). Whereas "God saw that it was good" on the previous days, after creating man he saw that **it was very good.** Unlike the other living things that were made **according to their kinds**, humanity was created **in the image of God** (see "*Imago Dei* and the Distinctiveness of Humans," *p. 27*). This special status and dignity distinguishes humans from animals and the rest of creation. We were made to embody God's qualities and to do his work on the earth (see "A Biblical Basis for Science," *p. 601*; "The Bible and Creation Care," *p. 24*). In many ancient Near Eastern texts, humanity is viewed negatively as an afterthought or intended to serve the gods as slaves (see "Chief Purpose of Humanity," *p. 1464*). Human sexuality is designed by God, who **created them male and female** (see "Purpose and Parameters of Sexual Relations," *p. 1397*; "Is Gender a Choice?" *p. 17*).

2 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. †
2 On the seventh † day God had completed his work that he had done,
and he rested † on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. †
3 God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested † from all
his work of creation. † †

MAN AND WOMAN IN THE GARDEN

4 These are the records † of the heavens and the earth, concerning their creation. At the time † that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens,

CREATION: WHY AN OLD EARTH VIEW IS DEFENSIBLE

Along with old earth creationists (OEC), I believe the best correlation of biblical teaching and scientific evidence is that the earth is very old but that Adam was created relatively recently. I also hold that theistic evolution (or "evolutionary creation" [EC], a preferred term for some) imperils not only the doctrines of creation, human nature, and the fall into sin, but also our understanding of the Bible itself. Therefore, I believe both old and young earth creationists (YEC) should treat one another with respect and not divide over the age question. We should join together in resisting pressure from fellow evangelicals to incorporate evolution into creationism in particular and Christian theology in general. In what follows I outline why Christians need not be dogmatic about the age of the earth, and why OEC is certainly defensible.

1. LEADING YECS TODAY ACCEPT THE SAME SCIENTIFIC THEORIES AS DO OECS.

Most laypeople are unaware that today's leading YECs generally affirm the reliability of the major scientific theories undergirding belief in an old earth—but reinterpret them to fit within a recent creation. Examples include continental drift (implying one pre-flood supercontinent) and plate tectonics, Big Bang expansion of the universe, the reliability of the order of the fossilized strata, and even the general trustworthiness of radiometric dating. The events described by these theories are understood to have occurred just several thousand years ago, with the flood generally understood to have catastrophically accelerated these processes (e.g., Andrew Snelling, director of research at Answers in Genesis).

Though rejecting human evolution and universal common descent, many leading YECs rather surprisingly also hold that broad speciation has occurred (beyond the taxonomic ranks of species, genus, and even family). To fit short timescales, these speciation rates are understood to have exceeded dramatically what mainstream evolutionists accept. Ironically, OECs have been far more resistant to the notion of evolutionary change, typically opting instead for God's direct supernatural creation of new species over time.

2. LEADING YECS ALSO EMPLOY THE SAME APPROACH AS OECS IN RELATING BIBLICAL TEACHING TO SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES.

Though both creationist groups contend they interpret science in light of the Bible, their actual practice is more complicated. Ever since Galileo, conservative Christians have assumed the Bible is inerrant when rightly interpreted and never conflicts with truth (including scientific). Thus, scientific theories appearing to contradict traditional biblical interpretations are rejected. If over time evidence mounts supporting the scientific theory, Christians have typically explored ways in which the theory might partially be true in relation to the Bible. One example is how Christian astronomers during Galileo's day suggested all the planets orbited the sun, but the sun orbited the earth—thus retaining their biblical interpretation of a non-moving, earth-centered universe. YEC examples include interpreting Genesis 1 to suggest the earth's land was originally created as one supercontinent. If historically a scientific theory is eventually believed to be confirmed (the trickiest part!), Christians have typically amended their original biblical interpretation. One example is how after considerable resistance to believe strange fossil discoveries came from extinct animals, some YECs reinterpreted the book of Job to refer to dinosaurs living with humans.

Happily, only twice have scientific theory and biblical interpretation collided in a major way such that the entire church was affected for more than a century. The first was the struggle over Copernican astronomy, whether the Bible really taught a stationary earth at the center of the universe. The church eventually became convinced it had misread numerous passages (e.g., Jos 10:12-13), as if they were written in scientific rather than everyday language. The second science-theology conflict has been over Darwinism. OECs and YECs alike continue to reject human evolution and universal common descent, believing them irreconcilable with biblical teaching. Evolutionary creationists, on the other hand, fully accept Darwinism and thereby reinterpret major Christian doctrines—often to include rejection of biblical inerrancy.

3. OECS CONSTITUTED THE FIRST LINE OF RESISTANCE TO DARWINISM IN ITS FIRST CENTURY.

The reason was simple: most Bible-believing Christians were OECs. It's true that the majority Christian position was YEC prior to the nineteenth century, but in those days most did not believe in dinosaurs. The age of the earth had not been seriously debated because, just as during the time of Galileo, the church had simply not faced growing evidence contrary to the tradition. But unlike Copernicanism or Darwinism, the church overwhelmingly adopted OEC without major controversy. Thus, at the onset of the Darwinian controversy, the vast majority of anti-evolutionists for the next century were OECs. These included the Southern Baptists' first seminary professors, the fundamentalists, and the anti-evolutionists at the Scopes Trial. The remarkable rise to dominance of YEC occurred in the second half of the twentieth century.

4. YECS SHARE NO MONOLITHIC AGREEMENT ON THE RELEVANT BIBLE AND SCIENCE ISSUES.

Of course, OECs don't either, but the perception sometimes is that YEC is the clear teaching of the Bible—if people would just accept it. Several examples must suffice here. For centuries biblical interpreters had noted that the Genesis creation days are structured such that they begin with "Then God said" and end with "and there was evening and morning, day *x*." Yet before the first creation day (Gn 1:3), the heavens and the earth are already created (vv. 1-2). Thus, even some YECs today hold to an ancient universe. Also long noted is that twenty-four hour days depend on the earth's axial rotation as it orbits the sun. But the "time" bearers, including the sun, are not created until day four (Gn 1:14-19). How, then, can one definitively assert the "days" were twenty-four hours in length? Some YECs, therefore, taught the sun was created on day one but was invisible until day four. YECs also have not agreed ever since discovery of fossilized strata which parts of the geologic column were caused by the flood. And some YECs then and more recently (Henry M. Morris) assumed dinosaurs were intentionally left off the ark to die.

5. HAPPILY, MOST YECS DO NOT PROMOTE THE IDEA THAT OEC IS HERETICAL.

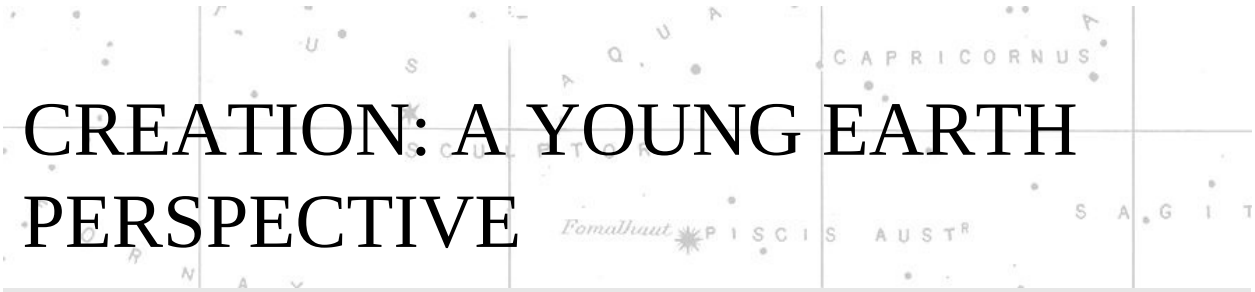
Some YEC ministries suggest OEC is deeply evil, but most YECs do not. Unfortunately, some OECs ridicule or suggest YEC should be abandoned. But OECs and YECs should humbly recognize the complexity of the issues. Both sides face interpretive difficulties. For example, even if Christ died to save humans and not animals (Rm 5:12-21), OECs should respectfully appreciate how the notion of pre-fall animal death troubles many YECs. And YECs who adopt widespread speciation in response to science should stop referring to OECs as evolutionists.

OECs and YECs would be much wiser to consider their shared convictions about an inerrant Bible, God's supernatural creation of Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the human race, the historic fall of Adam, and much more. OECs and YECs would do well to redirect energies from fighting one another to resisting the rapidly growing influence of EC among evangelicals. No doubt ECs may be warm-hearted followers of Christ and deserve to be treated with respect, but their aggressive promotion of certain doctrines are matters of deep concern. If acceptance of Darwinism entails believing human minds, bodies, morals, and even belief in God resulted from our descent from lower life forms, then OECs and YECs must kindly draw a line.

THEODORE J. CABAL

5 no shrub of the field † had yet grown on the land, † and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not made it rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground. 6 But mist would come up from the earth and water all the ground. 7 Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from

the ground † and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, † and the man became a living being. †
8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, † and there he placed the man he had formed. 9 The LORD God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, † as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. †
10 A river went † out from Eden to water the garden. From there it divided and became the source of four rivers. † 11 The name of the first is Pishon, which flows through the entire land of Havilah, † † where there is gold. 12 Gold from that land is pure; † bdellium † and onyx † are also there. 13 The name of the second river is Gihon, which flows through the entire land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river is Tigris, † which runs east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates. †
15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, † 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." †



CREATION: A YOUNG EARTH PERSPECTIVE

The Young Earth approach to Genesis 1–11 derives its position from the belief that the created universe is significantly younger than the 13.5 billion years postulated by conventional geology and astronomy. It was the traditional view held by Jews and Christians until the nineteenth century and asserts that the earth and universe are no older than ten thousand years. It holds that Adam and Eve were the first humans, specially created by God on the sixth day of the earth's existence and that Scripture contains an accurate lineage from them to Christ.

This view agrees with most other evangelical approaches in the basic theological foundation provided by Genesis 1–11. The differences are in the interpretation of certain parts of the biblical text related to the mechanism and timing of the creation. In other words, the Young Earth model generally agrees with most other evangelical approaches on the "Who?" and "Why?" of creation but takes different positions on the

questions of “How?” and “When?”

The most basic question is this: Could God have created the universe in six, twenty-four-hour days? The answer is, of course, yes. The task is to determine how the biblical account of creation can support this assumption and explain the numerous supposed conflicts with the naturalistic paradigm.

THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT

A straightforward reading of the biblical text describes the creation of the universe by God occurring over six days followed by a seventh day set aside for rest (Gn 1:1–2:3; Ex 20:11). God declared that all his creation was “good” and that with the addition of humanity, it was “very good” (Gn 1:10,12,18,21,25,31).

Genesis depicts God uniquely creating a man and a woman, the first humans, in his own image and likeness (Gn 1:26-27). They were innocent of sin until they willfully rejected God’s direct instructions (Gn 3:1-19). This event was the fall of mankind, and it sent shock waves throughout all creation (Gn 3:14-19; Rm 8:20-21). The remainder of the Bible shows God’s progressive revealing of his character and will in his plan to restore his relationship with a sinful humanity and to undo the consequences of sin throughout his creation, the culmination of which occurs in Revelation 21 and 22.

THE YOUNG EARTH APPROACH

This approach recognizes that both the biblical text and the data of science can instructively inform each other. Nevertheless, it gives priority to a straightforward reading of the biblical text. It views Genesis 1–11 as simple history, not allegory, poetry, or saga. The Young Earth position sets itself apart from other approaches in three major areas: biblical history, theological framework, and scientific interpretation.

BIBLICAL HISTORY

First, while acknowledging some similarities with the creation myth genre, the Young Earth perspective states that the biblical text nowhere indicates that it is anything but history. The seamless historical narrative structure of Genesis as a whole speaks for itself.

Second, the “days” of creation are understood as literal days with no need to postulate that they represent long periods of time or are allegorical progressive periods. The Hebrew term for “day” (*yom*) is characteristically used to describe a twenty-four-hour day, particularly when it is enumerated as in Genesis 1. In the biblical account, the creation days are defined as comprising a cycle of dark and light or “evening and morning” (Gn 1:3-5). Further, the six literal days of creation are presented as the model for the human week of work (Ex 20:10-12). The seven-day week has no astronomical basis as do the day, the month, and the year: the week was established by God as a model for humans to follow.

Third, the Young Earth approach holds that Adam and Eve are historical individuals and not literary representatives of an advanced species of hominids. Jesus describes Adam and Eve as historical figures being created at the “beginning,” and not millions of years after Genesis 1:1 (Mt 19:4; Mk 10:6). Adam is included as one of the historical ancestors of Jesus in his genealogy as recorded by Luke (3:37). Eve is referenced by the apostle Paul as being created after Adam (1Tm 2:13). Paul summarizes God’s work at creation: “From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live” (Ac 17:26). Paul also draws a crucial parallel between the sin of one man (Adam), resulting in universal death, and the obedience of one man (Jesus, the “second” Adam), bringing the promise of eternal life to all (Rm 5:12-15; 1Co 15:21,45).

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Genesis 1–11 was inspired by God to provide the theological framework for the rest of the Bible as well as all human history. The creation story clearly emphasizes the sovereignty of God as Creator, Sustainer, and Overseer of the universe. The elements of the created world form the foundation for human society and family, human stewardship of God’s creation, and the value of work and rest in the human regular timetable. The origin of sin and death is described as direct rebellion against God while God’s intention and

plan to intervene and redeem humanity is introduced (Gn 3:15).

The timing and relationship of these events are important emphases in the biblical account. The Young Earth approach explains why physical death is a defining feature of the world. The straightforward reading of the text provides a chronological basis for the effects of the first sin on humanity and creation. Death was the result of sin (Gn 3:15-17; Rm 5:12). After the fall, all creation was subjected to a downward spiral of rust, rot, decay, and death. God's perfect creation was no longer the land of the living but became the land of the dying. This makes sense if, as Jesus says, the creation of Adam and Eve occurred "in the beginning" (Mt 19:4) and their son Abel's death at "the foundation of the world" (Lk 11:50-51). If the fall was not an event soon after the creation, how could the deaths of living things occur for millions of years before sin entered?

SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION

While the Young Earth approach accepts the priority of the biblical text in understanding creation, it is not anti-science. Scientific study of the past is understood to be more akin to forensic science that seeks the most reasonable interpretation of existing data. Scientists who hold to a Young Earth view are conducting research to determine the plausibility of their position. They are exploring scientific data that call into question the prevailing view of an ancient universe (e.g., the existence of short-period comets, the large amount of interplanetary dust, the small number of supernova, rotational rates of spiral galaxies) and an ancient earth (discordant radioactive dates of ancient rocks).

Noah's flood (Gn 6–9) was described by Jesus (Mt 24:37-39) and by Peter (1Pt 3:20; 2Pt 3:5-6) as a historical event. Young Earth scientists are demonstrating that the vast, thick layers of marine rocks and fossils which blanket every continent are best understood as the result of catastrophic formation in a short period of time, not over millions of years. For example, it is now known that unless an organism is buried quickly (even if it contains hard tissues), it has little if any chance of becoming fossilized. Fossils are a testimony to the rapid formation of rocks, not to the necessity of millions of years. Charles Darwin believed fossils would eventually prove his theory of evolution, but they have proven its most serious challenge because of the sudden appearance of fully formed organisms deep in the fossil record and the lack of predicted intermediate forms between fossil organisms. The Young Earth approach does not just take a critical approach to conventional theories; it works to demonstrate that scientific data is best understood within the literal framework of Genesis.

Understanding the origin of the universe and the earth's biology and geology is like interpreting the clues of a crime scene. Who did it? When and how did it happen? As in every mystery story, a number of theories seem to interpret the evidence correctly. Which one is true? The appearance of an eyewitness often helps provide a key that leads to the answer. The Young Earth approach claims that a straightforward reading of God's eyewitness testimony to creation provides the clearest starting point for understanding the foundational truths he is revealing to us.

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18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a
helper corresponding † to him." 19 The LORD God formed out of the ground
every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see
what he would call it. † And whatever the man called a living creature, that was
its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and
to every wild animal; but for the man † no helper was found corresponding to

him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, † and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the LORD God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. † 23 And the man said:

This one, at last, is bone of my bone
and flesh of my flesh;
this one will be called “woman,”
for she was taken from man. †

24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. † 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

2:2 Sam, LXX, Syr read *sixth* **2:2** Or *ceased*, also in v. 3 **2:3** Lit *work that God created to make* **2:4** Lit *creation on the day* **2:5** Or *earth* **2:10** Or *goes* **2:10** Lit *became four heads* **2:11** Or *of the Havilah* **2:12** Lit *good* **2:12** A yellowish, transparent gum resin **2:12** Identity of this precious stone uncertain **2:20** Or *for Adam*

2:1 Neh 9:6; Ps 33:6; Is 34:4; 45:12 **2:2** Ex 20:8-11; 31:17; Dt 5:12-14; Heb 4:4 **2:3** Ex 31:17 **2:3** Ex 20:11; 31:17; Ps 121:2 **2:4** Gn 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10,27; 25:12,19; 36:1,9; 37:2 **2:5** Gn 1:11-12 **2:7** Gn 3:19,23; 18:27; Ps 103:14; Ec 12:7; 1Co 15:47 **2:7** Gn 7:22; Jb 33:4; Is 2:22 **2:7** 1Co 15:45 **2:8** Gn 13:10; Is 51:3; Ezk 28:13; 31:8; Jl 2:3 **2:9** Gn 3:22; Rv 2:7; 22:2,14 **2:9** Pr 3:18 **2:11** Gn 10:7,29; 25:18; 1Sm 15:7 **2:14** Dn 10:4 **2:14** Gn 15:18 **2:16** Gn 3:1-2 **2:17** Gn 3:5; Dt 30:15,19-20; Rm 6:23; 1Tm 5:6; Jms 1:15 **2:18** Pr 31:11-12; 1Co 11:9; 1Tm 2:13 **2:19** Ps 8:6 **2:21** Gn 15:12 **2:22** 1Co 11:8,12 **2:23** Eph 5:28-30 **2:24** Mal 2:15; Mt 19:5; Mk 10:7-8; 1Co 6:16; Eph 5:31

2:24 That this is a foundational statement on monogamous marriage between one man and one woman can be seen in two ways. First, Jesus quotes this passage in Matthew 19:5 when the Pharisees, referencing Deuteronomy 24:1-4, ask about divorce. Jesus’s response is that Deuteronomy 24 *permitted* divorce because of the hardness of hearts (Mt 19:8), but lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage was designed by God in the beginning. Jesus also clearly implies here that this design has not changed. Furthermore, if Genesis 1–2 contain the ideal for marriage, then instances of polygamy found later in the OT are also deviations from the original ideal. Second, the context and language of Genesis 2:24 suggest that it has broader application than merely to Adam and Eve. After all, Adam did not leave **his father and mother**, for he had neither. Therefore, the author of the Pentateuch, Moses, wrote this verse about marriage in general. In marriage, the man and woman become **one flesh**, a union stronger than blood or family ties. See also “Engaging LGBT Advocates,” *p. 1392*; “A Biblical View of Marriage,” *p. 1449*.

THE TEMPTATION AND THE FALL

3 Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You can’t eat from any tree in the garden’? ” †

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit from the trees in the
garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said,
‘You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.’ ” †
4 “No! You will not die,” the serpent said to the woman. † 5 “In fact, God
knows that when † you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like
God, † knowing good and evil.” 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for
food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So
she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was
with her, and he ate it. † 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they
knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for
themselves.

SIN’S CONSEQUENCES

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the
garden at the time of the evening breeze, † and they hid from the LORD God
among the trees of the garden. † 9 So the LORD God called out to the man and
said to him, “Where are you? ”
10 And he said, “I heard you † in the garden, and I was afraid because I was
naked, so I hid.”
11 Then he asked, “Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat from the
tree that I commanded you not to eat from? ”
12 The man replied, † “The woman you gave to be with me — she gave me
some fruit from the tree, and I ate.”
13 So the LORD God asked the woman, “What is this you have done? ”
And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” †
14 So the LORD God said to the serpent:

Because you have done this,
you are cursed more than any livestock
and more than any wild animal.
You will move on your belly
and eat dust all the days of your life. †
15 I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring
and her offspring.

He will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel. †

16 He said to the woman:

I will intensify your labor pains;
you will bear children with painful effort. †
Your desire † will be for your husband, yet he will rule over you.

17 And he said to the man, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘Do not eat from it’:

FALL AND REDEMPTION

The fall of humanity refers to the first act of human disobedience, enacted by Adam and Eve and recorded in Genesis 3. Prior to their rebellion our first parents had unbroken fellowship with God, unparalleled intimacy with each other, and undisturbed enjoyment in their Edenic environment. There has never been a time such as theirs when humans exercised biblical dominion over creation, complemented each other so completely, and joyously lived every moment under the rule of God. But there will be.

The Bible envisions a day when these broken relationships will be forever restored. God’s people will inherit a new earth that bears abundant food apart from the sweat of their brows and without the threat of thorns (Rv 22:3). They will never feel pain or cause others to experience hurt of any kind as their tears are eternally wiped away (21:4). Death will no longer haunt the living. Gentle lambs will rest side by side with formerly carnivorous wolves (Is 11:6). Best of all, God will dwell with his people (Rv 22:3). Nothing unclean will be allowed to enter the new creation. There will be no trees that lure or serpents that trick. Worship, not worry, will characterize the family of God in a world without end.

THE FALL AND SIN

The Christian worldview is premised on these two realities: currently God’s good world is spoiled by human sin (fall), but sinful humans are made fit to enjoy God forever through placing faith in Jesus Christ (redemption).

Critics of the Christian worldview tend to dismiss the idea of the fall by minimizing the reality of human sinfulness. They likewise set aside the doctrine of redemption by maximizing their expectations of human progress. Sin is thus reduced to social constructs and self-help becomes the means of salvation. In one sense the denial of sin is another manifestation of sin. Just as Adam and Eve tried to hide their wrongs from the God who sees all things (Gn 3:8), humans habitually maintain their innocence in spite of the biblical claim to the contrary (Rm 3:23).

There is another reason why people reject the biblical teaching about the fall. It is because the world continues to work—sort of. After the fall, Adam and Eve’s oldest son proved remarkably adept at navigating through life even though he was guilty of murdering his own brother (Gn 4:8). Cain married a woman, and loved his son (Gn 4:17). The curse of the ground notwithstanding, Cain became a farmer and then a city builder (4:3,17). Cain’s descendants were known for their creative prowess, including

advancements in shepherding livestock, playing musical instruments, and developing sturdy weaponry (4:20-22). Put simply, even fallen people in a fallen world manage to contribute to human progress, by the grace of God.

On the other hand, even morally upright people manage to confirm the human predicament. Noah is such a man who, in the midst of a moral sewer, managed to find favor in God's eyes (Gn 6:8). His craftsmanship is demonstrated through his ability to build an ark that withstood the most destructive storm ever. His attention to detail spared not only his life but also that of his family and the entire animal kingdom (6:14-22). Nevertheless, in spite of God's grace toward him, Noah later became drunk and passed out naked in his tent (9:20-21). When he awoke, he cursed generations yet to be born (9:24). This is hardly the behavior one would expect from the man through whom God rescued the world, but Noah's life confirms that "there is no one righteous, not even one" (Rm 3:10).

The doctrine of the fall asserts that while most of us are not as bad as we could be, none of us is as good as we should be either. Humans retain the image of God, which accounts for any semblance of goodness and enables progress (Gn 1:26-27; 9:6). Nevertheless, life is not as it should be in this fallen world.

Theologians have differed over the means by which Adam's sin has been passed down to every person, but the reality of death provides sufficient confirmation that no one is exempt (Rm 5:12). Though Charles Manson and Billy Graham took completely different paths with their lives, both are subject to the death sentence—as are you and me. The Bible thus describes our common plight: we are "dead" in our "trespasses and sins" and we are "by nature children under wrath" (Eph 2:1,3).

REDEMPTION AS REVERSAL

Redemption is the reversal of the fall. In part, this reversal means that those who were spiritually dead are made alive (Eph 2:4), and those who were children of wrath are now children of God (1Jn 3:1).

Though the Bible recognizes that fallen people may make positive contributions to the world as a whole, it is also clear that no one can contribute anything positive to their own redemption (Rm 3:23-28). The only person qualified to undo the effects of the fall is Jesus Christ who, as the eternal Son of God incarnate through the Virgin Mary, was exempted from inheriting Adam's sin. This is not to say that he was not tempted as he lived in a fallen world and as he experienced genuine struggles that all humans face (Heb 2:14-18). He was tempted as we are, but never sinned (2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 1Pt 2:22). Thus, he alone is the One who can make sinful humans fit to worship a holy God (Ac 4:12). Even the death of Jesus was not the result of any sin he committed but was, rather, the most gracious act of love ever displayed: he took upon himself the sins of the world so that all who believe in him will be saved (Rm 5:6-11).

The doctrine of redemption extends even beyond the matter of individual salvation. During his lifetime, Jesus provided abundant proof of his ability to completely restore a fallen world. He demonstrated his lordship over heaven when he calmed the storms on the sea (Mk 4:35-41); he demonstrated his lordship over hell when he exorcised demons from a troubled man (5:1-20); he demonstrated his lordship over life when he healed a woman of her incurable disease (5:24-34); and he demonstrated his lordship over death when he raised a young girl from the dead (5:35-43). With these and countless other miracles (Jn 20:30-31; 21:25), Jesus provided ample reason for us to conclude that this troubled world is not our home. He himself will, however, make all things new (Rv 21:5).

The final book of the Bible is therefore a fitting end to the story of the fall with its triumphant declaration of full redemption: "Then he showed me the river of the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree are for healing the nations, and there will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. Night will be no more; people will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, and they will reign forever and ever" (Rv 22:1-5).

FALL AND REDEMPTION IN THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

The Christian worldview thus includes both fall and redemption. To exclude the former is to deny the reality of sin; to exclude the latter is to deny the ultimate reality of Christ's work.

Living in a fallen world means that Christians will experience trials and tribulations, and they will continue to struggle with their own temptations and sin. We are forgiven, but God is not finished with us yet (Php 1:6). Consequently, longing for a better world, even a perfect world, is not a form of escapism. Rather, it is the Christian's rightful anticipation of a promise made by the One who justly pronounced a curse on this world (Gn 3; Rm 8:20-22) and then lovingly took that curse upon himself in order to redeem people for his glory.

ANTHONY L. CHUTE

The ground is cursed because of you. †
You will eat from it by means of painful labor †
all the days of your life.
18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants
of the field. †
19 You will eat bread † by the sweat of your brow until you return
to the ground, †
since you were taken from it.
For you are dust,
and you will return to dust."

20 The man named his wife Eve † because she was the mother of all the living.
21 The LORD God made clothing from skins for the man and his wife, and he clothed them.
22 The LORD God said, "Since the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil, he must not reach out, take from the tree of life, eat, and live forever." † 23 So the LORD God sent him away from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove the man out and stationed the cherubim and the flaming, whirling sword east of the garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life. †

3:5 Lit *on the day* **3:5** Or *gods*, or *divine beings* **3:8** Lit *at the wind of the day* **3:10** Lit *the sound of you* **3:17** Lit *it through pain* **3:19** Or *food* **3:20** Lit *Living*, or *Life*
3:1 Mt 10:16; 2Co 11:3; Rv 12:9; 20:2 **3:3** Gn 2:17 **3:4** Jn 8:44 **3:6** 1Tm 2:14; Jms 1:14-15; 1Jn 2:16 **3:8** Jb 34:22-23 **3:12** Jb 31:33; Pr 28:13 **3:13** Rm 7:11; 2Co 11:3; 1Tm 2:14 **3:14** Is 65:25; Mc 7:17 **3:15** Heb 2:14; 1Jn 3:8 **3:16** Jn 16:21; 1Tm 2:15 **3:16** Gn 4:7 **3:17** Gn 5:29; Rm 8:20-22; Heb 6:8 **3:18** Gn 2:5 **3:19** Ps 90:3; 104:29; Ec 12:7 **3:22** Gn 2:9; Rv 2:7 **3:24** Ex 25:18-22; Ps 104:4; Ezk 10:1-20; Heb 1:7

3:6-7 Adam and Eve's sin had disastrous consequences. Just as God had said (2:17), their eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil resulted in death ("you are dust, and you will return to dust," 3:19).

This sin also subjected their descendants, the entire human race, to death (Rm 5:12; 1Co 15:22). Moreover, Adam and Eve's relationship with God and with one another became distorted. When they heard God walking in the garden, they hid from him because they were afraid (3:8-10). Their intimacy with one another was also ruined, as shown by the **coverings** they made for themselves (v. 7). Additionally, their charge to "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it" (1:28) became much more difficult and **painful** to fulfill (3:16-19). Creation has been plagued with sin, death, and distorted relationships ever since.

3:15 The human race has hope because of God's promise of an **offspring** of the woman who will defeat the serpent, the devil. Although the Hebrew word translated offspring (*zera'*) can be used for either an individual or for a group, the reference to this one with the singular pronoun **he** suggests that an individual descendant of Eve is intended here. This offspring will deal a fatal blow to the serpent **(He will strike your head**; see "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*), though he also will be wounded by it **(you will strike his heel).**

CAIN MURDERS ABEL

4 The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave
birth to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's
help." † 2 She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a
shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. 3 In the course of time Cain
presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD. † 4 And Abel
also presented an offering — some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat
portions. † The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, † 5 but he did not
have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked
despondent. †

6 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you furious? † And why do you look
despondent? † 7 If you do what is right, won't you be accepted? But if you do
not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you
must rule over it." †

8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." † And while they
were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. †

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel? "
"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's guardian? "

10 Then he said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me
from the ground! † 11 So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that
opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. † 12 If you
work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless
wanderer on the earth." †

13 But Cain answered the LORD, “My punishment † is too great to bear! 14 Since you are banishing me today from the face of the earth, and I must hide from your presence and become a restless wanderer on the earth, whoever finds me will kill me.” †

15 Then the LORD replied to him, “In that case, † whoever kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” † And he placed a mark † on Cain so that whoever found him would not kill him. 16 Then Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

THE LINE OF CAIN

17 Cain was intimate with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch. Then Cain became the builder of a city, and he named the city Enoch after his son. 18 Irad was born to Enoch, Irad fathered Mehujael, Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. 19 Lamech took two wives for himself, one named Adah and the other named Zillah. 20 Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of the nomadic herdsmen. † 21 His brother was named Jubal; he was the father of all who play the lyre and the flute. 22 Zillah bore Tubal-cain, who made all kinds of bronze and iron tools. Tubal-cain’s sister was Naamah.
23 Lamech said to his wives:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
wives of Lamech, pay attention to my words.
For I killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.
24 If Cain is to be avenged seven times over, then for Lamech it will be seventy-seven times!

25 Adam was intimate with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, for she said, “God has given † me another child † in place of Abel, since Cain killed him.” 26 A son was born to Seth † also, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD. †

4:1 Lit *the Lord* **4:5** Lit *and his face fell* **4:6** Lit *why has your face fallen* **4:8** Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg; MT omits *“Let’s go out to the field.”* **4:11** Lit *blood from your hand* **4:13** Or *sin* **4:15** LXX, Syr, Vg read *“Not so!”* **4:15** Or *suffer severely* **4:20** Lit *the dweller of tent and livestock* **4:25** The Hb word for *given* sounds like the name “Seth.” **4:25** Lit *seed*
4:3 Ex 23:19; 34:26; Neh 10:35 **4:4** Ex 13:12; Nm 18:17; Pr 3:9 **4:4** Heb 11:4 **4:6** Jnh 4:4 **4:7** Gn 3:16 **4:8**

Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1Jn 3:12-15; Jd 11 **4:10** Nm 35:33; Dt 21:1-9; Heb 12:24; Rv 6:9-10 **4:12** Dt 28:16-18; Is 26:21 **4:14** Nm 35:26-27 **4:15** Ex 9:4; Ezk 9:4,6; Rv 13:16-17 **4:26** Lk 3:38 **4:26** Gn 12:8; 26:25; 1Kg 18:24; Ps 116:17; Jl 2:32; Zph 3:9; 1Co 1:2

4:2-5 Laws relating to sacrifice, such as would be given to Israel later (see Lv 1–7), did not yet exist. What seems to have distinguished Abel's offering from Cain's was that Abel gave his best **(the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions)**, whereas Cain only gave **some of the land's produce**—not the firstfruits (see Ex 23:16,19). God did not merely observe the offering itself but also the person giving it **(The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering . . . not . . . for Cain and his**; see also 1Sm 16:7; Heb 11:4). It is unlikely that Cain's offering was rejected merely because it was not an animal sacrifice, since some offerings mandated later were not animals either (see the grain offering in Lv 2).

4:6-10,23-24 Through Cain's murder of his brother, **sin** was manifested in shocking fashion. Clearly sin was not limited to Adam and Eve but had infected their offspring as well. Violence was also characteristic of Cain's descendant, **Lamech**, who killed a man in retaliation and threatened vengeance on any who would trouble him.

THE LINE OF SETH

5 This is the document containing the family † records † of Adam. † On the day that God created man, † he made him in the likeness of God; 2 he created them male and female. When they were created, he blessed them and called them mankind. †

3 Adam was 130 years old when he fathered a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth. 4 Adam lived 800 years after he fathered Seth, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 5 So Adam's life lasted 930 years; then he died.

6 Seth was 105 years old when he fathered Enosh. 7 Seth lived 807 years after he fathered Enosh, and he fathered other sons and daughters.

BIRTH CONTROL AND PROCREATION TECHNOLOGY

Artificial birth control and reproductive technologies have emerged out of the modern world's ability to control significant dimensions of human life. In terms of a biblical assessment, the first thing we must note is that the Bible nowhere directly addresses these issues.

When Scripture does not directly speak to contemporary ethical issues, we must rely on biblical worldview assumptions that are applicable to the issues. In the case of birth control and reproductive technologies we face three major worldview issues to which the Bible does speak: the meaning and purpose

of sex, the meaning of children and parenting, and the value of human life. From these larger contours of biblical teaching we are able to address the specific matters in view.

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW ASSUMPTIONS

Both birth control and reproductive technologies push us to explore the meaning and purpose of sex. From Scripture it is clear that sex is a good gift of our Maker. After God created humans, male and female, in his image and gave to them the command to "be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth" (Gn 1:28), he looked at all that he had made, "And it was very good" (Gn 1:31). This good gift was given to humans for very specific purposes, and sex is to be experienced in accordance with these.

First, sex consummates a marriage. "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gn 2:24). The "one flesh" relationship refers to sexual union, and it completes the other dimensions that make a marriage: change of status recognized by the community and state, and a commitment or covenant made before God and people.

Second, sex is a good gift of God for procreation. It leads to the bringing of children into the world, for "God created man in his own image . . . he created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth'" (Gn 1:27-28).

Third, sex is an expression of love as evidenced in the Song of Songs (2:3-6; 8:6-7) and in Paul's admonition to spouses to love as Christ loved the church (Eph 5:25-31).

Fourth, God ordained sex as a means of pleasure, for pleasure is not the invention of the devil, but is in its rightful place a wonderful gift of our Maker (Sg 4:10-14; Pr 5:18-19; Gn 26:8). It points to the ultimate pleasure that comes from being united to God through Christ. These four purposes of sex are designed by God to be held together and can only come together in the context of a marriage covenant between a man and a woman.

Birth control and reproductive technologies also raise questions about the meaning of children and parenting. There is a tendency in our fallen state, and particularly in contemporary culture, to view children as a means to our own satisfaction. Thus, how we "produce" them and for what purposes is deemed to lie in our own hands. But Scripture is clear that children are not a means to an end to fulfill parental aspirations and designs. We do not own our children as objects; rather, we are stewards to nurture their holistic development, for "Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD, offspring, a reward" (Ps 127:3).

A final issue raised by birth control and reproductive technologies is the value of human life, including life in the womb. Human life from conception to death has value, dignity, and sacredness because we are made in the image of God. We are thus called to preserve, not destroy it (Gn 9:6), and to maintain human dignity even through our words (Jms 3:9). Thus, we are never to use methods of preventing procreation or methods of conceiving human life that destroy it or impinge on its dignity and sacredness.

These three biblical teachings—the meaning and purposes of sex, the meaning of children and parenting, and the value of human life—are essential ingredients of a biblical worldview. And while God's Word does not directly address the issues of birth control and reproductive technologies, there is much ethical guidance from these worldview commitments.

APPLICATION TO BIRTH CONTROL

The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally rejected all forms of artificial birth control on the grounds that procreation is the primary purpose of sex and that every sexual act must be oriented toward this end. While it is true that procreation is one of the purposes of sex, we've noted that Scripture actually teaches four main purposes. Nevertheless, every sexual act should be in the context of procreation, meaning between a married couple that is able and willing to bear the potential fruit that can come from intercourse. But, the fact that sex is for more than procreation at least opens the possibility for contraception—as long as it is in the context of honoring life.

A biblical grounding for artificial birth control also comes from the fact that the procreative mandate of Genesis 1:28 is given in the context of the larger cultural mandate. This cultural mandate calls for humans

to steward and work with God's good creation. Thus, we are called to "Fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth" (Gn 1:28). This cultural mandate calls for taking care of the garden (Gn 2:15) and naming the animals (Gn 2:19-20). Thus, humans have a task of stewarding life in God's good creation, and this entails working with nature, not merely submitting to it. God is ultimately in control of the natural world, including procreation, but he grants to us a stewardship over the created world that can legitimately include birth control.

Any utilization of birth control methods must meet the criteria of the biblical worldview we earlier noted. It must be in the context of the major purposes of sex, including recognition that sex is inherently procreative. Thus, there must be a readiness to joyfully accept the gift of new life should it occur. Any methods that destroy human life or demean the sanctity of human life must be rejected. Hence, abortion is not an acceptable means of birth control.

APPLICATION TO REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

In recent decades various new means of conception have been developed and are widely used. These have emerged with the increase of infertility, as somewhere between 10 to 16 percent of all couples are unable to or have great difficulty in conceiving. They also reflect the modern world's attempt to control and design life according to human desires. The technologies include artificial insemination (or gamete donation, which can include female egg donations), in vitro fertilization, surrogacy, and potentially cloning.

Artificial insemination by a husband is merely aiding the bringing together of sperm and egg of husband and wife in a one-flesh union. But artificial insemination by a donor and egg donation separates procreation from that one flesh bond. The offspring is a result of the gametes of two people who are not joined together in marriage meeting. It not only separates what God has joined together (lovemaking and baby making), but also creates anonymous biological parenthood that can cause harm to the child.

In vitro fertilization brings together the sperm and egg in a petri dish before the resulting embryo is then placed into the cervix of a woman. Generally multiple embryos are formed in this process, with several implanted, some potentially frozen for later use, and others discarded. Such a process destroys human embryonic life and is contrary to the biblical worldview. Couples can avoid this by asking the fertility clinic to fertilize only a few and then utilize all the embryos. This may lessen the chances of pregnancy, but such choices are part of faithfulness to God's designs.

In vitro fertilization also opens up another potential: so-called designer babies whereby it is meant that one might choose the sex of the child, potential characteristics of the child, or may even form a new child for the sake of saving an existing child through blood transfusion or tissue transplant. Producing designer babies, even for what seems a good and desirable end, goes contrary to the nature of parenting and children. It undermines the dignity of human life.

Surrogacy is having children for another, usually bringing together the gametes of two people who are not married to each other. Cloning, not yet achieved in humans, is an asexual form of reproduction. It would be accomplished by removing the nucleus from a female ovum and then inserting a new nucleus into the ovum, thereby beginning a process of embryonic development that would produce an exact duplicate of the nucleus donor. In both surrogacy and cloning, procreation is separated from the one-flesh union of husband and wife. It undermines the dignity of the child. Procreation is thus turned into manufacturing children for parental desires, rather than seeing them as gifts of God placed into our care.

The above mentioned biblical worldview affirmations give significant direction for believers. Not all reproductive technologies must be rejected, but we need biblical worldview teaching and discerning wisdom to guide us to follow God's designs for human life.

DENNIS P. HOLLINGER

IS GENDER A CHOICE?

Sex and gender are commonly differentiated, with sex referring to the biological components of maleness and femaleness, and gender referring to their psychological and cultural components.

More precisely, the biological components of sex resolve into four facets: (1) chromosomes, with the prototypical male having one X and one Y chromosome and the female having two X chromosomes; (2) gonads and the hormones they produce, with males having testes and females ovaries; (3) sexual anatomy, with male external structures including the penis and scrotum and internal structures including vas deferens and prostate, while females externally have a clitoris and labia and internal structures including the vagina, uterus, and fallopian tubes; (4) secondary sex characteristics, including for males denser, coarser body and facial hair, larger stature and greater muscle mass, while females manifest enlarged breasts, wider hips, less body hair and less muscle mass.

The psychological/cultural complements of gender resolve into at least three separate facets: (1) gender identity, the subjective sense of being a man or woman; (2) sexual orientation, with the prototypical male experiencing only erotic attraction to females and the female to males; and (3) gender role, the person's adoption of cultural expectations for maleness/masculinity or femaleness/femininity.

Given the complexity of the seven factors and their development, it is remarkable that so many adults align consistently on all seven factors, thus experiencing a somewhat uncomplicated sense of being a woman or a man. But some individuals deviate from the norms in one or more of the seven areas, as the following examples illustrate: (1) Some individuals inherit extra chromosomes (e.g., XXY and XYY, conditions with attendant complications).

(2) Some persons experience incomplete gonadal development, and others develop gonads of mixed testicular and ovarian tissues (e.g., true hermaphroditism).

(3) Malfunctioning gonads or a hormonally abnormal uterine environment may result in problematic anatomical development (e.g., Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome; micropenis; ambiguous genitalia [such as enlarged clitoris and labia that are mistaken upon birth as a penis and scrotum] that are sometimes called Intersex conditions); further, environmental events may create problems (e.g., a botched circumcision that amputates a penis).

(4) Hormonal problems can result in minimized or exaggerated secondary sex characteristics.

(5) Certain individuals report emphatic gender identification in contrast with their biological sex (transgenderism).

(6) Three to five percent of the population report consistent, stable erotic attraction (orientation) toward persons of the same sex or to both sexes in varying degrees; others report stable attractions in other directions (e.g., pedophiles).

(7) Some individuals are drawn to gender-atypical roles; further, cultures vary widely in their prescribed gender roles, including their clarity and rigidity.

Scientific evidence exists for some biological contribution to the three gender variables and for some psychosocial contribution to the four biological aspects of sex, though we are uncertain how determinative these contributions are or how they interact with human choice.

IS SEX OR GENDER A CHOICE?

Christians begin by recognizing that God is the Creator and we are not, that humans are of two sexes by creational intent ("he created them male and female," Gn 1:27), and that our sexuality is intended as a gift to be first received with gratitude and humility, and then to be formed responsibly by our parents and our choices. God exists eternally in Trinitarian community, and in his divine image we exist as embodied women and men in community and charged under the authority of our Lord with the proper stewardship of these gifts of sex and gender. Given that our sin blinds us at times to understanding what is good, we affirm

with gratitude God's moral guidance of this stewardship.

Our sexuality is a gift given for purposes beyond our individual existence: maleness and femaleness typically sets the foundation for marriage, a covenantal union of one man and one woman that includes full sexual intimacy often resulting in the procreation of children and the extension of multigenerational families. Sexuality is a gift with relational and community entailments; the husband and wife are gifts to each other.

Christians do not insist that every biological or psychological given is God's eternal will. Because of sin, neither humanity nor the world around us is as God intended. We are disordered. Thus, we cannot take our experience as God's intent. Where cruelty or immorality is a cultural norm (e.g., the practice of female genital mutilation in certain African and Islamic cultures, or the Hindu practice of *settee*, the burning to death of a widow at the cremation of her husband's body), we seek to produce cultural change.

Further, we recognize our finite limitations in interpreting God's special revelation. For example, in the realm of gender roles, reasonable Christians recognize that there is room for responsible choice; many would support the young woman who wants to study business leadership or the young father who chooses homemaking in support of his wife's career given her higher earning power. Neither choice, however, denies the unique callings of men and women.

There is legitimacy to seeking to correct disorders in the realm of physical sexual characteristics as well. As we would support surgical correction of a child's cleft palette, so we would support reattachment of a severed penis, surgical breast reduction for a woman whose very heavy breasts contribute to muscular and spinal pain, or testosterone-enhancing treatments for a chromosomally and anatomically male teenager with delayed puberty and development of male secondary sex characteristics.

But more radical options are now possible. The question of whether sex or gender is a choice is challenging today because our technological prowess allows us to intervene medically or psychologically in ways once impossible. Such options present us with dilemmas. What of cases like the homosexual transsexual who, though born biologically female, undergoes sexual reassignment surgery to remove her ovaries and construct an artificial penis, takes testosterone, and develops male secondary sex characteristics, reports psychological identification as a man, adopts culturally masculine roles, yet desires sex with other men? In this case, six of the seven dimensions of sex/gender have been deviated from the presumptive norm with only the chromosomes unchanged. What do we make of her/his argument that "LGBT identity is congruent with how I have always felt and how God has made me"?

Biblical Christians in humble and full submission to Christ will accept the gift of their sexuality along with biblical norms for expression of that sexuality. But we live in a secular culture that rejects the Creator and his creational intent. This, in turn, leads to the rejection of any norms governing behavior and of the idea that departures from these norms constitute disorders in any objective sense. In the area of sexuality, we have seen steady shifts in the official mental health diagnostic criteria defining what constitute sexual disorders. Many behavioral or arousal patterns that were once regarded as "deviant" have been normalized; this includes non-heterosexual orientation and "fetishes."

Even more fundamentally, a materialistic worldview that assumes that chance alone determines life outcomes robs us of any deep sense of meaning or the good. With only a vague aspiration of genetic propagation and evolutionary progress as a guide, brute assertion of human will against cruel chance may be all that is left. This can lead to a broad societal embrace of something like the original temptation placed before Adam and Eve at the time of the fall, that through exercising one's choice in violation of norms, "you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gn 3:5).

We are living at a time when some fit the apostle Paul's harsh description in Romans 1 of persons who exchange "the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man" (1:23) with the result that "they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God" (1:28). As a possible example of such a prioritization of human will, the American Psychological Association's (www.apa.org) 2009 report on *Appropriate Therapeutic Response to Sexual Orientation* contrasted two perspectives: (1) a Christian religious understanding of personal identity grounded in external and transcendent norms, against (2) LGBT affirmation: psychological approaches of "living with a sense of wholeness in one's experiential self . . . [a]

perspective [that] gives priority to the unfolding of developmental processes, including self-awareness and personal identity" (p. 26). The Christian stance of personal submission to God's will indeed contrasts with an insistence that personal identity is best established by achieving congruence first with "one's experiential self."

Christians recognize that as a result of our disorder and that of our world due to humanity's choice to sin, we experience discord in many ways: between physical sex and the sexual prototypes, between facets of our sex and gender, between our personal inclinations and cultural standards, between biblical norms and our personal inclinations (or cultural standards), and others. Resolution of such discord may take many forms, requiring us as humble stewards to make complex choices. There are times to intervene medically or psychologically to correct disorders, following Christ's model as Healer. There are times to violate prevailing gender roles at God's calling; for instance, we have positive precedents in biblical stories of women who were prophetesses, judges, or who participated in acts of war.

More troubling are cases like transsexualism in which one's gender identity is discordant with the clear testimony of biological sex. Many today reject viewing this condition as a disorder in favor of celebrating it as part of human diversity. But in the Christian perspective incorporating God's creational intent, such conditions must be seen as disorders. Indeed, all human life is disordered because of sin. Our overarching call is to pursue conformity of our lives (body and soul) to God's revealed will (1Tm 4:1-5) and to seek his sovereign healing of our brokenness in confidence of our ultimate healing in eternity.

While it can prove difficult to discern the proper response in complex cases, the simple prioritization of the experiential self and a facile manipulation of biological sex must be rejected even as we seek compassionate responses to persons suffering with an objective disorder. We must resist the illusion that the ultimate determination of sex and gender is ours to make autonomously. There are many choices to be made about how we live out our sexuality in godliness. But in the deepest sense, our choices that shape sex and gender should first reflect humble submission to God's choices for us.

STANTON L. JONES

8 So Seth's life lasted 912 years; then he died.

9 Enosh was 90 years old when he fathered Kenan. 10 Enosh lived 815 years
after he fathered Kenan, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 11 So Enosh's
life lasted 905 years; then he died.

12 Kenan was 70 years old when he fathered Mahalalel. 13 Kenan lived 840
years after he fathered Mahalalel, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 14
So Kenan's life lasted 910 years; then he died.

15 Mahalalel was 65 years old when he fathered Jared. 16 Mahalalel lived 830
years after he fathered Jared, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 17 So
Mahalalel's life lasted 895 years; then he died.

18 Jared was 162 years old when he fathered Enoch. 19 Jared lived 800 years
after he fathered Enoch, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 20 So Jared's
life lasted 962 years; then he died.

21 Enoch was 65 years old when he fathered Methuselah. 22 And after he
fathered Methuselah, Enoch walked with God † 300 years and fathered other

sons and daughters. 23 So Enoch's life lasted 365 years. 24 Enoch walked with God; then he was not there because God took him. †
25 Methuselah was 187 years old when he fathered Lamech. 26 Methuselah lived 782 years after he fathered Lamech, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 27 So Methuselah's life lasted 969 years; then he died.
28 Lamech was 182 years old when he fathered a son. 29 And he named him Noah, † saying, "This one will bring us relief from the agonizing labor of our hands, caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." † 30 Lamech lived 595 years after he fathered Noah, and he fathered other sons and daughters. 31 So Lamech's life lasted 777 years; then he died.
32 Noah was 500 years old, and he fathered Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5:1 Lit *written family* **5:1** Or *mankind* **5:1** Or *Adam, human beings* **5:2** Hb *'adam* **5:29** In Hb, the name *Noah* sounds like "bring us relief."
5:1 Gn 2:4 **5:22** Gn 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; Mc 6:8; Mal 2:6; 1Th 2:12 **5:24** 2Kg 2:11; Heb 11:5 **5:29** Gn 3:17-19; 4:11

5:1-32 Adam and Eve have another offspring named **Seth.** It is Seth's line, not Cain's, who will produce the promised offspring (cp. 3:15). Nevertheless, Seth's line, like the human race as a whole, was still subject to death. The reign of death is emphasized through the repetition of the phrase **then he died** throughout this genealogy (vv. 5,8,11,14,17,20,27,31). This phrase, however, is not used of Enoch, who **walked with God; then he was not there because God took him.** This exception gives hope that there is deliverance from death for those who walk with God.

SONS OF GOD AND DAUGHTERS OF MANKIND

6 When mankind began to multiply on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God † saw that the daughters of mankind were beautiful, and they took any they chose as wives † for themselves. † 3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit will not remain † with † mankind forever, † because they are corrupt. † † Their days will be 120 years." 4 The Nephilim † were on the earth both in those days and afterward, when the sons of God came to the daughters of mankind, who bore children to them. They were the powerful men of old, the famous men.

JUDGMENT DECREED

5 When the LORD saw that human wickedness was widespread on the earth and that every inclination of the human mind was nothing but evil all the time, † 6 the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, † and he was deeply

grieved. † 7 Then the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky — for I regret that I made them.” 8 Noah, however, found favor with the LORD. †

GOD WARNS NOAH

9 These are the family records † of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, † blameless among his contemporaries; † Noah walked with God. † 10 And Noah fathered three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight, and the earth was filled with wickedness. † 12 God saw how corrupt the earth was, for every creature had corrupted its way on the earth. † 13 Then God said to Noah, “I have decided to put an end to every creature, for the earth is filled with wickedness because of them; therefore I am going to destroy them along with the earth.

14 “Make yourself an ark of gopher † wood. Make rooms in the ark, and cover it with pitch inside and outside. 15 This is how you are to make it: The ark will be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. † 16 You are to make a roof, † finishing the sides of the ark to within eighteen inches † of the roof. You are to put a door in the side of the ark. Make it with lower, middle, and upper decks.

17 “Understand that I am bringing a flood — floodwaters on the earth † to destroy every creature under heaven with the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18 But I will establish my covenant with you, † and you will enter the ark with your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives. 19 You are also to bring into the ark two of all the living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. 20 Two of everything — from the birds according to their kinds, from the livestock according to their kinds, and from the animals that crawl on the ground according to their kinds — will come to you so that you can keep them alive. 21 Take with you every kind of food that is eaten; gather it as food for you and for them.” 22 And Noah did this. He did everything that God had commanded him. †

6:2 Or *women* **6:3** Or *strive* **6:3** Or *in* **6:3** Lit *flesh* **6:4** Possibly means “fallen ones”; traditionally, “giants”; Nm 13:31-33 **6:6** Lit *was grieved to his heart* **6:11** Or *injustice*, also in v. 13 **6:14** Unknown species of tree; perhaps pine or cypress **6:15** Or *300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high* **6:16** Or *window*, or *hatch* ; Hb uncertain **6:16** Lit *to a cubit*

6:2 Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7 **6:2** 1Pt 3:19-20; Jd 6 **6:3** Gl 5:16-17; 1Pt 3:20 **6:3** Ps 78:39 **6:5** Gn 8:21; Ps 14:1-3; Pr 6:18; Mt 15:19; Rm 1:28-32 **6:6** Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:11,29; 2Sm 24:16; Jl 2:13 **6:8** Gn 19:19; Ex 33:17; Lk 1:30 **6:9** Gn 2:4 **6:9** Ps 37:39; 2Pt 2:5 **6:9** Gn 17:1; Dt 18:13; Jb 1:1 **6:9** Gn 5:22 **6:12** Jb 22:15-17; Ps 14:2-3; 53:2-3 **6:17** Gn 7:4; 2Pt 2:5 **6:18** Gn 9:9-16; 17:7 **6:22** Gn 7:5

6:1-4 These verses are difficult and have generated various interpretations. What is clear is that they describe the increase of human population on earth. Though some hold that **the sons of God** refer to angels (see Jb 1:6; 2:1) who somehow married human women, the immediate context (Gn 5:1-4; see also Lk 3:38) and the mention of marriage (see Gn 2:24; Mt 22:30) suggest instead that the sons of God refer to humans from the line of Seth. If so, their mistake (5:2) was like Eve's (3:6) and relates to later prohibitions against intermarriage (see notes on 24:2-9 and Dt 7:1-6). Another interpretive challenge is the meaning of **their days will be 120 years**, which has been taken as a reference to decreased human lifespan henceforth or alternatively to the amount of time God determined to allow before sending the flood. Still another interpretive challenge is the identity of the **Nephilim**, who are mentioned only one other time in Numbers 13:33. Both passages describe them as powerful men, but little else can be known about them with certainty.

6:5-13 Sin had affected the entire human race. It had corrupted minds and manifested itself in rampant **wickedness.** This **grieved** the heart of God so much that he decided to destroy them with a flood. There was one exception though: Noah, who **was a righteous man** and **blameless.** Like his forefather Enoch (5:24), Noah **walked with God** and was saved from death.

6:17 Gn 6–9 is not the only ancient account of a widespread **flood** that wiped out humanity. Other flood stories from the ancient Near East have been discovered, such as the one contained in Epic of Gilgamesh. When these are compared more closely to Gn 6–9, however, significant differences emerge. For example, whereas here God brought the flood as just punishment for man's sin, the other flood stories describe selfish gods bringing about a flood out of annoyance with the human race, which had increased and become overly disruptive to the gods. Such differences show the distinctiveness of the biblical account, even though the accounts concern the same general subject matter. The mere existence of these other flood stories is significant extra-biblical evidence that such a flood really occurred.

6:18 In addition to sparing Noah and his family from the flood, God promised to establish his **covenant** with Noah. This covenant is described in 9:8-17.

ENTERING THE ARK

7 Then the LORD said to Noah, "Enter the ark, you and all your household,
for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this
generation. † 2 You are to take with you seven pairs, a male and its
female, of all the clean animals, † and two of the animals that are not clean, a
male and its female, 3 and seven pairs, male and female, of the birds of the sky
— in order to keep offspring alive throughout the earth. 4 Seven days from now
I will make it rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing
I have made I will wipe off the face of the earth." 5 And Noah did everything
that the LORD commanded him. †

6 Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came and water covered the
earth. 7 So Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives entered the ark because
of the floodwaters. 8 From the clean animals, unclean animals, birds, and every
creature that crawls on the ground, 9 two of each, male and female, came to
Noah and entered the ark, just as God had commanded him. 10 Seven days later
the floodwaters came on the earth.

THE FLOOD

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the
seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the sources of the vast watery
depths burst open, † the floodgates of the sky were opened, † 12 and the rain
fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. 13 On that same day Noah along
with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, Noah's wife, and his three sons' wives
entered the ark with him.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Few social issues of our day have become as celebrated as so-called animal rights. Chiefly the concern of philosophers only a few decades ago, the movement now boasts a sizeable following of A-list celebrities and generally youthful converts eager to proclaim the purported evils of meat-eating, hide-wearing, hunting, and laboratory animal research. The core contention is not that animals used for these purposes ought to be treated compassionately, but rather that they should not be used at all. Animal liberation is a moral imperative for animal rights activists.

THE BASIS FOR ANIMAL LIBERATION

Animal liberationists view the dividing-line between humans and animals as arbitrary and unjust. In their way of thinking, to bear a right or an interest worthy of protection one must have "moral standing," and they assert that any species that has the capacity to suffer or experience pain ("sentience") qualifies. Many animals (not just humans) appear sentient, so with respect to moral status, animal liberationists proclaim a radical equality wherein, as prominent activist Ingrid Newkirk has stated, "a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy" (quoted by Katie McCabe in "Who Will Live, Who Will Die?" *Washingtonian*, August 1, 1986, p. 115).

THE VALUE OF ANIMALS

At the heart of animal rights lies a kernel of truth. Animals are due moral consideration—not because they are sentient, but because they are creatures of God and he cares for them. Created by him and for him (Col 1:16), they belong to him (Ps 24:1), and he rejoices in them (Ps 104:31). He pronounced them good and blessed them apart from humans (Gn 1:21-22,25); thus, they have value beyond what may be attributed to their utility for human ends. Such value is further seen by God's preservation of every kind of wildlife during the flood (Gn 7:14-16) and in his concern for the "many animals" of Nineveh (Jnh 4:11).

That God cares about animals is also evident in his provision for their needs. The psalmist declares, “All eyes look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing” (Ps 145:15-16). For the herbivore, God “causes grass to grow” (Ps 104:14) and to the lion he delivers the prey (Ps 104:21). To the bird he gives the tree for shelter and as a stage from which to sing (Ps 104:12,16-17) and to the sea creature Leviathan, he provides an environment suited to its playful disposition (Ps 104:26). God knows the needs of his creatures, and he provides accordingly.

As God values animals and concerns himself with their well-being, he demands that we do the same. Scripture thus declares, “The righteous cares about his animal’s health, but even the merciful acts of the wicked are cruel” (Pr 12:10). Tending to the needs of animals only when it aligns with self-interest misses the mark. Instead, care that is morally praiseworthy reflects genuine compassion for the beast, and here again God provides the example for “his compassion rests on all he has made” (Ps 145:9). Obligations extend not just to animals we call our own, so God commands that livestock belonging to friend or foe be treated mercifully (Ex 23:4-5; Dt 22:1-4). The ox in the ditch is to be rescued and stray animals taken in and cared for until they can be returned to their owner. In these situations, obligations exist even when human interests are not at stake. Wild animals are due our concern, and Scripture mandates that the feral hen brooding a clutch be left alone (Dt 22:6-7) and that fields, vineyards, and groves be regularly fallowed in provision for the beasts that roam (Ex 23:11).

ANIMALS AND HUMAN WORTH

While affirming the moral value of animals, the Bible provides no support for the claim of their equality with humans. Indeed, it refutes that notion. Like the animals, we have been fashioned from the earth and infused with the breath of life (Gn 1:30; 2:7), but we alone have been made in the image of God (Gn 1:26-27) and are rendered creatures of his special concern. Jesus testified to our favored status: “Aren’t five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight. Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Lk 12:6-7). By God’s accounting, animal life has value, but human life is of greater worth; thus, God demands that it be treated with an elevated measure of respect.

In Scripture, the differential in respect due animal and human life is readily apparent. For example, the passerby encountering the wild hen is permitted to take her chicks but kidnapping a child is a capital offense (Ex 21:16). Similarly, we may with God’s blessing kill and consume animals posing no threat to human life (Gn 9:3; Rm 14:2-3), but on account of our image-bearing status, the shedding of innocent human blood is strongly condemned (Gn 9:6; Ex 21:12). Thus, Cain sins greatly in killing Abel (Gn 4:10) and David also in ordering the death of Uriah (2Sm 11:15-27), but Jesus commits no transgression in directing a great catch of fish or in preparing from the netted bounty breakfast for his disciples (Jn 21:1-13). In God’s moral order, human life is in a category of its own.

HUMANS’ DOMINION AS A BLESSING

In affirming the unique moral status of humans, Scripture offers to balance animal rights ideology. The biblical proclamation of human headship over creation is a matter of divine purpose and blessing. “God blessed [Adam and Eve], and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth’” (Gn 1:28). Frequently, proponents of animal rights read into this dominion mandate a license for animal abuse, as if to subdue (*kabash*) and rule (*radah*) can only mean that humans are called to function as merciless tyrants. This is a misrepresentation of the biblical teaching. The dominion mandate was established before humanity’s fall into sin and after God had already indicated his intention for the animals to flourish (Gn 1:22). In other words, our function as vice-regents over creation comes part and parcel with God’s plan to bless all creation.

Under human stewardship the creation is intended to flourish, yet because of the curse wrought by sin, its present condition is one of futility and corruption (Gn 3; Rm 8:20-21). The mandate to rule remains after

the fall, but it is not immune to the perverting effects of sin and with the Noahic covenant its provisions were expanded by God to include eating meat (Gn 9:3-4). Dominion can indeed manifest as cruelty in this present age, but as Scripture presents it, the solution lies not in the abdication of human authority, as animal liberationists propose, but in our redemption through Christ. "The creation eagerly waits with anticipation for God's sons to be revealed" in the sure hope that it will be "set free from the bondage to decay [and corruption] into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rm 8:19-21).

Judged in light of Scripture, the ideological commitments underlying the animal rights movement can be a false morality. Its ethic is a product of a secular philosophy that looks no further than nature for the ground of moral value. True goodness and justice find their source not in the creation but in the Creator in whom "there is absolutely no darkness" (1Jn 1:5). "All his ways are just" (Dt 32:4). God has made humans creatures of special worth. He has assigned us the responsibility to care for his creation and the privilege to employ its resources. It is in that context that we bear a duty toward animals and their welfare.

ERIK CLARY

14 They entered it with all the wildlife according to their kinds, all livestock
according to their kinds, all the creatures that crawl on the earth according to
their kinds, every flying creature — all the birds and every winged creature —
according to their kinds. 15 Two of every creature that has the breath of life in it
came to Noah and entered the ark. 16 Those that entered, male and female of
every creature, entered just as God had commanded him. Then the LORD shut
him in.
17 The flood continued for forty days on the earth; the water increased and lifted
up the ark so that it rose above the earth. 18 The water surged and increased
greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19 Then the
water surged even higher on the earth, and all the high mountains under the
whole sky were covered. 20 The mountains were covered as the water surged
above them more than twenty feet. † 21 Every creature perished — those that
crawl on the earth, birds, livestock, wildlife, and those that swarm † on the
earth, as well as all mankind. 22 Everything with the breath of the spirit of life in
its nostrils † — everything on dry land died. 23 He wiped out every living thing
that was on the face of the earth, from mankind to livestock, to creatures that
crawl, to the birds of the sky, and they were wiped off the earth. Only Noah was
left, and those that were with him in the ark. † 24 And the water surged on the
earth 150 days.

7:20 Lit *surged 15 cubits* **7:21** Lit *all the swarming swarms*

7:1 Mt 24:38-39; Lk 17:26-27; Heb 11:7 **7:2** Gn 8:20; Lv 11:1-31; Dt 14:3-20 **7:5** Gn 6:22 **7:11** Gn 8:2; Pr 8:28; Am 9:6 **7:11** 2Kg 7:19; Ps 78:23; Is 24:18; Mal 3:10 **7:22** Gn 2:7 **7:23** 1Pt 3:20; 2Pt 2:5

THE FLOOD RECEDES

8 God remembered Noah, † as well as all the wildlife and all the livestock
that were with him in the ark. God caused a wind † to pass over the
earth, † and the water began to subside. 2 The sources of the watery
depths and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky
stopped. † 3 The water steadily receded from the earth, and by the end of 150
days the water had decreased significantly. † 4 The ark came to rest in the
seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of
Ararat. †
5 The water continued to recede until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the
first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were visible. 6 After forty days
Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made, 7 and he sent out a raven.
It went back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent
out a dove to see whether the water on the earth's surface had gone down, 9 but
the dove found no resting place for its foot. It returned to him in the ark because
water covered the surface of the whole earth. He reached out and brought it into
the ark to himself.

THE BIBLE AND CREATION CARE

The biblical story begins with God and his creative work. God spoke the universe into existence. He separated light from darkness, day from night, water under the expanse from water above it, and water from land. Then he caused vegetation to grow on the dry ground. He filled the waters with fish, the sky with flying creatures, and the earth with a variety of living things, each created according to its kind. He blessed the creatures he had made and commanded them to fill their domain (Gn 1:22). Then, as the pinnacle of his creative work, he made humanity (male and female) in his image and likeness and commanded them to fill the earth and rule over all the creatures he had made and blessed (Gn 1:26-28). Rather than caring for it himself, God entrusted the care of his creation to humans. He placed the man and woman "in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it" (Gn 2:15). It was a world of order, harmony, and blessing for all created things.

But then order was turned to chaos, harmony to turmoil, blessing to curse, and life to death. Creation's caretakers chose to believe the serpent, a creature, rather than God; they ate the fruit from the one tree from which God had forbidden them to eat (Gn 3:1-6). God cursed the ground as his judgment on these rebels. He removed them from the garden and promised them that death would be their end. Nevertheless, he did not rescind the command to rule over the earth and to care for the creation. Instead, he said that their creation care would be more difficult; their work would now be characterized as "painful labor . . . until [they returned] to the ground, since [they] were taken from it. For [they were] dust, and [they would] return

to dust" (Gn 3:17-19).

As humanity multiplied on the earth they became more corrupt and filled with wickedness (Gn 3:1-5). God was "deeply grieved" (Gn 6:6). He sent judgment on the earth in the form of a flood, in order to "wipe mankind, whom [he] created, off the face of the earth, together with the animals, creatures that crawl, and birds of the sky" (Gn 6:7). But God delivered Noah and his family and representatives of every kind of living creature. When the flood waters receded and the inhabitants of the ark returned to the dry ground, God reiterated his purpose for humanity when he said to Noah and his family, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gn 9:1). God made a covenant with all living creatures and the earth itself, in which he promised never again to destroy all life on the planet (Gn 9:11). This covenant had a sign, a rainbow, which God established as a reminder of the everlasting covenant between him and "all the living creatures on earth" (Gn 9:16). The everlasting covenant presupposes an everlasting earth, cared for by those created in God's image and likeness.

In the incarnation, in Jesus of Nazareth, the eternal Son of God entered creation. The Creator took on flesh and resided in the world he had made (Jn 1:14). In so doing, he revealed God to the world and became its Savior (Jn 1:14-18,29). Christ's work of redemption is not merely good news for humans. The salvific plan of God is cosmic in scope.

The apostle Paul explains that creation has been longing for its redemption since the day it was cursed. Human creation care cannot remove the curse. That can only be done by the Creator, and he has promised to do so in the restoration of all things, in the redemption of all creation: "Creation eagerly waits with anticipation . . . in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rm 8:19-21). Creation's redemption is tied to humanity's redemption. Creation groans as it looks forward to its liberation. God's love for the world means that the world will be redeemed by the work of the Savior (Jn 3:16).

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul asserts that Jesus Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15), the One who created "everything" (Col 1:16), and the One who came "to have first place in everything" through his resurrection from the dead (Col 1:18). Paul concludes: "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross" (Col 1:19-20). In the God-man, the Creator entered creation in order to redeem creation. As the head of his body, the church, Christ cares for his creation through his followers (Col 1:18).

The biblical story concludes with the promise of a new creation. In his vision of the completion of the work of redemption, John sees a new heaven and a new earth coming down to the earth from heaven. He also hears a voice from the throne of God: "Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away" (Rv 21:3-4). When redemption is completed, the curse and all its effects will be removed, the earth will be made new, and the Creator will make the creation his home forever (cp. Is 65:17-25). Then, forever, humans will serve God by caring for the world that he made.

Humanity has been given the responsibility to serve God by caring for his creation, the place in which God will make his home eternally. Creation care is a stewardship given to us. It is a biblical mandate that predates the fall and has never been repealed. The fall makes our care more difficult, but it does not remove our responsibility. One indication of the seriousness of this responsibility is seen in the declaration of the Judge that those who destroy the earth will be judged. In Revelation 11:18, according to the song of the twenty-four elders, in the day of God's wrath, "the time has come for the dead to be judged and to give the reward to your servants the prophets, to the saints, and to those who fear your name, both small and great, and the time has come to destroy those who destroy the earth." Destruction of the planet is not merely accomplished by active and willful rebellion. Passivity, too, is failure to care for the earth and is tantamount to destroying it.

Several practical implications follow. (1) Creation care is a gospel concern for it is a life issue. Healthy human and animal life depends on a good environment that includes clean air and water and one in which

disease and decay are controlled. (2) In James 1:27, the apostle describes “pure and undefiled religion” as looking “after orphans and widows in their distress” and keeping “oneself unstained from the world.” Later, he characterizes a faith that does not provide clothes and daily food for the needy as “dead” faith (Jms 2:15-17). Surely, providing clean air and water is as important as providing food and clothes. (3) Since no one knows when the end will come (Mt 24:36-44), caring for the creation benefits all inhabitants of the planet. Extending lifetimes and improving life’s quality is good stewardship.

GLENN R. KREIDER

10 So Noah waited seven more days and sent out the dove from the ark again. 11 When the dove came to him at evening, there was a plucked olive leaf in its beak. So Noah knew that the water on the earth’s surface had gone down. 12 After he had waited another seven days, he sent out the dove, but it did not return to him again. 13 In the six hundred and first year, † in the first month, on the first day of the month, the water that had covered the earth was dried up. Then Noah removed the ark’s cover and saw that the surface of the ground was drying. 14 By the twenty-seventh day of the second month, the earth was dry.

THE LORD’S PROMISE

15 Then God spoke to Noah, 16 “Come out of the ark, you, your wife, your sons, and your sons’ wives with you. 17 Bring out all the living creatures † that are with you — birds, livestock, those that crawl on the earth — and they will spread over the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.” † 18 So Noah, along with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, came out. 19 All the animals, all the creatures that crawl, and all the flying creatures — everything that moves on the earth — came out of the ark by their families.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD. He took some of every kind of clean animal and every kind of clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. 21 When the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, † he said to himself, “I will never again curse the ground † because of human beings, even though the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward. † And I will never again strike down every living thing as I have done. †

22 As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat,
summer and winter, and day and night
will not cease.” †

8:1 Or *spirit* ; Gn 1:2 **8:13** = of Noah's life **8:17** Lit *creatures of all flesh*
8:1 Gn 19:29; Ex 2:24; 1Sm 1:19; Ps 105:42 **8:1** Ex 14:21; 15:10; Jb 12:15; Ps 29:10; Is 44:27; Nah 1:4 **8:2** Gn 7:11 **8:3** Gn 7:24 **8:4** 2Kg 19:37; Is 37:38; Jr 51:27 **8:17** Gn 1:22,28; 9:1 **8:21** Ex 29:18; Lv 1:9; Ezk 16:19; 20:41; 2Co 2:15; Eph 5:2; Php 4:18 **8:21** Gn 3:17; 5:29; 6:7; Is 54:9 **8:21** Gn 6:5; Ps 51:5; Jr 17:9; Rm 1:21; 3:23; Eph 2:1-3 **8:21** Gn 9:11,15 **8:22** Jr 33:20,25

GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH

9 God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. † 2 The fear and terror of you will be in every living creature on the earth, every bird of the sky, every creature that crawls on the ground, and all the fish of the sea. They are placed under your authority. † 3 Every creature that lives and moves will be food for you; † as I gave the green plants, I have given you everything. † 4 However, you must not eat meat with its lifeblood in it. † 5 And I will require a penalty for your lifeblood; † I will require it from any animal † and from any human; if someone murders a fellow human, I will require that person's life. † †

6 Whoever sheds human blood, by humans his blood will be shed, †
for God made humans in his image. †

7 But you, be fruitful and multiply; spread out over the earth and multiply on it." †
8 Then God said to Noah and his sons with him, 9 "Understand that I am establishing my covenant † with you and your descendants after you, 10 and with every living creature that is with you — birds, livestock, and all wildlife of the earth that are with you — all the animals of the earth that came out of the ark. 11 I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth." †
12 And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant † I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations:
13 I have placed my bow in the clouds, † and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. 14 Whenever I form clouds over the earth and the bow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remember my covenant † between me and

you and all the living creatures: † water will never again become a flood to destroy every creature. 16 The bow will be in the clouds, and I will look at it and remember the permanent covenant † between God and all the living creatures † on earth." 17 God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and every creature on earth."

PROPHECIES ABOUT NOAH'S FAMILY

18 Noah's sons who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were Noah's sons, and from them the whole earth was populated. †

20 Noah, as a man of the soil, began by planting † a vineyard. 21 He drank some of the wine, became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. † 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a cloak and placed it over both their shoulders, and walking backward, they covered their father's nakedness. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father naked.

24 When Noah awoke from his drinking and learned what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said:

Canaan is cursed. †
He will be the lowest of slaves to his brothers. †

26 He also said:

Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; Let Canaan be † Shem's slave.
27 Let God extend Japheth; †
let Japheth dwell in the tents of Shem;
let Canaan be Shem's slave.

28 Now Noah lived 350 years after the flood. 29 So Noah's life lasted 950 years; then he died.

9:2 Lit *are given in your hand* **9:5** Lit *And your blood belonging to your life I will seek* **9:5** Lit *any human; from the hand of a man his brother I will seek the life of the human.* **9:15** Lit *and creatures of all flesh* **9:16** Lit *creatures of all flesh* **9:20** Or *Noah began to be a farmer and planted* **9:26** As a wish or prayer; others interpret the verbs in vv. 26-27 as prophecy: *Canaan will be . . .* **9:27** In Hb, the name *Japheth* sounds like the word "extend."

9:1 Gn 1:28; 8:17; 9:7; 35:11 **9:3** Dt 12:15; 1Tm 4:3-4 **9:1-3** Gn 1:28-30 **9:4** Lv 3:17; 7:20; 17:10-16; 19:26; Dt 12:16,23; 15:23; 1Sm 14:34; Ac 15:20,29 **9:5** Ex 21:28 **9:5** Gn 4:2,8 **9:6** Ex 21:12-14; Lv 24:17; Nm 35:33; Mt 26:52 **9:6** Gn 1:26-27 **9:7** Gn 1:28 **9:9** Gn 6:18; 8:22; 17:2; Ex 6:4; 19:5; Lv 26:9 **9:11** Is 54:9-10 **9:12** Gn 17:11 **9:13** Ezk 1:28; Rv 4:3; 10:1 **9:15** Lv 26:42,45; Dt 7:9; 1Kg 8:23; Ezk 16:60 **9:16** Gn 17:13; 2Sm 23:5; 1Ch 16:17; Is 24:5 **9:19** Gn 9:1,7; 10:32; 1Ch 1:4 **9:22** Lm 4:21; Hab 2:15 **9:25** Dt 27:16 **9:25** Jos 9:23; Jdg 1:28; 1Kg 9:20-21

9:1 God blessed Noah and his sons and said, **"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth**," just as he had instructed Adam and Eve. It is as though God restarts the human race through Noah's family. The sin problem, however, has not been solved: still "the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth onward" (8:21).

9:1-17 God initiated a **covenant** (Hb *berit*) with Noah and all living creatures (vv. 9-10). A covenant is a binding agreement defining a relationship between two parties and that requires obligations from at least one of them. In the present covenant, God's promise is that he will not destroy the whole earth again by means of a flood. Because God has revealed that his intentions are that all living creatures should live and flourish, Noah and his descendants are expected to respond by respecting and valuing life (9:3-5; see "Animal Rights," *p. 21*). Human life is so precious that the penalty for murder must be death (9:6; see "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*; "Birth Control and Procreation Technology," *p. 15*; "A Biblical Assessment of Abortion," *p. 718*). Covenants often required a public posting or a periodic reading of the obligations in order to remind the parties of their responsibilities. In the Bible, God usually gives a sign to accompany a covenant as a reminder that it is in effect and will (or should be) faithfully observed. In the covenant with Noah the **sign** is a (rain)**bow** in the sky. Other well-known covenants in the Bible include the covenant between God and Abram (Gn 15:18), the covenant between God and Israel (Ex 19:4-6; 20:1-17), the covenant between God and David (2Sm 7; 23:5), and the new covenant between God and Israel (Jr 31:31-34). Other examples of covenants include the covenant between David and Jonathan (1Sm 18:3) and covenants between nations, such as were forbidden between Israel and the Canaanites (Ex 23:32; 34:12).

9:20-21 Despite Noah's righteousness (6:9), 8:21 indicated that the flood had not solved man's sin problem. Noah too was a sinner, as shown by his drunkenness (9:21). His failure parallels that of his ancestors, Adam and Eve. Both failures involve planting (2:8; 9:20), partaking of fruit in some way (3:6; 9:21), nakedness (3:7; 9:21), and curse (3:14,17; 9:25).

9:22-27 Whereas his older brothers, **Shem and Japheth**, **covered their father's nakedness** (see also Ex 20:26), **Ham** did not protect his father's dignity. As a result, Noah cursed one of Ham's sons, **Canaan.** It seems this curse was fulfilled many generations later through God's punishment of the Canaanites for their idolatry (see 10:15-19; 15:16).

THE TABLE OF NATIONS

10 These are the family records † of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. They also had sons after the flood.

2 Japheth's sons: † Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 3 Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, and Togarmah. 4 And Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, † Kittim, and Dodanim. † 5 From these descendants, the peoples of the coasts and islands spread out into their lands according to their clans in their nations, each with its own language.

6 Ham’s sons: † Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. 7 Cush’s sons: Seba,
Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca. And Raamah’s sons: Sheba and Dedan.
8 Cush fathered Nimrod, who began to be powerful in the land. 9 He was a
powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD. That is why it is said, “Like Nimrod, a
powerful hunter in the sight of the LORD.” 10 His kingdom started with
Babylon, † Erech, † Accad, † and Calneh, † in the land of Shinar. † † 11
From that land he went to Assyria † and built Nineveh, Rehoboth-ir, Calah, 12
and Resen, between Nineveh and the great city Calah.
13 Mizraim † † fathered the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh, 14 Pathrus,
Casluh (the Philistines came from them), and Caphtor. †
15 Canaan fathered Sidon his firstborn and Heth, 16 as well as the Jebusites, the
Amorites, the Girgashites, † 17 the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, 18 the
Arvadites, the Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Afterward the Canaanite clans
scattered. 19 The Canaanite border went from Sidon going toward Gerar as far as
Gaza, and going toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim as far as
Lasha.
20 These are Ham’s sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their
lands and their nations.
21 And Shem, Japheth’s older brother, also had sons. Shem was the father of all
the sons of Eber. † 22 Shem’s sons † were Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, and
Aram.
23 Aram’s sons: Uz, Hul, Gether, and Mash.
24 Arpachshad fathered † Shelah, † and Shelah fathered Eber. 25 Eber had two
sons. One was named Peleg, † for during his days the earth was divided; † his
brother was named Joktan. 26 And Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph,
Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29
Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these were Joktan’s sons. 30 Their settlements
extended from Mesha to Sephar, the eastern hill country.
31 These are Shem’s sons by their clans, according to their languages, in their
lands and their nations.
32 These are the clans of Noah’s sons, according to their family records, in their
nations. The nations on earth spread out from these after the flood. †

10:4 Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX read *Rodanim* ; 1Ch 1:7 **10:10** Or *Uruk* **10:10** Or *Akkad* **10:10** Or *and all of*

them **10:10** Or *in Babylonia* **10:13** = Egypt **10:24** LXX reads *fathered Cainan, and Cainan fathered* ; Gn 11:12-13; Lk 3:35-36 **10:25** = Division
10:1 Gn 2:4 **10:2-5** 1Ch 1:5-7; Ezk 38:1-6 **10:4** 1Kg 10:22; Is 2:16 **10:6-7** 1Ch 1:8-10 **10:10** Gn 11:9 **10:10** Gn 11:2; 14:1 **10:11** Mc 5:6 **10:13-18** 1Ch 1:11-16 **10:14** Jr 47:4; Am 9:7 **10:16** Gn 15:19-21 **10:21** Gn 11:13-14 **10:22-29** 1Ch 1:17-23 **10:24** Gn 11:12; Lk 3:35 **10:25** Gn 11:8; Ps 55:9 **10:32** Gn 9:19

10:32 The genealogy in this chapter explains the origin of various **clans** and **nations**, as descended from Noah's three sons. In accordance with God's command (1:28, 9:1,7), the human race was in the process of being fruitful, multiplying, and filling the earth. The listing here also serves as a backdrop for the incident involving the tower of Babylon and the call of Abram (Gn 11–12). Several of Israel's future enemies are traced to Ham's line: Egypt (**Mizraim**, v. 6), Babylon (v. 10; see also 11:9), Assyria (v. 11), and the Canaanites (vv. 15-19).

THE TOWER OF BABYLON

11 The whole earth had the same language and vocabulary. † 2 As people † migrated from the east, † they found a valley in the land of Shinar and settled there. † 3 They said to each other, "Come, let us make oven-fired bricks." (They used brick for stone and asphalt † for mortar.) 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky. † Let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise, we will be scattered throughout the earth."

5 Then the LORD came down † to look over the city and the tower that the humans † were building. 6 The LORD said, "If they have begun to do this as one people all having the same language, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. 7 Come, let's go down there and confuse their language so that they will not understand one another's speech."

IMAGO DEI AND THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF HUMANS

Both land animals and the first humans, Adam and Eve, were created by God on the sixth day (Gn 1:24-31). Both were made of or from the earth (Gn 1:24; 2:7). Both have "breath of life" from God (Gn 2:7; 6:17; 7:15,22). Both originally ate vegetables and fruits (Gn 2:16). Nevertheless, humans are distinctive because they were created in the image of God (*imago Dei*), as clearly stated in Genesis 1:27: "God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female." Throughout church history, emphasis has been placed on three main aspects that distinguish humans from animals: rule,

relationship, and reason.

RULE

As God was about to create the first human couple in his own image, he already intended to have them rule over all animals (Gn 1:26). As soon as God created them according to his image, he commanded them to do what he intended: “Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth” (Gn 1:28). The fact that humans were appointed by God to be his representatives who reign over the animal kingdom is one of the distinctive features of being human, as clearly taught in the creation account. To be created in God’s image is to be bestowed with superior and sovereign authority to rule over the inferior beings, namely, animals.

RELATIONSHIP

That God created both male and female in his own image implies a relational nature in the image. That God said, “Let us make . . . in our image, according to our likeness” (three times, first person plural), strongly indicates a form of relationality in God’s being (Gn 1:26). This “our” language does not refer to other heavenly beings because the following verse immediately says that God created humans in “his own image,” that is, they are made in “the image of God” (Gn 1:27). God’s image of “plurality-singularity” expresses itself in his own distinctive creatures, namely, male and female (Gn 1:27). Two distinct persons yet one, they both “become one flesh” (Gn 2:24).

This form of personal unity between human male and female is never applied to animals. Though animals and humans both receive life from the same source, humans alone were described as having “the breath of life” breathed into their nostrils (Gn 2:7). This relationship of divine-human intimacy, found throughout Scripture, makes humans distinct from animals. Humans have the created capacity to relate to God so that they can experience, know, and love him in a personal way.

REASON

Animals cannot acquire the mind that humans have because the latter have minds made in God’s image. Humans are able to obtain vast and varied knowledge, to gain wisdom, to develop insights, to seek creative imagination and express it, and to experience continuing mind transformation (Rm 12:2). Human rational capability, moreover, includes and implies moral responsibility to God. Christians are to know the mind of God so that they may live according to the will of God. The way to know the mind of God is by having the mind of Christ (1Co 2:16; Php 2:5).

RESEMBLANCE-REPRESENTATION

These three aspects constitute the classic view of what it means to be made in “God’s image.” The following expounds another recent view, though not entirely innovative, concerning the image of God. According to the view of Resemblance-Representation, being made in God’s image simply means that humans resemble and represent God. Resembling God, then, means that humans are “patterned” after God; we are like him. Both man and woman are similar to, but not the same as, God. We are created to be images reflecting the original; we are to represent God himself.

A closer look at the uses of “image” and “likeness” in the Bible provides a significant clue about what it means to be like God for a purpose. In the Bible, the terms “image” and “likeness” (*selem* and *demut* in Hb; *eikon* and *homoioma* in Gk) are often used interchangeably or synonymously. We may categorize them into three types of meanings pertinent to our discussion: First, the “image” or “likeness” of God refers to humans who were created by God to be like God (Gn 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 1Co 11:7; Jms 3:9). Second, the “image(s)” or “likeness(es)” of gods refers to the idols that were created by humans to resemble and to revere the various created beings (e.g., Lv 26:1; Dt 4:16; 27:15; Ac 17:29; Rm 1:23). Third, the true image of the only real God, namely, his Son Jesus Christ (Rm 8:29; 2Co 4:4; Col 1:15).

God did not want his people to create images or idols to represent him, yet he created humans to be like

him. Unfortunately, the first humans decided to be "like God" by directly disobeying God's command (Gn 3:2-7). Since then, the "image of God" in humans has been functionally, relationally, and rationally distorted—though not entirely lost (Gn 3:16-19,22-24; 9:6; cp. Rm 3:23; 3:9). They wanted to be like God in their own way, which led them to punishment and banishment from God's presence. In spite of this hopeless and helpless condition, God, in his grace, had prepared the way to restore his image by way of his Son.

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN CHRIST

As we put side by side the first meaning of the "image of God" (humans) with the third meaning of the "image of God" (Christ), we come close to the central message. Jesus and all other humans bear the image. But there is a qualitative difference between him and us. We are sinners, but Jesus is the Son. Humans are created or *made in* God's image, while Jesus *is* God's image, uncreated (2Co 4:4; Col 1:15). Jesus embodies and emanates the true and pure divine essence. As Hebrews 1:3 described the Son, he "is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact expression of his nature." Nevertheless, our common image bearing indicates that Jesus is the ideal human. He fulfills God's intention for humanity. And as the ideal human, he is the pattern that we should follow. That is, we are to be like Christ and we are to be conformed to Christ. As Scripture affirms, "Those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image [*eikon*] of his Son" (Rm 8:29).

THE IMAGE OF GOD IN THE CHRISTIAN

By patterning ourselves after Jesus, we become like God in the way he intends. United to Jesus through faith, we have been created anew, being renewed in the image of God (2Co 5:17; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). Furthermore, we are created anew for a purpose: "for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do" (Eph 2:10). This new purpose entails a number of implications.

First, we love Christ wholeheartedly. The call to follow Jesus is to love him wholeheartedly (Lk 14:24). As we continue to comprehend "the length and width, height and depth" of Christ's surpassing love, Christians will be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:18-19). Consequently, we manifest God's fullness in and through our lives.

Second, we learn from Christ faithfully. Christians learned about him, heard from him, and were taught by him because "the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21). By learning from Jesus, their minds are progressively renewed and the image of God is thus restored "in righteousness and purity of the truth" (Eph 4:20,23-24).

Ultimately, to be like Christ is to conform to his image of glory: "We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror . . . and are being transformed into the same image [*eikon*] from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18a). This is the ultimate glorification that God promises to those whom he has chosen to conform to the image of his Son: "Those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified" (Rm 8:30). To be in God's image is to be conformed to Christ's image. This is the highest calling and privilege humans may know.

PETER TIE

8 So from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth, † and they stopped building the city. 9 Therefore it is called Babylon, † † † for there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth, and from there the LORD scattered them throughout the earth.

FROM SHEM TO ABRAM

10 These are the family records † of Shem. Shem lived 100 years and fathered
Arpachshad two years after the flood. 11 After he fathered Arpachshad, Shem
lived 500 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 12 Arpachshad lived 35
years † and fathered Shelah. 13 After he fathered Shelah, Arpachshad lived 403
years and fathered other sons and daughters. 14 Shelah lived 30 years and
fathered Eber. 15 After he fathered Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and fathered
other sons and daughters. 16 Eber lived 34 years and fathered Peleg. 17 After he
fathered Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 18
Peleg lived 30 years and fathered Reu. 19 After he fathered Reu, Peleg lived 209
years and fathered other sons and daughters. 20 Reu lived 32 years and fathered
Serug. 21 After he fathered Serug, Reu lived 207 years and fathered other sons
and daughters. 22 Serug lived 30 years and fathered Nahor. 23 After he fathered
Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 24 Nahor
lived 29 years and fathered Terah. †

LANGUAGE AND MEANING

Some people think if you know a word's definition and you know what the related grammar is, then you know the meaning. But discerning meaning involves recognizing a complex interaction between words, grammar, context, literary genre, style, background, and solid interpretive method.

The pursuit of meaning also must have the proper goal in mind, affirming the referents within the expressions of an author in the text one is studying. True meaning is not about what possible meaning a text can generate, because a text without a context can generate many meanings given the fluidity of words and a multiplicity of readings. Nor is meaning about what is in the mind of the author when he writes, since meaning is not about psychoanalysis. Finding meaning, rather, is about seeking what the writer sought to communicate through linguistic signs.

LANGUE AND PAROLE

Linguistics has long distinguished between *langue* and *parole*. These French terms designate a language system on the one hand (*langue*) and a specific utterance on the other (*parole*). An analogy used by Ferdinand de Saussure is that *langue* is like the rules of chess, while *parole* is a specific game. Thus *langue* is about possible meaning, while *parole* is about specific meaning. Obviously there is an interaction between what language is capable of meaning and what a specific utterance means in a given theological, literary, social, and historical context. The process of discerning this difference involves the act of interpretation.

MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

It is also important to distinguish meaning from significance. Meaning is specific (even when it is intended to be generic or representative as in many psalms or proverbs). Significance can shift as it involves meaning applied in new contexts or as it is read canonically. So, certain OT texts lose their direct applicability once NT realities supersede them. Thus laws of cleanliness that once applied to God's people, especially in light of temple service, no longer apply because of how the NT no longer endorses such categories and because there is no temple to which such laws apply.

GIVEN ALL OF THESE VARIABLES, HOW DOES ONE WORK TOWARD DISCOVERING MEANING?

1. CONSIDER WHAT THE TEXT MAY MEAN.

One needs to be aware of what the language will permit in terms of meaning. Words and grammar can yield only so many possibilities. Commentators often wrestle with the options as they work their way toward explaining what a text means. In doing so, they are not trying to confuse people; they are recognizing what the text could be saying before deciding what it does say. Meaning is not always immediately transparent. If it were, we would not need to debate what a text means. Meaning has to be recognized and validated by discussing why certain meanings work and other possible meanings do not.

2. LITERARY GENRE, AUTHORIAL STYLE, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, AND SPECIFIC CONTEXT ALL COME INTO PLAY IN MOVING TOWARD SPECIFIC MEANING.

Interpretation of meaning involves interaction between all these elements. Any one of these factors, or a combination of them, may generate an adequate interpretation.

Genre. For example, the moment we recognize we are reading an apocalyptic text, we know that the spiritual world can be depicted through symbols in that genre—which is why we get strange creatures and images in apocalyptic texts. The goal, then, is to determine what the symbol represents. A psalm or hymnic genre lifts up notes of praise, or laments particular experiences, that can give expression to the common experiences of God's people.

Style. Sometimes style is a factor for consideration. John's Gospel is known for its use of double entendre. So, when reading John we might entertain the possibility of a double meaning more readily than when reading the work of other Gospel writers. When John speaks of being "born again" or "from above" in John 3:3 (both are possible; see CSB footnote), he may have both ideas in mind rather than intending only one.

Background. The multiple possibilities here lead to debate as to when and whether a particular background is in mind. An uncontroversial example involves Jesus's use of a little child in response to the disciples' debate over who is the greatest (Lk 9). Children had little or no social status in the ancient world. They were not valued until they were of use to the family. So, Jesus's use of the image of a child immediately communicates that a person's value is not derived from social status.

Context. By far the most important factor for determining meaning is the specific context. Context involves some of the features already noted. But beyond these are the words used, and the relationships between words, to convey meaning. When Jesus speaks of plucking out one's eye if it causes lust, it is clear he is not speaking literally. Otherwise, an individual could only lust twice before becoming blind. So the context, along with Jesus's penchant for rhetorical vividness, produces a meaning that addresses the importance of not using one's eyes lustfully.

3. THE APPEAL TO THEOLOGY TO DETERMINE MEANING IS COMPLEX BECAUSE SCRIPTURE IS CAPABLE OF ADDRESSING TOPICS FROM DISTINCT ANGLES AND DISTINCT CONTEXTS.

Scripture often provides complementary information rather than simply repeating itself. Thus, multiple Gospel accounts of the same event may involve different details. These details open fresh perspectives on the event. According to Mark, Jesus cries out a quote from Psalm 22:1 to express that God is forsaking him while he is on the cross. Yet according to Luke, at a later moment, Jesus affirms his trust of God by appealing to Psalm 31:5. In such cases, one affirms the presence of Christ's varied emotions while on the cross. Another example is how Paul highlights how salvation is secured by faith without works, while James argues that works show the presence of saving faith. Since Paul and James are writing to address different concerns, we may see how the passages complement—rather than contradict—each other.

A tendency to over-harmonize texts risks making each say the same thing. Over-harmonization may result in eliminating a perspective. Thus, careful interpretation involves asking if each writer is making a related point, or instead is addressing a question from a different angle. This means that claiming to "let Scripture interpret Scripture" can be more complex than most realize. Sometimes Scripture simply complements Scripture.

4. THE INTERPRETATION THAT TAKES INTO ACCOUNT THE WIDEST ARRAY OF FACTORS IN A COHERENT FASHION IS LIKELY THE BEST READING.

The most likely meaning emerges when a reading takes into account these various features. Such results are more persuasive than other possibilities. A text cannot mean just anything that a reader can construe it to mean. This does not suggest that we always agree on which potential meaning is most likely. This is why it is necessary to discuss why we support a given reading—to make the case that it is the most likely possibility. This is known as validation. Nevertheless, often only a handful of candidates will possibly reflect what the text means. It is important to be reflective about how we observe meaning in the text because no one is a perfect interpreter. Interpretation within community, in dialogue with others, is an important check for understanding the text.

DARRELL L. BOCK

25 After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. 26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

27 These are the family records of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran, and Haran fathered Lot. 28 Haran died in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans, during his father Terah's lifetime. 29 Abram and Nahor took wives: Abram's wife was named Sarai, † and Nahor's wife was named Milcah. † She was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milcah and Iscah. 30 Sarai was unable to conceive; † she did not have a child.

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot (Haran's son), and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they set out together from Ur of the Chaldeans † to go to the land of Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there. 32 Terah lived 205 years and died in Haran.

11:1 Lit *one lip and the same words* **11:2** Lit *they* **11:2** Or *migrated eastward* **11:5** Or *the descendants of Adam* **11:9** Hb *Babel* **11:9** In Hb, the name for "Babylon," *babel* sounds like the word for "confuse," *balal*.

11:12-13 LXX reads *years and fathered Cainan.* 13*After he fathered Cainan, Arpachshad lived 430 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died. Cainan lived 130 years and fathered Shelah. After he fathered Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and fathered other sons and daughters, and he died* ; Gn 10:24; Lk 3:35-36
11:2 Gn 10:10; 14:1; Dn 1:2 **11:3** Gn 14:10; Ex 2:3 **11:4** Dt 1:28; 9:1; Ps 107:26 **11:5** Gn 18:21; Ex 3:8; 19:11,18,20 **11:8** Gn 11:4; Ps 92:9; Lk 1:51 **11:9** Gn 10:10 **11:10** Gn 2:4; 11:27 **11:24** Jos 24:2 **11:29** Gn 17:15; 20:12 **11:29** Gn 22:20,23; 24:15 **11:30** Gn 25:21; 29:31; Ex 23:26; Jdg 13:2-3; 1Sm 2:5; Jb 24:21; Is 54:1; Lk 1:36; 23:29; Gl 4:27; Heb 11:11 **11:31** Gn 15:7; Neh 9:7; Ac 7:4

11:1-9 Since the previous chapter mentions multiple languages (10:5,20,31), the building of the tower of Babylon (or, "Babel") probably took place sometime during the growth and expansion of the human race just described and not after it. The builders' motives were pride **(Let us make a name for ourselves)** and rebellion **(otherwise, we will be scattered**; see 1:28, 9:1,7). God put a stop to their project by confusing their language and dispersing them. **Babylon** thus had its beginnings as a place where humanity was united in rebellion against God (see also 10:10). This is consistent with other references to Babylon elsewhere in Scripture.

THE CALL OF ABRAM

12 The LORD said to Abram:

Go out from your land,
your relatives,
and your father's house
to the land that I will show you. †
2 I will make you into a great nation, †
I will bless you, †
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing. †
3 I will bless those who bless you, I will curse anyone who treats you with contempt, †
and all the peoples † on earth will be blessed † through you. † †

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. † 5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, 6 Abram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, † at the oak of Moreh. (At that time the Canaanites were in the land.) 7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring † I will give this land." So he

built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him. 8 From there he moved
on to the hill country east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west
and Ai on the east. He built an altar to the LORD there, and he called on the name
of the LORD. † 9 Then Abram journeyed by stages to the Negev.

ABRAM IN EGYPT

10 There was a famine in the land, † so Abram went down to Egypt to stay there
for a while because the famine in the land was severe. 11 When he was about to
enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, "Look, I know what a beautiful woman
you are. 12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife.' They
will kill me but let you live. † 13 Please say you're my sister so it will go well
for me because of you, and my life will be spared on your account." 14 When
Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15
Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, so the woman was taken
to Pharaoh's household. 16 He treated Abram well because of her, and Abram
acquired flocks and herds, male and female donkeys, male and female slaves,
and camels.
17 But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his household with severe plagues because
of Abram's wife Sarai. † 18 So Pharaoh sent for Abram and said, "What have
you done to me? Why didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did you
say, 'She's my sister,' so that I took her as my wife? Now, here is your wife.
Take her and go! " 20 Then Pharaoh gave his men orders about him, and they
sent him away with his wife and all he had.

12:3 Lit *clans* **12:3** Or *will find blessing* **12:3** Or *will bless themselves by you*
12:1 Gn 15:7; Ac 7:3; Heb 11:8 **12:2** Gn 17:4-6; 18:18; 46:3; Dt 26:5 **12:2** Gn 22:17 **12:2** Zch 8:13 **12:3** Gn 27:29; Nm 24:9 **12:3** Gn 18:18; 26:4; 28:14; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:8 **12:4** Gn 11:27,31 **12:6** Gn 35:4; Dt 11:30; Heb 11:9 **12:7** Gn 13:15; Ex 33:1; Ps 105:9-12; Ac 7:5; Gl 3:16 **12:8** Gn 4:26; 21:33 **12:10** Gn 26:1; 43:1 **12:12** Gn 20:1-18; 26:6-11 **12:17** Gn 20:18; 1Ch 16:21; Ps 105:14

12:1-3 The call of **Abram** (later called Abraham) was a decisive step forward in the salvation plan of God, which was first announced in 3:15. God promised him a new **land**, which was inhabited at that time by the Canaanites. Although 11:31-32 could be taken to mean that Abram was called out of Haran, 15:7 makes clear that he was called out of Ur of the Chaldeans. In contrast to the builders of the tower who wanted to make a name for themselves (11:4), God promised Abram that he would **make** Abram's **name great.** Through Abram, **all the peoples on earth will be blessed** (see "God's Purposes in a Christian's Participation in Missions," *p. 1191*). They are in need of blessing because they are all mired in sin (8:21; 11:1-9). It is through Abram's offspring (Hb *zera'*) that this blessing will come, as was the case in 3:15.

12:11-13 Though Abram exercised great faith in obeying God's command to leave his homeland (vv. 1-4), his faith faltered while in Egypt. God had promised him offspring and protection (vv. 2-3), but Abram

nevertheless feared for his life and resorted to deception. Abram's plan was effective in the short-term (v. 16), but God intervened to protect Sarai (later called Sarah) and brought the truth to light (vv. 17-19).

ABRAM AND LOT SEPARATE

13 Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev † — he, his wife, and all he had, and Lot with him. 2 Abram was very rich in livestock, silver, and gold. 3 He went by stages from the Negev to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had formerly been, 4 to the site where he had built the altar. And Abram called on the name of the LORD there. †

5 Now Lot, who was traveling with Abram, also had flocks, herds, and tents. 6 But the land was unable to support them as long as they stayed together, for they had so many possessions that they could not stay together, † 7 and there was quarreling between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. † (At that time the Canaanites and the Perizzites were living in the land.) †

8 So Abram said to Lot, "Please, let's not have quarreling between you and me, or between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, since we are relatives. † 9 Isn't the whole land before you? Separate from me: if you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right, I will go to the left."

10 Lot looked out and saw that the entire plain † of the Jordan † as far as † Zoar † was well watered everywhere like the LORD's garden † and the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) † 11 So Lot chose the entire plain of the Jordan for himself. Then Lot journeyed eastward, and they separated from each other. 12 Abram lived in the land of Canaan, but Lot lived in the cities on the plain and set up his tent near Sodom. 13 (Now the men of Sodom were evil, sinning immensely † against the LORD.) †

14 After Lot had separated from him, the LORD said to Abram, "Look from the place where you are. Look north and south, east and west, †

AND THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

Traditionally, Christians, like the Jews from whom they arose, have read the story of Adam and Eve in the opening chapters of the Bible as describing the first pair of humans from whom all other humans descend. Reading Genesis 1–11 as describing actual events, Christians have concluded (1) humankind is actually one family, with one set of ancestors; (2) God acted supernaturally to form our first parents; and (3) our first ancestors, at the headwaters of the human race, were created morally innocent, and nevertheless were seduced into disobedience and thus brought sin and dysfunction into the world in general and human life in particular.

This is a standard belief in the ancient Christian writers, both those in the East and those in the West. Even though Christians disagree on so many important matters—such as exactly how the first sin affects all people, or how long ago these events happened—they have been united on this basic point, finding it fundamental to their view of the world.

CONTEMPORARY QUESTIONS

Today there are also voices, outside the church and within it, raising questions about whether we should hold this ancient belief any longer. Some ask, How could anything someone else did long ago have any bearing on my life here and now? Even if Adam and Eve really lived, disobeyed God, and were booted out of the garden, what of it? Why should that affect me?

Second, there is the widely acknowledged conclusion that the material in Genesis 1–11 closely parallels what we find in other ancient stories, particularly those from Mesopotamia. Someone might ask, If we do not treat these other stories as history, why should we treat Genesis as such? What makes us think that the Bible writers themselves meant to produce anything unique from those other stories?

Third, we have the dominant theories of the modern sciences. Astrophysicists say that the universe began with a “big bang,” approximately thirteen to fourteen billion years ago. This is or is not a problem for Christians, depending on whether we think Genesis provides a timeline.

A more serious challenge comes from the science of evolutionary biology, with its narrative (as some construe it) of how humans arose through a purely natural process of evolution. Some evolutionary theories make it difficult to speak of the “first” members of a new species. Further, studies of DNA have seemed to imply that we cannot get the genetic diversity we find in the human population unless humanity began with more than two people. Many wonder whether the different people groups of humankind actually arose in separate places, independently of each other—a situation that would mean we are not a unified kind.

WORLDVIEW STAKES

What aspects of the Christian worldview are at stake in this discussion? Certainly there is the matter of whether we can trust the Bible to tell us the true story of who we are and where we came from, and of what has gone wrong—and thus of what God intends to do about it all. Then comes the issue of sin: is it a foreign invader into God’s good world, or is it an inevitable result of chance and time? And what of humans: do our capabilities, which distinguish us from the animal world, come with an obligation to rule that world wisely and lovingly? Is there a pattern for marriage and family life that all humans everywhere should follow? And finally, the Christian worldview traces our hunger for a loving community in which all kinds of people live peaceably and justly to our unified origin as members of one family.

Certainly a first blush reading of Genesis supports the traditional Christian view: we read of how God created the first humans (1:26-27, with 2:5-25 giving a fuller description); their marriage was to be the paradigm for all future sound marriages, and it was the beginning of human families and communities (2:24). Sadly, they disobeyed God and thus brought punishment on themselves and, apparently, all their

descendants (Gn 3–4). From Adam and Eve the rest of "the peoples on earth" (12:3) descended (Gn 10–11)—the very peoples who would be blessed by way of Abram and his family. The genealogies in Genesis 5, 10, and 11 bring us from Adam to Abram, the ancestor of Israel.

Many theologians have now come to realize that the Bible has an overarching storyline, which unifies all the different parts. And that storyline serves as the "Big Story" of the world—it is a narrative that tells us who we are, where we came from, what is wrong, and what God is doing about it. This is why Scripture's historicity matters: biblical faith is grounded in the narrative of God's great works of creation and redemption, and not simply in a list of timeless principles.

THE BIBLICAL STORYLINE AND THE EARLY CHAPTERS IN GENESIS

Good thinking about the biblical storyline leads to a deeper appreciation of Scripture as a whole. In Genesis 12:1-3: Abram's family, Israel, was to be the vehicle of God's light to the Gentiles through living faithfully in God's covenant. But what does this require as a foundation, if it is to be true? It requires that all the Gentiles (non-Jews) need God's light because they are estranged from him by something that does not belong in their lives; and it requires that there be something in those Gentiles that can be enlivened to respond to that light, just as in Israel (the Jews). In other words, these Gentiles have a common origin with Israel as humans, a common set of human capacities, and a common need that stems from an invasive event.

That is, this estrangement from God is unnatural; it is out of step with how things ought to be. Something has come into human experience that produced that estrangement; that something is sin (cp. Ec 7:29, "God made people upright, but they pursued many schemes"). It made its entry into human life at such a time and in such a way that it infects everyone, which means that it came in at the beginning.

In the biblical story sin is an alien intruder; it disturbs God's good creation order. This comes through clearly in the way that the Levitical sacrifices deal with sin: they treat it as a defiling element, which ruins human existence and renders people unworthy to be in God's presence. The sacrifices effect "atonement," "redemption," and "ransom," addressing sin as a defiling intruder that incurs God's displeasure (e.g., Lv 16).

The unnaturalness of sin is also evident in how Wisdom books such as Proverbs connect moral goodness with mental savvy—and wickedness is a kind of stupidity or folly (e.g., Pr 12:1). That is, living in line with God's will is sensible, while living out of step with God is foolish.

The notion that humankind is one family, sharing one set of ancestors—ancestors who, at the headwaters of the human race brought sin and dysfunction into the world—is behind all these factors as an unwavering assumption. The NT authors carry along this assumption. Certainly the apostle Paul spoke this way (e.g., Rm 5:12-21; 1Co 15:20-22,44-49), but the most notable example of this assumption comes from Jesus.

Consider Matthew 19:3-9, in which some Pharisees want to "test" Jesus, which probably means that they wanted to ensnare him into taking sides on a debate between their various schools of thought. So they asked him, "'Is it lawfull for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds?' 'Haven't you read . . . that he who created them in the beginning made them male and female, and he also said, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh"? So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one seperate.'"

Jesus's answer ties together Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Since these people are now one flesh, joined together by God, they should not be separated. The Pharisees then asked why Moses allowed divorce (Mt 19:7, citing Dt 24:1-4), and Jesus explains that it was a concession: "It was not like that from the beginning" (Mt 19:8).

This conversation shows that Jesus viewed the creation account of Genesis 1–2 as setting the ideal for a properly functioning marriage; that was how God intended things to be "from the beginning." The family legislation of Deuteronomy, on the other hand, does not set the ethical norm. It has another function—namely, that of preserving civility in Israel: a function that has become necessary by some change of

circumstances introduced since “the beginning.” The obvious candidate for the change is the sin of Adam and Eve, with its consequences for all humans.

Specialists in the apostle Paul’s writings have come to realize how firmly he rooted his arguments in this overarching narrative of the OT—just as Jesus did. From Romans 1:2-6, it is clear that Paul read the OT as the early chapters of the biblical story, which tells of how God chose Abraham’s family through which to work to restore what was damaged by sin. This ends with the anticipation of a new era in which the Gentiles receive the light. Paul links his key term “good news” (or “gospel”) to the announcement that through the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus this new era has begun (Rm 1:2-6; Gl 3:8-9; cp. Mk 1:15, see also Mt 28:1-20). As Paul tells us, Christian believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are those in whom God is renewing his image for proper human functioning in their individual, family, and community lives (e.g., Col 3:9-10; 2Cor 3:18). There the fractured family is once again united.

When it comes to comparing Adam and Jesus (Rm 5:12-19; 1Co 15:20-23,42-49), Paul’s argument likewise depends on a literal, historical narrative. That is, someone did something (one man trespassed; Rm 5:15), and as a result something happened (sin, death, and condemnation came into the world of human experience). Then Jesus came to deal with the consequences of it all (by his obedience to make the many righteous). The argument gains its coherence from its sequence of events; it is drastically inadequate to say that Paul is merely making a comparison here. Further, consider the notion that people are “in Adam” or “in Christ”: to be “in” someone is to be a member of that people for whom that someone is the representative. All the evidence we have indicates that only actual persons can function as representatives.

The book of Revelation continues this narrative focus: it portrays the final victory of God’s purposes using Edenic and sanctuary imagery to describe perfected human life in a cleansed creation (Rv 22).

Therefore, if we say that being prone to sin is inherent in being human and having a free will (rather than a horrific aberration brought in at an early stage by someone’s disobedience), then we must say that the Bible writers were wrong in describing atonement the way they did, as addressing defilement as an intruder; and we must say that Jesus was wrong to describe his own death in these terms (e.g., Mk 10:45). Further, this approach makes nonsense of the joyful expectation of Christians that they will one day live in a glorified world from which sin and death have been banished (Rv 21:1-8). No Christian would want to imply that those who dwell in a glorified world will be less human because they no longer sin!

From this it follows that we do not have to know exactly how the sin of our first ancestors affects us; it is enough to say that it has done so. In other words, our intuitive sense that the world is not the way it is supposed to be corresponds to reality. Furthermore, if we acknowledge that the stories from other ancient cultures aimed to explain the world, we can see that the Bible writers aimed to tell the true story of our origins: and the Bible’s story rings true.

SCIENCE AND THE EARLY CHAPTERS OF GENESIS

But does not science undermine our confidence that this is the true story of the world and of God’s purposes for it? To reply, we would have to consider whether “science” *could* actually do so. If we require beforehand that science conform to a naturalistic worldview, then it will thus conform: but that does not mean it will tell us the truth. If instead we ask good science to account for the whole range of evidence, then it must account for not simply our biological mechanisms, but also the human moral sense and human reasoning, which assume that our minds partake of something transcending our bodily existence.

We ought further to consider how widespread among all groups of people is the craving for peace and justice, and the recognition that something is amiss about human life. And finally, all humans are indeed one common family, with the same capacities and desires. These features distinguish us from the animal world, leaving a gap between humans and animals that no merely natural process can bridge. The story of Adam and Eve, created good, but who disobeyed and brought sin and misery into their own lives and into ours, answers this exactly. It also provides guidance for sound historical and scientific research into human origins and human nature.

Accepting the biblical story brings a further benefit. If we have a good explanation for why things have

gone wrong, then we find that the Christian hope that God will put them right one day is a secure comfort as well—a comfort that will help us to enjoy life as God's beloved people, even now.

There is room for Christians to disagree over questions of how strictly to interpret the details of Genesis 1–11, how long ago Adam and Eve lived, what kind of process God might have used to form the first man, and how the first disobedience affects us today. These are important questions that we ought not avoid; yet, at the same time, we must recognize that while we may offer differing answers to them, we all have a right to say with confidence that the early chapters of Genesis provide the true front end for the "Big Story" of the world—so long as we hold fast to these basic notions.

C. JOHN COLLINS

15 for I will give you and your offspring forever all the land that you see. † 16 I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, † so that if anyone could count the dust of the earth, then your offspring could be counted. 17 Get up and walk around the land, through its length and width, for I will give it to you."
18 So Abram moved his tent and went to live near the oaks of Mamre at Hebron, † where he built an altar to the LORD.

13:8 Lit *brothers* **13:10** Lit *circle* ; i.e., probably the large round plain where the Jordan River empties into the Dead Sea, also in v. 11 **13:10** Lit *Jordan as you go to* **13:13** Lit *evil and sinful*
13:1 Gn 12:9 **13:4** Gn 12:7,8 **13:6** Gn 36:7 **13:7** Gn 26:20 **13:7** Gn 12:6; 15:20-21 **13:10** Gn 19:17-29 **13:10** Gn 14:2,8; Dt 34:3 **13:10** Gn 2:8-10 **13:10** Gn 19:24-25 **13:13** Gn 18:20; Ezk 16:49; 2Pt 2:7-8 **13:14** Gn 28:14 **13:15** Gn 12:7; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7; 26:4; 28:13; 35:12; Dt 34:4; 2Ch 20:7; Ac 7:5 **13:16** Gn 16:10; 28:14; Nm 23:10 **13:18** Gn 14:13; 18:1; 23:17-19

13:14-17 Abram had given Lot first choice of which land to dwell in (vv. 8-10). After Lot chose the Jordan Valley, Abram lived in the land of Canaan (vv. 10-12). Here God's promises of possession of the land and of numerous descendants echo what he had said earlier in 12:1-3,7.

ABRAM RESCUES LOT

14 In those days King Amraphel of Shinar, † King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam, † and King Tidal of Goiim † 2 waged war against King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gomorrah, King Shinab of Admah, and King Shemeber of Zeboiim, † as well as the king of Bela (that is, Zoar †). 3 All of these came as allies to the Siddim Valley (that is, the Dead Sea †). 4 They were subject to Chedorlaomer for twelve years, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim † in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, † the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites † in the mountains of Seir, as far as El-paran † by the wilderness. 7 Then they came back to invade

En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh †), and they defeated the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who lived in Hazazon-tamar. †
8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out and lined up for battle in the Siddim Valley 9 against King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar — four kings against five. 10 Now the Siddim Valley contained many asphalt pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, † but the rest fled to the mountains. † 11 The four kings took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food and went on. 12 They also took Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, for he was living in Sodom, † and they went on.
13 One of the survivors came and told Abram the Hebrew, † who lived near the oaks belonging to Mamre the Amorite, the brother of Eshcol and the brother of Aner. They were bound by a treaty with † Abram. 14 When Abram heard that his relative had been taken prisoner, he assembled † his 318 trained men, born in his household, † and they went in pursuit as far as Dan. † 15 And he and his servants deployed against them by night, defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah to the north of Damascus. 16 He brought back all the goods and also his relative Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the other people.

MELCHIZEDEK'S BLESSING

17 After Abram returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him in the Shaveh Valley (that is, the King's Valley †). 18 Melchizedek, king of Salem, † † brought out bread and wine; he was a priest to God Most High. † 19 He blessed him and said:

Abram is blessed by God Most High,
Creator † of heaven and earth, 20 and blessed be God Most High who has handed over your enemies to you.

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. †
21 Then the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, but take the possessions for yourself."

22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand in an oath to
the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23 that I will not take a
thread or sandal strap or anything that belongs to you, so you can never say, ‘I
made Abram rich.’ 24 I will take nothing † except what the servants have eaten.
But as for the share of the men who came with me — Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre
— they can take their share.”

14:1 Or *nations* **14:10** Sam, LXX; MT reads *fell there* **14:13** Lit *were possessors of a covenant of* **14:14** Sam; MT reads *poured out* **14:18** = Jerusalem **14:19** Or *Possessor* **14:24** Lit *nothing to me*
14:1 Gn 10:10; 11:2 **14:1** Gn 10:22; Is 11:11; Dn 8:2 **14:2** Hs 11:8 **14:2** Gn 19:22-23 **14:3** Nm 34:12; Dt 3:17; Jos 3:16 **14:5** Gn 15:20; Dt 2:11,20-21; 3:11,13; Jos 12:4 **14:5** Dt 1:4; Jos 9:10 **14:6** Gn 36:20; Dt 2:12,22 **14:6** Gn 21:21; Nm 10:12 **14:7** Nm 13:26 **14:7** 2Ch 20:2 **14:10** Gn 19:17 **14:12** Gn 13:12 **14:13** Gn 39:14; 40:15 **14:14** Gn 12:5; 15:3; 17:27; Ec 2:7 **14:14** Dt 34:1; Jdg 18:29; 1Kg 15:20 **14:17** 2Sm 18:18 **14:18** Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 7:1 **14:18** Ps 57:2 **14:20** Heb 7:4

14:18-20 Abram’s victory led to a seemingly unexpected interaction with **Melchizedek**, **king of Salem** and **priest to God Most High.** After blessing Abram and receiving a tithe from him, this priest-king vanishes from the narrative just as suddenly as he entered it. Despite such a brief appearance, Melchizedek’s importance is confirmed by the only other place in the OT where he is mentioned. In Psalm 110:4, which Jesus cites as referring to himself (see Mt 22:41-45), the Messiah’s priesthood is likened to Melchizedek’s. The author of Hebrews discusses at length these two OT texts that mention Melchizedek since they relate to Jesus’s ministry as a great high priest (Heb 5–7).

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT

15 After these events, the word of the LORD came † to Abram in a vision:

Do not be afraid, † Abram.
I am your shield; †
your reward will be very great.

2 But Abram said, “Lord GOD, what can you give me, since I am childless and
the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” † 3 Abram continued, “Look,
you have given me no offspring, so a slave born in † my house will be my heir.”
4 Now the word of the LORD came to him: “This one will not be your heir;
instead, one who comes from your own body † will be your heir.” 5 He took
him outside and said, “Look at the sky and count the stars, if you are able to
count them.” Then he said to him, “Your offspring will be that numerous.” †
6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. †

7 He also said to him, “I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the
Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.” †
8 But he said, “Lord GOD, how can I know † that I will possess it? ”
9 He said to him, “Bring me a three-year-old cow, a three-year-old female goat,
a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.”
10 So he brought all these to him, cut them in half, and laid the pieces opposite
each other, but he did not cut the birds † in half. 11 Birds of prey came down on
the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. 12 As the sun was setting, a deep
sleep † came over Abram, and suddenly great terror and darkness descended on
him.
13 Then the LORD said to Abram, † “Know this for certain: Your offspring will
be resident aliens † for four hundred years † in a land that does not belong to
them and will be enslaved and oppressed. † 14 However, I will judge the nation
they serve, † and afterward they will go out with many possessions. † 15 But
you will go to your fathers in peace and be buried at a good old age. † 16 In the
fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites has not
yet reached its full measure.” † †
17 When the sun had set and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch
appeared and passed between the divided animals. 18 On that day the LORD made
a covenant with Abram, saying, “I give this land to your offspring, † from the
Brook of Egypt † to the great river, the Euphrates River: 19 the land of the
Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20 Hethites, Perizzites, Rephaim, 21 Amorites,
Canaanites, Girgashites, and Jebusites.”

15:2 Hb obscure **15:3** Lit *a son of* **15:4** Lit *loins* **15:13** Lit *will serve them and they will oppress them* **15:16** Lit *Amorites is not yet complete*

15:1 1Sm 15:10; 2Sm 7:4; 1Kg 6:11; Is 38:4; Jr 1:2 **15:1** Gn 26:24; Is 41:10; Jr 30:10; Lk 1:13,30 **15:1** Dt 33:29; 2Sm 22:3,31; Ps 3:3; 7:10 **15:5** Gn 22:17; 26:4; Ex 32:13; Dt 1:10; 10:22; 1Ch 27:23; Rm 4:18; Heb 11:12 **15:6** Rm 4:3,9,22; Gl 3:6; Jms 2:23 **15:7** Gn 11:31; 12:1; Neh 9:7-8; Ac 7:2-4 **15:8** Jdg 6:17; 2Kg 20:8; Ps 86:17; Is 7:11-13; Lk 1:18 **15:10** Lv 1:17 **15:12** Gn 2:21 **15:13-14** Ac 7:6-7 **15:13** Ex 22:21; 23:9 **15:13** Ex 12:40; Gl 3:17 **15:14** Ex 6:6; 7:4; 12:12 **15:14** Ex 3:22 **15:15** Gn 25:8; 47:30 **15:16** Lv 18:24-28; Dn 8:23; Mt 23:32; 1Th 2:16 **15:18** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 24:7; 26:4; Nm 34:2; Dt 34:4; Jos 21:43; Neh 9:8; Ac 7:5 **15:18** Ex 23:31; Nm 34:1-15; Dt 1:7-8; 2Kg 24:7

15:1-6 The delayed fulfillment of God’s promise of **offspring** (see 12:1-3,7; 13:15-16) resulted in Abram’s complaint here. In the subsequent exchange, God reaffirmed his promise, and **Abram believed the LORD.** That God **credited** Abram’s faith **to him as righteousness** is a lynchpin to Paul’s argument that

righteousness is by faith, not works (Rm 4; Gl 3; see "Faith and Reason," *p. 1387*). Hebrews 11:2-6 implies that faith has always been what pleases God.

15:17-21 God states that Abram's offspring will live in a foreign country and be oppressed there for four hundred years before returning to the land promised to them (vv. 13,16). God's plan for Abram and his offspring thus included a lengthy period of suffering, which itself would be followed by justice and a reward (v. 14). The **covenant** God makes with Abram is connected with his earlier promises (see 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17). God restates his intention to give the promised **land** to Abram's **offspring** (Hb *zera'*). The **smoking fire pot** and **flaming torch** are sometimes used to represent deities in the ancient Near East and here probably represent God. In some ancient Near Eastern ceremonies, a participant might pass between the pieces of an animal as a way of proclaiming a curse on himself should he fail to carry out promises and obligations. He would be saying, in effect, "May I become like this dead animal if I do not fulfill my promise" (see Jr 34:18 for a possible parallel). Here it is God who passes between the **divided animals.** The importance of this covenant is confirmed by the many passages in Scripture that refer to it (e.g., Ex 2:24; 2Kg 13:23; Ps 105:9; Ac 3:25). For more on covenants, see the note on 9:1-17.

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL

16 Abram's wife Sarai had not borne any children for him, but she owned
an Egyptian slave named Hagar. 2 Sarai said to Abram, "Since the LORD
has prevented me from bearing children, go to my slave; perhaps
through her I can build a family." And Abram agreed to what Sarai said. † 3 So
Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar, her Egyptian slave, and gave her to her husband
Abram as a wife for him. This happened after Abram had lived in the land of
Canaan ten years. 4 He slept with † Hagar, and she became pregnant. When she
saw that she was pregnant, her mistress became contemptible to her. 5 Then
Sarai said to Abram, "You are responsible for my suffering! † I put my slave in
your arms, † and when she saw that she was pregnant, I became contemptible to
her. May the LORD judge between me and you." †
6 Abram replied to Sarai, "Here, your slave is in your hands; do whatever you
want with her." Then Sarai mistreated her so much that she ran away from her.
7 The angel of the LORD † found her by a spring in the wilderness, the spring on
the way to Shur.

ISLAM

Islamic culture is diverse. The unifying factors of this global people group are their common Islamic beliefs and the use of Arabic as the language of prayer. In this article, we will explore three important questions and Islamic answers.

THREE QUESTIONS

1. WHO IS GOD?

Muslims believe the Creator God is a simple, indivisible Spirit who is far above relating to his creation. He has decreed and revealed Islam to be the religion of humanity.

There are problems with both parts of this belief, however. When a Muslim talks about God, his or her concept is different from God as presented by Jesus Christ and the Bible. Allah or "the God" is the only word used to translate the Bible's word for God in Arabic Bibles. Muslims will quickly point out that God has no one with him and that he is beyond having a Son.

In addition to their rejection of the incarnation of Jesus and God's entering into his own creation, they reject the biblical presentation of God who is simultaneously Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is regarded as polytheism, or more accurately, Tri-theism. Rather, Islam presents God as the transcendent, remote observer who is sovereign over all things, while the Bible portrays God as transcendent, sovereign, and intimate. These are significant differences related to who God is.

According to Muslims, God planned for humanity to worship through Islam from the beginning. They believe that even today all babies are born with an inclination toward Islam. The essential meaning of *Muslim* is "one who is submitted to God," and Christians agree that God wants all to submit to him. Nevertheless, we disagree on the plan for submission. The Bible teaches that God laid out a way back to himself before creation. In Islam, God simply forgives sin and lays out a plan for a worshipping community and a life of submission. For Muslims, knowing what God wants people to do is the whole purpose and content of God's revelation, the Qur'an. In the Bible, revelation presents the sovereign God choosing, before creation, to adopt sons and daughters through receiving his own personal self-sacrifice as the slain Lamb. The Bible is the story of God revealing himself to his creation.

2. WHAT IS HUMANITY'S PROBLEM?

Muslims believe that while people sin, these are actions against themselves and not against God. God can simply and mercifully absolve whom he pleases of sin. Sin is not seen as rebellion against him but as a mistake in a person's thoughts, attitudes, or actions.

In Islam, humanity is not damaged by Adam's sin to the extent that people cannot please God in this world. God will judge all human actions and will mercifully grant entrance into paradise to the faithful. Because the Muslim community externally reinforces correct Islamic behavior, many outsiders see the religion as teaching "works based" salvation. This, however, is incorrect. Entering paradise (salvation) is something based solely on God's decision. While he weighs all aspects of life, no action or attitude can assure a Muslim of entry into paradise except for dying in the cause of Islam. This lack of assurance causes most Muslims to think of God with abject fear that he would capriciously reject them. For this reason, Muhammad requested that Muslims pray for him because he did not know if God would allow him into paradise.

3. HOW DOES GOD COMMUNICATE HIS SOLUTION WITH HUMANITY?

The simple answer is through revelation (*wahy*) in which God's message was delivered to messengers (e.g., Moses, David, Jesus, and Muhammad) as well as hundreds of prophets. Islam teaches that each of the biblical messengers recognized and predicted the ministry of Muhammad. They point to two passages where they claim this happened, but was masked by Christians and Jews. First, God promises the people of

Israel a successor to Moses (Dt 18:15-22). The prophet is to be like Moses in that he is raised up from among the family of Israel. Muslims assume, incorrectly, that Muhammad's descent from Ishmael would qualify him for this role. Second, Jesus promises a Comforter to his disciples (Jn 14:16-17; 16:5-11). Muslims claim that there is a scribal error in this passage and that Muhammad was the promised one spoken of by Jesus. The problem with this interpretation is the context. Jesus offered an immediate and constant presence to guide his disciples as he was about to leave them by way of his death and resurrection. Muhammad's birth 600 years later would be no comfort to them at all.

THE WORLDVIEW OF ISLAM

The worldview of Islam is constructed differently from that of Christianity and of the West in general. A major element in the formation of a worldview is the way that cultures make moral decisions. Western culture in general forms moral decisions based on innocence or guilt; Islamic cultures are based in honor or shame. Both types of cultures form moral values, but the basis for considering an action as "the right thing to do" is different. Generally, in the West, to say "it's the right thing to do" means that if you do this, people will see you as blameless and innocent. The parallel in Islamic cultures means that the action will bring honor to your clan—the extended family, nation, or the Islamic community—and will avoid shame. These principles inform and guide Muslims in developing cultural norms, values, and worldview. In short, Islam and Islamic culture is as complex as Christianity and as diverse as Western culture.

As for the place of reason in worldview formation, all Muslims limit the power of rational thought to build their religious communities and culture. This is why qur'anic statements that conflict with historical facts are not a problem for Muslims. In Islam, history is dwarfed in the presence of the Qur'an. This unquestioning attitude has spread to much qur'anic interpretation. Traditional explanations of truth have become very authoritative.

The content of Islamic revelation consists solely of God's decrees and desires. God's character and nature —other than the fact that he is a solitary Spirit—is not the subject of revelation. Furthermore, Islamic inspiration and transmission of the divine message differs from Christian revelation in several ways.

First, the concept of the Word of God is different for Muslims. Whereas the Bible is God's Word revealed to various persons he inspired throughout history, the Qur'an is understood to be the exact copy of a book of divine speech that is recorded in a permanent form, residing with God. The Arabic Qur'an was delivered to Muhammad by the angel Gabriel in a piecemeal fashion. The Qur'an essentially exists only in Arabic. All translations of the Qur'an are merely aids to understanding it.

Second, the content is different. The Bible seeks to reveal God and enable a relationship with him. The Qur'an seeks to reveal that God is one and that identifying someone as his associate is blasphemy. The Qur'an presents God's decrees to create a community that worships him accurately. The third element that an Islamic revealed book contains is witness to the preceding and succeeding messengers and books of revelation.

Finally, the Qur'an precludes the possibility of God becoming flesh and revealing himself personally. Thus, the speech of God is revealed by the angel Gabriel. But in Jesus Christ, God presents himself clearly by providing redemption through the cross and empty tomb.

MICHAEL H. EDENS

8 He said, "Hagar, slave of Sarai, where have you come from and where are you going? "
She replied, "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai."
9 The angel of the LORD said to her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her authority." 10 The angel of the LORD said to her, "I will greatly multiply your

offspring, † and they will be too many to count."
11 The angel of the LORD said to her, "You have conceived and will have a son.
You will name him Ishmael, † for the LORD has heard your cry of affliction. 12
This man will be like a wild donkey. His hand will be against everyone, and
everyone's hand will be against him; he will settle near all his relatives." †
13 So she named the LORD who spoke to her: "You are El-roi," † for she said,
"In this place, have I actually seen † the one who sees me?" † 14 That is why
the well is called Beer-lahai-roi. † It is between Kadesh and Bered.
15 So Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son (whom Hagar
bore) Ishmael. 16 Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to
him.

16:2 Lit *Abram listened to the voice of Sarai* **16:4** Lit *He came to* **16:5** Or *"May my suffering be on you!* **16:5** Lit *bosom* **16:11** = God Hears **16:13** = God Sees Me **16:13** Hb obscure **16:14** = Well of the Living One Who Sees Me

16:5 Gn 31:49; Jos 22:25; 1Sm 24:12 **16:7** Gn 22:11; Ex 3:2; Nm 22:22; Jdg 2:1; 2Sm 24:16; 1Kg 19:7; 2Kg 19:35; Ps 34:7 **16:10** Gn 15:5; 17:2; 26:24; Lv 26:9; Dt 7:13; 30:5; Ps 107:38 **16:12** Gn 25:18 **16:13** Gn 32:30; Ex 33:23; Ps 139:1-12

16:1-16 Sarai's decision to give her slave **Hagar** to Abram **as a wife** took place about ten years after God's initial promise of offspring (cp. 12:4 and 16:16). The practice of a barren wife giving a maidservant to her husband is also found in 30:1-5 and is attested in marriage contracts of neighboring cultures of the same general period. Nevertheless, the subsequent narrative indicates that Sarai and Abraham should have continued waiting on God. Contrary to what Sarai thought, her age and barrenness were not insurmountable (17:15-22). In time she would bear a son, Isaac, who is the one through whom the promises would be fulfilled (21:1-13).

COVENANT CIRCUMCISION

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him,
saying, "I am God Almighty. † Live † in my presence and be
blameless. † 2 I will set up my covenant between me and you, and I will
multiply you greatly."
3 Then Abram fell facedown and God spoke with him: 4 "As for me, here is my
covenant with you: You will become the father of many nations. 5 Your name
will no longer be Abram; † your name will be Abraham, † for I will make you
the father of many nations. † 6 I will make you extremely fruitful and will make
nations and kings come from you. 7 I will confirm my covenant that is between
me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a

permanent covenant † to be your God and the God of your offspring after you. † 8 And to you and your future offspring † I will give the land where you are residing — all the land of Canaan — as a permanent possession, † and I will be their God."
9 God also said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations are to keep my covenant. 10 This is my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you, which you are to keep: Every one of your males must be circumcised. 11 You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and you. † † 12 Throughout your generations, every male among you is to be circumcised † at eight days old — every male born in your household or purchased from any foreigner and not your offspring. 13 Whether born in your household or purchased, he must be circumcised. My covenant will be marked in your flesh as a permanent covenant. 14 If any male is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that man will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."
15 God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, do not call her Sarai, for Sarah † will be her name. 16 I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. † I will bless her, and she will produce nations; kings of peoples will come from her."
17 Abraham fell facedown. Then he laughed † and said to himself, "Can a child be born to a hundred-year-old man? Can Sarah, a ninety-year-old woman, give birth?" 18 So Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael were acceptable † to you!"
19 But God said, "No. Your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will name him Isaac. † I will confirm my covenant with him as a permanent covenant for his future offspring. 20 As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I will certainly bless him; I will make him fruitful and will multiply him greatly. He will father twelve tribal leaders, † and I will make him into a great nation. 21 But I will confirm my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this time next year." †
22 When he finished talking with him, God withdrew † from Abraham. †
23 So Abraham took his son Ishmael and those born in his household or purchased — every male among the members of Abraham's household — and

he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that very day, just as God had said to him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised, 25 and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when the flesh of his foreskin was circumcised. 26 On that same day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised. 27 And all the men of his household — whether born in his household or purchased from a foreigner — were circumcised with him.

17:1 Or *Walk* **17:5** = The Father Is Exalted **17:5** = Father of a Multitude **17:11** *You* in v. 11 is pl. **17:15** = Princess **17:18** Lit *alive* **17:19** = He Laughs **17:22** Lit *went up*, or *ascended*
17:1 Gn 28:3; 35:11; Ex 6:3 **17:1** Gn 6:9; Ps 15:2; Lk 1:6 **17:5** Gn 35:11; 48:19; Rm 4:11-12,16-18 **17:7** Gn 9:16 **17:7** Ex 6:7; Lv 11:45; 26:12,45; Dt 29:13; Heb 11:16; Rv 21:7 **17:8** Gl 3:16 **17:8** Gn 48:4; Ac 7:5 **17:11** Ex 12:48; Dt 10:16; Ac 7:8; Rm 4:11 **17:12** Lv 12:3; Lk 1:59; 2:21; Php 3:5 **17:16** Gn 18:10 **17:17** Gn 21:6-7; Rm 4:19 **17:20** Gn 25:13-16 **17:21** Gn 18:10,14; 21:1 **17:22** Gn 35:13

17:11 Just as the rainbow was the sign of the covenant God made with Noah (9:12), circumcision was **a sign of the covenant** God made with Abraham in 15:7-21. Circumcision also generally distinguished Israelites from their neighbors (Gn 34:14-15; Ex 12:48; 1Sm 17:26; Ezk 44:9; though see Jr 9:25-26).

ABRAHAM'S THREE VISITORS

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham at the oaks of Mamre † while he was sitting at the entrance of his tent during the heat of the day. 2 He looked up, and he saw three men standing near him. † When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them, bowed to the ground, 3 and said, "My lord, if I have found favor with you, please do not go on past your servant. 4 Let a little water be brought, that you may wash your feet and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 I will bring a bit of bread so that you may strengthen yourselves. †
This is why you have passed your servant's way. Later, you can continue on."
"Yes," they replied, "do as you have said."
6 So Abraham hurried into the tent and said to Sarah, "Quick! Knead three measures † of fine flour and make bread." † 7 Abraham ran to the herd and got a tender, choice calf. He gave it to a young man, who hurried to prepare it. 8 Then Abraham took curds † and milk, as well as the calf that he had prepared, and set them before the men. He served † them as they ate under the tree.

SARAH LAUGHS

9 "Where is your wife Sarah? " they asked him.
"There, in the tent," he answered.

10 The LORD said, “I will certainly come back to you in about a year’s time, and your wife Sarah will have a son!” † Now Sarah was listening at the entrance of the tent behind him.

11 Abraham and Sarah were old and getting on in years. † Sarah had passed the age of childbearing. † † 12 So she laughed to herself: “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I have delight?” †

13 But the LORD asked Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, saying, ‘Can I really have a baby when I’m old?’ 14 Is anything impossible for the LORD? † At the appointed time I will come back to you, and in about a year she will have a son.”

15 Sarah denied it. “I did not laugh,” she said, because she was afraid.
But he replied, “No, you did laugh.”

ABRAHAM’S PLEA FOR SODOM

16 The men got up from there and looked out over Sodom, and Abraham was walking with them to see them off. 17 Then the LORD said, “Should I hide what I am about to do from Abraham? † 18 Abraham is to become a great and powerful nation, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed through him. †

19 For I have chosen † him so that he will command his children and his house after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. This is how the LORD will fulfill to Abraham what he promised him.” 20 Then the LORD said, “The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is immense, and their sin is extremely serious. 21 I will go down † to see if what they have done justifies the cry that has come up to me. If not, I will find out.”

22 The men turned from there and went toward Sodom † while Abraham remained standing before the LORD. † 23 Abraham stepped forward and said, “Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked? † 24 What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away instead of sparing the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people who are in it? 25 You could not possibly do such a thing: to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. You could not possibly do that! Won’t the Judge of the whole earth do what is just?” †

26 The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.” †
27 Then Abraham answered, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord — even though I am dust and ashes — 28 suppose the fifty righteous lack five. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five? ”
He replied, “I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.”
29 Then he spoke to him again, “Suppose forty are found there? ”
He answered, “I will not do it on account of forty.”
30 Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak further. Suppose thirty are found there? ”
He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”
31 Then he said, “Since I have ventured to speak to my lord, suppose twenty are found there? ”
He replied, “I will not destroy it on account of twenty.”
32 Then he said, “Let my lord not be angry, and I will speak one more time. † Suppose ten are found there? ”
He answered, “I will not destroy it on account of ten.” 33 When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he departed, and Abraham returned to his place.

18:5 Lit *may sustain your heart* **18:6** Lit *three seahs* ; about 21 quarts **18:6** A round, thin, unleavened bread **18:8** Or *butter* **18:8** Lit *was standing by* **18:11** Lit *days* **18:11** Lit *The way of women had ceased for Sarah* **18:19** Lit *known* **18:22** Alt Hb tradition reads *while the Lord remained standing before Abraham*
18:1 Gn 13:18; 14:13; 23:17-19 **18:2** Gn 18:16,22; 19:1; 32:24; Jos 5:13; Jdg 13:6-11; Heb 13:2 **18:10** Gn 17:10; 21:1; Rm 9:9 **18:11** Gn 17:17; Rm 4:19; Heb 11:11-12 **18:12** Gn 17:17; Lk 1:18; 1Pt 3:6 **18:14** Jb 34:10; Jr 32:17,27; Mt 19:26; Mk 10:27; Lk 1:37; 18:27; Heb 6:18 **18:17** Am 3:7 **18:18** Gn 12:3; 26:4; Gl 3:8 **18:21** Gn 11:5; Ex 3:8; Ps 14:2 **18:22** Gn 19:1 **18:23** Ex 23:7; Nm 16:22; 2Sm 24:17; Ps 11:4-7 **18:25** Dt 1:16-17; 32:4; Jb 8:3,20; Ps 58:11; 94:2; Is 3:10-11; Rm 3:5-6 **18:26** Jr 5:1 **18:32** Jdg 6:39

18:9-15 As he had done in 17:15-17, God promised that Abraham and Sarah would have **a son**, despite their old age. The idea was so preposterous to them that in both instances one of them **laughed** (17:17; 18:12-13). But nothing is impossible for the Lord.

18:17 This remarkable question implies that God felt compelled to reveal to **Abraham** what he was about **to do** to Sodom and Gomorrah. It shows their close relationship (see Am 3:7; Ps 25:14), which is confirmed by other passages that call Abraham a “friend of God” (2Ch 20:7; Is 41:8; Jms 2:23).

18:23-33 Abraham based his intercession on an appeal to God’s justice: **Will you really sweep away the righteous with the wicked?** (see Nm 16:22 for Moses’s similar appeal following Korah’s rebellion). What follows is an exchange in which Abraham first asks God to spare Sodom if fifty righteous people can be found in the city. As Abraham continues to decrease this already small number, God affirms that he will spare the city if these even smaller numbers of righteous people can be found there. In answer to Abraham’s original question, the clear implication is that God does not sweep away the righteous with the wicked and that he does not treat “the righteous and the wicked alike” (v. 25).

THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM AND GOMORRAH

19 The two angels entered Sodom † in the evening as Lot was sitting in
Sodom's gateway. When Lot saw them, he got up to meet them. He
bowed with his face to the ground 2 and said, "My lords, turn aside to your
servant's house, wash your feet, and spend the night. Then you can get up early
and go on your way."
"No," they said. "We would rather spend the night in the square." 3 But he urged
them so strongly that they followed him and went into his house. He prepared a
feast and baked unleavened bread for them, and they ate.
4 Before they went to bed, the men of the city of Sodom, both young and old,
the whole population, surrounded the house. 5 They called out to Lot and said,
"Where are the men who came to you tonight? Send them out to us so we can
have sex with them! " †
6 Lot went out to them at the entrance and shut the door behind him. 7 He said,
"Don't do this evil, my brothers. 8 Look, I've got two daughters who haven't
been intimate with a man. † I'll bring them out to you, and you can do whatever
you want † to them. However, don't do anything to these men, because they
have come under the protection of my roof."
9 "Get out of the way! " they said, adding, "This one came here as an alien, but
he's acting like a judge! † Now we'll do more harm to you than to them." They
put pressure on Lot and came up to break down the door. 10 But the angels †
reached out, brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11 They
struck the men who were at the entrance of the house, both young and old, with
blindness † so that they were unable to find the entrance. †
12 Then the angels said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here: a son-in-law,
your sons and daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get
them out of this place, 13 for we are about to destroy this place because the
outcry against its people is so great before the LORD, that the LORD has sent us to
destroy it." †
14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were going to marry † his
daughters. "Get up," he said. "Get out of this place, for the LORD is about to
destroy the city! " † But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

15 At daybreak the angels urged Lot on: “Get up! Take your wife and your two
daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment † of the
city.” 16 But he hesitated. Because of the LORD’s compassion for him, the men
grabbed his hand, his wife’s hand, and the hands of his two daughters. They
brought him out and left him outside the city.
17 As soon as the angels got them outside, one of them † said, “Run for your
lives! Don’t look back and don’t stop anywhere on the plain! Run to the
mountains, or you will be swept away! ”
18 But Lot said to them, “No, my lords † — please. 19 Your servant has indeed
found favor with you, and you have shown me great kindness by saving my life.
But I can’t run to the mountains; the disaster will overtake me, and I will die. 20
Look, this town is close enough for me to flee to. It is a small place. Please let
me run to it — it’s only a small place, isn’t it? — so that I can survive.”
21 And he said to him, “All right, † I’ll grant your request † about this matter
too and will not demolish the town you mentioned. 22 Hurry up! Run to it, for I
cannot do anything until you get there.” Therefore the name of the city is
Zoar. † †
23 The sun had risen over the land when Lot reached Zoar. 24 Then out of the
sky the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah burning sulfur from the LORD. †
25 He demolished these cities, the entire plain, all the inhabitants of the cities,
and whatever grew on the ground. 26 But Lot’s wife looked back and became a
pillar of salt. †
27 Early in the morning Abraham went to the place where he had stood before
the LORD. † 28 He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of
the plain, and he saw that smoke was going up from the land like the smoke of a
furnace. 29 So it was, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered
Abraham and brought Lot out of the middle of the upheaval when he demolished
the cities where Lot had lived.

THE ORIGIN OF MOAB AND AMMON

30 Lot departed from Zoar and lived in the mountains along with his two
daughters, because he was afraid to live in Zoar. Instead, he and his two
daughters lived in a cave. 31 Then the firstborn said to the younger, “Our father
is old, and there is no man in the land to sleep with us as is the custom of all the

land. 32 Come, let's get our father to drink wine so that we can sleep with him
and preserve our father's line." 33 So they got their father to drink wine that
night, and the firstborn came and slept with her father; he did not know when she
lay down or when she got up.
34 The next day the firstborn said to the younger, "Look, I slept with my father
last night. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight so you can go sleep with
him and we can preserve our father's line." 35 That night they again got their
father to drink wine, and the younger went and slept with him; he did not know
when she lay down or when she got up.
36 So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. 37 The firstborn
gave birth to a son and named him Moab. † He is the father of the Moabites of
today. † 38 The younger also gave birth to a son, and she named him Ben-
ammi. † He is the father of the Ammonites of today. †

19:8 Lit *do what is good in your eyes* **19:10** Lit *men*, also in v. 12 **19:11** Or *a blinding light* **19:14** Lit *take* **19:15** Or *iniquity*, or *guilt* **19:17** LXX, Syr, Vg read *outside, they* **19:18** Or *my Lord*, or *my lord* **19:21** Or *"Look!* **19:21** Lit *I will lift up your face* **19:22** In Hb, the name *Zoar* is related to "small" in v. 20; its previous name was "Bela"; Gn 14:2. **19:37** = From My Father **19:38** = Son of My People
19:1 Gn 18:2,22 **19:5** Lv 18:22; Jdg 19:22 **19:8** Jdg 19:24 **19:9** Ex 2:14 **19:11** Dt 28:28-29; 2Kg 6:18; Ac 13:11 **19:13** Gn 18:20-21; Ex 3:7; 22:23; 1Sm 9:16; Jb 27:9 **19:14** Nm 16:21,26,45; Jr 51:6; Rv 18:4 **19:22** Gn 14:2 **19:24** Dt 29:23; Ps 11:6; Is 13:19; Jr 20:16; Ezk 16:49-50; Lk 17:28-29; 2Pt 2:6-8; Jd 7 **19:26** Lk 17:32 **19:27** Gn 18:22 **19:37** Dt 2:9 **19:38** Dt 2:19

19:4-5 The sin of Sodom was characterized earlier as being "extremely serious" (18:20; see also 13:13). These verses suggest that Sodom's sin included homosexual relations (see also Jd 1:7), even brazenly so (see also Is 3:9). The pervasiveness of this sin in Sodom is indicated by the phrase **both young and old, the whole population.** Later, Ezekiel states that Sodom's sin also included pride and mistreatment of the poor and needy (Ezk 16:49-50). See "Engaging LGBT Advocates," *p. 1392*.

19:24-29 Though Abraham never said why he was trying to bargain down to ten righteous people (18:23-33), God knew he was concerned for his nephew Lot and his family. In an act of mercy, God **brought Lot out of the middle of the upheaval** even though the conditions for sparing the city had not been met. Thus, God destroyed the wicked, but saved Lot and his daughters for Abraham's sake. The utter destruction of Sodom is referred to repeatedly in Scripture as an example of the severity of God's judgment (e.g. Dt 29:23; Is 1:9; Jr 49:18; Mt 10:15; Lk 17:29; 2Pt 2:6). Sodom is also an example of extreme sinfulness (e.g., Dt 32:32; Is 1:10; Jr 23:14; Ezk 16:46-56; Rv 11:8).

19:36-38 The **Moabites** and **Ammonites** would become enemies of Israel, as many OT passages attest (e.g., Nm 24:17; Jdg 3:12-30; 2Ch 20; Ps 83:5-8; Jr 48:1–49:6).

SARAH RESCUED FROM ABIMELECH

20 From there Abraham traveled to the region of the Negev and settled
between Kadesh and Shur. While he was staying in Gerar, † 2

Abraham said about his wife Sarah, “She is my sister.” † So King Abimelech of Gerar had Sarah brought to him.
3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, “You are about to die because of the woman you have taken, for she is a married woman.” †
4 Now Abimelech had not approached her, so he said, “Lord, would you destroy a nation even though it is innocent? 5 Didn’t he himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ I did this with a clear conscience † and clean † hands.”
6 Then God said to him in the dream, “Yes, I know that you did this with a clear conscience. † I have also kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I have not let you touch her. 7 Now return the man’s wife, for he is a prophet, † and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not return her, know that you will certainly die, you and all who are yours.”
8 Early in the morning Abimelech got up, called all his servants together, and personally † told them all these things, and the men were terrified.
9 Then Abimelech called Abraham in and said to him, “What have you done to us? How did I sin against you that you have brought such enormous guilt on me and on my kingdom? You have done things to me that should never be done.” †
10 Abimelech also asked Abraham, “What made you do this? ”
11 Abraham replied, “I thought, ‘There is absolutely no fear of God in this place. † They will kill me because of my wife.’ 12 Besides, she really is my sister, the daughter of my father though not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife. 13 So when God had me wander from my father’s house, † I said to her: Show your loyalty to me wherever we go and say about me: ‘He’s my brother.’ ” †
14 Then Abimelech took flocks and herds and male and female slaves, gave them to Abraham, and returned his wife Sarah to him. 15 Abimelech said, “Look, my land is before you. † Settle wherever you want.” † 16 And he said to Sarah, “Look, I am giving your brother one thousand pieces of silver. It is a verification of your honor † to all who are with you. You are fully vindicated.”

17 Then Abraham prayed to God, † and God healed Abimelech, his wife, and
his female slaves so that they could bear children, 18 for the LORD had
completely closed all the wombs in Abimelech's household on account of Sarah,
Abraham's wife.

20:3 Lit *is possessed by a husband* **20:5** Lit *with integrity of my heart* **20:5** Lit *cleanness of my* **20:6** Lit *with integrity of your heart* **20:8** Lit *in their ears* **20:15** Lit *Settle in the good in your eyes* **20:16** Lit *a covering of the eyes*

20:1 Gn 26:1,6 **20:2** Gn 12:13; 26:7 **20:7** 1Sm 7:5; 2Kg 5:11; Jb 42:8 **20:9** Gn 12:19; 26:9 **20:11** Neh 5:15; Pr 16:6 **20:13** Gn 12:1 **20:13** Gn 12:13; 20:5 **20:15** Gn 13:9; 34:10; 47:6 **20:17** Nm 12:13; 21:7; Jms 5:16

20:1-3 Similar to what had happened in Egypt in 12:10-20, Abraham lied about his wife Sarah while in Gerar. In both instances, Abraham's deception is motivated by fear for his life (12:12; 20:11), and the truth comes out when God intervenes to protect Sarah (12:17; 20:3). As was the case previously, Abraham's faith faltered on this issue, despite God's promises (12:2-3; 15:1; 17:15-16).

20:11 Abraham underestimated the character of the people of Gerar. He had thought that **There is absolutely no fear of God in this place.** On the contrary, Abimelech had acted **with a clear conscience and clean hands**, as God himself had confirmed. Furthermore, Abimelech's servants **were terrified** when they heard about the dream, and Abimelech himself was indignant at Abraham because of his lie.

THE BIRTH OF ISAAC

21 The LORD came to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah
what he had promised. † 2 Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to
Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time God had told him. † 3 Abraham
named his son who was born to him — the one Sarah bore to him — Isaac. † 4
When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God had
commanded him. † 5 Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was
born to him. †

6 Sarah said, "God has made me laugh, and everyone who hears will laugh with
me." † † 7 She also said, "Who would have told Abraham that Sarah would
nurse children? Yet I have borne a son for him † in his old age."

HAGAR AND ISHMAEL SENT AWAY

8 The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham held a great feast on the day
Isaac was weaned. 9 But Sarah saw the son mocking — the one Hagar the
Egyptian had borne to Abraham. † 10 So she said to Abraham, "Drive out this
slave with her son, for the son of this slave will not be a coheir with my son
Isaac! " †

11 This was very distressing to † Abraham because of his son. 12 But God said
to Abraham, “Do not be distressed † about the boy and about your slave.
Whatever Sarah says to you, listen to her, because your offspring will be traced
through Isaac, † 13 and I will also make a nation of the slave’s son † because he
is your offspring.”
14 Early in the morning Abraham got up, took bread and a waterskin, put them
on Hagar’s shoulders, and sent her and the boy away. She left and wandered in
the Wilderness of Beer-sheba. 15 When the water in the skin was gone, she left
the boy under one of the bushes 16 and went and sat at a distance, about a
bowshot away, for she said, “I can’t bear to watch the boy die! ” While she sat at
a distance, she † wept loudly. †
17 God heard the boy crying, and the † angel of God called to Hagar from
heaven and said to her, “What’s wrong, Hagar? Don’t be afraid, for God has
heard the boy crying from the place where he is. 18 Get up, help the boy up, and
grasp his hand, for I will make him a great nation.” 19 Then God opened her
eyes, † and she saw a well. So she went and filled the waterskin and gave the
boy a drink. 20 God was with the boy, and he grew; he settled in the wilderness
and became an archer. 21 He settled in the Wilderness of Paran, and his mother
got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

ABRAHAM’S COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH

22 At that time Abimelech, accompanied by Phicol the commander of his
army, † said to Abraham, “God is with you in everything you do. † 23 Swear to
me by God here and now, that you will not break an agreement with me or with
my children and descendants. As I have been loyal to you, so you will be loyal to
me and to the country where you are a resident alien.”
24 And Abraham said, “I swear it.” 25 But Abraham complained to Abimelech
because of the well that Abimelech’s servants had seized. †
26 Abimelech replied, “I don’t know who did this thing. You didn’t report
anything to me, so I hadn’t heard about it until today.”
27 Abraham took flocks and herds and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of
them made a covenant. † 28 Abraham separated seven ewe lambs from the

flock. 29 And Abimelech said to Abraham, “Why have you separated these seven ewe lambs? ”

30 He replied, “You are to accept the seven ewe lambs from me so that this act † will serve as my witness that I dug this well.” 31 Therefore that place was called Beer-sheba † † because it was there that the two of them swore an oath. 32 After they had made a covenant at Beer-sheba, Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, left and returned to the land of the Philistines.

33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God. † 34 And Abraham lived as an alien in the land of the Philistines for many days.

21:6 Isaac = He Laughs; Gn 17:19 **21:7** Sam, Tg Jonathan; MT omits *him* **21:11** Lit *was very bad in the eyes of* **21:12** Lit *“Let it not be bad in your eyes* **21:16** LXX reads *the boy* **21:17** Or *an* **21:30** Lit *that it* **21:31** = Well of the Oath, or Seven Wells

21:1 Gn 17:16; 18:10; Gl 4:23 **21:2** Gn 17:21; 18:10,14; Heb 11:11 **21:3** Gn 17:19 **21:4** Gn 17:10,12; Ac 7:8 **21:5** Gn 17:1,17; Rm 4:19 **21:6** Gn 18:12-15 **21:9** Gn 16:1,15; Gl 4:29 **21:10** Gl 4:30 **21:12** Rm 9:7; Heb 11:18 **21:13** Gn 16:10; 21:18; 25:12-18 **21:16** Jr 6:26; Am 8:10 **21:19** Nm 22:31; 2Kg 6:17-18,20; Lk 24:16,31 **21:22** Gn 20:2; 26:1,26 **21:22** Gn 26:28 **21:25** Gn 26:15,18,20-22 **21:27** Gn 26:31 **21:31** Gn 26:33 **21:33** Ps 45:6; 48:14; 90:2; 93:2; Is 40:28; Jr 10:10; Rm 16:26; Heb 13:8

21:1-7 Twenty-five years after the initial calling and promises (12:1-4), God fulfilled his word to Abraham and Sarah. There was a lengthy period of waiting, but he had done **as he had said**, as **he had promised.** Sarah was barren (11:30) and past the age of childbearing at ninety years old (17:17; 18:11), but God was true to his word. What is impossible to the human mind, even to the point of being laughable (17:17; 18:12; 21:6), is not impossible for the Lord (18:14).

21:12 God’s covenant promises to Abraham would be fulfilled **through Isaac**, not Ishmael (see also 17:19,21; Rm 9:7; Heb 11:18). Ishmael’s mocking of his half brother (v. 9) seems to match his mother Hagar’s contempt for Sarah previously (16:4; see also Gl 4:29). As was the case before (16:5-6), Sarah was provoked, and her desire to expel Hagar and Ishmael was confirmed by God (21:10-12). Sarah’s conflicts with her Egyptian slave, along with Abraham and Sarah’s troublesome stay in Egypt earlier (12:10-20), foreshadow Israel’s conflicts and troubles as slaves to the Egyptians as recorded in the book of Exodus.

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC

22 After these things God tested Abraham † and said to him, “Abraham! ”
“Here I am,” he answered.

2 “Take your son,” he said, “your only son Isaac, whom you love, † go to the land of Moriah, † and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.”

3 So Abraham got up early in the morning, † saddled his donkey, and took with him two of his young men and his son Isaac. He split wood for a burnt offering

and set out to go to the place God had told him about. 4 On the third day † Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there to worship; then we’ll come back to you.” 6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac. † In his hand he took the fire and the knife, † and the two of them walked on together.

7 Then Isaac spoke to his father Abraham and said, “My father.”

And he replied, “Here I am, my son.”

Isaac said, “The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering? ”

8 Abraham answered, “God himself will provide † † the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.” Then the two of them walked on together.

9 When they arrived at the place that God had told him about, Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood. He bound his son Isaac † and placed him on the altar † on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out and took the knife to slaughter his son.

11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, “Abraham, Abraham! ”

He replied, “Here I am.”

12 Then he said, “Do not lay a hand on the boy or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your only son from me.” †

13 Abraham looked up and saw a ram † caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. 14 And Abraham named that place The LORD Will Provide, † so today it is said: “It will be provided † on the LORD’s mountain.”

15 Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, “By myself I have sworn,” † this is the LORD’s declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, 17 I will indeed bless you † and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky † and the sand on the seashore. † Your offspring will possess the city gates of their enemies. † 18 And all the nations of the earth will be blessed † by your offspring † because you have obeyed my command.”

19 Abraham went back to his young men, and they got up and went together to Beer-sheba. And Abraham settled in Beer-sheba.

REBEKAH'S FAMILY

20 Now after these things Abraham was told, "Milcah also has borne sons to your brother Nahor: † 21 Uz his firstborn, his brother Buz, Kemuel the father of Aram, 22 Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." 23 And Bethuel fathered Rebekah. † Milcah bore these eight to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

22:8 Lit *see* **22:9** Or *Isaac hand and foot* **22:13** Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX, Syr, Tg; other Hb mss read *saw behind him a ram* **22:14** = *Yahweh-yireh* **22:14** Or *"He will be seen* **22:18** Or *will bless themselves,* or *will find blessing*

22:1 Dt 8:2,16; 1Co 10:13; Heb 11:17; Jms 1:12-14; 1Pt 1:6-7 **22:2** Gn 22:12,16; Jr 6:26; Am 8:10; Mk 12:6; Lk 7:12; Jn 3:16; 1Jn 4:9 **22:2** 2Ch 3:1 **22:3** Jos 3:1 **22:4** Ex 19:11,16; Jos 9:17; Jdg 20:30; 2Sm 1:2; 1Kg 12:12; 2Kg 20:5; Est 5:1; Hs 6:2; Mt 17:23 **22:6** Jn 19:17 **22:6** Jdg 19:29; Pr 30:14 **22:8** Gn 22:14 **22:9** Heb 11:17; Jms 2:21 **22:12** Rm 8:32 **22:16** Ps 105:9; Lk 1:73; Heb 6:13 **22:17** Heb 6:14 **22:17** Gn 15:5; 26:4; Jr 33:22; Heb 11:12 **22:17** Gn 13:16; 32:12 **22:17** Gn 24:60 **22:18** Gn 12:3; 26:4; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:8 **22:20** Gn 11:29 **22:23** Gn 24:15

22:1-5 The biblical author, Moses, reveals to his readers that what is about to happen is a test. Abraham did not know this and was faced with the command to sacrifice Isaac as a **burnt offering.** Isaac's dearness to Abraham is emphasized through the descriptors **your son**, **your only son**, **whom you love.** Moreover, Isaac was the son promised by God, the one through whom the covenant promises would be fulfilled (17:19,21; 21:12). Despite the heartbreaking and mind-boggling nature of the command, **Abraham got up early in the morning** to carry it out. His words to the young men that he and Isaac would go **worship**, and **then we'll come back to you** suggest that he still believed God's covenant promises and that Isaac would somehow return (see Heb 11:19). In any case, God's instructions were to be obeyed, and the resolution of the apparent contradiction was left to God. Sure enough, Abraham was stopped from slaying Isaac at the last moment, and God provided a ram as a burnt offering in place of his son (vv. 12-14)—just as Abraham had believed (v. 8).

22:15-18 Abraham's obedience to the point of being willing to sacrifice his beloved son resulted in God strongly reaffirming the earlier promises (12:2-3; 13:14-17; 15:5; 17:2-8,16; 18:18). The fact that God here swore to fulfill them is cited elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., 26:3; Ex 32:13; Dt 4:31; Mc 7:20; Heb 6:13-18).

SARAH'S BURIAL

23 Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life. 2 Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron †) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3 Then Abraham got up from beside his dead wife and spoke to the Hethites: 4 "I am an alien residing among you. † Give me burial property among you so

that I can bury my dead.” † †

5 The Hethites replied to Abraham, † 6 “Listen to us, my lord. You are a prince of God † among us. Bury your dead in our finest burial place. † None of us will withhold from you his burial place for burying your dead.”

7 Then Abraham rose and bowed down to the Hethites, the people of the land. 8 He said to them, “If you are willing for me to bury my dead, listen to me and ask Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf 9 to give me the cave of Machpelah that belongs to him; it is at the end of his field. Let him give it to me in your presence, for the full price, as burial property.”

10 Ephron was sitting among the Hethites. So in the hearing † of all the Hethites who came to the gate of his city, † Ephron the Hethite answered Abraham: 11 “No, my lord. Listen to me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. I give it to you in the sight † of my people. Bury your dead.”

12 Abraham bowed down to the people of the land 13 and said to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, “Listen to me, if you please. Let me pay the price of the field. Accept it from me, and let me bury my dead there.”

14 Ephron answered Abraham and said to him, 15 “My lord, listen to me. Land worth four hundred shekels of silver † — what is that between you and me? Bury your dead.” 16 Abraham agreed with Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had agreed to in the hearing of the Hethites: four hundred standard shekels † of silver. † 17 So Ephron’s field † at Machpelah near Mamre — the field with its cave and all the trees anywhere within the boundaries of the field — became 18 Abraham’s possession in the sight of all the Hethites who came to the gate of his city. 19 After this, Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field at Machpelah near Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 The field with its cave passed from the Hethites to Abraham † as burial property.

23:4 Lit *dead from before me* **23:5** Lit *Abraham, saying to him* **23:6** Or *a mighty prince* **23:6** Or *finest graves* **23:10** Lit *ears*, also in vv. 13,16 **23:11** Lit *in the eyes of the sons* **23:16** Lit *400 shekels passing to the merchant*

23:2 Gn 35:27; Jos 14:15; 15:13; 21:11; Jdg 1:10 **23:4** Gn 17:8; Lv 25:23; 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; 105:12; Heb 11:9,13 **23:4** Gn 49:30; Ac 7:16 **23:10** Gn 34:20,24; Ru 4:1 **23:15** Ex 30:13; Ezk 45:12 **23:16** Jr 32:9; Zch 11:12 **23:17** Gn 25:9; 49:29-32; 50:13 **23:20** Jr 32:10-14

23:1-20 God’s promise to give Abraham this land was not yet fulfilled, and he was still **an alien** (a foreign resident) in it (see also 28:4; Heb 11:9). Following Sarah’s death, Abraham was allowed to purchase a

small portion of the land from Ephron the Hethite. His insistence on paying **the full price** for **Ephron's field at Machphelah near Mamre** is reminiscent of his unwillingness to receive a gift from the king of Sodom (14:21-24; see also David's insistence to pay such a price for the threshing floor of Ornan in 1Ch 21:22-24). If Abraham had accepted the land as a gift, later generations may have had a claim to take it back. Abraham wants to have the land as a permanent possession that can be passed down to his descendants. The cave in this field would be used as a burial plot for Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Leah too (25:9; 49:29-32).

A WIFE FOR ISAAC

24 Abraham was now old, getting on in years, † † and the LORD had blessed him in everything. 2 Abraham said to his servant, the elder of his household who managed all he owned, "Place your hand under my thigh, †
3 and I will have you swear by the LORD, God of heaven and God of earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I live, † 4 but will go to my land and my family to take a wife for my son Isaac."
5 The servant said to him, "Suppose the woman is unwilling to follow me to this land? Should I have your son go back to the land you came from? "
6 Abraham answered him, "Make sure that you don't take my son back there. 7 The LORD, the God of heaven, † who took me from my father's house and from my native land, † who spoke to me and swore to me, 'I will give this land to your offspring' † — he will send his angel before you, † and you can take a wife for my son from there. 8 If the woman is unwilling to follow you, then you are free from this oath to me, † but don't let my son go back there." 9 So the servant placed his hand under his master Abraham's thigh and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.
10 The servant took ten of his master's camels, and with all kinds of his master's goods in hand, he went to Aram-naharaim, to Nahor's town. 11 At evening, the time when women went out to draw water, he made the camels kneel beside a well outside the town.
12 "LORD, God of my master Abraham," he prayed, "make this happen for me today, † and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 I am standing here † at the spring where the daughters of the men of the town are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the girl to whom I say, 'Please lower your water jug so that I may drink,' and who responds, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels also' — let her be

the one you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."
15 Before he had finished speaking, there was Rebekah — daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, † the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor — coming with a jug on her shoulder. 16 Now the girl was very beautiful, † a virgin — no man had been intimate with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me have a little water from your jug."
18 She replied, "Drink, my lord." She quickly lowered her jug to her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I'll also draw water for your camels until they have had enough to drink." † 20 She quickly emptied her jug into the trough and hurried to the well again to draw water. She drew water for all his camels 21 while the man silently watched her to see whether or not the LORD had made his journey a success.
22 As the camels finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing half a shekel, and for her wrists two bracelets weighing ten shekels of gold. 23 "Whose daughter are you?" he asked. "Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"
24 She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She also said to him, "We have plenty of straw and feed and a place to spend the night."
26 Then the man knelt low, worshiped the LORD, † 27 and said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not withheld his kindness and faithfulness from my master. † As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."
28 The girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. 29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, † and Laban ran out to the man at the spring. 30 As soon as he had seen the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he had heard his sister Rebekah's words — "The man said this to me!" — he went to the man. He was standing there by the camels at the spring.
31 Laban said, "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD. † Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." 32 So the man came to the house, and the camels were unloaded. † Straw and feed

were given to the camels, and water was brought to wash his feet and the feet of the men with him.
33 A meal was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have said what I have to say.”
So Laban said, “Please speak.”
34 “I am Abraham’s servant,” he said. 35 “The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become rich. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys. 36 Sarah, my master’s wife, bore a son to my master in her † old age, † and he has given him everything he owns. † 37 My master put me under this oath: ‘You will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live 38 but will go to my father’s family and to my clan to take a wife for my son.’ 39 But I said to my master, ‘Suppose the woman will not come back with me?’ 40 He said to me, ‘The LORD before whom I have walked † will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, and you will take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father’s family. 41 Then you will be free from my oath if you go to my family and they do not give her to you — you will be free from my oath.’
42 “Today when I came to the spring, I prayed: LORD, God of my master Abraham, if only you will make my journey successful! 43 I am standing here at a spring. Let the young woman † who comes out to draw water, and I say to her, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your jug,’ 44 and who responds to me, ‘Drink, and I’ll draw water for your camels also’ — let her be the woman the LORD has appointed for my master’s son.
45 “Before I had finished praying silently, † there was Rebekah coming with her jug on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, ‘Please let me have a drink.’ 46 She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels also.’ So I drank, and she also watered the camels. 47 Then I asked her, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She responded, ‘The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milcah bore to him.’ So I put the ring on her nose † and the bracelets on her wrists. 48 Then I knelt low, worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who guided me on the right way to take the granddaughter of my master’s

brother for his son. 49 Now, if you are going to show kindness and faithfulness
to my master, † tell me; if not, tell me, and I will go elsewhere." †
50 Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we have no choice in
the matter. † † 51 Rebekah is here in front of you. Take her and go, and let her
be a wife for your master's son, just as the LORD has spoken."
52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed to the ground before
the LORD. 53 Then he brought out objects of silver and gold, and garments, and
gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious gifts to her brother and her mother.
54 Then he and the men with him ate and drank and spent the night.
When they got up in the morning, he said, "Send me to my master."
55 But her brother and mother said, "Let the girl stay with us for about ten
days. † Then she † can go."
56 But he responded to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has made my
journey a success. Send me away so that I may go to my master."
57 So they said, "Let's call the girl and ask her opinion." †
58 They called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man? "
She replied, "I will go." 59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah with the one
who had nursed and raised her, † † and Abraham's servant and his men.
60 They blessed Rebekah, saying to her:

Our sister, may you become
thousands upon ten thousands. †
May your offspring possess
the city gates of their † enemies. †

61 Then Rebekah and her female servants got up, mounted the camels, and
followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.
62 Now Isaac was returning from Beer-lahai-roi, † † for he was living in the
Negev region. 63 In the early evening Isaac went out to walk † in the field, and
looking up he saw camels coming. 64 Rebekah looked up, and when she saw
Isaac, she got down from her camel 65 and asked the servant, "Who is that man
in the field coming to meet us? "

The servant answered, “It is my master.” So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 Then the servant told Isaac everything he had done.
67 And Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah and took Rebekah to be his wife. Isaac loved her, and he was comforted after his mother’s death. †

24:1 Lit *days* **24:19** Lit *they are finished drinking* **24:36** Sam, LXX read *his* **24:43** Or *the virgin* **24:49** Lit *go to the right or to the left* **24:50** Lit *we cannot say to you anything bad or good* **24:55** Lit *us days or tenth* **24:55** Or *you* **24:57** Lit *mouth* **24:59** Lit *with her wet nurse* ; Gn 35:8 **24:60** Lit *his* **24:62** = A Well of the Living One Who Sees Me **24:63** Or *pray*, or *meditate* ; Hb obscure
24:1 Gn 18:11; Jos 13:1; 23:1-2; 1Kg 1:1 **24:2** Gn 47:29; Ex 1:5 **24:3** Gn 26:34,35; 27:46; Dt 7:3; 2Co 6:14 **24:7** 2Ch 36:23; Ezr 1:2 **24:7** Gn 12:1 **24:7** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; Ex 32:13 **24:7** Gn 16:7; 21:17; 22:11; Ex 23:20,23 **24:8** Jos 2:17-20 **24:12** Gn 27:20 **24:13-14** Gn 24:43-44 **24:15** Gn 11:29; 22:23 **24:16** Gn 12:11; 26:7; 29:17 **24:26** Ex 4:31 **24:27** Ru 2:20; Ezr 9:9; Neh 9:17 **24:29** Gn 25:20; 28:2; 29:5 **24:31** Gn 26:29; Jdg 17:2; Ru 3:10 **24:32** Gn 43:24; Jdg 19:21 **24:36** Gn 21:2 **24:36** Gn 25:5 **24:40** Gn 17:1; 1Sm 2:30; 1Kg 2:4; 8:23; 2Kg 20:3; Ps 116:9 **24:45** 1Sm 1:13 **24:47** Ezk 16:11-12 **24:49** Gn 47:29; Jos 2:14 **24:50** Gn 31:24,29; 2Sm 13:22 **24:59** Gn 35:8 **24:60** Gn 17:16 **24:60** Gn 22:17 **24:62** Gn 16:14; 25:11 **24:67** Gn 23:1-2

24:1 Just as God had promised Abraham years ago that he would bless him (12:2), so he **had blessed him in everything.**

24:2-9 Isaac’s need for a wife is not merely a family matter but is linked to the fulfillment of the covenant established with Abraham, which included having many descendants and becoming a great nation (12:2; 13:16). Abraham himself seemed aware of this when he expressed his confidence that God would **send his angel before** the servant and provide a wife for Isaac from their relatives. The full significance of the servant’s placing his hand under Abraham’s thigh is unclear, though the context indicates that it related to the taking of the oath. Abraham’s command **that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites** parallels the command given later to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 7:1-4, which explains such marriages were prohibited because the Canaanites were idolaters and would influence Israel toward idolatry. Abraham also indicated that Isaac was not to be taken back to Abraham’s homeland because God had called Abraham away from that land so that he and his descendants might possess another land (24:5-7; see also 12:1,7).

24:12-61 Upon arriving, Abraham’s servant **prayed** that God would give him success and that the woman he had chosen for Isaac would respond generously to his request in a particular way. While he was still praying, **Rebekah** came to the well and responded to his request just as he specified moments ago (vv. 15-21,45-46). After learning that Rebekah was one of Abraham’s relatives, he praised God for guiding him **on the right way.** The servant gave Rebekah a **gold ring** as well as other gifts as a bride price. This exchange of goods was intended to help provide for a woman in her marriage, especially in the event that she was abandoned or widowed (see also 34:12; 1Sm 18:25). The family agreed to the marriage arrangement, and Rebekah returned with Abraham’s servant. In accordance with his master’s faith and in answer to his prayer, God had given him success.

ABRAHAM’S OTHER WIFE AND SONS

25 Abraham had taken † another wife, whose name was Keturah, † 2 and she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan fathered Sheba and Dedan. Dedan’s sons were the Asshurim, Letushim,

and Leummim. [4] And Midian's sons were Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were sons of Keturah. [5] Abraham gave everything he owned to Isaac. † [6] But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of his concubines, and while he was still alive he sent them eastward, away from his son Isaac, to the land of the East. †

ABRAHAM'S DEATH

[7] This is the length of Abraham's life: † 175 years. [8] He took his last breath and died at a good old age, † old and contented, † and he was gathered to his people. † [9] His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah † near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hethite. [10] This was the field that Abraham bought from the Hethites. † Abraham was buried there with his wife Sarah. [11] After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who lived near Beer-lahai-roi. †

ISHMAEL'S FAMILY RECORDS

[12] These are the family records † of Abraham's son Ishmael, † whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's slave, bore to Abraham. [13] These are the names of Ishmael's sons; their names according to the family records are Nebaioth, Ishmael's firstborn, then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [14] Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [15] Hadad, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. [16] These are Ishmael's sons, and these are their names by their settlements and encampments: twelve leaders † † of their clans. † [17] This is the length † of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people. [18] And they † settled from Havilah to Shur, which is opposite Egypt as you go toward Asshur. † He † stayed near † all his relatives. †

THE BIRTH OF JACOB AND ESAU

[19] These are the family records of Isaac son of Abraham. Abraham fathered Isaac. † [20] Isaac was forty years old when he took as his wife Rebekah † daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan-aram † and sister of Laban the Aramean. † [21] Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was childless. † The LORD was receptive to his prayer, and his wife Rebekah

conceived. † 22 But the children inside her struggled with each other, and she said, “Why is this happening to me? ” † So she went to inquire of the LORD. †
23 And the LORD said to her:

Two nations are in your womb;
two peoples will come from you and be separated.
One people will be stronger than the other, †
and the older will serve the younger. †

24 When her time came to give birth, there were indeed twins in her womb. 25 The first one came out red-looking, † covered with hair † like a fur coat, and they named him Esau. † 26 After this, his brother came out grasping Esau’s heel with his hand. † So he was named Jacob. † † Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT

27 When the boys grew up, Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman, † but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. † 28 Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for wild game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. †
29 Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field exhausted.
30 He said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, because I’m exhausted.” That is why he was also named Edom. †
31 Jacob replied, “First sell me your birthright.”
32 “Look,” said Esau, “I’m about to die, so what good is a birthright to me? ”
33 Jacob said, “Swear to me first.” So he swore to Jacob and sold his birthright to him. 34 Then Jacob gave bread and lentil stew to Esau; he ate, drank, got up, and went away. So Esau despised his birthright. †

25:1 Or *Abraham took* **25:7** Lit *And these are the days of the years of the life of Abraham that he lived* **25:8** Sam, LXX, Syr read *full of days* **25:16** Or *chieftains* **25:16** Or *peoples* **25:17** Lit *And these are the years* **25:18** LXX, Vg read *he* **25:18** Or *Assyria* **25:18** = Ishmael and his descendants **25:18** Or *He settled down alongside of* **25:22** Lit *said, “If thus, why this I? ”* **25:25** In Hb, *red-looking* sounds like “Edom”; Gn 32:3. **25:25** In Hb, *hair* sounds like “Seir”; Gn 32:3. **25:26** = He Grasps the Heel **25:27** Lit *a man of the field* **25:27** Lit *man living in tents* **25:30** = Red
25:1-4 1Ch 1:32-33 **25:5** Gn 24:35-36 **25:6** Gn 21:14 **25:8** Gn 15:15; 47:8-9 **25:8** Gn 25:17; 35:29; 49:29,33 **25:9** Gn 23:17-18; 49:29-30; 50:13 **25:10** Gn 23:16; 50:13 **25:11** Gn 16:14; 24:62 **25:12** Gn 2:4; 25:19 **25:12-16** 1Ch 1:29-31 **25:16** Gn 17:20 **25:18** Gn 16:12 **25:19** Mt 1:2 **25:20** Gn 24:15,29,67 **25:20** Gn

22:23 **25:20** Gn 24:29 **25:21** Gn 11:30; 29:31; Ex 23:26; Jdg 13:2-3; 1Sm 2:5; Jb 24:21; Is 54:1; Lk 1:36; 23:29; Gl 4:27; Heb 11:11 **25:21** 1Sm 1:17; 1Ch 5:20; 2Ch 33:13; Ezr 8:23; Ps 127:3; Rm 9:10 **25:22** 1Sm 9:9; 10:22 **25:23** 2Sm 8:14; Ob 18-21 **25:23** Gn 27:29; Mal 1:2-3; Rm 9:12 **25:25** Gn 27:11,16,23 **25:26** Hs 12:3 **25:26** Gn 27:36 **25:28** Gn 27:4-9 **25:34** Heb 12:16-17

25:5,11 As God had said in 21:12, Abraham's "offspring will be traced through Isaac," and the covenant would be confirmed with him (17:19,21). In line with these things, Abraham gave his inheritance to Isaac, and God **blessed . . . Isaac** (26:3,12,24; see also 12:2; 22:17).

25:21 Isaac's response to the barrenness of Rebekah stands out in that **Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife.** Sarai and Rachel dealt with their barrenness by resorting to their own ideas of building a family through their maidservants (16:2; 30:1-3). Isaac's response was rewarded through God's answer to his prayer.

25:22-26 The struggling of Jacob and Esau while still in the womb foreshadows their sibling rivalry to come. Incidentally, the reference to them here as **the children** (lit "the sons") affirms the personhood of these unborn children. Like her husband did in another situation (v. 21), Rebekah went to God about the concern. He revealed that her twins would be fathers of two nations, and **the older** son would **serve the younger.** This parallels God's blessing of Isaac, who himself was younger than Ishmael (see also Rm 9:6-13). Jacob's birth and name, which means "he grasps the heel" or "he supplants," foreshadow his character in the subsequent narrative (see 27:36).

25:29-34 Jacob's acquisition of Esau's birthright revealed the character of each man. Esau was driven by physical desires; he was impulsive and short sighted (see also Heb 12:16). Jacob was crafty, self-centered, and manipulative. The **birthright** was a special privilege generally given to the firstborn son, though there are a number of examples showing that other customs also existed (cp. 1Ch 5:1-2). Because the firstborn had additional responsibilities—such as caring for extended family—he was usually given a double share of the material inheritance in order to have the necessary resources (cp. Dt 21:17).

THE PROMISE REAFFIRMED TO ISAAC

26 There was another famine in the land in addition to the one that had occurred in Abraham's time. † And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, at Gerar. † 2 The LORD appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land that I tell you about; 3 stay in this land as an alien, and I will be with you and bless you. † For I will give all these lands to you and your offspring, † and I will confirm the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. † 4 I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky, I will give your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth will be blessed † by your offspring, † 5 because Abraham listened to me and kept my mandate, my commands, my statutes, and my instructions." † 6 So Isaac settled in Gerar.

ISAAC'S DECEPTION

7 When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister,” †
for he was afraid to say “my wife,” thinking, † “The men of the place will kill
me on account of Rebekah, for she is a beautiful woman.” † 8 When Isaac had
been there for some time, Abimelech king of the Philistines looked down from
the window and was surprised to see † Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah.
9 Abimelech sent for Isaac and said, “So she is really your wife! How could you
say, ‘She is my sister’? ”
Isaac answered him, “Because I thought I might die on account of her.”
10 Then Abimelech said, “What is this you’ve done to us? One of the people
could easily have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on
us.” † 11 So Abimelech warned all the people, “Whoever harms this man or his
wife will certainly be put to death.”

CONFLICTS OVER WELLS

12 Isaac sowed seed in that land, and in that year he reaped † a hundred times
what was sown. The LORD blessed him, † 13 and the man became rich and kept
getting richer until he was very wealthy. 14 He had flocks of sheep, herds of
cattle, and many slaves, and the Philistines were envious of him. 15 Philistines
stopped up all the wells that his father’s servants had dug in the days of his
father Abraham, † filling them with dirt. 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac,
“Leave us, for you are much too powerful for us.” †
17 So Isaac left there, camped in the Gerar Valley, and lived there. 18 Isaac
reopened the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham and that
the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died. He gave them the same
names his father had given them. 19 Then Isaac’s servants dug in the valley and
found a well of spring † water there. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled
with Isaac’s herdsmen and said, “The water is ours! ” So he named the well
Esek † because they argued with him. † 21 Then they dug another well and
quarreled over that one also, so he named it Sitnah. † 22 He moved from there
and dug another, and they did not quarrel over it. He named it Rehoboth † and
said, “For now the LORD has made space for us, and we will be fruitful in the
land.”

THE LORD APPEARS TO ISAAC

23 From there he went up to Beer-sheba, 24 and the LORD appeared to him that
night and said, “I am the God of your father Abraham. † Do not be afraid, for I
am with you. † I will bless you and multiply your offspring because of my
servant Abraham.”
25 So he built an altar there, † called on the name of the LORD, and pitched his
tent there. Isaac’s servants also dug a well there. †

COVENANT WITH ABIMELECH

26 Now Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and
Phicol the commander of his army. † 27 Isaac said to them, “Why have you
come to me? You hated me and sent me away from you.”
28 They replied, “We have clearly seen how the LORD has been with you. We
think there should be an oath between two parties — between us and you. Let us
make a covenant with you: 29 You will not harm us, just as we have not harmed
you but have done only what was good to you, sending you away in peace. You
are now blessed by the LORD.” †
30 So he prepared a banquet for them, and they ate and drank. 31 They got up
early in the morning and swore an oath to each other. † † Isaac sent them on
their way, and they left him in peace. 32 On that same day Isaac’s servants came
to tell him about the well they had dug, saying to him, “We have found
water! ” † 33 He called it Sheba. † Therefore the name of the city is still Beer-
sheba † † today.

ESAU’S WIVES

34 When Esau was forty years old, he took as his wives Judith daughter of Beeri
the Hethite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hethite. † 35 They made life
bitter † for Isaac and Rebekah. †

26:4 Or *will bless themselves* **26:8** Or *and he looked and behold —* **26:12** Lit *found* **26:16** Or *are more numerous than we are* **26:19** Lit *living* **26:20** = Argument **26:21** = Hostility **26:22** = Open Spaces **26:31** Lit *swore, each man to his brother* **26:33** Or *Shibah* **26:33** = Well of the Oath **26:35** Lit *And they became bitterness of spirit*

26:1 Gn 12:10 **26:1** Gn 20:2 **26:3** Gn 12:2; 26:24; 28:15; 31:3 **26:3** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 15:18 **26:3** Gn 22:16-18; Ps 105:9 **26:4** Gn 12:3; 18:18; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:8 **26:5** Lv 18:30; Dt 11:1 **26:7** Gn 12:13; 20:5 **26:7** Pr 29:25 **26:7** Gn 24:16 **26:10** Gn 20:8-10 **26:12** Gn 24:1,35 **26:15** Gn 21:30 **26:20** Gn 21:25 **26:24** Gn 17:7-

8; 24:12; Ex 3:6; Ac 7:32 **26:24** Gn 21:17; Ex 20:20; 2Kg 6:16; Is 41:10; 43:1,5 **26:25** Gn 8:20; 12:7; 13:18; 35:7; Ex 17:15; Jos 8:30 **26:25** Gn 26:32 **26:26** Gn 21:22 **26:29** Gn 24:31; Ps 115:15 **26:31** Gn 21:31 **26:32** Gn 26:19 **26:33** Gn 21:30-31 **26:34** Gn 28:9; 36:2-3 **26:35** Gn 27:46

26:2-5 As promised (see 17:19,21), God's covenant with Abraham was continued with Isaac. The reaffirmation here includes many of the same elements as before, such as blessing, land, and numerous **offspring** (see also v. 24).

26:7-11 As his father Abraham had done (12:10-20; 20:1-18), Isaac lied about his relationship to his wife because he feared for his life. He too underestimated the character of the people of Gerar (20:4-6,9-11). Both men lied despite God's promises of blessing, numerous offspring, and land (12:1-3).

26:12-24 Isaac's unwillingness to quarrel with **the Philistines** and his deference to them regarding **the wells** parallels Abram's earlier unwillingness to dispute with Lot about the settlement of the land in Genesis 13. This demonstrated faith in God's ability to fulfill his promises rather than a reliance on schemes. In each instance God reaffirmed the covenant (13:14-17; 26:23-24), which itself was followed by the building of an altar (13:18; 26:25). This parallel pattern also includes the respective preceding passages in Genesis 12 and 26:1-11, which deal with the covenant, a famine, and lying about one's wife.

26:34-35 Esau's marriage to these two Hethite women is presented in a negative light (see also 27:46), just as marriage to Canaanite women was in 24:3,37. Both groups (and others as well) are mentioned in the prohibitions of Deuteronomy 7:1-4.

THE STOLEN BLESSING

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could not see, †
he called his older son Esau and said to him, "My son."
And he answered, "Here I am."
2 He said, "Look, I am old and do not know the day of my death. 3 So now take
your hunting gear, your quiver and bow, and go out in the field to hunt some
game for me. † 4 Then make me a delicious meal that I love and bring it to me
to eat, so that I can bless you before I die." †
5 Now Rebekah was listening to what Isaac said to his son Esau. So while Esau
went to the field to hunt some game to bring in, 6 Rebekah said to her son Jacob,
"Listen! I heard your father talking with your brother Esau. He said, 7 'Bring me
game and make a delicious meal for me to eat so that I can bless you in the
LORD's presence before I die.' 8 Now, my son, listen to me and do what I tell
you. 9 Go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, and I will make
them into a delicious meal for your father — the kind he loves. 10 Then take it to
your father to eat so that he may bless you before he dies."
11 Jacob answered Rebekah his mother, "Look, my brother Esau is a hairy man,
but I am a man with smooth skin. † 12 Suppose my father touches me. Then I

will be revealed to him as a deceiver and bring a curse rather than a blessing on myself."
13 His mother said to him, "Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey me and go get them for me."
14 So he went and got the goats and brought them to his mother, and his mother made the delicious food his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the best clothes of her older son Esau, which were in the house, and had her younger son Jacob wear them. 16 She put the skins of the young goats on his hands and the smooth part of his neck. 17 Then she handed the delicious food and the bread she had made to her son Jacob.
18 When he came to his father, he said, "My father."
And he answered, "Here I am. Who are you, my son? "
19 Jacob replied to his father, "I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may bless me."
20 But Isaac said to his son, "How did you ever find it so quickly, my son? "
He replied, "Because the LORD your God made it happen for me."
21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come closer so I can touch you, my son. Are you really my son Esau or not? "
22 So Jacob came closer to his father Isaac. When he touched him, he said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. 24 Again he asked, "Are you really my son Esau? "
And he replied, "I am."
25 Then he said, "Bring it closer to me, and let me eat some of my son's game so that I can bless you." Jacob brought it closer to him, and he ate; he brought him wine, and he drank.
26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Please come closer and kiss me, my son."
27 So he came closer and kissed him. When Isaac smelled † his clothes, he blessed him and said:

Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.
28 May God give to you — from the dew of the sky †
and from the richness of the land † — an abundance of grain and new wine. †

29 May peoples serve you †
and nations bow in worship to you.
Be master over your relatives;
may your mother's sons bow in worship to you.
Those who curse you will be cursed,
and those who bless you will be blessed. †

30 As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had left the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau arrived from his hunting. 31 He had also made some delicious food and brought it to his father. He said to his father, "Let my father get up and eat some of his son's game, so that you may bless me."
32 But his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you? "
He answered, "I am Esau your firstborn son."
33 Isaac began to tremble uncontrollably. "Who was it then," he said, "who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it all before you came in, and I blessed him. Indeed, he will be blessed! "
34 When Esau heard his father's words, he cried out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me too, my father! " †
35 But he replied, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing."
36 So he said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? † † For he has cheated me twice now. He took my birthright, and look, now he has taken my blessing." Then he asked, "Haven't you saved a blessing for me? "
37 But Isaac answered Esau, "Look, I have made him a master over you, have given him all of his relatives as his servants, and have sustained him with grain and new wine. What then can I do for you, my son? "
38 Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father! " And Esau wept loudly. †
39 His father Isaac answered him,

Look, your dwelling place will be
away from the richness of the land,
away from the dew of the sky above.
40 You will live by your sword, and you will serve your brother.
But when you rebel, †
you will break his yoke from your neck.

ESAU'S ANGER

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given
him. And Esau determined in his heart: "The days of mourning for my father are
approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."
42 When the words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she
summoned her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Listen, your brother Esau is
consoling himself by planning to kill you. 43 So now, my son, listen to me. Flee
at once to my brother Laban in Haran, 44 and stay with him for a few days until
your brother's anger subsides — 45 until your brother's rage turns away from
you and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send for you and
bring you back from there. Why should I lose you both in one day? "
46 So Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm sick of my life because of these Hethite
girls. † If Jacob marries someone from around here, † like these Hethite girls,
what good is my life? " †

27:27 Lit *smelled the smell of* **27:36** = He Grasps the Heel **27:38** Lit *Esau lifted up his voice and wept* **27:40** Hb obscure **27:46** Lit *someone like these daughters of the land*
27:1 Gn 48:10; 1Sm 3:2 **27:3** Gn 25:27-28 **27:4** Gn 27:19,25,31; 48:9,15-16; Dt 33:1; Heb 11:20 **27:11** Gn 25:25 **27:28** Gn 27:39; Dt 32:2; 33:13,28; 2Sm 1:21; Pr 3:20; Is 18:4; Hs 14:5; Hg 1:10; Zch 8:12 **27:28** Nm 18:12 **27:28** Dt 7:13; Jl 2:19 **27:29** Gn 25:23; Is 45:14; 49:7,23; 60:12-14 **27:29** Gn 12:3; Nm 24:9 **27:34** Heb 12:17 **27:36** Gn 25:26,32-34 **27:46** Gn 26:34-35; 28:8 **27:46** Gn 24:3

27:1-10 Isaac's plan to bless Esau (cp. Gn 48:9-20) was countered by Rebekah's plot for Jacob to get the blessing. The drawing up of these two competing sides is in keeping with the parental favoritism already mentioned (25:28). More importantly, this **blessing** related to the continuance of the covenant first made with Abraham and then passed down through Isaac to Jacob (cp. 25:23).

27:18-24 Jacob's character as a supplanter (and a deceiver) is on full display here (see the notes on 25:22-26 and 25:29-34).

27:27-29 Despite some suspenseful moments, Rebekah and Jacob's scheme worked, and Jacob received the blessing from his father. **Those who curse you will be cursed, and those who bless you will be blessed** links this blessing to the covenant with Abraham (see 12:3) and to messianic prophecy in Numbers 24:9 (see the note on Nm 24:7-9). Furthermore, the reference to rule over **peoples**, **nations**, and his **mother's sons** links the same blessing to the previous word to Rebekah in 25:23 and to messianic prophecy in 49:8,10. Thus, God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob included not only the promise of numerous offspring but also the promise of an individual messianic offspring, in accordance with 3:15. It is he who will bring blessing to all families and nations of the earth (12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; see also Lk 1:55; Ac 3:25; Gl 3:16,19).

27:41–28:4 Jacob had supplanted his brother Esau twice (v. 36), and Esau planned to **kill** him after their father died (cp. 4:3-8). Upon learning of this, Rebekah parlayed Jacob's legitimate need for a wife and Isaac's disapproval of Esau's Hethite wives (26:34-35) such that Isaac sent Jacob away to her brother Laban's house in Paddan-aram to get married. In doing so, Isaac invoked the covenant that God made with Abraham, including its blessings of numerous descendants and possession of the **land.**

JACOB'S DEPARTURE

28 So Isaac summoned Jacob, blessed him, and commanded him, "Do not
marry a Canaanite girl. 2 Go at once to Paddan-aram, to the house of
Bethuel, your mother's father. Marry one of the daughters of Laban,
your mother's brother. 3 May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful
and multiply you † so that you become an assembly of peoples. † 4 May God
give you and your offspring the blessing of Abraham † so that you may possess
the land where you live as a foreigner, the land God gave to Abraham." † 5 So
Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan-aram, to Laban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the
brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.
6 Esau noticed that Isaac blessed Jacob and sent him to Paddan-aram to get a
wife there. When he blessed him, Isaac commanded Jacob, "Do not marry a
Canaanite girl." 7 And Jacob listened to his father and mother and went to
Paddan-aram. 8 Esau realized that his father Isaac disapproved of the Canaanite
women, † 9 so Esau went to Ishmael and married, in addition to his other wives,
Mahalath daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son. She was the sister of Nebaioth.

JACOB AT BETHEL

10 Jacob left Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. 11 He reached a certain place
and spent the night there because the sun had set. He took one of the stones from
the place, put it there at his head, and lay down in that place. 12 And he
dreamed: † A stairway was set on the ground with its top reaching the sky, and
God's angels were going up and down on it. † 13 The LORD was standing there
beside him, † saying, "I am the LORD, † the God of your father Abraham and
the God of Isaac. I will give you and your offspring the land on which you are
lying. 14 Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, † and you will spread
out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth
will be blessed through you and your offspring. † 15 Look, I am with you and
will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land, † for I
will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."
16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said, "Surely the LORD is in this place,
and I did not know it." † 17 He was afraid and said, "What an awesome place
this is! This is none other than the house of God. This is the gate of heaven."

18 Early in the morning Jacob took the stone that was near his head and set it up as a marker. He poured oil on top of it 19 and named the place Bethel, † though previously the city was named Luz. † 20 Then Jacob made a vow: † "If God will be with me and watch over me during this journey I'm making, if he provides me with food to eat and clothing to wear, 21 and if I return safely to my father's family, † then the LORD will be my God. † 22 This stone that I have set up as a marker will be God's house, and I will give to you a tenth of all that you give me." †

28:13 Or *there above it* **28:19** = House of God
28:3 Gn 1:28 **28:3** Gn 48:4 **28:4** Gn 12:1-3 **28:4** Gn 12:7; 15:18 **28:8** Gn 24:3; 26:34-35; 27:46 **28:12** Gn 41:1; Nm 12:6; Jb 33:15-16 **28:12** Jn 1:51 **28:13** Gn 15:7; Ex 6:8 **28:14** Gn 13:16 **28:14** Gn 12:3 **28:15** Gn 48:21; Dt 30:3; 1Kg 8:34; Zph 3:20 **28:16** Ex 3:4-6; Jos 5:13-15; Ps 139:7-12 **28:19** Gn 35:6; 48:3; Jdg 1:23,26 **28:20** Gn 31:13 **28:21** Gn 33:18; Jdg 11:31; 2Sm 15:7-9 **28:21** Dt 26:17 **28:22** Gn 14:20; Lv 27:30; Dt 14:22

28:6-9 Another difference between Esau and Jacob was the kind of women they married. Whereas Jacob would marry within his own people, Esau married two Canaanite women (see also 26:34-35) and an Ishmaelite woman. Likewise, his father Isaac married within his own people (24:2-4,37-38), whereas his uncle Ishmael probably married an Egyptian (21:21). The driving force behind this distinction was not ultimately ethnicity (e.g., Rahab; see Mt 1:5) but participation in the covenant and worship of God (Dt 7:1-4; 2Co 6:14-18). For Isaac and Jacob, this also meant not marrying any of the women among whom they lived and overcoming the challenge of distance in order to find wives.

28:10-22 For the first time, Jacob had an encounter with God through a dream of a **stairway** connecting heaven and earth (see Jn 1:51). Up to this point, his life had been characterized by supplanting his brother using whatever means he saw fit. The only time Jacob had even mentioned God was as part of a lie to his father Isaac about how he had supposedly hunted game and prepared it so quickly (27:20). Nevertheless, God graciously affirmed his covenant with Jacob, including a promise of the **land** as well as **offspring** through which **all the peoples on earth will be blessed.** This continues the earlier covenant promises made to Abraham and Isaac (see also vv. 3-4; Rm 9:11-13). The Lord also promised to bring Jacob back home, to which Jacob responds with a vow (31:13; 35:1-7).

JACOB MEETS RACHEL

29 Jacob resumed his journey † and went to the eastern country. † † 2 He looked and saw a well in a field. Three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it because the sheep were watered from this well. But a large stone covered the opening of the well. 3 The shepherds would roll the stone from the opening of the well and water the sheep when all the flocks † were gathered there. Then they would return the stone to its place over the well's opening.
4 Jacob asked the men at the well, "My brothers! Where are you from?"
"We're from Haran," they answered.

5 “Do you know Laban grandson of Nahor? ” Jacob asked them.
They answered, “We know him.”
6 “Is he well? ” Jacob asked.
“Yes,” they said, “and here is his daughter Rachel, coming with his sheep.”
7 Then Jacob said, “Look, it is still broad daylight. It’s not time for the animals to be gathered. Water the flock, then go out and let them graze.”
8 But they replied, “We can’t until all the flocks have been gathered and the stone is rolled from the well’s opening. Then we will water the sheep.”
9 While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 As soon as Jacob saw his uncle Laban’s daughter Rachel with his sheep, † he went up and rolled the stone from the opening and watered his uncle Laban’s sheep. 11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept loudly. † 12 He told Rachel that he was her father’s relative, Rebekah’s son. She ran and told her father.

JACOB DECEIVED

13 When Laban heard the news about his sister’s son Jacob, he ran to meet him, hugged him, and kissed him. Then he took him to his house, and Jacob told him all that had happened.

14 Laban said to him, “Yes, you are my own flesh and blood.” † †
After Jacob had stayed with him a month, 15 Laban said to him, “Just because you’re my relative, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.”
16 Now Laban had two daughters: the older was named Leah, and the younger was named Rachel. 17 Leah had tender eyes, but Rachel was shapely and beautiful. 18 Jacob loved Rachel, so he answered Laban, “I’ll work for you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.” †
19 Laban replied, “Better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay with me.” 20 So Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.
21 Then Jacob said to Laban, “Since my time is complete, give me my wife, so I can sleep with † her.” 22 So Laban invited all the men of the place and sponsored a feast. 23 That evening, Laban took his daughter Leah and gave her

to Jacob, and he slept with her. 24 And Laban gave his slave Zilpah to his daughter Leah as her slave.
25 When morning came, there was Leah! So he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Wasn’t it for Rachel that I worked for you? Why have you deceived me? ”
26 Laban answered, “It is not the custom in this place to give the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn. 27 Complete this week of wedding celebration, and we will also give you this younger one in return for working yet another seven years for me.”
28 And Jacob did just that. He finished the week of celebration, and Laban gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife. 29 And Laban gave his slave Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her slave. 30 Jacob slept with Rachel also, and indeed, he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years. †

JACOB’S SONS

31 When the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, † he opened her womb; † but Rachel was unable to conceive. † 32 Leah conceived, gave birth to a son, and named him Reuben, † for she said, “The LORD has seen my affliction; † surely my husband will love me now.”
33 She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, “The LORD heard that I am unloved and has given me this son also.” So she named him Simeon. †
34 She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, “At last, my husband will become attached to me because I have borne three sons for him.” Therefore he was named Levi. †
35 And she conceived again, gave birth to a son, and said, “This time I will praise the LORD.” Therefore she named him Judah. † † Then Leah stopped having children.

29:1 Lit *Jacob picked up his feet* **29:1** Lit *the land of the children of the east* **29:3** Sam, some LXX mss read *flocks and the shepherds* **29:10** Lit *with the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother* **29:11** Lit *and he lifted his voice and wept* **29:14** Lit *my bone and my flesh* **29:21** Lit *can go to* **29:32** = See, a Son; in Hb, the name *Reuben* sounds like “has seen my affliction.” **29:33** In Hb, the name *Simeon* sounds like “has heard.” **29:34** In Hb, the name *Levi* sounds like “attached to.” **29:35** In Hb, the name *Judah* sounds like “praise.”
29:1 Nm 23:7; Jdg 6:3 **29:14** Gn 2:23; 37:27; Jdg 9:2; 2Sm 5:1; 19:12-13; 1Ch 11:1 **29:18** Gn 30:26; 31:41; Hs 12:12 **29:30** Gn 31:41 **29:31** Gn 25:28; Dt 21:15-16; 22:13; 24:3; Lk 14:26; 16:13 **29:31** Gn 30:22 **29:31** Gn 11:30; 25:21; Jdg 13:2-3; 1Sm 2:5; Lk 1:36 **29:32** Gn 31:42; Ex 3:7; 4:31; Dt 26:7 **29:35** Gn 49:8; Mt 1:2

29:18-30 Jacob, who had been a supplanter and deceiver, got a taste of his own medicine from his uncle **Laban.** There are several parallels between Laban's deception of Jacob and Jacob's earlier deception of his father Isaac, such as a meal (27:25; 29:22), impaired vision of the deceived (27:1; 29:23), and substitution of one sibling for another. These correspondences are ironic and indicate that Jacob would not be able to manipulate Laban as he had his family back home. Moreover, his stay was supposed to last a few days (27:44), but it had already lasted fourteen years and would last a total of 20 years (31:38,41).

29:30–30:24 The favoritism and competition between Jacob and Esau was perpetuated with Leah and Rachel. Just as Isaac favored Esau and Rebekah favored Jacob (25:28), Jacob favored Rachel. The Lord got involved and enabled the **unloved** Leah to conceive. Leah longed to win the affection and love of Jacob through bearing him children. She saw Rachel as having **taken** her **husband.** Rachel, on the other hand, **envied her sister** because of the children she was bearing to Jacob. Rachel described herself as having **wrestled with** her **sister and won.** Rachel's desperation to have children was shown through pressuring Jacob, giving her maid to Jacob as a wife, and her acquisition of **mandrakes.** Eventually God did enable Rachel to conceive and bear **Joseph.**

30 When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she
envied her sister. "Give me sons, or I will die! " † she said to Jacob.
2 Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, "Am I in God's place, who has
withheld offspring † from you? "
3 Then she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah. Go sleep with her, and she'll bear
children for me † † so that through her I too can build a family." 4 So Rachel
gave her slave Bilhah to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her. 5 Bilhah
conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; yes, he
has heard me and given me a son," so she named him Dan. †
7 Rachel's slave Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Rachel
said, "In my wrestlings with God, † I have wrestled with my sister and won,"
and she named him Naphtali. †
9 When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her slave
Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Leah's slave Zilpah bore Jacob a son.
11 Then Leah said, "What good fortune! " † and she named him Gad. †
12 When Leah's slave Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, 13 Leah said, "I am
happy that the women call me happy," † so she named him Asher. †
14 Reuben went out during the wheat harvest and found some mandrakes in the
field. † When he brought them to his mother Leah, Rachel asked, "Please give
me some of your son's mandrakes."

15 But Leah replied to her, “Isn’t it enough that you have taken my husband?
Now you also want to take my son’s mandrakes? ”
“Well then,” Rachel said, “he can sleep with you tonight in exchange for your
son’s mandrakes.”
16 When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah went out to meet him
and said, “You must come with me, for I have hired you with my son’s
mandrakes.” So Jacob slept with her that night.
17 God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Leah
said, “God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband,” and she named
him Issachar. †
19 Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 “God has given me
a good gift,” Leah said. “This time my husband will honor me because I have
borne six sons for him,” and she named him Zebulun. † 21 Later, Leah bore a
daughter and named her Dinah.
22 Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb. †
23 She conceived and bore a son, and she said, “God has taken away my
disgrace.” † 24 She named him Joseph † and said, “May the LORD add another
son to me.” †

JACOB’S FLOCKS MULTIPLY

25 After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way
so that I can return to my homeland. 26 Give me my wives and my children that
I have worked for, and let me go. † You know how hard I have worked for
you.”
27 But Laban said to him, “If I have found favor with you, stay. I have learned
by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you.” 28 Then Laban said,
“Name your wages, and I will pay them.” †
29 So Jacob said to him, “You know how I have served you and how your herds
have fared with me. † 30 For you had very little before I came, but now your
wealth has increased. The LORD has blessed you because of me. And now, when
will I also do something for my own family? ”
31 Laban asked, “What should I give you? ”
And Jacob said, “You don’t need to give me anything. If you do this one thing
for me, I will continue to shepherd and keep your flock. 32 Let me go through all

your sheep today and remove every sheep that is speckled or spotted, every dark-colored sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the female goats. Such will be my wages. 33 In the future when you come to check on my wages, my honesty will testify for me. If I have any female goats that are not speckled or spotted, or any lambs that are not black, they will be considered stolen."
34 "Good," said Laban. "Let it be as you have said."
35 That day Laban removed the streaked and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats — every one that had any white on it — and every dark-colored one among the lambs, and he placed his sons in charge of them. 36 He put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob. Jacob, meanwhile, was shepherding the rest of Laban's flock.
37 Jacob then took branches of fresh poplar, almond, and plane wood, and peeled the bark, exposing white stripes on the branches. 38 He set the peeled branches in the troughs in front of the sheep — in the water channels where the sheep came to drink. And the sheep bred when they came to drink. 39 The flocks bred in front of the branches and bore streaked, speckled, and spotted young. †
40 Jacob separated the lambs and made the flocks face the streaked sheep and the completely dark sheep in Laban's flocks. Then he set his own stock apart and didn't put them with Laban's sheep.
41 Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob placed the branches in the troughs, in full view of the flocks, and they would breed in front of the branches. 42 As for the weaklings of the flocks, he did not put out the branches. So it turned out that the weak sheep belonged to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob. 43 And the man became very rich. † He had many flocks, female and male slaves, and camels and donkeys. †

30:2 Lit *the fruit of the womb* **30:3** Lit *bear on my knees* **30:6** In Hb, the name *Dan* sounds like "has vindicated," or "has judged." **30:8** Or "*With mighty wrestlings* **30:8** In Hb, the name *Naphtali* sounds like "my wrestling." **30:11** Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Vg read "*Good fortune has come!* " **30:11** = Good Fortune **30:13** = Happy **30:18** In Hb, the name *Issachar* sounds like "reward." **30:20** In Hb, the name *Zebulun* sounds like "honored." **30:24** = He Adds **30:43** Lit *The man spread out very much, very much*
30:1 1Sm 1:5-6 **30:3** Gn 50:23 **30:13** Lk 1:48 **30:14** Sg 7:13 **30:22** Gn 29:31 **30:23** Is 4:1; Lk 1:25 **30:24** Gn 35:17 **30:26** Gn 29:18,20,27; Hs 12:12 **30:28** Gn 29:15; 31:7,41 **30:29** Gn 31:6,38-40 **30:39** Gn 31:10-12 **30:43** Gn 12:16; 13:2; 24:35; 26:13-14; 30:30

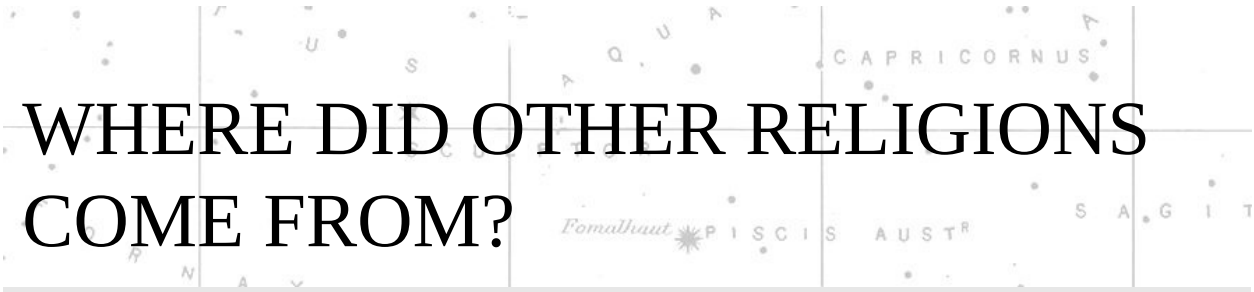
30:37-42 In order to keep Jacob from going home, Laban agreed that sheep and goats that were **streaked, speckled**, and **spotted** as well as **dark-colored lambs** would be Jacob's (vv. 32-35). How Jacob's practice

of positioning peeled branches in the watering troughs worked is not explained here, but the important thing was that God was giving Laban's flocks to him (31:8-12).

30:43–31:2 Like Abraham and Isaac, Jacob became **very rich** (see 12:16; 26:13-14), and others became envious.

JACOB SEPARATES FROM LABAN

31 Now Jacob heard what Laban's sons were saying: "Jacob has taken all
that was our father's and has built this wealth from what belonged to
our father." 2 And Jacob saw from Laban's face that his attitude toward
him was not the same as before.
3 The LORD said to him, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your family,
and I will be with you." †
4 Jacob had Rachel and Leah called to the field where his flocks were. 5 He said
to them, "I can see from your father's face that his attitude toward me is not the
same as before, but the God of my father has been with me. 6 You know that
with all my strength I have served your father † 7 and that he has cheated me
and changed my wages ten times. But God has not let him harm me. 8 If he said,
'The spotted sheep will be your wages,' then all the sheep were born spotted. If
he said, 'The streaked sheep will be your wages,' then all the sheep were born
streaked. † 9 God has taken away your father's herds and given them to me.
10 "When the flocks were breeding, I saw in a dream that the streaked, spotted,
and speckled males were mating with the females. 11 In that dream the angel of
God said to me, 'Jacob! ' and I said, 'Here I am.' 12 And he said, 'Look up and
see: all the males that are mating with the flocks are streaked, spotted, and
speckled, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. †



WHERE DID OTHER RELIGIONS COME FROM?

The Bible never states how non-biblical religions got their start. Genesis begins with the one true God. There certainly were people who lived in defiance of him (e.g., Cain and Lamech in Gn 4), but there is no account therein of people making substitutes for God. We know that Abraham's family had worshiped other gods in Ur (Jos 24:2), but when Abraham met Melchizedek (Gn 14:20), he turned out to be a priest of

El Elyon, “God Most High,” an expression that in this case clearly refers to Abraham’s God (Dn 4:2,34; Nm 24:16; Ps 78:35). We finally see mention of idols as they are brought up by Jacob’s entourage (Gn 31:19; 35:4), but by then owning such objects is already an established pagan custom.

We see a major eruption of idolatry in Exodus 32—and it concerns the people of Israel themselves and the golden calf. The Bible assumes that the nations worshiped false gods, but they are only mentioned when they directly affect the Hebrews. Scripture’s concern is to trace the history of God’s covenant people, and it does not immediately pay attention to other nations that do not worship him. Similarly, when we learn more about Canaanite religion, it is not in the context of condemnation of Baal worship per se (though it is certainly implied), but as a prohibition for God’s people to worship him alone (Nm 25:1-5). So, there is no biblical narration of the historical origin of idolatry.

The Bible does make it clear that the reason for false religion was for people to seek independence from God, or, more bluntly, to be their own gods. This attitude characterized the fall (Gn 3), when the serpent claimed that Adam and Eve could become like God and they were lured by the idea. The apostle Paul elaborates on this theme in Romans 1. He states that humans could know that there was a transcendent Creator who should receive their worship and gratitude. Yet they worshiped the creation instead. They applauded each other’s genius, committed acts contrary to nature, and recruited others to join them.

This suggests a puzzle: if people wanted to rid themselves of God, why did they start to worship other gods and spirits? We will attempt to solve this puzzle in four steps.

1. FIRST, ONE CANNOT EXCISE FROM HUMAN NATURE OUR NEED TO WORSHIP.

This fact was brought out clearly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries during debates on the evolution of religion. Many scholars reasoned that the earliest religious beliefs must have been “primitive,” consisting of the recognition of a magic force pervading the world or the veneration of ancestor ghosts. These scholars sought to prove their thesis by pointing to modern tribal cultures having little material sophistication, who practiced appeasement of spirits and magic rituals; they assumed that their religion was akin to that of earliest humankind.

These scholars, however, did not differentiate among those cultures that accurately reflect the earliest cultures and those that had clearly diverged from a previous pattern. Subsequently, scholars such as Andrew Lang and Wilhelm Schmidt demonstrated that those cultures that were closest to original human culture actually held to monotheism along with a high standard of morality.

2. WE LIVE IN A WORLD THAT WAS CREATED BY GOD, AND ITS VERY NATURE LEADS US TO RECOGNIZE THE REALITY OF THE ONE WHO MADE IT.

Many people come to this conclusion simply by an intuition based on the grandeur of the universe, its beauty and complexity, from the smallest level of subatomic particles to the largest realm of galaxies. These reflections can also be expressed rationally by means of the classic arguments for God’s existence, that unless there is a God, this universe could not exist.

3. SOME PROMINENT ATHEISTS HAVE CONCEDED THAT THEY SOMETIMES FEEL A NEED FOR A DIVINE BEING IN THEIR LIVES.

For example, in the area of morality, we may have to choose between satisfying our own interests and doing what is right. Even people who do not believe in God as the Author of moral standards will usually still attempt to act morally. And so they are confronted with the fact that at times they have rationalized themselves into breaking the rules. In moments of clarity they may recognize that they have acted immorally or sinfully, and their wrongdoings affect other people as well as their own identities, consciences, and souls. Aware of their shortcomings and knowing that as humans they are unable to undo

them, they must seek a superior being to forgive what they have done.

Anyone who goes through life with his eyes open recognizes that it is impossible to steer the ship of one's own life. A person may claim that God is unnecessary, but it is a very different thing to maintain that stance when one's own child is sick, his crops fail, his marriage crumbles, or his life is in danger. In such times one realizes that he is not truly in control, so he takes recourse to spiritual powers.

4. BUT TO WHICH POWERS WILL ONE TURN?

A person could pray to God, but he appears remote and not as someone with whom one can negotiate toward a desired outcome. On the other hand, in an animistic or polytheistic context, the powers are often weak and subject to manipulation; they come with the false promise that if one meets certain conditions, the desired solution will occur. So, even if the outcome should be negative, the person who turns to these powers feels he is somehow in control since the lack of success was his fault.

The monotheism of the earliest humans required a high level of behavior, but with little ritual attached to it. People made offerings as thanks and acts of devotion to God, but God did not need to be fed or persuaded to be good, and carrying out these simple ceremonies lay entirely in the hands of householders and patriarchs.

But as soon as people shifted away from worshiping the one true God toward gods with less knowledge and power, religion could become a profitable business. There arose experts, such as shamans or priests, on how to negotiate properly with the spiritual world. They claimed exclusive rights to the rituals, which they carried out mechanically, and bound people to their religion with fear.

SUMMARY

While the Bible does not give us the history of false religion, it makes clear that the motivation for it was the quest for human autonomy. Nevertheless, the story of the Bible does offer all people reconciliation to the true God through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. Through Christ, true worship of God is made possible for all people, regardless of their spiritual history.

WINFRIED CORDUAN

13 I am the God of Bethel, where you poured oil on the stone marker and made a
solemn vow to me. † Get up, leave this land, and return to your native land.' "
14 Then Rachel and Leah answered him, "Do we have any portion or inheritance
in our father's family? 15 Are we not regarded by him as outsiders? For he has
sold us † and has certainly spent our purchase price. 16 In fact, all the wealth
that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. So do
whatever God has said to you."
17 So Jacob got up and put his children and wives on the camels. 18 He took all
the livestock and possessions he had acquired in Paddan-aram, and he drove his
herds to go to the land of Canaan, to his father Isaac. 19 When Laban had gone
to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household idols. † 20 And Jacob
deceived † Laban the Aramean, not telling him that he was fleeing. 21 He fled

with all his possessions, crossed the Euphrates, and headed for † the hill country of Gilead.

LABAN OVERTAKES JACOB

22 On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. 23 So he took his relatives with him, pursued Jacob for seven days, and overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. 24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night. "Watch yourself! " God warned him. "Don't say anything to Jacob, either good or bad." †

25 When Laban overtook Jacob, Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban and his relatives also pitched their tents in the hill country of Gilead. 26 Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You have deceived me and taken my daughters away like prisoners of war! 27 Why did you secretly flee from me, deceive me, and not tell me? I would have sent you away with joy and singing, with tambourines and lyres, 28 but you didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters. You have acted foolishly. 29 I could do you great harm, but last night the God of your father said to me: 'Watch yourself! Don't say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' 30 Now you have gone off because you long for your father's family — but why have you stolen my gods? " †

31 Jacob answered, "I was afraid, for I thought you would take your daughters from me by force. 32 If you find your gods with anyone here, he will not live! † Before our relatives, point out anything that is yours and take it." Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the idols.

33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent, Leah's tent, and the tents of the two concubines, † but he found nothing. When he left Leah's tent, he went into Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken Laban's household idols, put them in the saddlebag of the camel, and sat on them. Laban searched the whole tent but found nothing.

35 She said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; † I am having my period." So Laban searched, but could not find the household idols.

JACOB'S COVENANT WITH LABAN

36 Then Jacob became incensed and brought charges against Laban. “What is
my crime?” he said to Laban. “What is my sin, that you have pursued me? 37
You’ve searched all my possessions! Have you found anything of yours? † Put
it here before my relatives and yours, and let them decide between the two of us.
38 I’ve been with you these twenty years. Your ewes and female goats have not
miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams from your flock. 39 I did not bring you
any of the flock torn by wild beasts; I myself bore the loss. You demanded
payment from me for what was stolen by day or by night. 40 There I was — the
heat consumed me by day and the frost by night, and sleep fled from my eyes. 41
For twenty years in your household I served you — fourteen years for your two
daughters and six years for your flocks † — and you have changed my wages
ten times! 42 If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, the Fear of Isaac,
had not been with me, certainly now you would have sent me off empty-handed.
But God has seen my affliction and my hard work, † and he issued his verdict
last night.”
43 Then Laban answered Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters; the sons, my
sons; and the flocks, my flocks! Everything you see is mine! But what can I do
today for these daughters of mine or for the children they have borne? 44 Come
now, let’s make a covenant, you and I. † Let it be a witness between the two of
us.”
45 So Jacob picked out a stone and set it up as a marker. † 46 Then Jacob said to
his relatives, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a mound, then ate
there by the mound. 47 Laban named the mound Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob
named it Galeed. †
48 Then Laban said, “This mound is a witness between you and me today.”
Therefore the place was called Galeed 49 and also Mizpah, † † for he said,
“May the LORD watch between you and me when we are out of each other’s
sight. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or take other wives, though no one is with
us, understand that God will be a witness between you and me.” † 51 Laban also
said to Jacob, “Look at this mound and the marker I have set up between you
and me. 52 This mound is a witness and the marker is a witness that I will not
pass beyond this mound to you, and you will not pass beyond this mound and
this marker to do me harm. 53 The God of Abraham, and the gods † of Nahor —

the gods of their father † — will judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and invited his relatives to eat a meal. So they ate a meal and spent the night on the mountain. 55 Laban got up early in the morning, kissed his grandchildren and daughters, and blessed them. Then Laban left to return home.

31:20 Lit *And he stole the heart of* **31:21** Lit *and set his face to* **31:33** Lit *servants* **31:37** Lit *What have you found from all of the possessions of your house?* **31:42** Lit *and the work of my hands* **31:47** *Jegar-sahadutha* is Aramaic, and *Galeed* is Hb; both names = Mound of Witness **31:49** = Watchtower **31:53** Two Hb mss, LXX omit *the gods of their father*

31:3 Gn 28:15; 32:10 **31:6** Gn 30:29 **31:8** Gn 30:32 **31:12** Gn 30:37-40; Ex 3:7 **31:13** Gn 28:18-19 **31:15** Gn 29:19-30 **31:19** Jdg 17:5; 1Sm 15:23; 19:13; Ezk 21:21; Hs 3:4; Zch 10:2 **31:24** Gn 24:50; 31:29; 2Sm 13:22 **31:30** Gn 31:19; Jos 24:2; Jdg 18:24 **31:32** Gn 44:9 **31:35** Lv 19:32 **31:41** Gn 29:27,30 **31:44** Gn 21:27,32; 26:28 **31:45** Jos 24:26-27 **31:49** Jdg 11:29; 1Sm 7:5-6 **31:50** Jdg 11:10; 1Sm 12:5; Jb 16:19; Jr 42:5; Mc 1:2 **31:53** Jos 24:2

31:3 As promised in 28:15, God was leading Jacob to return home with the assurance that he would **be with** him.

31:5-9 Earlier in life, Jacob had been the one cheating others for his own gain, but his time with Laban was one in which he was the one being cheated. Nevertheless, in the midst of such circumstances he experienced God's presence, provision, and protection (v. 29; see also 30:27). Also, instead of taking things that weren't rightfully his (see 27:36), Jacob had served **with all** his **strength** (30:26; 31:38-42) and was honest (30:33).

31:19,31-34 Laban earlier had mentioned that he used divination (30:27), and here he is also shown to be an idolater. These **household idols** (Hb *teraphim*) were his **gods.** Their precise nature is uncertain, though several passages seem to link them with divination (1Sm 15:23; 2Kg 23:24; Ezk 21:21; Zch 10:2). The idols would have been valuable to Laban. Rachel's theft of these may have been done in spite or motivated by an interest in inheritance, but either way this act reflects negatively upon her. See "Polytheism in Biblical Times," *p. 653*.

31:44-55 Jacob and Laban **make a covenant**, a binding agreement that defines a relationship between two parties and that requires obligations from at least one of them. Well-known covenants in the Bible typically involved God as one of the parties, but covenants can also be made between humans—as is the case here and in 1 Samuel 18:3 (see also the note on Gn 9:1-17). This covenant between Jacob and Laban involved a commitment by Jacob not to **mistreat** Laban's daughters or to take other wives. The two men agreed not to **pass beyond** Mizpah to harm one another. With that, Jacob had finally separated himself from Laban.

PREPARING TO MEET ESAU

32 Jacob went on his way, and God's angels met him. † 2 When he saw them, Jacob said, "This is God's camp." So he called that place Mahanaim. † †

3 Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the territory of Edom. 4 He commanded them, "You are to say to my lord Esau, 'This is what your servant Jacob says. I have been staying with Laban and have

been delayed until now. 5 I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female slaves. I have sent this message to inform my lord, in order to seek your favor.’ ” †
6 When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau; he is coming to meet you — and he has four hundred men with him.” † 7 Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; he divided the people with him into two camps, along with the flocks, herds, and camels. 8 He thought, “If Esau comes to one camp and attacks it, the remaining one can escape.” †
9 Then Jacob said, “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, † the LORD who said to me, ‘Go back to your land and to your family, and I will cause you to prosper,’ † 10 I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. Indeed, I crossed over the Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two camps. 11 Please rescue me from my brother Esau, for I am afraid of him; otherwise, he may come and attack me, the mothers, and their children. 12 You have said, ‘I will cause you to prosper, and I will make your offspring like the sand of the sea, too numerous to be counted.’ ” †
13 He spent the night there and took part of what he had brought with him as a gift for his brother Esau: † 14 two hundred female goats, twenty male goats, two hundred ewes, twenty rams, 15 thirty milk camels with their young, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys, and ten male donkeys. 16 He entrusted them to his slaves as separate herds and said to them, “Go on ahead of me, and leave some distance between the herds.”
17 And he told the first one: “When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘Who do you belong to? Where are you going? And whose animals are these ahead of you? ’ 18 then tell him, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And look, he is behind us.’ ”
19 He also told the second one, the third, and everyone who was walking behind the animals, “Say the same thing to Esau when you find him. 20 You are also to say, ‘Look, your servant Jacob is right behind us.’ ” For he thought, “I want to appease Esau with the gift that is going ahead of me. After that, I can face him, and perhaps he will forgive me.”
21 So the gift was sent on ahead of him while he remained in the camp that night. 22 During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two slave

women, and his eleven sons, and crossed the ford of Jabbok. † 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, along with all his possessions.

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

24 Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. † 25 When the man saw that he could not defeat him, he struck Jacob's hip socket as they wrestled and dislocated his hip. 26 Then he said to Jacob, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27 "What is your name? " the man asked.

"Jacob," he replied.

28 "Your name will no longer be Jacob," † he said. "It will be Israel † because you have struggled with God † and with men and have prevailed."

29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name."

But he answered, "Why do you ask my name? " † And he blessed him there.

30 Jacob then named the place Peniel, † "For I have seen God face to face," he said, "yet my life has been spared." † 31 The sun shone on him as he passed by Penuel † † — limping because of his hip. 32 That is why, still today, the Israelites don't eat the thigh muscle that is at the hip socket: because he struck Jacob's hip socket at the thigh muscle. †

32:2 = Two Camps **32:28** In Hb, the name *Israel* sounds like "he struggled (with) God." **32:30** = Face of God **32:31** Variant of *Peniel* **32:32** Or *tendon*

32:1 Ps 91:9-11 **32:2** Jos 21:38; 2Sm 2:8; 17:24,27; 1Kg 2:8 **32:5** Gn 33:8,15 **32:6** Gn 33:1 **32:8** Gn 27:41 **32:9** Gn 28:13; 31:42,53 **32:9** Gn 31:3,13 **32:12** Gn 28:13-15 **32:13** Gn 43:11 **32:22** Dt 2:37; 3:16; Jos 12:2 **32:24** Hs 12:3-4 **32:28** Gn 35:10; 2Kg 17:34 **32:28** Hs 12:3-4 **32:29** Jdg 13:18 **32:30** Gn 16:13; Ex 24:10-11; 33:20; Nm 12:8; Jdg 6:22; 13:22 **32:31** Jdg 8:8

32:1-2 Just as Jacob had encountered **angels** at Bethel when leaving the land (28:12), so he encountered angels again at Mahanaim when returning (see "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*).

32:3-8 Though Jacob was free of Laban, his troubles were not over because he still had to deal with his estranged brother Esau. The last time they had seen each other was twenty years prior (31:41), and back then Esau had wanted to kill Jacob for stealing their father's blessing (27:41). Jacob sent messengers to his brother **to seek** his **favor**, but Esau's actions led Jacob to prepare for an attack.

32:9-12 Jacob's prayer was one of humility **(I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown)**, which contrasts with how he had acted toward Esau earlier in life. Jacob's petition to be delivered from Esau was based on what God himself had said: **Go back to your land and to your family, and I will cause you to prosper . . . I will make your offspring like the sand of the sea.**

32:23-32 Jacob's wrestling match with **a man** (Hs 12:4 calls him an angel) was a microcosm of his whole

life, which consisted of struggles with Esau, Laban, and God. The fact that he **prevailed** was not because of his strength, but in spite of his weakness and through the mercy of God. The Lord had protected him from Laban (30:27; 31:5-9,24,29,42), and he would also be faithful to his word in delivering Jacob from Esau (32:11). Regarding seeing God, see also the notes on Exodus 24:9-11 and Judges 6:11-16.

JACOB MEETS ESAU

33 Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming toward him with four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two slave women. 2 He put the slaves and their children first, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 He himself went on ahead and bowed to the ground † seven times until he approached his brother.

4 But Esau ran to meet him, hugged him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. Then they wept. † 5 When Esau looked up and saw the women and children, he asked, "Who are these with you? "

He answered, "The children God has graciously given your servant." † 6 Then the slaves and their children approached him and bowed down. 7 Leah and her children also approached and bowed down, and then Joseph and Rachel approached and bowed down.

8 So Esau said, "What do you mean by this whole procession † I met? " †

"To find favor with you, my lord," † he answered.

9 "I have enough, my brother," Esau replied. "Keep what you have."

10 But Jacob said, "No, please! If I have found favor with you, take this gift from me. For indeed, I have seen your face, and it is like seeing God's face, since you have accepted me. 11 Please take my present that was brought to you, because God has been gracious to me and I have everything I need." So Jacob urged him until he accepted.

12 Then Esau said, "Let's move on, and I'll go ahead of you."

13 Jacob replied, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and I have nursing flocks and herds. If they are driven hard for one day, the whole herd will die. 14 Let my lord go ahead of his servant. I will continue on slowly, at a pace suited to the livestock and the children, until I come to my lord at Seir."

15 Esau said, "Let me leave some of my people with you."

But he replied, "Why do that? Please indulge me, † my lord." †

16 That day Esau started on his way back to Seir, 17 but Jacob went to Succoth. He built a house for himself and shelters for his livestock; that is why the place

was called Succoth. † †

18 After Jacob came from Paddan-aram, he arrived safely † at Shechem † in the land of Canaan and camped in front of the city. 19 He purchased a section of the field where he had pitched his tent from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. † † 20 And he set up an altar there and called it God, the God of Israel. †

33:8 Lit *camp* **33:15** Lit *May I find favor in your eyes* **33:17** = Stalls or Huts **33:19** Lit *100 qesitahs* ; the value of this currency is unknown **33:20** = *El-Elohe-Israel*
33:3 Gn 18:2; 42:6; 43:26 **33:4** Gn 45:14 **33:5** Gn 48:9; Ps 127:3; Is 8:18 **33:8** Gn 32:13-16 **33:8** Gn 32:5 **33:15** Gn 34:11; 47:25; Ru 2:13 **33:17** Jos 13:27; Jdg 8:5; Ps 60:6 **33:18** Gn 28:21 **33:18** Jos 24:1; Jdg 9:1; Ps 60:6; Ac 7:16 **33:19** Jos 24:32; Jn 4:5

33:4-11 Just as Jacob had prayed (32:11), he was delivered from Esau—and more. Not only did Esau not attack Jacob, he **ran to meet him, hugged him, threw his arms around him, and kissed him.** The four hundred men Esau brought with him were actually meant to escort his brother's traveling company. This reversal may be compared to Laban's treatment of Jacob, which was initially welcoming ("he ran to meet him, hugged him, and kissed him" in 29:13) but turned out to be exploitative. Esau's surprising response to Jacob should be attributed to God's answer to prayer rather than to Jacob's attempts to appease Esau (32:13-21). Both brothers had changed. In Jacob's case, he no longer tried to take things but humbly sought favor (32:5,20) and insisted on giving a gift. The Hebrew word for **present** in verse 11 is the same word translated "blessing" in 27:12,35-36,38,41.

DINAH DEFILED

34 Leah's daughter † Dinah, whom Leah bore to Jacob, went out to see some of the young women of the area. 2 When Shechem — son of Hamor the Hivite, who was the region's chieftain — saw her, he took her and raped her. 3 He became infatuated with Jacob's daughter Dinah. He loved the young girl and spoke tenderly to her. † 4 "Get me this girl as a wife," † he told his father.

5 Jacob heard that Shechem had defiled his daughter Dinah, but since his sons were with his livestock in the field, he remained silent until they returned. 6 Meanwhile, Shechem's father Hamor came to speak with Jacob. 7 Jacob's sons returned from the field when they heard about the incident and were deeply grieved and very angry. For Shechem had committed an outrage against Israel by raping Jacob's daughter, † and such a thing should not be done.

8 Hamor said to Jacob's sons, "My son Shechem has his heart set on your † daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9 Intermarry with us; give your

daughters to us, and take our daughters for yourselves. 10 Live with us. The land
is before you. Settle here, move about, and acquire property in it.”
11 Then Shechem said to Dinah’s father and brothers, “Grant me this favor, †
and I’ll give you whatever you say. 12 Demand of me a high compensation †
and gift; I’ll give you whatever you ask me. Just give the girl to be my wife! ”
13 But Jacob’s sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor deceitfully
because he had defiled their sister Dinah. 14 “We cannot do this thing,” they said
to them. “Giving our sister to an uncircumcised man is a disgrace to us. 15 We
will agree with you only on this condition: if all your males are circumcised as
we are. † 16 Then we will give you our daughters, take your daughters for
ourselves, live with you, and become one people. 17 But if you will not listen to
us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go.”
18 Their words seemed good to Hamor and his son Shechem. 19 The young man
did not delay doing this, because he was delighted with Jacob’s daughter. Now
he was the most important in all his father’s family. 20 So Hamor and his son
Shechem went to the gate of their city † and spoke to the men of their city.
21 “These men are peaceful toward us,” they said. “Let them live in our land and
move about in it, for indeed, the region is large enough for them. Let us take
their daughters as our wives and give our daughters to them. 22 But the men will
agree to live with us and be one people only on this condition: if all our men are
circumcised as they are. 23 Won’t their livestock, their possessions, and all their
animals become ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will live with us.”
24 All the men † who had come to the city gates listened to Hamor and his son
Shechem, and all those men were circumcised. 25 On the third day, when they
were still in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, † Dinah’s brothers,
took their swords, went into the unsuspecting city, and killed every male. 26
They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with their swords, took Dinah from
Shechem’s house, and went away. 27 Jacob’s sons came to the slaughter and
plundered the city because their sister had been defiled. 28 They took their
flocks, herds, donkeys, and whatever was in the city and in the field. 29 They
captured all their possessions, dependents, and wives and plundered everything
in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, “You have brought trouble on me, †
making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, † the Canaanites and the
Perizzites. † We are few in number; if they unite against me and attack me, I
and my household will be destroyed.” †
31 But they answered, “Should he treat our sister like a prostitute? ”

34:3 Lit *spoke to her heart* **34:8** The Hb word for *your* is pl, showing that Hamor is speaking to Jacob and his sons. **34:11** Lit *“May I find favor in your eyes* **34:12** Or *bride-price*, or *betrothal present*
34:1 Gn 30:21 **34:4** Jdg 14:2 **34:7** Dt 22:20-30; Jdg 20:6; 2Sm 13:12 **34:15** Gn 17:23-27 **34:20** Ru 4:1; 2Sm 15:2 **34:24** Gn 23:10 **34:25** Gn 49:5-7 **34:30** Jos 7:25 **34:30** Ex 5:21; 1Sm 13:4; 2Sm 10:6 **34:30** Gn 13:7; 34:2 **34:30** Gn 46:26-27; Dt 4:27; 1Ch 16:19; Ps 105:12

34:9 The sons of Israel had no interest in intermarriage with the pagan Canaanites in this instance, and such marriages would be expressly forbidden in Deuteronomy 7:3-4.

34:13-17 Evidently, the sons of Israel had observed circumcision as God had commanded Abraham and his descendants (17:9-11), and it distinguished them from the people of Shechem.

34:24-31 Simeon and Levi’s vengeful killing not only of Hamor but also of the men of Shechem was displeasing to Jacob, who would remember their act later when speaking about the future of his sons (49:5-7).

RETURN TO BETHEL

35 God said to Jacob, “Get up! Go to Bethel and settle there. † Build an
altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your
brother Esau.” †
2 So Jacob said to his family and all who were with him, “Get rid of the foreign
gods that are among you. † Purify yourselves and change your clothes. † 3 We
must get up and go to Bethel. I will build an altar there to the God who answered
me in my day of distress. † He has been with me everywhere I have gone.” †
4 Then they gave Jacob all their foreign gods and their earrings, and Jacob hid
them under the oak near Shechem. 5 When they set out, a terror from God came
over the cities around them, and they did not pursue Jacob’s sons. † 6 So Jacob
and all who were with him came to Luz (that is, Bethel †) in the land of Canaan.
7 Jacob built an altar there and called the place El-bethel † because it was there
that God had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.
8 Deborah, the one who had nursed and raised Rebekah, † † died and was
buried under the oak south of Bethel. So Jacob named it Allon-bacuth. †

9 God appeared to Jacob again after he returned from Paddan-aram, and he
blessed him. 10 God said to him, “Your name is Jacob; you will no longer be
named Jacob, but your name will be Israel.” † So he named him Israel. 11 God
also said to him, “I am God Almighty. † Be fruitful and multiply. † A nation,
indeed an assembly of nations, will come from you, † and kings will descend
from you. † † 12 I will give to you the land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac. †
And I will give the land to your future descendants.” 13 Then God
withdrew † † from him at the place where he had spoken to him.
14 Jacob set up a marker at the place where he had spoken to him — a stone
marker. He poured a drink offering on it and anointed it with oil. † 15 Jacob
named the place where God had spoken with him Bethel.

RACHEL’S DEATH

16 They set out from Bethel. When they were still some distance from Ephrath,
Rachel began to give birth, and her labor was difficult. 17 During her difficult
labor, the midwife said to her, “Don’t be afraid, for you have another son.” † 18
With her last breath — for she was dying — she named him Ben-oni, †
but his father called him Benjamin. † 19 So Rachel died and was buried on the way to
Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem †). 20 Jacob set up a marker on her grave; it is the
marker at Rachel’s grave still today.

ISRAEL’S SONS

21 Israel set out again and pitched his tent beyond the Tower of Eder. † 22
While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father’s
concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard about it. †
Jacob had twelve sons: †

23 Leah’s sons were Reuben (Jacob’s firstborn),
Simeon, Levi, Judah,
Issachar, and Zebulun.
24 Rachel’s sons were
Joseph and Benjamin.

25 The sons of Rachel's slave Bilhah
were Dan and Naphtali.
26 The sons of Leah's slave Zilpah
were Gad and Asher.

These are the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan-aram.

ISAAC'S DEATH

27 Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre † in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron †),
where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. 28 Isaac lived 180 years. 29 He took his
last breath and died, and was gathered to his people, † old and full of days. His
sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

35:7 = God of Bethel **35:8** Lit *Deborah, Rebekah's wet nurse* ; Gn 24:59 **35:8** = Oak of Weeping **35:11** Lit *will come from your loins* **35:13** Lit *went up* **35:18** = Son of My Sorrow **35:18** = Son of the Right Hand **35:21** Or *beyond Migdal-eder*

35:1 Gn 28:19 **35:1** Gn 27:43 **35:2** Gn 31:19; Jos 24:23; 1Sm 7:3 **35:2** Ex 19:10 **35:3** 1Sm 7:9; 2Sm 24:25; Jb 12:4; Ps 20:1; 34:4 **35:3** Gn 28:10-22 **35:5** Ex 23:27 **35:6** Gn 28:19; 48:3 **35:8** Gn 24:59 **35:10** Gn 17:5; 32:28 **35:11** Gn 17:1; 28:3; Ex 6:3 **35:11** Gn 9:1,7 **35:11** Gn 48:4 **35:11** Gn 17:6,16; 36:31 **35:12** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 26:3-4; 28:13; Ex 32:13 **35:13** Gn 17:22; 18:33 **35:14** Gn 28:18-19; 31:45 **35:17** Gn 30:24 **35:19** Mc 5:2; Mt 2:18 **35:22** Gn 49:3-4 **35:22-26** 1Ch 2:1-2 **35:27** Gn 13:18; 18:1; 23:19 **35:27** Jos 14:15 **35:29** Gn 25:8,17; 49:33; Nm 20:24,26; Dt 32:50

35:1-7 Jacob's actions of getting **rid of foreign gods** and building **an altar** indicate that indeed LORD is his God. Where the idols came from is not entirely clear, though some have suggested they were from the recent plundering of Shechem (34:29). True to his word given at Bethel in 28:15, God had watched over Jacob and led him homeward and back to Bethel. Earlier, Jacob had vowed that if God would protect and provide for him, "then the LORD will be my God," and "this stone that I have set up as a marker will be God's house, and I will give to [him] a tenth of all that [he] give[s] me" (28:21-22). Years later, Jacob recognized the faithfulness of God in that he **answered in** his **day of distress** and **has been with** him **everywhere** he has **gone.**

35:9-12 The Lord reaffirmed Jacob's name change and the covenant promises.

35:22 As would be the case for Simeon and Levi, Reuben's misdeed would be remembered later when Jacob spoke of his future (49:3-4). Through sleeping with Bilhah, Reuben had forfeited his privileges as the firstborn. Simeon and Levi would have been next in line, but they had already disqualified themselves by the slaughter at Shechem (34:24-31; 49:5-7). The next option was Judah (see 29:31-35), who would receive the special privilege of being part of the line of the Messiah (49:8-12). The promise that kings would come from the family line was part of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (17:6,16; 35:11). One of these would be an eschatological king (see the footnote on 49:1) and would have the "obedience of the peoples" (49:10).

ESAU'S FAMILY

36 These are the family records † of Esau (that is, Edom †). 2 Esau took
his wives from the Canaanite women: Adah daughter of Elon the
Hethite, † Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter † of Zibeon the
Hivite, 3 and Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth. † 4 Adah
bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, 5 and Oholibamah bore Jeush,
Jalam, and Korah. These were Esau's sons, who were born to him in the land of
Canaan.
6 Esau took his wives, sons, daughters, and all the people of his household, as
well as his herds, all his livestock, and all the property he had acquired in
Canaan; he went to a land away from his brother Jacob. 7 For their possessions
were too many for them to live together, † and because of their herds, the land
where they stayed could not support them. † 8 So Esau (that is, Edom) lived in
the mountains of Seir. †
9 These are the family records of Esau, father of the Edomites in the mountains
of Seir.

10 These are the names of Esau's sons: †
Eliphaz son of Esau's wife Adah,
and Reuel son of Esau's wife Basemath.
11 The sons of Eliphaz were
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.
12 Timna, a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz,
bore Amalek to Eliphaz.
These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah.

13 These are Reuel's sons:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.
These are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

14 These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah

daughter of Anah and granddaughter † of Zibeon:
She bore Jeush, Jalam, and Korah to Edom.

15 These are the chiefs among Esau's sons:
the sons of Eliphaz, Esau's firstborn:
chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz,
16 chief Korah, † chief Gatam, and chief Amalek.
These are the chiefs descended from Eliphaz
in the land of Edom.
These are the sons of Adah.

17 These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son:
chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, and chief Mizzah.
These are the chiefs descended from Reuel
in the land of Edom.
These are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.

18 These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah:
chief Jeush, chief Jalam, and chief Korah.
These are the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah
daughter of Anah.
19 These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom),
and these are their chiefs.

SEIR'S FAMILY

20 These are the sons of Seir the Horite, †
the inhabitants of the land:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah,
21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan.

These are the chiefs among the Horites,
the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.
22 The sons of Lotan were Hori and Heman.
Timna was Lotan's sister.
23 These are Shobal's sons:
Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.
24 These are Zibeon's sons: Aiah and Anah.
This was the Anah who found the hot springs † in the wilderness
while he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.
25 These are the children of Anah:
Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah.
26 These are Dishon's sons:
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.
27 These are Ezer's sons:
Bilhan, Zaavan, and Akan.
28 These are Dishan's sons: Uz and Aran.

29 These are the chiefs among the Horites:
chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah,
30 chief Dishon, chief Ezer, and chief Dishan.
These are the chiefs among the Horites,
clan by clan, † in the land of Seir.

RULERS OF EDOM

31 These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom †
before any king reigned over the Israelites:
32 Bela son of Beor reigned in Edom;

the name of his city was Dinhabah.
33 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah reigned
in his place.
34 When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites
reigned in his place.
35 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad reigned in his place.
He defeated Midian in the field of Moab;
the name of his city was Avith.
36 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place.
37 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the
Euphrates River reigned in his place.
38 When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor reigned
in his place.
39 When Baal-hanan son of Achbor died, Hadar † reigned
in his place.
His city was Pau, and his wife's name was Mehetabel
daughter of Matred daughter of Me-zahab.

40 These are the names of Esau's chiefs,
according to their families and their localities,
by their names:
chief Timna, chief Alvah, chief Jetheth,
41 chief Oholibamah, chief Elah, chief Pinon,
42 chief Kenaz, chief Teman, chief Mibzar,
43 chief Magdiel, and chief Iram.
These are Edom's chiefs,
according to their settlements in the land they possessed.
Esau † was father of the Edomites.

36:2 Sam, LXX read *Anah son* **36:14** Sam, LXX read *Anah son* **36:16** Sam omits *Korah* **36:24** Syr, Vg; Tg reads *the mules* ; Hb obscure **36:30** Lit *Horites, for their chiefs* **36:39** Many Hb mss, Sam, Syr read *Hadad* **36:43** Lit *He Esau*

36:1 Gn 2:4; 36:9 **36:1** Gn 25:30 **36:2** Gn 26:34 **36:3** Gn 28:9 **36:7** Gn 13:6 **36:7** Gn 17:8; Heb 11:9 **36:8** Dt 2:5 **36:10-14** 1Ch 1:35-37 **36:20-28** Gn 14:6; Dt 2:12,22; 1Ch 1:38-42 **36:31-43** Gn 17:6,16; 35:11; 1Ch 1:43-54

37:3-11 Joseph's brothers **hated** him because of their father's favoritism. In this way, the patterns of parental favoritism (25:28) and of brotherly conflict continued (4:1-8; 21:9; 25:22-27). The latter made the fulfillment of Joseph's **dreams** of his brothers bowing down to him all the more unlikely. Nevertheless, these dreams would come true (42:6,9; 43:26-28). Their significance is not limited to what happened between Joseph and his siblings but also is linked to the blessing given to Jacob of **rule** over his brothers and the nations in 27:29: "May peoples serve you and nations bow in worship to you. Be master over your relatives; may your mother's sons bow in worship to you." Rule over Israel and the nations (by an individual offspring) was thus part of the covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Such rule was displayed in part through Joseph but would be fulfilled by a messianic king from the tribe of Judah (49:8-10).

36:31 Kings would come from the line of **Edom** (Esau) also (cp. the promise to Abraham, 17:6; Sarah, 7:16; and Jacob 35:11) but not until the days of Saul and David centuries later.

JOSEPH'S DREAMS

37 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan. † 2 These are the family records of Jacob.
At seventeen years of age, Joseph tended sheep with his brothers. The young man was working with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives, † and he brought a bad report about them to their father. †
3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was a son born to him in his old age, † and he made a robe of many colors † for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him.
5 Then Joseph had a dream. When he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 There we were, binding sheaves of grain in the field. Suddenly my sheaf stood up, and your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf." †
8 "Are you really going to reign over us?" his brothers asked him. "Are you really going to rule us?" So they hated him even more because of his dream and what he had said.
9 Then he had another dream and told it to his brothers. "Look," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing down

to me.”
10 He told his father and brothers, and his father rebuked him. “What kind of
dream is this that you have had?” he said. “Am I and your mother and your
brothers really going to come and bow down to the ground before you?” 11 His
brothers were jealous of him, † but his father kept the matter in mind. †

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY

12 His brothers had gone to pasture their father’s flocks at Shechem. 13 Israel
said to Joseph, “Your brothers, you know, are pasturing the flocks at Shechem.
Get ready. I’m sending you to them.”
“I’m ready,” Joseph replied.
14 Then Israel said to him, “Go and see how your brothers and the flocks are
doing, and bring word back to me.” So he sent him from the Hebron † Valley,
and he went to Shechem.
15 A man found him there, wandering in the field, and asked him, “What are you
looking for?”
16 “I’m looking for my brothers,” Joseph said. “Can you tell me where they are
pasturing their flocks?”
17 “They’ve moved on from here,” the man said. “I heard them say, ‘Let’s go to
Dothan.’ ” † So Joseph set out after his brothers and found them at Dothan.
18 They saw him in the distance, and before he had reached them, they plotted to
kill him. † 19 They said to one another, “Oh, look, here comes that dream
expert! † 20 So now, come on, let’s kill him and throw him into one of the
pits. † We can say that a vicious animal ate him. Then we’ll see what becomes
of his dreams!”
21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to save him from them. † He said, “Let’s
not take his life.” † 22 Reuben also said to them, “Don’t shed blood. Throw him
into this pit in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him” — intending to
rescue him from them and return him to his father.
23 When Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped off Joseph’s robe, the robe
of many colors that he had on. 24 Then they took him and threw him into the pit.
The pit was empty, without water.

25 They sat down to eat a meal, † and when they looked up, there was a caravan
of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. † Their camels were carrying aromatic gum,
balsam, and resin, going down to Egypt. †
26 Judah said to his brothers, “What do we gain if we kill our brother and cover
up his blood? 27 Come on, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay a hand on
him, for he is our brother, our own flesh,” and his brothers agreed. 28 When
Midianite † traders passed by, his brothers pulled Joseph out of the pit and sold
him for twenty pieces of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took Joseph to Egypt. †
29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore
his clothes. † 30 He went back to his brothers and said, “The boy is gone! What
am I going to do?” † 31 So they took Joseph’s robe, slaughtered a male goat,
and dipped the robe in its blood. 32 They sent the robe of many colors to their
father and said, “We found this. Examine it. Is it your son’s robe or not?”
33 His father recognized it. “It is my son’s robe,” he said. “A vicious animal has
devoured him. Joseph has been torn to pieces!” † 34 Then Jacob tore his
clothes, put sackcloth around his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 35
All his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted.
“No,” he said. “I will go down to Sheol to my son, mourning.” And his father
wept for him.
36 Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of
Pharaoh and the captain of the guards.

37:3 Or *robe with long sleeves* ; see 2Sm 13:18,19 **37:19** Lit *comes the lord of the dreams* **37:20** Or *cisterns* **37:21** Lit *their hands* **37:30** Lit *And I, where am I going?*

37:1 Gn 26:3 **37:2** Gn 30:1-13 **37:2** 1Sm 2:22-24 **37:3** Gn 44:20 **37:7** Gn 42:6,9; 43:26; 44:14 **37:11** Ac 7:9 **37:11** Dn 7:28; Lk 2:19,51 **37:14** Gn 13:18; 35:27 **37:17** 2Kg 6:13 **37:18** Ps 31:13; 37:12,32; Mk 14:1; Jn 11:53; Ac 23:12 **37:21** Gn 42:22 **37:25** Gn 42:21 **37:25** Gn 39:1 **37:25** Gn 43:11; Jr 8:22; 46:11 **37:28** Dt 25:5,7; Jdg 8:22-24; Mt 22:24; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28 **37:28** Gn 45:4-5; Ps 105:17; Ac 7:9 **37:29** Gn 44:13; Nm 14:6; 2Sm 1:11; 3:31; Jb 1:20 **37:33** Gn 44:28

JUDAH AND TAMAR

38 At that time Judah left his brothers and settled near an Adullamite †
named Hirah. 2 There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite named
Shua; he took her as a wife and slept with her. 3 She conceived and gave birth to
a son, and he named him Er. † 4 She conceived again, gave birth to a son, and

named him Onan. 5 She gave birth to another son and named him Shelah. It was
at Chezib that † † she gave birth to him.
6 Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 Now Er,
Judah's firstborn, was evil in the LORD's sight, and the LORD put him to death. †
8 Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your brother's wife. Perform your duty
as her brother-in-law † and produce offspring for your brother." † 9 But Onan
knew that the offspring would not be his, so whenever he slept with his brother's
wife, he released his semen on the ground so that he would not produce
offspring for his brother. 10 What he did was evil in the LORD's sight, so he put
him to death also.
11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Remain a widow in your
father's house until my son Shelah grows up." † For he thought, "He might die
too, like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's house.
12 After a long time † Judah's wife, the daughter of Shua, died. When Judah
had finished mourning, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite went up to
Timnah † to his sheepshearers. 13 Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going
up to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14 So she took off her widow's clothes, veiled
her face, † covered herself, and sat at the entrance to Enaim, † which is on the
way to Timnah. For she saw that, though Shelah had grown up, she had not been
given to him as a wife. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a prostitute,
for she had covered her face.
16 He went over to her and said, "Come, let me sleep with you," for he did not
know that she was his daughter-in-law. †
She said, "What will you give me for sleeping with me? "
17 "I will send you a young goat from my flock," he replied.
But she said, "Only if you leave something with me until you send it."
18 "What should I give you? " he asked.
She answered, "Your signet ring, your cord, and the staff in your hand." So he
gave them to her and slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. 19 She got
up and left, then removed her veil and put her widow's clothes back on.
20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite in order to get
back the items he had left with the woman, he could not find her. 21 He asked

the men of the place, “Where is the cult prostitute who was beside the road at Enaim? ”
“There has been no cult prostitute here,” they answered.
22 So the Adullamite returned to Judah, saying, “I couldn’t find her, and besides, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no cult prostitute here.’ ”
23 Judah replied, “Let her keep the items for herself; otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I did send this young goat, but you couldn’t find her.”
24 About three months later Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law, Tamar, has been acting like a prostitute, and now she is pregnant.”
“Bring her out,” Judah said, “and let her be burned to death! ” †
25 As she was being brought out, she sent her father-in-law this message: “I am pregnant by the man to whom these items belong.” And she added, “Examine them. Whose signet ring, cord, and staff are these? ”
26 Judah recognized them and said, “She is more in the right † than I, † since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not know her intimately again.
27 When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. 28 As she was giving birth, one of them put out his hand, and the midwife took it and tied a scarlet thread around it, announcing, “This one came out first.” 29 But then he pulled his hand back, out came his brother, and she said, “What a breakout you have made for yourself! ” So he was named Perez. † † 30 Then his brother, who had the scarlet thread tied to his hand, came out, and was named Zerah. †

38:5 LXX reads *She was at Chezib when* **38:5** Or *He was at Chezib when* **38:12** Lit *And there were many days, and* **38:14** Or *sat by the mouth of the springs* **38:26** Or *more righteous* **38:29** = Breaking Out **38:30** = Brightness of Sunrise; perhaps related to the scarlet thread
38:1 Jos 15:35; 1Sm 22:1 **38:3** Gn 46:12; Nm 26:19 **38:7** 1Ch 2:3 **38:8** Dt 25:5-10 **38:8** Mt 22:24 **38:11** Ru 1:12-13 **38:12** Jos 15:10,57 **38:14** Gn 24:65 **38:16** Lv 18:15 **38:24** Lv 20:14 **38:26** 1Sm 24:17 **38:29** Gn 46:12; Nm 26:20; 1Ch 2:4; Mt 1:3

38:1-26 This chapter centering on **Judah** interrupts the focus on Joseph in the narrative context. Judah’s older brothers, Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, had disqualified themselves from receiving firstborn privileges (34:24-31; 35:22; 49:3-7). Judah was next, and his role in selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites reflected some measure of influence among his brothers (37:26-27). Judah, however, **left his brothers**, married **a Canaanite**, did not fulfill a promise to his daughter-in-law Tamar, slept with her thinking that she was a prostitute, and called for her death because of her resulting pregnancy. In the course of the narrative, however, Judah is humbled and says, **She is more in the right than I.** Later, he demonstrates that he has changed when he is a positive influence and a good leader (43:3-10; 44:14-34), even offering himself as a substitute for Benjamin (44:33).

38:6-10 The practice of marrying the childless widow of one’s deceased brother is called levirate marriage.

It was probably primarily intended to benefit the departed husband rather than the surviving widow. In this way, there would be an heir for the part of the inheritance belonging to the deceased; thus, it would not be lost by going to others instead. This is described in further detail in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (see also Ru 3–4).

JOSEPH IN POTIPHAR'S HOUSE

39 Now Joseph had been taken to Egypt. An Egyptian named Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and the captain of the guards, bought him from the Ishmaelites † who had brought him there. 2 The LORD was with Joseph, † and he became a successful man, serving † in the household of his Egyptian master. 3 When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made everything he did successful, † 4 Joseph found favor † with his master and became his personal attendant. Potiphar also put him in charge of his household and placed all that he owned under his authority. † 5 From the time that he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph. † The LORD's blessing was on all that he owned, in his house and in his fields. 6 He left all that he owned under Joseph's authority; † he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome. † 7 After some time † his master's wife looked longingly at Joseph and said, "Sleep with me."

8 But he refused. "Look," he said to his master's wife, "with me here my master does not concern himself with anything in his house, and he has put all that he owns under my authority. † 9 No one in this house is greater than I am. He has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. So how could I do this immense evil, and how could I sin against God?" †

10 Although she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her. † 11 Now one day he went into the house to do his work, and none of the household servants were there. † 12 She grabbed him by his garment and said, "Sleep with me!" But leaving his garment in her hand, he escaped and ran outside. 13 When she saw that he had left his garment with her and had run outside, 14 she called her household servants. "Look," she said to them, "my husband brought a Hebrew man to make fools of us. He came to me so he could

sleep with me, and I screamed as loud as I could. 15 When he heard me screaming for help, † he left his garment beside me and ran outside."
16 She put Joseph's garment beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she told him the same story: "The Hebrew slave you brought to us came to make a fool of me, 18 but when I screamed for help, † he left his garment beside me and ran outside."
19 When his master heard the story his wife told him — "These are the things your slave did to me" — he was furious 20 and had him thrown into prison, † where the king's prisoners were confined. So Joseph was there in prison.

JOSEPH IN PRISON

21 But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him. † He granted him favor with the prison warden. † 22 The warden put all the prisoners who were in the prison under Joseph's authority, † and he was responsible for everything that was done there. 23 The warden did not bother with anything under Joseph's authority, † because the LORD was with him, and the LORD made everything that he did successful. †

39:2 Lit *and he was* **39:4** Lit *owned in his hand* **39:6** Lit *owned in Joseph's hand* **39:7** Lit *And after these things* **39:8** Lit *owns in my hand* **39:10** Lit *he did not listen to her to lie beside her, to be with her* **39:11** Lit *there in the house* **39:15** Lit *he heard that I raised my voice and I screamed* **39:18** Lit *I raised my voice and screamed* **39:22** Lit *prison in the hand of Joseph* **39:23** Lit *anything in his hand*
39:1 Gn 37:25,28,36; Ps 105:17 **39:2** Gn 39:3,21,23; Ac 7:9 **39:3** Ps 1:3 **39:4** Gn 18:3; 19:19; 33:10 **39:5** Gn 30:27 **39:6** Gn 29:17; 1Sm 16:12 **39:9** Gn 20:6; 42:18; 2Sm 12:13; Ps 51:4; Pr 6:29 **39:20** Gn 40:3; Ps 105:18 **39:21** Gn 39:2; Ps 105:19; Ac 7:9 **39:21** Ex 3:21; 11:3; 12:36 **39:23** Gn 39:2-3

39:2-3,21-23 This chapter says four times that **the LORD was with Joseph.** The result was that he was **successful** both in Potiphar's house and in the prison. He also found **favor** in both the eyes of Potiphar and of the prison warden, and thus was entrusted with extensive responsibility in each place. God was with Joseph despite his being sold into slavery by his brothers, falsely accused of sexual misconduct, and then unjustly thrown into prison. The Lord also brought about good things through these difficult circumstances (50:20).

39:8-9 Although he lived long before the giving of the law through Moses, Joseph recognized that sleeping with his master's wife would be a **great evil** and a sin **against God**. Earlier, Abimelech, the king of Gerar, likewise recognized that adultery is a sin (20:3-10). Other mentions of **sin** thus far in Genesis are found in relation to Cain (4:7) and Sodom (18:20). As Romans 5:13 says, **sin was in the world before the law**.

JOSEPH INTERPRETS TWO PRISONERS' DREAMS

40 After this, the king of Egypt's cupbearer † and baker offended their
master, the king of Egypt. 2 Pharaoh was angry with his two officers,
the chief cupbearer and the chief baker, 3 and put them in custody in the house
of the captain of the guards † in the prison where Joseph was confined. 4 The
captain of the guards assigned Joseph to them as their personal attendant, and
they were in custody for some time. †
5 The king of Egypt's cupbearer and baker, who were confined in the prison,
each had a dream. Both had a dream on the same night, and each dream had its
own meaning. 6 When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they
looked distraught. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were in custody with
him in his master's house, "Why do you look so sad today?" †
8 "We had dreams," they said to him, "but there is no one to interpret them."
Then Joseph said to them, "Don't interpretations belong to God? Tell me your
dreams." †
9 So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph: "In my dream there was a
vine in front of me. 10 On the vine were three branches. As soon as it budded, its
blossoms came out and its clusters ripened into grapes. 11 Pharaoh's cup was in
my hand, and I took the grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed
the cup in Pharaoh's hand."
12 "This is its interpretation," † Joseph said to him. "The three branches are
three days. 13 In just three days Pharaoh will lift up your head † and restore you
to your position. You will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand the way you used to
when you were his cupbearer. 14 But when all goes well for you, remember that
I was with you. Please show kindness to me by mentioning me to Pharaoh, and
get me out of this prison. 15 For I was kidnapped from the land of the
Hebrews, † and even here I have done nothing that they should put me in the
dungeon." † †
16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was positive, he said to
Joseph, "I also had a dream. Three baskets of white bread were on my head. 17
In the top basket were all sorts of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were
eating them out of the basket on my head."
18 "This is its interpretation," Joseph replied. "The three baskets are three days.
19 In just three days Pharaoh will lift up your head — from off you — and hang

you on a tree. † Then the birds will eat the flesh from your body.” †
20 On the third day, which was Pharaoh’s birthday, he gave a feast for all his servants. He elevated † the chief cupbearer and the chief baker among his servants. † 21 Pharaoh restored the chief cupbearer to his position as cupbearer, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. 22 But Pharaoh hanged † the chief baker, just as Joseph had explained to them. 23 Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph; he forgot him. †

40:4 Lit *custody days* **40:15** Or *pit*, or *cistern* **40:19** Or *and impale you on a pole* **40:19** Lit *eat your flesh from upon you* **40:20** Lit *He lifted up the head of* **40:22** Or *impaled*
40:1 Neh 1:11 **40:3** Gn 39:20 **40:7** Neh 2:2 **40:8** Dn 2:11,20-24 **40:12** Gn 41:12; Dn 2:36 **40:13** Gn 40:19-22 **40:15** Gn 37:28 **40:15** Gn 39:20 **40:20** 2Kg 25:27; Jr 52:31; Mt 14:6 **40:23** Ec 9:15-16

40:5-19 Once again, dreams play a key role in the Joseph narrative. Whereas before Joseph had two dreams about his eventual rule over his brothers (37:5-11), this time he interpreted the two dreams of the **cupbearer** and the **baker.** Joseph emphasized here, as he would again (41:16), that it was not by his own wisdom that he did this, for **interpretations belong to God.**

40:23–41:1 Though Joseph asked the cupbearer to mention him to Pharaoh and help him get out of prison (40:14-15), the cupbearer did not do so. Through this neglect, Joseph’s imprisonment was prolonged for two more years. This delay, however, led to Joseph being recommended to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams (41:8-13). The delayed recognition of a good deed parallels that of Mordecai in the book of Esther (Est 2:21-23; 6:1-3). Both instances illustrate the sovereign wisdom and goodness of God.

JOSEPH INTERPRETS PHARAOH’S DREAMS

41 At the end of two years Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing beside the Nile, † 2 when seven healthy-looking, well-fed cows came up from the Nile and began to graze among the reeds. 3 After them, seven other cows, sickly and thin, came up from the Nile and stood beside those cows along the bank of the Nile. 4 The sickly, thin cows ate the healthy, well-fed cows. Then Pharaoh woke up. 5 He fell asleep and dreamed a second time: Seven heads of grain, plump and good, came up on one stalk. 6 After them, seven heads of grain, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up. 7 The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven plump, full ones. Then Pharaoh woke up, and it was only a dream.
8 When morning came, he was troubled, † so he summoned all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. † Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

9 Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, “Today I remember my faults. 10
Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and he put me and the chief baker in the
custody of the captain of the guards. 11 He and I had dreams on the same night;
each dream had its own meaning. 12 Now a young Hebrew, a slave of the
captain of the guards, was with us there. We told him our dreams, he interpreted
our dreams for us, and each had its own interpretation. 13 It turned out just the
way he interpreted them to us: I was restored to my position, and the other man
was hanged.” †
14 Then Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and they quickly brought him from the
dungeon. † † He shaved, changed his clothes, and went to Pharaoh. †
15 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and no one can interpret it. But I
have heard it said about you that you can hear a dream and interpret it.” †
16 “I am not able to,” † Joseph answered Pharaoh. “It is God who will give
Pharaoh a favorable answer.” † †
17 So Pharaoh said to Joseph: “In my dream I was standing on the bank of the
Nile, 18 when seven well-fed, healthy-looking cows came up from the Nile and
grazed among the reeds. 19 After them, seven other cows — weak, very sickly,
and thin — came up. I’ve never seen such sickly ones as these in all the land of
Egypt. 20 Then the thin, sickly cows ate the first seven well-fed cows. 21 When
they had devoured them, you could not tell that they had devoured them; their
appearance was as bad as it had been before. Then I woke up. 22 In my dream I
also saw seven heads of grain, full and good, coming up on one stalk. 23 After
them, seven heads of grain — withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind —
sprouted up. 24 The thin heads of grain swallowed the seven good ones. I told
this to the magicians, but no one can tell me what it means.” †
25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “Pharaoh’s dreams mean the same thing. God
has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. † 26 The seven good cows are
seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years. The dreams mean the
same thing. 27 The seven thin, sickly cows that came up after them are seven
years, and the seven worthless, scorched heads of grain are seven years of
famine. †
28 “It is just as I told Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do.
29 Seven years of great abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt. 30

After them, seven years of famine will take place, and all the abundance in the land of Egypt will be forgotten. The famine will devastate the land. † 31 The abundance in the land will not be remembered because of the famine that follows it, for the famine will be very severe. 32 Since the dream was given twice to Pharaoh, it means that the matter has been determined by God, and he will carry it out soon.

33 "So now, let Pharaoh look for a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do this: Let him appoint overseers over the land and take a fifth of the harvest of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance. 35 Let them gather all the excess food during these good years that are coming. Under Pharaoh's authority, store the grain in the cities, so they may preserve it as food. 36 The food will be a reserve for the land during the seven years of famine that will take place in the land of Egypt. Then the country will not be wiped out by the famine."

JOSEPH EXALTED

37 The proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants, 38 and he said to them, "Can we find anyone like this, a man who has God's spirit † in him? " † 39 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one as discerning and wise as you are. 40 You will be over my house, and all my people will obey your commands. † † Only I, as king, † will be greater than you." 41 Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "See, I am placing you over all the land of Egypt." 42 Pharaoh removed his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, clothed him with fine linen garments, and placed a gold chain around his neck. † 43 He had Joseph ride in his second chariot, and servants called out before him, "Make way! " † So he placed him over all the land of Egypt. 44 Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh and no one will be able to raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt without your permission." 45 Pharaoh gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah and gave him a wife, Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest at On. † And Joseph went throughout † the land of Egypt.

JOSEPH'S ADMINISTRATION

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph left Pharaoh's presence and traveled throughout the land of Egypt.
47 During the seven years of abundance the land produced outstanding harvests.

48 Joseph gathered all the excess food in the land of Egypt during the seven years and put it in the cities. He put the food in every city from the fields around it. 49 So Joseph stored up grain in such abundance — like the sand of the sea — that he stopped measuring it because it was beyond measure.

50 Two sons were born to Joseph before the years of famine arrived. † Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest at On, bore them to him. 51 Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh † and said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and my whole family." 52 And the second son he named Ephraim † and said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53 Then the seven years of abundance in the land of Egypt came to an end, 54 and the seven years of famine began, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in every land, but in the whole land of Egypt there was food. 55 When the whole land of Egypt was stricken with famine, the people cried out to Pharaoh for food. Pharaoh told all Egypt, "Go to Joseph and do whatever he tells you." 56 Now the famine had spread across the whole region, so Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. 57 Every land came to Joseph in Egypt to buy grain, for the famine was severe in every land. †

41:14 Or *pit*, or *cistern* **41:16** Or *"God will answer Pharaoh with peace of mind."* **41:38** Or *the spirit of the gods*, or *a god's spirit* **41:40** Lit *will kiss your mouth* **41:40** Lit *Only the throne I* **41:43** Or *"Kneel!"* **41:45** Or *Heliopolis*, also in v. 50 **41:45** Or *Joseph gained authority over* **41:51** In Hb, the name *Manasseh* sounds like the verb "forget." **41:52** In Hb, the name *Ephraim* sounds like the word for "fruitful."
41:1-7 Gn 41:17-23 **41:8** Dn 2:1,3 **41:8** Ex 7:11,22; Dn 1:20; 2:2 **41:13** Gn 40:1-22 **41:14** Ps 105:20 **41:14** Dn 2:25 **41:15** Dn 5:16 **41:16** Dn 2:30 **41:16** Gn 40:8; Dn 2:22,28,47 **41:24** Is 8:19; Dn 4:7 **41:25** Dn 2:28-29,45; Rv 4:1 **41:27** 2Kg 8:1 **41:30** Gn 41:54,56; 47:13; Ps 105:16 **41:38** Jb 32:8; Dn 4:8,9,18; 5:11,14 **41:40** Ps 105:21; Ac 7:10 **41:42** Est 3:10; 8:2; Dn 5:7,16,29 **41:50** Gn 46:20; 48:5 **41:57** Gn 12:10

41:8 These Egyptian **magicians** and **wise men**, despite whatever spiritual power they may have had through evil spirits, were unable to interpret Pharaoh's dream. They were thus inferior to Joseph, in whom dwelt the Spirit of God (v. 38)—just as future Egyptian magicians would be inferior to Moses and Aaron (Ex 8:18-19; 9:11; see also Dn 2:2). The clear implication is that the power of God is far greater than all other spiritual powers, especially evil ones.

41:16 As in 40:8, Joseph downplayed his own inherent ability to interpret dreams and gave proper credit to **God.** His words resemble those of Daniel in Daniel 2:20-23,27-30.

41:25-45 Joseph interpreted another pair of dreams, this time for Pharaoh. Because of his interpretation and his proposal regarding the famine, Joseph was described as **a man who has God's spirit in him**, who was **discerning and wise** (see also Ps 105:22). Whereas earlier he had hoped merely to be released from prison (40:14-15), the additional two-year delay and his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams led to his release and exaltation to the second highest position in Egypt. This exaltation, in fact, would be a key factor in the fulfillment of Joseph's own dreams (37:5-10; 42:6; 43:26-28).

41:51-57 The naming of Joseph's boys gives a rare glimpse into Joseph's suffering from his own perspective. He referred to **all my hardship** and called Egypt **the land of my affliction.** Despite these troubles, he recognized that **God** had **made** him **fruitful.** Furthermore, Joseph's wise planning for the famine saved the lives of both Egyptians and the surrounding peoples, including his own family (42:1-3). The international scope of his ministry is reminiscent of 12:3 ("all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you") and foreshadows the messianic fulfillment of this prophecy (see 49:8-12).

JOSEPH'S BROTHERS IN EGYPT

42 When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, † he said to his sons, "Why do you keep looking at each other? 2 Listen," he went on, "I have heard there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so that we will live and not die." † 3 So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he thought, "Something might happen to him."

5 The sons of Israel were among those who came to buy grain, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. 6 Joseph was in charge of the country; he sold grain to all its people. His brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the ground. † 7 When Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke harshly to them.

"Where do you come from? " he asked.

"From the land of Canaan to buy food," they replied.

8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. 9 Joseph remembered his dreams about them † and said to them, "You are spies. You have come to see the weakness † of the land."

10 "No, my lord. Your servants have come to buy food," they said. 11 "We are all sons of one man. We are honest; your servants are not spies."

12 "No," he said to them. "You have come to see the weakness of the land."

13 But they replied, "We, your servants, were twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now † with our father, and one is no longer living."

14 Then Joseph said to them, "I have spoken: † 'You are spies! ' 15 This is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one from among you to get your brother. The rest of you will be imprisoned so that your words can be tested

to see if they are true. If they are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies! ” 17 So Joseph imprisoned them together for three days.
18 On the third day Joseph said to them, “I fear God † — do this and you will live. 19 If you are honest, let one of you † be confined to the guardhouse, while the rest of you go and take grain to relieve the hunger of your households. 20 Bring your youngest brother to me so that your words can be confirmed; then you won’t die.” And they consented to this.
21 Then they said to each other, “Obviously, we are being punished for what we did to our brother. We saw his deep distress when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this trouble has come to us.” †
22 But Reuben replied: “Didn’t I tell you not to harm the boy? † But you wouldn’t listen. Now we must account for his blood! ” †
23 They did not realize that Joseph understood them, since there was an interpreter between them. 24 He turned away from them and wept. When he turned back and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and had him bound before their eyes. 25 Joseph then gave orders to fill their containers with grain, return each man’s silver to his sack, and give them provisions for their journey. This order was carried out. 26 They loaded the grain on their donkeys and left there.

THE BROTHERS RETURN HOME

27 At the place where they lodged for the night, one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver there at the top of his bag. 28 He said to his brothers, “My silver has been returned! It’s here in my bag.” Their hearts sank. Trembling, they turned to one another and said, “What is this that God has done to us? ”
29 When they reached their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them: 30 “The man who is the lord of the country spoke harshly to us and accused us of spying on the country. 31 But we told him: We are honest and not spies. 32 We were twelve brothers, sons of the same † father. One is no longer living, and the youngest is now with our father in the land of Canaan. 33 The man who is the lord of the country said to us, ‘This is how I will know if you are honest: Leave one brother with me, take food to relieve the hunger of your households, and go. 34 Bring back your youngest brother to me,

and I will know that you are not spies but honest men. I will then give your brother back to you, and you can trade in the country.' "
35 As they began emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his bag of silver! When they and their father saw their bags of silver, they were afraid.
36 Their father Jacob said to them, "It's me that you make childless. Joseph is gone, and Simeon is gone. Now you want to take Benjamin. Everything happens to me! "
37 Then Reuben said to his father, "You can kill my two sons if I don't bring him back to you. Put him in my care, † and I will return him to you."
38 But Jacob answered, "My son will not go down with you, for his brother is dead and he alone is left. † If anything happens to him on your journey, you will bring my gray hairs down to Sheol in sorrow." †

42:9 Lit *nakedness*, also in v. 12 **42:13** Or *today*, also in v. 32 **42:14** Lit *"That which I spoke to you saying:* **42:19** Lit *your brothers* **42:22** Lit *Even his blood is being sought! "* **42:32** Lit *of our* **42:37** Lit *hand*
42:1 Ac 7:12 **42:2** Gn 43:8 **42:6** Gn 37:7-10; 41:43; Is 60:14 **42:9** Gn 37:5-11 **42:18** Gn 39:9; Lv 25:43; Neh 5:15 **42:21** Gn 37:26-28 **42:22** Gn 37:22 **42:38** Gn 37:33-34; 42:13; 44:27-28 **42:38** Gn 44:29

42:6,9 Joseph's dreams about his **brothers** bowing down to him had come true (see 37:5-10; 43:26-28). The complexity of the sequence of events leading up to this is a testimony to the sovereignty of God.

42:14-20 Joseph's request to see Benjamin, the **youngest brother**, may have been motivated by a desire to know how his full brother was being treated by their half brothers. Benjamin was favored by Jacob (v. 4), just as Joseph had been. For Joseph, this led to his brothers' jealousy and mistreatment of him.

42:21-23 Joseph's brothers recognized that what they had done to him years ago was wrong. It was deeply moving for Joseph, who communicated through an **interpreter**, to hear this confession of guilt concerning what he had suffered at their hands.

42:33-34 Joseph's repeated questioning of his brothers' honesty (see also vv. 16,19) is fitting given their earlier lie about his supposed death by a vicious animal (37:20,31-33; see also 42:13).

42:37-38 Once again, Reuben's plans were thwarted (see 37:21-22,29-30; 42:22).

DECISION TO RETURN TO EGYPT

43 Now the famine in the land was severe. † 2 When they had used up the grain they had brought back from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little food."
3 But Judah said to him, "The man specifically warned us: 'You will not see me again unless your brother is with you.' 4 If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food for you. 5 But if you will not send him, we will not go, for the man said to us, 'You will not see me again unless your brother is with you.' " †

6 “Why have you caused me so much trouble?” Israel asked. “Why did you tell
the man that you had another brother?”
7 They answered, “The man kept asking about us and our family: ‘Is your father
still alive? Do you have another brother?’ And we answered him accordingly.
How could we know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother here’?”
8 Then Judah said to his father Israel, “Send the boy with me. We will be on our
way so that we may live and not die — neither we, nor you, nor our dependents.
9 I will be responsible for him. You can hold me personally accountable! † If I
do not bring him back to you and set him before you, I will be guilty before you
forever. † 10 If we had not delayed, we could have come back twice by now.”
11 Then their father Israel said to them, “If it must be so, then do this: Put some
of the best products of the land in your packs and take them down to the man as
a gift — a little balsam and a little honey, aromatic gum and resin, pistachios and
almonds. † 12 Take twice as much silver with you. Return the silver that was
returned to you in the top of your bags. Perhaps it was a mistake. 13 Take your
brother also, and go back at once to the man. 14 May God Almighty cause the
man to be merciful to you so that he will release your other brother and
Benjamin to you. As for me, if I am deprived of my sons, then I am deprived.” †

THE RETURN TO EGYPT

15 The men took this gift, double the amount of silver, and Benjamin. They
immediately went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.
16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his steward, “Take the men
to my house. Slaughter an animal and prepare it, for they will eat with me at
noon.” 17 The man did as Joseph had said and brought them to Joseph’s house.
18 But the men were afraid because they were taken to Joseph’s house. They
said, “We have been brought here because of the silver that was returned in our
bags the first time. They intend to overpower us, seize us, make us slaves, and
take our donkeys.” 19 So they approached Joseph’s steward † and spoke to him
at the doorway of the house.
20 They said, “My lord, we really did come down here the first time only to buy
food. 21 When we came to the place where we lodged for the night and opened
our bags of grain, each one’s silver was at the top of his bag! † It was the full
amount of our silver, and we have brought it back with us. 22 We have brought

additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in the bags."
23 Then the steward said, "May you be well. Don't be afraid. Your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your bags. I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them. 24 The steward brought the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet, † and got feed for their donkeys. 25 Since the men had heard that they were going to eat a meal there, they prepared their gift for Joseph's arrival at noon. 26 When Joseph came home, they brought him the gift they had carried into the house, and they bowed to the ground before him.
27 He asked if they were well, and he said, "How is your elderly father that you told me about? Is he still alive?"
28 They answered, "Your servant our father is well. He is still alive." And they knelt low and paid homage to him.
29 When he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother that you told me about?" Then he said, "May God be gracious to you, my son." 30 Joseph hurried out because he was overcome with emotion for his brother, and he was about to weep. He went into an inner room and wept there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out. Regaining his composure, † he said, "Serve the meal."
32 They served him by himself, his brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who were eating with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, since that is detestable to them. † 33 They were seated before him in order by age, from the firstborn to the youngest. The men looked at each other in astonishment. 34 Portions were served to them from Joseph's table, and Benjamin's portion was five times larger than any of theirs. † They drank and became drunk with Joseph.

43:9 Lit *can seek him from my hand* **43:19** Lit *approached the one who was over the house*
43:1 Gn 12:10; 41:56-57; 47:20 **43:5** Gn 42:18-20; 44:23 **43:9** Gn 42:37; 44:32 **43:11** Gn 37:25; Jr 8:22; Ezk 27:17 **43:14** Gn 42:36 **43:21** Gn 42:27,35 **43:24** Gn 18:4; 19:2; 24:32 **43:31** Gn 45:1 **43:32** Gn 46:34; Ex 8:26 **43:34** Gn 35:24; 45:22

43:3-10 Reuben's pledge to Jacob had been rejected (42:37-38), but Judah's was accepted. This parallels the earlier situation in which Reuben's plan to save Joseph from his brothers was thwarted, whereas Judah's proposal to sell him was accepted by them (37:21-30).

43:12,15 Jacob instructed his sons to act honestly regarding **the silver that was returned**, and they obeyed.

43:20-23 Joseph's reason for returning his brothers' payment for the grain is not explained explicitly (42:25-28,35). Perhaps Joseph did not want to charge his brothers. The steward's response did not reveal Joseph's involvement but encouraged his brothers to see the returned payment as a gift from **the God of** their **father.**

43:32 This brief comment that eating **with the Hebrews** would be **detestable** to **the Egyptians** not only gives a small insight into Egyptian culture of that time but also indicates an animosity between the two groups (see also 12:10-20; 16:1-6; 21:8-21). This tension is brought up again through similar statements in 46:34 and Exodus 8:26.

JOSEPH'S FINAL TEST

44 Joseph commanded his steward, "Fill the men's bags with as much food
as they can carry, and put each one's silver at the top of his bag. † 2 Put
my cup, the silver one, at the top of the youngest one's bag, along with the silver
for his grain." So he did as Joseph told him.
3 At morning light, the men were sent off with their donkeys. 4 They had not
gone very far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, "Get up. Pursue the
men, and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid evil for
good? 5 Isn't this the cup that my master drinks from and uses for divination? †
What you have done is wrong! ' "
6 When he overtook them, he said these words to them. 7 They said to him,
"Why does my lord say these things? Your servants could not possibly do such a
thing. 8 We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the silver we
found at the top of our bags. How could we steal silver or gold from your
master's house? 9 If it is found with one of us, your servants, he must die, and
the rest of us will become my lord's slaves." †
10 The steward replied, "What you have said is right, but only the one who is
found to have it will be my slave, and the rest of you will be blameless."
11 So each one quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. 12 The
steward searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and
the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they tore their clothes, † and
each one loaded his donkey and returned to the city.
14 When Judah and his brothers reached Joseph's house, he was still there. They
fell to the ground before him. † 15 "What is this you have done? " Joseph said to
them. "Didn't you know that a man like me could uncover the truth by
divination? "

16 “What can we say to my lord? ” Judah replied. “How can we plead? How can we justify ourselves? God has exposed your servants’ iniquity. We are now my lord’s slaves — both we and the one in whose possession the cup was found.”
17 Then Joseph said, “I swear that I will not do this. The man in whose possession the cup was found will be my slave. The rest of you can go in peace to your father.”

JUDAH’S PLEA FOR BENJAMIN

18 But Judah approached him and said, “My lord, please let your servant speak personally to my lord. † Do not be angry with your servant, for you are like Pharaoh. † 19 My lord asked his servants, ‘Do you have a father or a brother? ’ 20 and we answered my lord, ‘We have an elderly father and a younger brother, the child of his old age. † The boy’s brother is dead. He is the only one of his mother’s sons left, and his father loves him.’ 21 Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him to me so that I can see him.’ † 22 But we said to my lord, ‘The boy cannot leave his father. If he were to leave, his father would die.’ 23 Then you said to your servants, ‘If your younger brother does not come down with you, you will not see me again.’ †
24 “This is what happened when we went back to your servant my father: We reported to him the words of my lord. 25 But our father said, ‘Go again, and buy us a little food.’ † 26 We told him, ‘We cannot go down unless our younger brother goes with us. If our younger brother isn’t with us, we cannot see the man.’ 27 Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28 One is gone from me — I said he must have been torn to pieces — and I have never seen him again. † 29 If you also take this one from me and anything happens to him, you will bring my gray hairs down to Sheol in sorrow.’ †
30 “So if I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with us — his life is wrapped up with the boy’s life — 31 when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die. Then your servants will have brought the gray hairs of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow. 32 Your servant became accountable to my father for the boy, saying, ‘If I do not return him to you, I will always bear the guilt for sinning against you, my father.’ † 33 Now please let your servant

remain here as my lord's slave, in place of the boy. Let him go back with his brothers. 34 For how can I go back to my father without the boy? I could not bear to see the grief that would overwhelm my father."

44:18 Lit *speak a word in my lord's ears*

44:1 Gn 42:25 **44:5** Gn 30:27; 44:15; Lv 19:26; Dt 18:10-14 **44:9** Gn 31:32 **44:13** Gn 37:29 **44:14** Gn 37:7-10; 42:6; 43:26-28 **44:18** Gn 37:7-8; 41:40-44 **44:20** Gn 37:3; 43:8; 44:30 **44:21** Gn 42:15,20 **44:23** Gn 43:3,5 **44:25** Gn 43:2 **44:28** Gn 37:31-35 **44:29** Gn 42:38 **44:32** Gn 43:9

44:1-13 Joseph's scheme to secretly put his silver cup in Benjamin's bag worked perfectly. After his steward pursued the brothers and accused them of stealing, they promised that the guilty party **must die,** while **the rest of them** became Joseph's **slaves.** Without knowing it, they were implicating both Benjamin and themselves.

44:17-34 Joseph's intent to enslave Benjamin only led to Judah's lengthy plea. As was the case in 43:3-10, **Judah** exercised leadership positively as he explained how precious Benjamin was to his father. His selfless offer of himself as a substitute for Benjamin demonstrated a remarkable transformation from his earlier days when he suggested to his brothers that they sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites (37:26-27) and when he mistreated his daughter-in-law Tamar, slept with her unwittingly, and called for her death (38:11-24).

JOSEPH REVEALS HIS IDENTITY

45 Joseph could no longer keep his composure in front of all his attendants, † so he called out, "Send everyone away from me! " No one was with him when he revealed his identity to his brothers. † 2 But he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and also Pharaoh's household heard it. 3 Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living? " But they could not answer him because they were terrified in his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Please, come near me," and they came near. "I am Joseph, your brother," he said, "the one you sold into Egypt. † 5 And now don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because God sent me ahead of you to preserve life. † 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there will be five more years without plowing or harvesting. 7 God sent me ahead of you to establish you as a remnant within the land and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. † 8 Therefore it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household, and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

9 "Return quickly to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: "God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me without delay. 10 You can settle in the land of Goshen † and be near me — you, your children, and your grandchildren, your flocks, your herds, and all you have. 11 There I

will sustain you, for there will be five more years of famine. Otherwise, you, your household, and everything you have will become destitute.” ’ † 12 Look! Your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin can see that I’m † the one speaking to you. 13 Tell my father about all my glory in Egypt and about all you have seen. And bring my father here quickly.” †

14 Then Joseph threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin wept on his shoulder. 15 Joseph kissed each of his brothers as he wept, † and afterward his brothers talked with him.

THE RETURN FOR JACOB

16 When the news reached Pharaoh’s palace, “Joseph’s brothers have come,” Pharaoh and his servants were pleased. 17 Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Tell your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and go on back to the land of Canaan. 18 Get your father and your families, and come back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you can eat from the richness of the land.’ 19 You are also commanded to tell them, ‘Do this: Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your dependents and your wives and bring your father here. † 20 Do not be concerned about your belongings, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.’ ” †

21 The sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them wagons as Pharaoh had commanded, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave each of the brothers changes of clothes, † but he gave Benjamin three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of clothes. † 23 He sent his father the following: ten donkeys carrying the best products of Egypt and ten female donkeys carrying grain, food, and provisions for his father on the journey. 24 So Joseph sent his brothers on their way, and as they were leaving, he said to them, “Don’t argue † on the way.”

25 So they went up from Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26 They said, “Joseph is still alive, and he is ruler over all the land of Egypt! ” Jacob was stunned, † for he did not believe them. 27 But when they told Jacob all that Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to transport him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.

28 Then Israel said, “Enough! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go to see him before I die.”

45:1 Lit *all those standing about him* **45:7** Or *keep alive for you many survivors* **45:12** Lit *that my mouth is* **45:15** Lit *brothers, and he wept over them* **45:24** Or *be anxious* **45:26** Lit *Jacob’s heart was numb*
45:1 Ac 7:13 **45:4** Gn 37:18-36 **45:5** Gn 45:7-8; 50:20; Ps 105:17 **45:10** Gn 46:34; 47:1,4,6,11,27; 50:8; Ex 8:22; Jos 10:41 **45:11** Gn 47:12; 50:21 **45:13** Ac 7:14 **45:19** Gn 46:5 **45:20** Dt 32:9-14 **45:22** 2Kg 5:5 **45:22** Gn 43:34

45:4-8 Joseph’s mercy toward his brothers was rooted in his recognition that God had been working for his own good purposes through their evil intentions (see also 50:20). It is true that his brothers had wrongly **sold** him into Egypt, but the bigger picture was that **God sent** him **ahead of** them **to preserve life.** The Lord knew about the famine long beforehand and sent Joseph to prepare for their sake. Joseph’s confidence in the sovereignty of God shines through his statement, **It was not you who sent me here, but God.**

45:12,26 Upon discovering Joseph’s true identity, his brothers were terrified (v. 3), and Joseph continued to assure them that it was indeed him. Likewise, Jacob, long under the false impression that Joseph was dead (see 37:33-35), **was stunned** to hear that he was alive in Egypt.

JACOB LEAVES FOR EGYPT

46 Israel set out with all that he had and came to Beer-sheba, † and he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. 2 That night God spoke to Israel in a vision: † “Jacob, Jacob! ” he said.
And Jacob replied, “Here I am.”
3 God said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. † 4 I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you back. † Joseph will close your eyes when you die.” † †
5 Jacob left Beer-sheba. The sons of Israel took their father Jacob in the wagons Pharaoh had sent to carry him, † along with their dependents and their wives. 6 They also took their cattle and possessions they had acquired in the land of Canaan. Then Jacob and all his offspring with him came to Egypt. † 7 His sons and grandsons, his daughters and granddaughters, indeed all his offspring, he brought with him to Egypt.

JACOB’S FAMILY

8 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt † — Jacob and his sons:

Jacob’s firstborn: Reuben.

9 Reuben’s sons: † Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

10 Simeon’s sons: † Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar,
and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.

11 Levi’s sons: † Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 Judah’s sons: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah; but Er
and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

The sons † of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.

13 Issachar’s sons: † Tola, Puvah, † Jashub, † and Shimron.

14 Zebulun’s sons: Sered, Elon, and Jahleel.

15 These were Leah’s sons born to Jacob in Paddan-aram,
as well as his daughter Dinah. The total number

of persons: † thirty-three.

16 Gad’s sons: Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi,
and Areli.

17 Asher’s sons: † Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister
Serah.

Beriah’s sons were Heber and Malchiel.

18 These were the sons of Zilpah — whom Laban gave
to his daughter Leah — that she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.

19 The sons of Jacob’s wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

20 Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph in the land
of Egypt. They were born to him by Asenath daughter of Potiphera,

a priest at On. †

21 Benjamin’s sons: † Bela, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi,
Rosh, Muppim, Huppim, and Ard.

22 These were Rachel’s sons who were born to Jacob:
fourteen persons.

23 Dan’s son: † Hushim.

24 Naphtali’s sons: † Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and Shillem.

25 These were the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave
to his daughter Rachel. † She bore to Jacob: seven persons.

26 The total number of persons belonging to Jacob —
his direct descendants, † not including the wives of Jacob’s sons —
who came to Egypt: sixty-six.

27 And Joseph’s sons who were born to him in Egypt: two persons.
All those of Jacob’s household who came to Egypt:
seventy † persons. †

JACOB ARRIVES IN EGYPT

28 Now Jacob had sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to prepare for his arrival † at Goshen. † When they came to the land of Goshen, 29 Joseph hitched the horses to his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel. Joseph presented himself to him, threw his arms around him, and wept for a long time. †
30 Then Israel said to Joseph, “I’m ready to die now because I have seen your face and you are still alive! ”
31 Joseph said to his brothers and to his father’s family, “I will go up and inform Pharaoh, telling him, ‘My brothers and my father’s family, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me. † 32 The men are shepherds; they also raise livestock. They have brought their flocks and herds and all that they have.’ 33 When Pharaoh addresses you and asks, ‘What is your occupation? ’ 34 you are to say, ‘Your servants, both we and our fathers, have raised livestock † from our youth until now.’ Then you will be allowed to settle in the land of Goshen, since all shepherds are detestable to Egyptians.” †

46:4 Lit *will put his hand on your eyes* **46:13** Sam, Syr read *Puah* ; 1Ch 7:1 **46:13** Sam, LXX; MT reads *Iob* **46:15** Lit *All persons his sons and his daughters:* **46:20** Or *Heliopolis* **46:23** Alt Hb tradition reads *sons:* **46:26** Lit *Jacob who came out from his loins* **46:27** LXX reads *75* ; Ac 7:14 **46:28** Lit *to give directions before him* **46:34** Lit *fathers, are men of livestock*

46:1 Gn 21:14; 28:10; Jos 15:28; Jdg 20:1; 2Sm 24:7; 1Kg 19:3 **46:2** Gn 15:1; Jb 33:14-15 **46:3** Gn 12:2; 15:13-14; 35:11; Ex 1:7,9; Dt 26:5 **46:4** Gn 15:16; 28:15; 48:21; 50:24; Ex 3:8 **46:4** Gn 50:1 **46:5** Gn

45:19,21 **46:6** Dt 26:5; Jos 24:4; Ps 105:23; Is 52:4; Ac 7:15 **46:8-27** Ex 1:1-5; Nm 26:4-5 **46:9** Ex 6:14 **46:10** Ex 6:15 **46:11** Ex 6:16; 1Ch 6:16 **46:12** Gn 38:29; 1Ch 2:5 **46:13** 1Ch 7:1 **46:17** 1Ch 7:30-31 **46:21** Nm 26:38-40; 1Ch 7:6-12; 8:1 **46:24** 1Ch 7:13 **46:25** Gn 29:29; 30:5-8 **46:27** Ex 1:5; Dt 10:22; Ac 7:14 **46:28** Gn 45:10 **46:29** Gn 45:14 **46:31** Gn 47:1 **46:34** Gn 43:32; Ex 8:26

46:2-4 God reassured Jacob that leaving the land promised to him for Egypt was the right thing to do. He reaffirmed the covenantal promise that **I will make you into a great nation** (see 12:2) and pledged that they would be brought back. Their sojourn "as foreigners in a land that does not belong to them" had been foretold in 15:13.

46:28-34 As Joseph had suggested (45:10), his family arrived in Goshen, with Judah leading the way. Joseph instructed his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they were **shepherds** so that they would **be allowed to settle** there (see the note on 43:32). They followed his instructions, and all went as planned (47:2-6). **Goshen** was the best part of the land and apparently was associated with the land of Rameses (v. 11; see also Ex 1:11).

PHARAOH WELCOMES JACOB

47 So Joseph went and informed Pharaoh: "My father and my brothers,
with their flocks and herds and all that they own, have come from the
land of Canaan and are now in the land of Goshen." †
2 He took five of his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh. † 3 And Pharaoh
asked his brothers, "What is your occupation? "
They said to Pharaoh, "Your servants, both we and our fathers, are
shepherds." † 4 And they said to Pharaoh, "We have come to stay in the land
for a while because there is no grazing land for your servants' sheep, since the
famine in the land of Canaan has been severe. † So now, please let your servants
settle in the land of Goshen."
5 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Now that your father and brothers have come to
you, 6 the land of Egypt is open before you; settle your father and brothers in the
best part of the land. † They can live in the land of Goshen. If you know of any
capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock." †
7 Joseph then brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh, and Jacob
blessed Pharaoh. 8 Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How many years have you lived? "
9 Jacob said to Pharaoh, "My pilgrimage † has lasted 130 years. My years have
been few and hard, † and they have not reached the years of my fathers during
their pilgrimages." † 10 So Jacob blessed Pharaoh and departed from Pharaoh's
presence.

11 Then Joseph settled his father and brothers in the land of Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the land of Rameses, † as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 And Joseph provided his father, his brothers, and all his father's family with food for their dependents. †

THE LAND BECOMES PHARAOH'S

13 But there was no food in the entire region, for the famine was very severe. The land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were exhausted by the famine. 14 Joseph collected all the silver to be found in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan in exchange for the grain they were purchasing, and he brought the silver to Pharaoh's palace. † 15 When the silver from the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan was gone, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die here in front of you? The silver is gone! "

16 But Joseph said, "Give me your livestock. Since the silver is gone, I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for the horses, the flocks of sheep, the herds of cattle, and the donkeys. That year he provided them with food in exchange for all their livestock.

18 When that year was over, they came the next year and said to him, "We cannot hide from our lord that the silver is gone and that all our livestock belongs to our lord. There is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 19 Why should we die here in front of you — both us and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food. Then we with our land will become Pharaoh's slaves. Give us seed so that we can live and not die, and so that the land won't become desolate."

20 In this way, Joseph acquired all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh, because every Egyptian sold his field since the famine was so severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, 21 and Joseph moved the people to the cities † from one end of Egypt to the other. 22 The only land he did not acquire belonged to the priests, for they had an allowance from Pharaoh. They ate from their allowance that Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their land.

23 Joseph said to the people, "Understand today that I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you. Sow it in the land. 24 At harvest,

you are to give a fifth of it to Pharaoh, † and four-fifths will be yours as seed for the field and as food for yourselves, your households, and your dependents."
25 "You have saved our lives," they said. "We have found favor with our lord and will be Pharaoh's slaves." 26 So Joseph made it a law, still in effect today in the land of Egypt, that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. Only the priests' land does not belong to Pharaoh.

ISRAEL SETTLES IN GOSHEN

27 Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the region of Goshen. They acquired property in it and became fruitful and very numerous. † 28 Now Jacob lived in the land of Egypt 17 years, and his life span was 147 years. 29 When the time approached for him to die, † he called his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor with you, put your hand under my thigh † and promise me that you will deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. † Do not bury me in Egypt. 30 When I rest with my fathers, carry me away from Egypt and bury me in their burial place." †
Joseph answered, "I will do what you have asked."
31 And Jacob said, "Swear to me." So Joseph swore to him. Then Israel bowed in thanks at the head of his bed. † †

47:21 Sam, LXX, Vg read *and he made the people servants* **47:31** Or *Israel worshiped while leaning on the top of his staff*

47:1 Gn 45:10; 46:28 **47:2** Ac 7:13 **47:3** Gn 46:32-34 **47:4** Gn 15:13; Dt 26:5 **47:6** Gn 45:10,18; 47:11 **47:6** Ex 18:21,25; 1Kg 11:28; Pr 22:29 **47:9** 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; 119:19,54; Heb 11:9,13 **47:9** Jb 14:1; Ps 39:4-5; Jms 4:14 **47:9** Gn 11:32; 25:7; 35:28 **47:11** Gn 45:10; Ex 1:11; 12:37 **47:12** Gn 45:11; 50:21 **47:14** Gn 41:56 **47:24** Gn 41:34 **47:27** Gn 17:6; 26:4; 35:11; Ex 1:7; Dt 26:5; Ac 7:17 **47:29** Dt 31:14; 1Kg 2:1 **47:29** Gn 24:2 **47:29** Gn 24:49 **47:30** Gn 23:17-20; 25:9-10; 35:29; 49:29-32; 50:5,13; Ac 7:15-16 **47:31** Gn 48:2; 1Kg 1:47; Heb 11:21

47:9 Jacob referred to his life and those of his fathers as **pilgrimages.** The same Hebrew word is used several times to describe the land promised to them (17:8; 28:4; 37:1). This agrees with Heb 11:9-10: "[Abraham] stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob . . . he was looking forward to the city . . . , whose architect . . . "

47:22 Like later Israelite priests, Egyptian **priests** received some special treatment and were supported financially by others.

47:25 The biblical narrative continues to portray Joseph as someone who **saved lives** (see also vv. 15,19; 41:36; 42:2; 45:5,7).

47:27 That Israel **became fruitful and very numerous** while in Egypt shows God's faithfulness to his promise to multiply them (13:16; 15:5). It also recalls his earlier commands to Adam (1:28) and to Noah

(9:1). The large size of their population would play a role in their eventual enslavement by the Egyptians (Ex 1:7).

47:29-30 Joseph swore to his father Jacob that he would be buried **with** his **fathers**, and Jacob indeed would be buried in the cave at Machpelah in the field near Mamre, where Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah were buried (49:29-33; 50:13).

JACOB BLESSES EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

48 Some time after this, Joseph was told, "Your father is weaker." So he set out with his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel summoned his strength and sat up in bed.

3 Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty † appeared to me at Luz † in the land of Canaan and blessed me. 4 He said to me, 'I will make you fruitful and numerous; I will make many nations come from you, and I will give this land as a permanent possession † to your future descendants.' † 5 Your two sons † born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt are now mine. † Ephraim and Manasseh belong to me just as Reuben and Simeon do. 6 Children born to you after them will be yours and will be recorded under the names of their brothers with regard to their inheritance. 7 When I was returning from Paddan, to my sorrow Rachel died along the way, † some distance from Ephrath in the land of Canaan. I buried her there along the way to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

8 When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these? "

9 And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons God has given me here."

So Israel said, "Bring them to me and I will bless them." † 10 Now his eyesight was poor because of old age; he could hardly † see. † Joseph brought them to him, and he kissed and embraced them. † 11 Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, but now God has even let me see your offspring." 12 Then Joseph took them from his father's knees and bowed with his face to the ground. †

EPHRAIM'S GREATER BLESSING

13 Then Joseph took them both — with his right hand Ephraim toward Israel's left, and with his left hand Manasseh toward Israel's right — and brought them to Israel. 14 But Israel stretched out his right hand and put it on the head of

Ephraim, the younger, and crossing his hands, put his left on Manasseh's head, although Manasseh was the firstborn. † 15 Then he blessed Joseph and said:

The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, †
the God who has been my shepherd † all my life to this day, 16 the angel
who has redeemed me from all harm † — may he bless these boys.
And may they be called by my name
and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac, †
and may they grow to be numerous within the land.

17 When Joseph saw that his father had placed his right hand on Ephraim's head, he thought it was a mistake † and took his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's. 18 Joseph said to his father, "Not that way, my father! This one is the firstborn. Put your right hand on his head."
19 But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know! He too will become a tribe, † and he too will be great; nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his offspring will become a populous nation." † 20 So he blessed them that day, putting Ephraim before Manasseh when he said, "The nation Israel will invoke blessings by you, saying, 'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.' "
21 Israel said to Joseph, "Look, I am about to die, but God will be with you and will bring you back to the land of your fathers. † 22 Over and above what I am giving your brothers, I am giving you the one mountain slope † that I took from the Amorites with my sword and bow." †

48:10 Lit *he was not able to* **48:17** Or *he was displeased* ; lit *head, it was bad in his eyes* **48:19** Lit *people* **48:19** Or *a multitude of nations* ; lit *a fullness of nations* **48:22** Or *Shechem,* Joseph's burial place; lit *one shoulder*

48:3 Gn 17:1 **48:3** Gn 28:13,19; 35:6,9 **48:4** Gn 17:8 **48:4** Gn 35:9-12 **48:5** Gn 41:50-52; 46:20 **48:5** Jos 13:7; 14:4; 17:17 **48:7** Gn 35:9-19 **48:9** Gn 27:4; 49:25-26; Heb 11:21 **48:10** Gn 27:1 **48:10** Gn 27:27 **48:12** Gn 18:2; 24:52; 33:3; 42:6; 43:26; Ex 34:8 **48:14** Gn 25:23; 27:18-30 **48:15** Gn 17:1; 24:40 **48:15** Gn 49:24; Ps 23:1; Jr 31:10 **48:16** Gn 28:13-15; 31:11; Is 63:9; Ac 7:35 **48:16** Dt 28:10; 2Ch 7:14; Is 4:1; 43:1; 48:1 **48:21** Gn 46:4; 50:24 **48:22** Gn 34:25-29; Jos 24:32; Jn 4:5

48:5 Jacob's inclusion of Joseph's **sons** among his own would later be reflected in Ephraim and Manasseh each becoming a tribe like the other sons of Jacob (e.g., Nm 1).

48:13-20 The births of Joseph's two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, were described in 41:50-52. Jacob's greater blessing of **the younger** Ephraim compared to **the firstborn** Manasseh continues the pattern of a

younger brother surpassing a firstborn son, as seen with Cain and Abel, Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, and Reuben and Judah. These examples demonstrate God's nonconformity to human expectation and convention.

JACOB'S LAST WORDS

49 Then Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather around, and I will tell you what will happen to you in the days to come. † †

2 Come together and listen, sons of Jacob; listen to your father Israel:

3 Reuben, you are my firstborn, †
my strength and the firstfruits of my virility, †
excelling in prominence, excelling in power.
4 Turbulent as water, you will not excel, because you got into your father's bed †
and you defiled it — he † got into my bed.

5 Simeon and Levi are brothers; their knives are vicious weapons. †
6 May I never enter their council; may I never join their assembly.
For in their anger they kill men,
and on a whim they hamstring oxen.
7 Their anger is cursed, for it is strong, and their fury, for it is cruel!
I will disperse them throughout Jacob
and scatter them throughout Israel. †

8 Judah, your brothers will praise you. †
Your hand will be on the necks of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down to you. †
9 Judah is a young lion † — my son, you return from the kill.
He crouches; he lies down like a lion
or a lioness — who dares to rouse him?
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah or the staff from between his feet
until he whose right it is comes † †
and the obedience of the peoples belongs to him. †
11 He ties his donkey to a vine, and the colt of his donkey to the choice vine.

He washes his clothes in wine
and his robes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth are whiter than milk.

13 Zebulun will live by the seashore and will be a harbor for ships,
and his territory will be next to Sidon. †

14 Issachar is a strong donkey lying down between the saddlebags. †
15 He saw that his resting place was good and that the land was pleasant,
so he leaned his shoulder to bear a load
and became a forced laborer. †

16 Dan will judge his people †
as one of the tribes of Israel.
17 Dan will be a snake by the road, a viper beside the path,
that bites the horse's heels
so that its rider falls backward.

18 I wait for your salvation, LORD.

19 Gad will be attacked by raiders, but he will attack their heels. †

20 Asher's † food will be rich, and he will produce royal delicacies. †

21 Naphtali is a doe set free that bears beautiful fawns. †

22 Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine beside a spring;
its branches † climb over the wall. †
23 The archers attacked him, shot at him, and were hostile toward him.
24 Yet his bow remained steady, and his strong arms were made agile
by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, †
by the name of † the Shepherd, † the Rock of Israel, †
25 by the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you
with blessings of the heavens above,

blessings of the deep that lies below,
and blessings of the breasts and the womb.
26 The blessings of your father excel the blessings of my ancestors †
and † the bounty of the ancient hills. † †
May they rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince of his brothers.

27 Benjamin is a wolf; he tears his prey.
In the morning he devours the prey,
and in the evening he divides the plunder." †

28 These are the tribes of Israel, twelve in all, and this is what their father said to them. He blessed them, and he blessed each one with a suitable blessing.

JACOB'S BURIAL INSTRUCTIONS

29 Then he commanded them: "I am about to be gathered to my people. † Bury me with my fathers † in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hethite. † 30 The cave is in the field of Machpelah near Mamre, in the land of Canaan. This is the field Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hethite as burial property. † 31 Abraham and his wife Sarah are buried there, † Isaac and his wife Rebekah are buried there, † and I buried Leah there. † 32 The field and the cave in it were purchased from the Hethites." 33 When Jacob had finished giving charges to his sons, he drew his feet into the bed, took his last breath, and was gathered to his people.

49:1 Or *in the last days* **49:4** LXX, Syr, Tg read *you* **49:10** Or *until tribute comes to him*, or *until Shiloh comes*, or *until he comes to Shiloh* **49:14** Or *sheep pens* **49:19-20** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *their heel.* 20*From Asher* **49:22** Lit *daughters* **49:22** Hb obscure **49:24** Syr, Tg; MT reads *Jacob, from there* **49:26** Or *of the mountains* **49:26** Lit *to* **49:26** Hb obscure

49:1 Nm 24:14; Dt 4:30; 31:29; Is 2:2; Jr 23:20; Dn 2:28; 10:14; Hs 3:5 **49:3** Gn 29:32 **49:3** Dt 21:17 **49:4** Gn 35:22 **49:5** Gn 34:25,30 **49:7** Ex 32:28; Nm 3:5-13; Dt 33:10; Jos 19:1-9; 1Ch 4:24-39; 2Ch 34:6; Neh 11:25-28 **49:8** Gn 29:35 **49:8** Gn 27:29; 1Ch 5:2 **49:9** Nm 24:9; Ezk 19:5-7; Mc 5:8; Rv 5:5 **49:10** Nm 2:9; 10:14; 24:17; Jdg 1:1-2; Ps 60:7; 108:8; Ezk 21:27 **49:10** Ps 2:6-9; 72:8-11; Is 42:1,4; 49:6 **49:13** Dt 33:19; Jos 19:10-16 **49:15** Jdg 5:15-16 **49:16** Dt 33:22; Jdg 13:2,25; 18:25-27 **49:19** Dt 33:20; 1Ch 5:18-22; Jr 49:1 **49:20** Dt 33:24-25; Jos 19:24-31; Jdg 5:17; 1Kg 4:7 **49:21** Jos 19:32-39 **49:24** Gn 31:42; Ps 132:2,5; Is 1:24; 49:26 **49:24** Gn 48:15; Ps 23:1; Jr 31:10 **49:24** Ps 118:22; Is 28:16; 1Pt 2:6-8 **49:26** Dt 33:15-16 **49:27** Jdg 5:14; 20:21; 1Sm 14:47-48 **49:29** Gn 25:8 **49:29** Gn 47:30 **49:29** Gn 23:16-20; 50:13 **49:30** Gn 23:3-20 **49:31** Gn 23:19; 25:9 **49:31** Gn 35:29 **49:31** Gn 48:7

49:1 This verse begins a key chapter in Genesis and in the Pentateuch as a whole. It contains one of the

Pentateuch's four major poetic sections (vv. 2-27), the others being Exodus 15:1-18; Numbers 23:7-10,18-24 and 24:3-9,15-19; and Deuteronomy 32–33. Each of these sections consists of lengthier portions of poetry than are found elsewhere in the Pentateuch, and three of them involve the main character in the narrative calling an audience together to declare what will happen in the last days. That the Hebrew phrase used here does not merely refer to the future generally (as **in the days to come** could be taken to mean) is supported by its consistent usage elsewhere in the OT to refer to "the last days" (e.g., Is 2:2; Jr 48:47; 49:39; Ezk 38:16; Dn 10:14; Hs 3:5). Such an eschatological understanding of this phrase fits with the important messianic prophecy that follows in verses 8-12 (see also the note on 1:1).

49:8-12 Following Jacob's verse 1 declaration of what will happen "in the days to come" (see previous note) is a key messianic prophecy. From the line of **Judah**, who had played a leading role in the preceding narrative (43:3-10; 44:14-34; 46:28), will come a ruler, who will reign over his brothers and other peoples (vv. 8,10; 37:5-10; 41:40-44,56-57). Such rule by a descendant of Abraham had already been predicted in 27:29, had been pictured in part through Joseph, and would be fulfilled by the Messiah (see also 3:15; 12:3). Other details of this prophecy, such as his being compared to a **lion**, his association with a **donkey** and its **colt**, and his clothes being wet with **wine** and **the blood of grapes** connect this passage with messianic passages elsewhere (respectively, Nm 24:9; Zch 9:9; Is 63:1-6).

49:29-33 This is what Jacob had requested earlier in 47:29-31, and Joseph had sworn to carry it out.

JACOB'S BURIAL

50 Then Joseph, leaning over his father's face, wept and kissed him. 2 He commanded his servants who were physicians to embalm his father. So they embalmed Israel. 3 They took forty days to complete this, for embalming takes that long, and the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. †
4 When the days of mourning were over, Joseph said to Pharaoh's household, "If I have found favor with you, please tell † Pharaoh that 5 my father made me take an oath, † saying, 'I am about to die. You must bury me there in the tomb that I made for myself in the land of Canaan.' † Now let me go and bury my father. Then I will return."
6 So Pharaoh said, "Go and bury your father in keeping with your oath."
7 Then Joseph went to bury his father, and all Pharaoh's servants, the elders of his household, and all the elders of the land of Egypt went with him, 8 along with all Joseph's family, his brothers, and his father's family. Only their dependents, their flocks, and their herds were left in the land of Goshen. 9 Horses and chariots went up with him; it was a very impressive procession. 10 When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, which is across the Jordan, they lamented and wept loudly, and Joseph mourned seven days for his father. 11 When the Canaanite inhabitants of the land saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a solemn mourning on the part of the

Egyptians.” Therefore the place is named Abel-mizraim. † It is across the Jordan.
12 So Jacob’s sons did for him what he had commanded them. 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave at Machpelah in the field near Mamre, which Abraham had purchased as burial property from Ephron the Hethite. † 14 After Joseph buried his father, he returned to Egypt with his brothers and all who had gone with him to bury his father.

JOSEPH’S KINDNESS

15 When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, “If Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he will certainly repay us for all the suffering we caused him.” †
16 So they sent this message to Joseph, “Before he died your father gave a command: 17 ‘Say this to Joseph: Please forgive your brothers’ transgression and their sin — the suffering they caused you.’ Therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept † when their message came to him. 18 His brothers also came to him, bowed down before him, and said, “We are your slaves! ”
19 But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? † 20 You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people. † 21 Therefore don’t be afraid. I will take care of you and your children.” † And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. †

JOSEPH’S DEATH

22 Joseph and his father’s family remained in Egypt. Joseph lived 110 years.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND THE OVERCOMING OF EVIL

Jesus acknowledges that the world has a problem. When John writes that memorable phrase, "Jesus wept" (Jn 11:35), he provides a powerful glimpse of the God, who created the universe as "very good" (Gn 1:31), experiencing in the flesh the evil of this world that is under the curse of sin. And even though Jesus was about to demonstrate his divine authority by raising Lazarus from the dead, his reaction to the evil of death is one of utter sorrow.

The Teacher wrote that he looked out into the world at everything "under the sun"—that is, everything apart from God—and he saw such great evil, oppression, and suffering that he concluded it would be better never to have existed at all if this life is all that a person could expect to live (Ec 3:16–4:3). He clearly observed the problem of evil—that this world is a place in which people and circumstances have gone terribly wrong. In it justice and righteousness are noticeably lacking.

Not all worldviews, however, entail a belief in real good and real evil. According to some beliefs, such as eastern pantheistic monism (found in Buddhism and Hinduism), good and evil are illusions. Atheistic materialism holds that there is no absolute standard of good and evil, since there is nothing at work in the universe besides natural, physical processes, which are amoral, or neutral. "Good" and "evil" may be illusory projections of an ignorant mind, but they are not grounded in any objective reality.

In the Christian worldview, God's essential nature is good (Ps 119:68; Lk 18:19), and his inherent goodness provides the standard for what we understand to be "good." Anything that lacks God's goodness is "evil." We know what is good and evil because God created us with the capacity to know it. If a person doubts God's goodness due to the observation of evil's presence in the world, then he must establish how he can even comprehend what is "good" and "evil." The skeptic's frustration with evil implies that he actually believes in the absolute concepts of good and evil. Yet, since his worldview cannot provide philosophical grounding for them, he denies these concepts. But such denial is inconsistent with our experience of evil in this life.

REAL EVIL AND A REAL PROBLEM

According to atheistic materialism, everything in the universe is dancing to the tune of its DNA, as Richard Dawkins suggests. The singer sings, the artist creates, the murderer murders, and the rapist rapes. Nothing is "good" or "evil" in this view: everything is just the way it is, because each person is biologically determined to do whatever his or her genes tells them to do. According to Nancy Pearcey and Randy Thornhill of the University of New Mexico and Craig Palmer of the University of Colorado, then, one can "advance the startling thesis that rape is not a pathology but an evolutionary adaptation—a strategy for maximizing reproductive success." Rape is "a natural, biological phenomenon that is a product of the human evolutionary heritage," just like "the leopard's spots and the giraffe's elongated neck" (Nancy R. Pearcey, *Darwin's Dirty Secret*, http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/arn/pearcey/np_world-rape0300.htm). Although atheists generally deny that there is an absolute moral law, deep down most will agree that rape and murder are truly wrong.

So atheists are aware of the existence of evil, but this creates more of a problem for them than for the Christian. If we are purely the result of DNA, there is no immortal soul, and death is the end of our existence, then all of our human sensibilities and attempts to relieve the suffering of the world are useless and absurd. As William Lane Craig states, "If life ends at the grave, then it makes no difference whether one has lived as a Stalin or as a saint. Since one's destiny is ultimately unrelated to one's behavior, you may as well just live as you please" (William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith*. Wheaton: IL, Moody Press, 1984, 60–61). The fact that many atheists pursue meaningful and altruistic lives illustrates the impossibility of living consistently within such a worldview.

Jesus, on the other hand, understands that evil is a real problem that cannot be ignored or denied. Death is not just the dance of our DNA. Death is the enemy (1Co 15:26). Jesus teaches that evil affects all of us through death (Lk 13:1-5). And it is Jesus's confrontation of actual evil that provides a real solution offering hope to mankind.

REAL HOPE

REAL HOPE

Hope acknowledges that there is a problem in the world, but at the same time hope confidently holds out for something better to come. The uniqueness of the Christian worldview resides in the hope provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. “Death is the ultimate weapon of the tyrant; resurrection does not make a covenant with death, it overthrows it” (N.T. Wright. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2003, 730).

Suffering, pain, and ultimately death are not part of the way things should be; rather, they are the consequences of evil (Rm 6:23). The resurrection is a clear defeat of these consequences. Peter explains in Acts 2:24, that “God raised [Jesus Christ] up, ending the pains of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by death.” Paul declares the impotence of death’s sting and its shattered victory (1Co 15:55-57).

Jesus gives us hope because, by his resurrection, he overthrows death and demonstrates that God’s good creation will be restored (1Co 15:20-22,42-44). Things will be as they should be. Our painful comprehension of evil and our hopeful longing for goodness are neither vain nor illusory. They are evidence that we are created by a good and mighty God. There is no other worldview that can compete with what Christianity has to offer: a grounding of real evil, a definitive defeat of that evil, and real hope for mankind through the actual restoration of goodness, as seen in the resurrection.

MARY JO SHARP

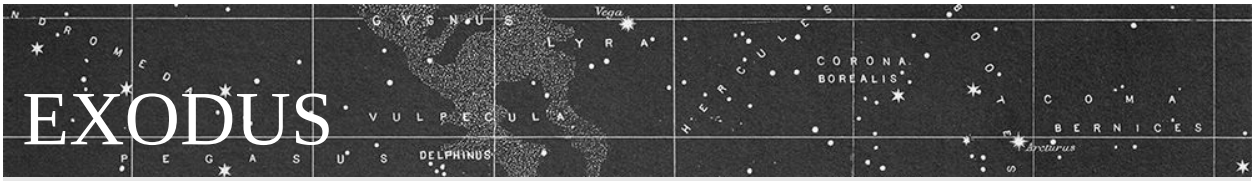
23 He saw Ephraim’s sons to the third generation; † the sons of Manasseh’s son
Machir were recognized by † † Joseph. †
24 Joseph said to his brothers, “I am about to die, † but God will certainly come
to your aid and bring you up from this land to the land he swore to give to
Abraham, † Isaac, † and Jacob.” † 25 So Joseph made the sons of Israel take an
oath: “When God comes to your aid, you are to carry my bones up from here.” †
26 Joseph died at the age of 110. They embalmed him and placed him in a coffin
in Egypt.

50:4 Lit *please speak in the ears of* **50:11** = Mourning of Egypt **50:21** Lit *spoke to their hearts* **50:23** Lit *were born on the knees of* **50:23** Referring to a ritual of adoption or of legitimation; Gn 30:3
50:3 Gn 50:10; Nm 20:29; Dt 34:8 **50:5** Gn 47:29-31 **50:5** 2Ch 16:14; Is 22:16; Mt 27:60 **50:13** Gn 23:16-20 **50:15** Gn 37:28; 42:21-22 **50:17** Gn 43:30; 46:29; 50:1 **50:19** Gn 3:5 **50:20** Gn 45:7; Rm 8:28 **50:21** Gn 45:11; 47:12 **50:23** Jb 42:16; Ps 128:6 **50:23** Gn 30:3 **50:24** Gn 48:21; Ex 3:16-17; Heb 11:22 **50:24** Gn 13:15-17; 15:7-8 **50:24** Gn 26:3 **50:24** Gn 28:13; 35:12 **50:25** Ex 13:19

50:2-3 Embalming preserved the bodies of the deceased, and evidence of this practice can be found dating as early as 2600 BC. Besides Jacob and Joseph (v. 26), who were probably embalmed because of their status and close relationship to Pharaoh, there is no other reference to such embalming in the OT. The Egyptians typically associated embalming with their pagan religious beliefs about the afterlife, but there is no evidence for these associations with the embalmings of Jacob and Joseph. They knew they were distinct from the Egyptians (see 46:4,34; 48:21; 50:24), and they both called for oaths to ensure that their bodies would not be finally laid to rest in Egypt (47:29-31; 50:24-26; Ex 13:19).

50:20 Joseph’s forgiveness of his brothers sprung from his faith in God’s sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness (see also 45:4-8; Rm 8:28). To be sure, they had **planned evil** against him, but **God planned it for good.** Joseph had suffered greatly (41:51-52) during this process in which “the word of the LORD tested

him" (Ps 105:19), but the outcome was **the survival of many people.** Joseph's words here and in 45:5 are an implicit affirmation of both divine sovereignty and human free will. See "A Biblical View of History," *p. 525*.



EXODUS

INTRODUCTION

The title “Exodus” is an anglicized version of a Greek word that means “departure” in recognition of one of the book’s major events—the departure of God’s people from Egypt. Exodus could be considered the central book in the OT because it records God’s act of saving the Israelites and establishing them as a covenant community, a nation chosen to serve and represent him. Exodus describe the enslavement and oppression of the Israelites; the preparation and call of Moses; the conflict between Yahweh the God of Israel and the gods of Egypt (represented by Pharaoh); the exodus of the Israelites; their establishment as a nation in covenant with the Lord; their rebellion; and the Lord’s provision for their ongoing relationship, symbolized by his presence at the tabernacle they built for him.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The book of Exodus does not state who its author was. It does refer to occasions when Moses made a written record of events that took place and what God had said (17:14; 24:4,7; 34:27-28). The book also contains references to preserving and passing on information. Along with the other four books of the Pentateuch, it has long been considered to be primarily the work of Moses. Moses could have written Exodus at any time during a forty-year time span: after the Israelites finished constructing and dedicating the tabernacle at Mount Sinai, at the start of their second year after leaving Egypt (1445 BC), and before his death in the land of Moab (about 1406 BC).

BACKGROUND: Exodus picks up where the Genesis narrative ended with the death of Joseph around 1805 BC. It quickly moves us forward almost three hundred years to a time when the circumstances of Jacob’s descendants had changed in Egypt. The Israelites were serving as slaves during Egypt’s Eighteenth Dynasty, probably under the pharaohs Thutmose and Amenhotep II. The Hebrew slaves experienced a miraculous deliverance by God’s hand through his servant-leader Moses. The Israelite slavery ended in 1446 BC. The book of Exodus records the events surrounding the exodus from Egypt and the Israelites’ first year in the wilderness, including the giving of the law.

The date of the exodus is disputed, but biblical evidence favors 1446 BC. First Kings 6:1 states that the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon’s fourth year as king, established by biblical data combined with Assyrian chronology to be 966 BC. In Judges 11:26, Jephthah said that Israel had been living in regions of Palestine for three hundred years. Jephthah lived around 1100 BC, thus dating the end of the wilderness journey to around 1400 BC.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Exodus provides the high point of redemptive history in the OT. Many patterns and concepts from Exodus receive attention, further development, and fulfillment elsewhere in Scripture, especially in the past, present, and future work of the Lord Jesus. These include rescue from oppression, provision of sustenance, God’s faithfulness to his promises, the self-revelation of God, knowledge of God resulting from his actions, the presence of God, his glory, efforts required to preserve the knowledge of God, a new identity for people that is based on God’s actions, provision for worship, provision for life in community, connection between the reputation of God and his relationship with a group of people, obedience and rebellion, intercession, and gracious forgiveness.

STRUCTURE

Exodus is considered a part of the Law, but it is more historical narrative than law. The book is structured around the life and travels of Moses. Sandwiched between the narratives of chapters 1–18 and 32–40 are the establishment of the covenant (chaps. 19–24) and the laws related to the tabernacle and priesthood.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Exodus reveals the Lord as Redeemer. Because of his love and for his name's sake, he takes the initiative to save his people from bondage. Exodus further reveals him as the One who expects his redeemed people to live according to the provisions of the covenant made at Mount Sinai. Christ is prefigured both by Moses and by the Passover lambs. Exodus 31:3; 35:31 mention the Spirit as empowering a person for special service.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Exodus highlights the universality of human evil by showing rebellion against God in a variety of ways. Pharaoh's wickedness (chaps. 4–14) and redeemed Israel's shameful idolatry in the golden calf incident (chap. 32) are perhaps the clearest examples. On the other hand, Exodus shows the great value God puts on humanity through the high price paid at the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Until Christ's coming and his death on the cross, the exodus was the greatest divine redemptive act. In the exodus God provided a clear picture of substitutionary atonement in the Passover lamb's death: "when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (12:13). This, however, only prefigured the coming One, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29).

EXODUS TIMELINE

3000–1750 BC

Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus dating to **1550** is the earliest known surgical treatise; it is a copy of a much older Egyptian document attributed to Imhotep, architect, high priest, and physician of the Old Kingdom. **3000-2500**

Jacob's family settles in Egypt. **1876**

Jacob dies. **1859**

Joseph dies. **1805**

Hammurabi develops the first legal code in Mesopotamia. **1792–1750**

1700 BC

Body armor is used in China. **1700**

Minoans develop a system for running water. **1700**

Underground ice houses, Kingdom of Mari, northwest Iraq **1700**

Cookbook, Mesopotamia **1700**

Linear A script comes into use on Crete. **1700**

Egyptians show proficiency in geometry including a formula for calculating the volume of a truncated pyramid. Sources: The Moscow Papyrus and the Rhind Papyrus. **1700**

1650–1600 BC

Hyksos rule Egypt. **1630–1543**

Volcanic island of Thera (Santorini) erupts with massive environmental consequences felt as far as the British Isles and North America. **1600**

Chocolate originates in northern Honduras. **1600**

Children's swings invented, Crete **1600**

Linear B script comes into use on Crete. **1600**

War chariots are used in Egypt. **1600**

1445 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

Egyptians develop effective pharmaceutical compounds. **1500**

Moses flees to Midian. **1487**

Moses is commissioned. **1447**

The ten plagues begin. **1446**

The Passover instituted. **1446**

Exodus and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea **1446**

God's covenant with Israel at Sinai **1446**

Tabernacle is built and dedicated. **1445**

ISRAEL OPPRESSED IN EGYPT

1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob;
each came with his family: †

2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah;
3 Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin;
4 Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher.

5 The total number of Jacob's descendants † was seventy; † † Joseph was already in Egypt.

6 Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation eventually died. † 7 But the Israelites were fruitful, increased rapidly, multiplied, and became extremely numerous † so that the land was filled with them.
8 A new king, who did not know about Joseph, came to power in Egypt. 9 He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and powerful than we are. † 10 Come, let’s deal shrewdly with them; otherwise they will multiply further, and when war breaks out, they will join our enemies, fight against us, and leave the country.” † 11 So the Egyptians assigned taskmasters over the Israelites to oppress them with forced labor. † They built Pithom and Rameses as supply cities † for Pharaoh. 12 But the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied and spread so that the Egyptians came to dread † the Israelites. 13 They worked the Israelites ruthlessly † 14 and made their lives bitter with difficult labor in brick and mortar and in all kinds of fieldwork. They ruthlessly imposed all this work on them. †
15 The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives — the first whose name was Shiphrah and the second whose name was Puah — 16 “When you help the Hebrew women give birth, observe them as they deliver. If the child is a son, kill him, but if it’s a daughter, she may live.” 17 The midwives, however, feared God † and did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; † they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, “Why have you done this and let the boys live? ”
19 The midwives said to Pharaoh, “The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women, for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife can get to them.” †
20 So God was good to the midwives, † and the people multiplied and became very numerous. 21 Since the midwives feared God, he gave them families. †
22 Pharaoh then commanded all his people: “You must throw every son born to the Hebrews into the Nile, but let every daughter live.” †

1:5 Lit *of people issuing from Jacob’s loins* **1:5** LXX, DSS read *75* ; Gn 46:27; Ac 7:14 **1:12** Or *Egyptians loathed*

1:1 Gn 46:8 **1:5** Gn 46:26-27; Dt 10:22 **1:6** Gn 50:26 **1:7** Gn 12:2; 46:3; Dt 26:5; Ac 7:17 **1:9** Ps 105:24 **1:10** Ps 83:3-4; Ac 7:19 **1:11** Gn 15:13; Ex 2:11; 3:7; 5:4-5; 6:6; Dt 26:6 **1:11** Gn 47:11; 1Kg 9:19; 2Ch 8:4 **1:13** Dt 4:20 **1:14** Ex 2:23; Nm 20:15; Ac 7:19 **1:17** Ex 1:21; Pr 16:6 **1:17** Dn 3:16-18; Ac 4:18-20; 5:29 **1:19** Jos 2:4; 2Sm 17:20 **1:20** Pr 11:18; Is 3:10 **1:21** 1Sm 2:35; 2Sm 7:11,27; 1Kg 11:38; Ps 127:1 **1:22** Gn

41:1; Ac 7:19

1:1 Exodus picks up where Genesis left off—with the **sons of Israel** (that is, Jacob) in Egypt. Like Genesis, Exodus is part of the larger work known as the Pentateuch (see the note on Gn 1:1). This book was written by Moses and was considered to be a single work rather than five separate ones (Jos 23:6; 2Ch 25:4; Mk 12:26).

1:1-7 These verses review certain elements of the preceding Genesis narrative (see Gn 46:5-27; 47:27; 50:26) and serve as background for the Israelites' enslavement (vv. 8-11).

1:8-14 The Israelites' enslavement and oppression in a foreign land for four hundred years had been predicted in Genesis 15:13. The suffering of God's people was thus part of his plan, allowing them to grow from a family into a great nation In the midst of this, he continued to bless them **(the more they oppressed them, the more they multiplied).**

1:15-21 The **Hebrew midwives** were commended twice as those who **feared God** (vv. 17,21; see also Ac 5:29). This expression identifies God, rather than Pharaoh, as the object of their faith and loyalty. Pharaoh's cruel method of population control was ultimately futile, since **the people multiplied and became very numerous** anyway (see also v. 7; Gn 47:27).

MOSES'S BIRTH AND ADOPTION

2 Now a man from the family of Levi married a Levite woman. † 2 The
woman became pregnant and gave birth to a son; when she saw that he
was beautiful, † she hid him for three months. † 3 But when she could
no longer hide him, she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with asphalt
and pitch. She placed the child in it and set it among the reeds by the bank of the
Nile. 4 Then his sister † stood at a distance in order to see what would happen
to him.
5 Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe at the Nile while her servant girls
walked along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds, sent her slave
girl, took it, 6 opened it, and saw him, the child — and there he was, a little boy,
crying. She felt sorry for him and said, "This is one of the Hebrew boys."
7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Should I go and call a Hebrew
woman who is nursing to nurse the boy for you? "
8 "Go," Pharaoh's daughter told her. So the girl went and called the boy's
mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse him
for me, and I will pay your wages." So the woman took the boy and nursed him.
10 When the child grew older, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he
became her son. She named him Moses, † "Because," she said, "I drew him out
of the water."

MOSES IN MIDIAN

11 Years later, † after Moses had grown up, he went out to his own people †
and observed their forced labor. † He saw an Egyptian striking a Hebrew, one of
his people. 12 Looking all around and seeing no one, he struck the Egyptian dead
and hid him in the sand. 13 The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews
fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you attacking your
neighbor? " †
14 "Who made you a commander and judge over us? " the man replied. "Are you
planning to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? "
Then Moses became afraid and thought, "What I did is certainly known."
15 When Pharaoh heard about this, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from
Pharaoh and went to live in the land of Midian, † and sat down by a well. †
16 Now the priest of Midian † had seven daughters. They came to draw water
and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then some shepherds
arrived and drove them away, but Moses came to their rescue and watered their
flock. 18 When they returned to their father Reuel, † † he asked, "Why have
you come back so quickly today? "
19 They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds. He even drew
water for us and watered the flock."
20 "So where is he? " he asked his daughters. "Why then did you leave the man
behind? Invite him to eat dinner."
21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah † to
Moses in marriage. 22 She gave birth to a son whom he named Gershom, † for
he said, "I have been a resident alien † in a foreign land."
23 After a long time, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned because of
their difficult labor; and they cried out; † and their cry for help because of the
difficult labor ascended to God. 24 And God heard their groaning; and God
remembered † his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob; †
25 and God saw the Israelites; and God knew. †

2:2 Or *healthy* **2:10** The name *Moses* sounds like "drawing out" in Hb and "born" in Egyptian. **2:11** Lit *And it was in those days* **2:11** Lit *his brothers* **2:13** Or *fellow Hebrew* **2:18** Jethro's clan or last name was Reuel; Ex 3:1. **2:22** In Hb the name *Gershom* sounds like the phrase "a stranger there."

2:1 Ex 6:20; Nm 26:59; 1Ch 23:14 **2:2** Ac 7:20; Heb 11:23 **2:4** Ex 15:20; Nm 26:59 **2:11** Ex 1:11; Ac 7:23; Heb 11:24-26 **2:15** Ac 7:29; Heb 11:27 **2:15** Gn 24:11; 29:2 **2:16** Ex 3:1; 1Sm 9:11 **2:18** Ex 3:1; 4:18; Nm 10:29 **2:21** Ex 4:25; 18:2 **2:22** Ex 18:3-4; Ac 7:29; Heb 11:13 **2:23** Ex 3:7,9; Dt 26:7; Jms 5:4 **2:24** Gn

9:15; Ex 6:5; 1Ch 16:15; Ps 105:8; 106:45; 111:4 **2:24** Ps 22:23; Lk 1:33,55 **2:25** Ex 3:7; 4:31; Lk 1:25

2:1-10 Moses was born during a time in which Pharaoh had commanded the drowning of every newborn Hebrew boy (1:22). Since the Israelites' stay in Egypt lasted 430 years (12:40-41) and Moses was eighty when he went before Pharaoh (7:7), it follows that the Israelites had been in Egypt for about 350 years at the time of Moses's birth. Most of this period is passed over quickly in the narrative. The willingness of **Pharaoh's daughter** to have a wet nurse is supported by Egyptian records dating from that same general time period.

2:14 This response amounted to a rejection of Moses's leadership (see Ac 7:35).

2:19 Moses evidently looked, dressed, and spoke like an Egyptian—even though he was an Israelite.

2:23-25 The setting into motion of the Israelites' deliverance from Egypt sprung from God's attention to their cries and from his faithfulness to **his covenant with Abraham**, **Isaac**, and **Jacob** (see also 3:6-8). Their painful stay in Egypt was part of his plan, but the time had come for them to depart (Gn 15:13-14).

MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH

3 Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, † the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, † the mountain of God. † 2 Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. † As Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. 3 So Moses thought, "I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn't the bush burning up? "

4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses! "

"Here I am," he answered.

5 "Do not come closer," he said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." † 6 Then he continued, "I am the God of your father, † the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." † Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

7 Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people in Egypt, and have heard them crying out † because of their oppressors. I know about their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them from that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey † — the territory of the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. † 9 So because the Israelites' cry for help has come to me, and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are

oppressing † them, 10 therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

11 But Moses asked God, "Who am I † that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt? "

12 He answered, "I will certainly be with you, † and this will be the sign to you that I am the one who sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship † God at this mountain."

13 Then Moses asked God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name? ' what should I tell them? "

14 God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. † † This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you." 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever; † this is how I am to be remembered in every generation.

16 "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I have paid close attention to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt. † 17 And I have promised you that I will bring you up from the misery of Egypt † to the land of the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — a land flowing with milk and honey. 18 They will listen to what you say. Then you, along with the elders of Israel, must go to the king of Egypt and say to him: The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Now please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. †

19 "However, I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go, even under force from a strong hand. † 20 But when I stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my miracles that I will perform in it, after that, he will let you go. †

21 And I will give these people such favor with the Egyptians that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. † 22 Each woman will ask her neighbor and any woman staying in her house for silver and gold jewelry, and clothing, and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians." †

3:1 Moses's father-in-law's first name was *Jethro* ; Ex 2:18. **3:1** = Desolation; another name for Mount

Sinai; Dt 4:10,15; 18:16; Mal 4:4 **3:6** Sam, some LXX mss read *fathers* ; Ac 7:32 **3:12** Or *serve* **3:14** Or *I AM BECAUSE I AM,* or *I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE*
3:1 Ex 2:18; 18:5; 1Kg 19:8 **3:2** Dt 33:16; Ac 7:30 **3:5** Jos 5:15; Ac 7:33 **3:6** Gn 28:13; Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37; Ac 7:32 **3:7** Ex 2:23-25; Neh 9:9; Ps 106:44 **3:8** Gn 50:24; Ex 6:6 **3:8** Gn 15:18-21; Ex 3:17; 13:5; Dt 1:25; Jr 11:5; Ezk 20:6 **3:9** Ex 1:14; 2:23 **3:11** Ex 6:12; 1Sm 18:18 **3:12** Gn 31:3; Jos 1:5; Rm 8:31 **3:14** Ex 6:3; Ps 68:4; Jn 8:58; Heb 13:8; Rv 1:4; 4:8 **3:15** Ps 102:12; 135:13; Hs 12:5 **3:16** Ex 4:29; Lk 1:68 **3:17** Gn 15:16; Jos 24:11 **3:18** Ex 4:31; 5:1; Nm 23:3-4,15-16 **3:19** Ex 5:2; 6:1 **3:20** Ex 6:6; 9:15; 12:31; Dt 6:22; Neh 9:10 **3:21** Ex 11:3; 12:36 **3:22** Gn 15:14; Ex 11:2; Ezk 39:10

3:1-10 Moses was unexpectedly called by God while shepherding in a foreign land. By this time, he had been away from Egypt for forty years (Ac 7:30). Moses was initially intrigued by the **fire within a bush** (vv. 2-3), but he soon discovered that he was encountering a holy, covenant-keeping God, who was calling him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. God states again that on the basis of his covenant with **Abraham**, **Isaac**, and **Jacob**, he intends to **bring them . . . to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.** He is fulfilling his promises of descendants, land, and relationship to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3).

3:11-12 Moses responded to God's call with a protest that he was inadequate, and God responded indirectly with both an assurance of his presence and a **sign** that Moses and the Israelites would return to that same **mountain** after their escape from Egypt (see 19:1-2). This unusual sign subtly called Moses to faith and obedience.

3:13-15 Moses's second subtle protest dealt with the divine **name**, which concerns God's character or essence (see Gn 27:36; 1Sm 25:25). For reasons related to Hebrew syntax, God's response, **I Am Who I Am** (from which the name Yahweh is likely derived) is probably better understood to mean, "I am the one who is with you." He is the God who is present with his people (see v. 12).

3:19-22 The Lord informs Moses (and the reader) that Pharaoh will be unwilling, but his stubbornness will provide an occasion for God to **strike Egypt with all [his] miracles.** Moreover, the Israelites will **plunder the Egyptians** peacefully before leaving Egypt (see 11:2; 12:35-36), in fulfillment of what God had said to Abraham long ago: "They will go out with many possessions" (Gn 15:14).

MIRACULOUS SIGNS FOR MOSES

4 Moses answered, "What if they won't believe me and will not obey me
but say, 'The LORD did not appear † to you'?"
2 The LORD asked him, "What is that in your hand?"
"A staff," he replied.
3 "Throw it on the ground," he said. So Moses threw it on the ground, it became
a snake, and he ran from it. 4 The LORD told Moses, "Stretch out your hand and
grab it by the tail." So he stretched out his hand and caught it, and it became a
staff in his hand. 5 "This will take place," he continued, "so that they will
believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of
Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." †
6 In addition the LORD said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So he put
his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, his hand was diseased,

resembling snow. † † 7 “Put your hand back inside your cloak,” he said. So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, it had again become like the rest of his skin. † 8 “If they will not believe you and will not respond to the evidence of the first sign, they may believe the evidence of the second sign. 9 And if they don’t believe even these two signs or listen to what you say, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the Nile will become blood on the ground.” †

10 But Moses replied to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent — either in the past or recently or since you have been speaking to your servant — because my mouth and my tongue are sluggish.” † †

11 The Lord said to him, “Who placed a mouth on humans? Who makes a person mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? † 12 Now go! I will help you speak † and I will teach you what to say.” †

13 Moses said, “Please, Lord, send someone else.” †

14 Then the Lord’s anger burned against Moses, and he said, “Isn’t Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, he is on his way now to meet you. He will rejoice when he sees you. 15 You will speak with him and tell him what to say. † I will help both you and him to speak † and will teach you both what to do. 16 He will speak to the people for you. He will serve as a mouth for you, and you will serve as God to him. 17 And take this staff in your hand that you will perform the signs with.” †

MOSES’S RETURN TO EGYPT

18 Then Moses went back to his father-in-law Jethro and said to him, “Please let me return to my relatives in Egypt and see if they are still living.”
Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.”

19 Now in Midian the Lord told Moses, “Return to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead.” † 20 So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took God’s staff † in his hand.

21 The Lord instructed Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, make sure you do before Pharaoh all the wonders that I have put within your power. But I will harden his heart † † so that he won’t let the people go. 22 And you will say to

Pharaoh: This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son. † 23 I told you:
Let my son go so that he may worship me, but you refused to let him go. Look, I
am about to kill your firstborn son! " †
24 On the trip, at an overnight campsite, it happened that the LORD confronted
him and intended to put him to death. 25 So Zipporah took a flint, cut off her
son's foreskin, threw it at Moses's feet, and said, "You are a bridegroom of
blood to me! " † 26 So he let him alone. At that time she said, "You are a
bridegroom of blood," referring to the circumcision.

REUNION OF MOSES AND AARON

27 Now the LORD had said to Aaron, "Go and meet Moses in the wilderness." So
he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. † 28 Moses told
Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and about all the signs he had
commanded him to do. 29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the
elders of the Israelites. 30 Aaron repeated everything the LORD had said to Moses
and performed the signs before the people. 31 The people believed, and when
they heard that the LORD had paid attention † to them and that he had seen their
misery, † they knelt low and worshiped.

4:6 A reference to whiteness or flakiness of the skin **4:10** Lit *heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue* **4:12** Lit *will be with your mouth* **4:13** Lit *send by the hand of whom you will send* **4:15** Lit *will be with your mouth and with his mouth* **4:21** Or *will make him stubborn*

4:1 Ex 3:18; 6:30 **4:1-5** Ex 3:6,15; 4:17,20; 19:9 **4:6** Lv 13:3-4; Nm 12:10; 2Kg 5:27 **4:7** Nm 12:13-14; Dt 32:39; 2Kg 5:14 **4:9** Ex 7:19 **4:10** Ex 6:12; Jr 1:6 **4:11** Ps 94:9 **4:12** Is 50:4; Jr 1:9; Mt 10:19-20; Mk 13:11; Lk 12:11-12; 21:14-15 **4:15** Ex 7:1-2; Nm 23:5,12,16 **4:17** Ex 4:2; 7:15 **4:19** Ex 2:15,23; Mt 2:20 **4:20** Ex 17:9; Nm 20:8-9 **4:21** Ex 7:13; 9:12,35; 14:8; Dt 2:30; Jos 11:20; Is 63:17; Jn 12:40; Rm 9:18 **4:22** Is 63:16; 64:8; Jr 31:9; Hs 11:1; Rm 9:4 **4:23** Ex 11:5; 12:29 **4:25** Gn 17:14; Jos 5:2-3 **4:27** Ex 3:1; 4:14 **4:31** Ex 2:25; 3:7,18; 4:8-9 **4:31** Gn 24:26; 1Ch 29:20

4:1-9 Moses's third protest expressed his concern: **they won't believe me and will not obey me** (see also 3:18). The Lord responded by giving him **two signs** to perform so that **they will believe** (see vv. 29-31).

4:10-17 Moses's reluctance, which had already become apparent through the preceding, is now fully displayed. Rather than asking questions as he had earlier, he voices his objections directly. First, he objected that he was not a good speaker (see also 6:12,30; Jr 1:6), and then he plainly asked God to **send someone else.** The Lord's response to the first objection was quite pointed (v. 12), and his **anger burned against Moses** because of the latter request (v. 14). Nevertheless, God accommodated Moses partially by allowing his brother **Aaron** to come alongside as a **spokesman** (see also vv. 27-30). This dialogue illuminates the truth, taught throughout the OT, that success often comes not from skill, resources, or any kind of personal ability, but through God's presence and empowerment.

4:21-23 The plague of the **firstborn** and the Passover are thus foreshadowed (see Ex 11–12). On the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, see the note on 7:3-5.

4:24-26 This is a notoriously difficult passage. The Lord sought to put Moses **to death**, perhaps because he had neglected to circumcise his son or because he had killed the Egyptian (2:12). The Hebrew word for **feet** can also be a euphemism for "genitals." This incident demonstrates God's seriousness about obedience to his commands.

MOSES CONFRONTS PHARAOH

5 Later, Moses and Aaron went in and said to Pharaoh, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival for me in the wilderness." †

2 But Pharaoh responded, "Who is the LORD that I should obey him by letting Israel go? † I don't know † the LORD, and besides, I will not let Israel go." †

3 They answered, "The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go on a three-day trip into the wilderness so that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God, or else he may strike us with plague or sword."

4 The king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why are you causing the people to neglect their work? Get to your labor! " 5 Pharaoh also said, "Look, the people of the land are so numerous, and you would stop them from their labor." †

FURTHER OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL

6 That day Pharaoh commanded the overseers † of the people as well as their foremen: 7 "Don't continue to supply the people with straw for making bricks, as before. They must go and gather straw for themselves. 8 But require the same quota of bricks from them as they were making before; do not reduce it. For they are slackers — that is why they are crying out, † 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 Impose heavier work on the men. Then they will be occupied with it and not pay attention to deceptive words."

10 So the overseers and foremen of the people went out and said to them, "This is what Pharaoh says: † 'I am not giving you straw. 11 Go get straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but there will be no reduction at all in your workload.' " 12 So the people scattered throughout the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. 13 The overseers insisted, "Finish your assigned work each day, just as you did when straw was provided." 14 Then the Israelite foremen, whom Pharaoh's slave drivers had set over the people, were beaten † and asked,

“Why haven’t you finished making your prescribed number of bricks yesterday or today, as you did before? ”
15 So the Israelite foremen went in and cried for help to Pharaoh: “Why are you treating your servants this way? 16 No straw has been given to your servants, yet they say to us, ‘Make bricks! ’ Look, your servants are being beaten, but it is your own people who are at fault.”
17 But he said, “You are slackers. Slackers! That is why you are saying, ‘Let us go sacrifice to the LORD.’ 18 Now get to work. No straw will be given to you, but you must produce the same quantity of bricks.”
19 The Israelite foremen saw that they were in trouble when they were told, “You cannot reduce your daily quota of bricks.” 20 When they left Pharaoh, they confronted Moses and Aaron, who stood waiting to meet them.
21 “May the LORD take note of you and judge,” they said to them, “because you have made us reek to Pharaoh and his officials — putting a sword in their hand to kill us! ” †
22 So Moses went back to the LORD and asked, “Lord, why have you caused trouble for this people? And why did you ever send me? † 23 Ever since I went in to Pharaoh to speak in your name he has caused trouble for this people, and you haven’t rescued your people at all.”

5:2 Or *recognize*

5:1 Ex 3:18; 10:9 **5:2** 1Sm 25:10; Pr 30:9; Jr 9:6 **5:2** Ex 3:19; 2Kg 18:35; Jb 21:15 **5:3-5** Ex 1:7,9,11; 3:18 **5:6** Ex 1:1; 3:7 **5:8** Ex 2:23; 3:7; 5:15 **5:10** Ex 4:22; 5:1 **5:14** Is 10:24 **5:21** Gn 34:30; Ex 6:9; 14:11 **5:22** Nm 11:11; Jr 4:10

5:14–6:1 Things would get worse before they would get better. As God predicted in 3:19-20 and 4:21, Pharaoh was unwilling to let the Israelites go (5:1-2). Furthermore, he accused Moses and Aaron of causing the Israelites to **neglect their work** (v. 4) and the Israelites themselves of being **slackers** (vv. 8,17). He refused to give them **straw** anymore but continued to require them to produce the same quota of **bricks** as before. The **Israelite foremen** were beaten for not meeting this quota, and they blamed Moses and Aaron for the worsened situation (see also 6:9). Moses himself recognized this (v. 22), but God reaffirmed that he would use his “strong hand” to get Pharaoh to let Israel go (6:1; 3:19).

6 But the LORD replied to Moses, “Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: because of a strong hand he will let them go, and because of a strong hand he will drive them from his land.” †

GOD PROMISES FREEDOM

2 Then God spoke to Moses, telling him, “I am the LORD. 3 I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but I was not known to them by

my name ‘the LORD.’ † † 4 I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land they lived in as aliens. † 5 Furthermore, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are forcing to work as slaves, and I have remembered † my covenant.
6 “Therefore tell the Israelites: I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians and rescue you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm † and great acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as my people, † and I will be your God. You will know † that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the forced labor of the Egyptians. 8 I will bring you to the land that I swore † † to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.” 9 Moses told this to the Israelites, but they did not listen † to him because of their broken spirit and hard labor.
10 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 11 “Go and tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go from his land.”
12 But Moses said in the LORD’s presence: “If the Israelites will not listen to me, then how will Pharaoh listen to me, since I am such a poor speaker?” † †
13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them commands concerning both the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt to bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt.

GENEALOGY OF MOSES AND AARON

14 These are the heads of their fathers’ families:

The sons of Reuben, † the firstborn of Israel:
Hanoch and Pallu, Hezron and Carmi.
These are the clans of Reuben.

15 The sons of Simeon: †
Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin,
Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman.
These are the clans of Simeon.

16 These are the names of the sons of Levi
according to their family records;
Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. †
Levi lived 137 years.
17 The sons of Gershon:
Libni and Shimei, by their clans.
18 The sons of Kohath:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
Kohath lived 133 years.
19 The sons of Merari:
Mahli and Mushi.
These are the clans of the Levites †
according to their family records.

20 Amram married his father's sister Jochebed,
and she bore him Aaron and Moses. †
Amram lived 137 years.
21 The sons of Izhar: †
Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri.
22 The sons of Uzziel:
Mishael, Elzaphan, † and Sithri.
23 Aaron married Elisheba,
daughter of Amminadab † and sister of Nahshon.
She bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. †
24 The sons of Korah: †
Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph.

These are the clans of the Korahites.
25 Aaron's son Eleazar married
one of the daughters of Putiel,
and she bore him Phinehas. †
These are the heads of the Levite families by their clans.

26 It was this Aaron and Moses whom the LORD told, "Bring the Israelites out of the land of Egypt according to their military divisions." † 27 Moses and Aaron were the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt in order to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

MOSES AND AARON BEFORE PHARAOH

28 On the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 he said to him, "I am the LORD; † tell Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I am telling you."
30 But Moses replied in the LORD's presence, "Since I am such a poor speaker, † how will Pharaoh listen to me? "

6:3 *Lord* (in small capitals) stands for the personal name of God, which in Hb is *Yahweh*. There is a long tradition of substituting "Lord" for "Yahweh" out of reverence. **6:8** Lit *raised my hand* **6:12** Lit *I have uncircumcised lips*, also in v. 30
6:1 Ex 3:19; 12:31,33,39 **6:3** Gn 17:1; Ex 3:14; Ps 68:4; 83:18; Jn 8:58 **6:4** Gn 15:18; 28:4 **6:5** Gn 9:15; Ex 2:24; 1Ch 16:15; Ps 105:8; 106:45; 111:4 **6:6** Ex 3:17; Dt 7:8; 26:8; 1Ch 17:21 **6:7** Dt 4:20; 2Sm 7:24 **6:7** Ex 16:12; 29:45; Is 41:20; Rv 21:7 **6:8** Gn 14:22; 15:18; 26:3 **6:9** Ex 5:21; Ac 7:25 **6:12** Ex 4:10; 6:30; Jr 1:6 **6:14** Gn 46:9; 1Ch 5:3 **6:15** Gn 46:10; 1Ch 4:24 **6:16** Gn 46:11; Nm 3:17 **6:17-19** Nm 3:18-20; 1Ch 6:17-19; 23:21 **6:20** Ex 2:1-2; Nm 26:59 **6:21** Nm 16:1; 1Ch 6:37-38 **6:22** Lv 10:4; Nm 3:30 **6:23** Ru 4:19-20; 1Ch 2:10; Mt 1:4 **6:23** Lv 10:1; Nm 3:2; 26:60 **6:24** Nm 26:11; 1Ch 6:22-23,37 **6:25** Nm 25:7,11; Jos 24:33; Ps 106:30 **6:26** Ex 7:4; 12:17,51; Nm 33:1 **6:29** Ex 6:11; 7:2 **6:30** Ex 4:10; 6:12

6:2-5 Since the name Yahweh (translated as **LORD**) does appear repeatedly in the narratives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (e.g., Gn 15:2,7; 26:22; 32:10) and earlier (e.g., 4:26), God may be indicating here that he did not reveal the *meaning* of this name to the patriarchs as he had done for Moses in 3:13-15. Indeed, he had appeared to them as "God Almighty" on several occasions (Gn 17:1; 35:9-11; 48:3), whereas his appearance to Moses especially emphasized the significance of the name Yahweh (Ex 3:2,16). The same God who made a covenant with the patriarchs was about to bring the Israelites out of Egypt in accordance with it (6:3-8; 2:24; Gn 12:7; 15:18-21).

7 The LORD answered Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet. 2 You must say whatever I command you; then Aaron your brother must declare it to Pharaoh so that he will let the Israelites go from his land. 3 But I will harden Pharaoh's

heart † and multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 Pharaoh will
not listen to you, but I will put my hand into Egypt and bring the military
divisions of my people the Israelites out of the land of Egypt by great acts of
judgment. 5 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD † when I stretch out
my hand † against Egypt and bring out the Israelites from among them."
6 So Moses and Aaron did this; they did just as the LORD commanded them.
7 Moses was eighty years old † and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to
Pharaoh.
8 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 9 "When Pharaoh tells you, 'Perform a
miracle,' tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down before Pharaoh. It will
become a serpent.' " † 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and did just
as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw down his staff before Pharaoh and his
officials, and it became a serpent. 11 But then Pharaoh called the wise men and
sorcerers — the magicians † of Egypt, and they also did the same thing by their
occult practices. † 12 Each one threw down his staff, and it became a serpent.
But Aaron's staff swallowed their staffs. 13 However, Pharaoh's heart was
hard, † and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

THE FIRST PLAGUE: WATER TURNED TO BLOOD

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hard: He refuses to let the
people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning. When you see him walking out to
the water, stand ready to meet him by the bank of the Nile. Take in your hand
the staff that turned into a snake. † 16 Tell him: The LORD, the God of the
Hebrews, has sent me to tell you: Let my people go, so that they may worship †
me in the wilderness, but so far you have not listened. 17 This is what the LORD
says: Here is how you will know that I am the LORD. Watch. I am about to strike
the water in the Nile with the staff in my hand, and it will turn to blood. 18 The
fish in the Nile will die, the river will stink, and the Egyptians will be unable to
drink water from it."
19 So the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron: Take your staff and stretch out your
hand † over the waters of Egypt — over their rivers, canals, ponds, and all their
water reservoirs — and they will become blood. There will be blood throughout
the land of Egypt, even in wooden and stone containers."

20 Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded; in the sight of
Pharaoh and his officials, he raised the staff and struck the water in the Nile, and
all the water in the Nile was turned to blood. † 21 The fish in the Nile died, and
the river smelled so bad the Egyptians could not drink water from it. There was
blood throughout the land of Egypt.
22 But the magicians of Egypt did the same thing by their occult practices. So
Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.
23 Pharaoh turned around, went into his palace, and didn't take even this to
heart. 24 All the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink because they
could not drink the water from the river. 25 Seven days passed after the LORD
struck the Nile.

7:16 Or *serve* ; Ex 4:23
7:3 Ex 4:21 **7:5** Ex 7:17; 8:19,22; 14:4,18 **7:5** Ex 3:20; 6:6 **7:7** Dt 29:5; 31:2; 34:7; Ac 7:23,30 **7:9** Ex 4:2; Is 7:11; Jn 2:18; 6:30 **7:11** Gn 41:8; 2Tm 3:8 **7:11** Ex 7:22; 8:7,18 **7:13** Ex 4:21; 7:22; 8:15,19,32; 9:7,12,34; 10:1,20,27; 11:10; 14:8 **7:14-15** Ex 4:2-3; 8:15; 10:1,20,27 **7:19** Ex 8:5-6,16-17; 9:22; 10:12,21; 14:21,26 **7:20** Ex 17:5; Ps 78:44; 105:29

7:3-5 As God had said in 4:21, he would **harden Pharaoh's heart.** Indeed, several later passages describe him doing this very thing (see 9:12; 10:1,20,27; 14:4,8). This act of judgment, however understood, did not overrule Pharaoh's free will nor absolve him from responsibility. Other passages say that Pharaoh himself "hardened his heart" (8:15,32; 9:34 additionally calls this a sin) and that he himself "did not listen" (7:13,22; 8:15,19; 9:12) or "let the Israelites go" (8:32; 9:35; 10:20,27). His stubbornness provided an opportunity for God to **multiply** his **signs and wonders in the land of Egypt.** These would be **great acts of judgment** (6:6; see also Gn 15:14), which would result in the Egyptians' acknowledgement of the Lord (v. 5; see also 5:2).

7:8-12 Moses and Aaron performed the miraculous sign of the staff becoming a serpent that God had shown them earlier (4:2-5). That Pharaoh's **wise men and sorcerers—the magicians** were also able to perform this miracle suggests that they did possess some spiritual power, albeit derived from the occult (see also v. 22; 8:7). Evil spiritual power is real (see Eph 6:12), and the people of God are forbidden from involvement with divination, sorcery, mediums, fortune telling, spells, and the like (Ex 22:18; Lv 19:26; 20:27; Dt 18:10-11). Such power, however, is vastly inferior to the power of God, as implied by **Aaron's staff** swallowing up **their staffs** (see also 1 Jn 4:4).

7:20-24 Pharaoh had not acknowledged the Lord (see also 5:2), who declared that the intention of this plague was so that Pharaoh "will know that I am the LORD" (7:17). The turning of the Nile and other waters into blood (vv. 19-20) was fitting in light of Pharaoh's earlier command to drown newborn Hebrew boys in the Nile (1:22). As before (vv. 11-12), the **magicians** were able to perform this miracle as well (see also 8:7)

THE SECOND PLAGUE: FROGS

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh and tell him: This is
what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. †
2 But if you refuse to let them go, then I will plague all your territory

with frogs. † 3 The Nile will swarm with frogs; they will come up and go into
your palace, into your bedroom and on your bed, into the houses of your officials
and your people, and into your ovens and kneading bowls. 4 The frogs will come
up on you, your people, and all your officials."
5 The LORD then said to Moses, "Tell Aaron: Stretch out your hand with your
staff over the rivers, canals, and ponds, and cause the frogs to come up onto the
land of Egypt." † 6 When Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of
Egypt, the frogs † came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 But the magicians
did the same thing by their occult practices and brought frogs up onto the land of
Egypt.
8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Appeal † to the LORD to
remove the frogs from me and my people. Then I will let the people go and they
can sacrifice to the LORD."
9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "You may have the honor of choosing. When should I
appeal on behalf of you, your officials, and your people, that the frogs be taken
away from you and your houses, and remain only in the Nile? "
10 "Tomorrow," he answered.
Moses replied, "As you have said, so that you may know there is no one like the
LORD our God, † 11 the frogs will go away from you, your houses, your
officials, and your people. The frogs will remain only in the Nile." 12 After
Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD for help
concerning the frogs that he had brought against Pharaoh. 13 The LORD did as
Moses had said: the frogs in the houses, courtyards, and fields died. 14 They
piled them in countless heaps, and there was a terrible odor in the land. 15 But
when Pharaoh saw there was relief, he hardened his heart † and would not listen
to them, as the LORD had said.

THE THIRD PLAGUE: GNATS

16 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron: Stretch out your staff and strike
the dust of the land, and it will become gnats † throughout the land of Egypt."
17 And they did this. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff, and when he
struck the dust of the land, gnats were on people and animals. All the dust of the
land became gnats throughout the land of Egypt. 18 The magicians tried to

produce gnats using their occult practices, but they could not. The gnats remained on people and animals. †

19 "This is the finger of God," † the magicians said to Pharaoh. But Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

THE FOURTH PLAGUE: SWARMS OF FLIES

20 The LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh when you see him going out to the water. Tell him: This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship † me. † 21 But if you will not let my people go, then I will send swarms of flies † against you, your officials, your people, and your houses. The Egyptians' houses will swarm with flies, and so will the land where they live. † 22 But on that day I will give special treatment to the land of Goshen, where my people are living; † no flies will be there. This way you will know that I, the LORD, am in the land. 23 I will make a distinction † between my people and your people. This sign will take place tomorrow."

24 And the LORD did this. Thick swarms of flies went into Pharaoh's palace and his officials' houses. Throughout Egypt the land was ruined because of the swarms of flies. † 25 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go sacrifice to your God within the country."

26 But Moses said, "It would not be right † to do that, because what we will sacrifice to the LORD our God is detestable to the Egyptians. † If we sacrifice what the Egyptians detest in front of them, won't they stone us? 27 We must go a distance of three days into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as he instructs us."

28 Pharaoh responded, "I will let you go and sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness, but don't go very far. Make an appeal † for me."

29 "As soon as I leave you," Moses said, "I will appeal to the LORD, and tomorrow the swarms of flies will depart from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people. But Pharaoh must not act deceptively again by refusing to let the people go and sacrifice to the LORD." 30 Then Moses left Pharaoh's presence and appealed to the LORD. 31 The LORD did as Moses had said: He removed the

swarms of flies from Pharaoh, his officials, and his people; not one was left. 32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart this time also and did not let the people go.

8:16 Perhaps sand fleas or mosquitoes **8:20** Or *serve* **8:21** Or *insects* **8:21** Lit *are* **8:23** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *will place redemption* **8:26** Or *allowable*

8:1 Ex 3:12,18; 4:23 **8:2** Ex 7:14; 9:2; Rv 16:13 **8:3-5** Ex 7:19; 10:6 **8:6** Ps 78:45; 105:30 **8:8** Ex 8:28; 9:28; 10:17 **8:10** Ex 9:14; Dt 33:26; 2Sm 7:22; 1Ch 17:20; Is 46:9; Jr 10:6-7 **8:15** Ex 7:4; Ec 8:11 **8:18** Ex 7:11; 9:11; Dn 5:8 **8:19** Ps 8:3; Lk 11:20 **8:20** Ex 2:5; 7:15; 8:1; 9:13 **8:22** Ex 9:4,6; 10:23; 11:7 **8:24** Ps 78:45; 105:31 **8:26** Gn 43:32; 46:34 **8:28** Ex 8:8; 9:28; 1Kg 13:6

8:2 The Egyptians worshiped a frog goddess; therefore, this plague may have been an attack on the Egyptian deity Heket (a giver of life), but it is doubtful whether every frog would be associated with this goddess.

8:9-10 Moses allowed Pharaoh to decide when the plague of frogs would end so that he might **know there is no one like the LORD our God**, but Pharaoh hardened his heart (v. 15).

8:18-19 This time the magicians could not reproduce the miracle Moses and Aaron performed (see 7:11,22; 8:7). They recognized that the plague of gnats was the work of **the finger of God.** This expression, used in ancient Egyptian literature of Egyptian gods, shows that the magicians knew that they were powerless before the God of the Israelites. But still, Pharaoh **would not listen.**

8:22-24 With the plague of the flies and several other plagues, God made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians (see also 9:4-7,26; 10:23; 11:7). The purpose was to make it even clearer to Pharaoh **that I, the LORD, am in the land.**

THE FIFTH PLAGUE: DEATH OF LIVESTOCK

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Go in to Pharaoh and say to him: This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 2 But if you refuse to let them go and keep holding them, 3 then the LORD’s hand will bring a severe plague against your livestock in the field — the horses, donkeys, camels, herds, and flocks. 4 But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing of all that the Israelites own will die.” 5 And the LORD set a time, saying, “Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.” † 6 The LORD did this the next day. All the Egyptian livestock died, † but none among the Israelite livestock died. 7 Pharaoh sent messengers who saw that not a single one of the Israelite livestock was dead. But Pharaoh’s heart was hard, † and he did not let the people go.

THE SIXTH PLAGUE: BOILS

8 Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Take handfuls of furnace soot, and Moses is to throw it toward heaven in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 It will become fine

dust over the entire land of Egypt. It will become festering boils † on people and animals throughout the land of Egypt.” 10 So they took furnace soot and stood before Pharaoh. Moses threw it toward heaven, and it became festering boils on people and animals. 11 The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils were on the magicians as well as on all the Egyptians. † 12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart † and he did not listen to them, as the LORD had told Moses.

THE SEVENTH PLAGUE: HAIL

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh. Tell him: This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 14 For this time I am about to send all my plagues against you, † your officials, and your people. Then you will know there is no one like me on the whole earth. 15 By now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague, and you would have been obliterated from the earth. † 16 However, I have let you live for this purpose: to show you my power † and to make my name known on the whole earth. 17 You are still acting arrogantly against † my people by not letting them go. 18 Tomorrow at this time I will rain down the worst hail † that has ever occurred in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. 19 Therefore give orders to bring your livestock and all that you have in the field into shelters. Every person and animal that is in the field and not brought inside will die when the hail falls on them.” 20 Those among Pharaoh’s officials who feared the word of the LORD made their servants and livestock flee to shelters, 21 but those who didn’t take to heart the LORD’s word left their servants and livestock in the field.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven and let there be hail throughout the land of Egypt — on people and animals and every plant of the field in the land of Egypt.” 23 So Moses stretched out his staff toward heaven, and the LORD sent thunder and hail. † Lightning struck the land, and the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 The hail, with lightning flashing through it, was so severe that nothing like it had occurred in the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25 Throughout the land of Egypt, the hail

struck down everything in the field, both people and animals. The hail beat down every plant of the field and shattered every tree in the field. 26 The only place it didn't hail was in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were. †
27 Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. "I have sinned this time," he said to them. "The LORD is the righteous † one, and I and my people are the guilty ones. 28 Make an appeal to the LORD. There has been enough of God's thunder and hail. I will let you go; † you don't need to stay any longer."
29 Moses said to him, "When I have left the city, I will spread out my hands † to the LORD. The thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know the earth † † belongs to the LORD. 30 But as for you and your officials, I know that you still do not fear the LORD God."
31 The flax and the barley were destroyed because the barley was ripe † and the flax was budding, † 32 but the wheat and the spelt were not destroyed since they are later crops. †
33 Moses left Pharaoh and the city, and spread out his hands to the LORD. Then the thunder and hail ceased, and rain no longer poured down on the land. 34 When Pharaoh saw that the rain, hail, and thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his officials. 35 So Pharaoh's heart was hard, and he did not let the Israelites go, as the LORD had said through Moses.

9:14 Lit *plagues to your heart* **9:17** Or *still obstructing* **9:29** Or *land* **9:31** Lit *was ears of grain* **9:32** Lit *are late*

9:1-5 Ex 7:4,16; 8:1-2,22; 11:7 **9:6** Ex 9:19; Ps 78:50 **9:7** Ex 7:14; 8:32 **9:9** Dt 28:27; Rv 16:2 **9:11** Ex 8:18; 2Tm 3:9 **9:12** Ex 4:21; 7:22 **9:15** Ex 3:20; 8:10,20 **9:16** Ex 14:17; Pr 16:4; Rm 9:17 **9:18** Jos 10:11; Jb 38:22; Ps 18:12; Is 28:2; 30:30; Ezk 13:11; 38:22 **9:23** Ps 78:47-48; 105:32; 148:8; Rv 8:7; 11:19; 16:21 **9:26** Ex 8:22; 9:4,6; 11:7; 12:13; Is 32:18 **9:27** Ex 10:16; 2Ch 12:6; Ps 129:4; 145:17; Lm 1:18 **9:28** Ex 8:8; 10:17 **9:29** 1Kg 8:22,38; Ps 143:6; Is 1:15 **9:29** Ps 24:1; 1Co 10:26 **9:31** Ru 1:22; 2:23

9:13-16 This passage resounds with God's surpassing power and his strong desire to make his **name known on the whole earth** (see also Jos 4:23-24; 1Sm 17:46; 1Kg 8:41-43). If Pharaoh and the Egyptians continued in their rebellion, he would unleash **all** his **plagues against** them so that in the end they would **know there is no one like** him. He also made clear that he could have easily wiped out Pharaoh and the Egyptians already, but Pharaoh's stubbornness was being used as an opportunity to declare the glory of God all over the world (v. 16). Other passages had mentioned God's desire that Israel, Pharaoh, and the Egyptians would know him (e.g., 6:7; 7:5,17), but this verse takes it a significant step further.

THE EIGHTH PLAGUE: LOCUSTS

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may do these miraculous

signs of mine among them, † † 2 and so that you may tell † your son and grandson † how severely I dealt with the Egyptians and performed miraculous signs among them, and you will know that I am the LORD."
3 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh and told him, "This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may worship me. † 4 But if you refuse to let my people go, then tomorrow I will bring locusts † into your territory. 5 They will cover the surface of the land so that no one will be able to see the land. They will eat the remainder left † to you that escaped the hail; they will eat every tree you have growing in the fields. 6 They will fill your houses, all your officials' houses, and the houses of all the Egyptians — something your fathers and grandfathers never saw since the time they occupied the land until today." Then he turned and left Pharaoh's presence.
7 Pharaoh's officials asked him, "How long must this man be a snare † to us? Let the men go, so that they may worship the LORD their God. Don't you realize yet that Egypt is devastated? "
8 So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD your God," Pharaoh said. "But exactly who will be going? "
9 Moses replied, "We will go with our young and with our old; we will go with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds because we must hold the LORD's festival." †
10 He said to them, "The Lord would have to be with you if I would ever let you and your families go! Look out — you're heading for trouble. 11 No, go — just able-bodied men — worship the LORD, since that's what you want." And they were driven from Pharaoh's presence.
12 The LORD then said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, and the locusts will come up over it and eat every plant in the land, everything that the hail left." 13 So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the LORD sent an east wind over the land all that day and through the night. By morning the east wind had brought in the locusts. 14 The locusts went up over the entire land of Egypt and settled on the whole territory of Egypt. Never before had there been such a large number of locusts, and there never will be again. †
15 They covered the surface of the whole land so that the land was black, and

they consumed all the plants on the ground and all the fruit on the trees that the hail had left. Nothing green was left on the trees or the plants in the field throughout the land of Egypt. †

16 Pharaoh urgently sent for Moses and Aaron and said, “I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. 17 Please forgive my sin once more and make an appeal to the LORD your God, so that he will just take this death away from me.” 18 Moses left Pharaoh’s presence and appealed to the LORD. †

19 Then the LORD changed the wind to a strong west † wind, and it carried off the locusts and blew them into the Red Sea. † Not a single locust was left in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, † and he did not let the Israelites go.

THE NINTH PLAGUE: DARKNESS

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Stretch out your hand toward heaven, and there will be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt.” 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt for three days. 23 One person could not see another, and for three days they did not move from where they were. Yet all the Israelites had light where they lived. †

24 Pharaoh summoned Moses and said, “Go, worship the LORD. Even your families may go with you; only your flocks and herds must stay behind.”

25 Moses responded, “You must also let us have † sacrifices and burnt offerings to prepare for the LORD our God. 26 Even our livestock must go with us; not a hoof will be left behind because we will take some of them to worship the LORD our God. We will not know what we will use to worship the LORD until we get there.”

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart, † and he was unwilling to let them go. 28 Pharaoh said to him, “Leave me! Make sure you never see my face again, for on the day you see my face, you will die.”

29 “As you have said,” Moses replied, “I will never see your face again.” †

10:1 Lit *mine in his midst* **10:2** Lit *tell in the ears of* **10:19** Lit *sea* **10:25** Lit *also give in our hand*
10:1 Ex 4:21; 7:4,13 **10:2** Ex 13:8,14; Dt 4:9; 6:20-22; Ps 44:1; 78:5-7; Jl 1:3 **10:3** 1Kg 21:29; Jms 4:10; 1Pt 5:6 **10:4** Pr 30:27; Rv 9:3 **10:5** Ex 9:32; Jl 1:4 **10:7** Ex 23:33; Jos 23:13; 1Sm 18:21; Ec 7:26 **10:8-9** Ex 5:1; 8:8 **10:14** Ps 78:46; 105:34; Jl 2:2 **10:15** Ex 10:5; Ps 105:35 **10:16-18** Ex 8:8,30; 9:27 **10:19** Ex 13:18; 15:4,22; 23:31; Nm 14:25; 21:4; 33:10-11 **10:20** Ex 4:21; 11:10 **10:22-23** Ex 8:22; Ps 105:28 **10:27** Ex

4:21; 10:20 **10:29** Heb 11:27

10:1-2 Preceding passages mentioned that the stubbornness of Pharaoh gave an opportunity for the demonstration of God's **miraculous signs** (3:19-20; 7:3-5; 9:13-16). This passage specifically expresses God's intention that future generations **(your son and grandson**; see also 12:24-28) might be taught about these things and **know that I am the LORD.**

10:3 Despite the seven preceding plagues, Pharaoh had repeatedly rejected the Lord's command to **Let my people go** (7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13). Thus far, he had refused **to humble** himself before the Lord, but his resistance was to no avail.

10:7 Pharaoh's magicians had already acknowledged the Lord's power (8:19), and this time his **officials** recognized the obvious and appealed to him to let the Israelites go. The recent hailstorm was unprecedented in its severity (9:24) and likewise the threatened locust invasion (v. 6).

10:12-15 The eighth plague was the devastation of innumerable **locusts.** People in the ancient Near East often viewed locusts as divine punishment and a curse. Several examples of this are found in the Bible (cp. Jl 1:2-14; Am 4:9).

10:22 The ninth plague, **darkness**, may have targeted one of several Egyptian sun gods. It is difficult to know which Egyptian deity is in view, but the point is that the power of the gods is meaningless in comparison to that of the God of the Israelites.

THE TENTH PLAGUE: DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

11 The LORD said † to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh
and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here. When he lets you
go, † he will drive you out of here. 2 Now announce to the people that both men
and women should ask their neighbors for silver and gold items." 3 The LORD
gave † the people favor with the Egyptians. In addition, Moses himself was very
highly regarded † in the land of Egypt by † Pharaoh's officials and the
people. †
4 So Moses said, "This is what the LORD says: About midnight I will go
throughout Egypt, 5 and every firstborn male in the land of Egypt will die, from
the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne to the firstborn of the servant girl
who is at the grindstones, as well as every firstborn of the livestock. 6 Then
there will be a great cry of anguish through all the land of Egypt such as never
was before or ever will be again. 7 But against all the Israelites, whether people
or animals, not even a dog will snarl, † so that you may know that the LORD
makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 All these officials of yours will
come down to me and bow before me, saying: Get out, you and all the people

who follow you. † After that, I will get out." And he went out from Pharaoh's presence fiercely angry. †

9 The LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen † to you, so that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10 Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, † and he would not let the Israelites go out of his land.

11:1 Or *had said* **11:1** Or *go, it will be finished —* **11:3** Or *had given* **11:3** Lit *was very great* **11:3** Or *in the eyes of* **11:7** Lit *point its tongue* **11:8** Lit *people at your feet*
11:1-3 Ex 3:21-22; 12:35-36 **11:8** Ex 12:3; Am 5:17 **11:9** Ex 3:19; 7:4; 10:1 **11:10** Ex 4:21; 10:20,27

11:1 The tenth plague, the killing of the firstborn, would finally result in Pharaoh letting the Israelites go. This plague had been hinted at earlier when God threatened to take the life of Pharaoh's firstborn son (4:22-23), but it would actually reach not only to Pharaoh's household but to "every firstborn male in the land of Egypt" and even to "every firstborn of the livestock" (v. 5). As was the case before, God would make "a distinction between Egypt and Israel" so that the latter would be left in peace (v. 7; see 8:22-24 9:4-7,26; 10:23).

11:2-3 The Lord had also predicted previously that when the Israelites left Egypt, they would be supplied by the Egyptians (3:21-22; see also 12:35-36).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PASSOVER

12 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: 2 "This month is to be the beginning of months for you; it is the first month of your year. † 3 Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they must each select an animal of the flock according to their fathers' families, one animal per family. 4 If the household is too small for a whole animal, that person and the neighbor nearest his house are to select one based on the combined number of people; you should apportion the animal according to what each will eat. 5 You must have an unblemished † animal, a year-old male; you may take it from either the sheep or the goats. 6 You are to keep it until the fourteenth day of this month; then the whole assembly of the community of Israel will slaughter the animals at twilight. † 7 They must take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses where they eat them. 8 They are to eat the meat that night; they should eat it, roasted over the fire along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. † 9 Do not eat any of it raw or cooked in boiling † water, but only roasted † over fire — its head as well as its legs and inner organs. 10 You must not leave any of it until

morning; † any part of it left until morning you must burn. 11 Here is how you must eat it: You must be dressed for travel, † your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. You are to eat it in a hurry; it is the LORD's Passover. †
12 "I will pass through † the land of Egypt on that night and strike every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both people and animals. I am the LORD; I will execute judgments against all the gods of Egypt. † 13 The blood on the houses where you are staying will be a distinguishing mark for you; when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No plague will be among you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
14 "This day is to be a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to the LORD. You are to celebrate it throughout your generations as a permanent statute. † 15 You must eat unleavened bread for seven days. On the first day you must remove yeast † from your houses. Whoever eats what is leavened from the first day through the seventh day must be cut off † from Israel. 16 You are to hold a sacred assembly † on the first day and another sacred assembly on the seventh day. No work may be done on those days except for preparing what people need to eat — you may do only that.
17 "You are to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread because on this very day I brought your military divisions out of the land of Egypt. † You must observe this day throughout your generations as a permanent statute. 18 You are to eat unleavened bread in the first month, † from the evening of the fourteenth day of the month until the evening of the twenty-first day. 19 Yeast must not be found in your houses for seven days. If anyone eats something leavened, that person, whether a resident alien or native of the land, must be cut off from the community of Israel. 20 Do not eat anything leavened; eat unleavened bread in all your homes." †
21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, select an animal from the flock according to your families, and slaughter the Passover animal. † 22 Take a cluster of hyssop, dip it in the blood † that is in the basin, and brush the lintel and the two doorposts with some of the blood in the basin. None of you may go out the door of his house until morning. 23 When the LORD passes through to strike Egypt and sees the blood on the lintel and the two

doorposts, he will pass over the door and not let the destroyer enter your houses to strike you. †
24 “Keep this command permanently as a statute for you and your descendants.
25 When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, you are to observe this ceremony. 26 When your children † ask you, ‘What does this ceremony mean to you?’ 27 you are to reply, ‘It is the Passover sacrifice † to the LORD, for he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when he struck the Egyptians and spared our homes.’ ” So the people knelt low and worshiped.
28 Then the Israelites went and did this; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron.

THE EXODUS

29 Now at midnight the LORD struck every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and every firstborn of the livestock. †
30 During the night Pharaoh got up, he along with all his officials and all the Egyptians, and there was a loud wailing † throughout Egypt because there wasn’t a house without someone dead. 31 He summoned Moses and Aaron during the night and said, “Get out immediately from among my people, both you and the Israelites, and go, worship the LORD as you have said. 32 Take even your flocks and your herds as you asked and leave, and also bless me.”
33 Now the Egyptians pressured the people in order to send them quickly out of the country, for they said, “We’re all going to die!” † 34 So the people took their dough before it was leavened, with their kneading bowls wrapped up in their clothes on their shoulders.
35 The Israelites acted on Moses’s word and asked the Egyptians for silver and gold items and for clothing. † 36 And the LORD gave the people such favor with the Egyptians that they gave them what they requested. In this way they plundered the Egyptians.
37 The Israelites traveled from Rameses to Succoth, † about six hundred thousand † able-bodied men on foot, besides their families. 38 A mixed crowd also went up with them, along with a huge number of livestock, both flocks and herds. 39 The people baked the dough they had brought out of Egypt into

unleavened loaves, since it had no yeast; for when they were driven † out of Egypt, they could not delay and had not prepared provisions for themselves.
40 The time that the Israelites lived in Egypt † was 430 years. † 41 At the end of 430 years, on that same day, all the LORD's military divisions went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It was a night of vigil in honor of the LORD, because he would bring them out of the land of Egypt. This same night is in honor of the LORD, a night vigil for all the Israelites throughout their generations. †

PASSOVER INSTRUCTION

43 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner may eat it. 44 But any slave a man has purchased may eat it, after you have circumcised him. 45 A temporary resident or hired worker may not eat the Passover. † 46 It is to be eaten in one house. You may not take any of the meat outside the house, and you may not break any of its bones. † 47 The whole community of Israel must celebrate † it. 48 If an alien resides among you and wants to observe the LORD's Passover, every male in his household must be circumcised, and then he may participate; † he will become like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised person may eat it. 49 The same law will apply to both the native and the alien † who resides among you."
50 Then all the Israelites did this; they did just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron. 51 On that same day the LORD brought the Israelites out of the land of Egypt according to their military divisions. †

12:9 Or *or boiled at all in* **12:11** Lit *must have your waist girded* **12:20** Or *settlements* **12:40** LXX, Sam add *and in Canaan* **12:47** Lit *do* **12:48** Lit *may come near to do it*
12:2 Ex 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1 **12:5** Lv 22:19-21; Mal 1:8,14 **12:6** Lv 23:5; Nm 9:3; Dt 16:6 **12:8** Ex 34:25; Nm 9:11; Dt 16:3; 1Co 5:8 **12:9** Dt 16:7; 2Ch 35:13 **12:10** Ex 23:18; 34:25 **12:11** Ex 12:27; Dt 16:5 **12:12** Ex 11:4-5; Am 5:17 **12:12** Ex 6:2; Nm 33:4 **12:14** Ex 12:17,43; 13:9-10; 2Kg 23:21 **12:15** Ex 13:6-7; 23:15; 34:18; Lv 23:6; Dt 16:3,8 **12:15** Gn 17:14; Nm 9:13 **12:16** Lv 23:7-8; Nm 28:18,25 **12:17** Ex 12:41,51; 13:3 **12:18** Lv 23:5-8; Nm 28:16-25 **12:21** Ex 12:3; Mk 14:12-16 **12:22** Ex 12:7; Heb 11:28 **12:23** Ezk 9:6; 1Co 10:10; Rv 7:3 **12:26** Ex 10:2; 13:8,14; Dt 6:20; 32:7; Jos 4:6,21; Ps 78:3-6 **12:27** Ex 4:31; 12:11 **12:29** Ex 4:23; 11:4; Nm 8:17; 33:4; Ps 78:51; 135:8 **12:30** Ex 11:6; Am 5:17 **12:33** Ex 11:8; Ps 105:38 **12:35** Gn 15:14; Ex 3:21; Ps 105:37 **12:37** Gn 47:11; Nm 33:3,5 **12:37** Ex 38:26; Nm 1:46; 11:21 **12:39** Ex 6:1; 12:33 **12:40** Gn 15:13-16; Ac 7:6; Gl 3:17 **12:42** Ex 13:10; Dt 16:1,6 **12:43-45** Gn 17:11-13; Lv 22:10; Nm 9:14 **12:46** Nm 9:12; Ps 34:20; Jn 19:33,36 **12:49** Nm 9:14; 15:15-16,19; Gl 3:28 **12:51** Ex 6:26; 12:41

12:3-11 The correspondence between the Passover **animal** (a lamb or kid) and Jesus have long been observed. Paul remarked in 1 Corinthians 5:7, "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed." The prophet

Isaiah also likened the Messiah to an innocent lamb (Hb *seh*) who was killed for the salvation of others (see Is 53:5-9).

12:12 The narrative has focused on the contest between the Lord and Pharaoh (e.g., 5:2; 10:3). It was Pharaoh himself whose heart was hard and who had refused to let the Israelites go, and God had repeatedly demonstrated his superior power through the plagues. He would do so once more in climactic fashion on the Passover. This verse also adds that this would be a judgment **against all the gods of Egypt** (see also 18:11; Nm 33:4). The Egyptians indeed worshiped other gods, and although they have not been mentioned in the narrative, God declares here that he is superior to them as well. Moreover, these gods are not really gods at all, for as Isaiah 45:5 says, "I am the LORD, and there is no other; there is no God but me" (see also Dt 4:35,39; 6:4).

12:24-27 The Lord intended for both the Passover ritual and its significance to be passed down from generation to generation (see also 10:1-2). See "Christian Perspectives on Children's Education," *p. 225*.

12:31-32 At long last, Pharaoh had let the Israelites go, as God had promised (see 3:19-20; 6:1; 11:1).

12:40-42 Special mention is made of the length of Israel's stay in Egypt. The **430 years** here agrees essentially with what God had predicted to Abraham long ago: his descendants would live in a foreign country and be enslaved for 400 years (Gn 15:13), a duration which may have been intended as an approximate figure.

12:46 This seemingly insignificant detail (see also Nm 9:12; Ps 34:20) is taken up in John 19:31-36 as having prophetic significance that was fulfilled when Jesus's legs were not broken along with those of the men crucified alongside him.

13 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Consecrate every firstborn male † to me,
the firstborn from every womb among the Israelites, both man and
domestic animal; it is mine."
3 Then Moses said to the people, "Remember this day when you came out of
Egypt, out of the place of slavery, for the LORD brought you out of here by the
strength of his hand. Nothing leavened may be eaten. † 4 Today, in the month
of Abib, † † you are going out. 5 When the LORD brings you into the land of the
Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Hivites, and Jebusites, † which he swore to
your fathers that he would give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, † you
must carry out this ceremony in this month. † 6 For seven days you must eat
unleavened bread, and on the seventh day there is to be a festival to the LORD.
7 Unleavened bread is to be eaten for those seven days. Nothing leavened may
be found among you, and no yeast may be found among you in all your territory.
8 On that day explain to your son, 'This is because of what the LORD did for me
when I came out of Egypt.' † 9 Let it serve as a sign for you on your hand and
as a reminder on your forehead, † † so that the LORD's instruction may be in

your mouth; for the LORD brought you out of Egypt with a strong hand. 10 Keep this statute at its appointed time from year to year.
11 "When the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 you are to present to the LORD every firstborn male of the womb. All firstborn offspring of the livestock you own that are males will be the LORD's. 13 You must redeem every firstborn of a donkey with a flock animal, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. However, you must redeem every firstborn among your sons. †
14 "In the future, when your son † asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'By the strength of his hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. 15 When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed every firstborn male in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of humans and the firstborn of livestock. That is why I sacrifice to the LORD all the firstborn of the womb that are males, but I redeem all the firstborn of my sons.' 16 So let it be a sign on your hand and a symbol † on your forehead, for the LORD brought us out of Egypt by the strength of his hand." †

THE ROUTE OF THE EXODUS

17 When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them along the road to the land of the Philistines, even though it was nearby; for God said, "The people will change their minds and return to Egypt if they face war." † 18 So he led the people around toward the Red Sea along the road of the wilderness. And the Israelites left the land of Egypt in battle formation. †
19 Moses took the bones of Joseph † with him, because Joseph had made the Israelites swear a solemn oath, saying, "God will certainly come to your aid; then you must take my bones with you from this place."
20 They set out from Succoth and camped at Etham on the edge of the wilderness. 21 The LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud † to lead them on their way during the day and in a pillar of fire to give them light at night, so that they could travel day or night. 22 The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never left its place in front of the people.

13:4 March–April; called Nisan in the post-exilic period; Neh 2:1; Est 3:7 **13:5** DSS, Sam, LXX, Syr add *Girgashites* and *Perizzites* ; Jos 3:10 **13:9** Lit *reminder between your eyes* **13:16** Or *phylactery*
13:2 Ex 13:12-13,15; 22:29-30; Nm 3:13; Dt 15:9; Lk 2:23 **13:3** Ex 6:1; 12:8,42; Dt 16:3 **13:4** Ex 12:2; 23:15; 34:18; Dt 16:1 **13:5** Ex 3:8; 33:3; Nm 16:14; Jos 5:6; Jr 32:22 **13:5** Ex 6:8; 12:25 **13:8** Ex 3:14;

12:26-27 **13:9** Ex 13:16; Dt 6:8; 11:18 **13:13** Ex 34:20; Nm 3:46-47; 18:15 **13:14** Ex 12:26-27; Dt 6:20 **13:15-16** Ex 12:29; 13:9 **13:17** Ex 14:11; Nm 14:1-4; Dt 17:16 **13:18** Ex 14:2; Nm 33:6; Jos 1:14 **13:19** Gn 50:25; Jos 24:32; Ac 7:16; Heb 11:22 **13:21** Ex 14:19; Nm 9:15-16; Dt 1:33; Neh 9:12; Ps 78:14; 99:7; Is 4:5; 1Co 10:1

13:2 The consecration of every **firstborn** Israelite **male** to God was based on the fact that they were his because he had spared them from death during the Passover (see also v. 15).

13:3-10 The celebration of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was related to the Passover because that is what the Israelites ate as they departed in haste (see 12:39).

13:19 Hebrews 11:22 says that it was "by faith" that Joseph requested the removal of his bones from Egypt (see Gn 50:24-25).

13:21-22 The **pillar of cloud** and **pillar of fire**, which would also accompany the Israelites throughout their time in the wilderness (see 40:36-38; Nm 9:15-23), appear here for the first time.

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell the Israelites to turn back and
camp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea; you must
camp in front of Baal-zephon, facing it by the sea. † 3 Pharaoh will say
of the Israelites: They are wandering around the land in confusion; the
wilderness has boxed them in. 4 I will harden Pharaoh's heart so that he will
pursue them. Then I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army,
and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this. †

THE EGYPTIAN PURSUIT

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his
officials changed their minds about the people and said: "What have we done?
We have released Israel from serving us." 6 So he got his chariot ready and took
his troops † with him; 7 he took six hundred of the best chariots and all the rest
of the chariots of Egypt, with officers in each one. 8 The LORD hardened the
heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the Israelites, who were going
out defiantly. † † 9 The Egyptians — all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, his
horsemen, † and his army — chased † after them and caught up with them as
they camped by the sea beside Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon.
10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians
coming after them! The Israelites were terrified and cried out † to the LORD for
help. 11 They said to Moses: "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you
have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us by
bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Isn't this what we told you in Egypt: Leave us

alone so that we may serve the Egyptians? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness." †

13 But Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid. Stand firm and see † the LORD's salvation that he will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians you see today, you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you, and you must be quiet." †

ESCAPE THROUGH THE RED SEA

15 The LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to break camp. 16 As for you, lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. † 17 As for me, I am going to harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and I will receive glory by means of Pharaoh, all his army, and his chariots and horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

19 Then the angel of God, † who was going in front of the Israelite forces, moved and went behind them. The pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and stood behind them. † 20 It came between the Egyptian and Israelite forces. There was cloud and darkness, it lit up the night, and neither group came near the other all night long.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back with a powerful east wind all that night and turned the sea into dry land. So the waters were divided, † 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. †

23 The Egyptians set out in pursuit — all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen — and went into the sea after them. 24 During the morning watch, the LORD looked down at the Egyptian forces from the pillar of fire † and cloud, and threw the Egyptian forces into confusion. 25 He caused their chariot wheels to swerve † † and made them drive † with difficulty. "Let's get away from Israel," the Egyptians said, "because the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt! "

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the water may come back on the Egyptians, on their chariots and horsemen." 27 So

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal depth. While the Egyptians were trying to escape from it, the LORD threw them into the sea. † 28 The water came back and covered the chariots † and horsemen, plus the entire army of Pharaoh that had gone after them into the sea. Not even one of them survived.

29 But the Israelites had walked through the sea on dry ground, with the waters like a wall to them on their right and their left. 30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 When Israel saw the great power that the LORD used against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and believed † in him and in his servant Moses.

14:6 Lit *people* **14:8** Lit *with a raised hand* **14:9** Or *chariot drivers* **14:25** Sam, LXX, Syr read *He bound their chariot wheels* **14:25** Or *fall off* **14:25** Or *and they drove them*

14:2 Ex 13:18; Nm 33:7; Jr 44:1 **14:4** Ex 4:21; 7:5; Rm 9:17,22-23 **14:8** Ex 6:1; 13:9; Nm 33:3; Ac 13:17 **14:9** Ex 15:9; Jos 24:6 **14:10** Jos 24:7; Neh 9:9; Ps 34:17 **14:12** Ex 5:21; Ps 106:7-8 **14:13** Gn 15:1; 46:3; Ex 20:20; 2Ch 20:15,17; Is 41:10 **14:14** Ex 14:25; Dt 1:30; 3:22; Jos 10:14; 2Ch 20:29; Is 30:15 **14:16** Ex 4:17; Nm 20:8-9; Is 10:26 **14:19** Ex 23:20,23; 32:34; 33:2 **14:19** Ex 13:21; Is 63:9 **14:21** Ex 15:8; Jos 3:16; Neh 9:11; Ps 74:13; 114:3,5; Is 63:12-13 **14:22** Ex 15:19; Ps 66:6; Is 63:13; Hab 3:10; 1Co 10:1; Heb 11:29 **14:24** Ex 13:21; Nm 14:14; Neh 9:12 **14:27** Ex 5:1,7; Jos 4:18; Ps 78:53; Heb 11:29 **14:28** Ps 106:11; Heb 3:8,13 **14:31** Ps 106:12; Jn 2:11

14:1-4 Though Pharaoh had already let the Israelites go (12:31-32), God instructed them to **turn back** so that Pharaoh would think they were **wandering around the land in confusion** and **pursue them.** In this way, God would **receive glory by means of Pharaoh and all his army** (see also vv. 17,18). Like 9:13-16, this passage provides a powerful example of God's desire to be glorified.

14:11-12 The Israelites' fickleness and complaining against Moses was an unfortunate sign of things to come (see 16:3; 17:3).

14:23-25 Just as Moses had assured the Israelites of God's salvation and that he would fight for them (vv. 13-14), **the LORD looked down at the Egyptians forces . . . and threw [them] into confusion**, so that even the Egyptians recognized that **the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt** (see also 8:19; 10:7).

14:28-31 Not only had the Israelites been freed, but **the entire army of Pharaoh** had been drowned (15:19), to the glory of God (vv. 2-4,17-18). He had **saved Israel from the power of the Egyptians** (see also v. 13). The Israelites responded by **fear[ing] the LORD and believ[ing] in him and in his servant Moses** (see also 4:31). But this response of faith would be short-lived (see Nm 14:11; Ps 78:22,32).

ISRAEL'S SONG

15 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD. They said:

I will sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted;
he has thrown the horse
and its rider into the sea.

2 The LORD is my strength and my song; †
he has become my salvation. †
This is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him. †
3 The LORD is a warrior; †
the LORD is his name. †

4 He threw Pharaoh's chariots and his army into the sea;
the elite of his officers
were drowned in the Red Sea. †
5 The floods covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone. †
6 LORD, your right hand is glorious in power.
LORD, your right hand shattered the enemy. †
7 You overthrew your adversaries by your great majesty.
You unleashed your burning wrath;
it consumed them like stubble. †
8 The water heaped up † at the blast from your nostrils; the currents stood firm like a dam.
The watery depths congealed in the heart of the sea.
9 The enemy said: "I will pursue, I will overtake,
I will divide the spoil. †
My desire will be gratified at their expense.
I will draw my sword;
my hand will destroy † them."
10 But you blew with your breath, and the sea covered them.
They sank like lead
in the mighty waters.

11 LORD, who is like you among the gods?
Who is like you, glorious in holiness, †
revered with praises, performing wonders? †
12 You stretched out your right hand, and the earth swallowed them.
13 With your faithful love, you will lead the people

you have redeemed;
you will guide them to your holy dwelling
with your strength. †

14 When the peoples hear, they will shudder; anguish will seize the inhabitants
of Philistia.
15 Then the chiefs of Edom will be terrified; †
trembling will seize the leaders of Moab;
all the inhabitants of Canaan will panic;
16 terror † and dread will fall on them.
They will be as still † as a stone because of your powerful arm
until your people pass by, LORD, until the people whom you purchased †
pass by. †

17 You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your possession; †
LORD, you have prepared the place for your dwelling;
Lord, † your hands have established the sanctuary.
18 The LORD will reign † forever and ever!

19 When Pharaoh's horses with his chariots and horsemen went into the sea, the LORD brought the water of the sea back over them. But the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. 20 Then the prophetess Miriam, † Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women came out following her with tambourines and dancing. † 21 Miriam sang to them:

Sing to the LORD, for he is highly exalted;
he has thrown the horse
and its rider into the sea.

WATER PROVIDED

22 Then Moses led Israel on from the Red Sea, and they went out to the Wilderness of Shur. They journeyed for three days in the wilderness without finding water. 23 They came to Marah, but they could not drink the water at Marah because it was bitter — that is why it was named Marah. † 24 The people

grumbled to Moses, “What are we going to drink?” † 25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he threw it into the water, the water became drinkable.

The LORD made a statute and ordinance for them at Marah, and he tested them there. † 26 He said, “If you will carefully obey the LORD your God, do what is right in his sight, pay attention to his commands, and keep all his statutes, I will not inflict any illnesses on you that I inflicted on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.” †

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy date palms, and they camped there by the water.

15:2 Or *might* **15:9** Or *conquer* **15:16** Or *silent* **15:16** Or *created* **15:17** Some Hb mss, DSS, Sam, Tg read *Lord* **15:23** = Bitter or Bitterness

15:2 Ps 18:2; 59:17; Is 12:2; Hab 3:18 **15:2** Gn 28:21; Ex 3:6,15,18; Is 25:1 **15:3** Ps 24:8; Rv 19:11 **15:3** Ex 6:3; Ps 83:18 **15:4** Ex 13:18; 15:22; 23:31 **15:5** Ex 14:28; 15:10; Neh 9:11 **15:6** Ps 118:15-16 **15:7** Dt 33:26; Is 5:24 **15:8** Ex 14:21; Ps 78:13 **15:9** Ex 14:9; Jdg 5:30; Is 53:12 **15:11** Dt 3:24; 1Kg 8:23 **15:11** Ps 77:14; Is 6:3; Rv 4:8 **15:13** Ps 77:15,20; 78:54 **15:15** Gn 36:15,40; Nm 22:3; Dt 2:4; Jos 5:1 **15:16** Ex 23:27; Jos 2:9 **15:16** 1Sm 25:37; Ps 74:2; 1Pt 2:9 **15:17** Ps 44:2; 78:54 **15:18** Ps 10:16; 29:10; Is 57:15 **15:20** Nm 26:59; Jdg 4:4 **15:20** Jdg 11:34; 1Sm 18:6; Ps 150:4 **15:23-24** Ex 16:2; Nm 33:8 **15:25** Ex 14:10; Dt 8:2,16; Jdg 2:22; 3:1,4; 2Kg 2:21; Ps 66:10 **15:26** Ex 23:25; Dt 7:12,15; 28:27,60; Ps 103:3

15:1 This verse begins the second major poetic section in the Pentateuch (vv. 1-18). The other three are Genesis 49:1-32; Numbers 23:7-10,18-24 and 24:3-9,15-19; and Deuteronomy 32–33. These four poetic sections play a key role in the structure and message of the Pentateuch as a whole. Like the other three, this one involves the main character in the narrative (Moses) calling an audience together. Unlike the other three, it does not use the phrase “in the last days” (lit Gn 49:1; Nm 24:14; Dt 31:29; Hb *be’acharit hayyamim*) or contain a messianic prophecy (see Gn 49:8-12; Nm 24:17; Dt 33:7). See also the notes on Genesis 1:1; 49:1.

15:17-18 Most of this song consists of a triumphant celebration of God’s recent victory over Pharaoh and his army (vv. 1-12). These two verses, on the other hand, look forward to what he will do for his people in the future and to his eternal reign. In view of the fact that “the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands” (Ac 7:48), **the sanctuary** that God’s own **hands have established** for his **dwelling** mentioned here probably does not refer to Solomon’s temple or to any other man-made structure but to something that he himself distinctively and recognizably **prepared** (see also Is 2:2-4; 66:1-2; Pss 48:8; 87:5; 114:2), such as the church (Mt 16:18; 1Co 3:9; Eph 2:21-22; 1Pt 2:5).

15:22-24 The euphoria of the exodus from Egypt and deliverance at the Red Sea quickly faded when the Israelites went **without finding water** for three days. As they would do on many future occasions (e.g., 16:2; 17:3; Nm 14:2; 17:6), they **grumbled** against Moses.

MANNA AND QUAIL PROVIDED

16 The entire Israelite community departed from Elim and came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had left the land of Egypt. † 2 The

entire Israelite community grumbled † against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 The Israelites said to them, “If only we had died by the LORD’s hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by pots of meat and ate all the bread we wanted. Instead, you brought us into this wilderness to make this whole assembly die of hunger! ” †

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to rain bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. This way I will test them to see whether or not they will follow my instructions. † 5 On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.” †

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites: “This evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, † 7 and in the morning you will see the LORD’s glory because he has heard your complaints about him. For who are we that you complain about us? ” † 8 Moses continued, “The LORD will give you meat to eat this evening and all the bread you want in the morning, for he has heard the complaints that you are raising against him. Who are we? Your complaints are not against us but against the LORD.” †

9 Then Moses told Aaron, “Say to the entire Israelite community, ‘Come before the LORD, for he has heard your complaints.’ ” 10 As Aaron was speaking to the entire Israelite community, they turned toward the wilderness, and there in a cloud the LORD’s glory appeared. †

11 The LORD spoke to Moses, 12 “I have heard the complaints of the Israelites. Tell them: At twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning you will eat bread until you are full. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God.”

13 So at evening quail † came and covered the camp. In the morning there was a layer of dew all around the camp. 14 When the layer of dew evaporated, there were fine flakes on the desert surface, as fine as frost on the ground. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they asked one another, “What is it? ” because they didn’t know what it was.

Moses told them, “It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. † 16 This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather as much of it as each person needs to eat. You may take two quarts † per individual, according to the number of people each of you has in his tent.’ ”

17 So the Israelites did this. Some gathered a lot, some a little. 18 When they measured it by quarts, † the person who gathered a lot had no surplus, and the person who gathered a little had no shortage. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat. † 19 Moses said to them, “No one is to let any of it remain until morning.” 20 But they didn’t listen to Moses; some people left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. Therefore Moses was angry with them.
21 They gathered it every morning. Each gathered as much as he needed to eat, but when the sun grew hot, it melted. 22 On the sixth day they gathered twice as much food, four quarts † apiece, and all the leaders of the community came and reported this to Moses. 23 He told them, “This is what the Lord has said: ‘Tomorrow is a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath † to the Lord. Bake what you want to bake, and boil what you want to boil, and set aside everything left over to be kept until morning.’ ”
24 So they set it aside until morning as Moses commanded, and it didn’t stink or have maggots in it. 25 “Eat it today,” Moses said, “because today is a Sabbath to the Lord. Today you won’t find any in the field. 26 For six days you will gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none.”
27 Yet on the seventh day some of the people went out to gather, but they did not find any. 28 Then the Lord said to Moses, “How long will you † refuse to keep my commands † and instructions? 29 Understand that the Lord has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day he will give you two days’ worth of bread. Each of you stay where you are; no one is to leave his place on the seventh day.” 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.
31 The house of Israel named the substance manna. † † It resembled coriander seed, was white, and tasted like wafers made with honey. 32 Moses said, “This is what the Lord has commanded: ‘Two quarts † of it are to be preserved throughout your generations, so that they may see the bread I fed you in the wilderness when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.’ ”
33 Moses told Aaron, “Take a container and put two quarts † of manna in it. Then place it before the Lord to be preserved throughout your generations.”
34 As the Lord commanded Moses, Aaron placed it before the testimony † to be preserved.

35 The Israelites ate manna for forty years, until they came to an inhabited land.
They ate manna until they reached the border of the land of Canaan. † 36 (They
used a measure called an omer, which held two quarts. †)

16:5 Lit *as gathering day to day* **16:16** Lit *an omer* **16:18** Lit *by an omer* **16:22** Lit *two omers* **16:28** The Hb word for *you* is pl, referring to the whole nation. **16:31** = what?; Ex 16:15 **16:32** Lit *'A full omer* **16:33** Lit *a full omer* **16:36** Lit *(The omer is a tenth of an ephah.)*

16:1 Nm 33:10-11 **16:2** Ex 15:24; 1Co 10:10 **16:3** Nm 11:4-5; Lm 4:9 **16:4** Dt 8:2; Jn 6:31 **16:6** Ex 6:7; Nm 16:28-30 **16:7** Nm 14:27; 16:11; Is 35:2; 40:5 **16:8** 1Sm 8:7; Lk 10:16; Rm 13:2 **16:10** Ex 13:21-22; Nm 16:19; 1Kg 8:10 **16:13** Nm 11:9,31; Ps 78:27-28; 105:40 **16:15** Ex 16:4; Jn 6:31 **16:18** 2Co 8:15 **16:23** Gn 2:3; Ex 20:8; 31:15; 35:3; Lv 23:3 **16:28** 2Kg 17:14; Ps 78:10 **16:31** Ex 16:14; Nm 11:7; Dt 8:3 **16:34** Ex 25:16,21; 27:21; 40:20; Nm 17:10 **16:35** Jos 5:12; Neh 9:20-21; Jn 6:31,49

16:4-30 Whereas the Israelites were in need of water at Marah (15:22-25), now they were in need of food (vv. 1-3). Again, they **grumbled** against their leaders (see also 14:11-12; 15:24), who informed them that their **complaints are not against** them **but against God.** The giving of only enough **bread** for **each day** served not only to meet the Israelites' physical needs but also to provide an opportunity to **test them to see whether or not** they would follow God's instructions related to its gathering. Nevertheless, some Israelites did not follow the instruction not to keep any manna for the next day, and some disobeyed by going out to gather it on the Sabbath. The people had failed God's test of obedience (see also 15:25-26), and he was displeased.

WATER FROM THE ROCK

17 The entire Israelite community left the Wilderness of Sin, moving from one place to the next according to the LORD's command. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. † 2 So the people complained to Moses, "Give us water to drink."

"Why are you complaining to me?" Moses replied to them. "Why are you testing † the LORD?"

3 But the people thirsted there for water and grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you ever bring us up from Egypt to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" †

4 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What should I do with these people? In a little while they will stone me!" †

5 The LORD answered Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff you struck the Nile with in your hand and go. 6 I am going to stand there in front of you on the rock at Horeb; when you hit the rock, water † will come out of it and the people will drink." Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place Massah † and

Meribah † † because the Israelites complained, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us or not? ”

THE AMALEKITES ATTACK

8 At Rephidim, Amalek † † came and fought against Israel. 9 Moses said to Joshua, † “Select some men for us and go fight against Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the hilltop with God’s staff in my hand.”
10 Joshua did as Moses had told him, and fought against Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 While Moses held up his hand, † Israel prevailed, but whenever he put his hand † down, Amalek prevailed. † 12 When Moses’s hands grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat down on it. Then Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side and one on the other so that his hands remained steady until the sun went down. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his army † with the sword.
14 The LORD then said to Moses, “Write this down on a scroll as a reminder and recite it to Joshua: I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven.” †
15 And Moses built an altar † and named it, “The LORD Is My Banner.” † 16 He said, “Indeed, my hand is lifted up toward † the LORD’s throne. The LORD will be at war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

17:7 = Testing **17:7** = Quarreling **17:8** A semi-nomadic people descended from *Amalek*, a grandson of Esau; Gn 36:12 **17:11** Sam, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *hands* **17:11** Sam, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *hands* **17:13** Or *people* **17:15** = *Yahweh-nissi* **17:16** Or *hand was on*, or *hand was against* ; Hb obscure
17:1 Ex 16:1; Nm 33:12,14 **17:2** Nm 20:3; Dt 6:16; Ps 78:18,41; 1Co 10:9 **17:3** Ex 15:24; 16:2,7-8; Nm 14:2,27,29,36; 16:11 **17:4** Nm 14:10; 1Sm 30:6; Jn 8:59; 10:31 **17:6** Ex 20:10-11; Ps 114:8; 1Co 10:9 **17:7** Nm 20:13,24; Ps 81:7; 95:8 **17:8** Gn 36:12; Nm 13:29; 24:20; Dt 25:17; Jdg 3:13; 6:3; 10:12; 1Sm 14:48 **17:9** Ex 24:13; 32:17; 33:11; Ac 7:45 **17:11** Ex 24:14; Jms 5:16 **17:14** Ex 34:27; Dt 25:17-19; 1Sm 15:3 **17:15** Ex 20:24-26; 24:4; Jdg 6:24

17:1-7 Once again, the Israelites needed water (see also 15:22-23) and **grumbled against Moses** (see also 15:24; 16:2). The Lord miraculously brought out water from the rock for them, but their constant grumbling had amounted to testing the Lord (see also Dt 6:16).

17:8-15 Joshua and his army were following Moses’s orders by doing battle with **Amalek.** Their success, however, did not depend on their own strength but on whether **Moses’s hands** were upraised. It evidently did not depend on Moses’s strength either, since he himself needed help to keep his hands raised. The reason for Moses’s gesture is not certain. Perhaps it was a call to battle, like the raising of Joshua’s javelin (cp. Jos 8:18). Several passages associate the lifting up of hands with prayer (e.g., Pss 28:2; 141:2; 1Tm 2:8); another possibility is that Moses was calling attention to the presence of God as the source of their military might.

JETHRO'S VISIT

18 Moses's father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, † heard about
everything that God had done for Moses and for God's people Israel
when the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt.
2 Now Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, had taken in Zipporah, † Moses's wife,
after he had sent her back, 3 along with her two sons, one of whom was named
Gershom † (because Moses had said, "I have been a resident alien in a foreign
land") † 4 and the other Eliezer (because he had said, "The God of my father
was my helper and rescued me from Pharaoh's sword"). †
5 Moses's father-in-law Jethro, along with Moses's wife and sons, came to him
in the wilderness where he was camped at the mountain of God. † 6 He sent
word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife
and her two sons."
7 So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, † and then kissed
him. They asked each other how they had been † and went into the tent.
8 Moses recounted to his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and
the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardships that confronted them on the
way, and how the LORD rescued them. †
9 Jethro rejoiced over all the good things the LORD had done for Israel when he
rescued them from the power of the Egyptians. 10 "Blessed be the LORD," †
Jethro exclaimed, "who rescued you from the power of Egypt and from the
power of Pharaoh. He has rescued the people from under the power of Egypt!
11 Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because he did wonders
when the Egyptians acted arrogantly against Israel." † †
12 Then Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and sacrifices to
God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses's
father-in-law in God's presence.
13 The next day Moses sat down to judge the people, and they stood around
Moses from morning until evening. 14 When Moses's father-in-law saw
everything he was doing for them he asked, "What is this thing you're doing for
the people? Why are you alone sitting as judge, while all the people stand around
you from morning until evening? "

15 Moses replied to his father-in-law, “Because the people come to me to inquire
of God. 16 Whenever they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I make a decision
between one man and another. I teach them God’s statutes and laws.” †
17 “What you’re doing is not good,” Moses’s father-in-law said to him. 18 “You
will certainly wear out both yourself and these people who are with you, because
the task is too heavy for you. You can’t do it alone. † 19 Now listen to me; I will
give you some advice, and God be with you. You be the one to represent the
people before God and bring their cases to him. 20 Instruct them about the
statutes and laws, and teach them the way to live and what they must do. †
21 But you should select from all the people able men, God-fearing, trustworthy,
and hating dishonest profit. † Place them over the people as commanders of
thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. † 22 They should judge the people at all
times. Then they can bring you every major case but judge every minor case
themselves. In this way you will lighten your load, † and they will bear it with
you. † 23 If you do this, and God so directs you, you will be able to endure, and
also all these people will be able to go home satisfied.” †
24 Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25 So Moses
chose able men from all Israel and made them leaders over the people as
commanders of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. 26 They judged the people
at all times; they would bring the hard cases to Moses, but they would judge
every minor case themselves.
27 Moses let his father-in-law go, and he journeyed to his own land. †

18:3 In Hb the name *Gershom* sounds like the phrase “a stranger there.” **18:4** = My God Is Help **18:7** Lit *other about well-being* **18:11** Hb obscure **18:22** Lit *lighten from on you* **18:23** Lit *go to their place in peace* **18:1** Ex 2:16,18; 3:1 **18:2** Ex 2:21; 4:25 **18:3** Ex 2:22; 4:20; Ac 7:29 **18:4-5** Ex 3:1; 1Ch 23:15 **18:7** Gn 29:13; Ex 18:2 **18:8** Ex 15:6,16; Ps 81:7 **18:10** Gn 14:20; 2Sm 18:28 **18:11** 2Ch 2:5; Lk 1:51 **18:15-16** Ex 24:14; Lv 24:12; Nm 15:34; Dt 17:8 **18:18** Ex 3:12; 4:16; Nm 27:5 **18:20** Dt 1:18; 5:1; Ps 143:8 **18:21** Ex 18:8; Dt 16:19; Ac 6:3 **18:21** Dt 1:15; 2Ch 19:5-10 **18:22** Lv 24:11; Nm 11:17; Dt 1:17 **18:25-27** Ex 18:22; Nm 10:29-30; Dt 1:15

18:17-26 Jethro called Moses’s attempt to handle all the Israelites’ disputes **not good.** His counsel to appoint **able men**, who were **God-fearing, trustworthy, and hating dishonest profit**, helped to lighten Moses’s load. As was the case in 17:12, Moses could not **do it alone.** This passage also demonstrates that Israel was able to handle its own disputes prior to the giving of the law at Mount Sinai in the following chapters. Moreover, at this point the Israelites already had been given some of God’s statutes and laws (v. 16; see also 12:14; 13:10; 15:25; 16:4,28).

ISRAEL AT SINAI

19 In the third month from the very day the Israelites left the land of Egypt, they came to the Sinai Wilderness.

ELDERLY CARE

Most Christians are appalled by and work against the kinds of laws that make it easier to take the lives of the elderly. Most recoil in horror at news stories that report on corruption and abuse at nursing homes. But the real scandal might be the way in which God's people subtly contribute to a culture of discard and death for those considered past their prime.

HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

Scripture is clear on the Christian responsibility for the elderly. "Honor your father and your mother" is an ethic woven throughout the Bible; it's a command given (Ex 20:12) and repeated (Eph 6:2) as a commandment from God in the old covenant and a responsibility of God's people in the new covenant (Eph 6:2). We moderns often read this as an admonition to be polite to Mom at Thanksgiving, but it means so much more than merely contributing to good vibes around the holidays.

The call to honor parents implies that children will not only respect those who brought them into this world, but will be responsible for their care in this life. Both the ancient Near Eastern culture of Exodus and the first-century culture of Ephesians devalued the elderly. Unlike Western societies, which fund safety nets like social security and Medicare, there were few provisions for aging populations within those cultures.

Early church fathers took the command as a mandate for younger children to financially provide for their parents. Origen, Ambrose, and Jerome are just a few who used these texts to encourage the people of God toward intentional care of elderly populations.

THE DIGNITY OF THE ELDERLY

Our views on the elderly should be shaped by the uniquely Christian concept of human dignity. The Bible teaches that every human life possesses value, not because of utility, but because each life bears the image of the Creator. Sin has corrupted the human condition, bringing death and disease, corruption and confusion. It has also turned humans against each other. One of the ways we strike out at our Creator is when we consider his image-bearers disposable enough to ignore or discard. Societies that reject Christian witness are often marked by their cruelty to elderly populations.

Jesus's life, death, and resurrection reversed the curse of sin and offers the promise of full bodily restorations for his people when he returns to fully consummate his kingdom. Those who follow Jesus embody this gospel news by caring for the most vulnerable, including those who advance in age and can no longer care for themselves. We should also follow an example from Jesus's earthly life: when nearing death, he instructed his best friend John to provide for the physical well-being of his mother Mary. Jesus, even while bearing our sin on the cross, still took time to honor his mother.

THE GOSPEL AND ELDER CARE

A Christian's attitude toward the elderly is a good indicator of just how much he or she believes the gospel. We care for our infirm parents, not because they parented us well but because they are image-bearers deserving dignity. We respect rather than dismiss our elders because we recognize the good fruit of God's sanctifying work in giving them wisdom beyond our years. We resist the culture's worship of youth and sex

appeal because we as Christ-followers find our value not in our appearance, but in our status as sons and daughters of the King.

When we marginalize older generations, either by overt neglect or by subtle disrespect, we communicate to the world a different gospel than the upside-down kingdom of Christ. When we worship at the altar of relevance, we are, like the rich man in Jesus's parable in Luke 16, living as though we believe this life is all there is instead of believing the truth that Jesus will renew us, body and soul, in the final resurrection. When our churches prioritize the young at the expense of the old, we are living out an altogether different ethic than the intergenerational ideal of Titus 2.

A twofold responsibility for the church is thus implied. First, we should advocate for the dignity of the elderly in society. Today, in many Western societies, there are powerfully active movements to marginalize the elderly as a burden on society. We should use our voices and our votes to stand against inhumane government policies, utilitarian marketplace economics, and predatory financial practices.

Second, we should teach and model for the next generation of Christians what it means to respect and honor parents and older generations. Our church communities should be oases of dignity, embodying the true religion of caring for "orphans and widows in their distress" (Jms 1:27). In a cut-throat world that values people for their sex appeal and short-lived youthfulness, may the church resound with the countercultural message that all human life has dignity endowed by a Creator who visited sinners when they were least desirable (Rm 5:8).

DANIEL DARLING

2 They traveled from Rephidim, came to the Sinai Wilderness, and camped in
the wilderness. Israel camped there in front of the mountain. †
3 Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called † to him from the
mountain: "This is what you must say to the house of Jacob and explain to the
Israelites: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on
eagles' wings and brought you to myself. † 5 Now if you will carefully listen to
me and keep my covenant, † you will be my own possession † out of all the
peoples, although the whole earth is mine, 6 and you will be my kingdom of
priests and my holy nation.' † These are the words that you are to say to the
Israelites."
7 After Moses came back, he summoned the elders of the people and set before
them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. 8 Then all the people
responded together, "We will do all that the LORD has spoken." † So Moses
brought the people's words back to the LORD.
9 The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, †
so that the people will hear when I speak † with you and will always believe you."
Moses reported the people's words to the LORD, 10 and the LORD told Moses,
"Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. They must wash

their clothes † 11 and be prepared by the third day, for on the third day the LORD
will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. † 12 Put
boundaries for the people all around the mountain and say: Be careful that you
don't go up on the mountain or touch its base. Anyone who touches the
mountain must be put to death. † 13 No hand may touch him; † instead he will
be stoned or shot with arrows and not live, whether animal or human. When the
ram's horn sounds a long blast, they may go up the mountain."
14 Then Moses came down from the mountain to the people and consecrated
them, and they washed their clothes. 15 He said to the people, "Be prepared by
the third day. Do not have sexual relations with women."
16 On the third day, when morning came, there was thunder and lightning, a
thick cloud on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the
people in the camp shuddered. 17 Then Moses brought the people out of the
camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Mount Sinai
was completely enveloped in smoke because the LORD came down on it in
fire. † Its smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, † and the whole mountain
shook violently. † 19 As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder,
Moses spoke and God answered him in the thunder. †
20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai at the top of the mountain. Then the
LORD summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and he went up. 21 The LORD
directed Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to break through to see the
LORD; otherwise many of them will die. † 22 Even the priests who come near the
LORD must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out in anger against
them." †
23 Moses responded to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai,
since you warned us: Put a boundary around the mountain and consecrate it."
24 And the LORD replied to him, "Go down and come back with Aaron. But the
priests and the people must not break through to come up to the LORD, or he will
break out in anger against them." 25 So Moses went down to the people and told
them.

19:13 Or *it*

19:2 Ex 3:1; 17:1,8 **19:3** Ex 3:4; Ac 7:38 **19:4** Dt 29:2; Is 63:9 **19:5** Ex 15:26; Dt 5:2 **19:5** Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Ti 2:14 **19:6** Dt 26:19; Is 62:12; 1Pt 2:5,9 **19:8** Ex 24:3,7; Dt 5:27 **19:9** Ex 24:15-16; Mt 17:5 **19:9** Dt 4:12,36; Jn 12:29 **19:10** Gn 35:2; Lv 11:44-45; Heb 10:22 **19:11** Ex 19:16; 34:5 **19:12** Heb 12:20 **19:18** Ex 3:2; 24:17; Dt 4:11; 2Ch 7:1 **19:18** Ps 144:5; Rv 15:8 **19:18** Jdg 5:5; Ps 68:7; Jr 4:24; Heb

12:26 **19:19** Neh 9:13; Ps 81:7 **19:21** Ex 3:5; 1Sm 6:19 **19:22** Lv 10:3; 2Sm 6:7-8

19:1-2 When God appeared to Moses at **the mountain** known as Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb; see 33:6) earlier, he promised that Moses and the Israelites would "worship God at this mountain" (3:12). Less than two months after their departure from Egypt (12:2-12,51), they had arrived.

19:3-6 The Lord described his work on behalf of the Israelites as having **carried [them] on eagles' wings** (see also Dt 1:31; Is 40:31; 46:4). If they **will carefully listen to [him] and keep [his] holy covenant** (see also 15:26), they will be his **own possession**, a **kingdom of priests**, and a **holy nation.** Israel's identity as "a kingdom of priests" is significant in that Israel is not to be God's treasured possession for its own sake. Rather, the nation's task is to mediate the knowledge of God to the rest of the world. God is continuing to fulfill his promise that Abraham's descendants (i.e., Israel) will be a blessing to the rest of the nations (cp. Gn 12:3).

19:10-20 Israel was to prepare and be consecrated for a meeting with God at Mount Sinai on **the third day.** They were to **wash their clothes**, avoid touching the mountain, and abstain from sexual relations. At the appointed time, **the LORD came down** on Mount Sinai in dramatic fashion, accompanied by **thunder**, **lightning**, **thick cloud**, **smoke**, and **fire.** Even **the whole mountain shook violently.** The Israelites **shuddered** and **stood at the foot of** it in fear (see 20:18-21). Although God had said that they were supposed to **go up the mountain** when the **ram's horn** sounded long (see also 3:12), there is no indication that they ever did so—even though a **trumpet** was sounded (Dt 5:5). Jos 6:4 associates these two designations closely through its phrase, "ram's-horn trumpets" (see also vv. 5-6,8,13 [Hb]).

19:25-20:1 Though 19:25 could suggest that Moses reported the Ten Commandments to the people, Deuteronomy 5:4,22-27 explains that God spoke them directly to all the people. Thus, the events narrated here were not consecutive, and the giving of the Ten Commandments may overlap with what is described in 19:19. Chapter 19, verses 20-25 does relate to its present context through its reference to "a boundary around the mountain" (v. 23; see v. 12) and related warnings, but the events it narrates seem to have more to do with what is described in 20:21.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

20 Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of
Egypt, out of the place of slavery. †

3 Do not have other gods besides me. †

4 Do not make an idol † for yourself, whether in the shape of
anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the
waters under the earth. 5 Do not bow in worship to them, and do
not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, †
punishing the children for the fathers' iniquity, to the third and
fourth generations † of those who hate me, 6 but showing faithful

love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. †

7 Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name. †

8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: † 9 You are to labor six days and do all your work, † 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. You must not do any work — you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. † 11 For the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

12 Honor your father and your mother † so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

13 Do not murder. †

14 Do not commit adultery. †

15 Do not steal. †

16 Do not give false testimony against your neighbor. †

17 Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. †

THE PEOPLE'S REACTION

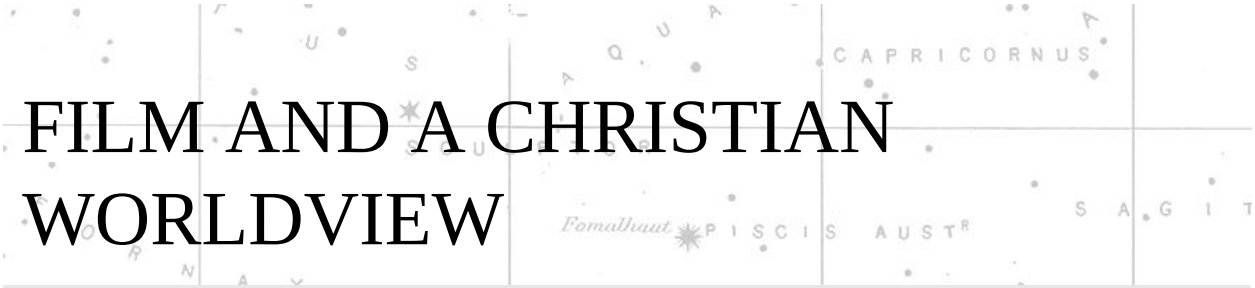
18 All the people witnessed † the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain surrounded by smoke. When the people saw it † they trembled and stood at a distance. † 19 "You speak to us, and we will listen," they said to Moses, "but don't let God speak to us, or we will die." †

20 Moses responded to the people, “Don’t be afraid, for God has come to test you, so that you will fear him and will not † sin.” † 21 And the people remained standing at a distance as Moses approached the total darkness where God was. †

MOSES RECEIVES ADDITIONAL LAWS

22 Then the LORD told Moses, “This is what you are to say to the Israelites: You have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven. † 23 Do not make gods of silver to rival me; do not make gods of gold for yourselves. †

24 “Make an earthen altar for me, and sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your flocks and herds. I will come to you and bless you in every place where I cause my name to be remembered. †



FILM AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Arguably, film is the most influential art form in our culture. That’s not because there is something more important about film itself, but because the cost of making movies ensures that film companies spend millions of dollars to drive our awareness of them through marketing campaigns. Movies are so costly to produce that far fewer of them are made than music albums, TV shows, novels, or paintings. The expenses sunk into each film, in fact, ensure that they will be marketed in a way that makes it far more likely that you will know about a movie you’ve never seen than a band you’ve never listened to or a book you’ve never read. Such widespread awareness makes movies an important piece of common ground in our culture. For filmmakers, they offer opportunities to convey worldviews. And filmgoers receive opportunity to interact with those worldviews, be shaped by them, and discuss them as points of common interest.

ART AND WORLDVIEW

Art is a form of communication, and it always communicates the worldview of the artist. Often filmmakers intentionally share their worldviews.

To cite a few examples, the *Star Wars* series conveys a pantheistic view of the world. The 2005 film *V for Vendetta* is an argument for political anarchy (in the sense of self-rule). The 2012 movie *Life of Pi* portrays a Hindu worldview. Sometimes, however, filmmakers are unaware of the worldviews their movies end up expressing. Think about the 2004 film *The Polar Express*. Toward the end of the movie, the train conductor tells the boy what appears to be the moral of the story: “One thing about trains—it doesn’t matter where they’re going. What matters is deciding to get on.” In a nutshell, this is the philosophy of existentialist philosopher Jean Paul Sartre. In the face of a meaningless world, we are to assert ourselves and make meaning of the journey we choose. The movie, targeted to young kids, is probably not intended to create pre-school existentialists; nevertheless, that is the message that comes across. Viewers of all ages will catch

the significance of the conductor's statement, and it will shape the worldview of many.

In order to create a world believable enough to engage an audience, filmmakers must first decide what kind of world their story unfolds in. What is the world? Who and what is god? Who are we? What is the problem with the world, and what is the solution to that problem? In other words, films have to have a worldview so that the story they tell can be understood. Films may not explicitly answer those questions, and some of them make a special point to remain ambiguous. Still, the internal logic of the world the movie depicts will address the questions and provide a way of understanding the story. This internal logic of the story and how these questions are answered is why fantasy movies, such as the *Lord of the Rings* series, can portray a biblical worldview as accurately as a biopic like *Chariots of Fire* (1981).

STORIES FOR LIFE

One of the things that make films so powerful and popular is their ability to engage us in a story that resonates with us in some way. Just as in our own lives, on-screen stories always have some kind of tension that needs resolution. Drama requires something to be wrong, something that is not the way it should be, sins that need atonement and redemption. But we also know that the story told in a movie will usually resolve with a satisfying ending.

As people made in the image of God, we have a yearning for the day when God will set things right and resolve the tensions in our lives and in the world. We invest ourselves in movies in part because the resolution we intuitively expect is a foreshadowing of the resolution God will bring to all of our stories. And when movies don't provide the resolution we want, when justice isn't served or the bad guy gets away, we recognize that something is wrong and we react strongly—almost as if the movie's outcome is our own. That our yearning for resolution is not satisfied in these cases points us to the only thing that can ultimately provide resolution for any and all problems—God.

WORLDVIEW AND THE FORM OF FILM

The form of film itself also reflects a biblical worldview in many ways. First, the screenwriter is revealing something to the audience, giving information in the form of a story. The director never gives all the information about everything we want to know about the story, yet they share enough that we can understand the plot and process the information. The information is revealed through a story that plays out in a linear fashion and moves toward a resolution (or lack of resolution) that was determined by the filmmakers before the story began to be told.

Notably, the filmmaker is transcendent in relation to the film itself, standing outside of the film as a creator and guide exercising sovereign control over every aspect of it. Not only does the director exist, but he or she wants to be known; in fact, we can know something about each director because they reveal hints to us through the stories they shape and the way they reveal them to us. It is much the same in religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. According to each of these worldviews, God exists, wants to be known, and has revealed himself generally through what he has made and, more specifically, through special revelations collected in sacred books.

ART AND THE REFLECTION OF GOD

It's important to remember that film, as a kind of art, justifies itself as an act of creation done in imitation of the God who created the ability to create. In that sense, all art reflects the God of the Bible because it is an impulse that is an integral part of being made in the image of God.

We shouldn't treat film, or any other art form, in a utilitarian way in which it is simply a kind of delivery vehicle for whatever message we want to share. That approach only results in bad art or propaganda. However, because film is an art form and therefore a kind of communication, it does always convey some message. From a Walt Disney fairy tale to a Woody Allen monologue, from the high drama of *A Few Good Men* to the hijinks of *Ace Ventura,* all films present worldviews and invite the audience to enter them. This gives Christians a powerful opportunity to talk about those worldviews with others. Almost without

exception people love talking about the movies they've seen. Christians can engage them on the worldview themes put forward through film. By doing worldview analysis using movies, we can reveal the truthfulness of the biblical worldview in casual, everyday conversations.

FILM AND CHRISTIAN WITNESS

Finally, there is an increasing awareness within the Christian community that film is an art that, though largely given over to the promotion of non-Christian worldviews in our current culture, must not be abandoned. Like music and theater, the art of film is a powerful tool for reaching people and communicating with them the big picture ideas that matter most. Christians should both watch films and create them.

By watching films, especially the ones that cut against our beliefs, we stay current with the larger conversation of our culture and provide accountability for those who would misrepresent the biblical worldview. By creating films, we can be an active part of directing conversation and bringing audiences in touch with the sacred truth that satisfies more than anything else—God exists, wants to be known, and has created a story in which we are all invited to participate through placing faith in the Son he sent to live, die, and rise again.

DOUG POWELL

25 If you make a stone altar for me, do not build it out of cut stones. If you use your chisel on it, you will defile it. † 26 Do not go up to my altar on steps, so that your nakedness is not exposed on it.

20:18 Lit *saw* **20:18** Sam, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *smoke. The people* (or *they*) *were afraid,* **20:20** Lit *that the fear of him may be in you, and you do not*

20:2 Ex 13:3; Hs 13:4 **20:3** Dt 6:14; Jr 35:15 **20:4** Lv 26:1; Dt 27:15 **20:5** Ex 34:14; Dt 4:24; Is 44:15,19 **20:5** Nm 14:18; Ps 79:8; Jr 32:18 **20:6** Dt 7:9 **20:7** Lv 19:12; Mt 5:33 **20:8** Ex 31:13-16; Lv 26:2 **20:9** Ex 34:21; Lk 13:14 **20:10** Gn 2:2-3; Neh 13:16-19 **20:12** Lv 19:3; Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10; Lk 18:20; Eph 6:2 **20:13** Mt 5:21; Rm 13:9 **20:14** Dt 5:18; Mt 5:27 **20:15** Lv 19:11; Mt 19:18 **20:16** Ex 23:1 **20:17** Dt 5:21; Mt 5:28; Lk 12:15; Rm 7:7; 13:9; Eph 5:3,5; Heb 13:5 **20:18** Ex 19:18; Heb 12:18 **20:19** Dt 5:25,27; Gl 3:19 **20:20** Dt 13:3; Pr 16:6; Is 8:13 **20:21** Ex 19:16; Dt 5:22 **20:22** Dt 4:36; Neh 9:13 **20:23** Ex 20:3; 32:4 **20:24** Gn 12:2; Dt 12:5; 16:6,11; 1Kg 9:3; 2Ch 6:6 **20:25** Dt 27:5-6; Jos 8:31

20:2-17 God established a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. He began by identifying himself as the covenant giver: **I am the LORD your God.** Next, he reminded the people of how he had already saved them out of **slavery** in Egypt. The so-called Ten Commandments (Hb "ten words") were the formal obligations of the covenant (see also Dt 5:6-21). It is significant that they follow the historical introduction. Israel's obligations to God are a response to his saving work, not a prerequisite for receiving it. These commands govern both a person's relationship to God (vv. 2-11) and to fellow man (vv. 12-17; see "The Basics of Civil Law," *p. 220*). The underlying principles behind most—if not all—of them have already appeared in earlier passages, such as worship of God alone (Gn 35:2), Sabbath (Ex 16:22-26), honoring parents (Gn 9:20-25), and the prohibitions of murder (Gn 4:8-12; 9:5-6), adultery (Gn 12:17-19; 20:3-7; 39:9), and theft (Gn 31:19,30-36). Regarding the existence of **other gods**, see the note on 12:12. The other laws in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy expand upon the Ten Commandments and provide other stipulations for life in community with God.

20:18-21 The Israelites' response to hearing the Ten Commandments mirrors their fear in 19:16. Upon experiencing the powerful natural phenomena accompanying God's descent to Mount Sinai (see also 19:16-18), they **trembled and stood at a distance.** Not only did they not ascend the mountain (see 19:13;

but note the contrast in the last days, Is 2:2-3), but they were so terrified that they requested that Moses be their mediator henceforth because they thought they would die if they continued to hear God's voice directly. This request seems in tension with God's commands in 15:26 and 19:5 to "diligently listen" to his "voice" (lit trans.; see also 23:22). Moses counseled the Israelites not to be afraid, but to **fear** God in such a way that they would flee *sin*, not God (see also Jb 1:1; Pr 16:6). Israel's terror and standing at a distance contrasts with Moses's approach to **the total darkness where God was.**

20:22-25 These first laws that Moses receives while atop Mount Sinai concern the worship of God, just like the first two of the Ten Commandments (20:3-6; see also 22:20; 23:13). The group of laws in 20:22–23:33 is sometimes referred to by commentators as the "Book of the Covenant" (see 24:4,7) or the "Covenant Code."

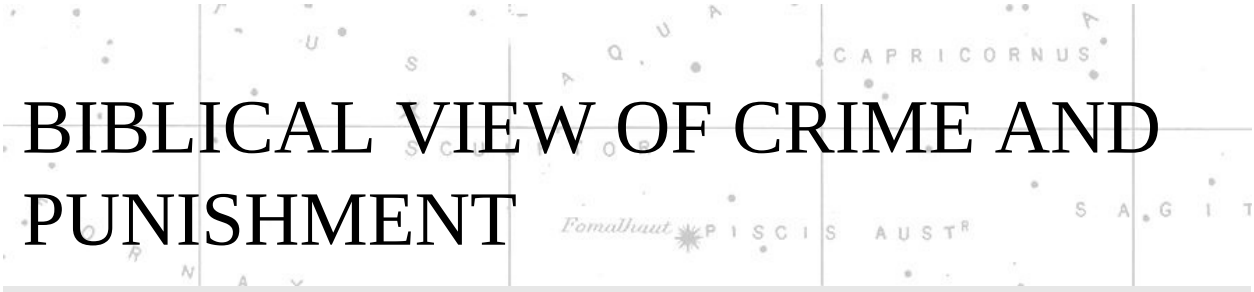
21 "These are the ordinances that you are to set before them:

LAWS ABOUT SLAVES

2 "When you buy a Hebrew slave, he is to serve for six years; then in the seventh he is to leave as a free man † without paying anything. † 3 If he arrives alone, he is to leave alone; if he arrives with † a wife, his wife is to leave with him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children belong to her master, and the man must leave alone.

5 "But if the slave declares, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I do not want to leave as a free man,' † 6 his master is to bring him to the judges † and then bring him to the door or doorpost. His master will pierce his ear with an awl, and he will serve his master for life.

7 "When a man sells his daughter as a concubine, † she is not to leave as the male slaves do. † 8 If she is displeasing to her master, who chose her for himself, then he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners because he has acted treacherously toward her. 9 Or if he chooses her for his son, he must deal with her according to the customary treatment of daughters.



BIBLICAL VIEW OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Today we most often use the terms *jail* or *prison* to describe the places where criminals are sent once they are convicted of crimes, but the name *penitentiary* is also commonly used. One need not be a

language scholar to discern the root of penitentiary, which is penitent. In its adjectival form, penitent is used to denote a strong sense of regret. Taken as a noun, a penitent is a person who seeks forgiveness from God. The founding of penitentiaries, beginning in the eighteenth century with John Howard in England, expressed the Christian hope that criminals could repent, find forgiveness from God and people, and return to the community as citizens who contribute to the common good.

The Bible's influence on approaches to crime and punishment preceded the rehabilitation movement of the eighteenth century. The Hebrew Scriptures (OT) tell us that God chose a people (the Hebrews) and set them apart from all other peoples by giving them regulations for running a just society.

Although it is sometimes argued that codes from Hammurabi or the Hittites provided inspiration for the laws set forth in the OT, Jewish scholars point to important distinctions which show the uniqueness and greater justice of the laws given by God. They argue that the Hammurabi code is more brutal and primitive than the laws of Israel. For example, the Hammurabic legislation required that a man's daughter be taken if he killed another man's daughter. The injustice in such a rule is evident as the punishment extends beyond the offender to an innocent person, the perpetrator's daughter. The Hittite code, which was compensation-based, also falls short of the standards expressed in the law as given by God in the OT. Even an offense as serious as murder could be bought off with enough cash, according to the Hittite approach. In contrast, Exodus 21:23-25, with its eye-for-an-eye reasoning, is more proportionate to the offense and is thus more just.

The Hebrew law codes reveal a great desire for true justice rather than a rush to judgment. One example is Deuteronomy's rule requiring two eyewitnesses to be in agreement in order to establish evidence of a crime (Dt 17:6; 19:15). This means no one shall be put to death without the evidence of more than one witness. It should be noted that the laws of the United States offer less protection than this. Similar to the instructions in Deuteronomy, Matthew 18:16 indicates that one should take witnesses along when attempting to resolve a dispute. Such advice demonstrates a concern with establishing truth in a reliable fashion, drawing on the perspectives of multiple persons. In both Testaments, great care is taken to be certain of the truth of an offense, and emphasis is placed on the strong connection between the punishment, the offender, and the severity of the offense.

One thing that is striking about how the Bible approaches punishment of crime is that imprisonment is uncommon. Deuteronomy, Exodus, and other OT texts offer examples of compensatory payments, exile, corporal punishments, and death sentences, but do not advocate sending large numbers of criminals to prison. The first and most obvious reason for the absence of prisons is that ancient agrarian societies did not have the resources to imprison and feed significant numbers of offenders. Aside from this logistical factor, one might also wonder whether the mass incarceration model we currently practice is wise. We tend to view biblical punishments such as lashing as barbaric, but is it really better to incarcerate an offender with those who might reinforce his bad behavior? Could it be that a policy of corporal punishment would prove more effective?

THREE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

In contemporary thinking about crime and punishment, there are at least three major schools of thought regarding how to deal with law-breaking. Theorists often speak and write in terms of retribution, utilitarianism, and rehabilitation.

RETRIBUTION

Retribution-based thinking is at odds with the more social-scientific thrust of much of today's thinking about punishment. It is seen as crude, vengeance-based, and perhaps barbaric. Many of the punishments in the OT are perceived in this light. Nevertheless, there are others who have argued convincingly that retributive approaches are anything but crude and cruel. Rather, the choice of retribution attributes dignity to both the victim and the offender. Retribution vindicates the rights of the victim because it recognizes that something important has been violated and that punishment must follow the violation. At the same time,

retribution assigns respect to the offender as well because punishing the offender indicates that God and society had real expectations for better decision-making and behavior. In essence, people who transgress have not lived up to God's standard (or society's) and thus must be reminded that we respect them enough to punish the wrongdoing.

UTILITARIAN

Utilitarian theories of crime and punishment focus less on the rights of individuals and more on the scientific control of populations. For example, a utilitarian might say that we should come up with laws that reduce social friction between citizens rather than continuing to enforce laws that lead to conflict. The danger of the utilitarian approach is that it is mostly concerned with social regulation. For example, let us imagine that a series of murders have been committed. In the utilitarian view, it would be nearly as good to convince the public that the murderer has been caught and punished (even if that weren't true) as it would be to actually catch the villain. Perception would count nearly as much as reality. It might even be better to pin the crime on an innocent party, if it could be done convincingly, than to let the public go on thinking that a murderer is on the loose.

REHABILITATION

As mentioned above, rehabilitation theories were originally motivated by Christian thinking about crime and punishment. The Christian view tended to support retribution-based consequences, while adding a component of rehabilitation. Forgiveness does not necessarily wipe out the penalty, but it does pave the way for full acceptance back into the social body once punishment and rehabilitation are complete. During the twentieth century, however, thinking about rehabilitation went through a transformation, dropping the idea of a "penitent" person paying a debt and seeking forgiveness. Rehabilitation approaches came to view crime as a result of broad, structural social injustices that produce marginalized victims of the system who perpetuate injustices by engaging in social pathologies such as stealing. While there is some value to thinking about social systems in this way, the effect can be to undermine the moral dimension of crime and the recognition that the offender has personally done wrong against others and should repent of sin.

Not everyone has appreciated these developments. Anger at progressive penal policies has led to the creation of victim's rights movements. Among other things, these movements have sought to make society and the judicial system aware of the harm victims suffer when they perceive that the wrongs perpetrated against them have gone unpunished or inadequately punished.

Christians remain highly active in prison ministry today, though often with less official influence in the penal system than they once had. Prison Fellowship, founded by Charles Colson after his imprisonment following the Watergate scandal, has led the way in sharing the good news of redemption through Jesus Christ with prisoners. After many years of effective ministry to prisoners and their families, Prison Fellowship gained the ability to participate in some institutions by hosting special Christian cellblocks and offering seminary programs in others. Early evidence indicates that their ministry reduces recidivism among those released.

Whatever good government may achieve through attempts to address the social causes of crime—and we must not dismiss these—crime remains a manifestation of a spiritual problem that must be addressed. The true rehabilitator and vindicator of injustices is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and we must point both victims and criminals to his gospel.

HUNTER BAKER

10 If he takes an additional wife, he must not reduce the food, clothing, or marital rights of the first wife. † 11 And if he does not do these three things for

her, she may leave free of charge, without any payment. †

LAWS ABOUT PERSONAL INJURY

12 “Whoever strikes a person so that he dies must be put to death. † 13 But if he did not intend any harm, † and yet God allowed it to happen, I will appoint a place for you where he may flee. † 14 If a person schemes and willfully † acts against his neighbor to murder him, you must take him from my altar to be put to death. †

15 “Whoever strikes his father or his mother must be put to death.

16 “Whoever kidnaps a person must be put to death, whether he sells him or the person is found in his possession. †

17 “Whoever curses his father or his mother must be put to death. †

18 “When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or his fist, and the injured man does not die but is confined to bed, 19 if he can later get up and walk around outside leaning on his staff, then the one who struck him will be exempt from punishment. Nevertheless, he must pay for his lost work time † and provide for his complete recovery.

20 “When a man strikes his male or female slave with a rod, and the slave dies under his abuse, † the owner must be punished. † 21 However, if the slave can stand up after a day or two, the owner should not be punished † because he is his owner’s property. † †

22 “When men get in a fight and hit a pregnant woman so that her children are born prematurely but there is no injury, the one who hit her must be fined as the woman’s husband demands † from him, and he must pay according to judicial assessment. 23 If there is an injury, then you must give life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, † hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, bruise for bruise, wound for wound.

26 “When a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave and destroys it, he must let the slave go free in compensation for his eye. 27 If he knocks out the tooth of his male or female slave, he must let the slave go free in compensation for his tooth.

28 “When an ox † gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be stoned, †
and its meat may not be eaten, but the ox’s owner is innocent. 29 However, if the
ox was in the habit of goring, and its owner has been warned yet does not
restrain it, and it kills a man or a woman, the ox must be stoned, and its owner
must also be put to death. 30 If instead a ransom † is demanded of him, he can
pay a redemption price for his life in the full amount demanded from him. 31 If it
gores a son or a daughter, he is to be dealt with according to this same law. 32 If
the ox gores a male or female slave, he must give thirty shekels † of silver † to
the slave’s master, and the ox must be stoned.
33 “When a man uncovers a pit or digs a pit, and does not cover it, and an ox or
a donkey falls into it, 34 the owner of the pit must give compensation; he must
pay to its owner, but the dead animal will become his.
35 “When a man’s ox injures his neighbor’s ox and it dies, they must sell the live
ox and divide its proceeds; they must also divide the dead animal. 36 If,
however, it is known that the ox was in the habit of goring, yet its owner has not
restrained it, he must compensate fully, ox for ox; the dead animal will become
his.

21:2 Lit *to go forth* **21:3** Lit *he is the husband of* **21:6** Or *to God* ; that is, to his sanctuary or court **21:7** Or *servant* **21:11** She doesn’t have to pay any redemption price. **21:13** Lit *he was not lying in wait* **21:14** Or *maliciously* **21:19** Lit *his inactivity* **21:20** Lit *hand* **21:20** Or *must suffer vengeance* **21:21** Or *not suffer vengeance* **21:21** Lit *silver* **21:28** Or *a bull*, or *a steer* **21:32** About one pound of silver
21:2 Dt 4:14; Jr 34:14 **21:5** Dt 15:16-17 **21:7** Neh 5:5 **21:10** 1Co 7:5 **21:12** Gn 9:6; Mt 26:52 **21:13** Nm 35:11,22-25; Dt 19:2-5; Jos 20:2-9; 1Sm 24:4,10,18 **21:14** Dt 19:11-12; 1Kg 2:28-34 **21:16** Gn 37:28; Ex 22:4; Dt 24:7 **21:17** Lv 20:9; Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10 **21:21** Lv 25:44-46 **21:22** Ex 21:30; Dt 22:18-19 **21:24** Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21; Mt 5:38 **21:28** Gn 9:5 **21:30** Nm 35:31 **21:32** Zch 11:12; Mt 26:15; 27:3,9

21:2-6 The situation set forth that an Israelite would **buy a Hebrew slave** seems strange given that God had just redeemed all Israel “out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery” (20:2). The context of a parallel passage in Deuteronomy 15:12-18 suggests that such a situation might arise if a person sold himself into slavery because of poverty (see also Lv 25:39-43). Slavery in Israel was most often a kind of welfare that provided for a person and his family; it was not based on ethnicity and was carefully regulated.

21:12-19 These laws seem to be applications of the fifth, sixth, and eighth commandments to various concrete situations (see 20:12-13,15; 18:15-26).

21:21 This seemingly harsh law should be seen in relation to vv. 26-27, which does protect the physical well being of slaves.

21:22-25 The phrase **there is no injury** seems to apply to both the mother and the infant(s) born prematurely. This law thus protects the lives of babies and unborn children. See “A Biblical Assessment of Abortion,” *p. 718*.

21:28-36 These laws concern a person’s responsibility for certain wrongdoings even though the person did not directly commit the wrongdoing. See “Biblical View of Crime and Punishment,” *p. 105*

LAWS ABOUT THEFT

22 “When a man steals an ox or a sheep and butchers it or sells it, he must repay † five cattle for the ox or four sheep for the sheep. 2 If a thief is caught in the act of breaking in, and he is beaten to death, no one is guilty of bloodshed. † 3 But if this happens after sunrise, the householder is guilty of bloodshed. A thief must make full restitution. If he is unable, he is to be sold because of his theft. † 4 If what was stolen — whether ox, donkey, or sheep — is actually found alive in his possession, he must repay double.

LAWS ABOUT CROP PROTECTION

5 “When a man lets a field or vineyard be grazed in, and then allows his animals to go and graze in someone else’s field, he must repay † with the best of his own field or vineyard.

6 “When a fire gets out of control, spreads to thornbushes, and consumes stacks of cut grain, standing grain, or a field, the one who started the fire must make full restitution for what was burned.

LAWS ABOUT PERSONAL PROPERTY

7 “When a man gives his neighbor valuables † or goods to keep, but they are stolen from that person’s house, the thief, if caught, must repay double. 8 If the thief is not caught, the owner of the house must present himself to the judges † to determine † whether or not he has taken his neighbor’s property. † 9 In any case of wrongdoing involving an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or anything else lost, and someone claims, ‘That’s mine,’ † the case between the two parties is to come before the judges. † The one the judges condemn † must repay double to his neighbor.

10 “When a man gives his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any other animal to care for, but it dies, is injured, or is stolen, while no one is watching, 11 there must be an oath before the LORD between the two of them to determine whether or not he has taken his neighbor’s property. Its owner must accept the oath, and the other man does not have to make restitution. 12 But if, in fact, the animal was stolen from his custody, he must make restitution to its owner. †

13 If it was actually torn apart by a wild animal, he is to bring it as evidence; he
does not have to make restitution for the torn carcass.
14 "When a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, and it is injured or dies
while its owner is not there with it, the man must make full restitution. 15 If its
owner is there with it, the man does not have to make restitution. If it was rented,
the loss is covered by † its rental price.

LAWS ABOUT SEDUCTION

16 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and he sleeps with her, he
must certainly pay the bridal price for her to be his wife. 17 If her father
absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must pay an amount in silver equal to
the bridal price for virgins. †

CAPITAL OFFENSES

18 "Do not allow a sorceress † to live.

19 "Whoever has sexual intercourse with an animal † must be put to death.

20 "Whoever sacrifices to any gods, except the LORD alone, is to be set apart for
destruction. †

LAWS PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

21 "You must not exploit a resident alien † or oppress him, since you were
resident aliens in the land of Egypt.

22 "You must not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. † 23 If you do mistreat
them, they will no doubt cry to me, and I will certainly hear their cry. † 24 My
anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword; then your wives will be
widows and your children fatherless. †

25 "If you lend silver to my people, to the poor person among you, you must not
be like a creditor to him; you must not charge him interest. †

26 "If you ever take your neighbor's cloak as collateral, return it to him before
sunset. 27 For it is his only covering; it is the clothing for his body. † What will
he sleep in? And if he cries out to me, I will listen because I am gracious. †

RESPECT FOR GOD

28 "You must not blaspheme God † or curse a leader among your people. †

29 “You must not hold back offerings † from your harvest or your vats. Give me
the firstborn of your sons. 30 Do the same with your cattle and your flock. Let
them stay with their mothers for seven days, but on the eighth day you are to
give them to me. †

31 “Be my holy people. You must not eat the meat of a mauled animal † found
in the field; throw it to the dogs.

22:5 LXX adds *from his field according to its produce. But if someone lets his animals graze an entire field, he must repay* ; DSS, Sam also support this reading. **22:7** Lit *silver* **22:8** Or *to God* **22:8** LXX, Tg, Vg read *swear* **22:9** Lit *That is it* **22:9** Or *before God* **22:9** Or *one whom God condemns* **22:15** Lit *rented, it comes with* **22:27** Lit *skin* **22:28** Or *judges*

22:1 2Sm 12:6; Pr 6:31; Lk 19:8 **22:2** Nm 35:27; Mt 24:43 **22:3** Ex 21:2,16 **22:8** Dt 17:8-9 **22:11-12** Gn 31:39; Heb 6:16 **22:16-17** Gn 34:12; Dt 22:28-29 **22:18** Lv 20:27; Dt 18:11; 1Sm 28:3 **22:19** Lv 18:23; 20:15; Dt 27:21 **22:20** Dt 17:2-5 **22:21** Lv 19:33; Dt 10:19 **22:22** Dt 24:17; Jms 1:27 **22:23** Ps 18:6; Lk 18:7 **22:24** Ps 69:4; 109:9 **22:25** Lv 25:36-37; Dt 23:20; Ps 15:5 **22:26-27** Ex 34:6; Dt 24:6 **22:28** Ec 10:20; Ac 23:5 **22:29** Ex 13:2; 23:16 **22:30** Lv 22:27; Dt 15:19 **22:31** Ex 19:2; Ezk 4:14

22:21-24 These laws protect three types of vulnerable and potentially needy people: the **resident alien** or foreigner, the **widow**, and the **fatherless child.** These groups are mentioned many times in the OT as deserving special attention (e.g., Dt 10:18; 24:17-21; 26:12-13; Jr 7:6; 22:3). The Israelites were not to take advantage of them or the poor (vv. 25-27; see also 23:6-9,11). Here the reason given is that Israel knows what it is like to be vulnerable since they were **resident aliens in the land of Egypt.** In protecting the weak, they will reflect the character of God, who shows mercy.

22:31 The Lord’s desire for Israel’s holiness **(Be my holy people)** echoes that of 19:6 **(you will be . . . my holy nation).**

LAWS ABOUT HONESTY AND JUSTICE

23 “You must not spread a false report. Do not join † the wicked to be a
malicious witness. †

2 “You must not follow a crowd in wrongdoing. Do not testify in a lawsuit and
go along with a crowd to pervert justice. † 3 Do not show favoritism to a poor
person in his lawsuit.

4 “If you come across your enemy’s stray ox or donkey, you must return it to
him.

5 “If you see the donkey of someone who hates you lying helpless under its load,
and you want to refrain from helping it, you must help with it. † †

6 “You must not deny justice to a poor person among you in his lawsuit. 7 Stay
far away from a false accusation. Do not kill the innocent and the just, because I
will not justify the guilty. † 8 You must not take a bribe, † for a bribe blinds the

clear-sighted and corrupts the words † of the righteous. 9 You must not oppress a resident alien; † you yourselves know how it feels to be a resident alien because you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt.

SABBATHS AND FESTIVALS

10 "Sow your land for six years and gather its produce. † 11 But during the seventh year you are to let it rest and leave it uncultivated, so that the poor among your people may eat from it and the wild animals may consume what they leave. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

12 "Do your work † for six days but rest on the seventh day so that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female slave as well as the resident alien may be refreshed.

13 "Pay strict attention to everything I have said to you. You must not invoke the names of other gods; they must not be heard on your lips. † †

14 "Celebrate a festival in my honor three times a year. † 15 Observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you are to eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, † because you came out of Egypt in that month. No one is to appear before me empty-handed. † 16 Also observe the Festival of Harvest † with the firstfruits of your produce from what you sow in the field, and observe the Festival of Ingathering † † at the end of the year, when you gather your produce † from the field. 17 Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD.

18 "You must not offer the blood of my sacrifices with anything leavened. The fat of my festival offering must not remain until morning. †

19 "Bring the best of the firstfruits of your land to the house of the LORD your God.

"You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. †

PROMISES AND WARNINGS

20 "I am going to send an angel † before you to protect you on the way and bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Be attentive to him and listen to him. Do not defy him, because he will not forgive your acts of rebellion, for my name is in him. † 22 But if you will carefully obey him and do everything I say, then I

will be an enemy † to your enemies and a foe to your foes. 23 For my angel will
go before you and bring you to the land of the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites,
Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. † 24 Do not bow in
worship to their gods, and do not serve them. Do not imitate their practices.
Instead, demolish them † and smash their sacred pillars to pieces. † 25 Serve
the LORD your God, and he † will bless your bread and your water. I will remove
illnesses from you. † 26 No woman will miscarry or be childless in your land. I
will give you the full number of your days. †
27 "I will cause the people ahead of you to feel terror † and will throw into
confusion † all the nations you come to. I will make all your enemies turn their
backs to you in retreat. † 28 I will send hornets † † in front of you, and they
will drive the Hivites, Canaanites, and Hethites away from you. 29 I will not
drive them out ahead of you in a single year; otherwise, the land would become
desolate, and wild animals would multiply against you. 30 I will drive them out
little by little ahead of you until you have become numerous † and take
possession of the land. 31 I will set your borders from the Red Sea to the
Mediterranean Sea, † and from the wilderness to the Euphrates River. † For I
will place the inhabitants of the land under your control, and you will drive them
out ahead of you. † 32 You must not make a covenant † with them or their
gods. 33 They must not remain in your land, or else they will make you sin
against me. If you serve their gods, it will be a snare for you." †

23:1 Lit *join hands with* **23:5** Or *load, you must refrain from leaving it to him; you must set it free with him* **23:8** Or *and subverts the cause* **23:13** Lit *mouth* **23:15** March–April; called Nisan in the post-exilic period; Neh 2:1; Est 3:7 **23:16** The *Festival of Harvest* is called Festival of Weeks elsewhere; Ex 34:22. In the NT it is called Pentecost; Ac 2:1. **23:16** The *Festival of Ingathering* is called Festival of Shelters elsewhere; Lv 23:34-36. **23:16** Lit *labors* **23:24** Probably the idols **23:25** LXX, Vg read *I* **23:27** Lit *will send terror of me ahead of you* **23:27** Or *I will give your enemies to you by the neck* **23:28** Or *send panic* **23:30** Lit *fruitful* **23:31** Lit *the Sea of the Philistines* **23:31** Lit *the River*

23:1 Ps 35:11; 101:5; Ac 6:11 **23:2** Dt 16:19; 24:17; 27:19 **23:5** Dt 22:1,4; Rm 12:20 **23:6-7** Ec 5:8; Eph 4:25 **23:8** Dt 10:17; 16:19; Pr 15:27 **23:9** Ex 22:21 **23:10** Lv 25:3-4 **23:12** Ex 20:9 **23:13** Dt 4:9; Jos 23:7; Hs 2:17; 1Tm 4:16 **23:14** Ex 34:23; Dt 16:16 **23:15** Ex 12:15; 34:20 **23:16** Ex 34:22; Lv 23:39; Dt 16:13 **23:18** Ex 34:25; Dt 16:4 **23:19** Ex 22:29; 26:2,10; Dt 14:21 **23:20** Ex 14:19; 15:16-17; 23:23; 32:34; 33:2 **23:21** Nm 14:11; Dt 18:19; Ps 78:40,56 **23:22** Gn 12:3; Dt 30:7; Jr 30:20 **23:23** Ex 23:20; Jos 24:8 **23:24** Ex 20:5; 34:13; Nm 33:52; Dt 12:30 **23:25** Ex 15:26; Dt 6:13; 7:15; 28:5,8; Mt 4:10 **23:26** Dt 7:14; Jb 5:26; Mal 3:11 **23:27** Dt 2:25; 7:23 **23:28** Dt 7:20; Jos 24:12 **23:31** Gn 15:18; Dt 11:24; Jos 21:44; 1Kg 4:21 **23:32** Ex 34:12,15; Dt 7:2 **23:33** Dt 7:16; Ps 106:36

23:4-5 These commands resemble Jesus's teaching to love one's enemies (Mt 5:44; see also Pr 25:21). See "Animal Rights," *p. 21*.

23:10-12 Observation of the Sabbath day had been commanded in 20:8-11, where it was linked to God's making **the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days** and resting **on the seventh day.** The Sabbath year would help provide for **the poor** (see also Lv 25:1-7,20-22), and it allowed **rest** not only for oneself but for laborers (see also Dt 5:12-15).

23:19 Suggested reasons for this cooking prohibition (see also 34:26; Dt 14:21) include dietary concerns or avoidance of idolatrous associations. It is possible that the restriction is related to the theme in OT law that some things must be kept separate. (This was in part a teaching device that underscored the importance of separating what was holy from what was ordinary). Since a **mother's milk** is intended to give life, it would be mixing categories and therefore inappropriate to use it in the context of a young goat's death.

23:23-33 The Lord had promised Abraham long ago that his offspring would receive **the land of the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites** (see Gn 15:18-21). Here he promises the help of his **angel** (see "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*) and **hornets** for the Israelites, who, for their part, must be careful to destroy the gods of these peoples, worship God only, and drive these peoples out of the land completely (see also Dt 7:1-6). The promise of blessing upon the Israelites' food and health if they obey resembles 15:26 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

THE COVENANT CEREMONY

24 Then he said to Moses, "Go up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and
Abihu, and seventy of Israel's elders, † and bow in worship at a
distance. 2 Moses alone is to approach the LORD, but the others are not to
approach, and the people are not to go up with him."
3 Moses came and told the people all the commands of the LORD and all the
ordinances. Then all the people responded with a single voice, "We will do
everything that the LORD has commanded." † 4 And Moses wrote † down all
the words of the LORD. He rose early the next morning and set up an altar and
twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel at the base of the mountain. 5 Then
he sent out young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed
bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half the blood and set it
in basins; the other half of the blood he splattered on the altar. 7 He then took the
covenant scroll and read it aloud to the people. They responded, "We will do and
obey all that the LORD has commanded."
8 Moses took the blood, splattered it on the people, and said, "This is the blood
of the covenant that the LORD has made with you concerning all these words." †
9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of Israel's
elders, 10 and they saw † the God of Israel. Beneath his feet was something like

a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as clear as the sky itself. † 11 God did not harm † the Israelite nobles; they saw † him, and they ate and drank.
12 The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay there so that I may give you the stone tablets † with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.”
13 So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua and went up the mountain of God. †
14 He told the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. Aaron and Hur are here with you. Whoever has a dispute should go to them.” 15 When Moses went up the mountain, the cloud † covered it. 16 The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from the cloud. † 17 The appearance of the LORD’s glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire † on the mountaintop. 18 Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and he remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. †

24:11 Lit *not stretch out his hand against*
24:1 Ex 6:23; Lv 10:1-2; Nm 11:16 **24:3** Ex 19:8; Dt 5:27 **24:4** Gn 28:18; Dt 31:9 **24:6-8** Heb 9:18-20; 1Pt 1:2 **24:10** Jn 1:18; 1Jn 4:12 **24:10** Ezk 1:26; Mt 17:2; Rv 4:3 **24:11** Gn 32:30; Ex 19:21 **24:12** Ex 32:15; Dt 5:22 **24:13** Ex 3:1; 17:9 **24:15** Ex 19:9; Mt 17:5 **24:16** Ex 16:10 **24:17** Ex 3:2; Dt 4:36; Heb 12:18,29 **24:18** Ex 34:28; Dt 9:9

24:1-2 Though these men were permitted to **worship at a distance** (see also v. 9), Moses was still the only one allowed to **approach the LORD** (see also 19:20-24).

24:3 Moses descended from Mount Sinai and reported to Israel **all the commands of the LORD and all the ordinances** from 20:22–23:33. As they had done twice before (19:8, 20:19), the people promised obedience. Nevertheless, they would commit a serious sin shortly (see 32:1-6). Deuteronomy 5:27-29 suggests that the problem was not the promises themselves but the Israelites’ hearts (see also Jr 31:31-33).

24:8 The splattering of **the blood of the covenant on the people** served to ratify the covenant between God and Israel (see also Heb 9:18-20).

24:9-11 Since John 1:18 says “no one has ever seen God,” the statement that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the elders **saw the God of Israel** should probably be taken to mean that they saw a partial representation of God in a vision but not God himself (see also 33:20 and the note on Jdg 6:11-16). This is consistent with the limited description of what they saw: **a pavement made of lapis lazuli** below his feet (see also Ezk 1:26; 10:1).

24:12-14 Moses was to go up the mountain again to receive the tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments (see also 31:18; 32:15-16; 34:1,28). He would also receive instructions regarding the construction of the tabernacle (25:1–31:11).

OFFERINGS TO BUILD THE TABERNACLE

25 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Tell the Israelites to take an offering for
me. You are to take my offering from everyone who is willing to
give. † 3 This is the offering you are to receive from them: gold, silver,
and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; 5 ram skins
dyed red † and fine leather; † acacia wood; 6 oil † for the light; spices for the
anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7 and onyx † along with other
gemstones for mounting on the ephod and breastpiece. † †
8 “They are to make a sanctuary † for me so that I may dwell † among them.
9 You must make it according to all that I show you — the pattern † of the
tabernacle as well as the pattern of all its furnishings.

THE ARK

10 “They are to make an ark † of acacia wood, forty-five inches long, twenty-
seven inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high. † 11 Overlay it with pure
gold; overlay it both inside and out. Also make a gold molding all around it.
12 Cast four gold rings for it and place them on its four feet, two rings on one
side and two rings on the other side. 13 Make poles of acacia wood and overlay
them with gold. 14 Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark in order
to carry the ark with them. 15 The poles are to remain in the rings of the ark;
they must not be removed from it. 16 Put the tablets of † the testimony that I
will give you into the ark. † 17 Make a mercy seat † of pure gold, forty-five
inches long and twenty-seven inches wide. † 18 Make two cherubim of gold;
make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one
cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end. At its two ends, make the
cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat. 20 The cherubim are to have wings
spread out above, covering † the mercy seat with their wings, and are to face
one another. The faces of the cherubim should be toward the mercy seat. 21 Set
the mercy seat on top of the ark and put the tablets of the testimony that I will
give you into the ark. † 22 I will meet with you there above the mercy seat,
between the two cherubim † that are over the ark of the testimony; I will speak
with you from there about all that I command you regarding the Israelites.

THE TABLE

23 “You are to construct a table † of acacia wood, thirty-six inches long,
eighteen inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high. † 24 Overlay it with pure
gold and make a gold molding all around it. 25 Make a three-inch † frame all
around it and make a gold molding for it all around its frame. 26 Make four gold
rings for it, and attach the rings to the four corners at its four legs. 27 The rings
should be next to the frame as holders for the poles to carry the table. 28 Make
the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, and the table can be
carried by them. 29 You are also to make its plates † and cups, as well as its
pitchers and bowls for pouring drink offerings. Make them out of pure gold.
30 Put the Bread of the Presence † on the table before me at all times.

THE LAMPSTAND

31 “You † are to make a lampstand † out of pure, hammered gold. It is to be
made of one piece: its base and shaft, its ornamental cups, and its buds † and
petals. 32 Six branches are to extend from its sides, three branches of the
lampstand from one side and three branches of the lampstand from the other
side. 33 There are to be three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a bud
and petals, on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each
with a bud and petals, on the next branch. It is to be this way for the six branches
that extend from the lampstand. 34 There are to be four cups shaped like almond
blossoms on the lampstand shaft along with its buds and petals. 35 For the six
branches that extend from the lampstand, a bud must be under the first pair of
branches from it, a bud under the second pair of branches from it, and a bud
under the third pair of branches from it. 36 Their buds and branches are to be of
one piece. † All of it is to be a single hammered piece of pure gold.
37 “Make its seven lamps, † and set them up so that they illuminate the area in
front of it. 38 Its snuffers and firepans must be of pure gold. 39 The lampstand †
with all these utensils is to be made from seventy-five pounds † of pure gold.
40 Be careful to make them according to the pattern † you have been shown on
the mountain.

25:5 Hb obscure **25:7** Or *carnelian* **25:7** Traditionally, *breastplate* **25:10** Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width, and one and a half cubits its height* **25:16** *the tablets of* supplied for clarity, also in v. 21 **25:17** Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width* **25:23** Lit *two cubits its length, one cubit its width, and one and a half cubits its height* **25:25** Lit *Make it a handbreadth*

25:31 = the outer covering of a flower **25:36** Lit *piece with it* **25:39** Lit *It* **25:39** Lit *a talent*
25:2 Ex 35:5,21; 1Ch 29:5; Ezr 2:68; Neh 11:2; 2Co 8:12; 9:7 **25:5** Ex 26:14; 35:7,23; 36:19; 39:34 **25:6** Ex 27:20; 30:23-24 **25:7** Ex 28:4,6-15 **25:8** Ex 36:1-5; Heb 9:12 **25:8** Ex 29:45; 1Kg 6:13; 2Co 6:16; Rv 21:3 **25:9** Ex 25:40; 26:30; Ac 7:44; Heb 8:2,5 **25:10** Ex 37:1,3-4; Dt 10:3; Heb 9:4 **25:16** Ex 16:34; Dt 31:26; 1Kg 8:9 **25:17** Ex 37:6; Rm 3:25; Heb 9:5 **25:20** 1Kg 8:7; 1Ch 28:18; Heb 9:5 **25:21** Ex 25:16; 26:34 **25:22** Nm 7:89; 1Sm 4:4; 2Sm 6:2; 2Kg 19:15; Ps 80:1; Is 37:16 **25:23** Ex 37:10; 1Kg 7:48; 2Ch 4:8; Heb 9:2 **25:29** Ex 37:16; Nm 4:7 **25:30** Ex 35:13; 39:36; 40:23; Lv 24:5-9; Nm 4:7 **25:31-39** Ex 37:17-24 **25:31** 1Kg 7:49; Zch 4:2; Heb 9:2; Rv 1:12 **25:37** Ex 27:21; 37:23; Lv 24:3-4; Nm 8:2; 2Ch 13:11 **25:40** Ex 26:30; Nm 8:4; 1Ch 28:11,19; Ac 7:44; Heb 8:5

25:2-7 The materials for the tabernacle would not be exacted from the Israelites but would be given voluntarily (see also 35:4-9,20-29; 36:4-7).

25:8 God noted the purpose of constructing the tabernacle: he intended to **dwell among them** (see also 29:45-46). This was the goal of God's original creation and the goal of the exodus from Egypt. It is also the goal of God's redemption that leads to new creation. The Israelites' sin, however, meant that their proximity to a holy God dwelling in the tabernacle was dangerous and had to be carefully regulated. This is similar to the Israelites' encounter with God at Mount Sinai.

25:9 See the note on 25:40.

25:22 The ark was at the center of the tabernacle. The Lord promised, **I will meet with you there above the mercy seat**. See also "Forms of Media and Resisting the Spirit of the Age," *p. 178*.

25:40 The tabernacle was not to be constructed according to the Israelites' ideas but **according to the pattern** they were **shown** (see also v. 9). Citing this verse, Hebrews 8:5 argues that the tabernacle was thus "a copy and shadow of the heavenly things." The tabernacle was closely associated with animal sacrifices (Lv 1–7), the Aaronic priesthood (Ex 28–29), and laws written on stone tablets (25:16,21). Hebrews 10:1 uses similar language to describe this entire system by saying, "The law has only a shadow of the good things to come, and not the reality itself of those things" (see also Col 2:16-17). This implies correspondences between new covenant realities surrounding the person and work of Jesus on the one hand, and the tabernacle, animal sacrifices, the Aaronic priesthood, the law, and the old covenant on the other. Passages like Hebrews 7–10 explain some of these, but in cases where the Bible is silent, it is difficult to determine how certain details related to the tabernacle or sacrificial system precisely correspond to the new covenant (see also note on Lv 1:1).

THE TABERNACLE

26 "You † are to construct the tabernacle itself with ten curtains. You must make them of finely spun linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, with a design of cherubim worked into them. 2 Each curtain should be forty-two feet † long and six feet † wide; all the curtains are to have the same measurements. 3 Five of the curtains should be joined together, and the other five curtains joined together. 4 Make loops of blue yarn on the edge of the last curtain in the first set, and do the same on the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. 5 Make fifty loops on the one curtain and make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain in the second set, so that the loops line up together. 6 Also

make fifty gold clasps and join the curtains together with the clasps, so that the tabernacle may be a single unit.
7 “You are to make curtains of goat hair for a tent over the tabernacle; make eleven of these curtains. 8 Each curtain should be forty-five feet † long and six feet wide. All eleven curtains are to have the same measurements. 9 Join five of the curtains by themselves, and the other six curtains by themselves. Then fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent. 10 Make fifty loops on the edge of one curtain, the outermost in the first set, and make fifty loops on the edge of the corresponding curtain of the second set. 11 Make fifty bronze clasps; put the clasps through the loops and join the tent together so that it is a single unit. 12 As for the flap that remains from the tent curtains, the leftover half curtain is to hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13 What remains along the length of the tent curtains — a half yard † on one side and a half yard on the other side — should hang over the sides of the tabernacle on either side to cover it. 14 Make a covering for the tent from ram skins dyed red † and a covering of fine leather † on top of that.
15 “You are to make upright supports † of acacia wood † for the tabernacle. 16 Each support is to be fifteen feet † long and twenty-seven † inches wide. 17 Each support will have two tenons for joining. Do the same for all the supports of the tabernacle. 18 Make the supports for the tabernacle as follows: twenty supports for the south side, 19 and make forty silver bases under the twenty supports, two bases under the first support for its two tenons, and two bases under the next support for its two tenons; 20 twenty supports for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, 21 along with their forty silver bases, two bases under the first support and two bases under each support; 22 and make six supports for the west side of the tabernacle. 23 Make two additional supports for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 24 They are to be paired at the bottom, and joined together † at the top in a single ring. So it should be for both of them; they will serve as the two corners. 25 There are to be eight supports with their silver bases: sixteen bases; two bases under the first support and two bases under each support.
26 “You are to make five crossbars of acacia wood for the supports on one side of the tabernacle, 27 five crossbars for the supports on the other side of the

tabernacle, and five crossbars for the supports of the back side of the tabernacle on the west. 28 The central crossbar is to run through the middle of the supports from one end to the other. 29 Then overlay the supports with gold, and make their rings of gold as the holders for the crossbars. Also overlay the crossbars with gold. 30 You are to set up the tabernacle according to the plan for it that you have been shown on the mountain. †

31 "You are to make a curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen with a design of cherubim worked into it. † 32 Hang it on four gold-plated pillars of acacia wood that have gold hooks and that stand on four silver bases. 33 Hang the curtain under the clasps † and bring the ark of the testimony there behind the curtain, so the curtain will make a separation for you between the holy place † and the most holy place. 34 Put the mercy seat on the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. † 35 Place the table outside the curtain and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle, opposite the table; put the table on the north side. †

36 "For the entrance to the tent you are to make a screen embroidered † with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. 37 Make five pillars of acacia wood for the screen and overlay them with gold; their hooks are to be gold, and you are to cast five bronze bases for them.

26:2 Lit *28 cubits* **26:2** Lit *four cubits,* also in v. 8 **26:8** Lit *30 cubits* **26:13** Lit *the cubit* **26:14** Hb obscure **26:15** Or *frames,* or *beams* **26:16** Lit *10 cubits* **26:16** Lit *a cubit and a half* **26:24** Lit *and together they are to be complete* **26:33** The *clasps* that join the ten curtains of the tabernacle; Ex 26:6 **26:36** Or *woven* **26:1-37** Ex 36:8-38 **26:14** Ex 25:5; 35:7; 36:19; 39:34; Nm 4:25 **26:15** Ex 25:28; 26:37; 27:1,6; 30:1,5; 35:33; 36:20; 37:15; 38:6 **26:30** Ex 25:9,40; Ac 7:44; Heb 8:5 **26:31** Ex 36:35; 2Ch 3:14; Mt 27:51; Heb 9:3 **26:33** Ex 25:16; 40:21; Lv 16:2; Heb 9:2 **26:34** Ex 25:21; 40:20; Heb 9:5 **26:35** Ex 40:22,24; Heb 9:2

THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

27 "You † are to construct the altar of acacia wood. The altar must be square, 7 1/2 feet long, and 7 1/2 feet wide; † it must be 4 1/2 feet high. † 2 Make horns for it on its four corners; the horns are to be of one piece. † Overlay it with bronze. † 3 Make its pots for removing ashes, and its shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans; make all its utensils of bronze. 4 Construct a grate for it of bronze mesh, and make four bronze rings on the mesh at its four corners. 5 Set it below, under the altar's ledge, † so that the

mesh comes halfway up † the altar. 6 Then make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 The poles are to be inserted into the rings so that the poles are on two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8 Construct the altar with boards so that it is hollow. They are to make it just as it was shown to you on the mountain. †

THE COURTYARD

9 "You † are to make the courtyard for the tabernacle. Make hangings for the south side of the courtyard out of finely spun linen, 150 feet † long on that side 10 including twenty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and silver bands † for the posts. 11 And so make hangings 150 feet long for the north side, including twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and silver bands for the posts. 12 For the width of the courtyard, make hangings 75 feet † long for the west side, including their ten posts and their ten bases. 13 And for the width of the courtyard on the east side toward the sunrise, 75 feet, 14 make hangings 22 1/2 feet † long for one side of the gate, including their three posts and their three bases. 15 And make hangings 22 1/2 feet long for the other side, including their three posts and their three bases. 16 The gate of the courtyard is to have a 30-foot † screen † embroidered † with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. It is to have four posts and their four bases.
17 "All the posts around the courtyard are to be banded with silver and have silver hooks and bronze bases. 18 The courtyard is to be 150 feet long, 75 feet wide at each end, and 7 1/2 feet high, † all of it made of finely spun linen. The bases of the posts are to be bronze. 19 All the utensils of the tabernacle for every use and all its tent pegs as well as all the tent pegs of the courtyard are to be made of bronze.

THE LAMPSTAND OIL

20 "You are to command the Israelites to bring you pure oil from crushed olives for the light, in order to keep the lamp burning regularly. 21 In the tent of meeting outside the curtain that is in front of the testimony, † Aaron and his sons are to tend the lamp † from evening until morning before the LORD. This is to be a permanent statute † for the Israelites throughout their generations.

27:1 Lit *five cubits in length and five cubits in width* **27:1** Lit *wide; and its height three cubits* **27:2** Lit *piece with it* **27:5** Perhaps a *ledge* around the altar on which the priests could stand; Lv 9:22 **27:5** Or *altar's rim, so that the grid comes halfway down* **27:9** Lit *100 cubits*, also in v. 11 **27:10** Or *connecting rods*, also in v. 11 **27:12** Lit *50 cubits*, also in v. 13 **27:14** Lit *15 cubits*, also in v. 15 **27:16** Lit *20-cubit* **27:16** Or *woven* **27:18** Lit *be 100 by the cubit, and the width 50 by 50, and the height five cubits*
27:1-8 Ex 38:1-7; Ezk 43:13 **27:2** Nm 16:38; Ps 118:27 **27:8** Ex 25:40; 26:30 **27:9-19** Ex 38:9-20 **27:16** Ex 35:17; 38:18; 39:40; 40:8,33; Nm 3:26; 4:26 **27:21** Ex 30:8; 1Sm 3:3; 2Ch 13:11 **27:21** Ex 26:31,33; 28:43 **27:21** Ex 29:9; Lv 3:17; 16:34; Nm 18:23; 19:21

THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS

28 "Have your brother Aaron, with his sons, come to you from the Israelites to serve me as priest — Aaron, his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.† 2 Make holy garments† for your brother Aaron, for glory and beauty. 3 You are to instruct all the skilled artisans,†† whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom, to make Aaron's garments for consecrating him to serve me as priest. 4 These are the garments that they must make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a specially woven tunic,† a turban, and a sash. They are to make holy garments for your brother Aaron and his sons so that they may serve me as priests. 5 They should use† gold; blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; and fine linen.

THE EPHOD

6 "They† are to make the ephod of finely spun linen embroidered† with gold, and with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. 7 It must have two shoulder pieces attached to its two edges so that it can be joined together. 8 The artistically woven waistband that is on the ephod† must be of one piece,† according to the same workmanship of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen.
9 "Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of Israel's sons: 10 six of their names on the first stone and the remaining six names on the second stone, in the order of their birth. 11 Engrave the two stones with the names of Israel's sons as a gem cutter engraves a seal. Mount them, surrounded with gold filigree settings. 12 Fasten both stones on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the Israelites. Aaron will carry their names on his two shoulders before the LORD as a reminder.† 13 Fashion gold filigree settings 14 and two chains of pure gold; you will make them of braided cord work, and attach the cord chains to the settings.

THE BREASTPIECE

15 “You † are to make an embroidered breastpiece for making decisions. †
Make it with the same workmanship as the ephod; make it of gold, of blue,
purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen. 16 It must be square and folded
double, nine inches long and nine inches wide. † 17 Place a setting of
gemstones † on it, four rows of stones:

The first row should be
a row of carnelian, topaz, and emerald; †
18 the second row,
a turquoise, † a lapis lazuli, and a diamond; †
19 the third row,
a jacinth, † an agate, and an amethyst;
20 and the fourth row,
a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

They should be adorned with gold filigree in their settings. 21 The twelve stones
are to correspond to the names of Israel’s sons. Each stone must be engraved like
a seal, with one of the names of the twelve tribes.
22 “You are to make braided chains † of pure gold cord work for the
breastpiece. 23 Fashion two gold rings for the breastpiece and attach them to its
two corners. 24 Then attach the two gold cords to the two gold rings at the
corners of the breastpiece. 25 Attach the other ends of the two cords to the two
filigree settings, and in this way attach them to the ephod’s shoulder pieces in
the front. 26 Make two other gold rings and put them at the two other corners of
the breastpiece on the edge that is next to the inner border of the ephod. 27 Make
two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the ephod’s two shoulder
pieces on its front, close to its seam, † and above the ephod’s woven waistband.
28 The artisans are to tie the breastpiece from its rings to the rings of the ephod
with a cord of blue yarn, so that the breastpiece is above the ephod’s waistband
and does not come loose from the ephod.

29 “Whenever he enters the sanctuary, Aaron is to carry the names of Israel’s
sons over his heart on the breastpiece for decisions, as a continual reminder
before the LORD. 30 Place the Urim and Thummim † in the breastpiece for
decisions, so that they will also be over Aaron’s heart whenever he comes before
the LORD. Aaron will continually carry the means of decisions for the Israelites
over his heart before the LORD.

THE ROBE

31 “You † are to make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue yarn. 32 There
should be an opening at its top in the center of it. Around the opening, there
should be a woven collar with an opening like that of body armor † so that it
does not tear. 33 Make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn on its
lower hem and all around it. Put gold bells between them all the way around,
34 so that gold bells and pomegranates alternate around the lower hem of the
robe. 35 The robe will be worn by Aaron whenever he ministers, and its sound
will be heard when he enters the sanctuary before the LORD and when he exits, so
that he does not die.

THE TURBAN

36 “You are to make a pure gold medallion and engrave it, like the engraving of
a seal: † HOLY TO THE LORD. 37 Fasten it to a cord of blue yarn so it can be
placed on the turban; the medallion is to be on the front of the turban. 38 It will
be on Aaron’s forehead so that Aaron may bear the guilt † connected with the
holy offerings that the Israelites consecrate as all their holy gifts. It is always to
be on his forehead, so that they may find acceptance with the LORD.

OTHER PRIESTLY GARMENTS

39 “You are to weave the tunic from fine linen, make a turban of fine linen, and
make an embroidered sash. 40 Make tunics, sashes, and headbands for Aaron’s
sons to give them glory and beauty. † 41 Put these on your brother Aaron and
his sons; then anoint, † ordain, † and consecrate † them, so that they may serve
me as priests. 42 Make them linen undergarments † to cover their naked bodies;
they must extend from the waist to the thighs. 43 These must be worn by Aaron
and his sons whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to

minister in the sanctuary area, so that they do not incur guilt † and die. This is to be a permanent statute † for Aaron and for his future descendants.

28:3 Lit *all wise of heart* **28:4** Hb obscure **28:5** Lit *receive* **28:6** Or *woven* **28:8** Lit *waistband of its ephod, which is on it* **28:8** Lit *piece with the ephod* **28:15** Used for determining God's will; Nm 27:21 **28:16** Lit *a span its length and a span its width* **28:17** Many of these stones cannot be identified with certainty. **28:17** Or *beryl* **28:18** Or *malachite*, or *garnet* **28:18** Hb obscure; LXX, Vg read *jasper* **28:19** Hb obscure **28:22** The same *chains* mentioned in v. 14 **28:27** The place where the *shoulder pieces* join the front of the ephod **28:32** Hb obscure **28:41** Lit *anoint them, fill their hand*

28:1 Nm 18:7; Ps 99:6; Heb 5:1 **28:2** Ex 29:5,9; 31:10; 39:1-2; Lv 8:7,30; Nm 20:26,28 **28:3** Ex 31:6; 35:25; 36:1 **28:6-12** Ex 39:2-7; Lv 8:7 **28:12** Ex 28:29; Jos 4:7; Zch 6:14 **28:15-28** Ex 39:8-21 **28:30** Lv 8:8; Nm 27:21; Dt 33:8; Ezr 2:63; Neh 7:65 **28:31-40** Ex 39:22-31 **28:36** Lv 8:9; Zch 14:20 **28:38** Lv 10:17; 22:16; Nm 18:1; Is 53:11; Ezk 4:4-6; Jn 1:29; Heb 9:28; 1Pt 2:24 **28:40** Ex 39:41; Ezk 44:17-18 **28:41** Ex 29:7; 30:30; 40:15; Lv 10:7 **28:41** Ex 29:9; Heb 7:28 **28:42** Lv 6:10; 16:4; Ezk 44:18 **28:43** Ex 20:26; Lv 5:1,17; 20:19 **28:43** Ex 27:21; Lv 17:7

28:1-4 Integrally related to the giving of the law and the construction of the tabernacle was the institution of the Aaronic priesthood. The Lord had originally intended for all Israel to be a kingdom of priests (19:6; see also 1Pt 2:9), but they instead fearfully requested Moses to mediate between them and God (19:16; 20:18-21). The institution of the Aaronic priesthood was consistent with this request (see 28:17-21,29) and was appropriately alluded to in 19:22,24 (see the note on 20:1). Like the construction of the tabernacle as a whole, the making of the priestly garments was to be performed by **skilled artisans.** The same Hebrew word is translated as **skilled** and **wisdom**; it express their ability to do the work well (see also 31:1-11).

28:30 The precise nature of the **Urim and Thummim** and how they were used for decision-making is uncertain and continues to puzzle interpreters. Whatever the mechanics of their use, they were a means by which God would express his will.

28:36 The association between holiness and priesthood found here also appeared in 19:6 where God expressed the possibility that Israel could become "[his] kingdom of priests and [his] holy nation."

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT CONSECRATION

29 "This is what you are to do for them to consecrate them to serve me as priests. Take a young bull and two unblemished rams, 2 with unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers coated with oil. Make them out of fine wheat flour, † 3 put them in a basket, and bring them in the basket, along with the bull and two rams. 4 Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. † 5 Then take the garments and clothe Aaron with the tunic, the robe for the ephod, the ephod itself, and the breastpiece; fasten the ephod on him with its woven waistband. † 6 Put the turban on his head and place the holy diadem † on the turban. 7 Take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint † him. 8 You must also bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 9 Tie the sashes on

Aaron and his sons and fasten headbands on them. The priesthood is to be theirs by a permanent statute. This is the way you will ordain Aaron and † his sons. †
10 “You are to bring the bull to the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on the bull’s head. † 11 Slaughter the bull before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 12 Take some of the bull’s blood and apply it to the horns † of the altar with your finger; then pour out all the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 13 Take all the fat † that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with the fat on them, and burn them on the altar. 14 But burn the bull’s flesh, its hide, and its waste outside the camp; † it is a sin offering.
15 “Take one ram, and Aaron and his sons are to lay their hands on the ram’s head. † 16 You are to slaughter the ram, take its blood, and splatter it on all sides of the altar. 17 Cut the ram into pieces. Wash its entrails and legs, and place them with its head and its pieces on the altar. 18 Then burn the whole ram on the altar; it is a burnt offering to the LORD. It is a pleasing aroma, † a fire offering to the LORD.
19 “You are to take the second ram, and Aaron and his sons must lay their hands on the ram’s head. † 20 Slaughter the ram, take some of its blood, and put it on Aaron’s right earlobe, on his sons’ right earlobes, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Splatter the remaining blood on all sides of the altar. 21 Take some of the blood that is on the altar and some of the anointing oil, † and sprinkle them on Aaron and his garments, as well as on his sons and their garments. So he and his garments will be holy, as well as his sons and their garments.
22 “Take the fat from the ram, the fat tail, the fat covering the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, and the right thigh (since this is a ram for ordination †); 23 take one loaf of bread, one cake of bread made with oil, and one wafer from the basket of unleavened bread that is before the LORD; 24 and put all of them in the hands of Aaron and his † sons and present them as a presentation offering before the LORD. † 25 Take them from their hands and burn them on the altar on top of the burnt offering, as a pleasing aroma before the LORD; it is a fire offering to the LORD.

26 “Take the breast from the ram of Aaron’s ordination and present it as a
presentation offering before the LORD; it is to be your portion. † 27 Consecrate
for Aaron and his sons † the breast of the presentation offering that is presented
and the thigh of the contribution that is lifted up from the ram of ordination.
28 This will belong to Aaron and his sons as a regular portion from the Israelites,
for it is a contribution. It will be the Israelites’ contribution from their fellowship
sacrifices, their contribution to the LORD.
29 “The holy garments that belong to Aaron are to belong to his sons after him,
so that they can be anointed and ordained † in them. † 30 Any priest who is one
of his sons and who succeeds him and enters the tent of meeting to minister in
the sanctuary must wear them for seven days. †
31 “You are to take the ram of ordination and boil its flesh in a holy place.
32 Aaron and his sons are to eat the meat of the ram and the bread that is in the
basket at the entrance to the tent of meeting. † 33 They must eat those things by
which atonement was made at the time of their ordination † and consecration.
An unauthorized person must not eat † them, for these things are holy. 34 If any
of the meat of ordination or any of the bread is left until morning, burn what is
left over. It must not be eaten because it is holy.
35 “This is what you are to do for Aaron and his sons based on all I have
commanded you. Take seven days to ordain them. 36 Sacrifice a bull as a sin
offering each day for atonement. Purify † the altar when you make atonement
for it, and anoint it in order to consecrate it. † 37 For seven days you must make
atonement for the altar and consecrate it. The altar will be especially holy.
Whatever touches the altar will be consecrated. †
38 “This is what you are to offer regularly on the altar every day: two year-old
lambs. † 39 In the morning offer one lamb, and at twilight offer the other
lamb. † 40 With the first lamb offer two quarts † of fine flour mixed with one
quart † of oil from crushed olives, and a drink offering of one quart of wine.
41 You are to offer the second lamb at twilight. Offer a grain offering and a
drink offering with it, like the one in the morning, as a pleasing aroma, a fire
offering to the LORD. 42 This will be a regular burnt offering throughout your
generations at the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD, where I will

meet you † to speak with you. † 43 I will also meet with the Israelites there, and that place will be consecrated by my glory. † 44 I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; I will also consecrate Aaron and his sons to serve me as priests. 45 I will dwell † among the Israelites and be their God. † 46 And they will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God. †

29:9 Lit *you will fill the hand of Aaron and the hand of* ; Ex 29:23-24 **29:22** The priest would normally receive the right thigh to be eaten, but here it is burned; Lv 7:32-34. **29:24** Lit *in the hands of his* **29:29** Lit *him for anointing in them and for filling their hand* **29:33** Lit *made to fill their hand* **29:36** Or *Make a sin offering on* **29:40** Lit *offer a tenth* **29:40** Lit *a fourth of a hin* **29:42** = Moses

29:2 Lv 2:4; 6:19-23 **29:4** Ex 40:12; Lv 8:6; Heb 10:22 **29:5** Ex 28:2,8; Lv 8:7 **29:6** Ex 28:36-37; Lv 8:9 **29:7** Ex 30:25; Lv 8:12; 10:7; 21:10; Nm 35:25 **29:9** Ex 28:41; Nm 18:7 **29:10** Lv 1:4; 8:14 **29:12** Ex 27:2; Lv 8:15 **29:13** Lv 3:3-4 **29:14** Lv 4:11-12,21; Heb 13:11 **29:15** Lv 1:4; 8:18 **29:18** Gn 8:21; Ex 29:25 **29:19** Ex 29:3; Lv 8:22 **29:21** Ex 30:25,31; Heb 9:22 **29:23-24** Lv 7:30; 8:22 **29:26** Lv 7:3; 8:29 **29:27** Lv 7:31,34; Nm 18:11,18; Dt 18:3 **29:29** Nm 18:8; 20:26,28 **29:30** Lv 8:35; Nm 20:28 **29:31-32** Lv 8:31; Mt 12:4 **29:33** Lv 10:14-15,17; 22:10 **29:36** Ex 40:10; Heb 10:11 **29:37** Ex 30:29; Mt 23:19 **29:38** Nm 28:3; 1Ch 16:40; Ezr 3:3; Dn 12:11 **29:39** 1Kg 18:29,36; 2Kg 16:15; Ezr 9:4-5; Ps 141:2; Ezk 46:13-15 **29:42** Ex 25:22; 30:8 **29:43** 1Kg 8:11; 2Ch 5:14; Ezk 43:5; Hg 2:7,9 **29:45** Zch 2:10; Jn 14:17 **29:45** Ex 25:8; Lv 26:12 **29:46** Ex 20:2

29:45-46 As God said in 25:8 (see note), the purpose of the tabernacle was so that God would **dwell among the Israelites.**

THE INCENSE ALTAR

30 "You are to make an altar for the burning of incense; make it of acacia wood. † 2 It must be square, eighteen inches long and eighteen inches wide; † it must be thirty-six inches high. † Its horns must be of one piece with it. 3 Overlay its top, all around its sides, and its horns with pure gold; make a gold molding all around it. 4 Make two gold rings for it under the molding on two of its sides; put these on opposite sides of it to be holders for the poles to carry it with. 5 Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold.

6 "You are to place the altar in front of the curtain by the ark of the testimony — in front of the mercy seat that is over the testimony — where I will meet with you. 7 Aaron must burn fragrant incense on it; he must burn it every morning when he tends the lamps. † 8 When Aaron sets up the lamps at twilight, he must burn incense. There is to be an incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 You must not offer unauthorized incense on it, † or a burnt or grain offering; you are not to pour a drink offering on it.

10 “Once a year Aaron is to perform the atonement ceremony for the altar.
Throughout your generations he is to perform the atonement ceremony for † it
once a year, with the blood of the sin offering for atonement on the horns. †
The altar is especially holy to the LORD.”

THE ATONEMENT MONEY

11 The LORD spoke to Moses: 12 “When you take a census † of the Israelites to
register them, each of the men must pay a ransom † for his life to the LORD as
they are registered. Then no plague † will come on them as they are registered.
13 Everyone who is registered must pay half a shekel † according to the
sanctuary shekel (twenty gerahs to the shekel). This half shekel is a contribution
to the LORD. † 14 Each man who is registered, twenty years old or more, must
give this contribution to the LORD. 15 The wealthy may not give more and the
poor may not give less † than half a shekel when giving the contribution to the
LORD to atone for † your lives. 16 Take the atonement price † from the
Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will serve as a
reminder for the Israelites before the LORD to atone for your lives.” †

THE BRONZE BASIN

17 The LORD spoke to Moses: 18 “Make a bronze basin † for washing and a
bronze stand for it. Set it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water
in it. 19 Aaron and his sons must wash their hands and feet from the basin.
20 Whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister by
burning an offering to the LORD, they must wash with water so that they will not
die. 21 They must wash their hands and feet so that they will not die; this is to be
a permanent statute † for them, for Aaron and his descendants throughout their
generations.”

THE ANOINTING OIL

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: 23 “Take for yourself the finest spices: † 12 1/2
pounds † of liquid myrrh, half as much (6 1/4 pounds †) of fragrant cinnamon,
6 1/4 pounds of fragrant cane, 24 12 1/2 pounds of cassia (by the sanctuary

shekel), and a gallon † of olive oil. † 25 Prepare from these a holy anointing oil,
a scented blend, the work of a perfumer; it will be holy anointing oil. †
26 "With it you are to anoint † the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony,
27 the table with all its utensils, the lampstand with its utensils, the altar of
incense, 28 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the basin with its
stand. 29 Consecrate them and they will be especially holy. Whatever touches
them will be consecrated. 30 Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate † them
to serve me as priests.
31 "Tell the Israelites: This will be my holy anointing oil throughout your
generations. 32 It must not be used for ordinary anointing on a person's body,
and you must not make anything like it using its formula. It is holy, and it must
be holy to you. 33 Anyone who blends something like it or puts some of it on an
unauthorized person must be cut off † from his people."

THE SACRED INCENSE

34 The LORD said to Moses: "Take fragrant spices: stacte, onycha, and
galbanum; the spices and pure frankincense are to be in equal measures.
35 Prepare expertly blended incense from these; it is to be seasoned with salt,
pure and holy. 36 Grind some of it into a fine powder and put some in front of
the testimony in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It must be
especially holy † to you. 37 As for the incense you are making, you must not
make any for yourselves using its formula. It is to be regarded by you as holy —
belonging to the LORD. 38 Anyone who makes something like it to smell its
fragrance must be cut off from his people."

30:2 Lit *one cubit its length and one cubit its width* **30:2** Lit *wide; and two cubits its height* **30:10** Or *on* **30:13** A shekel is about two-fifths of an ounce of silver **30:15** Or *to ransom*, also in v. 16 **30:16** Lit *the silver of the atonement* **30:23** Lit *500* (shekels), also in v. 24 **30:23** Lit *250* (shekels) **30:24** Lit *a hin*
30:1 Ex 37:25; Rv 8:3 **30:7** Ex 27:21; 1Sm 2:28; 1Ch 23:13; Lk 1:9 **30:9** Lv 10:1 **30:10** Lv 16:18 **30:12** Nm 1:2; 2Sm 24:2 **30:12** Nm 31:50; Mt 20:28 **30:12** Ex 12:13; 2Sm 24:13,21,25 **30:13** Ex 38:26; Nm 3:47; Mt 17:24 **30:15** Pr 22:2; Eph 6:9 **30:16** Ex 38:25-28; Nm 16:40 **30:18** Ex 38:8; 40:7,30; 1Kg 7:38 **30:21** Ex 27:21; 28:43 **30:23** Sg 4:14; Ezk 27:22 **30:24** Ex 29:40; Ps 45:8 **30:25** Ex 37:29; Nm 35:25 **30:26** Ex 40:9; Lv 8:10; Nm 7:1 **30:30** Ex 29:7; Lv 8:12,30 **30:33** Gn 17:14; Ex 30:38 **30:36** Ex 29:37; Lv 2:3

GOD'S PROVISION OF THE SKILLED WORKERS

31 The LORD also spoke to Moses: 2 "Look, I have appointed by name
Bezalel † son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 I have filled

him with God's Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every craft † 4 to design artistic works in gold, silver, and bronze, 5 to cut gemstones for mounting, and to carve wood for work in every craft. 6 I have also selected Oholiab † son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to be with him. I have put wisdom in the heart of every skilled artisan † in order to make all that I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the testimony, the mercy seat that is on top of it, and all the other furnishings of the tent † — 8 the table with its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 9 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, the basin with its stand — 10 the specially woven † garments, both the holy garments for the priest Aaron and the garments for his sons to serve as priests, 11 the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense for the sanctuary. They must make them according to all that I have commanded you." †

OBSERVING THE SABBATH

12 The LORD said to Moses: 13 "Tell the Israelites: You must observe my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, so that you will know that I am the LORD who consecrates you. † 14 Observe the Sabbath, for it is holy to you. Whoever profanes it must be put to death. If anyone does work on it, that person must be cut off from his people. † 15 Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there must be a Sabbath of complete rest, † holy to the LORD. Anyone who does work on the Sabbath day must be put to death. 16 The Israelites must observe the Sabbath, celebrating it throughout their generations as a permanent covenant. 17 It is a sign forever between me and the Israelites, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed."

THE TWO STONE TABLETS

18 When he finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the testimony, stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. †

31:6 LXX, Syr read *Eliab* **31:6** Lit *everyone wise of heart* **31:10** Hb obscure
31:2 Ex 35:30; 36:1; 1Ch 2:20 **31:3** Ex 35:31; 1Kg 7:14 **31:7** Ex 36:8-38; 37:1-6 **31:8-11** Ex 30:25,31,34; 37:10-29; 38:1,8; 39:1,41 **31:13** Lv 19:3,30; Ezk 20:12,20 **31:14** Nm 15:35 **31:15** Gn 2:2; Ex 16:23; 20:9 **31:18** Ex 24:12; 32:15-16; Dt 4:13; 5:22; 2Co 3:3

31:1-11 The construction of the tabernacle was not merely commanded by God (see 25:9,40) but was also empowered by his Spirit. **Bezalel**, the divinely appointed leader of the whole project, was **filled . . . with God's Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every craft.** The Lord had also given **wisdom** to **every skilled artisan** to help with the work (see also 28:3; see "A Biblical View of Art," *p. 123*). There is a striking correspondence between Bezalel, a Spirit-filled man from the line of Judah who led the construction of the tabernacle, and Jesus, another Spirit-filled man from the line of Judah who leads the building of the church (Mt 16:18; Lk 4:1; Eph 2:22).

31:12-17 Yet again God instructed the Israelites to keep the Sabbath (see 16:22-26; 20:8-11; 23:12; 34:21; 35:1-3). Here the Sabbath is also called a **sign** (vv. 13,17).

THE GOLD CALF

32 When the people saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come, make gods † for us who will go before us because this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt — we don't know what has happened to him! " †

2 Aaron replied to them, "Take off the gold rings † that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off the gold rings that were on their ears and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took the gold from them, fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it into an image of a calf.

Then they said, "Israel, these are your gods, † who brought you up from the land of Egypt! " †

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of it and made an announcement: "There will be a festival † to the LORD tomorrow." 6 Early the next morning they arose, offered burnt offerings, and presented fellowship offerings. The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party. †

7 The LORD spoke to Moses: "Go down at once! For your people you brought up from the land of Egypt have acted corruptly. † 8 They have quickly turned from the way I commanded them; they have made for themselves an image of a calf. They have bowed down to it, sacrificed to it, and said, 'Israel, these are your gods, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.' " † 9 The LORD also said to Moses: "I have seen this people, and they are indeed a stiff-necked † people.

10 Now leave me alone, so that my anger can burn against them and I can
destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.” †
11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God: “LORD, why does your anger
burn against your people you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power
and a strong hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, ‘He brought them out with
an evil intent to kill them in the mountains and eliminate them from the face of
the earth’? Turn from your fierce anger and relent concerning this disaster
planned for your people. † 13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and
Israel — you swore to them by yourself † and declared, ‘I will make your
offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and will give your offspring all this
land that I have promised, and they will inherit it forever.’ ” † 14 So the LORD
relented † concerning the disaster he had said he would bring on his people.
15 Then Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the
testimony in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides — inscribed front and
back. 16 The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was God’s writing,
engraved on the tablets. †
17 When Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses,
“There is a sound of war in the camp.”
18 But Moses replied:

It’s not the sound of a victory cry
and not the sound of a cry of defeat;
I hear the sound of singing!

19 As he approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses became
enraged and threw the tablets out of his hands, smashing them at the base of the
mountain. 20 He took the calf they had made, burned it up, and ground it to
powder. He scattered the powder over the surface of the water and forced the
Israelites to drink the water.
21 Then Moses asked Aaron, “What did these people do to you that you have led
them into such a grave sin? ”
22 “Don’t be enraged, my lord,” Aaron replied. “You yourself know that the
people are intent on evil. † 23 They said to me, ‘Make gods for us who will go
before us because this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt

— we don’t know what has happened to him! ’ 24 So I said to them, ‘Whoever has gold, take it off,’ and they gave it to me. When I threw it into the fire, out came this calf! ”
25 Moses saw that the people were out of control, for Aaron had let them get out of control, making them a laughingstock to their enemies. † 26 And Moses stood at the camp’s entrance and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come to me.” And all the Levites gathered around him. 27 He told them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘Every man fasten his sword to his side; go back and forth through the camp from entrance to entrance, and each of you kill his brother, his friend, and his neighbor.’ ” † 28 The Levites did as Moses commanded, and about three thousand men fell dead that day among the people.
29 Afterward Moses said, “Today you have been dedicated † to the LORD, since each man went against his son and his brother. Therefore you have brought a blessing on yourselves today.” †
30 The following day Moses said to the people, “You have committed a grave sin. Now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I will be able to atone for your sin.” †
31 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Oh, these people have committed a grave sin; they have made a god of gold for themselves. † 32 Now if you would only forgive their sin. But if not, please erase me from the book you have written.” †
33 The LORD replied to Moses: “Whoever has sinned against me I will erase from my book. † 34 Now go, lead the people to the place I told you about; see, my angel will go before you. But on the day I settle accounts, I will hold them accountable for their sin.” † 35 And the LORD inflicted a plague on the people for what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

32:1 Or *make a god,* also in v. 23 **32:4** Or *“Israel, this is your god* or *“Israel, this is your God,* also in v. 8 **32:25** Hb obscure **32:29** Text emended; MT reads *“Today dedicate yourselves* ; LXX, Vg read *“Today you have dedicated yourselves*

32:1 Ex 13:21; 24:18; Dt 9:9; Ac 7:40 **32:2** Ex 35:22; Jdg 8:24-27 **32:4** Dt 9:16; Jdg 17:3-4; 1Kg 12:28; Neh 9:18; Ps 106:19; Ac 7:41 **32:5** Lv 23:2,37; 2Kg 10:20 **32:6** Nm 25:2; 1Co 10:7 **32:7** Gn 6:11-12; Dt 9:12 **32:8** Ex 20:3-4,23; 34:15; Dt 32:17; 1Kg 12:28 **32:9** Ex 33:3,5; 34:9; 2Ch 30:8; Is 48:4; Ac 7:51 **32:10** Ex 22:24; Nm 14:12; Dt 9:14 **32:11-12** Nm 14:13-16; Dt 9:18,26-29 **32:13** Gn 22:16-18; Heb 6:13 **32:13** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 15:7,18; 26:4; 35:11-12 **32:14** 2Sm 24:16; Ps 106:45 **32:15-16** Ex 31:18; Dt 9:15 **32:19-22** Gn 20:9; 26:10; Ex 14:11; Dt 9:16-17,21 **32:27** Nm 25:5; Dt 33:9 **32:29** Nm 25:11-13; Zch 13:3 **32:30** 1Sm 12:20; 2Sm 16:12 **32:31** Ex 20:23; Dt 9:18 **32:32** Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1; Rm 9:3; Php 4:3; Rv 3:5; 21:27 **32:33** Dt 29:20; Ps 9:5 **32:34** Dt 32:35; Rm 2:5-6

32:1-6 The making of the golden **calf** was both tragic and ironic. Though Moses was on Mount Sinai on behalf of the Israelites (see 20:19-21), they felt that he was taking too long. At the same time that Moses was receiving laws about the tabernacle and the priesthood (see Ex 25–31), the Israelites, with the help of their future high priest Aaron, were making an idol and worshiping it. Thus, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai coincided with the breaking of the same law (see also Lv 10:1-3; 17:7). The Israelites quickly disobeyed God even though they had heard for themselves his prohibitions against idolatry and making of graven images (see 20:3-6,23). Their earlier pledges of obedience were for naught (19:8; 20:19; 24:7).

32:7-14 The Israelites had committed a **grave sin**, and God was so angry that he wanted to destroy them all (v. 10). This catastrophe was prevented by Moses's intercession, which appealed to God's own reputation in the sight of the Egyptians and his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

32:22-24 Aaron blamed the Israelites for his part in the making and worshiping of the golden calf and even claimed that he **threw** the gold **into the fire** and **out came this calf** (see v. 4).

32:26-29 This is the origin of the dedication of the Levites to the service of God (see Nm 1:47-53; 3:5-45; Dt 33:8-11). Unfortunately, the circumstances surrounding their selection had to do with carrying out God's judgment against the Israelites for the sin of the golden calf (see also Nm 25:7-13).

THE TENT OUTSIDE THE CAMP

33 The LORD spoke to Moses: "Go up from here, you and the people you brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land I promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying: I will give it to your offspring. † 2 I will send an angel ahead of you and will drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites, † Hivites, and Jebusites. † 3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go up with you because you are a stiff-necked people; otherwise, I might destroy you on the way." † 4 When the people heard this bad news, they mourned and didn't put on their jewelry. †

5 For the LORD said to Moses: "Tell the Israelites: You are a stiff-necked people. If I went up with you for a single moment, I would destroy you. Now take off your jewelry, and I will decide what to do with you." 6 So the Israelites remained stripped of their jewelry from Mount Horeb onward.

7 Now Moses took a tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a distance from the camp; he called it the tent of meeting. Anyone who wanted to consult the LORD would go to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp. † 8 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would stand up, each one at the door of his tent, and they would watch Moses until he entered the tent. 9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and remain at the entrance to the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses. † 10 As all the people saw the pillar of cloud remaining at the entrance to the tent, they would stand up,

then bow in worship, each one at the door of his tent. 11 The LORD would speak with Moses face to face, just as a man speaks with his friend, then Moses would return to the camp. His assistant, the young man Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the inside of the tent. †

THE LORD'S GLORY

12 Moses said to the LORD, "Look, you have told me, 'Lead this people up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You said, 'I know you by name, † and you have also found favor with me.' 13 Now if I have indeed found favor with you, please teach me your ways, † and I will know you, so that I may find favor with you. Now consider that this nation is your people." †

14 And he replied, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." †

15 "If your presence does not go," Moses responded to him, "don't make us go up from here. 16 How will it be known that I and your people have found favor with you unless you go with us? I and your people will be distinguished by this from all the other people on the face of the earth." †

17 The LORD answered Moses, "I will do this very thing you have asked, for you have found favor with me, and I know you by name."

18 Then Moses said, "Please, let me see your glory." †

19 He said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim the name 'the LORD' before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." †

20 But he added, "You cannot see my face, for humans cannot see † me and live." 21 The LORD said, "Here is a place near me. You are to stand on the rock, 22 and when my glory passes by, I will put you in the crevice of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. † 23 Then I will take my hand away, and you will see my back, but my face will not be seen."

33:2 Sam, LXX add *Girgashites*

33:1 Gn 12:7; Ex 32:7 **33:2** Ex 32:34; Jos 24:11 **33:3** Ex 3:8; 32:9; Nm 16:21,45 **33:4** Nm 14:39; Ezk 24:17,23 **33:7** Ex 29:42-43; Dt 4:29 **33:9** Ex 13:21; 31:18; Ps 99:7 **33:11**Ex 24:13; Nm 12:8; Dt 34:10 **33:12** Ex 32:34; Jn 10:14-15; 2Tm 2:19 **33:13** Ps 25:4; 86:11; 119:33 **33:13** Ex 34:9; Dt 9:26,29 **33:14** Jos 21:44; 22:4; Is 63:9 **33:16** Ex 34:10; Nm 14:14 **33:18** Ex 33:20; 1Tm 6:16 **33:19** Rm 9:15 **33:20** Gn 32:30; Is 6:5 **33:22** Ps 91:1,4; Is 2:21

33:7-11 The Israelites' relationship with God was in serious trouble (vv. 3,5), but at the **tent of meeting**, God would speak **with Moses face to face, just as a man speaks with his friend.** Moses's desire to see

God's glory (v. 18) as compared to Israel's fear and sin (19:16; 20:18-21; 32:1-6) further contributes to the extreme contrast between their respective relationships to God. In this context, the phrase "tent of meeting" does not refer to the tabernacle, which had not yet been built. Later in 40:34, however, the same phrase does refer to the tabernacle.

33:19-23 The statement **I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion** affirms both the grace and the sovereignty of God (Rm 9:15-18). Moses was only permitted to see God's back because no one can see God and live (vv. 20-23; see also note on 24:9-11).

NEW STONE TABLETS

34 The LORD said to Moses, "Cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. † 2 Be prepared by morning. Come up Mount Sinai in the morning and stand before me on the mountaintop. 3 No one may go up with you; in fact, no one should be seen anywhere on the mountain. Even the flocks and herds are not to graze in front of that mountain." †

4 Moses cut two stone tablets like the first ones. He got up early in the morning, and taking the two stone tablets in his hand, he climbed Mount Sinai, just as the LORD had commanded him.

5 The LORD came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, "the LORD." 6 The LORD passed in front of him and proclaimed:

The LORD — the LORD is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth, † 7 maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. † But he will not leave the guilty † unpunished, bringing the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

8 Moses immediately knelt low on the ground and worshiped. 9 Then he said, "My Lord, if I have indeed found favor with you, my Lord, please go with us (even though this is a stiff-necked people), forgive our iniquity and our sin, and accept us as your own possession." †

COVENANT OBLIGATIONS

10 And the LORD responded: "Look, I am making a covenant. I will perform wonders in the presence of all your people that have never been done † in the whole earth or in any nation. All the people you live among will see the LORD's work, for what I am doing with you is awe-inspiring. † 11 Observe what I

command you today. I am going to drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hethites, Perizzites, Hivites, † and Jebusites. 12 Be careful not to make a treaty with the inhabitants of the land that you are going to enter; otherwise, they will become a snare among you. † 13 Instead, you must tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, and chop down their Asherah poles. † 14 Because the LORD is jealous † for his reputation, you are never to bow down to another god. † He is a jealous God.
15 "Do not make a treaty with the inhabitants of the land, or else when they prostitute themselves with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, they will invite you, and you will eat their sacrifices. † 16 Then you will take some of their daughters as brides for your sons. Their daughters will prostitute themselves with their gods and cause your sons to prostitute themselves with their gods. †
17 "Do not make cast images † of gods for yourselves.
18 "Observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread. You are to eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, † as I commanded you, for you came out of Egypt in the month of Abib. †
19 "The firstborn † male from every womb belongs to me, including all your male † † livestock, the firstborn of cattle or sheep. 20 You may redeem the firstborn of a donkey with a sheep, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. † You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons. No one is to appear before me empty-handed.
21 "You are to labor six days but you must rest † on the seventh day; you must even rest during plowing and harvesting times.
22 "Observe the Festival of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering † at the turn of the agricultural year. 23 Three times a year † all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel. 24 For I will drive out nations † before you and enlarge your territory. † No one will covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God.
25 "Do not present † the blood for my sacrifice with anything leavened. The sacrifice of the Passover Festival must not remain until morning. †

26 “Bring the best firstfruits † of your land to the house of the LORD your God.
“You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”
27 The LORD also said to Moses, “Write † down these words, for I have made a
covenant with you and with Israel based on these words.”
28 Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat
food or drink water. He wrote the Ten Commandments, † the words of the
covenant, on the tablets.

MOSES’S RADIANT FACE

29 As Moses descended from Mount Sinai — with the two tablets of the
testimony in his hands as he descended the mountain — he did not realize that
the skin of his face shone as a result of his speaking with the LORD. † †
30 When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone! †
They were afraid to come near him. 31 But Moses called out to them, so Aaron
and all the leaders of the community returned to him, and Moses spoke to them.
32 Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he commanded them to do
everything the LORD had told him on Mount Sinai. 33 When Moses had finished
speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. 34 But whenever Moses went
before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out.
After he came out, he would tell the Israelites what he had been commanded, †
35 and the Israelites would see that Moses’s face † was radiant. Then Moses
would put the veil over his face again until he went to speak with the LORD.

34:10 Lit *created* **34:11** DSS, Sam, LXX add *Girgashites* **34:14** Or *the Lord — his name is Jealous* or *the Lord, being jealous by nature* **34:18** March–April; called Nisan in the post-exilic period; Neh 2:1; Est 3:7 **34:19** LXX, Theod, Vg, Tg read *males* **34:19** Hb obscure **34:22** The *Festival of Ingathering* is called Festival of Shelters elsewhere; Lv 23:34-36. **34:25** Lit *slaughter* **34:29** Lit *with him* **34:35** Lit *see Moses’s face, that the skin of his face*

34:1 Ex 32:19; 34:28; Dt 10:2,4 **34:2-3** Ex 19:12-13,20-21 **34:6** Nm 14:18; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 108:4; Jl 2:13; Rm 2:4 **34:7** Ex 20:6; Ps 103:3; 130:4; Dn 9:9; 1Jn 1:9 **34:7** Jos 24:19; Jb 10:14; Nah 1:3 **34:9** Ex 33:15-16; Ps 33:12; 94:14 **34:10** Dt 4:32; 5:2; Ps 77:14; 145:6 **34:11-12** Ex 23:32-33; 33:2 **34:13** Ex 23:24; Dt 12:3; 2Kg 18:4; 2Ch 34:3-4 **34:14** Ex 20:3,5; Dt 4:24 **34:15** Nm 25:2; Jdg 2:17; 1Co 8:4,7,10 **34:16** Dt 7:3; 1Kg 11:2,4; Ezr 9:2; Neh 13:25 **34:17** Ex 32:8; Lv 19:14 **34:18** Ex 12:15; 13:4 **34:19** Ex 13:2; 22:29 **34:20** Ex 13:13,15; 23:15; Dt 16:16 **34:21** Ex 20:9; Lk 13:14 **34:23** Ex 23:14 **34:24** Ex 33:2; Ps 78:55 **34:24** Dt 12:20; 19:8 **34:25** Ex 12:10; 23:18 **34:26** Ex 23:19; Dt 26:2 **34:27** Ex 17:14; 24:4 **34:28** Ex 24:18; 31:18; Dt 4:13; 10:2,4 **34:29** Ex 32:15 **34:30** Ps 34:5; Mt 17:2; 2Co 3:7,13 **34:34** Ex 24:3; 2Co 3:13-16

34:5-9 As suggested in 33:19, God’s appearance to Moses emphasized his grace and compassion. It was thus primarily a revelation of his *character*, as a **compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and**

abounding in faithful love and truth . . . forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. This revelation also included mention of his justice as a God who **will not leave the guilty unpunished.** The importance of this particular description of God's character is reflected by its citation elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Nm 14:18; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; Jl 2:13; Nah 1:3). Moses responded to this revelation with worship and a corresponding appeal for forgiveness.

34:26 On the boiling of a young goat in its mother's milk, see the note on 23:19.

34:29-35 Moses had been on Mount Sinai again and came down with a second set of tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments (vv. 28-29; see 31:18; 32:15-20). Whereas Moses's relationship with God was close (see the note on 33:7-11), the Israelites' relationship with God was becoming increasingly distant. Moses was mediating for them in the first place because they were terrified of God (20:18-21), and now they were **afraid to come near** their mediator because of his shining face. Moses's use of a **veil** when speaking with the Israelites further underscores both the barriers in their relationship with God and Moses's intimacy with him.

THE SABBATH COMMAND

35 Moses assembled the entire Israelite community and said to them,
"These are the things that the LORD has commanded you to do: † 2 For
six days work is to be done, but on the seventh day you are to have a holy day, a
Sabbath † of complete rest to the LORD. Anyone who does work on it must be
executed. 3 Do not light a fire in any of your homes on the Sabbath day." †

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

4 Then Moses said to the entire Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has
commanded: 5 Take † up an offering among you for the LORD. Let everyone
whose heart is willing bring this as the LORD's offering: gold, silver, and bronze;
6 blue, purple, and scarlet yarn; fine linen and goat hair; 7 ram skins dyed red
and fine leather; † acacia wood; 8 oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil
and for the fragrant incense; 9 and onyx with gemstones to mount on the ephod
and breastpiece.
10 "Let all the skilled artisans † among you come and make everything that the
LORD has commanded: † 11 the tabernacle — its tent and covering, its clasps
and supports, its crossbars, its pillars and bases; 12 the ark with its poles, the
mercy seat, and the curtain for the screen; 13 the table with its poles, all its
utensils, and the Bread of the Presence; 14 the lampstand for light with its
utensils and lamps as well as the oil for the light; 15 the altar of incense with its
poles; the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; the entryway screen for the
entrance to the tabernacle; 16 the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grate, its

poles, and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; 17 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and bases, and the screen for the gate of the courtyard; 18 the tent pegs for the tabernacle and the tent pegs for the courtyard, along with their ropes; 19 and the specially woven † garments for ministering in the sanctuary — the holy garments for the priest Aaron and the garments for his sons to serve as priests." †

20 Then the entire Israelite community left Moses's presence. 21 Everyone whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its services, and for the holy garments. † 22 Both men and women came; all who had willing hearts brought brooches, earrings, rings, necklaces, and all kinds of gold jewelry — everyone who presented a presentation offering of gold to the LORD. 23 Everyone who possessed blue, purple, or scarlet yarn, † fine linen or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or fine leather, † brought them. 24 Everyone making an offering of silver or bronze brought it as a contribution to the LORD. Everyone who possessed acacia wood useful for any task in the work brought it. 25 Every skilled † woman † spun yarn with her hands and brought it: blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and fine linen. 26 And all the women whose hearts were moved spun the goat hair by virtue of their skill. 27 The leaders † brought onyx and gemstones to mount on the ephod and breastpiece, 28 as well as the spice † and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. 29 So the Israelites brought a freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts prompted them to bring something for all the work that the LORD, through Moses, had commanded to be done. †

BEZALEL AND OHOLIAB

30 Moses † then said to the Israelites: "Look, the LORD has appointed by name Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 31 He has filled him with God's Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every kind of craft 32 to design artistic works in gold, silver, and bronze, 33 to cut gemstones for mounting, and to carve wood for work in every kind of artistic craft. 34 He has also given † both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35 He has filled them with skill † to do all the work † of

a gem cutter; a designer; an embroiderer † in blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine linen; and a weaver. They can do every kind of craft and design artistic designs.

35:7 Hb obscure **35:10** Lit *the wise of heart* **35:19** Hb obscure **35:23** Hb obscure **35:25** Lit *wise of heart* **35:34** Lit *also put in his heart* **35:35** Lit *with wisdom of heart* **35:35** Or *weaver*

35:1 Ex 34:32 **35:2** Ex 20:9; Lv 23:3 **35:3** Ex 16:23 **35:5-9** Ex 25:2-7 **35:10** Ex 31:6 **35:11-19** Ex 24:5-6; 25:10,23,30-31; 26:1-2; 27:1,9; 30:1,25,34; 31:10; 39:1,41; Lv 24:5-6; Nm 4:5 **35:21** Ex 36:2 **35:23** 1Ch 29:8 **35:25** Ex 28:3 **35:27** 1Ch 29:6; Ezr 2:68 **35:28** Ex 30:23 **35:29** Ex 35:21; 36:3; 1Ch 29:9 **35:30-34** Ex 31:1-6; 2Ch 2:14 **35:35** Ex 31:3,6; 1Kg 7:14

35:1-3 Yet another Sabbath command is found here (see the notes on 23:10-12 and 31:12-17).

35:21–36:7 As God had said earlier, the materials for the tabernacle were to be given voluntarily by the Israelites (25:1-7; 35:4-9). Without coercion, **everyone whose heart was moved and whose spirit prompted him came and brought an offering to the LORD** (35:20). Remarkably, they brought **more than** was **needed** so that Moses even had to give **an order** to stop contributing. The building project was led by Bezalel, who was divinely appointed and **filled . . . with God's Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every kind of craft** (see also the note on 31:1-11). He was assisted by **Oholiab** and other **skilled** workers (see also 28:3). Thus, both the materials and manpower for the construction of the tabernacle were well supplied (see also the note on 1Ch 29:6-9).

36 Bezalel, Oholiab, and all the skilled † people are to work based on everything the LORD has commanded. The LORD has given them wisdom and understanding to know how to do all the work of constructing the sanctuary." †

2 So Moses summoned Bezalel, Oholiab, and every skilled person in whose heart the LORD had placed wisdom, all whose hearts moved them, † to come to the work and do it. 3 They took from Moses's presence all the contributions that the Israelites had brought for the task of making the sanctuary. Meanwhile, the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning.

4 Then all the artisans who were doing all the work for the sanctuary came one by one from the work they were doing 5 and said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than is needed † for the construction of the work the LORD commanded to be done."

6 After Moses gave an order, they sent a proclamation throughout the camp: "Let no man or woman make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." So the people stopped. 7 The materials were sufficient for them to do all the work. There was more than enough.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF ART

Throughout Christian history, Genesis 1–3 has served as a cornerstone for constructing a biblical understanding of the arts. The first thing the Bible reveals about God in Genesis 1:1 is that he is the divine Creator, the sovereign Artisan of all creation. As part of God's creative activities, he made man and woman "in his own image" (Gn 1:26-27). Although the Bible does not provide a precise definition of the meaning of this phrase, Christians throughout history have consistently argued that human artistry, creativity, and imagination are ultimately rooted in the *imago Dei*. Thus, when humans engage in artistic, creative, and imaginative activities, they mirror the nature and activities of their Creator.

Humans are, by God's divine design, aesthetic—that is, artistic, creative, and imaginative. From the ornate visual designs of the wilderness tabernacle to John's apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem adorned with gold, pearls, and precious stones (Rv 21:10-21), Scripture consistently engages humans as aesthetic beings and appeals directly to their aesthetic sensibilities.

As part of humanity's role in creation, God, in Genesis 1:28, further declares that humans are to fill the earth and "subdue" it. All art making is in essence an act of subjugation; poets bring order to words, musicians bring order to sounds, and so on. An essential part of what it means to be human, then, is to serve as stewards of God's creation; this includes aesthetic stewardship. God, through his mercy and grace, has afforded humans the honor and privilege of continuing his creative work in the world. The arts are a gift from God that can and should play a positive role in the life and worship of every believer.

The Bible, therefore, presents a cautiously optimistic and encouraging view of the arts. Although Scripture does not directly address the arts, it does provide numerous examples of the use of the arts in worship and everyday life, as well as offering various principles and teachings that shed light on how God's people are to approach, think about, and engage the arts. Active participation in the arts, either as performers or spectators, contributes to a holistic enjoyment of God, his people, and his creation. In addition to the fine arts, such as painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and the performing arts, the Bible also presents a positive view of the applied arts, that is, art designed primarily for utilitarian purposes. This includes ceramics, textiles, metalwork, woodwork, and stonework of various kinds. The Bible, in its entirety, shows no ambivalence toward the arts; rather, it regards them as important features of its overall scope and message.

At the same time, however, the Bible repeatedly warns against the idolatrous misuse of the arts. Among the various forms of idols recorded in the OT are artistically executed "carved" images (Dt 7:25; Is 30:22; 40:19; Hab 2:19). Shortly after the Israelites were delivered out of bondage in Egypt, for example, they gathered together the "gold rings that were on their ears" (Ex 32:3) and cast a likeness of a golden calf using a graving tool (32:4). When Moses returned from meeting with God on Mount Sinai and saw the people worshiping the calf, he burned with anger and rebuked them for having committed a great sin (32:15-35).

Similarly, in Hosea 13:2-3, the prophet Hosea warns, "Now they continue to sin and make themselves a cast image, idols skillfully made from their silver, all of them the work of craftsman. People say about them, 'Let the men who sacrifice kiss the calves.' Therefore, they will be like the morning mist, like the early dew that vanishes, like chaff blown from a threshing floor, or like smoke from a window."

Because of sin, anything, including the arts, can be used inappropriately. As a result, the arts should always be engaged prayerfully and with great care. It must be noted, however, that while the Bible clearly denounces the idolatrous misuse of the arts, it never forbids or condemns humanity's general involvement in the arts. As the Renaissance artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) once wrote, "A sword is a sword, which may be used either for murder or justice. Similarly the arts are in themselves good. What God hath formed that is good, misuse it how ye will" (William Conway, ed., *The Writings of Albrecht Dürer*, p. 176).

Music and, to a lesser degree, dance represent the most prominent and fully developed art forms in the Bible. In terms of human origins, the Bible identifies Jubal as the "father of all who play the lyre and the

flute" in Genesis 4:21. Biblical music consisted of both vocal and instrumental styles and was performed using a variety of instruments, including the tambourine (Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34), lyre (1Sm 16:23), zither (Dn 3:5), trumpet (Nm 10:1-2; Jr 4:5), and flute (Gn 4:21). Notable lyrical songs include the Israelites' song of deliverance at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-21); Deborah and Barak's song of victory over King Jabin's army (Jdg 5:2-31); Israel's song of praise at the completion of the temple's foundation (Ezr 3:11); Mary's song of rejoicing at the news of the conception of Jesus (Lk 1:46-55); Zechariah's song of praise for the birth of his son, John (Lk 1:68-79); and the apocalyptic song of praise unto the Lamb of God (Rv 15:3). Closely associated with music is dance, which was among the most popular pastime activities for women and children (Jb 21:11; Jr 31:4; Mt 11:17; Lk 7:32) and was performed in times of joyous national celebrations (1Sm 18:6) and religious festivities (Ex 15:20; Jdg 21:21).

The visual arts are best represented in the wilderness tabernacle (Ex 25–31; 35–40) and Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6). The account of the wilderness tabernacle is of particular significance because it was God himself who supplied the tabernacle's designs. A survey of these designs shows the use of both representational and abstract or decorative styles of art as well as a wide variety of colors, textures, and materials. From the gold-covered ark of the covenant (Ex 25:10-22) to the colorful priestly garments (Ex 28), God called for the making of beautiful objects of exquisite craftsmanship to aid in worship of him. To accomplish this task, God filled Bezalel, the son of Uri, with his "Spirit, with wisdom, understanding, and ability in every craft" (Ex 31:2-3) and put "wisdom in the heart of every skilled artisan" (Ex 31:6).

One of the most intimate connections between God and the arts in the Bible are the figurative descriptions involving God and the work of the potter. To make a clay vessel in biblical times, an artisan would first trod the clay with his feet, then form it on a human powered pottery wheel, and finally heat and harden it in a brick kiln.

In Jeremiah 19:1-13, the Lord commands Jeremiah to go down to the potter's house (cp. 18:3-4), buy a clay jar, and then take it, along with some of the elders and priests of the people, and travel to the Hinnom Valley near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate (18:1). There, after proclaiming to the people a message of God's coming judgment (18:2-9), Jeremiah is instructed to shatter the jar in their presence (18:10) and proclaim that the Lord will "shatter these people and this city, like one shatters a potter's jar that can never again be mended" (19:11).

In Romans 9:21, God's sovereign power to mold human destinies is likened to a potter who has full mastery over his clay: "Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor?"

Likewise, the prophet Isaiah paints a vivid word-picture of the relationship between God and humanity when he writes, "Yet LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we all are the work of your hands" (Is 64:8). As reflected in these verses and others (Ps 2:9; Is 30:14; Lm 4:2), the arts and artistic imagery provide an effective means of communicating God's truth to his people.

STEVE R. HALLA

BUILDING THE TABERNACLE

8 All † the skilled artisans † among those doing the work made the tabernacle
with ten curtains. Bezalel made them of finely spun linen, as well as blue,
purple, and scarlet yarn, with a design of cherubim worked into them. 9 Each
curtain was forty-two feet † long and six feet † wide; all the curtains had the
same measurements. 10 He joined five of the curtains to each other, and the
other five curtains he joined to each other. 11 He made loops of blue yarn on the

edge of the last curtain in the first set and did the same on the edge of the outermost curtain in the second set. 12 He made fifty loops on the one curtain and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain in the second set, so that the loops lined up with each other. 13 He also made fifty gold clasps and joined the curtains to each other, so that the tabernacle became a single unit.

14 He made curtains of goat hair for a tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven of them. 15 Each curtain was forty-five feet † long and six feet wide. All eleven curtains had the same measurements. 16 He joined five of the curtains together, and the other six together. 17 He made fifty loops on the edge of the outermost curtain in the first set and fifty loops on the edge of the corresponding curtain in the second set. 18 He made fifty bronze clasps to join the tent together as a single unit. 19 He also made a covering for the tent from ram skins dyed red and a covering of fine leather † on top of it.

20 He † made upright supports † of acacia wood for the tabernacle. 21 Each support was fifteen feet † long and twenty-seven inches † wide. 22 Each support had two tenons for joining one to another. He did the same for all the supports of the tabernacle. 23 He made supports for the tabernacle as follows: twenty for the south side, 24 and he made forty silver bases to put under the twenty supports, two bases under the first support for its two tenons, and two bases under each of the following supports for their two tenons; 25 for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty supports, 26 with their forty silver bases, two bases under the first support and two bases under each of the following ones; 27 and for the back of the tabernacle, on the west side, he made six supports. 28 He also made two additional supports for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 29 They were paired at the bottom and joined together † at the † top in a single ring. This is what he did with both of them for the two corners. 30 So there were eight supports with their sixteen silver bases, two bases under each one.

31 He made five crossbars of acacia wood for the supports on one side of the tabernacle, 32 five crossbars for the supports on the other side of the tabernacle, and five crossbars for those at the back of the tabernacle on the west. 33 He made the central crossbar run through the middle of the supports from one end to

the other. 34 He overlaid them with gold and made their rings out of gold as holders for the crossbars. He also overlaid the crossbars with gold.

35 Then † he made the curtain with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen. He made it with a design of cherubim worked into it. 36 He made four pillars of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold; their hooks were of gold. And he cast four silver bases for the pillars.

37 He made a screen embroidered † with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely spun linen for the entrance to the tent, 38 together with its five pillars and their hooks. He overlaid the tops of the pillars and their bands with gold, but their five bases were bronze.

36:1 Lit *wise of heart*, also in v. 2 **36:8** Lit *the wise of heart* **36:9** Lit *28 cubits* **36:9** Lit *four cubits*, also in v. 15 **36:15** Lit *30 cubits* **36:19** Hb obscure **36:20** Or *made frames* **36:21** Lit *10 cubits* **36:21** Lit *a cubit and a half* **36:29** Lit *and together they are to be complete* **36:29** Lit *its* **36:37** Or *woven*

36:1 Ex 25:8; 28:3; 31:6; 35:10,35 **36:2** Ex 25:2; 35:21,26; 1Ch 29:5 **36:5** 2Ch 31:10; 2Co 8:2-3 **36:8-19** Ex 26:1-14 **36:20-34** Ex 25:5; 26:15-29 **36:35-38** Ex 26:31-37

MAKING THE ARK

37 Bezalel † made the ark of acacia wood, forty-five inches long, twenty-seven inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high. † 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and out and made a gold molding all around it. 3 He cast four gold rings for it, for its four feet, two rings on one side and two rings on the other side. 4 He made poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. 5 He inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark for carrying the ark.

6 He made a mercy seat of pure gold, forty-five inches long and twenty-seven inches wide. † 7 He made two cherubim of gold; he made them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat, 8 one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end. At each end, he made a cherub of one piece with the mercy seat.

9 They had wings spread out. They faced each other and covered the mercy seat with their wings. The faces of the cherubim were looking toward the mercy seat.

MAKING THE TABLE

10 He † constructed the table of acacia wood, thirty-six inches long, eighteen inches wide, and twenty-seven inches high. † 11 He overlaid it with pure gold and made a gold molding all around it. 12 He made a three-inch † frame all around it and made a gold molding all around its frame. 13 He cast four gold

rings for it and attached the rings to the four corners at its four legs. [14] The rings were next to the frame as holders for the poles to carry the table. [15] He made the poles for carrying the table from acacia wood and overlaid them with gold. [16] He also made the utensils that would be on the table out of pure gold: its plates and cups, as well as its bowls and pitchers for pouring drink offerings.

MAKING THE LAMPSTAND

[17] Then † he made the lampstand out of pure hammered gold. He made it all of one piece: its base and shaft, its ornamental cups, and its buds and petals. [18] Six branches extended from its sides, three branches of the lampstand from one side and three branches of the lampstand from the other side. [19] There were three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a bud and petals, on one branch, and three cups shaped like almond blossoms, each with a bud and petals, on the next branch. It was this way for the six branches that extended from the lampstand. [20] There were four cups shaped like almond blossoms on the lampstand shaft along with its buds and petals. [21] For the six branches that extended from it, a bud was under the first pair of branches from it, a bud under the second pair of branches from it, and a bud under the third pair of branches from it. [22] Their buds and branches were of one piece with it. All of it was a single hammered piece of pure gold. [23] He also made its seven lamps, snuffers, and firepans of pure gold. [24] He made it and all its utensils of seventy-five pounds † of pure gold.

MAKING THE ALTAR OF INCENSE

[25] He † made the altar of incense out of acacia wood. It was square, eighteen inches long and eighteen inches wide; it was thirty-six inches high. † Its horns were of one piece with it. [26] He overlaid it, its top, all around its sides, and its horns with pure gold. Then he made a gold molding all around it. [27] He made two gold rings for it under the molding on two of its sides; he put these on opposite sides of it to be holders for the poles to carry it with. [28] He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with gold.

[29] He also made the holy anointing oil and the pure, fragrant, and expertly blended incense. †

37:1 Lit *two and a half cubits its length, one and a half cubits its width, and one and a half cubits its height*
37:6 Lit *two and a half cubits its length and one and a half cubits its width* **37:10** Lit *two cubits its length,*

one cubit its width, and one and a half cubits its height **37:12** Lit *a handbreadth* **37:24** Lit *a talent* **37:25** Lit *a cubit its length, a cubit its width, and two cubits its height*
37:1-9 Ex 25:10-20 **37:10-16** Ex 25:23-29 **37:17-24** Ex 25:31-39 **37:25-28** Ex 30:1-5 **37:29** Ex 30:23-24,34-35

37:1 The explicit mention of **Bezalel** here with reference to the making of the **ark** of the covenant further emphasizes his leadership role in the construction of the tabernacle (see also 38:22). God had said earlier that "they are to make an ark of acacia wood" (25:10).

MAKING THE ALTAR OF BURNT OFFERING

38 Bezalel † constructed the altar of burnt offering from acacia wood. It was square, 7 1/2 feet long and 7 1/2 feet wide, † and was 4 1/2 feet † high. 2 He made horns for it on its four corners; the horns were of one piece with it. Then he overlaid it with bronze.
3 He made all the altar's utensils: the pots, shovels, basins, meat forks, and firepans; he made all its utensils of bronze. 4 He constructed for the altar a grate of bronze mesh under its ledge, † halfway up from the bottom. 5 He cast four rings at the four corners of the bronze grate as holders for the poles. 6 He made the poles of acacia wood and overlaid them with bronze. 7 Then he inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar in order to carry it with them. He constructed the altar with boards so that it was hollow.

MAKING THE BRONZE BASIN

8 He made the bronze basin and its stand from the bronze mirrors of the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. †

MAKING THE COURTYARD

9 Then † he made the courtyard. The hangings on the south side of the courtyard were of finely spun linen, 150 feet † long, 10 including their twenty posts and their twenty bronze bases, with silver hooks and silver bands † for the posts. 11 The hangings on the north side were also 150 feet long, including their twenty posts and twenty bronze bases. The hooks and bands of the posts were silver. 12 The hangings on the west side were 75 feet † long, including their ten posts and their ten bases, with silver hooks and silver bands for the posts. 13 And for the east side toward the sunrise, 75 feet long, 14 the hangings on one side of the gate were 22 1/2 feet, † including their three posts and their three bases. 15 It

was the same for the other side of the courtyard gate. The hangings were 22 1/2 feet, including their three posts and their three bases. 16 All the hangings around the courtyard were of finely spun linen. 17 The bases for the posts were bronze; the hooks and bands of the posts were silver; and the plating for the tops of the posts was silver. All the posts of the courtyard were banded with silver.
18 The screen for the gate of the courtyard was made of finely spun linen, expertly embroidered † with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. It was 30 feet † long, and like the hangings of the courtyard, 7 1/2 feet † high. † 19 It had four posts with their four bronze bases. Their hooks were silver, and their top plating and their bands were silver. 20 All the tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the surrounding courtyard were bronze.

INVENTORY OF MATERIALS

21 This is the inventory for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the testimony, † that was recorded at Moses's command. It was the work of the Levites under the direction of † Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. † 22 Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made everything that the LORD commanded Moses.
23 With him was Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, a gem cutter, a designer, and an embroiderer with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.
24 All the gold of the presentation offering that was used for the project in all the work on the sanctuary, was 2,193 pounds, † according to the sanctuary shekel. † 25 The silver from those of the community who were registered was 7,544 pounds, † according to the sanctuary shekel — 26 one-fifth of an ounce † per man, that is, half a shekel according to the sanctuary shekel, from everyone twenty years old or more who had crossed over to the registered group, 603,550 men. 27 There were 7,500 pounds † of silver used to cast the bases of the sanctuary and the bases of the curtain — one hundred bases from 7,500 pounds, 75 pounds † for each base. † 28 With the remaining 44 pounds † he made the hooks for the posts, overlaid their tops, and supplied bands for them.
29 The bronze of the presentation offering totaled 5,310 pounds. † 30 He made with it the bases for the entrance to the tent of meeting, the bronze altar and its bronze grate, all the utensils for the altar, 31 the bases for the surrounding courtyard, the bases for the gate of the courtyard, all the tent pegs for the tabernacle, and all the tent pegs for the surrounding courtyard.

38:1 Lit *five cubits its length and five cubits its width* **38:1** Lit *three cubits* **38:4** Or *rim* **38:9** Lit *100 cubits*, also in v. 11 **38:10** Or *connecting rods*, also in vv. 11,17,19,28 **38:12** Lit *50 cubits*, also in v. 13 **38:14** Lit *15 cubits*, also in v. 15 **38:18** Or *woven* **38:18** Lit *20 cubits* **38:18** Lit *five cubits* **38:18** Lit *high in width* **38:21** Lit *Levites by the hand of* **38:24** Lit *29 talents and 730 shekels* **38:25** Lit *100 talents and 1,775 shekels* **38:26** Lit *a beka* **38:27** Lit *100 talents* **38:27** Lit *one talent* **38:28** Lit *1,775* (shekels) **38:29** Lit *70 talents and 2,400 shekels*
38:1-7 Ex 27:1-8 **38:8** Ex 30:18; 1Sm 2:22 **38:9-20** Ex 27:9-19 **38:21** Nm 1:50,53; 9:15; 10:11; 17:7-8; 2Ch 24:6; Ac 7:44 **38:21** Nm 4:28,33 **38:24** Ex 30:13; Lv 27:25; Nm 3:47; 18:16 **38:26-27** Ex 26:19,21,25,32; 30:13; Nm 1:46

MAKING THE PRIESTLY GARMENTS

39 They made specially woven † garments for ministry in the sanctuary, and the holy garments for Aaron from the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. †

MAKING THE EPHOD

2 Bezalel † made the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen. 3 They hammered out thin sheets of gold, and he † cut threads from them to interweave with the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and the fine linen in a skillful design. 4 They made shoulder pieces for attaching it; it was joined together at its two edges. 5 The artistically woven waistband that was on the ephod was of one piece with the ephod, according to the same workmanship of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
6 Then they mounted the onyx stones surrounded with gold filigree settings, engraved with the names of Israel's sons as a gem cutter engraves a seal. 7 He fastened them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the Israelites, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE BREASTPIECE

8 He † also made the embroidered † breastpiece with the same workmanship as the ephod of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and of finely spun linen. 9 They made the breastpiece square and folded double, nine inches long and nine inches wide. † 10 They mounted four rows of gemstones † on it.

The first row was

a row of carnelian, topaz, and emerald; †

11 the second row,
a turquoise, † a lapis lazuli, and a diamond; †
12 the third row,
a jacinth, † an agate, and an amethyst;
13 and the fourth row,
a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper.

They were surrounded with gold filigree in their settings.
14 The twelve stones corresponded to the names of Israel's sons. Each stone was engraved like a seal with one of the names of the twelve tribes.
15 They made braided chains of pure gold cord for the breastpiece. 16 They also fashioned two gold filigree settings and two gold rings and attached the two rings to its two corners. 17 Then they attached the two gold cords to the two gold rings on the corners of the breastpiece. 18 They attached the other ends of the two cords to the two filigree settings, and in this way they attached them to the ephod's shoulder pieces in front. 19 They made two other gold rings and put them at the two other corners of the breastpiece on the edge that is next to the inner border of the ephod. 20 They made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the ephod's two shoulder pieces on its front, close to its seam, † above the ephod's woven waistband. 21 Then they tied the breastpiece from its rings to the rings of the ephod with a cord of blue yarn, so that the breastpiece was above the ephod's waistband and did not come loose from the ephod. They did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE ROBE

22 They † made the woven robe of the ephod entirely of blue yarn. 23 There was an opening in the center of the robe like that of body armor † with a collar around the opening so that it would not tear. 24 They made pomegranates of finely spun blue, purple, and scarlet yarn † on the lower hem of the robe. 25 They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells between the pomegranates, all around the hem of the robe between the pomegranates, 26 a

bell and a pomegranate alternating all around the lower hem of the robe † to be worn for ministry. They made it just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

THE OTHER PRIESTLY GARMENTS

27 They made the tunics of fine woven linen for Aaron and his sons. 28 They made the turban and the ornate headbands † of fine linen, the linen undergarments of finely spun linen, † 29 and the sash of finely spun linen expertly embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet yarn. They did just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MAKING THE HOLY DIADEM

30 They made a medallion, the holy diadem, out of pure gold and wrote on it an inscription like the engraving on a seal: † HOLY TO THE LORD. 31 They attached a cord of blue yarn to it in order to mount it on the turban, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

MOSES'S INSPECTION OF THE TABERNACLE

32 So all the work for the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was finished. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses. † 33 They brought the tabernacle to Moses: the tent with all its furnishings, its clasps, its supports, its crossbars, and its pillars and bases; 34 the covering of ram skins dyed red and the covering of fine leather; † the curtain for the screen; 35 the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; 36 the table, all its utensils, and the Bread of the Presence; 37 the pure gold lampstand, with its lamps arranged and all its utensils, as well as the oil for the light; 38 the gold altar; the anointing oil; the fragrant incense; the screen for the entrance to the tent; 39 the bronze altar with its bronze grate, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; 40 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and bases, the screen for the gate of the courtyard, its ropes and tent pegs, and all the furnishings for the service of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; 41 and the specially woven † garments for ministering in the sanctuary, the holy garments for the priest Aaron and the garments for his sons to serve as priests. 42 The Israelites had done all the work according to everything the LORD had commanded Moses. † 43 Moses

inspected all the work they had accomplished. They had done just as the LORD commanded. Then Moses blessed them. †

39:1 Hb obscure **39:3** Sam, Syr, Tg read *they* **39:8** Or *woven* **39:9** Lit *a span its length and a span its width* **39:10** Many of these stones cannot be identified with certainty. **39:10** Or *beryl* **39:11** Or *malachite*, or *garnet* **39:11** Hb uncertain; LXX, Vg read *jasper* **39:12** Hb obscure **39:20** The place where the *shoulder pieces* join the front of the ephod **39:23** Hb obscure **39:24** Sam, LXX, Vg add *and linen* **39:26** Lit *bell and pomegranate, bell and pomegranate, on the hem of the robe around* **39:28** Lit *and the headdresses of headbands* **39:34** Hb obscure **39:41** Hb obscure

39:1 Ex 28:2,4; 31:10; 35:19,23; 39:41 **39:2-7** Ex 28:6-12 **39:8-21** Ex 28:15-28 **39:22-26** Ex 28:31-34 **39:28** Ex 28:39,42; Ezk 44:18 **39:30** Ex 28:36-37; 29:6 **39:32** Ex 25:40; 39:42-43 **39:33-42** Ex 25:31; 27:9-15; 30:3; 35:10 **39:43** Lv 9:22-23; Nm 6:23-27; Jos 22:6; 2Sm 6:18; 1Kg 8:14; 2Ch 30:27

39:32 The preceding detailed account of the construction of the tabernacle (36:8–39:31) demonstrated that the **Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses** in chapter 25. Their obedience is mentioned twice more in 39:42-43 and contrasts sharply with their worship of the golden calf in 32:1-6.

SETTING UP THE TABERNACLE

40 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "You are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, on the first day of the first month. † † 3 Put the ark † of the testimony there and screen off the ark with the curtain. 4 Then bring in the table and lay out its arrangement; also bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. 5 Place the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony. Put up the screen for the entrance to the tabernacle. 6 Position the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting. 7 Place the basin † between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8 Assemble the surrounding courtyard and hang the screen for the gate of the courtyard.

9 "Take the anointing oil and anoint † the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it along with all its furnishings so that it will be holy. 10 Anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar so that it will be especially holy. 11 Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate it.

12 "Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. † 13 Clothe Aaron with the holy garments, † anoint him, and consecrate him, so that he can serve me as a priest. 14 Have his sons come forward and clothe them in tunics. 15 Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may also serve me as priests. Their anointing will serve to inaugurate a permanent priesthood for them throughout their generations." †

16 Moses did everything just as the LORD had commanded him. 17 The
tabernacle was set up in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the
month. † † 18 Moses set up the tabernacle: He laid its bases, positioned its
supports, inserted its crossbars, and set up its pillars. 19 Then he spread the tent
over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as the LORD
had commanded Moses.
20 Moses took the testimony † and placed it in the ark, and attached the poles to
the ark. He set the mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 He brought the ark into the
tabernacle, put up the curtain for the screen, and screened off the ark of the
testimony, just as the LORD had commanded him.
22 Moses placed the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the
tabernacle, outside the curtain. 23 He arranged the bread on it before the LORD,
just as the LORD had commanded him. 24 He put the lampstand in the tent of
meeting opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle 25 and set up the
lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded him.
26 Moses installed the gold altar in the tent of meeting, in front of the curtain,
27 and burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded him.
28 He put up the screen at the entrance to the tabernacle. 29 He placed the altar
of burnt offering at the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and
offered the burnt offering and the grain offering on it, just as the LORD had
commanded him.
30 He set the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it
for washing. 31 Moses, Aaron, and his sons washed their hands and feet from it.
32 They washed whenever they came to the tent of meeting and approached the
altar, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
33 Next Moses set up the surrounding courtyard for the tabernacle and the altar
and hung a screen for the gate of the courtyard. So Moses finished the work. †

THE LORD'S GLORY

34 The cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the
tabernacle. † 35 Moses was unable to enter the tent of meeting because the
cloud rested on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
36 The Israelites set out whenever the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle
throughout all the stages of their journey. † 37 If the cloud was not taken up,

they did not set out until the day it was taken up. † 38 For the cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by day, and there was a fire inside the cloud by night, visible to the entire house of Israel throughout all the stages of their journey.

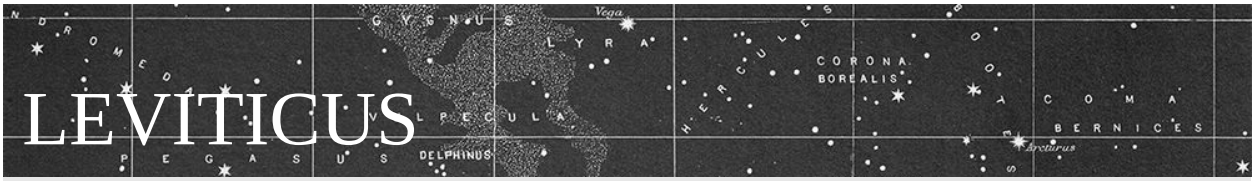
40:2 Lit *on the day of the first month, on the first of the month* **40:17** DSS, Sam, LXX add *of their coming out of Egypt*

40:2 Ex 12:12; 13:4; 26:30 **40:3** Ex 26:33; 40:21; Nm 4:5 **40:7** Ex 30:18; 40:30 **40:9** Ex 30:26; Lv 8:10 **40:12** Lv 8:1-3 **40:13** Ex 28:41 **40:15** Ex 29:9; Nm 25:13 **40:17** Ex 40:2; Nm 7:1 **40:20** Ex 16:34; 25:16 **40:21-33** Ex 25:37; 26:33,35-36; 27:9,16; 29:38; 30:5-7,19-20; 40:1-7 **40:34** Lv 16:2; Nm 9:15; 1Kg 8:10-11; 2Ch 5:13-14; 7:2; Is 6:4; Hg 2:7,9; Rv 15:8 **40:36** Nm 9:17; Neh 9:19 **40:37** Nm 9:19-22

40:1-15 God instructed Moses himself **to set up the tabernacle . . . on the first day of the first month** (see also v. 17), which he did **just as the LORD had commanded him** (vv. 16,19,21,23,25,27,29). This took place almost one year after the Passover (12:2-3) and about ten months after the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai (19:1).

40:34-35 The completion of the tabernacle in v. 33 according to God's instructions was followed by a display of **the glory of the LORD**, which **filled the tabernacle** such that **Moses was unable to enter.** God's special manifestation of his glory in the Israelite camp was unique and dangerous (given Israel's sin). This was the reason for the careful instructions for the construction of the tabernacle and the priesthood, which had to be carried out precisely (see 39:32). The presence and glory of God in the camp is the climax of the book of Exodus and the ultimate goal of his bringing Israel out of slavery in Egypt. He brought Israel out of captivity to be in relationship with himself. The narrative will continue in Leviticus 1:1 with God speaking "from the tent of meeting" (probably the tabernacle; see the note on 33:7-11) to Moses.

40:36-38 The pillar of cloud and of fire had been mentioned earlier as a means of guidance for the Israelites (13:21-22). Henceforth it rested over the tabernacle (see also Nm 9:15-23).



LEVITICUS

INTRODUCTION

The book's name comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT): "relating to the Levites." This third section of the Pentateuch deals primarily with the duties of the priests and the service of the tabernacle, but it contains other laws as well. Leviticus gives us regulations for worship, laws on ceremonial cleanness, moral laws, and holy days.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Although the book of Leviticus is technically anonymous, the evidence from the Bible and from Jewish and Christian traditions attributes it to the lawgiver, Moses (cp. 18:5 with Rm 10:5). Moses was the chief recipient of God's revelation in the book of Leviticus (1:1; 4:1). Elsewhere, Moses is said to have written down revelation that he received (Ex 24:4; 34:28; Mk 10:4-5; 12:19; Jn 1:45; 5:46). The author of Leviticus was someone well acquainted with the events in the book, and he was knowledgeable of the Sinai Wilderness, making him most likely a firsthand witness.

BACKGROUND: About one year passed from the time Israel arrived at Sinai until they departed (Ex 19:1; Nm 10:11). During that time, Moses received the covenant from the Lord, erected the tabernacle (Ex 40:17), and received all the instructions in Leviticus and in the early chapters of Numbers. This block of material is the continuous narrative extending from Exodus 19 through Leviticus to Numbers 10:11. Since these events occurred in just one year and yet received the largest amount of space in the books from Exodus through Deuteronomy, Moses showed the special importance of the Sinai revelation to the writing of the Pentateuch. The repeated expression "The LORD spoke to Moses" throughout Leviticus leaves no doubt that its instructions were of divine origin, not the creation of Moses (Lv 1:1; 27:1).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Leviticus is often neglected because Christians have misunderstood its message and purpose. This was not true of Jesus, who designated "love your neighbor as yourself" (19:18) as the second greatest commandment (Mt 22:39). The apostle Paul considered these words the summation of the Mosaic commandments (Rm 13:9; Gl 5:14; cp. Jms 2:8). The writer of Hebrews relied on the images of Leviticus in describing the person and role of Jesus Christ: sacrifice, the priesthood, and the Day of Atonement (Heb 4:14–10:18). Studying Leviticus gives us a deeper devotion to Jesus Christ, a stronger worship of God, and a better understanding of daily Christian living.

STRUCTURE

Leviticus is primarily a collection of laws, with a little historical narrative. The laws contained in Leviticus can be divided into two groups. First are the commands, or apodictic law. These are both positive commands ("You must . . .") and negative commands ("You must not . . ."). The second type of law is casuistic law. These are case laws using an example of what to do if such and such happened ("If a man . . ."). Some scholars seek to divide the laws further into civil laws, moral laws, and ceremonial laws, but there is no evidence that the Israelites made such a distinction.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Leviticus teaches that in his holiness God has the absolute right to instruct his people in what holiness demands, down to the minute details of life. Sinful people may approach him for forgiveness only through the sacrifices he has ordained.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

God has made complete provision for forgiving the sins and failures of people, if only they make use of his means. Further, humans can enjoy full fellowship with God but only if they live according to the way he has revealed.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

"Blood" occurs more than sixty times in Leviticus. Readers are overwhelmed with the truth that in God's design blood outpoured through ritual sacrifice is the key to atoning for sins (17:11). This is critical for understanding the necessity of Christ's violent death as the atoning sacrifice for people's sins.

LEVITICUS TIMELINE

1750–1500 BC

Hyksos rule Egypt. **1630–1543**

18th Dynasty of Egypt **1570–1303** (includes Thutmose and Amenhotep; traditionally the pharaohs of oppression) The New Kingdom begins in Egypt. **1540**

The god Osiris is represented in Egyptian tombs as a symbol of resurrection in the world to come. **1540**

1500–1450 BC

AARON 1529–1409?

Egyptians find a way to create lubricants that last and do not burn off. **1500**

Clay tablet map of the Babylonian city of Nippur. **1500**

Battle of Megiddo between Egyptian forces of Pharaoh Thutmose III and a Kadesh alliance, reestablishing Egyptian hegemony in the Levant. **1479**

Queen Makare Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I, reigned in Egypt during a period of peace and prosperity. **1479–1457**

1450–1405 BC

JOSHUA 1409?–1380

The exodus and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea **1446**

The Passover is instituted. **1446**

God's covenant at Sinai **1446**

The tabernacle is built and dedicated. **1445**

Events in Leviticus **1445**

Exploration of Canaan by 12 spies **1445**

1405–1300 BC

Musical notation, Ugarit **1400**

Water clocks were invented. **1400**

The Amarna letters were diplomatic correspondence between administrators in Egypt's New Kingdom and their representatives in Canaan and other states of the Ancient Near East. They were written on clay tablets. **1345**

THE BURNT OFFERING

1 Then the LORD summoned Moses † and spoke to him from the tent of
meeting: † 2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When any of you
brings an offering to the LORD from the livestock, you may bring your
offering from the herd or the flock.
3 "If his offering is a burnt offering † from the herd, he is to bring an
unblemished male. † He will bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting so
that he † may be accepted by the LORD. † 4 He is to lay his hand on † the head
of the burnt offering so it can be accepted † on his behalf to make atonement for
him. † 5 He is to slaughter the bull before the LORD; Aaron's sons the priests †
are to present the blood † and splatter it † on all sides of the altar that is at the
entrance to the tent of meeting. 6 Then he is to skin the burnt offering †
and cut it into pieces. † 7 The sons of Aaron the priest will prepare a fire on the altar
and arrange wood on the fire. 8 Aaron's sons the priests are to arrange the
pieces, the head, and the fat † on top of the burning wood on the altar. 9 The
offerer is to wash its entrails † and legs † with water. Then the priest will burn
all of it on the altar as a burnt offering, a fire offering † of a pleasing aroma † to
the LORD.
10 "But if his offering for a burnt offering is from the flock, from sheep or
goats, † he is to present an unblemished male. 11 He will slaughter it on the
north side of the altar before the LORD. Aaron's sons the priests will splatter its
blood against the altar on all sides. 12 He will cut the animal into pieces with its
head and its fat, and the priest will arrange them on top of the burning wood on

the altar. 13 But he is to wash the entrails and legs with water. The priest will
then present all of it and burn it on the altar; it is a burnt offering, a fire offering
of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.
14 "If his offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, † he is to present his
offering from the turtledoves † or young pigeons. † † 15 Then the priest is to
bring it to the altar, and will twist off its head and burn it on the altar; its blood
should be drained at the side of the altar. 16 He will remove its digestive tract, †
cutting off the tail feathers, and throw it on the east side of the altar at the place
for ashes. † 17 He will tear it open by its wings without dividing the bird. †
Then the priest is to burn it on the altar on top of the burning wood. It is a burnt
offering, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

1:3 Or *it* **1:6** Lit *its pieces*, also in v. 12 **1:14** Or *or pigeons* **1:16** Or *its crop*, or *its crissum*
1:1 Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **1:1** Ex 27:21 **1:3** Gn 22:2; Lv 3:5 **1:3** Ex 29:1 **1:3** Lv 19:5; Heb 9:14; 1Pt 1:19 **1:4** Ex 29:10; Lv 3:2; 8:14,18,22; 16:21; Nm 8:10,12 **1:4** Gn 33:10; Lv 7:18; 19:7; 22:23,25,27 **1:4** Ex 30:15 **1:5** Lv 4:16 **1:5** Heb 9:12 **1:5** Ex 24:6; 29:16,20 **1:6** Lv 7:8; 9:11; 2Ch 29:34 **1:8** Lv 1:12; 8:20 **1:9** Ex 12:9; 29:13,22; Lv 1:13; 3:3 **1:9** Ex 12:9; 29:17; Lv 1:13; 4:11; 8:21; 9:14; Am 3:12 **1:9** Dt 18:1 **1:9** Lv 2:2; 23:13 **1:10** Lv 4:23 **1:14** Gn 40:17; Lv 17:13 **1:14** Gn 15:9; Lv 1:14; 5:7,11; 12:6,8; 14:22,30; 15:14,29; Nm 6:10; Ps 74:19; Sg 2:12; Jr 8:7 **1:14** Gn 8:8-12; Lv 5:7,11 **1:16** Lv 4:12; 6:10-11; 1Kg 13:3,5; Jr 31:40 **1:17** Gn 15:9-10

1:1 The Pentateuch continues with Leviticus, which picks up where Exodus left off (see the note on Ex 1:1). The tabernacle was set up and filled with the glory of God so that Moses could not enter (Ex 40:34-35). Leviticus begins with God speaking to Moses **from the tent of meeting.** Chronologically, the book of Leviticus covers a period of only one month (see Ex 40:17; Nm 1:1). The pace of the narrative, which had already slowed with the construction of the tabernacle just described, thus slows down even further here. This book is dominated by laws spoken by God to Moses (and sometimes Aaron), which are in turn to be relayed to the Israelites (e.g., 1:2). The enduring significance of these detailed laws can sometimes be difficult to determine, but several NT passages helpfully compare the law to a "shadow" of superior new covenant realities (Col 2:16-17; Heb 8:5; 10:1; see the note on Ex 25:40). This suggests a general correspondence between the law and the new covenant, though there may not necessarily be a clear one-to-one correspondence in every instance. Another helpful NT passage in this regard is Galatians 3:24, which calls the law "our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith."

1:3-17 The **burnt offering** was typically to be **an unblemished male**, either **from the herd** or **from the flock.** This offering was to be burned entirely, and its purpose was **to make atonement for** the one bringing it. *Atonement* refers to the covering of sin so that it would not interfere with God's presence in the camp. Not until the death and resurrection of Christ was this sin fully forgiven and removed. Burnt offerings are found throughout the OT (e.g., 1Sm 13:9-10; 1Kg 3:4) and have already been mentioned in the Pentateuch (e.g., Gn 8:20; 22:13; Ex 24:5).

THE GRAIN OFFERING

2 "When anyone presents a grain offering † as an offering to the LORD, it
is to consist of fine flour. † He is to pour olive oil † on it, put

frankincense on it, † 2 and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest will
take a handful of fine flour and oil from it, along with all its frankincense, and
will burn this memorial portion † of it on the altar, a fire offering of a pleasing
aroma to the LORD. 3 But the rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron and
his sons; it is the holiest part † of the fire offerings to the LORD.
4 "When you present a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to be made of fine
flour, either unleavened cakes † mixed with oil or unleavened wafers † coated
with oil. 5 If your offering is a grain offering prepared on a griddle, † it is to be
unleavened bread † made of fine flour mixed with oil. 6 Break it into pieces and
pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7 If your offering is a grain offering prepared
in a pan, † it is to be made of fine flour with oil. 8 When you bring to the LORD
the grain offering made in any of these ways, it is to be presented to the priest,
and he will take it to the altar. 9 The priest will remove the memorial portion †
from the grain offering and burn it on the altar, a fire offering of a pleasing
aroma to the LORD. 10 But the rest of the grain offering will belong to Aaron and
his sons; † it is the holiest part of the fire offerings to the LORD.
11 "No grain offering that you present to the LORD is to be made with yeast, for
you are not to burn † any yeast † or honey † as a fire offering to the LORD.
12 You may present them to the LORD as an offering of firstfruits, † but they are
not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. 13 You are to season each of
your grain offerings with salt; you must not omit from your grain offering the
salt of the covenant † with your God. You are to present salt with each of your
offerings.
14 "If you present a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you are to present
fresh heads of grain, crushed kernels, roasted on the fire, for your grain offering
of firstfruits. 15 You are to put oil and frankincense on it; it is a grain offering.
16 The priest will then burn some of its crushed kernels and oil with all its
frankincense as a fire offering to the LORD.

2:9 Lit *portion of it* **2:11** Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX, Tg read *present*

2:1 Ex 40:29 **2:1** Gn 18:6; Ex 29:2,40; Lv 2:1-7 **2:1** Gn 28:18; 35:14 **2:1** Ex 30:34 **2:2** Lv 2:9,16; 5:12; 6:8; 24:7; Nm 5:26; Ac 10:4 **2:3** Lv 14:13 **2:4** Ex 29:2 **2:4** Ex 29:2,23; Lv 7:12; 8:26; Nm 6:15,19; 1Ch 23:29 **2:5** Lv 6:14; 7:9; 1Ch 23:29; Ezk 4:3 **2:5** Ex 12:8; Mt 16:6,11-12; 1Co 5:6-8 **2:7** Lv 7:9 **2:10** Lv 7:9-10 **2:11** Ex 12:14 **2:11** Jdg 14:8 **2:12** Gn 49:3; Ex 23:16,19 **2:13** Ex 19:5; Nm 18:19; 2Ch 13:5

2:1 Not all of the sacrifices described in Leviticus 1–7 were animal sacrifices.

2:9-10 The ubiquitous involvement of the priests here and throughout Leviticus 1–7 is a reminder of the mediated worship experience of all who would bring offerings to the tabernacle.

2:11-13 The prohibition against grain offerings **made with yeast** (see also 6:16-17) is reminiscent of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex 12:8,15-20,39). Both yeast and **honey** were probably excluded from proximity to God's holiness because they are susceptible to fermentation, which in turn was associated with mortality and impurity. The use of the preservative salt (**the salt of the covenant with your God**) seems to reflect the enduring nature of this covenant.

THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

3 "If his offering is a fellowship sacrifice, † and he is presenting an animal from the herd, whether male or female, he is to present one without blemish † before the LORD. 2 He is to lay his hand on the head of his offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests will splatter the blood on all sides of the altar. † 3 He will present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD: the fat † surrounding the entrails, † all the fat that is on the entrails, 4 and the two kidneys † with the fat on them at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver † with the kidneys. 5 Aaron's sons will burn it on the altar along with the burnt offering † that is on the burning wood, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

6 "If his offering as a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD is from the flock, he is to present a male or female without blemish. 7 If he is presenting a lamb for his offering, he is to present it before the LORD. 8 He must lay his hand on the head of his offering, then slaughter it before the tent of meeting. Aaron's sons will splatter its blood on all sides of the altar. 9 He will then present part of the fellowship sacrifice as a fire offering to the LORD consisting of its fat and the entire fat tail, † which he is to remove close to the backbone. He will also remove the fat surrounding the entrails, † all the fat on the entrails, 10 the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins, and the fatty lobe of the liver above the kidneys. 11 Then the priest will burn the food on the altar, † as a fire offering to the LORD.

12 "If his offering is a goat, † he is to present it before the LORD. 13 He must lay his hand on its head and slaughter it before the tent of meeting. Aaron's sons will

splatter † its blood on all sides of the altar. 14 He will present part of his offering as a fire offering to the LORD: the fat surrounding the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, 15 and the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with the kidneys. 16 Then the priest will burn the food on the altar, as a fire offering for a pleasing aroma. †
"All fat belongs to the LORD. 17 This is a permanent statute † throughout your generations, wherever you live: you must not eat any fat or any blood." †
3:13 Or *dash* **3:16** Sam, LXX add *to the Lord*
3:1 Lv 7:11 **3:1** Ex 29:1 **3:2** Lv 1:5 **3:3** Ex 23:18; 29:13,22 **3:3** Ex 12:9 **3:4** Lv 7:4 **3:4** Lv 9:10 **3:5** Lv 1:3-4 **3:9** Ex 29:22; Lv 7:3; 8:25; 9:19 **3:9** Lv 1:9 **3:11** Lv 3:16; 21:6,8,17,21-22; 22:25; 26:5; Nm 28:24 **3:12** Lv 4:23 **3:17** Ex 28:43; Lv 11:46 **3:17** Lv 7:26; 17:10,14; 19:26; Dt 12:16,23; 15:23

3:1-2 The **fellowship sacrifice** was not a response for sin, but rather a voluntary offering of thanksgiving in light of God's deliverance or an unexpected blessing. It was to be **without blemish** and could be a **male or female**, either **from the herd** or **from the flock.** The laying of one's **hand on the head of his offering** probably indicates some kind of identification with the animal (see Ac 8:18; 13:3; 2Tm 1:6).

3:17 The prohibition against eating **fat** and **blood** is also mentioned in 7:22-27 (see also 17:10; Dt 12:16).

THE SIN OFFERING

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell the Israelites: When someone sins unintentionally † against any of the LORD's commands and does anything prohibited by them — 3 "If the anointed priest † sins, bringing guilt † on the people, he is to present to the LORD a young, unblemished † bull as a sin † offering † for the sin he has committed. 4 He is to bring the bull to the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and slaughter it before the LORD. 5 The anointed priest will then take some of the bull's blood and bring it into the tent of meeting. 6 The priest is to dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times † before the LORD in front of the curtain † of the sanctuary. † 7 The priest is to apply some of the blood to the horns of the altar of fragrant incense † that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. He must pour out the rest of the bull's blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering † that is at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8 He is to remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering: the fat surrounding the entrails, all the fat that is on the entrails, 9 and the two kidneys with the fat on them at the loins. He will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver with the kidneys,

10 just as the fat is removed from the ox of the fellowship sacrifice. † The priest
is to burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11 But the hide † of the bull and
all its flesh, with its head and legs, and its entrails and waste — 12 all the rest of
the bull — he must bring to a ceremonially clean place † outside the camp † to
the ash heap, and must burn it on a wood fire. It is to be burned at the ash heap.
13 "Now if the whole community of Israel † errs, † and the matter escapes the
notice of the assembly, † so that they violate any of the LORD's commands and
incur guilt † by doing what is prohibited, 14 then the assembly must present a
young bull as a sin offering. They are to bring it before the tent of meeting when
the sin they have committed in regard to the command becomes known. 15 The
elders † of the community are to lay their hands on the bull's head before the
LORD and it is to be slaughtered before the LORD. 16 The anointed priest will
bring some of the bull's blood into the tent of meeting. 17 The priest is to dip his
finger in the blood and sprinkle it seven times before the LORD in front of the
curtain. 18 He is to apply some of the blood to the horns of the altar that is
before the LORD in the tent of meeting. He will pour out the rest of the blood at
the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance to the tent of
meeting. 19 He is to remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar. 20 He is to
offer this bull just as he did with the bull in the sin offering; he will offer it the
same way. So the priest will make atonement † on their behalf, and they will be
forgiven. † 21 Then he will bring the bull outside the camp † and burn it just as
he burned the first bull. It is the sin offering for the assembly.
22 "When a leader † † sins and unintentionally violates any of the commands of
the LORD his God by doing what is prohibited, and incurs guilt, 23 or someone
informs him about the sin he has committed, he is to bring an unblemished male
goat † as his offering. 24 He is to lay his hand on the head of the goat and
slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering † is slaughtered before the
LORD. It is a sin offering. † 25 Then the priest is to take some of the blood from
the sin offering with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt
offering. † The rest of its blood he is to pour out at the base of the altar of burnt
offering. 26 He must burn all its fat on the altar, like the fat of the fellowship

sacrifice. In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf for that person's sin, and he will be forgiven.

27 "Now if any of the common people † sins unintentionally by violating one of the LORD's commands, does what is prohibited, and incurs guilt, 28 or if someone informs him about the sin he has committed, then he is to bring an unblemished female goat as his offering for the sin that he has committed. 29 He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. 30 Then the priest is to take some of its blood with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt offering. He is to pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. 31 He is to remove all its fat just as the fat is removed from the fellowship sacrifice. The priest is to burn it on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf, and he will be forgiven.

32 "Or if the offering that he brings as a sin offering is a lamb, † he is to bring an unblemished female. 33 He is to lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it as a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. 34 Then the priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and apply it to the horns of the altar of burnt offering. He is to pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar. 35 He is to remove all its fat just as the fat of the lamb is removed from the fellowship sacrifice. The priest will burn it on the altar along with the fire offerings to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

4:3 Or *purification* **4:22** Or *ruler* **4:27** Lit *the people of the land*

4:2 Nm 15:22,24 **4:3** Lv 4:16; 6:15 **4:3** Lv 6:5,7; 22:16 **4:3** Ex 29:1 **4:3** Ex 29:14 **4:6** Lv 16:14 **4:6** Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45 **4:6** Ex 15:17; Lv 10:4 **4:7** Ex 30:27 **4:7** Ex 3:5; 35:16 **4:8-10** Lv 7:11 **4:11** Lv 7:8 **4:12** Lv 6:4; 10:14; Nm 19:9 **4:12** Lv 8:17; Heb 13:11-13 **4:13** Ex 12:47 **4:13** Nm 15:22 **4:13** Ex 16:3; Lv 4:21; Nm 10:7; 15:15; 20:6,10 **4:13** Nm 5:6; Ps 68:21 **4:15** Ex 18:12 **4:20** Ex 30:15 **4:20** Lv 5:16; 6:7 **4:21** Lv 8:17 **4:22** Ex 34:31 **4:23** Lv 9:3; 16:5; 23:19; Nm 7:16-82 **4:24** Gn 22:2; Ex 20:24; Lv 3:5 **4:24** Ex 29:14 **4:25** Lv 5:9 **4:32** Lv 9:3

4:14 The animal offered as a sin offering varied depending on the position or size of the party that had sinned. **The anointed priest** was to offer **a young, unblemished bull** (v. 3), and the whole community of Israel was to offer **a young bull** (v. 14). A leader was to offer "an unblemished male goat" (v. 23), and a common person was to offer "an unblemished female goat" (v. 28).

4:27 The need for a sin offering should anyone sin **unintentionally by violating one of the LORD's commands** demonstrates that that law required perfection and that an unintentional sin was still a sin (see also vv. 2,13,22; 5:15,17). The purpose of the sin offering was to "make atonement on [a person's] behalf"(v. 31) so that he might be forgiven.

CASES REQUIRING SIN OFFERINGS

5 “When someone sins in any of these ways:
If he has seen, heard, or known about something he has witnessed, and did not respond to a public call to testify, he will bear his iniquity. †

2 Or if someone touches anything unclean † — a carcass of an unclean wild animal, † or unclean livestock, or an unclean swarming creature † — without being aware of it, he is unclean and incurs guilt. †

3 Or if he touches human uncleanness † — any uncleanness by which one can become defiled † — without being aware of it, but later recognizes it, he incurs guilt.

4 Or if someone swears rashly † to do what is good or evil — concerning anything a person may speak rashly in an oath — without being aware of it, but later recognizes it, he incurs guilt in such an instance.

5 If someone incurs guilt in one of these cases, he is to confess † he has committed that sin. 6 He must bring his penalty for guilt † for the sin he has committed to the LORD: a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement † on his behalf for his sin.

7 “But if he cannot afford an animal from the flock, then he may bring to the LORD two turtledoves or two young pigeons † as penalty for guilt for his sin — one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. 8 He is to bring them to the priest, who will first present the one for the sin offering. He is to twist its head at the back of the neck without severing it. † 9 Then he will sprinkle some of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, while the rest of the blood is to be drained out at the base of the altar; † it is a sin offering. 10 He will prepare the second bird as a burnt offering according to the regulation. † In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven.

11 “But if he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young pigeons, † he may bring two quarts † of fine flour † † as an offering for his sin. He must not put olive oil or frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering. 12 He is to bring it to the priest, who will take a handful from it as its memorial portion † and burn it on

the altar along with the fire offerings to the LORD; it is a sin offering. 13 In this way the priest will make atonement on his behalf concerning the sin he has committed in any of these cases, and he will be forgiven. The rest will belong to the priest, like the grain offering." †

THE GUILT OFFERING

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 15 "If someone offends † by sinning unintentionally † in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, † he must bring his penalty for guilt to the LORD: an unblemished ram from the flock (based on your assessment of its value in silver shekels, according to the sanctuary shekel †) as a guilt offering. 16 He is to make restitution † for his sin regarding any holy † thing, adding a fifth of its value to it, † and give it to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf with the ram of the guilt offering, and he will be forgiven. †

17 "If someone sins and without knowing it violates any of the LORD's commands concerning anything prohibited, he is guilty, and he will bear his iniquity. 18 He must bring an unblemished ram from the flock according to your assessment of its value as a guilt offering to the priest. Then the priest will make atonement on his behalf for the error he has committed unintentionally, and he will be forgiven. 19 It is a guilt offering; he is indeed guilty before the LORD."

5:11 Lit *one-tenth of an ephah* **5:11** Lit *flour as a sin offering* **5:15** Things dedicated to the Lord
5:1 Gn 4:13; Ex 20:5; Lv 16:21-22; Nm 5:15,31; Dt 19:15 **5:2** Lv 11:4; Nm 19:13 **5:2** Lv 26:6 **5:2** Lv 11:24-40; Dt 14:8 **5:2** Nm 5:6; Ps 68:21 **5:3** Lv 14:19 **5:3** Lv 11:24 **5:4** Ps 106:33; Pr 12:18 **5:5** Lv 16:21 **5:6** Lv 14:12 **5:6** Ex 30:15 **5:7** Lv 1:14 **5:8** Gn 15:10; Lv 1:15,17 **5:9** Lv 4:25,30 **5:10** Lv 1:14-17 **5:11** Lk 2:24 **5:11** Lv 2:1 **5:12** Lv 2:2 **5:13** Lv 2:3,10 **5:15** Dt 32:51 **5:15** Nm 15:24 **5:15** Lv 27:3; Nm 3:47 **5:16** Lv 14:12; 24:18 **5:16** Lv 25:12 **5:16** Lv 27:13 **5:16** Lv 4:20,26,31,35; 6:7

5:1-6 Sin offerings were to be offered not only for sins such as failure to testify and making rash oaths but also for touching **anything unclean.**

5:7,11 The laws concerning sin offerings accounted for those who **cannot afford an animal from the flock.** This built-in flexibility allowed a poor person to offer **two turtledoves or two young pigeons** instead. If this concession was still not sufficient, **two quarts of fine flour** could be brought. The offering would have the same effectiveness in all three cases.

6 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "When someone sins and offends the LORD by deceiving † his neighbor in regard to a deposit, † a security, † or a robbery; † or defrauds † his neighbor; 3 or finds something lost and lies about it; † or swears falsely † about any of the sinful things a person may do —

4 once he has sinned † and acknowledged his guilt † — he must return what he
stole or defrauded, or the deposit entrusted to him, or the lost item he found, 5 or
anything else about which he swore falsely. He will make full restitution for it
and add a fifth of its value to it. † He is to pay it to its owner on the day he
acknowledges his guilt. † 6 Then he is to bring his guilt offering † to the LORD:
an unblemished † ram from the flock according to your assessment of its value
as a guilt offering to the priest. 7 In this way the priest will make atonement on
his behalf before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for anything he may have
done to incur guilt." †

THE BURNT OFFERING

8 The LORD spoke to Moses: 9 "Command Aaron and his sons: This is the law of
the burnt offering; the burnt offering itself must remain on the altar's hearth all
night until morning, while the fire of the altar is kept burning on it. 10 The priest
is to put on his linen robe and linen undergarments. † † He is to remove the
ashes of the burnt offering the fire has consumed on the altar, and place them
beside the altar. 11 Then he will take off his garments, put on other clothes, †
and bring the ashes outside the camp to a ceremonially clean place. 12 The fire
on the altar is to be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest
will burn wood on the fire. He is to arrange the burnt offering on the fire and
burn the fat portions from the fellowship offerings † on it. 13 Fire must be kept
burning on the altar continually; it must not go out.

THE GRAIN OFFERING

14 "Now this is the law of the grain offering: † Aaron's sons will present it
before the LORD in front of the altar. 15 The priest is to remove a handful of fine
flour and olive oil from the grain offering, with all the frankincense that is on the
offering, and burn its memorial portion on the altar as a pleasing aroma to the
LORD. 16 Aaron and his sons may eat the rest of it. † It is to be eaten in the form
of unleavened bread † in a holy place; † they are to eat it in the courtyard † of
the tent of meeting. 17 It must not be baked with yeast; I have assigned it as their
portion † from my fire offerings. † It is especially holy, like the sin offering †
and the guilt offering. 18 Any male among Aaron's descendants † may eat it. It

is a permanent portion † † throughout your generations from the fire offerings to the LORD. Anything that touches the offerings will become holy." †
19 The LORD spoke to Moses: 20 "This is the offering that Aaron and his sons are to present to the LORD on the day that he is anointed: two quarts † of fine flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. 21 It is to be prepared with oil on a griddle; you are to bring it well-kneaded. You are to present it as a grain offering of baked pieces, † a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 22 The priest, who is one of Aaron's sons and will be anointed to take his place, is to prepare it. It must be completely burned as a permanent portion for the LORD. 23 Every grain offering for a priest will be a whole burnt offering; † it is not to be eaten."

THE SIN OFFERING

24 The LORD spoke to Moses: 25 "Tell Aaron and his sons: This is the law of the sin offering. † The sin offering is most holy and must be slaughtered before the LORD at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. 26 The priest who offers it as a sin offering will eat it. It is to be eaten in a holy place, † in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. 27 Anything that touches its flesh will become holy, and if any of its blood spatters on a garment, then you must wash that garment † in a holy place. 28 A clay pot in which the sin offering is boiled is to be broken; if it is boiled in a bronze vessel, it is to be scoured and rinsed with water. 29 Any male among the priests may eat it; it is especially holy. 30 But no sin offering may be eaten if its blood has been brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the holy place; it must be burned.

6:2 Or *an investment* **6:10** Lit *undergarments on his flesh* **6:18** Or *statute* **6:20** Lit *a tenth of an ephah* **6:21** Hb obscure **6:27** Lit *wash what it spattered on*

6:2 Lv 19:11 **6:2** Ex 22:7-13 **6:2** Is 61:8; Ezk 22:29 **6:2** Dt 24:14 **6:3** Ex 23:4; Dt 22:1-3 **6:3** Ex 22:11; Lv 19:12 **6:4** Gn 44:32; Jdg 10:10; Neh 1:6; Ps 39:1; Is 1:4 **6:4** Lv 4:3 **6:5** Lv 27:13 **6:4-5** Ex 22:9-12; 23:4-5; Dt 22:13; Mt 5:23-24; Lk 19:8-9 **6:6** Lv 14:12 **6:6** Ex 29:1 **6:7** Lv 5:10,13,18 **6:10** Ex 28:42-43; Lv 16:4; Ezk 44:17-19 **6:11** Lv 16:23; Ezk 42:14; 44:19 **6:12** Lv 1:2; 7:11 **6:14-18** Lv 2:1-16 **6:16** 1Co 9:13 **6:16** Ex 12:8; 1Co 5:8 **6:16** Lv 16:24 **6:16** Ex 27:9 **6:17** Lv 6:10; Nm 18:20; 31:36; Dt 10:9; 12:12 **6:17** Dt 18:1 **6:17** Ex 29:14 **6:18** Lv 21:18-23 **6:18** Lv 7:34; Heb 13:10 **6:18** Ex 29:37; Lk 11:2 **6:23** Dt 13:17; 33:10; 1Sm 7:9; Ps 51:19 **6:25** Ex 29:14 **6:26** Lv 16:24; 1Co 9:13

6:1-7 The reparations for the sins listed here were to be made with both man and God. Whatever was stolen, defrauded, or lost was to be returned to the owner along with **a fifth of its value** (see also 5:16). In addition, a **guilt offering** was to be made to God (see also 5:15).

6:8 Beginning here and ending in 7:21, additional instructions were given concerning the various offerings

just described. For example, the burnt offering **must remain on the altar's hearth all night until morning**, and the **fire on the altar is to be kept burning.** Whereas the earlier instructions were primarily given to the **Israelites** (see 1:2; 4:2), these instructions were for **Aaron and his sons** (see also 7:25). Thus, this section naturally gives more attention to matters that specifically concerned the priests, such as details related to the priests' eating of their portions of various offerings (e.g., vv. 16-18,23,26-30; 7:6-10,14).

THE GUILT OFFERING

7 "Now this is the law of the guilt † offering; † it is especially holy.
2 The guilt offering is to be slaughtered at the place where the burnt
offering † is slaughtered, and the priest is to splatter its blood on all
sides of the altar. 3 The offerer is to present all the fat from it: the fat tail, †
the fat surrounding the entrails, † 4 and the two kidneys with the fat on them at the
loins; he will also remove the fatty lobe of the liver † with the kidneys. 5 The
priest will burn them on the altar as a fire offering † to the LORD; it is a guilt
offering. 6 Any male among the priests may eat it. † It is to be eaten in a holy
place; † it is especially holy. †
7 "The guilt offering is like the sin offering; † the law is the same for both. It
belongs to the priest † who makes atonement † with it. 8 As for the priest who
presents someone's burnt offering, the hide of the burnt offering he has
presented belongs to him; it is the priest's. 9 Any grain offering † that is baked
in an oven or prepared in a pan or on a griddle belongs to the priest who presents
it; it is his. 10 But any grain offering, whether dry or mixed with oil, belongs
equally to all of Aaron's sons.

THE FELLOWSHIP SACRIFICE

11 "Now this is the law of the fellowship sacrifice † that someone may present
to the LORD: 12 If he presents it for thanksgiving, in addition to the thanksgiving
sacrifice, † he is to present unleavened cakes † mixed with olive oil,
unleavened wafers † coated with oil, and well-kneaded cakes of fine flour
mixed with oil. 13 He is to present as his offering cakes of leavened bread with
his thanksgiving sacrifice of fellowship. 14 From the cakes he is to present one
portion of each offering as a contribution † to the LORD. It will belong to the
priest who splatters the blood of the fellowship offering; it is his. 15 The meat of

his thanksgiving sacrifice of fellowship must be eaten on the day he offers it; † he may not leave any of it until morning. †
16 "If the sacrifice he offers is a vow † or a freewill offering, † it is to be eaten on the day he presents his sacrifice, and what is left over may be eaten on the next day. 17 But what remains of the sacrificial meat by the third day must be burned. † 18 If any of the meat of his fellowship sacrifice is eaten on the third day, it will not be accepted. † It will not be credited to the one who presents it; it is repulsive. † The person who eats any of it will bear his iniquity. †
19 "Meat that touches anything unclean must not be eaten; it is to be burned. Everyone who is clean may eat any other meat. 20 But the one who eats meat from the LORD's fellowship sacrifice while he is unclean, that person must be cut off from his people. † 21 If someone touches anything unclean, whether human uncleanness, an unclean animal, or any unclean, abhorrent † † creature, and eats meat from the LORD's fellowship sacrifice, that person is to be cut off from his people."

FAT AND BLOOD PROHIBITED

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: 23 "Tell the Israelites: You are not to eat any fat † of an ox, a sheep, or a goat. 24 The fat of an animal that dies naturally or is mauled by wild beasts † † may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it. † 25 If anyone eats animal fat from a fire offering presented to the LORD, the person who eats it is to be cut off from his people. 26 Wherever you live, you must not eat the blood † of any bird or animal. 27 Whoever eats any blood is to be cut off from his people."

THE PORTION FOR THE PRIESTS

28 The LORD spoke to Moses: 29 "Tell the Israelites: The one who presents a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD is to bring an offering to the LORD from his sacrifice. 30 His own hands will bring the fire offerings to the LORD. He will bring the fat together with the breast. The breast is to be presented as a presentation offering † before the LORD. 31 The priest is to burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. 32 You are to give the right thigh † to the priest as a contribution from your fellowship sacrifices. 33 The

son of Aaron who presents the blood of the fellowship offering and the fat will have the right thigh as a portion. 34 I have taken from the Israelites the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the contribution from their fellowship sacrifices, and have assigned them to the priest Aaron and to his sons as a permanent portion † † from the Israelites."
35 This is the portion from the fire offerings to the LORD for Aaron and his sons † since the day they were presented to serve the LORD as priests. 36 The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the Israelites on the day he anointed them. † It is a permanent portion throughout their generations.
37 This is the law for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering, † and the fellowship sacrifice, 38 which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai † on the day he † commanded the Israelites to present their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai. †

7:1 Or *restitution* **7:3** LXX, Sam add *and all the fat that is on the entrails* ; Lv 3:3,9,14; 4:8 **7:18** Or *will bear his guilt* **7:21** Some Hb mss, Sam, Syr, Tg read *swarming* **7:24** Lit *fat of a carcass or the fat of a mauled beast* **7:34** Or *statute*, also in v. 36 **7:38** Or *he*

7:1 Lv 14:12-13 **7:2** Gn 22:2; Lv 3:5; Nm 6:11; Jos 8:31; 1Ch 16:1; Ps 20:3; Mc 6:6 **7:3** Lv 3:9 **7:4** Lv 9:10 **7:5** Dt 18:1 **7:6** 1Co 9:13 **7:6** Lv 16:24 **7:6** Lv 14:13 **7:7** Ex 29:14 **7:7** Lv 14:13 **7:7** Ex 30:15 **7:9** Ex 40:29 **7:11** Lv 3:1,3,6,9 **7:12** Lv 22:29 **7:12** Ex 12:8 **7:12** Lv 2:4 **7:14** Ex 36:3 **7:15** Lv 22:30 **7:15** Ex 12:10; 34:25; Lv 19:5-8; Dt 16:4 **7:16** Lv 27:8 **7:16** Ex 35:29 **7:17** Lv 19:6 **7:18** Lv 1:4 **7:18** Lv 19:7; Is 65:4; Ezk 4:14 **7:20** Gn 17:14; Lv 7:27; 19:8; Nm 9:13 **7:21** Lv 11:10-13,20,23,41-42; Is 66:17; Ezk 8:10 **7:23** Lv 3:16-17 **7:24** Lv 17:15; 22:8 **7:24** Ex 22:31; Lv 3:17; 17:15; 22:8; Dt 14:21; Ezk 4:14; 44:31 **7:26** Gn 9:3-4; Lv 17:10-12; Dt 12:16,23 **7:30** Ex 29:24 **7:32** Ex 29:22; Lv 8:25-26; 9:21; Nm 18:18 **7:34** Ex 29:28; 30:21; Lv 6:11,15; 10:15; 24:9; Nm 18:8,11,19; Jr 5:22 **7:35** Mt 10:10; 1Co 9:13-14; 1Tm 5:17-18 **7:36** Ex 40:13-15; Lv 8:12,30 **7:37** Lv 8:22 **7:38** Ex 34:2 **7:38** Ex 31:18; 34:32; Lv 26:46; Neh 9:13

7:20-21 Eating the meat of a **fellowship sacrifice** while unclean was a serious offense. Intentional sins or acts of rebelling against God's ordinances resulted in expulsion from the Israelite community and thus being cut off from the covenant.

7:22-27 On the prohibition against eating **fat** or **blood**, see the note on 3:17.

7:29-36 The priestly portions of the grain offering, sin offering, and guilt offering had already been specified (6:15-16,26; 7:6-10). Here the priestly portion of a **fellowship sacrifice** was designated as the **breast** and the **right thigh. The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the Israelites** as **a permanent portion.**

7:37-38 These verses serve as both a conclusion to Leviticus 1–7 and a reminder of the narrative context. The Israelites were still at **Mount Sinai**, and these offerings began to be brought to the tabernacle while they were in the **Wilderness of Sinai.**

ORDINATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS

8 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Take Aaron, his sons with him, the
garments, the anointing oil, † the bull of the sin † offering, the two
rams, and the basket † of unleavened bread, 3 and assemble the whole
community † at the entrance to the tent of meeting.” 4 So Moses did as the
LORD commanded him, and the community assembled at the entrance to the tent
of meeting. 5 Moses said to them, “This is what the LORD has commanded to be
done.”
6 Then Moses presented Aaron and his sons and washed them with water. 7 He
put the tunic on Aaron, wrapped the sash around him, clothed him with the robe,
and put the ephod † on him. He put the woven band of the ephod around him
and fastened it to him. 8 Then he put the breastpiece on him and placed the Urim
and Thummim † into the breastpiece. 9 He also put the turban † on his head
and placed the gold medallion, the holy diadem, on the front of the turban, as the
LORD had commanded Moses. †
10 Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything
in it to consecrate † them. 11 He sprinkled some of the oil on the altar seven
times, anointing the altar with all its utensils, and the basin with its stand, to
consecrate them. † 12 He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron’s head and
anointed and consecrated him. † 13 Then Moses presented Aaron’s sons,
clothed them with tunics, wrapped sashes around them, and fastened headbands
on them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.
14 Then he brought the bull near for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid
their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering. 15 Then Moses
slaughtered it, † took the blood, and applied it with his finger to the horns of the
altar on all sides, purifying † the altar. He poured out the blood at the base of the
altar and consecrated it so that atonement can be made on it. † † 16 Moses took
all the fat that was on the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, and the two
kidneys † with their fat, and he burned them on the altar. † 17 He burned the
bull with its hide, flesh, and waste outside the camp, † as the LORD had
commanded Moses.
18 Then he presented the ram for the burnt offering, and Aaron and his sons laid
their hands on the head of the ram. 19 Moses slaughtered it and † splattered the

blood on all sides of the altar. 20 Moses cut the ram into pieces and burned the
head, the pieces, and the fat, † 21 but he washed the entrails and legs with water.
He then burned the entire ram on the altar. It was a burnt offering for a pleasing
aroma, a fire offering to the LORD as he had commanded Moses.
22 Next he presented the second ram, the ram of ordination, † and Aaron and his
sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. 23 Moses slaughtered it, † took
some of its blood, and put it on Aaron's right earlobe, on the thumb of his right
hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. † 24 Moses also presented Aaron's
sons and put some of the blood on their right earlobes, on the thumbs of their
right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then Moses splattered the
blood on all sides of the altar. 25 He took the fat — the fat tail, † all the fat that
was on the entrails, the fatty lobe of the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat
— as well as the right thigh. 26 From the basket of unleavened bread that was
before the LORD he took one cake of unleavened bread, one cake of bread made
with oil, and one wafer, and placed them on the fat portions and the right
thigh. † 27 He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and presented
them before the LORD as a presentation offering. 28 Then Moses took them from
their hands and burned them on the altar with the burnt offering. This was an
ordination offering for a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. 29 He also
took the breast and presented it before the LORD as a presentation offering; it was
Moses's portion of the ordination ram as the LORD had commanded him.
30 Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood that was on
the altar and sprinkled them on Aaron and his garments, as well as on his sons
and their garments. In this way he consecrated Aaron and his garments, as well
as his sons and their garments. †
31 Moses said to Aaron and his sons, "Boil the meat at the entrance to the tent of
meeting and eat it there with the bread that is in the basket for the ordination
offering as I commanded: † Aaron and his sons are to eat it. † 32 Burn up what
remains of the meat and bread. † 33 Do not go outside the entrance to the tent of
meeting for seven days, until the time your days of ordination are completed,
because it will take seven days to ordain you. † 34 The LORD commanded what
has been done today in order to make atonement for you. † 35 You must remain
at the entrance to the tent of meeting day and night for seven days and keep the

LORD's charge † so that you will not die, † for this is what I was commanded."
36 So Aaron and his sons did everything the LORD had commanded through Moses.

8:2 Or *purification* **8:14-15** Or *offering, and he slaughtered it.* 15*Then Moses* **8:15** Or *it by making atonement for it* **8:18-19** Or *ram,* 19*and he slaughtered it. Moses* **8:22-23** Or *ram,* 23*and he slaughtered it. Moses* **8:31** LXX, Syr, Tg read *was commanded* ; Ex 29:31-32 **8:33** Lit *because he will fill your hands for seven days*

8:2 Ex 29:7 **8:2** Gn 40:16 **8:3** Ex 12:47 **8:7** Ex 28:4 **8:8** Ex 28:30; Nm 27:21; Dt 33:8; 1Sm 28:6; Ezr 2:63; Neh 7:65 **8:9** Lv 16:4 **8:1-9** Ex 28:1-43; 29:1-8; 39:1-31 **8:10** Ex 19:10,14,23; 20:11 **8:10-11** Ex 30:18-28; 38:8; 40:7-11 **8:12** Ex 29:7; 30:30; Lv 21:10-12 **8:15** Ex 29:36; Lv 14:49,52; Nm 19:19; Ps 51:7; Ezk 43:22-23; 45:18 **8:14-15** Ex 29:10-12,36-37; Lv 4:7 **8:16** Lv 7:4 **8:16** Ex 29:13; Lv 4:7-10 **8:17** Ex 29:14; 33:7; Lv 4:12,21; 6:4; 9:11; 10:4-5; 13:46; 14:3; 16:27; 17:3; 24:14,23 **8:20** Lv 1:8 **8:22** Ex 29:22,26-34; Lv 7:37; 8:28-33 **8:23** Ex 29:20; Lv 14:14,17,25,28 **8:25** Lv 3:9 **8:26** Ex 29:3,23; Lv 7:32; Nm 6:15-19 **8:30** Ex 29:21; Is 6:6-7; Heb 10:22 **8:31** Lv 6:16,18; 10:12; 1Co 9:13-14 **8:32** Ex 29:34 **8:33-34** Ex 29:35-37; Heb 7:28 **8:35** Gn 26:5 **8:35** Lv 10:1-2

8:1-5 After the instructions concerning various offerings, God commanded Moses to ordain Aaron and his sons as priests. The ordination procedure described in this chapter closely follows Exodus 29. Moses faithfully carried out this ordination, as is made clear through the repetition of the phrase, "as the LORD had commanded Moses" (vv. 9,13,17; see also vv. 21,29,36).

THE PRIESTLY MINISTRY INAUGURATED

9 On the eighth day Moses summoned Aaron, his sons, and the elders of Israel. † 2 He said to Aaron, "Take a young bull for a sin † offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, † and present them before the LORD. 3 And tell the Israelites: † Take a male goat for a sin offering; a calf and a lamb, male yearlings without blemish, for a burnt offering; 4 an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD; and a grain offering mixed with oil. For today the LORD is going to appear † to you."
5 They brought what Moses had commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the whole community came forward and stood before the LORD. 6 Moses said, "This is what the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD † may appear to you." 7 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Approach the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering; make atonement for yourself and the people. † † Sacrifice the people's offering and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."
8 So Aaron approached the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. 9 Aaron's sons brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger in the

blood and applied it to the horns of the altar. He poured out the blood at the base of the altar. 10 He burned the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver from the sin offering on the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11 He burned the flesh and the hide † outside the camp. †

12 Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. Aaron's sons brought him the blood, and he splattered it on all sides of the altar. 13 They brought him the burnt offering piece by piece, along with the head, and he burned them on the altar. 14 He washed the entrails and the legs and burned them with the burnt offering on the altar.

15 Aaron presented the people's offering. He took the male goat for the people's sin offering, slaughtered it, and made a sin offering with it as he did before. 16 He presented the burnt offering and sacrificed it according to the regulation. † 17 Next he presented the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning burnt offering. †

18 Finally, he slaughtered the ox and the ram as the people's fellowship sacrifice. Aaron's sons brought him the blood, and he splattered it on all sides of the altar. 19 They also brought the fat portions from the ox and the ram — the fat tail, the fat surrounding the entrails, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver — 20 and placed these on the breasts. Aaron burned the fat portions on the altar, 21 but he presented the breasts † and the right thigh as a presentation offering † before the LORD, as Moses had commanded. †

22 Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed † them. He came down after sacrificing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the fellowship offering. 23 Moses and Aaron then entered the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people, and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. 24 Fire came from the LORD and consumed † the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted † and fell facedown. †

9:2 Or *purification* **9:3** Sam, LXX read *elders of Israel* **9:7** LXX reads *and your household* **9:21** Some Hb mss, LXX, Sam read *as the Lord commanded Moses*

9:1 Ex 18:12 **9:2** Ex 29:1 **9:4** Gn 35:9 **9:6** Ex 40:34; Lk 9:32 **9:7** Heb 5:1-3; 7:26-27 **9:11** Lv 7:8 **9:11** Ex 29:14; Lv 4:8-10,12,21; 8:17; 16:27 **9:16** Lv 18:26 **9:17** Ex 29:38-42; Lv 2:2 **9:21** Ex 29:26-27; Lv 7:30-34; 8:26; 10:14-15; Nm 6:20; 18:18 **9:21** Ex 29:24 **9:22** Gn 14:19; Nm 6:24-26 **9:24** 1Kg 18:38-39; 2Ch 7:1 **9:24** Ps 35:27; Is 12:6; 24:14 **9:24** Nm 16:4

9:1-7 Having been ordained, Aaron and his sons began their priestly ministry with offerings first for Aaron himself and then for the Israelites. In both cases, the sin offering came first, followed by the burnt offering (vv. 8-17). The fellowship sacrifice came last (vv. 18-21). This significant moment was accompanied by an appearance of **the glory of the LORD** and fire from God that **consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar** (vv. 23-24).

NADAB AND ABIHU

10 Aaron's sons Nadab † and Abihu † each took his own firepan, † put
fire in it, placed incense on it, † and presented unauthorized † fire
before the LORD, which he had not commanded them to do. 2 Then fire came
from the LORD † and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. † 3 Moses
said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has spoken:

I will demonstrate my holiness † †
to those who are near me, †
and I will reveal my glory † †
before all the people."

And Aaron remained silent.

4 Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, † sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, †
and said to them, "Come here and carry your relatives away from the front of the
sanctuary to a place outside the camp." † 5 So they came forward and carried
them in their tunics outside the camp, as Moses had said.

6 Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, † "Do not let
your hair hang loose † and do not tear your clothes, † or else you will die, and
the LORD will become angry † with the whole community. However, your
brothers, the whole house of Israel, may weep † over the conflagration the LORD
ignited. 7 You must not go outside the entrance to the tent of meeting or you will
die, for the LORD's anointing oil † is on you." So they did as Moses said.

REGULATIONS FOR PRIESTS

8 The LORD spoke to Aaron: 9 "You and your sons are not to drink wine † or
beer † when you enter the tent of meeting, or else you will die; this is a
permanent statute † throughout your generations. 10 You must distinguish †

between the holy and the common, † and the clean and the unclean, † 11 and teach the Israelites all the statutes † that the LORD has given to them through Moses."

12 Moses spoke to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar: "Take the grain offering that is left over from the fire offerings † to the LORD, and eat it prepared without yeast beside the altar, because it is especially holy. 13 You must eat it in a holy place because it is your portion † and your sons' from the fire offerings to the LORD, for this is what I was commanded. 14 But you and your sons and your daughters may eat the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the contribution in any ceremonially clean place, because these portions have been assigned to you and your children from the Israelites' fellowship sacrifices. 15 They are to bring the thigh of the contribution and the breast of the presentation offering, together with the offerings of fat portions made by fire, to present as a presentation offering before the LORD. It will belong permanently † to you and your children, as the LORD commanded."

16 Then Moses inquired carefully about the male goat of the sin offering, but it had already been burned up. He was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's surviving sons, and asked, 17 "Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? † For it is especially holy, and he has assigned it to you to take away the guilt † of the community † and make atonement for them before the LORD. 18 Since its blood was not brought inside the sanctuary, you should have eaten it in the sanctuary area, as I commanded." †

19 But Aaron replied to Moses, "See, today they presented their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD. Since these things have happened to me, if I had eaten the sin offering today, would it have been acceptable in the LORD's sight? " 20 When Moses heard this, it was acceptable to him. †

10:3 Or *will be treated as holy* **10:3** Or *will be glorified* **10:13** Or *statute* **10:20** Lit *acceptable in his sight*
10:1 Ex 6:23; 28:1; Nm 3:2,4; 26:60-61; 1Ch 6:3 **10:1** Ex 24:1 **10:1** Ex 27:3; 38:3; 1Kg 7:50; 2Kg 25:15; Jr 52:19 **10:1** Ex 30:7-9; Lv 16:12; Nm 16:17,46 **10:1** Ex 30:9; Nm 3:4; 26:61; Jr 2:25; 3:13; Hs 5:7 **10:2** Gn 4:14 **10:2** Nm 26:61; Dt 4:24; 2Sm 6:7 **10:3** Nm 20:13; Ezk 20:41; 28:22,25; 36:23; 38:16; 39:27 **10:3** Dt 30:14; Heb 7:19 **10:3** Ex 14:4,17-18; Is 26:15; Ezk 28:22; 39:13; Hg 1:8 **10:4** Ex 6:22 **10:4** Nm 3:19 **10:4** Lv 8:17; Heb 13:11-13 **10:6** Ex 6:23 **10:6** Lv 13:45; 21:10; Nm 5:18; Jdg 5:2 **10:6** Lv 21:10; Mk 14:63 **10:6** Ex 16:20 **10:6** Gn 37:34 **10:7** Ex 29:7; Lv 21:12 **10:9** Gn 9:21 **10:9** Nm 6:3-4; Dt 7:13; 11:14; Jdg 13:4; Pr 20:1; Ezk 44:21; Dn 1:3-16; 10:3; Am 2:12; Mk 4:23-25; Lk 1:15; Jn 2:1-11; Rm 14:21; 1Tm 3:3,8 **10:9** Ex 28:43; Lv 11:46 **10:10** Lv 20:25 **10:10** Ezk 22:26; 42:20; 44:23; 48:15; Ac 10:28 **10:10** Lv 11:4; Nm 19:13 **10:11** Gn 47:26 **10:12** Dt 18:1 **10:15** Ex 29:28; 30:21; Lv 6:11,15; 24:9; Nm 18:8,11,19; Jr 5:22

10:17 Lv 6:26,29 **10:17** Nm 5:31 **10:17** Ex 28:38; Hs 14:2; Jn 1:29 **10:18** Lv 6:26,29-30

10:1-2 Even before his ordination as high priest, Aaron had the negative association of his involvement with the making and worship of the golden calf (Ex 32:1-6). Now two of his sons, also ordained as priests, **presented unauthorized fire before the LORD** and were burned to death by fire from God. The precise nature of their offering is not explained, other than that it was something that God **had not commanded** (see Ex 30:34-38). The episode shows once again that the Israelites could come to God *only* in accordance with his instructions. The distinction between their sin and his holiness represented a barrier that had to be taken seriously. Furthermore, the Aaronic priesthood as a whole is shown to be inadequate from its inception. Hebrews 7 further explains the inadequacy of this priesthood and argues that Jesus's priesthood in the order of Melchizedek is far superior.

10:3 The disobedience of Nadab and Abihu was treated by Moses as a failure to honor God's **holiness** (see also Nm 20:12). Many other passages in Leviticus reflect the importance of recognizing the holiness of God (e.g., 10:10; 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7).

10:8-11 The sin of Nadab and Abihu resulted in additional instructions from God **to Aaron**, which concerned both him and his **sons.** Some have suggested that the command to abstain from alcohol implies that Nadab and Abihu were drunk, but this is uncertain. Nevertheless, obedience to such a command would help ensure that the priests would think clearly and correctly in order to prevent future similar violations. Unlike Nadab and Abihu, the priests henceforth were to rightly **distinguish between the holy and the common, and the clean and the unclean, and teach the Israelites** (see also the notes on 10:3 and 11:1).

10:16-20 The meat of the **sin offering** should have been **eaten** (see 6:30), but Aaron asked for an exception because of the recent death of two of his sons. Moses's acceptance of Aaron's appeal suggests a certain degree of flexibility in the application of this law as evidenced by the recognition of Aaron's extenuating circumstances and motives (see also 5:7,11; Nm 9:6-13).

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN LAND ANIMALS

11 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 "Tell the Israelites: You may
eat † all these kinds of land animals. † 3 You may eat any animal with
divided hooves and that chews the cud. 4 But among the ones that chew the cud
or have divided hooves you are not to eat these:

camels, † though they chew the cud,
do not have divided hooves — they are unclean for you;
5 hyraxes, † though they chew the cud,
do not have hooves — they are unclean for you;
6 hares, though they chew the cud,
do not have hooves — they are unclean for you;
7 pigs, though they have divided hooves,
do not chew the cud — they are unclean for you.

8 Do not eat any of their meat or touch their carcasses — they are unclean for you. †

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN AQUATIC ANIMALS

9 "This is what you may eat from all that is in the water: You may eat everything in the water that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or streams. 10 But these are to be abhorrent to you: everything in the seas or streams that does not have fins and scales among all the swarming things and other living creatures † in the water. 11 They are to remain abhorrent to you; you must not eat any of their meat, and you must abhor their carcasses. 12 Everything in the water that does not have fins and scales will be abhorrent to you.

UNCLEAN BIRDS

13 "You are to abhor these birds. They must not be eaten because they are abhorrent:

eagles, † † bearded vultures,
Egyptian vultures, † 14 kites, †
any kind of falcon, † †
15 every kind of raven, 16 ostriches, †
short-eared owls, gulls, †
any kind of hawk, †
17 little † owls, cormorants, †
long-eared owls, † †
18 barn † owls, eagle owls, † †
ospreys, 19 storks, †
any kind of heron, †
hoopoes, and bats.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FLYING INSECTS

20 “All winged insects that walk on all fours are to be abhorrent to you. 21 But you may eat these kinds of all the winged insects that walk on all fours: those that have jointed legs above their feet for hopping on the ground. 22 You may eat these:

any kind of locust, † katydid, cricket, and grasshopper.

23 All other winged insects that have four feet are to be abhorrent to you.

PURIFICATION AFTER TOUCHING DEAD ANIMALS

24 “These will make you unclean. Whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean † until evening, 25 and whoever carries any of their carcasses is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. † 26 All animals that have hooves but do not have a divided hoof and do not chew the cud are unclean for you. Whoever touches them becomes unclean. 27 All the four-footed animals † that walk on their paws are unclean for you. Whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean until evening, 28 and anyone who carries their carcasses is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. They are unclean for you.

29 “These creatures that swarm † on the ground are unclean for you:

weasels, † mice, †
any kind of large lizard, †
30 geckos, monitor lizards, †
common lizards, † skinks, †
and chameleons. †

31 These are unclean for you among all the swarming creatures. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean until evening. 32 When any one of them dies and falls on anything it becomes unclean — any item of wood, clothing, leather, sackcloth, † or any implement used for work. It is to be rinsed with water and will remain unclean until evening; then it will be clean. 33 If any of them falls into any clay pot, everything in it will become unclean; you are to

break it. 34 Any edible food † coming into contact with that unclean water will become unclean, and any drinkable liquid in any container will become unclean. 35 Anything one of their carcasses falls on will become unclean. If it is an oven or stove, it is to be smashed; it is unclean and will remain unclean for you. 36 A spring or cistern containing water will remain clean, but someone who touches a carcass in it will become unclean. 37 If one of their carcasses falls on any seed that is to be sown, it is clean; 38 but if water has been put on the seed and one of their carcasses falls on it, it is unclean for you.

39 "If one of the animals that you use for food dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean until evening. 40 Anyone who eats some of its carcass is to wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening. Anyone who carries its carcass must wash his clothes and will be unclean until evening.

UNCLEAN SWARMING CREATURES

41 "All the creatures that swarm on the earth are abhorrent; they must not be eaten. 42 Do not eat any of the creatures that swarm on the earth, anything that moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet, † for they are abhorrent. 43 Do not become contaminated by any creature that swarms; do not become unclean or defiled by them. 44 For I am the LORD your God, † so you must consecrate yourselves † and be holy because I am holy. † Do not defile yourselves by any swarming creature that crawls on the ground. 45 For I am the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God, † so you must be holy because I am holy. †

46 "This is the law concerning animals, birds, all living creatures that move in the water, and all creatures that swarm on the ground, 47 in order to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between the animals † that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten."

11:13 Or *griffon-vultures* **11:13** Or *ospreys,* or *bearded vultures* **11:14** Or *hawks* **11:14** Or *buzzards,* or *hawks* **11:16** Or *eagle owls* **11:16** Or *long-eared owls* **11:17** Or *tawny* **11:17** Or *pelicans* **11:17** Or *ibis* **11:18** Or *little* **11:18** Or *pelicans,* or *horned owls* **11:19** Or *herons* **11:19** Or *cormorants,* or *hawks* **11:29** Or *mole rats,* or *rats* **11:29** Or *of thorn-tailed,* or *dabb lizard,* or *of crocodile* **11:30** Or *spotted lizards,* or *chameleons* **11:30** Or *geckos,* or *newts,* or *salamanders* **11:30** Or *sand lizards,* or *newts,* or *snails* **11:30** Or *salamanders,* or *moles* **11:42** Lit *fours, to anything multiplying pairs of feet*

11:2 Lv 11:1-23; Dt 14:3-21; Dn 1:3-16; Ac 10:9-16; 11:3; Rm 14:2; Gl 2:11-14 **11:2** Dt 14:4-21; Ac 10:9-16; Rm 14:14 **11:4** Gn 24:64; 31:34; Dt 14:7; Jr 2:23; Mt 19:24; 23:24; Mk 10:25; Lk 18:25 **11:5** Dt 14:7; Ps 104:18; Pr 30:26 **11:8** Lv 7:21; 11:24-27; Is 52:11; 2Co 6:17 **11:10** Gn 1:20; 2:19; Lv 11:46 **11:13** Dt

14:12; 28:49; 32:11; Pr 23:5; Is 40:31 **11:14** Dt 14:13; Jb 28:7 **11:16** Dt 14:15; Jb 39:26 **11:17** Dt 14:16 **11:18** Dt 14:17; Ps 102:6; Is 34:11; Zph 2:14 **11:22** Dt 28:38 **11:24** Ezk 22:3-4; 23:17; 44:25; Mc 2:10; Hg 2:13 **11:25** Lv 16:28; 17:15-16; 22:6; Nm 19:7-10 **11:27** Rv 18:2 **11:29** Ex 8:3 **11:29** 1Sm 6:4-5,11,18; Is 66:17 **11:32** Gn 37:34 **11:34** Lv 26:5 **11:44** Nm 15:41 **11:44** Ex 19:22; Lv 20:7; Nm 11:18; Ezk 38:23 **11:44** Lv 19:2; 20:7,26; 1Pt 1:16 **11:45** Ex 6:7; 20:2; Lv 25:38,42; 26:13,45 **11:45** Lv 21:8 **11:47** Lv 26:6

11:1 Leviticus 11–15 is not only preceded by the sin and death of Nadab and Abihu (10:1-3) but is immediately followed by another reference to it (16:1). This suggests that the laws given in this section are closely related to this incident. The focus on the **clean** and the **unclean** in these chapters reflects God's instruction to the priests that they "distinguish between the holy and the common, and the clean and the unclean, and teach the Israelites" (10:10-11). It is as though the priests' failure to honor God as holy (10:3) resulted in his giving the Israelites these laws to help them understand these distinctions (see 11:46-47 and the note on Ex 32:1-6).

11:44-47 Though these dietary laws would not be permanent (see Mk 7:19), God gave them to Israel to obey as a tangible part of their consecration to him. Leviticus does not explain the rationale for the dietary laws. Interpreters have made many suggested proposals for the distinction between clean and unclean foods including health concerns and the idea that unpermitted animals are associated with death in some way. Foundationally, however, the laws were intended to reinforce the idea that Israel was to **be holy because I am holy** (see also 19:2; 20:7). That these dietary laws were given **in order to distinguish between the unclean and the clean** is a reminder of what God said to the priests in 10:10.

PURIFICATION AFTER CHILDBIRTH

12 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell the Israelites: When a woman becomes pregnant and gives birth to a male child, † she will be unclean seven days, as she is during the days of her menstrual impurity. † 3 The flesh of his foreskin † must be circumcised † on the eighth day. † 4 She will continue in purification † from her bleeding † for thirty-three days. She must not touch any holy thing or go into the sanctuary until completing her days of purification. 5 But if she gives birth to a female child, she will be unclean for two weeks as she is during her menstrual impurity. She will continue in purification from her bleeding for sixty-six days.

6 "When her days of purification are complete, whether for a son or daughter, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old male lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin † offering. 7 He will present them before the LORD and make atonement on her behalf; she will be clean from her discharge of blood. This is the law for a woman giving birth, whether to a male or female. 8 But if she doesn't have sufficient means † † for a sheep, she may take two turtledoves or two young

pigeons, † one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the priest will make atonement on her behalf, and she will be clean."

12:6 Or *purification*, also in v. 8 **12:8** Lit *if her hand cannot obtain what is sufficient*

12:2 Lv 10:14 **12:2** Lv 15:19 **12:3** Ex 4:25 **12:3** Gn 34:14 **12:3** Gn 17:12-13; 21:4; Lk 2:21; Gl 3:5; 5:6; 6:15 **12:4** Lv 14:2 **12:4** Lk 8:43 **12:8** Lv 14:21 **12:8** Lk 2:24

12:1-5 The concern for cleanness is now applied to women who had recently given birth. Their uncleanness from **menstrual impurity** prohibited them from physical contact with **any holy thing** and from entering the **sanctuary** for a time.

SKIN DISEASES

13 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 "When a person has a swelling, † scab, † or spot on the skin of his body, and it may be a serious disease on the skin † of his body, he is to be brought to the priest Aaron or to one of his sons, the priests. 3 The priest will examine the sore † on the skin of his body. If the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is in fact a serious skin disease. After the priest examines him, he must pronounce him unclean. 4 But if the spot on the skin of his body is white and does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest will quarantine the stricken person for seven days. † 5 The priest will then reexamine him on the seventh day. If he sees that the sore remains unchanged and has not spread on the skin, the priest will quarantine him for another seven days. 6 The priest will examine him again on the seventh day. If the sore has faded and has not spread on the skin, the priest is to pronounce him clean; † it is a scab. The person is to wash his clothes and will become clean. 7 But if the scab spreads further on his skin after he has presented himself to the priest for his cleansing, † he is to present himself again to the priest. 8 The priest will examine him, and if the scab has spread on the skin, then the priest must pronounce him unclean; he has a serious skin disease.

9 "When a case of serious skin disease may have developed on a person, he is to be brought to the priest. 10 The priest will examine him. If there is a white swelling on the skin that has turned the hair white, and there is a patch of raw flesh in the swelling, 11 it is a chronic serious disease on the skin of his body, and the priest must pronounce him unclean. † He need not quarantine him, for he is unclean. 12 But if the skin disease breaks out all over the skin so that it

covers all the skin of the stricken person from his head to his feet so far as the priest can see, 13 the priest will look, and if the skin disease has covered his entire body, he is to pronounce the stricken person clean. † Since he has turned totally white, he is clean. 14 But whenever raw flesh appears on him, he will be unclean. 15 When the priest examines the raw flesh, he must pronounce him unclean. Raw flesh is unclean; this is a serious skin disease. 16 But if the raw flesh changes † and † turns white, he is to go to the priest. 17 The priest will examine him, and if the sore has turned white, the priest must pronounce the stricken person clean; he is clean.

18 "When a boil appears on the skin † of someone's body † and it heals, 19 and a white swelling or a reddish-white spot develops where the boil was, the person is to present himself to the priest. 20 The priest will make an examination, and if the spot seems to be beneath the skin and the hair in it has turned white, the priest must pronounce him unclean; it is a case of serious skin disease that has broken out in the boil. 21 But when the priest examines it, if there is no white hair in it, and it is not beneath the skin but is faded, the priest will quarantine him seven days. 22 If it spreads further on the skin, the priest must pronounce him unclean; it is in fact a disease. 23 But if the spot remains where it is and does not spread, it is only the scar from the boil. The priest is to pronounce him clean.

24 "When there is a burn on the skin of one's body produced by fire, and the patch made raw by the burn becomes reddish-white or white, 25 the priest is to examine it. If the hair in the spot has turned white and the spot appears to be deeper than the skin, it is a serious skin disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest must pronounce him unclean; it is a serious skin disease. 26 But when the priest examines it, if there is no white hair in the spot and it is not beneath the skin but is faded, the priest will quarantine him seven days. 27 The priest will reexamine him on the seventh day. If it has spread further on the skin, the priest must pronounce him unclean; it is in fact a case of serious skin disease. 28 But if the spot has remained where it was and has not spread on the skin but is faded, it is the swelling from the burn. The priest is to pronounce him clean, for it is only the scar from the burn.

29 "When a man or woman has a condition on the head or chin, 30 the priest is to examine the condition. If it appears to be deeper than the skin, † and the hair in it is yellow and sparse, the priest must pronounce the person unclean. It is a

scaly outbreak, a serious skin disease of the head or chin. 31 When the priest
examines the scaly condition, if it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, and
there is no black hair in it, the priest will quarantine the person with the scaly
condition for seven days. 32 The priest will reexamine the condition on the
seventh day. If the scaly outbreak has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it
and it does not appear to be deeper than the skin, 33 the person is to shave
himself † but not shave the scaly area. Then the priest will quarantine the person
who has the scaly outbreak for another seven days. 34 The priest will examine
the scaly outbreak on the seventh day, and if it has not spread on the skin and
does not appear to be deeper than the skin, the priest is to pronounce the person
clean. He is to wash his clothes, and he will be clean. 35 But if the scaly
outbreak spreads further on the skin after his cleansing, 36 the priest is to
examine the person. If the scaly outbreak has spread on the skin, the priest does
not need to look for yellow hair; the person is unclean. 37 But if as far as he can
see, the scaly outbreak remains unchanged and black hair has grown in it, then it
has healed; he is clean. The priest is to pronounce the person clean.
38 "When a man or a woman has white spots on the skin of the body, 39 the
priest is to make an examination. If the spots on the skin of the body are dull
white, it is only a rash † that has broken out on the skin; the person is clean.
40 "If a man loses the hair of his head, he is bald, † but he is clean. 41 Or if he
loses the hair at his hairline, he is bald on his forehead, but he is clean. 42 But if
there is a reddish-white condition on the bald head or forehead, it is a serious
skin disease breaking out on his head or forehead. † 43 The priest is to examine
him, and if the swelling of the condition on his bald head or forehead is reddish-
white, like the appearance of a serious skin disease on his body, 44 the man is
afflicted with a serious skin disease; † he is unclean. The priest must pronounce
him unclean; the infection is on his head.
45 "The person who has a case of serious skin disease is to have his clothes
torn † and his hair hanging loose, and he must cover his mouth † and cry out,
'Unclean, unclean! ' 46 He will remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he
is unclean. He must live alone in a place outside the camp. †

CONTAMINATED FABRICS

47 “If a fabric is contaminated with mildew — in wool or linen fabric, 48 in the
warp or weft of linen or wool, or in leather or anything made of leather —
49 and if the contamination is green or red in the fabric, the leather, the warp, the
weft, or any leather article, it is a mildew contamination and is to be shown to
the priest. 50 The priest is to examine the contamination and quarantine the
contaminated fabric for seven days. 51 The priest is to reexamine the
contamination on the seventh day. If it has spread in the fabric, the warp, the
weft, or the leather, regardless of how it is used, the contamination is harmful
mildew; it is unclean. † 52 He is to burn the fabric, the warp or weft in wool or
linen, or any leather article, which is contaminated. Since it is harmful mildew it
must be burned.
53 “When the priest examines it, if the contamination has not spread in the
fabric, the warp or weft, or any leather article, 54 the priest is to order whatever
is contaminated to be washed and quarantined for another seven days. 55 After it
has been washed, the priest is to reexamine the contamination. If the appearance
of the contaminated article has not changed, it is unclean. Even though the
contamination has not spread, you must burn the fabric. It is a fungus † on the
front or back of the fabric.
56 “If the priest examines it, and the contamination has faded after it has been
washed, he is to cut the contaminated section out of the fabric, the leather, or the
warp or weft. 57 But if it reappears in the fabric, the warp or weft, or any leather
article, it has broken out again. You must burn whatever is contaminated. 58 But
if the contamination disappears from the fabric, the warp or weft, or any leather
article, which have been washed, it is to be washed again, and it will be clean.
59 “This is the law concerning a mildew contamination in wool or linen fabric,
warp or weft, or any leather article, in order to pronounce it clean or unclean.” †
13:2 Or *discoloration* **13:2** Or *rash,* or *eruption* **13:16** Or *recedes* **13:16** Or *flesh again* **13:39** Hb obscure **13:55** Hb obscure
13:2 Lv 14:3,7,32,44,54-57; Dt 24:8; 2Kg 5:3,6-7,27; 2Ch 26:19 **13:3** Ex 11:1; Dt 17:8; 21:5; Is 53:8 **13:4** Nm 12:14-15; 2Kg 15:5 **13:6** Nm 8:6-7; Ps 51:2; Ezk 24:13 **13:7** Lv 14:2 **13:11** Lv 11:4 **13:13** Lv 10:10 **13:18** Lv 13:2 **13:18** Ex 9:9-11; Dt 28:27,35; Jb 2:7 **13:30** Lv 13:2 **13:33** Gn 41:14; Lv 14:8-9; 21:5; Nm 6:9,18-19; Dt 21:12; Jdg 16:17,19,22 **13:40** 2Kg 2:23 **13:42** 2Ch 26:19-20 **13:44** Ex 4:6; Lv 14:2-3; 22:4; Nm 5:2; 12:10 **13:45** Lv 10:6; 21:10 **13:45** Ezk 24:17,22; Mc 3:7 **13:46** Nm 5:1-4; 8:17; 12:14-15 **13:51** Lv 11:24; 15:10-12,21-27; Hg 2:12-13 **13:59** Lv 10:10-11

13:1-8 While public health concerns alone could have resulted in laws related to skin diseases and mildew, these laws continue to emphasize the distinction between the clean and the unclean found in the preceding

laws and in 10:10. The laws here particularly emphasize the need to prevent uncleanness from spreading. The primary measure employed for this was **quarantine** (vv. 4-5,21,26,31,33).

13:30-34 One of the key criteria for determining if something was an infectious skin disease was whether it was **deeper than the skin** (see also vv. 3-4,25).

13:45-46 The tragic but necessary consequences of uncleanness from a **serious skin disease** were isolation, loneliness, and shame. The infected person was to be unkempt in appearance, declare his uncleanness, and **live alone in a place outside the camp.**

13:47-52 The mention of mildew here is related to the fact that the Hebrew phrase translated **contaminated with mildew** is the same phrase used in v. 2 to refer to a skin disease (see also 14:54-56). In both cases, special care is taken to prevent its spread.

13:59 On whether to **pronounce** such fabric **clean or unclean**, see the notes on 10:8-11 and 11:1.

CLEANSING OF SKIN DISEASES

14 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "This is the law † concerning the person
afflicted with a skin disease on the day of his cleansing. † He is to be
brought to the priest, † 3 who will go outside the camp † and examine him. † If
the skin disease has disappeared from the afflicted person, † 4 the priest will
order that two live clean birds, † cedar wood, † scarlet † yarn, and hyssop † be
brought for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 Then the priest will order that one of
the birds be slaughtered over fresh water in a clay pot. 6 He is to take the live
bird together with the cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop, and dip them all into
the blood of the bird that was slaughtered over the fresh water. 7 He will then
sprinkle the blood seven times on the one who is to be cleansed from the skin
disease. He is to pronounce him clean and release the live bird over the open
countryside. † 8 The one who is to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off
all his hair, and bathe with water; he is clean. Afterward he may enter the camp,
but he must remain outside his tent for seven days. 9 He is to shave off all his
hair again on the seventh day: his head, his beard, his eyebrows, and the rest of
his hair. He is to wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; he is clean.
10 "On the eighth day he must take two unblemished † male lambs, an
unblemished year-old ewe lamb, a grain offering of six quarts † of fine flour
mixed with olive oil, and one-third of a quart † of olive oil. 11 The priest who
performs the cleansing will place the person who is to be cleansed, together with
these offerings, before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 12 The
priest is to take one male lamb and present it as a guilt offering, † along with the

one-third quart of olive oil, and he will present them as a presentation offering † before the LORD. 13 He is to slaughter the male lamb at the place in the sanctuary area where the sin offering † and burnt offering † are slaughtered, † for like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; † it is especially holy. †
14 The priest is to take some of the blood from the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. † 15 Then the priest will take some of the one-third quart of olive oil and pour it into his left palm. 16 The priest will dip his right finger into the oil in his left palm and sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. 17 From the oil remaining in his palm the priest will put some on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. † 18 What is left of the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed. In this way the priest will make atonement for him before the LORD. 19 The priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from his uncleanness. † Afterward he will slaughter the burnt offering. 20 The priest is to offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. The priest will make atonement for him, and he will be clean. †
21 "But if he is poor † and cannot afford these, † he is to take one male lamb for a guilt offering to be presented in order to make atonement for him, along with two quarts † of fine flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, one-third of a quart of olive oil, 22 and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, whatever he can afford, one to be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. 23 On the eighth day he is to bring these things for his cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD. 24 The priest will take the male lamb for the guilt offering and the one-third quart of olive oil, and present them as a presentation offering before the LORD. 25 After he slaughters the male lamb for the guilt offering, the priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the right earlobe of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 26 Then the priest will pour some of the oil into his left palm. 27 With his right finger the priest will sprinkle some of the oil in his left palm seven times before the LORD. 28 The priest will

also put some of the oil in his palm on the right earlobe of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the same place as the blood of the guilt offering. 29 What is left of the oil in the priest's palm he is to put on the head of the one to be cleansed to make atonement for him before the LORD. † 30 He is to then sacrifice one type of what he can afford, either the turtledoves or young pigeons, 31 one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, sacrificing what he can afford together with the grain offering. In this way the priest will make atonement before the LORD for the one to be cleansed. 32 This is the law for someone who has † a skin disease and cannot afford the cost of his cleansing."

CLEANSING OF CONTAMINATED OBJECTS

33 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 34 "When you enter the land of Canaan † that I am giving you as a possession, † and I place a mildew contamination in a house in the land you possess, † 35 the owner of the house is to come and tell the priest: Something like mildew contamination has appeared † in my house. 36 The priest must order them to clear the house before he enters to examine the contamination, so that nothing in the house becomes unclean. Afterward the priest will come to examine the house. 37 He will examine it, and if the contamination in the walls of the house consists of green or red indentations † that appear to be beneath the surface of the wall, 38 the priest is to go outside the house to its doorway and quarantine the house for seven days. 39 The priest is to return on the seventh day and examine it. If the contamination has spread on the walls of the house, 40 the priest must order that the stones with the contamination be pulled out and thrown into an unclean place outside the city. 41 He is to have the inside of the house completely scraped, and have the plaster † that is scraped off dumped in an unclean place outside the city. 42 Then they are to take different stones to replace the former ones and take additional plaster to replaster the house.

43 "If the contamination reappears in the house after the stones have been pulled out, and after the house has been scraped and replastered, 44 the priest is to come and examine it. If the contamination has spread in the house, it is harmful mildew; the house is unclean. 45 It must be torn down with its stones, its beams, and all its plaster, and taken outside the city to an unclean place. 46 Whoever

enters the house during any of the days the priest quarantines it will be unclean until evening. 47 Whoever lies down in the house is to wash his clothes, and whoever eats in it is to wash his clothes.
48 "But when the priest comes and examines it, if the contamination has not spread in the house after it was replastered, he is to pronounce the house clean because the contamination has disappeared. † 49 He is to take two birds, cedar wood, scarlet yarn, and hyssop to purify the house, 50 and he is to slaughter one of the birds over a clay pot containing fresh water. 51 He will take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn, and the live bird, dip them in the blood of the slaughtered bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 He will purify the house with the blood of the bird, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet yarn. 53 Then he is to release the live bird into the open countryside † outside the city. In this way he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean.
54 "This is the law for any skin disease or mildew, for a scaly outbreak, 55 for mildew in clothing or on a house, 56 and for a swelling, scab, or spot, 57 to determine when something is unclean or clean. This is the law regarding skin disease and mildew."

14:3 Lit *the person afflicted with skin disease* **14:10** Lit *three-tenths* ; probably three-tenths of an ephah **14:10** Lit *one log*, also in vv. 12,15,21,24 **14:21** Lit *him, and one-tenth* ; probably one-tenth of an ephah **14:32** Lit *someone on whom there is* **14:34** Lit *land of your possession* **14:35** Lit *appeared to me* **14:37** Or *eruptions* ; Hb obscure **14:41** Lit *dust*, also in v. 42 **14:48** Lit *healed*

14:2 Lv 11:46 **14:2** Lv 12:4-5; Nm 6:9; Ezk 44:26 **14:2** Lv 4:16 **14:3** Lv 8:17 **14:3** Lv 13:2-3 **14:4** Gn 40:17 **14:4** Jdg 9:15; 2Sm 5:11; 7:2,7; 1Kg 5:13; 6:9-10; Ps 29:5; Sg 1:17; 8:9; Am 2:9; Zch 11:1-2 **14:4** Ex 25:4; Nm 4:8; 19:6 **14:4** Ex 12:22 **14:7** Lv 14:53; 16:21-22 **14:10** Ex 29:1 **14:12** Lv 5:6-19 **14:12** Ex 29:24 **14:13** Ex 29:14 **14:13** Gn 22:2; Lv 3:5; Nm 6:11; Jos 8:31; 1Ch 16:1; Ps 20:3; Mc 6:6 **14:13** Lv 1:11; 6:25; 7:2 **14:13** Lv 7:7 **14:13** Lv 2:3; 6:10; 7:1,6; 10:12; 24:9; 27:28 **14:14** Ex 29:20; Lv 8:23-24; 14:25,28 **14:17** Lv 14:14 **14:19** Lv 5:3 **14:20** Mt 8:1-4; Mk 1:21-44; Lk 5:12-14 **14:21** Am 5:11 **14:21** Lv 5:7-13; 12:8 **14:29** Lv 14:18 **14:34** Gn 37:1 **14:34** Gn 17:8; 23:4; 36:43; 47:11; 48:4; 49:30; 50:13; Dt 32:49; Jos 21:12,41 **14:53** Lv 14:7

14:1-20 After a **skin disease has disappeared**, the **afflicted person** still needed to bring offerings in order to be **clean** (see also 12:6-8; 15:13-15,29-30). Allowance was made for a poor person to bring less costly offerings (vv. 21-32; see also note on 5:7,11).

14:49-53 The cleansing of a dwelling from mildew involved two birds, just as the cleansing of a person from an infectious skin disease did (vv. 4-7). In both cases, one bird was killed over a pot of fresh water and the other bird was dipped in this liquid before being released into the open country.

14:54-57 On determining **when something is unclean or clean**, see the notes on 10:8-11 and 11:1.

BODILY DISCHARGES

15 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell
them: When any man has a discharge † from his member, he is
unclean. 3 This is uncleanness of his discharge: Whether his member secretes
the discharge or retains it, he is unclean. All the days that his member secretes or
retains anything because of his discharge, † he is unclean. 4 Any bed the man
with the discharge lies on will be unclean, and any furniture he sits on will be
unclean. 5 Anyone who touches his bed is to wash his clothes and bathe with
water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 6 Whoever sits on furniture that
the man with the discharge was sitting on is to wash his clothes and bathe with
water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 7 Whoever touches the body †
of the man with a discharge is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he
will remain unclean until evening. 8 If the man with the discharge spits on
anyone who is clean, he is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will
remain unclean until evening. 9 Any saddle the man with the discharge rides on
will be unclean. † 10 Whoever touches anything that was under him will be
unclean until evening, and whoever carries such things is to wash his clothes and
bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 11 If the man with
the discharge touches anyone without first rinsing his hands in water, †
the person who was touched is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will
remain unclean until evening. 12 Any clay pot that the man with the discharge
touches must be broken, while any wooden utensil is to be rinsed with water. †
13 “When the man with the discharge has been cured of it, he is to count seven
days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in fresh water; he
will be clean. 14 He must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons on the
eighth day, come before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting, and give
them to the priest. 15 The priest is to sacrifice them, one as a sin offering and the
other as a burnt offering. † In this way the priest will make atonement for him
before the LORD because of his discharge.
16 “When a man has an emission of semen, † he is to bathe himself completely
with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 17 Any clothing or leather
on which there is an emission of semen is to be washed with water, and it will
remain unclean until evening. 18 If a man sleeps with a woman and has an

emission of semen, both of them are to bathe with water, and they will remain unclean until evening. †
19 “When a woman has a discharge, and it consists of blood from her body, she will be unclean because of her menstruation † for seven days. Everyone who touches her will be unclean until evening. 20 Anything she lies on during her menstruation will become unclean, and anything she sits on will become unclean. 21 Everyone who touches her bed is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 22 Everyone who touches any furniture she was sitting on is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 23 If discharge is on the bed or the furniture she was sitting on, when he touches it he will be unclean until evening. 24 If a man sleeps with her, and blood from her menstruation gets on him, he will be unclean for seven days, and every bed he lies on will become unclean. †
25 “When a woman has a discharge of her blood for many days, though it is not the time of her menstruation, or if she has a discharge beyond her period, she will be unclean all the days of her unclean discharge, as she is during the days of her menstruation. 26 Any bed she lies on during the days of her discharge will be like her bed during menstrual impurity; any furniture she sits on will be unclean as in her menstrual period. 27 Everyone who touches them will be unclean; he must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening. 28 When she is cured of her discharge, she is to count seven days, and after that she will be clean. † 29 On the eighth day she must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 30 The priest is to sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her before the LORD because of her unclean discharge.
31 “You must keep the Israelites from their uncleanness, so that they do not die by defiling my tabernacle † that is among them. 32 This is the law for someone with a discharge: a man who has an emission of semen, becoming unclean by it; 33 a woman who is in her menstrual period; anyone who has a discharge, whether male or female; and a man who sleeps with a woman who is unclean.”
15:3 DSS, Sam, LXX; MT omits *he is unclean. All the days that his member secretes or retains anything because of his discharge* **15:7** Or *member*, also in v. 13
15:2 Lv 15:33; 22:4; Nm 5:2; 2Sm 3:29 **15:9** Gn 31:34-35 **15:11** Ex 30:19; Mt 15:2; Mk 7:3 **15:12** Lv 6:28; 11:33 **15:15** Gn 22:2; Lv 3:5; Nm 6:11; Jos 8:31; 1Ch 16:1; Ps 20:3; Mc 6:6 **15:16** Lv 15:32; 19:20; 22:4;

Nm 5:13 **15:18** 2Sm 11:2-4 **15:19** Lv 12:2,5; 18:19; Ezk 22:10; 36:17 **15:24** Lv 18:19; 20:18; Ezk 18:6 **15:28** Lv 15:13; Mt 9:20-22 **15:31** Ex 25:9; Nm 5:2-3

15:4-12 Laws concerning uncleanness from a bodily **discharge** emphasize that everything that touches a person who is unclean for this reason becomes unclean, be it a **bed**, **furniture**, another person, a **saddle**, **anything that was under him**, a **clay pot**, or a **wooden utensil** (see also vv. 19-27). Secondarily, anyone who touches the unclean furniture or object becomes unclean himself for a period of time. That uncleanness was transferrable meant that unclean objects had to be destroyed or cleansed.

15:31 Here another important reason is given for the laws in Leviticus 11–15 (see also the note on 11:1). The Israelites needed to be careful not to defile the **tabernacle** through **their uncleanness.** If they did, they could **die**, like Nadab and Abihu (10:1-3; 16:1).

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

16 The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of two of Aaron's sons when
they approached the presence † of † the LORD and died. † 2 The LORD
said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he may not come whenever he
wants into the holy place † behind the curtain † in front of the mercy seat † on
the ark or else he will die, because I appear in the cloud † above the mercy
seat. †
3 "Aaron is to enter the most holy place † in this way: with a young bull for a
sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. † 4 He is to wear a holy linen tunic,
and linen undergarments are to be on his body. He is to tie a linen sash around
him and wrap his head with a linen turban. † These are holy garments; he must
bathe his body with water before he wears them. 5 He is to take from the
Israelite community two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt
offering. †
6 "Aaron will present the bull for his sin offering and make atonement for
himself and his household. 7 Next he will take the two goats and place them
before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8 After Aaron casts lots †
for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other for an uninhabitable
place, † † † 9 he is to present the goat chosen by lot for the LORD and sacrifice
it as a sin offering. † 10 But the goat chosen by lot for an uninhabitable place is
to be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement with it by sending it
into the wilderness † for an uninhabitable place.

11 “When Aaron presents the bull for his sin offering and makes atonement for
himself and his household, he will slaughter the bull for his sin offering. 12 Then
he is to take a firepan full of blazing coals from the altar before the LORD and
two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense, † and bring them inside the
curtain. † 13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, so that the
cloud † of incense covers the mercy seat that is over the testimony, † or else he
will die. † 14 He is to take some of the bull’s blood † and sprinkle it with his
finger against the east side of the mercy seat; then he will sprinkle some of the
blood with his finger before the mercy seat seven times. †
15 “When he slaughters the male goat for the people’s sin offering and brings its
blood inside the curtain, he will do the same with its blood as he did with the
bull’s blood: He is to sprinkle it against the mercy seat and in front of it. 16 He
will make atonement for the most holy place in this way for all their sins because
of the Israelites’ impurities and rebellious acts. † He will do the same for the
tent of meeting that remains among them, because it is surrounded by their
impurities. 17 No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to
make atonement in the most holy place until he leaves after he has made
atonement for himself, his household, and the whole assembly of Israel. †
18 Then he will go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement
for it. He is to take some of the bull’s blood and some of the goat’s blood and
put it on the horns on all sides of the altar. 19 He is to sprinkle some of the blood
on it with his finger seven times to cleanse and set it apart † from the Israelites’
impurities. †
20 “When he has finished making atonement for the most holy place, the tent of
meeting, and the altar, he is to present the live male goat. 21 Aaron will lay both
his hands on the head of the live goat and confess † over it all the Israelites’
iniquities † and rebellious acts — all their sins. † He is to put them on the
goat’s head and send it away into the wilderness † by the man appointed for the
task. † 22 The goat will carry all their iniquities into a desolate land, † and the
man will release it there.
23 “Then Aaron is to enter the tent of meeting, take off the linen garments † he
wore when he entered the most holy place, and leave them there. 24 He will

bathe his body with water in a holy place † and put on his clothes. † Then he must go out and sacrifice his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering; he will make atonement for himself and for the people. 25 He is to burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar. 26 The man who released the goat for an uninhabitable place is to wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; afterward he may reenter the camp. 27 The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought into the most holy place to make atonement, must be brought outside the camp † and their hide, † flesh, and waste burned. † 28 The one who burns them is to wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may reenter the camp.

29 "This is to be a permanent statute † for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month you are to practice self-denial † and do no work, † both the native and the alien † who resides among you. 30 Atonement will be made for you on this day to cleanse you, † and you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 It is a Sabbath † of complete rest for you, † and you must practice self-denial; it is a permanent statute. 32 The priest who is anointed and ordained † † to serve as high priest † in place of his father will make atonement. He will put on the linen garments, the holy garments, 33 and make atonement for the most holy place. He will make atonement for the tent of meeting and the altar and will make atonement for the priests and all the people of the assembly. 34 This is to be a permanent statute for you, to make atonement for the Israelites once a year † because of all their sins." And all this was done as the LORD commanded Moses.

16:1 LXX, Tg, Syr, Vg read *they brought strange fire before* ; Nm 3:4 **16:8** Lit *for Azazel*, also in vv. 10 (2x),26 **16:8** Perhaps a term that means "for the goat that departs," or "for removal," or "for a rough, difficult place," or "for a goat demon"; Hb obscure, also in vv. 10,26 **16:21** Lit *wilderness in the hand of a ready man* **16:32** Lit *and will fill his hand*

16:1 Gn 4:14 **16:1** Lv 10:1-2 **16:2** Heb 6:19 **16:2** Mk 15:38 **16:2** Ex 31:7 **16:2** Ex 16:10 **16:2** Nm 7:89; 16:42; 1Kg 8:10-12; Heb 9:5 **16:3** Lv 4:1-12; Heb 9:7,24-25 **16:3** Gn 22:2; Lv 3:5; Nm 6:11; Jos 8:31; 1Ch 16:1; Ps 20:3; Mc 6:6 **16:4** Ex 28:42-43; Lv 6:10; 8:7-8; Ezk 44:17-19 **16:5** Lv 4:23-24; 8:18-21; 9:15 **16:8** Nm 26:55 **16:8** Lv 16:26 **16:9** Nm 29:11 **16:10** Gn 14:6 **16:12** Nm 7:14 **16:12** Mk 15:38 **16:13** Ex 16:10 **16:13** Ex 31:18 **16:13** Lv 10:1; Nm 16:46-48; Ps 141:2; Rv 8:3-5 **16:14** Heb 9:22 **16:14** Lv 4:6; Heb 9:4-5 **16:16** Ex 22:9 **16:17** 1Tm 2:5; Heb 9:7 **16:19** Lv 8:10 **16:17-19** Heb 9:11-14 **16:21** Lv 5:5; 26:40; Nm 5:7; 2Ch 30:22; Neh 1:6; 9:2; Dn 9:4,20 **16:21** Lv 5:1 **16:21** Ezr 10:1; Neh 9:2-3; Dn 9:20; 2Co 5:21; Jms 5:16; 1Jn 1:9 **16:21** Lv 14:7 **16:22** Ps 103:12; Is 53:4,6,11-12; Jn 1:29; Heb 9:28; 1Pt 2:24; 1Jn 3:5 **16:23** Lv 6:11 **16:24** Ex 29:31; Lv 6:16,26-27; 7:6; 10:13; 24:9; Ec 8:10; Ezk 42:13 **16:24** Lv 8:6-9 **16:27** Lv 8:17 **16:27** Lv 7:8 **16:27** Lv 4:11-12; Heb 13:11-12 **16:29** Ex 28:43; Lv 11:46 **16:29** Lv 23:27-32; Nm 29:7; Ps 35:13;

Is 58:3,5; Dn 10:12 **16:29** Ex 12:16; Lv 23:3,28,31; Nm 29:7; Jr 17:22 **16:29** Ex 12:49; Lv 17:15; 18:26 **16:30** Lv 13:6 **16:31** Gn 2:2 **16:31** Ex 16:23; 31:15; 35:2; Lv 23:3,24,32,39; 25:4-5 **16:32** Ex 29:33 **16:32** Lv 8:12,33 **16:34** Heb 9:7

16:1-2 This reference to **the death of two of Aaron's sons** ties the laws of Leviticus 11–15 back to the incident surrounding Nadab and Abihu in 10:1-3 (see the note on 11:1). Aaron was not permitted to go **behind the curtain** before the ark **whenever he wants . . . or else he will die** (v. 2; see also v. 13). He could only go in "once a year" on the Day of Atonement (v. 34; 23:27-28).

16:6-10 The sacrificial rituals performed by the high priest on the Day of Atonement involved both sacrifices for himself and for the people. Hebrews 7:27 points out in contrast that Jesus, since he was perfect, did not need to offer sacrifices for his own sins.

16:16 The goat sacrificed as a sin offering for the people was to **make atonement for the most holy place . . . for all their sins because of the Israelites' impurities and rebellious acts** (see also vv. 19,30). Israel's uncleanness is once again brought into view (see the note on 15:31).

16:20-22 The other goat (see v. 8) was sent **away into the wilderness** after Aaron laid hands on its head and confessed **over it all the Israelites' iniquities and rebellious acts.** Just as uncleanness was transferable from person to object or object to person (see 15:4-12), the sin of the community was placed on the live goat and sent into the wilderness for ritual disposal. The statement that the **goat will carry all their iniquities into a desolate land** bears remarkable similarity to Isaiah 53:12, which says of the Suffering Servant that "he bore the sin of many." Thus, each year on the tenth day of the seventh month, **atonement will be made for you . . . to cleanse you, and you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD.** The ritual surrounding the two goats associates atonement with both a sacrificial death for sin and its removal (see Ps 103:12).

FORBIDDEN SACRIFICES

17 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the
Israelites and tell them: This is what the LORD has commanded:
3 Anyone from the house of Israel who slaughters † an ox, sheep, or
goat in the camp, or slaughters it outside the camp, 4 instead of bringing it to the
entrance to the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD before his
tabernacle — that person will be considered guilty. † † He has shed blood †
and is to be cut off from his people. † 5 This is so the Israelites will bring to the
LORD the sacrifices † they have been offering in the open country. They are to
bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting and offer them as
fellowship sacrifices † to the LORD. 6 The priest will then splatter the blood on
the LORD's altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting and burn the fat as a
pleasing aroma to the LORD. 7 They must no longer offer their sacrifices to the
goat-demons † that they have prostituted † themselves with. This will be a
permanent statute † for them throughout their generations.

8 “Say to them: Anyone from the house of Israel or from the aliens † who reside among them who offers a burnt offering or a sacrifice 9 but does not bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD, that person is to be cut off from his people.

EATING BLOOD AND CARCASSES PROHIBITED

10 “Anyone from the house of Israel or from the aliens who reside among them who eats any blood, † I will turn † against that person who eats blood and cut him off from his people. 11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have appointed it to you to make atonement on the altar for † your lives, since it is the lifeblood that makes atonement. † 12 Therefore I say to the Israelites: None of you and no alien who resides among you may eat blood.

13 “Any Israelite or alien residing among them, who hunts † down a wild animal or bird that may be eaten must drain its blood † and cover it with dirt. 14 Since the life of every creature is its blood, I have told the Israelites: You are not to eat the blood of any creature, † because the life of every creature is its blood; whoever eats it must be cut off.

15 “Every person, whether the native or the resident alien, † who eats an animal that died a natural death or was mauled by wild beasts † is to wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will remain unclean until evening; then he will be clean. 16 But if he does not wash his clothes and bathe himself, he will bear his iniquity.”

17:4 Lit *tabernacle — blood will be charged against that person* **17:10** Lit *will set my face* **17:11** Or *to ransom*

17:3 Dt 12:5-21 **17:4** Ex 22:1; Lv 20:9; Nm 35:27; Dt 19:10; Ps 55:23; Is 33:15 **17:4** Gn 9:6 **17:4** Nm 9:13 **17:5** Gn 46:1; Ex 34:25 **17:5** Lv 7:11 **17:7** 2Ch 11:15; Is 13:21; 34:14 **17:7** Dt 22:21 **17:7** Gn 26:5; Ex 12:14; Lv 3:17; Nm 9:3; Dt 6:2; 8:11 **17:8** Gn 19:9; Ex 2:22 **17:10** Gn 9:4; Lv 3:17 **17:11** Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Rm 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14,20; Heb 13:12; 1Jn 1:7; Rv 1:5 **17:13** Gn 25:27 **17:13** Ex 29:12; Lv 17:4; Dt 12:16,24; 15:23; Ezk 24:7 **17:14** Lv 3:17 **17:15** Lv 16:29 **17:15** Ex 22:31; Lv 7:24; 22:8; Dt 14:21

17:2 The laws in Leviticus 17 were given both to the priests and to all the Israelites, whereas Leviticus 18–20 was directed just to the Israelites (18:2; 19:2; 20:2) and Leviticus 21–22 to the priests only (21:1,17; 22:2,18).

17:5-7 The prohibitions in vv. 2-4 were given because the Israelites had been making sacrifices **in the open country** instead of at the tabernacle (see also vv. 8-9). The reference to **fellowship sacrifices** and the command not to eat blood (see vv. 10-15) relates to earlier instructions regarding fellowship sacrifices in Leviticus 3 (esp. v. 17) and 7:22-26. Shockingly, the Israelites had actually been practicing idolatry by offering **sacrifices to the goat-demons that they have prostituted themselves with.** Their worship of the

golden calf was thus not an isolated incident. As was the case then and with Nadab and Abihu in 10:1-3, the giving of the law at Mount Sinai coincided with the breaking of the law by Israel (see notes on Ex 32:1-6 and Lv 11:1).

PROHIBITED PAGAN PRACTICES

18 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: I am
the LORD your God. † 3 Do not follow the practices of the land of
Egypt, † where you used to live, or follow the practices of the land of
Canaan, † where I am bringing you. You must not follow their customs. †
4 You are to practice my ordinances † and you are to keep my statutes † by
following them; I am the LORD your God. 5 Keep my statutes and ordinances; a
person will live † if he does them. † I am the LORD.
6 "You are not to come near † any close relative † for sexual intercourse; † I
am the LORD. 7 You are not to violate the intimacy that belongs to your father †
and mother. † She is your mother; you must not have sexual intercourse with
her. 8 You are not to have sex with your father's wife; † she is your father's
family. † 9 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your sister, either your
father's daughter or your mother's, † whether born at home or born elsewhere.
You are not to have sex with her. 10 You are not to have sexual intercourse with
your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, for they are your family. †
11 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your father's wife's daughter,
who is adopted by † your father; she is your sister. 12 You are not to have
sexual intercourse with your father's sister; † she is your father's close relative.
13 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your mother's sister, † for she is
your mother's close relative. 14 You are not to violate the intimacy that belongs
to † your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual intercourse;
she is your aunt. † 15 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your
daughter-in-law. † She is your son's wife; you are not to have sex with her.
16 You are not to have sexual intercourse with your brother's wife; she is your
brother's family. † 17 You are not to have sexual intercourse with a woman and
her daughter. † You are not to marry her son's daughter or her daughter's

daughter and have sex with her. They are close relatives; it is depraved. †
18 You are not to marry a woman as a rival to her sister and have sexual
intercourse with her during her sister's lifetime. †
19 "You are not to approach † a woman during her menstrual impurity to have
sexual intercourse with her. † 20 You are not to have sexual intercourse with †
your neighbor's wife, defiling yourself with her. †
21 "You are not to sacrifice any of your children in the fire † to Molech. † Do
not profane the name † of your God; I am the LORD. 22 You are not to sleep
with a man as with a woman; † it is detestable. † 23 You are not to have sexual
intercourse with † any animal, defiling yourself with it; a woman is not to
present herself to an animal to mate with it; † it is a perversion.
24 "Do not defile yourselves by any of these practices, for the nations I am
driving out before you have defiled themselves by all these things. 25 The land
has become defiled, so I am punishing it for its iniquity, and the land will vomit
out its inhabitants. † 26 But you are to keep my statutes and ordinances. You
must not commit any of these detestable acts — not the native or the alien who
resides among you. 27 For the people who were in the land prior to you have
committed all these detestable acts, and the land has become defiled. 28 If you
defile the land, it will vomit † you out as it has vomited out the nations that
were before you. 29 Any person who does any of these detestable practices is to
be cut off from his people. 30 You must keep my instruction to not do any of the
detestable customs † that were practiced before you, so that you do not defile
yourselves by them; I am the LORD your God."

18:6 Lit *any flesh of his flesh* **18:7** Lit *Do not uncover your father's nakedness and your mother's nakedness* **18:10** Lit *because they are your nakedness* **18:11** Lit *daughter, a relative of* **18:14** Lit *Do not uncover the nakedness of* **18:20** Lit *to give your emission of semen to* **18:21** Lit *to make any of your children pass through the fire* **18:23** Lit *to give your emission to*

18:2 Nm 15:41 **18:3** Lv 11:45; 19:34,36 **18:3** Dt 18:9-12 **18:3** Ex 23:24; Lv 18:24-30; 2Kg 17:7-8 **18:4** Lv 18:26; Nm 29:18; Jos 6:15; Ezr 3:4; Jb 9:19; Ps 119:13; Is 1:17; Ezk 18:5 **18:4** Lv 7:7 **18:5** Dt 4:1; Neh 9:29; Ezk 20:13,21,25; 33:12; Rm 7:10; Php 1:21 **18:5** Dt 6:24; Pr 6:23; Lk 10:26-28; Rm 7:10; 10:5; Gl 3:12 **18:6** Gn 20:4 **18:6** 1Tm 4:3 **18:7** Ezk 22:10 **18:8** Gn 35:22; 49:4; Lv 20:11; 2Sm 16:21-22; Am 2:7; 1Co 5:1 **18:8** Lv 20:11 **18:9** Lv 20:17; Dt 27:22; 2Sm 13:11-14; Ezk 22:11 **18:12** Ex 6:20 **18:13** Lv 20:19 **18:14** Lv 20:20 **18:15** Gn 38:16; Lv 20:12; Ezk 22:11 **18:16** Lv 20:21; Dt 25:5-10; Mt 14:3-4; Mk 6:18 **18:17** Lv 20:14; Dt 27:23; Am 2:7 **18:17** Lv 19:29 **18:18** Gn 29:21-28 **18:19** Gn 20:4 **18:19** Lv 15:19-24; 20:18; Ezk 18:6 **18:20** Ex 20:14; Lv 20:10; Nm 5:11-31; Dt 22:22; 1Co 6:9; Heb 13:4 **18:21** Lv 20:2-5; Dt 18:10; 1Kg 11:7; 2Kg 23:10; Jr 32:35; Ac 7:43 **18:21** Ex 20:7; Lv 20:3; Jn 10:25 **18:22** Gn 19:5; Lv 20:13;

Dt 23:18; Rm 1:26-27; 1Co 6:9-11; Gl 5:21; 1Tm 1:10; Rv 21:8 **18:22** Gn 46:34 **18:23** Ex 22:19 **18:25** Nm 35:33-34; Dt 9:4; Ezr 9:11; Is 24:5-6; Jr 2:7; Ezk 36:1 **18:28** Lv 20:22; Dt 8:20 **18:30** Lv 7:7

18:1-5 The Israelites' idolatrous worship of "goat-demons" (17:7) had led to instructions meant to prevent further idolatry (17:1-9). Here God's implicit concern that Israel be set apart from sin is seen through his command not to follow either **the practices of the land of Egypt** from which they had come or **the practices of the land of Canaan** to which they were going (see also vv. 24-30). Rather, they were to keep his **statutes and ordinances.**

18:6-26 Forbidden sexual practices listed here include incest, sex with a woman during her menstrual impurity, adultery, homosexual intercourse (see "Engaging LGBT Advocates," *p. 1392*), and bestiality. Also forbidden was the idolatrous and cruel practice of sacrificing children to **Molech** (see also Dt 18:10; Jr 19:5; 32:35; Ezk 16:21), an Ammonite god (1Kg 11:7, see footnote A). The Canaanites had **defiled themselves by all these things** (see also vv. 27,30), bringing God's judgment upon themselves. Israel was not to be like them but was to keep God's **statutes and ordinances** (see vv. 2-5).

LAWS OF HOLINESS

19 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Speak to the entire Israelite community
and tell them: Be holy † because I, the LORD your God, am holy. †
3 "Each of you is to respect his mother and father. † You are to keep my
Sabbaths; I am the LORD your God. 4 Do not turn to idols † or make cast
images † of gods for yourselves; † I am the LORD your God.
5 "When you offer a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD, sacrifice it so that you
may be accepted. 6 It is to be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day,
but what remains on the third day must be burned. † 7 If any is eaten on the
third day, it is a repulsive thing; it will not be accepted. † 8 Anyone who eats it
will bear his iniquity, for he has profaned what is holy to the LORD. That person
is to be cut off from his people. †
9 "When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap to the very edge
of your field or gather the gleanings † of your harvest. 10 Do not strip your
vineyard bare or gather its fallen grapes. Leave them for the poor † and the
resident alien; † I am the LORD your God.
11 "Do not steal. † Do not act deceptively † or lie † to one another. 12 Do not
swear falsely by my name, profaning the name of your God; † I am the LORD.
13 "Do not oppress † your neighbor or rob † him. The wages due a hired
worker † must not remain with you until morning. 14 Do not curse the deaf or

put a stumbling block in front of the blind, † but you are to fear your God; † I am the LORD. †

15 “Do not act unjustly † when deciding a case. Do not be partial † to the poor or give preference to the rich; † judge your neighbor fairly. 16 Do not go about spreading slander † among your people; do not jeopardize † your neighbor’s life; I am the LORD.

17 “Do not harbor hatred against your brother. † † Rebuke your neighbor directly, and you will not incur guilt because of him. † 18 Do not take revenge † or bear a grudge against members of your community, but love your neighbor as yourself; † I am the LORD.

19 “You are to keep my statutes. Do not crossbreed two different kinds of your livestock, sow your fields with two kinds of seed, or put on a garment made of two kinds of material. †

20 “If a man has sexual intercourse with a woman who is a slave designated for another man, but she has not been redeemed † or given her freedom, there must be punishment. † They are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. 21 However, he must bring a ram as his guilt † offering to the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. † 22 The priest will make atonement on his behalf before the LORD with the ram of the guilt offering for the sin he has committed, and he will be forgiven for the sin he committed.

23 “When you come into the land and plant any kind of tree for food, you are to consider the fruit forbidden. † It will be forbidden to you for three years; it is not to be eaten. 24 In the fourth year all its fruit is to be consecrated as a praise offering † to the LORD. 25 But in the fifth year you may eat its fruit. In this way its yield will increase for you; † I am the LORD your God.

26 “You are not to eat anything with blood in it. † † You are not to practice divination † or witchcraft. † 27 You are not to cut off the hair at the sides of your head or mar the edge of your beard. † 28 You are not to make gashes on your bodies for the dead † or put tattoo marks on yourselves; I am the LORD.

29 “Do not debase † † your daughter by making her a prostitute, † or the land
will be prostituted and filled with depravity. 30 Keep my Sabbaths and revere
my sanctuary; † I am the LORD.
31 “Do not turn to mediums † † or consult spiritists, † † or you will be defiled
by them; I am the LORD your God.
32 “You are to rise in the presence of the elderly and honor the old. † Fear your
God; I am the LORD.
33 “When an alien resides with you in your land, you must not oppress † him.
34 You will regard the alien who resides with you as the native-born among you.
You are to love him as yourself, † for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; † I
am the LORD your God.
35 “Do not be unfair † in measurements of length, weight, or volume. 36 You
are to have honest balances, † honest weights, an honest dry measure, † and an
honest liquid measure; † † I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the
land of Egypt. 37 Keep all my statutes and all my ordinances and do them; I am
the LORD.”

19:16 Lit *not stand against* **19:17** Or *your fellow Israelite* **19:20** Or *compensation* **19:21** Or *restitution* **19:23** Lit *uncircumcised* **19:26** Or *anything over its blood* **19:29** Lit *profane* **19:31** Or *spirits of the dead* **19:31** Or *familiar spirits* **19:36** Lit *honest ephah* **19:36** Lit *honest hin*

19:2 Ex 19:5-6 **19:2** Lv 11:44; 21:8 **19:3** Ex 20:12; 21:15 **19:4** Lv 26:1 **19:4** Nm 33:52 **19:4** Ex 20:3,23; 32:31; Dt 4:15-16 **19:6** Lv 7:17 **19:7** Lv 1:4 **19:7-8** Lv 7:18,20 **19:9** Lv 23:22; Dt 24:19-22; Ru 2:2-7,15-19,23; Is 17:5 **19:10** Dt 15:11 **19:10** Ex 2:22; Dt 24:20-21; Is 17:5-6; 24:13 **19:11** Ex 20:15; 22:1; Rm 13:9; Eph 4:28 **19:11** Pr 30:9; Is 30:9; 59:13; Jr 5:12; Hs 4:2; 7:3; 9:2; 10:13; Nah 3:1; Hab 3:17; Zch 13:4 **19:11** Gn 21:23; Ex 20:16; 1Sm 15:29; Ps 44:18; 89:34; Is 63:8; Eph 4:25 **19:12** Ex 20:7; Lv 18:21; 20:3; Mal 3:5; Jms 5:12 **19:13** Dt 24:14 **19:13** Dt 28:29 **19:13** Ex 12:45; 22:14; Lv 22:10; 25:6,40,50,53; Is 7:20; Jr 46:21; Ezk 18:7; Mal 3:5; Jms 5:4 **19:14** Ex 4:11; Dt 27:18 **19:14** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Ac 10:2; Rv 14:7 **19:14** Ex 31:13 **19:15** Dt 25:16 **19:15** Ex 23:2-3; Dt 1:17; Jms 2:9 **19:15** Gn 24:35; Jb 34:19 **19:16** Ps 15:3; Jr 6:28; 9:4; Lk 6:22; 2Co 6:8; 12:20; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Ti 3:2; 1Pt 2:1; 4:4; Rv 2:9 **19:17** 2Th 3:15; 1Jn 2:9,11; 3:15; 4:20 **19:17** Pr 9:8; 27:5; Ezk 3:18; Mt 18:15; Gl 6:1 **19:18** Dt 32:35; Pr 20:22; Rm 12:17,19; Heb 10:30; Rv 19:2 **19:18** Pr 17:17; Mt 5:43; 22:39; Mk 12:31; Lk 10:27; Rm 13:9; Gl 5:14; Jms 2:8 **19:19** Dt 22:9-11 **19:20** Ex 6:6; 21:7-11; Lv 27:29; Dt 22:23-27 **19:21** Ex 27:21 **19:24** Jdg 9:27 **19:25** Lv 25:18-22 **19:26** Gn 9:4; Lv 3:17; 17:10-12; 1Sm 14:32-35; Ezk 33:25 **19:26** 1Kg 20:33 **19:26** Dt 18:10,14; Jdg 9:37; 2Kg 21:6; 2Ch 33:6; Is 2:6; 57:3; Jr 27:9 **19:27** Lv 21:5; Dt 14:1; 2Sm 10:4-5; Jr 41:5; 48:37; Ezk 5:1-5; 44:20 **19:28** 1Kg 18:28; Jr 16:6; 41:5; 47:5; 48:37 **19:29** Lv 21:12 **19:29** Ex 34:31; Lv 21:9; Dt 23:17-18 **19:30** Ex 15:17; Lv 20:3; 26:2; Nm 19:20 **19:31** Lv 20:6 **19:31** Dt 18:11; Ac 16:16 **19:32** Jb 12:12; 32:4; Pr 23:22; Lm 5:12; 1Tm 5:1 **19:33** Dt 23:16 **19:34** Lv 19:18 **19:34** Ex 23:9; Lv 18:3; Dt 10:19; 23:7 **19:35** Dt 25:16 **19:36** Hs 12:8; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11 **19:36** Dt 25:13-16; Pr 16:11; Ezk 45:10

19:2 As was implicit in the laws of the previous two chapters, the Israelites were to **be holy**, or set apart, **because I, the LORD your God, am holy.** This instruction had already been given in 11:44-45 and

reappears in 20:7,26; 21:6. The repetition of this command reflects its importance as an overarching theme in these sections of law.

19:3-16 Many of these laws expand on the laws in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2-17) and in the Covenant Code (Ex 20:22–23:33). In this chapter, however, the phrase **I am the LORD your God** (vv. 4,10,25,31,34) or simply **I am the LORD** (vv. 12,14,16,18,28,30,37) is found repeatedly, perhaps emphasizing God's holy character and his relationship to Israel.

19:17-18 The instruction not to hate another person and to **love your neighbor as yourself** anticipates Jesus's teaching in Matthew 5:22 and 22:39.

19:19 The specific rationale behind this law is unclear.

19:23-25 This law involved a distinction between fruit that was **forbidden** for a tree's first three years, **consecrated** to God during its fourth year, and permissible to eat from the fifth year onward (see 10:10; 20:25).

19:27-28 The motivation behind these obscure laws may have been to maintain a visual distinction between the Israelites and the Canaanites (see 20:23,26; 21:5; Dt 14:1).

19:33-34 The instruction to treat **an alien** (a foreigner) well was based on the Israelites' own experience of being oppressed as foreigners in Egypt.

19:35-36 Honest weights and measures related to fair business practices (Dt 25:13-16; Pr 20:10; Am 8:5).

MOLECH WORSHIP AND SPIRITISM

20 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Say to the Israelites: Any Israelite or
alien residing in Israel who gives any of his children to Molech † must
be put to death; the people of the country are to stone him. † 3 I will turn †
against that man and cut him off from his people, because he gave his offspring
to Molech, defiling my sanctuary † and profaning my holy name. † 4 But if the
people of the country look the other way when that man †
gives any of his children to Molech, and do not put him to death, 5 then I will turn against that
man and his family, and cut off from their people both him and all who follow †
him in prostituting † themselves with Molech.
6 "Whoever turns to mediums † † or spiritists † and prostitutes himself with
them, I will turn against that person and cut him off from his people.
7 Consecrate yourselves and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8 Keep my
statutes and do them; I am the LORD who sets you apart.

FAMILY AND SEXUAL OFFENSES

9 "If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. † He has
cursed his father or mother; his death is his own fault. †

10 “If a man commits adultery † with a married woman — if he commits
adultery with his neighbor’s wife — both the adulterer and the adulteress must
be put to death. 11 If a man sleeps with his father’s wife, he has violated the
intimacy that belongs to his father. † † Both of them must be put to death; their
death is their own fault. † 12 If a man sleeps with his daughter-in-law, † both of
them must be put to death. They have acted perversely; their death is their own
fault. 13 If a man sleeps with a man as with a woman, † they have both
committed a detestable act. † They must be put to death; their death is their own
fault. 14 If a man marries † a woman and her mother, † it is depraved. Both he
and they must be burned, † so that there will be no depravity among you. 15 If a
man has sexual intercourse with † an animal, he must be put to death; you are
also to kill the animal. 16 If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it,
you are to kill the woman and the animal. † They must be put to death; their
death is their own fault. 17 If a man marries his sister, † whether his father’s
daughter or his mother’s daughter, and they have sexual relations, † † it is a
disgrace. † They are to be cut off publicly from their people. He has had sexual
intercourse with his sister; he will bear his iniquity. 18 If a man sleeps with a
menstruating woman and has sexual intercourse with her, he has exposed the
source of her flow, and she has uncovered the source of her blood. † Both of
them are to be cut off from their people. 19 You must not have sexual
intercourse with your mother’s sister or your father’s sister, † for it is exposing
one’s own blood relative; both people will bear their iniquity. 20 If a man sleeps
with his aunt, he has violated the intimacy that belongs to his uncle; † † they
will bear their guilt and die childless. 21 If a man marries his brother’s wife, it is
impurity. † He has violated the intimacy that belongs to his brother; † † they
will be childless.

HOLINESS IN THE LAND

22 “You are to keep all my statutes and all my ordinances, and do them, so that
the land where I am bringing you to live will not vomit you out. † 23 You must
not follow the statutes of the nations I am driving out before you, for they did all

these things, and I abhorred them. † 24 And I promised you: You will inherit
their land, since I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and
honey. † I am the LORD your God who set you apart from the peoples.
25 Therefore you are to distinguish the clean animal from the unclean one, and
the unclean bird from the clean one. Do not become contaminated † by any land
animal, bird, or whatever crawls on the ground; I have set these apart as unclean
for you. † 26 You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have
set you apart from the nations to be mine. †

27 "A man or a woman who is † a medium or a spiritist must be put to death.
They are to be stoned; their death is their own fault."

20:3 Lit *will set my face*, also in vv. 5,6 **20:4** Lit *country ever close their eyes from that man when he* **20:5** Lit *prostitute themselves with* **20:6** Or *spirits of the dead* **20:6** Or *familiar spirits* **20:9** Lit *his blood on him* **20:11** Lit *has uncovered his father's nakedness* **20:11** Lit *their blood on them*, also in vv. 12,13,16,27 **20:14** Lit *takes*, also in vv. 17,21 **20:15** Lit *man gives his emission to* **20:17** Lit *and he sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness* **20:20** Lit *has uncovered his uncle's nakedness* **20:21** Lit *has uncovered his brother's nakedness* **20:27** Lit *is in them*

20:2 Lv 18:21; Dt 18:10; 2Kg 23:10; Ac 7:43 **20:2** Lv 24:14; Nm 15:35-36; Dt 17:2-7; 21:21; Jos 7:25 **20:3** Ex 15:17 **20:3** Lv 18:21; 19:12; 22:2,32; Jr 34:16; Ezk 36:20; 39:7; Am 2:7 **20:5** Dt 22:21 **20:6** Lv 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:11; 1Sm 28:3,7-9; 2Kg 21:6; 23:24; 1Ch 10:13; 2Ch 33:6; Is 8:19; 19:3; 29:4 **20:9** Ex 21:17; Dt 21:18-21; 27:16; Pr 20:20; 30:11; Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10 **20:10** Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18; 22:22; 31:16; Pr 6:32; Mal 3:5; Mt 5:27-28,32; 19:9,18 **20:11** Lv 18:8; Dt 22:30; 27:20; 1Co 5:1 **20:12** Gn 38:16; Lv 18:15; Ezk 22:11 **20:13** Gn 19:5 **20:13** Gn 46:34 **20:14** Lv 18:17 **20:14** Gn 38:24; Lv 18:22; 21:9; Jdg 14:15; Rv 17:16 **20:15-16** Ex 22:19 **20:17** Lv 18:13 **20:17** Lv 18:9 **20:17** Lv 19:29 **20:18** Lv 18:19 **20:19** Ex 6:20; Lv 18:12-13 **20:20** Lv 18:14 **20:21** Mk 6:18 **20:21** Lv 18:16 **20:22** Lv 18:25 **20:23** Ex 23:24; Lv 18:3 **20:24** Ex 3:8; 13:5; Nm 14:8; 16:13-14 **20:25** Dt 7:26 **20:25** Lv 11:1-47 **20:26** Ex 19:5-6; Lv 11:44-45; Is 1:4; 6:3

20:1-8 The worship of **Molech** and involvement with **mediums** or **spiritists**, which had been mentioned earlier (18:21; 19:31), is addressed again (see also 19:26; 20:27; see "Spiritism, Animism, and Cynicism in Biblical Times," *p. 237*). The whole community was responsible for punishing anyone who worshiped Molech. The Israelites' separation from these practices was to be one aspect of their holiness.

20:11-21 The laws in 18:6-23 forbade certain sexual practices, and this section explains that the punishment for guilty individuals was generally **death** (vv. 10-16) or being **cut off** from their people (vv. 17-18).

20:22-26 The section of laws in Leviticus 18–20 was directed to the Israelites (18:2; 19:2; 20:2) and concludes with yet another call for holiness (see also 18:2-4; 19:2; 20:7). The Israelites had been **set . . . apart from the nations** to belong to God (see also v. 8). Through their obedience to him, they were to be distinct from the Canaanites and their practices (see also Dt 18:9-14). The reference to **clean** and **unclean** animals links the present set of laws in Leviticus 18–20 with those in Leviticus 11–15.

THE HOLINESS OF THE PRIESTS

21 The LORD said to Moses: “Speak to Aaron’s sons, the priests, and tell
them: A priest is not to make himself ceremonially unclean for a dead
person among his relatives, † 2 except for his immediate family: his
mother, father, son, daughter, or brother. 3 He may make himself unclean for his
unmarried virgin sister in his immediate family. 4 He is not to make himself
unclean for those related to him by marriage † and so defile himself.
5 “Priests may not make bald spots on their heads, shave the edge of their
beards, or make gashes on their bodies. † 6 They are to be holy to their God and
not profane the name of their God. † For they present the fire offerings to the
LORD, the food of their God, and they must be holy. 7 They are not to marry a
woman defiled by prostitution. † † They are not to marry one divorced † by
her husband, for the priest is holy to his God. 8 You are to consider him holy
since he presents the food of your God. He will be holy to you because I, the
LORD who sets you apart, am holy. 9 If a priest’s daughter defiles herself by
promiscuity, † † she defiles her father; she must be burned to death. †
10 “The priest who is highest among his brothers, who has had the anointing oil
poured on his head and has been ordained † to wear the clothes, must not
dishevel his hair † or tear his clothes. † 11 He must not go near any dead person
or make himself unclean even for his father or mother. † 12 He must not leave
the sanctuary or he will desecrate the sanctuary of his God, for the consecration
of the anointing oil of his God is on him; † I am the LORD.
13 “He is to marry a woman who is a virgin. 14 He is not to marry a widow, †
a divorced woman, † or one defiled by prostitution. He is to marry a virgin from
his own people, 15 so that he does not corrupt his bloodline † among his people,
for I am the LORD who sets him apart.”

PHYSICAL DEFECTS AND PRIESTS

16 The LORD spoke to Moses: 17 “Tell Aaron: None of your descendants
throughout your generations who has a physical defect † is to come near to
present the food † of his God. 18 No man who has any defect is to come near:
no man who is blind, lame, facially disfigured, or deformed; 19 no man who has
a broken foot or hand, 20 or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, † † or who has an

eye defect, a festering rash, scabs, † or a crushed testicle. † 21 No descendant of the priest Aaron who has a defect is to come near to present the fire offerings to the LORD. He has a defect and is not to come near to present the food of his God. 22 He may eat the food of his God from what is especially holy as well as from what is holy. 23 But because he has a defect, he must not go near the curtain † or approach the altar. He is not to desecrate my holy places, for I am the LORD who sets them apart." † 24 Moses said this to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

21:4 Lit *unclean a husband among his people* **21:7** Or *a prostitute,* or *a defiled woman* **21:9** Or *prostitution* **21:10** Lit *and one has filled his hand* **21:10** Or *not uncover his head* **21:15** Lit *not profane his seed* **21:20** Or *or emaciated*

21:1 Nm 5:2-3; 6:6; 19:11-13; 31:19; Ezk 44:25 **21:5** Lv 19:27-28 **21:6** Ex 20:7; Lv 20:3; Jn 10:25 **21:7** Gn 34:31 **21:7** Dt 22:19,29; 24:1,3; Mal 2:16; Mt 1:19; 5:31-32; 19:3-9 **21:9** Dt 22:21 **21:9** Gn 38:24; Lv 20:14; Jdg 15:6; Rv 17:16 **21:10** Lv 10:6; Ezk 44:20; Mk 14:63 **21:11** Ezk 44:25 **21:12** Lv 10:7 **21:14** Ex 22:22 **21:14** Lv 21:7; 22:13; Nm 30:10; Ezk 44:22 **21:17** Nm 19:2 **21:17** Lv 3:11 **21:20** Gn 41:3-4,6-7,23-24; Ex 16:14; Lv 13:30; 16:12; 1Kg 19:12; Is 29:5; 40:15,22 **21:20** Lv 22:22 **21:18-20** Lv 22:24; Dt 23:1 **21:23** Mk 15:38; Heb 6:19 **21:23** Ex 31:13; Lv 20:8; 21:8,15; 22:9,16,32; Ezk 20:12

21:1-15 The laws in Leviticus 21–22 were directed to the **priests** (see also v. 17; 22:2,18; note on 17:2). Like the Israelites, they were **to be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God** (see 18:21; 19:2,12; 20:3,7,26). Because of their service in the tabernacle, priests had to take special care in choosing a wife and were restricted from becoming unclean when mourning for relatives outside of their immediate family. The regulations for the high priest were even stricter (vv. 10-15).

21:17-23 Though still bearing the image of God (see the note on Gn 1:26-31), descendants of Aaron who had a **physical defect** were not permitted to **come near to present the food of his God** or **go near the curtain or approach the altar** (v. 23). This corresponds with the requirement that animals sacrificed at the tabernacle be "unblemished" (22:18-25; see also 1:3,10; 3:1,6; 4:3,23). The impression left is that the law required perfection (see Gl 3:10; Jms 2:10).

PRIESTS AND THEIR FOOD

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Tell Aaron and his sons to deal respectfully with the holy offerings of the Israelites that they have consecrated to me, so they do not profane my holy name; † I am the LORD. 3 Say to them: If any man from any of your descendants throughout your generations is in a state of uncleanness yet approaches the holy offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD, that person will be cut off from my presence; I am the LORD. 4 No man of Aaron's descendants who has a skin disease † or a discharge is to eat from the holy offerings until he is clean. Whoever touches anything made unclean by a dead person or by a man who has an emission of semen, 5 or whoever touches any swarming creature that makes him unclean or

any person who makes him unclean — whatever his uncleanness — [6] the man who touches any of these will remain unclean until evening † and is not to eat from the holy offerings unless he has bathed his body with water. [7] When the sun has set, he will become clean, and then he may eat from the holy offerings, for that is his food. † [8] He must not eat an animal that died naturally or was mauled by wild beasts, † † making himself unclean by it; I am the LORD. [9] They must keep my instruction, † or they will be guilty and die because they profane it; I am the LORD who sets them apart.

[10] "No one outside a priest's family † † is to eat the holy offering. A foreigner staying with a priest or a hired worker is not to eat the holy offering. [11] But if a priest purchases someone with his own silver, that person may eat it, and those born in his house may eat his food. [12] If the priest's daughter is married to a man outside a priest's family, † she is not to eat from the holy contributions. † [13] But if the priest's daughter becomes widowed or divorced, has no children, and returns to her father's house as in her youth, she may share her father's food. But no outsider may share it. [14] If anyone eats a holy offering in error, † he is to add a fifth to its value and give the holy offering to the priest. † [15] The priests must not profane the holy offerings the Israelites give to the LORD [16] by letting the people eat their holy offerings and having them bear the penalty of restitution. † For I am the LORD who sets them apart."

ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICES

[17] The LORD spoke to Moses: [18] "Speak to Aaron, his sons, and all the Israelites and tell them: Any man of the house of Israel or of the resident aliens † in Israel who presents his offering † — whether they present payment of vows or freewill gifts to the LORD as burnt offerings — [19] must offer an unblemished male † from the cattle, sheep, or goats in order for you to be accepted. [20] You are not to present anything that has a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf.

[21] "When a man presents a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering from the herd or flock, it has to be unblemished to be acceptable; there must be no defect in it. [22] You are not to present any animal to

the LORD that is blind, injured, maimed, or has a running sore, festering rash, † or scabs; you may not put any of them on the altar as a fire offering to the LORD. † 23 You may sacrifice as a freewill offering any animal from the herd or flock that has an elongated or stunted limb, but it is not acceptable as a vow offering. 24 You are not to present to the LORD anything that has bruised, crushed, torn, or severed testicles; † you must not sacrifice them in your land. 25 Neither you nor † a foreigner are to present food to your God from any of these animals. They will not be accepted for you because they are deformed and have a defect." †

26 The LORD spoke to Moses: 27 "When an ox, sheep, or goat is born, it is to remain with † its mother for seven days; from the eighth day † on, it will be acceptable as an offering, a fire offering to the LORD. 28 But you are not to slaughter an animal from the herd or flock on the same day as its young. †

29 When you sacrifice a thank offering † to the LORD, sacrifice it so that you may be accepted. 30 It is to be eaten on the same day. † Do not let any of it remain until morning; I am the LORD.

31 "You are to keep my commands and do them; I am the LORD. 32 You must not profane my holy name; I must be treated as holy † among the Israelites. I am the LORD who sets you apart, 33 the one who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD."

22:4 Or *has leprosy* or *scale disease* **22:8** Lit *eat a carcass or a mauled beast* **22:10** Lit *"No stranger* **22:12** Lit *to a stranger* **22:12** Lit *the contribution of holy offerings* **22:25** Lit *nor from the hand of* **22:27** Lit *under* **22:2** Ex 20:7; Jn 10:25 **22:6** Lv 11:24-28,31-32,39-40 **22:7** Lv 6:16-18,29; 7:7-10,32-36; 26:5 **22:8** Ex 22:31; Lv 7:24; 17:15; Ezk 44:31 **22:9** Gn 26:5; Lv 18:30 **22:10** Ex 29:33; Nm 3:10; 18:4,7 **22:14** Nm 15:22,24 **22:14** Lv 5:14-16 **22:16** Lv 14:12 **22:18** Ex 2:22 **22:18** Lv 1:2 **22:19** Ex 29:1 **22:22** Dt 28:27; 2Sm 23:38; 1Ch 11:40; Jr 31:39 **22:22** Lv 21:18-20; Is 28:20 **22:24** Lv 21:20 **22:25** Mal 1:14 **22:27** Ex 22:30 **22:28** Ex 23:19; Dt 22:6-7 **22:29** Lv 7:12-15; 2Ch 29:31; 33:16; Ps 56:13; Jr 17:26; 33:11; Am 4:5 **22:30** Ex 34:25; Lv 7:15; 19:6-7 **22:32** Lv 19:12; 21:6-8,23; 22:2; Lk 11:2

22:2 The concern that the priests **not profane** God's **holy name** is now related to their handling of the Israelites' offerings (see also v. 32; 21:6). They were not to eat of them when unclean (vv. 3-7) or to allow others outside of their family to eat them (vv. 10-16).

22:18-25 See the note on 21:17.

22:31-33 Once again, God charged Israel to obey him, **not** to **profane** his **holy name**, and to honor him **as holy** (see also 10:3; 18:2-5,21; 20:22-26). As in other passages, he appealed to his having brought them out of Egypt (see 11:45; 19:36).

HOLY DAYS

HOLY DAYS

23 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
These are my appointed times, † the times of the LORD that you will
proclaim as sacred assemblies. †
3 “Work may be done for six days, but on the seventh day there is to be a
Sabbath of complete rest, † a sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; it is
a Sabbath † to the LORD wherever you live.
4 “These are the LORD’s appointed times, the sacred assemblies you are to
proclaim at their appointed times. 5 The Passover † to the LORD comes in the
first month, at twilight on the fourteenth day of the month. 6 The Festival of
Unleavened Bread † to the LORD is on the fifteenth day of the same month. For
seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7 On the first day you are to hold a
sacred assembly; you are not to do any daily work. 8 You are to present a fire
offering to the LORD for seven days. On the seventh day there will be a sacred
assembly; do not do any daily work.”
9 The LORD spoke to Moses: 10 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you
enter the land I am giving you and reap its harvest, † you are to bring the first
sheaf of your harvest to the priest. 11 He will present the sheaf before the LORD
so that you may be accepted; the priest is to present it on the day after the
Sabbath. 12 On the day you present the sheaf, you are to offer a year-old male
lamb † without blemish † as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 Its grain offering
is to be four quarts † of fine flour mixed with oil as a fire offering to the LORD, a
pleasing aroma, and its drink offering will be one quart † of wine. 14 You must
not eat bread, roasted grain, or any new grain † until this very day, and until you
have brought the offering to your God. This is to be a permanent statute
throughout your generations wherever you live.
15 “You are to count seven † complete weeks † † starting from the day after
the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the presentation offering. †
16 You are to count fifty days until the day after the seventh Sabbath and then
present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17 Bring two loaves of bread from
your settlements as a presentation offering, each of them made from four quarts
of fine flour, baked with yeast, as firstfruits † to the LORD. 18 You are to present

with the bread seven unblemished male lambs a year old, one young bull, and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offerings and drink offerings, a fire offering of a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 19 You are also to prepare one male goat as a sin offering, and two male lambs a year old as a fellowship sacrifice. 20 The priest will present the lambs with the bread of firstfruits as a presentation offering before the LORD; the bread and the two lambs will be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 On that same day you are to make a proclamation and hold a sacred assembly. You are not to do any daily work. This is to be a permanent statute wherever you live throughout your generations. 22 When you reap the harvest of your land, you are not to reap all the way to the edge of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and the resident alien; † I am the LORD your God."

23 The LORD spoke to Moses: 24 "Tell the Israelites: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you are to have a day of complete rest, commemoration, and trumpet blasts † — a sacred assembly. † 25 You must not do any daily work, but you must present a fire offering to the LORD."

26 The LORD again spoke to Moses: 27 "The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. † You are to hold a sacred assembly and practice self-denial; † you are to present a fire offering to the LORD. 28 On this particular day you are not to do any work, for it is a Day of Atonement to make atonement for yourselves before the LORD your God. 29 If any person does not practice self-denial on this particular day, he is to be cut off from his people. 30 I will destroy among his people anyone who does any work on this same day. 31 You are not to do any work. This is a permanent statute throughout your generations wherever you live. 32 It will be a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you must practice self-denial. You are to observe your Sabbath from the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening."

33 The LORD spoke to Moses: 34 "Tell the Israelites: The Festival of Shelters † † to the LORD begins on the fifteenth day of this seventh month and continues for seven days. 35 There is to be a sacred assembly on the first day; you are not to do any daily work. 36 You are to present a fire offering to the LORD for seven days. On the eighth day you are to hold a sacred assembly and present a fire offering to the LORD. It is a solemn gathering; † you are not to do any daily work.

37 “These are the LORD’s appointed times that you are to proclaim as sacred
assemblies for presenting fire offerings to the LORD, burnt offerings and grain
offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings, each on its designated day. 38 These are
in addition to the offerings for the LORD’s Sabbaths, your gifts, all your vow
offerings, and all your freewill offerings that you give to the LORD.
39 “You are to celebrate the LORD’s festival on the fifteenth day of the seventh
month for seven days after you have gathered the produce of the land. There will
be complete rest on the first day and complete rest on the eighth day. 40 On the
first day you are to take the product † of majestic trees — palm fronds, †
boughs of leafy trees, † and willows of the brook † — and rejoice before the
LORD your God for seven days. 41 You are to celebrate it as a festival to the
LORD seven days each year. This is a permanent statute for you throughout your
generations; celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You are to live in shelters †
for seven days. All the native-born of Israel must live in shelters, 43 so that your
generations may know that I made the Israelites live in shelters when I brought
them out of the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.” 44 So Moses declared
the LORD’s appointed times to the Israelites.

23:10 = the barley harvest **23:12** Or *a male lamb in its first year* **23:13** Lit *two-tenths of an ephah*, also in v. 17 **23:13** Lit *one-fourth of a hin* **23:14** Grain or bread from the new harvest **23:15** Lit *count; they will be seven* **23:15** Or *Sabbaths* **23:34** Or *Tabernacles*, or *Booths*

23:2 Lv 23:37,44; Nm 10:10; 2Ch 2:3; Ezr 3:5 **23:2** Ex 12:16; Lv 23:21,24,27,35-37; Nm 28:18,25-26; 29:1,7,12 **23:3** Ex 31:15; 35:2; Lv 16:31; 23:32; 25:4 **23:3** Gn 2:2-3 **23:5** Ex 12:11 **23:6** Ex 12:17 **23:12** Ex 29:1 **23:15** Ex 34:22; Nm 28:26; Dt 16:10; Ac 2:1 **23:15** Ex 29:24 **23:17** Lv 2:12; 1Co 15:20; Rv 14:4 **23:22** Ex 2:22; Lv 19:9-10; Ac 6:1; 11:29 **23:24** Lv 25:9; Nm 5:15 **23:24** Nm 29:1; Ps 81:3 **23:27** Ex 30:10; Lv 16:29-30; 25:9; Nm 29:7-11 **23:27** Ac 27:9 **23:34** Ex 23:16; Jn 7:37 **23:36** Nm 29:35 **23:40** Gn 1:11 **23:40** Ex 15:27; Nm 33:9; Jdg 4:5; Neh 8:15; Ps 92:12; Sg 7:8-9; Jl 1:12; Rv 7:9 **23:40** Neh 8:15; Ezk 6:13; 20:28 **23:40** Jb 40:22; Is 44:4 **23:42** Gn 33:17; Dt 16:13,16; 31:10; Neh 8:14-17; Am 9:11; Jnh 4:5

23:1 Instructions found in this chapter concerning the celebration of three annual festivals, the **Passover** and **Festival of Unleavened Bread** (vv. 4-8), the Festival of Weeks (vv. 9-22), and the **Festival of Shelters** (vv. 33-36,39-43), can also be found in Exodus 23:14-17 and 34:18-26. Leviticus 23 adds instructions regarding the **Day of Atonement** (vv. 26-32), which had been commanded in Leviticus 16 in connection with the sin of Nadab and Abihu. Like the Sabbath, the observance of these **appointed times** (vv. 2,37,44) involved resting and not doing **any work.**

TABERNACLE OIL AND BREAD

24 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 “Command the Israelites to bring you
pure oil from crushed olives for the light, in order to keep the lamp
burning regularly. † 3 Aaron is to tend it continually from evening until

morning before the LORD outside the curtain † of the testimony † in the tent of meeting. This is a permanent statute throughout your generations. 4 He must continually tend the lamps on the pure gold lampstand in the LORD's presence. †
5 "Take fine flour and bake it into twelve loaves; † each loaf is to be made with four quarts. † 6 Arrange them in two rows, six to a row, on the pure gold table † before the LORD. 7 Place pure frankincense † near each row, so that it may serve as a memorial portion † for the bread and a fire offering † to the LORD. 8 The bread is to be set out before the LORD every Sabbath day as a permanent covenant † obligation on the part of the Israelites. 9 It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in a holy place, for it is the holiest portion for him from the fire offerings to the LORD; this is a permanent rule."

A CASE OF BLASPHEMY

10 Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father was † among the Israelites. A fight broke out in the camp between the Israelite woman's son and an Israelite man. 11 Her son cursed and blasphemed the Name, † and they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith, a daughter of Dibri of the tribe of Dan. †) 12 They put him in custody † until the LORD's decision † could be made clear to them.
13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 14 "Bring the one who has cursed to the outside of the camp and have all who heard him lay their hands on his head; then have the whole community stone him. † 15 And tell the Israelites: If anyone curses his God, he will bear the consequences of his sin. 16 Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD must be put to death; † the whole community is to stone him. If he blasphemes the Name, he is to be put to death, whether the resident alien or the native.
17 "If a man kills anyone, he must be put to death. † 18 Whoever kills an animal is to make restitution for it, life for life. 19 If any man inflicts a permanent injury on his neighbor, whatever he has done is to be done to him: 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Whatever injury he inflicted on the person, the same is to be inflicted on him. † 21 Whoever kills an animal is to make restitution for it, but whoever kills a person is to be put to death. † 22 You are to

have the same law for the resident alien and the native, because I am the LORD your God.”
23 After Moses spoke to the Israelites, they brought the one who had cursed to the outside of the camp and stoned him. So the Israelites did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24:5 Lit *two-tenths of an ephah* **24:10** Lit *went out*
24:2 Ex 25:37 **24:3** Mk 15:38; Heb 6:19 **24:3** Ex 31:18 **24:4** Gn 4:14; Ex 25:31; 37:17; Zch 4:2 **24:5** Ex 25:30 **24:6** Ex 25:23; Heb 9:2 **24:7** Ex 30:34 **24:7** Lv 2:2 **24:7** Dt 18:1 **24:8** Ex 19:5 **24:11** Ex 20:7; Lv 24:16; Nm 15:30; 1Sm 3:13; Neh 9:18 **24:11** Gn 49:16 **24:12** Gn 40:3-7; 41:10; 42:17 **24:12** Nm 3:39; 15:32-36 **24:14** Lv 20:2,27; 24:16,23; Nm 14:10; 15:35-36; Dt 21:21; Jos 7:25; 1Kg 12:18; Ezk 16:40; 23:47; Jn 10:33 **24:16** Ex 20:7; 22:28; 1Kg 21:10,13; Jn 8:59; 19:7; 2Tm 2:19 **24:17** Gn 9:5-6; Ex 20:13; 21:12-14; Nm 35:30-31 **24:19-20** Ex 21:24; Dt 19:21; Mt 5:38-39; 7:12 **24:21** Nm 35:30-33

24:10-12 The essentially uninterrupted stream of laws from Leviticus 11 onward pauses momentarily with this brief narrative section. The only other narrative in Leviticus is Leviticus 8–10, and both passages involve a serious sin (see 10:1-3). The overall effect is that not only does the pace of the book come to a near halt (see the note on 1:1), but irony continues to build as God gives more laws and Israel continues to commit grave sins (see also 10:1-3; 17:7; Ex 32:1-6). As God says of Israel in Hosea 8:12, “Though I were to write out for him ten thousand points of my instruction, they would be regarded as something strange.”

24:13-16 Blasphemy had already been forbidden in Exodus 22:28 (see also Ex 20:7), but its punishment had been unspecified. This is why Moses put the blasphemer “in custody until the LORD’S decision could be made clear to them” (v. 12; see also Nm 15:34). The Lord revealed the punishment to be death by stoning, which the Israelites carried out (v. 23). The severity of this punishment is consistent with Exodus 21:17, which also mandates the death penalty for the relatively lesser crime of cursing one’s parents.

SABBATH YEARS AND JUBILEE

25 The LORD spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai: 2 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you enter the land I am giving you, the land will observe a Sabbath to the LORD. 3 You may sow your field for six years, and you may prune your vineyard and gather its produce for six years. 4 But there will be a Sabbath of complete rest † for the land in the seventh year, a Sabbath to the LORD: you are not to sow your field or prune your vineyard. 5 You are not to reap what grows by itself from your crop, or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. It is to be a year of complete rest for the land. 6 Whatever the land produces during the Sabbath year can be food for you — for yourself, your male or female slave, and the hired worker or alien who resides with you. 7 All of its growth may serve as food for your livestock and the wild animals in your land.
8 “You are to count seven sabbatical years, seven times seven years, so that the time period of the seven sabbatical years amounts to forty-nine. 9 Then you are

to sound a trumpet loudly in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month; you will sound it throughout your land on the Day of Atonement. † 10 You are to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land for all its inhabitants. It will be your Jubilee, † when each of you is to return to his property and each of you to his clan. 11 The fiftieth year will be your Jubilee; you are not to sow, reap what grows by itself, or harvest its untended vines. 12 It is to be holy to you because it is the Jubilee; you may only eat its produce directly from the field.
13 "In this Year of Jubilee, each of you will return to his property. 14 If you make a sale to your neighbor or a purchase from him, do not cheat † one another. 15 You are to make the purchase from your neighbor based on the number of years since the last Jubilee. He is to sell to you based on the number of remaining harvest years. 16 You are to increase its price in proportion to a greater amount of years, and decrease its price in proportion to a lesser amount of years, because what he is selling to you is a number of harvests. 17 You are not to cheat one another, but fear your God, for I am the LORD your God.
18 "You are to keep my statutes and ordinances and carefully observe them, so that you may live securely in the land. † 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, so that you can eat, be satisfied, and live securely in the land. 20 If you wonder: 'What will we eat in the seventh year if we don't sow or gather our produce? ' 21 I will appoint my blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it will produce a crop sufficient for three years. 22 When you sow in the eighth year, you will be eating from the previous harvest. You will be eating this until the ninth year when its harvest comes in.
23 "The land is not to be permanently sold because it is mine, and you are only aliens and temporary residents on my land. † † 24 You are to allow the redemption of any land you occupy. 25 If your brother becomes destitute and sells part of his property, his nearest relative may come and redeem what his brother has sold. 26 If a man has no family redeemer, but he prospers † and obtains enough to redeem his land, 27 he may calculate the years since its sale, repay the balance to the man he sold it to, and return to his property. 28 But if he cannot obtain enough to repay him, what he sold will remain in the possession of its purchaser until the Year of Jubilee. It is to be released at the Jubilee, so that he may return to his property.

29 “If a man sells a residence in a walled city, his right of redemption will last
until a year has passed after its sale; his right of redemption will last a year. 30 If
it is not redeemed by the end of a full year, then the house in the walled city is
permanently transferred to its purchaser throughout his generations. It is not to
be released on the Jubilee. 31 But houses in settlements that have no walls
around them are to be classified as open fields. The right to redeem such houses
stays in effect, and they are to be released at the Jubilee.
32 “Concerning the Levitical cities, † the Levites always have the right to
redeem houses in the cities they possess. 33 Whatever property one of the
Levites can redeem † — a house sold in a city they possess — is to be released
at the Jubilee, because the houses in the Levitical cities are their possession
among the Israelites. 34 The open pastureland around their cities may not be
sold, for it is their permanent possession.
35 “If your brother becomes destitute and cannot sustain himself among † you,
you are to support him as an alien or temporary resident, so that he can continue
to live among you. 36 Do not profit or take interest from him, † but fear your
God and let your brother live among you. 37 You are not to lend him your silver
with interest or sell him your food for profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who
brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be
your God.
39 “If your brother among you becomes destitute and sells himself to you, †
you must not force him to do slave labor. 40 Let him stay with you as a hired worker
or temporary resident; he may work for you until the Year of Jubilee. 41 Then he
and his children are to be released from you, and he may return to his clan and
his ancestral property. † 42 They are not to be sold as slaves, † because they are
my servants † that I brought out of the land of Egypt. 43 You are not to rule
over them harshly † but fear your God. 44 Your male and female slaves are to
be from the nations around you; you may purchase male and female slaves.
45 You may also purchase them from the aliens residing with you, or from their
families living among you — those born in your land. These may become your
property. 46 You may leave them to your sons after you to inherit as property;
you can make them slaves for life. But concerning your brothers, the Israelites,
you must not rule over one another harshly.

47 “If an alien or temporary resident living among you prospers, but your brother
living near him becomes destitute and sells himself to the alien living among
you, or to a member of the resident alien’s clan, 48 he has the right of
redemption after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him. 49 His
uncle or cousin may redeem him, or any of his close relatives from his clan may
redeem him. If he prospers, he may redeem himself. 50 The one who purchased
him is to calculate the time from the year he sold himself to him until the Year of
Jubilee. The price of his sale will be determined by the number of years. It will
be set for him like the daily wages of a hired worker. 51 If many years are still
left, he must pay his redemption price in proportion to them based on his
purchase price. 52 If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, he will
calculate and pay the price of his redemption in proportion to his remaining
years. 53 He will stay with him like a man hired year by year. A resident alien is
not to rule over him harshly in your sight. 54 If he is not redeemed in any of
these ways, he and his children are to be released at the Year of Jubilee. 55 For
the Israelites are my servants. † They are my servants that I brought out of the
land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.

25:23 Lit *residents with me* **25:26** Lit *but his hand reaches* **25:33** Hb obscure **25:35** Lit *and his hand falters with* **25:42** Lit *sold with a sale of a slave* **25:42** Or *slaves*

25:4 Lv 16:31 **25:9** Lv 23:27 **25:10** Lv 27:17-24; Nm 36:4; Dt 15:1 **25:14** Dt 23:16 **25:18** Lv 18:4-5,26; 19:37; 20:8,22; 26:3-5 **25:23** 1Ch 29:15; Heb 11:13 **25:32** Nm 35:1-8; Dt 18:1-2; 19:2-9; Jos 21; 1Ch 6:54-81 **25:36** Ex 22:25; Dt 23:19-20; Ezk 22:12 **25:39** 2Kg 4:1; Neh 5:5; Is 50:1; Mt 18:25 **25:41** Ex 21:3-6 **25:43** Ex 1:13-14 **25:55** Ex 4:10

25:2-7 Not only were the Israelites to observe the Sabbath day every week, but the land was to observe a Sabbath year every seven years (see also Ex 23:10-11; Lv 26:34-35). This meant that the Israelites were **not to sow . . . or prune** their fields and vineyards so that the land would have **a year of complete rest.** As for provisions for a Sabbath year, God promised that the produce of the sixth year would be “sufficient for three years” (vv. 20-22). That is, in the seventh year there would be no planting; crops planted in the eighth year would be ready for harvest in the ninth.

25:8-17 After seven Sabbath years there was to be a **Year of Jubilee**, during which **each** Israelite was **to return to his property and each . . . to his clan.** Poor Israelites who had sold themselves as workers were also to be released so that they might return to their ancestral land (vv. 39-41). The land was **not to be permanently sold because it is** the Lord’s, and the Israelites were “only aliens and temporary residents in it” (v. 23). Purchase price was to be based on the number of years **since the last Jubilee** (see also vv. 50-52).

25:55 Just as the land was not to be sold permanently because it is God’s (v. 23), so Israelites were not to be sold permanently because they are God’s **servants that [he] brought out of the land of Egypt** (see also v. 42). They were to be released during the Year of Jubilee (vv. 40,54).

COVENANT BLESSINGS AND DISCIPLINE

26 “Do not make idols for yourselves, † set up a carved image or sacred
pillar for yourselves, or place a sculpted stone in your land to bow down
to it, for I am the LORD your God. 2 Keep my Sabbaths and revere my
sanctuary; † I am the LORD.
3 “If you follow my statutes and faithfully observe my commands, 4 I will give
you rain at the right time, and the land will yield its produce, and the trees of the
field will bear their fruit. 5 Your threshing will continue until grape harvest, and
the grape harvest will continue until sowing time; you will have plenty of food to
eat and live securely in your land. † 6 I will give peace to the land, and you will
lie down with nothing to frighten you. I will remove dangerous animals from the
land, and no sword will pass through your land. † 7 You will pursue your
enemies, and they will fall before you by the sword. 8 Five of you will pursue a
hundred, and a hundred of you will pursue ten thousand; your enemies will fall
before you by the sword. †
9 “I will turn to you, make you fruitful and multiply you, and confirm my
covenant with you. 10 You will eat the old grain of the previous year and will
clear out the old to make room for the new. 11 I will place my residence †
among you, and I will not reject you. † 12 I will walk among you and be your
God, and you will be my people. † 13 I am the LORD your God, who brought
you out of the land of Egypt, so that you would no longer be their slaves. I broke
the bars of your yoke † and enabled you to live in freedom. †
14 “But if you do not obey me and observe all these commands — 15 if you
reject my statutes and despise my ordinances, and do not observe all my
commands — and break my covenant, 16 then I will do this to you: I will bring
terror † on you — wasting disease and fever that will cause your eyes to fail and
your life to ebb away. You will sow your seed in vain because your enemies will
eat it. 17 I will turn † against you, so that you will be defeated by your enemies.
Those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even though no one is
pursuing you. †
18 “But if after these things you will not obey me, I will proceed to discipline
you seven times for your sins. † 19 I will break down your strong pride. I will
make your sky like iron and your land like bronze, 20 and your strength will be

used up for nothing. † Your land will not yield its produce, and the trees of the land will not bear their fruit.
21 “If you act with hostility toward me and are unwilling to obey me, I will multiply your plagues seven times for your sins. † 22 I will send wild animals against you that will deprive you of your children, ravage your livestock, and reduce your numbers until your roads are deserted. †
23 “If in spite of these things you do not accept my discipline, but act with hostility toward me, 24 then I will act with hostility toward you; I also will strike you seven times for your sins. 25 I will bring a sword against you † to execute the vengeance of the covenant. Though you withdraw into your cities, I will send a pestilence among you, and you will be delivered into enemy hands. 26 When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will bake your bread in a single oven and ration out your bread by weight, so that you will eat but not be satisfied. †
27 “And if in spite of this you do not obey me but act with hostility toward me, 28 I will act with furious hostility toward you; I will also discipline you seven times for your sins. 29 You will eat the flesh of your sons; you will eat the flesh of your daughters. † 30 I will destroy your high places, cut down your shrines, † and heap your lifeless bodies on the lifeless bodies of your idols; † I will reject you. 31 I will reduce your cities to ruins and devastate your sanctuaries. I will not smell the pleasing aroma of your sacrifices. † 32 I also will devastate the land, so that your enemies who come to live there will be appalled by it. 33 But I will scatter you among the nations, and I will draw a sword to chase after you. So your land will become desolate, and your cities will become ruins.
34 “Then the land will make up for its Sabbath years during the time it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies. At that time the land will rest and make up for its Sabbaths. 35 As long as it lies desolate, it will have the rest it did not have during your Sabbaths when you lived there.
36 “I will put anxiety in the hearts of those of you who survive in the lands of their enemies. The sound of a wind-driven leaf will put them to flight, and they will flee as one flees from a sword, and fall though no one is pursuing them. 37 They will stumble over one another as if fleeing from a sword though no one is pursuing them. You will not be able to stand against your enemies. 38 You

will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you.
39 Those † who survive in the lands of your enemies will waste away because
of their iniquity; they will also waste away because of their fathers' iniquities
along with theirs.
40 "But when they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers — their
unfaithfulness that they practiced against me, and how they acted with hostility
toward me, 41 and I acted with hostility toward them and brought them into the
land of their enemies — and when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled † and
they make amends for their iniquity, 42 then I will remember my covenant with
Jacob. I will also remember my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with
Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43 For the land abandoned by them will
make up for its Sabbaths by lying desolate without the people, while they make
amends for their iniquity, because they rejected my ordinances and abhorred my
statutes. 44 Yet in spite of this, while they are in the land of their enemies, I will
not reject or abhor them so as to destroy them and break my covenant with them,
since I am the LORD their God. † 45 For their sake I will remember the covenant
with their fathers, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the
nations to be their God; I am the LORD."
46 These are the statutes, ordinances, and laws the LORD established between
himself and the Israelites through Moses on Mount Sinai.

26:11 Or *tabernacle* **26:13** Lit *to walk uprightly* **26:17** Lit *will set my face* **26:30** Or *incense altars* **26:39** Lit *Those of you*

26:1 Ex 20:3-4; Ps 81:9 **26:2** Ex 15:17; Lv 19:30; Ezk 20:13,16,21; 23:38 **26:3-5** Lv 25:18-19; Dt 28:1-2,12; Is 30:21-23; Am 9:13 **26:6** Jr 30:10; Ezk 34:25,28; Mc 4:4 **26:7-8** Dt 3:22; 32:30; Jos 10:19; 23:3,10 **26:11** Ex 25:8; 29:45-46; Lv 26:44; 1Kg 6:13 **26:12** Jr 7:23; Lk 1:68; 2Co 6:16; Rv 21:3 **26:13** Ex 6:6-7; Is 9:4; Jr 5:5; 28:10-11 **26:16** Ps 78:33; Is 65:23; Jr 15:8 **26:17** Ex 12:23; Dt 28:25 **26:18** Gn 4:15,24; Heb 12:4-11 **26:20** Dt 28:23; Am 4:7-8 **26:21** Gn 4:15,24 **26:22** Dt 32:24; Jdg 5:6; Is 33:8; Lm 1:1-4; Ezk 14:15; Zch 7:14 **26:25** Ezk 14:21 **26:26** Is 3:1; Ezk 4:16; 14:13; Am 4:6; Mc 6:14 **26:29** Dt 28:53-57; 2Kg 6:28-29; Jr 19:9; Lm 4:10; Mc 3:2-3 **26:30** Gn 31:19; Ezk 6:3-6 **26:31** Gn 8:21; 1Sm 26:19; Am 5:21-22 **26:41** Dt 30:6; Jr 4:4; 9:25; Ezk 44:7,9 **26:44** Gn 17:8; Ezk 36:22; Hs 11:8-9; Zch 10:9

26:1 This chapter begins with another command against idolatry (see 17:7; 19:4; 20:2-5) and continues with a description of the respective consequences of obedience (vv. 3-13) and disobedience (vv. 14-45) to God's commands. In this respect, Leviticus 26 resembles Deuteronomy 28. Consequences for obedience and disobedience are a regular feature of ancient Near Eastern covenants. These passages conclude the covenant between God and Israel, which he made with them at Mount Sinai. Note the logical order of the covenant: (1) gracious relationship, (2) ordinances and stipulations, and (3) consequences. Obedience was a response to the relationship with God, not a prerequisite. An important difference between these two texts is that Leviticus 26 was spoken to the generation of Israelites brought out of Egypt, whereas Deuteronomy 28 was spoken to the next generation (see Nm 14:21-33).

26:18 The consequences of disobedience would get increasingly severe if Israel continued to disobey **(if**

after these things you will not obey me, I will proceed to discipline you seven times for your sins).

26:40-45 Despite serious consequences for disobedience to God's commands, Israel could humbly confess their sins and God would **remember** his **covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and would **not reject or abhor them so as to destroy them and break . . . covenant with them** (v. 44).

FUNDING THE SANCTUARY

27 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When someone makes a special vow † to the LORD that involves the
assessment of people, 3 if the assessment concerns a male from twenty to sixty
years old, your assessment is fifty silver shekels † measured by the standard
sanctuary shekel. † 4 If the person is a female, your assessment is thirty
shekels. † 5 If the person is from five to twenty years old, your assessment for a
male is twenty shekels † and for a female ten shekels. 6 If the person is from
one month to five years old, your assessment for a male is five silver shekels, †
and for a female your assessment is three shekels of silver. 7 If the person is
sixty years or more, your assessment is fifteen shekels for a male and ten shekels
for a female. 8 But if one is too poor to pay the assessment, he is to present the
person before the priest and the priest will set a value for him. The priest will set
a value for him according to what the one making the vow can afford.
9 "If the vow involves one of the animals that may be brought as an offering to
the LORD, any of these he gives to the LORD will be holy. 10 He may not replace
it or make a substitution for it, either good for bad, or bad for good. † But if he
does substitute one animal for another, both that animal and its substitute will be
holy.
11 "If the vow involves any of the unclean animals that may not be brought as an
offering to the LORD, the animal must be presented before the priest. 12 The
priest will set its value, whether high or low; the price will be set as the priest
makes the assessment for you. 13 If the one who brought it decides to redeem it,
he must add a fifth to the † assessed value. †
14 "When a man consecrates his house as holy to the LORD, the priest will assess
its value, whether high or low. The price will stand just as the priest assesses it.
15 But if the one who consecrated his house redeems it, he must add a fifth to the
assessed value, and it will be his. †

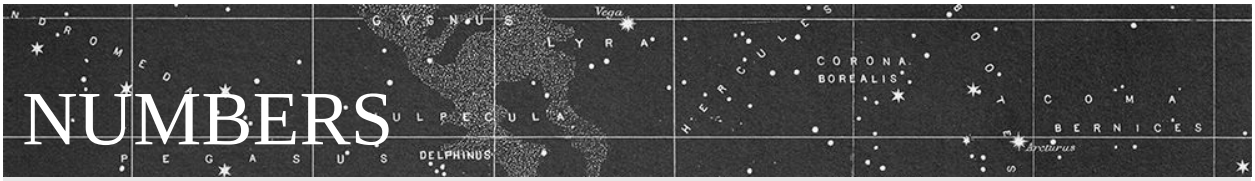
16 “If a man consecrates to the LORD any part of a field that he possesses, your
assessment of value will be proportional to the seed needed to sow it, at the rate
of fifty silver shekels for every five bushels † of barley seed. † 17 If he
consecrates his field during the Year of Jubilee, † the price will stand according
to your assessment. 18 But if he consecrates his field after the Jubilee, the priest
will calculate the price for him in proportion to the years left until the next Year
of Jubilee, so that your assessment will be reduced. 19 If the one who
consecrated the field decides to redeem it, he must add a fifth to the assessed
value, and the field will transfer back to him. 20 But if he does not redeem the
field or if he has sold it to another man, it is no longer redeemable. 21 When the
field is released in the Jubilee, it will be holy to the LORD like a field
permanently set apart; it becomes the priest’s property.
22 “If a person consecrates to the LORD a field he has purchased that is not part
of his inherited landholding, 23 then the priest will calculate for him the amount
of the assessment up to the Year of Jubilee, and the person will pay the assessed
value on that day as a holy offering to the LORD. 24 In the Year of Jubilee the
field will return to the one he bought it from, † the original owner. 25 All your
assessed values will be measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, † twenty
gerahs to the shekel. †
26 “But no one can consecrate a firstborn of the livestock, whether an animal
from the herd or flock, to the LORD, because a firstborn already belongs to the
LORD. † 27 If it is one of the unclean livestock, it can be ransomed according to
your assessment by adding a fifth of its value to it. If it is not redeemed, it can be
sold according to your assessment. †
28 “Nothing that a man permanently sets apart to the LORD from all he owns,
whether a person, an animal, or his inherited landholding, can be sold or
redeemed; everything set apart is especially holy to the LORD. 29 No person who
has been set apart for destruction is to be ransomed; he must be put to death. †
30 “Every tenth of the land’s produce, grain from the soil or fruit from the trees,
belongs to the LORD; † it is holy to the LORD. 31 If a man decides to redeem any
part of this tenth, he must add a fifth to its value. 32 Every tenth animal from the
herd or flock, which passes under the shepherd’s rod, † will be holy to the LORD.

33 He is not to inspect whether it is good or bad, and he is not to make a substitution for it. But if he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute will be holy; † they cannot be redeemed.” †
34 These are the commands the LORD gave Moses for the Israelites on Mount Sinai. †

27:13 Lit *your*, also in vv. 15,19,23 **27:16** Lit *for a homer* **27:16** Or *grain* **27:25** A *shekel* is about two-fifths of an ounce of silver

27:2 Lv 27:8 **27:3** 2Kg 15:20 **27:3** Ex 30:13; Lv 5:15; 27:25; Nm 3:47 **27:4** Ex 21:32 **27:5** Gn 37:28 **27:6** Nm 3:46-47; 18:15-16 **27:10** Mal 1:8 **27:13** Gn 47:24; Lv 5:16; 6:5 **27:14-15** Lv 25:29-31 **27:17** Lv 25:10 **27:24** Lv 25:28 **27:25** Ex 30:13; Nm 18:16; Ezk 45:12 **27:26** Ex 13:2,15; 34:19; Nm 18:15 **27:27** Ex 13:13; 34:20 **27:29** Nm 21:1-3; 31:7,13-17; Jos 6:17; 1Sm 15:17-33 **27:30** Nm 18:21-32; Dt 14:22-29; Neh 10:37-39 **27:32** Gn 28:22; 2Ch 31:6; Jr 33:13 **27:33** Lv 12:4; 25:12 **27:33** Lv 27:10 **27:34** Nm 36:13

27:1 The section of laws in this chapter concludes the giving of the law at Mount Sinai (see v. 34), which began in Exodus 20.



NUMBERS

INTRODUCTION

The English title “Numbers” derives from the Septuagint name “Arithmoi,” based on the two military censuses in chapters 1 and 26. The Hebrew title, *Bemidbar*, “In the Wilderness,” describes the geographical setting of much of the book—from the Wilderness of Sinai to the arid Plains of Moab, across the Jordan River from Jericho.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Christian scholars have traditionally held that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, which includes the book of Numbers. As with the other books in the Pentateuch, Numbers is anonymous, but Moses is a central character throughout. Moses kept a journal (33:2), and the phrase “The Lord spoke to Moses” is used thirty-one times. It is possible that a few portions were later added by scribes, such as the reference to Moses’s humility (12:3) and the reference to the “Book of the Lord’s Wars” (21:14). Moses remains the primary writer.

BACKGROUND: Numbers continues the historical narrative begun in Exodus. It picks up one month after the close of Exodus (Ex 40:2; Nm 1:1), which is about one year after the Israelites’ departure from Egypt. Numbers covers the remaining thirty-nine years of the Israelites’ stay in the wilderness, from Sinai to Kadesh, and finally to the plains on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Numbers shows us how God responded to the unbelief of the Israelites. There are consequences to our disobedience, but God’s grace remains and his redemptive plan and desire for us will not be stopped. The book of Numbers underscores for us the importance of obedience in the life of a Christian, and Paul reminded us of the value of learning from the way God has worked in the past (Rm 15:4; 1Co 10:6,11).

STRUCTURE

Numbers reflects the challenging message of faithfulness. The book consists of seven cycles of material, with the repetition of the following types of material: (1) a statement of the historical setting, (2) reference to the twelve tribes of Israel and their respective leaders, (3) matters related to the priests and Levites, and (4) laws for defining the nature of the faithful community.

This book of the Law is primarily narrative with portions of case law interwoven into a vibrant literary fabric.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Numbers emphasizes two attributes of God: his sovereign power and his covenant faithfulness. He is faithful to Israel on account of the covenant he made with Abraham (32:11). God's Spirit is present as the One enabling service and inspiring true prophecy (11:25-26; 24:2).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This book shows how painfully sinful and flawed all humans are. The rebellion at Kadesh led by Korah and the story of Balaam demonstrate this. Moreover, even Moses the lawgiver, to whom God spoke directly, sinned and was not allowed to enter Canaan. Without divine mercy, all perish.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Exodus (redemption through the death of the Passover lambs) and Leviticus (forgiveness provided through many blood sacrifices) teach more extensively about salvation than Numbers. The incident concerning the brass serpent on the pole, however, shows the centrality of faith in receiving God's provision: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Make a snake image and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover.' So Moses made a bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he looked at the bronze snake, he recovered" (21:8-9).

NUMBERS TIMELINE

1600–1525 BC

The Hittites destroy Babylon. **1530**

The Hittites develop iron technology. **1500**

Ahmose I, first pharaoh of Egypt's Eighteenth Dynasty, expels the Hyksos from Egypt. **1525**

1500–1450 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

Glass bottles are first used in Egypt. **1500**

Copper trumpet is developed in Egypt. **1500**

Hatshepsut, female pharaoh in Egypt. **1479-1457**

In the first well-documented battle in history, Pharaoh Thutmose III defeats an alliance of enemies at Megiddo. **1469**

1450–1445 BC

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

Passover is instituted. **1446**

The exodus and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea **1446**

The Ten Commandments are given at Mount Sinai. **1446**

Tabernacle is built and dedicated. **1445**

Exploration of Canaan by 12 spies. **1445**

1445–1375 BC

Events in Leviticus **1445**

Events in Numbers **1445–1407**

Events in Deuteronomy **1406**

Events in Joshua **1406–1380?**

The Egyptians develop a water clock, a container into which water dripped at a constant rate indicating the amount of time that had elapsed by reference to marks on the container into which the water flowed. This device had an advantage over the sundial in being able to tell time at night. **1400**

THE CENSUS OF ISRAEL

1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting † in the Wilderness of Sinai, † on the first day of the second month of the second year † after Israel's departure from the land of Egypt: 2 "Take a census † of the entire Israelite community by their clans and their fathers' families, † counting the names of every male one by one. 3 You and Aaron are to register those who are twenty years old or more by their military divisions — everyone who can serve in Israel's army. † † 4 A man from each tribe is to be with you, each one the head of his ancestral family. † † 5 These are the names of the men who are to assist you:

Elizur son of Shedeur † from Reuben;
6 Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai from Simeon;
7 Nahshon son of Amminadab from Judah;
8 Nethanel son of Zuar from Issachar;
9 Eliab son of Helon from Zebulun;
10 from the sons of Joseph:
Elishama son of Ammihud from Ephraim,
Gamaliel son of Pedahzur from Manasseh;
11 Abidan son of Gideoni from Benjamin;
12 Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai from Dan;
13 Pagiel son of Ochran from Asher;
14 Eliasaph son of Deuel † from Gad;

15 Ahira son of Enan from Naphtali.

16 These are the men called from the community; they are leaders of their ancestral tribes, † the heads of Israel's clans." †

17 So Moses and Aaron took these men who had been designated by name, †
18 and they assembled the whole community on the first day of the second month. They recorded their ancestry by their clans and their ancestral families, counting one by one the names of those twenty years old or more, 19 just as the LORD commanded Moses. He registered them in the Wilderness of Sinai:

20 The descendants of Reuben, † the firstborn of Israel: according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting one by one the names of every male twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 21 those registered for the tribe of Reuben numbered 46,500.

22 The descendants of Simeon: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, those registered counting one by one the names of every male twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 23 those registered for the tribe of Simeon numbered 59,300.

24 The descendants of Gad: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 25 those registered for the tribe of Gad numbered 45,650.

26 The descendants of Judah: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 27 those registered for the tribe of Judah numbered 74,600.

28 The descendants of Issachar: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 29 those registered for the tribe of Issachar numbered 54,400.

30 The descendants of Zebulun: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 31 those registered for the tribe of Zebulun numbered 57,400.

32 The descendants of Joseph: †

The descendants of Ephraim: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 33 those registered for the tribe of Ephraim numbered 40,500.

34 The descendants of Manasseh: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 35 those registered for the tribe of Manasseh numbered 32,200.

36 The descendants of Benjamin: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 37 those registered for the tribe of Benjamin numbered 35,400.

38 The descendants of Dan: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 39 those registered for the tribe of Dan numbered 62,700.

40 The descendants of Asher: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 41 those registered for the tribe of Asher numbered 41,500.

42 The descendants of Naphtali: † according to their family records by their clans and their ancestral families, counting the names of those twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in the army, 43 those registered for the tribe of Naphtali numbered 53,400.

44 These are the men Moses and Aaron registered, with the assistance of the twelve leaders of Israel; each represented his ancestral family. 45 So all the Israelites twenty years old or more, everyone who could serve in Israel's army, were registered by their ancestral families. 46 All those registered numbered 603,550. †

DUTIES OF THE LEVITES

47 But the Levites † were not registered with them by their ancestral tribe. 48 For the LORD had told Moses: 49 "Do not register or take a census of the tribe

of Levi with the other Israelites. 50 Appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, all its furnishings, and everything in it. They are to transport the tabernacle and all its articles, take care of it, and camp around it. 51 Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever it is to stop at a campsite, the Levites are to set it up. Any unauthorized † person who comes near it is to be put to death. †

52 "The Israelites are to camp by their military divisions, each man with his encampment and under his banner. 53 The Levites are to camp around the tabernacle of the testimony and watch over it, so that no wrath will fall on the Israelite community." † 54 The Israelites did everything just as the LORD had commanded Moses. †

1:2 Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in vv. 18,20,22,24,26,28,30,32,34,36,38,40,42,45 **1:3** Lit *everyone going out to war in Israel* **1:4** Lit *the house of his fathers*, also in v. 44 **1:14** LXX, Syr read *Reuel*
1:1 Ex 27:21; 40:2,6-7,34-35 **1:1** Ex 19:1; Nm 33:16 **1:1** Ex 12:40-41; 19:1; 40:17 **1:2** Ex 30:11-16; Nm 26:2 **1:3** Ex 30:14; Nm 14:29; 32:11; 1Ch 23:24,27; Ezr 3:8 **1:4** Nm 1:16; Jos 22:14 **1:5-15** Nm 2:3-30; 7:18-78; 10:14-27 **1:16** Nm 1:47; 13:2; 26:55; 33:54; 36:4-8 **1:16** Nm 10:4; Jos 22:21,30 **1:17** 1Ch 12:31; 16:41; 2Ch 28:15; 31:19; Ezr 8:20 **1:20** Gn 29:32; 49:3-4; 1Ch 5:1 **1:22** Gn 29:33; 42:14-24; 49:5-7 **1:24** Gn 30:11; 49:19 **1:26** Gn 29:35; 49:8-12; Mt 1:2-3; Rv 5:5 **1:28** Gn 30:18; 49:14-15 **1:30** Gn 30:20; 49:13 **1:32** Gn 30:22-24; 49:22-26 **1:32** Gn 46:20; 48:13-20 **1:34** Gn 46:20; 48:13-20 **1:36** Gn 35:18; 49:27 **1:38** Gn 30:6; 49:16-17 **1:40** Gn 30:13; 49:20 **1:42** Gn 30:8; 49:21 **1:46** Ex 12:37; Nm 26:51 **1:47** Gn 34:25,30; 49:5-7; Ex 32:26-29; Nm 3:6,12-13,40-43; 8:16-19; 18:1; Dt 10:8-9; 18:1-2; 21:5; Jos 13:14,33 **1:51** Ex 29:33; 30:33; Nm 3:10,38; 16:40; 18:4,7 **1:51** Ex 19:12; Nm 3:10,38; 8:19; 18:7 **1:53** Nm 3:7; 18:4-5; 1Ch 23:32; Ezk 44:15-16 **1:54** Ex 39:32,42; Nm 9:5; 36:10; Jos 14:5

1:1 Like Genesis, Exodus, and Leviticus before it, Numbers is part of the larger work known as the Pentateuch (see the notes on Gn 1:1 and Ex 1:1). At the time God commanded Moses to take **a census** of the Israelite males twenty years old and older, the Israelites were still at Mount Sinai. They had arrived there about eleven months prior (Ex 19:1) and would leave in about three weeks (see Nm 10:11-12).

1:17-19 With the help of one "man from each tribe" (v. 4), Moses and Aaron took a census of Israel, **just as the LORD commanded Moses.**

1:20-46 The tribe of **Judah** had by far the largest number of fighting men: **74,600**. The next largest group was **Dan**, with **62,700**. The combined number between **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** was 72,700, comparable to Judah (vv. 32-35).

1:32-35 As Jacob had declared in his old age (Gn 48:5,13-20), Joseph's sons **Ephraim** and **Manasseh** would be counted alongside of Jacob's own sons.

1:46 As one would expect, the total number of Israelite soldiers cited here, **603,550**, is comparable to the earlier statement in Exodus 12:37 that "about six-hundred thousand able-bodied men on foot" had come out of Egypt (see also Nm 11:21).

1:47-53 The Levites were not counted with the other tribes in vv. 20-43 because they were to be responsible for the tabernacle. This included transporting it, taking it down, setting it up, and camping **around the tabernacle.** The seriousness of this task is indicated by God's warning that **any unauthorized person who comes near** the tabernacle must **be put to death** (see also 3:10,38). Because the tabernacle

was the location of God's special, manifested presence, the conflict between Israel's sin and his holiness presented a unique danger. The Hebrew word translated *unauthorized person* here is closely related to the description of Nadab and Abihu's offering as "unauthorized" in Leviticus 10:1.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CAMPS

2 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 "The Israelites are to camp under their respective banners beside the flags of their ancestral families. † They are to camp around the tent of meeting at a distance from it:

3 Judah's military divisions † will camp on the east side toward the sunrise under their banner. The leader of the descendants of Judah is Nahshon † son of Amminadab. 4 His military division numbers 74,600. 5 The tribe of Issachar will camp next to it. The leader of the Issacharites is Nethanel son of Zuar. 6 His military division numbers 54,400. 7 The tribe of Zebulun will be next. The leader of the Zebulunites is Eliab son of Helon. 8 His military division numbers 57,400. 9 The total number in their military divisions who belong to Judah's encampment is 186,400; they will move out first.

10 Reuben's military divisions will camp on the south side under their banner. The leader of the Reubenites is Elizur son of Shedeur. 11 His military division numbers 46,500. 12 The tribe of Simeon will camp next to it. The leader of the Simeonites is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 13 His military division numbers 59,300. 14 The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the Gadites is Eliasaph son of Deuel. † 15 His military division numbers 45,650. 16 The total number in their military divisions who belong to Reuben's encampment is 151,450; they will move out second.

17 The tent of meeting is to move out with the Levites' camp, which is in the middle of the camps. They are to move out just as they camp, each in his place, † with their banners.

18 Ephraim's military divisions will camp on the west side under their banner. The leader of the Ephraimites is Elishama son of Ammihud. 19 His military division numbers 40,500. 20 The tribe of Manasseh will be next to it. The leader of the Manassites is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 21 His military division numbers 32,200. 22 The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The leader of the Benjaminites is Abidan son of Gideoni. 23 His military division numbers 35,400. 24 The total in

their military divisions who belong to Ephraim's encampment number 108,100; they will move out third.
25 Dan's military divisions will camp on the north side under their banner. The leader of the Danites is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 26 His military division numbers 62,700. 27 The tribe of Asher will camp next to it. The leader of the Asherites is Pagiel son of Ochran. 28 His military division numbers 41,500. 29 The tribe of Naphtali will be next. The leader of the Naphtalites is Ahira son of Enan. 30 His military division numbers 53,400. 31 The total number who belong to Dan's encampment is 157,600; they are to move out last, with their banners."
32 These are the Israelites registered by their ancestral families. The total number in the camps by their military divisions is 603,550. 33 But the Levites were not registered among the Israelites, just as the LORD had commanded Moses. †
34 The Israelites did everything the LORD commanded Moses; they camped by their banners in this way and moved out the same way, each man by his clan and by his ancestral family. † †

2:2 Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in v. 32 **2:14** Some Hb mss, Sam, Vg; other Hb mss read *Reuel* **2:17** Lit *each on his hand* **2:34** Lit *the house of his fathers*
2:3 Nm 1:3,52; 2:9-10; 10:14; 33:1; Jdg 8:6 **2:3** Ex 6:23; Nm 1:7; 7:12,17; 10:14; 1Ch 2:10-11; Mt 1:4; Lk 3:32 **2:33** Nm 1:47-49 **2:34** Nm 10:10-28

2:1-2 As Israel prepared to leave Mount Sinai and to journey through the wilderness, God gave them instructions as to how their large camp was to be organized. They "did everything the LORD commanded Moses" (v. 34).

2:3-9 The ascendancy of the tribe of Judah is seen through its being mentioned first. This agrees with Jacob's blessing of Judah in Genesis 49:8-12. The tribe of Judah was to lead the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun in being the first three tribes to set out.

2:17 Bearing the tabernacle and its furnishings (see 1:50), the Levites were to be **the middle** group in the procession.

AARON'S SONS AND THE LEVITES

3 These are the family records of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. † 2 These are the names of Aaron's sons: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These are the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. 4 But Nadab and Abihu died in the LORD's presence when they presented

unauthorized fire † before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai, and they had no sons. So Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests under the direction of Aaron their father. †

5 The LORD spoke to Moses: 6 "Bring the tribe of Levi near and present them to the priest Aaron to assist him. 7 They are to perform duties for † him and the entire community before the tent of meeting by attending to the service of the tabernacle. 8 They are to take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting † and perform duties for the Israelites by attending to the service of the tabernacle. 9 Assign the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they have been assigned exclusively to him † from the Israelites. † 10 You are to appoint Aaron and his sons to carry out their priestly responsibilities, but any unauthorized person who comes near the sanctuary is to be put to death." †

11 The LORD spoke to Moses: 12 "See, I have taken the Levites from the Israelites in place of every firstborn Israelite from the womb. † The Levites belong to me, 13 because every firstborn belongs to me. At the time I struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, † I consecrated every firstborn in Israel to myself, both man and animal. They are mine; I am the LORD." †

THE LEVITICAL CENSUS

14 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai: 15 "Register the Levites by their ancestral families † and their clans. You are to register every male one month old or more." 16 So Moses registered them in obedience to the LORD as he had been commanded:

17 These were Levi's sons by name: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 18 These were the names of Gershon's sons by their clans: Libni and Shimei. 19 Kohath's sons by their clans were Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 Merari's sons by their clans were Mahli and Mushi. These were the Levite clans by their ancestral families. †

21 The Libnite clan and the Shimeite clan came from Gershon; these were the Gershonite clans. 22 Those registered, counting every male one month old or more, numbered 7,500. 23 The Gershonite clans camped behind the tabernacle on the west side, † 24 and the leader of the Gershonite families † was Eliasaph

son of Lael. 25 The Gershonites' duties † at the tent of meeting involved the tabernacle, the tent, its covering, the screen for the entrance to the tent of meeting, † 26 the hangings of the courtyard, the screen for the entrance † to the courtyard that surrounds the tabernacle and the altar, and the tent ropes — all the work relating to these.
27 The Amramite clan, the Izharite clan, the Hebronite clan, and the Uzzielite clan came from Kohath; these were the Kohathites. 28 Counting every male one month old or more, there were 8,600 † responsible for the duties of † the sanctuary. 29 The clans of the Kohathites camped on the south side of the tabernacle, † 30 and the leader of the families of the Kohathite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. 31 Their duties involved the ark, the table, the lampstand, the altars, the sanctuary utensils that were used with these, and the screen † † — and all the work relating to them. † 32 The chief of the Levite leaders was Eleazar † son of Aaron the priest; he had oversight of those responsible for the duties of the sanctuary.
33 The Mahlite clan and the Mushite clan came from Merari; these were the Merarite clans. 34 Those registered, counting every male one month old or more, numbered 6,200. 35 The leader of the families of the Merarite clans was Zuriel son of Abihail; they camped on the north side of the tabernacle. † 36 The assigned duties of Merari's descendants involved the tabernacle's supports, crossbars, pillars, bases, all its equipment, and all the work related to these, †
37 in addition to the posts of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, and ropes.
38 Moses, Aaron, and his sons, who performed the duties of † the sanctuary as a service on behalf of the Israelites, camped in front of the tabernacle on the east, † in front of the tent of meeting toward the sunrise. Any unauthorized person who came near it was to be put to death. †
39 The total number of all the Levite males one month old or more that Moses and Aaron † registered by their clans at the LORD's command was 22,000.

REDEMPTION OF THE FIRSTBORN

40 The LORD told Moses: “Register every firstborn male of the Israelites † one
month old or more, and list their names. 41 You are to take the Levites for me —
I am the LORD — in place of every firstborn among the Israelites, and the
Levites’ cattle in place of every firstborn among the Israelites’ cattle.” 42 So
Moses registered every firstborn among the Israelites, as the LORD commanded
him. 43 The total number of the firstborn males one month old or more listed by
name was 22,273.
44 The LORD spoke to Moses again: 45 “Take the Levites in place of every
firstborn among the Israelites, and the Levites’ cattle in place of their cattle. The
Levites belong to me; I am the LORD. † 46 As the redemption price for the 273
firstborn Israelites who outnumber the Levites, 47 collect five shekels for each
person, according to the standard sanctuary shekel — twenty gerahs to the
shekel. † † 48 Give the silver to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for
those who are in excess among the Israelites.”
49 So Moses collected the redemption amount from those in excess of the ones
redeemed by the Levites. 50 He collected the silver from the firstborn Israelites:
1,365 shekels † measured by the standard sanctuary shekel. 51 He gave the
redemption silver to Aaron and his sons in obedience to the LORD, just as the
LORD commanded Moses.

3:7 Or *to guard*, also in v. 8 **3:9** Some Hb mss, LXX, Sam read *me* ; Nm 8:16 **3:15** Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in v. 20 **3:24** Lit *a father’s house*, also in vv. 30,35 **3:28** LXX reads *8,300* **3:28** Or *for guarding*, also in v. 32 **3:31** The screen between the most holy place and the holy place; Ex 35:12 **3:38** Or *who guarded* **3:39** Some Hb mss, Sam, Syr omit *and Aaron* **3:47** A shekel is about two-fifths of an ounce of silver **3:50** Over 34 pounds of silver

3:1 Ex 19:3 **3:4** Lv 10:1-2 **3:4** Lv 10:6; Nm 4:16,28,33 **3:8** Nm 1:50,53 **3:9** Nm 8:16,19,22; 18:6 **3:10** Nm 1:51; 3:38; 8:19; 18:7 **3:12** Ex 13:1-2; 32:26-29; Nm 3:6,12-13,40-43; 8:16-18; 18:1 **3:13** Ex 13:15-16 **3:13** Ex 3:14-16; 6:6-7; Nm 3:41,45 **3:17-20** Ex 6:17-19; 1Ch 6:1,16,20-29 **3:23** Nm 2:18-24 **3:25-26** Nm 4:24-26 **3:25** Ex 26:7,14,36-37; 35:11,15 **3:26** Ex 27:9-19; 35:17-18; 38:9-31 **3:29** Nm 2:10-16 **3:31** Ex 35:12 **3:31** Ex 25:10–27:21 **3:32** Ex 6:23-25; 28:1; Lv 10:6,12,16; Nm 3:2,4 **3:35** Nm 2:25-31 **3:36-37** Ex 35:1-13; Nm 4:31-32 **3:38** Nm 2:3-9 **3:38** Nm 1:51; 3:10; 8:19; 18:7 **3:40** Ex 13:1-2; Nm 8:16-18 **3:45** Nm 3:13,41; 10:10; 15:40-41 **3:47** Nm 18:16

3:2-4 Besides Nadab and Abihu, Aaron had two other sons, **Eleazar** and **Ithamar**, who **served as priests under the direction of Aaron.**

3:11-13 Instead of taking the **firstborn** from each family in the various tribes (see Ex 13:2; 32:26-29), God took the entire tribe of Levi. The **Levites** were to assist the priests in certain aspects of the tabernacle service (vv. 5-10,25-26,31-32,36-37).

3:15 In contrast with the other tribes (see 1:3), Levite males **one month old or more** were registered. Their total number was 22,000 (v. 39).

3:40-51 The total number of firstborn Israelite males was 22,273. Since God was taking the 22,000 Levite males in their place (vv. 11-13,39,41), there was a shortfall of 273. This difference was made up through the payment of a **redemption price** of five shekels for each of the 273 firstborn that had been unaccounted for.

DUTIES OF THE KOHATHITES

4 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 2 "Among the Levites, take a census of the Kohathites † by their clans and their ancestral families, †
3 men from thirty years old to fifty years old — everyone who is qualified † to do work at the tent of meeting.
4 "The service of the Kohathites at the tent of meeting concerns the most holy objects. † 5 Whenever the camp is about to move on, Aaron and his sons are to go in, take down the screening curtain, and cover the ark of the testimony with it. † 6 They are to place over this a covering made of fine leather, † † spread a solid blue cloth on top, and insert its poles. †
7 "They are to spread a blue cloth over the table of the Presence and place the plates and cups on it, as well as the bowls and pitchers for the drink offering. The regular bread offering is to be on it. † 8 They are to spread a scarlet cloth over them, cover them with a covering made of fine leather, and insert the poles in the table. †
9 "They are to take a blue cloth and cover the lampstand † used for light, with its lamps, snuffers, and firepans, † as well as its jars of oil by which they service it. 10 Then they are to place it with all its utensils inside a covering made of fine leather and put them on the carrying frame.
11 "They are to spread a blue cloth over the gold altar, † cover it with a covering made of fine leather, and insert its poles. † 12 They are to take all the serving utensils they use in the sanctuary, place them in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering made of fine leather, and put them on a carrying frame.
13 "They are to remove the ashes from the bronze altar, spread a purple cloth over it, 14 and place all the equipment on it that they use in serving: the firepans, meat forks, shovels, and basins — all the equipment of the altar. † They are to spread a covering made of fine leather over it and insert its poles. † †

15 “Aaron and his sons are to finish covering the holy objects and all their
equipment whenever the camp is to move on. The Kohathites will come and
carry them, but they are not to touch the holy objects or they will die. † These
are the transportation duties of the Kohathites regarding the tent of meeting.
16 “Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has oversight of the lamp oil, † the fragrant
incense, † the daily grain offering, † and the anointing oil. † He has oversight
of the entire tabernacle and everything in it, the holy objects and their
utensils.” †
17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 18 “Do not allow the Kohathite
tribal clans to be wiped out from the Levites. 19 Do this for them so that they
may live and not die when they come near the most holy objects: † Aaron and
his sons are to go in and assign each man his task and transportation duty.
20 The Kohathites are not to go in and look at the holy objects as they are
covered † or they will die.”

DUTIES OF THE GERSHONITES

21 The LORD spoke to Moses: 22 “Take a census of the Gershonites † also, by
their ancestral families and their clans. 23 Register men from thirty years old to
fifty years old, everyone who is qualified to perform service, to do work at the
tent of meeting. 24 This is the service of the Gershonite clans regarding work
and transportation duties: 25 They are to transport the tabernacle curtains, †
the tent of meeting with its covering and the covering made of fine leather on top
of it, the screen for the entrance to the tent of meeting, 26 the hangings of the
courtyard, the screen for the entrance at the gate of the courtyard that surrounds
the tabernacle and the altar, along with their ropes and all the equipment for their
service. They will carry out everything that needs to be done with these items.
27 “All the service of the Gershonites, all their transportation duties and all their
other work, is to be done at the command of Aaron and his sons; you are to
assign to them all that they are responsible to carry. 28 This is the service of the
Gershonite clans at the tent of meeting, and their duties will be under the
direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. †

DUTIES OF THE MERARITES

29 “As for the Merarites, you are to register them by their clans † and their
ancestral families. 30 Register men from thirty years old to fifty years old,
everyone who is qualified to do the work of the tent of meeting. 31 This is what
they are responsible to carry as the whole of their service at the tent of meeting:
the supports of the tabernacle, with its crossbars, pillars, and bases, 32 the posts
of the surrounding courtyard with their bases, tent pegs, and ropes, including all
their equipment and all the work related to them. You are to assign by name the
items that they are responsible to carry. 33 This is the service of the Merarite
clans regarding all their work at the tent of meeting, under the direction of
Ithamar son of Aaron the priest.”

CENSUS OF THE LEVITES

34 So Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the community registered the Kohathites
by their clans and their ancestral families, 35 men from thirty years old to fifty
years old, everyone who was qualified for work at the tent of meeting. 36 The
men registered by their clans numbered 2,750. 37 These were the registered men
of the Kohathite clans, everyone who could serve at the tent of meeting. Moses
and Aaron registered them at the LORD’s command through Moses.
38 The Gershonites were registered by their clans and their ancestral families,
39 men from thirty years old to fifty years old, everyone who was qualified for
work at the tent of meeting. 40 The men registered by their clans and their
ancestral families numbered 2,630. 41 These were the registered men of the
Gershonite clans. At the LORD’s command Moses and Aaron registered everyone
who could serve at the tent of meeting.
42 The men of the Merarite clans were registered by their clans and their
ancestral families, 43 those from thirty years old to fifty years old, everyone who
was qualified for work at the tent of meeting. 44 The men registered by their
clans numbered 3,200. 45 These were the registered men of the Merarite clans;
Moses and Aaron registered them at the LORD’s command through Moses.
46 Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel registered all the Levites by their
clans and their ancestral families, 47 from thirty years old to fifty years old,
everyone who was qualified to do the work of serving at the tent of meeting and
transporting it. 48 Their registered men numbered 8,580. 49 At the LORD’s
command they were registered under the direction of Moses, each one according

to his work and transportation duty, and his assignment was as the LORD commanded Moses.

4:2 Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in vv. 22,29,34,38,40,42,46 **4:3** Lit *everyone entering the service* **4:6** Hb obscure, also in vv. 8,10,11,12,14,25 **4:14** Sam, LXX add *They are to take a purple cloth and cover the wash basin and its base. They are to place them in a covering made of fine leather and put them on the carrying frame.* **4:16** Or *the sanctuary and its furnishings* **4:20** Or *objects, even long enough to swallow,* **4:2** Ex 6:16,18; Nm 3:27-31; 1Ch 6:22-28 **4:4** Nm 3:30-31; 4:15-19 **4:5** Ex 25:10-22; 26:31-33 **4:6** Ex 25:5; 26:14; 35:7,23; 36:19,34 **4:6** Ex 25:13-15 **4:7** Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9 **4:8** Ex 25:26-28 **4:9** Ex 25:31-35; 26:35; 37:17-20 **4:9** Ex 25:38; 37:23; Nm 4:14 **4:11** Ex 30:1-3; 31:8; 39:38; 40:5,26 **4:11** Ex 30:4; 35:15 **4:14** Ex 27:3; 38:3; Nm 7:13–8:4 **4:14** Ex 27:7 **4:15** Nm 1:51; 4:20; 8:19; 18:7 **4:16** Ex 25:6; 27:20; Lv 4:2 **4:16** Ex 25:6; 30:7; Lv 4:7 **4:16** Lv 6:20-22 **4:16** Ex 25:6; 29:7,21; Lv 8:2,10,12,30 **4:19** Nm 3:31; 4:4 **4:22** Nm 3:17,21-26 **4:25** Ex 26:1-13; 36:8-17 **4:28** Ex 6:23; 28:1; 38:21 **4:29** Ex 6:16,19; Nm 3:17,33-37

4:15 As specified in 3:27-32, **the Kohathites** were responsible for the tabernacle furnishings, such as the ark, table, and lampstand. These were "most holy objects" (4:4). Though the Kohathites were to transport these objects on poles (vv. 6,8,13) and frames (vv. 10,12), they were neither to touch these objects nor look at them (v. 20), lest they die.

4:46-49 The Levites assigned the preceding tasks were between the ages of thirty and fifty (see also vv. 3,23,30,35,39,43). Each group served under the leadership and guidance of the priests (vv. 15,19,27-28,33) and were registered according to **the LORD's command.**

ISOLATION OF THE UNCLEAN

5 The LORD instructed Moses: 2 "Command the Israelites to send away anyone from the camp who is afflicted with a skin disease, † anyone who has a discharge, † or anyone who is defiled because of a corpse. †
3 Send away both male or female; send them outside the camp, so that they will not defile their camps where I dwell among them." 4 The Israelites did this, sending them outside the camp. The Israelites did as the LORD instructed Moses.

COMPENSATION FOR WRONGDOING

5 The LORD spoke to Moses: 6 "Tell the Israelites: When a man or woman commits any sin against another, that person acts unfaithfully toward the LORD † and is guilty. † 7 The person is to confess † the sin he has committed. He is to pay full compensation, add a fifth of its value to it, and give it to the individual he has wronged. † 8 But if that individual has no relative † to receive compensation, the compensation goes to the LORD for the priest, along with the atonement ram by which the priest will make atonement for the guilty person. †
9 Every holy contribution the Israelites present to the priest will be his. †

10 Each one’s holy contribution is his to give; what each one gives to the priest will be his.”

THE JEALOUSY RITUAL

11 The LORD spoke to Moses: 12 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: If any man’s wife goes astray, is unfaithful to him, 13 and sleeps with another, † but it is concealed from her husband, and she is undetected, even though she has defiled herself, since there is no witness against her, and she wasn’t caught in the act; 14 and if a feeling of jealousy † comes over the husband and he becomes jealous because of his wife who has defiled herself — or if a feeling of jealousy comes over him and he becomes jealous of her though she has not defiled herself — 15 then the man is to bring his wife to the priest. He is also to bring an offering for her of two quarts † of barley flour. He is not to pour oil over it or put frankincense on it because it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering for remembrance to draw attention to guilt.

16 “The priest is to bring her forward and have her stand before the LORD. 17 Then the priest is to take holy water in a clay bowl, take some of the dust from the tabernacle floor, and put it in the water. 18 After the priest has the woman stand before the LORD, he is to let down her hair † and place in her hands the grain offering for remembrance, which is the grain offering of jealousy. The priest is to hold the bitter water that brings a curse. 19 The priest will require the woman to take an oath and will say to her, ‘If no man has slept with you, if you have not gone astray and become defiled while under your husband’s authority, be unaffected by this bitter water that brings a curse. 20 But if you have gone astray while under your husband’s authority, if you have defiled yourself and a man other than your husband has slept with you’ — 21 at this point the priest will make the woman take the oath with the sworn curse, and he is to say to her — ‘May the LORD make you into an object of your people’s cursing and swearing when he makes your womb † shrivel and your belly swell. 22 May this water that brings a curse enter your stomach, causing your belly to swell and your womb to shrivel.’

“And the woman will reply, ‘Amen, Amen.’

23 “Then the priest is to write these curses on a scroll and wash them off into the bitter water. 24 He will require the woman to drink the bitter water that brings a

curse, and it will enter her to cause bitter suffering. 25 The priest is to take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman, present the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar. 26 The priest is to take a handful of the grain offering as a memorial portion † and burn it on the altar. Afterward, he will require the woman to drink the water.
27 "When he makes her drink the water, if she has defiled herself and been unfaithful to her husband, the water that brings a curse will enter her to cause bitter suffering; her belly will swell, and her womb will shrivel. She will become a curse among her people. 28 But if the woman has not defiled herself and is pure, she will be unaffected and will be able to conceive children.
29 "This is the law regarding jealousy when a wife goes astray and defiles herself while under her husband's authority, 30 or when a feeling of jealousy comes over a husband and he becomes jealous of his wife. He is to have the woman stand before the LORD, and the priest will carry out all these instructions for her. 31 The husband will be free of guilt, but that woman will bear her iniquity."

5:13 Lit *and man lies with her and has an emission of semen* **5:15** Lit *a tenth of an ephah* **5:18** Or *to uncover her head* **5:21** Lit *thigh*, also in vv. 22,27

5:2 Ex 4:6; Lv 13:42-44; Nm 12:10 **5:2** Lv 15:2-33; 22:4; 2Sm 3:29 **5:2** Lv 14:2-3; 15:2; 22:4; Nm 9:6-7 **5:6** Lv 6:2; Nm 31:16; Jos 22:22; 2Ch 28:19 **5:6** Lv 4:13,22,27; 5:2-5,17-19; 6:4; Ezk 22:4; 25:12 **5:7** Lv 5:5; 26:40; Neh 1:6 **5:7** Lv 5:16; 6:1-5; 22:14; 27:13,15,19,27,31 **5:8** Lv 25:25,48-49; Jr 32:7 **5:8** Lv 6:6-7 **5:9** Ex 25:2-3; 29:27-28; Lv 7:14,32,34 **5:14** Jb 5:2; Pr 6:34; 14:30; 27:4; 2Co 12:20; Gl 5:20 **5:26** Lv 2:2,9,16; 5:12; 6:15; 24:7

5:2-3 The organization of the Israelite community continued with sending away from the camp all who were unclean with a skin disease (see Lv 12–15), which the **Israelites did as the LORD instructed Moses.** Skin disease might be contagious but, even more importantly, it represented a defect that was in conflict with the harmony of nature prior to humanity's fall and the holiness of God.

5:5-10 These instructions are similar to those found in Leviticus 6:1-7. Both this passage and the previous one involve the repetition of previous laws to Israel before they leave Mount Sinai.

5:19-28 The rituals described here involve a situation in which there is insufficient evidence for the priest to determine what had really happened. God, however, is just and all-knowing, and the resolution is ultimately left up to him. Even though many laws had already been given, this passage points to Israel's continuing need to rely on God's justice.

THE NAZIRITE VOW

6 The LORD instructed Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When a man or woman makes a special vow, a Nazirite vow, † to consecrate himself to the LORD, 3 he is to abstain from wine and beer. †

He must not drink vinegar made from wine or from beer. He must not drink any grape juice or eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 He is not to eat anything produced by the grapevine, from seeds to skin, during the period of his consecration.

5 "You must not cut his hair † throughout the time of his vow of consecration. He may be holy until the time is completed during which he consecrates himself to the LORD; he is to let the hair of his head grow long. 6 He must not go near a dead body during the time he consecrates himself to the LORD. † 7 He is not to defile himself for his father or mother, or his brother or sister, when they die, while the mark of consecration to his God is on his head. 8 He is holy to the LORD † during the time of consecration.

9 "If someone suddenly dies near him, defiling his consecrated head, he must shave his head on the day of his purification; he is to shave it on the seventh day. † 10 On the eighth day he is to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. † 11 The priest is to offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering † to make atonement on behalf of the Nazirite, since he incurred guilt because of the corpse. On that day he is to consecrate his head again. † 12 He is to rededicate his time of consecration to the LORD and to bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. † But do not count the initial period of consecration because it became defiled.

13 "This is the law of the Nazirite: On the day his time of consecration is completed, he is to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. † 14 He is to present an offering to the LORD † of one unblemished year-old male lamb as a burnt offering, one unblemished year-old female lamb as a sin offering, one unblemished ram as a fellowship offering, † 15 along with their grain offerings and drink offerings, † and a basket of unleavened cakes made from fine flour mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers coated with oil. †

16 "The priest is to present these before the LORD and sacrifice the Nazirite's sin offering and burnt offering. 17 He will also offer the ram as a fellowship sacrifice to the LORD, together with the basket of unleavened bread. Then the priest will offer the accompanying grain offering and drink offering.

18 "The Nazirite is to shave his consecrated head at the entrance to the tent of meeting, take the hair from his head, and put it on the fire under the fellowship

sacrifice. 19 The priest is to take the boiled shoulder from the ram, one unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them into the hands † of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated head. 20 The priest is to present them as a presentation offering before the LORD. † It is a holy portion for the priest, in addition to the breast of the presentation offering and the thigh of the contribution. † After that, the Nazirite may drink wine.
21 "These are the instructions about the Nazirite who vows his offering to the LORD for his consecration, † in addition to whatever else he can afford; he must fulfill whatever vow he makes in keeping with the instructions for his consecration."

THE PRIESTLY BLESSING

22 The LORD spoke to Moses: 23 "Tell Aaron and his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Israelites. You should say to them,

24 "May the LORD bless you and protect you; †
25 may the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; †
26 may the LORD look with favor on you †
and give you peace." ' †

27 In this way they will pronounce my name over † the Israelites, and I will bless them."

6:5 Lit *"A razor is not to pass over his head* **6:26** Lit *Lord lift his face to you* **6:27** Or *put my name on*
6:2 Jdg 13:5,7; 16:17; Am 2:11-12 **6:3** Jdg 13:4,7,14 **6:6** Nm 19:11-16 **6:8** Nm 6:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19; 2Ch 35:3 **6:9** Nm 19:11 **6:10** Ex 29:42-43; Lv 5:7; Nm 6:18 **6:11** Lv 1:14-17; 5:7-10 **6:11** Lv 15:13-15 **6:12** Lv 5:14-19; 7:1-6 **6:13** Lv 14:11; Nm 8:9 **6:14** Ac 21:24 **6:14** Lv 1:10-13; 3:1-5; 4:32-35 **6:15** Ex 29:40-41; Lv 23:12-13,18; Nm 15:1-12 **6:15** Ex 29:2; Lv 2:4-11; 7:12 **6:19** Ex 29:24; Lv 2:4-11 **6:20** Ex 29:25-27 **6:20** Ex 25:2-3; 29:27-28; Lv 7:14,32,34 **6:21** Ac 21:24 **6:24** Ps 121:4,7; 128:5; 134:3 **6:25** Ps 67:1; 80:3; 89:15; 119:135 **6:26** Ps 4:6; 147:14

6:1-21 Though only the priests and Levites were set apart for tabernacle service, these instructions concerning a **Nazirite vow** demonstrate that any Israelite, **man or woman**, could consecrate themselves to God (see also Ex 19:6) for a special service. Such consecration involved abstaining from several things: alcoholic drinks, grapes and grape products, cutting one's hair, and becoming unclean through being in the presence of a corpse—even that of a family member. The prohibition against alcohol is similar to what had been said earlier to priests (Lv 10:9). The prohibition against being in the presence of the corpse of a deceased immediate family member had been required only of the high priest (Lv 21:10-11). A Nazirite's uncut **hair** served as an outward sign of his time of consecration and was cut off when that period ended. The seriousness and binding nature of the Nazirite vow is indicated by the fact that even if it were violated

unintentionally, the person making the vow would have to start his period of consecration all over again (vv. 9-12).

6:22-27 The oft-cited blessing in verses 24-26 is found in a context that expresses God's desire to bless Israel and to do so through the priests.

OFFERINGS FROM THE LEADERS

7 On the day Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, † he anointed and consecrated it and all its furnishings, along with the altar and all its utensils. After he anointed and consecrated these things, 2 the leaders of Israel, the heads of their ancestral families, † presented an offering. They were the tribal leaders who supervised the registration. † 3 They brought as their offering before the LORD six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart from every two leaders and an ox from each one, and presented them in front of the tabernacle.

4 The LORD said to Moses, 5 "Accept these from them to be used in the work of the tent of meeting, and give this offering to the Levites, to each division according to their service."

6 So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave them to the Levites. 7 He gave the Gershonites two carts and four oxen corresponding to their service, † 8 and gave the Merarites four carts and eight oxen corresponding to their service, † under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron the priest. 9 But he did not give any to the Kohathites, since their responsibility was service related to the holy objects † carried on their shoulders. †

10 The leaders also presented the dedication gift for the altar when it was anointed. † The leaders presented their offerings in front of the altar. 11 The LORD told Moses, "Each day have one leader present his offering for the dedication of the altar." †

12 The one who presented his offering on the first day was Nahshon son of Amminadab † from the tribe of Judah. 13 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds † and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, † measured by the standard sanctuary shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; † 14 one gold bowl weighing four ounces, † full of incense; 15 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt

offering; † 16 one male goat for a sin offering; † 17 and two bulls, five rams,
five male goats, and five male lambs a year old, for the fellowship sacrifice. †
This was the offering of Nahshon son of Amminadab.
18 On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, † leader of Issachar, presented an
offering. 19 As his offering, he presented one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 20 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 21 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 22 one male goat for a sin
offering; 23 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Nethanel son of Zuar.
24 On the third day Eliab son of Helon, † leader of the Zebulunites, presented an
offering. 25 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds and one
silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary shekel,
both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 26 one gold
bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 27 one young bull, one ram, and one
male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 28 one male goat for a sin offering;
29 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old, for
the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.
30 On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeur, † leader of the Reubenites,
presented an offering. 31 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 32 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 33 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 34 one male goat for a sin
offering; 35 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Elizur son of Shedeur.
36 On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, † leader of the Simeonites,
presented an offering. 37 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 38 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 39 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 40 one male goat for a sin

offering; 41 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Shelumiel son of
Zurishaddai.
42 On the sixth day Eliasaph son of Deuel, † † leader of the Gadites, presented
an offering. 43 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds and one
silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary shekel,
both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 44 one gold
bowl weighing four ounces full of incense; 45 one young bull, one ram, and one
male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 46 one male goat for a sin offering;
47 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old, for
the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Eliasaph son of Deuel. †
48 On the seventh day Elishama son of Ammihud, † leader of the Ephraimites,
presented an offering. 49 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 50 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 51 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 52 one male goat for a sin
offering; 53 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Elishama son of
Ammihud.
54 On the eighth day Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, † leader of the Manassites,
presented an offering. 55 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 56 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 57 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 58 one male goat for a sin
offering; 59 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Gamaliel son of
Pedahzur.
60 On the ninth day Abidan son of Gideoni, † leader of the Benjaminites,
presented an offering. 61 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 62 one

gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 63 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 64 one male goat for a sin
offering; 65 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Abidan son of Gideoni.
66 On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, † leader of the Danites,
presented an offering. 67 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 68 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 69 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 70 one male goat for a sin
offering; 71 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of
Ammishaddai.
72 On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Ochran, † leader of the Asherites,
presented an offering. 73 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds
and one silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary
shekel, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 74 one
gold bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 75 one young bull, one ram,
and one male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 76 one male goat for a sin
offering; 77 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year
old, for the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Pagiel son of Ochran.
78 On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, † leader of the Naphtalites, presented
an offering. 79 His offering was one silver dish weighing 3 1/4 pounds and one
silver basin weighing 1 3/4 pounds, measured by the standard sanctuary shekel,
both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering; 80 one gold
bowl weighing four ounces, full of incense; 81 one young bull, one ram, and one
male lamb a year old, for a burnt offering; 82 one male goat for a sin offering;
83 and two bulls, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs a year old, for
the fellowship sacrifice. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.
84 This was the dedication gift from the leaders of Israel for the altar when it
was anointed: † twelve silver dishes, twelve silver basins, and twelve gold
bowls. 85 Each silver dish weighed 3 1/4 pounds, † and each basin 1 3/4
pounds. † The total weight of the silver articles was 60 pounds † measured by

the standard sanctuary shekel. 86 The twelve gold bowls full of incense each
weighed four ounces measured by the standard sanctuary shekel. The total
weight of the gold bowls was 3 pounds. † 87 All the livestock for the burnt
offering † totaled twelve bulls, twelve rams, and twelve male lambs a year old,
with their grain offerings, and twelve male goats for the sin offering. † 88 All
the livestock for the fellowship sacrifice † totaled twenty-four bulls, sixty rams,
sixty male goats, and sixty male lambs a year old. This was the dedication gift
for the altar after it was anointed.
89 When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the
voice speaking to him † from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the
testimony, from between the two cherubim. † He spoke to him that way.

7:2 Lit *the house of their fathers* **7:13** Lit *dish, 130 its shekel-weight,* also in vv. 19,25,31,37,43,49,55,61, 67,73,79 **7:13** Lit *70 shekels,* also in vv. 19,25,31,37,43,49,55,61,67,73,79 **7:14** Lit *10* (shekels), also in vv. 20,26,32,38,44,50,56,62,68,74,80,86 **7:42** LXX, Syr read *Reuel* **7:47** LXX, Syr read *Reuel* **7:85** Lit *130* (shekels) **7:85** Lit *70* (shekels) **7:85** Lit *2,400* (shekels) **7:86** Lit *120* (shekels)

7:1 Ex 39:32; 40:17; Nm 9:15 **7:2** Nm 1:4-16 **7:7** Nm 4:23-28,32 **7:8** Nm 3:36-37; 4:30-33 **7:9** Nm 4:4-16 **7:9** Nm 3:28-31; 4:4-20 **7:10** Nm 7:11,84,88; 1Kg 8:62-64; 2Ch 7:4-9; Neh 12:27 **7:11** Ex 40:10 **7:12** Nm 1:7; 2:3; 10:14 **7:13** Lv 2:1-2; 6:14-18 **7:15** Lv 1:1-13; 6:8-13 **7:16** Lv 4:1–5:13; 6:24-30; Nm 28:11-15 **7:17** Lv 3:1-17; 7:11-21 **7:18** Nm 1:8; 2:5; 10:15 **7:24** Nm 1:9; 2:7; 10:16 **7:30** Nm 1:5; 2:10; 10:18 **7:36** Nm 1:6; 2:12; 10:19 **7:42** Nm 1:14; 2:14; 10:20 **7:48** Nm 1:10; 2:18; 10:22 **7:54** Nm 1:10; 2:20; 10:23 **7:60** Nm 1:11; 2:22; 10:24 **7:66** Nm 1:12; 2:25; 10:25 **7:72** Nm 1:13; 2:27; 10:26 **7:78** Nm 1:15; 2:29; 10:27 **7:84** Nm 7:1,10 **7:87** Lv 1:1-13; 6:8-13 **7:87** Lv 4:22-26; 6:24-30; Nm 28:11-15 **7:88** Lv 3:1-17; 7:11-21 **7:89** Nm 12:8 **7:89** Ex 25:10-22; 37:1-9; 1Kg 6:25

7:1-3 The offerings brought by **the leaders of Israel** were given in connection with the completion of the tabernacle (see Ex 40:2,17). They brought **carts** and **oxen** (v. 3) that were used by the Levites to transport some of the articles of the tabernacle (vv. 4-9). They also each brought an "offering for the dedication of the altar" on successive days (vv. 10-11).

7:12 The order in which these offerings were presented reflects the order in which Israel was to leave camp (2:3-31); it gave prominence to **the tribe of Judah** (see the note on 2:3-9).

7:89 This verse probably describes what generally happened when Moses **entered the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD.** The Hebrew syntax here does not imply a chronological sequence following the previous verse and the completion of the "dedication gift for the altar." That God spoke to him from **above the mercy seat that was on the ark** was exactly what God had promised Moses earlier in Exodus 25:22. This was the place that God's glory and presence were particularly manifested in the camp. Before the tabernacle was built, God spoke with Moses in another tent (see the note on Ex 33:7-11).

THE LIGHTING IN THE TABERNACLE

8 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Speak to Aaron and tell him: When you
set up the lamps, the seven lamps are to give light in front of the

lampstand.” 3 So Aaron did this; he set up its lamps to give light in front of the lampstand just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 4 This is the way the lampstand was made: it was a hammered work of gold, hammered from its base to its flower petals. The lampstand was made according to the pattern the LORD had shown Moses. †

CONSECRATION OF THE LEVITES

5 The LORD spoke to Moses: 6 “Take the Levites from among the Israelites and ceremonially cleanse them. 7 Do this to them for their purification: Sprinkle them with the purification water. † Have them shave their entire bodies and wash their clothes, and so purify themselves. †

8 “They are to take a young bull and its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you are to take a second young bull for a sin offering. 9 Bring the Levites before the tent of meeting and assemble the entire Israelite community. † 10 Then present the Levites before the LORD, and have the Israelites lay their hands on them. 11 Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a presentation offering from the Israelites, so that they may perform the LORD’s work. † 12 Next the Levites are to lay their hands on the heads of the bulls. Sacrifice one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites. †

13 “You are to have the Levites stand before Aaron and his sons, and you are to present them before the LORD as a presentation offering. 14 In this way you are to separate the Levites from the rest of the Israelites so that the Levites will belong to me. † 15 After that the Levites may come to serve at the tent of meeting, once you have ceremonially cleansed them and presented them as a presentation offering. † 16 For they have been exclusively assigned to me from the Israelites. † I have taken them for myself in place of all who come first from the womb, every Israelite firstborn. † 17 For every firstborn among the Israelites is mine, both man and animal. I consecrated them to myself † on the day I struck down every firstborn in the land of Egypt. 18 But I have taken the Levites in place of every firstborn among the Israelites. 19 From the Israelites, I have given the Levites exclusively to Aaron and his sons to perform the work for the

Israelites at the tent of meeting and to make atonement on their behalf, so that no plague will come against the Israelites when they approach the sanctuary.” †
20 Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite community did this to the Levites. The Israelites did everything to them the LORD commanded Moses regarding the Levites. 21 The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented † them before the LORD as a presentation offering. Aaron also made atonement for them to cleanse them ceremonially. 22 After that, the Levites came to do their work at the tent of meeting in the presence of Aaron and his sons. So they did to them as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites.
23 The LORD spoke to Moses: 24 “In regard to the Levites: From twenty-five years old or more, a man enters the service in the work at the tent of meeting. †
25 But at fifty years old he is to retire from his service in the work and no longer serve.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF RETIREMENT

Many competing ideas about retirement exist. In Western civilization, retirement has become an entitlement. In recent years, the French have rioted over pushing the retirement age from sixty to sixty-two. In Greece, similar riots occurred when the retirement age was adjusted from fifty-five to sixty-five. One can study the history of retirement in the Industrial Age, but as believers, we need to ask ourselves, “What does the Bible say about this matter?” Is our modern concept of retirement biblical?

The word *retire* comes from the combination of two French words: *re*, meaning “back” and *tire*, meaning “draw”. Therefore, the word has several shades of meaning: 1. to withdraw, as for rest or seclusion 2. to go to bed
3. to withdraw from one’s occupation, business, or office; stop working 4. to fall back or retreat, as from battle 5. to move back or away; recede.

Retirement, therefore, is the act of withdrawing from use or active service. As in the case of bonds, it means to take out of circulation. When we think about retirement today, the picture is that of ceasing to work at some predetermined statutory age.

RETIREMENT IN THE BIBLE

In only one place in the Bible is there a hint at mandatory retirement age. It has to do with the Levites serving in the tabernacle*:* “In regard to the Levites: From twenty-five years old or more, a man enters the service in the work at the tent of meeting. But at fifty years old he is to retire from his service in the work

and no longer serve. He may assist his brothers to fulfill responsibilities at the tent of meeting, but he must not do the work. This is how you are to deal with the Levites regarding their duties" (Nm 8:24-26). Considering the context of this passage, we see that the work of making burnt offerings was physically taxing and is therefore probably the reason for the age limitation. Note, however, that the retired Levites were still to help their brothers fulfill their responsibilities at the tent of meeting.

RETIREMENT AND GOD'S PLAN

As we think about retirement, it is important to see the work God has given us as part of the fulfillment of his plan for us. The Bible is full of people who never "retired" from serving God. Abraham was called of God to *begin* a great journey at seventy-five years old. Moses began his work as liberator at age eighty, and Caleb still had fire in the belly when he said, You know what the LORD promised Moses the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. I was forty years old when Moses the LORD'S servant sent me from Kadesh-barnea to scout the land, and I brought back an honest report. My brothers who went with me caused the people to lose heart, but I followed the LORD my God completely. On that day Moses swore to me: 'The land where you have set foot will be an inheritance for you and your descendants forever, because you have followed the LORD my God completely.' As you see, the LORD has kept me alive these forty-five years as he promised, since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, eighty-five years old. I am still as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and for daily tasks is now as it was then. Now give me this hill country the LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the Anakim are there, as well as large fortified cities. Perhaps the LORD will be with me and I will drive them out as the LORD promised. (Jos 14:6-12) Furthermore, Anna still served God night and day in the temple at age eighty-four (Lk 2:37), and Simeon would not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. All of these saints had one thing in common: they knew service to God was a lifelong privilege that would continue until they drew their last breaths.

RETIREMENT AND PLANNING

The problem we face regarding retirement from income-earning labor is stated best by Isaac when he said to his son Esau, "Look, I am old and do not know the day of my death" (Gn 27:2). None of us know how long we will live. Therefore, we may need to work for as long as we are physically able. Since few of us have an extended family of hunters and goat herders, we will have to rely on savings, investments, and family members for our survival when we can no longer earn an income.

This issue is brought into sharper focus by The 100 Man Story. It was compiled by the Department of Health and Human Services. It found that for every 100 people in the work force, • Roughly sixteen do not live to reach age sixty-five.

- Sixty-six who do reach age sixty-five and have incomes at or below $20,000 annually are forced by circumstance to become dependent on their children, government, or charity or continue working in some capacity beyond age sixty-five.
- Fourteen will have income in excess of $30,000, giving them the ability to be financially independent. Unfortunately, $30,000 per annum does not provide a comfortable quality of life.
- Only four people have an income in excess of $50,000 annually, which makes them financially independent and "successful" as far as finances go. Some argue that the number would have to be much larger than $50,000 annually in order to maintain the current standard of living of many individuals (Social Security Administration, Office of Research and Statistics, April 2000).

Think about the United States as it relates to the rest of the world. We are rich, and much of the world is in abject poverty by comparison. The majority of the world's population, in fact, cannot in any way conceive of retirement—and that has been true throughout history. Perhaps this is the reason for the Lord's command to honor one's father and mother (Ex 20:12). The word *honor* means not only to show them the respect that they are due, but to provide for them materially when they are old and in distress. This is why Jesus called out the Pharisees and scribes on this issue. "For God said: Honor your father and your mother; and,

Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death. But you say, 'Whoever tells his father or mother, "Whatever benefit you might have received from me is a gift committed to the temple," he does not have to honor his father.' In this way, you have nullified the word of God because of your tradition" (Mt 15:4-6). In other words, the son would say to a parent in need, "I would like to help you, but all of my money is dedicated to God's work." This is illegitimate, says Jesus.

Another issue that complicates retirement is the matter of inflation. We never know what the value of money or our medium of exchange will be in the future. At some point, there may be a dramatic increase in the cost of daily bread. The rise of dictators and the instability of governments always give rise to inflation. So, our paper investments and our currency could become worthless overnight. This is another good reason not to stop working while we are still able to earn.

One final aspect is important as we develop the proper Christian worldview of retirement. Retirement is never to be devoted solely to the pursuit of pleasure (1Tm 5:3-16). Make everlasting use, therefore, of the time you are given (Col 4:5). And with this in mind, continue to walk in the company of our great senior saints who have served the Lord all the days of their long lives, and give them new opportunities to do so.

JEFF CARROLL

26 He may assist his brothers to fulfill responsibilities † at the tent of meeting, † but he must not do the work. This is how you are to deal with the Levites regarding their duties."

8:21 Lit *waved* **8:26** Or *to keep guard*

8:2-4 Ex 25:31-40 **8:7** Lv 14:51; Nm 19:7,13,17,20; Heb 9:13,23 **8:7** Lv 8:1-6; 14:8-9; Nm 6:19 **8:9** Ex 29:4; Lv 8:1-6 **8:11** Nm 1:50,53; 3:6-7 **8:12** Lv 1:3-5; 4:3-4 **8:14** Nm 3:12,45; 16:8-9 **8:15** Ex 29:26-27; Lv 8:26-29; Nm 6:20 **8:16** Nm 3:9; 18:6 **8:16** Ex 13:2,12,15; 32:26-29; Nm 3:6,12-13,41-45; 8:16-19; 18:1; Dt 10:8-9; 18:1-2; 21:5 **8:17** Ex 13:1-2,11-12,15-16 **8:19** Nm 1:51,53; 16:1-3,32-50; 18:1-7 **8:24** Nm 4:3,23,30 **8:26** Nm 3:7-8

8:1-7 Perhaps during one of the times in which Moses went into the tabernacle to speak with God, the Lord instructed him about the setting up and lighting of **the lampstand** and the **purification** of **the Levites** (vv. 5-19). Instructions concerning the making of the lampstand had already been given and fulfilled (Ex 25:31-39; 37:17:24), but here more instructions for its lighting are given. The Levites had been taken by God "in place of every firstborn among the Israelites" (v. 18; see also 3:41), and here they are being consecrated like the priests (Lv 8–9).

THE SECOND PASSOVER

9 In the first month of the second year after their departure from the land of Egypt, the LORD told Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai: † 2 "The Israelites are to observe the Passover at its appointed time. † 3 You must observe it at its appointed time on the fourteenth day of this month at twilight; you are to observe it according to all its statutes and ordinances." † 4 So Moses told the Israelites to observe the Passover, 5 and they observed it in the first month on the fourteenth day at twilight in the Wilderness of Sinai. The Israelites did everything as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 But there were some men who were unclean because of a human corpse, so
they could not observe the Passover on that day. † These men came before
Moses and Aaron the same day 7 and said to him, “We are unclean because of a
human corpse. Why should we be excluded from presenting the LORD’s offering
at its appointed time with the other Israelites? ”
8 Moses replied to them, “Wait here until I hear what the LORD commands for
you.”
9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 10 “Tell the Israelites: When any one of you or
your descendants is unclean because of a corpse † or is on a distant journey, he
may still observe the Passover to the LORD. 11 Such people are to observe it in
the second month, on the fourteenth day at twilight. They are to eat the animal
with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; † 12 they may not leave any of it until
morning or break any of its bones. † They must observe the Passover according
to all its statutes.
13 “But the man who is ceremonially clean, is not on a journey, and yet fails to
observe the Passover is to be cut off from his people, because he did not present
the LORD’s offering at its appointed time. That man will bear the consequences
of his sin.
14 “If an alien resides with you and wants to observe the Passover to the
LORD, † he is to do it according to the Passover statute and its ordinances. You
are to apply the same statute to both the resident alien and the native of the
land.” †

GUIDANCE BY THE CLOUD

15 On the day the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle, the
tent of the testimony, † and it appeared like fire above the tabernacle from
evening until morning. 16 It remained that way continuously: the cloud would
cover it, † appearing like fire at night. † 17 Whenever the cloud was lifted up
above the tent, the Israelites would set out; at the place where the cloud stopped,
there the Israelites camped. † 18 At the LORD’s command the Israelites set out,
and at the LORD’s command they camped. As long as the cloud stayed over the
tabernacle, they camped.

19 Even when the cloud stayed over the tabernacle many days, the Israelites carried out the LORD's requirement and did not set out. 20 Sometimes the cloud remained over the tabernacle for only a few days. They would camp at the LORD's command and set out at the LORD's command. 21 Sometimes the cloud remained only from evening until morning; when the cloud lifted in the morning, they set out. Or if it remained a day and a night, they moved out when the cloud lifted. 22 Whether it was two days, a month, or longer, † the Israelites camped and did not set out as long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle. But when it was lifted, they set out. 23 They camped at the LORD's command, and they set out at the LORD's command. They carried out the LORD's requirement according to his command through Moses.

9:16 LXX, Vg, Syr, Tg read *it by day* **9:22** Or *a year*

9:1 Ex 19:1-2; Nm 1:1; 3:4,14 **9:2** Ex 13:10; 23:15 **9:3** Ex 12:2-27; Lv 23:4-8; Nm 28:16-25; Dt 16:1-8 **9:6** 2Ch 30:3 **9:10** Lv 21:1-3; Nm 5:2; 6:6-12 **9:11** Ex 12:8,15; Dt 16:3-4,8 **9:12** Ex 12:10,46; Ps 34:20; Jn 19:36 **9:14** Ex 12:48 **9:14** Ex 12:49; Lv 24:22; Nm 15:14-16 **9:15** Ex 40:17,34; Nm 7:1 **9:16** Ex 13:21-22; 40:38 **9:17** Ex 40:36-38; Nm 10:11,33-34

9:1-5 The narrative of Numbers is not told in strict chronological order. The celebration of the second Passover during **the first month of the second year** actually took place before the aforementioned census, which took place during "the second month of the second year" (1:1). They kept the Passover **as the LORD had commanded Moses** (see also Ex 12).

9:6-13 As was the case in Leviticus 24:10-16, Moses encountered a situation concerning which the existing laws did not give clear guidance. Some men could not keep the Passover because they had become **unclean because of a human corpse**, but they still wanted to participate somehow. As he did previously (Lv 24:12), Moses sought guidance from God. The Lord's response was to allow those who were **unclean because of a corpse or . . . on a distant journey** to celebrate the Passover one month later, **in the second month, on the fourteenth day.** Thus, although the application of the law was strict at times (e.g., 3:46-47; 15:32-36), this incident demonstrates that such was not always the case (see also the notes on Lv 10:16-20 and 1Sm 21:3-6). The Lord took into account the circumstances of the situation and made an exception for these men and others in the future who legitimately could not keep the Passover on the originally prescribed date. Nevertheless, anyone **who is ceremonially clean, is not on a journey, and yet fails to observe the Passover is to be cut off from his people.**

9:15-23 The pillar of **cloud** and of fire had gone before the Israelites when they were leaving Egypt (Ex 13:21-22) and had also served as a protective barrier from the pursuing Egyptians (Ex 14:19-20). The cloud had settled on the tabernacle after its completion (see also Ex 40:35). These verses appropriately describe the role of the pillar of cloud and of fire in guiding the Israelites from place to place throughout the wilderness (see also Ex 40:36-38). This passage emphasizes the authority of God and the constant trust Israel was to place in his guidance during their wilderness travels.

TWO SILVER TRUMPETS

10 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Make two trumpets of hammered silver to summon the community † and have the camps set out. 3 When both

are sounded in long blasts, the entire community is to gather before you at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 4 However, if one is sounded, only the leaders, the heads of Israel's clans, † are to gather before you.

5 "When you sound short blasts, the camps pitched on the east † are to set out. 6 When you sound short blasts a second time, the camps pitched on the south † are to set out. Short blasts are to be sounded for them to set out. 7 When calling the assembly together, you are to sound long blasts, not short ones. 8 The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to sound the trumpets. Your use of these is a permanent statute throughout your generations.

9 "When you enter into battle in your land against an adversary who is attacking you, sound short blasts on the trumpets, and you will be remembered before the LORD your God and be saved from your enemies. † 10 You are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your fellowship sacrifices and on your joyous occasions, your appointed festivals, and the beginning of each of your months. They will serve as a reminder for you before your God: I am the LORD your God." †

FROM SINAI TO PARAN

11 During the second year, in the second month on the twentieth day of the month, the cloud was lifted up above the tabernacle of the testimony. 12 The Israelites traveled on from the Wilderness of Sinai, moving from one place to the next † until the cloud stopped in the Wilderness of Paran. †

FORMS OF MEDIA AND RESISTING THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

One way of understanding the history of God's people is recognizing that it is the ongoing narrative of the tension between the Spirit of the Lord and the spirit of the age. And the spirit of the age, or *zeitgeist*, is in many ways the unintended effect of new media.

Regardless of geographic location or historical time period, the people of God have largely been

characterized by having the courage necessary to stand up to the forces of the majority, for the individual to stand against the many, and for the weak to stand against the strong and to know the outcome is in God's hands. This pattern is revealed in many of the major events in the history of God's people that are recorded in Scripture as well as in subsequent Christian history. We see this in Abraham's standing against his father's ways, leaving his father's land, and heading west to Canaan (Gn 12). We see it in Moses standing up against the pharaoh and leading his people out of Egypt. We see it in Jesus Christ's inability to compromise with the Pharisees and Sadducees and in his courage in standing up against the Roman Empire when on trial before Pontius Pilate.

A significant aspect of this tension is that in each case where the people of God stand up against the spirit of the age, there is simultaneously a change in how they perceive and use media forms for acceptable uses toward the good, the true, and the beautiful. Thus, the media that create the plausibility of perception are themselves an intricate part of the history of God's people.

A brief walk through some of these key moments will be helpful in understanding how a change in the religious practices of God's people is often inseparable from a change in media form or media usage. How changes in media form and religious practices later shaped the culture where these events took place can help us to understand our own places and purposes in today's cultural context.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

When, at age seventy-five, Abraham declared he would never again worship gods made by human hands, he exchanged the medium of wood and stone (the previous media used for making idols, cp. Dt 4:28-29) for the intangible God. He exchanged man-made forms for formlessness, declaring God to be of the Spirit.

For the worshipers at the tabernacle, God said, "I will meet you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony; I will speak with you from there" (Ex 25:22). Thus, God's own decree to man was that he should meet him in a prescribed visual space that was itself empty—what art historians call "negative space," the hidden ground between two other figures. Perceiving God as Spirit when coming out of such an idolatrous culture must have taken an impressive act of the imagination, and the concept was something that Jesus Christ would have to remind the people of God about several centuries later.

When Moses led his people out of Egypt, he simultaneously crafted for them a new identity by receiving the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, which archaeologists and biblical scholars claim is a reasonable location for the Proto-Sinaitic script, the earliest precursor to the Hebrew phonetic alphabet. This suggests that as part and parcel of making a new people group, Moses had to give them a new communication form to supplant the previous hieroglyphic writing system they would have labored under in Egypt.

In symbolic communication terms, they exchanged a pictographic (logographic and ideographic) writing system for an abstract phonetic writing system, one in which the shape of the letters no longer resembled the things they represented. Instead, letters were symbolic of basic sounds that the human mouth could make. When combined, these would make meaningful words. This was a huge advance, as it was an improvement in the media. It displaced over five thousand Egyptian hieroglyphic symbols with just twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. This media change represented not merely a massive increase in efficiency for learning the old system. It also introduced the possibility for culture-wide literacy for the first time in recorded history. Even the term *hieroglyphics* is telling in this regard, as it originally meant "sacred carvings" or "priestly writing"—which should be understood not so much as the writings that priests do, but as indicative of the knowledge monopoly that literacy represented: only readers and writers of this complex code could become priests under the Egyptian system. So in exchanging this pictographic writing system for a phonetic writing system, it is no wonder that the second commandment of the Hebrew Decalogue declares, effectively, that henceforth pictographic symbols be banned.

Moses exchanged pictures for words. As a result, the Israelites were born as a new people and the rule of law was established. But the phonetic alphabet created a hardening of the categories, allowing 613 Mosaic laws to be created and leading the Pharisees and Sadducees to compete with one another over a definition of

righteousness that equated keeping as many of these laws as possible with pleasing God. This gave birth to what would later be termed *legalism*.

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

When Jesus Christ came into the world, he was the Word who preached the Word and healed the sick, traveling around Israel with his followers and greatly upsetting the religious establishment of Judaism. Paradoxically, though we know about him from Scripture, Jesus never wrote anything down (at least as far as penning Scripture is concerned), never commanded his followers to write anything down, and never had among his disciples a designated secretary or epistle-writer. The closest he had to this was an accountant, or money-handler: Judas Iscariot.

So one of the most incredible questions that the Gospels presents us with is how could the man-God Christ be sure that his message would spread if he did not insure its inscription into an existing cultural medium? How did he place such confidence in word-of-mouth transmission of his acts, good deeds, and sermons? And why did he tell some of his patients, whom he had miraculously healed, to go and tell no one what the Lord had done (see Mk 7:36)?

That is a complex and endlessly fascinating question, but at least some part of the answer can be had in understanding that what Christ brought into the world was a readjustment of the imbalance between the spoken and written word. He clearly favored the living word as spoken in the moment as his preferred medium of transmission, even as he honored the OT with his many references to what “is written.” He said that “an hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. Yes, the Father wants such people to worship him” (Jn 4:23).

Perhaps we see Christ utilizing the power of the medium of speech against the excesses of the power of the written word best when he frees the woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11. In this astonishing legal case, Jesus frees her from the judgment of the written law by orally delivering an if-then clause to the judge, jury, and executioners. “All right,” he says in effect, agreeing with the validity and authority of the written law, “but let the one who has not sinned throw the first stone!” Interestingly, this is the only event recorded in Scripture in which Christ himself does any writing, and it is in the dust; we have no idea what he wrote. This is significant because it makes clear that Jesus Christ is both fully educated and fully literate, yet he chooses not to make writing an emphasis of his ministry. When the judge, jury, and executioners all leave the scene, what is left is effectively a mistrial (in which the trial is rendered invalid because of errors in the proceedings). Nevertheless, Jesus does not, even at this point, dismiss the serious nature of the accused’s sin. Instead, he says with a perfect balance of justice and mercy, “Neither do I condemn you . . . Go, and from now on do not sin anymore” (v. 11). As a legal analysis of the case would show, this rhetorically perfect use of the spoken word to disrupt the otherwise deadly effect of the written law is only handled safely by the One whose heart is perfectly loving, yet who knows that the hearts of men are evil and lead them to cite the law to achieve their own purposes (which, in this case, was to entrap Jesus).

In his teachings, Christ seems to have consistently reminded his followers and adversaries of the power of the present, living, breathing word of the speaker as a formidable power against the dead hand of the written law. Perhaps this helps explain what Paul later meant when he said that the letter of the law kills, but the spirit of the law gives life (cp. 2Co 3:6) CONCLUSION

This pattern of God’s people following his will and concurrently changing their media habits runs throughout history. We see a media reformation in Martin Luther’s ability to stand up to the abuses of the Roman Catholic Church at the time of his *95 Theses*. And today, in the digital age, where all our communication and social media leads to physical distance between even the closest writer and speaker, we see that Christians are called to be the presence of Christ in an age of absence. In this and many other ways, we see that attention to the Spirit of the Lord must also include attention to the details of how media effects can transform our perceptions, our thoughts, and our cultures.

READ M. SCHUCHARDT

13 They set out for the first time according to the LORD's command through Moses. †
14 The military divisions of the camp of Judah's descendants with their banner set out first, and Nahshon son of Amminadab † was over their divisions.
15 Nethanel son of Zuar † was over the division of the tribe of Issachar's descendants, 16 and Eliab son of Helon was over the division of the tribe of Zebulun's descendants. 17 The tabernacle was then taken down, and the Gershonites and the Merarites set out, transporting the tabernacle.
18 The military divisions of the camp of Reuben with their banner set out, and Elizur son of Shedeur was over their divisions. 19 Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai † was over the division of the tribe of Simeon's descendants, 20 and Eliasaph son of Deuel † was over the division of the tribe of Gad's descendants. 21 The Kohathites then set out, transporting the holy objects; † the tabernacle was to be set up before their arrival.
22 Next the military divisions of the camp of Ephraim's descendants with their banner set out, and Elishama son of Ammihud † was over their divisions.
23 Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh's descendants, 24 and Abidan son of Gideoni was over the division of the tribe of Benjamin's descendants.
25 The military divisions of the camp of Dan's descendants with their banner set out, serving as rear guard for all the camps, and Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai † was over their divisions. 26 Pagiel son of Ochran was over the division of the tribe of Asher's descendants, 27 and Ahira son of Enan was over the division of the tribe of Naphtali's descendants. 28 This was the order of march for the Israelites by their military divisions as they set out.
29 Moses said to Hobab, descendant of Reuel † the Midianite and Moses's relative by marriage: "We're setting out for the place the LORD promised: 'I will give it to you.' † Come with us, and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel." †
30 But he replied to him, "I don't want to go. Instead, I will go to my own land and my relatives."

31 “Please don’t leave us,” Moses said, “since you know where we should camp
in the wilderness, and you can serve as our eyes. 32 If you come with us,
whatever good the LORD does for us we will do for you.” †
33 They set out from the mountain of the LORD on a three-day journey with the
ark of the LORD’s covenant traveling ahead of them for those three days to seek a
resting place for them. † 34 Meanwhile, the cloud of the LORD was over them by
day when they set out from the camp.
35 Whenever the ark set out, Moses would say:

Arise, LORD!
Let your enemies be scattered,
and those who hate you flee from your presence. †

36 When it came to rest, he would say:

Return, LORD, to the countless thousands of Israel. †

10:20 LXX, Syr read *Reuel*
10:2 Jl 2:15-16 **10:4** Nm 1:5-16 **10:5** Nm 2:3-9; 10:14-16 **10:6** Nm 2:10-16; 10:18-20 **10:9** Dt 20:4; 2Ch 13:12; Ps 18:3 **10:10** Ex 6:7; Lv 18:2,4,30; 19:2-4 **10:12** Ex 17:1; 19:1; Nm 1:1 **10:12** Gn 21:21; Nm 12:16; 13:3,26; 1Sm 25:1 **10:13** Nm 9:18-23 **10:14** Nm 1:7; 2:3; 7:12; 1Ch 2:10 **10:15** Nm 1:8; 2:5; 7:18 **10:19** Nm 1:6; 2:12; 7:36 **10:21** Nm 3:27-31; 4:2-4,15,18-20 **10:22** Nm 1:10; 2:18; 7:48 **10:25** Nm 1:12; 2:25; 7:66 **10:29** Ex 2:16-18; 3:1; 4:18; Jdg 4:11 **10:29** Gn 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7; Ac 7:5 **10:29** Ex 18:9 **10:32** Jdg 1:16; 4:11 **10:33** Dt 1:33 **10:35** Ps 68:1 **10:36** Gn 15:5; Dt 1:8,10

10:11-13 This marks Israel’s departure from Mount Sinai in **the second year, in the second month on the twentieth day of the month.** They **set out for the first time** in orderly fashion (vv. 14-28), as God had prescribed earlier (see Nm 2). The Israelites’ stay at Mount Sinai had lasted almost one year (Ex 19:1).

10:29-34 Just as the last passage before Israel arrived at Mount Sinai involved Moses and his father-in-law Reuel (called Jethro in Ex 18), so the first passage after Israel left Mount Sinai involved an interaction between Moses and **Hobab, descendant of Reuel the Midianite and Moses’s relative by marriage.** There is some ambiguity in the Hebrew text here as to whether Moses’s father-in-law Jethro/Reuel also had the name Hobab (see Ex 2:18; Jdg 4:11). In Exodus 18:14-23, the father-in-law corrected Moses for attempting to handle all of Israel’s disputes. In the present passage, Moses wanted Hobab to travel with Israel as their guide in the wilderness. Both passages show Moses’s wisdom in a certain area to be inferior to that of a non-Israelite relative.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT HARDSHIP

11 Now the people began complaining openly before † the LORD about
hardship. When the LORD heard, his anger burned, † and fire † from

the LORD blazed among them and consumed the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and he prayed to the LORD, and the fire died down. 3 So that place was named Taberah, † † because the LORD's fire had blazed among them.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT FOOD

4 The riffraff † among them † had a strong craving † for other food. The Israelites wept again and said, "Who will feed us meat? 5 We remember the free fish we ate in Egypt, † along with the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic. 6 But now our appetite is gone; † there's nothing to look at but this manna! "

7 The manna † resembled coriander seed, and its appearance was like that of bdellium. † 8 The people walked around and gathered it. They ground it on a pair of grinding stones or crushed it in a mortar, then boiled it in a cooking pot and shaped it into cakes. It tasted like a pastry cooked with the finest oil. 9 When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna would fall with it. †

10 Moses heard the people, family after family, weeping at the entrance of their tents. The LORD was very angry; † Moses was also provoked. † 11 So Moses asked the LORD, "Why have you brought such trouble on your servant? Why are you angry with me, † and why do you burden me with all these people? † 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth so you should tell me, 'Carry them at your breast, as a nanny carries a baby,' † to the land that you swore to give their fathers? † 13 Where can I get meat to give all these people? For they are weeping to me, 'Give us meat to eat! ' 14 I can't carry all these people by myself. They are too much for me. 15 If you are going to treat me like this, please kill me right now † if I have found favor with you, and † don't let me see my misery † anymore."

SEVENTY ELDERS ANOINTED

16 The LORD answered Moses, "Bring me seventy men from Israel known to you as elders and officers of the people. Take them to the tent of meeting and have them stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and speak with you there. I will take some of the Spirit who is on you and put the Spirit on them. † They

will help you bear the burden of the people, so that you do not have to bear it by yourself. †

18 “Tell the people: Consecrate yourselves in readiness for tomorrow, and you will eat meat because you wept in the LORD’s hearing, ‘Who will feed us meat? We were better off in Egypt.’ The LORD will give you meat and you will eat. 19 You will eat, not for one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, 20 but for a whole month — until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes nauseating to you — because you have rejected the LORD who is among you, and wept before him: ‘Why did we ever leave Egypt? ’ ” †

21 But Moses replied, “I’m in the middle of a people with six hundred thousand foot soldiers, † yet you say, ‘I will give them meat, and they will eat for a month.’ 22 If flocks and herds were slaughtered for them, would they have enough? Or if all the fish in the sea were caught for them, would they have enough? ” †

23 The LORD answered Moses, “Is the LORD’s arm weak? † † Now you will see whether or not what I have promised will happen to you.”

24 Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. He brought seventy men from the elders of the people and had them stand around the tent. 25 Then the LORD descended in the cloud and spoke to him. † He took some of the Spirit that was on Moses and placed the Spirit on the seventy elders. As the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, † but they never did it again. 26 Two men had remained in the camp, one named Eldad and the other Medad; the Spirit rested on them — they were among those listed, but had not gone out to the tent — and they prophesied in the camp. 27 A young man ran and reported to Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

28 Joshua son of Nun, assistant to Moses since his youth, † responded, “Moses, my lord, stop them! ”

29 But Moses asked him, “Are you jealous on my account? † If only all the LORD’s people were prophets and the LORD would place his Spirit on them! ”
30 Then Moses returned to the camp along with the elders of Israel.

QUAIL IN THE CAMP

31 A wind sent by the LORD † came up and blew quail in from the sea; it
dropped them all around the camp. They were flying three feet † off † the
ground for about a day's journey in every direction. † 32 The people were up all
that day and night and all the next day gathering the quail — the one who took
the least gathered fifty bushels † — and they spread them out all around the
camp. † †
33 While the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the LORD's
anger burned † against the people, and the LORD struck them with a very severe
plague. † 34 So they named that place Kibroth-hattaavah, † because there they
buried the people who had craved the meat.
35 From Kibroth-hattaavah the people moved on to Hazeroth † † and remained
there.

11:1 Lit *in the ears of* **11:3** = Blaze **11:4** Or *The mixed multitude* ; Hb obscure **11:6** Or *our lives are wasting away*, or *our throat is dry* **11:7** A yellowish, transparent gum resin **11:10** Lit *and it was evil in the eyes of Moses* **11:11** Lit *Why have I not found favor in your eyes* **11:15** Alt Hb tradition reads *your misery* **11:23** Lit *the Lord's arm too short* **11:28** Or *Moses, from his elite young men* **11:31** Lit *two cubits* **11:31** Or *They were three feet deep on* **11:32** Lit *10 homers* **11:32** To dry or cure the meat; 2Sm 17:19; Ezk 26:5,14 **11:34** = Graves of Craving **11:35** = Settlements; Nm 12:16; 33:16-17

11:1 Ex 22:24; 32:10-11; Nm 11:1,33; 32:13; Dt 6:15 **11:1** 1Kg 18:38; 19:12; Is 66:16 **11:3** Dt 9:22 **11:4** Ex 12:38 **11:4** Nm 11:34; Ps 78:29-31; 106:14-15; 1Co 10:5-6 **11:5** Ex 16:3 **11:7** Ex 16:4-35; Dt 8:3,16; Jos 5:12; Neh 9:20; Ps 78:24; Jn 6:48-51; Rv 2:17 **11:9** Ex 16:13-14 **11:10** Ex 22:24; 32:10-11; Nm 11:1,33; 32:13; Dt 6:15 **11:11** Ex 5:22; Dt 1:9-13 **11:12** Is 40:11; 66:11-12 **11:12** Gn 12:7; 26:3-4; Nm 14:16,23; Dt 6:10,23 **11:15** Ex 32:32; Jb 6:9; 7:15-16 **11:15** Gn 6:8; Ex 33:12-17; Ru 2:2,10,13 **11:17** 2Kg 2:9,15 **11:17** Ex 18:18; Dt 1:9-13; Ac 6:1-6 **11:20** Ex 17:3 **11:21** Ex 12:37; Nm 1:45-46; 2:32; 26:51 **11:22** Mt 15:33; Mk 6:37; 8:4 **11:23** Jb 38:1–42:6; Is 50:2; 59:1 **11:25** Ex 19:9; 33:9-10; Nm 12:5-8 **11:25** 1Sm 10:6-10; 19:20-24; Is 63:11; Jl 2:28 **11:29** Nm 12:2; 16:3 **11:31** Ex 14:21 **11:31** Ex 16:12-13; Ps 78:26-28 **11:32** 2Sm 17:19; Ezk 26:5,14 **11:33** Ex 22:24; 32:10-11; Nm 11:1,10; 32:13; Dt 6:15 **11:33** Ps 78:29-31; 106:14-15 **11:35** Nm 12:16; 33:16-17

11:1-3 Though the Israelites had received many laws from God at Mount Sinai, their subsequent journey demonstrated that their hearts remained unchanged. Just as they had complained on the way to Mount Sinai (Ex 15:24; 16:2,7-9; 17:3), so on their way from there **the people began complaining openly before the LORD** (see also 14:2,27,29,36; 16:11,41; 17:5). The consequences of their complaining, however, grew more severe—God's **anger burned** and **fire from the LORD . . . consumed the outskirts of the camp** (see also Lv 10:2). This ceased only through Moses's intercession.

11:4-15 As before, the Israelites complained about their food and expressed longing for what they ate in Egypt (see Ex 16:2-3). This angered both God and Moses, and Moses was especially weary of the **burden** of leading the Israelites—so much so that he did not want to continue any longer. Moses's need for help in verse 14 **(They are too much for me)** revisits an earlier theme (see Ex 4:10; 17:12; 18:14-18).

11:16-17,24-29 The Lord granted Moses the help he implicitly requested (vv. 11-15) by putting his **Spirit on seventy** Israelite **elders.** Their role was to help Moses **bear the burden of the people, so that** he would **not have to bear it** alone. Thus, God's provision for an overworked Moses was a group of Spirit-

empowered elders to help carry out the responsibilities of leading Israel (see also Ac 6:1-4; Ti 2:5). Moses's response to the prophesying of **Eldad and Medad** expressed his desire for the placing of God's Spirit on **all the LORD's people.**

11:18-20,33-34 The Israelites were tired of eating manna and craved meat (vv. 4-6). The Lord granted their request and simultaneously punished them by giving them meat **for a whole month—until it . . . [became] nauseating** (see also Ps 78:29-31). Their complaint amounted to a rejection of God (v. 20). His **anger burned against the people**, and he **struck them with a very severe plague** (see also Ps 106:14-15).

MIRIAM AND AARON REBEL

12 Miriam † and Aaron criticized Moses because of the Cushite woman
he married (for he had married a Cushite woman). 2 They said, "Does
the LORD speak only through Moses? Does he not also speak through us? "
And the LORD heard it. 3 Moses was a very humble man, more so than anyone on the
face of the earth.
4 Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "You three come out to
the tent of meeting." So the three of them went out. 5 Then the LORD descended
in a pillar of cloud, † stood at the entrance to the tent, and summoned Aaron and
Miriam. When the two of them came forward, 6 he said:

"Listen to what I say:
If there is a prophet among you from the LORD, I make myself known to him
in a vision; †
I speak with him in a dream.
7 Not so with my servant Moses; he is faithful in † all my household. †
8 I speak with him † directly, †
openly, and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD. †

So why were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? " 9 The LORD's
anger burned against them, † and he left.
10 As the cloud moved away from the tent, Miriam's skin suddenly became
diseased, resembling snow. † When Aaron turned toward her, he saw that she
was diseased 11 and said to Moses, "My lord, please don't hold against us this
sin we have so foolishly committed. 12 Please don't let her be like a dead

baby † whose flesh is half eaten away when he comes out of his mother's womb."

13 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "God, please heal her! " †

14 The LORD answered Moses, "If her father had merely spit in her face, wouldn't she remain in disgrace for seven days? Let her be confined outside the camp † for seven days; † after that she may be brought back in." 15 So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on until Miriam was brought back in. † 16 After that, the people set out from Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

12:7 Or *is entrusted with* **12:8** Lit *mouth to mouth* **12:10** A reference to whiteness or flakiness of the skin **12:12** Alt Hb tradition reads *baby who comes out of our mother's womb and our flesh is half eaten away.* **12:1** Ex 15:20-21; Nm 20:1; 26:59; Dt 24:9 **12:5** Dt 31:15 **12:6** 1Sm 3:15; Ezk 1:1; Dn 10:7-8,16; Rv 1:10-12 **12:7** Heb 3:2,5 **12:8** Ex 33:11; Nm 7:89; Jdg 6:22 **12:8** 1Co 13:12 **12:9** Ex 22:24; 32:10-11; Nm 11:1,10,33; 32:13; Dt 6:15 **12:13** Gn 20:17; Ex 15:26; Lv 14:3; Dt 32:39 **12:14** Lv 13:46; Nm 5:1-4; 2Kg 15:5 **12:14** Lv 13:4 **12:15** Lv 14:2,8

12:1-2 Israel's rebellions following their departure from Mount Sinai continue. This time Moses's siblings, **Miriam and Aaron**, criticize Moses for his marriage to a **Cushite woman.** It is uncertain whether this woman was Zipporah or a second wife, but the challenge was probably not based on ethnicity. Foreigners were welcome in the community of Israel and could enter God's covenant relationship and even celebrate the Passover (see 9:14). Likely the objection came down to a challenge of Moses's authority and the siblings' bid for more power for themselves. Miriam's leading role in this matter is suggested through her name being mentioned first in verse 1 and through her being punished with leprosy, whereas Aaron seemed unscathed (vv. 10-15).

12:6-8 The Lord's words to Aaron and Miriam highlight Moses's special relationship with God, which deserved their respect. To be a prophet would already be special, as it involved revelation from God in the form of a **vision** or a **dream** (see Ex 15:20). Moses's relationship with God, however, was even closer than that of prophets since God spoke **with him directly, openly, and not in riddles**. In similar fashion, Deuteronomy 34:10-12 upholds Moses as greater than other prophets.

SCOUTING OUT CANAAN

13 The LORD spoke to Moses: 2 "Send men to scout out the land of Canaan † I am giving to the Israelites. Send one man who is a leader among them from each of their ancestral tribes." 3 Moses sent them from the Wilderness of Paran at the LORD's command. All the men were leaders in Israel. † 4 These were their names:

Shammua son of Zaccur from the tribe of Reuben;

5 Shaphat son of Hori from the tribe of Simeon;

6 Caleb † son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah;
7 Igal son of Joseph from the tribe of Issachar;
8 Hoshea son of Nun † from the tribe of Ephraim;
9 Palti son of Raphu from the tribe of Benjamin;
10 Gaddiel son of Sodi from the tribe of Zebulun;
11 Gaddi son of Susi from the tribe of Manasseh (from the tribe of Joseph);
12 Ammiel son of Gemalli from the tribe of Dan;
13 Sethur son of Michael from the tribe of Asher;
14 Nahbi son of Vophsi from the tribe of Naphtali;
15 Geuel son of Machi from the tribe of Gad.

16 These were the names of the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and Moses renamed Hoshea son of Nun, Joshua.
17 When Moses sent them to scout out the land of Canaan, he told them, “Go up this way to the Negev, then go up into the hill country. 18 See what the land is like, and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. 19 Is the land they live in good † or bad? Are the cities they live in encampments or fortifications? † 20 Is the land fertile or unproductive? † Are there trees in it or not? Be courageous. Bring back some fruit from the land.” It was the season for the first ripe grapes. †
21 So they went up and scouted out the land from the Wilderness of Zin † as far as Rehob near the entrance to Hamath. † 22 They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, † were living. Hebron was built seven years before Zoan † in Egypt. 23 When they came to the Valley of Eshcol, † they cut down a branch with a single cluster of grapes, which was carried on a pole by two men. They also took some pomegranates and figs. † 24 That place was called the Valley of Eshcol †

because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut there. 25 At the end of forty days † they returned from scouting out the land.

REPORT ABOUT CANAAN

26 The men went back to Moses, Aaron, and the entire Israelite community in the Wilderness of Paran at Kadesh. They brought back a report for them and the whole community, and they showed them the fruit of the land. † 27 They reported to Moses: "We went into the land where you sent us. Indeed it is flowing with milk and honey, † and here is some of its fruit. 28 However, the people living in the land are strong, and the cities are large and fortified. † We also saw the descendants of Anak † there. 29 The Amalekites † are living in the land of the Negev; the Hethites, Jebusites, and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live by the sea and along the Jordan."

30 Then Caleb † quieted the people in the presence of Moses and said, "Let's go up now and take possession of the land because we can certainly conquer it! "

31 But the men who had gone up with him responded, "We can't attack the people because they are stronger than we are! " 32 So they gave a negative report to the Israelites about the land they had scouted: "The land we passed through to explore is one that devours its inhabitants, and all the people we saw in it are men of great size. 33 We even saw the Nephilim † there — the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim! † To ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and we must have seemed the same to them."

13:21 Southern border of the promised land **13:21** Or *near Lebo-hamath* **13:24** = Cluster
13:2 Dt 1:22-26 **13:3** Ex 18:25-26; Dt 1:13-18 **13:6** Nm 14:6,24,30,38; 26:65 **13:8** Ex 33:11; Nm 14:30,38; 27:18-23 **13:19** Nm 14:7; Dt 1:25 **13:19** Dt 1:28; 3:5; 9:1; Jos 14:12 **13:20** Neh 9:25,35; Is 30:23; Ezk 34:14,20 **13:20** Nm 13:23 **13:22** Nm 13:28,33; Dt 1:28; 2:10-11,21 **13:22** Ps 78:12; Is 19:11; 30:4; Ezk 30:14 **13:23** Nm 32:9; Dt 1:24 **13:23** Nm 20:5; Dt 8:8 **13:25** Nm 14:33-34; 32:13; Ps 95:10 **13:26** Nm 32:9; Dt 1:24-25 **13:27** Ex 3:8; Lv 20:24; Nm 14:8; 16:13-14 **13:28** Dt 1:28; 3:5; 9:1; Jos 14:12 **13:28** Nm 13:22,33; Dt 1:28; 2:10-11,21 **13:29** Ex 17:8-16; Nm 14:25,43,45; Dt 25:17-19 **13:30** Nm 14:6,24,30,38; 26:65 **13:33** Gn 6:4 **13:33** Dt 2:10-11,20-21

13:1-3,17-20 As the Israelites approached the promised land of Canaan (see Gn 15:13-21), God commanded that a small group consisting of one man from each tribe be sent ahead **to scout out the land.** Moses instructed the scouts to find out about the land, its people, and their cities, and to bring back **some fruit.**

13:27-33 After forty days, the scouts returned with a report about the land and some of its fruit. As God had said, the land indeed was **flowing with milk and honey.** This is a common expression of the abundance and flourishing of the promised land (see Ex 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3; Lv 20:24; Dt 6:3; 11:9). The scouts also reported, however, that not only were Canaan's people **strong** and their cities **large and**

fortified, but that the Israelites could not defeat them. They even spread a **negative report** about how the land **devours its inhabitants.** The **descendants of Anak** were strong and tall and had a reputation for being a mighty people (Dt 9:2). For discussion of the **Nephilim**, see the note on Genesis 6:1-4. On the other hand, one of the scouts, Caleb (v. 6), dissented and assured the Israelites that they could take possession of the land.

ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO ENTER CANAAN

14 Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept
that night. 2 All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, †
and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt,
or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why is the LORD bringing us into this
land to die by the sword? Our wives and children will become plunder. †
Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" † 4 So they said to one
another, "Let's appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."
5 Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole assembly of the
Israelite community. 6 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who
were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to the
entire Israelite community: "The land we passed through and explored is an
extremely good land. † 8 If the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us into
this land, a land flowing with milk and honey, † and give it to us. 9 Only don't
rebel against the LORD, and don't be afraid of the people of the land, for we will
devour them. † Their protection † has been removed from them, and the LORD
is with us. Don't be afraid of them! "
10 While the whole community threatened to stone them, † the glory of the
LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting.

GOD'S JUDGMENT OF ISRAEL'S REBELLION

11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people despise me? How long
will they not trust in me despite all the signs I have performed among them? †
12 I will strike them with a plague and destroy them. Then I will make you into a
greater and mightier nation than they are." †
13 But Moses replied to the LORD, "The Egyptians will hear about it, for by your
strength you brought up this people from them. 14 They will tell it to the
inhabitants of this land. † They have heard that you, LORD, are among these
people, how you, LORD, are seen face to face, how your cloud stands over them,

and how you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. † 15 If you kill this people with a single blow, † † the nations that have heard of your fame † will declare, 16 ‘Since the LORD wasn’t able to bring this people into the land he swore to give them, † he has slaughtered them in the wilderness.’ †
17 “So now, may my Lord’s power be magnified just as you have spoken: 18 The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, † forgiving iniquity and rebellion. † But he will not leave the guilty unpunished, † bringing the consequences of the fathers’ iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generation. † 19 Please pardon the iniquity of this people, in keeping with the greatness of your faithful love, † just as you have forgiven them from Egypt until now.”
20 The LORD responded, “I have pardoned them as you requested. 21 Yet as surely as I live and as the whole earth is filled with the LORD’s glory, † 22 none of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested me these ten times and did not obey me, 23 will ever see the land I swore to give their fathers. † None of those who have despised me † will see it. 24 But since my servant Caleb has a different spirit and has remained loyal to me, I will bring him into the land where he has gone, and his descendants will inherit it. † 25 Since the Amalekites and Canaanites are living in the lowlands, † turn back tomorrow and head for the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.” †
26 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron: 27 “How long must I endure this evil community that keeps complaining about me? I have heard the Israelites’ complaints that they make against me. † 28 Tell them: As surely as I live — this is the LORD’s declaration — I will do to you exactly as I heard you say. 29 Your corpses will fall in this wilderness — all of you who were registered in the census, the entire number of you twenty years old or more † — because you have complained about me. 30 I swear that none of you will enter the land I promised † to settle you in, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31 I will bring your children whom you said would become plunder † into

the land you rejected, and they will enjoy it. † 32 But as for you, your corpses will fall in this wilderness. 33 Your children will be shepherds in the wilderness for forty years and bear the penalty for your acts of unfaithfulness until all your corpses lie scattered in the wilderness. 34 You will bear the consequences of your iniquities forty years based on the number of the forty days that you scouted the land, a year for each day. † † You will know my displeasure. †
35 I, the LORD, have spoken. I swear that I will do this to the entire evil community that has conspired against me. † They will come to an end in the wilderness, and there they will die." †
36 So the men Moses sent to scout out the land, and who returned and incited the entire community to complain about him by spreading a negative report about the land — 37 those men who spread the negative report about the land were struck down by the LORD. 38 Only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh remained alive of those men who went to scout out the land.

ISRAEL ROUTED

39 When Moses reported these words to all the Israelites, the people were overcome with grief. 40 They got up early the next morning and went up the ridge of the hill country, saying, "Let's go to the place the LORD promised, for we were wrong." †
41 But Moses responded, "Why are you going against the LORD's command? It won't succeed. 42 Don't go, because the LORD is not among you and you will be defeated by your enemies. 43 The Amalekites and Canaanites are right in front of you, and you will fall by the sword. The LORD won't be with you, since you have turned from following him."
44 But they dared to go up the ridge of the hill country, even though the ark of the LORD's covenant and Moses did not leave the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and Canaanites who lived in that part of the hill country came down, attacked them, and routed them as far as Hormah. †

14:15 Lit *people as one man* **14:25** Lit *valley* **14:30** Lit *I raised my hand* **14:34** Lit *a day for the year, a day for the year* **14:34** Or *my opposition*

14:2 Ex 16:2,7-8; 17:3; Nm 14:27; 16:11,41; Ps 59:15 **14:3** Gn 34:29; Nm 14:31 **14:3** Nm 11:5; Dt 17:16; Neh 9:17; Ac 7:39 **14:7** Ex 3:8; Nm 13:27; Dt 1:25; 3:25 **14:8** Ex 3:8; Lv 20:24; Nm 13:17; 16:13-14 **14:9** Nm 14:3 **14:9** Ps 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:1; Is 49:2; 51:16 **14:10** Ex 17:4; Mt 23:37 **14:11** Ex 4:1–12:31; 14:11,21-22; Nm 14:22 **14:12** Gn 12:2; Ex 32:10 **14:14** Ex 15:13-15; Dt 2:25 **14:14** Ex 13:21-22; Nm 9:16-17; Dt 1:33 **14:15** Ex 32:9-12 **14:15** Dt 2:25; Jos 2:10; 9:9; Is 66:19; Hab 3:2 **14:16** Gn 12:7; 13:14-17;

15:7; Ac 7:5 **14:16** Dt 9:28 **14:18** Neh 9:17; Ps 86:5,15; 103:8; 145:8; Jl 2:13; Jnh 4:2 **14:18** Ezr 9:13; Ps 78:38; 85:2; Is 43:25; 44:22 **14:18** Pr 11:21; Jr 25:29; Nah 1:3 **14:18** Ex 20:5; 34:6-7; Dt 5:9; Jr 32:18 **14:19** Ex 34:9; Ps 25:11; 86:5; Jl 2:13 **14:21** Ps 72:19; Hab 2:14 **14:23** Gn 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:7; Ac 7:5 **14:23** Nm 14:11; Dt 31:20; Ps 74:18 **14:24** Jos 14:6-15; Jdg 1:10-12,20 **14:25** Nm 21:4; Dt 1:40; 2:1 **14:27** Ex 16:2,7-8; 17:3; Nm 14:29,36; 16:11,41; Dt 1:27 **14:29** Nm 1:3 **14:31** Nm 14:3 **14:31** Dt 1:39 **14:34** Nm 13:25; 32:13; Dt 2:14; Ps 95:10; Ezk 4:6 **14:35** Nm 16:11; 27:3; Ps 2:1-3 **14:35** Nm 14:30; 26:64-65; 1Co 10:5 **14:40** Dt 1:41-44 **14:45** Nm 21:3; Jdg 1:17

14:1-10 The bad report from the scouts negatively influenced Israel, which was already weak in faith. They again **complained**, expressed the wish that they had died already, and planned to return to Egypt. Despite Joshua and Caleb's pleas (vv. 6-9), the Israelites refused to move forward and **threatened to stone them.**

14:11 The Israelites had accused God of "bringing [them] into this land to die by the sword" (v. 3), which was an act of despising him and failing to **trust in** [him] **despite all the signs** [he had] **performed among them.** These Israelites had believed in God previously (Ex 4:31; 14:31), but had not continued in faith (see also Mt 13:20-21; Heb 3:7-19).

14:20-38 The Lord's intention to destroy Israel (v. 12) was averted only by Moses's intercessory prayer, which appealed to God's concern for his own reputation (vv. 15-16) and to his being **slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, forgiving iniquity and rebellion** (v. 18; see Ex 34:6-7). This episode closely resembles Exodus 32:9-14, which also describes God's intention to destroy Israel after they worshiped the golden calf and Moses's effective intercession following. Though God granted Moses's request not to wipe out Israel, he still forbade this entire generation of Israelites from entering the promised land (see also Ex 32:28,33-35). All of those **twenty years old or more** who were counted in the census earlier would die in the desert, and the whole community would wander in the wilderness for **forty years based on the number of the forty days that** [they] **scouted the land, a year for each day.** The scouts who had spread the **negative report about the land were struck down by the LORD** (vv. 36-37). From the older generation, only Caleb and Joshua would be permitted to enter the land (v. 30) since they followed [God] completely.

14:39-45 Though God had commanded them to turn back (v. 25), the Israelites presumptuously decided to go up to the land and paid the price for it. When the **Amalekites and Canaanites . . . attacked them**, God did not fight for them and give them success as he would later when they finally entered the land.

LAWS ABOUT OFFERINGS

15 The LORD instructed Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them:
When you enter the land I am giving you to settle in, † 3 and you make
a fire offering † to the LORD from the herd or flock — either a burnt offering or
a sacrifice, to fulfill a vow, † or as a freewill offering, or at your appointed
festivals — to produce a pleasing aroma for the LORD, † 4 the one presenting his
offering to the LORD is also to present a grain offering of two quarts † of fine
flour mixed with a quart † of oil. 5 Prepare a quart of wine as a drink offering †
with the burnt offering or sacrifice of each lamb.

6 “If you prepare a grain offering with a ram, it is to be four quarts † of fine
flour mixed with a third of a gallon † of oil. † 7 Also present a third of a gallon
of wine for a drink offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD.
8 “If you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or as a sacrifice, to fulfill a
vow, or as a fellowship offering to the LORD, 9 a grain offering of six quarts † of
fine flour mixed with two quarts † of oil is to be presented with the bull. †
10 Also present two quarts of wine as a drink offering. It is a fire offering of
pleasing aroma to the LORD. 11 This is to be done for each ox, ram, lamb, or
goat. 12 This is how you are to prepare each of them, no matter how many.
13 “Every Israelite is to prepare these things in this way when he presents a fire
offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 14 When an alien resides with you or
someone else is among you and wants to prepare a fire offering as a pleasing
aroma to the LORD, he is to do exactly as you do throughout your generations.
15 The assembly is to have the same statute for both you and the resident alien as
a permanent statute throughout your generations. † You and the alien will be
alike before the LORD. 16 The same law and the same ordinance will apply to
both you and the alien who resides with you.” †
17 The LORD instructed Moses: 18 “Speak to the Israelites and tell them: After
you enter the land where I am bringing you, 19 you are to offer a contribution to
the LORD when you eat from the food of the land. 20 You are to offer a loaf from
your first batch of dough † as a contribution; offer it just like a contribution
from the threshing floor. † 21 Throughout your generations, you are to give the
LORD a contribution from the first batch of your dough.
22 “When you sin unintentionally and do not obey all these commands that the
LORD spoke to Moses † — 23 all that the LORD has commanded you through
Moses, from the day the LORD issued the commands and onward throughout your
generations — 24 and if it was done unintentionally without the community’s
awareness, the entire community is to prepare one young bull for a burnt
offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD, with its grain offering and drink
offering according to the regulation, and one male goat as a sin offering. 25 The
priest will then make atonement for the entire Israelite community so that they
may be forgiven, † for the sin was unintentional. They are to bring their

offering, one made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD for their unintentional sin. 26 The entire Israelite community and the alien who resides among them will be forgiven, since it happened to all the people unintentionally.

27 "If one person sins unintentionally, † he is to present a year-old female goat as a sin offering. 28 The priest will then make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the person who acts in error sinning unintentionally, and when he makes atonement for him, he will be forgiven. 29 You are to have the same law for the person who acts in error, whether he is an Israelite or an alien who resides among you.

30 "But the person who acts defiantly, † whether native or resident alien, blasphemes the LORD. † That person is to be cut off from his people. 31 He will certainly be cut off, because he has despised the LORD's word and broken his command; his guilt remains on him."

SABBATH VIOLATION

32 While the Israelites were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. † 33 Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses, Aaron, and the entire community. 34 They placed him in custody because it had not been decided what should be done to him. 35 Then the LORD told Moses, "The man is to be put to death. The entire community is to stone him outside the camp." † 36 So the entire community brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

TASSELS FOR REMEMBRANCE

37 The LORD said to Moses, 38 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them that throughout their generations they are to make tassels † for the corners of their garments, and put a blue cord on the tassel at each corner. 39 These will serve as tassels for you to look at, so that you may remember all the LORD's commands and obey them and not prostitute yourselves by following your own heart † and your own eyes. † 40 This way you will remember and obey all my commands and be holy to your God. 41 I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the LORD your God." †

15:4 Lit *a tenth* (of an ephah) **15:4** Lit *a fourth hin*, also in v. 5 **15:6** Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah) **15:6** Lit *a third hin*, also in v. 7 **15:9** Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah) **15:9** Lit *a half hin*, also in v. 10 **15:30** Lit *with a*

high hand
15:2 Lv 14:34 **15:3** Ex 29:18; Lv 1:9; 21:6; Nm 15:10,13-14,25; 18:17; 28:2; Dt 18:1 **15:3** Lv 22:21; 27:2; Nm 15:8 **15:3** Lv 1:9,13,17 **15:5** Ex 29:40; Lv 23:13 **15:6** Lv 23:13; Nm 28:9,12 **15:9** Nm 28:12 **15:15** Ex 27:21; Lv 3:17; 7:36; 10:9; 23:14,31,41; 24:3; Nm 10:8; 18:23 **15:16** Ex 12:19,49; Lv 16:29-31; 17:8-16; Nm 9:14; 15:26,29; 19:10; 35:15 **15:20** Neh 10:37; Ezk 44:30 **15:20** Lv 2:14 **15:22** Lv 4:2 **15:25** Lv 4:20,26,31,35; 19:20; Jr 5:1 **15:27** Lv 4:27 **15:30** 2Kg 19:6,22; Is 37:6,23; Ezk 20:27 **15:32** Ex 35:2-3 **15:35** Lv 20:27; 24:14,23; Nm 14:10; Jos 7:25; Ezk 16:40; Mt 21:35; Ac 14:19; 2Co 11:25; Heb 11:37; 12:20 **15:38** Dt 22:12; Mt 9:20; 14:36; 23:5 **15:39** Jr 3:17; 9:14; 16:12; 18:12; Ezk 14:7; 20:16; 33:31 **15:39** Jb 31:7 **15:41** Ex 29:46; Lv 19:36; 25:38; 26:13

15:1-30 The progress of storyline is interrupted momentarily with the laws found in this chapter (see 14:45; 16:1). The reason for their placement here is unclear. In view of Israel's catastrophic failure in the previous chapter that resulted in an entire generation of Israelites being forbidden to enter the land (14:21-23,29-32), these laws do provide some balance through their view toward a more hopeful future situation in which Israel does **enter the land** (vv. 2,18). The laws in verses 1-16 also provide additional instructions on the particular **grain offering** and **drink offering** to be brought with certain sacrifices.

15:32-36 As has been the case repeatedly, the giving of laws takes place in close connection with Israel's disobedience to laws (see the notes on Ex 32:1-6; Lv 11:1; 17:7; 24:10-12). Here it concerns a man who was **gathering wood on the Sabbath day.** Although Moses was initially unsure about how to handle this case (see also 9:8; Lv 24:12), God made clear that the man was guilty and was **to be put to death.** At issue was the intentional violation of sacred time that had been instituted by God as a way of regulating worship and as a sign of his covenant relationship with Israel. Though the laws revealed the righteous standards of God (see Rm 7:7), the hearts of the Israelites were the same as they had been before the giving of the law (see the note on 11:1-3).

15:37-41 The Lord continued to desire that Israel **be holy to** [their] **God**, which he linked to his deliverance of them from Egypt (see also Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7,26). The **tassels** were to help them to remember all the Lord's commands and obey them.

KORAH INCITES REBELLION

16 Now Korah son of Izhar, son of Kohath, son of Levi, † with Dathan
and Abiram, † sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth, sons of Reuben,
took 2 two hundred and fifty prominent Israelite men who were leaders of the
community and representatives in the assembly, and they rebelled against
Moses. 3 They came together against Moses and Aaron and told them, "You
have gone too far! Everyone in the entire community is holy, and the LORD is
among them. † Why then do you exalt yourselves above the LORD's assembly? "
4 When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. 5 Then he said to Korah and all his
followers, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will reveal who belongs to him, who is
set apart, and the one he will let come near † him. He will let the one he
chooses † come near him. 6 Korah, you and all your followers are to do this:
take firepans, † and tomorrow 7 place fire in them and put incense on them

before the LORD. † Then the man the LORD chooses will be the one who is set apart. † It is you Levites who have gone too far! ”
8 Moses also told Korah, “Now listen, Levites! 9 Isn’t it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the Israelite community to bring you near to himself, † to perform the work at the LORD’s tabernacle, and to stand before the community to minister to them? † 10 He has brought you near, and all your fellow Levites who are with you, but you are pursuing the priesthood † as well.
11 Therefore, it is you and all your followers who have conspired against the LORD! † As for Aaron, who is he † that you should complain about him? ”
12 Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, but they said, “We will not come! 13 Is it not enough that you brought us up from a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? † Do you also have to appoint yourself as ruler over us? 14 Furthermore, you didn’t bring us to a land flowing with milk and honey or give us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you gouge out the eyes of these men? † We will not come! ”
15 Then Moses became angry and said to the LORD, “Don’t respect their offering. I have not taken one donkey from them or mistreated a single one of them.”
16 So Moses told Korah, “You and all your followers are to appear before the LORD tomorrow — you, they, and Aaron. 17 Each of you is to take his firepan, place incense on it, and present his firepan before the LORD — 250 firepans. You and Aaron are each to present your firepan also.”
18 Each man took his firepan, placed fire in it, put incense on it, and stood at the entrance to the tent of meeting along with Moses and Aaron. 19 After Korah assembled the whole community against them at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the glory of the LORD † appeared to the whole community. 20 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 21 “Separate yourselves from this community so I may consume them instantly.” †
22 But Moses and Aaron fell facedown † and said, “God, God who gives breath to all, † † when one man sins, will you vent your wrath on the whole community? ” †
23 The LORD replied to Moses, 24 “Tell the community: Get away from the dwellings of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

25 Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel
followed him. 26 He warned the community, “Get away now from the tents of
these wicked men. Don’t touch anything that belongs to them, † or you will be
swept away because of all their sins.” † 27 So they got away from the dwellings
of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Meanwhile, Dathan and Abiram came out and
stood at the entrance of their tents with their wives, children, and infants.
28 Then Moses said, “This is how you will know that the LORD sent me † to do
all these things and that it was not of my own will: 29 If these men die naturally
as all people would, and suffer the fate of all, then the LORD has not sent me.
30 But if the LORD brings about something unprecedented, and the ground opens
its mouth and swallows them along with all that belongs to them so that they go
down alive into Sheol, † then you will know that these men have despised the
LORD.”
31 Just as he finished speaking all these words, the ground beneath them split
open. 32 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households,
all Korah’s people, † and all their possessions. 33 They went down alive into
Sheol with all that belonged to them. The earth closed over them, and they
vanished from the assembly. 34 At their cries, all the people of Israel who were
around them fled because they thought, “The earth may swallow us too!”
35 Fire also came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were
presenting the incense. †
36 Then the LORD spoke to Moses: 37 “Tell Eleazar son of Aaron the priest to
remove the firepans from the burning debris, because they are holy, and scatter
the fire far away. 38 As for the firepans of those who sinned at the cost of their
own lives, make them into hammered sheets as plating for the altar, for they
presented them before the LORD, and the firepans are holy. They will be a sign to
the Israelites.”
39 So the priest Eleazar took the bronze firepans that those who were burned had
presented, and they were hammered into plating for the altar, 40 just as the LORD
commanded him through Moses. It was to be a reminder for the Israelites that no
unauthorized person outside the lineage of Aaron should approach to offer
incense before the LORD † and become like Korah and his followers.

41 The next day the entire Israelite community complained about Moses and
Aaron, † saying, “You have killed the LORD’s people! ” 42 When the community
assembled against them, Moses and Aaron turned toward the tent of meeting,
and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the LORD’s glory appeared.
43 Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD
said to Moses, 45 “Get away from this community so that I may consume them
instantly.” † But they fell facedown.
46 Then Moses told Aaron, “Take your firepan, place fire from the altar in it, and
add incense. Go quickly to the community and make atonement for them,
because wrath has come from the LORD; the plague has begun.” 47 So Aaron
took his firepan as Moses had ordered, ran into the middle of the assembly, and
saw that the plague had begun among the people. After he added incense, he
made atonement for the people. 48 He stood between the dead and the living,
and the plague was halted. 49 But those who died from the plague numbered
14,700, in addition to those who died because of the Korah incident. 50 Aaron
then returned to Moses at the entrance to the tent of meeting, since the plague
had been halted. †

16:11 Or *Aaron, what has he done* **16:22** Or *God of the spirits of all flesh*
16:1 Ex 6:16-21 **16:1** Nm 26:9; Dt 11:6; Ps 106:16-18 **16:3** Nm 14:14; Ezk 37:26-28 **16:5** Ex 40:12-15 **16:5** Nm 17:5; Jdg 10:14; 1Sm 10:24; 2Sm 6:21; 1Kg 8:44; 11:32; Ps 105:26 **16:6** Ex 27:3; 38:3; Nm 4:9,14; 16:17,37-39 **16:7** Lv 10:1-2; 16:12 **16:7** Nm 17:5 **16:9** Gn 8:9; Ex 19:4 **16:9** Dt 10:8; 21:5; 2Ch 29:11; Ezk 40:46; 44:11,15-16 **16:10** Ex 29:9; Nm 18:7; 25:13; Neh 7:64; 13:29 **16:11** Nm 14:35; 27:3; Ps 2:1-3 **16:13** Ex 3:8,17 **16:14** 1Sm 11:2 **16:19** Ex 16:7,10 **16:21** Nm 16:45; Jos 24:20; Jr 14:12; Ezk 43:8 **16:22** Gn 17:3; Lv 9:24; Nm 16:4,45 **16:22** Nm 27:16 **16:22** Gn 18:24-26 **16:26** Is 52:11 **16:26** Gn 19:15,17 **16:28** Ex 3:10-12; Zch 2:9,11; 4:9; 6:15 **16:30** Is 5:14 **16:32** Ex 15:12; Nm 26:10 **16:35** Gn 19:24; Lv 10:1-2; Nm 11:1; 2Kg 1:10 **16:40** Ex 28:1; Nm 3:10,38; 18:4,7 **16:41** Ex 16:2,7-8; 17:3; Nm 14:2,27; 16:3; 17:6; 20:2; 26:9; 1Co 10:10 **16:45** Nm 16:21 **16:47-50** Nm 25:1-9; 2Sm 24:15-25

16:1-3 The Israelites continued to rebel, and the culprits this time were **Korah** and his followers, who rejected the leadership of Moses and Aaron. It was true that all Israel was to be **holy** (e.g., 15:40), but Moses and Aaron had been set apart by God for special roles and responsibilities.

16:8-11 Korah was himself a Levite (v. 1), as were many others in his group apparently (vv. 7-8). Though **Levites** had already been set apart by God to assist the priests in the service of the tabernacle, these men were discontent with their role. Moses rebuked them because they had not merely rejected Moses and Aaron but had also thus **conspired against the LORD** (see also Ex 17:2), who had assigned their respective roles.

16:20-24 Once again, God is angry enough to destroy **the whole community**, but Moses’s intercession prevents this (see also 14:12-20; Ex 32:9-14).

16:28-35 The unusual way in which Korah and his followers died both validated Moses and Aaron’s authority and served as a dramatic demonstration of God’s judgment. The earth **opened its mouth and**

swallowed them and their households (see also Jos 7:24-26) and fire **consumed the 250 men** (see also v. 2). The line of Korah, however, did not die out (26:11; 1Ch 6:37).

16:41-50 When the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron because of the judgment against Korah and his followers, they came under judgment as well. The Lord was angry enough to destroy the entire **community** (see the note on 16:20-24). If Aaron had not made **atonement** for Israel, the plague would have claimed even more than the 14,700 lives that it did.

AARON'S STAFF CHOSEN

17 The LORD instructed Moses: 2 "Speak to the Israelites and take one staff from them for each ancestral tribe, † twelve staffs from all the leaders of their tribes. † Write each man's name on his staff. 3 Write Aaron's name on Levi's staff, because there is to be one staff for the head of each tribe. 4 Then place them in the tent of meeting in front of the testimony where I meet with you. 5 The staff of the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of the Israelites' complaints that they have been making about you."

6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and each of their leaders gave him a staff, one for each of the leaders of their tribes, twelve staffs in all. Aaron's staff was among them. † 7 Moses placed the staffs before the LORD in the tent of the testimony.

8 The next day Moses entered the tent of the testimony and saw that Aaron's staff, representing the house of Levi, had sprouted, formed buds, blossomed, and produced almonds! 9 Moses then brought out all the staffs from the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They saw them, and each man took his own staff.

10 The LORD told Moses, "Put Aaron's staff back in front of the testimony to be kept as a sign † for the rebels, so that you may put an end to their complaints before me, or else they will die." † 11 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him.

12 Then the Israelites declared to Moses, "Look, we're perishing! We're lost; we're all lost! 13 Anyone who comes near the LORD's tabernacle will die. † Will we all perish? "

17:2 Lit *father's house* **17:2** Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in vv. 3,6
17:6 Ex 7:12 **17:10** Heb 9:4 **17:10** Ex 28:35; 30:20-21; Lv 8:35; 10:6,9; 15:31; 16:2,13; Nm 4:19; 18:3,32; 35:12 **17:13** Nm 3:10,38; 8:19; 18:7

17:8 Aaron's authority as priest had been challenged by Korah and his followers (16:3,8-11), and the fact that only **Aaron's staff . . . sprouted, formed buds, blossomed, and produced almonds** further validated his legitimacy as a priest (see vv. 2-5).

17:12-13 As in 14:39-45, the Israelites' belated awareness of their sin was both too late and misdirected. Their panic resembles their response to hearing the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:19.

PROVISION FOR THE PRIESTHOOD

18 The LORD said to Aaron, "You, your sons, and your ancestral family † † will be responsible for iniquity against the sanctuary. You and your sons will be responsible for iniquity involving your priesthood. 2 But also bring your relatives with you from the tribe of Levi, your ancestral tribe, so they may join you and assist you and your sons in front of the tent of the testimony. † 3 They are to perform duties for you and for the whole tent. They must not come near the sanctuary equipment or the altar; otherwise, both they and you will die. 4 They are to join you and guard the tent of meeting, doing all the work at the tent, but no unauthorized person may come near you.
5 "You are to guard the sanctuary and the altar so that wrath may not fall on the Israelites again. † 6 Look, I have selected your fellow Levites from the Israelites as a gift for you, assigned by the LORD to work at the tent of meeting. 7 But you and your sons will carry out your priestly responsibilities † for everything concerning the altar and for what is inside the curtain, and you will do that work. I am giving you the work of the priesthood as a gift, † but an unauthorized person who comes near the sanctuary will be put to death." †

SUPPORT FOR THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, "Look, I have put you in charge of the contributions † brought to me. As for all the holy offerings † of the Israelites, I have given them to you and your sons as a portion and a permanent statute. †
9 A portion of the holiest offerings kept from the fire will be yours; every one of their offerings that they give me, whether the grain offering, sin offering, or guilt offering will be most holy for you and your sons. 10 You are to eat it as a most holy offering. † Every male may eat it; it is to be holy to you.
11 "The contribution of their gifts also belongs to you. I have given all the Israelites' presentation offerings † to you and to your sons and daughters as a permanent statute. † Every ceremonially clean person in your house may eat it.
12 I am giving you all the best of the fresh oil, new wine, and grain, † which the

Israelites give to the LORD as their firstfruits. † 13 The firstfruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, belong to you. Every clean person in your house may eat them.

14 "Everything in Israel that is permanently dedicated to the LORD † belongs to you. 15 The firstborn of every living thing, human or animal, presented to the LORD belongs to you. But you must certainly redeem a human firstborn, † and redeem the firstborn of an unclean animal. 16 You will pay the redemption price for a month-old male according to your assessment: five shekels † of silver by the standard sanctuary shekel, which is twenty gerahs. †

17 "However, you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep, or a goat; they are holy. You are to splatter their blood on the altar and burn their fat as a fire offering for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. 18 But their meat belongs to you. It belongs to you like the breast of the presentation offering and the right thigh.

19 "I give to you and to your sons and daughters all the holy contributions that the Israelites present to the LORD as a permanent statute. It is a permanent covenant of salt † before the LORD for you as well as your offspring."

20 The LORD told Aaron, "You will not have an inheritance in their land; there will be no portion among them for you. I am your portion and your inheritance among the Israelites. †

21 "Look, I have given the Levites every tenth † in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work they do, the work of the tent of meeting. 22 The Israelites must never again come near the tent of meeting, or they will incur guilt and die. 23 The Levites will do the work of the tent of meeting, and they will bear the consequences of their iniquity. The Levites will not receive an inheritance among the Israelites; † this is a permanent statute throughout your generations. 24 For I have given them the tenth that the Israelites present to the LORD as a contribution for their inheritance. That is why I told them that they would not receive an inheritance among the Israelites."

25 The LORD instructed Moses, 26 "Speak to the Levites and tell them: When you receive from the Israelites the tenth that I have given you as your inheritance, you are to present part of it as an offering to the LORD — a tenth of the tenth. 27 Your offering will be credited to you as if it were your grain from the threshing floor or the full harvest from the winepress. 28 You are to present

an offering to the LORD from every tenth you receive from the Israelites. Give some of it to the priest Aaron as an offering to the LORD. 29 You must present the entire offering due the LORD from all your gifts. The best part of the tenth † is to be consecrated.

30 "Tell them further: Once you have presented the best part of the tenth, and it is credited to you Levites as the produce of the threshing floor or the winepress, 31 then you and your household may eat it anywhere. It is your wage in return for your work at the tent of meeting. 32 You will not incur guilt because of it once you have presented the best part of it, but you must not defile the Israelites' holy offerings, so that you will not die."

18:1 Lit *the house of your father* **18:7** Or *curtain. So you are to perform the service; a gift of your priesthood I grant* **18:10** Or *it in a most holy place* **18:16** A shekel is about two-fifths of an ounce
18:1 Nm 10:21 **18:2** Nm 8:5-26 **18:5** Nm 1:53; 16; 17:12-13; 1Ch 9:19; Ezk 44:11 **18:7** Nm 3:10 **18:7** Nm 1:51; 3:10,38 **18:8** Ex 36:3; Lv 22:12; Nm 18:19; Dt 12:6,11,17; Neh 10:39; 12:44; 13:5; Ezk 20:40; Mal 3:8 **18:8** Lv 22:2-7,15-16; Nm 18:32; Ezk 42:13 **18:8** Lv 10:12-15; Nm 5:9 **18:11** Ex 29:24-27; 35:22; 38:24,29; Lv 7:30,34; 8:27,29; 9:21; 10:14-15; 14:12,24; 23:15,17,20; Nm 6:20; 8:11-21 **18:11** Lv 7:34-36 **18:12** Dt 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; 14:23; 18:4; 28:51; Neh 10:37-39 **18:12** Gn 49:3; Ex 23:16,19; 34:22,26; Lv 2:12,14; 23:17,20; Nm 28:26; Jr 2:3; Rm 8:23; 11:16; 1Co 15:20,23; 16:15; Jms 1:18; Rv 14:4 **18:14** Lv 27:28 **18:15** Ex 13:11-16 **18:16** Lv 27:6; Nm 3:46-47 **18:19** Lv 2:13; 2Ch 13:5 **18:20** Dt 10:9; Jos 18:7; Ezk 44:28-30 **18:21** Dt 26:12; 2Ch 31:12; Neh 10:37-38; Heb 7:5 **18:23** Dt 10:8-9; 18:1-2; Jos 13:14,33 **18:29** Nm 18:12

18:1-24 The instructions given **to Aaron** continue the focus on the priesthood. Although much of what God says here has already been said before (see Nm 3; Lv 6:14–7:14), in the context of Korah's recent revolt these instructions serve as a reaffirmation of the roles of the priests and Levites and of their rightful provisions. That Aaron would **not have an inheritance in their land** because God was his **portion** and **inheritance** is mentioned again in several other passages (e.g., Dt 10:9; 18:1-2; Jos 18:7). Later, David's words in Psalm 16:5-6, "LORD, You are my portion . . . I have a beautiful inheritance," likely drew from this idea. It appears that David understood this experience of the priests and the Levites as expressing a spiritual reality that he and God's people as a whole could also participate in.

PURIFICATION RITUAL

19 The LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, 2 "This is the legal statute that the LORD has commanded: Instruct the Israelites to bring you an unblemished red cow that has no defect and has never been yoked. † 3 Give it to the priest Eleazar, † and he will have it brought outside the camp and slaughtered in his presence. 4 The priest Eleazar is to take some of its blood with his finger and sprinkle it seven times toward the front of the tent of meeting. 5 The cow is to be burned in his sight. Its hide, flesh, and blood, are to be burned along with its waste. 6 The priest is to take cedar wood, hyssop, and

crimson yarn, † and throw them onto the fire where the cow is burning. 7 Then the priest must wash his clothes and bathe his body in water; after that he may enter the camp, but he will remain ceremonially unclean until evening. 8 The one who burned the cow must also wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and he will remain unclean until evening.

9 "A man who is clean is to gather up the cow's ashes and deposit them outside the camp in a ceremonially clean place. The ashes will be kept by the Israelite community for preparing the water to remove impurity; it is a sin offering. †

10 Then the one who gathers up the cow's ashes must wash his clothes, and he will remain unclean until evening. This is a permanent statute for the Israelites and for the alien who resides among them.

11 "The person who touches any human corpse will be unclean for seven days.

12 He is to purify himself with the water † on the third day and the seventh day; then he will be clean. † But if he does not purify himself on the third and seventh days, he will not be clean. 13 Anyone who touches a body of a person who has died, and does not purify himself, defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person will be cut off from Israel. He remains unclean because the water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him, and his uncleanness is still on him.

14 "This is the law when a person dies in a tent: everyone who enters the tent and everyone who is already in the tent will be unclean for seven days, 15 and any open container without a lid tied on it is unclean. 16 Anyone in the open field who touches a person who has been killed by the sword or has died, or who even touches a human bone, or a grave, will be unclean for seven days. 17 For the purification of the unclean person, they are to take some of the ashes of the burnt sin offering, put them in a jar, and add fresh water to them. 18 A person who is clean is to take hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle the tent, all the furnishings, and the people who were there. He is also to sprinkle the one who touched a bone, a grave, a corpse, or a person who had been killed.

19 "The one who is clean is to sprinkle the unclean person on the third day and the seventh day. After he purifies the unclean person on the seventh day, the one being purified must wash his clothes and bathe in water, and he will be clean by evening. 20 But a person who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person will be cut off from the assembly because he has defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. † The water for impurity has not been sprinkled on him; he is unclean.

21 This is a permanent statute for them. The person who sprinkles the water for impurity is to wash his clothes, and whoever touches the water for impurity will be unclean until evening. 22 Anything the unclean person touches will become unclean, and anyone who touches it will be unclean until evening.”

19:12 Or *ashes* ; lit *with it*
19:2 Dt 21:3; 1Sm 6:7; Heb 9:13 **19:3** Ex 6:23-25; 28:1; Lv 10:6,12,16; Nm 3:2,4,32; 4:16; 16:37,39 **19:6** Lv 14:4-7,49-52; Heb 9:19 **19:9** Lv 4 **19:12** Nm 31:19 **19:20** 1Co 6:19-20

19:2,6,9 The **ashes** of the **red cow** were used for **preparing the water** for cleansing from impurity. The red color of the cow, along with the redness of **cedar wood, hyssop, and crimson yarn**, was probably representative of blood.

WATER FROM THE ROCK

20 The entire Israelite community entered the Wilderness of Zin † in the first month, and they † settled in Kadesh. † Miriam † died and was buried there.

2 There was no water for the community, so they assembled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The people quarreled with Moses and said, † “If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the LORD. † 4 Why have you brought the LORD’s assembly into this wilderness † for us and our livestock to die here? †
5 Why have you led us up from Egypt to bring us to this evil place? It’s not a place of grain, figs, vines, and pomegranates, † and there is no water to drink! ”
6 Then Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting. They fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7 The LORD spoke to Moses, 8 “Take the staff † and assemble the community. You and your brother Aaron are to speak to the rock † while they watch, and it will yield its water. You will bring out water for them from the rock and provide drink for the community and their livestock.”

9 So Moses took the staff from the LORD’s presence † just as he had commanded him. 10 Moses and Aaron summoned the assembly in front of the rock, and Moses said to them, “Listen, you rebels! Must we bring water out of this rock for you? ” 11 Then Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his staff, so that abundant water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank. †

12 But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me to demonstrate my holiness in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them.” † 13 These are the Waters of Meribah, † † where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD, and he demonstrated his holiness to them. †

EDOM DENIES PASSAGE

14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, “This is what your brother Israel † says, ‘You know all the hardships that have overtaken us. 15 Our fathers went down to Egypt, and we lived in Egypt many years, but the Egyptians treated us and our fathers badly. 16 When we cried out to the LORD, he heard our plea, † and sent an angel, † † and brought us out of Egypt. Now look, we are in Kadesh, a city on the border of your territory. 17 Please let us travel through your land. We won’t travel through any field or vineyard, or drink any well water. We will travel the King’s Highway; we won’t turn to the right or the left until we have traveled through your territory.’ ” †

18 But Edom answered him, “You will not travel through our land, or we will come out and confront you with the sword.”

19 “We will go on the main road,” the Israelites replied to them, “and if we or our herds drink your water, we will pay its price. † There will be no problem; only let us travel through on foot.”

20 Yet Edom insisted, “You may not travel through.” And they came out to confront them with a large force of heavily-armed people. † 21 Edom refused to allow Israel to travel through their territory, and Israel turned away from them.

AARON’S DEATH

22 After they set out from Kadesh, the entire Israelite community came to Mount Hor. † 23 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor on the border of the land of Edom, 24 “Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will not enter the land I have given the Israelites, because you both rebelled against my command at the Waters of Meribah. 25 Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up Mount Hor. 26 Remove Aaron’s garments and put them on his son Eleazar. Aaron will be gathered to his people and die there.”

27 So Moses did as the LORD commanded, and they climbed Mount Hor in the

sight of the whole community. 28 After Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29 When the whole community saw that Aaron had passed away, the entire house of Israel mourned for him thirty days.

20:1 Lit *the people* **20:13** = Quarreling **20:16** Lit *voice* **20:16** Or *a messenger* **20:20** Lit *with numerous people and a strong hand*

20:1 Nm 13:21; 27:14; 33:36; 34:3; Dt 32:51; Jos 15:1 **20:1** Nm 13:26; 27:14; 33:36-37; Dt 1:46; Jdg 11:16-17; Ps 29:8 **20:1** Ex 15:20-21; Nm 12:1; 26:59; Dt 24:9 **20:3** Ex 17:2 **20:3** Nm 16:31-35,41-50 **20:4** Nm 11:11 **20:4** Gn 47:15,19; Ex 14:11-12; Nm 21:5 **20:5** Ex 13:5; Nm 13:23-27; Dt 8:8 **20:8** Ex 4:2-5; 7:15,17,20; 17:4-9; Nm 17:8; 2Kg 4:31 **20:8** Gn 49:24; Ex 17:6; Dt 32:13-18; Neh 9:15; Jb 29:6; Ps 78:20; 81:16; 114:8 **20:9** Nm 17:10 **20:11** Ex 17:6; Ps 78:15; 1Co 10:4 **20:12** Nm 27:12-14; Dt 1:37; 3:26; 32:51 **20:13** Ex 17:7; Nm 27:14; Dt 32:51; Ps 95:8; 106:32 **20:13** Nm 27:14; Ezk 28:22; 38:23 **20:14** Gn 25:23-26,30; 36:8 **20:16** Ex 3:7-10; 14:19; 23:20 **20:17** Nm 21:22; Dt 2:27 **20:19** Dt 2:1-7 **20:22** Nm 21:4; 33:37-41; Dt 32:50

20:2-8 As had happened on their way to Mount Sinai (Ex 17:1-7), the Israelites again needed water, complained, and received water from a rock. This time, however, Moses and Aaron were supposed to **speak to the rock** instead of striking it (cp. Ex 17:6).

20:10-12 Moses disobeyed God's instructions by striking the rock twice. Although he provided the water, God was displeased with Moses and Aaron. Their disobedience was seen by him as a failure to **trust** [him] **to demonstrate** [his] **holiness.** This implies that faith honors the holiness of God. Israel's lack of faith earlier (14:11) was thus followed by Moses and Aaron's, and the consequences again involved not being allowed to enter the promised land (14:22-23; 20:12). The connection between disobedience and failing to honor God's holiness is also found with reference to the sin of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10:1-3.

20:28 The Lord had said to Moses and Aaron that the two of them would not be permitted to enter Canaan because of their failure at Meribah (vv. 12,24). The time had come for Aaron's death, which also meant that Aaron's son **Eleazar** would be the new high priest. Sure enough, **Aaron died** on Mount Hor, outside of the land.

CANAANITE KING DEFEATED

21 When the Canaanite king of Arad, † who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming on the Atharim road, he fought against Israel and captured some prisoners. 2 Then Israel made a vow to the LORD, "If you will hand this people over to us, we will completely destroy their cities." † 3 The LORD listened to Israel's request and handed the Canaanites over to them, and Israel completely destroyed them and their cities. So they named the place Hormah. † †

THE BRONZE SNAKE

4 Then they set out from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea to bypass the land of
Edom, but the people became impatient because of the journey. 5 The people
spoke against God and Moses: “Why have you led us up from Egypt to die in the
wilderness? There is no bread or water, and we detest this wretched food!”
6 Then the LORD sent poisonous † snakes among the people, and they bit them
so that many Israelites died. †
7 The people then came to Moses and said, “We have sinned by speaking
against the LORD and against you. Intercede with the LORD so that he will take the
snakes away from us.” And Moses interceded for the people.
8 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Make a snake image and mount it on a pole.
When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will recover.” † 9 So Moses made a
bronze snake and mounted it on a pole. Whenever someone was bitten, and he
looked at the bronze snake, he recovered.

JOURNEY AROUND MOAB

10 The Israelites set out and camped at Oboth. † 11 They set out from Oboth
and camped at Iye-abarim in the wilderness that borders Moab on the east.
12 From there they went and camped at Zered Valley. 13 They set out from there
and camped on the other side of the Arnon River, in the wilderness that extends
from the Amorite border, because the Arnon was the Moabite border between
Moab and the Amorites. 14 Therefore it is stated in the Book of the LORD’s
Wars:

Waheb in Suphah
and the ravines of the Arnon,
15 even the slopes of the ravines that extend to the site of Ar †
and lie along the border of Moab.

16 From there they went to Beer, † the well the LORD told Moses about, “Gather
the people so I may give them water.” 17 Then Israel sang this song:

Spring up, well — sing to it!
18 The princes dug the well; the nobles of the people hollowed it out
with a scepter and with their staffs.

They went from the wilderness to Mattanah, [19] from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, [20] from Bamoth to the valley in the territory of Moab near the Pisgah highlands † that overlook the wasteland. † †

AMORITE KINGS DEFEATED

[21] Israel sent messengers to say to King Sihon † of the Amorites: [22] "Let us travel through your land. We won't go into the fields or vineyards. We won't drink any well water. We will travel the King's Highway until we have traveled through your territory." † [23] But Sihon would not let Israel travel through his territory. Instead, he gathered his whole army and went out to confront Israel in the wilderness. When he came to Jahaz, † he fought against Israel. [24] Israel struck him with the sword and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, † but only up to the Ammonite border, because it was fortified. †
[25] Israel took all the cities and lived in all these Amorite cities, including Heshbon and all its surrounding villages. [26] Heshbon was the city of King Sihon of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken control of all his land as far as the Arnon. [27] Therefore the poets † say:

Come to Heshbon, let it be rebuilt;
let the city of Sihon be restored. †
[28] For fire came out of Heshbon, a flame from the city of Sihon.
It consumed Ar of Moab,
the citizens of Arnon's heights.
[29] Woe to you, Moab!
You have been destroyed, people of Chemosh! †
He gave up his sons as refugees,
and his daughters into captivity
to Sihon the Amorite king.
[30] We threw them down; Heshbon has been destroyed as far as Dibon. †
We caused desolation as far as Nophah,
which reaches as far as Medeba. †

[31] So Israel lived in the Amorites' land. [32] After Moses sent spies to Jazer, Israel captured its surrounding villages and drove out the Amorites who were

there.

33 Then they turned and went up the road to Bashan, and King Og of Bashan † came out against them with his whole army to do battle at Edrei. † 34 But the LORD said to Moses, “Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to you along with his whole army and his land. Do to him as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon.” † 35 So they struck him, his sons, and his whole army until no one was left, † and they took possession of his land. †

21:3 = Destruction **21:6** Lit *Burning* **21:16** = Well **21:20** Or *overlook Jeshimon* **21:24** LXX reads *because the Ammonite border was Jazer* **21:27** Lit *ones who speak proverbs* **21:27** Or *firmly founded* **21:35** Lit *left to him*

21:1 Nm 33:40; Jos 12:14; Jdg 1:16 **21:2** Dt 2:34; 13:16-17; Jos 6:18,21 **21:3** Nm 14:45; Dt 1:44; Jdg 1:17 **21:6** 1Co 10:9 **21:8** 2Kg 18:4; Jn 3:14-15 **21:10-11** Nm 33:43-44 **21:15** Nm 21:28; Dt 2:9,18,29; Is 15:1 **21:20** Nm 23:14; Dt 3:17,27; 4:49; 34:1; Jos 12:3; 13:20 **21:20** Nm 23:28 **21:21** Nm 32:33; Dt 1:4; 2:24–4:46 **21:22** Nm 20:17; Dt 2:26-33 **21:23** Dt 2:32; Jdg 11:20; 1Ch 6:78 **21:21-24** Jdg 11:19-22 **21:27-29** Jdg 11:24; 1Kg 11:7,33; Jr 48:45-47 **21:30** Nm 32:34; Neh 11:25; Jr 48:18,22 **21:30** Jos 13:9,16; 1Ch 19:7; Is 15:2 **21:33** Nm 32:33; Dt 3:1-13; 4:47 **21:33** Dt 3:1,10; Jos 12:4; 13:12,31 **21:34** Dt 3:2 **21:35** Ps 135:10-11

21:1-3 Israel’s victory over **the Canaanite king of Arad** resulted from God’s answer to their prayer and vow.

21:4-9 The Israelites’ complaints led to God’s sending **poisonous snakes among the people.** When they repented, God instructed Moses to make a **bronze snake** and **mount it on a pole.** Those who looked at it would recover. Such an act required faith in God’s chosen means of salvation. In John 3:14-15, Jesus compared his own substitutionary death on the cross to Moses’s lifting up of the bronze snake. Just as those who looked at the uplifted serpent were healed, so those who believe in Jesus “may have eternal life.”

21:14 The **Book of the LORD’s Wars** was apparently an extrabiblical work contemporaneous with the Pentateuch, but no other record of it still exists today (see also the note on Jos 10:8-15).

21:21-35 As Israel journeyed toward the promised land, they once again requested permission to pass through the land of other peoples (see also 20:17). **King Sihon of the Amorites** not only refused but **gathered his whole army and went out to confront Israel in the wilderness** (see also 20:18-21). Israel defeated him and took possession of his land. Likewise, they defeated **King Og of Bashan** and took possession of his land. These victories over Sihon and Og are recounted elsewhere in Scripture as great victories God won for Israel (Dt 31:4; Jos 2:10; 9:9-10; Pss 135:10-11; 136:17-19).

BALAK HIRES BALAAM

22 The Israelites traveled on and camped in the plains of Moab near the Jordan across from Jericho. 2 Now Balak † son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. † 3 Moab was terrified of the people because they were numerous, † and Moab dreaded the Israelites. 4 So the Moabites said to the elders of Midian, “This horde will devour everything around us like an ox eats up the green plants in the field.”

Since Balak son of Zippor was Moab's king at that time, 5 he sent messengers to Balaam † son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the Euphrates in the land of his people. † † Balak said to him: "Look, a people has come out of Egypt; they cover the surface of the land † and are living right across from me. 6 Please come and put a curse on these people for me because they are more powerful than I am. I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed." †
7 The elders of Moab and Midian departed with fees for divination † in hand. † They came to Balaam and reported Balak's words to him. 8 He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will give you the answer the LORD tells me." So the officials of Moab stayed with Balaam.
9 Then God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are these men with you? "
10 Balaam replied to God, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent this message to me: 11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the surface of the land. Now come and put a curse on them for me. I may be able to fight against them and drive them away.' "
12 Then God said to Balaam, "You are not to go with them. You are not to curse this people, for they are blessed."
13 So Balaam got up the next morning and said to Balak's officials, "Go back to your land, because the LORD has refused to let me go with you."
14 The officials of Moab arose, returned to Balak, and reported, "Balaam refused to come with us."
15 Balak sent officials again who were more numerous and higher in rank than the others. 16 They came to Balaam and said to him, "This is what Balak son of Zippor says: 'Let nothing keep you from coming to me, 17 for I will greatly honor you and do whatever you ask me. So please come and put a curse on these people for me! ' "
18 But Balaam responded to the servants of Balak, "If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the command of the LORD my God to do anything small or great. 19 Please stay here overnight as the others did, so that I may find out what else the LORD has to tell me."
20 God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "Since these men have come to summon you, get up and go with them, but you must only do what I tell you."

21 When he got up in the morning, Balaam saddled his donkey and went with the officials of Moab.

BALAAM'S DONKEY AND THE ANGEL

22 But God was incensed that Balaam was going, and the angel of the LORD † took his stand on the path to oppose him. Balaam was riding his donkey, and his two servants were with him. 23 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing on the path with a drawn sword in his hand, she turned off the path and went into the field. So Balaam hit her to return her to the path. 24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a narrow passage between the vineyards, with a stone wall on either side. 25 The donkey saw the angel of the LORD and pressed herself against the wall, squeezing Balaam's foot against it. So he hit her once again. 26 The angel of the LORD went ahead and stood in a narrow place where there was no room to turn to the right or the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she crouched down under Balaam. So he became furious and beat the donkey with his stick.

28 Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she asked Balaam, "What have I done to you that you have beaten me these three times? " †

29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You made me look like a fool. If I had a sword in my hand, I'd kill you now! "

30 But the donkey said, "Am I not the donkey you've ridden all your life until today? Have I ever treated you this way before? "

"No," he replied.

31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the path with a drawn sword in his hand. Balaam knelt low and bowed in worship on his face. 32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look, I came out to oppose you, because I consider what you are doing to be evil. † 33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away from me, I would have killed you by now and let her live."

34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the path to confront me. And now, if it is evil in your sight, I will go back."

35 Then the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but you are to say only what I tell you." So Balaam went with Balak's officials.

36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the Moabite city † on the Arnon border at the edge of his territory. 37 Balak asked Balaam, “Did I not send you an urgent summons? Why didn’t you come to me? Am I really not able to reward you?”

38 Balaam said to him, “Look, I have come to you, but can I say anything I want? I must speak only the message God puts in my mouth.” 39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kiriath-huzoth. † 40 Balak sacrificed cattle, sheep, and goats and sent for Balaam and the officials who were with him.

41 In the morning, Balak took Balaam and brought him to Bamoth-baal. † From there he saw the outskirts of the people’s camp.

22:5 Sam, Vg, Syr read *of the Ammonites* **22:5** Or *of the Amawites* **22:32** Lit *because your way is perverse before me* **22:36** Or *at Ir-moab*, or *at Ar of Moab* **22:39** = The City of Streets **22:41** = The High Places of Baal

22:2 Jos 24:9-10; Jdg 11:25; Mc 6:5; Rv 2:14 **22:2** Dt 4:46; Jos 10:12 **22:3** Gn 47:27; Ex 1:7,9; 32:13; 2Sm 17:11; 1Kg 4:20; 1Ch 27:23 **22:5** Dt 23:3-5; Jos 24:9-10; Mc 6:5; 2Pt 2:15-16; Jd 11; Rv 2:14 **22:5** Ex 10:5 **22:6** Gn 27:29; Nm 24:9 **22:7** Gn 30:27; 44:5,15; Lv 19:26; Nm 23:23; Dt 18:10; 1Sm 15:23; 2Kg 17:17; 21:6; Is 2:6; Jr 14:14; Ezk 12:24; 13:7,23; 21:21; Mc 3:11 **22:7** 2Pt 2:15; Jd 11 **22:22** Gn 16:7; 22:11; Ex 3:2; Jdg 2:1; 5:23; 6:1; 13:3; 2Sm 24:16; 1Kg 19:7; 2Kg 1:3; 19:35; Zch 1:11; 3:1; 12:8 **22:28** 2Pt 2:15-16

22:2-6 Like Pharaoh, **Balak** king of Moab feared the Israelites because **they were numerous** (see also Ex 1:9). He requested Balaam’s help to **put a curse on these people** so that he could **drive them out of the land.** Balak’s confidence in Balaam that **those you bless are blessed and those you curse are cursed** sets the stage for a conflict with God, who is determined to bless Israel (v. 12; 23:8,20) in keeping with his promises to the patriarchs (see Gn 12:3; 27:29).

22:18-21 Balaam’s words sound pious, but God had already told him that he was not to go (v. 12). The Lord’s words in verses 20-21 permitted Balaam to go; nevertheless, he **was incensed that Balaam was going** (v. 22).

22:23-33 The irony of this passage is that Balaam’s **donkey** understood more than he did, despite his experience in divination (v. 7; 24:1). Three times the donkey **saw the angel of the LORD** (vv. 23,25,27) and **turned away**, whereas Balaam was oblivious each time. His blindness was finally alleviated when **the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the angel.** The donkey was able to speak because **the LORD opened** its mouth. This rare circumstance of an animal talking occurs only once elsewhere with the serpent in the garden of Eden (Gn 3:1-5).

BALAAM’S ORACLES

23 Then Balaam said to Balak, “Build me seven altars here and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me.” † 2 So Balak did as Balaam directed, and they offered a bull and a ram on each altar. 3 Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here by your burnt offering while I am gone. Maybe the LORD will meet with me. I will tell you whatever he reveals to me.” So he went to a barren hill.

4 God met with him and Balaam said to him, “I have arranged seven altars and
offered a bull and a ram on each altar.” 5 Then the LORD put a message in
Balaam’s mouth and said, “Return to Balak and say what I tell you.”
6 So he returned to Balak, who was standing there by his burnt offering with all
the officials of Moab.

BALAAM’S FIRST ORACLE

7 Balaam proclaimed his poem:

Balak brought me from Aram; †
the king of Moab, from the eastern mountains: “Come, put a curse on Jacob
for me;
come, denounce Israel! ” †
8 How can I curse someone God has not cursed?
How can I denounce someone the LORD has not denounced?
9 I see them from the top of rocky cliffs, and I watch them from the hills.
There is a people living alone; †
it does not consider itself among the nations.
10 Who has counted the dust of Jacob †
or numbered even one-fourth of Israel?
Let me die the death of the upright;
let the end of my life be like theirs.

11 “What have you done to me? ” Balak asked Balaam. “I brought you to curse
my enemies, but look, you have only blessed them! ”
12 He answered, “Shouldn’t I say exactly what the LORD puts in my mouth? ” †

BALAAM’S SECOND ORACLE

13 Then Balak said to him, “Please come with me to another place † where you
can see them. You will only see the outskirts of their camp; you won’t see all of
them. From there, put a curse on them for me.” 14 So Balak took him to Lookout
Field † on top of Pisgah, † built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on
each altar.
15 Balaam said to Balak, “Stay here by your burnt offering while I seek the LORD
over there.”

16 The LORD met with Balaam and put a message in his mouth. Then he said,
“Return to Balak and say what I tell you.”
17 So he returned to Balak, who was standing there by his burnt offering with
the officials of Moab. Balak asked him, “What did the LORD say? ”
18 Balaam proclaimed his poem:

Balak, get up and listen;
son of Zippor, pay attention to what I say!
19 God is not a man, that he might lie, or a son of man, that he might change his
mind. †
Does he speak and not act,
or promise and not fulfill? †
20 I have indeed received a command to bless; since he has blessed, †
I cannot change it.
21 He considers no disaster for Jacob; he sees no trouble for Israel. †
The LORD their God is with them, †
and there is rejoicing over the King among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt; he is like the horns of a wild ox
for them. † †
23 There is no magic curse against Jacob and no divination against Israel.
It will now be said about Jacob and Israel, “What great things God has done! ”
24 A people rise up like a lioness; they rouse themselves like a lion. †
They will not lie down until they devour the prey and drink the blood
of the slain.

25 Then Balak told Balaam, “Don’t curse them and don’t bless them! ”
26 But Balaam answered him, “Didn’t I tell you: Whatever the LORD says, I must
do? ” †

BALAAM’S THIRD ORACLE

27 Again Balak said to Balaam, “Please come. I will take you to another place.
Maybe it will be agreeable to God that you can put a curse on them for me
there.” 28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, which overlooks the
wasteland. † †

29 Balaam told Balak, “Build me seven altars here and prepare seven bulls and
seven rams for me.” † 30 So Balak did as Balaam said and offered a bull and a
ram on each altar.

23:14 Or *to the field of Zophim* **23:20** Sam, LXX read *since I will bless* **23:21** Or *He does not observe sin in Jacob; he does not see wrongdoing in Israel* **23:22** Or *Egypt; they have the horns of a wild ox* **23:28** Or *overlooks Jeshimon*

23:1 1Ch 15:26; 2Ch 29:21; Jb 42:8; Ezk 45:23 **23:7** Dt 23:4 **23:7** Nm 22:6,17 **23:9** Dt 33:28 **23:10** Gn 13:16 **23:12** Nm 22:38 **23:13** Nm 23:27 **23:14** Nm 21:20; Dt 3:17,27; 4:49; 34:1; Jos 12:3; 13:20 **23:19** 1Sm 15:29; Mal 3:6; Ti 1:2; Heb 6:17-18 **23:19** Ps 33:10-11; Pr 19:21; Is 14:24; 31:2; 45:23; 46:9-11; 48:3; 55:11; Rm 11:29; Eph 1:11; 2Tm 2:13 **23:21** Gn 28:15; Nm 14:9; Dt 2:7; 20:1; Jos 1:17; Jdg 6:13; 2Ch 20:17; Ps 46:11; Is 8:10; 41:10; Jr 1:19; 15:20; Zph 3:17; Hg 2:4; Rv 21:3 **23:22** Nm 24:8 **23:24** Nm 24:9 **23:26** Nm 22:38 **23:28** Nm 21:20 **23:29** Nm 23:1-2

23:7-12 Balaam’s four oracles (see also vv. 18-24; 24:3-9,15-19) comprise one of the Pentateuch’s four major poetic sections, the others being Genesis 49:2-27; Exodus 15:1-18; and Deuteronomy 32–33 (see the note on Gn 49:1). Like Genesis49:2-27 and Deuteronomy 32–33, this poetic section is also found in close connection with the phrase “in the last days” (lit Nm 24:14) and contains important messianic prophecies (24:7-9,17-19). In this first oracle, Balaam declared that he could not curse Israel as Balak desired because **God has not cursed** them. He also reaffirmed just how numerous they were (see 22:3-5) and wished to be associated with them (v. 10). Naturally, Balak was upset with Balaam (see also v. 25; 24:10-11).

23:18-24 Balak tried again to get Balaam to curse Israel (v. 13), but Balaam informed him that God’s determination to bless Israel would not change (vv. 19-20). He was with them and had brought them out of Egypt. Contrary to what Balak had believed in trying to hire Balaam (22:6-7,16-17), there was **no divination against Israel.**

24 Since Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go
to seek omens as on previous occasions, but turned † toward the
wilderness. 2 When Balaam looked up and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe,
the Spirit of God † came on him, 3 and he proclaimed his poem:

The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened, 4 the oracle of one who hears
the sayings of God, who sees a vision from the Almighty, †
who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered: 5 How beautiful are your tents,
Jacob, your dwellings, Israel.
6 They stretch out like river valleys, †
like gardens beside a stream,
like aloes the LORD has planted, like cedars beside the water.
7 Water will flow from his buckets, and his seed will be by abundant water.
His king will be greater than Agag, †
and his kingdom will be exalted.

8 God brought him out of Egypt; he is like † the horns of a wild ox for them. †
He will feed on enemy nations
and gnaw their bones;
he will strike them with his arrows.
9 He crouches, he lies down like a lion or a lioness — who dares to rouse him? †
Those who bless you will be blessed,
and those who curse you will be cursed. †

10 Then Balak became furious with Balaam, struck his hands together, and said to him, "I summoned you to put a curse on my enemies, but instead, you have blessed them these three times. 11 Now go to your home! I said I would reward you richly, † but look, the LORD has denied you a reward."
12 Balaam answered Balak, "Didn't I previously tell the messengers you sent me: 13 If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go against the LORD's command, to do anything good or bad of my own will? I will say whatever the LORD says. † 14 Now I am going back to my people, but first, let me warn you what these people will do to your people in the future."

BALAAM'S FOURTH ORACLE

15 Then he proclaimed his poem:

The oracle of Balaam son of Beor,
the oracle of the man whose eyes are opened; 16 the oracle of one who hears the sayings of God and has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who falls into a trance with his eyes uncovered: †
17 I see him, but not now; I perceive him, but not near.
A star will come from Jacob,
and a scepter will arise from Israel. †
He will smash the forehead † of Moab and strike down † all the Shethites. †
18 Edom will become a possession; Seir † will become a possession of its enemies, but Israel will be triumphant.
19 One who comes from Jacob will rule; he will destroy the city's survivors.

20 Then Balaam saw Amalek and proclaimed his poem:

Amalek was first among the nations, †
but his future is destruction.

21 Next he saw the Kenites and proclaimed his poem:

Your dwelling place is enduring;
your nest is set in the cliffs.
22 Kain will be destroyed when Asshur takes you captive.

23 Once more he proclaimed his poem:

Ah, who can live when God does this?
24 Ships will come from the coast of Kittim; †
they will carry out raids against Asshur and Eber, †
but they too will come to destruction.

25 Balaam then arose and went back to his homeland, and Balak also went his way.

24:1 Lit *set his face* **24:6** Or *like date palms* **24:8** Or *he has* **24:17** Or *frontiers* **24:17** Sam reads *and the skulls of* ; Jr 48:45 **24:17** Or *Sethites*
24:2 Ex 35:31; Nm 11:17,25-26,29; 1Sm 10:10 **24:4** Is 13:6,9; Ezk 30:2-3; Jl 2:1-2,11,31 **24:7** Ex 17:14-16; 1Sm 15:8-33 **24:8** Nm 23:22 **24:9** Gn 49:9; Nm 23:24 **24:9** Gn 12:3; 27:29 **24:11** Nm 22:17 **24:13** Nm 22:18,38 **24:15-16** Nm 24:3-4 **24:17** Gn 49:10; Mt 2:2; Rv 22:16 **24:18** Gn 32:3 **24:20** Ex 17:8-16; 1Sm 15 **24:24** Gn 10:4; Is 23:1,12; Jr 2:10; Dn 11:30 **24:24** Gn 10:21,24-25; 11:14-27

24:1-4 Balak tried a third time to get Balaam to curse Israel (23:27-30). This time, Balaam **did not go to seek omens as on previous occasions** but spoke after **the Spirit of God came on him.** That the resulting heightened spiritual vision Balaam experienced related to his third and fourth oracles is indicated by his testimony that his **eyes are opened**, he **hears the sayings of God**, he **sees a vision from the Almighty**, and **his eyes** are **uncovered** (see also 22:31).

24:7-9 Unlike the first two oracles, the third and fourth oracles highlight a messianic king (see the note on 23:7-10). The description found in the first part of v. 9 **(He crouches, he lies down like a lion or a lioness —who dares to rouse him?)** is also used for the messianic king in Genesis 49:9. The latter part of verse 9 **(Those who bless you will be blessed, and those who curse you will be cursed)** recalls Genesis 27:29, which itself has ties to Genesis 49:8-10 through its mention of rule over both fellow Israelites and the nations.

24:14-19 Balaam's fourth and last oracle declared what Israel would do to Moab **in the future** (lit "in the last days" verse 14; see the note on 23:7-12). As in the third oracle, Balaam's spiritual senses were heightened (vv. 15-16; see the note on 24:1-4), and he predicted the coming of the Messiah (vv. 17-19). Out of the many descendants of Abraham who were like the "stars of the sky" (Gn 22:17; 26:4), there would arise a single **star** from among them. His arrival was **not near** and **not now** (v. 17) but rather "in the last days," which is the literal translation of verse 14's point about the future. He would be a ruler who would defeat Moab and Israel's enemies. **Edom** had also resisted Israel recently (20:14-21).

ISRAEL WORSHIPS BAAL

25 While Israel was staying in the Acacia Grove, † † the people began to
prostitute themselves with the women of Moab. 2 The women invited
them to the sacrifices for their gods, and the people ate and bowed in worship to
their gods. † 3 So Israel aligned itself with Baal of Peor, † and the LORD's anger
burned against Israel. † 4 The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of the
people and execute † them in broad daylight before the LORD so that his burning
anger may turn away from Israel."
5 So Moses told Israel's judges, "Kill each of the men who aligned themselves
with Baal of Peor."

PHINEHAS INTERVENES

6 An Israelite man came bringing a Midianite woman to his relatives in the sight
of Moses and the whole Israelite community while they were weeping at the
entrance to the tent of meeting. 7 When Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron
the priest, saw this, he got up from the assembly, took a spear in his hand,
8 followed the Israelite man into the tent, † and drove it through both the
Israelite man and the woman — through her belly. Then the plague on the
Israelites was stopped, 9 but those who died in the plague numbered twenty-four
thousand. †
10 The LORD spoke to Moses, 11 "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the
priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites because he was zealous
among them with my zeal, † † so that I did not destroy the Israelites in my zeal.
12 Therefore declare: I grant him my covenant of peace. † 13 It will be a
covenant of perpetual priesthood for him and his future descendants, † because
he was zealous for his God and made atonement for the Israelites."
14 The name of the slain Israelite man, who was struck dead with the Midianite
woman, was Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite family. † 15 The name
of the slain Midianite woman was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur, a tribal head of a
family in Midian.

VENGEANCE AGAINST THE MIDIANITES

16 The LORD told Moses: 17 "Attack the Midianites and strike them dead. 18 For they attacked you with the treachery that they used against you in the Peor incident. They did the same in the case involving their sister Cozbi, daughter of the Midianite leader who was killed the day the plague came at Peor."

25:1 Or *in Shittim* **25:4** Or *impale*, or *hang*, or *expose* ; Hb obscure **25:8** Perhaps a tent shrine or bridal tent **25:11** Or *jealousy* **25:14** Lit *a father's house*, also in v. 15

25:1 Nm 33:49; Jos 2:1; 3:1; Mc 6:5 **25:2** Ex 34:15-16; 1Co 10:8; Rv 2:14 **25:3** Nm 23:28 **25:3** Dt 4:3; Ps 106:28-29; Hs 9:10 **25:9** 1Co 10:8 **25:11** Ex 34:14; Zch 8:2 **25:12** Is 54:10; Ezk 34:25; 37:26; Mal 2:5 **25:13** Ex 40:15; Ps 106:30-31

25:1-15 Despite God's determined plan to bless them (22:12; 23:8,11,20; 24:9-10), Israel continued to be unfaithful to him. They committed sexual immorality with Moabite **women** and worshiped **Baal of Peor** (for more on Baal, see the note on Jdg 3:7-11). The singling out of the **leaders** for execution suggests their responsibility in this rebellion. As in the golden calf incident, Israel's idolatry was followed by a **plague** and by judgment carried out by a subgroup of Israelites (Ex 32:26-28,35). Whereas the Levites were consequently ordained for service to God (Ex 32:29), Phinehas' line was given a **covenant of perpetual priesthood.** Sadly and ironically, the setting apart of both groups for special service resulted from their putting fellow Israelites to death for idolatry. The focus on **a Midianite woman** in verses 6-15, along with God's mandated judgment against the Midianites (vv. 16-18; see Nm 31), indicates this group's responsibility for this situation.

THE SECOND CENSUS

26 After the plague, the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron the priest, 2 "Take a census of the entire Israelite community by their ancestral families † of those twenty years old or more who can serve in Israel's army." †

3 So Moses and the priest Eleazar said to them in the plains of Moab † by the Jordan across from Jericho, 4 "Take a census of those twenty years old or more, as the LORD had commanded Moses and the Israelites who came out of the land of Egypt." †

5 Reuben † was the firstborn of Israel.
Reuben's descendants:
the Hanochite clan from Hanoch;
the Palluite clan from Pallu;
6 the Hezronite clan from Hezron;
the Carmite clan from Carmi.

7 These were the Reubenite clans,
and their registered men numbered 43,730.
8 The son of Pallu was Eliab.
9 The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram.
(It was Dathan and Abiram, chosen by the community, who fought
against Moses and Aaron; they and Korah's followers fought
against the LORD. † 10 The earth opened its mouth and swallowed
them with Korah, when his followers died and the fire consumed
250 men. † They serve as a warning sign. 11 The sons of Korah,
however, did not die.)

12 Simeon's descendants by their clans:
the Nemuelite clan from Nemuel; †
the Jaminite clan from Jamin;
the Jachinite clan from Jachin;
13 the Zerahite clan from Zerah;
the Shaulite clan from Shaul.
14 These were the Simeonite clans, numbering 22,200 men.

15 Gad's descendants by their clans:
the Zephonite clan from Zephon;
the Haggite clan from Haggi;
the Shunite clan from Shuni;
16 the Oznite clan from Ozni;
the Erite clan from Eri;
17 the Arodite clan from Arod;
the Arelite clan from Areli.
18 These were the Gadite clans numbered by their

registered men: 40,500.

19 Judah’s sons included Er and Onan, but they died in the land of
Canaan. † 20 Judah’s descendants by their clans:
the Shelanite clan from Shelah;
the Perezite clan from Perez; †
the Zerahite clan from Zerah.
21 The descendants of Perez:
the Hezronite clan from Hezron;
the Hamulite clan from Hamul.
22 These were Judah’s clans numbered by their
registered men: 76,500.

23 Issachar’s descendants by their clans:
the Tolaite clan from Tola;
the Punite clan from Puvah; † †
24 the Jashubite clan from Jashub;
the Shimronite clan from Shimron.
25 These were Issachar’s clans numbered by their
registered men: 64,300.

26 Zebulun’s descendants by their clans:
the Seredite clan from Sered;
the Elonite clan from Elon;
the Jahleelite clan from Jahleel.
27 These were the Zebulunite clans numbered by their
registered men: 60,500.

28 Joseph’s descendants by their clans from Manasseh

and Ephraim:

29 Manasseh’s descendants: †
the Machirite clan from Machir.
Machir fathered Gilead;
the Gileadite clan from Gilead.
30 These were Gilead’s descendants:
the Iezerite clan from Iezer;
the Helekite clan from Helek;
31 the Asrielite clan from Asriel;
the Shechemite clan from Shechem;
32 the Shemidaite clan from Shemida;
the Hepherite clan from Hepher;
33 Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons — only daughters. The names of Zelophehad’s daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. †
34 These were Manasseh’s clans, numbered by their registered men: 52,700.
35 These were Ephraim’s descendants by their clans:
the Shuthelahite clan from Shuthelah;
the Becherite clan from Becher;
the Tahanite clan from Tahan.
36 These were Shuthelah’s descendants:
the Eranite clan from Eran.
37 These were the Ephraimite clans numbered by their registered men: 32,500.
These were Joseph’s descendants by their clans.

38 Benjamin’s descendants by their clans:

the Belaite clan from Bela;
the Ashbelite clan from Ashbel;
the Ahiramite clan from Ahiram;
39 the Shuphamite clan from Shupham; †
the Huphamite clan from Hupham.
40 Bela's descendants from Ard and Naaman:
the Ardite clan from Ard;
the Naamite clan from Naaman.
41 These were the Benjaminite clans numbered by their registered men: 45,600.

42 These were Dan's descendants by their clans:
the Shuhamite clan from Shuham.
These were the clans of Dan by their clans.
43 All the Shuhamite clans numbered by their registered men: 64,400.

44 Asher's descendants by their clans:
the Imnite clan from Imnah;
the Ishvite clan from Ishvi;
the Beriite clan from Beriah.
45 From Beriah's descendants:
the Heberite clan from Heber;
the Malchielite clan from Malchiel.
46 And the name of Asher's daughter was Serah.
47 These were the Asherite clans numbered by their registered men: 53,400.

48 Naphtali's descendants by their clans:

the Jahzeelite clan from Jahzeel;
the Gunite clan from Guni;
49 the Jezerite clan from Jezer;
the Shillemite clan from Shillem.
50 These were the Naphtali clans numbered by their
registered men: 45,400.

51 These registered Israelite men numbered 601,730.

52 The LORD spoke to Moses, 53 "The land is to be divided among them as an inheritance based on the number of names. 54 Increase the inheritance for a large tribe and decrease it for a small one. Each is to be given its inheritance according to those who were registered in it. 55 The land is to be divided by lot; they will receive an inheritance according to the names of their ancestral tribes. 56 Each inheritance will be divided by lot among the larger and smaller tribes." †

57 These were the Levites registered by their clans:
the Gershonite clan from Gershon;
the Kohathite clan from Kohath;
the Merarite clan from Merari.
58 These were the Levite family groups:
the Libnite clan,
the Hebronite clan,
the Mahlite clan,
the Mushite clan,
and the Korahite clan. †

Kohath was the ancestor of Amram. † 59 The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, a descendant of Levi, born to Levi in Egypt. She bore to Amram: Aaron, Moses, and their sister Miriam. 60 Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar

were born to Aaron, † 61 but Nadab and Abihu died when they presented unauthorized fire before the LORD. † 62 Those registered were 23,000, every male one month old or more; they were not registered among the other Israelites, because no inheritance was given to them among the Israelites.
63 These were the ones registered by Moses and the priest Eleazar when they registered the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.
64 But among them there was not one of those who had been registered by Moses and the priest Aaron when they registered the Israelites in the Wilderness of Sinai. † 65 For the LORD had said to them that they would all die in the wilderness. None of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

26:2 Lit *the house of their fathers* **26:23** Sam, LXX, Vg, Syr read *Puite clan from Puah* ; 1Ch 7:1 **26:39** Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *Shephupham*
26:2 Nm 1:2-3; 4:2,22; 2Sm 24:10; 2Kg 12:4; 1Ch 27:24; 2Ch 2:17 **26:3** Nm 22:1; 26:63; 31:12; 33:48-50; 35:1; 36:13; Dt 34:1,8; Jos 13:32 **26:4** Nm 1 **26:5** Gn 46:8-27; Ex 6:14-25 **26:9** Nm 16:1-3 **26:10** Nm 16:31-35 **26:12** Gn 46:10; Ex 6:15; 1Ch 4:24 **26:19** Gn 38:3-4,6-11 **26:20** Gn 38:29; 46:12; Ru 4:12,18; 1Ch 2:4; 4:1; 9:4; 27:3; Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33 **26:23** 1Ch 7:1 **26:29** Nm 1:34; 32:39; Jos 14:4; 17:2; 1Ch 9:3 **26:33** Nm 27:1-11; 36:10-11; Jos 17:3; 1Ch 7:15 **26:56** Nm 33:53-54; 34:13; 36:2; Jos 14:2; 18:6-11; 19:51; 21:4-8; 1Ch 6:61,63,65; Ps 78:55; Ezk 45:1 **26:58** Ex 6:21,24; Nm 3:17-20 **26:58** Ex 6:18-20 **26:60** Ex 6:23; 24:1,9; 28:1; Nm 3:2,4; 1Ch 6:3 **26:61** Lv 10:1-2; 1Ch 24:1-2 **26:64** Nm 1:17-46; 3:39

26:1-4 As they had done in Numbers 1, the Israelites took a **census** of their fighting men. Those numbered this time were a new group of Israelites because the former group had all died in the wilderness—except for Caleb and Joshua (vv. 64-65; see also 14:22-24,28-32).

26:5-51 In contrast with the earlier census, this one lists the names of each clan within each tribe.

26:9-11 This is a reminder of Dathan and Abiram's role in Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16. Since the **sons of Korah . . . did not die** (v. 11), evidently some of them were spared the earlier judgment.

26:19 The reminder that Er and Onan **died in the land of Canaan** provides another subtle reminder of past sins (Gn 38:2-10).

26:51 The size of Israel's army was comparable to what it had been before (1:46).

26:52-56 One of the purposes for the census was to assist in the apportionment of the land of Canaan. More land was to be given to the more populous tribes, and the land must **be divided by lot** (see Jos 14-19).

26:61 This is yet another reminder of Nadab and Abihu's sin (see also 3:4; Lv 16:1; 1Ch 24:2).

26:62 As before (1:47-51), the Levites were counted separately; they would not inherit a portion of the land. Their number was comparable to what it had been before (3:39).

26:63-65 As Israel prepares to enter the promised land, the taking of the second census serves as a reminder of God's judgment on the older generation of Israelites who had come out of Egypt as adults who neither trusted nor obeyed God (see also 14:21-23,28-32,35).

A CASE OF DAUGHTERS' INHERITANCE

27 The daughters of Zelophehad approached; Zelophehad was the son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh from the clans of Manasseh, the son of Joseph. These were the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 They stood before Moses, the priest Eleazar, the leaders, and the entire community at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said, 3 "Our father died in the wilderness, but he was not among Korah's followers, who gathered together against the LORD. † Instead, he died because of his own sin, and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan? Since he had no son, give us property among our father's brothers."
5 Moses brought their case before the LORD, 6 and the LORD answered him, 7 "What Zelophehad's daughters say is correct. You are to give them hereditary property among their father's brothers and transfer their father's inheritance to them. † 8 Tell the Israelites: When a man dies without having a son, transfer his inheritance to his daughter. 9 If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11 If his father has no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative of his clan, and he will take possession of it. This is to be a statutory ordinance for the Israelites as the LORD commanded Moses."

JOSHUA COMMISSIONED TO SUCCEED MOSES

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, † "Go up this mountain of the Abarim range † and see the land that I have given the Israelites. 13 After you have seen it, you will also be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was. † 14 When the community quarreled in the Wilderness of Zin, both of you rebelled against my command to demonstrate my holiness in their sight at the waters." Those were the Waters of Meribah-kadesh † in the Wilderness of Zin. †
15 So Moses appealed to the LORD, 16 "May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all, † † appoint a man over the community 17 who will go out before them and come back in before them, † and who will bring them out and bring them in, so that the LORD's community won't be like sheep without a shepherd." †
18 The LORD replied to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man who has the Spirit in him, and lay your hands on him. † 19 Have him stand before the priest

Eleazar and the whole community, and commission † him in their sight.
20 Confer some of your authority on him so that the entire Israelite community
will obey him. 21 He will stand before the priest Eleazar who will consult the
LORD for him with the decision of the Urim. † He and all the Israelites with him,
even the entire community, will go out and come back in at his command."
22 Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua, had him stand
before the priest Eleazar and the entire community, 23 laid his hands on him, and
commissioned him, as the LORD had spoken through Moses.

27:12 = Mount Nebo; Nm 33:47-48; Dt 32:49; Jr 22:20 **27:14** = Quarreling **27:16** Or *God of the spirits of all flesh*

27:3 Nm 16:1-3,11 **27:7** Jos 17:4 **27:12-14** Dt 32:48-51 **27:13** Nm 20:22-29 **27:14** Nm 20:2-13 **27:16** Nm 16:22 **27:17** Jos 14:11; 1Sm 18:13-16; 2Sm 5:2; 11:1; 1Kg 3:7; 2Kg 11:9 **27:17** 1Kg 22:17; 2Ch 18:16; Ezk 34:5; Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34 **27:18** Dt 34:9 **27:19** Dt 31:14,23; Ps 91:11; Is 10:6 **27:21** Ex 28:30

27:1-11 Zelophehad's daughters requested to inherit their father's property since he had no sons. **Moses brought their case before the LORD**, who saw their request as legitimate and granted it. He also gave further instructions to cover similar situations in the future (vv. 8-11). This case resembles other situations in which Moses sought God because he needed wisdom related to the application of a particular law (see also 9:6-13; 15:32-36; Lv 24:10-16). This particular case will be revisited in Numbers 36.

27:15-21 The Lord had declared that Moses and Aaron would die outside the promised land because of their sin at Meribah (vv. 12-14; 20:7-13). Aaron had already died on Mount Hor (20:22-29), and now Moses's death draws near. Moses prayed to God for a new leader for Israel, whom God declared to be **Joshua.** He was **a man who has the Spirit in him** (see also Dt 34:9).

PRESCRIBED OFFERINGS

28 The LORD spoke to Moses, 2 "Command the Israelites and say to them:
Be sure to present to me at its appointed time my offering and my
food † as my fire offering, a pleasing aroma to me. † 3 And say to
them: This is the fire offering you are to present to the LORD: †

DAILY OFFERINGS

"Each day present two unblemished year-old male lambs as a regular burnt
offering. 4 Offer one lamb in the morning and the other lamb at twilight, 5 along
with two quarts † of fine flour for a grain offering mixed with a quart † of olive
oil from crushed olives. † 6 It is a regular burnt offering established at Mount
Sinai for a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD. 7 The drink offering is to
be a quart with each lamb. Pour out the offering of beer to the LORD in the
sanctuary area. 8 Offer the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of

grain offering and drink offering as in the morning. It is a fire offering, a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

SABBATH OFFERINGS

9 "On the Sabbath day present two unblemished year-old male lambs, four quarts † of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, and its drink offering.
10 It is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. †

MONTHLY OFFERINGS

11 "At the beginning of each of your months † present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, seven male lambs a year old — all unblemished
— 12 with six quarts † of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each bull, four quarts of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for the ram,
13 and two quarts † of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering for each lamb. It is a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.
14 Their drink offerings are to be two quarts † of wine with each bull, one and a third quarts † with the ram, and one quart † with each male lamb. This is the monthly burnt offering for all the months of the year. 15 And one male goat is to be offered as a sin offering to the LORD, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

OFFERINGS FOR PASSOVER

16 "The Passover † to the LORD comes in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month. 17 On the fifteenth day of this month there will be a festival; unleavened bread is to be eaten for seven days. 18 On the first day there is to be a sacred assembly; you are not to do any daily work. † 19 Present a fire offering, a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old. Your animals are to be unblemished. † 20 The grain offering with them is to be of fine flour mixed with oil; offer six quarts with each bull and four quarts with the ram. 21 Offer two quarts with each of the seven lambs 22 and one male goat for a sin offering to make atonement for yourselves. 23 Offer these with the morning burnt offering that is part of the regular burnt offering. 24 You are to offer the same food each day for seven days as a fire offering, † a

pleasing aroma to the LORD. It is to be offered with its drink offering and the regular burnt offering. 25 On the seventh day you are to hold a sacred assembly; you are not to do any daily work.

OFFERINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF WEEKS

26 "On the day of firstfruits, you are to hold a sacred assembly when you present an offering of new grain to the LORD at your Festival of Weeks; † you are not to do any daily work. 27 Present a burnt offering for a pleasing aroma to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old, 28 with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts with each bull, four quarts with the ram, 29 and two quarts with each of the seven lambs, 30 and one male goat to make atonement for yourselves. 31 Offer them with their drink offerings in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering. Your animals are to be unblemished.

28:5 Lit *one-tenth of an ephah* **28:5** Lit *a fourth of a hin*, also in v. 7 **28:9** Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah), also in vv. 12,20,28 **28:12** Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah), also in vv. 20,28 **28:13** Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah), also in vv. 21,29 **28:14** Lit *a half hin* **28:14** Lit *bull, a third hin* **28:14** Lit *a fourth hin*
28:2 Lv 3:11,16; 22:25; Nm 28:24 **28:2** Ex 29:18; Lv 1:9; 2:2; 3:5; 8:21; 23:13; Nm 15:3; 18:17; 29:6; Am 5:25 **28:3-8** Ex 29:38-41 **28:5** Ex 27:20; Lv 2:1; 24:2; Nm 15:4 **28:10** Ezk 46:4-5 **28:11** 1Sm 20:5; 1Ch 23:31; 2Ch 2:4; Ezr 3:5; Is 1:13-14; Ezk 45:17; 46:6; Hs 2:11; Col 2:16 **28:16-17** Ex 12:18; Lv 23:5-6; Ezk 45:21 **28:18** Ex 12:16; Lv 23:3,7,28; Nm 29:7 **28:19** Lv 22:20; Nm 29:8,13; Dt 15:21; 17:1 **28:24-25** Ex 12:16; 13:6; Lv 23:8 **28:26** Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lv 23:10,15; Dt 16:9-10; Ac 2:1

28:3-8 These daily offerings were mentioned in Exodus 29:38-42. Descriptions of offerings related to various days and festivals are described starting here through the end of Numbers 29.

FESTIVAL OF TRUMPETS OFFERINGS

29 "You are to hold a sacred assembly in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, and you are not to do any daily work. † This will be a day of trumpet blasts for you. † 2 Offer a burnt offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old — all unblemished — 3 with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts † with the bull, four quarts † with the ram, 4 and two quarts † with each of the seven male lambs. 5 Also offer one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for yourselves. 6 These are in addition to the monthly and regular burnt offerings with their prescribed grain offerings and drink offerings. They are a pleasing aroma, a fire offering to the LORD.

OFFERINGS FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

7 “You are to hold a sacred assembly on the tenth day of this seventh month and practice self-denial; † do not do any work. 8 Present a burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma: one young bull, one ram, and seven male lambs a year old. All your animals are to be unblemished. 9 Their grain offering is to be of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts with the bull, four quarts with the ram, 10 and two quarts with each of the seven lambs. 11 Offer one male goat for a sin offering. The regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offerings are in addition to the sin offering of atonement.

OFFERINGS FOR THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

12 “You are to hold a sacred assembly on the fifteenth day of the seventh month; † you do not do any daily work. You are to celebrate a seven-day festival for the LORD. 13 Present a burnt offering, a fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs a year old. They are to be unblemished. 14 Their grain offering is to be of fine flour mixed with oil, six quarts with each of the thirteen bulls, four quarts with each of the two rams, 15 and two quarts with each of the fourteen lambs. 16 Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.

17 “On the second day present twelve young bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs a year old — all unblemished — 18 with their grain and drink offerings † for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. 19 Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink and their drink offerings.

20 “On the third day present eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old — all unblemished — 21 with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. 22 Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.

23 “On the fourth day present ten bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old — all unblemished — 24 with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. 25 Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.

26 “On the fifth day present nine bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old

— all unblemished — [27] with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [28] Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.
[29] "On the sixth day present eight bulls, two rams, fourteen male lambs a year old — all unblemished — [30] with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [31] Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.
[32] "On the seventh day present seven bulls, two rams, and fourteen male lambs a year old — all unblemished — [33] with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [34] Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.
[35] "On the eighth day you are to hold a solemn assembly; you are not to do any daily work. † [36] Present a burnt offering, a fire offering as a pleasing aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven male lambs a year old — all unblemished — [37] with their grain and drink offerings for the bulls, rams, and lambs, in proportion to their number. [38] Also offer one male goat as a sin offering. These are in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain and drink offerings.
[39] "Offer these to the LORD at your appointed times in addition to your vow and freewill offerings, whether burnt, grain, drink, or fellowship offerings." [40] So Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him.
29:3 Lit *three-tenths* (of an ephah), also in vv. 9,14 **29:3** Lit *two-tenths* (of an ephah), also in vv. 9,14 **29:4** Lit *one-tenth* (of an ephah), also in vv. 10,15
29:1 Ex 12:16 **29:1** Lv 23:23-25 **29:7** Lv 23:27-28 **29:12** Lv 23:34-35 **29:18** Nm 15:1-12 **29:35** Ex 12:16; Lv 23:36

REGULATIONS ABOUT VOWS

30 Moses told the leaders of the Israelite tribes, † "This is what the LORD has commanded: [2] When a man makes a vow to the LORD or swears an oath to put himself under an obligation, he must not break his word; he must do whatever he has promised. †
[3] "When a woman in her father's house during her youth makes a vow to the LORD or puts herself under an obligation, [4] and her father hears about her vow or the obligation she put herself under, and he says nothing to her, all her vows and

every obligation she put herself under are binding. 5 But if her father prohibits her on the day he hears about it, none of her vows and none of the obligations she put herself under are binding. The LORD will release her because her father has prohibited her.
6 "If a woman marries while her vows or the rash commitment she herself made are binding, 7 and her husband hears about it and says nothing to her when he finds out, her vows are binding, and the obligations she put herself under are binding. 8 But if her husband prohibits her when he hears about it, he will cancel her vow that is binding or the rash commitment she herself made, and the LORD will release her.
9 "Every vow a widow or divorced woman puts herself under is binding on her.
10 "If a woman in her husband's house has made a vow or put herself under an obligation with an oath, 11 and her husband hears about it, says nothing to her, and does not prohibit her, all her vows are binding, and every obligation she put herself under is binding. 12 But if her husband cancels them on the day he hears about it, nothing that came from her lips, whether her vows or her obligation, is binding. Her husband has canceled them, and the LORD will release her. 13 Her husband may confirm or cancel any vow or any sworn obligation to deny herself. 14 If her husband says nothing at all to her from day to day, he confirms all her vows and obligations, which are binding. He has confirmed them because he said nothing to her when he heard about them. 15 But if he cancels them after he hears about them, he will be responsible for her commitment." †
16 These are the statutes that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the relationship between a man and his wife, or between a father and his daughter in his house during her youth.

30:15 Or *will bear her guilt*

30:1 1Kg 8:1 **30:2** Dt 23:21; Jb 22:27; Ps 22:25; 50:14; 56:12; 66:13,14; 116:14,18; Ec 5:4; Nah 1:15; Mal 1:14; Mt 5:33

30:1-16 These instructions concerning vows express their binding nature and the possibility that the vow of a daughter or wife could be annulled. If a daughter who still lives in his house makes a vow and the father **hears about her vow** and **says nothing** about it, then the vow is binding. If he **prohibits her on the day he hears about it**, then the vow is not. Similar instructions apply to married women. Rather than encouraging rash vows among these women, these instructions highlight both the authority and responsibility of fathers and husbands for the women under their care.

WAR WITH MIDIAN

31 The LORD spoke to Moses, 2 “Execute vengeance for the Israelites
against the Midianites. After that, you will be gathered to your
people.” †
3 So Moses spoke to the people, “Equip some of your men for war. They will go
against Midian to inflict the LORD’s vengeance † on them. 4 Send one thousand
men to war from each Israelite tribe.” 5 So one thousand were recruited from
each Israelite tribe out of the thousands † in Israel — twelve thousand equipped
for war. 6 Moses sent one thousand from each tribe to war. They went with
Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest, in whose care were the holy objects and
signal trumpets.
7 They waged war against Midian, as the LORD had commanded Moses, and
killed every male. † 8 Along with the others slain by them, they killed the
Midianite kings — Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. †
They also killed Balaam son of Beor † with the sword. 9 The Israelites took the
Midianite women and their dependents captive, and they plundered all their
cattle, flocks, and property. † 10 Then they burned all the cities where the
Midianites lived, as well as all their encampments, 11 and took away all the
spoils of war and the captives, both people and animals. 12 They brought the
prisoners, animals, and spoils of war to Moses, the priest Eleazar, and the
Israelite community at the camp on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from
Jericho.
13 Moses, the priest Eleazar, and all the leaders of the community went to meet
them outside the camp. 14 But Moses became furious with the officers, the
commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, who were returning
from the military campaign. 15 “Have you let every female live?” he asked
them. 16 “Yet they are the ones who, at Balaam’s advice, incited the Israelites to
unfaithfulness against the LORD in the Peor incident, so that the plague came
against the LORD’s community. † 17 So now, kill every male among the
dependents and kill every woman who has gone to bed with a man, † 18 but
keep alive for yourselves all the young females who have not gone to bed with a
man. †
19 “You are to remain outside the camp for seven days. All of you and your
prisoners who have killed a person or touched the dead are to purify yourselves

on the third day and the seventh day. † 20 Also purify everything: garments, leather goods, things made of goat hair, and every article of wood." †
21 Then the priest Eleazar said to the soldiers who had gone to battle, "This is the legal statute the LORD commanded Moses: 22 The gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, and lead — 23 everything that can withstand fire — you are to pass through fire, and it will be clean. It must still be purified with the purification water. † Anything that cannot withstand fire, pass through the water. 24 On the seventh day wash your clothes, and you will be clean. † After that you may enter the camp."
25 The LORD told Moses, 26 "You, the priest Eleazar, and the family heads of the community are to take a count of what was captured, people and animals. 27 Then divide the captives between the troops who went out to war and the entire community. † 28 Set aside a tribute for the LORD from what belongs to the fighting men who went out to war: one out of every five hundred people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats. 29 Take the tribute from their half and give it to the priest Eleazar as a contribution to the LORD. 30 From the Israelites' half, take one out of every fifty from the people, cattle, donkeys, sheep, and goats, all the livestock, and give them to the Levites who perform the duties of † the LORD's tabernacle."
31 So Moses and the priest Eleazar did as the LORD commanded Moses. 32 The captives remaining from the plunder the army had taken totaled:

675,000 sheep and goats,
33 72,000 cattle,
34 61,000 donkeys,
35 and 32,000 people, all the females who had not gone to bed with a man.

36 The half portion for those who went out to war numbered:

337,500 sheep and goats,
37 and the tribute to the LORD was 675

from the sheep and goats;
38 from the 36,000 cattle,
the tribute to the LORD was 72;
39 from the 30,500 donkeys,
the tribute to the LORD was 61;
40 and from the 16,000 people,
the tribute to the LORD was 32 people.

41 Moses gave the tribute to the priest Eleazar as a contribution for the LORD, as
the LORD had commanded Moses.
42 From the Israelites' half, which Moses separated from the men who fought,
43 the community's half was:

337,500 sheep and goats,
44 36,000 cattle,
45 30,500 donkeys,
46 and 16,000 people.

47 Moses took one out of every fifty, selected from the people and the livestock
of the Israelites' half. He gave them to the Levites who perform the duties of the
LORD's tabernacle, as the LORD had commanded him.
48 The officers who were over the thousands of the army, the commanders of
thousands and of hundreds, approached Moses 49 and told him, "Your servants
have taken a census of the fighting men under our command, and not one of us is
missing. 50 So we have presented to the LORD an offering of the gold articles
each man found — armlets, bracelets, rings, earrings, and necklaces — to make
atonement for ourselves before the LORD." †
51 Moses and the priest Eleazar received from them all the articles made out of
gold. 52 All the gold of the contribution they offered to the LORD, from the
commanders of thousands and of hundreds, was 420 pounds. † 53 Each of the
soldiers had taken plunder for himself. † 54 Moses and the priest Eleazar

received the gold from the commanders of thousands and of hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD.

31:5 Or *clans* **31:30** Or *who protect* **31:52** Lit *16,750 shekels*

31:2 Nm 20:24-26; 27:13; Dt 32:50 **31:3** Ps 18:47; 79:10; 94:1; Jr 11:20 **31:7** Gn 34:25; 1Kg 11:16 **31:8** Jos 13:21-22; Jdg 8:5,12,26 **31:8** Nm 22:5–24:25 **31:9** Gn 34:28-29; Dt 20:13-14 **31:16** Nm 25; Dt 20:18; 2Pt 2:15; Rv 2:14 **31:17** Jdg 21:11-12 **31:18** Dt 21:10-14 **31:19** Lv 11:31; 22:4; Nm 5:2; 19:11,18; Hg 2:13 **31:19-20** Lv 11:32; Nm 19:11-20 **31:23** Nm 19:1-9,17-20 **31:24** Ex 19:10; Lv 11:25,28,40; 13:6,34; 14:8; 15:5; 16:26; 17:15; Nm 8:7; 19:7 **31:27** Jos 22:8; 1Sm 30:24 **31:50** Ex 30:12-16 **31:53** Dt 20:14

31:2 The Lord had previously instructed the Israelites to attack the Midianites (25:17) because of their role in Israel's idolatry with Baal of Peor (25:1-18). This **vengeance** was to be one of Moses's final acts.

31:8 The surprising mention of **Balaam** here reflects his involvement with this affair (see also v. 16).

31:13-18 The Israelites had killed every male (v. 7) but had allowed the women to live (v. 9), to Moses's dismay. He reminded them that it was the women who **incited the Israelites to unfaithfulness against the LORD** through sexual immorality and then idolatry (see also 25:1-3). For this reason, Moses commanded the killing of **every woman who has** had sexual relations **with a man.** Holy war, in which Israel was to kill their enemies, had several purposes including judgment on evil, the eradication of impurity from the land, and the removal of those who would influence Israel to participate in sin and idolatry (see the note on 33:50-56).

31:48-50 Aside from the tribute for the Lord (v. 28), the army leaders also decided to give an additional offering to God because **not one of** them was missing following the battle. All survived.

TRANSJORDAN SETTLEMENTS

32 The Reubenites and Gadites had a very large number of livestock. When they surveyed the lands of Jazer † and Gilead, they saw that the region was a good one for livestock. 2 So the Gadites and Reubenites came to Moses, the priest Eleazar, and the leaders of the community and said: 3 "The territory of Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, † Nebo, and Beon, † 4 which the LORD struck down † before the community of Israel, † is good land for livestock, and your servants own livestock." 5 They said, "If we have found favor with you, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Don't make us cross the Jordan."

6 But Moses asked the Gadites and Reubenites, "Should your brothers go to war while you stay here? 7 Why are you discouraging the Israelites from crossing into the land the LORD has given them? 8 That's what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-barnea to see the land. † 9 After they went up as far as Eshcol Valley and saw the land, they discouraged the Israelites from entering the land the LORD had given them. 10 So the LORD's anger burned that day, and he

swore an oath: † 11 ‘Because they did not remain loyal to me, † none of the men twenty years old or more who came up from Egypt will see the land I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob † — 12 none except Caleb † son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua † son of Nun, because they did remain loyal to the LORD.’ 13 The LORD’s anger burned against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years until the whole generation that had done what was evil in the LORD’s sight was gone. † 14 And here you, a brood of sinners, stand in your fathers’ place adding even more to the LORD’s burning anger against Israel. 15 If you turn back from following him, † he will once again leave this people in the wilderness, and you will destroy all of them.”
16 Then they approached him and said, “We want to build sheep pens here for our livestock and cities for our dependents. 17 But we will arm ourselves and be ready to go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them into their place. † Meanwhile, our dependents will remain in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. 18 We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has taken possession of his inheritance. † 19 Yet we will not have an inheritance with them across the Jordan and beyond, because our inheritance will be across the Jordan to the east.” †
20 Moses replied to them, “If you do this — if you arm yourselves for battle before the LORD, 21 and every one of your armed men crosses the Jordan before the LORD until he has driven his enemies from his presence, 22 and the land is subdued before the LORD — afterward you may return and be free from obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will belong to you as a possession before the LORD. 23 But if you don’t do this, you will certainly sin against the LORD; be sure your sin will catch up with you. 24 Build cities for your dependents and pens for your flocks, but do what you have promised.” †
25 The Gadites and Reubenites answered Moses, “Your servants will do just as my lord commands. 26 Our dependents, wives, livestock, and all our animals will remain here in the cities of Gilead, 27 but your servants are equipped for war before the LORD and will go across to the battle as my lord orders.”
28 So Moses gave orders about them to the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes. 29 Moses told them, “If the Gadites and Reubenites cross the Jordan with you, every man in battle formation before

the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, you are to give them the land of Gilead as a possession. † 30 But if they don't go across with you in battle formation, they must accept land in Canaan with you."
31 The Gadites and Reubenites replied, "What the LORD has spoken to your servants is what we will do. 32 We will cross over in battle formation before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but we will keep our hereditary possession across the Jordan."
33 So Moses gave them — the Gadites, Reubenites, and half the tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph — the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites and the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, the land including its cities with the territories surrounding them. † 34 The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, 35 Atroth-shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36 Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran † as fortified cities, and built sheep pens. 37 The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh, Kiriathaim, 38 as well as Nebo and Baal-meon (whose names were changed), and Sibmah. They gave names to the cities they rebuilt.
39 The descendants of Machir † son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured it, and drove out the Amorites who were there. 40 So Moses gave Gilead to the clan of Machir son of Manasseh, and they settled in it. † 41 Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, went and captured their villages, which he renamed Jair's Villages. † † 42 Nobah went and captured Kenath with its surrounding villages and called it Nobah after his own name.

32:3 Sam, LXX read *Sibmah* (v. 38); Syr reads *Sebah* **32:41** Or *renamed Havvoth-jair*
32:1 Nm 21:32; Jos 13:25; 21:39; 2Sm 24:5 **32:3** Nm 21:30; 33:47; Dt 32:49; 1Ch 5:8; Is 15:2; 46:1; Jr 48:1,22 **32:4** Nm 21:24 **32:4** Nm 21:24,34 **32:8** Nm 13:1-3,32-33; Dt 1:22-28 **32:10** Dt 1:34-36 **32:11-12** Nm 14:22-24,29-30 **32:11** Nm 14:29 **32:12** Nm 14:6,24,30,38; 26:65; Dt 1:36; Jos 14:6,8-9; 15:7 **32:12** Ex 33:11; Nm 27:18-23 **32:13** Nm 14:33-35; 26:64-65 **32:15** Jos 22:16-18; 2Ch 7:19-20 **32:17** Dt 3:18; Jos 1:13-15; 4:12-13 **32:18** Jos 22:4,9 **32:19** Jos 13:8 **32:24** Nm 30:2; Jos 1:12-18; 4:12 **32:29** Jos 22:9 **32:33** Dt 3:12-17; 29:8; Jos 12:6; 13:8; 22:4 **32:36** Jos 13:27 **32:39** Gn 50:23; Nm 26:29; Jos 17:1,3 **32:40** Jos 13:31 **32:41** Dt 3:14; Jos 13:30; 1Kg 4:13; 1Ch 2:23

32:16-19 The tribes of Reuben and Gad wanted the land east of the Jordan that had belonged to Sihon and Og (vv. 1-5,33). Moses was initially displeased because he saw this as a discouragement to the other tribes from crossing the Jordan to take possession of "the land the LORD has given to them" (v. 7). When the men of the three tribes explained that they would cross the Jordan to help their kinsmen take possession of the land, Moses accepted their proposal under these conditions (vv. 20-24,28-30; see also note on Jos 22:13-20). Half of the tribe of Manasseh was also involved with this request (v. 33).

WILDERNESS TRAVELS REVIEWED

33 These were the stages of the Israelites' journey when they went out of
the land of Egypt by their military divisions under the leadership of
Moses and Aaron. 2 At the LORD's command, Moses wrote down the
starting points for the stages of their journey; these are the stages listed by their
starting points:

3 They traveled from Rameses † in the first month, on the fifteenth
day of the month. On the day after the Passover † the Israelites
went out defiantly † † in the sight of all the Egyptians.
4 Meanwhile, the Egyptians were burying every firstborn male the
LORD had struck down among them, for the LORD had executed
judgment against their gods. † 5 The Israelites traveled from
Rameses and camped at Succoth. †
6 They traveled from Succoth and camped at Etham, † which is on
the edge of the wilderness.
7 They traveled from Etham and turned back to Pi-hahiroth, which
faces Baal-zephon, and they camped before Migdol. †
8 They traveled from Pi-hahiroth † and crossed through the middle
of the sea † into the wilderness. They took a three-day journey into
the Wilderness of Etham and camped at Marah. †
9 They traveled from Marah and came to Elim. † There were
twelve springs and seventy date palms at Elim, so they camped
there.
10 They traveled from Elim and camped by the Red Sea.
11 They traveled from the Red Sea and camped in the Wilderness
of Sin. †
12 They traveled from the Wilderness of Sin and camped in
Dophkah.

13 They traveled from Dophkah and camped at Alush.
14 They traveled from Alush and camped at Rephidim, † where there was no water for the people to drink. †
15 They traveled from Rephidim and camped in the Wilderness of Sinai. †
16 They traveled from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped at Kibroth-hattaavah. †
17 They traveled from Kibroth-hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth. †
18 They traveled from Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.
19 They traveled from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon-perez.
20 They traveled from Rimmon-perez and camped at Libnah.
21 They traveled from Libnah and camped at Rissah.
22 They traveled from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.
23 They traveled from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.
24 They traveled from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.
25 They traveled from Haradah and camped at Makheloth.
26 They traveled from Makheloth and camped at Tahath.
27 They traveled from Tahath and camped at Terah.
28 They traveled from Terah and camped at Mithkah.
29 They traveled from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah.
30 They traveled from Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.
31 They traveled from Moseroth and camped at Bene-jaakan. †
32 They traveled from Bene-jaakan and camped at Hor-haggidgad.
33 They traveled from Hor-haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.

34 They traveled from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.
35 They traveled from Abronah and camped at Ezion-geber. †
36 They traveled from Ezion-geber and camped in the Wilderness of Zin † (that is, Kadesh).
37 They traveled from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor † on the edge of the land of Edom. 38 At the LORD's command, the priest Aaron climbed Mount Hor and died there on the first day of the fifth month in the fortieth year after the Israelites went out of the land of Egypt. † 39 Aaron was 123 years old when he died on Mount Hor. 40 At that time the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev in the land of Canaan, † heard the Israelites were coming.
41 They traveled from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.
42 They traveled from Zalmonah and camped at Punon.
43 They traveled from Punon and camped at Oboth. †
44 They traveled from Oboth and camped at Iye-abarim on the border of Moab. †
45 They traveled from Iyim † and camped at Dibon-gad. †
46 They traveled from Dibon-gad and camped at Almon-diblathaim. †
47 They traveled from Almon-diblathaim and camped in the Abarim † range facing Nebo. †
48 They traveled from the Abarim range and camped on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. † 49 They camped by the Jordan from Beth-jeshimoth † to the Acacia Meadow † † on the plains of Moab.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OCCUPYING CANAAN

50 The LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, 51 "Tell the Israelites: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 you must drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you, destroy all their stone images † and cast images, † and demolish all their high places. 53 You are to take possession of the land and settle in it because I have given you the land † to possess. 54 You are to receive the land as an inheritance by lot according to your clans. Increase the inheritance for a large clan and decrease it for a small one. Whatever place the lot indicates for someone will be his. You will receive an inheritance according to your ancestral tribes. 55 But if you don't drive out the inhabitants of the land before you, those you allow to remain will become barbs for your eyes and thorns for your sides; they will harass you in the land where you will live. 56 And what I had planned to do to them, I will do to you." †

33:3 Lit *with a raised hand* ; Ex 14:8 **33:8** Some Hb mss, Sam, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *from before Hahiroth* **33:45** A shortened form of Iye-abarim **33:49** Or *to Abel-shittim*

33:3 Gn 47:11; Ex 1:11; 12:37 **33:3** Ex 12:11-48; Lv 23:5; Nm 9:2-14 **33:3** Ex 14:8 **33:4** Ex 12:12 **33:5** Ex 12:37 **33:6** Ex 13:20 **33:7** Ex 14:2,9; Jr 46:14; Ezk 30:6 **33:8** Ex 14:22-26 **33:8** Ex 15:23 **33:9** Ex 15:27; 16:1 **33:11** Ex 16:1; 17:1 **33:14** Ex 17:1,8; 19:2 **33:14** Ex 17:1-7 **33:15** Ex 19:1-2 **33:16** Nm 11:34-35; Dt 9:22 **33:17** Nm 11:35; 12:16; Dt 1:1 **33:31-33** Dt 10:6-7 **33:35** Dt 2:8; 1Kg 9:26 **33:36** Nm 10:12 **33:37** Nm 21:4; 33:37-41; Dt 32:50 **33:38** Nm 20:23-29 **33:40** Nm 21:1-3 **33:43** Nm 21:10-11 **33:44** Nm 21:11 **33:45** Nm 32:34; Neh 11:25; Jr 48:18,22 **33:46** Jr 48:22 **33:47** Nm 27:12; Dt 32:49; Jr 22:20 **33:47** Dt 32:49; 34:1 **33:48** Nm 22:1 **33:49** Jos 12:3; 13:20; Ezk 25:9 **33:49** Nm 25:1; Jos 2:1; 3:1; Jl 3:18; Mc 6:5 **33:52** Lv 26:1; Ezk 8:12 **33:52** Ex 32:4,8; 34:17; Lv 19:4; Dt 27:15 **33:53** Gn 12:7; 15:18; 24:7; 35:12 **33:56** Dt 28:15

33:1-48 Moses wrote down the following detailed record of the places the Israelites had been in the wilderness. Verses 3-48 thus serve as a reminder of the faithfulness of God, who had led them to so many places and through so many situations over the course of forty years, from Egypt to the edge of the promised land (**in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho**; v. 50).

33:50-56 As the Israelites prepared to enter the promised land, God instructed them to **drive out all the inhabitants of the land.** The reason behind this was the Canaanites' idolatry (v. 52; see also Gn 15:16), which would negatively influence Israel and bring them under the same judgment. This important command is repeated elsewhere (Dt 7:1-5; Jos 23:2-13). An instruction about distributing the land by lot and apportioning it based on the size of a particular tribe was also given in 26:52-56.

BOUNDARIES OF THE PROMISED LAND

34 The LORD spoke to Moses, 2 "Command the Israelites and say to them: When you enter the land of Canaan, it will be allotted to you as an inheritance † with these borders:

3 Your southern side will be from the Wilderness of Zin along the boundary of Edom. Your southern border on the east will begin at the east end of the Dead Sea. 4 Your border will turn south of the Scorpions' Ascent, † proceed to Zin, and end south of Kadesh-barnea. It will go to Hazar-addar and proceed to Azmon. † 5 The border will turn from Azmon † to the Brook of Egypt, † where it will end at the Mediterranean Sea.
6 Your western border will be the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea; this will be your western border.
7 This will be your northern border: From the Mediterranean Sea draw a line to Mount Hor; † 8 from Mount Hor draw a line to the entrance of Hamath, † † and the border will reach Zedad. † 9 Then the border will go to Ziphron and end at Hazar-enan. † This will be your northern border.
10 For your eastern border, draw a line from Hazar-enan to Shepham. 11 The border will go down from Shepham to Riblah east of Ain. † It will continue down and reach the eastern slope of the Sea of Chinnereth. † † 12 Then the border will go down to the Jordan and end at the Dead Sea. This will be your land defined by its borders on all sides."
13 So Moses commanded the Israelites, "This is the land you are to receive by lot as an inheritance, which the LORD commanded to be given to the nine and a half tribes. 14 For the tribe of Reuben's descendants and the tribe of Gad's descendants have received their inheritance according to their ancestral families, † and half the tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. 15 The two and a half tribes have received their inheritance † across the Jordan east of Jericho, toward the sunrise."

LEADERS FOR DISTRIBUTING THE LAND

16 The LORD spoke to Moses, 17 "These are the names of the men who are to distribute the land as an inheritance for you: the priest Eleazar and Joshua son of Nun. 18 Take one leader from each tribe to distribute the land. 19 These are the names of the men:

Caleb † son of Jephunneh from the tribe of Judah;
20 Shemuel son of Ammihud from the tribe of Simeon's

descendants;
21 Elidad son of Chislon from the tribe of Benjamin;
22 Bukki son of Jogli, a leader from the tribe of Dan's descendants;
23 from the sons of Joseph:
Hanniel son of Ephod, a leader from the tribe of Manasseh's descendants,
24 Kemuel son of Shiphtan, a leader from the tribe of Ephraim's descendants;
25 Elizaphan son of Parnach, a leader from the tribe of Zebulun's descendants;
26 Paltiel son of Azzan, a leader from the tribe of Issachar's descendants;
27 Ahihud son of Shelomi, a leader from the tribe of Asher's descendants;
28 Pedahel son of Ammihud, a leader from the tribe of Naphtali's descendants."

29 These are the ones the LORD commanded to distribute the inheritance to the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

34:2 Lit *inheritance — the land of Canaan* **34:4** Lit *of Scorpions* ; Jos 15:3; Jdg 1:36 **34:8** Or *to Lebo-hamath* **34:11** = the Sea of Galilee; Jos 12:3; 13:27; Lk 5:1 **34:14** Lit *the house of their fathers*
34:4 Jos 15:3; Jdg 1:36 **34:4-5** Jos 15:4 **34:5** Jos 15:47; Is 27:12; Ezk 47:19 **34:7** Nm 20:22-28; 33:37-56 **34:8** Nm 13:21; 2Kg 14:25; 2Ch 7:8; Ezk 48:1 **34:8** Ezk 47:15 **34:9** Ezk 47:17; 48:1 **34:11** Jos 15:32 **34:11** Jos 12:3; 13:27; Lk 5:1 **34:15** Nm 32:33 **34:19** Nm 14:6,24,30,38; 26:65

34:3-12 Although some of these places can still be identified today (e.g., Dead Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Sea of Chinnereth), others cannot.

34:13-15 The land demarcated in verses 1-12 was to be divided among nine and a half tribes because Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh received their allotment of land on the other side of the Jordan (see Nm 32).

CITIES FOR THE LEVITES

35 The LORD again spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho: † 2 "Command the Israelites to give cities out of

their hereditary property for the Levites to live in and pastureland around the cities. † 3 The cities will be for them to live in, and their pasturelands will be for their herds, flocks, and all their other animals. 4 The pasturelands of the cities you are to give the Levites will extend from the city wall five hundred yards † on every side. 5 Measure a thousand yards † outside the city for the east side, a thousand yards for the south side, a thousand yards for the west side, and a thousand yards for the north side, with the city in the center. This will belong to them as pasturelands for the cities.

6 "The cities you give the Levites will include six cities of refuge, † which you will provide so that the one who kills someone may flee there; in addition to these, give forty-two other cities. † 7 The total number of cities you give the Levites will be forty-eight, along with their pasturelands. † 8 Of the cities that you give from the Israelites' territory, you should take more from a larger tribe and less from a smaller one. † Each tribe is to give some of its cities to the Levites in proportion to the inheritance it receives."

CITIES OF REFUGE

9 The LORD said to Moses, 10 "Speak to the Israelites and tell them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 designate cities to serve as cities of refuge for you, so that a person who kills someone unintentionally may flee there. † 12 You will have the cities as a refuge from the avenger, † so that the one who kills someone will not die until he stands trial before the assembly. 13 The cities you select will be your six cities of refuge. 14 Select three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan to be cities of refuge. † 15 These six cities will serve as a refuge for the Israelites and for the alien or temporary resident among them, so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there.

16 "If anyone strikes a person with an iron object and death results, he is a murderer; the murderer must be put to death. † 17 If anyone has in his hand a stone capable of causing death and strikes another person and he dies, the murderer must be put to death. 18 If anyone has in his hand a wooden object capable of causing death and strikes another person and he dies, the murderer must be put to death. 19 The avenger of blood himself is to kill the murderer;

when he finds him, he is to kill him. † 20 Likewise, if anyone in hatred pushes a
person or throws an object at him with malicious intent and he dies, 21 or if in
hostility he strikes him with his hand and he dies, the one who struck him must
be put to death; he is a murderer. The avenger of blood is to kill the murderer
when he finds him.
22 "But if anyone suddenly pushes a person without hostility or throws any
object at him without malicious intent 23 or without looking drops a stone that
could kill a person and he dies, but he was not his enemy and didn't intend to
harm him, 24 the assembly is to judge between the person who kills someone
and the avenger of blood according to these ordinances. 25 The assembly is to
protect the one who kills someone from the avenger of blood. Then the assembly
will return him to the city of refuge he fled to, and he must live there until the
death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. †
26 "If the one who kills someone ever goes outside the border of the city of
refuge he fled to, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the border of his
city of refuge and kills him, the avenger will not be guilty of bloodshed, 28 for
the one who killed a person was supposed to live in his city of refuge until the
death of the high priest. Only after the death of the high priest may the one who
has killed a person return to the land he possesses. 29 These instructions will be
a statutory ordinance for you throughout your generations wherever you live.
30 "If anyone kills a person, the murderer is to be put to death based on the word
of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death based on the testimony of one
witness. † 31 You are not to accept a ransom for the life of someone who is
guilty of murder; he must be put to death. 32 Neither should you accept a ransom
for the person who flees to his city of refuge, allowing him to return and live in
the land before the death of the high priest.
33 "Do not defile the land where you live, for bloodshed defiles the land, † and
there can be no atonement for the land because of the blood that is shed on it,
except by the blood of the person who shed it. 34 Do not make the land unclean
where you live and where I dwell; for I, the LORD, reside among the Israelites."
35:4 Lit *1,000 cubits* **35:5** Lit *2,000 cubits*
35:1 Nm 22:1; 26:3,63; 31:12; 33:48-50; 36:13; Dt 34:1,8; Jos 13:32 **35:2** Jos 14:3-4; 21:2-3; Ezk 45:1-5; 48:8-14 **35:6** Ex 21:12-14; Dt 4:41-43; 19:1-13; Jos 20:2,7-9; 21:3,13,21,27,32,36,38; 1Ch 6:57,67 **35:6** Jos 21:13 **35:7** Jos 21:41 **35:8** Nm 26:54; 33:54 **35:11** Dt 4:42; 19:3-4,6; Jos 20:3-6 **35:12** Gn 9:5-6; Dt 19:6,12; Jos 20:5,9; 2Sm 14:11; 1Th 4:6 **35:14** Dt 4:41; Jos 20:8 **35:16** Ex 21:12-14; Lv 24:17; Dt 19:11-12 **35:19** Dt 19:6,12; Jos 20:3,5 **35:22-25** Ex 21:13 **35:30** Dt 17:6; 19:15; Mt 18:16 **35:33** Ps 106:38; Is 24:5;

35:1-5 The tribe of Levi would not receive a portion of land along with the other tribes (see 18:20-24; 26:52-62). Instead, the other tribes were to give the Levites **cities out of their hereditary property for the Levites to live in and pastureland around the cities** (see also v. 8). According to one estimate, the forty-eight cities given to the Levites including their pasturelands amounted to a mere 0.1 percent of the land of Canaan. Thus, it was indeed accurate to say that the Levites had no "inheritance among the Israelites" (18:23).

35:9-34 Among the forty-eight cities given to the Levites, six were to be **cities of refuge** (vv. 6-7). The purpose of these cities was to provide protection for a person **who kills someone unintentionally** (see also vv. 15,22-23). In such a situation, an **avenger** presumably would seek this person's life, but this set of laws provided for a trial and for protection of the innocent. Such cities were foreshadowed in Exodus 21:13 and are also discussed in Deuteronomy 4:41-43 and 19:1-10. They were to be spread throughout the land for ease of access (see Dt 19:3-6), with **three cities across the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan.** Murderers were still to be punished by death. See "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*

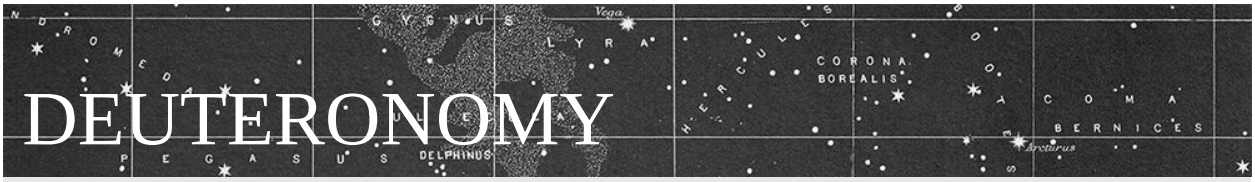
THE INHERITANCE OF ZELOPHEHAD'S DAUGHTERS

36 The family heads from the clan of the descendants of Gilead — the son of Machir, son of Manasseh † — who were from the clans of the sons of Joseph, approached and addressed Moses and the leaders who were heads of the Israelite families. 2 They said, "The LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the Israelites. My lord was further commanded by the LORD to give our brother Zelophehad's inheritance to his daughters. † 3 If they marry any of the men from the other Israelite tribes, their inheritance will be taken away from our fathers' inheritance and added to that of the tribe into which they marry. Therefore, part of our allotted inheritance would be taken away. 4 When the Jubilee † comes for the Israelites, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry, and their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of our ancestral tribe."

5 So Moses commanded the Israelites at the word of the LORD, "What the tribe of Joseph's descendants says is right. 6 This is what the LORD has commanded concerning Zelophehad's daughters: They may marry anyone they like provided they marry within a clan of their ancestral tribe. 7 No inheritance belonging to the Israelites is to transfer from tribe to tribe, because each of the Israelites is to retain the inheritance of his ancestral tribe. † 8 Any daughter who possesses an inheritance from an Israelite tribe must marry someone from the clan of her ancestral tribe, so that each of the Israelites will possess the inheritance of his

fathers. 9 No inheritance is to transfer from one tribe to another, because each of
the Israelite tribes is to retain its inheritance.”
10 The daughters of Zelophehad did as the LORD commanded Moses. 11 Mahlah,
Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, married
cousins on their father’s side. 12 They married men from the clans of the
descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained within
the tribe of their father’s clan.
13 These are the commands and ordinances the LORD commanded the Israelites
through Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.
36:1 Nm 26:29 **36:2** Nm 26:33; 27:1-11; Jos 17:3; 1Ch 7:15 **36:4** Lv 25:8-55; 27:7-24 **36:7** Lv 25:23-24; 1Kg 21:3

36:3-9 The case of Zelophehad’s daughters had come up in 27:1-11, and through it these women were given the right to their father’s inheritance because he had no sons. Their situation arises again here because of the possibility of their marriage to **men from the other Israelite tribes**, which would result in the loss of this inheritance to these tribes. Consequently, **Moses commanded the Israelites at the word of the LORD** that Zelophehad’s daughters and those like them must marry within their own tribe because inheritances must not **transfer from tribe to tribe.**



DEUTERONOMY

INTRODUCTION

The title of this book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy, comes from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) and means “second law” or “repetition of the law.” The phrase is actually a mistranslation of 17:18, which reads “a copy of this instruction.” It is still a fitting title since much of the book contains repetitions of the laws found in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The book itself asserts that Moses is the principle source and author for the material (1:1), as do subsequent OT texts (Jos 1:7-8; 1Kg 2:3; Ezr 3:2) and NT texts (Mt 19:7; Ac 3:22; Rm 10:19). This attribution remained virtually unchallenged until the advent of modern rationalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but no arguments advanced by this school of thought have successfully overcome the ancient Mosaic tradition.

BACKGROUND: The exodus probably occurred in 1446 BC, whereupon Israel set out for Canaan, the inheritance God had promised his people. Because of their rebellious spirit, the Israelites were forced to wander in the desert for forty years (2:7) until at last they arrived in Moab, just opposite Jericho (32:49). It was there that Moses put pen to parchment to compose this farewell treatise (31:9,24).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Next to the books of Psalms and Isaiah, the NT alludes to Deuteronomy more than any other book in the OT. This is true not only in terms of the sheer number of instances but especially in the passages where theological truth seems most to be at issue. Jesus and the apostles considered Deuteronomy of paramount importance to their own teaching about God and his dealings with his chosen people and humanity at large. Jesus in his temptation quoted the book of Deuteronomy three times against Satan (Mt 4:4-10).

STRUCTURE

The style of the book of Deuteronomy appears as a series of repetitious, reminiscent, and even irregular exhortations, which is fitting for a collection of Moses’s sermons preparing the people for their move into the promised land. The style is also reflective of the typical suzerain-vassal treaties, which could contain a preamble, historical prologue, main provisions, blessings and curses, and plans for continuing the covenant relationship. The book of Deuteronomy could be considered the constitution for the nation of Israel once it was established in the promised land.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Deuteronomy emphasizes the unity of God in the famous Shema, "Listen!" (See Dt 6:4-5). God's love as the basis for his covenant, his acts on Israel's behalf, and his commands are also prominent. On the other hand, idolatry or apostasy is so serious an affront to God's glory that the book commands the most severe penalties against those who insult God by turning away from him.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Deuteronomy faithfully records Israel's failures and gives solemn warnings of divine curse on disobedient and rebellious people. Yet the tenor of the book is that living according to God's commands is a true delight and that obedience is no drudgery but the response of love and faith—an easy yoke. "But the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may follow it" (30:14; see Mt 11:29).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Deuteronomy emphasizes that salvation is entirely God's provision. He sets his covenantal love on people solely out of his love. The remarkable text in Dt 7:1-10 denies that God's redemption of Israel from Egypt was based on any quality in Israel but only "because the LORD loved you" (7:8)—his sovereign choice. This book also shows that redeemed people demonstrate their love and faith by their obedience.

DEUTERONOMY TIMELINE

1550–1500 BC

AARON 1529–1409?

Amenhotep I becomes pharaoh of Egypt. **1525**

Glass is invented accidentally in Phoenicia. **1530**

Thutmose I becomes pharaoh of Egypt. **1506**

Hebrew parents are ordered to throw newborn sons into the Nile. **1528**

1500–1450 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

Bronze razors, Scandinavia **1500**

Egyptians develop effective pharmaceutical compounds. **1500**

First tomb in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt **1500**

Cinnamon is exported from Kerala to the Middle East. **1500**

Evidence of gold hammered into foil in South America **1500**

Moses flees Egypt. **1487**

1450–1445 BC

Pictographic writing appears in China **1450**

Thutmose III erects numerous obelisks in Egypt, one of which has mistakenly been called "Cleopatra's Needle." The shadow of this obelisk was used to calculate time, seasons, and solstices. **1450**

Dogs are domesticated in North America. **1450**

Single tube seed drill is developed by the Sumerians. **1450**

The exodus and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea **1446**

1445–1375 BC

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

Events in Leviticus **1445**

Events in Numbers **1445–1407**

Events in Deuteronomy **1406**

Miraculous crossing of the Jordan River **1406**

INTRODUCTION

1 These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel across the Jordan in the wilderness, † in the Arabah † opposite Suph, † between Paran † and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, † and Di-zahab. 2 It is an eleven-day journey from Horeb † to Kadesh-barnea † by way of Mount Seir. † 3 In the fortieth year, † in the eleventh month, on the first of the month, Moses told the Israelites everything the LORD had commanded him to say to them. 4 This was after he had defeated King Sihon of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and King Og of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth, at Edrei. † 5 Across the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying:

DEPARTURE FROM HOREB

6 "The LORD our God spoke to us at Horeb: 'You have stayed at this mountain long enough. 7 Resume your journey and go to the hill country of the Amorites † and their neighbors in the Arabah, the hill country, the Judean foothills, † the Negev † and the sea coast — to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon as far as the great river, the Euphrates River. † 8 See, I have set the land before you. Enter and take possession of the land † the LORD swore to give to your fathers † Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their future descendants.' †

LEADERS FOR THE TRIBES

9 "I said to you at that time: I can't bear the responsibility for you on my own. 10 The LORD your God has so multiplied you that today you are as numerous as the stars of the sky. † 11 May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a

thousand times more, and bless you as he promised you. 12 But how can I bear
your troubles, burdens, and disputes by myself? 13 Appoint for yourselves wise,
understanding, and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will make
them your leaders.
14 "You replied to me, 'What you propose to do is good.'
15 "So I took the leaders of your tribes, wise and respected men, and set them
over you as leaders: commanders for thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens, and
officers for your tribes. 16 I commanded your judges at that time: Hear the cases
between your brothers, and judge rightly between a man and his brother or his
resident alien. 17 Do not show partiality when deciding a case; † listen to small
and great alike. Do not be intimidated by anyone, for judgment belongs to
God. † Bring me any case too difficult for you, and I will hear it. 18 At that time
I commanded you about all the things you were to do. †

ISRAEL'S DISOBEDIENCE AT KADESH-BARNEA

19 "We then set out from Horeb and went across all the great and terrible
wilderness you saw on the way to the hill country of the Amorites, just as the
LORD our God had commanded us. When we reached Kadesh-barnea, 20 I said to
you: You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God
is giving us. 21 See, the LORD your God has set the land before you. Go up and
take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has told you. Do not
be afraid or discouraged.
22 "Then † all of you approached me and said, 'Let's send men ahead of us, so
that they may explore the land for us and bring us back a report about the route
we should go up and the cities we will come to.' 23 The plan seemed good to
me, so I selected twelve men from among you, one man for each tribe. 24 They
left and went up into the hill country and came to the Valley of Eshcol, scouting
the land. 25 They took some of the fruit from the land in their hands, carried it
down to us, and brought us back a report: 'The land the LORD our God is giving
us is good.' †
26 "But you were not willing to go up. You rebelled against the command of the
LORD your God. 27 You grumbled in your tents † and said, 'The LORD brought
us out of the land of Egypt to hand us over to the Amorites in order to destroy
us, because he hates us. 28 Where can we go? Our brothers have made us lose

heart, † † saying: The people are larger and taller than we are; the cities are large, fortified to the heavens. † We also saw the descendants of the Anakim † there.’
29 “So I said to you: Don’t be terrified or afraid of them! † 30 The Lord your God who goes before you † will fight for you, † just as you saw him do for you in Egypt. 31 And you saw in the wilderness how the Lord your God carried you as a man carries his son all along the way you traveled until you reached this place. 32 But in spite of this you did not trust the Lord your God, 33 who went before you on the journey to seek out a place for you to camp. He went in the fire by night and in the cloud by day to guide you on the road you were to travel.
34 “When the Lord heard your † words, he grew angry and swore an oath: 35 ‘None of these men in this evil generation will see the good land I swore to give your fathers, † 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give him and his descendants the land on which he has set foot, because he remained loyal to the Lord.’
37 “The Lord was angry with me also because of you and said: ‘You will not enter there either. † 38 Joshua son of Nun, who attends you, will enter it. Encourage him, for he will enable Israel to inherit it. † 39 Your children, whom you said would be plunder, your sons who † don’t yet know good from evil, will enter there. I will give them the land, and they will take possession of it. 40 But you are to turn back and head for the wilderness by way of the Red Sea.’ †
41 “You answered me, ‘We have sinned against the Lord. We will go up and fight just as the Lord our God commanded us.’ Then each of you put on his weapons of war and thought it would be easy to go up into the hill country.
42 “But the Lord said to me, ‘Tell them: Don’t go up and fight, for I am not with you to keep you from being defeated by your enemies.’ † 43 So I spoke to you, but you didn’t listen. You rebelled against the Lord’s command and defiantly went up into the hill country. 44 Then the Amorites who lived there came out against you and chased you like a swarm of bees. They routed you from Seir as far as Hormah. † 45 When you returned, you wept before the Lord, but he didn’t listen to your requests or pay attention to you. 46 For this reason you stayed in Kadesh as long as you did. †

1:1 LXX, Tg, Vg read *the Red Sea* **1:7** Or *the Shephelah* **1:28** Lit *have melted our hearts* **1:34** Lit *the sound of your* **1:39** Lit *who today* **1:46** Lit *Kadesh for many days, according to the days you stayed*
1:1 Gn 50:10-11; Dt 4:41,46-47; 11:30; Jos 1:14-15 **1:1** Dt 3:17; 4:49; Jos 12:3,8; Jr 50:12; Ezk 47:8 **1:1** Nm 12:16; Dt 33:2 **1:1** Nm 11:35 **1:2** Ex 3:1; Dt 4:10,15; 5:2; 18:16; 1Kg 8:9; 19:8; Ps 106:19; Mal 4:4 **1:2** Nm 13:26; 20:1,14,16,22; 27:14; 32:8; Dt 2:14; 9:23; Jos 14:6-7 **1:2** Gn 32:3; 36:8-9,20-21; Dt 2:12; 33:2; Jdg 5:4; Ezk 35:2-3,7,15 **1:3** Ex 16:35; Nm 14:33-34; 32:13; Dt 2:7; 8:2,4; 29:5; Jos 5:6; Neh 9:21; Ps 95:10; Am 2:10; 5:25; Ac 7:36,42; 13:18; Heb 3:17 **1:4** Nm 21:21-35; 32:33; Dt 2:24-3:11; 29:7; 31:4; Jos 2:10; 9:10; 12:1-5; Jdg 11:19-21; Ps 135:10-12; 136:17-21 **1:7** Gn 15:16; 48:22; Ex 3:8,17; 13:5; 23:23; Nm 13:29; 21:13; 22:2; 32:39; Jos 10:12; 11:3; 12:8; 24:8 **1:7** Gn 12:9; 13:3; Nm 13:29; Dt 34:3; Jos 15:21; Ps 126:4; Is 30:6; Ob 19-20 **1:7** Dt 11:24 **1:8** Dt 4:1; 6:10,18; 8:1; 10:11; 11:8 **1:8** Dt 1:35; 9:5; 11:9,21; 26:3; 28:11; 29:13; 30:20; 31:7; Jos 5:6 **1:8** Gn 15:18-21; 26:3; 35:12; Ex 3:16; 6:8; 33:1; Nm 32:11; Dt 34:4; Ac 3:13 **1:10** Gn 22:17; 26:4; Ex 32:13 **1:17** Lv 19:15; Dt 16:19; Pr 24:23 **1:17** 2Ch 19:6 **1:9-18** Ex 18:13-26 **1:22-46** Nm 13–14 **1:25** Dt 8:7 **1:27** Ps 106:25 **1:28** Jos 14:8 **1:28** Dt 9:1-2 **1:28** Dt 2:10; 9:2; Jos 11:21; 14:12 **1:29** Dt 31:6 **1:30** Ex 23:23; 32:34; Dt 31:8; Jdg 4:14; Is 52:12 **1:30** Ex 14:14; Dt 20:4; Jdg 9:17 **1:35** Dt 1:8; 6:18; 10:11; 11:21; 30:20; 31:7,20; Ezk 20:42 **1:37** Nm 20:12 **1:38** Nm 27:12-21 **1:40** Nm 14:25 **1:42** Nm 14:42 **1:44** Nm 14:45

1:1-5 Like Genesis–Numbers before it, Deuteronomy is part of the larger work called the Pentateuch (see the note on Gn 1:1). It continues where Numbers left off, with the Israelites about to enter the land of Canaan **(across the Jordan in the land of Moab**; see also Nm 36:13). Because of his unbelief and disobedience at Meribah (Nm 20:7-13,24; 27:12-14), Moses would not be permitted to enter with them (see 1:37; 3:23-28; 4:21-22), and his death is described at the end of the book (Dt 34). Deuteronomy can be seen as mostly consisting of Moses's last instructions to the Israelites before his death and their entrance into the promised land.

1:6-8 Starting here and continuing to the end of Deuteronomy 3, Moses gives a historical summary of Israel's experiences from Mount Horeb up to this point. This summary is highly selective, and the portion of it found in Deuteronomy 1 includes the departure from Mount Horeb (1:6-8; see Nm 10:11-13), the appointment of leaders to help Moses (vv. 9-18; see Ex 18:13-26), and the previous generation of Israelites' refusal to enter the promised land (vv. 19-46; see Nm 13–14).

1:26-36 The lengthy retelling of the previous generation's refusal to enter Canaan is especially fitting given the present generation's charge to enter this same land (see Nm 33:50-56). Although the previous generation was promised that the **LORD** [their] **God . . .** [would] **fight for** [them] and that he had **carried** [them] **as a man carries his son**, they **did not trust the LORD** (see also Nm 14:11). As a result, God **swore an oath**: **none of these men in this evil generation will see the good land I swore to give your fathers.** Rather, it would be given to their **children**, who had become the present generation of adult Israelites, which would **enter there** and **take possession.**

JOURNEY PAST SEIR

2 "Then we turned back and headed for the wilderness by way of the Red
Sea,† as the LORD had told me, and we traveled around the hill country
of Seir for many days. 2 The LORD then said to me, 3 'You've been
traveling around this hill country long enough; turn north.† 4 Command the
people: You are about to travel through the territory of your brothers, the
descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, so be very
careful. 5 Don't provoke them, for I will not give you any of their land, not even

a foot of it,† because I have given Esau the hill country of Seir as his possession.† 6 You may purchase food from them, so that you may eat, and buy water from them to drink.† 7 For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands.† He has watched over your journey through this immense wilderness. The LORD your God has been with you this past forty years, and you have lacked nothing.'†

JOURNEY PAST MOAB

8 "So we bypassed our brothers, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir. We turned away from the Arabah road and from Elath and Ezion-geber.† We traveled along the road to the Wilderness of Moab. 9 The LORD said to me, 'Show no hostility toward Moab, and do not provoke them to battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, since I have given Ar as a possession to the descendants of Lot.' "†

10 The Emim, a great and numerous people as tall as the Anakim,† had previously lived there. 11 They were also regarded as Rephaim,† like the Anakim, though the Moabites called them Emim.† 12 The Horites† had previously lived in Seir, but the descendants of Esau drove them out, destroying them completely† and settling in their place, just as Israel did in the land of its possession the LORD gave them.

13 "The LORD said, 'Now get up and cross the Zered Valley.' So we crossed the Zered Valley.† 14 The time we spent traveling from Kadesh-barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley was thirty-eight years until the entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. 15 Indeed, the LORD's hand was against them, to eliminate† them from the camp until they had all perished.†

JOURNEY PAST AMMON

16 "When all the fighting men had died among the people, 17 the LORD spoke to me, 18 'Today you are going to cross the border of Moab at Ar. 19 When you get close to the Ammonites, don't show any hostility to them or provoke them, for I will not give you any of the Ammonites' land as a possession; I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot.' "†

20 This too used to be regarded as the land of the Rephaim. The Rephaim lived there previously, though the Ammonites called them Zamzummim, † 21 a great and numerous people, tall as the Anakim. The LORD destroyed the Rephaim at the advance of the Ammonites, so that they drove them out and settled in their place. 22 This was just as he had done for the descendants of Esau who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them; they drove them out and have lived in their place until now. 23 The Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, † † destroyed the Avvites, who lived in villages as far as Gaza, and settled in their place.

DEFEAT OF SIHON THE AMORITE

24 "The LORD also said, 'Get up, move out, and cross the Arnon Valley. See, I have handed the Amorites' King Sihon of Heshbon and his land over to you. Begin to take possession of it; engage † him in battle. † 25 Today I will begin to put the fear and dread of you on the peoples everywhere under heaven. They will hear the report about you, tremble, and be in anguish because of you.' †

26 "So I sent messengers with an offer of peace † to King Sihon of Heshbon from the Wilderness of Kedemoth, saying, 27 'Let us travel through your land; we will keep strictly to the highway. We will not turn to the right or the left. †

28 You can sell us food in exchange for silver so we may eat, and give us water for silver so we may drink. Only let us travel through on foot, 29 just as the descendants of Esau who live in Seir did for us, and the Moabites who live in Ar, until we cross the Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us.' 30 But King Sihon of Heshbon would not let us travel through his land, for the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to hand him over to you, as has now taken place. †

31 "Then the LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to give Sihon and his land to you. Begin to take possession of it.' 32 So Sihon and his whole army came out against us for battle at Jahaz. 33 The LORD our God handed him over to us, † and we defeated him, his sons, and his whole army. 34 At that time we captured all his cities and completely destroyed the people of every city, including the women and children. We left no survivors. † 35 We took only the livestock and the spoil from the cities we captured as plunder for ourselves. 36 There was no

city that was inaccessible to † † us, from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the valley, even as far as Gilead. † The LORD our God gave everything to us. 37 But you did not go near the Ammonites' land, all along the bank of the Jabbok River, † the cities of the hill country, or any place that the LORD our God had forbidden. †

2:5 Lit *land as far as the width of a sole of a foot* **2:12** Lit *them before them* **2:23** Probably Crete **2:24** Or *provoke* **2:36** Or *was too high for*

2:1 Ex 10:19; 13:18; 15:4,22; 23:31; Nm 21:4; Dt 1:40 **2:3** Dt 1:6 **2:5** Ezk 25:12-14 **2:1-6** Nm 20:14-21 **2:7** Dt 30:9 **2:7** Dt 8:2-4; 29:5; Neh 9:21 **2:8** Nm 33:35-36; 1Kg 9:26 **2:9** Gn 19:36-37; Ezk 25:8-11; Am 2:1-2; Mc 6:5; Zph 2:8-9 **2:10** Dt 1:28; Jos 11:21-22 **2:11** Gn 14:5; 15:20; Jos 13:12; 2Sm 21:15-22 **2:11** Gn 14:5 **2:12** Gn 14:6; 36:21,29-30 **2:8-13** Nm 21:10-20 **2:15** Ex 14:24; 23:27; Dt 7:23 **2:15** 1Co 10:1-5; Jd 5 **2:19** Gn 19:36,38; Nm 21:24; Jdg 10:9-18; 1Sm 11:11; 12:12; Neh 4:7 **2:20** Gn 14:5 **2:23** Gn 10:14; 1Ch 1:12; Jr 47:4; Am 9:7 **2:24** Dt 1:27 **2:25** Ex 15:14-16; 23:27; Dt 11:25; Jos 2:9-11; 5:1; 9:3-6 **2:26** Dt 20:10; Jdg 21:13 **2:27** Nm 20:17 **2:30** Ex 4:21; 7:3; Nm 21:23; 2Ch 36:13 **2:33** Dt 7:2,23; 20:13; 21:10; 31:5; Jos 8:7; 11:8 **2:34** Dt 20:16-18; 1Sm 15:9 **2:36** Nm 13:28; Ps 139:6; Pr 18:10-11; Is 2:11,17; 26:5 **2:36** Jos 13:9,16 **2:37** Nm 21:24; Jos 12:2 **2:24-37** Nm 21:21-31

2:1-3 The Israelites' wandering in the wilderness for almost forty years is passed over briefly here (see also v. 14). The following passage concerns their approach to the land of Edom, territory of Esau's descendants, while on their way to Canaan (vv. 4-8; Nm 21:14-21).

2:14-15 Related to the lengthy retelling of Israel's initial failure to enter the promised land (1:19-46), these verses serve as another reminder that the previous generation **had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them.**

2:18-19 During the Israelites' recent approach to Canaan, God explained that he was not giving them the land of the **Ammonites**, the Moabites (v. 9), or the Edomites (v. 5).

2:24-37 Sihon's defeat was described in Numbers 21:21-32, but Moses's recounting here includes God's broader purpose of putting **the fear and dread of** [the Israelites] **on the peoples everywhere.** This victory thus signaled that God was helping Israel and would continue to do so in future battles (see 3:21). Moreover, Sihon's refusal to let Israel pass through his land is said to have happened because **the LORD . . . had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to hand him over.** This is reminiscent of what God had done with Pharaoh earlier (see Ex 7:3).

DEFEAT OF OG OF BASHAN

3 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan, and King Og of Bashan † came out against us with his whole army to do battle at Edrei. † 2 But the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have handed him over to you along with his whole army and his land. Do to him as you did to King Sihon of the Amorites, † who lived in Heshbon.'

SHOULD WE LEGISLATE MORALITY?

People often say, “You can’t legislate morality.” This statement, however, is false because governments legislate morality all the time. Otherwise, we would not have laws banning prostitution, incest, murder, polygamy, and theft.

Laws deter people from engaging in activities prohibited by civilized society. In some cases laws induce people to engage in immoral behavior by imposing rules and regulations that violate their values. In other cases, people in power declare that there are no moral absolutes, meaning that each individual can decide what is right and wrong based on personal beliefs. The inducement to do wrong can occur when trusting individuals follow the government’s conception of morality out of respect for its authority.

MORAL LEGISLATION AND NATURAL LAW

Until recent years, the American legal system was strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Mosaic laws found in the Ten Commandments. Belief in a God-breathed natural law that transcends man-made law also undergirded the Judeo-Christian influence on America.

Evidence for the reality of natural law predated the giving of the Ten Commandments, as for instance in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (eighteenth century BC). Joseph Hester writes that in “Hammurabi’s Code, the strong were not supposed to oppress the weak. Justice primarily meant economic justice and opportunity, for many of the laws dealt with property, business practices, and contracts” (Hester, *The Ten Commandments*, p. 34). Similarly, ancient Rome had a code of law called the Twelve Tables. That Rome and Babylon, both of which were pagan nations, encoded ethical and moral laws resembling biblical teaching is evidence that natural law is ingrained in the heart of humankind. In fact, Dr. Liane Young, a Boston University scientist, has found a biological function in the human brain that is responsible for moral judgments. Some have described this as a “moral compass,” an internal sense of right and wrong that supports the theory of natural law.

Natural law is the universal sense of right and wrong that we discern through human reasoning without a preknowledge of the God revealed in the Judeo-Christian Bible. The apostle Paul refers to this in Romans 2:14-15, where he says of natural law, “So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, [instinctively] do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them.” Thus the higher, transcendent law of God stands as a measuring rod for all people, no matter the laws of their nation or their personal beliefs.

MORAL LEGISLATION AND VALUE SYSTEMS

Whether government legislating morality is good or bad depends on the leaders and their value systems. Abortion was once prohibited in the United States, but in 1973, the Supreme Court legalized it in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. This signaled a new standard of morality based on the right of privacy and the Fourteenth Amendment. What has ensued is more than forty years of debate and controversy about a procedure that has always troubled large segments of the population.

In *The Revenge of Conscience*, J. Budziszewski describes the evolution of the abortion rights debate: “First we were to approve of killing unborn babies, then babies in the process of birth; next came babies with physical defects, now newborns in perfect health” (p. 21). Although the latter stage is not yet enshrined in law, there are intellectuals, such as moral philosopher Peter Singer, who argue that it ought to be allowable for parents to kill their infants until they reach a certain age.

When secular law affirms behavior that runs counter to the conscience or law of the heart, it causes some

people who might otherwise not contemplate the offensive action to make choices that violate their conscience because the law has indicated that the action is morally acceptable. For example, the legalization of abortion has induced some women to accept the moral proposition that the desires of the mother trump the rights of her unborn child. It is not uncommon for women to experience regret and depression after making what they thought would be an easy decision given the legal status of abortion. When the Supreme Court decided that the rights of the mother trumped the rights of fathers, it was imposing a moral code that has proven detrimental to fathers and unborn children. It also leaves mothers saddled with regret.

Laws are often advanced based on the moral and ethical values of legislators elected by people from a specific geographical area. Ideally, legislators will reflect the values and principles of the electorate, but it is difficult to hold elected officials accountable in an environment where most incumbents are reelected and where federal judges are appointed for life. Cultural elites composed of officeholders, judges, newspaper editors, and media personalities have enormous influence on policy outputs and the preferences of the general public.

WHOSE MORALITY?

The real issue is not whether we can or will legislate morality. We have always done so. The issue is whose morality will triumph.

The new morality of same-sex marriage endorsed by the U.S. Supreme Court has validated the homosexual lifestyle and made it more difficult for states to exercise their rights under the federal constitution. Christian businessmen and women can face lawsuits and harassment in some states if they refuse certain services to LGBT couples, even if the services are personal and offensive to the person's biblical worldview. Couples living together before marriage, no-fault divorce, demands for polygamy, and government use of taxpayer dollars to support the taking of human life all herald a new morality that troubles and offends many Christians.

Same-sex marriage is an example of the federal government legislating a morality that does not comport with the moral preferences of many people around the country, as demonstrated by democratic votes on various propositions. Political correctness and strong penalties for resisting what was once considered deviant behavior have led to the impression that the public accepts this behavior as normal.

The new morality has led to situations where government has chosen politically correct decisions over decisions that would protect and advance the rights of children. One of the most controversial topics today is transgender children. What should be done when kids as young as four or five express desires to be a member of the opposite sex, even though biologically they were born male or female? In some cases, parents have found doctors who are willing to prescribe hormones to delay or transform the natural development of the child.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, legislating morality is what governments do. Whatever laws are passed, some citizens will be offended (feeling the law has imposed morality on them) while others will rejoice (feeling that the law conforms to true morality). Whether imposed morality is legislatively enacted or judicially declared, it will receive a far different reception depending on what the affected individuals believe about moral absolutism or natural law.

For people who have lived in a nation where Judeo-Christian values have historically set the community standards, it comes as a rude awakening that the tables have been turned. Traditional values are no longer embraced by the majority of voters; thus, it seems unlikely that such values will continue to be enshrined in the legal fabric of the nation. As "progressive" laws and norms are pushed through legislatures or imposed by judges, what shall Christians do?

Christians should not simply give way to an agenda this is unhealthy for our society and individuals, yet the new set of cultural values suggest that the church is now experiencing a period of "exile," not unlike what Israel endured in Babylon. While a previous generation of American Christians may have thought of

the United States as “Israel,” in which God’s standards could be expressed at a political level, this is no longer the case. Rather, we must continue to trust God and seek to live his way even as society chooses a different path. In this respect, it is more important than ever that we live out our identity as aliens and strangers on the earth, seeking to offer light and truth in the midst of increasing darkness.

CAROL M. SWAIN

3 So the LORD our God also handed over King Og of Bashan and his whole army
to us. We struck him until there was no survivor left. † 4 We captured all his
cities at that time. There wasn’t a city that we didn’t take from them: sixty cities,
the entire region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. 5 All these were
fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a large number of rural
villages. 6 We completely destroyed them, as we had done to King Sihon of
Heshbon, destroying the men, women, and children of every city. 7 But we took
all the livestock and the spoil from the cities as plunder for ourselves. †

THE LAND OF THE TRANSJORDAN TRIBES

8 “At that time we took the land from the two Amorite kings across the
Jordan, † from the Arnon Valley as far as Mount Hermon, 9 which the
Sidonians call Sirion, but the Amorites call Senir, 10 all the cities of the plateau,
Gilead, and Bashan as far as Salecah and Edrei, cities of Og’s kingdom in
Bashan. † 11 (Only King Og of Bashan was left of the remnant of the
Rephaim. † His bed † was made of iron. Isn’t it in Rabbah of the Ammonites?
† It is 13 1/2 feet long and 6 feet wide by a standard measure. †) †
12 “At that time we took possession of this land. † I gave to the Reubenites and
Gadites the area extending from Aroer by the Arnon Valley, and half the hill
country of Gilead along with its cities. 13 I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh the
rest of Gilead and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og. The entire region of Argob,
the whole territory of Bashan, used to be called the land of the Rephaim. 14 Jair,
a descendant of Manasseh, took over the entire region of Argob as far as the
border of the Geshurites and Maacathites. He called Bashan by his own name,
Jair’s Villages, † as it is today. 15 I gave Gilead to Machir, 16 and I gave to the
Reubenites and Gadites the area extending from Gilead to the Arnon Valley (the
middle of the valley was the border) and up to the Jabbok River, the border of
the Ammonites. 17 The Arabah and Jordan are also borders from Chinnereth †

as far as the Sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, under the slopes of Pisgah on the east. †

18 "I commanded you at that time: The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. All your valiant men will cross over in battle formation ahead of your brothers the Israelites. 19 But your wives, dependents, and livestock — I know that you have a lot of livestock — will remain in the cities I have given you † 20 until the LORD gives rest † to your brothers as he has to you, and they also take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them across the Jordan. Then each of you may return to his possession that I have given you. †

THE TRANSFER OF ISRAEL'S LEADERSHIP

21 "I commanded Joshua at that time: Your own eyes have seen everything the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will do the same to all the kingdoms you are about to enter. 22 Don't be afraid of them, for the LORD your God fights for you.

23 "At that time I begged the LORD: 24 Lord GOD, you have begun to show your greatness and your strong hand to your servant, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can perform deeds and mighty acts like yours? 25 Please let me cross over and see the beautiful land † on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country and Lebanon.

26 "But the LORD was angry with me because of you † and would not listen to me. The LORD said to me, 'That's enough! Do not speak to me again about this matter. 27 Go to the top of Pisgah and look to the west, north, south, and east, and see it with your own eyes, for you will not cross the Jordan. † 28 But commission Joshua and encourage and strengthen him, for he will cross over ahead of the people and enable them to inherit this land that you will see.' † 29 So we stayed in the valley facing Beth-peor.

3:11 Or *sarcophagus* **3:11** Lit *nine cubits its length and four cubits its width, by a man's cubit* **3:14** Or *Havvoth-jair* **3:17** = the Sea of Galilee; Jos 12:3; 13:27; Lk 5:1 **3:26** Or *me for your sake*

3:1 Nm 21:33; 32:33; Dt 1:4; 4:43,47; 29:7; 32:14; 33:22; Jos 9:10; 12:4-5; 13:11-12,30-31; 17:1; 20:8; 1Kg 4:19; Neh 9:22; Ps 22:12; 68:15; 135:11; 136:20; Is 2:13; Ezk 27:6 **3:1** Nm 21:33,35; Dt 1:4; 3:10; 29:6-7; Jos 12:4; 13:12,31 **3:2** Nm 21:23-26,34; Dt 2:33; Jdg 11:21 **3:3** Dt 2:34 **3:1-7** Nm 21:32-35 **3:8** Gn 50:10-11; Dt 1:1,5; Jos 1:14-15 **3:10** Jos 13:11 **3:11** Gn 14:5; 15:20; Dt 2:11,20-21 **3:11** Jos 13:25; 15:60; 2Sm 11:1; 12:29; Jr 49:2 **3:11** 1Sm 17:4 **3:12** Gn 28:4; Lv 20:24; Dt 4:5; 6:1; 7:1; 8:1; 12:29; 30:5 **3:8-17** Nm 32:1-19,33-42; Jos 12:2-3 **3:19** Dt 1:39; 2:35; 3:7 **3:20** Gn 2:15; Ex 20:11; 23:12; 33:14; Nm 10:33,36; Dt 12:9-10; 25:19; 28:65; Jos 1:13,15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; Ru 1:9; 3:1; 2Sm 7:1,11; 1Kg 5:4; 8:56; 1Ch 6:31; 22:9; 28:2; 2Ch 6:41; Ps 23:2; 95:11; 116:7; 132:8,14; Is 11:10; 14:3,7; 28:12; 32:18; 63:14; 66:1; Heb

3:11-4:11 **3:18-20** Nm 32:20-32; Jos 1:14-15 **3:25** Dt 8:7 **3:26-27** Nm 20:1-13 **3:27-28** Nm 27:12-23

3:2-3 The emphasis on God's activity on behalf of the Israelites continues in the recounting of the defeat of **Og** (see also 2:33,36).

3:12-20 The giving of the land of Sihon and Og to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh was also described in Numbers 32.

3:21-22 The reason for the detailed recounting of the Israelites' victories over Sihon and Og (2:24–3:7) was to encourage Joshua (and Israel) that what God had **done to these two kings** he would also do **to all the kingdoms** [they were] **about to enter.**

3:23-29 Moses pleaded with God to allow him to **cross over and see the beautiful land on the other side of the Jordan**, but God would not yield and only allowed him to see it from the top of Mount Pisgah (vv. 26-27; see 1:37; 4:21-22).

CALL TO OBEDIENCE

4 "Now, Israel, listen to the statutes and ordinances † I am teaching you
to follow, so that you may live, † enter, and take possession of the land
the LORD, the God of your fathers, † is giving you. 2 You must not add
anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, † so that you
may keep the commands of the LORD your God I am giving you. 3 Your eyes
have seen what the LORD did at Baal-peor, for the LORD your God destroyed
every one of you who followed Baal of Peor. † 4 But you who have remained
faithful † to the LORD your God are all alive today. 5 Look, I have taught you
statutes and ordinances as the LORD my God has commanded me, so that you
may follow them in the land you are entering to possess. 6 Carefully follow
them, for this will show your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the
peoples. When they hear about all these statutes, they will say, 'This great nation
is indeed a wise and understanding people.' 7 For what great nation is there that
has a god near to it as the LORD our God is to us whenever we call to him? †
8 And what great nation has righteous statutes and ordinances like this entire law
I set before you today? †
9 "Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, † so that you don't
forget † the things your eyes have seen and so that they don't slip from your
mind † as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your
grandchildren. † 10 The day you stood before the LORD your God † at Horeb,
the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people before me, and I will let them hear

my words, so that they may learn to fear me † all the days they live on the earth and may instruct their children.’ 11 You came near and stood at the base of the mountain, † a mountain blazing with fire † into the heavens and enveloped in a totally black cloud. † 12 Then the LORD spoke to you from the fire. † You kept hearing the sound of the words, but didn’t see a form; there was only a voice. † 13 He declared his covenant † to you. He commanded you to follow the Ten Commandments, † which he wrote on two stone tablets. † 14 At that time the LORD commanded me to teach you statutes and ordinances for you to follow in the land you are about to cross into and possess.

WORSHIPING THE TRUE GOD

15 “Diligently watch yourselves — because you did not see any form on the day the LORD spoke to you out of the fire at Horeb — 16 so you don’t act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of any figure: a male or female form, 17 or the form of any animal on the earth, any winged creature that flies in the sky, 18 any creature that crawls on the ground, or any fish in the waters under the earth. 19 When you look to the heavens and see the sun, moon, and stars — all the stars in the sky — do not be led astray to bow in worship to them and serve them. † The LORD your God has provided them for all people everywhere under heaven. † 20 But the LORD selected you and brought you out of Egypt’s iron furnace † to be a people for his inheritance, as you are today.

21 “The LORD was angry with me on your account. † He swore that I would not cross the Jordan and enter the good land † the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. † 22 I won’t be crossing the Jordan because I am going to die in this land. † But you are about to cross over and take possession of this good land. 23 Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you, and make an idol for yourselves in the shape of anything he has forbidden you. 24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, † a jealous God. † 25 “When you have children and grandchildren and have been in the land a long time, and if you act corruptly, make an idol in the form of anything, and do what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, angering him, 26 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that you will quickly perish † from the land

you are about to cross the Jordan to possess. You will not live long there, but you will certainly be destroyed. 27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, † and you will be reduced to a few survivors † among the nations where the LORD your God will drive you. 28 There you will worship man-made gods of wood and stone, which cannot see, hear, eat, or smell. 29 But from there, you will search for the LORD your God, and you will find him when you seek him with all your heart and all your soul. † 30 When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, in the future you will return to the LORD your God and obey him. 31 He will not leave you, destroy you, or forget the covenant † with your fathers that he swore to them by oath, because the LORD your God is a compassionate God. †

32 "Indeed, ask about the earlier days that preceded you, from the day God created mankind † on the earth and from one end of the heavens to the other: Has anything like this great event ever happened, or has anything like it been heard of? 33 Has a people heard God's voice speaking from the fire as you have, and lived? 34 Or has a god attempted to go and take a nation as his own out of another nation, by trials, signs, wonders, and war, by a strong hand and an outstretched arm, by great terrors, as the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 You were shown these things so that you would know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him. † 36 He let you hear his voice from heaven to instruct you. † He showed you his great fire on earth, and you heard his words from the fire. † 37 Because he loved † your fathers, he chose their descendants after them and brought you out of Egypt by his presence and great power, 38 to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you in and give you their land as an inheritance, † as is now taking place. 39 Today, recognize and keep in mind that the LORD is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other. 40 Keep his statutes and commands, which I am giving you today, so that you and your children after you may prosper and so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

CITIES OF REFUGE

41 Then Moses set apart three cities across the Jordan to the east. 42 Someone could flee there who committed manslaughter, killing his neighbor accidentally without previously hating him. He could flee to one of these cities and stay alive: 43 Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau land, belonging to the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead, belonging to the Gadites; or Golan in Bashan, belonging to the Manassites. †

INTRODUCTION TO THE LAW

44 This is the law Moses gave the Israelites. 45 These are the decrees, statutes, and ordinances Moses proclaimed to them after they came out of Egypt, 46 across the Jordan in the valley facing Beth-peor in the land of King Sihon of the Amorites. He lived in Heshbon, and Moses and the Israelites defeated him after they came out of Egypt. 47 They took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two Amorite kings who were across the Jordan to the east, 48 from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley as far as Mount Sion (that is, Hermon) 49 and all the Arabah on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Dead Sea below the slopes of Pisgah.

4:4 Lit *have held on* **4:9** Or *don't depart from your heart* **4:27** Lit *be left few in number* **4:32** Or *Adam*
4:1 Ex 15:25; Lv 26:46; Dt 5:1; 11:32; 12:1; 26:16-17; Jos 24:25; 1Sm 30:25; 1Kg 9:4; Ezr 7:10; Ps 81:4; 147:19; Ezk 11:12; 20:18,25; 36:27; Mal 4:4 **4:1** Lv 25:18; Dt 4:40; 5:16,33; 8:1; 11:9; 25:15; 30:16; 2Kg 18:32; Ezk 18:9; Am 5:14 **4:1** Ex 3:13,15-16; Dt 1:11,21; 6:3; 12:1; 27:3; Jos 18:3; 2Ch 13:12; 28:9; 29:5; Ezr 8:28; 10:11 **4:2** Dt 12:32; Pr 30:6; Mk 7:9-13; Rv 22:18-19 **4:3** Ps 106:28; Hs 9:10; 1Co 10:8 **4:7** 1Kg 8:52; Ps 4:3; Is 55:6; Jr 11:14; Hs 11:7; Rm 10:12,14 **4:8** Dt 11:26,32 **4:9** Jos 22:5; Pr 13:3; 16:17; 19:16; 22:5 **4:9** Dt 6:12; 8:11; Pr 3:1; 4:5 **4:9-10** Ex 12:26; Dt 6:7,20-25; 11:2-7,18-21; 31:12-13,19-22; 32:46; Jos 4:6,21-22; 8:35; Ps 34:11; 78:5 **4:10** Gn 18:22; 19:27; Lv 9:5; Dt 10:8; 1Sm 6:20; 1Kg 22:21; 2Ch 20:13 **4:10** Dt 5:29; Is 57:11; Jr 5:22; 32:39; Zph 3:7; Mal 3:5 **4:11** Ex 24:4; 32:19 **4:11** Ex 3:2; 19:18; Dt 5:23; 9:15; Heb 12:18 **4:11** Gn 15:12; Ex 20:21; Dt 5:22; 2Sm 22:10; 1Kg 8:12; 2Ch 6:1; Ps 18:9; 97:2; Is 60:2; Jr 13:16; Ezk 34:12; Jl 2:2; Zph 1:15 **4:12** Ex 3:2-4; Dt 4:33,36; 5:4,22-26; 9:10; 10:4; 33:16; Ezk 1:4; Ac 7:30,35 **4:9-12** Ex 19:10-19; Dt 5:8; Heb 12:18-19 **4:13** Ex 2:24; 19:5; Lv 26:9,15,42,44; Dt 7:12; 8:18; 17:2; 31:16,20; Jos 7:11; Jdg 2:1,20; 2Kg 17:15; 18:12; Ps 25:10,14; 78:37; 103:18; 105:8; 106:45; 111:5,9 **4:13** Ex 34:28; Dt 10:4 **4:13** Ex 34:1,4; Dt 5:22; 10:1,3 **4:19** Dt 17:3; Ezk 8:16; Zph 1:5; Ac 7:42 **4:19** Ps 19:1 **4:20** 1Kg 8:51; Jr 11:4 **4:21** Dt 1:37 **4:21** Dt 8:7 **4:21** Dt 15:4 **4:22** Dt 34:1-8 **4:24** Ex 24:17; Dt 9:3; 2Sm 22:9; Is 29:6; 30:27,30; 34:14 **4:23-24** Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 5:9; 6:15; Jos 24:19; Heb 12:29 **4:26** Dt 8:19 **4:27** Lv 26:33; Dt 28:64; 1Kg 14:15; Neh 1:8; Est 3:8; Ps 44:11; 106:27; Jr 9:16; 31:10; Ezk 6:8; 11:16-17; 12:15; Zch 1:19,21; 2:6 **4:29** Jr 29:13 **4:31** Lv 26:45; Dt 5:3; 7:12; 8:18; 31:20 **4:31** Ex 34:6 **4:35** 1Kg 8:60; Is 43:11; 44:8; 45:5-6,18-22; 46:9; Dn 3:29; Jl 2:27; Mk 12:32 **4:36** Ex 20:22 **4:36** Ex 19:18 **4:37** Dt 7:6-8; 10:15; 23:5; 33:3; Jr 31:3; Hs 11:1; Mal 1:2 **4:38** Lv 20:24 **4:41-43** Nm 35:6-15; Dt 19:2-13; Jos 20:7-9

4:1 Having concluded the historical summary (1:6–3:29), Moses turns to the first of many calls to obedience found in Deuteronomy (e.g., 5:1; 6:1-3; 8:1).

4:5-8 The laws Moses is giving Israel are for them to follow **in the land** [they] **are entering to possess**

(see also v. 1). Their obedience would **show** [their] **wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples**, thus spreading God's fame. It is thus natural to view the law as an expression of divine wisdom.

4:9-10 The lessons the Israelites had learned were to be passed down to their **children** and **grandchildren**, from one generation to the next. This was also true of the law that had been given to them at Mount Horeb (Sinai) (v. 10; see the note on 5:2-3). References to passing on knowledge of God to one's children can be found in many other passages in Deuteronomy (e.g., v. 40; 5:29; 6:7; 11:2,19), attaching great importance to parents' instruction of children in the home.

4:25-31 Though the Israelites were solemnly warned about idolatry (vv. 12,15-20,23), Moses predicted that they would indeed engage in it and consequently be exiled from the land (vv. 25-28). Deuteronomy 31:16-29 makes this even more clear. In this way, both passages are anticlimactic because they predict both Israel's disobedience to the very commands that Moses was giving and their exile from the land before they had even entered it. Nevertheless, there was still hope because **from there** (i.e., exile) they would **search for the LORD** [their] **God** and **return to the LORD** [their] **God**, who would not forsake them or forget his covenant with them (see also Lv 26:40-45). All this would happen **in the future** (lit "in the last days"; see the notes on Gn 1:1 and 49:1), a time frame associated with the coming of the Messiah (see the notes on Gn 49:8-12 and Nm 24:14-19).

4:32-38 The rhetorical questions posed in verses 32-34 emphasize Israel's special privilege of having **heard God's voice speaking from the fire** and **lived** and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt. Likewise, the questions in verses 7-8 highlight Israel's special privilege of God's nearness to them and their possession of the law. The desired response from Israel was that they know that **the LORD is God** and **there is no other** and obey his commands (v. 40).

4:41-43 The setting apart of three cities of refuge on the east side of the Jordan had been commanded in Numbers 35:14 (see also the note on Nm 35:9-34).

4:44-49 This passage has similarities to 1:1-5 and marks a transition to the section of laws found in Deuteronomy 5–11.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

5 Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Israel, listen to the
statutes and ordinances I am proclaiming as you hear them today. Learn
and follow them carefully. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant † with
us at Horeb. 3 He did not make this covenant with our fathers, † but with all of
us who are alive here today. 4 The LORD spoke to you face to face from the fire
on the mountain. 5 At that time I was standing between the LORD and you to
report the word † of the LORD to you, because you were afraid of the fire and did
not go up the mountain. And he said:

THE BASICS OF CIVIL LAW

The United States House of Representatives contains a number of interesting features. The bullet holes from an attack by Puerto Rican terrorists are an unusual example. More relevant to our subject are portraits of history's great lawgivers. Three in particular invite special attention: Moses the Israelite, Justinian the Byzantine emperor, and Sir William Blackstone—one of the greatest jurists in English history.

MOSES THE ISRAELITE

Through Moses we received the most famous set of laws in the history of humanity—the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17). According to the Hebrew Scriptures, God gave Moses the famed tablets of law on Mount Sinai. He then conveyed them to the Israelites and established what is the single most enduring depiction of the duties people owe to God (the four vertical commandments) and to each other (the six horizontal commandments).

In the horizontal prohibitions concerning disrespecting parents, lying, stealing, adultery, murder, and even coveting, we see the building blocks of modern law. For example, lying is an actionable offense in the forms of fraud, misrepresentation, and perjury. Parental rights still count for much as children do not enjoy full constitutional rights until they reach the age of majority. Theft and murder occupy a giant share of the criminal law. Even covetousness remains part of our codes. If an individual can be shown to have coveted, then it is possible to establish the *mens rea* or "guilty mind" necessary to prove the severe gravity of some civil or criminal offenses. Of the horizontal commandments, adultery now receives least attention in modern law. Adultery has gone almost entirely out of the criminal law, though it remains relevant to divorce proceedings—even though it legally counts for less now in the era of no-fault statutes.

In recent years, a controversy regarding church and state separation has revolved around the posting of the Ten Commandments in public places. Judge Roy Moore in Alabama gained notoriety for mounting the commandments in his courtroom as a lesser judge and then bringing them in to the Alabama Supreme Court after his election there. Though Judge Moore lost in that case, other monuments and postings of the commandments have survived challenge. For example, the commandments on the capitol grounds in Austin, Texas, remain in place. Courts have accepted the argument that the commandments represent an important source of law. Successful challenges have not suggested that the commandments are unimportant to modern law, but rather that certain displays involved some improper purpose. Whether or not the modern state publicly embraces the Ten Commandments, their formative influence on the law—both in the West and, increasingly, worldwide—is difficult to question.

JUSTINIAN THE BYZANTINE RULER

Enter the second portrait. Justinian was a Christian ruler of the Byzantine Empire during the heart of the sixth century AD. He took up the project of systematizing and rationalizing the various laws and precedents that had sprouted during the long tenure of the Roman Empire. Interestingly, Justinian demonstrated fealty to God in the initiation of the project. He called for "the aid of God" in governing the empire "delivered to Us by His Celestial Majesty." The emperor further claimed that the protection of the state depended not upon arms, but rather upon "the providence of the Holy Trinity." The *Corpus Juris Civilis* had its beginning in this way; the collection was far more explicit in its reliance on the Christian God than is the American Constitution.

Justinian's work demonstrated a view of law that fully embraced God as lawgiver. The *Corpus* refers to jurisprudence as the knowledge of things both human and divine. Civil law defines the arrangements that a nation makes for its people. The "law of nations" reflects what we all know through the exercise of our natural reason. This is natural law. In Christian societies, natural law has been understood as a part of God's common grace, protecting the world from chaos and strife. Indeed, in John Locke's famed social contract, he did not think we needed government to give us a moral law since it already existed in the natural law. Rather, he felt government should enforce the dictates of natural law.

The *Corpus Juris Civilis* became the model for the civil law systems of continental Europe. The civil law that survived the Byzantine Empire also inspired the development of the canon law of the Roman Catholic

Church. Together, the two types of law formed the basis of European legal thought.

SIR WILLIAM BLACKSTONE

The English model of common law is a different system that emerged in the Middle Ages. Whereas the civil law systems are highly codified, common law systems rely much more on precedent interpreted by judges. The nations derived from England, such as the United States, also have common law systems. It has not been unusual for American judges to look to English cases to shape opinions. Despite differences in method (codification versus precedent), common law systems have also been significantly inspired by Christianity's ideas about natural law.

As for our third portrait, Sir William Blackstone was perhaps the greatest exponent of English common law. His commentaries sought to systematize precedents and ideas into a comprehensible whole. American law students today study some of his opinions and concepts. In his commentaries, Blackstone wrote about natural law in terms of how it applied to creation and to creatures.

For example, God had imbued matter with certain properties as part of his law. He made the planets to move along predictable paths. In the same way, God created natural laws to govern relations between humans in such a way as to bring about justice. By Blackstone's reasoning, we must obey these laws because of our dependence on God who has ordained them. Notably, Blackstone held the revealed divine law next to God's natural law and viewed it as authoritative. Human laws ought not be permitted to contradict either of these two sources.

Through Blackstone, it is easy to understand the concept of theonomy over against autonomy. *Theonomy* refers to adherence to God's law, whereas *autonomy* views the individual as a law unto himself. Blackstone's legal reasoning operated from a position of theonomy based on our apprehension of natural law.

But what was once commonplace has become the subject of significant dispute. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. famously attacked natural law, emphasizing that the law "is not some brooding omnipresence in the sky." He viewed the law as an instrument designed to reduce social friction and to achieve other desirable outcomes. Regrettably, this new and positivistic view of law has gained much ground during the last century, while natural law reasoning has fallen into disfavor. Nevertheless, the very places where law is made, such as in the U.S. Congress, provide ample reminders from whence we came and on what foundations we rest.

HUNTER BAKER

6 I am the LORD your God, † who brought you out of the land of
Egypt, out of the place of slavery. †
7 Do not have other gods besides me.
8 Do not make an idol for yourself in the shape of anything in the
heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the
earth. 9 Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them,
because I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the
children for the fathers' iniquity to the third and fourth generations
of those who hate me, † 10 but showing faithful love to a thousand
generations of those who love me and keep my commands.

11 Do not misuse the name † of the LORD your God, because the
LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name.
12 Be careful to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy as the
LORD your God has commanded you. 13 You are to labor six days
and do all your work, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the
LORD your God. Do not do any work — you, your son or daughter,
your male or female slave, your ox or donkey, any of your
livestock, or the resident alien who lives within your city gates, so
that your male and female slaves may rest as you do.
15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the
LORD your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an
outstretched arm. That is why the LORD your God has commanded
you to keep the Sabbath day.
16 Honor your father and your mother, † as the LORD your God has
commanded you, so that you may live long and so that you may
prosper in the land the LORD your God is giving you. †
17 Do not murder. †
18 Do not commit adultery. †
19 Do not steal.
20 Do not give dishonest testimony against your neighbor. †
21 Do not covet your neighbor's wife or desire your neighbor's
house, his field, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or
anything that belongs to your neighbor. †

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

22 "The LORD spoke these commands in a loud voice to your entire assembly
from the fire, cloud, and total darkness on the mountain; he added nothing more.
He wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me. 23 All of you
approached me with your tribal leaders and elders when you heard the voice

from the darkness and while the mountain was blazing with fire. 24 You said,
‘Look, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have
heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that God speaks with a
person, yet he still lives. 25 But now, why should we die? This great fire will
consume us and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer.
26 For who out of all mankind has heard the voice of the living God speaking
from the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go near and listen to everything the
LORD our God says. Then you can tell us everything the LORD our God tells you;
we will listen and obey.’ †
28 “The LORD heard your † words when you spoke to me. He said to me, ‘I have
heard the words that these people have spoken to you. Everything they have said
is right. 29 If only they had such a heart to fear me and keep all my commands
always, so that they and their children would prosper forever. 30 Go and tell
them: Return to your tents. 31 But you stand here with me, and I will tell you
every command — the statutes and ordinances — you are to teach them, so that
they may follow them in the land I am giving them to possess.’
32 “Be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; you are not to
turn aside to the right or the left. 33 Follow the whole instruction the LORD your
God has commanded you, so that you may live, prosper, and have a long life in
the land you will possess.

5:5 One Hb ms, DSS, Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg read *words* **5:28** Lit *the sound of your*
5:2 Dt 31:16 **5:3** Dt 4:31 **5:6-21** Ex 20:2-17; Dt 8:14 **5:6** Lv 26:13; Dt 6:12; 8:14; 13:5,10; Jos 24:17; Jr 34:13 **5:9** Ex 34:7; Nm 14:18; Dt 7:10; Ezk 18 **5:11** Ex 3:13; 6:3; 33:19 **5:16-20** Mt 19:18-19; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20; Rm 13:9 **5:16** Mt 15:4; Mk 7:10; Eph 6:2-3 **5:17** Mt 5:21; Jms 2:11 **5:18** Mt 5:27 **5:20** Pr 25:18 **5:16-21** Mt 19:18-19; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20; Rm 13:9 **5:22-27** Ex 20:18-21

5:1-3 The laws found in Deuteronomy 5–11 are of a more general nature than those found in Deuteronomy 12–26. The present section naturally begins with the **covenant** God made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai. Moses asserted that this covenant had continuing significance for Israel and was not (merely) made with the previous generation but **with all** the living Israelites assembled.

5:6-21 Central to the covenant that God made with Israel at Horeb was the Ten Commandments, which are recounted here (see also Ex 20:1-17). These summarize the stipulations of God’s covenant with Israel. The other laws in Deuteronomy expand on these stipulations. Regarding the existence of **other gods**, see the note on Exodus 12:12.

5:23-27 Moses’s role as mediator had arisen in connection with the giving of the Ten Commandments because the Israelites were afraid when they heard God speaking (see also v. 5; Ex 20:18-21).

5:29 The Lord granted Israel’s request for a mediator (v. 28), but his wish that Israel **had such a heart to fear** [him] **and keep all** [his] **commands** implies that they did not have such a God-fearing heart (for other wishes employing the same Hebrew construction, see Ex 16:3; Nm 11:29). This implication is

disappointing given God's intention that the encounter at Mount Sinai would teach Israel this very thing (4:10; Ex 20:20).

THE GREATEST COMMAND

6 "This is the command — the statutes and ordinances — the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, so that you may follow them in the land you are about to enter and possess. † 2 Do this so that you may fear † the LORD your God † all the days of your life † by keeping all his statutes and commands I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life. † 3 Listen, Israel, and be careful to follow them, so that you may prosper and multiply greatly, because the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you a land flowing with milk and honey. †

4 "Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. † † 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. † 6 These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. † 7 Repeat them to your children. † Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol † on your forehead. † † 9 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.

REMEMBERING GOD THROUGH OBEDIENCE

10 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give you — a land with large and beautiful cities that you did not build, 11 houses full of every good thing that you did not fill them with, cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant † — and when you eat and are satisfied, † 12 be careful not to forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. † 13 Fear the LORD your God, worship him, and take your oaths in his name. † 14 Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you, 15 for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God. † Otherwise, the LORD your God will become angry with you and obliterate you from the face of the earth. 16 Do not test † the LORD your God as you tested him at Massah. † 17 Carefully observe the commands of the LORD your God, the

decrees and statutes he has commanded you. 18 Do what is right and good in the LORD's sight, so that you may prosper and so that you may enter and possess the good land † the LORD your God swore to give your fathers, †

JUDAISM

Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children"(Dt 6:4-7).

These vibrant words continue to be recited by observant Jews as the central component of their daily morning and evening prayers. Known as the Shema, it is the dominant expression of the fundamental axioms of Judaism: (1) absolute monotheism, (2) unwavering and holistic love for God, and (3) steadfast commitment to the teachings of Scripture as rightly interpreted and applied.

HISTORY OF JUDAISM

Repeated six times in just the book of Genesis, God entered into a special covenant relationship with Abraham and his Hebrew descendants with a promise of blessing should they remain faithful (Gn 12:1-3; 18:18-19; 22:17-18; 26:2-5; 28:13-15; 35:9-12). The Torah, meaning "teaching" or "law" and known in the OT as the Pentateuch, relays the Jewish understanding of creation, the election of Abraham and his family, the salvific redemption of the exodus, and the promulgation of the initial laws that form the foundation for faith. The *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings), subsequent sections in the Tanak, the Jewish acronym referencing the totality of the OT, offer an expanded understanding of faith as well as a theological reflection on the extent to which Jews historically embodied that faith.

Traces of modern Judaism are perhaps first located in the actions of Ezra. As theologically interpreted by multiple prophets, repeated failures in monotheistic belief, corporate societal injustice, and individual unrighteousness resulted in seventy years of Babylonian exile beginning in 597 BC (Is 28–30, 39–40; Jr 2–6, 25; Lm 1–2; Hab 1–2). When the Jews returned home to start a multi-generational process of painstaking restoration, a key architect was Ezra. He is remembered today as the "Father of Judaism." This moniker stems from Ezra's reestablishment of corporate ritual purity, Torah obedience, and protected ethnic homogenization maintained through marital endogamy, a practice that has helped the Jews remain a unique people group even in the midst of frequent dispersion (Ezr 8:15–10:17; Neh 8–10).

Additional developments following the years of Ezra include a religious shift from temple, priestly, and sacrificial focus to lay-rabbinical leadership and prayer and faithful study of the Torah. This corresponded with the slow emergence of synagogues, "houses of assembly" for prayer and study, and the office of Pharisee and Sadducee. Perhaps most significantly was an intensification of theology anticipating a salvific Messiah who would fully restore the Jewish nation in the vein of King David that endures even today as an expectant but unfulfilled hope. For many Jews, a crucified and resurrected Jesus remains an anathema.

When Roman forces destroyed the Jerusalem temple in AD 70, allegiance to the divinely revealed law strengthened and transitioned. Rabbis began teaching that at Mount Sinai, God handed down a two-part revelation. The first was the installation of 613 laws codified in the Torah and divided into 248 positive commandments and 365 negative ones. Moses was also gifted with a second revelation: the Talmud. The Talmud is an "oral Torah" comprised of two major sections, the Mishnah and Gemara, imparted first by Moses, preserved by prophets, and sealed by qualified rabbis around AD 500. With sixty-three tractates, the

Talmud is a central text of contemporary Judaism and channels the static, written laws of the Torah into an official interpretation of dynamic application to daily living that allows flexibility and ongoing adaptability of Jewish practice.

The razing of the temple further reinforced a migratory Diaspora of Jews living as minorities within other lands. Throughout medieval Europe, Jewish life ebbed and flowed often in newly emerging ghettos, special Jewish quarters frequently surrounded by walls with gates that closed at night. While this allowed the flourishing of a distinct ethnicity, religion, languages, and cultural customs within foreign lands, it foreshadowed darker measures. By the twentieth century, in many important respects, Eastern Europe, with its distinctive Yiddish dialect intermingling German and Hebrew, was the heart of Jewish civilization. Tragically, this time also corresponded to a mounting anti-Semitism.

By the middle of the twentieth century, two major developments were significantly altering contemporary Judaism. First was the emergence of Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaic groups. Reform Judaism, among other changes, rescinded dietary laws, prayer shawls, and head coverings in an attempt to conform tradition to modern realities by emphasizing ethics over ritual. Orthodox Judaism, on the other hand, has continued a strict traditional belief in the binding character of the Torah and Jewish laws and resists efforts to amend or otherwise conform. Conservative Judaism has sought a delicate middle ground, balancing traditional adherence with cautious openness and adaptation.

The horrors of the Holocaust and the genocidal elimination of six million Jews was the second major development of the twentieth century. It considerably bolstered Zionism, a modern political movement to secure a permanent Jewish homeland in Palestine. Though initially contentious, Zionism was essential to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, a process continuing to shape and divide the Middle East today.

JUDAISM TODAY

Though Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism have different approaches and emphases, Jews tend to agree that individuals are born with two intrinsic drives: *yetzer hatov*, the inclination to do good, and *yetzer hara*, the inclination to do evil. The latter inevitably results in sin, *averah*. *Yetzer hatov* leads individuals to obey the commandments of the Torah as interpreted by the Talmud and applied by the Halakhah, a Jewish legal tradition intended to govern every aspect of an individual's life and that of the community. In other words, when rightly interpreted, the *mitzvoth* (commandments) are not static but dynamic principles holistically applying to religious elements such as prayer and worship as well as to so-called secular areas such as male circumcision on the eighth day, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs celebrating adulthood, marriage, death and burial, the treatment of others, and food and its preparation. Halakhah is a lifestyle expecting external obedience leading to internal change.

To summarize, humanity needs to experience internal transformation, a process beginning with personal repentance completed by God who is Creator and ultimate Redeemer, and maintained when individuals faithfully choose to obey the Torah *mitzvoth* as rightly interpreted by the Talmud and applied to daily life by the Halakhah or "the way of walking." Importantly, Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Judaism expect different degrees of adherence and conformity to the Halakhah lifestyle. Individuals born into Judaism, which is a matrilineal religion, strive to live a life of obedience and worship of God. They are grateful for being born onto the path of salvation while non-Jews are welcomed to the faith through a process of conversion.

Key festivals and holy days as well as communal worship strengthen and reinforce adherence. The Sabbath (Shabbat) is the key weekly celebration beginning on Friday at sundown and ending at sundown on Saturday. Observant Jews utilize Friday evenings as occasion for communal services at local synagogues and spend the remainder of the Shabbat in rest. Other key celebrations include Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year, usually in September), Yom Kippur (a solemn day of repentance as the Day of Atonement), Sukkot (the Festival of Shelters, a celebratory autumn harvest festival), Hanukkah (an eight day celebration known as the Festival of Lights), Passover (a spring festival focusing on new life with a highly symbolic familial meal called the Seder) and the Festival of Weeks (seven weeks after Passover commemorating the giving of

the Torah).

At the heart of Judaism is the monotheistic worship of God. Prayer is most properly completed when offered in community and according to the appropriate prayer book, though individual, private, and spontaneous prayers are also encouraged. Prayer is further enhanced when complemented with a yarmulke (a head cap), tallit (a prayer shawl), and tefillin (a small black box containing the words of the Torah and attached to the forehead or arm by leather bands).

Worldwide, the number of messianic Jews remains small. According to Operation World, less than 2.5 percent of modern Israel is Christian. Given ongoing anti-Semitism and historical hostility, healthy interfaith dialogue and relationship building remains essential. Especially relevant, however, is the critical need to support Christian believers living within Israel—particularly those of Arab descent, who are often marginalized and caught in the crossfire of Arab-Israeli conflicts.

ELIJAH M. BROWN

CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

To have a biblical worldview is to interpret every aspect of life within the framework of God's story. At the center of God's story stands this singular act: in Jesus Christ, God personally intersected human history and redeemed humanity. Yet this central act does not stand alone. It is bordered by God's good creation and humanity's fall into sin on the one hand and by the consummation of God's kingdom on the other. This story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation is the story that Christians have repeated to one another and to the world ever since Jesus ascended into the sky and sent his Spirit to dwell in his first followers. This age-old plotline should frame every aspect of our lives—including how we treat and train children.

GIFTS FROM GOD AND SINNERS IN NEED

In each movement of God's storyline, children are neither burdens to be avoided nor by-products of sin. Every child is a gift (Ps 127:3-5). Even before humanity's fall, God designed the raising of children to serve as a means for multiplying his glory (Gn 1:26-28). After the fall, men and women still exercise divinely ordered dominion over creation by raising children (1:26-28; 8:17; 9:1-7; Mk 10:5-9). What has changed in the aftermath of the fall is that children have become not only gifts to be nurtured but also sinners to be trained.

The training of little ones is a primary parental responsibility. Parents are responsible not only to provide for their children's needs but also to train them to reflect God's glory. This doesn't release the larger faith community from a responsibility for shaping children's souls. The Great Commission to "make disciples" was given to the whole people of God and includes every age group (Mt 28:19). Parents may partner with church ministries or enlist teachers to develop certain skills in their children, but parents do bear final responsibility before God for how their children are trained for life.

In the OT, Moses commanded parents—particularly fathers—to train their children in God's ways (the pronouns translated "you" and "your" in Dt 6:6-7 are masculine singular in the original language). Moses expected children to ask their parents about their family's spiritual practices, and he prepared fathers to respond in ways that highlighted God's mighty works (Ex 12:25-28; Dt 6:20-25). These expectations

persisted throughout Israel's songs and early history (Jos 4:6; Ps 78:1-7). This ancient heritage of songs, statutes, and ceremonies foreshadowed the coming of Jesus and explicitly recognized the primacy of parents in their children's training.

Paul reiterated this in the NT when he reminded fathers to nurture their children in the "training and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). Paul seems to have derived this phrase from Deuteronomy 11:2, where "discipline of the LORD" prefaced a description of how God disciplined his people to remind them of his covenant with them.

In other letters, Paul applied these same two terms—*training* and *instruction*—to patterns that characterized the disciple-making relationships of brothers and sisters in the faith. *Training* implied discipline and described one of the key results of training in the words of God (2Tm 3:16). *Instruction* included warnings to avoid unwise behaviors and ungodly teachings (1Co 10:11; Ti 3:10). Such texts suggest that Paul was calling parents to do far more than manage their children's behaviors and provide for their needs. Paul expected parents to train their children to engage with their world in light of God's words and ways.

Children's training is worldview training. This training includes more than merely increasing children's biblical knowledge or involving them in a community of faith. Moses commanded the Israelites to teach their offspring to view all they did ("hand") and all they chose ("forehead"), as well as how they lived at home ("doorposts") and how they conducted business ("your city gates") within the all-encompassing framework of a God-centered worldview (Dt 6:8-9).

"Wisdom" in Proverbs was conveyed from parent to child and included not only knowledge about God but also practical skills for engaging with the world in light of God's truth. Skills in craftsmanship, leadership, and a broad range of other fields all fell under the heading of wisdom, which begins with "the fear of the LORD" (Pr 1:7). Persons outside the believing community may possess these skills, but only the believer sees them as God intended: they are signposts pointing to the order and glory of God. There is no biblical warrant for separating the training of children into "secular" and "sacred" categories, with one handled by the world and the other superintended by parents. God is Lord over all of life.

Children's training includes formal and informal components. Moses commanded the Israelites to teach God's words to their children and to discuss these truths informally throughout each day (Dt 6:7-9). In Proverbs, the father passed on particular teachings to his son (Pr 4:2) and provided occasional instructions in response to specific situations (4:1). The biblical pattern is for parents to be involved in formal and informal training. The book of Proverbs mentions the mother's role five times (1:8; 4:3; 6:20; 31:1,26). According to biblical scholar Peter Gentry, this inclusion of the mother is unparalleled in the Wisdom literature of ancient Near Eastern nations. In Scripture the father possessed a particular responsibility to lead, but the father's responsibility did not negate or diminish the mother's supportive role in the nurture and admonition of children.

EVERY CHILD IS MORE THAN A CHILD

No amount of training can ever raise a child to the level of God's perfect righteousness. Even the best training may not result in a child's perseverance in the faith. Proverbs 22:6, the text that declares "even when he grows old he will not depart," is not a promise to parents but a proverb. It's a pithy observation about how life typically works.

Every order of creation, including our relationships with children, has been subjected to frustration due to the fall (Rm 8:20-22). The ultimate solution is not better training but a perfect substitute—and that's precisely what God provided in Jesus Christ. Through Christ, God bridged the gap between his perfection and humanity's imperfection (2Co 5:21). The death of Jesus brought about the possibility of redemption here and now; his resurrection guaranteed the consummation of God's kingdom in the future.

This introduces a radical new dimension to how we view children. To embrace God's redemption is to be adopted in Jesus Christ as God's heir; it means gaining a new identity that transcends every earthly status (Rm 8:15-17; Gl 3:28-29; 4:3-7; Eph 1:5; 2:13-22). United in Christ with other believers, the church

becomes the believer's first family. Because the church is a family, in instances where one parent is absent or is an unbeliever, other believers may become that child's parents in the faith (2Tm 1:2,5; 3:15). "Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother," Jesus said (Mt 12:50). Paul made much the same point when he directed Timothy to encourage "younger men as brothers" and "younger women as sisters" (1Tm 5:1-2).

What this means for followers of Jesus is that every child is far more than a child. Every child is a potential or actual brother or sister in Christ. The children who stand beside us in eternal glory will not stand beside us as our children or as our students. They will stand beside us as our brothers and sisters, "heirs of God and coheirs with Christ" (Rm 8:17; see also Gl 4:7; Heb 2:11; Jms 2:5; 1Pt 3:7).

Every child is an eternal soul whose days will long outlast the rise and fall of earthly kingdoms. They and their children and their children's children will flit ever so briefly across this life before being swept away into eternity (Jms 4:14). If these children become our brothers and sisters in Christ, however, their days on this earth are preparatory for glory that will never end (Dn 12:3; 2Co 4:17–5:4; 2Pt 1:10-11). That's why our primary purpose for the children we educate must not be anything as small and miserable as earthly success. Our loving purpose should be to leverage children's lives to advance God's kingdom.

TIMOTHY PAUL JONES

19 by driving out all your enemies before you, as the LORD has said. †
20 "When your son asks you in the future, 'What is the meaning † of the
decrees, statutes, and ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you? '
21 tell him, 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of
Egypt with a strong hand. † 22 Before our eyes the LORD inflicted great and
devastating signs and wonders on Egypt, † on Pharaoh, and on all his
household, 23 but he brought us from there in order to lead us in and give us the
land that he swore to our fathers. 24 The LORD commanded us to follow all these
statutes and to fear the LORD our God for our prosperity always and for our
preservation, as it is today. 25 Righteousness will be ours if we are careful to
follow every one of these commands before the LORD our God, as he has
commanded us.'

6:4 Or *the Lord is our God; the Lord is one*, or *The Lord is our God, the Lord alone*, or *The Lord our God is one Lord* **6:8** Or *phylactery* ; Mt 23:5 **6:8** Lit *symbol between your eyes*

6:1 Dt 3:12 **6:2** Dt 14:23 **6:2** Dt 6:24; 10:12; 14:23; 17:19; 31:12-13; Jos 4:24; 24:14; 1Sm 12:14,24; 2Kg 17:34-39 **6:2** Dt 4:9; 16:3; 17:19; Jos 1:5; 4:14; 1Sm 1:11; 7:15; 1Kg 4:21; 11:34; 15:5-6; 2Kg 25:29-30 **6:2** Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16 **6:3** Ex 3:8,17; 13:5; 33:3; Lv 20:24; Nm 16:13-14; Dt 11:9; 26:9,15; 27:3; Jos 5:6; Jr 11:5; 32:22 **6:4** Zch 14:9; Mk 12:29,32; Rm 3:30; 1Co 8:6; Eph 4:6; 1Tm 2:5; Jms 2:19 **6:5** Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27 **6:6-9** Dt 11:18-20 **6:7** Dt 4:9-10 **6:8** Ex 13:16; Dt 11:18 **6:10-11** Jos 24:13 **6:11** Dt 8:10; Neh 9:25 **6:12** Lv 26:13; Dt 5:6; 8:14; 13:5,10; Jos 24:17; Jr 34:13 **6:13** Dt 10:12,20; 13:4; Jos 24:14; 1Sm 12:24; Mt 4:10; Lk 4:8; Rv 14:7 **6:15** Dt 5:9 **6:16** Ex 15:25; 16:4; Nm 14:22; Ps 78:18,41,56; 106:14; Mal 3:15; Mt 4:7; Lk 4:12 **6:16** Ex 17:1-7; Dt 9:22; 33:8; Ps 95:8-9 **6:18** Dt 8:7 **6:18** Dt 1:35 **6:19** Ex 34:11 **6:20** Jos 4:21 **6:21** Ex 3:19; 6:1; 13:9; 32:11; Nm 20:20; Dt 4:34; 5:15; 7:8; 9:26; 26:8; Ps 136:12; Jr 32:21; Ezk 20:33-34; Dn 9:15 **6:22** Neh 9:10; Ps 135:9; Is 20:3; Jr 32:20

6:4-9 This important passage is known as the *Shema*, for the Hebrew word translated **Listen.** Since **the LORD is One**, there are no other gods, and Israel was to love him with single-minded devotion. Jesus called this the "greatest and most important command" (Mt 22:36-38; Mk 12:28-30). The fundamental statement about the nature of God does not preclude the Trinity because the same word is used of Adam and Eve becoming "one flesh" in marriage (Gn 2:24; see "The Holy Trinity," *p. 1426*). See also "A Biblical View of Child Rearing," *p. 1451*.

6:16 The failures of the past were to serve as warnings for the present generation of the Israelites not to repeat the same mistakes (see also 4:3; 1Co 10:6). **Massah** was where Israel had complained about their thirst and then received water from the rock for the first time (Ex 17:1-7).

6:25 The possibility that Israel would obey all the **commands** and consequently have **righteousness** in the foreseeable future is highly doubtful in view of passages such as 4:25-31; 9:6; 29:4; 31:16-29.

ISRAEL TO DESTROY IDOLATROUS NATIONS

7 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land † you are entering to possess, † and he drives out many nations before you — the Hethites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations † more numerous and powerful than you † — 2 and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you and you defeat them, you must completely destroy † them. Make no treaty with them and show them no mercy. † 3 You must not intermarry with them, and you must not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, † 4 because they will turn your sons away from me to worship other gods. † Then the LORD's anger will burn against you, † and he will swiftly destroy you. 5 Instead, this is what you are to do to them: tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, cut down their Asherah poles, † and burn their carved images. 6 For you are a holy people † belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be his own possession † out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.
7 "The LORD had his heart set on you and chose you, not because you were more numerous than all peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But because the LORD loved † you and kept the oath he swore to your fathers, he brought you out with a strong hand and redeemed † you from the place of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his gracious covenant loyalty for a thousand generations with those who love him and keep his commands. † 10 But he directly pays

back † and destroys those who hate him. † He will not hesitate to pay back directly † the one who hates him. 11 So keep the command — the statutes and ordinances — that I am giving you to follow today.
12 "If you listen to and are careful to keep these ordinances, the LORD your God will keep his covenant loyalty with you, as he swore to your fathers. † 13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will bless your offspring, † † and the produce of your land — your grain, new wine, and fresh oil — the young of your herds, and the newborn of your flocks, in the land he swore to your fathers that he would give you. 14 You will be blessed above all peoples; there will be no infertile male or female among you or your livestock. 15 The LORD will remove all sickness from you; he will not put on you † all the terrible diseases of Egypt that you know about, but he will inflict them on all who hate you. 16 You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God is delivering over to you and not look on them with pity. Do not worship their gods, for that will be a snare to you.
17 "If you say to yourself, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I drive them out?' 18 do not be afraid of them. Be sure to remember what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and all Egypt: 19 the great trials that you saw, the signs and wonders, the strong hand and outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you fear. 20 The LORD your God will also send hornets against them until all the survivors and those hiding from you perish. † 21 Don't be terrified of them, for the LORD your God, a great and awesome God, is among you. 22 The LORD your God will drive out these nations before you little by little. You will not be able to destroy them all at once; otherwise, the wild animals will become too numerous for you. † 23 The LORD your God will give them over to you and throw them into great confusion until they are destroyed. 24 He will hand their kings over to you, and you will wipe out their names under heaven. No one will be able to stand against you; you will annihilate them. 25 Burn up the carved images of their gods. Don't covet the silver and gold on the images and take it for yourself, or else you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. 26 Do not bring any detestable thing into your house, or you will be set apart for

destruction like it. You are to abhor and detest it utterly because it is set apart for destruction.

7:10 Lit *He pays back to their faces* **7:10** Lit *to pay back to their faces* **7:13** Lit *bless the fruit of your womb* **7:1-5** Ex 23:23-26 **7:1** Dt 3:12 **7:1** Ac 13:19 **7:1** Ex 1:9 **7:2** Dt 20:17 **7:2** Pr 6:34; Is 9:17; 13:18; 27:11; 47:6; Jr 13:14; Hs 1:6,8; 2:4,23 **7:3** Jos 23:12-13; 1Kg 11:1-2; Ezr 9:12,14 **7:4** Dt 13:6,13; 17:3; 28:36,64; 29:26; Jos 23:16; 24:16; 1Sm 26:19; Jr 16:13 **7:4** Ex 22:24; Dt 11:17; 31:17; Jos 23:16 **7:5** Ex 34:13; Dt 12:2-3; Jdg 2:2 **7:6** Ex 22:31; Dt 14:2,21; 26:19; 28:9; Ps 16:3; Is 62:12; 63:18; Dn 8:24; 12:7 **7:6** Ex 19:5; Dt 14:2; 26:18-19; Ps 135:4; Ec 2:8; Mal 3:17 **7:8** Dt 4:37 **7:8** Dt 9:26; 15:15; 24:18 **7:9** Neh 1:5; Dn 9:4 **7:10** Ex 34:6-7 **7:12** Dt 4:31 **7:13** Dt 28:4 **7:15** Ex 15:26; 23:25; Dt 28:27,60 **7:20** Ex 23:28; Jos 24:12 **7:22** Ex 23:29-30

7:1-6 As God had said already (6:18-19; Nm 33:51-52), the Israelites were to drive out the peoples of the land and **completely destroy them** (see also vv. 5,16,24-26). The reason for these extreme measures was that the Canaanites' continued presence in the land would lead to intermarriage. This would lead the Israelites into idolatry, thus incurring the wrath of God against them (Ex 34:11-16). Importantly, Genesis 15:16 shows that the idolatry of the Canaanites had been going on for centuries, and Deuteronomy 12:31 shows that this idolatry had involved child sacrifice (see also Lv 18:21-24; 20:1-5; Dt 9:4-6). The Israelites were to be a **holy people**, distinct from the Canaanites and others (see 18:9-14; Lv 20:23).

7:7-9 Israel had been chosen and rescued by God not because of their greatness as a nation but because of his love and his faithfulness to his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

7:17-21 Israel's confidence that they could defeat these strong nations was to be based on God's help and his past victory over **Pharaoh** and **Egypt.** He is **a great and awesome God** who had done **signs and wonders** before and would do them again (see also 3:21-22).

REMEMBER THE LORD

8 "Carefully follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase, and may enter and take possession of the land † the LORD swore to your fathers. 2 Remember that the LORD your God led you on the entire journey these forty years in the wilderness, so that he might humble you and test you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. 3 He humbled you by letting you go hungry; then he gave you manna to eat, which you and your fathers had not known, so that you might learn that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. † 4 Your clothing did not wear out, and your feet did not swell these forty years. † 5 Keep in mind that the LORD your God has been disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. 6 So keep the commands of the LORD your God by walking in his ways and fearing him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, † a land with streams, springs, and deep water sources, flowing in both valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat, barley, vines, figs, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land where you

will eat food without shortage, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you will mine copper. 10 When you eat and are full, † you will bless the LORD your God for the good land † he has given you.
11 "Be careful that you don't forget the LORD your God by failing to keep his commands, ordinances, and statutes that I am giving you today. 12 When you eat and are full, and build beautiful houses to live in, 13 and your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold multiply, and everything else you have increases, 14 be careful that your heart doesn't become proud and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. † 15 He led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its poisonous † snakes and scorpions, a thirsty land where there was no water. He brought water out of the flint rock for you. 16 He fed you in the wilderness with manna, † which your fathers had not known, in order to humble and test you, so that in the end he might cause you to prosper. 17 You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' 18 but remember that the LORD your God gives you the power to gain wealth, in order to confirm his covenant he swore to your fathers, † as it is today. 19 If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods to serve them and bow in worship to them, I testify against you today that you will perish. † 20 Like the nations the LORD is about to destroy before you, you will perish if you do not obey the LORD your God.

8:15 Lit *burning*

8:1 Dt 3:12 **8:3** Mt 4:4; Lk 4:4 **8:4** Dt 29:5; Neh 9:21 **8:7** Ex 3:8; Nm 14:7; Dt 1:25,35; 3:25; 4:21-22; 6:18; 8:10; 9:6; 11:17; Jos 23:16 **8:10** Dt 11:15 **8:10** Dt 8:7 **8:14** Lv 26:13; Dt 5:6; 6:12; 13:5,10; Jos 24:17; Jr 34:13 **8:16** Ex 16:4 **8:18** Dt 4:31 **8:19** Dt 4:26

8:1 If Israel obeyed God's commands, they would take possession of the land and live in it prosperously (see also 4:40; 5:32-33; 6:1-3; 7:12-15; 28:1-14).

8:2-5 Once again, Israel's past was to serve as a lesson for their present situation (see the note on 6:16). The lesson here derives from God's guidance and provision for them during the last forty years in the wilderness. Through this lengthy experience, the Israelites were humbled and tested by God, who was **disciplining** [them] **just as a man disciplines his son** (see also Pr 3:11-12; Heb 12:5-11).

8:12-20 The Israelites were warned not to **forget the LORD** when enjoying abundance and material wealth in the promised land (see also 6:10-12). During such times, it would be easier for the Israelites to **become proud**, to forget that God had led and sustained them in the wilderness (see vv. 2-5), and to think that their wealth was a result of their own doing. Moses instructed them that it was God who **gives . . . the power to gain wealth** and that if they turned away from him they would **perish.**

WARNING AGAINST SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

WARNING AGAINST SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

9 “Listen, Israel: Today you are about to cross the Jordan to enter and drive out nations greater and stronger than you, † with large cities fortified to the heavens. † 2 The people are strong and tall, the descendants of the Anakim. † You know about them and you have heard it said about them, ‘Who can stand up to the sons of Anak? ’ † 3 But understand that today the LORD your God will cross over ahead of you † as a consuming fire; † he will devastate and subdue them before you. You will drive them out and destroy them swiftly, † as the LORD has told you. 4 When the LORD your God drives them out before you, do not say to yourself, ‘The LORD brought me in to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.’ † Instead, the LORD will drive out these nations before you because of their wickedness. † 5 You are not going to take possession of their land because of your righteousness or your integrity. Instead, the LORD your God will drive out these nations before you because of their wickedness, in order to fulfill the promise he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land † to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people. †

ISRAEL’S REBELLION AND MOSES’S INTERCESSION

7 “Remember † and do not forget how you provoked the LORD your God in the wilderness. You have been rebelling against the LORD from the day you left the land of Egypt until you reached this place. 8 You provoked the LORD at Horeb, and he was angry enough with you to destroy you. 9 When I went up the mountain to receive the stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant † the LORD made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I did not eat food or drink water. 10 On the day of the assembly the LORD gave me the two stone tablets, inscribed by God’s finger. † The exact words were on them, which the LORD spoke to you from the fire on the mountain. † 11 The LORD gave me the two stone tablets, the tablets of the covenant, at the end of the forty days and forty nights.

12 “The LORD said to me, ‘Get up and go down immediately from here. For your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly. They have quickly

turned from the way that I commanded them; they have made a cast image for themselves.’ † 13 The LORD also said to me, ‘I have seen this people, and indeed, they are a stiff-necked people. 14 Leave me alone, and I will destroy them and blot out their name under heaven. † Then I will make you into a nation stronger and more numerous than they.’
15 “So I went back down the mountain, while it was blazing with fire, and the two tablets of the covenant were in my hands. 16 I saw how you had sinned against the LORD your God; you had made a calf image for yourselves. You had quickly turned from the way the LORD had commanded for you. 17 So I took hold of the two tablets and threw them from my hands, shattering them before your eyes. † 18 I fell down like the first time in the presence of the LORD for forty days and forty nights; I did not eat food or drink water because of all the sin you committed, doing what was evil in the LORD’s sight and angering him. 19 I was afraid of the fierce anger the LORD had directed against you, † because he was about to destroy you. But again the LORD listened to me on that occasion. † 20 The LORD was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him. But I prayed for Aaron at that time also. 21 I took the sinful calf you had made and burned it. I crushed it, thoroughly grinding it to powder as fine as dust, and threw its dust into the stream that came down from the mountain. †
22 “You continued to provoke the LORD at Taberah, Massah, and Kibroth-hattaavah. † 23 When the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, he said, ‘Go up and possess the land I have given you’; you rebelled against the command of the LORD your God. You did not believe or obey him. † 24 You have been rebelling against the LORD ever since I have † known you. †
25 “I fell down in the presence of the LORD forty days and forty nights because the LORD had threatened to destroy you. 26 I prayed to the LORD:
Lord GOD, do not annihilate your people, your inheritance, whom you redeemed † through your greatness and brought out of Egypt with a strong hand. 27 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Disregard this people’s stubbornness, and their wickedness and sin. 28 Otherwise, those in the land you brought us from will say, ‘Because the LORD wasn’t able to bring them into the land he had promised them, and because he hated them, he brought them

out to kill them in the wilderness.' † 29 But they are your people, your inheritance, whom you brought out by your great power and outstretched arm. †

9:24 Sam, LXX read *since he has*
9:1 Dt 4:38; 11:23; Jos 17:18; Jdg 1:19 **9:1** Dt 1:28 **9:2** Dt 2:10; Jos 11:21-22; 14:12,15 **9:2** Nm 13:22; Jos 15:13-14; 21:11; Jdg 1:20 **9:3** Dt 31:3; Jos 3:11 **9:3** Ex 24:17; Dt 4:24; Is 29:6; 30:27,30; 33:14; Ezk 15:7; 19:12 **9:3** Dt 12:2; Jos 23:13 **9:4** Ps 31:1; 89:16; 119:40; Ezk 14:14,20; 18:22 **9:4** Pr 11:5 **9:6** Dt 8:7 **9:6** Ex 32:9; 33:3,5; 34:9; Dt 9:13 **9:7–10:11** Ex 32–34 **9:9** Ex 24:12; 31:18; Dt 9:11,15; Heb 9:4 **9:10** Ex 8:19; 31:18; Lk 11:20; Jn 8:6 **9:10** Dt 5:4,22; 10:4 **9:12** Ex 32:4,8; 34:17; Lv 19:4; Nm 33:52; Dt 27:15 **9:14** Ex 17:14; Dt 25:19; 29:20; 32:26; 2Kg 14:27; Ps 51:1,9; Jr 18:23 **9:17** Ex 32:19 **9:19** Heb 12:21 **9:19** Dt 10:10 **9:21** Ex 32:20 **9:22** Ex 17:1-7; Nm 11:1-35 **9:23** Nm 13–14 **9:24** Ps 95; 106 **9:26** Dt 7:8; 15:15; 24:18 **9:28** Nm 14:16 **9:29** 2Kg 17:36; Neh 1:10; Jr 27:5; 32:17

9:4-6 Just as Israel had not been chosen and loved by God because they were more numerous than other nations (7:7-9), neither were they chosen because of their **righteousness** or **integrity.** Rather, it was because of the wickedness of the inhabitants of the land that God would **drive out these nations** and because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see also Gn 15:16). Indeed, Israel was not righteous but was **a stiff-necked people.**

9:7-24 Israel's past sins while in the wilderness provided plenty of evidence for Moses's characterization of them as **a stiff-necked people** (vv. 6, 13; v. 27). They had been **rebelling against the LORD from the day** [they] **left the land of Egypt until** [they] **reached this place.** The prime example cited here was the sin of the golden calf, which **provoked the LORD** to the point that he wanted **to destroy** them (see also vv. 14,18-20,25). They had also angered God on many other occasions, including in their refusal to enter the land previously (see also 1:32).

THE COVENANT RENEWED

10 "The LORD said to me at that time, 'Cut two stone tablets like the first ones and come to me on the mountain and make a wooden ark. 2 I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets you broke, and you are to place them in the ark.' 3 So I made an ark of acacia wood, † cut two stone tablets like the first ones, and climbed the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. 4 Then on the day of the assembly, the LORD wrote on the tablets what had been written previously, the Ten Commandments that he had spoken to you on the mountain from the fire. The LORD gave them to me, 5 and I went back down the mountain and placed the tablets in the ark I had made. And they have remained there, as the LORD commanded me." †

6 The Israelites traveled from Beeroth Bene-jaakan † to Moserah. Aaron died and was buried there, and Eleazar his son became priest in his place. † 7 They traveled from there to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land with flowing streams. †

8 “At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi † to carry the ark of the
LORD’s covenant, to stand before the LORD to serve him, and to pronounce
blessings in his name, as it is today. 9 For this reason, Levi does not have a
portion or inheritance like his brothers; the LORD is his inheritance, as the LORD
your God told him. †
10 “I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights like the first time. The
LORD also listened to me on this occasion; † he agreed not to annihilate you.
11 Then the LORD said to me, ‘Get up. Continue your journey ahead of the
people, so that they may enter and possess the land I swore to give their
fathers.’ †

WHAT GOD REQUIRES

12 “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you except to fear †
the LORD your God by walking in all his ways, to love him, and to worship the
LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul? † 13 Keep the LORD’s
commands and statutes I am giving you today, for your own good. † 14 The
heavens, indeed the highest heavens, belong to the LORD your God, as does the
earth and everything in it. † 15 Yet the LORD had his heart set on your fathers
and loved them. † He chose their descendants after them — he chose you out of
all the peoples, as it is today. † 16 Therefore, circumcise your hearts † and
don’t be stiff-necked any longer. 17 For the LORD your God is the God of gods †
and Lord of lords, † the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, showing no
partiality and taking no bribe. † 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the
widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. † 19 You are
also to love the resident alien, since you were resident aliens in the land of
Egypt. † 20 You are to fear the LORD your God and worship him. Remain
faithful † to him and take oaths in his name. † 21 He is your praise and he is
your God, who has done for you these great and awe-inspiring works your eyes
have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt, seventy people in all, † and
now the LORD your God has made you numerous, like the stars of the sky. †

10:6 Or *from the wells of Bene-jaakan,* or *from the wells of the Jaakanites* **10:20** Lit *Hold on*
10:3 Ex 25:10; 37:1 **10:5** Ex 25:16; 1Kg 8:9; Heb 9:4 **10:6** Nm 20:22-29 **10:6-7** Nm 33:31-33 **10:8** Ex
27:21-28:1; 32:26-29; Nm 3:45; 18:19; 25:12-13; Dt 33:8-11 **10:9** Lv 25:32-34; Nm 18:20; 26:62; Dt 18:1-

2; Jos 13:14,33; Ezk 44:28-30 **10:10** Dt 9:19 **10:11** Dt 1:35 **10:12** Dt 14:23 **10:12** Dt 6:5; 11:13; 13:3; 30:6; Jos 22:5; Mt 22:37 **10:13** Ex 15:26; Dt 4:40; 11:1; 26:17; 28:45; 30:16; 1Kg 2:3; 3:14; 6:12; 8:58,61; 9:6-7; 11:38; 2Kg 17:13; 23:3 **10:14** Ps 24:1 **10:15** Dt 4:37 **10:15** Dt 7:7; Ezk 20:5 **10:16** Dt 30:6; Jr 4:4; Rm 2:29 **10:17** Jos 22:22; Ps 50:1; 136:2; Dn 2:47; 11:36 **10:17** Ps 136:3; 1Tm 6:15; Rv 17:14; 19:6 **10:17** 2Ch 19:7; Jb 34:19; Mt 22:16 **10:18** Dt 27:19; Jr 22:3; Mal 3:5 **10:19** Lv 19:34 **10:20** Dt 6:13; 13:4 **10:22** Gn 46:27; Ex 1:5 **10:22** Gn 15:5; 22:17; 26:4

10:10-11 Moses continued to recount the golden calf incident, including his intercession (9:26-29) and the making of another set of stone tablets (10:1-5). Here he concluded with God's granting of his request for mercy. Truly, Israel was not receiving the land because of their own righteousness (9:4-6).

10:12-16 Having recounted some of their earlier failures, Moses called the Israelites to obedience. Evidently, fearing God (i.e., having an appropriate, deep respect for him) does not conflict with loving him (v. 12). The call to **circumcise your hearts** (cp. Jr 4:4), through its connection with the command not to **be stiff-necked any longer**, suggests an internal change resulting in willing obedience. It is doubtful whether Israel ever did or could do this, but later God promised that he would do it for them (30:6; see also Rm 2:29; Col 2:11).

REMEMBER AND OBEY

11 "Therefore, love the LORD your God and always keep his mandate and his statutes, ordinances, and commands. 2 Understand today that it is not your children who experienced or saw the discipline of the LORD your God:

His greatness, strong hand, and outstretched arm; † 3 his signs and the works he did in Egypt to Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his land; † 4 what he did to Egypt's army, its horses and chariots, when he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued you, and he destroyed them † completely; † 5 what he did to you in the wilderness until you reached this place; 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when in the middle of the whole Israelite camp the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their households, their tents, and every living thing with them. †

7 Your own eyes have seen † every great work the LORD has done.

8 "Keep every command I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to cross into and possess the land you are to inherit, 9 and so that you may live long † in the land the LORD swore to your fathers to give them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey. † 10 For the land you are entering to possess is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and irrigated by hand † as in a vegetable garden. 11 But the land you are entering to possess is a land of mountains and valleys,

watered by rain from the sky. 12 It is a land the LORD your God cares for. He is always watching over it † from the beginning to the end of the year.
13 "If you carefully obey my commands I am giving you today, to love the LORD your God and worship him with all your heart and all your soul, 14 I † will provide rain for your land in the proper time, the autumn and spring rains, † and you will harvest your grain, new wine, and fresh oil. † 15 I † will provide grass in your fields for your livestock. You will eat and be satisfied. † 16 Be careful † that you are not enticed to turn aside, serve, and bow in worship to other gods. †
17 Then the LORD's anger will burn against you. † He will shut the sky, and there will be no rain; † the land will not yield its produce, and you will perish quickly from the good land † the LORD is giving you.
18 "Imprint these words of mine on your hearts and minds, bind them as a sign on your hands, and let them be a symbol † on your foreheads. † 19 Teach them to your children, † talking about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 20 Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates, † 21 so that as long as the heavens are above the earth, your days and those of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your fathers. † 22 For if you carefully observe every one of these commands I am giving you to follow — to love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, and remain faithful † to him — 23 the LORD will drive out all these nations before you, and you will drive out nations greater and stronger than you are. † 24 Every place the sole of your foot treads will be yours. † Your territory will extend from the wilderness to Lebanon and from the Euphrates River † to the Mediterranean Sea. † 25 No one will be able to stand against you; the LORD your God will put fear and dread of you in all the land where you set foot, as he has promised you. †

A BLESSING AND A CURSE

26 "Look, today I set before you a blessing and a curse: † 27 there will be a blessing, if you obey the commands of the LORD your God I am giving you today, 28 and a curse, if you do not obey the commands of the LORD your God

and you turn aside from the path I command you today by following other gods you have not known. 29 When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess, you are to proclaim the blessing at Mount Gerizim and the curse at Mount Ebal. 30 Aren't these mountains across the Jordan, beyond the western road in the land of the Canaanites, who live in the Arabah, opposite Gilgal, near the oaks † of Moreh? 31 For you are about to cross the Jordan to enter and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you. When you possess it and settle in it, 32 be careful to follow all the statutes and ordinances I set before you today.

11:4 Lit *to this day* **11:10** Lit *foot* **11:14** DSS, Sam, LXX read *he* **11:15** DSS, Sam, LXX read *He* **11:18** Or *phylactery* ; Mt 23:5 **11:18** Lit *symbol between your eyes* ; Ex 13:16; Dt 6:8 **11:22** Lit *and hold on* **11:24** Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg, Vg read *the great river, the river Euphrates* **11:30** Sam, LXX, Syr, Aq, Sym read *oak* ; Gn 12:6

11:2 1Kg 8:42; 2Ch 6:32 **11:3** Ex 7–12 **11:4** Ex 14 **11:6** Nm 16 **11:7** Dt 3:21; 4:3; 29:2-3; Jos 24:7 **11:9** Dt 4:40; 5:16; 25:15 **11:9** Ex 3:17; Lv 20:24; Nm 13:27; Dt 6:3; 26:9,15; 27:3; 31:20; Jos 5:6; Jr 11:5; Ezk 20:6 **11:12** Is 27:3 **11:14** Jr 5:24; Jms 5:7 **11:14** Dt 7:13; 14:23; 18:4; 2Ch 32:28; Neh 10:39; 13:5,12; Hs 2:22; Jl 2:19,24 **11:15** Lv 25:19; Dt 6:11; 8:10; 31:20 **11:16** Ex 34:12; Dt 4:23; 6:12; 8:11; 12:13,19,30; 15:9 **11:16** Dt 17:3; 29:26; 30:17; Jos 23:16; Jdg 2:17; 2Ch 7:19,22 **11:17** Ex 22:24; Dt 7:4; 31:17; Jos 23:16 **11:17** 1Kg 8:35; 2Ch 2:6; 6:26; 7:13 **11:17** Dt 8:7 **11:19** Dt 4:9-10 **11:18-20** Dt 6:6-9 **11:21** Dt 1:35 **11:23** Dt 4:38; 9:1 **11:24-25** Jos 1:3-5 **11:24** Gn 15:18-20; Ex 23:31 **11:25** Dt 2:25 **11:26** Dt 30:15; Jr 21:8

11:1-32 This chapter concludes the general instructions given in Deuteronomy 5–11 and revisits some of the topics already discussed. Having witnessed the mighty acts of God with their **own eyes**, the (adult) Israelites were especially responsible both for obedience to God's **commands** (see the note on 4:1) and for instructing their **children** (see the note on 4:9-10). Their obedience would ensure their prosperous dwelling in the land for a long time, whereas disobedience would result in drought, famine, and destruction (see the note on 8:1). The mention of either a **blessing** or a **curse** contingent on obedience or disobedience places even greater importance on Israel's future conduct in terms of fidelity to their covenant relationship with God. The blessing and the curse would be proclaimed from **Mount Gerizim** and **Mount Ebal**, respectively (27:11–28:68; Jos 8:30-35).

THE CHOSEN PLACE OF WORSHIP

12 "Be careful to follow these statutes and ordinances in the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, † has given you to possess all the days you live on the earth. 2 Destroy completely all the places where the nations that you are driving out worship their gods † — on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every green tree. † 3 Tear down their altars, smash their sacred pillars, burn their Asherah poles, cut down the carved images of their gods, and wipe out their names from every † place. † 4 Don't worship the LORD your God this way. 5 Instead, turn to the place the LORD your God chooses † from all your

tribes to put his name for his dwelling and go there. 6 You are to bring there
your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tenths and personal contributions, †
your vow offerings and freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and
flocks. 7 You will eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice
with your household in everything you do, † because the LORD your God has
blessed you.
8 "You are not to do as we are doing here today; everyone is doing whatever
seems right in his own sight. † 9 Indeed, you have not yet come into the resting
place † and the inheritance † the LORD your God is giving you. 10 When you
cross the Jordan and live in the land the LORD your God is giving you to
inherit, † and he gives you rest from all the enemies around you and you live in
security, 11 then the LORD your God will choose the place to have his name
dwell. † Bring there everything I command you: your burnt offerings, sacrifices,
offerings of the tenth, personal contributions, † and all your choice offerings
you vow to the LORD. 12 You will rejoice † before the LORD your God — you,
your sons and daughters, your male and female slaves, and the Levite who is
within your city gates, since he has no portion or inheritance among you. †
13 Be careful not to offer your burnt offerings in all the sacred places you see.
14 You must offer your burnt offerings only in the place the LORD chooses in one
of your tribes, and there you must do everything I command you.

SLAUGHTERING ANIMALS TO EAT

15 "But whenever you want, you may slaughter and eat meat within any of your
city gates, † according to the blessing the LORD your God has given you. Those
who are clean or unclean may eat it, as they would a gazelle or deer, 16 but you
must not eat the blood; pour it on the ground like water. † 17 Within your city
gates you may not eat the tenth of your grain, new wine, or fresh oil; the
firstborn of your herd or flock; any of your vow offerings that you pledge; your
freewill offerings; or your personal contributions. † 18 You are to eat them in
the presence of the LORD your God at the place the LORD your God chooses —
you, your son and daughter, your male and female slave, and the Levite who is
within your city gates. Rejoice before the LORD your God in everything you do,
19 and be careful not to neglect the Levite, as long as you live in your land.

20 “When the LORD your God enlarges your territory as he has promised you, †
and you say, ‘I want to eat meat’ because you have a strong desire to eat meat,
you may eat it whenever you want. 21 If the place where the LORD your God
chooses to put his name is too far from you, you may slaughter any of your herd
or flock he has given you, as I have commanded you, and you may eat it within
your city gates whenever you want. 22 Indeed, you may eat it as the gazelle and
deer are eaten; both the clean and the unclean may eat it. 23 But don’t eat the
blood, since the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. †
24 Do not eat blood; pour it on the ground like water. † 25 Do not eat it, so that
you and your children after you will prosper, because you will be doing what is
right in the LORD’s sight.
26 “But you are to take the holy offerings you have and your vow offerings and
go to the place the LORD chooses. 27 Present the meat and blood of your burnt
offerings on the altar of the LORD your God. The blood of your other sacrifices is
to be poured out beside the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the
meat. 28 Be careful to obey all these things I command you, so that you and your
children after you may prosper forever, because you will be doing what is good
and right in the sight of the LORD your God.
29 “When the LORD your God annihilates the nations before you, † which you
are entering to take possession of, † and you drive them out and live in their
land, 30 be careful not to be ensnared by their ways † after they have been
destroyed before you. Do not inquire about their gods, asking, ‘How did these
nations worship their gods? I’ll also do the same.’ 31 You must not do the same
to the LORD your God, because they practice every detestable act, which the
LORD hates, for their gods. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire to
their gods. 32 Be careful to do everything I command you; do not add anything
to it or take anything away from it. †

12:3 Lit *that* **12:6** Lit *and the contributions from your hands* **12:7** Lit *you put your hand to*, also in v. 18 **12:11** Lit *tenth, the contributions from your hands* **12:17** Lit *or the contributions from your hands*
12:1 Ex 3:13,15-16; Dt 1:11,21; 4:1; 6:3; 27:3; Jos 18:3; Ezr 10:11; Ac 7:32 **12:2** Ex 23:23-26; 34:13; Dt 7:1-5 **12:2** 1Kg 14:23; 2Kg 16:4; 17:10; 2Ch 28:4; Is 57:5; Jr 2:20; 3:6,13; Ezk 6:13 **12:3** Ex 34:13; Dt 7:5; 2Kg 23:14; 2Ch 14:3; 31:1; 34:4,7; Is 27:9 **12:5** Dt 14:23-25; 15:20; 16:2,7,11,15-16; 17:8,10; 18:6; 26:2; 31:11; Jos 9:27 **12:8** Ex 15:26; Jdg 17:6; 21:25 **12:9** Dt 3:20; 5:14; 25:19; 28:65 **12:9** Dt 15:4 **12:10** Dt 15:4 **12:11** Dt 14:23; 16:2,6,11; 26:2 **12:12** Lv 23:40; Dt 14:26; 16:11-15; 26:11; 27:7 **12:12** Ex 20:10; Nm 18:20; Dt 5:14; 12:18; 14:21,27,29; 16:11,14; 23:16 **12:15-16** Dt 15:22-23 **12:16** Lv 17:10-14 **12:20** Ex 34:24 **12:23** Lv 17:11,14 **12:24** Lv 3:17; 7:26; 17:14; 19:26; Dt 15:23; 1Sm 14:34; Ezk 33:25 **12:29** Dt 19:1

12:29 Dt 3:12 **12:30** Ex 23:33; 34:12; Dt 7:16,25; Jos 23:13; Jdg 8:27; Ps 106:36; Heb 12:1 **12:32** Dt 4:2; Rv 22:18-19

12:1 In contrast to Deuteronomy 5–11 (see the note on 5:1-3), Deuteronomy 12–26 contains more specific laws related to life in the promised land.

12:2-14 The first group of laws in this section concern proper worship. The Israelites were to **destroy** the Canaanites' idols and places of worship (see also 7:5,25) and worship God at **the place the Lord . . . God chooses . . . to put his name for his dwelling** (see also vv. 18,21,26). They were not to worship God as they pleased (v. 8) but were to go to the designated location to offer sacrifices, eat, and rejoice there (vv. 5-7,11-14,17-18,26-28). After settling the Israelites in the land, God would choose the **place to have his name dwell.**

12:29-31 The Israelites were not even to be curious about the Canaanites' idolatry (see vv. 2-4), lest they be **ensnared.** The Lord characterized the inhabitants of the land as **practic**[ing] **every detestable act, which the LORD hates, for their gods**, including **even burn**[ing] **their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods** (see the note on 7:1-5).

THE FALSE PROPHET

13 "If a prophet or someone who has dreams † arises among you and proclaims a sign or wonder to you, 2 and that sign or wonder he has promised you comes about, but he says, 'Let us follow other gods,' which you have not known, 'and let us worship them,' 3 do not listen to that prophet's words or to that dreamer. For the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and all your soul. † 4 You must follow the LORD your God and fear him. You must keep his commands and listen to him; you must worship him and remain faithful † to him. † 5 That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, † because he has urged rebellion against the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the place of slavery, † to turn you from the way the LORD your God has commanded you to walk. You must purge the evil from you. †

DON'T TOLERATE IDOLATRY

6 "If your brother, the son of your mother, † or your son or daughter, or the wife you embrace, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods' — which neither you nor your fathers have known, 7 any of the gods of the peoples around you, near you or far from you, from one end of the earth to the other — 8 do not yield to him or listen to him. Show him no pity, † and do not spare him or shield him. † 9 Instead, you must kill him. Your hand is to be the first against him to put him to death, and then the hands of all

the people. † 10 Stone him to death for trying to turn you away from the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. † 11 All Israel will hear and be afraid, and they will no longer do anything evil like this among you. †
12 "If you hear it said about one of your cities the LORD your God is giving you to live in, 13 that wicked men have sprung up among you, led the inhabitants of their city astray, and said, 'Let us go and worship other gods,' which you have not known, † 14 you are to inquire, investigate, and interrogate thoroughly. If the report turns out to be true that this detestable act has been done among you, 15 you must strike down the inhabitants of that city with the sword. Completely destroy everyone in it as well as its livestock with the sword. 16 You are to gather all its spoil in the middle of the city square and completely burn the city and all its spoil for the LORD your God. The city is to remain a mound of ruins forever; † it is not to be rebuilt. 17 Nothing set apart for destruction is to remain in your hand, so that the LORD will turn from his burning anger and grant you mercy, show you compassion, and multiply you as he swore to your fathers. 18 This will occur if you obey the LORD your God, keeping all his commands I am giving you today, doing what is right in the sight of the LORD your God.

13:4 Lit *and hold on* **13:6** DSS, Sam, LXX read *If the son of your father or the son of your mother* **13:8** Lit *Your eye must not pity him*

13:1 1Sm 28:6,15; Jr 23:27,32; 29:8; Zch 10:2 **13:3** Dt 6:5; 11:13; Jos 22:5; Mt 22:37 **13:4** Dt 10:20; Jr 13:10; 25:6 **13:5** Jos 1:18 **13:5** Lv 26:13; Dt 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:10; Jos 24:17; Jr 34:13 **13:5** Dt 17:7,12; 19:13,19; 21:9,21; 22:21-24; 24:7; Ezk 20:38; 22:15 **13:8** Dt 7:16; 19:13,21; 25:12 **13:9** Dt 17:7 **13:10** Lv 24:16; Dt 17:5; 21:21; 1Kg 21:13 **13:11** Dt 19:20 **13:12-15** Dt 17:2-5 **13:16** Jr 25:9; 49:13; Mal 1:4

13:1-5 The concern for proper and exclusive worship of God in the previous chapter continues in these instructions regarding false prophets. Even if a **sign or wonder he has promised . . . comes about**, such prophets were not to be followed because they teach **rebellion against the LORD** (see also 18:20-22). That false prophets may possess some unusual power is confirmed by several other passages (e.g., Ex 7:8-12; Mt 7:21-23; Rv 13:11-14; 16:14; 19:20). This reality shows the importance of examining a person's teaching and not simply following someone who demonstrates spiritual influence or power.

13:6-18 These laws demonstrate that Israel's loyalty to God was to have an even higher priority than their loyalty to family, friends, and nation. Likewise, Jesus requires his followers to love him more than any other (Lk 14:26).

FORBIDDEN PRACTICES

14 "You are sons of the LORD your God; † do not cut yourselves or make a bald spot on your head † on behalf of the dead, † 2 for you are a holy

people belonging to the LORD your God. The LORD has chosen you to be his own possession † out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN FOODS

3 "You must not eat any detestable thing. 4 These are the animals you may eat:

oxen, sheep, goats,
5 deer, gazelles, roe deer,
wild goats, ibexes, antelopes,
and mountain sheep.

6 You may eat any animal that has hooves divided in two and chews the cud. †
7 But among the ones that chew the cud or have divided hooves, you are not to eat these:

camels, hares, and hyraxes,
though they chew the cud, they do not have hooves —
they are unclean for you;
8 and pigs, though they have hooves, they do not chew the cud —
they are unclean for you.

Do not eat their meat or touch their carcasses. †
9 "You may eat everything from the water that has fins and scales, 10 but you may not eat anything that does not have fins and scales — it is unclean for you. †
11 "You may eat every clean bird, 12 but these are the ones you may not eat:

eagles, bearded vultures,
black vultures, 13 the kites,
any kind of falcon, †
14 every kind of raven, 15 ostriches,
short-eared owls, gulls,

any kind of hawk,
16 little owls, long-eared owls,
barn owls, 17 eagle owls,
ospreys, cormorants, 18 storks,
any kind of heron,
hoopoes, and bats. † †

19 All winged insects are unclean for you; they may not be eaten. 20 But you may eat every clean flying creature. †
21 "You are not to eat any carcass; you may give it to a resident alien within your city gates, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. For you are a holy people belonging to the LORD your God. Do not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

A TENTH FOR THE LORD

22 "Each year you are to set aside a tenth of all the produce grown in your fields. 23 You are to eat a tenth of your grain, new wine, and fresh oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, in the presence of the LORD your God at the place where he chooses to have his name dwell, † so that you will always learn to fear † the LORD your God. 24 But if the distance is too great for you to carry it, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to put his name is too far away from you and since the LORD your God has blessed you, 25 then exchange it for silver, take the silver in your hand, and go to the place the LORD your God chooses. 26 You may spend the silver on anything you want: cattle, sheep, goats, wine, beer, or anything you desire. You are to feast there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice with your family. 27 Do not neglect the Levite within your city gates, since he has no portion or inheritance among you. †
28 "At the end of every three years, bring a tenth of all your produce for that year and store it within your city gates. 29 Then the Levite, who has no portion or inheritance among you, the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow within your city gates may come, eat, and be satisfied. † And the LORD your God will bless you in all the work of your hands that you do. †

14:1 Or *forehead* **14:6** The Hb does not specify chewing the cud, but bringing up partially digested food

and swallowing it again. **14:13** Some Hb mss, Sam, LXX; other Hb mss, Vg read *the falcon, the various kinds of kite* **14:5-18** The identification of some of these animals is uncertain.
14:1 Ex 4:22-23; Dt 32:6 **14:1** Lv 19:28 **14:2** Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6 **14:4-8** Lv 11:1-8 **14:9-10** Lv 11:9-12 **14:11-18** Lv 11:13-19 **14:19-20** Lv 11:20-23 **14:23** Dt 12:11 **14:23** Dt 4:10; 6:2; 10:12; 17:19; 31:12-13; Jos 4:24; 24:14; 1Sm 12:14; 2Kg 17:25; Ps 15:4 **14:26-27** Dt 12:12,18-19 **14:28-29** Dt 26:12 **14:29** Dt 30:9

14:1-2 Israel's call to be distinct in this area (see also Lv 19:28; 21:5) was based on the fact that they were **a holy people** (see also Lv 19:2; 20:23) and **sons of the LORD** [their] **God** (see also Mt 5:9,44-45).

14:3-21 The concern for Israel's holiness continues in this section on dietary laws (see v. 21), which is similar to Leviticus 11 (see the notes on Lv 11:1 and 11:44-47). On the boiling of a young goat in its **mother's milk**, see the note on Exodus 23:19.

14:22-29 A tenth (or tithe) of the Israelites' crops were to be brought annually to God to **the place where he chooses to have his name dwell** (see the note on 12:2-14). They were not to neglect the Levites, who had **no portion among** them, or **the resident alien** (the foreigner)**, the fatherless,** or **the widow** (see also 10:18; 12:12,18-19; 16:11,14; 26:12-13).

DEBTS CANCELED

15 "At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. † 2 This is
how to cancel debt: Every creditor † is to cancel what he has lent his
neighbor. He is not to collect anything from his neighbor or brother, because the
LORD's release of debts has been proclaimed. 3 You may collect something from
a foreigner, but you must forgive whatever your brother owes you.
4 "There will be no poor among you, however, because the LORD is certain to
bless you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an
inheritance † — 5 if only you obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow
every one of these commands I am giving you today. 6 When the LORD your
God blesses you as he has promised you, you will lend to many nations but not
borrow; you will rule many nations, but they will not rule you.

LENDING TO THE POOR

7 "If there is a poor person among you, one of your brothers within any of your
city gates in the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or
tightfisted toward your poor brother. 8 Instead, you are to open your hand to him
and freely loan him enough for whatever need he has. 9 Be careful that there
isn't this wicked thought in your heart, 'The seventh year, the year of canceling
debts, is near,' and you are stingy toward your poor brother and give him
nothing. He will cry out to the LORD against you, and you will be guilty. 10 Give
to him, and don't have a stingy heart † when you give, and because of this the

LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you do. †
11 For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; † that is why I am commanding you, ‘Open your hand willingly to your poor and needy brother in your land.’

RELEASE OF SLAVES

12 “If your fellow Hebrew, a man or woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, you must set him free in the seventh year. † 13 When you set him free, do not send him away empty-handed. 14 Give generously to him from your flock, your threshing floor, and your winepress. You are to give him whatever the LORD your God has blessed you with. 15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed † you; that is why I am giving you this command today. † 16 But if your slave says to you, ‘I don’t want to leave you,’ because he loves you and your family, and is well off with you, 17 take an awl and pierce through his ear into the door, and he will become your slave for life. Also treat your female slave the same way. 18 Do not regard it as a hardship † when you set him free, because he worked for you six years — worth twice the wages of a hired worker. Then the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do. †

CONSECRATION OF FIRSTBORN ANIMALS

19 “Consecrate to the LORD your God every firstborn male produced by your herd and flock. † You are not to put the firstborn of your oxen to work or shear the firstborn of your flock. 20 Each year you and your family are to eat it before the LORD your God in the place the LORD chooses. 21 But if there is a defect in the animal, if it is lame or blind or has any serious defect, you may not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22 Eat it within your city gates; both the unclean person and the clean may eat it, as though it were a gazelle or deer. 23 But you must not eat its blood; pour it on the ground like water. †

15:2 Lit *owner of a loan of his hand* **15:10** Lit *and let not your heart be grudging* **15:10** Lit *you put your hand to* **15:18** Lit *Let it not be hard in your sight*
15:1 Ex 22:25-27; Lv 25 **15:4** Ex 32:13; Lv 20:24; Dt 4:21; 12:10; 16:20; 19:10; 21:23; 24:4; 25:19; 26:1; 29:8; Jos 1:6 **15:11** Mt 26:11 **15:12** Jr 34:14 **15:15** Ex 15:13; Dt 7:8; 9:26; 24:18 **15:15** Dt 24:18,22 **15:12-18** Ex 21:2-11 **15:19** Lv 23:9-14 **15:22-23** Dt 12:15-16,22-24

15:7 The preceding verses had just promised the Israelites that there would “be no poor among” them if

they carefully obeyed all of God's commands because God would bless them abundantly (vv. 4-6). The situation set forth in verse 7 **(If there is a poor person among you)** thus suggests that the Israelites would not fulfill this condition (see also 4:25-31; 31:16-29; and the note on 19:1-3). Verse 11 goes even further, declaring that "there will never cease to be poor people in the land." For this reason, the Israelites were commanded to cancel debts every seven years (vv. 1-3; see also vv. 12-18) and still to be generous lenders (vv. 7-11). These instructions are paralleled by Exodus 21:2-6 and Leviticus 25:2-7.

15:19-23 The consecration of **firstborn male** animals was also discussed in several passages previously (Ex 13:11-15; 22:29-30; Nm 18:15-18). As stated in 12:5-7, these animals were to be brought to **the place the LORD chooses** and eaten there (see also 14:23; 16:2,6-7).

THE FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER

16 "Set aside the month of Abib † † and observe the Passover to the LORD your God, because the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night in the month of Abib. † 2 Sacrifice to the LORD your God a Passover animal from the herd or flock in the place where the LORD chooses to have his name dwell. † 3 Do not eat leavened bread with it. † For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread with it, the bread of hardship — because you left the land of Egypt in a hurry † — so that you may remember for the rest of your life the day you left the land of Egypt. 4 No yeast is to be found anywhere in your territory for seven days, † and none of the meat you sacrifice in the evening of the first day is to remain until morning. † 5 You are not to sacrifice the Passover animal in any of the towns the LORD your God is giving you. 6 Sacrifice the Passover animal only at the place where the LORD your God chooses to have his name dwell. Do this in the evening as the sun sets at the same time of day you departed from Egypt. 7 You are to cook and eat it in the place the LORD your God chooses, and you are to return to your tents in the morning. 8 Eat unleavened bread for six days. On the seventh day there is to be a solemn assembly to the LORD your God; do not do any work.

THE FESTIVAL OF WEEKS

9 "You are to count seven weeks, counting the weeks from the time the sickle is first put to the standing grain. † 10 You are to celebrate the Festival of Weeks † to the LORD your God with a freewill offering † that you give in proportion to how the LORD your God has blessed you. 11 Rejoice † before the LORD your God in the place where he chooses to have his name dwell — you, your son and daughter, your male and female slave, the Levite within your city gates, as well

as the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow among you. 12 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt; carefully follow these statutes.

THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

13 "You are to celebrate the Festival of Shelters † for seven days when you have gathered in everything from your threshing floor and winepress. † 14 Rejoice during your festival — you, your son and daughter, your male and female slave, as well as the Levite, the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow within your city gates. 15 You are to hold a seven-day festival for the LORD your God in the place he chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, † and you will have abundant joy.

16 "All your males are to appear three times a year † before the LORD your God in the place he chooses: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters. No one is to appear before the LORD empty-handed. † 17 Everyone must appear with a gift suited to his means, according to the blessing the LORD your God has given you.

APPOINTING JUDGES AND OFFICIALS

18 "Appoint judges and officials for your tribes in all your towns the LORD your God is giving you. They are to judge the people with righteous judgment. 19 Do not deny justice or show partiality to anyone. Do not accept a bribe, for it blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous. † 20 Pursue justice and justice alone, so that you will live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you. †

FORBIDDEN WORSHIP

21 "Do not set up an Asherah of any kind of wood next to the altar you will build for the LORD your God, 22 and do not set up a sacred pillar; the LORD your God hates them. †

16:1 March–April; called Nisan in the post-exilic period; Neh 2:1; Est 3:7
16:1-8 Ex 12 **16:1** Ex 13:4; 23:15; 34:18 **16:2** Dt 12:11 **16:3** Ex 12:15; 13:6-7; 23:15; 34:18; Lv 23:6; Nm 28:17; 2Ch 30:21; 35:17; Ezr 6:22; Ezk 45:21; Ac 20:6 **16:3** Ex 12:11 **16:4** Ex 12:39; 13:7 **16:4** Ex 12:10; Lv 7:17; 8:32 **16:9-12** Lv 23:15-21 **16:10** Ex 34:22; Nm 28:26; 2Ch 8:13 **16:10** Ex 35:29; Lv 7:16; 22:21,23; Nm 15:3; Ezr 1:4,6; 8:28; Ps 54:6 **16:11** Lv 23:40; Dt 12:12; 14:26; 26:11; 27:7 **16:13** Lv 23:34; Dt 31:10; 2Ch 8:13; Ezr 3:4; Zch 14:16-19 **16:13-15** Lv 23:33-43 **16:15** Ex 23:14,17; 34:23-24; 1Kg 9:25 **16:16** Ex 23:14,17; 34:23-24; 1Kg 9:25; Lk 2:42 **16:16** Ex 3:21; 23:15; 34:20 **16:19** Ex 23:8; Dt 10:17; 27:25; 1Sm 12:3; 2Ch 19:7; Ps 15:5; Pr 17:23; Is 33:15; Ezk 22:12; Am 5:12 **16:19-20** Ex 23:2-9 **16:21-22**

Dt 7:1-5; 12:2-3; 2Kg 23:2-6

16:5-7 The **Passover** was not to be celebrated in the people's towns or homes, as it was originally (Ex 12:1-11,24-27,46), but at **the place the LORD . . . chooses** (see vv. 11,15,16; 12:1-14).

16:11,14 The instructions for both the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Shelters make the point that Israel was to rejoice not only with their family but also with their **male and female slaves** and with the needy (i.e., the **Levite**, the **resident alien**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow**; see the note on 14:22-29). The Israelites were not to forget that they too were in great need before as **slaves in Egypt** (see also 10:19).

17 "Do not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or sheep with a defect or any serious flaw, for that is detestable to the LORD your God. †

THE JUDICIAL PROCEDURE FOR IDOLATRY

2 "If a man or woman among you in one of your towns that the LORD your God will give you is discovered doing evil in the sight of the LORD your God and violating his covenant † 3 and has gone to serve other gods † by bowing in worship to the sun, moon, or all the stars in the sky † — which I have forbidden † — 4 and if you are told or hear about it, then investigate it thoroughly. If the report turns out to be true that this detestable act has been done in Israel, 5 you are to bring out to your city gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing and stone them to death. † 6 The one condemned to die is to be executed on the testimony of two or three witnesses. † No one is to be executed on the testimony of a single witness. 7 The witnesses' hands are to be the first in putting him to death, and after that, the hands of all the people. † You must purge the evil from you. †

DIFFICULT CASES

8 "If a case is too difficult for you — concerning bloodshed, † lawsuits, † or assaults † — cases disputed at your city gates, † then go up to the place the LORD your God chooses. 9 You are to go to the Levitical priests and to the judge who presides at that time. Ask, and they will give you a verdict in the case. 10 You must abide by the verdict they give you at the place the LORD chooses. Be careful to do exactly as they instruct you. 11 You must abide by the instruction they give you and the verdict they announce to you. Do not turn to the right or the left from the decision they declare to you. 12 The person who acts arrogantly, refusing to listen either to the priest who stands there serving the

LORD your God or to the judge, must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. 13 Then all the people will hear about it, be afraid, and no longer behave arrogantly.

APPOINTING A KING

14 "When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, † take possession of it, live in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations around me,' 15 you are to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. † Appoint a king from your brothers. You are not to set a foreigner over you, or one who is not of your people. † 16 However, he must not acquire many horses for himself or send the people back to Egypt to acquire many horses, for the LORD has told you, 'You are never to go back that way again.' † 17 He must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray. † He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself. † 18 When he is seated on his royal throne, he is to write a copy of this instruction for himself on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. 19 It is to remain with him, and he is to read from it all the days of his life, so that he may learn to fear † the LORD his God, to observe all the words of this instruction, and to do these statutes. 20 Then his heart will not be exalted above his countrymen, he will not turn from this command to the right or the left, and he and his sons will continue reigning many years † in Israel.

17:20 Lit *will lengthen days on his kingdom*

17:1 Lv 3:1,6: 9:2-3; 21:17-23; 22:17-25; 23:12; Nm 19:2; Dt 15:21; Mal 1:8; Heb 9:14; 1Pt 1:19; 2Pt 3:14 **17:2** Dt 31:16 **17:3** Dt 13:6,13; Jos 23:16 **17:3** Dt 4:19; 2Kg 23:5; Jb 31:26-28; Ps 148:3; Is 24:23; 60:19-20; Jr 8:2 **17:2-5** Dt 13:12-15; 29:18 **17:5** Dt 22:24 **17:6** Dt 19:15; Mt 18:16; 2Co 13:1; 1Tm 5:19; Heb 10:28 **17:7** Dt 13:9 **17:7** Dt 13:5; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21-24; 24:7; 1Co 5:13 **17:8** Ex 21:12-14,18-25; Nm 35:9-34; Dt 19:1-13; 25:7 **17:8** Ex 22:6-14 **17:8** Ex 21:22-26; Lv 24:19-20 **17:8** Dt 21:19; 22:15 **17:14** Dt 26:1 **17:14-15** 1Sm 8:4-22 **17:15** Gn 17:6,16; 35:11; Nm 24:17-19 **17:16** 1Kg 10:28-29 **17:17** 1Kg 11:3-4 **17:17** 1Kg 10:21-25 **17:19** Dt 14:23

17:2-13 Israel was to seek "justice and justice alone" (16:20), part of which included thorough investigation of alleged idolatry (vv. 2-4) and requiring a sufficient number of witnesses prior to executing the guilty (vv. 5-7; see also 19:15-21; "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment" on *p. 105*). Cases that were too difficult to decide were to be brought **to the place the LORD . . . chooses**, **to the Levitical priests and to the judge who presides.** Their decisions would be binding.

17:14-20 The Israelites did not then have a human king (see Jdg 8:23), though they would desire one later. The questionable motive of wanting to be **like all the nations around** them foreshadows the impetus for Saul's reign (1Sm 8:5-9,19-20). The prohibitions against the acquisition of **many horses**, **many wives**, and

large amounts of silver and gold foreshadow Solomon's failure in all three areas (1Kg 10:14-28; 11:1-6). The king was not above God's law but subject to it like other Israelites (vv. 18-20).

PROVISIONS FOR THE LEVITES

18 "The Levitical priests, the whole tribe of Levi, will have no portion or
inheritance with Israel. They will eat the LORD's fire offerings; that is
their † † inheritance. 2 Although Levi has no inheritance among his
brothers, the LORD is his inheritance, as he promised him. † 3 This is the priests'
share from the people who offer a sacrifice, whether it is an ox, a sheep, or a
goat; the priests are to be given the shoulder, jaws, and stomach. 4 You are to
give him the firstfruits of your grain, new wine, and fresh oil, † and the first
sheared wool of your flock. 5 For the LORD your God has chosen him and his
sons from all your tribes to stand and minister in his name from now on. †
6 When a Levite leaves one of your towns in Israel where he was staying and
wants to go to the place the LORD chooses, 7 he may serve in the name of the
LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who minister there in the presence of the
LORD. 8 They will eat equal portions besides what he has received from the sale
of the family estate. † †

OCCULT PRACTICES VERSUS PROPHETIC REVELATION

9 "When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not imitate the
detestable customs of those nations. †

SPIRITISM, ANIMISM, AND CYNICISM IN BIBLICAL TIMES

ANIMISM

Animism (Lat *anima*, meaning "soul, life") is the belief that innumerable spirits (souls) inhabit the world and that they are inextricably connected to persons, places, and things—even things like trees and rocks. Animism believes that all animate (living) and inanimate (nonliving) entities are by nature "soulish."

Religion historians in the nineteenth century believed that animism was the religious viewpoint of primitive, preliterate cultures. Animism was considered to be an early step in the development (evolution) of religious belief. The progression was thought to have gone from the simplest superstition to the

polytheism of the ancient high cultures and on to the monotheism of revealed religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam). E. B. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1871) offered historians a rational basis for explaining this stepwise development of religion. The theory failed, however, when anthropological studies questioned the unfounded presupposition that religion in primitive cultures was an intellectual development instead of an intuitive need for a superior being. Also, the theory collapsed because there was no evidence that religion had a uniform, linear development from simple forms to complex systems of thought. The history of religious development was not as simple as many had supposed.

The Bible's creation account and the biblical worldview as a whole indicate that there are distinct categories of animate and inanimate things. Rocks and trees do not have souls. Further, the origin of religion was revealed by God, not invented by human intellectual or cultural progress. People are intuitively aware of a divine being by virtue of their creation in the image of God (Gn 1:26) and by their internal conscience and external ability to observe and reason (Rm 1:18-21).

SPIRITISM

Spiritism, also called Spiritualism, is subject to varying understandings and can be confused with any philosophical or religious system that embraces a reality that is immaterial (e.g., God, spiritual power, universal intellect). Spiritism, however, is a particular belief system regarding the existence of a non-corporeal world—a realm that is real but non-physical.

Spiritism believes there is a connection between deceased beings (souls) and living beings (mortals). There is an immaterial world of disembodied spirits that climb an evolutionary ladder to perfection and happiness through a series of reincarnations into the material world where the spirit learns and develops. It is believed that disembodied spirits are eternal and have the ability to inhabit a body and to communicate with the material world. The connection between the spirit world and the material world is usually facilitated through a medium, a living human. The medium is typically in an altered state mentally and/or physically. Also, there may be a spirit "on the other side" who functions as the agent of conveyance to the human medium. Besides the use of human mediums, spirits make contact with the material world through apparitions, dreams, levitation, and materializing (incarnating).

Spiritism is not necessarily nonreligious or irreligious, although its chief adherents consider it to be more of a science than a religion. All religions are considered valid by spiritists since they are a means whereby the "Infinite Intelligence" (God) makes himself known. Spiritism as a science seeks to investigate on a rational basis the agencies whereby the spiritual world and material world intersect.

For example, many of its advocates propose following the ethical teachings of Jesus. Spiritism had its primary catalyst in the mid-nineteenth century, in the Frenchman Allan Kardec, whose writing *What is Spiritism?* provided the main tenets of the movement. The most celebrated case in North America was the incident of the Fox household in Hydesville, New York. In 1848, the Fox daughters devised a system of raps and knocks to communicate with the spirit of a former resident of the house. The spiritists' phenomenon reached its height in the 1840s to the 1920s and was popular among common households that held parlor séances. A séance involves a medium who claims to have a channel with departed souls and a group of believers gathered around a table. Spiritist practices received a mixed reception from the public, for many judged it fraudulent or evil.

In the biblical view, spiritist practices are vociferously condemned. It is at its best regarded as the blatant rejection of God's Word and at its worst as contact with demons. Ancient peoples regularly practiced diviners' arts: divination and magic, for example, were abilities that could earn one a living and a high reputation. Discerning the future and manipulating the gods for a favorable outcome by using divination, incantation, and magic emerged from fear of spiritual powers (gods, demons). Deuteronomy 18:10-14 established the general policy that prohibits such practices.

Yet the Bible also permitted some forms of divination, such as casting lots and interpreting dreams—though only on a limited basis (Nm 12:6; Jos 18:6). It was assumed that the Lord superintends such practices to achieve his will (Pr 16:33). There was, however, condemnation of seeking spiritists. Doing so

resulted in capital punishment for the guilty (Lv 19:31; 20:6,27). A case of necromancy occurred during the reign of King Saul, who consulted the witch of En-dor, a medium who facilitated the appearance of the deceased prophet Samuel (1Sm 28:7-19). Saul's action resulted in his excommunication from any approved means of interaction with God.

CYNICISM

Cynicism (Gk *kunismos*, meaning "dog-like") in its modern usage refers to the derision of, or questioning of, someone's motivations, or it may indicate a person's general pessimism toward life. Classical Cynicism, however, was an ancient Greek philosophy that believed that virtue, not material possessions, was the way to happiness.

The major problem in defining the philosophy of the Cynics is the paucity of documents authored by Cynics themselves. The movement was more a way of life than a philosophical system. Its founder was either Antithenes (fifth century BC) or Diogenes of Sinope (fourth century BC). The latter was indisputably the chief proponent of Cynicism. He was famous for his antisocial behaviors; consequently, "shamelessness" was a feature of Cynicism. He contended that human reason was the purest expression of human nature. The "natural life," which was human primitivism, characterized Cynics who opposed social and political conventions.

Nevertheless, ancient Cynicism did not reject the morals of civilized society. In fact, it contributed significantly to Greek philosophy by its focus on ethics. Cynics taught and learned morality through personal self-control and asceticism. By training in austerity, a person could rise to self-sufficiency, living above selfish luxury. For example, Cynicism influenced Zeno, the founder of the philosophy of Stoicism, and the movement of Cynicism became overshadowed by it.

Although Cynicism and Christian asceticism exhibit parallels in attitude toward materialism, Christian ethics has its origin in the biblical tradition. Hebrew wisdom, for example, instructs that moderation—neither poverty nor riches—is the proper goal for living effectively (Pr 30:8). The apostle Paul learned to accept his condition in life, whether poor or rich, without worry (Php 4:11-13). Although self-sufficiency is commendable, self-sacrifice motivated by love is the highest Christian virtue. It is the proper response of a disciple to the voluntary self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ (2Co 8:9; Php 2:5-11). Happiness and a peaceful life are virtuous, but the greater ambition of a Christian is righteousness (2Tm 4:8; Heb 12:11).

KENNETH A. MATHEWS

10 No one among you is to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire, † † practice
divination, tell fortunes, interpret omens, practice sorcery, 11 cast spells, consult
a medium or a spiritist, or inquire of the dead. † 12 Everyone who does these
acts is detestable to the LORD, and the LORD your God is driving out the nations
before you because of these detestable acts. 13 You must be blameless before the
LORD your God. 14 Though these nations you are about to drive out listen to
fortune-tellers and diviners, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do this.
15 "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your
own brothers. † You must listen to him. 16 This is what you requested from the
LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, 'Let us not
continue to hear the voice of the LORD our God or see this great fire any longer,

so that we will not die!’ † 17 Then the LORD said to me, ‘They have spoken
well. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I
will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command
him. 19 I will hold accountable whoever does not listen to my words that he
speaks in my name. † 20 But the prophet who presumes to speak a message in
my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of
other gods — that prophet must die.’ 21 You may say to yourself, ‘How can we
recognize a message the LORD has not spoken? ’ 22 When a prophet speaks in the
LORD’s name, and the message does not come true or is not fulfilled, that is a
message the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously.
Do not be afraid of him.

18:1 LXX; MT reads *his* **18:1** Or *his* **18:5** Lit *name all the days* **18:8** Hb obscure **18:10** Lit *to make his son or daughter pass through the fire*

18:2 Nm 18:20; Dt 12:12; 14:27-29; Jos 14:4 **18:4** Dt 14:23; Neh 10:39; 13:5,12 **18:8** Nm 18:8-32 **18:9** Ex 23:24; Dt 20:18; 1Kg 14:24; 2Kg 17:15; Ezk 16:47 **18:10** Lv 18:21; 2Kg 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; Jr 32:35; Ezk 20:26,31; 23:37 **18:11** Lv 19:26,31; 20:6,27; Nm 22:7; 23:23; 1Sm 28:3; 2Kg 23:24; 2Ch 33:6; Is 2:6; 8:19; Jr 14:14; Ezk 13:7; 21:21; Mc 3:11 **18:15** Mt 21:11; Lk 2:25-34; 7:16; 24:19; Jn 1:21,25; 4:19; Ac 3:22; 7:37 **18:16** Ex 20:19; Dt 5:23-27 **18:19** Ac 3:23

18:15-22 This key passage explains prophecy as the primary vehicle for God’s revelation in the OT and sets forward the criteria by which the Israelites could recognize a true prophet (vv. 15-19) or a false one (vv. 20-22). The Israelites were not to be involved in the occult as the peoples of the land had been (vv. 9-14). Magic and divination attempt to extract information from a deity or to manipulate the gods to serve one’s own purposes. Instead, Moses states that a true prophet is an Israelite, called by God. God had told Moses, **I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.** Thus, the true prophet speaks only what God says, whether good news or bad, in contrast to the false prophet **who presumes to speak a message in** [God’s] **name that** [he has] **not commanded**. Speaking in God’s name without true revelation was a serious violation, calling for the death penalty.

CITIES OF REFUGE

19 “When the LORD your God annihilates the nations whose land he is
giving you, † so that you drive them out and live in their cities and
houses, 2 you are to set apart three cities for yourselves within the land the LORD
your God is giving you to possess. † 3 You are to determine the distances † and
divide the land the LORD your God is granting you as an inheritance into three
regions, so that anyone who commits manslaughter can flee to these cities. †
4 “Here is the law concerning a case of someone who kills a person and flees
there to save his life, having killed his neighbor accidentally without previously
hating him: 5 If, for example, he goes into the forest with his neighbor to cut

timber, and his hand swings the ax to chop down a tree, but the blade flies off the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies, that person may flee to one of these cities and live. 6 Otherwise, the avenger of blood in the heat of his anger † might pursue the one who committed manslaughter, overtake him because the distance is great, and strike him dead. Yet he did not deserve to die, † since he did not previously hate his neighbor. 7 This is why I am commanding you to set apart three cities for yourselves. 8 If the LORD your God enlarges your territory as he swore to your fathers, and gives you all the land he promised to give them — 9 provided you keep every one of these commands I am giving you today and follow them, loving the LORD your God and walking in his ways at all times — you are to add three more cities to these three. 10 In this way, innocent blood will not be shed, and you will not become guilty of bloodshed in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. † 11 But if someone hates his neighbor, lies in ambush for him, attacks him, and strikes him fatally, and flees to one of these cities, 12 the elders of his city are to send for him, take him from there, and hand him over to the avenger of blood and he will die. 13 Do not look on him with pity but purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, and you will prosper.

BOUNDARY MARKERS

14 "Do not move your neighbor's boundary marker, † established at the start in the inheritance you will receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

WITNESSES IN COURT

15 "One witness cannot establish any iniquity or sin against a person, whatever that person has done. † A fact must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. †

16 "If a malicious witness † testifies against someone accusing him of a crime, 17 the two people in the dispute are to stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and judges in authority at that time. 18 The judges are to make a careful investigation, and if the witness turns out to be a liar who has falsely accused his brother, 19 you must do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from you. 20 Then everyone else will hear and be

afraid, and they will never again do anything evil like this among you. † 21 Do not show pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, and foot for foot. †

19:3 Or *to prepare the roads* **19:3** Lit *flee there* **19:6** Lit *heart* **19:6** Lit *did not have a judgment of death* **19:1** Dt 12:29 **19:2-13** Nm 35:6-34; Jos 20 **19:10** Dt 15:4 **19:14** Dt 27:17; Pr 22:28; Hs 5:10 **19:15** Nm 35:30 **19:15** Mt 18:16; Jn 8:17; 2Co 13:1 **19:16** Ex 23:1 **19:20** Dt 13:11 **19:21** Ex 21:23-25; Lv 24:19-20; Mt 5:38

19:1-3 Moses had already set aside three cities of refuge in Israelite territory east of the Jordan (4:41-43), and he reiterated here that three more cities were to be set apart in the land of Canaan (see also the note on Nm 35:9-34). Moses additionally mentioned here that the Israelites were to set aside yet another three cities if **God enlarges** [their] **territory.** This, however, was contingent on Israel's full obedience to God's commands, which never happened (see also the note on 15:7).

19:14-21 Additional matters of justice (see vv. 1-13) are addressed here, including respect for **boundary markers** and proper establishment of wrongdoing through multiple, honest **witnesses** (see also 17:6-7). See "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*

RULES FOR WAR

20 "When you go out to war against your enemies and see horses, chariots, and an army larger than yours, † do not be afraid of them, for the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, † is with you. 2 When you are about to engage in battle, the priest is to come forward and address the army. † 3 He is to say to them: 'Listen, Israel: Today you are about to engage in battle with your enemies. Do not be cowardly. Do not be afraid, alarmed, or terrified because of them. 4 For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you † against your enemies to give you victory.'
5 "The officers are to address the army, 'Has any man built a new house and not dedicated it? Let him leave and return home. Otherwise, he may die in battle and another man dedicate it. 6 Has any man planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy its fruit? † Let him leave and return home. Otherwise he may die in battle and another man enjoy its fruit. † 7 Has any man become engaged to a woman and not married her? Let him leave and return home. Otherwise he may die in battle and another man marry her.' 8 The officers will continue to address the army and say, 'Is there any man who is afraid or cowardly? Let him leave and return home, so that his brothers won't lose heart as he did.' † † 9 When the officers have finished addressing the army, they will appoint military commanders to lead it.

10 “When you approach a city to fight against it, make an offer of peace. 11 If it
accepts your offer of peace and opens its gates to you, all the people found in it
will become forced laborers for you and serve you. † 12 However, if it does not
make peace with you but wages war against you, lay siege to it. 13 When the
LORD your God hands it over to you, strike down all its males with the sword. †
14 But you may take the women, dependents, animals, and whatever else is in
the city — all its spoil — as plunder. You may enjoy the spoil of your enemies
that the LORD your God has given you. 15 This is how you are to treat all the
cities that are far away from you and are not among the cities of these nations.
16 However, you must not let any living thing survive among the cities of these
people the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 17 You must
completely destroy them — the Hethite, Amorite, Canaanite, Perizzite, Hivite,
and Jebusite — as the LORD your God has commanded you, 18 so that they won’t
teach you to do all the detestable acts they do for their gods, and you sin against
the LORD your God. †
19 “When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it in order to
capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can get
food from them. Do not cut them down. Are trees of the field human, to come
under siege by you? 20 But you may destroy the trees that you know do not
produce food. You may cut them down to build siege works against the city that
is waging war against you, until it falls.

20:6 Lit *not put it to use* **20:6** Lit *man put it to use* **20:8** Lit *brothers’ hearts won’t melt like his own*
20:1 Jos 17:18; 2Ch 32:8; Ps 20:7; Is 31:1 **20:1** Dt 1:26-40 **20:2** 2Ch 13:12; 32:8 **20:4** Ex 14:14; Dt 1:30; 3:22; 31:6,8; Jos 23:10; Jdg 9:17; Jr 42:11 **20:8** Jdg 7:3 **20:11** Ex 1:11; Jos 16:10; 17:13; Jdg 1:28-35; 2Sm 20:24; 1Kg 5:13-14; 9:21 **20:13** Nm 31:7 **20:17-18** Dt 7:1-5

20:1-8 Israel’s military success would not depend on its might, which was inferior to that of the nations it would conquer, but on God **who brought** [them] **out of the land of Egypt.** They did not need to fear because God **is the one who goes with** [them] **to fight for** [them] **against** [their] **enemies to give . . . victory.** Consequently, those soldiers who had not yet dedicated a new house, enjoyed the fruits of their vineyard, married a fiancée, or who were fearful were permitted to **return home.**

20:10-18 An **offer of peace** was only to be extended to **the cities that are far away . . . not among the cities** within the land of Canaan, which were to be utterly destroyed (vv. 16-18; see also 7:1-6).

UNSOLVED MURDERS

21 “If a murder victim is found lying in a field in the land the LORD your
God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who killed him,
2 your elders and judges are to come out and measure the distance from

the victim to the nearby cities. 3 The elders of the city nearest to the victim are to get a young cow that has not been yoked or used for work. 4 The elders of that city will bring the cow down to a continually flowing stream, to a place not tilled or sown, and they will break its neck there by the stream. 5 Then the priests, the sons of Levi, will come forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to serve him and pronounce blessings in his name, and they are to give a ruling in † every dispute and case of assault. 6 All the elders of the city nearest to the victim will wash their hands by the stream over the young cow whose neck has been broken. 7 They will declare, 'Our hands did not shed this blood; our eyes did not see it. 8 LORD, wipe away the guilt of your people Israel whom you redeemed, and do not hold the shedding of innocent blood against them.' Then the responsibility for bloodshed will be wiped away from them. 9 You must purge from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood, for you will be doing what is right in the LORD's sight.

FAIR TREATMENT OF CAPTURED WOMEN

10 "When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God hands them over to you and you take some of them prisoner, and 11 if you see a beautiful woman among the captives, desire her, and want to take her as your wife, 12 you are to bring her into your house. She is to shave her head, trim her nails, 13 remove the clothes she was wearing when she was taken prisoner, live in your house, and mourn for her father and mother a full month. After that, you may have sexual relations with her and be her husband, and she will be your wife. 14 Then if you are not satisfied with her, you are to let her go where she wants, but you must not sell her or treat her as merchandise, † because you have humiliated her.

THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN

15 "If a man has two wives, one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved bear him sons, and if the unloved wife has the firstborn son, 16 when that man gives what he has to his sons as an inheritance, he is not to show favoritism to the son of the loved wife as his firstborn over the firstborn of the unloved wife. 17 He must acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved wife, by giving him two shares † † of his estate, for he is the firstfruits of his virility; he has the rights of the firstborn. †

A REBELLIOUS SON

18 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father or
mother and doesn't listen to them even after they discipline him, 19 his father
and mother are to take hold of him and bring him to the elders of his city, to the
gate † of his hometown. 20 They will say to the elders of his city, 'This son of
ours is stubborn and rebellious; he doesn't obey us. He's a glutton and a
drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of his city will stone him to death. † You must
purge the evil from you, and all Israel will hear and be afraid.

DISPLAY OF EXECUTED PEOPLE

22 "If anyone is found guilty of an offense deserving the death penalty and is
executed, and you hang his body on a tree, 23 you are not to leave his corpse on
the tree overnight but are to bury him that day, for anyone hung on a tree is
under God's curse. † You must not defile the land the LORD your God is giving
you as an inheritance. †

21:5 Lit *and according to their mouth will be* **21:14** Hb obscure **21:17** Lit *him mouth of two,* or *two mouthfuls* **21:17** Or *two-thirds*
21:15-17 Gn 29:30-33; 49:3 **21:19** Dt 17:8; 22:15; 25:7 **21:21** Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 **21:23** Gl 3:13 **21:23** Dt 15:4

21:7-8 The prayer related to an unsolved murder declared the innocence of the elders of the nearest city (see vv. 1-6) and requested mercy from God that he not **hold the shedding of innocent blood against them.**

21:10-14 These regulations concerning marrying a **woman among the captives** would apply to the Israelites' battles with **cities that are far away** (20:10-15) but not to Canaanite women, who were not to be spared (20:16-18; see also 7:1-6).

21:15-17 The rights of the firstborn son were to be respected even if he was not the offspring of his father's favored wife (see also the note on Gn 25:29-34).

21:18-21 Exodus 21:15 and Leviticus 20:9 attach serious consequences for children who respectively struck or cursed their parents. Likewise, **a stubborn and rebellious son** was subject to execution after being brought to **the elders of the city.** Such laws clearly communicate the importance of respect for and obedience to one's parents (see also the note on 13:6-18).

21:23 Paul cites this verse in Galatians 3:13 to show that Jesus was under a curse during the crucifixion.

CARING FOR YOUR BROTHER'S PROPERTY

22 "If you see your brother Israelite's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore
it; make sure you return it to your brother. 2 If your brother does not
live near you or you don't know him, you are to bring the animal to
your home to remain with you until your brother comes looking for it; then you

can return it to him. 3 Do the same for his donkey, his garment, or anything your brother has lost and you have found. You must not ignore it. † 4 If you see your brother's donkey or ox fallen down on the road, do not ignore it; help him lift it up.

PRESERVING NATURAL DISTINCTIONS

5 "A woman is not to wear male clothing, and a man is not to put on a woman's garment, for everyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD your God.
6 "If you come across a bird's nest with chicks or eggs, either in a tree or on the ground along the road, and the mother is sitting on the chicks or eggs, do not take the mother along with the young. 7 You may take the young for yourself, but be sure to let the mother go free, so that you may prosper and live long. 8 If you build a new house, make a railing around your roof, so that you don't bring bloodguilt on your house if someone falls from it. 9 Do not plant your vineyard with two types of seed; otherwise, the entire harvest, both the crop you plant and the produce of the vineyard, will be defiled. 10 Do not plow with an ox and a donkey together. 11 Do not wear clothes made of both wool and linen. †
12 Make tassels on the four corners of the outer garment you wear. †

VIOLATIONS OF PROPER SEXUAL CONDUCT

13 "If a man marries a woman, has sexual relations with her, and comes to hate her, 14 and accuses her of shameful conduct, and gives her a bad name, saying, 'I married this woman and was intimate with her, but I didn't find any evidence of her virginity,' 15 the young woman's father and mother will take the evidence of her virginity and bring it to the city elders at the city gate. † 16 The young woman's father will say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as a wife, but he hates her. 17 He has accused her of shameful conduct, saying: "I didn't find any evidence of your daughter's virginity," but here is the evidence of my daughter's virginity.' They will spread out the cloth before the city elders. 18 Then the elders of that city will take the man and punish him. † 19 They will also fine him a hundred silver shekels and give them to the young woman's father, because that man gave an Israelite virgin a bad name. She will remain his wife; he cannot divorce her as long as he lives. 20 But if this accusation is true and no evidence of the young woman's virginity is found, 21 they will bring the woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city will stone her to

death. For she has committed an outrage in Israel by being promiscuous while living in her father's house. You must purge the evil from you.
22 "If a man is discovered having sexual relations with another man's wife, both the man who had sex with the woman and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel. 23 If there is a young woman who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man encounters her in the city and sleeps with her, 24 take the two of them out to the gate of that city and stone them to death — the young woman because she did not cry out in the city and the man because he has violated his neighbor's fiancée. You must purge the evil from you. 25 But if the man encounters an engaged woman in the open country, and he seizes and rapes her, only the man who raped her must die. 26 Do nothing to the young woman, because she is not guilty of an offense deserving death. This case is just like one in which a man attacks his neighbor and murders him. 27 When he found her in the field, the engaged woman cried out, but there was no one to rescue her. 28 If a man encounters a young woman, a virgin who is not engaged, takes hold of her and rapes her, and they are discovered, 29 the man who raped her is to give the young woman's father fifty silver shekels, and she will become his wife because he violated her. † He cannot divorce her as long as he lives.
30 "A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not violate his father's marriage bed. † †

22:30 Lit *not uncover the edge of his father's garment* ; Ru 3:9; Ezk 16:8
22:1-3 Ex 23:4 **22:11** Lv 19:19 **22:12** Nm 15:38-39 **22:15** Dt 17:8; 21:19; 25:7 **22:18** Dt 25:1-3 **22:28-29** Ex 22:16-17 **22:30** Lv 18:8; 20:10-11

22:1-4 These commands resemble Exodus 23:4-5 and show that Israelites were not to ignore the **lost** property or **fallen** animals of their fellow Israelites (see "Animal Rights," *p. 21*). The law evidently also dealt with sins of omission (see also v. 8).

22:5 This prohibition against cross-dressing suggests a desire to maintain a clear distinction between men and women and serves as a reminder that human sexuality has been designed by God (see the note on Gn 1:26-31). Verses 9-11 also seems to relate to maintaining distinctions (see also Lv 19:19).

EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION

23 "No man whose testicles have been crushed † or whose penis has been cut off may enter the LORD's assembly. 2 No one of illegitimate birth may enter the LORD's assembly; none of his descendants, even to the tenth generation, may enter the LORD's assembly. 3 No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the LORD's assembly; † none of their descendants, even to the tenth

generation, may ever enter the LORD's assembly. 4 This is because they did not meet you with food and water on the journey after you came out of Egypt, and because Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram-naharaim was hired to curse you. † 5 Yet the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but he turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves † you. † 6 Never pursue their welfare or prosperity as long as you live. 7 Do not despise an Edomite, because he is your brother. Do not despise an Egyptian, because you were a resident alien in his land. 8 The children born to them in the third generation may enter the LORD's assembly.

CLEANLINESS OF THE CAMP

9 "When you are encamped against your enemies, be careful to avoid anything offensive. 10 If there is a man among you who is unclean because of a bodily emission during the night, he must go outside the camp; he may not come anywhere inside the camp. 11 When evening approaches, he is to wash with water, and when the sun sets he may come inside the camp. † 12 You are to have a place outside the camp and go there to relieve yourself. 13 You are to have a digging tool in your equipment; when you relieve yourself, dig a hole with it and cover up your excrement. 14 For the LORD your God walks throughout your camp to protect you and deliver your enemies to you; so your encampments must be holy. He must not see anything indecent among you or he will turn away from you.

FUGITIVE SLAVES

15 "Do not return a slave to his master when he has escaped from his master to you. 16 Let him live among you wherever he wants within your city gates. Do not mistreat him.

CULT PROSTITUTION FORBIDDEN

17 "No Israelite woman is to be a cult prostitute, and no Israelite man is to be a cult prostitute. 18 Do not bring a female prostitute's wages or a male prostitute's † earnings into the house of the LORD your God to fulfill any vow, because both are detestable to the LORD your God.

INTEREST ON LOANS

19 “Do not charge your brother interest on silver, food, or anything that can earn
interest. 20 You may charge a foreigner interest, but you must not charge your
brother Israelite interest, so that the LORD your God may bless you in everything
you do † in the land you are entering to possess. †

KEEPING VOWS

21 “If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to keep it, because
he will require it of you, and it will be counted against you as sin. 22 But if you
refrain from making a vow, it will not be counted against you as sin. 23 Be
careful to do whatever comes from your lips, because you have freely vowed
what you promised † to the LORD your God. †

NEIGHBOR’S CROPS

24 “When you enter your neighbor’s vineyard, you may eat as many grapes as
you want until you are full, but do not put any in your container. 25 When you
enter your neighbor’s standing grain, you may pluck heads of grain with your
hand, but do not put a sickle to your neighbor’s grain.

23:1 Lit *man bruised by crushing* **23:18** Lit *a dog’s* **23:20** Lit *you put your hand to* **23:23** Lit *promised with your mouth*

23:3-4 Neh 13:1-2 **23:4** Nm 22:5-6 **23:5** Dt 4:37 **23:5** Nm 23:11; 24:10 **23:11** Lv 15:16-17 **23:19-20** Ex 22:25 **23:21-23** Nm 30:2-15; Jb 22:27; Ps 50:14; 56:12; 61:8; Pr 20:25; Ec 5:4-7; Mal 1:14

23:1-8 The restrictions in verses 1-2 preventing certain people from entering **the LORD’s assembly** are reminiscent of Leviticus 21:17-21, which forbade any descendant of Aaron who had a blemish from offering sacrifices in the tabernacle (see the note on Lv 21:17). Although Ammonites and Moabites were also barred from **the LORD’s assembly** because of their poor treatment of the Israelites (vv. 3-4), Ruth the Moabitess would find favor with God (see the book of Ruth). Edomites and Egyptians, on other hand, would be granted access after three generations (vv. 7-8).

23:14 The reason for the preceding instructions regarding cleanness and sanitation (vv. 9-13) was the presence of God, who **walks throughout your camp to protect you and deliver your enemies to you** (see also Gn 3:8; Lv 26:12).

23:15-16 The Israelites were not to return runaway slaves to their masters but were to allow them to live in their midst.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE LAWS

24 “If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him †
because he finds something indecent about her, he may write her a
divorce certificate, hand it to her, and send her away from his house. † 2 If after
leaving his house she goes and becomes another man’s wife, 3 and the second

man hates her, writes her a divorce certificate, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house or if he dies, 4 the first husband who sent her away may not marry her again after she has been defiled, because that would be detestable to the LORD. You must not bring guilt on the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. †

5 "When a man takes a bride, he must not go out with the army or be liable for any duty. He is free to stay at home for one year, so that he can bring joy to the wife he has married.

SAFEGUARDING LIFE

6 "Do not take a pair of grindstones or even the upper millstone as security for a debt, because that is like taking a life as security.

7 "If a man is discovered kidnapping † one of his Israelite brothers, whether he treats him as a slave or sells him, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from you.

8 "Be careful with a person who has a case of serious skin disease, following carefully everything the Levitical priests instruct you to do. Be careful to do as I have commanded them. 9 Remember what the LORD your God did to Miriam on the journey after you left Egypt. †

CONSIDERATION FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

10 "When you make a loan of any kind to your neighbor, do not enter his house to collect what he offers as security. 11 Stand outside while the man you are making the loan to brings the security out to you. 12 If he is a poor man, do not sleep with the garment he has given as security. 13 Be sure to return it † to him at sunset. Then he will sleep in it and bless you, and this will be counted as righteousness to you before the LORD your God. †

14 "Do not oppress a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether one of your Israelite brothers or one of the resident aliens in a town † in your land. 15 You are to pay him his wages each day before the sun sets, because he is poor and depends on them. † Otherwise he will cry out to the LORD against you, and you will be held guilty.

16 "Fathers are not to be put to death for their children, and children are not to be put to death for their fathers; each person will be put to death for his own sin. †

17 Do not deny justice to a resident alien or fatherless child, and do not take a
widow's garment as security. 18 Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and
the LORD your God redeemed † you from there. Therefore I am commanding
you to do this. †
19 "When you reap the harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf in the field,
do not go back to get it. It is to be left for the resident alien, the fatherless, and
the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your
hands. † 20 When you knock down the fruit from your olive tree, do not go over
the branches again. What remains will be for the resident alien, the fatherless,
and the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean
what is left. What remains will be for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the
widow. 22 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt. Therefore I am
commanding you to do this. †

24:1 Lit *she does not find favor in his eyes* **24:13** Lit *return what he has given as security* **24:14** Lit *within the city gates*

24:1 Mt 5:31; 19:7; Mk 10:4 **24:4** Dt 15:4 **24:7** Gn 40:15; Ex 21:16; 22:1; 1Sm 30:2-3,5; 1Tm 1:10 **24:9** Nm 12:1-15; Dt 25:17 **24:12-13** Ex 22:26-27 **24:14-15** Lv 19:13 **24:16** 2Kg 14:6; 2Ch 25:4; Ezk 18:20; 33:10-20 **24:18** Dt 7:8; 9:26; 15:15 **24:18** Dt 15:15; 24:22 **24:18-19** Ex 23:2-3,6-9; Dt 30:9 **24:19-22** Ex 22:26-27; Lv 19:9-10,13,15

24:1-5 The laws concerning **divorce** and remarriage forbade a woman who had been divorced twice (or widowed from her second husband) from remarrying her first husband. Also, a newlywed man was released from military and other duties for his first year of marriage to **bring joy to the wife he has married.** This passage comes up in Matthew19:1-9 when the Pharisees asked Jesus whether divorce was permissible "on any grounds." Jesus replied that Moses permitted divorce "because of the hardness of your hearts" but that God's design is for lifelong marriage, with allowance for divorce in the case of "sexual immorality" (see also note on Gn 2:24).

24:7 The seriousness of **kidnapping** is evident through its being a capital offense.

24:10-22 These laws give special attention to various types of vulnerable of people in Israel: the **poor**, the **hired worker**, the **resident alien**, the **fatherless**, and the **widow** (see also the note on 14:22-29). The Israelites knew what it was like to be in need and were to **remember** that they **were a slave in the land of Egypt** (see also the note on 16:11,14).

FAIRNESS AND MERCY

25 "If there is a dispute between men, they are to go to court, and the
judges will hear their case. They will clear the innocent and condemn
the guilty. 2 If the guilty party deserves to be flogged, the judge will
make him lie down and be flogged in his presence with the number of lashes
appropriate for his crime. 3 He may be flogged with forty lashes, but no more.

Otherwise, if he is flogged with more lashes than these, your brother will be degraded in your sight.

4 “Do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain. †

PRESERVING THE FAMILY LINE

5 “When brothers live on the same property † and one of them dies without a son, the wife of the dead man may not marry a stranger outside the family. Her brother-in-law is to take her as his wife, have sexual relations with her, and perform the duty of a brother-in-law for her. 6 The first son she bears will carry on the name of the dead brother, so his name will not be blotted out from Israel. † 7 But if the man doesn’t want to marry his sister-in-law, she is to go to the elders at the city gate † and say, ‘My brother-in-law refuses to preserve his brother’s name in Israel. He isn’t willing to perform the duty of a brother-in-law for me.’ 8 The elders of his city will summon him and speak with him. If he persists and says, ‘I don’t want to marry her,’ 9 then his sister-in-law will go up to him in the sight of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, and spit in his face. Then she will declare, ‘This is what is done to a man who will not build up his brother’s house.’ 10 And his family name in Israel will be ‘The house of the man whose sandal was removed.’ †

11 “If two men are fighting with each other, and the wife of one steps in to rescue her husband from the one striking him, and she puts out her hand and grabs his genitals, 12 you are to cut off her hand. Do not show pity.

HONEST WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

13 “Do not have differing weights † in your bag, one heavy and one light. †
14 Do not have differing dry measures in your house, a larger and a smaller.
15 You must have a full and honest weight, a full and honest dry measure, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. 16 For everyone who does such things and acts unfairly is detestable to the LORD your God. †

REVENGE ON THE AMALEKITES

17 “Remember what the Amalekites did to you on the journey after you left Egypt. † 18 They met you along the way and attacked all your stragglers from

behind when you were tired and weary. They did not fear God. 19 When the LORD your God gives you rest † from all the enemies around you in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, † blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven. Do not forget. †

25:5 Lit *live together* **25:13** Lit *have a stone and a stone*
25:4 1Co 9:9; 1Tm 5:18 **25:5-6** Gn 38:8; Mt 22:24; Mk 12:19; Lk 20:28 **25:7** Dt 17:8; 21:19; 22:15 **25:10** Gn 38; Ru 4:1-12 **25:13** Pr 20:10 **25:16** Lv 19:35-36 **25:17** Dt 24:9 **25:19** Dt 3:20; 5:14; 12:9-11; 28:65 **25:19** Dt 15:4 **25:19** Ex 17:8-16; 1Sm 15; 30

25:5-10 The situation described in which a man marries his deceased brother's widow because they had no sons is sometimes called Levirate marriage. A practice well known in the ancient Near East, its purpose was to raise up a son to **carry on the name of the dead brother.** This practice is reflected in Genesis 38:6-10. Ruth 3–4 is not technically Levirate marriage, but it may refer to a similar practice involving extended family.

25:13-16 These laws concerning fair **weights** and **measures** reflect God's deep concern for honesty and fair business practices (see also Lv 19:35-36; Pr 20:10).

25:17-19 Moses was referring to the incident described in Exodus 17:9-16. Back then God had declared that he would **completely blot out the memory of Amalek under heaven.**

GIVING THE FIRSTFRUITS

26 "When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, † and you take possession of it and live in it, 2 take some of the first of all the land's produce that you harvest from the land the LORD your God is giving you and put it in a basket. Then go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to have his name dwell. † 3 When you come before the priest who is serving at that time, say to him, 'Today I declare to the LORD your † God that I have entered the land the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

4 "Then the priest will take the basket from you and place it before the altar of the LORD your God. 5 You are to respond by saying in the presence of the LORD your God:

My father was a wandering Aramean. † He went down to Egypt with a few people and resided there as an alien. † There he became a great, powerful, and populous nation. 6 But the Egyptians mistreated and oppressed us, and forced us to do hard labor. 7 So we called out to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our cry and saw our misery, hardship, and oppression. † 8 Then the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with terrifying power, and with signs and wonders. 9 He led us to this place and gave

us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. † 10 I have now brought the first of the land's produce that you, LORD, have given me.
You will then place the container before the LORD your God and bow down to him. 11 You, the Levites, and the resident aliens among you will rejoice † in all the good things the LORD your God has given you and your household.

THE TENTH IN THE THIRD YEAR

12 "When you have finished paying all the tenth of your produce in the third year, † the year of the tenth, you are to give it to the Levites, resident aliens, fatherless children and widows, so that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13 Then you will say in the presence of the LORD your God:
I have taken the consecrated portion out of my house; I have also given it to the Levites, resident aliens, fatherless children, and widows, according to all the commands you gave me. I have not violated or forgotten your commands. 14 I have not eaten any of it while in mourning, or removed any of it while unclean, or offered any of it for the dead. † I have obeyed the LORD my God; I have done all you commanded me. 15 Look down from your holy dwelling, from heaven, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as you swore to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

COVENANT SUMMARY

16 "The LORD your God is commanding you this day to follow these statutes and ordinances. Follow them carefully with all your heart and all your soul. 17 Today you have affirmed that the LORD is your God and that you will walk in his ways, keep his statutes, commands, and ordinances, and obey him. 18 And today the LORD has affirmed that you are his own possession as he promised you, that you are to keep all his commands, 19 that he will elevate you to praise, fame, and glory above all the nations he has made, and that you will be a holy people † to the LORD your God as he promised."

26:3 LXX reads *my*

26:1 Dt 15:4; 17:14 **26:2** Dt 12:11 **26:5** Gn 28:5 **26:5** Ex 1:1-3 **26:7** Ex 3:7 **26:9** Dt 11:9; Jr 32:22 **26:11** Lv 23:40; Dt 12:12; 14:26; 16:11; 27:7 **26:12** Dt 14:28-29 **26:14** Jr 16:7; Ezk 24:17; Hs 9:4 **26:19** Dt 7:6

26:1-10 These instructions look forward (by faith) to the time in which God had fulfilled his gracious promises to settle Israel in the land. At that time, the Israelites were to recall his faithfulness to them and to their ancestors.

26:16-19 The lengthy section of laws in Deuteronomy 12–26 concerning life in the promised land

concludes with this charge to obedience and reaffirmation of the special relationship between God and Israel (see also 27:9-10; Ex 19:4-6).

THE LAW WRITTEN ON STONES

27 Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people, “Keep every
command I am giving you today. 2 When you cross the Jordan into the
land the LORD your God is giving you, set up large stones and cover
them with plaster. † 3 Write all the words of this law on the stones after you
cross to enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, a land flowing with milk
and honey, † as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you. 4 When
you have crossed the Jordan, you are to set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I
am commanding you today, and you are to cover them with plaster. 5 Build an
altar of stones there to the LORD your God — do not use any iron tool on them. †
6 Use uncut stones to build the altar of the LORD your God and offer burnt
offerings to the LORD your God on it. 7 There you are to sacrifice fellowship
offerings, eat, and rejoice in the presence of the LORD your God. 8 Write clearly
all the words of this law on the plastered stones.”

THE COVENANT CURSES

9 Moses and the Levitical priests spoke to all Israel, “Be silent, Israel, and listen!
This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. 10 Obey the LORD
your God and follow his commands and statutes I am giving you today.”
11 On that day Moses commanded the people, 12 “When you have crossed the
Jordan, these tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon,
Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. 13 And these tribes will stand on
Mount Ebal to deliver the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and
Naphtali. † 14 The Levites will proclaim in a loud voice to every Israelite:

15 ‘The person who makes a carved idol or cast image, which is
detestable to the LORD, the work of a craftsman, and sets it up in
secret is cursed.’
And all the people will reply, ‘Amen! ’
16 ‘The one who dishonors his father or mother is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’

17 ‘The one who moves his neighbor’s boundary marker is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
18 ‘The one who leads a blind person astray on the road is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
19 ‘The one who denies justice to a resident alien, a fatherless child, or a widow is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
20 ‘The one who sleeps with his father’s wife is cursed, for he has violated his father’s marriage bed.’ †
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
21 ‘The one who has sexual intercourse with any animal is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
22 ‘The one who sleeps with his sister, whether his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
23 ‘The one who sleeps with his mother-in-law is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
24 ‘The one who secretly kills his neighbor is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
25 ‘The one who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’
26 ‘Anyone who does not put the words of this law into practice is cursed.’
And all the people will say, ‘Amen! ’

27:20 Lit *has uncovered the edge of his father’s garment* ; Ru 3:9; Ezk 16:8
27:2-8 Jos 8:30-32 **27:3** Dt 11:9 **27:5-7** Ex 20:25 **27:12-13** Dt 11:29-30; Jos 8:33-35

27:1-13 The contents of **this law** that would be written on stones (v. 3) and then set up on Mount Ebal may

have consisted only of the blessings and curses and seems unlikely to have consisted of the whole book of Deuteronomy or the lengthy Pentateuch. Joshua and the Israelites fulfilled the instructions found in this section in Joshua 8:30-35.

27:26 Anyone who disobeyed would be **cursed.** Paul quotes this verse in Galatians 3:10 to support his assertion that "all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse" (see also Jms 2:10).

BLESSINGS FOR OBEDIENCE

28 "Now † if you faithfully obey the LORD your God † and are careful to follow all his commands I am giving you today, † the LORD your God will put you far above all the nations of the earth. † 2 All these blessings will come and overtake † you, because you obey the LORD your God:

3 You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country. †
4 Your offspring † will be blessed, and your land's produce,
and the offspring of your livestock,
including the young of your herds
and the newborn of your flocks. †
5 Your basket and kneading bowl will be blessed.
6 You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out. †

7 "The LORD will cause the enemies who rise up against you to be defeated before you. They will march out against you from one direction but flee from you in seven directions. 8 The LORD will grant you a blessing on your barns and on everything you do; † † he will bless you in the land the LORD your God is giving you. † 9 The LORD will establish you as his holy people, † as he swore to you, if you obey the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways. 10 Then all the peoples of the earth will see that you bear the LORD's name, † and they will stand in awe of you. † 11 The LORD will make you prosper abundantly with offspring, † the offspring of your livestock, and your land's produce in the land the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. 12 The LORD will open for you his abundant storehouse, † the sky, to give your land rain in its season and to bless all the work of your hands. † You will lend to many nations, but you will not borrow. 13 The LORD will make you the head and not the tail; †

you will only move upward and never downward if you listen to the LORD your God's commands I am giving you today and are careful to follow them. 14 Do not turn aside to the right or the left from all the things I am commanding you today, † and do not follow other gods to worship them.

CURSES FOR DISOBEDIENCE

15 "But if you do not obey the LORD your God by carefully following all his commands and statutes I am giving you today, all these curses will come and overtake † you: †

16 You will be cursed in the city and cursed in the country.
17 Your basket and kneading bowl will be cursed.
18 Your offspring will be cursed, and your land's produce,
the young of your herds,
and the newborn of your flocks.
19 You will be cursed when you come in and cursed when you go out.

20 The LORD will send against you curses, confusion, † and rebuke in everything you do until you are destroyed and quickly perish, † because of the wickedness of your actions in abandoning me. † 21 The LORD will make pestilence cling to you until he has exterminated you from the land you are entering to possess. †
22 The LORD will afflict you with wasting disease, fever, inflammation, burning heat, drought, † blight, and mildew; † these will pursue you until you perish.
23 The sky above you will be bronze, and the earth beneath you iron. 24 The LORD will turn the rain of your land into falling † dust; it will descend on you from the sky until you are destroyed. 25 The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will march out against them from one direction but flee from them in seven directions. † You will be an object of horror † to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 Your corpses will be food for all the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the earth, with no one to scare them away. †
27 "The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt, † tumors, a festering rash, and scabies, from which you cannot be cured. 28 The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness, and mental confusion, † 29 so that at noon you will grope

as a blind person gropes in the dark. † You will not be successful in anything you do. You will only be oppressed and robbed continually, and no one will help you. † 30 You will become engaged to a woman, but another man will rape her. You will build a house but not live in it. † You will plant a vineyard but not enjoy its fruit. 31 Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will not eat any of it. Your donkey will be taken away from you and not returned to you. Your flock will be given to your enemies, and no one will help you. 32 Your sons and daughters will be given to another people, while your eyes grow weary looking for them every day. But you will be powerless to do anything. † † 33 A people you don't know will eat your land's produce and everything you have labored for. You will only be oppressed and crushed continually. † 34 You will be driven mad by what you see. 35 The LORD will afflict you with painful and incurable boils on your knees and thighs — from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. †

36 "The LORD will bring you and your king that you have appointed to a nation neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you will worship other gods, of wood and stone. † 37 You will become an object of horror, scorn, and ridicule among all the peoples where the LORD will drive you. †

38 "You will sow much seed in the field but harvest little, because locusts will devour it. 39 You will plant and cultivate vineyards but not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. 40 You will have olive trees throughout your territory but not moisten your skin with oil, because your olives will drop off. 41 You will father sons and daughters, but they will not remain yours, because they will be taken prisoner. 42 Buzzing insects will take possession of all your trees and your land's produce. 43 The resident alien among you will rise higher and higher above you, while you sink lower and lower. 44 He will lend to you, but you won't lend to him. He will be the head, and you will be the tail.

45 "All these curses will come, pursue, and overtake you until you are destroyed, since you did not obey the LORD your God and keep the commands and statutes he gave you. 46 These curses will be a sign and a wonder † against you and your descendants forever. 47 Because you didn't serve the LORD your God with

joy and a cheerful heart, † even though you had an abundance of everything,
48 you will serve your enemies the LORD will send against you, in famine, thirst,
nakedness, and a lack of everything. He will place an iron yoke † on your neck
until he has destroyed you. 49 The LORD will bring a nation from far away, from
the ends of the earth, † to swoop down on you like an eagle, † a nation whose
language you won't understand, † 50 a ruthless nation, † showing no respect for
the old and not sparing the young. 51 They will eat the offspring of your
livestock and your land's produce until you are destroyed. They will leave you
no grain, new wine, fresh oil, young of your herds, or newborn of your flocks
until they cause you to perish. 52 They will besiege you within all your city gates
until your high and fortified walls, that you trust in, come down throughout your
land. They will besiege you within all your city gates throughout the land the
LORD your God has given you.
53 "You will eat your offspring, † the flesh of your sons and daughters the LORD
your God has given you † during the siege and hardship your enemy imposes on
you. 54 The most sensitive and refined man among you will look grudgingly †
at his brother, the wife he embraces, † and the rest of his children, 55 refusing to
share with any of them his children's flesh that he will eat because he has
nothing left during the siege and hardship your enemy imposes on you in all
your towns. 56 The most sensitive and refined woman among you, who would
not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her refinement
and sensitivity, will begrudge the husband she embraces, her son, and her
daughter, 57 the afterbirth that comes out from between her legs and the children
she bears, because she will secretly eat them for lack of anything else during the
siege and hardship your enemy imposes on you within your city gates.
58 "If you are not careful to obey all the words of this law, which are written in
this scroll, by fearing this glorious and awe-inspiring name — the LORD, your
God — 59 he will bring wondrous plagues on you and your descendants, severe
and lasting plagues, and terrible and chronic sicknesses. 60 He will afflict you
again with all the diseases of Egypt, † which you dreaded, and they will cling to
you. 61 The LORD will also afflict you with every sickness and plague not
recorded in the book of this law, until you are destroyed. 62 Though you were as
numerous as the stars of the sky, you will be left with only a few people, because

you did not obey the LORD your God. 63 Just as the LORD was glad to cause you
to prosper and to multiply you, so he will also be glad to cause you to perish and
to destroy you. You will be ripped out of the land you are entering to possess.
64 Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples from one end of the earth to
the other, † and there you will worship other gods, of wood and stone, † which
neither you nor your fathers have known. † 65 You will find no peace among
those nations, and there will be no resting place † for the sole of your foot.
There the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and a despondent
spirit. 66 Your life will hang in doubt before you. You will be in dread night and
day, never certain of survival. 67 In the morning you will say, 'If only it were
evening! ' and in the evening you will say, 'If only it were morning! ' — because
of the dread you will have in your heart and because of what you will see.
68 The LORD will take you back in ships to Egypt by a route that I said you
would never see again. † There you will sell yourselves to your enemies as male
and female slaves, but no one will buy you."

28:4 Lit *The fruit of your womb,* also in v. 18 **28:8** Lit *you put your hand to,* also in v. 20 **28:11** Lit *abundantly in the fruit of your womb* **28:22** Or *sword* **28:24** Lit *powder and* **28:32** Lit *day, and not for power your hand* **28:50** Lit *a nation strong of face* **28:53** Lit *eat the fruit of your womb* **28:54** Lit *you his eye will be evil* **28:54** Lit *wife of his bosom*

28:1-14 Lv 26:3-13 **28:1** Ex 15:26; 19:5; 23:22; Dt 11:13; 15:5; Jr 17:24; Zch 6:15 **28:1** Dt 13:18; 30:8 **28:1** Gn 18:18; 22:18; Jr 33:9; Zch 12:3 **28:2** Dt 28:15,45; Is 35:10; 51:11; Zch 1:6 **28:3** Dt 28:16 **28:4** Dt 7:13 **28:6** Dt 28:19; 2Kg 19:27; Is 37:28 **28:8** Pr 3:10 **28:8** Dt 15:4; 30:16 **28:9** Ex 22:31; Dt 7:6; 14:2,21; 26:19; Is 62:12; 63:18 **28:10** 1Kg 8:60; 2Ch 6:33; Zph 3:20 **28:10** Dt 2:4; Mc 7:17 **28:12** Ps 135:7; Jr 10:13; 51:16 **28:12** Dt 2:7; 14:29; 16:15; 24:19; 30:9 **28:13** Dt 28:44 **28:14** 1Sm 6:12; 12:21; 1Kg 15:5; 2Kg 22:2; 2Ch 34:2 **28:15** Jb 27:20; Ps 7:5; 40:12; 69:24; Hs 10:9; Zch 1:6 **28:15-68** Lv 26:14-46 **28:20** Ezk 7:7 **28:20** Dt 7:23,24; 28:45,48,51,61; Jos 23:15 **28:20** Jr 4:4; 21:12; 26:3; 44:22 **28:21** 1Sm 15:18; Jr 9:16; 49:37 **28:22** Am 4:9 **28:25** Dt 28:7 **28:25** 2Ch 29:8; Jr 15:4; 24:9; 29:18; 34:17 **28:26** Ps 79:2; Is 5:25; 34:3; Jr 7:33; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezk 6:5; Nah 3:3 **28:27** Ex 9:9-11 **28:28** 2Kg 9:20; Zch 12:4 **28:28-29** Jb 5:14; Ps 91:6; Is 59:9-10; Am 8:9; Mt 27:45 **28:29** Dt 22:27; 1Sm 11:3; 2Sm 22:42; Ps 18:41; Is 47:15 **28:30** Ac 1:20 **28:32** Neh 5:5 **28:33** Jdg 10:8; Jb 20:19; Hs 5:11; Am 4:1 **28:35** Jb 2:7; Is 1:6 **28:36** Dt 4:28; 28:64; Dn 5:23 **28:37** Dt 4:27; 1Kg 9:7; 2Ch 7:20; Jr 24:9 **28:46** Ex 7:3; Dt 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; Is 8:18; Jr 32:20 **28:47** Pr 15:15; Ec 9:7 **28:48** Jr 28:13-14 **28:49** Is 5:26 **28:49** Jr 48:40; 49:22 **28:49** Jr 5:15 **28:53** Lv 26:29; 2Kg 6:25-29; Jr 19:9; Lm 2:20; 4:10; Ezk 5:10 **28:60** Dt 7:15 **28:64** Lv 26:33; Dt 4:27; Neh 1:8; Ezk 22:15 **28:64** Dt 4:28; 28:36; 2Kg 19:18; Ezk 20:32; Dn 5:4,23 **28:64** Dt 8:16; 13:6; 28:36 **28:65** Gn 8:9; Dt 12:9 **28:68** Dt 17:16

28:1-14 If the Israelites **faithfully obey**[ed] **the LORD**, they would be blessed (see also 26:16-19). They would be exalted above other **nations** and have blessed **offspring**, **livestock**, and crops. A similar promise of blessings for obedience had been given earlier in Leviticus 26:3-13, but Israel's fulfillment of the condition was doubtful (see the notes on 4:25-31 and 15:7).

28:15-19 The general description of the curses for disobedience mirror that of the blessings for obedience in verses 1-6. As was the case in Leviticus 26:3-39, more space is given to the consequences for

disobedience. The amount of detail given in Leviticus 26:14-39 and in Deuteronomy 28:20-68 suggests that Israel will indeed disobey and experience these negative consequences (see also the notes on 4:25-31 and 15:7).

28:30-34 Rather than experiencing blessing upon their descendants, livestock, and crops (see vv. 1-14), the Israelites, if they disobeyed God, would not enjoy the fruit of their vineyards (see also vv. 24,38-40), their livestock would be taken by their enemies, and their children would be taken away as well (see also vv. 41,53-55,59,62).

28:36-37 The end result of their disobedience would be their destruction (vv. 20-24,45) and exile (v. 36; see also vv. 63-65; 4:27-28). Rather than being exalted above other nations (vv. 1,7,10,12), the Israelites would **become an object of horror, scorn, and ridicule among all the peoples** (see also vv. 25,43-44,48).

28:49-52 One of God's instruments of judgment against the disobedient Israelites would be **a nation from far away**, **a ruthless nation** that would both consume their livestock and crops as well as **besiege** their cities. At that time, the Israelites would trust their **high and fortified walls** instead of God. The invasion of the Babylonians is thus anticipated here.

28:53-55 The siege would drive the Israelites to such desperation that parents would resort to cannibalism. The horrible irony was that a foreign nation would eat the Israelites' livestock and produce (v. 51), but the Israelites' children would be eaten by the Israelites themselves. This is a far cry from these same children being blessed by God (see 28:4) and taught by their parents (see the note on 4:9-10).

28:68 The long description of curses for disobedience ends with Israel going back to Egypt (see Jr 43:7), the very place from which God had brought them out of slavery. This time, however, no one would even want to buy them as slaves.

RENEWING THE COVENANT

29 These are the words of the covenant † the LORD commanded Moses to
make with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant
he had made with them at Horeb. † 2 Moses summoned all Israel and said to
them, "You have seen with your own eyes † everything the LORD did in Egypt to
Pharaoh, to all his officials, and to his entire land. 3 You saw with your own
eyes the great trials and those great signs and wonders. † 4 Yet to this day the
LORD has not given you a mind to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear. † 5 I
led you forty years in the wilderness; your clothes and the sandals on your feet
did not wear out; † 6 you did not eat food or drink wine or beer — so that you
might know that I am the LORD your God. † 7 When you reached this place,
King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan came out against us in battle,
but we defeated them. † 8 We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the
Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. † 9 Therefore, observe

the words of this covenant † and follow them, so that you will succeed in everything you do. †
10 “All of you are standing today before the LORD your God — your leaders, tribes, elders, officials, all the men of Israel, 11 your dependents, your wives, and the resident aliens in your camps who cut your wood and draw your water — 12 so that you may enter into the covenant of the LORD your God, which he is making with you today, so that you may enter into his oath 13 and so that he may establish you today as his people and he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. † 14 I am making this covenant and this oath not only with you, 15 but also with those who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God and with those who are not here today.

ABANDONING THE COVENANT

16 “Indeed, you know how we lived in the land of Egypt and passed through the nations where you traveled. 17 You saw their abhorrent images and idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold, which were among them. † 18 Be sure there is no man, woman, clan, or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations. Be sure there is no root among you bearing poisonous and bitter fruit. † 19 When someone hears the words of this oath, he may consider himself exempt, † thinking, ‘I will have peace even though I follow my own stubborn heart.’ This will lead to the destruction of the well-watered land as well as the dry land. 20 The LORD will not be willing to forgive him. Instead, his anger and jealousy will burn against that person, and every curse written in this scroll will descend on him. The LORD will blot out his name under heaven, † 21 and single him out for harm from all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this book of the law.
22 “Future generations of your children who follow you and the foreigner who comes from a distant country will see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses the LORD has inflicted on it. 23 All its soil will be a burning waste of sulfur and salt, unsown, producing nothing, with no plant growing on it, just like the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the LORD demolished in his fierce anger. † 24 All the nations will ask, ‘Why has the LORD done this to this

land? Why this intense outburst of anger?’ 25 Then people will answer, ‘It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he had made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. 26 They began to serve other gods, bowing in worship to gods they had not known † — gods that the LORD had not permitted them to worship. † 27 Therefore the LORD’s anger burned against this land, and he brought every curse written in this book on it. 28 The LORD uprooted them from their land in his anger, rage, and intense wrath, and threw them into another land where they are today.’ 29 The hidden things belong to the LORD our God, but the revealed things belong to us and our children forever, so that we may follow all the words of this law.

29:19 Lit *may bless himself in his heart*

29:1 Dt 31:16 **29:1** Ex 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Dt 1:2,6,19; 4:10,15; 5:2; 18:16; 1Kg 8:9; 2Ch 5:10 **29:2** Dt 4:34; 6:22; Jos 24:7,17 **29:3** Ex 7:3; Dt 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 34:11; Neh 9:10; Ps 135:9; Jr 32:20-21 **29:4** Is 6:9-10; Ezk 12:2; Mt 13:14; Ac 28:26-27; Rm 11:8 **29:5** Dt 8:4; Neh 9:21 **29:6** Ex 6:7; 7:5,17; 8:10,22; 9:14; 10:2; 14:4; Ezk 6:7,10,13-14 **29:7** Dt 2:26-3:17 **29:7-8** Nm 21:21-35; 32:1-42; Jos 1:12 **29:9** Dt 31:16 **29:9** Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2-3 **29:13** Dt 7:8,12-13; 8:18; 9:5 **29:17** 2Ch 15:8; Jr 4:1; Ezk 16:36 **29:18** Heb 12:15 **29:20** Dt 9:14 **29:23** Gn 14:2,8; 19:23-29 **29:26** Dt 32:17 **29:26** Dt 4:19; 1Kg 9:8-9; Jr 22:8-9

29:4 This verse gives important insight into the spiritual condition of the Israelites. Although they had seen “with [their] own eyes everything the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh” (v. 2), their spiritual senses were lacking in that they still did not have **a mind to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear.** That **the LORD has not given** these things does not absolve Israel of their responsibility; instead, it emphasizes their need for his help and grace. This predicament would persist into the future (see 31:16-29; Is 6:9-10; Mt 13:13-15) and would not be resolved until the establishment of the new covenant, through which their hearts would be circumcised (see Dt 30:6; Jr 31:31-34) and their spiritual senses awakened through the Spirit of God (see Nm 24:2-4,15-17).

29:14-15 The **covenant** was not only between God and all Israel of that time (vv. 10-13) but also included **those who are not here today** (see also 5:3).

RETURNING TO THE LORD

30 “When all these things happen to you — the blessings and curses I have set before you — and you come to your senses while you are in all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, † 2 and you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and all your soul † by doing † everything I am commanding you today, 3 then he will restore your fortunes, † † have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. † 4 Even if your exiles are at the farthest horizon, † he will gather you and bring you back

from there. † 5 The LORD your God will bring you into the land your fathers possessed, and you will take possession of it. † He will cause you to prosper and multiply you more than he did your fathers. † 6 The LORD your God will circumcise your heart † and the hearts of your descendants, and you will love him with all your heart and all your soul so that you will live. † 7 The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. 8 Then you will again obey him and follow all his commands I am commanding you today. 9 The LORD your God will make you prosper abundantly in all the work of your hands, † your offspring, † the offspring of your livestock, and the produce of your land. Indeed, the LORD will again delight in your prosperity, as he delighted in that of your fathers, 10 when you obey the LORD your God by keeping his commands and statutes that are written in this book of the law and return to him with all your heart and all your soul.

CHOOSE LIFE

11 "This command that I give you today is certainly not too difficult or beyond your reach. 12 It is not in heaven so that you have to ask, 'Who will go up to heaven, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it? ' 13 And it is not across the sea so that you have to ask, 'Who will cross the sea, get it for us, and proclaim it to us so that we may follow it? ' 14 But the message is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you may follow it. † 15 See, today I have set before you life and prosperity, death and adversity. † 16 For † I am commanding you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, statutes, and ordinances, so that you may live † and multiply, and the LORD your God may bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you do not listen and you are led astray to bow in worship to other gods and serve them, 18 I tell you today that you will certainly perish and will not prolong your days in the land you are entering to possess across the Jordan. 19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life † so that you and your descendants may live, 20 love the LORD your God, obey him, and remain faithful † to him. For he is your life, and he will

prolong your days as you live in the land the LORD swore to give to your fathers † Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

30:2 Lit *soul according to* **30:3** Or *will end your captivity* **30:4** Lit *skies* **30:9** Lit *hands in the fruit of your womb* **30:16** LXX reads *If you obey the commands of the Lord your God that* **30:16** LXX reads *ordinances, then you will live* **30:20** Lit *and hold on*

30:1 Jr 23:12; Am 4:3; 9:4; Zph 3:18 **30:2** Dt 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 26:16; Jos 22:5; 23:14; 1Kg 2:4; 8:48; 2Kg 23:25; 2Ch 15:12; 34:31 **30:3** Jr 29:14; Zph 2:7 **30:3** Lv 26:40-45; 1Kg 8:46-50; Jr 29:14; Ezk 16:53; Zph 3:20 **30:4** Neh 1:9 **30:5** Dt 3:12 **30:5** Dt 6:3; 28:63 **30:6** Dt 10:16; Jr 4:4 **30:6** Dt 16:20; Is 55:3 **30:9** Dt 2:7; 14:29; 16:15; 24:19; 28:12; Ec 5:6; Hg 2:17 **30:12-14** Rm 10:6-8 **30:15** Dt 11:26; Jr 21:8 **30:19** Dt 4:1; 5:33; 6:24; 8:1,3; 16:20; 32:46-47 **30:20** Dt 1:35

30:1-6 This passage assumes that the Israelites will turn away from God and experience the curses just described, especially exile (see also 4:25-27; 29:22-28). While in exile, however, the Israelites would repent (v. 2) and be restored to their land (vv. 3-5; see also 4:29-30). The promised circumcision of their hearts (v. 6) would meet their central need (see Lv 26:41; Jr 9:26) and is a direct reference to the new covenant (see Jr 31:31-34; Rm 2:29). That God would perform this suggests that Israel could not do it for themselves (see Dt 10:16; Jr 4:4). The result of this transformation of the heart would be that they **will love him with all** [their] **heart and all** [their] **soul**, as commanded in the *Shema* (see the note on 6:4-9).

30:11-15 Paul cites this passage in Romans 10:6-8 and interprets these verses as referring to the new covenant, not the law given at Mount Sinai. The clear distinction in Paul's argument is indicated through his assertion that this passage concerns "the righteousness that comes from faith," in contrast to "the righteousness that is from the law." Along these lines, some have taken verses 12-13 as alluding to Moses climbing Mount Sinai to receive the law and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea prior to this. Additional support for Paul's interpretation can be found in the direct reference to the new covenant in the near context (v. 6) and in the characterization of the **message** as being **in your mouth and in your heart** (see Is 59:21; Jr 31:33).

30:15-21 The word **today** (vv. 15,18-19) shifts the temporal frame of reference back to that of Moses and his contemporaries. This passage parallels other passages in Deuteronomy, such as 4:25-26; 10:12-13; and 11:26-28. See "Sources for Ethics," *p. 1371*.

JOSHUA TAKES MOSES'S PLACE

31 Then Moses continued to speak these † words to all Israel, 2 saying, "I am now 120 years old; † I can no longer act as your leader. † The LORD has told me, 'You will not cross the Jordan.' † 3 The LORD your God is the one who will cross ahead of you. † He will destroy these nations before you, and you will drive them out. Joshua is the one who will cross ahead of you, as the LORD has said. † 4 The LORD will deal with them as he did Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, and their land when he destroyed them. † 5 The LORD will deliver them over to you, and you must do to them exactly as I have commanded you. 6 Be strong and courageous; † don't be terrified or afraid of

them. For the LORD your God is the one who will go with you; † he will not leave you or abandon you.” †
7 Moses then summoned Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, “Be strong and courageous, for you will go with † this people into the land the LORD swore to give to their fathers. † You will enable them to take possession of it.
8 The LORD is the one who will go before you. † He will be with you; he will not leave you or abandon you. † Do not be afraid or discouraged.”
9 Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the LORD’s covenant, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 Moses commanded them, “At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of debt cancellation, † during the Festival of Shelters, † 11 when all Israel assembles † in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he chooses, † you are to read this law aloud before all Israel. † 12 Gather the people — men, women, dependents, and the resident aliens within your city gates — so that they may listen and learn to fear † the LORD your God and be careful to follow all the words of this law. 13 Then their children † who do not know the law will listen and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.”
14 The LORD said to Moses, “The time of your death is now approaching. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting so that I may commission him.” When Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves at the tent of meeting, 15 the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, † and the cloud stood at the entrance to the tent. †
16 The LORD said to Moses, “You are about to rest with your fathers, † and these people will soon prostitute themselves with the foreign gods † of the land they are entering. They will abandon me † and break the covenant † I have made with them. 17 My anger will burn against them on that day; † I will abandon them and hide my face from them so that they will become easy prey. † † Many troubles and afflictions will come to them. On that day they will say, ‘Haven’t these troubles come to us because our God is no longer with us?’ 18 I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all the evil they have done by

turning to other gods. 19 Therefore write down this song † for yourselves and teach it to the Israelites; have them sing it, † so that this song may be a witness for me against the Israelites. 20 When I bring them into the land I swore to give their fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey, † they will eat their fill † and prosper. † They will turn to other gods and worship them, despising me † and breaking my covenant. † 21 And when many troubles and afflictions come to them, this song will testify against them, because † their descendants will not have forgotten it. For I know what they are prone to do, † even before I bring them into the land I swore to give them." 22 So Moses wrote down this song on that day and taught it to the Israelites.

23 The LORD commissioned Joshua son of Nun, "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I swore to them, and I will be with you." †

MOSES WARNS THE PEOPLE

24 When Moses had finished writing down on a scroll every single word † of this law, 25 he commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the LORD's covenant, 26 "Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God so that it may remain there as a witness against you. 27 For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you are rebelling against the LORD now, while I am still alive, how much more will you rebel after I am dead! 28 Assemble all your tribal elders and officers before me so that I may speak these words directly to them and call heaven and earth as witnesses against them. † 29 For I know that after my death you will become completely corrupt and turn from the path I have commanded you. Disaster will come to you in the future, because you will do what is evil in the LORD's sight, angering him with what your hands have made." † 30 Then Moses recited aloud every single word † of this song to the entire assembly of Israel:

31:1 Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX, Syr, Vg read *all these* **31:2** Lit *no longer go out or come in* **31:7** Some Hb mss, Sam, Syr, Vg read *you will bring* **31:11** Lit *comes to appear* **31:17** Lit *will be for devouring* **31:19** Lit *Israelites; put it in their mouths* **31:20** Lit *be fat* **31:21** Lit *because the mouths of* **31:21** Or *know the plans they are devising* **31:24** Lit *scroll the words to their completion* **31:30** Lit *recited the words to their completion*

31:2 Jos 14:10 **31:2** Dt 3:27 **31:3** Ex 23:31; Dt 9:3 **31:3** Dt 3:28 **31:4** Nm 21:21-35; Dt 29:6; Jos 2:10 **31:6** Dt 31:23; Jos 1:6-7,9,18; 10:25 **31:6** Dt 1:29; 7:21; 20:3 **31:6** Heb 13:5 **31:7** Dt 1:8,35; 8:1; 11:9,21; 31:20;

Ezk 20:42 **31:8** Ex 23:23; 32:34; Dt 1:30; Jdg 4:14; Is 52:12 **31:8** Jos 1:5; 1Ch 28:20; Heb 13:5 **31:10** Dt 15:1-2 **31:10** Lv 23:34; Dt 16:3 **31:11** Dt 12:14; 14:23; 15:20; 16:2; 23:16 **31:10-11** Jos 8:34; 2Kg 22:8; Neh 8:3,8,18; 9:3; Jr 2:8; Mal 2:1-9 **31:12** Dt 14:23; 17:19 **31:13** Dt 4:9-10 **31:15** Ex 13:21-22; 33:9-10; Ps 99:7 **31:15** Nm 12:5 **31:16** Gn 47:30; 2Sm 7:12; 1Kg 2:10; 11:43; 14:20,31 **31:16** Jr 5:7; 7:9; Hs 3:1 **31:16** Dt 28:20; Jdg 10:13; 1Sm 8:8; 1Kg 11:33; 2Kg 22:17; Jr 1:16; 2:13; 5:7,19; 16:11; 19:4 **31:16** Dt 4:13,23; 5:2-3; 17:2; 29:1,9-14,21,25 **31:17** Nm 32:10; Is 13:9,13; Lm 1:12 **31:17** Ps 63:10; Jr 2:14; Ezk 34:8 **31:19** Dt 32:1-43 **31:20** Dt 11:9 **31:20** Dt 11:15 **31:20** Nm 14:11,23; 1Sm 2:29-30; 2Sm 12:10; Jr 23:17; Mal 1:6 **31:20** Lv 26:15,44; Dt 4:31; Jos 23:16 **31:23** Jos 1:1-9 **31:28** Dt 4:26; 30:19 **31:27-29** Dt 4:25; Jdg 2:6-13

31:1-8 Moses's death was imminent, and the transfer of leadership to Joshua is mentioned again (see also vv. 14-15; Nm 27:18-21). Moses's charge to him to **be strong and courageous** and his assurance that God **will be with** [him] (see also v. 23) are echoed in Jos 1:5-8.

31:16-22 The Lord predicted that after Moses's death the Israelites would **soon prostitute themselves with the foreign gods of the land they are entering**. As a result, God would be angry with them, and the Israelites would encounter **many troubles and afflictions.** The **song** would **be a witness for [God] against the Israelites** (see also vv. 30; 32:1-44; see "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*). The Israelites' future disobedience as well as their exile (see the note on 4:25-31) are thus to be expected, even though they had yet to enter the land (see also 29:22–30:1). Nevertheless, their future was not hopeless because of the promise of the new covenant (see 30:6).

31:26-29 Moses was sure that the Israelites would rebel against God after his death (v. 27). Both **the book of the law** and the heavens and earth were also **witnesses** against the Israelites, just as the song that Moses taught them was (v. 19). The Israelites' corruption and disobedience would cause trouble for them **in the future** (lit "in the last days"; see the note on Gn 49:1). This same Hebrew phrase is also used in Deuteronomy 4:30, where it likewise characterizes a period in which Israel is experiencing serious consequences for their sins (see the note on 4:25-31). The other two occurrences of this phrase in the Pentateuch appear in connection with the coming of the Messiah (Gn 49:1; Nm 24:14; see also the notes on Gn 49:8-12 and Nm 24:14-19). The Messiah's coming naturally fits with Israel's need for deliverance from their sins.

SONG OF MOSES

32 Pay attention, heavens, and I will speak; listen, earth, to the words
from my mouth. †

2 Let my teaching fall like rain and my word settle like dew,
like gentle rain on new grass
and showers on tender plants.

3 For I will proclaim the LORD's name. †
Declare the greatness of our God!

4 The Rock † — his work is perfect; all his ways are just. †
A faithful God, † without bias, he is righteous and true.

5 His people have acted corruptly toward him; †

this is their defect † — they are not his children but a devious and crooked generation. †

6 Is this how you repay the LORD, you foolish and senseless people? †
Isn't he your Father and Creator? † †
Didn't he make you and sustain you?
7 Remember the days of old; consider the years of past generations.
Ask your father, and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will teach you.
8 When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance †
and divided the human race, †
he set the boundaries of the peoples †
according to the number of the people of Israel. †
9 But the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob, his own inheritance. †

10 He found him in a desolate land, in a barren, howling wilderness;
he surrounded him, cared for him, †
and protected him as the pupil of his eye. †
11 He watches over † his nest like an eagle and hovers over his young;
he spreads his wings, catches him,
and carries him on his feathers. †
12 The LORD alone led him, with no help from a foreign god. †
13 He made him ride on the heights of the land †
and eat the produce of the field.
He nourished him with honey from the rock
and oil from flinty rock,
14 curds from the herd and milk from the flock, with the fat of lambs,
rams from Bashan, † and goats, with the choicest grains of wheat;
you drank wine from the finest grapes. †

15 Then † Jeshurun † † became fat and rebelled — you became fat, bloated, and gorged.
He abandoned the God who made him

and scorned the Rock of his salvation.
16 They provoked his jealousy with different gods; they enraged him with detestable practices. †
17 They sacrificed to demons, not God, to gods they had not known,
new gods that had just arrived,
which your fathers did not fear. †
18 You ignored the Rock who gave you birth; you forgot the God who gave birth to you.

19 When the LORD saw this, he despised them, angered by his sons and daughters.
20 He said: "I will hide my face from them; †
I will see what will become of them,
for they are a perverse generation —
unfaithful children.
21 They have provoked my jealousy with what is not a god; †
they have enraged me with their worthless idols. †
So I will provoke their jealousy
with what is not a people; †
I will enrage them with a foolish nation. †
22 For fire has been kindled because of my anger and burns to the depths of Sheol; †
it devours the land and its produce,
and scorches the foundations of the mountains.

23 "I will pile disasters on them; I will use up my arrows against them.
24 They will be weak from hunger, ravaged by pestilence and bitter plague;
I will unleash on them wild beasts with fangs, as well as venomous snakes that slither in the dust.
25 Outside, the sword will take their children, and inside, there will be terror;
the young man and the young woman will be killed, the infant and the gray-haired man. †

26 "I would have said: I will cut them to pieces †

and blot out the memory of them from mankind, †
27 if I had not feared provocation from the enemy, or feared that these foes might misunderstand and say: ‘Our own hand has prevailed;
it wasn’t the LORD who did all this.’ ”

28 Israel is a nation lacking sense with no understanding at all. † †
29 If only they were wise, they would comprehend this; they would understand their fate.
30 How could one pursue a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, †
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the LORD had given them up? †
31 But their “rock” is not like our Rock, as even our enemies concede.
32 For their vine is from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are poisonous;
their clusters are bitter.
33 Their wine is serpents’ venom, the deadly poison of cobras. †

34 “Is it not stored up with me, sealed up in my vaults?
35 Vengeance † belongs to me; I will repay. † †
In time their foot will slip,
for their day of disaster is near,
and their doom is coming quickly.”
36 The LORD will indeed vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants †
when he sees that their strength is gone
and no one is left — slave or free. †
37 He will say: “Where are their gods, the ‘rock’ they found refuge in?
38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices and drank the wine of their drink offerings?
Let them rise up and help you;
let it † be a shelter for you.
39 See now that I alone am he; there is no God but me. †
I bring death and I give life;
I wound and I heal.

No one can rescue anyone from my power. †
40 I raise my hand to heaven and declare: As surely as I live forever,
41 when I sharpen my flashing sword, and my hand takes hold of judgment,
I will take vengeance on my adversaries
and repay those who hate me.
42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood while my sword devours flesh — the
blood of the slain and the captives,
the heads of the enemy leaders." †

43 Rejoice, you nations, concerning his people, † †
for he will avenge the blood of his servants. †
He will take vengeance on his adversaries; † †
he will purify his land and his people. †

44 Moses came with Joshua † son of Nun and recited all the words of this song in the presence of the people. 45 After Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, "Take to heart all these words I am giving as a warning to you today, † so that you may command your children to follow all the words of this law carefully. † 47 For they are not meaningless words to you but they are your life, † and by them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

MOSES'S IMPENDING DEATH

48 On that same day the LORD spoke to Moses, † 49 "Go up Mount Nebo † in the Abarim range in the land of Moab, across from Jericho, and view the land of Canaan I am giving the Israelites as a possession. 50 Then you will die on the mountain that you go up, and you will be gathered to your people, † just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. † 51 For both of you broke faith with me among the Israelites at the Waters of Meribath-kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin by failing to treat me as holy in their presence. 52 Although from a distance you will view the land that I am giving the Israelites, you will not go there." †

32:5 Or *him; through their fault* ; Hb obscure **32:6** Or *Possessor* **32:8** Or *Most High divided the nations* **32:8** One DSS reads *number of the sons of God* ; LXX reads *number of the angels of God* **32:11** Or *He stirs*

up **32:12** Lit *him, and no foreign god with him* **32:14** Lit *drank the blood of grapes, fermenting wine* **32:15** DSS, Sam, LXX add *Jacob ate his fill;* **32:15** = Upright One, referring to Israel **32:21** Lit *with no gods* **32:21** Lit *with no people* **32:26** LXX reads *will scatter them* **32:28** Lit *understanding in them* **32:35** Sam, LXX read *On a day of vengeance* **32:35** LXX, Tg, Vg read *me; and recompense I will recompense* **32:36** Or *left—even the weak and impaired* ; Hb obscure **32:38** Sam, LXX, Tg, Vg read *them* **32:42** Or *the long-haired heads of the enemy* **32:43** LXX reads *Rejoice, you heavens, along with him, and let all the sons of God worship him; rejoice, you nations, with his people, and let all the angels of God strengthen themselves in him* ; DSS read *Rejoice, you heavens, along with him, and let all the angels worship him* ; Heb 1:6 **32:43** DSS, LXX read *sons* **32:43** DSS, LXX add *and he will recompense those who hate him* ; v. 41 **32:43** Syr, Tg; DSS, Sam, LXX, Vg read *his people's land* **32:44** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *Hoshea* ; Nm 13:8,16 **32:1** Jdg 5:3; Pr 4:20; Is 1:2; 28:23; 34:1; 49:1; Mc 1:2 **32:3** Ex 33:19; Ps 22:22; 71:16,18; 89:1 **32:4** Gn 49:24; Dt 32:15,18,30-31; 1Sm 23:28; 2Sm 23:3; Is 30:29; 44:8; Hab 1:12 **32:4** 2Sm 22:31; Ps 10:5; 18:30; 25:10; 145:17; Lm 1:18; Dn 4:37 **32:4** Dt 7:9; Ps 59:10,17 **32:5** Ex 32:7; Dt 4:16,25; 9:12; Jdg 2:19; Neh 1:7; Zph 3:7 **32:5** Dt 32:20; Ps 78:8; Jr 2:31; Mt 11:16; 12:39; 16:4; 17:7; Ac 2:40; Php 2:15 **32:6** Jr 4:22; 5:21; 10:8 **32:6** Mal 2:10 **32:8** Gn 11:1-9 **32:8** Ac 17:26 **32:9** Nm 18:20; Dt 10:9; Zch 2:12 **32:10** Ezk 16:6-14 **32:10** Pr 7:2 **32:11** Ex 19:4; Ps 91:4 **32:13** Is 58:14 **32:14** Ps 22:12; Ezk 39:18; Am 4:1; Mc 7:14 **32:15** Is 44:2 **32:16** Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; Jos 24:19; 1Kg 14:22; Ps 78:58; Nah 1:2; Zph 1:18; 3:8 **32:17** Ps 106:37; 1Co 10:19-20 **32:20** Dt 31:17-18; Jb 13:24; 34:29; Ps 10:11; 13:1; 22:24; 27:9; 30:7; 69:17; 88:14; 102:2; 104:29; 143:7; Is 8:17; 54:8; 59:2; 64:7; Jr 33:5; Ezk 39:23-24; 39:29; Mc 3:4 **32:21** 1Kg 16:13,26; 2Kg 17:15; Jr 10:8 **32:21** Dt 32:6; Ps 74:18; Rm 10:19; 11:14 **32:22** Ps 86:13; Pr 9:18; Is 7:11 **32:22-25** Is 5:8-30; Jr 9:17-21 **32:26** Ex 17:14; Dt 9:14; 25:19; 29:20; 2Kg 14:27 **32:28** Is 44:19; Jr 29:7 **32:30** Lv 26:36 **32:30** Ps 127:1; Lm 3:37; Mk 13:20 **32:33** Jb 20:14 **32:35** 1Sm 24:12; 2Sm 22:48; Jr 11:20; 51:36; Nah 1:2; Rm 12:19; Heb 10:30 **32:36** Ps 135:14 **32:39** Is 40:25; 43:11-13; 46:9; Ezk 36:23 **32:39** Dt 30:15,19; 1Sm 2:6-8; 4:8; Jr 21:8; Hs 2:10 **32:43** Rm 15:10 **32:43** Ps 79:10; Jr 46:10; Mc 5:15; Nah 1:2 **32:46** Dt 11:18; Ezk 3:10; Mal 2:2 **32:46** Dt 29:29; 31:12 **32:47** Dt 30:20; Pr 4:13 **32:48-51** Nm 27:12-14 **32:49** Dt 34:1 **32:50** Gn 25:8,17; 35:29; 49:33; Nm 27:13; 31:2 **32:50** Nm 20:22-29 **32:51-52** Nm 20:2-13

32:1 This verse begins the fourth and last major poetic section in the Pentateuch (Dt 32–33), the others being Genesis 49:2-27; Exodus 15:1-18; and Numbers 23:7-10,18-24 and 24:3-9,15-19 (see the notes on Gn 49:1; Ex 15:1; Nm 23:7-10).

32:10-25 Although God had done so much for Israel (vv. 10-14), the Israelites forsook him and worshiped idols (vv. 15-18; see also vv. 5-6), which provoked him to anger and judgment (vv. 19-25; see also the note on 31:16-22).

32:26-27 The Lord relented from destroying Israel completely because he wanted to protect his honor from the reproach and boast of **the enemy** (see also the notes on Ex 32:7-14 and Nm 14:20-25).

32:28-29 Israel's rebellion is cast as foolishness again (see also v. 6).

32:36 Despite Israel's sins and God's punishment of them, he would ultimately **vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants** (see also v. 43) and show himself to be the only God (vv. 37-39; see also vv. 15-18).

MOSES'S BLESSINGS

33 This is the blessing that Moses, the man of God, gave the Israelites before his death. † 2 He said:

The LORD came from Sinai and appeared to them from Seir; †

he shone on them from Mount Paran †
and came with ten thousand holy ones, †
with lightning † from his right hand † for them. †
3 Indeed he loves the people. † †
All your † holy ones are in your hand, and they assemble † at your feet.
Each receives your words.
4 Moses gave us instruction, a possession for the assembly of Jacob.
5 So he became King in Jeshurun † †
when the leaders of the people gathered
with the tribes of Israel.

6 Let Reuben live and not die though his people become few. †

7 He said this about Judah:

LORD, hear Judah's cry and bring him to his people.
He fights for his cause † with his own hands, but may you be a help against his foes.

8 He said about Levi:

Your Thummim and Urim † belong to your faithful one; †
you tested him at Massah
and contended with him at the Waters of Meribah. †
9 He said about his father and mother, "I do not regard them."
He disregarded his brothers
and didn't acknowledge his sons,
for they kept your word
and maintained your covenant. †
10 They will teach your ordinances to Jacob and your instruction to Israel; †
they will set incense before you
and whole burnt offerings on your altar.
11 LORD, bless his possessions, †
and accept the work of his hands.

Break the back † of his adversaries and enemies, so that they cannot rise again.

12 He said about Benjamin:

The LORD's beloved rests † securely on him.
He † shields him all day long, and he rests on his shoulders. †

13 He said about Joseph:

May his land be blessed by the LORD with the dew of heaven's bounty
and the watery depths that lie beneath; †
14 with the bountiful harvest from the sun and the abundant yield of the seasons;
15 with the best products of the ancient mountains and the bounty of the eternal hills; †
16 with the choice gifts of the land and everything in it;
and with the favor of him
who appeared † in the burning bush. †
May these rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince of his brothers. †
17 His firstborn bull has † splendor, and horns like † those of a wild ox; he gores all the peoples with them
to the ends of the earth.
Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim,
and such are the thousands of Manasseh.

18 He said about Zebulun:

Rejoice, Zebulun, in your journeys,
and Issachar, in your tents.
19 They summon the peoples to a mountain; there they offer acceptable sacrifices.
For they draw from the wealth of the seas
and the hidden treasures of the sand. †

20 He said about Gad:

The one who enlarges Gad's territory
will be blessed.
He lies down like a lion
and tears off an arm or even a head. †
21 He chose the best part for himself, because a ruler's portion was assigned there for him.
He came with the leaders of the people;
he carried out the LORD's justice and his ordinances for Israel. †

22 He said about Dan:

Dan is a young lion,
leaping out of Bashan. †

23 He said about Naphtali:

Naphtali, enjoying approval,
full of the LORD's blessing, take † possession to the west and the south.

24 He said about Asher:

May Asher † be the most blessed of the sons; may he be the most favored among his brothers and dip his foot in olive oil. †
25 May the bolts of your gate be iron and bronze, and your strength last as long as you live.

26 There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rides the heavens to your aid,
the clouds in his majesty. †
27 The God of old is your dwelling place, †
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
He drives out the enemy before you
and commands, "Destroy! "
28 So Israel dwells securely; †
Jacob lives untroubled † †
in a land of grain and new wine;

even his skies drip with dew. †
29 How happy you are, Israel!
Who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD?
He is the shield that protects you,
the sword you boast in.
Your enemies will cringe before you, †
and you will tread on their backs. † †

33:2 LXX reads *Mount Paran with ten thousands from Kadesh* **33:2** Or *fiery law* ; Hb obscure **33:2** Or *ones, from his southland to the mountain slopes* **33:3** Or *peoples* **33:3** Lit *his*, or *its* **33:3** Hb obscure **33:5** = Upright One, referring to Israel, also in v. 26 **33:7** Or *he contends for them* **33:8** DSS, LXX read *Give to Levi your Thummim, your Urim to your favored one* **33:11** Or *abilities* **33:11** Or *waist* **33:12** Or *Let the Lord's beloved rest* **33:12** LXX reads *The Most High* **33:12** Or *and he dwells among his mountain slopes* **33:16** Lit *dwelt* **33:17** Some DSS, Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg read *A firstborn bull — he has* **33:17** Lit *and his horns are* **33:23** Sam, LXX, Syr, Vg, Tg read *he will take* **33:24** = Happy or Blessed; Gn 30:13 **33:28** Text emended; MT reads *Jacob's fountain is alone* **33:29** Or *high places*
33:1-29 Gn 49:1-33 **33:2** Gn 14:6; 32:3; 36:8; Dt 1:2; Jdg 5:4 **33:2** Gn 21:21; Nm 10:12; 12:16; Dt 1:1; Hab 3:3 **33:2** Jdg 5:4-5; Ps 68:7-8; Hab 3:3 **33:3** Dt 4:37; Mal 1:2 **33:5** Dt 32:15; 33:26; Is 44:2 **33:6** Gn 49:3-4; Jdg 5:15-16 **33:8** Ex 28:30; Lv 8:8; Ezr 2:63; Neh 7:65 **33:8** Ex 17:1-7; Nm 20:2-13; Dt 6:16; 9:22; Ps 95:8 **33:9** Ex 32:25-29 **33:10** Dt 31:9-13 **33:13** Pr 3:20 **33:15** Gn 49:26; Hab 3:6 **33:16** Ex 3:2-4 **33:16** Gn 49:26 **33:18-19** Gn 49:13; Jdg 5:15,18 **33:20** 1Ch 12:8 **33:20-21** Nm 32:1-38 **33:22** Jdg 5:17 **33:24** Gn 49:20 **33:26** 2Sm 22:8-20; Ps 18:7-19; 68:4,33; Is 19:1 **33:27** Ps 91:9 **33:28** Lv 25:18-19; 26:5; Dt 12:10; 33:12; Jr 23:6; 33:16; Ezk 28:26; 34:28; 39:6 **33:28** Nm 23:9 **33:28** Dt 8:7-9 **33:29** 2Sm 22:44-46; Ps 18:43-45 **33:29** Dt 32:13; Hab 3:19

33:1 This **blessing** that Moses gave to the tribes of Israel is part of the fourth and last major poetic section in the Pentateuch (see the note on 32:1) and parallels Jacob's predictions about his sons in the first major poetic section (Gn 49:2-27). Whereas Jacob made foreboding statements about some of them (see Gn 49:3-7,14-17), Moses's words for each of the twelve tribes are entirely positive (e.g., vv. 6,8-12). His blessing was thus for all Israel. The order in which Moses spoke of each of the tribes is roughly the same as Genesis 49:2-27, except Judah and Joseph are moved forward in the list.

33:2 Seir was the land of Edom (see Gn 32:3; Dt 2:4), and **Mount Paran** (see also Hab 3:3) was most likely located somewhere in the Wilderness of Paran (see Gn 21:21; Nm 10:12; 12:16).

33:7 This brief statement about **Judah** is difficult to interpret within its immediate context. The other two major poetic sections that appear in connection with the phrase "in the future" (see notes on 31:26-29 and 32:1) contain clear messianic prophecy (see the notes on Gn 49:8-12; Nm 24:7-9; 24:14-17). These passages describe the Messiah's triumph over "his enemies" (see Gn 49:8; Nm 24:8,17-18). Perhaps the same victory is in view here, with God's answer to his prayer being brought out this time.

33:26-29 Moses's blessing concludes with a declaration of praise to God (vv. 26-27) and of the blessedness of Israel (vv. 28-29). **There is none like the God of Jeshurun**, and no people is as blessed as Israel, **a people saved by the LORD.**

MOSES'S DEATH

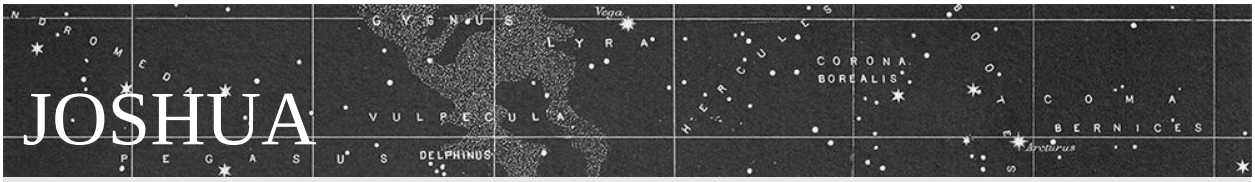
34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the
top of Pisgah, † which faces Jericho, and the LORD showed him all the
land: Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all of Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh,
all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean † Sea, 3 the Negev, and the
plain in the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. 4 The LORD then
said to him, “This is the land I promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, ‘I will give
it to your descendants.’ † I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you will
not cross into it.”
5 So Moses the servant of the LORD † died there in the land of Moab, according
to the LORD’s word. 6 He buried him † in the valley † in the land of Moab
facing Beth-peor, and no one to this day knows where his grave is. † 7 Moses
was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his eyes were not weak, and his
vitality had not left him. 8 The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab
thirty days. † Then the days of weeping and mourning for Moses came to an
end. †
9 Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom † because Moses had
laid his hands on him. † So the Israelites obeyed him and did as the LORD had
commanded Moses. † 10 No prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses,
whom the LORD knew face to face. † 11 He was unparalleled for all the signs
and wonders the LORD sent him to do against the land of Egypt — to Pharaoh, to
all his officials, and to all his land, 12 and for all the mighty acts of power † and
terrifying deeds that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. †

34:2 Lit *Western* **34:6** Or *he was buried* **34:12** Lit *the strong hand*
34:1-4 Dt 3:27; 32:48; Jos 13:20 **34:4** Gn 12:7; 15:18-20; 26:3; 35:12; Ex 33:1; 1Kg 4:24 **34:5** Jos 24:29; Jdg 2:8; 2Sm 3:18; 7:5,8; 1Kg 11:13; 14:8; 2Kg 18:12; 19:34; 21:8; Jb 1:8; 42:8; Is 20:3; 41:8-9; 42:1; 44:1; 52:13; 53:11 **34:6** Nm 21:20 **34:6** Jd 9 **34:8** Nm 20:29 **34:8** Mt 17:3 **34:9** Ex 28:3; 31:3-6; 1Kg 4:29; 5:12; 7:14; 2Ch 1:10-12; Is 11:2; Ac 6:3; Eph 1:17 **34:9** Nm 11:16-30; 27:18; 1Sm 10:1,10; 16:13 **34:9** Nm 26:65; 27:15-23; 34:17; Dt 1:38; 3:28; 31:3-8,14-23 **34:10** Ex 33:11 **34:12** Ex 7:3; Dt 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; 26:8; 29:3; Neh 9:10; Ps 78:43; 105:27

34:1-8 Deuteronomy, as well as the Pentateuch (see the note on Gn 1:1), ends with Moses’s death outside of the promised land. Israel too had not yet entered it. The Lord’s promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were thus not yet fulfilled.

34:9 Joshua, Israel’s new leader, had been described earlier as “a man who has the Spirit in him” (Nm 27:18). Likewise, he was now **filled with the spirit of wisdom.**

34:10-12 Moses's greatness as a prophet was demonstrated through his intimate relationship with God and through the mighty works that he performed. The statement that **No prophet has arisen again in Israel like Moses** implicitly compares prophets after Moses's time with him and implies that the messiah, "the prophet like Moses," had not yet come.



JOSHUA

INTRODUCTION

The book of Joshua is named for the most famous member of the Israelites in the generation after the death of Moses. The book describes the history of that generation of Israel who crossed the Jordan River and entered the promised land of Canaan. Their battles and faithfulness have a place among the greatest stories of faith in the Old Testament. Joshua led the people to defeat the adversaries who opposed God's people. He then oversaw the division of the land into the tribal allotments. Finally, Joshua renewed the covenant between the people and God.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author of the book of Joshua is not identified in the Bible and otherwise remains anonymous. If Joshua himself did not originally compose the book that bears his name, then it may be presumed that someone who knew him and his exploits recorded the work. There are numerous references throughout Joshua that suggest a final formation of the book after his lifetime. These include the death of Joshua and descriptions of memorials or names that are said to remain "still. . .today" (4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:17; 23:8).

BACKGROUND: The accounts in the book of Joshua occur in the period immediately after Moses's death. This was a new generation, not the one that had left Egypt. The story of Joshua is thus set when the nation of Israel first appeared in the land west of the Jordan River—the land that would bear their name. First Kings 6:1 states that the exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon's fourth year as king (966 BC). In Jdg 11:26, Jephthah said that Israel had been living in regions of Palestine for three hundred years. Jephthah lived around 1100 BC, thus dating the end of the wilderness journey and the beginning of the conquest around 1400 BC.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Just as Joshua's leadership begins with the death of Moses, so the book of Joshua follows and completes the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy serves as a means by which the new generation of Israelites renewed their covenant with God. The book of Joshua provides the means by which God fulfilled his part of the covenant. God gave them victories, but each victory required a step of faith. God's provision for the people as their leader and guide bore witness to later generations of the divinely willed leadership for Israel, and his gracious gift of the land showed how the people's faithful fulfillment of the covenant could result in abundant blessing.

STRUCTURE

The book of Joshua should be seen as a land grant, similar to the land grants and suzerain treaties of the ancient Near East. The suzerain, who was Israel's God, gave to his people the land that they were meant to receive. There are three major parts to the structure of the land grant.

First is a review of the history and events leading up to the gift of the land. This occurs in chapter 1 and its discussion of what has brought Joshua to this point—the death of Moses. Chapters 2–5 detail the preparation for the acquisition of the gift of the land. Chapters 6–12 describe the battles that were fought as background to the receipt of the land. The second section considers the allotment of the territories to the tribes and families of Israel. The many specific names and towns of this part of the text provide a

particularity to the gift that affirms it was an authentic fulfillment of God's promise to his people. The third section is a renewal of the covenant. Here the key parts are the stipulations of the covenant that require loyalty to God alone (24:14-15) and the response of the people that they agree to these demands.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The two attributes of God most on display in Joshua are his faithfulness to fulfill his promises and his ultimate judgment on evil. If the promise made to Abraham concerning land for Israel was kept only after many centuries, then today's believers should not be surprised if the promise he made concerning the return of Christ is kept after many centuries.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Although the book is careful to report Israel's occasional failures during the conquest, it is optimistic in its view that God's people can "live in victory" as they trust in him. For this reason, Joshua has been popular in Christian pulpits with the positive principles it contains.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The account of Rahab the prostitute (chaps. 2 and 6) profoundly illustrates salvation by "grace through faith." So thoroughly was she converted that she was considered an Israelite and became a biological ancestor of Jesus (Jos 6:25; Mt 1:5; Heb 11:31). Although most of the victories in Joshua are military, the entire tenor of the book is that salvation—of whatever kind—comes only from God's hand.

JOSHUA TIMELINE

1500–1450 BC

AARON 1529–1409?

MOSES 1526–1406

New Kingdom in Egypt **1540**

First alphabet developed in Egypt **1500**

Olmecs settle on the Gulf Coast of Mexico. **1500**

Queen Makare Hatshepsut, daughter of Thutmose I, reigned in Egypt during a period of peace and prosperity. **1449-1457**

1450–1425 BC

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

Bronze hand mirrors were taken from Egypt by Hebrew women. **1446**

The exodus and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. **1446**

Exploration of Canaan by the twelve spies. **1445**

1425–1400 BC

Events in Deuteronomy **1406**

Events in Joshua **1406–1380?**

Miraculous crossing of the Jordan River **1406**

Destruction of Jericho **1406**

1400–1375 BC

Warriors from the north, called Achaians by Homer, enter Greece to form foundations of Greek civilization. **1400**

Multiple cropping within the same year is developed in China. **1400**

Phoenicians advance open sea transportation with ships powered by oars and navigation by reference to the stars. **1400**

Division of the land into twelve allotments **1385?**

ENCOURAGEMENT OF JOSHUA

1 After the death of Moses † the LORD's servant, the LORD spoke to Joshua son of Nun, † Moses's assistant: 2 "Moses my servant is dead. †
Now you and all the people prepare to cross over the Jordan † to the land I am giving the Israelites. 3 I have given you every place where the sole of your foot treads, † just as I promised Moses. 4 Your territory will be from the wilderness and Lebanon † to the great river, the Euphrates River — all the land of the Hittites † — and west to the Mediterranean Sea. † † 5 No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. † I will be with you, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you. †
6 "Be strong and courageous, † for you will distribute the land I swore to their fathers to give them as an inheritance. † 7 Above all, be strong and very courageous to observe carefully the whole instruction my servant Moses commanded you. † Do not turn from it to the right or the left, so that you will have success wherever you go. 8 This book of instruction must not depart from your mouth; † you are to meditate on † it day and night so that you may carefully observe everything written in it. For then you will prosper and succeed in whatever you do. † 9 Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous?

† Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

JOSHUA PREPARES THE PEOPLE

10 Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people: 11 "Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get provisions ready for yourselves, for within three days you will be crossing the Jordan to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you to inherit.' " †

12 Joshua said to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh: †
13 "Remember what Moses the LORD's servant commanded you when he said, 'The LORD your God will give you rest, and he will give you this land.' †
14 Your wives, dependents, and livestock may remain in the land Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But your best soldiers must cross over in battle formation † ahead of your brothers and help them 15 until the LORD gives your brothers rest, as he has given you, and they too possess the land the LORD your God is giving them. You may then return to the land of your inheritance † and take possession of what Moses the LORD's servant † gave you on the east side of the Jordan."
16 They answered Joshua, "Everything you have commanded us we will do, and everywhere you send us we will go. 17 We will obey you, just as we obeyed Moses in everything. Certainly the LORD your God will be with you, as he was with Moses. † 18 Anyone who rebels against your order and does not obey your words in all that you command him, will be put to death. Above all, be strong and courageous! " †

1:4 Lit *and to the Great Sea, the going down of the sun* **1:8** Or *to recite* **1:14** Or *over armed*
1:1 Dt 34:5 **1:1** Ex 17:8-13; 33:11; Nm 13:8,16; 14:6-9; 27:18-23; Dt 31:2-8; 1Ch 7:20,27 **1:2** Dt 34:5-8 **1:2** Jos 1:11 **1:3-5** Dt 11:24-25 **1:4** Gn 15:18; Nm 34:3 **1:4** Gn 10:15; 15:19-21 **1:4** Dt 11:24; 1Kg 4:21,24-25; 8:65 **1:5** Dt 7:24 **1:5** Dt 31:6-8; Heb 13:5 **1:6** Jos 1:18; 10:25; 1Kg 2:2-3; 1Ch 22:13; 28:20; Ps 27:14; 31:24 **1:6** Gn 15:18; Ex 32:13; Dt 15:4 **1:7** Dt 5:32; 20:1-2; 21:1-3 **1:8** Dt 31:24; Jos 8:34 **1:8** Dt 29:9; Ps 1:1-3 **1:9** Dt 31:7-8; Jos 10:25 **1:11** Jos 3:2 **1:12** Nm 32:20-22 **1:13-15** Dt 3:18-20 **1:15** Jos 22:4 **1:15** Jos 1:1 **1:17** Jos 1:5,9 **1:18** Dt 31:7; Jos 1:6-7,9; 10:25

1:1 Deuteronomy (and the Pentateuch) ended with Moses's death (see Dt 34:10-12), and the book of Joshua picks up the story from there. Joshua, however, should be regarded as a separate book since it is not part of the Pentateuch (see the note on Gn 1:1).

1:2-9 The Lord's encouragement to Joshua came in the midst of a major leadership transition for Israel and is similar to Moses's earlier charge in Deuteronomy 31:1-8. Moses was dead, and Joshua was to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River to take possession of the land. Twice Joshua was reminded that God was

with him (vv. 5,9; see also v. 17), and three times he was commanded to **be strong and courageous** (vv. 6,7,9; see also v. 18). Remarkably, Joshua's success would not depend on military might or his own skill but on his obedience to **the whole instruction** [lit "law"] **[God's] servant Moses commanded.** The instruction to **meditate on it day and night so that** he would **prosper** (v. 8; see footnote B) parallels the description of the righteous man in Psalm 1:2-3. See also "Biblical Formation" on *p. 1504*; "Biblical Authority," *p. 709*.

1:12-15 That two and a half tribes would take possession of land across the Jordan after helping with the conquest had been agreed upon in Numbers 32.

1:16-18 The strong pledge of obedience is ironic in view of the Israelites' past disobedience to Moses (see the note on Ex 24:3; Nm 14:39-45; Ac 7:35).

SPIES SENT TO JERICHO

2 Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two men as spies † from the Acacia Grove, † saying, "Go and scout the land, especially Jericho." So they left, and they came to the house of a prostitute named Rahab, † and stayed there.

2 The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelite men have come here tonight to investigate the land." 3 Then the king of Jericho sent word to Rahab and said, "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, † for they came to investigate the entire land."

4 But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. † So she said, "Yes, the men did come to me, but I didn't know where they were from. 5 At nightfall, when the city gate was about to close, the men went out, and I don't know where they were going. Chase after them quickly, and you can catch up with them!" 6 But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them † among the stalks of flax that she had arranged on the roof. 7 The men pursued them along the road to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as they left to pursue them, the city gate was shut.

THE PROMISE TO RAHAB

8 Before the men fell asleep, she went up on the roof 9 and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land † and that the terror of you has fallen on us, † and everyone who lives in the land is panicking because of you. † † 10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, † and what you did to Sihon and Og,

the two Amorite kings you completely destroyed † across the Jordan. 11 When we heard this, we lost heart, † and everyone's courage failed † because of you, † for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on earth below. †
12 Now please swear to me by the LORD that you will also show kindness to my father's family, † because I showed kindness to you. † Give me a sure sign †
13 that you will spare the lives of my father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all who belong to them, and save us from death."
14 The men answered her, "We will give our lives for yours. If you don't report our mission, we will show kindness and faithfulness to you when the LORD gives us the land."
15 Then she let them down by a rope through the window, since she lived in a house that was built into the wall of the city. 16 "Go to the hill country so that the men pursuing you won't find you," she said to them. "Hide there for three days until they return; afterward, go on your way."
17 The men said to her, "We will be free from this oath you made us swear,
18 unless, when we enter the land, you tie this scarlet cord to the window through which you let us down. Bring your father, mother, brothers, and all your father's family into your house. 19 If anyone goes out the doors of your house, his death will be his own fault, † † and we will be innocent. But if anyone with you in the house should be harmed, † his death will be our fault. † 20 And if you report our mission, we are free from the oath you made us swear."
21 "Let it be as you say," she replied, and she sent them away. After they had gone, she tied the scarlet cord to the window.
22 So the two men went into the hill country and stayed there three days until the pursuers had returned. They searched all along the way, but did not find them.
23 Then the men returned, came down from the hill country, and crossed the Jordan. They went to Joshua son of Nun and reported everything that had happened to them. 24 They told Joshua, "The LORD has handed over the entire land to us. Everyone who lives in the land is also panicking because of us." †

2:1 Or *from Shittim* **2:9** Or *land panics at your approach* **2:11** Lit *and spirit no longer remained in anyone* **2:12** Lit *my father's house* **2:12** Or *a sign of truth* **2:19** Lit *his blood on his head* **2:19** Lit *if a hand should be on him* **2:19** Lit *his blood on our heads* **2:24** Or *land also panics at our approach*

2:1 Gn 42:9; Nm 13:2,16-17; Jos 7:2; Jdg 18:2 **2:1** Heb 11:31; Jms 2:25 **2:3** Gn 19:5 **2:4** 2Sm 17:19 **2:6** Jms 2:25 **2:9** Nm 20:24; Jos 9:24 **2:9** Ex 15:16; 23:27; Ezr 3:3; Jb 9:34; 13:21; Is 33:18; Jr 50:38 **2:9** Ex 15:15; Jos 2:24; 1Sm 14:16 **2:10** Ex 14:21-30 **2:10** Nm 21:23-30,33-35; Dt 2:32-34; 3:1-3; Jos 6:21 **2:11** Dt

1:28; 20:8; Jos 5:1; 7:5; 2Sm 17:10; Is 13:7; 19:1; Ezk 21:7; Nah 2:10 **2:11** Jos 5:1; 7:5; Ps 22:14; Is 13:7; 19:1 **2:11** Dt 4:39; 1Kg 8:23 **2:12** Gn 21:23; Jdg 1:24; 2Sm 2:5; 10:2 **2:19** Mt 27:25

2:4-16 On this approach to Canaan, only two spies were sent to "scout the land" (v. 1; see Nm 13). They stayed in the house of a prostitute who hid them and sent those searching for them in another direction (vv. 2-7). As a result, Rahab the prostitute was rewarded with salvation for herself and her household (vv. 12-14,17-20; 6:22-23) and was later commended for her faith in Hebrews 11:31 (see vv. 9-11). Along with the other inhabitants of Jericho, she had heard what God had done for Israel and was terrified (vv. 9-11; see also v. 24; 5:1). Moreover, she confessed that **the LORD** [their] **God is God in heaven above and on earth below.** The Lord's fame had thus spread to the people of Jericho and even resulted in the salvation of a Canaanite and her family. Rahab's deception (vv. 4-6) may qualify as a special circumstance and should not be used as justification for lying in general (see Eph 4:25).

CROSSING THE JORDAN

3 Joshua started early the next morning and left the Acacia Grove † with
all the Israelites. They went as far as the Jordan and stayed there before
crossing. 2 After three days the officers went through the camp † 3 and
commanded the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your
God carried by the Levitical priests, † you are to break camp and follow it.
4 But keep a distance of about a thousand yards † between yourselves and the
ark. Don't go near it, so that you can see the way to go, for you haven't traveled
this way before." †

5 Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, † because the LORD will do
wonders † among you tomorrow." 6 Then he said to the priests, "Carry the ark
of the covenant and go on ahead of the people." So they carried the ark of the
covenant and went ahead of them.

7 The LORD spoke to Joshua: "Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all
Israel, † so they will know that I will be with you just as I was with Moses. †
8 Command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant: When you reach the
edge of the water, † stand in the Jordan."

9 Then Joshua told the Israelites, "Come closer and listen to the words of the
LORD your God." 10 He said: "You will know that the living God is among
you † and that he will certainly dispossess before you the Canaanites, Hethites,
Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites † 11 when the ark of
the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth † goes ahead of you into the Jordan.
12 Now choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man for each tribe. †

13 When the feet † of the priests who carry the ark of the LORD, the Lord of the whole earth, come to rest in the Jordan's water, its water will be cut off. The water flowing downstream will stand up in a mass." †
14 When the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carried the ark of the covenant † ahead of the people. 15 Now the Jordan overflows its banks throughout the harvest season. † But as soon as the priests carrying the ark reached the Jordan, their feet touched the water at its edge 16 and the water flowing downstream stood still, rising up in a mass that extended as far as † Adam, a city next to Zarethan. The water flowing downstream into the Sea of the Arabah † — the Dead Sea — was completely cut off, and the people crossed opposite Jericho. 17 The priests carrying the ark of the LORD's covenant stood firmly on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, † while all Israel crossed on dry ground until the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan.

3:1 Or *left Shittim* **3:4** Lit *2,000 cubits* **3:4** Lit *yesterday and the day before* **3:8** Lit *waters of the Jordan* **3:13** Lit *soles of the feet* **3:16** Alt Hb tradition reads *mass at*

3:2 Jos 1:11 **3:3** Dt 17:9,18; 18:1; 31:9; Jos 8:33; 2Ch 23:18; Jr 33:18,21 **3:5** Ex 19:10; Nm 11:18; Jos 7:13; 1Sm 16:5; 1Ch 15:12; 2Ch 29:5; 30:3,17; 35:6 **3:5** Ps 72:18; 86:10; 98:1; 106:22; 119:18; Mc 7:15 **3:7** Jos 4:14 **3:7** Dt 31:23; Jos 1:5; Jdg 6:16; 1Kg 11:38; Is 43:2; Jr 1:8; 30:11; 46:28 **3:10** Dt 5:26; Jr 10:10; Hs 1:10; 2Co 3:3 **3:10** Ex 33:2; Dt 7:1 **3:11** Ps 97:5; Mc 4:13; Zch 6:5 **3:12** Jos 4:2 **3:13** Ex 15:8 **3:14** Ac 7:44-45 **3:15** 1Ch 12:15; Jr 12:5; 49:19 **3:16** Dt 1:1 **3:17** Ex 14:29

3:5-8 As the Israelites prepared to cross the Jordan into the promised land, they were to **consecrate** themselves (see also Ex 19:10-11). The Lord declared to Joshua that he would **exalt** [him] **in the sight of all Israel** as the rightful successor to Moses (see 4:14; 6:27).

3:15-17 The Israelites' miraculous crossing of the **Jordan** River **on dry ground** parallels their similar crossing of the Red Sea, a connection which 4:22-24 makes explicit. Both the exodus from Egypt and the entrance into the land of Canaan were thus marked by a miraculous traversal of a body of water (see also the note on 5:2-9). As God had promised, he was indeed with Joshua "just as [he] was with Moses" (v. 7; 4:14; 6:27) and would help the Israelites conquer the Canaanites (v. 11).

THE MEMORIAL STONES

4 After the entire nation had finished crossing the Jordan, † the LORD spoke to Joshua: 2 "Choose twelve men from the people, one man for each tribe, † 3 and command them: Take twelve stones † from this place in the middle of the Jordan where the priests † are standing, carry them with you, and set them down at the place where you spend the night."

4 So Joshua summoned the twelve men he had selected from the Israelites, one
man for each tribe, 5 and said to them, “Go across to the ark of the LORD your
God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one
for each † of the Israelite tribes, 6 so that this will be a sign among you. In the
future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ †
7 you should tell them, ‘The water of the Jordan was cut off in front of the ark of
the LORD’s covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan’s water was cut
off.’ Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites.” †
8 The Israelites did just as Joshua had commanded them. The twelve men took
stones from the middle of the Jordan, one for each † of the Israelite tribes, just
as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the camp and set them down
there. 9 Joshua also set up twelve stones in the middle † of the Jordan where the
priests who carried the ark of the covenant were standing. The stones are still
there today. †
10 The priests carrying the ark continued standing in the middle of the Jordan
until everything was completed that the LORD had commanded Joshua to tell the
people, in keeping with all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people
hurried across, 11 and after everyone had finished crossing, the priests with the
ark of the LORD crossed in the sight of the people. 12 The Reubenites, Gadites,
and half the tribe of Manasseh went in battle formation in front of the
Israelites, † as Moses had instructed them. 13 About forty thousand equipped
for war crossed to the plains of Jericho in the LORD’s presence.
14 On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel, and they revered
him throughout his life, as they had revered Moses. † 15 The LORD told Joshua,
16 “Command the priests who carry the ark of the testimony † to come up from
the Jordan.”
17 So Joshua commanded the priests, “Come up from the Jordan.” 18 When the
priests carrying the ark of the LORD’s covenant came up from the middle of the
Jordan, and their feet † stepped out on solid ground, the water of the Jordan
resumed its course, flowing over all the banks as before.
19 The people came up from the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, †
and camped at Gilgal on the eastern limits of Jericho. † 20 Then Joshua set up in

Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken from the Jordan, 21 and he said to the
Israelites, “In the future, when your children ask their fathers, ‘What is the
meaning of these stones?’ 22 you should tell your children, ‘Israel crossed the
Jordan on dry ground.’ † 23 For the Lord your God dried up the water of the
Jordan before you until you had crossed over, † just as the Lord your God did to
the Red Sea, which he dried up before us until we had crossed over. 24 This is so
that all the peoples of the earth may know † that the Lord’s hand is mighty, †
and so that you may always fear the Lord your God.” †

4:3 Lit *feet of the priests*, also in v. 9 **4:5** Lit *shoulder according to the number* **4:8** Lit *Jordan according to the number* **4:9** Or *Now Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle* **4:18** Lit *and the soles of the feet of the priests*

4:1 Jos 3:17 **4:2** Jos 3:12 **4:3** Ex 28:21; 39:14; Jos 4:9,20; 1Kg 18:31 **4:6** Ex 12:26-27; 13:8-9,14; Dt 6:20-24; Jos 4:21-22 **4:7** Ex 12:14; 28:12; 39:7; Lv 2:2; Nm 16:40; 31:54; Is 57:8; Zch 6:14 **4:9** Jos 6:25 **4:12** Nm 32:17 **4:14** Jos 3:7 **4:16** Ex 25:16 **4:19** Ex 12:3; Ezk 40:1 **4:19** Dt 11:30 **4:22** Jos 3:17 **4:23** Ex 14:21 **4:24** Ex 9:14-16; 14:31; 1Kg 8:42 **4:24** Nm 11:23; Ps 89:13; Is 41:20; 59:1; 66:14 **4:24** Ex 14:31; Dt 6:2; 10:12; 14:23; 31:12-13

4:6-7 The purpose of these **stones** taken from the Jordan was to be **a memorial** to teach **your children** (see also vv. 21-22) about God’s mighty act of stopping the river so that Israel could cross over it (see 3:15-17; 4:18). The importance of passing on the knowledge of God and his works to one’s offspring and to future generations is also mentioned in relation to the Passover (see Ex 10:1-2; 12:24-27) and in numerous passages in Deuteronomy (see the note on Dt 4:9-10; “Christian Perspectives on Children’s Education,” *p. 225*).

4:23-24 The stopping of the Jordan River not only benefited Israel but was also for the purpose of spreading the glory of God **so that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord’s hand is mighty** (see also 5:1). This was also true of God’s mighty acts in Egypt (see Ex 9:16; 1Sm 17:46).

CIRCUMCISION OF THE ISRAELITES

5 When all the Amorite kings across the Jordan to the west and all the
Canaanite kings near the sea † heard how the Lord had dried up the
water of the Jordan before the Israelites until they had crossed over, †
they lost heart and their courage failed † because of the Israelites.
2 At that time the Lord said to Joshua, “Make flint knives and circumcise the
Israelite men again.” † 3 So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the
Israelite men at Gibeath-haaraloth. † 4 This is the reason Joshua circumcised
them: All the people who came out of Egypt who were males — all the men of
war — had died in the wilderness along the way after they had come out of
Egypt. 5 Though all the people who came out were circumcised, none of the

people born in the wilderness along the way were circumcised after they had come out of Egypt. 6 For the Israelites wandered in the wilderness forty years until all the nation's men of war who came out of Egypt had died off because they did not obey the LORD. † So the LORD vowed never to let them see the land he had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. †
7 He raised up their sons in their place; it was these Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised, since they had not been circumcised along the way.
8 After the entire nation had been circumcised, they stayed where they were in the camp until they recovered. † 9 The LORD then said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the disgrace of Egypt from you." Therefore, that place is still called Gilgal today. †

FOOD FROM THE LAND

10 While the Israelites camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, they observed the Passover on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month. † 11 The day after Passover they ate unleavened bread and roasted grain from the produce of the land. † 12 And the day after they ate from the produce of the land, the manna ceased. † Since there was no more manna for the Israelites, they ate from the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

COMMANDER OF THE LORD'S ARMY

13 When Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. † Joshua approached him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies? "
14 "Neither," he replied. "I have now come as commander of the LORD's army." †

Then Joshua bowed with his face to the ground in worship † and asked him, "What does my lord want to say to his servant? "
15 The commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." † And Joshua did that.

5:1 Lit *and they did not have spirit in them any more* **5:3** Or *The Hill of Foreskins*
5:1 Nm 13:29; Dt 1:7; Jos 11:3 **5:1** Jos 2:11 **5:2** Gn 17:10-14; Ex 4:24-26; 12:44,48; Lv 12:3 **5:6** Dt 2:7,14 **5:6** Nm 14:23-24; Dt 11:9 **5:8** Dt 30:6; Hs 6:1-2 **5:9** Jos 6:25 **5:10** Ex 12:11,18,21; Lv 23:5; Nm 28:16; Ezk 45:21 **5:11** Lv 23:14 **5:12** Ex 16:35; Ps 78:25; Jn 6:48-51 **5:13** Gn 18:2; 32:24; Nm 22:31 **5:14** Ex 7:4;

12:41; 1Sm 17:45 **5:14** Gn 17:3 **5:15** Ex 3:5

5:1 Not only were those in Jericho afraid of Israel (2:9-11,24), but so were **all the Amorite kings across the Jordan to the west and all the Canaanite kings near the sea.**

5:2-9 The first place Israel stopped after crossing the Jordan was **Gilgal** (see 4:19), which was named thus because of the mass circumcision that took place there (v. 9). Despite instructions to the contrary (see Gn 17:9-14; Lv 12:3), the present generation of Israelite men, who had been born in the wilderness, had not been circumcised. Circumcision was required in order to celebrate the Passover (Ex 12:44,48), which the Israelites subsequently kept at Gilgal (vv. 10-12). Their entrance into the land was thus closely associated with the crossing of a body of water, circumcision, and Passover—as was their exodus from Egypt (see also the note on 3:15-17; Ex 12:48).

5:13-15 This brief conversation between Joshua and the **commander of the LORD's army** resembles Moses's encounter with God at the burning bush. Both leaders of Israel were told to take off their **sandals** because they were **standing** on **holy** ground (Ex 3:5). The commander's statement that he was neither for Israel nor for its enemies asserts God's sovereignty and freedom, especially from human agendas.

THE CONQUEST OF JERICHO

6 Now Jericho was strongly fortified because of the Israelites — no one
leaving or entering. 2 The LORD said to Joshua, "Look, I have handed
Jericho, its king, and its best soldiers over to you. † 3 March around the
city with all the men of war, circling the city one time. Do this for six days.
4 Have seven priests carry seven ram's-horn trumpets in front of the ark. But on
the seventh day, march around the city seven times, while the priests blow the
trumpets. † 5 When there is a prolonged blast of the horn and you hear its
sound, have all the troops give a mighty shout. Then the city wall will collapse,
and the troops will advance, each man straight ahead."
6 So Joshua son of Nun summoned the priests and said to them, "Take up the
ark of the covenant and have seven priests carry seven trumpets in front of the
ark of the LORD." 7 He said to the troops, "Move forward, march around the city,
and have the armed men go ahead of the ark of the LORD."
8 After Joshua had spoken to the troops, seven priests carrying seven trumpets
before the LORD moved forward and blew the trumpets; the ark of the LORD's
covenant followed them. 9 While the trumpets were blowing, the armed men
went in front of the priests who blew the trumpets, and the rear guard went
behind the ark. † 10 But Joshua had commanded the troops: "Do not shout or let
your voice be heard. Don't let one word come out of your mouth until the time I
say, 'Shout!' Then you are to shout." 11 So the ark of the LORD was carried

around the city, circling it once. They returned to the camp and spent the night there. †
12 Joshua got up early the next morning. The priests took the ark of the LORD,
13 and the seven priests carrying seven trumpets marched in front of the ark of the LORD. While the trumpets were blowing, the armed men went in front of them, and the rear guard went behind the ark of the LORD. 14 On the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days.
15 Early on the seventh day, they started at dawn and marched around the city seven times in the same way. That was the only day they marched around the city seven times. 16 After the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets, and Joshua said to the troops, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city. 17 But the city and everything in it are set apart to the LORD for destruction. † Only Rahab the prostitute and everyone with her in the house will live, † because she hid the messengers we sent. 18 But keep yourselves from the things set apart, or you will be set apart for destruction. If you † take any of those things, you will set apart the camp of Israel for destruction and make trouble for it. 19 For all the silver and gold, and the articles of bronze and iron, are dedicated to the LORD and must go into the LORD's treasury." †
20 So the troops shouted, and the trumpets sounded. When they heard the blast of the trumpet, the troops gave a great shout, and the wall collapsed. † The troops advanced into the city, each man straight ahead, and they captured the city. 21 They completely destroyed † everything in the city with the sword — every man and woman, both young and old, and every ox, sheep, and donkey.

RAHAB AND HER FAMILY SPARED

22 Joshua said to the two men who had scouted the land, "Go to the prostitute's house and bring the woman out of there, and all who are with her, just as you swore to her." † 23 So the young men who had scouted went in and brought out Rahab and her father, mother, brothers, and all who belonged to her. They brought out her whole family and settled them outside the camp of Israel.
24 They burned the city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house.
25 However, Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, her father's family, and all who

belonged to her, because she hid the messengers Joshua had sent to spy on Jericho, and she still lives in Israel † today. †
26 At that time Joshua imposed this curse:

The man who undertakes
the rebuilding of this city, Jericho,
is cursed before the LORD. †
He will lay its foundation
at the cost of his firstborn;
he will finish its gates
at the cost of his youngest. †

27 And the LORD was with Joshua, † and his fame spread throughout the land.

6:11 Lit *at the camp* **6:18** LXX reads *you covet and* ; Jos 7:21
6:2 Dt 7:24; Jos 2:9,24; 8:1; Neh 9:24 **6:4** Ex 19:13; Ps 24:7; Is 18:3; 1Co 15:52; 1Th 4:16; Rv 11:15 **6:9** Is 52:12 **6:17** Lv 27:29; Dt 7:26; 13:17; Jos 7:1 **6:17** Dt 7:2 **6:19** 1Kg 7:51; 14:26; 15:18 **6:20** Heb 11:30 **6:21** Jos 2:10; 8:26 **6:22** Jos 2:14 **6:25** Ex 6:23; Ru 4:21-22; 1Ch 2:10-12; Mt 1:4-5 **6:25** Jos 4:9; 5:9; 7:26; 14:14; 15:63 **6:26** Dt 27:15; 1Sm 14:24; Jr 11:3; 20:15 **6:26** 1Kg 16:34 **6:27** Gn 39:2,21; Jdg 1:19,22; 2:18; 1Sm 3:19; 18:12; 1Kg 1:37; 2Kg 18:7; 1Ch 9:20; 2Ch 17:3

6:8-21 Joshua's obedience to God's unusual instructions for taking Jericho (see vv. 2-5) demonstrated his faith in God. It was God himself who handed over Jericho into the hands of Israel (v. 2) and who was fighting for them (see Dt 20:4). Joshua's warning against **the city and everything in it** which was **set apart to the LORD for destruction** (see also Dt 7:2; 20:17) would be violated by Achan (7:1). The reason for these serious measures against Jericho (and other peoples in the land) was their idolatry and potential idolatrous influence on Israel (see also the note on Dt 7:1-6). The Lord sovereignly chose to use Israel as the instrument of his righteous judgment.

6:22-23 In keeping with the earlier arrangement, **Rahab** gathered her family into her home, which was marked by a scarlet cord tied to the window (see 2:17-21). The sparing of Rahab and her family is emphasized through contrast and repetition (see vv. 17,25).

DEFEAT AT AI

7 The Israelites, however, were unfaithful † regarding the things set apart for destruction. Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of what was set apart, and the LORD's anger burned against the Israelites.

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, † east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and scout the land." So the men went up and scouted Ai.

3 After returning to Joshua they reported to him, “Don’t send all the people, but
send about two thousand or three thousand † men to attack Ai. Since the people
of Ai are so few, don’t wear out all our people there.” 4 So about three thousand
men † went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai. † 5 The men of Ai
struck down about thirty-six of them and chased them from outside the city gate
to the quarries, † striking them down on the descent. As a result, the people lost
heart. † †
6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of
the LORD until evening, † as did the elders of Israel; they all put dust on their
heads. † 7 “Oh, Lord GOD,” Joshua said, “why did you ever bring these people
across the Jordan to hand us over to the Amorites for our destruction? If only we
had been content to remain on the other side of the Jordan! 8 What can I say,
Lord, now that Israel has turned its back and run from its enemies? 9 When the
Canaanites and all who live in the land hear about this, they will surround us and
wipe out our name from the earth. † Then what will you do about your great
name? ” †
10 The LORD then said to Joshua, “Stand up! Why have you fallen facedown?
11 Israel has sinned. They have violated my covenant that I appointed for them.
They have taken some of what was set apart. They have stolen, deceived, and
put those things with their own belongings. † 12 This is why the Israelites
cannot stand against their enemies. They will turn their backs and run from their
enemies, because they have been set apart for destruction. † I will no longer be
with you unless you remove from among you what is set apart.
13 “Go and consecrate the people. Tell them to consecrate themselves for
tomorrow, † for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are things
that are set apart among you, Israel. You will not be able to stand against your
enemies until you remove what is set apart. 14 In the morning, present
yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD selects is to come forward clan by
clan. The clan the LORD selects is to come forward family by family. The family
the LORD selects is to come forward man by man. 15 The one who is caught with
the things set apart must be burned, along with everything he has, because he has
violated the LORD’s covenant and committed an outrage in Israel.” †

ACHAN JUDGED

ACHAN JUDGED

16 Joshua got up early the next morning. He had Israel come forward tribe by
tribe, and the tribe of Judah was selected. 17 He had the clans of Judah come
forward, and the Zerahite clan was selected. He had the Zerahite clan come
forward by heads of families, † and Zabdi was selected. 18 He then had Zabdi's
family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of
Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected.
19 So Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of
Israel, † and make a confession to him. † I urge you, tell me what you have
done. Don't hide anything from me."
20 Achan replied to Joshua, "It is true. I have sinned against the LORD, the God
of Israel. † This is what I did: 21 When I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak
from Babylon, † five pounds † of silver, and a bar of gold weighing a pound
and a quarter, † I coveted them and took them. † You can see for yourself.
They are concealed in the ground inside my tent, with the silver under the
cloak." 22 So Joshua sent messengers who ran to the tent, and there was the
cloak, concealed in his tent, with the silver underneath. 23 They took the things
from inside the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread
them out in the LORD's presence.
24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the
cloak, and the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his ox, donkey, and sheep, his
tent, and all that he had, and brought them up to the Valley of Achor. †
25 Joshua said, "Why have you brought us trouble? † Today the LORD will bring
you trouble!" So all Israel stoned them † to death. They burned their bodies,
threw stones on them, 26 and raised over him a large pile of rocks that remains
still today. † Then the LORD turned from his burning anger. Therefore that place
is called the Valley of Achor † still today.

7:3 Or *send two or three military units of* **7:4** Lit *men from the people* **7:5** Or *to Shebarim* **7:5** Lit *people's hearts melted and became like water* **7:17** Lit *forward man by man* **7:19** Or *and praise him* **7:21** Lit *Shinar* **7:21** Lit *200 shekels* **7:21** Lit *50 shekels* **7:25** Lit *him* **7:26** Or *of Trouble*

7:1 Lv 6:2; Nm 5:27; 31:16; Dt 32:51; Jos 22:16; Ezr 9:2-4 **7:2** Jos 18:12; 1Sm 13:5; 14:23 **7:4** Lv 26:17; Dt 28:25 **7:5** Dt 20:8; Jos 2:11; 5:1; 2Sm 17:10; Ps 22:14; Is 13:7; 19:1; Ezk 21:7 **7:6** Jb 1:20 **7:6** Neh 9:1; Lm 2:10; Ezk 27:30; Rv 18:19 **7:9** Ru 4:10; 1Sm 24:9; Ps 109:13; Is 24:19; 56:5; Jr 11:19 **7:9** 1Kg 8:42 **7:11** Jos 6:18 **7:12** Nm 14:45; Jdg 2:14 **7:13** Jos 3:5 **7:15** Gn 34:7; Dt 22:21; Jdg 19:23-24; 20:6 **7:19** 1Sm 6:5; 2Ch 30:22; Jr 13:16; Jn 9:24 **7:20** Jos 22:20 **7:21** Gn 3:6; 2Sm 12:2-4; 1Jn 2:16 **7:24** Jos 15:7 **7:25** Jos

6:18; 1Ch 2:7 **7:26** Jos 6:25; 8:28-29; 10:27; 13:13

7:4-5 Despite the Israelites' victory at Jericho, one of them, Achan, took some of "the things set apart for destruction" (v. 1). They also apparently failed to seek God or receive clear instructions from him about how to approach Ai, relying instead on their own strength (vv. 2-3; see 6:1-5; 8:1-8). Thus, "the LORD's anger burned against the Israelites" (v. 1), and they were defeated by the men of Ai.

7:10-15 The Lord revealed to Joshua that the reason for Israel's recent defeat was that someone had sinned (see also vv. 20-21). As such, he also said that **Israel** [had] **sinned** and **violated** [his] **covenant** and would not be able to **stand against their enemies** unless they **remove . . . what is set apart** (see also Dt 7:26; 13:17). Achan's sin had seriously affected Israel as a whole, and this incident illustrates both individual and corporate responsibility for sin. Despite the consequences for Israel (v. 5), Achan was still primarily responsible (vv. 13-19) and was singled out—along with his family and livestock—for stoning by the community (vv. 24-26). For other passages in which a reward or punishment is given not only to an individual but to the person's family, see Genesis 7:1; Numbers 16:26-33; and Joshua 2:12-13,18; and 6:22-23. Apparently, corporate responsibility apparently can apply to families as well.

CONQUEST OF AI

8 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid or discouraged. † Take all
the troops with you and go attack Ai. Look, I have handed over to you
the king of Ai, his people, city, and land. † 2 Treat Ai and its king as
you did Jericho and its king, † except that you may plunder its spoil and
livestock for yourselves. † Set an ambush behind the city." †
3 So Joshua and all the troops set out to attack Ai. Joshua selected thirty
thousand of his best soldiers and sent them out at night. 4 He commanded them:
"Pay attention. Lie in ambush behind the city, not too far from it, and all of you
be ready. † 5 Then I and all the people who are with me will approach the city.
When they come out against us as they did the first time, we will flee from them.
6 They will come after us until we have drawn them away from the city, for they
will say, 'They are fleeing from us as before.' While we are fleeing from them,
7 you are to come out of your ambush and seize the city. The LORD your God
will hand it over to you. 8 After taking the city, set it on fire. Follow the LORD's
command — see that you do as I have ordered you." 9 So Joshua sent them out,
and they went to the ambush site and waited between Bethel and Ai, to the west
of Ai. But he spent that night with the troops.
10 Joshua started early the next morning and mobilized them. Then he and the
elders of Israel led the troops up to Ai. 11 All those † who were with him went
up and approached the city, arriving opposite Ai, and camped to the north of it,
with a valley between them and the city. 12 Now Joshua had taken about five

thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. 13 The troops were stationed in this way: the main † camp to the north of the city and its rear guard to the west of the city. And that night Joshua went into the valley.
14 When the king of Ai saw the Israelites, the men of the city hurried and went out early in the morning so that he and all his people could engage Israel in battle at a suitable place facing the Arabah. But he did not know there was an ambush waiting for him behind the city. 15 Joshua and all Israel pretended to be beaten back by them and fled toward the wilderness. † 16 Then all the troops of Ai were summoned to pursue them, and they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17 Not a man was left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel, leaving the city exposed while they pursued Israel.
18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Hold out the javelin in your hand toward Ai, for I will hand the city over to you.” So Joshua held out his javelin toward it. 19 When he held out his hand, the men in ambush rose quickly from their position. They ran, entered the city, captured it, and immediately set it on fire.
20 The men of Ai turned and looked back, and smoke from the city was rising to the sky! They could not escape in any direction, and the troops who had fled to the wilderness now became the pursuers. 21 When Joshua and all Israel saw that the men in ambush had captured the city and that smoke was rising from it, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. 22 Then men in ambush came out of the city against them, and the men of Ai were trapped between the Israelite forces, some on one side and some on the other. They struck them down until no survivor or fugitive remained, † 23 but they captured the king of Ai alive and brought him to Joshua.
24 When Israel had finished killing everyone living in Ai who had pursued them into the open country, and when every last one of them had fallen by the sword, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the sword. 25 The total of those who fell that day, both men and women, was twelve thousand — all the people of Ai. 26 Joshua did not draw back his hand that was holding the javelin until all the inhabitants of Ai were completely destroyed. † 27 Israel plundered only the cattle and spoil of that city for themselves, according to the LORD’s command that he had given Joshua.

28 Joshua burned Ai and left it a permanent ruin, still desolate today. † 29 He hung † the body of the king of Ai on a tree † until evening, and at sunset Joshua commanded that they take his body down from the tree. † They threw it down at the entrance of the city gate and put a large pile of rocks over it, which still remains today.

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO THE LAW

30 At that time Joshua built an altar on Mount Ebal † to the LORD, the God of Israel, 31 just as Moses the LORD's servant had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses: an altar of uncut stones on which no iron tool has been used. † Then they offered burnt offerings to the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings on it. 32 There on the stones, Joshua copied the law of Moses, which he had written in the presence of the Israelites. † 33 All Israel — resident alien and citizen alike — with their elders, officers, and judges, stood on either side of the ark of the LORD's covenant facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Half of them were in front of Mount Gerizim and half in front of Mount Ebal, † as Moses the LORD's servant had commanded earlier concerning blessing the people of Israel. † 34 Afterward, Joshua read aloud all the words of the law — the blessings as well as the curses — according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read before the entire assembly of Israel, including the women, the dependents, and the resident aliens who lived † among them. †

8:11 Lit *the people of war* **8:13** Lit *way: all the* **8:29** Or *impaled* **8:29** Or *wooden stake* **8:35** Lit *walked*
8:1 Dt 1:21; 7:18; 31:8; Jos 1:9; 10:25 **8:1** Jos 6:2 **8:2** Jos 6:17 **8:2** Dt 20:14; Jos 8:27 **8:2** Jdg 9:32-35,43; 20:29; 1Sm 15:5 **8:4** Jdg 20:29 **8:15** Jdg 20:36 **8:22** Dt 7:2 **8:26** Nm 21:2-3; Dt 2:34; Jos 2:10; 6:21; 10:1,28,35-40; 11:11-12,20-21; 24:20 **8:28** Dt 13:16; Jos 6:25 **8:29** Dt 21:21-23 **8:30** Dt 27:4-6 **8:31** Ex 20:24-25; Dt 27:5-7 **8:32** Dt 27:2-3 **8:33** Dt 11:29 **8:33** Dt 27:12-13 **8:35** Dt 31:12; Neh 8:2-3; 13:1

8:1-2 After Achan's sin had been dealt with, God turned his anger from Israel (see 7:1,24-26) and proceeded once again to lead the Israelites to take possession of the land. In view of Israel's recent defeat, God encouraged Joshua again (see also v. 9). Much as he had done prior to the defeat of Jericho (see 6:1-5), God declared that he was handing Ai over to Joshua and gave him instructions about how this was to take place. The Israelites were to **set an ambush behind the city**, which was a success (vv. 3-26).

8:24-26 Regarding the complete destruction of the inhabitants of Ai, see the note on 6:8-21.

8:27 Israel had been permitted by God to take this **cattle and spoil** for themselves (see v. 2).

8:29 The taking down of **the body of the king of Ai at sunset** probably reflects Joshua's obedience to

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (see also 10:26-27).

8:30-35 The building of **an altar on Mount Ebal**, making a copy of the law **on stones**, and the proclamation of **curses** and **blessings** (vv. 33-34) had all been commanded by Moses earlier in Deuteronomy 27:1-13.

DECEPTION BY GIBEON

9 When all the kings heard about Jericho and Ai, those who were west of the Jordan in the hill country, † in the Judean foothills, † and all along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea † toward Lebanon — the Hethites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites — 2 they formed a unified alliance to fight against Joshua and Israel.

3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, † 4 they acted deceptively. They gathered provisions † and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys and old wineskins, cracked and mended. 5 They wore old, patched sandals on their feet and threadbare clothing on their bodies. Their entire provision of bread was dry and crumbly. 6 They went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant land. Please make a treaty with us." †

7 The men of Israel replied to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us. How can we make a treaty with you? " †

8 They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." †

Then Joshua asked them, "Who are you and where do you come from? "

9 They replied to him, "Your servants have come from a faraway land because of the reputation of the LORD your God. For we have heard of his fame, and all that he did in Egypt, 10 and all that he did to the two Amorite kings beyond the Jordan — King Sihon of Heshbon and King Og of Bashan, who was in Ashtaroth. 11 So our elders and all the inhabitants of our land told us, 'Take provisions with you for the journey; go and meet them and say, "We are your servants. Please make a treaty with us." ' 12 This bread of ours was warm when we took it from our houses as food on the day we left to come to you; but see, it is now dry and crumbly. 13 These wineskins were new when we filled them; but see, they are cracked. And these clothes and sandals of ours are worn out from the extremely long journey." 14 Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions, but did not seek the LORD's decision. † 15 So Joshua established

peace with them and made a treaty to let them live, and the leaders of the community swore an oath to them. †

GIBEON'S DECEPTION DISCOVERED

16 Three days after making the treaty with them, they heard that the Gibeonites were their neighbors, living among them. 17 So the Israelites set out and reached the Gibeonite cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim. † 18 But the Israelites did not attack them, because the leaders of the community had sworn an oath † to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then the whole community grumbled against the leaders.

19 All the leaders answered them, "We have sworn an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20 This is how we will treat them: we will let them live, so that no wrath will fall on us because of the oath we swore to them." 21 They also said, "Let them live." So the Gibeonites became woodcutters and water carriers † for the whole community, as the leaders had promised them.

22 Joshua summoned the Gibeonites and said to them, "Why did you deceive us by telling us you live far away from us, when in fact you live among us? 23 Therefore you are cursed and will always be slaves — woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

24 The Gibeonites answered him, "It was clearly communicated to your servants that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you. We greatly feared for our lives because of you, and that is why we did this. † 25 Now we are in your hands. Do to us whatever you think is right." † † 26 This is what Joshua did to them: he rescued them from the Israelites, and they did not kill them. 27 On that day he made them woodcutters and water carriers — as they are today — for the community and for the LORD's altar at the place he would choose. †

9:1 Or *the Shephelah* **9:4** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *They went disguised as ambassadors* **9:25** Lit *us as is good and as is right in your eyes do*

9:1 Jos 3:10 **9:1** Nm 34:6 **9:3** Jos 10:2 **9:6** Jos 5:10 **9:7** Ex 23:32; Dt 7:2-5; 20:10-18 **9:8** 2Sm 15:15; 2Kg 10:5 **9:14** Ex 17:1; Lv 24:12; Nm 3:16; 9:18; 22:18; 27:21; Dt 1:26; 8:3; Jr 23:16 **9:15** 2Sm 21:1-2 **9:17** Jos 18:25 **9:18** Ps 15:1-4; Ezk 17:16-20 **9:21** Dt 29:11 **9:24** Jos 10:2 **9:25** Gn 16:6; Jr 26:14; 38:5 **9:27** Dt 12:5

9:3-15 The Israelites made a serious mistake by making a covenant with the Gibeonites, who pretended to have come from far away. Though the Israelites were initially skeptical (v. 7), they were eventually deceived after sampling the Gibeonites' provisions and neglecting to **seek the LORD's decision.** A person's

physical senses are thus insufficient for making correct decisions; rather, “the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom” (Pr 9:10). The Gibeonites’ deceptive use of food mirrors what Jacob did to secure the blessing from his aged father Isaac (Gn 27:1-29; see also Gn 3:1-6). To make matters worse, Joshua was directly involved in the discussions with the Gibeonites (v. 8), and he **established peace with them and made a treaty to let them live**—despite Moses’s instructions to destroy them and other inhabitants of Canaan (Dt 7:1-2; 20:10-18). Although it resulted from Israel’s failure, the episode has theological significance in that it shows more non-Israelites (like Rahab) being saved from destruction by joining the Israelite covenant community.

THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

10 Now King Adoni-zedek of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had captured
Ai and completely destroyed † it, treating Ai and its king as he had
Jericho and its king, and that the inhabitants of Gibeon † had made peace with
Israel and were living among them. † 2 So Adoni-zedek and his people were †
greatly alarmed because Gibeon was a large city like one of the royal cities; † it
was larger than Ai, and all its men were warriors. 3 Therefore King Adoni-zedek
of Jerusalem sent word to King Hoham of Hebron, King Piram of Jarmuth, King
Japhia of Lachish, and King Debir of Eglon, saying, 4 “Come up and help me.
We will attack Gibeon, because they have made peace with Joshua and the
Israelites.” 5 So the five Amorite kings — the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron,
Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon — joined forces, advanced with all their armies,
besieged Gibeon, and fought against it.
6 Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal: “Don’t
give up on † your servants. Come quickly and save us! Help us, for all the
Amorite kings living in the hill country have joined forces against us.” 7 So
Joshua and all his troops, including all his best soldiers, came from Gilgal. †
8 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, † for I have handed them
over to you. † Not one of them will be able to stand against you.” †
9 So Joshua caught them by surprise, after marching all night from Gilgal.
10 The LORD threw them into confusion † before Israel. He defeated them in a
great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them through the ascent of Beth-horon, and
struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. 11 As they fled before Israel,
the LORD threw large hailstones on them † from the sky along the descent of
Beth-horon all the way to Azekah, and they died. More of them died from the
hail than the Israelites killed with the sword.

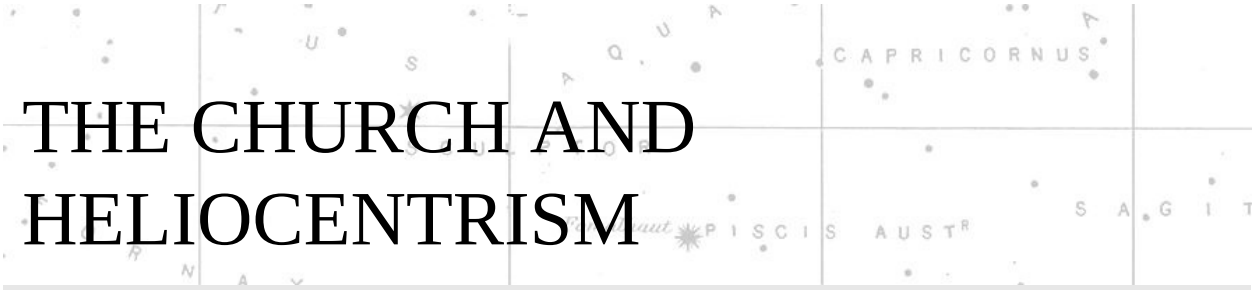
12 On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to the Israelites, Joshua spoke to
the LORD in the presence of Israel:

"Sun, † stand still over Gibeon, and moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."
13 And the sun stood still and the moon stopped
until the nation took vengeance on its enemies.

Isn't this written in the Book of Jashar? †

So the sun stopped
in the middle of the sky
and delayed its setting
almost a full day.

14 There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD listened to a man, because the LORD fought for Israel. †



THE CHURCH AND HELIOCENTRISM

Contrary to widespread cultural myth, scientific theory and biblical interpretation have clashed in only two major, protracted ways. The first, the Copernican controversy, lasted almost two centuries and affected both Catholics and Protestants alike. The second, Darwinism, has also impacted all streams of Christianity since the publication of *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. This article concerns the history and lessons learned from the church's first debate over what appeared to be scientific undermining of the truth and authority of Scripture.

THE COPERNICAN REVOLUTION

On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres by Nicolaus Copernicus was published shortly before his death in 1543. The work ignited controversy because its sun-centered theory of the universe seemed to contradict not only the Bible but also science. The received astronomy in Europe understood a non-moving earth to be the orbital center of the universe; that had been the intellectual standard since the second century work of Claudius Ptolemy. But Copernicus, a devout Catholic, believed that heliocentrism provided a better explanation of planetary orbits than geocentrism.

Theologians were troubled that the Bible seemed to teach that heavenly bodies orbited a stationary earth. Joshua's famous "long day" was typically cited: "The sun stood still and the moon stopped until the nation took vengeance on its enemies. . . . the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed its setting almost a

full day" (Jos 10:13). Other biblical texts also appeared to teach geocentrism (Gn 15:12,17; 19:23; 28:11; Ex 17:12; 22:3,26; Lv 22:7 and many more).

Unsurprisingly, the heliocentrism of Copernicus was largely rejected at first as unscientific and unbiblical. Luther warned that the "fool will overturn the whole art of astronomy. But, as Holy Writ declares, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth." Theologians and astronomers typically stood together in their dismissal of this new theory.

But despite initial resistance, the attraction of heliocentrism grew as a theory with better explanatory power. A generation later the greatest observational astronomer of the day, Tycho Brahe, died. He left his understudy, Johannes Kepler, a wealth of observational data, the best available before the invention of the telescope. Whereas Copernicus had retained the circular orbits of earlier astronomy, Tycho's data enabled Kepler to determine in 1605 the first law of planetary motion: planets move in ellipses with the sun at one focus. By 1609 and 1619 he had discovered and published the second and third planetary laws describing the ellipses mathematically. Kepler's work greatly strengthened the case for heliocentrism.

THE GENERATION AFTER COPERNICUS

These astronomers believed in the Bible. Nonetheless, this generation after Copernicus suffered much greater controversy over the new astronomy. Theologians often bitterly wrangled over its implications for the truthfulness of Scripture. Some astronomers, called "semi-Copernicans," attempted reconciliation between the older and newer theories. They postulated "hybrid solutions" such as having the earth rotate daily on its axis while other planets revolved around the sun which orbited the earth.

The low point of this second generation culminated in the Galileo affair. Galileo Galilei built a telescope and became the first to train it systematically on the heavens. In 1610, he published his discovery that Jupiter has four moons, refuting the notion that all heavenly spheres orbit the earth. Additionally, he revealed that Venus has a complete set of phases rather than the expected constant crescent phase predicted by geocentrism. Galileo's promotion of Copernicanism alarmed ecclesiastical authorities; they warned him that his view injured the holy faith by making the Scripture false.

Galileo responded by noting that Scripture was not wrong; rather, the geocentric interpretation of Scripture was wrong. He explained that not all of Scripture ought to be interpreted literally, lest Scripture be made to affirm untruths. (Israel as "a land flowing with milk and honey," for instance, is poetic language to be read as such.) In his important letter to the Grand Duchess Christina "concerning the use of biblical quotations in matters of science" (1615), Galileo wrote: "I think in the first place that it is very pious to say and prudent to affirm that the holy Bible can never speak untruth—whenever its true meaning is understood." He argued that the divinely inspired Bible was written to speak "to the capacities of the common people." But he stressed Scripture must be interpreted carefully or else it could be made to affirm obvious false propositions, contradictions, or even "grave heresies and follies."

Galileo's explanation did nothing to mitigate the controversy. Heliocentrism was condemned as a heresy in 1616 and books by Copernicus and Kepler were placed on the official index of prohibited books. Moreover, Galileo's continued advocacy of heliocentrism required him in 1633 to face examination by the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Rome. He was sentenced to indefinite imprisonment for spreading the heretical teaching that the earth orbits the sun.

ISAAC NEWTON AND THE WANING OF THE CONTROVERSY

Another generation would pass before the heliocentrism controversy began to wane. The 1687 publication of Isaac Newton's *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* sounded the death knell for geocentrism. His discoveries, which essentially ended major scientific discussion about the debate, were (1) the three laws of motion, (2) the theory of universal gravitation, and (3) demonstration that Kepler's three laws of planetary motion follow from points 1 and 2. Heliocentric orbits were now understood simply to be the result of the same mechanics operative on earth.

Even before 1687, the new astronomy was being widely taught and believed in Puritan New England.

Christian ministers played a primary role in propagating heliocentrism via scientific essays published in almanacs, the most widely circulated literary form of the period. A century and a half after the groundbreaking work of Copernicus, the scientific community and much of the American public believed heliocentrism without hesitation. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the exegetical skirmishes were fast dying out. The biblical passages that once were understood to teach geocentrism were now reinterpreted and understood in light of heliocentrism.

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Criticism regarding the mistakes made by geocentric interpreters of the Bible after Copernicus now comes easily. But it must be remembered that the best science for more than a millennium taught an earth-centered view of the universe. Moreover, astronomical predictions made from this old astronomy were just as accurate as those based on the work of Copernicus. In addition, the church had never dealt with apparent conflict between accepted scientific theory and long-standing biblical interpretation. Even now, debate continues regarding the lessons learned from the heliocentrism debate.

For instance, many advocates are interpreting the Bible in light of the latest scientific theories. But the Copernicus controversy had as much to do with bad scientific theory as with biblical interpretation. The Bible was not corrected by science; rather, faulty biblical interpretation and faulty scientific theory were both corrected by truth.

Claims that the Bible and science have been at war ever since—and that Scripture keeps losing this battle—lack any historical basis. Only the Darwinian controversy has risen to the level of that first Bible versus science debate in its widespread and long lasting impact. Yet the heliocentrism issue is often presented as sufficient reason for accepting the total Neo-Darwinian package. In truth, creationists are justified in accepting natural selection as a mechanism for biological change while rejecting universal common descent—not to mention the inherent philosophical naturalism of orthodox Darwinism. The Copernican incident has nothing to teach about this issue other than the need for care in biblical interpretation and scientific theorizing.

LESSONS FOR TODAY

What are some legitimate lessons learned from the first great Bible versus science debate? First, Christians should feel no compulsion to abandon their confidence in the authority and complete truth of Scripture. Believers should hold fast to the Spirit-given conviction that no conflict exists between the truth of God's Word and his creation. But scientific and theological theories, though necessary, never enjoy this infallibility. Confidence in this basic principle provides believers with patience to wait on solutions when faced with apparent conflicts.

Wise believers also recognize that not all theological or scientific debates are equally important, in spite of the claims made by those involved. Some issues may not require believers to commit to a position until more truth comes to light, perhaps even in a generation to come. When an abundance of controversial, fluid "hybrid solutions" competes for allegiance, wisdom may dictate forestalling final commitment. Ultimately, discernment of the theological importance of a particular issue should prioritize one's commitments.

THEODORE J. CABAL

15 Then Joshua and all Israel with him returned to the camp at Gilgal.

EXECUTION OF THE FIVE KINGS

16 Now the five defeated kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah.
17 It was reported to Joshua: "The five kings have been found; they are hiding in

the cave at Makkedah.”
18 Joshua said, “Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and station men
by it to guard the kings. 19 But as for the rest of you, don’t stay there. Pursue
your enemies and attack them from behind. Don’t let them enter their cities, for
the LORD your God has handed them over to you.” 20 So Joshua and the
Israelites finished inflicting a terrible slaughter on them until they were
destroyed, although a few survivors ran away to the fortified cities. 21 The
people returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah. And no one dared to
threaten † the Israelites.
22 Then Joshua said, “Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings to
me out of there.” 23 That is what they did. They brought the five kings of
Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon to Joshua out of the cave.
24 When they had brought the kings to him, Joshua summoned all the men of
Israel and said to the military commanders who had accompanied him, “Come
here and put your feet on the necks of these kings.” So the commanders came
forward and put their feet on their necks. 25 Joshua said to them, “Do not be
afraid or discouraged. Be strong and courageous, † for the LORD will do this to
all the enemies you fight.”
26 After this, Joshua struck them down and executed them. He hung † their
bodies on five trees † and they were there until evening. † 27 At sunset Joshua
commanded that they be taken down from the trees † and thrown into the cave
where they had hidden. Then large stones were placed against the mouth of the
cave, and the stones are still there today. †

CONQUEST OF SOUTHERN CITIES

28 On that day Joshua captured Makkedah and struck it down with the sword,
including its king. He completely destroyed it † and everyone in it, leaving no
survivors. So he treated the king of Makkedah as he had the king of Jericho. †
29 Joshua and all Israel with him † crossed from Makkedah to Libnah and
fought against Libnah. † 30 The LORD also handed it and its king over to Israel.
He struck it down, putting everyone in it to the sword, and left no survivors in it.
He treated Libnah’s king as he had the king of Jericho.

31 From Libnah, Joshua and all Israel with him crossed to Lachish. They laid
siege to it and attacked it. 32 The LORD handed Lachish over to Israel, and
Joshua captured it on the second day. He struck it down, putting everyone in it to
the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. 33 At that time King Horam of Gezer
went to help Lachish, † but Joshua struck him down along with his people,
leaving no survivors.
34 Then Joshua crossed from Lachish to Eglon and all Israel with him. They laid
siege to it and attacked it. 35 On that day they captured it and struck it down,
putting everyone in it to the sword. He completely destroyed it that day, just as
he had done to Lachish.
36 Next, Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron † and
attacked it. 37 They captured it and struck down its king, all its villages, and
everyone in it with the sword. He left no survivors, just as he had done at Eglon.
He completely destroyed Hebron and everyone in it.
38 Finally, Joshua turned toward Debir † and attacked it. And all Israel was with
him. 39 He captured it — its king and all its villages. They struck them down
with the sword and completely destroyed everyone in it, leaving no survivors.
He treated Debir and its king as he had treated Hebron and as he had treated
Libnah and its king.
40 So Joshua conquered the whole region † — the hill country, the Negev, the
Judean foothills, † and the slopes — with all their kings, leaving no survivors.
He completely destroyed every living being, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had
commanded. † 41 Joshua conquered everyone from Kadesh-barnea to Gaza, and
all the land of Goshen † as far as Gibeon. 42 Joshua captured all these kings and
their land in one campaign, † because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for
Israel. † 43 Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

10:2 One Hb ms, Syr, Vg read *So he was* **10:6** Lit *Don't withdraw your hands from* **10:13** Or *of the Upright* **10:21** Lit *No one sharpened his tongue against* **10:26** Or *impaled* **10:26** Or *wooden stakes*, also in v. 27 **10:28** Some Hb mss read *them* **10:40** Or *the Shephelah* **10:42** Lit *land at one time*

10:1 Jos 8:26; 10:28,35-40; 11:11-12,20-21; 24:20; Jdg 1:17; 21:11 **10:1** Jos 8:22 **10:1** Jos 9:15 **10:2** Jos 13:31; 1Sm 27:5 **10:7** Jos 8:1 **10:8** Jos 1:5 **10:8** Gn 14:20; Nm 21:34; Dt 2:30; 7:24 **10:8** Dt 7:24; 11:25; Jos 1:5; 21:44; 23:9 **10:10** Ex 14:24; 23:27; 1Sm 7:10 **10:11** Ps 18:12-14 **10:12** Hab 3:11 **10:14** Ex 14:14,25; Dt 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Jos 10:42; 23:3,10; 2Ch 20:29; 32:8; Ps 35:1; Zch 14:3 **10:25** Dt 31:7; Jos 1:6-7,9,18 **10:26** Jos 8:29 **10:27** Dt 21:22-23 **10:27** Jos 6:25 **10:28** Jos 6:21 **10:29** Jos 7:24; 10:15,31,36 **10:29** Jos 21:13 **10:33** Jos 16:10; Jdg 1:29; 1Kg 9:16-17 **10:36** Jdg 1:10 **10:38** Jos 15:15; Jdg 1:11 **10:40** Dt 19:8; 34:1; Jos 2:24; 9:24; 11:16,23; 21:43 **10:40** Dt 20:16 **10:41** Jos 15:50 **10:42** Jos 10:14

10:1-7 Five Amorite kings joined forces (see also 9:1-2) to attack Gibeon, which they knew had made a treaty with Israel (see also 9:15). The Gibeonites naturally appealed to the Israelites for aid (v. 6), and **Joshua and all his troops** responded.

10:8-15 The Lord assured Joshua of victory over these Amorite kings (see also 6:2; 8:1) and fought for Israel by throwing their enemies **into confusion** and casting **large hailstones on them from the sky.** The mention of the **sun** and **moon** standing still has challenged interpreters and has been taken in various ways; perhaps it was a fully supernatural event, a solar eclipse, or a poetic description of a normal day. The **Book of Jashar** is only mentioned once elsewhere in 2 Samuel 1:18 and apparently was a contemporaneous extrabiblical work that is no longer in existence (see also the note on Nm 21:14).

10:26-27 Regarding the taking down of the bodies **at sunset**, see the note on 8:29.

10:40-43 Just as God had fought for Israel against five Amorite kings (v. 14), so he fought against other kings in **the hill country, the Negev, the Judean foothills, and the slopes.** The biblical text emphasizes that it was God who gave Israel these victories (see vv. 30,32).

CONQUEST OF NORTHERN CITIES

11 When King Jabin of Hazor heard this news, he sent a message to: King
Jobab of Madon, the kings of Shimron and Achshaph, 2 and the kings
of the north in the hill country, the Arabah south of Chinnereth, † the
Judean foothills, † and the Slopes of Dor † to the west, 3 the Canaanites in the
east and west, the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites, and Jebusites in the hill
country, and the Hivites at the foot of Hermon in the land of Mizpah. † 4 They
went out with all their armies — a multitude as numerous as the sand on the
seashore † — along with a vast number of horses and chariots. 5 All these kings
joined forces; they came and camped together at the Waters of Merom to attack
Israel. †
6 The LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid of them, for at this time tomorrow I
will cause all of them to be killed before Israel. † You are to hamstring their
horses and burn their chariots.” † 7 So Joshua and all his troops surprised them
at the Waters of Merom and attacked them. 8 The LORD handed them over to
Israel, and they struck them down, pursuing them as far as greater Sidon and
Misrephoth-maim, and to the east as far as the Valley of Mizpeh. † They struck
them down, leaving no survivors. † 9 Joshua treated them as the LORD had told
him; he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.
10 At that time Joshua turned back, captured Hazor, and struck down its king
with the sword, because Hazor had formerly been the leader of all these

kingdoms. 11 They struck down everyone in it with the sword, completely destroying † them; he left no one alive. Then he burned Hazor.
12 Joshua captured all these kings and their cities and struck them down with the sword. He completely destroyed them, as Moses the LORD's servant † had commanded. 13 However, Israel did not burn any of the cities that stood on their mounds except Hazor, which Joshua burned. 14 The Israelites plundered all the spoils and cattle of these cities for themselves. But they struck down every person with the sword until they had annihilated them, leaving no one alive. 15 Just as the LORD had commanded his servant Moses, Moses commanded Joshua. That is what Joshua did, leaving nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

SUMMARY OF CONQUESTS

16 So Joshua took all this land — the hill country, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, † the foothills, the Arabah, and the hill country of Israel with its foothills — 17 from Mount Halak, † which ascends to Seir, as far as Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon at the foot of Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and struck them down, putting them to death. † 18 Joshua waged war with all these kings for a long time. 19 No city made peace with the Israelites except the Hivites who inhabited Gibeon; † all of them were taken in battle. 20 For it was the LORD's intention to harden their hearts, † so that they would engage Israel in battle, be completely destroyed without mercy, and be annihilated, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21 At that time Joshua proceeded to exterminate the Anakim † from the hill country — Hebron, Debir, Anab — all the hill country of Judah and of Israel. Joshua completely destroyed them with their cities. 22 No Anakim were left in the land of the Israelites, except for some remaining in Gaza, Gath, † and Ashdod.
23 So Joshua took the entire land, in keeping with all that the LORD had told Moses. Joshua then gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal allotments. After this, the land had rest from war. †

11:2 Or *Shephelah*, also in v. 16 **11:2** Or *and in Naphoth-dor*
11:2 Dt 3:17; Jos 12:3; 13:27; 19:35; 1Kg 15:20; Mt 14:34; Lk 5:1 **11:3** Jdg 3:3 **11:4** Gn 22:17; Jdg 7:12; 1Sm 13:5; 1Kg 4:29 **11:5** Jdg 7:12 **11:6** Jos 10:8 **11:6** 2Sm 8:4; Ps 20:7 **11:8** Jos 13:6 **11:8** Dt 2:34; Jos

10:28,30,33,37,39-40 **11:11** Jos 10:1; 24:20; Jdg 1:17; 21:11; 1Sm 15:3; 2Ch 8:8; Jr 25:9 **11:12** Dt 20:16-17 **11:16** Jos 15:51 **11:17** Jos 12:7 **11:17** Dt 7:24 **11:19** Jos 9:3,7 **11:20** Ex 4:21; 7:3; 14:4,17; Is 63:17; Rm 9:18 **11:21** Nm 13:22,28,33 **11:22** 1Sm 17:4 **11:23** Jos 14:15; 21:44; 2Ch 14:6; Hs 2:18; Heb 4:8

11:1-9 Led by Jabin king of Hazor, another coalition of kings waged war against Israel (see 10:1-5), and their armies were **a multitude as numerous as the sand on the seashore.** Yet again, God encouraged Joshua not to be afraid and assured him of victory. Indeed, the **LORD handed** [the enemies] **over to Israel**, and Joshua did to them as God instructed (vv. 6,9; see also vv. 11-15).

11:19-20 With the exception of the Gibeonites, the inhabitants of the promised land fought against Joshua because **it was the LORD's intention to harden their hearts** unto their own destruction (see also Ex 7:3-5; Dt 7:1-2).

11:23 The statement that **Joshua took the entire land** should probably be understood as referring to those cities mentioned previously and in 12:1-24 because God would say to Joshua in his old age that "a great deal of the land remains to be possessed" (13:1; see also 13:2-6; 11:22). The taking of the land mentioned here is related to its distribution **as an inheritance to Israel** (see also 13:6–19:51).

TERRITORY EAST OF THE JORDAN

12 The Israelites struck down the following kings of the land and took possession of their land beyond the Jordan to the east and from the Arnon River to Mount Hermon, including all the Arabah eastward: †

2 King Sihon of the Amorites lived in Heshbon. He ruled from Aroer † on the rim of the Arnon River, along the middle of the valley, and half of Gilead up to the Jabbok River (the border of the Ammonites †), 3 the Arabah east of the Sea of Chinnereth to the Sea of Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), eastward through Beth-jeshimoth † and southward † below the slopes of Pisgah. †

4 King Og † of Bashan, of the remnant of the Rephaim, lived in Ashtaroth and Edrei. † 5 He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salecah, all Bashan up to the Geshurite and Maacathite border, and half of Gilead to the border of King Sihon of Heshbon. † 6 Moses the LORD's servant † and the Israelites struck them † down. And Moses the LORD's servant gave their land as an inheritance to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh. †

TERRITORY WEST OF THE JORDAN

7 Joshua and the Israelites struck down the following kings of the land beyond the Jordan to the west, from Baal-gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, † which ascends toward Seir (Joshua gave their land as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to their allotments: 8 the hill country, the Judean

foothills, † the Arabah, the slopes, the wilderness, and the Negev — the lands of the Hethites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites):

9 the king of Jericho †	one
the king of Ai, † which is next to Bethel	one
10 the king of Jerusalem †	one
the king of Hebron	one
11 the king of Jarmuth	one
the king of Lachish	one
12 the king of Eglon	one
the king of Gezer	one
13 the king of Debir	one
the king of Geder	one
14 the king of Hormah	one
the king of Arad	one
15 the king of Libnah	one
the king of Adullam	one
16 the king of Makkedah	one
the king of Bethel	one
17 the king of Tappuah	one
the king of Hepher	one
18 the king of Aphek	one
the king of Lasharon	one
19 the king of Madon	one
the king of Hazor	one
20 the king of Shimron-meron	one
the king of Achshaph	one
21 the king of Taanach	one
the king of Megiddo	one
22 the king of Kedesh	one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel	one
23 the king of Dor in Naphath-dor †	one

the king of Goiim in Gilgal † one
24 the king of Tirzah one
the total number of all kings: thirty-one.

12:3 Or *and from Teman* **12:4** LXX; MT reads *The territory of Og* **12:8** Or *the Shephelah* **12:23** Or *in the Slopes of Dor* **12:23** LXX reads *Galilee*

12:1 Dt 3:8-9 **12:2** Dt 2:36 **12:2** Dt 3:16 **12:3** Jos 13:20 **12:3** Jos 11:2 **12:4** Dt 1:4 **12:5** Dt 3:10,14 **12:6** Nm 32:33; Dt 3:12; Jos 1:1,13,15; 8:31,33; 11:12; 13:8; 14:7; 18:7; 22:2,4-5 **12:6** Nm 21:21-35; Dt 2:26–3:11; 29:7; 31:4; Ps 135:11; 136:19-20; Neh 9:22-25 **12:6** Dt 3:12-17; 29:8 **12:7** Jos 11:16-17 **12:9** Jos 6:2 **12:9** Jos 8:29 **12:10** Jos 10:23

12:1 In keeping with the summarizing nature of 11:16-23, this chapter lists the kings defeated by Israel, starting with those east of the Jordan (vv. 1-5).

12:6-8 Moses had led the victories over Sihon and Og and oversaw the giving of their land to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh (see Nm 32), whereas Joshua had led Israel during their victories over kings west of the Jordan.

12:9-24 Many of these conquered kings were mentioned in the preceding narrative, though not all of them.

UNCONQUERED LANDS

13 Joshua was now old, advanced in age, † and the LORD said to him, "You have become old, advanced in age, but a great deal of the land remains to be possessed. † 2 This is the land that remains:
All the districts of the Philistines and the Geshurites: 3 from the Shihor east of Egypt to the border of Ekron on the north (considered to be Canaanite territory) — the five Philistine rulers of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron, as well as the Avvites 4 in the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians to Aphek and as far as the border of the Amorites; 5 the land of the Gebalites; † and all Lebanon east from Baal-gad below Mount Hermon to the entrance of Hamath † † — 6 all the inhabitants of the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth-maim, † all the Sidonians.
I will drive them out before the Israelites, only distribute the land as an inheritance for Israel, as I have commanded you. 7 Therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

THE INHERITANCE EAST OF THE JORDAN

8 With the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, the Reubenites and Gadites had received the inheritance Moses gave them beyond the Jordan to the east, just as Moses the LORD's servant had given them: †

9 From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the middle
of the valley, † all the Medeba plateau as far as Dibon, 10 and all the cities of
King Sihon of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, to the border of the
Ammonites; 11 also Gilead † and the territory of the Geshurites and
Maacathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan to Salecah — 12 the whole
kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei; he was one of
the remaining Rephaim.
Moses struck them down and drove them out, † 13 but the Israelites did not
drive out the Geshurites and Maacathites. † So Geshur and Maacath still live in
Israel today. †
14 He did not, however, give any inheritance to the tribe of Levi. This was their
inheritance, just as he had promised: the offerings made by fire to the LORD, the
God of Israel. †

REUBEN'S INHERITANCE

15 To the tribe of Reuben's descendants by their clans, Moses gave 16 this as
their territory:
From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Valley, along with the city in the middle of
the valley, the whole plateau as far as † Medeba, 17 with Heshbon and all its
cities on the plateau — Dibon, Bamoth-baal, Beth-baal-meon, 18 Jahaz,
Kedemoth, Mephaath, † 19 Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth-shahar on the hill in the
valley, † 20 Beth-peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth-jeshimoth — 21 all the
cities of the plateau, and all the kingdom of King Sihon of the Amorites, who
reigned in Heshbon. Moses had killed him and the chiefs of Midian — Evi,
Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba — the princes of Sihon who lived in the land. †
22 Along with those the Israelites put to death, they also killed the diviner,
Balaam son of Beor, with the sword.
23 The border of the Reubenites was the Jordan and its plain. This was the
inheritance of the Reubenites by their clans, with the cities and their settlements.

GAD'S INHERITANCE

24 To the tribe of the Gadites by their clans, Moses gave 25 this as their territory:
Jazer and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the Ammonites to Aroer,
near Rabbah; 26 from Heshbon to Ramath-mizpeh and Betonim, and from

Mahanaim to the border of Debir; † 27 in the valley: Beth-haram, Beth-nimrah, Succoth, and Zaphon — the rest of the kingdom of King Sihon of Heshbon. Their land also included the Jordan and its territory as far as the edge of the Sea of Chinnereth on the east side of the Jordan. †
28 This was the inheritance of the Gadites by their clans, with the cities and their settlements.

EAST MANASSEH'S INHERITANCE

29 And to half the tribe of Manasseh (that is, to half the tribe of Manasseh's descendants by their clans) Moses gave 30 this as their territory:
From Mahanaim through all Bashan — all the kingdom of King Og of Bashan, including all of Jair's Villages † † that are in Bashan — sixty cities. 31 But half of Gilead, and Og's royal cities in Bashan — Ashtaroth and Edrei — are for the descendants of Machir son of Manasseh (that is, half the descendants of Machir by their clans).
32 These were the portions Moses gave them on the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan east of Jericho. 33 But Moses did not give a portion to the tribe of Levi. The LORD, the God of Israel, was their inheritance, just as he had promised them. †

13:5 Or *to Lebo-hamath* **13:16** Some Hb mss read *plateau near* **13:26** Or *Lidbir*, or *Lo-debar* **13:27** Lit *Chinnereth beyond the Jordan to the east* **13:30** Or *all of Havvoth-jair*

13:1 Gn 18:11; 24:1; Jos 14:10; 23:1-2; 1Kg 1:1 **13:1** Ex 23:27-33 **13:5** 1Kg 5:18 **13:5** Jos 12:7 **13:6** Jos 11:8 **13:8** Jos 12:6 **13:9** Dt 2:36; Jos 13:16 **13:11** Dt 3:10 **13:12** Nm 21:24 **13:13** Jos 16:10; 17:12-13; Jdg 1:1–2:5 **13:13** Jos 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 10:27; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10; 22:17; 23:8-9 **13:14** Nm 18:20; Dt 10:9; 18:1-2; Jos 13:33; 14:3-4; 18:7; 21:1-42 **13:18** Nm 21:23 **13:19** Nm 32:37 **13:21** Nm 31:8 **13:30** Nm 32:41 **13:33** Dt 18:1-2; Jos 13:14

13:1 Though his exact age is uncertain, the narrative mentions that **Joshua was now old, advanced in age** (see also 23:1-2). He had led Israel's earlier battle against the Amalekites (Ex 17:9-13) and spent forty years in the desert. Based on Caleb's words in 14:7-10, the conquest of the promised land had taken about five years. Despite Israel's many victories (see 11:16**–**12:24), "a great deal of the land remains to be possessed" (v.1; see also vv. 2-6). This may be in keeping with what God had said earlier about not driving out all of the peoples at once (Ex 23:29-30; Dt 7:22).

13:7 Since Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh received their allotments of land on the east side of the Jordan (vv. 8-12), this left nine and a half tribes to inherit land to its west.

13:13 The Israelites' failure to **drive out the Geshurites and Maacathites** from their land mirrors their failure to drive out inhabitants of other parts of their land (see 15:63; 16:10; 17:12-13; Jdg 1:19-21,27-36). They had completely destroyed some cities previously (see 11:11-15), but their failure to do so on other occasions was in disobedience to Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and foreshadowed their eventual idolatry (see Jdg 3:5-7).

13:15-32 These lands east of the Jordan had been given by Moses (vv. 15,24,29,32) to Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh.

ISRAEL'S INHERITANCE IN CANAAN

14 The Israelites received these portions that the priest Eleazar, † Joshua
son of Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes gave them in the
land of Canaan. † 2 Their inheritance was by lot † as the LORD commanded
through Moses for the nine and a half tribes, 3 because Moses had given the
inheritance to the two and a half tribes beyond the Jordan. But he gave no
inheritance among them to the Levites. 4 The descendants of Joseph became two
tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim. No portion of the land was given to the Levites
except cities to live in, along with pasturelands for their cattle and livestock.
5 So the Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses, † and they divided the
land.

CALEB'S INHERITANCE

6 The descendants of Judah approached Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of
Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know what the LORD promised Moses
the man of God at Kadesh-barnea about you and me. † 7 I was forty years old
when Moses the LORD's servant sent me from Kadesh-barnea to scout the land,
and I brought back an honest report. † 8 My brothers who went with me caused
the people to lose heart, † but I followed the LORD my God completely. † 9 On
that day Moses swore to me: 'The land where you have set foot will be an
inheritance for you and your descendants forever, because you have followed the
LORD my God completely.' †
10 "As you see, the LORD has kept me alive these forty-five years as he
promised, † since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel was
journeying in the wilderness. Here I am today, eighty-five years old. 11 I am still
as strong today as I was the day Moses sent me out. My strength for battle and
for daily tasks † is now as it was then. † 12 Now give me this hill country the
LORD promised me on that day, because you heard then that the Anakim are
there, † as well as large fortified cities. † Perhaps the LORD will be with me and
I will drive them out as the LORD promised."

13 Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as an
inheritance. † 14 Therefore, Hebron still belongs to Caleb son of Jephunneh the
Kenizzite as an inheritance today † because he followed the LORD, the God of
Israel, completely. 15 Hebron's name used to be Kiriath-arba; Arba was the
greatest man among the Anakim. † After this, the land had rest from war. †
14:8 Lit *people's hearts to melt with fear* **14:11** Lit *for going out and coming in*
14:1 Nm 34:17-18 **14:1** Jos 19:51 **14:2** Nm 33:54; 34:13 **14:5** Nm 35:1-2; Jos 21:2 **14:6** Nm 14:24,30 **14:7** Nm 13:1-29 **14:8** Nm 13:30–14:3 **14:9** Dt 1:36 **14:10** Nm 14:30; 26:65; 32:12 **14:11** Dt 34:7 **14:12** Dt 1:28; 2:10-11,21; 9:2; Jos 11:21-22 **14:12** Nm 13:28 **14:13-15** Jos 15:13; Jdg 1:10,20 **14:14** Jos 6:25 **14:15** Nm 13:33 **14:15** Ex 33:14; Dt 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Jos 1:13,15; 11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; 2Sm 7:1,11,12; 1Kg 5:4; 8:56; Ps 95:11; Mt 11:28-29; Heb 4:1

14:2 As God commanded, the land was distributed **by lot** (see Nm 26:55-56; 33:54).

14:3-4 For a third time in this context (see 13:14,33; 18:7), the biblical text reminds the reader **the Levites** did not receive any land inheritance (see the note on Nm 18:1-24). The command to give some cities and pasturelands to Levi's descendants was given in Numbers 35:1-8 and is carried out in Joshua 21.

14:6-15 The giving of Hebron to **Caleb** (vv. 13-15) not only fulfilled Moses's promise to give him a portion of land as an inheritance (see also Nm 14:24) but also serves as a reminder of his example of faith and loyalty to God, in stark contrast to that of the previous generation of Israelites. The aging Caleb's continuing faith, demonstrated through his confidence that God could help him drive out the fearsome Anakites (v. 12; 15:14; see also Nm 13:28,33; Dt 1:28; 2:21), contrasted with the current generation's difficulty driving out certain inhabitants of the land (see the note on 13:13; 17:16). See "A Biblical View of Retirement," *p. 175*.

JUDAH'S INHERITANCE

15 Now the allotment for the tribe of the descendants of Judah by their
clans † was in the southernmost region, south to the Wilderness of Zin
and over to the border of Edom.
2 Their southern border began at the tip of the Dead Sea on the south bay †
3 and went south of the Scorpions' Ascent, † proceeded to Zin, ascended to the
south of Kadesh-barnea, passed Hezron, ascended to Addar, and turned to
Karka. 4 It proceeded to Azmon and to the Brook of Egypt † and so the border
ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This is your † southern border.
5 Now the eastern border was along the Dead Sea to the mouth of the Jordan.
The border on the north side was from the bay of the sea at the mouth of the
Jordan. 6 It ascended to Beth-hoglah, proceeded north of Beth-arabah, and
ascended to the Stone of Bohan son of Reuben. 7 Then the border ascended to
Debir from the Valley of Achor, turning north to the Gilgal that is opposite the

Ascent of Adummim, which is south of the ravine. The border proceeded to the Waters of En-shemesh and ended at En-rogel. 8 From there the border ascended Ben Hinnom Valley to the southern Jebusite slope (that is, Jerusalem) and ascended to the top of the hill that faces Hinnom Valley on the west, at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. 9 From the top of the hill the border curved to the spring of the Waters of Nephtoah, went to the cities of Mount Ephron, and then curved to Baalah (that is, Kiriath-jearim †). 10 The border turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, went to the northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is, Chesalon), descended to Beth-shemesh, and proceeded to Timnah. † 11 Then the border reached to the slope north of Ekron, curved to Shikkeron, proceeded to Mount Baalah, went to Jabneel, and ended at the Mediterranean Sea.
12 Now the western border was the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.
This was the boundary of the descendants of Judah around their clans.

CALEB AND OTHNIEL

13 He gave Caleb son of Jephunneh the following portion among the descendants of Judah based on the LORD's instruction to Joshua: Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron; Arba was the father of Anak). 14 Caleb drove out from there the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, descendants of Anak. †
15 From there he marched against the inhabitants of Debir, which used to be called Kiriath-sepher, † 16 and Caleb said, "Whoever attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah to him as a wife." 17 So Othniel † son of Caleb's brother, Kenaz, captured it, and Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to him as a wife. † 18 When she arrived, she persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?" 19 She replied, "Give me a blessing. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me the springs also." So he gave her the upper and lower springs.

JUDAH'S CITIES

20 This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Judah by their clans.
21 These were the outermost cities of the tribe of the descendants of Judah toward the border of Edom in the Negev: Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, † 22 Kinah,

Dimonah, Adadah, [23] Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, [24] Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, [25] Hazor-hadattah, Kerioth-hezron (that is, Hazor), [26] Amam, Shema, Moladah, [27] Hazar-gaddah, Heshmon, Beth-pelet, [28] Hazar-shual, Beer-sheba, Biziothiah, † [29] Baalah, Iim, Ezem, [30] Eltolad, Chesil, Hormah, [31] Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, † [32] Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and Rimmon — twenty-nine cities in all, with their settlements.

[33] In the Judean foothills: † Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, [34] Zanoah, En-gannim, Tappuah, † Enam, [35] Jarmuth, Adullam, † Socoh, † Azekah, [36] Shaaraim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim — fourteen cities, with their settlements; [37] Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal-gad, [38] Dilan, Mizpeh, Jokthe-el, [39] Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, [40] Cabbon, Lahmam, Chitlish, [41] Gederoth, Beth-dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah — sixteen cities, with their settlements; [42] Libnah, Ether, Ashan, [43] Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, [44] Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah — nine cities, with their settlements; [45] Ekron, with its surrounding villages and settlements; [46] from Ekron to the sea, all the cities near Ashdod, with their settlements; [47] Ashdod, with its surrounding villages and settlements; Gaza, with its surrounding villages and settlements, to the Brook of Egypt and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

[48] In the hill country: Shamir, Jattir, Socoh, [49] Dannah, Kiriath-sannah (that is, Debir), [50] Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, [51] Goshen, Holon, and Giloh — eleven cities, with their settlements; [52] Arab, Dumah, † Eshan, [53] Janim, Beth-tappuah, Aphekah, [54] Humtah, Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), and Zior — nine cities, with their settlements; [55] Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, [56] Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, [57] Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah — ten cities, with their settlements; [58] Halhul, Beth-zur, Gedor, [59] Maarath, Beth-anoth, and Eltekon — six cities, with their settlements; † [60] Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), and Rabbah — two cities, with their settlements.

[61] In the wilderness: Beth-arabah, Middin, Secacah, [62] Nibshan, the City of Salt, † and En-gedi — six cities, with their settlements.

[63] But the descendants of Judah could not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem. † So the Jebusites still live in Jerusalem among the descendants of Judah today. †

15:2 Lit *Sea at the tongue that turns southward* **15:3** Lit *of scorpions* **15:4** LXX reads *their* **15:33** Or *the Shephelah* **15:34** Or *En-gannim-tappuah* **15:35** Or *Adullam-socoh* **15:52** Some Hb mss read *Rumah* **15:59** LXX adds *Tekoa, Ephrathah (that is, Bethlehem), Peor, Etam, Culom, Tatam, Sores, Carem, Gallim, Baither, and Manach — eleven cities, with their settlements* **15:62** Or *Ir-hamelach*
15:1 Nm 34:3 **15:4** Jos 15:47; 1Kg 8:65; 2Kg 24:7; Is 27:12; 2Ch 7:8 **15:9** 1Ch 13:6 **15:10** Gn 38:13; Jdg 14:1 **15:14** Nm 13:22,28,33; Dt 9:2; Jos 21:11 **15:15-19** Jdg 1:11-15 **15:17** Jdg 3:8-11 **15:17** 1Sm 17:25 **15:21** Gn 35:21 **15:28** Gn 21:31 **15:31** 1Sm 27:6; 30:1 **15:35** 1Sm 22:1 **15:63** Jdg 1:21; 2Sm 5:5-9 **15:63** Jos 6:25; 16:10; 22:17; 23:8-9

15:1 The allotments of land portions west of the Jordan begin to be described here, starting with Judah (see also 14:2).

15:14 Caleb was from the tribe of Judah (see Nm 13:6) and drove out the Anakites, just as he believed God would help him to do (see 14:12). The Israelites had expressed great fear of them on previous occasions (see Nm 13:28,33; Dt 1:28; 2:21).

15:15-19 This incident is also recounted in Judges 1:11-15. This **Othniel** would later become a judge in Israel (Jdg 3:9-11).

15:63 Although Israel had killed the king of **Jerusalem** and defeated his army (see chap. 10), **Judah**—Israel's leading tribe (see Nm 7:12; 26:22)—was unable to capture the city. This failure to complete their portion of the conquest did not bode well for Judah or for the nation (see also the note on 13:13; Jdg 19:10-12).

JOSEPH'S INHERITANCE

16 The allotment for the descendants of Joseph went from the Jordan at
Jericho to the Waters of Jericho on the east, through the wilderness †
ascending from Jericho into the hill country of Bethel. 2 From Bethel it went to
Luz and proceeded to the border of the Archites by Ataroth. † 3 It then
descended westward to the border of the Japhletites as far as the border of lower
Beth-horon, then to Gezer, † and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. 4 So Ephraim
and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph, † received their inheritance. †

EPHRAIM'S INHERITANCE

5 This was the territory of the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:
The border of their inheritance went from Ataroth-addar † on the east to Upper
Beth-horon. 6 In the north the border went westward from Michmethath; † it
turned eastward from Taanath-shiloh and passed it east of Janoah. 7 From
Janoah it descended to Ataroth and Naarah, † and then reached Jericho and went
to the Jordan. 8 From Tappuah the border went westward along the Brook of
Kanah and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. †

This was the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Ephraim by their clans, together with [9] the cities set apart for the descendants of Ephraim within the inheritance of the descendants of Manasseh — all these cities with their settlements. [10] However, they did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer. † So the Canaanites still live in Ephraim today, † but they are forced laborers.

16:1 Jos 8:15; 18:12 **16:2** Jos 18:13 **16:3** Jos 10:33 **16:4** Jos 17:14 **16:4** Gn 48:5-20 **16:5** Jos 18:13 **16:6** Jos 17:7 **16:7** 1Ch 7:28 **16:8** Jos 17:8 **16:10** Jdg 1:29; 1Kg 9:16 **16:10** Jos 6:25

16:10 Like Judah (see 15:63), **Ephraim** did not drive out all of the **Canaanites** from their allotment of land either (see also the note on 13:13).

WEST MANASSEH'S INHERITANCE

17 This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh † as Joseph's firstborn. Gilead and Bashan were given to Machir, the firstborn of Manasseh and the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war. † [2] So the allotment was for the rest of Manasseh's descendants by their clans, for the sons of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher, and Shemida. These are the male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, by their clans.

[3] Now Zelophehad son of Hepher, son of Gilead, son of Machir, son of Manasseh, had no sons, only daughters. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. † [4] They came before the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders, saying, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our male relatives." So they gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers, in keeping with the LORD's instruction. † [5] As a result, ten tracts fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which are beyond the Jordan, † [6] because Manasseh's daughters received an inheritance among his sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of Manasseh's sons.

[7] The border of Manasseh went from Asher to Michmethath near Shechem. It then went southward toward the inhabitants of En-tappuah. [8] The region of Tappuah belonged to Manasseh, but Tappuah itself on Manasseh's border † belonged to the descendants of Ephraim. [9] From there the border descended to the Brook of Kanah; south of the brook, cities belonged to Ephraim among Manasseh's cities. Manasseh's border was on the north side of the brook and

ended at the Mediterranean Sea. 10 Ephraim's territory was to the south and Manasseh's to the north, with the Sea as its border. They reached Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. 11 Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh had Beth-shean, Ibleam, and the inhabitants of Dor with their surrounding villages; † the inhabitants of En-dor, Taanach, and Megiddo — the three cities of † Naphath — with their surrounding villages. †
12 The descendants of Manasseh could not possess these cities, because the Canaanites were determined to stay in this land. 13 However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they imposed forced labor on the Canaanites but did not drive them out completely. †

JOSEPH'S ADDITIONAL INHERITANCE

14 Joseph's descendants said to Joshua, "Why did you give us only one tribal allotment † as an inheritance? We have many people, because the LORD has been blessing us greatly."
15 "If you have so many people," Joshua replied to them, "go to the forest and clear an area for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaim, because Ephraim's hill country is too small for you."
16 But the descendants of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who inhabit the valley area have iron chariots, both at Beth-shean with its surrounding villages and in the Jezreel Valley."
17 So Joshua replied to Joseph's family (that is, Ephraim and Manasseh), "You have many people and great strength. You will not have just one allotment,
18 because the hill country will be yours also. It is a forest; clear it and its outlying areas will be yours. You can also drive out the Canaanites, even though they have iron chariots and are strong."

17:5 = east of the Jordan River **17:11** LXX, Vg read *the third is* **17:14** Lit *one lot and one territory*, also in v. 17

17:1 Gn 41:51; 46:20; 48:18 **17:1** 1Ch 28:3 **17:3** Nm 26:33 **17:4** Nm 27:1-11 **17:8** Jos 16:8-9 **17:11** 1Ch 7:29 **17:11** Jos 11:2; 12:23 **17:13** Jdg 1:27-28

17:3-6 For more on Zelophehad's daughters, see Numbers 27:1-11 and 36:1-12.

17:12-13 Yet another tribe failed to drive out all of **the Canaanites** from their portion of land (see 15:63; 16:10). The failures of Judah, Ephraim, and **Manasseh** foreshadow the disaster that is to come in Judges when Israel was alternatively oppressed and negatively influenced by their neighbors (see the note on 13:13).

17:16-18 Ephraim and Manasseh's reluctance to challenge the **iron chariots** of **the Canaanites** in the **valley area** (see also Jdg 1:19) contrasts with Caleb's courage before the Anakites (14:21; 15:14) and is

met with an exhortation from **Joshua.** God had commanded Israel to drive out all the inhabitants of the land and had promised to help them to do so (Dt 7:1-5,17-26).

LAND DISTRIBUTION AT SHILOH

18 The entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh † and set up the
tent of meeting there. The land had been subdued before them, 2 but
seven tribes among the Israelites were left who had not divided up their
inheritance. 3 So Joshua asked the Israelites, “How long will you delay going
out to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, gave
you? † 4 Appoint for yourselves three men from each tribe, and I will send them
out. They are to go and survey the land, write a description of it for the purpose
of their inheritance, and return to me. 5 Then they are to divide it into seven
portions. Judah is to remain in its territory in the south and Joseph’s family in
their territory in the north. † 6 When you have written a description of the seven
portions of land and brought it to me, I will cast lots † for you here in the
presence of the LORD our God. † 7 But the Levites among you do not get a
portion, because their inheritance is the priesthood of the LORD. † Gad, Reuben,
and half the tribe of Manasseh have taken their inheritance beyond the Jordan to
the east, which Moses the LORD’s servant gave them.”
8 As the men prepared to go, Joshua commanded them † to write down a
description of the land, saying, “Go and survey the land, write a description of it,
and return to me. I will then cast lots for you here in Shiloh in the presence of
the LORD.” 9 So the men left, went through the land, and described it by towns in
a document of seven sections. They returned to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh.
10 Joshua cast lots for them at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD where he
distributed the land to the Israelites according to their divisions.

BENJAMIN’S INHERITANCE

11 The lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin’s descendants by their clans, and
their allotted territory lay between Judah’s descendants and Joseph’s
descendants.
12 Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, ascended to the slope of
Jericho on the north, through the hill country westward, and ended at the
wilderness around Beth-aven. † 13 From there the border went toward Luz, to

the southern slope of Luz (that is, Bethel); it then went down by Ataroth-addar, over the hill south of Lower Beth-horon. †
14 On the west side, from the hill facing Beth-horon on the south, the border curved, turning southward, and ended at Kiriath-baal (that is, Kiriath-jearim), a city of the descendants of Judah. This was the west side of their border.
15 The south side began at the edge of Kiriath-jearim, and the border extended westward; it went to the spring at the Waters of Nephtoah. 16 The border descended to the foot of the hill that faces Ben Hinnom Valley at the northern end of Rephaim Valley. It ran down Hinnom Valley toward the south Jebusite slope and downward to En-rogel. 17 It curved northward and went to En-shemesh and on to Geliloth, which is opposite the Ascent of Adummim, and continued down to the Stone of Bohan † son of Reuben. 18 Then it went north to the slope opposite the Arabah † and proceeded into the plains. † 19 The border continued to the north slope of Beth-hoglah and ended at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at the southern end of the Jordan. This was the southern border.
20 The Jordan formed the border on the east side.
This was the inheritance of Benjamin's descendants, by their clans, according to its surrounding borders.

BENJAMIN'S CITIES

21 These were the cities of the tribe of Benjamin's descendants by their clans:
Jericho, Beth-hoglah, Emek-keziz, 22 Beth-arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel,
23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24 Chephar-ammoni, Ophni, and Geba — twelve cities, with their settlements; 25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26 Mizpeh, Chephirah, Mozah, 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28 Zela, Haeleph, Jebus † (that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah, and Kiriath † — fourteen cities, with their settlements.
This was the inheritance for Benjamin's descendants by their clans.

18:8 Lit *the ones going around* **18:18** LXX reads *went northward to Beth-arabah* **18:18** Or *the Arabah* **18:28** Lit *Jebusite* **18:28** LXX, Syr read *Kiriath-jearim*
18:1 Jos 19:51; Jdg 18:31; 1Sm 1:9; 3:3 **18:3** Jdg 18:9 **18:5** Jos 15:1 **18:6** 1Ch 24:31; 25:8; 26:13-14; Neh 10:34; 11:1; Ps 22:18; Jnh 1:7 **18:6** Jos 14:2 **18:7** Jos 13:33 **18:12** Jos 16:1 **18:13** Jos 16:3 **18:17** Jos 15:6

18:1-6 Judah, Ephraim, and Manasseh had taken possession of their land, but seven tribes still remained **who had not divided up their inheritance.** They had unnecessarily delayed taking possession of their territories, and Joshua instructed them to send representatives to **survey the land** so that it could be divided among them by lot. The placement of the tabernacle **at Shiloh** (vv. 1,8-10) during this era is also mentioned in other passages (e.g., 21:1-2; Jdg 18:31; 21:19; 1Sm 1:3,24; 4:3; Jr 7:12).

SIMEON'S INHERITANCE

19 The second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of his descendants by their clans, but their inheritance was within the inheritance given to Judah's descendants. 2 Their inheritance included
Beer-sheba (or Sheba †), Moladah, 3 Hazar-shual, Balah, Ezem, 4 Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, 5 Ziklag, Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susah, 6 Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen — thirteen cities, with their settlements; 7 Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan — four cities, with their settlements; 8 and all the settlements surrounding these cities as far as Baalath-beer (Ramah in the south †).
This was the inheritance of the tribe of Simeon's descendants by their clans. 9 The inheritance of Simeon's descendants was within the territory of Judah's descendants, because the share for Judah's descendants was too large. So Simeon's descendants received an inheritance within Judah's portion.

ZEBULUN'S INHERITANCE

10 The third lot came up for Zebulun's descendants by their clans.
The territory of their inheritance stretched as far as Sarid; 11 their border went up westward to Maralah, reached Dabbesheth, and met the brook east of Jokneam. 12 From Sarid, it turned due east along the border of Chisloth-tabor, went to Daberath, and went up to Japhia. 13 From there, it went due east to Gath-hepher and to Eth-kazin; it extended to Rimmon, curving around to Neah. 14 The border then circled around Neah on the north to Hannathon and ended at Iphtah-el Valley, 15 along with Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem — twelve cities, with their settlements.
16 This was the inheritance of Zebulun's descendants by their clans, these cities, with their settlements.

ISSACHAR'S INHERITANCE

17 The fourth lot came out for the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans.
18 Their territory went to Jezreel, and included Chesulloth, Shunem, †
19 Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, 20 Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, 21 Remeth, En-gannim, En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez. 22 The border reached Tabor, Shahazumah, and Beth-shemesh, and ended at the Jordan — sixteen cities, with their settlements.

23 This was the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar's descendants by their clans,
the cities, with their settlements.

ASHER'S INHERITANCE

24 The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans.
25 Their boundary included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, 26 Allammelech,
Amad, and Mishal and reached westward to Carmel and Shihor-libnath. 27 It
turned eastward to Beth-dagon, reached Zebulun and Iphtah-el Valley, north
toward Beth-emek and Neiel, and went north to Cabul, † 28 Ebron, Rehob,
Hammon, and Kanah, as far as greater Sidon. 29 The boundary then turned to
Ramah as far as the fortified city of Tyre; it turned back to Hosah and ended at
the Mediterranean Sea, including Mahalab, Achzib, † 30 Ummah, Aphek, and
Rehob — twenty-two cities, with their settlements.
31 This was the inheritance of the tribe of Asher's descendants by their clans,
these cities with their settlements.

NAPHTALI'S INHERITANCE

32 The sixth lot came out for Naphtali's descendants by their clans.
33 Their boundary went from Heleph and from the oak in Zaanannim, including
Adami-nekeb and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum, and ended at the Jordan. 34 To the
west, the boundary turned to Aznoth-tabor and went from there to Hukkok,
reaching Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Judah † at the Jordan on
the east. 35 The fortified cities were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath,
Chinnereth, 36 Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37 Kedesh, Edrei, En-hazor, 38 Iron,
Migdal-el, Horem, Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh — nineteen cities, with their
settlements.
39 This was the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali's descendants by their clans,
the cities with their settlements.

DAN'S INHERITANCE

40 The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan's descendants by their clans.
41 The territory of their inheritance included Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir-shemesh,
42 Shaalabbin, Aijalon, † Ithlah, 43 Elon, Timnah, Ekron, 44 Eltekeh,
Gibbethon, Baalath, 45 Jehud, Bene-berak, Gath-rimmon, 46 Me-jarkon, and
Rakkon, with the territory facing Joppa. †

47 When the territory of the descendants of Dan slipped out of their control, they went up and fought against Leshem, captured it, and struck it down with the sword. So they took possession of it, lived there, and renamed Leshem after their ancestor Dan. † 48 This was the inheritance of the tribe of Dan's descendants by their clans, these cities with their settlements.

JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE

49 When they had finished distributing the land into its territories, the Israelites gave Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them. 50 By the LORD's command, they gave him the city Timnath-serah in the hill country of Ephraim, † which he requested. He rebuilt the city and lived in it.

51 These were the portions that the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of Nun, and the family heads distributed to the Israelite tribes by lot at Shiloh in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. † So they finished dividing up the land.

19:8 Or *the Negev* **19:29** Or *Sea, in the region of Achzib* **19:34** LXX omits *Judah*
19:2 1Ch 4:28 **19:18** 1Sm 28:4 **19:27** 1Kg 9:13 **19:42** Jdg 1:35 **19:46** 2Ch 2:16; Ezr 3:7 **19:47** Jdg 1:34,35; 18:1 **19:50** Jos 24:30 **19:51** Jos 14:1

19:1,9 Simeon's inheritance had no boundaries since it was **within the inheritance given to Judah's descendants.** This may be a fulfillment of what was said about their forefather (and Levi) in Genesis 49:7. **Simeon** is also the only tribe omitted from Moses's blessing of the tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy 33. Simeon is, however, mentioned in Rv 7:5-8, whereas Dan is omitted.

19:49-50 Just as Caleb had received a portion of land (see 14:6-15), so did **Joshua.** They were the only two survivors of the previous generation of Israelites. The respective accounts of these two individual allotments of land begin and end the literary unit (Jos 14–20) and its description of tribal allotments west of the Jordan.

CITIES OF REFUGE

20 Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, 2 "Tell the Israelites: Select your cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, † 3 so that a person who kills someone unintentionally or accidentally may flee there. These will be your refuge from the avenger of blood. † 4 When someone flees to one of these cities, stands at the entrance of the city gate, and states his case before † the elders of that city, they are to bring him into the city and give him a place to live among them. † 5 And if the avenger of blood pursues him, they must not hand the one who committed manslaughter over to him, for he killed his neighbor

accidentally and did not hate him beforehand. 6 He is to stay in that city until he
stands trial before the assembly and until the death of the high priest serving at
that time. † Then the one who committed manslaughter may return home to his
own city from which he fled."
7 So they designated Kedesh in the hill country of Naphtali in Galilee, †
Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the
hill country of Judah. † 8 Across the Jordan east of Jericho, they selected Bezer
on the wilderness plateau from Reuben's tribe, Ramoth in Gilead from Gad's
tribe, and Golan in Bashan from Manasseh's tribe.
9 These are the cities appointed for all the Israelites and the aliens residing
among them, † so that anyone who kills a person unintentionally may flee there
and not die at the hand of the avenger of blood until he stands before the
assembly.

20:4 Lit *in the ears of*

20:2 Nm 35:6-34; Dt 4:41-43; 19:1-13 **20:3** Nm 5:5-8; Dt 19:6 **20:4** Ru 4:1 **20:6** Nm 35:12; Dt 21:1-9 **20:7** 1Ch 6:76 **20:7** Jos 21:11; Lk 1:39 **20:9** Nm 35:15

20:7-8 The designation of three cities of refuge west of the Jordan fulfilled Numbers 35:9-15 and Deuteronomy 19:2. Moses had already set aside **Bezer**, **Ramoth**, and **Golan** east of the Jordan (Dt 4:41-43).

CITIES OF THE LEVITES

21 The Levite family heads approached the priest Eleazar, Joshua son of
Nun, and the family heads of the Israelite tribes. 2 At Shiloh, in the land
of Canaan, they told them, "The LORD commanded through Moses that
we be given cities to live in, with their pasturelands for our livestock." † 3 So
the Israelites, by the LORD's command, gave the Levites these cities with their
pasturelands from their inheritance.
4 The lot came out for the Kohathite clans: The Levites who were the
descendants of the priest Aaron received thirteen cities by lot from the tribes of
Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. 5 The remaining descendants of Kohath received
ten cities by lot from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan, and half the tribe of
Manasseh.
6 Gershon's descendants received thirteen cities by lot from the clans of the
tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.
7 Merari's descendants received twelve cities for their clans from the tribes of
Reuben, Gad, and Zebulun.

8 The Israelites gave these cities with their pasturelands around them to the Levites by lot, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

CITIES OF AARON'S DESCENDANTS

9 The Israelites gave these cities by name from the tribes of the descendants of Judah and Simeon 10 to the descendants of Aaron from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because they received the first lot. 11 They gave them Kiriath-arba † (that is, Hebron; Arba was the father of Anak) with its surrounding pasturelands in the hill country of Judah. 12 But they gave the fields and settlements of the city to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13 They gave to the descendants of the priest Aaron:
Hebron, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Libnah with its pasturelands, 14 Jattir with its pasturelands, Eshtemoa with its pasturelands, 15 Holon with its pasturelands, Debir with its pasturelands, 16 Ain with its pasturelands, Juttah with its pasturelands, and Beth-shemesh with its pasturelands — nine cities from these two tribes.

17 From the tribe of Benjamin they gave:
Gibeon with its pasturelands, Geba with its pasturelands, 18 Anathoth with its pasturelands, and Almon with its pasturelands — four cities. 19 All thirteen cities with their pasturelands were for the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

CITIES OF KOHATH'S OTHER DESCENDANTS

20 The allotted cities to the remaining clans of Kohath's descendants, who were Levites, came from the tribe of Ephraim. 21 The Israelites gave them:

Shechem, † the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands in the hill country of Ephraim, Gezer with its pasturelands, 22 Kibzaim with its pasturelands, and Beth-horon with its pasturelands — four cities.

23 From the tribe of Dan they gave:

Elteke with its pasturelands, Gibbethon with its pasturelands, 24 Aijalon with its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon with its pasturelands — four cities.

25 From half the tribe of Manasseh they gave:

Taanach with its pasturelands and Gath-rimmon † with its pasturelands — two cities.

26 All ten cities with their pasturelands were for the clans of Kohath's other

descendants.

CITIES OF GERSHON'S DESCENDANTS

27 From half the tribe of Manasseh, they gave to the descendants of Gershon, † who were one of the Levite clans:
Golan, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands in Bashan, and Beeshterah with its pasturelands — two cities.
28 From the tribe of Issachar they gave:
Kishion with its pasturelands, Daberath with its pasturelands, 29 Jarmuth with its pasturelands, and En-gannim with its pasturelands — four cities.
30 From the tribe of Asher they gave:
Mishal with its pasturelands, Abdon with its pasturelands, 31 Helkath with its pasturelands, and Rehob with its pasturelands — four cities.
32 From the tribe of Naphtali they gave:
Kedesh in Galilee, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Hammoth-dor with its pasturelands, and Kartan with its pasturelands — three cities.
33 All thirteen cities with their pasturelands were for the Gershonites by their clans.

CITIES OF MERARI'S DESCENDANTS

34 From the tribe of Zebulun, they gave to the clans of the descendants of Merari, † who were the remaining Levites:
Jokneam with its pasturelands, Kartah with its pasturelands, 35 Dimnah with its pasturelands, and Nahalal with its pasturelands — four cities.
36 From the tribe of Reuben they gave:
Bezer † with its pasturelands, Jahzah † with its pasturelands, 37 Kedemoth with its pasturelands, and Mephaath with its pasturelands — four cities. †
38 From the tribe of Gad they gave:
Ramoth in Gilead, the city of refuge for the one who commits manslaughter, with its pasturelands, Mahanaim with its pasturelands, 39 Heshbon with its pasturelands, and Jazer with its pasturelands — four cities in all. 40 All twelve cities were allotted to the clans of Merari's descendants, the remaining Levite clans.

41 Within the Israelite possession there were forty-eight cities in all with their pasturelands for the Levites. † 42 Each of these cities had its own surrounding pasturelands; this was true for all the cities.

THE LORD'S PROMISES FULFILLED

43 So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their fathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. 44 The LORD gave them rest on every side according to all he had sworn to their fathers. None of their enemies were able to stand against them, for the LORD handed over all their enemies to them. 45 None of the good promises the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed. Everything was fulfilled. †

21:25 Or *Ibleam* **21:36** Or *Jahaz* **21:36-37** Some Hb mss omit these vv.
21:2 Nm 35:4-5 **21:11** 1Ch 6:55 **21:21** Jos 20:7 **21:27** 1Ch 6:71 **21:34** 1Ch 6:77 **21:36-38** Jos 20:8 **21:41** Nm 35:7 **21:45** Jos 23:14

21:2-3 The earlier command to give **the Levites . . . cities** and **pasturelands** from each tribal allotment of land was now being fulfilled (see vv. 41-42; 14:3-4; Nm 35:1-8).

21:43-45 After concluding the description of the division of the land, the biblical text emphasizes God's faithfulness to his **good promises** to Israel (see also 23:14-15). As **he had sworn to give their fathers**, God had given them both the land and **rest on every side.** He had fought for them so that **none of their enemies were able to stand against them** (see 1:5; 11:8). These statements, however, should not be taken to mean that the land had been entirely subdued (see 13:1; note on 13:13). Wherever they had fought enemies, they had been victorious through God's help, and the strength of their enemies had been broken. Nonetheless, many enemies had not been eradicated and remained in the land.

EASTERN TRIBES RETURN HOME

22 Joshua summoned the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh 2 and told them, "You have done everything Moses the LORD's servant commanded you † and have obeyed me in everything I commanded you. 3 You have not deserted your brothers even once this whole time but have carried out the requirement of the command of the LORD your God. 4 Now that he has given your brothers rest, just as he promised them, return to your homes in your own land that Moses the LORD's servant gave you across the Jordan. 5 Only carefully obey the command and instruction that Moses the LORD's servant gave you: to love the LORD your God, walk in all his ways, keep his commands, be loyal to him, and serve him with all your heart and all your soul." †

6 Joshua blessed them and sent them on their way, † and they went to their
homes. 7 Moses had given territory to half the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan, but
Joshua had given territory to the other half, † with their brothers, on the west
side of the Jordan. † When Joshua sent them to their homes and blessed them,
8 he said, “Return to your homes with great wealth: a huge number of cattle, and
silver, gold, bronze, iron, and a large quantity of clothing. Share the spoil of your
enemies with your brothers.” †

EASTERN TRIBES BUILD AN ALTAR

9 The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at
Shiloh in the land of Canaan to return to their own land of Gilead, † which they
took possession of according to the LORD’s command through Moses. 10 When
they came to the region of † the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites,
Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh built a large, impressive altar there by
the Jordan.
11 Then the Israelites heard it said, “Look, the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the
tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the frontier of the land of Canaan at the
region of † the Jordan, on the Israelite side.” 12 When the Israelites heard this,
the entire Israelite community assembled at Shiloh to go to war against them. †

EXPLANATION OF THE ALTAR

13 The Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest to the Reubenites,
Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead. † 14 They sent ten
leaders with him — one family leader for each tribe of Israel. All of them were
heads of their ancestral families † among the clans of Israel. † 15 They went to
the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilead,
and told them, 16 “This is what the LORD’s entire community says: ‘What is this
treachery you have committed today against the God of Israel by turning away
from the LORD and building an altar for yourselves, so that you are in rebellion
against the LORD today? 17 Wasn’t the iniquity of Peor, † which brought a
plague on the LORD’s community, enough for us? We have not cleansed
ourselves from it even to this day, † 18 and now would you turn away from the
LORD? If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the

entire community of Israel. † 19 But if the land you possess is defiled, cross over to the land the LORD possesses where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession of it among us. But don't rebel against the LORD or against us by building for yourselves an altar other than the altar of the LORD our God. 20 Wasn't Achan son of Zerah unfaithful regarding what was set apart for destruction, bringing wrath on the entire community of Israel? He was not the only one who perished because of his iniquity.' " †

21 The Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered the heads of the Israelite clans, 22 "The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! † † He knows, † and may Israel also know. Do not spare us today, if it was in rebellion or treachery against the LORD 23 that we have built for ourselves an altar to turn away from him. May the LORD himself hold us accountable if we intended to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings on it, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it. 24 We actually did this from a specific concern that in the future your descendants might say to our descendants, 'What relationship do you have with the LORD, the God of Israel? 25 For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between us and you descendants of Reuben and Gad. You have no share in the LORD!' So your descendants may cause our descendants to stop fearing the LORD.

26 "Therefore we said: Let us take action and build an altar for ourselves, but not for burnt offering or sacrifice. 27 Instead, it is to be a witness between us and you, † and between the generations after us, so that we may carry out the worship of the LORD in his presence with our burnt offerings, sacrifices, and fellowship offerings. † Then in the future, your descendants will not be able to say to our descendants, 'You have no share in the LORD!' 28 We thought that if they said this to us or to our generations in the future, we would reply: Look at the replica of the LORD's altar that our fathers made, not for burnt offering or sacrifice, but as a witness between us and you. 29 We would never ever rebel against the LORD or turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offering, grain offering, or sacrifice, other than the altar of the LORD our God, which is in front of his tabernacle."

CONFLICT RESOLVED

30 When the priest Phinehas and the community leaders, the heads of Israel's clans who were with him, heard what the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and

Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. 31 Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest
said to the descendants of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, “Today we know that
the LORD is among us, because you have not committed this treachery against
him. † As a result, you have rescued the Israelites from the LORD’s power.”
32 Then the priest Phinehas son of Eleazar and the leaders returned from the
Reubenites and Gadites in the land of Gilead to the Israelites in the land of
Canaan and brought back a report to them. 33 The Israelites were pleased with
the report, and they blessed God. † They spoke no more about going to war
against them to ravage the land where the Reubenites and Gadites lived. 34 So
the Reubenites and Gadites named the altar: It † is a witness between us that the
LORD is God.

22:7 Lit *to his half* **22:10** Or *to Geliloth by* **22:11** Or *at Geliloth by* **22:14** Lit *the house of their fathers* **22:22** Or *The Lord is the God of gods! The Lord is the God of gods!* **22:34** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *altar Witness because it*

22:2 Dt 3:18-20 **22:5** Dt 6:5; 10:12-13; 11:13-17 **22:6** Jos 14:13 **22:7** Nm 32:33; Jos 17:5 **22:8** Nm 31:27; 1Sm 30:24 **22:9** Nm 32:1,26,29 **22:12** Lv 17:8-9; Dt 13:12-15 **22:13** Ex 6:25; Nm 25:7 **22:14** Nm 1:4,16 **22:17** Dt 10:17; Ps 50:1; 136:2; Dn 2:47; 11:36 **22:17** Jos 6:25 **22:18** Nm 16:22 **22:20** Jos 7:1-26 **22:22** Dt 10:17; Ps 50:1; 136:2; Dn 2:47; 11:36 **22:22** 1Kg 8:39 **22:27** Gn 31:48,52; Dt 31:19,26; Jos 24:27; Is 19:20 **22:27** Dt 12:6 **22:31** Lv 26:11-12 **22:33** 1Ch 29:20; Dn 2:19; Lk 2:28

22:1-5 Having fulfilled their promise to fight alongside the other tribes, Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were released by Joshua to return to their land east of the Jordan (see also 1:12-18; Nm 32). His charge to them to keep the law of Moses resembles Moses’s previous charges (see Dt 6:5; 10:12-13; 11:1,13).

22:13-29 This is the second time Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were accused of major wrongdoing (see Nm 32:6-15). Once again, these tribes explained their actions and the purity of their motives (see Nm 32:16-19,25-27,31-32). They had not built the altar **in rebellion or treachery against the LORD** (v. 22) or **for burnt offering or sacrifice** (vv. 26,28) but as a **witness** (vv. 27-28,34) that they too had a **share in the LORD** (vv. 25, 27) and were worshipers of him (vv. 24-28). This explanation resolved the misunderstanding of the delegation and the other Israelites (vv. 30-34).

JOSHUA’S FAREWELL ADDRESS

23 A long time after the LORD had given Israel rest from all the enemies
around them, † Joshua was old, advanced in age. † 2 So Joshua
summoned all Israel, including its elders, leaders, judges, and officers, † and
said to them, “I am old, advanced in age, 3 and you have seen for yourselves
everything the LORD your God did to all these nations on your account, because
it was the LORD your God who was fighting for you. † 4 See, I have allotted
these remaining nations to you as an inheritance for your tribes, † including all

the nations I have destroyed, from the Jordan westward to the Mediterranean Sea. 5 The LORD your God will force them back on your account and drive them out before you so that you can take possession of their land, † as the LORD your God promised you.

6 "Be very strong † and continue obeying all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, so that you do not turn from it to the right or left 7 and so that you do not associate with these nations remaining among you. Do not call on the names of their gods or make an oath to them; † do not serve them or bow in worship to them. 8 Instead, be loyal to the LORD your God, as you have been to this day. †

9 "The LORD has driven out great and powerful nations before you, † and no one is able to stand against you to this day. † 10 One of you routed a thousand † because the LORD your God was fighting for you, as he promised. † † 11 So diligently watch yourselves! Love the LORD your God! 12 If you ever turn away and become loyal to the rest of these nations remaining among you, † and if you intermarry or associate with them † and they with you, 13 know for certain that the LORD your God will not continue to drive these nations out before you. They will become a snare and a trap for you, † a sharp stick † for your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you disappear from this good land the LORD your God has given you.

14 "I am now going the way of the whole earth, † and you know with all your heart and all your soul that none of the good promises the LORD your God made to you has failed. Everything was fulfilled for you; not one promise has failed. †
15 Since every good thing the LORD your God promised you has come about, so he will bring on you every bad thing until he has annihilated you from this good land the LORD your God has given you. † 16 If you break the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow in worship to them, the LORD's anger will burn against you, and you will quickly disappear from this good land he has given you."

23:10 Lit *promised you* **23:13** Or *a whip* ; Hb obscure
23:1 Jos 21:44 **23:1** Jos 13:1 **23:2** Jos 24:1 **23:3** Dt 1:30; Jos 10:14 **23:4** Ex 23:30 **23:5** Nm 33:53 **23:6** Dt 5:32; Jos 1:7 **23:7** Ex 23:13; Ps 16:4 **23:8** Jos 6:25 **23:9** Ex 23:30 **23:9** Jos 1:5 **23:10** Jdg 15:15-16 **23:10** Lv 26:8 **23:12** Ex 34:16 **23:12** Dt 7:3 **23:13** Ex 23:33; Dt 7:16; Jdg 2:3 **23:14** 1Kg 2:2 **23:14** Jos 21:45 **23:15** Lv 26:14-33; Dt 28:15

23:1-8 Prior to his death, Moses reminded the Israelites of God's past works on their behalf and called them to future obedience (see Deuteronomy), and Joshua did the same prior to his death (see also v. 14). His confidence that God would drive out the remaining inhabitants of the land and his command to **be very strong** and keep **the law of Moses** closely resemble the charge he himself was given in 1:2-9.

23:12-16 The Lord had faithfully fulfilled all of **the good promises** that he had made to Israel (see also 21:45), but his threats of judgment would come true also if Israel disobeyed (Jdg 2:15). Moses had said earlier that Israel would indeed turn away from God and be exiled (see the note on Dt 31:16-22), and Joshua expected the same (v. 15; see the note on 24:14-24). **If you break the covenant** can also be translated literally: "When you break the covenant."

REVIEW OF ISRAEL'S HISTORY

24 Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem † and summoned
Israel's elders, leaders, judges, and officers, and they presented
themselves before God. † 2 Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah, †
the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped
other gods. 3 But I took your father Abraham from the region beyond the
Euphrates River, led him throughout the land of Canaan, and multiplied his
descendants. † I gave him Isaac, † 4 and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. † I
gave the hill country of Seir to Esau as a possession. †
" 'Jacob and his sons, however, went down to Egypt. † 5 I sent Moses and
Aaron, † and I defeated Egypt by what I did within it, and afterward I brought
you out. 6 When I brought your fathers out of Egypt and you reached the Red
Sea, † the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen as far as
the sea. 7 Your fathers cried out to the LORD, so he put darkness between you
and the Egyptians, and brought the sea over them, engulfing them. Your own
eyes saw what I did to Egypt. After that, you lived in the wilderness a long time.
8 " 'Later, I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived beyond the
Jordan. † They fought against you, but I handed them over to you. You
possessed their land, and I annihilated them before you. 9 Balak son of Zippor,
king of Moab, † set out to fight against Israel. He sent for Balaam son of Beor to
curse you, 10 but I would not listen to Balaam. Instead, he repeatedly blessed
you, and I rescued you from him.
11 " 'You then crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. † Jericho's citizens — as
well as the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hethites, Girgashites, Hivites, and

Jebusites — fought against you, but I handed them over to you. 12 I sent hornets † † ahead of you, and they drove out the two Amorite kings † before you. It was not by your sword or bow. 13 I gave you a land you did not labor for, and cities you did not build, † though you live in them; you are eating from vineyards and olive groves you did not plant.'

THE COVENANT RENEWAL

14 "Therefore, fear the LORD and worship him in sincerity and truth. † Get rid of the gods your fathers worshiped † beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the LORD. 15 But if it doesn't please you to worship the LORD, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship — the gods your fathers worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? † As for me and my family, we will worship the LORD."
16 The people replied, "We will certainly not abandon the LORD to worship other gods! 17 For the LORD our God brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, † and performed these great signs before our eyes. He also protected us all along the way we went and among all the peoples whose lands we traveled through. 18 The LORD drove out before us all the peoples, including the Amorites who lived in the land. We too will worship the LORD, because he is our God."
19 But Joshua told the people, "You will not be able to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; † he will not forgive your transgressions and sins. † 20 If you abandon the LORD and worship foreign gods, he will turn against you, harm you, and completely destroy † you, after he has been good to you."
21 "No! " the people answered Joshua. "We will worship the LORD."
22 Joshua then told the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen to worship the LORD."
"We are witnesses," they said.
23 "Then get rid of the foreign gods that are among you and turn your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."
24 So the people said to Joshua, "We will worship the LORD our God and obey him."

25 On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people at Shechem and established a statute and ordinance for them. 26 Joshua recorded these things in the book of the law of God; † he also took a large stone and set it up there under the oak at the sanctuary of the LORD. 27 And Joshua said to all the people, "You see this stone — it will be a witness against us, † for it has heard all the words the LORD said to us, and it will be a witness against you, so that you will not deny your God." 28 Then Joshua sent the people away, each to his own inheritance.

BURIAL OF THREE LEADERS

29 After these things, the LORD's servant, Joshua son of Nun, died at the age of 110. 30 They buried him in his allotted territory at Timnath-serah, in the hill country of Ephraim † north of Mount Gaash. 31 Israel worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua † and who had experienced all the works the LORD had done for Israel.

32 Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, † were buried at Shechem in the parcel of land Jacob had purchased from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver. † † It was an inheritance for Joseph's descendants.

33 And Eleazar son of Aaron died, and they buried him at Gibeah, † which had been given to his son Phinehas † in the hill country of Ephraim.

24:12 Or *sent terror* **24:32** Lit *a hundred qesitahs* **24:33** = the Hill

24:1 Gn 12:1-7 **24:1** Jos 23:2 **24:2** Gn 11:27-32 **24:3** Gn 12:1 **24:3** Gn 21:3 **24:4** Gn 25:25-26 **24:4** Gn 36:8; Dt 2:5 **24:4** Gn 46:6 **24:5** Ex 4:14 **24:6** Ex 14:2 **24:8** Nm 21:21-32 **24:9** Nm 22:5 **24:11** Jos 3:14,17 **24:12** Ex 23:27-28; Dt 7:20 **24:12** Nm 21:21-35; Dt 2:26–3:11; 29:7 **24:13** Dt 6:10-11 **24:14** Dt 10:12; 1Sm 12:24 **24:14** Gn 35:4 **24:15** Jdg 6:10 **24:17** Lv 26:13; Dt 5:6; 6:12; 8:14; 13:5,10; Jr 34:13 **24:19** Lv 19:2 **24:19** Ex 23:21 **24:20** Jos 10:1; 11:11; Jdg 1:17 **24:26** Dt 31:24 **24:27** Jos 22:27,34 **24:30** Jos 19:49-50 **24:31** Jdg 2:7 **24:32** Gn 50:25; Ex 13:19 **24:32** Gn 33:19; Jb 42:11 **24:33** Jos 22:13

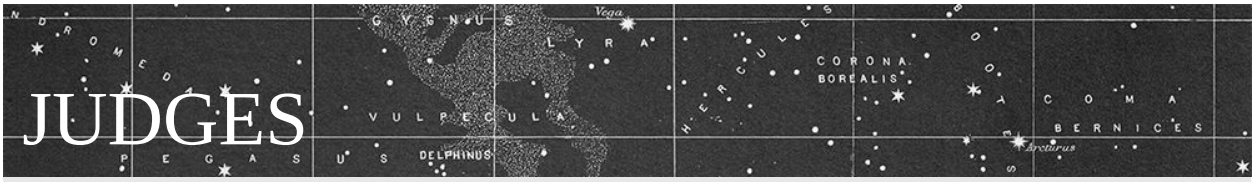
24:2-13 As Moses had done before (e.g., Dt 1:6-3:29; 5:4-31; 8:2-4), Joshua reminded the Israelites of what God had done for them in the past until the present day when they had entered **a land** [they] **did not labor for**, lived in **cities** [they] **did not build**, and were **eating from vineyards and olive groves** [they] **did not plant (v. 13).**

24:14-25 In view of what God had done for Israel, Joshua charged the Israelites to choose to serve God instead of idols. He actually thought that Israel would **not be able to worship the LORD, because he is a holy God** and **a jealous God**, but Israel nevertheless pledged their obedience three times (vv. 16-18,21,24). Repeated pledges, however, did not keep an earlier generation of Israelites from rebelling against God (see the note on Ex 24:3). Joshua's words in verse 19 and 23:15 (see the note on 23:12-16)—

along with the calling of witnesses in verses 22,27—do not inspire confidence in these pledges (see also the note on 1:16-18). In the end, Joshua still **made a covenant for the people at Shechem.**

24:29-31 The Pentateuch ends with Moses's death, and the book of Joshua closes with Joshua's death at the **age of 110.** Israel indeed was faithful to God **throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua**, but would turn away from God afterwards (see Jdg 2:7-10).

24:32 The mention of the burial of **Joseph's bones** in **Shechem** both related to the promise made long ago to this forefather (Gn 50:25) and served as a reminder of God's faithfulness to his promises (see also the note on Ex 13:19).



JUDGES

INTRODUCTION

The book of Judges is the second of the Historical Books in the OT (Joshua–Esther). In the Hebrew Bible, these books are called the Former Prophets; the theological and spiritual concerns found in the Pentateuch and the Prophets take precedence over simply recording historical facts. The book derives its name from the Hebrew designation of the principal characters, *shophetim* (2:18), which could also be translated as "governors." These judges were the Lord's agents of deliverance. The Lord is both the central character and the hero of Judges.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: No author is named in the book of Judges, nor is any indication given of the writer or writers who are responsible for it. The three divisions of the book are on a different footing regarding the sources from which they are drawn. The historical introduction presents a form of the traditional narrative of the conquest of Palestine that is parallel to the book of Joshua. The main portion of the book, comprising the narratives of the judges, appears to be based on oral or written traditions of a local observer.

BACKGROUND: The period of the Israelite judges lay between the conquest of the promised land under Joshua and the rise of the monarchy with Saul and David. The events described are thus to be dated from the end of the fifteenth century BC to the latter part of the eleventh century BC, a period of around three hundred years. This was a time of social and religious anarchy, characterized by the repeated refrain, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

We cannot ascertain exactly when the book of Judges was composed. The reference in 18:30 to the fate of Dan at "the time of the exile from the land" suggests a date of final editing after the exile of the northern kingdom by Assyria around 722 BC. Meanwhile, the suggestion that readers could visit the site of Gideon's altar at Ophrah in 6:24 suggests a date prior to the exile of the southern kingdom, Judah, in 586 BC Its message would have resonated strongly at several points of Israel's history, and it has been argued that it fits well during the dark days of Manasseh (686–642 BC; 2Kg 21:1-18). However, it is not possible to date Judges with precision.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Judges shows us that the nation of Israel survived the dark days of the judges entirely by the grace of God. In mercy he sent oppressors as reminders of their rebellion. In mercy he responded to their cries and raised up deliverers. Judges also illustrates the fundamental problem of the human heart. When God's people forget his saving acts, they go after other gods. Judges also illustrates the link between spiritual commitments and ethical conduct. In the end the book of Judges illustrates the eternal truth: the Lord will build his kingdom, in spite of our sin and rebellion.

STRUCTURE

The book falls into three parts. There is a prologue (1:1–3:6) that deals with the failure of the second generation to press on with the conquest of Canaan. This is followed by a sixfold cycle of sin and salvation (3:7–16:31), which forms the bulk of the book. Finally, there is an appendix (chaps. 17–21) that shows the full effects of total depravity let loose upon the people. This structure demonstrates not only the repetition

of patterns of sin and judgment but also negative progress. The midpoint of the narrative is the linked episode involving Gideon and Abimelech, which serves to highlight further the significance of the issue of kingship.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Judges shows the severity of God, who does not take it lightly when people claiming his name forsake his ways (2:11-15). It also shows the mercy of God, who is moved with pity when his children cry out to him, even when their troubles are caused by their own sins (2:16-18). The Spirit's power in enabling certain judges to perform mighty works is noteworthy in the book.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This book paints an embarrassing picture of human fickleness. Israel was seemingly ready to turn away from God to serve idols at the drop of a hat. The shameful incident of the Levite's concubine (chap. 19) demonstrates how degraded the times of the judges were. Even the three most memorable judges (Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson) were seriously flawed.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Judges teaches that salvation involves more than just an individual's forgiveness from sin. Sin has consequences that are social and can affect an entire society. Therefore, when God brings salvation, he dramatically changes societies and nations as well as individuals. Further, this book teaches that salvation—deliverance—is always from the Lord and never because someone (or some group) deserves it.

JUDGES TIMELINE

1500–1400 BC

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

Events in Deuteronomy **1406**

Miraculous crossing of the Jordan River **1406**

Events in Joshua **1406–1380?**

Musical notation, Ugarit **1400**

Chopsticks are used in China. **1400**

1400–1200 BC

DEBORAH 1360?–1300?

Division of the land into twelve allotments **1385?**

Deborah and Barak defeat the Canaanites. **1320?**

Pharaoh Horemheb creates a river security unit to board and search boats suspected of smuggling. **1320**

Pharaoh Merneptah **(1212–1203)** memorializes his victories against Libya and Canaan on a granite stele, the so-called Merneptah Stele. This is the first Egyptian document in which Israel is mentioned. The Merneptah Stele was discovered in AD 1896 by Flinders Petrie at Thebes.

1200–1175 BC

JEPHTHAH 1250?–1175?

RUTH 1225?–1125?

Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**

Gideon defeats the Midianites and Amalekites. **1200?**

Invasion of the Sea Peoples **1200?**

The Phoenicians become the world's first maritime power. **1200**

The Phoenicians develop warships with battering rams on the bow. **1200**

The Egyptians make several attempts to connect the Nile River with the Red Sea by digging canals. **1200**

1175–1100 BC

SAMSON 1120?–1060?

Jephthah defeats the Ammonites and Philistines. **1170?**

Ramesses III, Egypt's last great pharaoh, dies. **1155**

The Amorite king Nebuchadnezzar I captures Babylon. **1124**

Body armor made from rhinoceros hide, China **1100**

JUDAH'S LEADERSHIP AGAINST THE CANAANITES

1 After the death of Joshua, † the Israelites inquired of the LORD, † "Who will be the first to fight for us against the Canaanites?"

2 The LORD answered, "Judah † is to go. † I have handed the land over to him." †

3 Judah said to his brother Simeon, "Come with me to my allotted territory, and let us fight against the Canaanites. I will also go with you to your allotted territory." So Simeon went with him.

4 When Judah attacked, the LORD handed the Canaanites and Perizzites † over to them. They struck down ten thousand men in Bezek. † 5 They found Adoni-bezek in Bezek, fought against him, and struck down the Canaanites and Perizzites.

6 When Adoni-bezek fled, they pursued him, caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes. † 7 Adoni-bezek said, “Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to pick up scraps † under my table. God has repaid me for what I have done.” They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.
8 The men of Judah fought against Jerusalem, captured it, put it to the sword, and set the city on fire. 9 Afterward, the men of Judah marched down to fight against the Canaanites who were living in the hill country, the Negev, and the Judean foothills. † 10 Judah also marched against the Canaanites who were living in Hebron † (Hebron was formerly named Kiriath-arba †). They struck down Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai. † 11 From there they marched against the residents of Debir † (Debir was formerly named Kiriath-sepher).
12 Caleb † said, “Whoever attacks and captures Kiriath-sepher, I will give my daughter Achsah † to him as a wife.” 13 So Othniel † son of Kenaz, Caleb’s youngest brother, captured it, and Caleb gave his daughter Achsah to him as his wife.
14 When she arrived, she persuaded Othniel to ask her father for a field. As she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, “What do you want?” 15 She answered him, “Give me a blessing. Since you have given me land in the Negev, † give me springs also.” So Caleb gave her both the upper and lower springs. †
16 The descendants of the Kenite, Moses’s father-in-law, † had gone up with the men of Judah from the City of Palms † † to the Wilderness of Judah, which was in the Negev of Arad. † They went to live among the people.
17 Judah went with his brother Simeon, struck the Canaanites who were living in Zephath, and completely destroyed the town. So they named the town Hormah. † 18 Judah captured Gaza and its territory, Ashkelon and its territory, and Ekron and its territory. 19 The LORD was with † Judah and enabled them to take possession of the hill country, but they could not drive out † the people who were living in the valley because those people had iron chariots. †
20 Judah gave Hebron to Caleb, just as Moses had promised. † Then Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak † who lived there.

BENJAMIN’S FAILURE

21 At the same time the Benjaminites did not drive out the Jebusites who were living in Jerusalem. The Jebusites have lived among the Benjaminites in Jerusalem to this day. †

SUCCESS OF THE HOUSE OF JOSEPH

22 The house of Joseph also attacked Bethel, and the LORD was with † them. 23 They sent spies to Bethel (the town was formerly named Luz †). 24 The spies saw a man coming out of the town and said to him, “Please show us how to get into town, and we will show you kindness.” † 25 When he showed them the way into the town, they put the town to the sword but released the man and his entire family. 26 Then the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a town, and named it Luz. That is its name still today.

FAILURE OF THE OTHER TRIBES

27 At that time Manasseh failed to take possession of Beth-shean † and Taanach † and their surrounding villages, or the residents of Dor, † Ibleam, † and Megiddo † and their surrounding villages; the Canaanites were determined to stay in this land. † 28 When Israel became stronger, they made the Canaanites serve as forced labor but never drove them out completely. †

29 At that time Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites who were living in Gezer, so the Canaanites have lived among them in Gezer. †

30 Zebulun failed to drive out the residents of Kitron or the residents of Nahalol, † so the Canaanites lived among them and served as forced labor.

31 Asher failed to drive out the residents of Acco or of Sidon, or Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 The Asherites lived among the Canaanites who were living in the land, because they failed to drive them out.

33 Naphtali did not drive out the residents of Beth-shemesh or the residents of Beth-anath. They lived among the Canaanites who were living in the land, but the residents of Beth-shemesh and Beth-anath served as their forced labor.

34 The Amorites † forced the Danites into the hill country and did not allow them to go down into the valley. 35 The Amorites were determined to stay in † Har-heres, Aijalon, † and Shaalbim. When the house of Joseph got the upper

hand, † the Amorites † were made to serve as forced labor. 36 The territory of the Amorites extended from the Scorpions' Ascent, † that is from Sela † upward.

1:7 Lit *toes cut off are gathering* **1:9** Or *the Shephelah* **1:16** = Jericho; Dt 34:3; Jdg 3:13; 2Ch 28:15 **1:35** Or *Amorites determined to live in* **1:35** Lit *When the hand of the house of Joseph was heavy* **1:35** LXX reads *Joseph became strong on the Amorites, they*

1:1 Jos 1:1; 24:29-31 **1:1** Jdg 20:23,27; 1Sm 10:22; 23:2,4; 28:6 **1:2** Gn 29:35; 49:8-12 **1:1-2** Jdg 20:18 **1:2** Gn 35:12; Ex 6:8 **1:4** Gn 13:7; Dt 7:1; Jos 3:10; Ezr 9:1 **1:4** 1Sm 11:8 **1:6** 2Sm 4:12 **1:10** Gn 13:18; 23:2 **1:10** Gn 23:2; 35:27; Jos 14:15 **1:10** Nm 13:22; Jos 15:13-14 **1:11** Jos 10:38-39; 11:21; 15:7; 21:15; 1Ch 6:58 **1:12** Nm 13:6,13; 14:6,24,30,38; 26:65; 32:12 **1:12** 1Ch 2:49 **1:13** Jdg 3:9,11; 1Ch 4:13 **1:15** Gn 12:9; 13:1,3; Nm 13:17,22,29; 2Sm 24:7; Ps 126:4 **1:11-15** Jos 15:15-19 **1:16** Ex 2:18; 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-12; Nm 10:29 **1:16** Dt 34:3; Jdg 3:13; 2Ch 28:15 **1:16** Nm 21:1; 33:40; Jos 12:14 **1:17** Nm 21:3; Dt 1:44 **1:19** Gn 39:2,21; Jos 6:27; Jdg 2:18; 1Sm 18:12 **1:19** Jos 15:63 **1:19** Jos 17:16,18; Jdg 4:3,13 **1:20** Dt 1:36; Jos 14:9 **1:20** Nm 13:22 **1:21** Jos 15:63 **1:22** Gn 39:2,21; Jos 6:27; Jdg 2:18; 1Sm 18:12 **1:23** Gn 28:19; 35:6; 48:3 **1:24** Jos 2:12,14; 2Sm 9:1,3,7 **1:27** Jos 17:11,16; 1Sm 31:10,12; 2Sm 21:12 **1:27** Jos 21:25; Jdg 5:19 **1:27** Jos 11:2; 12:23; 17:11; 1Kg 4:11 **1:27** Jos 17:11; 2Kg 9:27 **1:27** Jdg 5:19; 1Kg 9:15; 2Kg 23:29-30 **1:27** Jdg 1:35; Hs 5:11 **1:27-28** Jos 17:12-13 **1:29** Jos 16:10 **1:30** Jos 19:15; 21:35 **1:34** Ex 3:8; Nm 13:29; 21:31; Jos 2:10 **1:35** Jos 10:12; 1Sm 14:31; 1Ch 8:13; 2Ch 28:18 **1:36** Nm 34:4; Jos 15:3 **1:36** 2Kg 14:7; Is 16:1

1:1 Like the book of Joshua, the book of Judges begins with Israel in transition because of the death of their leader (see Jos 1:1). This time, however, the transition would not be smooth (see 2:7-10). Joshua had said late in his life that "a great deal of the land remains to be possessed" (Jos 13:1; see also the note on 21:43-45), and Judges picks up the storyline from there. Many other such connections exist between Judges and Joshua (see notes below).

1:2-4 As he had done on many previous occasions (e.g., Jos 21:44; 24:8,11), God promised that he would give the Israelites victory and then did so. In view of God's instructions and help (vv. 2,19), the collaboration of **Judah** and **Simeon** may seem unexpected (vv. 3,17) and unnecessary, but Simeon's inheritance did lie within the boundary of Judah's (see the note on Jos 19:1,9).

1:6-7 This punishment on **Adoni-Bezek** rendered him unable to fight anymore. It was just recompense from God because the man had previously done the same thing to **seventy kings** (see also 8:18-19; 9:23-24).

1:10 It was Caleb who struck down **Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai**, who were sons of Anak (see the note on Jos 15:14).

1:11-15 This incident was also mentioned in Joshua 15:15-19. **Othniel** would later become a judge in Israel (see 3:9-11).

1:19-20 Judah failed to **drive out the people who were living in the valley because those people had iron chariots.** The Canaanite's technological superiority presented a challenge, but failure was ultimately unjustified because of God's promise to give Israel the land (v. 2; see also Jos 15:63). As Joshua 17:16-18 makes clear, iron chariots should not have prevented the Israelites from taking possession of the land. Caleb's defeat of three Anakites makes this even clearer (v. 20; see the note on Jos 15:14).

1:21-36 Just as Judah had not driven out the inhabitants of the land entirely, neither did Benjamin, Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, or Dan. This failure had already been described in part in Joshua 13:13; 15:63; 16:10; and 17:12-13, but the concentrated mention of more tribes in the present passage makes Israel's disobedience unmistakable (see also 2:1-3). The result was that the Canaanites

lived among the Israelites (vv. 21,28-30). To make matters worse, the biblical text suggests that Canaanites outnumbered the people of Asher and Naphtali in their territories (vv. 32-33), and Dan had difficulty taking possession of its territory (vv. 34-35; 18:1). Israel's coexistence with the Canaanites did not bode well for their future faithfulness to God (see 3:5-6; Dt 7:1-5).

PATTERN OF SIN AND JUDGMENT

2 The angel of the LORD † went up from Gilgal to Bochim and said, "I brought you out of Egypt and led you into the land † I had promised to your fathers. † I also said: I will never break my covenant with you.
2 You are not to make a covenant † with the inhabitants of this land. You are to tear down their altars. † But you have not obeyed me. What is this you have done? 3 Therefore, I now say: I will not drive out these people before you. †
They will be thorns † † in your sides, † and their gods will be a trap for you." † 4 When the angel of the LORD had spoken these words to all the Israelites, the people wept loudly. 5 So they named that place Bochim † and offered sacrifices there to the LORD.

JOSHUA'S DEATH

6 Previously, when Joshua had sent the people away, the Israelites had gone to take possession of the land, each to his own inheritance. † 7 The people worshiped the LORD throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived † Joshua. They had seen all the LORD's great works † he had done for Israel.
8 Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110. 9 They buried him in the territory of his inheritance, in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, † north of Mount Gaash. 10 That whole generation was also gathered to their ancestors. After them another generation rose up who did not know the LORD † or the works he had done for Israel.
11 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight. † They worshiped the Baals † 12 and abandoned the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed other gods from the surrounding peoples †
and bowed down to them. They angered the LORD, † 13 for they abandoned him and worshiped Baal and the Ashtoreths. †

14 The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he handed them over to
marauders who raided them. He sold † them to † the enemies around them, and
they could no longer resist their enemies. 15 Whenever the Israelites went out,
the LORD † was against them † and brought disaster on them, just as he had
promised and sworn to them. † So they suffered greatly.
16 The LORD raised up † judges, who saved them from the power of their
marauders, 17 but they did not listen to their judges. Instead, they prostituted †
themselves with other gods, bowing down to them. They quickly turned from the
way † of their fathers, who had walked in obedience to the LORD's commands.
They did not do as their fathers did. 18 Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for
the Israelites, the LORD was with † him and saved the people from the power of
their enemies while the judge was still alive. † The LORD was moved to pity
whenever they groaned because of those who were oppressing and afflicting
them. 19 Whenever the judge died, the Israelites would act even more
corruptly † than their fathers, following other gods to serve them and bow in
worship to them. They did not turn from their evil practices or their obstinate †
ways.
20 The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he declared, "Because this nation
has violated my covenant † that I made with their fathers † and disobeyed me,
21 I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left † when
he died. † 22 I did this to test Israel and to see whether or not they would keep
the LORD's way † by walking in it, as their fathers had." † 23 The LORD left
these nations and did not drive them out immediately. He did not hand them over
to Joshua.

2:3 LXX reads *affliction* **2:3** Lit *traps* **2:5** Or *Weeping* **2:7** Lit *extended their days after* **2:14** Lit *into the hand of* **2:15** Lit *the hand of the Lord* **2:18** Lit *enemies all the days of the judge*

2:1 Gn 22:11; Ex 3:2; Ps 34:7; 35:5-6 **2:1** Ex 6:8; Nm 14:3,8; Ezk 20:15 **2:1** Nm 14:23; Dt 6:10,23; 10:11; Jos 1:6 **2:2** Ex 23:32; Dt 7:2 **2:2** Ex 34:13; Dt 7:5; 12:3; Jdg 6:30-32; 2Ch 34:7 **2:3** Ex 23:29 **2:3** Nm 33:55 **2:3** Ex 23:33; 34:12; Dt 7:16; Jos 23:13 **2:6** Dt 9:4; 11:31; Jos 1:11; 18:3; Jdg 18:9; Neh 9:15 **2:7** Dt 11:7 **2:9** Jos 19:50; 1Sm 1:1; 14:22; 1Ch 6:67 **2:10** Ex 5:2; 1Sm 2:12 **2:11** Nm 32:12; Dt 4:25; 31:29; 1Kg 11:6 **2:11** Jdg 3:7; 8:33; 1Sm 12:10; 2Kg 17:16; Jr 2:23; 9:14 **2:12** Dt 6:14; 13:7 **2:12** 1Kg 14:15; 15:30; 2Kg 17:11; 2Ch 28:25 **2:13** Jdg 10:6; 1Sm 7:3-4; 12:10; 1Kg 11:5,33; 2Kg 23:13 **2:14** Jdg 3:8; 4:2,9; 10:7; Ps 44:12; Is 50:1; Ezk 30:12; Jl 3:8 **2:15** Dt 2:15 **2:15** Lv 26:14-46; Dt 28:15-68 **2:16** Jdg 3:9,15; 1Kg 11:14; 14:14 **2:17** Dt 4:30; 1Sm 13:6; 30:6; 2Sm 22:7; Jb 20:22; Ps 59:16; Hs 5:15 **2:17** Ex 32:8; Dt 9:12,16 **2:18** Gn 39:2,21; Jos 6:27; 1Sm 18:12 **2:19** Gn 6:12; Dt 31:29; Is 1:4 **2:19** Ex 32:9; Dt 9:6,13; Ezk 2:4 **2:20** Jos

7:11,15; 23:16; Jr 34:18; Hs 6:7 **2:20** Jdg 3:4; 1Kg 8:58; 2Kg 17:13; Ps 78:5; Jr 11:4 **2:21** Jos 13:1-7; 23:1-16 **2:21** Jos 24:29-30 **2:22** Gn 18:19; 2Sm 22:22; Ps 138:5 **2:22** Jos 24:31

2:1-3 God was displeased with Israel's failure to drive out the inhabitants of the land. His words imply that Israel had indeed made covenants with them and had not torn down their altars (see 3:5-6; Jos 9:3-15). As a result, he would no longer help them **drive out** the Canaanites (see also v. 21).

2:7-10 Israel was faithful to God **throughout Joshua's lifetime and during the lifetimes of the elders who outlived Joshua**, but later **another generation rose up who did not know the LORD** (see also Ex 1:8). The predictions of Moses and Joshua that Israel would turn away from God were coming true (see Dt 31:16-29; Jos 23:12-16; 24:19). This is a negative example of the importance of parents passing down the truth of God's words and deeds to the next generation, as taught in Deuteronomy 6 and Joshua 4.

2:11-19 This passage explains the pattern of idolatry, divine anger, punishment through a foreign nation, a cry for help, deliverance through a judge, and a period of peace before further sin that is evidenced throughout the book of Judges. As a result of their failure to drive out the Canaanites (1:19–2:2; 3:5), Israel turned to other gods and angered God, who justly punished them severely through foreign enemies (vv. 14-15; see also Jos 23:15). Out of his mercy, **the LORD raised up judges** to deliver Israel. Nevertheless, Israel **did not listen to their judges** and would become even more corrupt and turned to idols after the judge died. This cycle repeats in 3:7–16:31. Regarding **Baal and the Ashtoreths**, see the note on 3:7-11.

2:20–3:6 As God had said in 2:3, he would **no longer drive out** the inhabitants of the land before Israel. They were left **to test Israel** to see if they would obey and to give military experience to those who lacked it (3:2). Israel's intermarriage with the Canaanites and worship of their gods clearly demonstrated that they failed this test of obedience (v. 6; Dt 7:1-5; see also Ex 15:25; 16:4; 20:20).

THE LORD TESTS ISRAEL

3 These are the nations the LORD left in order to test all those in Israel who had experienced † none of the wars in Canaan. † 2 This was to teach the future generations of the Israelites how to fight in battle, especially those who had not fought before. † 3 These nations included the five rulers † of the Philistines † and all of the Canaanites, the Sidonians, † and the Hivites † who lived in the Lebanese mountains from Mount Baal-hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath. † 4 The LORD left them to test Israel, to determine if they would keep the LORD's commands he had given their fathers through † Moses. † 5 But they settled among the Canaanites, Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 6 The Israelites took their daughters as wives for themselves, gave their own daughters to their sons, and worshiped their gods. †

OTHNIEL, THE FIRST JUDGE

7 The Israelites did what was evil in the LORD's sight; they forgot the LORD their God † and worshiped the Baals and the Asherahs. 8 The LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he sold them to † King Cushan-rishathaim † of Aram-naharaim, † † and the Israelites served him eight years.
9 The Israelites cried out to the LORD. † So the LORD raised up Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's youngest brother, † as a deliverer † to save the Israelites. 10 The Spirit of the LORD came on him, and he judged Israel. Othniel went out to battle, and the LORD handed over King Cushan-rishathaim of Aram to him, so that Othniel overpowered him. 11 Then the land had peace for † forty years, and Othniel son of Kenaz died.

EHUD

12 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He gave King Eglon of Moab † power over Israel, because they had done what was evil in the LORD's sight. 13 After Eglon convinced the Ammonites and the Amalekites to join forces with him, he attacked and defeated Israel and took possession of the City of Palms. † † 14 The Israelites served King Eglon of Moab eighteen years.
15 Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he raised up Ehud son of Gera, a left-handed † Benjaminite, † as a deliverer for them. The Israelites sent him with the tribute † for King Eglon of Moab.
16 Ehud made himself a double-edged sword eighteen inches long. † He strapped it to his right thigh under his clothes 17 and brought the tribute to King Eglon of Moab, who was an extremely fat man. 18 When Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he dismissed the people who had carried it. 19 At the carved images near Gilgal he returned and said, "King Eglon, I have a secret message for you." The king said, "Silence!" and all his attendants left him. 20 Then Ehud approached him while he was sitting alone in his upstairs room where it was cool. Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you," and the king stood up from his throne. 21 Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and plunged it into Eglon's belly. 22 Even the handle went in after the blade, and Eglon's fat closed in over it, so that Ehud did not withdraw the sword from his belly. And the waste came out. † 23 Ehud escaped

by way of the porch, closing and locking the doors of the upstairs room behind him.
24 Ehud was gone when Eglon's servants came in. They looked and found the doors of the upstairs room locked and thought he was relieving himself † in the cool room. 25 The servants waited until they became embarrassed and saw that he had still not opened the doors of the upstairs room. So they took the key and opened the doors — and there was their lord lying dead on the floor!
26 Ehud escaped while the servants waited. He passed the Jordan near the carved images and reached Seirah. 27 After he arrived, he sounded the ram's horn throughout the hill country of Ephraim. The Israelites came down with him from the hill country, and he became their leader. 28 He told them, "Follow me, because the LORD has handed over your enemies, the Moabites, to you." So they followed him, captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. † 29 At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all stout and able-bodied men. Not one of them escaped. 30 Moab became subject to Israel that day, and the land had peace for eighty years.

SHAMGAR

31 After Ehud, Shamgar son of Anath became judge. He also delivered Israel, striking down six hundred Philistines with a cattle prod.

3:1 Lit *had known* **3:2** Lit *not known it* **3:3** Or *as Lebo-hamath* **3:4** Lit *by the hand of* **3:8** Lit *into the hand of* **3:8** Lit *Doubly-Evil* **3:8** = Mesopotamia **3:13** = Jericho; Dt 34:3; Jdg 1:16; 2Ch 28:15 **3:15** = son of the right hand **3:16** Lit *sword a gomed in length* **3:22** Or *And Eglon's bowels discharged* **3:24** Lit *was covering his feet*

3:1 Jos 1–12 **3:3** Jos 13:3; 1Sm 5:8,11 **3:3** Gn 10:14; Ex 13:17 **3:3** Jos 13:4; 1Kg 5:6; Ezk 32:30 **3:3** Ex 38:17; Dt 20:17; Jos 9:1,7 **3:4** 1Kg 8:58; 2Kg 17:13; Ps 78:5; Jr 11:4 **3:6** Ex 23:33; Dt 7:16 **3:7** Dt 8:11,14,19; 1Sm 12:9; Jr 3:21 **3:8** Gn 24:10; Dt 23:3-4; 1Ch 19:6; Ps 60 title **3:9** Jdg 3:15; 6:6-7; 10:10 **3:9** Jdg 1:13 **3:9** Dt 28:29,31; Jdg 6:36; 1Sm 14:39; Is 19:20; 43:11; Hs 13:4 **3:11** Jdg 3:30; 5:31; 8:28; 2Ch 14:1,5-6 **3:12** Nm 22:3; Dt 2:8-9; 32:49 **3:13** Dt 34:3; Jdg 1:16; 2Ch 28:15 **3:15** Jdg 20:16 **3:15** 2Sm 8:2,6; 2Ch 9:24; 17:11 **3:28** Jdg 12:5-6

3:7-11 This is the first example of the cycle of sin, salvation, deliverance, and further apostasy (see 2:11-19). Baal was the Canaanite god of storm and rain, and Asherah (also known as Ashtoreth) was his consort and the goddess of war and fertility. There seem to have been local variants of Baal (e.g., 9:4; Nm 25:3). The idolatrous worship of these two gods plagued Israel over the course of their history (e.g., 2:11-13; 6:25-30; 10:6; 1Sm 7:3-4; 1Kg 16:31-33; 18:19). **Othniel** had been mentioned earlier in 1:13-14 and was enabled by **the Spirit of the LORD** (see also 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14).

3:12-15 As expected (see 2:19), Israel turned back to idolatry after Othniel's death and was punished by God—this time through Moab. In the midst of their servitude to the Moabites (v. 14), the Israelites **cried out to the LORD**, who graciously raised up **Ehud** as a deliverer. He used intrigue to kill Eglon, the king of

Moab (vv. 18-26) and then defeated the Moabites with the help of reinforcements from the hill country of Ephraim (vv. 27-30).

DEBORAH AND BARAK

4 The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD after Ehud had died. 2 So the LORD sold them to King Jabin † of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. † The commander of his army was Sisera † who lived in Harosheth of the Nations. † 3 Then the Israelites cried out † to the LORD, because Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots, and he harshly oppressed them twenty years.

4 Deborah, a prophetess † and the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 She would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to settle disputes. †

6 She summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "Hasn't the LORD, the God of Israel, † commanded you: 'Go, deploy the troops on Mount Tabor, † and take with you ten thousand men from the Naphtalites † and Zebulunites? † 7 Then I will lure Sisera commander of Jabin's army, his chariots, and his infantry at the Wadi Kishon † to fight against you, and I will hand him over to you.' " †

8 Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go. But if you will not go with me, I will not go."

9 "I will gladly go with you," she said, "but you will receive no honor on the road you are about to take, because the LORD will sell Sisera to a woman." So Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; ten thousand men followed him, and Deborah also went with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite had moved away from the Kenites, the sons of Hobab, † Moses's father-in-law, † and pitched his tent beside the oak tree of Zaanannim, † which was near Kedesh.

12 It was reported to Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up Mount Tabor. 13 Sisera summoned all his nine hundred iron chariots and all the troops who were with him from Harosheth of the Nations to the Wadi Kishon. 14 Then

Deborah said to Barak, “Go! This is the day the LORD has handed Sisera over to you. Hasn’t the LORD gone before you?” So Barak came down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him.

15 The LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into a panic † before Barak’s assault. Sisera left his chariot and fled on foot. 16 Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth of the Nations, and the whole army of Sisera fell by the sword; not a single man was left.

17 Meanwhile, Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was peace between King Jabin of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. 18 Jael went out to greet Sisera and said to him, “Come in, my lord. Come in with me. Don’t be afraid.” So he went into her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. 19 He said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink for I am thirsty.” She opened a container of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him again. 20 Then he said to her, “Stand at the entrance to the tent. If a man comes and asks you, ‘Is there a man here?’ say, ‘No.’” 21 While he was sleeping from exhaustion, Heber’s wife Jael took a tent peg, grabbed a hammer, and went silently to Sisera. She hammered the peg into his temple and drove it into the ground, and he died.

22 When Barak arrived in pursuit of Sisera, Jael went out to greet him and said to him, “Come and I will show you the man you are looking for.” So he went in with her, and there was Sisera lying dead with a tent peg through his temple!

23 That day God subdued King Jabin of Canaan before the Israelites. 24 The power of the Israelites continued to increase against King Jabin of Canaan until they destroyed him.

4:2 Or *Harosheth-ha-goiim*, also in vv. 13,16

4:2 Jos 11:1; Ps 83:9 **4:2** 1Sm 12:9 **4:2** Jdg 5:20-30; 1Sm 12:9; Ps 83:9 **4:3** Ex 14:10; Nm 12:13; Dt 26:7; Ps 34:17 **4:4** Ex 15:20; 2Kg 22:14; Neh 6:14; Is 8:3 **4:5** Nm 35:12; 2Ch 19:8; Ps 9:4; 76:8-9; Is 3:13-14; Ezk 44:24 **4:6** Ex 5:1; Dt 6:4; Ps 41:13 **4:6** Jos 19:12,22,34; Ps 89:12 **4:6** Gn 30:8; 49:21 **4:6** Gn 30:20; 49:13 **4:7** Jdg 5:21; 1Kg 18:40; Ps 83:9 **4:7** Dt 2:30; Jdg 7:9; 2Sm 5:19; 1Ch 14:10; Is 47:6 **4:11** Nm 10:29 **4:11** Ex 3:1; 4:18; 18:1-27 **4:11** Jos 19:33 **4:15** Ex 14:24; 23:27; Jos 10:10; Ps 18:14; 144:6

4:1-9 Israel **again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD** after their previous judge died (see also 2:19; 3:11-12) so that God judged them through **King Jabin of Canaan**, who **harshly oppressed them twenty years.** God’s intended means of deliverance was **Barak**, but he was unwilling go alone and asked that **Deborah**, **who was a prophetess** and **was judging Israel**, would accompany him.

4:14-22 In verse 14, for a second time, Deborah declared to Barak that God would hand **Sisera over to** him (cp. v. 7). Barak’s timidity had already been shown through his unwillingness to go to battle without Deborah (v. 8). As she had said, **the LORD threw Sisera, all his charioteers, and all his army into confusion** so that they all **fell by the sword.** Sisera himself was killed unsuspectingly by **Jael** while he was

sleeping in her tent. His death at the hands of a woman fulfilled what Deborah had said earlier to Barak (vv. 8-9). The key roles of two women are thus highlighted in this battle (see also 5:6-7,24-27; 9:53-54).

DEBORAH'S SONG

5 On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang:

2 When the leaders lead † in Israel, when the people volunteer,
blessed be the LORD.
3 Listen, kings! Pay attention, princes!
I will sing to the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.
4 LORD, when you came from Seir, †
when you marched from the fields of Edom, the earth trembled, †
the skies poured † rain, and the clouds poured water.
5 The mountains melted before the LORD, even Sinai, † before the LORD,
the God of Israel. †

6 In the days of Shamgar † son of Anath, in the days of Jael, †
the main roads were deserted
because travelers kept to the side roads.
7 Villages were deserted, †
they were deserted in Israel,
until I, † Deborah, arose, a mother in Israel.
8 Israel chose new gods, then there was war in the city gates.
Not a shield or spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.
9 My heart is with the leaders of Israel, with the volunteers of the people.
Blessed be the LORD!
10 You who ride on white † donkeys, who sit on saddle blankets,
and who travel on the road, give praise!
11 Let them tell the righteous acts † of the LORD, the righteous deeds
of his warriors in Israel, with the voices of the singers
at the watering places. †

Then the LORD's people went down to the city gates.

12 “Awake! Awake, Deborah!
Awake! Awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak,
and take your prisoners,
son of Abinoam! ”
13 Then the survivors † came down to the nobles; †
the LORD’s people came down to me † with the warriors.
14 Those with their roots in Amalek † came from Ephraim; Benjamin came with your people after you.
The leaders came down from Machir, †
and those who carry a marshal’s staff came from Zebulun.
15 The princes of Issachar were with Deborah; Issachar was with Barak;
they were under his leadership † † in the valley.
There was great searching † of heart among the clans of Reuben.
16 Why did you sit among the sheep pens †
listening to the playing of pipes for the flocks?
There was great searching of heart
among the clans of Reuben.
17 Gilead † remained beyond the Jordan.
Dan, why did you linger at the ships?
Asher remained at the seashore
and stayed in his harbors.
18 The people of Zebulun defied death, Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

19 Kings came and fought.
Then the kings of Canaan fought
at Taanach by the Waters of Megiddo,
but they did not plunder the silver.
20 The stars fought from the heavens; the stars fought with Sisera from their paths.
21 The river Kishon swept them away, †
the ancient river, the river Kishon.
March on, my soul, in strength!

22 The horses' hooves then hammered — the galloping, galloping
of his † stallions.
23 "Curse Meroz," says the angel of the LORD, "Bitterly curse her inhabitants,
for they did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD with the warriors."

24 Jael is most blessed of women, the wife of Heber the Kenite;
she is most blessed among tent-dwelling women.
25 He asked for water; she gave him milk.
She brought him cream † in a majestic bowl.
26 She reached for a tent peg, her right hand, for a workman's hammer.
Then she hammered Sisera —
she crushed his head;
she shattered and pierced his temple.
27 He collapsed, he fell, he lay down between her feet; he collapsed, he fell between her feet;
where he collapsed, there he fell — dead.

28 Sisera's mother looked through the window; she peered through the lattice, crying out: "Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why don't I hear the hoofbeats of his horses? " †
29 Her wisest princesses answer her; she even answers herself: †
30 "Are they not finding and dividing the spoil — a girl or two † for each warrior, the spoil of colored garments for Sisera, the spoil of an embroidered garment or two for my neck? " †

31 LORD, may all your enemies perish as Sisera did. †
But may those who love him
be like the rising of the sun in its strength.

And the land had peace for forty years.

5:2 Or *the locks of hair are loose* **5:5** Or *Lord, this one of Sinai* **5:7** Hb obscure **5:7** Or *you* **5:10** Hb obscure **5:11** Hb obscure **5:13** LXX reads *down for him* **5:14** LXX reads *in the valley* **5:15** Lit *they set out as his feet* **5:15** Some Hb mss, Syr read *There were great resolves* **5:16** Or *the campfires* **5:22** = Sisera's **5:28** Lit *Why have the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed* **5:29** Lit *answers her words* **5:30** Lit *a womb or two wombs* **5:30** Hb obscure **5:31** Lit *perish in this way*

5:4 Gn 14:6; 36:8-9; Dt 2:1 **5:4** 2Sm 22:8; Ps 18:7; Is 13:13; Ezk 38:20 **5:4** Jb 29:22; Ps 68:8; Pr 5:3; Jl 3:18 **5:5** Ex 5:1; Dt 6:4; Ps 41:13 **5:6** Jdg 3:31 **5:6** Jdg 4:17-22 **5:11** 1Sm 12:7; Ps 103:6; Is 45:24; Mc 6:5

5:13 Nm 21:35; Dt 2:34; Is 1:9 **5:13** Jdg 5:25; 2Ch 23:20; Neh 3:5; 10:29; Ps 16:3; Jr 14:3; Nah 2:5; 3:18 **5:14** Gn 50:23; Nm 26:29; 32:39-40; Jos 17:1; 2Sm 9:4-5 **5:15** Jdg 4:10 **5:17** Gn 31:25; Nm 32:40; Jdg 10:17–11:11 **5:20-21** Jdg 4:15 **5:25** Gn 18:8; Dt 32:14; 2Sm 17:29; Jb 20:17; 29:6; Pr 30:3; Is 7:15,22

5:1-31 Deborah and Barak's song following the defeat of Sisera parallels Moses and Israel's song following the defeat of Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-18).

5:13-18 The narrative had mentioned only Zebulun and Naphtali as following Barak into battle (4:6,10), whereas Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh (from the line of **Machir**; see Gn 50:23), and Issachar are also added here (vv. 14-15). Reuben, Dan, and Asher (and possibly Gad; see this tribe's association with **Gilead** in Jos 12:24-25) should have come to help (vv. 15-17).

5:23 The precise location of **Meroz** is uncertain, but its inhabitants were cursed for not helping Israel in this battle.

MIDIAN OPPRESSES ISRAEL

6 The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. † So the LORD handed † them over to Midian seven years, 2 and they oppressed Israel. † Because of Midian, the Israelites made hiding places † for themselves in the mountains, caves, and strongholds. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted crops, the Midianites, Amalekites, and the Qedemites † came and attacked them. 4 They encamped against them and destroyed the produce of the land, even as far as Gaza. They left nothing for Israel to eat, as well as no sheep, ox, or donkey. 5 For the Midianites came with their cattle and their tents like a great swarm of locusts. † They and their camels were without number, and they entered the land to lay waste to it. 6 So Israel became poverty-stricken because of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the LORD. †

7 When the Israelites cried out to him because of Midian, 8 the LORD sent a prophet † to them. He said to them, "This is what the LORD † God of Israel says: 'I brought you out of Egypt and out of the place of slavery. † 9 I rescued you from the power of Egypt and the power of all who oppressed † you. I drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 I said to you: I am the LORD your God. Do not fear the gods of the Amorites whose land you live in. † But you did not obey me.' "

THE LORD CALLS GIDEON

11 The angel of the LORD † came, and he sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, † which belonged to Joash, the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was

threshing wheat in the winepress in order to hide it from the Midianites. 12 Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said: “The LORD is with you, valiant warrior.” †

13 Gideon said to him, “Please, my lord, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened? And where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about? They said, ‘Hasn’t the LORD brought us out of Egypt?’ But now the LORD has abandoned us and handed us over to Midian.”

14 The LORD turned to him and said, “Go in the strength you have and deliver Israel from the grasp of Midian. I am sending you! ” †

15 He said to him, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s family.”

16 “But I will be with you,” † the LORD said to him. “You will strike Midian down as if it were one man.”

17 Then he said to him, “If I have found favor with you, † give me a sign † that you are speaking with me. 18 Please do not leave this place until I return to you. Let me bring my gift and set it before you.”

And he said, “I will stay until you return.”

19 So Gideon went and prepared a young goat and unleavened bread from a half bushel † of flour. He placed the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot. He brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

20 The angel of God † said to him, “Take the meat with the unleavened bread, put it on this stone, and pour the broth on it.” So he did that.

21 The angel of the LORD extended the tip of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire came up from the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. Then the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight.

22 When Gideon realized that he was the angel of the LORD, he said, “Oh no, Lord GOD! † I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face! ” †

23 But the LORD said to him, “Peace to you. Don’t be afraid, for you will not die.” 24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. † It is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites today.

GIDEON TEARS DOWN A BAAL ALTAR

25 On that very night the LORD said to him, “Take your father’s young bull and a
second bull seven years old. Then tear down the altar of Baal † that belongs to
your father and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. 26 Build a well-constructed
altar to the LORD your God on the top of this mound. † Take the second bull and
offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down.”
27 So Gideon took ten of his male servants and did as the LORD had told him.
But because he was too afraid of his father’s family and the men of the city to do
it in the daytime, he did it at night.
28 When the men of the city got up in the morning, they found Baal’s altar torn
down, the Asherah pole beside it cut down, and the second bull offered up on the
altar that had been built. 29 They said to each other, “Who did this? ” After they
made a thorough investigation, they said, “Gideon son of Joash did it.”
30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, “Bring out your son. He must die,
because he tore down Baal’s altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it.”
31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, “Would you plead Baal’s case
for him? Would you save him? Whoever pleads his case will be put to death by
morning! If he is a god, let him plead his own case because someone tore down
his altar.” 32 That day he was called Jerubbaal, since Joash said, “Let Baal
contend with him,” because he tore down his altar.

THE SIGN OF THE FLEECE

33 All the Midianites, Amalekites, and Qedemites gathered together, crossed
over the Jordan, and camped in the Jezreel Valley. †
34 The Spirit of the LORD enveloped † Gideon, † and he blew the ram’s horn
and the Abiezrites rallied behind him. 35 He sent messengers throughout all of
Manasseh, who rallied behind him. He also sent messengers throughout Asher,
Zebulun, and Naphtali, who also came to meet him.
36 Then Gideon said to God, “If you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you said,
37 I will put a wool fleece here on the threshing floor. If dew is only on the
fleece, and all the ground is dry, I will know that you will deliver Israel by my
strength, as you said.” 38 And that is what happened. When he got up early in
the morning, he squeezed the fleece and wrung dew out of it, filling a bowl with
water.

39 Gideon then said to God, “Don’t be angry with me; let me speak one more
time. Please allow me to make one more test with the fleece. Let it remain dry,
and the dew be all over the ground.” 40 That night God did as Gideon requested:
only the fleece was dry, and dew was all over the ground.

6:19 Lit *an ephah* **6:24** = *Yahweh-shalom* **6:34** Lit *clothed*; 1Ch 12:18; 2Ch 24:20
6:1 Jdg 2:11; 3:7,12; 4:1; 10:6; 13:1 **6:1** Jos 11:8; Jdg 11:32; 12:3; 13:1; 1Sm 14:10,12 **6:2** Jdg 3:10 **6:2** 1Sm 23:14,19; 1Ch 11:7; Is 33:16; Jr 48:41 **6:3** Gn 29:1; 1Kg 4:30; Is 11:14 **6:5** Jdg 7:12; Jr 46:23 **6:6** Jdg 3:9,15; 4:3; 10:10 **6:8** Gn 20:7; Ex 7:1; Nm 11:29; 12:6; Dt 18:15,18,20,22; 34:10 **6:8** Ex 4:22; 5:1; Dt 6:4; Jos 7:13 **6:8** Ex 13:3,14; 20:2; Dt 5:6; 7:8; Jr 34:13; Mc 6:4 **6:9** Ex 3:9; 1Sm 10:18; Ps 106:42 **6:10** Ex 23:24; Dt 7:16; 8:19; 11:16; Jos 24:14 **6:11** Ex 3:2 **6:11** Jos 18:23; Jdg 8:27,32 **6:12** Jos 1:14; 8:3; 2Kg 24:14; 1Ch 12:8 **6:14** Ex 3:10; 1Sm 9:16; 16:1; Jr 1:7; 25:15; Ezk 2:3-4; Mal 4:5; Jn 20:21 **6:16** Gn 26:3; Ex 3:12 **6:17** Gn 6:8; 18:3; Ex 33:12-13; Ru 2:2,10,13; Est 5:8; 7:3 **6:17** Ex 3:12; 1Sm 10:7,9; Is 7:11,14 **6:20** Gn 31:11; Ex 14:19; Jdg 13:6,9; 2Sm 14:17,20; 2Ch 36:16 **6:22** Jos 7:7; Jr 1:6; Ezk 4:14 **6:22** Gn 32:20; Ex 24:10-11; 33:19-23; Jdg 13:21-23; Is 6:5 **6:25** Jdg 2:11,13; 10:6; 1Kg 18:21; 2Ch 33:3; Jr 2:23; Zph 1:4 **6:26** Neh 8:10; Ps 27:1; 37:39; Pr 10:29; Is 17:9-10 **6:33** Jos 17:16; 1Sm 29:1,11; 1Kg 21:1 **6:34** Jdg 3:10; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14; 1Sm 10:6; 16:13-14

6:1-10 A period of rest (5:31) was followed yet again by Israel’s turning away from God and his judging them through a foreign nation. Midian’s oppression of Israel is described in detail and involved the destruction of their crops so that they were without food (vv. 2-6,11). Israel’s cries to God would eventually result in deliverance but were first met with a rebuke from an unnamed **prophet** for their disobedience (see also 2:1-3; 4:4).

6:11-16 God’s instrument of deliverance from the Midianites was **Gideon.** Like Barak (see 4:8), he too was timid (vv. 11,15,27), and he would request several assurances that God would indeed save Israel through him (vv. 17-21,36-40; see also 7:9-14). Gideon asks the cynical question, **If the LORD is with us, why has all this happened?** and states that **the LORD has abandoned us.** Both statements are faulty. It is God’s continuing faithfulness that has motivated this very conversation so that Gideon can deliver Israel! Furthermore, it was not God’s abandonment of the covenant, but Israel’s, which led to the Midianite oppression. The alternation of the terms **angel of the LORD** and **LORD** in this passage suggests that they refer to the same person and that God appeared to Gideon in human form (v. 22; see also Gn 32:24-30 and the note on Ex 24:9-11).

6:25-32 Part of God’s calling of Gideon to deliver Israel included the destruction of his father’s **altar** to **Baal** and **Asherah pole**, and their replacement with **an altar to the LORD.** Gideon did these things at night **because he was too afraid of his father’s family and the men of the city** (see also the note on 6:11-16). The name **Jerubbaal** sounds like the Hebrew phrase translated **Let Baal contend with him.** The name, which contains the name of the deity, demonstrates the extent to which idolatry had found its way into Israelite society. Regarding Israel’s worship of Baal and Asherah, see the note on 3:7-11.

6:34 As had been the case with Othniel, Gideon was strengthened by **the Spirit of the LORD** (see the note on 3:7-11).

6:36-40 Though Gideon had already received a sign (vv. 17-21) and multiple assurances from God (vv. 12,14,16,23), he asked for two more confirmations, which God patiently granted (see also the note on 6:11-16).

GOD SELECTS GIDEON’S ARMY

7 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the troops who were with him, got up
early and camped beside the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was
north of them, below the hill of Moreh, in the valley. 2 The LORD said to
Gideon, “You have too many troops for me to hand the Midianites over to them,
or else Israel might elevate themselves over me and say, † ‘My own strength
saved me.’ 3 Now announce to the troops: ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling
may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’ ” † So twenty-two thousand of the
troops turned back, but ten thousand remained.
4 Then the LORD said to Gideon, “There are still too many troops. Take them
down to the water, and I will test them for you there. If I say to you, ‘This one
can go with you,’ he can go. But if I say about anyone, ‘This one cannot go with
you,’ he cannot go.” 5 So he brought the troops down to the water, and the LORD
said to Gideon, “Separate everyone who laps water with his tongue like a dog.
Do the same with everyone who kneels to drink.” 6 The number of those who
lapped with their hands to their mouths was three hundred men, and all the rest
of the troops knelt to drink water. 7 The LORD said to Gideon, “I will deliver
you † with the three hundred men who lapped and hand the Midianites over to
you. But everyone else is to go home.” 8 So Gideon sent all the Israelites to their
tents but kept the three hundred troops, who took the provisions and their
trumpets. The camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

GIDEON SPIES ON THE MIDIANITE CAMP

9 That night the LORD said to him, “Get up and attack the camp, for I have
handed it over to you. † 10 But if you are afraid to attack the camp, go down
with Purah your servant. 11 Listen to what they say, and then you will be
encouraged † to attack the camp.” So he went down with Purah his servant to
the outpost of the troops † who were in the camp.
12 Now the Midianites, Amalekites, and all the Qedemites had settled down in
the valley like a swarm of locusts, and their camels were as innumerable as the
sand on the seashore. 13 When Gideon arrived, there was a man telling his friend
about a dream. He said, “Listen, I had a dream: † a loaf of barley bread came
tumbling into the Midianite camp, struck a tent, and it fell. The loaf turned the
tent upside down so that it collapsed.”

14 His friend answered: “This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite. God has handed the entire Midianite camp over to him.”

GIDEON ATTACKS THE MIDIANITES

15 When Gideon heard the account of the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship. He returned to Israel’s camp and said, “Get up, for the LORD has handed the Midianite camp over to you.” 16 Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies and gave each of the men a trumpet in one hand and an empty pitcher with a torch inside it in the other hand.
17 “Watch me,” he said to them, “and do what I do. When I come to the outpost of the camp, do as I do. 18 When I and everyone with me blow our trumpets, you are also to blow your trumpets all around the camp. Then you will say, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon! ’ ”
19 Gideon and the hundred men who were with him went to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch after the sentries had been stationed. They blew their trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands. 20 The three companies blew their trumpets and shattered their pitchers. They held their torches in their left hands, their trumpets † in their right hands, and shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon! ” 21 Each Israelite took his position around the camp, and the entire Midianite army began to run, and they cried out as they fled. 22 When Gideon’s men blew their three hundred trumpets, the LORD caused the men in the whole army to turn on each other with their swords. † They fled to Acacia House † in the direction of Zererah as far as the border of Abel-meholah † near Tabbath. 23 Then the men of Israel were called from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh, and they pursued the Midianites.

THE MEN OF EPHRAIM JOIN THE BATTLE

24 Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim with this message: “Come down to intercept the Midianites and take control of the watercourses ahead of them as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan.” So all the men of Ephraim † were called out, and they took control of the watercourses as far as Beth-barah and the Jordan. 25 They captured Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian; they killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb, while they were pursuing the Midianites. They brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon across the Jordan.

7:2 Lit *brag against me* **7:11** Lit *then your hands will be strengthened* **7:11** Lit *of those who were arranged in companies of 50* **7:20** Lit *trumpets to blow* **7:22** Or *Beth-shittah*
7:3 Gn 31:21,23,25; Dt 3:12 **7:7** Dt 20:4; Jr 42:11; Ezk 36:29; 37:23; Zch 8:13 **7:9** Dt 2:30; Jdg 4:7; 20:28; 2Sm 5:19; 1Kg 20:13 **7:13** Gn 37:5-6,8-10; 40:5,8-9,16; 41; 42:9; Nm 12:6; Dn 1:17 **7:22** 1Sm 14:20 **7:22** 1Kg 4:12; 19:16 **7:24** Jdg 8:3; Ps 83:11; Is 10:26

7:1-7 The Lord deliberately shrunk the size of Gideon's army from twenty-two thousand to three hundred in order to clearly demonstrate that their victory was from him, not themselves. First the fearful and then those who knelt to drink water were sent home (vv. 3-7).

7:9-14 Gideon and his servant's eavesdropping reassured them of victory despite the enemy army's likeness to **a swarm of locusts** and their camels being **as innumerable as the sand on the seashore** (see also 8:10). The extreme numerical difference between their army and Gideon's would not matter because God would fight for Israel (vv. 2,4,7).

7:19-22 Gideon's victory with three hundred men armed only with trumpets, empty pitchers, and torches came about because **the LORD caused the men in the whole army to turn on each other with their swords.** Other instances of an Israelite victory over a self-destructing army are found in 1 Samuel 14:20-23 and 2 Chronicles 20:21-24. **Trumpets** were also used in the victory over Jericho (Jos 6).

8 The men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us, not calling us when you went to fight against the Midianites?" And they argued with him violently.
2 So he said to them, "What have I done now compared to you? Is not the gleaning † of Ephraim better than the grape harvest † of Abiezer? 3 God handed over to you Oreb and Zeeb, the two princes of Midian. What was I able to do compared to you?" When he said this, their anger against him subsided.

GIDEON PURSUES THE KINGS OF MIDIAN

4 Gideon and the three hundred men came to the Jordan and crossed it. They were exhausted but still in pursuit. 5 He said to the men of Succoth, † "Please give some loaves of bread to the troops under my command, † because they are exhausted, for I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."
6 But the princes of Succoth asked, "Are † Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hands that we should give bread to your army?"
7 Gideon replied, "Very well, when the LORD has handed Zebah and Zalmunna over to me, I will tear † your flesh with thorns and briers from the wilderness!"
8 He went from there to Penuel and asked the same thing from them. The men of Penuel † answered just as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 He also told the men of Penuel, "When I return safely, I will tear down this tower!"

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor, and with them was their army of
about fifteen thousand men, who were all those left of the entire army of the
Qedemites. Those who had been killed were one hundred twenty thousand
armed men. † 11 Gideon traveled on the caravan route † east of Nobah † and
Jogbehah and attacked their army while the army felt secure. 12 Zebah and
Zalmunna fled, and he pursued them. He captured these two kings of Midian and
routed the entire army.
13 Gideon son of Joash returned from the battle by the Ascent of Heres. 14 He
captured a youth from the men of Succoth and interrogated him. The youth
wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven leaders and elders of
Succoth. 15 Then he went to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and
Zalmunna. You taunted me about them, saying, 'Are Zebah and Zalmunna now
in your power that we should give bread to your exhausted men?' " 16 So he
took the elders of the city, and he took some thorns and briers from the
wilderness, and he disciplined the men of Succoth with them. 17 He also tore
down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city.
18 He asked Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men did you kill at Tabor? "
"They were like you," they said. "Each resembled the son of a king."
19 So he said, "They were my brothers, the sons of my mother! As the LORD
lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." 20 Then he said to Jether,
his firstborn, "Get up and kill them." The youth did not draw his sword, for he
was afraid because he was still a youth.
21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Get up and strike us down yourself, for a man is
judged by his strength." So Gideon got up, killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took
the crescent ornaments that were on the necks of their camels.

GIDEON'S LEGACY

22 Then the Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us, † you as well as your sons
and your grandsons, for you delivered us from the power of Midian."
23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, and my son will not rule
over you; the LORD will rule over you." 24 Then he said to them, "Let me make a
request of you: Everyone give me an earring from his plunder." Now the enemy
had gold earrings because they were Ishmaelites.
25 They said, "We agree to give them." So they spread out a cloak, and everyone
threw an earring from his plunder on it. 26 The weight of the gold earrings he

requested was forty-three pounds † of gold, in addition to the crescent ornaments and ear pendants, the purple garments on the kings of Midian, and the chains on the necks of their camels. 27 Gideon made an ephod † from all this and put it in Ophrah, his hometown. Then all Israel prostituted themselves by worshiping it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his household.
28 So Midian was subdued before the Israelites, and they were no longer a threat. † The land had peace for forty years † during the days of Gideon.
29 Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) son of Joash went back to live at his house.
30 Gideon had seventy sons, his own offspring, since he had many wives. 31 His concubine who was in Shechem † also bore him a son, and he named him Abimelech. 32 Then Gideon son of Joash died at a good old age and was buried in the tomb of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
33 When Gideon died, the Israelites turned and prostituted † themselves by worshiping the Baals and made Baal-berith † their god. 34 The Israelites did not remember the LORD their God † who had rescued them from the hand of the enemies around them. 35 They did not show kindness † to the house of Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) for all the good he had done for Israel.

8:5 Lit *troops at my feet* **8:6** Lit *Are the hands of*, also in v. 15 **8:7** Lit *thresh* **8:10** Lit *men who drew the sword* **8:11** Lit *on the route of those who live in tents* **8:26** Lit *1,700 shekels* **8:28** Lit *they no longer raised their head* **8:33** Lit *Baal of the Covenant*, or *Lord of the Covenant*

8:2 Lv 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt 24:19-20; Ru 2 **8:2** Lv 26:5; Is 24:13; 32:10; Mc 7:1 **8:5** Gn 33:17; Jos 13:27; 1Kg 7:46; 2Ch 4:17; Ps 60:6 **8:8** Gn 32:31-32; 1Kg 12:25 **8:11** Nm 32:42 **8:22** Gn 3:16; 4:7; 37:8 **8:27** Ex 25:7; 28:12; 39:12; Jdg 18:14,17-20; 2Sm 6:14; Hs 3:4 **8:28** Jdg 3:11; 5:31 **8:31** Gn 12:6; 37:12-14; Jos 21:22; Ps 60:6; 108:7 **8:33** Ex 34:15-16; Dt 31:16; 2Ch 21:13; Is 23:17; Jr 3:6,8; Ezk 16:15-17,26-28; Hs 4:12 **8:34** Gn 40:23; Ex 23:13; Jos 23:7; Is 17:10; 57:11; Zch 13:2 **8:35** Gn 24:12,49; Ex 20:6; 2Sm 22:51; Ps 18:50

8:1 Ephraim had not been among the tribes initially summoned to fight with Gideon (6:35), and **they argued with him violently** about this. Ephraim would again be part of a similar, more serious conflict in 12:1-6.

8:18-21 Gideon did to these two kings what they had done to his own **brothers** (see also the notes on 1:6-7; 9:23-24). The killing of the two Midianite kings, **Zebah and Zalmunna** (see vv. 5,12), and two Midianite princes, Oreb and Zeeb (see 7:25), is referenced in Psalm 83:11.

8:22-32 Gideon appears to decline the opportunity to become a king and to begin a dynasty in Israel because God alone was the rightful ruler of Israel (see also the notes on Gn 49:8-12 and 1Sm 8:4-9). Nevertheless, his subsequent actions communicate just the opposite. First, he established a center of ritual worship with an idolatrous image (v. 27) and had **seventy sons** through **many wives** (v. 30). He even named his son **Abimelech**, which means in Hebrew, “My father is king.”

8:24-27 Gideon’s making of a golden idolatrous image from the collected **gold earrings** resembles

Aaron's making of the golden calf, which was made from similar materials (see Ex 32:2-4). **Israel prostituted themselves** with this **ephod**, and its characterization as a **snare** recalls earlier warnings (e.g., Ex 23:33; Dt 7:16; Jos 23:13; Jdg 2:3).

8:33-34 Once again, Israel turned to idols after the death of a judge (see 2:19; 3:11-12; 4:1) and **did not remember the LORD their God.**

ABIMELECH BECOMES KING

9 Abimelech son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem and spoke to his uncles
and to his mother's whole clan, saying, 2 "Please speak in the hearing of
all the citizens of Shechem, 'Is it better for you that seventy men, all the
sons of Jerubbaal, † rule over you or that one man rule over you? ' Remember
that I am your own flesh and blood." †
3 His mother's relatives spoke all these words about him in the hearing of all the
citizens of Shechem, and they were favorable to Abimelech, for they said, "He is
our brother." 4 So they gave him seventy pieces of silver from the temple of
Baal-berith. † Abimelech used it to hire worthless and reckless men, and they
followed him. 5 He went to his father's house in Ophrah and killed his seventy
brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal, on top of a large stone. But Jotham, the youngest
son of Jerubbaal, survived, because he hid. 6 Then all the citizens of Shechem
and of Beth-millo gathered together and proceeded to make Abimelech king at
the oak of the pillar in Shechem.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE

7 When they told Jotham, he climbed to the top of Mount Gerizim, † raised his
voice, and called to them:

Listen to me, citizens of Shechem,
and may God listen to you:

8 The trees decided to anoint a king over themselves.
They said to the olive tree, "Reign over us."
9 But the olive tree said to them, "Should I stop giving my oil
that people use to honor both God and men, and rule † over the trees? "

10 Then the trees said to the fig tree, "Come and reign over us."
11 But the fig tree said to them, "Should I stop giving
my sweetness and my good fruit,

and rule over trees? ”

12 Later, the trees said to the grapevine, “Come and reign over us.”
13 But the grapevine said to them, “Should I stop giving my wine
that cheers both God and man,
and rule over trees? ”

14 Finally, all the trees said to the bramble, “Come and reign over us.”
15 The bramble said to the trees, “If you really are anointing me
as king over you,
come and find refuge in my shade.
But if not,
may fire come out from the bramble
and consume the cedars of Lebanon.”

16 “Now if you have acted faithfully † and honestly † in making Abimelech king, if you have done well by Jerubbaal and his family, and if you have rewarded him appropriately for what he did — 17 for my father fought for you, risked his life, and rescued you from Midian, 18 and now you have attacked my father’s family today, killed his seventy sons on top of a large stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his slave woman, king over the citizens of Shechem ‘because he is your brother’ — 19 so if you have acted faithfully and honestly with Jerubbaal and his house this day, rejoice in Abimelech and may he also rejoice in you. 20 But if not, may fire come from Abimelech and consume the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo, and may fire come from the citizens of Shechem and Beth-millo and consume Abimelech.” 21 Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and lived there because of his brother Abimelech.

ABIMELECH’S PUNISHMENT

22 When Abimelech had ruled over Israel three years, 23 God sent an evil spirit † between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem. They treated Abimelech deceitfully, 24 so that the crime against the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might come to justice and their blood would be avenged on their brother Abimelech, who killed them, and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him † kill his brothers. 25 The citizens of Shechem rebelled against him by

putting men in ambush † on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed everyone who passed by them on the road. So this was reported to Abimelech.
26 Gaal son of Ebed came with his brothers and crossed into Shechem, and the citizens of Shechem trusted him. 27 So they went out to the countryside and harvested grapes from their vineyards. They trampled the grapes and held a celebration. † Then they went to the house of their god, and as they ate and drank, they cursed Abimelech. 28 Gaal son of Ebed said, “Who is Abimelech and who is Shechem that we should serve him? Isn’t he the son of Jerubbaal, and isn’t Zebul his officer? You are to serve the men of Hamor, the father of Shechem. † Why should we serve Abimelech? 29 If only these people were in my power, I would remove Abimelech.” So he said † to Abimelech, “Gather your army and come out.”
30 When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal son of Ebed, he was angry. 31 So he secretly sent messengers to Abimelech, saying, “Beware! Gaal son of Ebed, with his brothers, have come to Shechem and are turning the city against you. † 32 Now tonight, you and the troops with you, come and wait in ambush in the countryside. 33 Then get up early, and at sunrise attack the city. When he and the troops who are with him come out against you, do to him whatever you can.” 34 So Abimelech and all the troops with him got up at night and waited in ambush for Shechem in four units.
35 Gaal son of Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the city gate. Then Abimelech and the troops who were with him got up from their ambush. 36 When Gaal saw the troops, he said to Zebul, “Look, troops are coming down from the mountaintops! ” But Zebul said to him, “The shadows of the mountains look like men to you.”
37 Then Gaal spoke again, “Look, troops are coming down from the central part of the land, † and one unit is coming from the direction of the Diviners’ Oak.”
38 Zebul replied, “What do you have to say now? You said, ‘Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? ’ Aren’t these the troops you despised? Now go and fight them! ”
39 So Gaal went out leading the citizens of Shechem and fought against Abimelech, 40 but Abimelech pursued him, and Gaal fled before him. Numerous

bodies were strewn † as far as the entrance of the city gate. 41 Abimelech stayed
in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his brothers from Shechem.
42 The next day when the people of Shechem † went into the countryside, this
was reported to Abimelech. 43 He took the troops, divided them into three
companies, and waited in ambush in the countryside. He looked, and the people
were coming out of the city, so he arose against them and struck them down.
44 Then Abimelech and the units that were with him rushed forward and took
their stand at the entrance of the city gate. The other two units rushed against all
who were in the countryside and struck them down. 45 So Abimelech fought
against the city that entire day, captured it, and killed the people who were in it.
Then he tore down the city and sowed it with salt. †
46 When all the citizens of the Tower of Shechem heard, they entered the inner
chamber † of the temple of El-berith. † 47 Then it was reported to Abimelech
that all the citizens of the Tower of Shechem had gathered. 48 So Abimelech and
all the troops who were with him went up to Mount Zalmon. Abimelech took his
ax in his hand and cut a branch from the trees. He picked up the branch, put it on
his shoulder, and said to the troops who were with him, “Hurry and do what you
have seen me do.” 49 Each of the troops also cut his own branch and followed
Abimelech. They put the branches against the inner chamber and set it on fire;
about a thousand men and women died, including all the men of the Tower of
Shechem.
50 Abimelech went to Thebez, † camped against it, and captured it. 51 There
was a strong tower inside the city, † and all the men, women, and citizens of the
city fled there. They locked themselves in and went up to the roof of the tower.
52 When Abimelech came to attack the tower, he approached its entrance to set
it on fire. 53 But a woman threw the upper portion of a millstone on Abimelech’s
head and fractured his skull. 54 He quickly called his armor-bearer and said to
him, “Draw your sword and kill me, or they’ll say about me, ‘A woman killed
him.’ ” So his armor-bearer ran him through, and he died. 55 When the Israelites
saw that Abimelech was dead, they all went home.
56 In this way, God brought back Abimelech’s evil—the evil that Abimelech
had done to his father when he killed his seventy brothers. 57 God also brought

back to the men of Shechem all their evil. † So the curse of Jotham son of Jerubbaal came upon them. †

9:2 Lit *your bone and your flesh* **9:4** Lit *Baal of the Covenant*, or *Lord of the Covenant* **9:9** Lit *and go to sway*, also in vv. 11,13 **9:24** Lit *had strengthened his hands* **9:29** DSS read *They said* ; LXX reads *I would say* **9:31** Hb obscure **9:42** *of Shechem* supplied for clarity **9:46** Or *the crypt*, or *the vault* **9:46** = God of the Covenant

9:2 Jdg 6:32 **9:7** Dt 11:29; 27:12; Jos 8:33 **9:16** 1Sm 12:24; 1Kg 2:4; Ps 111:8; Pr 29:14; Jr 32:41 **9:16** Jos 24:14; Ps 84:11 **9:23** 1Sm 16:14-23; 18:10-12; 19:9; 2Kg 19:7 **9:25** Jos 8:2; 1Sm 15:5; 2Ch 20:22; Ezr 8:31; Ps 10:9; Pr 1:11; Jr 9:8 **9:27** Lv 19:24; Jdg 21:20-21 **9:28** Gn 33:19; 34:2-26; Jos 24:32 **9:37** Ezk 38:12 **9:40** 1Sm 17:52; 2Ch 13:17; Ezk 6:4,7; Dn 11:26 **9:45** Dt 29:23; Ezk 47:11; Zph 2:9 **9:50** 2Sm 11:21 **9:51** Ps 61:3; Pr 18:10 **9:57** Jos 2:19; 1Sm 25:39; 1Kg 2:37,44; 8:32; 2Ch 6:23; Ps 7:16; Ezk 9:10; 11:21; 17:19; 22:31; 33:4; Jl 3:4; Ob 15 **9:57** Jdg 9:20

9:1-6 The unsuitability of Gideon's line for rule becomes even more apparent here (see 8:22-23). Gideon had led the Israelites into idolatry (8:24-27), and now one of his sons, **Abimelech**, killed all but one of his own **seventy brothers.** Abimelech had been born to Gideon through his concubine (8:31), and he secured the support of his relatives in **Shechem** to help him kill Gideon's other sons and make him king.

9:16-20 Jotham was the lone survivor from his brethren (v. 5), and he confronted the leaders of Shechem with a parable about trees seeking a ruler (see vv. 7-15). After being rebuffed by an olive tree, fig tree, and grapevine, they finally settled for an inferior bramble. Jotham's point was that Shechem had wronged the family of Gideon (8:35), supported an unworthy man, and ought to experience destruction as a result (vv. 15,20; see also vv. 56-57). The olive tree, fig tree, and grapevine may stand for worthier people in general or for Gideon and his line (8:22-23).

9:23-24 Abimelech's murderous actions had not gone unnoticed by God, who **sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem** so that his crime **might come to justice** (see also the note on 11:27). Jotham's curse would come true (vv. 20,56-57).

9:26-30 The lords of Shechem switched their allegiance to **Gaal son of Ebed**, who led them in cursing Abimelech and challenging him to a battle. With the help of **Zebul, the ruler of the city** (vv. 30-38), Abimelech was able to drive out Gaal (vv. 39-41). His destruction of the city and its tower (vv. 32-49) and his own death at Thebez fulfilled Jotham's curse (vv. 20,56-57).

9:53-54 This woman's role in Abimelech's death recalls Jael's killing of Sisera (4:17-22).

9:56-57 Like verses 23-24, these verses clearly demonstrate God's active involvement in bringing about justice on Abimelech's evil deed (see also 1:6-7). He was still at work, even during this dark period of Israelite history (see also 6:8-10).

TOLA AND JAIR

10 After Abimelech, Tola son of Puah, son of Dodo became judge and began to deliver Israel. He was from Issachar and lived in Shamir in the hill country of Ephraim. 2 Tola judged Israel twenty-three years and when he died, was buried in Shamir.

3 After him came Jair the Gileadite, † who judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 He had thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys. They had thirty towns † in Gilead,

which are still called Jair's Villages † today. 5 When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

ISRAEL'S REBELLION AND REPENTANCE

6 Then the Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. † They worshiped the Baals and the Ashtoreths, the gods of Aram, Sidon, and Moab, and the gods of the Ammonites and the Philistines. † They abandoned the LORD and did not worship him. † 7 So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and he sold them to † the Philistines and the Ammonites. † 8 They shattered and crushed the Israelites that year, and for eighteen years they did the same to all the Israelites who were on the other side of the Jordan † in the land of the Amorites † in Gilead. 9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin, and the house of Ephraim. Israel was greatly oppressed, 10 so they cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have sinned against you. † We have abandoned our God and worshiped the Baals."

11 The LORD said to the Israelites, "When the Egyptians, † Amorites, Ammonites, Philistines, 12 Sidonians, Amalekites, and Maonites † † oppressed you, and you cried out to me, did I not deliver you from them? 13 But you have abandoned me and worshiped other gods. Therefore, I will not deliver you again. 14 Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. † Let them deliver you whenever you are oppressed."

15 But the Israelites said, "We have sinned. Deal with us as you see fit; † only rescue us † today! " 16 So they got rid of the foreign gods † among them and worshiped the LORD, † and he became weary † of Israel's misery.

17 The Ammonites were called together, and they camped in Gilead. So the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. † 18 The rulers † of Gilead said to one another, "Which man will begin the fight against the Ammonites? He will be the leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."

10:4 LXX; MT reads *donkeys* **10:4** Or *called Havvoth-jair* **10:7** Lit *into the hand of* **10:12** LXX reads *Midianites* **10:15** Lit *Do to us what is good in your eyes* **10:18** Lit *The people, rulers*

10:3 Nm 26:29-30; Jos 17:1,3; Jdg 11:1-2; 1Ch 2:12-24; 7:14-17 **10:6** Jdg 3:12; 4:1 **10:6** 1Kg 11:33 **10:6** Ex 20:5; 23:24; Dt 5:9; Jos 23:7; 2Kg 17:35; Neh 9:35; Is 60:12; Mal 3:18 **10:7** Jdg 2:14; 3:8 **10:8** Gn 50:10-11; Dt 1:1,5; 3:8,20,25; Jos 12:17; Jdg 5:17 **10:8** Nm 21:31; Jos 24:8; Jdg 11:21; Am 2:10 **10:10** Neh 1:6; Jr 14:20; Dn 9:8 **10:11** Ex 1–15 **10:12** Jos 15:5; 1Sm 23:24-25 **10:14** Dt 32:37-38; Jr 2:28; 11:12 **10:15**

1Sm 12:10; 1Ch 16:35; Ps 79:9 **10:16** Gn 35:2; Jos 24:33; 1Sm 7:3; 2Ch 33:15 **10:16** Ex 10:7-8; 12:31; Dt 10:12; Jos 24:14-15; 2Ch 30:8 **10:16** Nm 21:4; Jdg 16:16; Mc 2:7; Zch 11:8 **10:17** Gn 31:49; Jdg 11:11,34; Hs 5:1

10:6-16 Another round in the cycle of apostasy begins as Israel **again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD**, worshiped idols, and incurred his wrath (see 2:11-19). Israel's cry for help was initially refused by God, who said **I will not deliver you again. Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen.** But Israel persisted (v. 15) and **got rid of the foreign gods among them** so that the Lord was moved to help them yet again.

JEPHTHAH BECOMES ISRAEL'S LEADER

11 Jephthah † the Gileadite was a valiant warrior, † but he was the son of a prostitute, and Gilead was his father. 2 Gilead's wife bore him sons, and when they grew up, they drove Jephthah out and said to him, "You will have no inheritance in our father's family, because you are the son of another woman." 3 So Jephthah fled from his brothers and lived in the land of Tob. † Then some worthless men joined Jephthah and went on raids with him.

4 Some time later, the Ammonites fought against Israel. 5 When the Ammonites made war with Israel, the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6 They said to him, "Come, be our commander, and let's fight the Ammonites."

7 Jephthah replied to the elders of Gilead, "Didn't you hate me and drive me out of my father's family? Why then have you come to me now when you're in trouble? "

8 They answered Jephthah, "That's true. But now we turn to you. Come with us, fight the Ammonites, and you will become leader of all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9 So Jephthah said to them, "If you are bringing me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me, I will be your leader."

10 The elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "The LORD is our witness if we don't do as you say." 11 So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead. The people made him their leader and commander, and Jephthah repeated all his terms in the presence of the LORD at Mizpah.

JEPHTHAH REJECTS AMMONITE CLAIMS

12 Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, asking, "What do you have against me that you have come to fight me in my land? "

13 The king of the Ammonites said to Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel
came from Egypt, they seized my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok † and the
Jordan. Now restore it peaceably."
14 Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites 15 to tell him,
"This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take away the land of Moab or the
land of the Ammonites. 16 But when they came from Egypt, Israel traveled
through the wilderness to the Red Sea and came to Kadesh. 17 Israel sent
messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let us travel through your land,'
but the king of Edom would not listen. They also sent messengers to the king of
Moab, but he refused. So Israel stayed in Kadesh. †
18 "Then they traveled through the wilderness and around the lands of Edom and
Moab. They came to the east side of the land of Moab and camped on the other
side of the Arnon but did not enter into the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was
the boundary of Moab.
19 "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of
Heshbon. † Israel said to him, 'Please let us travel through your land to our
country,' 20 but Sihon would not trust Israel to pass through his territory.
Instead, Sihon gathered all his troops, camped at Jahaz, and fought with Israel.
21 Then the LORD God of Israel handed over Sihon and all his troops to Israel,
and they defeated them. So Israel took possession † of the entire land of the
Amorites who lived in that country. 22 They took possession of all the territory
of the Amorites from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the
Jordan.
23 "The LORD God of Israel has now driven out the Amorites before his people
Israel, and will you now force us out? 24 Isn't it true that you can have whatever
your god Chemosh conquers for you, and we can have whatever the LORD our
God conquers for us? 25 Now are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king
of Moab? Did he ever contend with Israel or fight against them? 26 While Israel
lived three hundred years in Heshbon and Aroer and their surrounding villages,
and in all the cities that are on the banks of the Arnon, why didn't you take them
back at that time? 27 I have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong
by fighting against me. Let the LORD who is the judge † decide today between
the Israelites and the Ammonites." 28 But the king of the Ammonites would not
listen to Jephthah's message that he sent him.

JEPHTHAH'S VOW AND SACRIFICE

29 The Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah, who traveled through Gilead and
Manasseh, and then through Mizpah of Gilead. He crossed over to the
Ammonites from Mizpah of Gilead. 30 Jephthah made this vow † to the LORD:
"If you in fact hand over the Ammonites to me, 31 whoever comes out the doors
of my house to greet me when I return safely from the Ammonites will belong to
the LORD, and I will offer that person as a burnt offering." †
32 Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the LORD
handed them over † to him. 33 He defeated twenty of their cities with a great
slaughter from Aroer all the way to the entrance of Minnith and to Abel-
keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued † before the Israelites.
34 When Jephthah went to his home in Mizpah, there was his daughter, coming
out to meet him with tambourines and dancing! † She was his only child; he had
no other son or daughter besides her. 35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes
and said, "No! Not my daughter! You have devastated me! You have brought
great misery on me. † I have given my word to the LORD and cannot take it
back."
36 Then she said to him, "My father, you have given your word to the LORD. Do
to me as you have said, for the LORD brought vengeance on your enemies, the
Ammonites." 37 She also said to her father, "Let me do this one thing: Let me
wander two months through the mountains with my friends and mourn my
virginity."
38 "Go," he said. And he sent her away two months. So she left with her friends
and mourned her virginity as she wandered through the mountains. 39 At the end
of two months, she returned to her father, and he kept the vow he had made
about her. And she had never been intimate with a man. Now it became a custom
in Israel 40 that four days each year the young women of Israel would
commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

11:35 Lit *have been among those who trouble me*

11:1 1Sm 12:11; Heb 11:32 **11:1** Jdg 6:12; Ru 2:1; 1Sm 9:1; 16:18; 1Kg 11:28; 2Kg 5:1 **11:3** 2Sm 10:6,8 **11:13** Nm 21:24; Dt 2:37; 3:16 **11:17** Nm 20:14-21 **11:19** Nm 21:25,28,30,34; Dt 3:2,6; Neh 9:22; Is 15:4 **11:21** Nm 21:24; Dt 4:47; Jos 12:1; Jdg 1:19 **11:27** Gn 18:25; Jb 9:15; 23:7; Ps 7:11; 50:6; 75:7; Is 33:22 **11:30** Gn 28:20; Nm 30:2; 1Sm 1:11 **11:31** Ps 66:13 **11:32** Jdg 12:3; 1Sm 14:10 **11:33** Lv 26:41; Jdg 3:30; 8:28; 1Sm 7:13; 1Ch 20:4; 2Ch 13:18; Ps 106:42 **11:34** Ex 15:20; 32:19; Jdg 21:21; Sg 6:13

11:1-6 Jephthah would be the one to deliver Israel from the Ammonites. As a **son of a prostitute**, he was

denied social status and **inheritance** in his family. This probably led him to lawless behavior (v. 3) as a means of supporting himself.

11:13 The Ammonites contended that the Israelites had wrongly seized their **land from the Arnon to the Jabbok** and ought to **restore it peaceably.** As Jephthah explained, however, the Israelites had taken this land from the Amorites, not from the Ammonites (vv. 15, 21-22; see also Nm 22:21-24; Dt 2:19-37).

11:24 More typically associated with Moab (see Nm 11:29; 1Kg 11:7; Jr 48), the **god Chemosh** is associated with Ammon here.

11:27 Jephthah's appeal to **the LORD who is the judge** to decide this dispute was granted (see vv. 32-33). The theme of God's justice even during chaotic times surfaces here again (see the notes on 1:6-7; 2:11-19; 9:23-24).

11:29 Like Othniel, Gideon, and Samson (see 3:10; 6:34; 14:19; 15:14), Jephthah was also empowered by **the Spirit of the LORD** to deliver Israel.

11:39 Jephthah's rash vow to offer up "whoever comes out of the doors of my house to greet me . . . as a burnt offering" (v. 31) resulted in disaster because his daughter came out to meet him when he returned home (vv. 34-35). The emphasis on her permanent virginity (vv. 37-40) has led some to suggest that she was not sacrificed and merely was made to **belong to the LORD** (v. 31). If Jephthah did indeed offer her as a burnt offering, he did so contrary to several clear prohibitions against human sacrifice (see Lv 18:21; 20:2-4; Dt 12:31; 18:10). Because vows were binding (see Nm 30; Jos 9:15-20), rash vows are discouraged elsewhere in Scripture (see Dt 23:21-23; Pr 20:25; Ec 5:4-6). Jephthah had foolishly put himself into a dilemma.

CONFLICT WITH EPHRAIM

12 The men of Ephraim were called together and crossed the Jordan to
Zaphon. † They said to Jephthah, "Why have you crossed over to fight
against the Ammonites but didn't call us to go with you? We will burn your
house with you in it! "
2 Then Jephthah said to them, "My people and I had a bitter conflict with the
Ammonites. So I called for you, but you didn't deliver me from their power.
3 When I saw that you weren't going to deliver me, I took my life in my own
hands and crossed over to the Ammonites, and the LORD handed them over to
me. Why then have you come today to fight against me? "
4 Then Jephthah gathered all of the men of Gilead. They fought and defeated
Ephraim, because Ephraim had said, "You Gileadites are Ephraimite fugitives in
the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh." 5 The Gileadites captured the fords of
the Jordan leading to Ephraim. Whenever a fugitive from Ephraim said, "Let me
cross over," the Gileadites asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite? " If he answered,
"No," 6 they told him, "Please say Shibboleth." If he said, "Sibboleth," because
he could not pronounce it correctly, they seized him and executed him at the
fords of the Jordan. At that time forty-two thousand from Ephraim died.

7 Jephthah judged Israel six years, and when he died, he was buried in one of the cities of Gilead. †

IBZAN, ELON, AND ABDON

8 Ibzan, who was from Bethlehem, † judged Israel after Jephthah 9 and had thirty sons. He gave his thirty daughters in marriage to men outside the tribe and brought back thirty wives for his sons from outside the tribe. Ibzan judged Israel seven years, 10 and when he died, he was buried in Bethlehem.
11 Elon, who was from Zebulun, judged Israel after Ibzan. He judged Israel ten years, 12 and when he died, he was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.
13 After Elon, Abdon son of Hillel, who was from Pirathon, † judged Israel. 14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. Abdon judged Israel eight years, 15 and when he died, he was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the hill country of the Amalekites. †

12:7 LXX reads *in his city in Gilead*
12:1 Jos 13:27 **12:8** Gn 35:19; Ru 1:1-2; Mc 5:2 **12:13** 2Sm 23:30; 1Ch 11:31; 27:14 **12:15** Gn 14:7; Nm 14:45; 2Sm 1:8,13

12:1-6 Whereas earlier Gideon had eased Ephraimite discontent for similar reasons (7:24–8:3), the present conflict with the Ephraimites escalated into violence. The softer, conciliatory response of Gideon in 8:2-3 and the harsher, defensive response of Jephthah in 12:2-3 well-illustrate the truth of Proverbs 15:1. The killing of **forty-two thousand** Ephraimites shows that Israel was self-destructing and foreshadows the near-destruction of the entire tribe of Benjamin (20:8-48).

BIRTH OF SAMSON

13 The Israelites again did what was evil in the LORD's sight, † so the LORD handed them over to the Philistines forty years. 2 There was a certain man from Zorah, † from the family of Dan, whose name was Manoah; his wife was unable to conceive and had no children. 3 The angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "It is true that you are unable to conceive and have no children, but you will conceive and give birth to a son. 4 Now please be careful not to drink wine or beer, † or to eat anything unclean; † 5 for indeed, you will conceive and give birth to a son. You must never cut his hair, † because the boy will be a Nazirite † to God from birth, and he will begin to save Israel from the power of the Philistines."

6 Then the woman went and told her husband, “A man of God came to me. He looked like the awe-inspiring angel of God. I didn’t ask him where he came from, and he didn’t tell me his name. 7 He said to me, ‘You will conceive and give birth to a son. Therefore, do not drink wine or beer, and do not eat anything unclean, because the boy will be a Nazirite to God from birth until the day of his death.’ ”

8 Manoah prayed † to the LORD and said, “Please, Lord, let the man of God you sent come again to us and teach us what we should do for the boy who will be born.”

9 God listened † to † Manoah, and the angel of God came again to the woman. She was sitting in the field, and her husband Manoah was not with her. 10 The woman ran quickly to her husband and told him, “The man who came to me the other day has just come back! ”

11 So Manoah got up and followed his wife. When he came to the man, he asked, “Are you the man who spoke to my wife? ”

“I am,” he said.

12 Then Manoah asked, “When your words come true, what will be the boy’s responsibilities and work? ”

13 The angel of the LORD answered Manoah, “Your wife needs to do everything I told her. 14 She must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine or drink wine or beer. And she must not eat anything unclean. Your wife must do everything I have commanded her.”

15 “Please stay here,” Manoah told him, “and we will prepare a young goat † for you.”

16 The angel of the LORD said to him, “If I stay, I won’t eat your food. But if you want to prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD.” (Manoah did not know he was the angel of the LORD.) 17 Then Manoah said to him, “What is your name, so that we may honor you when your words come true? ”

18 “Why do you ask my name,” the angel of the LORD asked him, “since it is beyond understanding.” †

19 Manoah took a young goat and a grain offering and offered them on a rock to the LORD, who did something miraculous † while Manoah and his wife were watching. 20 When the flame went up from the altar to the sky, the angel of the LORD went up in its flame. When Manoah and his wife saw this, they fell

facedown on the ground. 21 The angel of the LORD did not appear again to Manoah and his wife. Then Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD.
22 "We're certainly going to die," he said to his wife, "because we have seen God! " †
23 But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had intended to kill us, he wouldn't have accepted the burnt offering and the grain offering from us, and he would not have shown us all these things or spoken to us like this."
24 So the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson. † The boy grew, † and the LORD blessed him. 25 Then the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him in the Camp of Dan, † between Zorah and Eshtaol. †

13:5 Lit *And a razor is not to go up on his head* **13:9** Lit *to the voice of* **13:19** LXX reads *to the Lord, to the one who works wonders* **13:25** Or *in Mahaneh-dan*

13:1 Jdg 3:12; 4:1; 10:6 **13:2** Jos 19:42; Jdg 13:25; 16:31; 18:2,8,11 **13:4** Nm 6:3 **13:4** Lv 7:19,21; 22:8; Dt 12:22; 14:10; 15:22; Hs 9:3-4 **13:5** Nm 6:2 **13:8** Gn 25:21; Ex 10:18; Jb 33:26 **13:9** Gn 16:11; Ex 16:8; Dt 1:45; 33:7; Jos 10:14; Ps 27:7 **13:15** Gn 18:5 **13:18** Gn 32:29 **13:22** Gn 33:10; Ex 24:10; 33:20; Jdg 6:22; Is 6:5 **13:24** Heb 11:32 **13:24** 1Sm 3:19; Lk 1:80 **13:25** Jos 15:33; Jdg 16:31; 18:2,8,11; 1Ch 2:53

13:4-7 The last cycle in 3:7–16:31 (see the notes on 2:11-19 and 3:7-11) centers around Samson, who was to be **a Nazirite** (vv. 5,7; see also v. 14). Such a person was especially consecrated to God and was to avoid drinking alcohol, becoming unclean, and cutting his hair (see also Nm 6:1-21). The narrative, however, will shortly reveal just how poor of a Nazirite Samson was. The name *Samson* means "little sun," which could be a vestige of honoring the sun god named Shemesh. If so, this is another indication of the extent to which idolatry was a part of the fabric of Israelite life (see the note on 6:25-32).

13:22 Manoah thought he had **seen God** but actually had seen "the angel of the LORD" (v. 21; cp. v. 13). Regarding seeing God, see also the notes on 6:11-16 and Exodus 24:9-11.

13:25 The activity of **the Spirit of the LORD** in connection with a judge is highlighted by the author yet again (see 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 14:6,19; 15:14). Judges has seven references to the "Spirit of the LORD," more than any other book in the Bible. The second most is Isaiah with five, and 1 and 2 Samuel together also have five.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE

14 Samson went down to Timnah † and saw a young Philistine woman there. 2 He went back and told his father and his mother: "I have seen a young Philistine woman in Timnah. Now get her for me as a wife."
3 But his father and mother said to him, "Can't you find a young woman among your relatives or among any of our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines for a wife? "
But Samson told his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." 4 Now his father and mother did not know this was from the LORD, † who wanted the

Philistines to provide an opportunity for a confrontation. † At that time, the Philistines were ruling Israel.
5 Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Suddenly a young lion came roaring at him, 6 the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on † him, and he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he did not tell his father or mother what he had done. 7 Then he went and spoke to the woman, because she seemed right to Samson.
8 After some time, when he returned to marry her, he left the road to see the lion's carcass, and there was a swarm of bees with honey in the carcass. 9 He scooped some honey into his hands and ate it as he went along. When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them and they ate it. But he did not tell them that he had scooped the honey from the lion's carcass. †
10 His father went to visit the woman, and Samson prepared a feast there, as young men were accustomed to do. 11 When the Philistines saw him, they brought thirty men to accompany him.
12 "Let me tell you a riddle," † Samson said to them. "If you can explain it to me during the seven days of the feast and figure it out, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes. 13 But if you can't explain it to me, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothes."
"Tell us your riddle," they replied. † "Let's hear it."
14 So he said to them:

Out of the eater came something to eat,
and out of the strong came something sweet.

After three days, they were unable to explain the riddle. 15 On the fourth † day they said to Samson's wife, "Persuade your husband to explain the riddle to us, or we will burn you and your father's family to death. Did you invite us here to rob us? "
16 So Samson's wife came to him, weeping, and said, "You hate me and don't love me! † You told my people the riddle, but haven't explained it to me."
"Look," he said, † "I haven't even explained it to my father or mother, so why should I explain it to you? "

17 She wept the whole seven days of the feast, and at last, on the seventh day, he explained it to her, because she had nagged him so much. Then she explained it to her people. 18 On the seventh day, before sunset, the men of the city said to him:

What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?

So he said to them:

If you hadn't plowed with my young cow,
you wouldn't know my riddle now!

19 The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on him, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men. He stripped them and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. In a rage, Samson returned to his father's house, 20 and his wife was given to one of the men who had accompanied him.

14:4 *for a confrontation* supplied for clarity **14:13** Lit *replied to him* **14:15** LXX, Syr; MT reads *seventh* **14:16** Lit *said to her*

14:1 Jos 15:10; 19:43; 2Ch 28:18 **14:4** Jos 11:20; 1Kg 12:15; 2Kg 6:33 **14:6** Jdg 14:19; 15:14; 1Sm 10:6,10; 11:6; 16:13; 18:10 **14:9** Lv 11:27 **14:12** Nm 12:8; Ps 49:4; Pr 1:6; Ezk 17:2; Dn 8:23 **14:16** Jdg 16:15

14:1-9 A Nazirite was supposed to be someone who not only kept the laws applicable to all Israelites but would go a step further in personal dedication to God (see Nm 6:1-21). This passage, however, reveals that Samson violated both the general law and that of the Nazirite. First, he chose to marry a **Philistine woman.** This intermarriage was opposed by his parents (v. 3) and was almost certainly forbidden for all Israelites (see 3:1-6; 10:6; Ex 34:15-16; Dt 7:1-4). Samson's reason for disregarding the law was merely, "she is right in my eyes" (lit v. 3). Likewise, the Israelites as a whole had intermarried (3:6) and "did what was right in [their] own eyes" (lit 17:6; 21:25; see notes on both verses). These parallels suggest that Samson personifies Israel as a whole. Nevertheless, God was working through him to punish the Philistines (v. 4; see 14:19; 15:14). Second, Samson ate honey he had taken from an unclean **lion's carcass** (see the note on 13:4-7).

14:15-17 The successful manipulation of Samson through his wife foreshadows a similar turn of events involving Delilah (see the note on 16:16-17).

14:19 The Lord wanted Samson's marriage to a Philistine "to provide an opportunity for a confrontation" between that judge and the Philistines (v. 4). He thus empowered him to kill thirty men from Ashkelon, a Philistine city (see also 15:14,18).

SAMSON'S REVENGE

15 Later on, during the wheat harvest, † Samson took a young goat as a gift and visited his wife. "I want to go to my wife in her room," he said.

But her father would not let him enter.
2 “I was sure you hated her,” her father said, “so I gave her to one of the men
who accompanied you. Isn’t her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Why
not take her instead? ”
3 Samson said to them, “This time I will be blameless † when I harm the
Philistines.” 4 So he went out and caught three hundred foxes. † He took
torches, turned the foxes tail-to-tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails.
5 Then he ignited the torches and released the foxes into the standing grain of
the Philistines. He burned the piles of grain and the standing grain as well as the
vineyards and olive groves. †
6 Then the Philistines asked, “Who did this? ”
They were told, “It was Samson, the Timnite’s son-in-law, because he took
Samson’s wife and gave her to his companion.” So the Philistines went to her
and her father and burned them to death.
7 Then Samson told them, “Because you did this, I swear that I won’t rest until I
have taken vengeance on you.” 8 He tore them limb from limb † and then went
down and stayed in the cave at the rock of Etam.
9 The Philistines went up, camped in Judah, and raided Lehi. 10 So the men of
Judah said, “Why have you attacked us? ”
They replied, “We have come to tie Samson up and pay him back for what he
did to us.”
11 Then three thousand men of Judah went to the cave at the rock of Etam, and
they asked Samson, “Don’t you realize that the Philistines rule us? † What have
you done to us? ”
“I have done to them what they did to me,” he answered. †
12 They said to him, “We’ve come to tie you up and hand you over to the
Philistines.”
Then Samson told them, “Swear to me that you yourselves won’t kill me.”
13 “No,” they said, † “we won’t kill you, but we will tie you up securely and
hand you over to them.” So they tied him up with two new ropes † and led him
away from the rock.
14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came to meet him shouting. The Spirit
of the LORD came powerfully on him, and the ropes that were on his arms and
wrists became like burnt flax and fell off. 15 He found a fresh jawbone of a

donkey, reached out his hand, took it, and killed a thousand men with it. 16 Then Samson said:

With the jawbone of a donkey
I have piled them in heaps.
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have killed a thousand men.

17 When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone and named that place Ramath-lehi. † 18 He became very thirsty and called out to the LORD: "You have accomplished this great victory through your servant. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" 19 So God split a hollow place in the ground at Lehi, and water came out of it. After Samson drank, his strength returned, and he revived. † That is why he named it En-hakkore, † which is still in Lehi today. 20 And he judged Israel twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

15:8 Lit *He struck them hip and thigh with a great slaughter* **15:11** Lit *answered them* **15:13** Lit *said to him* **15:17** = High Place of the Jawbone **15:19** = Spring of the One Who Cried Out
15:1 Gn 30:14; Ex 34:22; 1Sm 6:13; 12:17 **15:3** Nm 5:19,28,31; 1Sm 26:9; Jr 2:35 **15:4** Neh 4:3; Ps 63:10; Sg 2:15; Lm 5:18; Ezk 13:4 **15:5** Ex 22:6 **15:11** Lv 26:25; Dt 28:43; Jdg 13:1; 14:4; Ps 106:40-42 **15:13** Jdg 16:11-12 **15:19** Gn 45:27; 1Kg 17:22; 2Kg 13:21; Is 38:16,21; Ezk 37:3,14

15:3-5 Samson's anger and impulsiveness resurface when he discovers that his wife had been given to someone else (14:19**–**15:2). Using **foxes** and **torches**, he burned the grain, vineyards, and olive groves of the Philistines.

15:14-16 The Philistines' retaliation (vv. 6-10) resulted in Samson killing **a thousand** more Philistines (see the note on 14:19). While this act fulfilled his God-given role as judge, he accomplished it with the help of **the jawbone of a donkey.** This contact with a carcass again violated his Nazirite vow.

SAMSON AND DELILAH

16 Samson went to Gaza, † where he saw a prostitute and went to bed with her. 2 When the Gazites heard that Samson was there, they surrounded the place and waited in ambush for him all that night at the city gate. They kept quiet all night, saying, "Let's wait until dawn; then we will kill him." 3 But Samson stayed in bed only until midnight. Then he got up, took hold of the doors of the city gate along with the two gateposts, and pulled them out, bar and all. He put them on his shoulders and took them to the top of the mountain overlooking Hebron.

4 Some time later, he fell in love with a woman named Delilah, who lived in the
Sorek Valley. 5 The Philistine leaders † went to her and said, “Persuade him to
tell you † where his great strength comes from, so we can overpower him, tie
him up, and make him helpless. Each of us will then give you 1,100 pieces of
silver.”
6 So Delilah said to Samson, “Please tell me, where does your great strength
come from? How could someone tie you up and make you helpless? ”
7 Samson told her, “If they tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings that have not
been dried, I will become weak and be like any other man.”
8 The Philistine leaders brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been
dried, and she tied him up with them. 9 While the men in ambush were waiting
in her room, she called out to him, “Samson, the Philistines are here! ” † But he
snapped the bowstrings as a strand of yarn snaps when it touches fire. The secret
of his strength remained unknown.
10 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have mocked me and told me lies! Won’t
you please tell me how you can be tied up? ”
11 He told her, “If they tie me up with new ropes that have never been used, †
I will become weak and be like any other man.”
12 Delilah took new ropes, tied him up with them, and shouted, “Samson, the
Philistines are here! ” But while the men in ambush were waiting in her room, he
snapped the ropes off his arms like a thread.
13 Then Delilah said to Samson, “You have mocked me all along and told me
lies! Tell me how you can be tied up.”
He told her, “If you weave the seven braids on my head into the fabric on a loom
__ ” †
14 She fastened the braids with a pin and called to him, “Samson, the Philistines
are here! ” He awoke from his sleep and pulled out the pin, with the loom and
the web.
15 “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ ” † she told him, “when your heart is not
with me? This is the third time you have mocked me and not told me what
makes your strength so great! ”
16 Because she nagged him day after day and pleaded with him until she wore
him out, † 17 he told her the whole truth and said to her, “My hair has never

been cut, † because I am a Nazirite † to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man."
18 When Delilah realized that he had told her the whole truth, she sent this message to the Philistine leaders: "Come one more time, for he has told me the whole truth." The Philistine leaders came to her and brought the silver with them.
19 Then she let him fall asleep on her lap and called a man to shave off the seven braids on his head. In this way, she made him helpless, and his strength left him.
20 Then she cried, "Samson, the Philistines are here! " When he awoke from his sleep, he said, "I will escape as I did before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the LORD had left him. †

SAMSON'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

21 The Philistines seized him and gouged out his eyes. They brought him down to Gaza and bound him with bronze shackles, and he was forced to grind grain in the prison. 22 But his hair began to grow back after it had been shaved.
23 Now the Philistine leaders gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. † They rejoiced and said:

Our god has handed over
our enemy Samson to us.

24 When the people saw him, they praised their god † and said:

Our god has handed over to us
our enemy who destroyed our land
and who multiplied our dead.

25 When they were in good spirits, † they said, "Bring Samson here to entertain us." So they brought Samson from prison, and he entertained them. They had him stand between the pillars.
26 Samson said to the young man who was leading him by the hand, "Lead me where I can feel the pillars supporting the temple, so I can lean against them."
27 The temple was full of men and women; all the leaders of the Philistines were there, and about three thousand men and women were on the roof watching Samson entertain them. 28 He called out to the LORD: "Lord GOD, please

remember me. † Strengthen me, God, just once more. With one act of vengeance, let me pay back the Philistines for my two eyes.” 29 Samson took hold of the two middle pillars supporting the temple and leaned against them, one on his right hand and the other on his left. 30 Samson said, “Let me die with the Philistines.” He pushed with all his might, and the temple fell on the leaders and all the people in it. And those he killed at his death were more than those he had killed in his life.

31 Then his brothers and all his father’s family came down, carried him back, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. So he judged Israel twenty years.

16:5 Lit *him and see* **16:9** Lit *are on you,* also in vv. 12,14,20 **16:13-14** LXX reads *loom and fasten them with a pin into the wall and I will become weak and be like any other man.”* 14*And while he was sleeping, Delilah wove the seven braids on his head into the loom.* **16:16** Lit *him and he became short to death* **16:17** Lit *A razor has not gone up on my head* **16:25** Or *When they were feeling good*

16:1 Jos 15:47 **16:5** Jos 13:3 **16:11** Jdg 15:13 **16:15** Jdg 14:6 **16:17** Nm 6:5; Jdg 13:5 **16:20** Nm 14:9,42-43; Jos 7:12; 1Sm 16:14; 18:12; 28:15-16; 2Ch 15:2 **16:23** Jos 15:41; 19:27; 1Sm 5:2-5,7; 1Ch 10:10 **16:24** Dn 5:4 **16:28** Jr 15:15

16:1 Samson’s serious moral flaws become apparent again when he goes to **a prostitute.**

16:16-17 Samson’s statement **I am a Nazirite to God from birth** is strikingly ironic. He had not cut his hair, but he had eaten unclean food (14:8-9) and may have consumed alcohol (14:10). He had also used an animal carcass (15:16) and slept with a prostitute (16:1). Despite his tremendous physical strength, he twice succumbed to the nagging of a woman (see 14:17; and the note on 4:14-22). He had the look of a Nazirite and of a mighty warrior, but he lacked both genuine dedication to God and self-control.

16:19-20 Samson’s strength was from God and not from his hair (see 14:6,19; 15:14; 16:28-30), which did not bear any magical power. **His strength left him** because **the LORD had left him.**

16:21-30 Samson spent the latter part of his life tragically in weakness, blindness, imprisonment, and humiliation under the Philistines (see the note on 16:16-17). As a result, his captors praised their god Dagon (see also 1Sm 5:2-7; 1Ch 10:10) for his supposed deliverance (vv. 23-24). Nevertheless, God answered Samson’s last prayer for strength to push over the central pillars of the temple as his final act of vengeance against the Philistines (see the note on 14:19).

MICAH’S PRIEST

17 There was a man from the hill country of Ephraim named Micah. 2 He said to his mother, “The 1,100 pieces of silver taken from you, and that I heard you place a curse on — here’s the silver. I took it.”

Then his mother said, “My son, may you be blessed by the LORD! ” †

3 He returned the 1,100 pieces of silver to his mother, and his mother said, “I personally consecrate † the silver to the LORD for my son’s benefit to make a carved image and a silver idol. † I will give it back to you.” 4 So he returned the

silver to his mother, and she took five pounds of silver and gave it to a silversmith. He made it into a carved image and a silver idol, and it was in Micah's house.

5 This man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and household idols, † and installed one of his sons to be his priest. 6 In those days there was no king in Israel; † everyone did whatever seemed right to him.

7 There was a young man, a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who was staying within the clan of Judah. † 8 The man left the town of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find a place. On his way he came to Micah's home in the hill country of Ephraim.

9 "Where do you come from?" Micah asked him.

He answered him, "I am a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I'm going to stay wherever I can find a place."

10 Micah replied, † "Stay with me and be my father † and priest, and I will give you four ounces of silver a year, along with your clothing and provisions." So the Levite went in 11 and agreed to stay with the man, and the young man became like one of his sons. 12 Micah consecrated the Levite, and the young man became his priest † and lived in Micah's house. 13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, because a Levite has become my priest."

17:3 Or *image and a cast image*, also in v. 4 **17:10** Lit *replied to him*

17:2 Ru 2:20; 1Sm 15:13 **17:3** Lv 22:2-3; 27:14-19; 1Ch 18:11; 26:26-28; 2Ch 30:17 **17:5** Gn 31:19,34-35; Jdg 18:14; 1Sm 19:13; 2Kg 23:24; Hs 3:4 **17:6** Jdg 18:1; 19:1; 21:25 **17:7** Dt 18:6-7 **17:10** Gn 45:8; Jdg 18:19; Jr 3:19 **17:12** Jdg 18:30

17:1 The last five chapters of the book describe two incidents that further illustrate the depth of spiritual darkness in Israel during the period of the judges (see also the note on v. 6).

17:6 Repeated four times in Judges 17–21 is the statement that **in those days there was no king in Israel** (see also 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), and twice is added the point that **everyone did whatever seemed right to him** (see 21:25; note on 14:1-9). The statement "there was no king" probably has a double meaning. On the one hand, there was no human king over Israel. The biblical author is thus characterizing the period of the judges as lacking adequate leadership and as a free-for-all (see also Dt 12:8). But Israel had also rejected the Lord as King and was unwilling to submit to him. A parallel to postmodernism and its rejection of absolute truth has been suggested with regard to this passage. Apparently, verses 1-5 have already served to illustrate the author's point in the present verse.

17:13 Micah's confidence **that the LORD will be good to** him is utterly baseless. Like his mother, he has invoked the name of God and assumed his favor despite blatant idolatry (see vv. 2-5). The involvement of **a Levite** only adds to the travesty.

DAN'S INVASION AND IDOLATRY

DAN'S INVASION AND IDOLATRY

18 In those days, there was no king in Israel, † and the Danite tribe was looking for territory to occupy. † Up to that time no territory had been captured by them among the tribes of Israel. 2 So the Danites sent out five brave men † from all their clans, from Zorah and Eshtaol, † to scout † out the land and explore it. They told them, "Go and explore the land."
They came to the hill country of Ephraim as far as the home of Micah and spent the night there. 3 While they were near Micah's home, they recognized the accent of the young Levite. So they went over to him and asked, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What is keeping you here? " 4 He told them, "This is what Micah has done for me: He has hired me, and I became his priest."
5 Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God † for us to determine if we will have a successful journey."
6 The priest told them, "Go in peace. The LORD is watching over the journey you are going on."
7 The five men left and came to Laish. They saw that the people who were there were living securely, in the same way as the Sidonians, quiet and unsuspecting. There was nothing lacking † in the land and no oppressive ruler. They were far from the Sidonians, having no alliance with anyone. †
8 When the men went back to their relatives at Zorah and Eshtaol, † their relatives asked them, "What did you find out? "
9 They answered, "Come on, let's attack them, for we have seen the land, and it is very good. Why wait? Don't hesitate to go and invade and take possession of the land! 10 When you get there, you will come to an unsuspecting people and a spacious land, for God has handed it over to you. It is a place where nothing on earth is lacking." † 11 Six hundred Danites departed from Zorah and Eshtaol armed with weapons of war. 12 They went up and camped at Kiriath-jearim † in Judah. This is why the place is still called the Camp of Dan † today; it is west of Kiriath-jearim. 13 From there they traveled to the hill country of Ephraim and arrived at Micah's house.
14 The five men who had gone to scout out the land of Laish told their brothers, "Did you know that there are an ephod, household gods, and a carved image and

a silver idol † in these houses? Now think about what you should do.” 15 So
they detoured there and went to the house of the young Levite at the home of
Micah and greeted him. 16 The six hundred Danite men were standing by the
entrance of the city gate, armed with their weapons of war. 17 Then the five men
who had gone to scout out the land went in and took the carved image, the
ephod, the household idols, and the silver idol, † while the priest was standing
by the entrance of the city gate with the six hundred men armed with weapons of
war.
18 When they entered Micah’s house and took the carved image, the ephod, the
household idols, and the silver idol, the priest said to them, “What are you
doing? ”
19 They told him, “Be quiet. Keep your mouth shut. † † Come with us and be a
father and a priest to us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the house of one
person or for you to be a priest for a tribe and family in Israel? ” 20 So the priest
was pleased and took his ephod, household idols, and carved image, and went
with the people. 21 They prepared to leave, putting their dependents, livestock,
and possessions in front of them.
22 After they were some distance from Micah’s house, the men who were in the
houses near it were mustered and caught up with the Danites. 23 They called to
the Danites, who turned to face them, and said to Micah, “What’s the matter
with you that you mustered the men? ”
24 He said, “You took the gods I had made and the priest, and went away. What
do I have left? How can you say to me, ‘What’s the matter with you? ’ ”
25 The Danites said to him, “Don’t raise your voice against us, or angry men
will attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives.” 26 The Danites
went on their way, and Micah turned to go back home, because he saw that they
were stronger than he was.
27 After they had taken the gods Micah had made and the priest that belonged to
him, they went to Laish, to a quiet and unsuspecting people. They killed them
with their swords and burned the city. † 28 There was no one to rescue them †
because it was far from Sidon and they had no alliance with anyone. It was in a
valley that belonged to Beth-rehob. They rebuilt the city and lived in it. 29 They
named the city Dan, after the name of their ancestor Dan, who was born to
Israel. The city was formerly named Laish.

30 The Danites set up the carved image for themselves. Jonathan son of Gershom, son of Moses, † and his sons were priests for the Danite tribe until the time of the exile from the land. † 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image that he had made, and it was there as long as the house of God was in Shiloh. †

18:7 Hb obscure **18:7** MT; some LXX mss, Sym, Old Lat, Syr read *Aram* **18:12** Or *called Mahaneh-dan* **18:14** Or *image, the cast image* **18:17** Or *the cast image*, also in v. 18 **18:19** Lit *Put your hand on your mouth* **18:30** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *Manasseh*

18:1 Jdg 17:6; 19:1; 21:25 **18:1** Jos 19:47-48; Jdg 1:34 **18:2** Dt 3:18; 1Sm 14:52; 18:17; 2Sm 2:7; 13:28; 17:10; 1Kg 1:52; 2Kg 2:16 **18:2** Jos 19:40-41; Jdg 13:2,25 **18:2** Nm 13:17; Jos 2:1 **18:5** Gn 25:22; Ex 18:15; Jdg 1:1; 20:18; 1Sm 9:9; 10:22; 14:37; 22:10; 23:2; 28:6 **18:8** Jos 15:33; 19:41; Jdg 13:2,25; 16:31 **18:10** Dt 8:9 **18:12** Jos 9:17; 1Ch 13:5-6; 2Ch 1:4; Jr 26:20 **18:19** Jb 21:5; 29:9; 40:4; Mc 7:16 **18:27** Dt 13:16; Jos 6:24; Jdg 1:8,25; 4:15-16; 1Sm 30:3; Jr 32:29; 34:2 **18:28** Jb 5:4; Ps 7:2; 50:22; 71:11; Is 5:29; 42:22; Dn 8:4; Hs 5:14; Mc 5:8 **18:30** 2Kg 15:29 **18:31** Jos 18:1; Jdg 21:12; 1Sm 1:3; 3:21; Ps 78:60; Jr 7:12,14; 26:6,9

18:1-2 The tribe of Dan was the slowest to take possession of their land (see the note on 1:21-36). Regarding the lack of a **king in Israel**, see the note on 17:6.

18:19-26 The idolatry of one household has now ensnared an entire tribe (see also vv. 30-31). This is in line with the wisdom of 1 Corinthians 5:6: "a little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough." Sadly, Micah cared deeply about his **gods** and tried to get them back but was turned back by the Danites' threats of violence.

OUTRAGE IN BENJAMIN

19 In those days, when there was no king in Israel, † a Levite staying in a remote part of the hill country of Ephraim acquired a woman from Bethlehem in Judah as his concubine. 2 But she was unfaithful to † him and left him for her father's house in Bethlehem in Judah. She was there for four months. 3 Then her husband got up and followed her to speak kindly to her † † and bring her back. He had his servant with him and a pair of donkeys. So she brought him to her father's house, and when the girl's father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. 4 His father-in-law, the girl's father, detained him, and he stayed with him for three days. They ate, drank, and spent the nights there.

5 On the fourth day, they got up early in the morning and prepared to go, but the girl's father said to his son-in-law, "Have something to eat to keep up your strength † and then you can go." 6 So they sat down and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the girl's father said to the man, "Please agree to stay overnight and enjoy yourself." † 7 The man got up to go, but his father-in-law

persuaded him, so he stayed and spent the night there again. 8 He got up early in
the morning of the fifth day to leave, but the girl's father said to him, "Please
keep up your strength." So they waited until late afternoon and the two of them
ate. 9 The man got up to go with his concubine and his servant, when his father-
in-law, the girl's father, said to him, "Look, night is coming. Please spend the
night. See, the day is almost over. Spend the night here, enjoy yourself, then you
can get up early tomorrow for your journey and go home."
10 But the man was unwilling to spend the night. He got up, departed, and
arrived opposite Jebus (that is, Jerusalem †). The man had his two saddled
donkeys and his concubine with him. 11 When they were near Jebus and the day
was almost gone, the servant † said to his master, "Please, why not let us stop at
this Jebusite city and spend the night here?"
12 But his master replied to him, "We will not stop at a foreign city where there
are no Israelites. Let's move on to Gibeah." † 13 "Come on," he said, † "let's
try to reach one of these places and spend the night in Gibeah or Ramah." 14 So
they continued on their journey, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in
Benjamin. 15 They stopped † to go in and spend the night in Gibeah. The Levite
went in and sat down in the city square, but no one took them into their home to
spend the night.
16 In the evening, an old man came in from his work in the field. He was from
the hill country of Ephraim, † but he was residing in Gibeah where the people
were Benjaminites. 17 When he looked up and saw the traveler in the city
square, the old man asked, "Where are you going, and where do you come
from?"
18 He answered him, "We're traveling from Bethlehem in Judah to the remote
hill country of Ephraim, where I am from. I went to Bethlehem in Judah, and
now I'm going to the house of the LORD. † No one has taken me into his home,
19 although there's straw and feed for the donkeys, and I have bread and wine
for me, my concubine, and the servant † with us. There is nothing we lack."
20 "Welcome!" said the old man. "I'll take care of everything you need. Only
don't spend the night in the square." 21 So he brought him to his house and fed
the donkeys. Then they washed their feet and ate and drank. † 22 While they
were enjoying themselves, all of a sudden, wicked men of the city † surrounded

the house and beat on the door. They said to the old man who was the owner of the house, “Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him! ”
23 The owner of the house went out and said to them, “Please don’t do this evil, my brothers. After all, this man has come into my house. Don’t commit this horrible outrage. † 24 Here, let me bring out my virgin daughter † and the man’s concubine now. Abuse them † and do whatever you want † to them. But don’t commit this outrageous thing against this man.”
25 But the men would not listen to him, so the man seized his concubine and took her outside to them. They raped † her and abused her all night until morning. At daybreak they let her go. 26 Early that morning, the woman made her way back, and as it was getting light, she collapsed at the doorway of the man’s house where her master was.
27 When her master got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house, and went out to leave on his journey, there was the woman, his concubine, collapsed near the doorway of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28 “Get up,” he told her. “Let’s go.” But there was no response. † So the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.
29 When he entered his house, he picked up a knife, took hold of his concubine, cut her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and then sent her throughout the territory of Israel. 30 Everyone who saw it said, “Nothing like this has ever happened or has been seen since the day the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt until now. † Think it over, discuss it, and speak up! ”

19:2 LXX reads *was angry with* **19:3** Lit *speak to her heart* **19:13** Lit *said to his servant* **19:15** Lit *stopped there* **19:18** LXX reads *to my house* **19:19** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *servants* **19:24** Lit *do what is good in your eyes* **19:25** Lit *knew* **19:30** LXX reads *until now.” He commanded the men he sent out, saying, “You will say this to all the men of Israel: Has anything like this happened since the day the Israelites came out of Egypt until this day?*

19:1 Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 21:25 **19:3** Gn 34:3; 50:21 **19:5** Gn 18:5 **19:6** Jdg 16:25; 19:22; Ru 3:7; 1Kg 21:7; Est 1:10 **19:10** Jos 18:28; 1Ch 11:4-5 **19:11** Jdg 19:19 **19:12** Jos 18:28; 1Sm 10:26; 22:6; Hs 5:8; 9:9; 10:9 **19:16** Jdg 19:1 **19:21** Gn 24:32-33 **19:22** Gn 19:4-5; Dt 13:13; 1Sm 2:12; 1Kg 21:10; Ezk 16:46-48 **19:23** Gn 34:7; Dt 22:21; Jdg 20:6; 2Sm 13:12; Jb 42:8 **19:24** Gn 19:8 **19:24** Jdg 20:5; 2Sm 13:12,14; Lm 5:11 **19:28** Jdg 20:5

19:1 The second incident recounted in Judges 17–21 also involves **a Levite** (see the note on 17:13). His having a **concubine** seems questionable at best. Regarding the lack of **a king in Israel**, see the note on 17:6.

19:16-28 Significant parallels exist between this passage and Genesis 19: guests spending the night in a local host’s home (cp. Gn 19:1-3), other local men demanding homosexual relations with the male guest(s)

(cp. Gn 19:4-5), and an offer of women instead (cp. Gn 19:6-8). The implication is that Israel had become as depraved as Sodom and as such deserved the same just punishment (see Gn 19:24-25). Ironically, the Levite had actually passed by a Jebusite city earlier because he thought he would be better off in an Israelite one (vv. 10-13). See "Engaging LGBT Advocates," *p. 1392*.

WAR AGAINST BENJAMIN

20 All the Israelites from Dan to Beer-sheba † and from the land of Gilead came out, and the community assembled as one body before the LORD at Mizpah. † 2 The leaders † of all the people and of all the tribes of Israel presented themselves in the assembly of God's people: four hundred thousand armed † foot soldiers. 3 The Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.
The Israelites asked, "Tell us, how did this evil act happen? "
4 The Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, answered: "I went to Gibeah in Benjamin with my concubine to spend the night. 5 Citizens of Gibeah came to attack me and surrounded the house at night. They intended to kill me, but they raped my concubine, and she died. 6 Then I took my concubine and cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout Israel's territory, because they have committed a wicked outrage in † Israel. 7 Look, all of you are Israelites. Give your judgment and verdict here and now."
8 Then all the people stood united and said, "None of us will go to his tent or return to his house. 9 Now this is what we will do to Gibeah: we will attack it. By lot 10 we will take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and one hundred out of every thousand, and one thousand out of every ten thousand to get provisions for the troops when they go to Gibeah in Benjamin to punish them for all the outrage they committed in Israel."
11 So all the men of Israel † gathered united against the city. 12 Then the tribes of Israel sent men throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What is this evil act that has happened among you? 13 Hand over the wicked men † in Gibeah so we can put them to death and eradicate evil † from Israel." But the Benjaminites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. 14 Instead, the Benjaminites gathered together from their cities to Gibeah to go out and fight against the Israelites. 15 On that day the Benjaminites mobilized twenty-six thousand armed men † † from their cities, besides seven hundred fit young men rallied by the inhabitants

of Gibeah. 16 There were seven hundred fit young men who were left-handed
among all these troops; all could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.
17 The Israelites, apart from Benjamin, mobilized four hundred thousand armed
men, every one an experienced warrior. 18 They set out, went to Bethel, and
inquired of God. † The Israelites asked, “Who is to go first to fight for us
against the Benjaminites? ”
And the LORD answered, “Judah will be first.”
19 In the morning, the Israelites set out and camped near Gibeah. 20 The men of
Israel went out to fight against Benjamin and took their battle positions against
Gibeah. 21 The Benjaminites came out of Gibeah and slaughtered twenty-two
thousand men of Israel on the field that day. 22 But the Israelite troops rallied
and again took their battle positions in the same place where they positioned
themselves on the first day. 23 They went up, wept † before the LORD until
evening, † and inquired of him: “Should we again attack our brothers the
Benjaminites? ”
And the LORD answered: “Fight against them.”
24 On the second day the Israelites advanced against the Benjaminites. 25 That
same day the Benjaminites came out from Gibeah to meet them and slaughtered
an additional eighteen thousand Israelites on the field; all were armed. †
26 The whole Israelite army went to Bethel where they wept and sat before the
LORD. † They fasted that day until evening and offered burnt offerings and
fellowship offerings to the LORD. 27 Then the Israelites inquired of the LORD. In
those days, the ark of the covenant † of God was there, 28 and Phinehas son of
Eleazar, son of Aaron, † was serving before it. The Israelites asked: “Should we
again fight against our brothers the Benjaminites or should we stop? ”
The LORD answered: “Fight, because I will hand them over to you tomorrow.” †
29 So Israel set up an ambush † around Gibeah. 30 On the third day the
Israelites fought against the Benjaminites and took their battle positions against
Gibeah as before. 31 Then the Benjaminites came out against the troops and
were drawn away from the city. † They began to attack the troops as before,
killing about thirty men of Israel on the highways, one of which goes up to
Bethel and the other to Gibeah through the open country. 32 The Benjaminites
said, “We are defeating them as before.”

But the Israelites said, “Let’s flee and draw them away from the city to the highways.” 33 So all the men of Israel got up from their places and took their battle positions at Baal-tamar, while the Israelites in ambush charged out of their places west of † Geba. † 34 Then ten thousand fit young men from all Israel made a frontal assault against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce, but the Benjaminites did not know that disaster was about to strike them. 35 The LORD defeated Benjamin in the presence of Israel, and on that day the Israelites slaughtered 25,100 men of Benjamin; all were armed. 36 Then the Benjaminites realized they had been defeated.

The men of Israel had retreated before Benjamin, because they were confident in the ambush they had set against Gibeah. 37 The men in ambush had rushed quickly against Gibeah; they advanced and put the whole city to the sword. † 38 The men of Israel had a prearranged signal with the men in ambush: when they sent up a great cloud of smoke from the city, 39 the men of Israel would return to the battle. When Benjamin had begun to strike them down, killing about thirty men of Israel, they said, “They’re defeated before us, just as they were in the first battle.” † 40 But when the column of smoke began to go up from the city, Benjamin looked behind them, and the whole city was going up in smoke. † 41 Then the men of Israel returned, and the men of Benjamin were terrified when they realized that disaster had struck them. 42 They retreated before the men of Israel toward the wilderness, † but the battle overtook them, and those who came out of the cities † slaughtered those between them. 43 They surrounded the Benjaminites, pursued them, and easily overtook them near Gibeah toward the east. 44 There were eighteen thousand men who died from Benjamin; all were warriors. 45 Then Benjamin turned and fled toward the wilderness to Rimmon Rock, † and Israel killed five thousand men on the highways. They overtook them at Gidom and struck two thousand more dead.

46 All the Benjaminites who died that day were twenty-five thousand armed men; all were warriors. 47 But six hundred men escaped into the wilderness to Rimmon Rock and stayed there four months. 48 The men of Israel turned back against the other Benjaminites and killed them with their swords — the entire city, the animals, and everything that remained. They also burned all the cities that remained.

20:2 Lit *drawing the sword* **20:15** Lit *men drawing the sword,* also in vv. 17,46 **20:25** Lit *were drawing the*

sword, also in v. 35 **20:33** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *places in the plain of*, or *places in the cave of* **20:40** Lit *up to the sky* **20:42** LXX, Vg read *city*

20:1 Gn 21:14; 22:19; 1Sm 3:20; 1Kg 4:25 **20:1** Jdg 11:11; 21:1,5,8; 1Sm 7:5-16; 10:17 **20:2** 1Sm 14:38; Is 19:13 **20:6** Lv 18:17; 19:29; Jr 13:27; Ezk 16:27,43 **20:11** Dt 29:10; Jos 10:24; Jdg 20:33; 1Sm 11:15; 17:19; 2Sm 16:18; 17:14,24; 19:41; 20:2; 1Kg 8:2; 1Ch 10:7; 2Ch 5:3 **20:13** Dt 13:13; Jdg 19:22; 1Sm 2:12; 10:27; 25:17; 1Kg 21:10,13; 2Ch 13:7 **20:13** Dt 13:5; 17:7,12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21-24; 24:7 **20:15** Nm 1:36-37; 2:23; 26:41 **20:18** Nm 27:21; Jdg 18:5; 1Sm 14:37; 1Ch 14:10 **20:23** Jos 7:6-7 **20:23** 2Sm 1:12 **20:26** Jdg 21:2 **20:27** 1Sm 4:4; 2Sm 15:24; 1Ch 16:6 **20:28** Nm 25:7,11 **20:28** Jdg 7:9 **20:29** Jos 8:4 **20:31** Jos 8:31 **20:33** Jos 8:19 **20:37** Dt 13:15; Jos 10:37,39; 11:12,14; Jdg 1:8,25; 18:27; 20:48; 1Sm 22:19; 2Sm 15:14; 2Kg 10:25; Jr 21:7; Ezk 5:2 **20:39** Jdg 20:32 **20:42** Jos 8:15,24 **20:45** Jdg 21:13

20:11-17 The Levite's tactics aroused the attention of the whole nation. After hearing his report, the Israelites determined to go to war against **Gibeah** (vv. 8-10). When **Benjamin** decided to stand alongside of this city of theirs (19:14,16), the stage was set for civil war. The theme of disunity and infighting within Israel has thus appeared again (see the note on 12:1-6).

20:18-28 The Israelites were humbled when **Benjamin** defeated them soundly twice (vv. 18-25). Although they **inquired of the LORD** prior to both of these occasions, their first inquiry assumed that they were supposed to fight (v. 18), and their second inquiry was not answered with an assurance of victory (v. 23). Their third inquiry clearly left every option open, including not fighting Benjamin anymore (v. 28). This time, God's response did include an assurance of victory, as in other passages (see 4:14; 7:9; Jos 6:2; 8:1; 10:8; 1Sm 23:4; 2Sm 5:19; 1Kg 20:13,28).

BRIDES FOR BENJAMIN

21 The men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah: "None of us will give
his daughter to a Benjaminite in marriage." † 2 So the people went to
Bethel and sat there before God † until evening. They wept loudly and bitterly,
3 and cried out, "Why, LORD God of Israel, has it occurred † that one tribe is
missing in Israel today?" 4 The next day the people got up early, built an altar
there, † and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. 5 The Israelites
asked, "Who of all the tribes of Israel didn't come to the LORD with the
assembly?" For a great oath had been taken that anyone who had not come to
the LORD at Mizpah would certainly be put to death.
6 But the Israelites had compassion on their brothers, the Benjaminites, and said,
"Today a tribe has been cut off from Israel. 7 What should we do about wives
for the survivors? We've sworn to the LORD not to give them any of our
daughters as wives." 8 They asked, "Which city among the tribes of Israel didn't
come to the LORD at Mizpah?" It turned out that no one from Jabesh-gilead had
come to the camp and the assembly. 9 For when the roll was called, no men
were there from the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead.

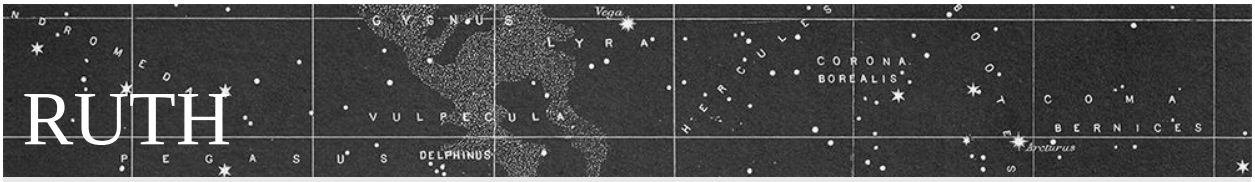
10 The congregation sent twelve thousand brave warriors † there and
commanded them: “Go and kill the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the
sword, † including women and dependents. 11 This is what you should do:
Completely destroy every male, as well as every woman who has gone to bed
with a man.” 12 They found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead four
hundred young virgins, who had not gone to bed with a man, and they brought
them to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.
13 The whole congregation sent a message of peace † to the Benjaminites who
were at Rimmon Rock. 14 Benjamin returned at that time, and Israel gave them
the women they had kept alive from Jabesh-gilead. But there were not enough
for them.
15 The people had compassion on Benjamin, because the LORD had made this
gap in the tribes of Israel. 16 The elders of the congregation said, “What should
we do about wives for those who are left, since the women of Benjamin have
been destroyed?” 17 They said, “There must be heirs for the survivors of
Benjamin, so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. 18 But we can’t give
them our daughters as wives.” For the Israelites had sworn, “Anyone who gives
a wife to a Benjaminite is cursed.” 19 They also said, “Look, there’s an annual
festival to the LORD in Shiloh, † which is north of Bethel, east of the highway
that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah.”
20 Then they commanded the Benjaminites: “Go and hide in the vineyards.
21 Watch, and when you see the young women of Shiloh come out to perform
the dances, † each of you leave the vineyards and catch a wife for yourself from
the young women of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. 22 When their
fathers or brothers come to us and protest, we will tell them, ‘Show favor to
them, since we did not get enough wives for each of them in the battle. You
didn’t actually give the women to them, so † you are not guilty of breaking your
oath.’ ”
23 The Benjaminites did this and took the number of women they needed from
the dancers they caught. They went back to their own inheritance, rebuilt their
cities, † and lived in them. 24 At that time, each of the Israelites returned from
there to his own tribe and family. Each returned from there to his own
inheritance.

25 In those days there was no king in Israel; † everyone did whatever seemed right to him.

21:3 Lit *has this occurred in Israel* **21:10** Lit *twelve thousand of their sons of valor* **21:22** Lit *at this time* **21:1** Jdg 21:7,18 **21:2** Jdg 20:26 **21:4** 2Sm 24:25 **21:10** Nm 31:17 **21:13** Dt 20:10 **21:19** Jos 18:1; Jdg 18:31; 1Sm 1:3 **21:21** Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34 **21:23** Jdg 20:48 **21:25** Jdg 17:6; 18:1; 19:1

21:1-7 The battle against Benjamin had left only six hundred men from that tribe (20:47). To make matters worse, their Israelite brethren had sworn **None of us will give his daughter to a Benjaminite in marriage** so that the continued existence of Benjamin's tribe was threatened (see v. 17). The seizure of wives from Jabesh Gilead and Shiloh for these survivors punished Jabesh Gilead for not being present at the assembly (vv. 8-12) and absolved Shiloh from the oath that had been sworn (vv. 19-23). Ironically, Israel was under a similar curse if they intermarried with the Canaanites (see Dt 7:1-4; 27:26). They had broken this law of God to their own harm (see 3:6), but they carefully kept their self-imposed oath not to give their daughters to the men of Benjamin. They had not completely destroyed the inhabitants of the land (see 3:5), but they nearly obliterated one of their own tribes.

21:25 This final verse aptly characterizes Israelite life during the period of the judges (see also the note on 17:6).



RUTH

INTRODUCTION

The book of Ruth gets its name from one of its principle characters, a Moabite woman named Ruth who was the ancestor of David and Jesus. After reading the book of Judges, which paints a dark and depressing picture of Israel, the reader is relieved to encounter Ruth. Although the book is relatively short, it is rich in examples of kindness, faith, and patience. It is one of the five scrolls that was to be read during the Jewish festivals, in particular the Festival of Weeks.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The Talmud attributes the authorship of Ruth to Samuel, but the book itself offers no hint of the identity of its author. We can only speculate about who might have written the book of Ruth, and its provenance and date must be deduced from the internal evidence—language and style, historical allusions, and themes. The family records at the end and the explanation of archaic customs requires a date during or later than the reign of King David (1011–971 BC), though it could have been written as late as after the exile, when the issue of the inclusion of Gentiles once again became pressing.

BACKGROUND: The book of Ruth is set "during the time of the judges" (1:1), a period of social and religious disorder when "everyone did whatever seemed right to him" (Jdg 17:6). Historically, this era bridged the time between the conquest of the land under Joshua and the rise of King David, whose family records form the conclusion of the book. It is not clear exactly when during the time of the judges the book belongs, but it opens with a famine in the land, which may have been the result of Israel's idolatry.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Ruth's covenantal faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi and her God provided a model showing that those who were not ethnic Israelites could be incorporated into the people of God through faith. If Moabites who joined themselves to the Lord could be accepted, there was hope for other Gentiles as well (Is 56:3-7). The book also effectively answered questions that may have been raised over the legitimacy of the Davidic line, given his Moabite roots.

STRUCTURE

The book of Ruth is a delightful short story with a classical plot that moves from crisis to complication to resolution. The narrator draws the reader into the minds of the characters (successively Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz), inviting us to identify with their personal anxieties and joys and in the end to celebrate the movement from emptiness and frustration to fulfillment and joy.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The sovereign hand of God in all circumstances is prominent throughout Ruth. The famine and the deaths of three husbands at the beginning of the book were not random acts that "just happened." They were the divinely arranged circumstances to incorporate Ruth into God's family and to bring her joy. God's bringing about Naomi's journey from emptiness to fullness parallels the way he brings all his people in the end to eternal fullness of joy. Many scholars recognize Boaz's role of family redeemer as a prefiguring of Jesus Christ.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

One of the virtues held up throughout the OT is *chesed*, "loving kindness" or "acts of loyal friendship." Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi did memorable deeds based on *chesed*. Further, although human life inevitably includes pain and loss, it becomes purposeful when people see themselves living under God's protective care. Also, people find great blessing when they live according to God's commands, illustrated by Boaz's blessing because he followed both the law of gleaning and the law concerning levirate marriage.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In this story a most unlikely person was reached by God's grace and gained full membership in the community of God's people. This shows that, even in the OT, God's grace was not limited only to the descendants of Jacob. Further, Ruth's famous declaration of loyalty to Naomi (1:16-17) includes the concept that conversion and commitment to the Lord is a way of life, not just a point of decision.

RUTH TIMELINE

1400–1300 BC

DEBORAH 1360?–1300?

GIDEON 1250?–1175?

Water clocks are invented in Egypt. **1400**

Division of the land into twelve allotments **1385?**

Joshua dies. **1380**

Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**

Pharaoh Horemheb creates a river security unit to board and search boats suspected of smuggling. **1320**

Deborah and Barak defeat the Canaanites. **1320?**

1300–1200 BC

JEPHTHAH 1200?–1150?

RUTH 1175?–1125?

Philistine Ascendancy **1300–1000**

Decimal numbers are used in China. **1300**

Signal fires are used to communicate across distances by the Greeks. **1300**

Battle of Kadesh between Ramesses II of Egypt and Muwatalli, the Hittite king. This may be the first battle in history for which there is sufficient information to understand the tactics of the opposing

forces. **1274**

1200–1100 BC

SAMSON 1120?–1060?

SAMUEL 1105–1025

Gideon defeats the Midianites and Amalekites. **1200?**
Lightning rods are used by the Minoans of Crete. **1200**
Birth of Eli **1157**
Jephthah defeats the Ammonites and Philistines. **1170?**
Events in Ruth **1140?**

1100–1000 BC

SAUL 1080–1010

DAVID 1050?–970

Samson defeats the Philistines. **1080?**
Death of Eli **1070**
Samson destroys the Philistine temple. **1060?**
Philistines capture the ark of the covenant. **1055?**

NAOMI'S FAMILY IN MOAB

1 During the time † of the judges, † there was a famine in the land. † A man left Bethlehem † † in Judah with his wife and two sons to stay in the territory of Moab for a while. 2 The man's name was Elimelech, † and his wife's name was Naomi. † The names of his two sons were Mahlon † and Chilion. † They were Ephrathites † from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the fields of Moab and settled there. 3 Naomi's husband Elimelech died, and she was left with her two sons. 4 Her sons took Moabite women as their wives: one was named Orpah and the second was named Ruth. After they lived in Moab about ten years, 5 both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two children and without her husband.

RUTH'S LOYALTY TO NAOMI

6 She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. † 7 She left the place where she had been living,

accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah.

8 Naomi said to them, “Each of you go back to your mother’s home. † May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. 9 May the LORD grant each of you rest † in the house of a new husband.” She kissed them, and they wept loudly.

10 They said to her, “We insist on returning with you to your people.”

11 But Naomi replied, “Return home, my daughters. Why do you want to go with me? Am I able to have any more sons who could become your husbands? †

12 Return home, my daughters. Go on, for I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me to have a husband tonight and to bear sons, 13 would you be willing to wait for them to grow up? Would you restrain yourselves from remarrying? † No, my daughters, my life is much too bitter for you to share, † because the LORD’s hand has turned against me.” †

14 Again they wept loudly, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. 15 Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. † Follow your sister-in-law.”

16 But Ruth replied:

Don’t plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go,
and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people,
and your God will be my God.
17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.
May the LORD punish me, † †
and do so severely,
if anything but death separates you and me.

18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped talking to her.

19 The two of them traveled until they came to Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole town was excited about their arrival † † and the local women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi? ”

20 “Don’t call me Naomi. Call me Mara,” † she answered, “for the Almighty †
has made me very bitter. † 21 I went away full, but the LORD has brought me
back empty. † Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has opposed † me,
and the Almighty has afflicted me? ”
22 So Naomi came back from the territory of Moab with her daughter-in-law
Ruth the Moabitess. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley
harvest. †

1:1 Lit *In the days of the judging* **1:1** = House of Bread **1:2** = My God Is King **1:2** = Pleasant **1:2** = Sickly **1:2** = Weak or Failing **1:13** Lit *marrying a man* **1:13** Lit *daughters, for more bitter to me than you* **1:17** A solemn oath formula; 1Sm 3:17; 2Sm 3:9,35; 1Kg 2:23; 2Kg 6:31 **1:19** Lit *excited because of them* **1:20** = Bitter **1:21** LXX, Syr, Vg read *has humiliated*

1:1 Jdg 2:16-18 **1:1** Gn 12:10; 26:1; 43:1; 2Kg 8:1 **1:1** Jdg 17:7; 19:1 **1:2** Gn 35:19; 1Sm 17:12; 1Ch 4:4; Mc 5:2 **1:6** Ex 4:31; 1Sm 2:21 **1:8** Gn 24:28 **1:9** Ru 3:1 **1:11** Gn 38:11; Dt 25:5 **1:13** Jdg 2:15; Jb 19:21; Ps 32:4; 38:2; 39:10 **1:15** Jdg 11:24; 1Kg 11:7; Jr 48:7,13,46 **1:17** 1Sm 3:17; 2Sm 3:9,35; 1Kg 2:23; 2Kg 6:31 **1:19** Mt 21:10 **1:20** Gn 49:25; Ex 6:3; Nm 24:4; Jb 6:4 **1:20** Ex 15:23 **1:21** Ru 3:17 **1:22** Ex 9:31; Lv 23:10-11

1:1 The events described in the book of Ruth took place **during the time of the judges.** The reference to King David in 4:22, however, shows that the book was actually written after the period of the judges had ended. Given difficulties that Israel experienced during that time, it is not difficult to imagine a family leaving the country (see also 2Kg 8:1-2).

1:2-5 The biblical text emphasizes Naomi’s bereavement. After her husband died, **she was left with her two sons**, and after her sons died, **Naomi was left without her two children and without her husband.** Widows in ancient times were very vulnerable since they lacked husbands to protect and provide for them and to represent their interests in society.

1:8-14 Naomi desired that God help her Moabite daughters-in-law (vv. 8-9), but her hopelessness and bitterness showed through her belief that his **hand has turned against** her (see also vv. 20-21).

1:14-17 Unlike her sister-in-law **Orpah**, Ruth insisted on returning to Israel with her mother-in-law. At stake were not only issues of family and nation but also of worship (see also 1Sm 26:19). Whereas Orpah went back **to her people and to her gods**, Ruth not only remained loyal to her mother-in-law but also to a foreign nation (Israel) and to the Lord (see 2:12). The syntax of the Hebrew text translated **your people will be my people, and your God will be my God** does not clearly refer to the future. This syntax differs from the syntax of Ruth’s related statements preceding and following, which do seem to speak of the future. The significance of this observation is that Ruth’s allegiance to God and to Israel may have already existed so that it is being reaffirmed rather than initially declared.

1:22 Though the reader already knows that Ruth is a **Moabitess** (see 1:4), the biblical author continues to emphasize Ruth’s foreign status (e.g., 2:2,6,10,21).

RUTH AND BOAZ MEET

2 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side. He was a prominent
man of noble character † from Elimelech’s family. His name was Boaz.

2 Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, “Will you let me go into the fields and
gather fallen grain † behind someone with whom I find favor? ”
Naomi answered her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” 3 So Ruth left and entered the
field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened † to be in the portion
of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech’s family.
4 Later, when Boaz arrived from Bethlehem, he said to the harvesters, “The
LORD be with you.” †
“The LORD bless you,” † they replied.
5 Boaz asked his servant who was in charge of the harvesters, “Whose young
woman is this? ”
6 The servant answered, “She is the young Moabite woman who returned with
Naomi from the territory of Moab. 7 She asked, ‘Will you let me gather fallen
grain among the bundles behind the harvesters? ’ She came and has been on her
feet since early morning, except that she rested a little in the shelter.” †
8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. † Don’t go and gather grain in
another field, and don’t leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants.
9 See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven’t I ordered the
young men not to touch you? † When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars
the young men have filled.”
10 She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, † and said to him, “Why have I
found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner? ”
11 Boaz answered her, “Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since
your husband’s death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and
mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn’t
previously know. 12 May the LORD reward you for what you have done, † and
may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings
you have come for refuge.” †
13 “My lord,” she said, “I have found favor with you, for you have comforted
and encouraged † your servant, although I am not like one of your female
servants.”
14 At mealtime Boaz told her, “Come over here and have some bread and dip it
in the vinegar sauce.” So she sat beside the harvesters, and he offered her roasted
grain. She ate and was satisfied and had some left over.

15 When she got up to gather grain, Boaz ordered his young men, “Let her even
gather grain among the bundles, and don’t humiliate her. 16 Pull out some stalks
from the bundles for her and leave them for her to gather. Don’t rebuke her.”
17 So Ruth gathered grain in the field until evening. She beat out what she had
gathered, and it was about twenty-six quarts † of barley. 18 She picked up the
grain and went into the town, where her mother-in-law saw what she had
gleaned. She brought out what she had left over from her meal and gave it to her.
19 Her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you gather barley today, and
where did you work? May the LORD bless the man who noticed you.” †
Ruth told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with and said, “The name of
the man I worked with today is Boaz.”
20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May the LORD † bless him because
he has not abandoned his kindness to the living or the dead.” † Naomi
continued, “The man is a close relative. He is one of our family redeemers.” †
21 Ruth the Moabitess said, “He also told me, ‘Stay with my young men until
they have finished all of my harvest.’ ”
22 So Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, “My daughter, it is good for you
to work † with his female servants, so that nothing will happen to you in another
field.” 23 Ruth stayed close to Boaz’s female servants and gathered grain until
the barley and the wheat harvests were finished. † And she lived with † her
mother-in-law.

2:7 LXX reads *morning, and until evening she has not rested in the field a little* ; Vg reads *morning until now and she did not return to the house* ; Hb uncertain **2:8** Lit *“Haven’t you heard, my daughter?* **2:9** Either sexual or physical harassment **2:13** Lit *and spoken to the heart of* **2:17** Lit *about an ephah* **2:22** Lit *go out* **2:23** Some Hb mss, Vg read *she returned to*

2:1 Ru 1:2 **2:2** Lv 19:9-10; 23:22 **2:3** Pr 16:33; 20:24 **2:4** 1Sm 20:13 **2:4** Nm 6:24 **2:10** 1Sm 25:23,41 **2:12** 1Sm 24:19 **2:12** Ru 1:16; Ps 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 63:7 **2:19** Ps 41:1 **2:20** 2Sm 2:5 **2:20** Ru 1:8 **2:20** Lv 25:25-26; Ru 3:9,12; 4:1-8,14; Ps 19:14; Is 41:14 **2:23** Dt 16:9

2:2 Deuteronomy 24:19-22 instructed Israelites not to go through their fields or vineyards a second time during the harvest. Instead of taking every last part of the crop, they were to allow the poor to **gather** in their fields from what had been left behind.

2:3 That Ruth **happened to be in the portion of the land belonging to Boaz** was providential. Working in the field could be dangerous—especially for a lone woman away from the protection of the town. The narrator will soon show that God is working out much more than simply a welcoming place for Ruth to find food.

2:4 This brief conversation between Boaz and his harvesters reveals his kindness and good relationship

with them. His kindness is also shown through his generosity and protection of Ruth (see vv. 8-9,14-18,21; 3:15).

2:11 Ruth's leaving behind her **father and mother and** [her] **native land** and her coming **to a people** [she] **didn't previously know** resembles Abram's act of faith in Genesis 12:1-7.

2:20 As a **relative** to the women (see also v. 1), Boaz was one of their **family redeemers** (see also 3:9). Such a person would assist in some way. This might include avenging a relative who had been murdered (Nm 35:12,19-27), assisting a poor relation who could not support himself (Lv 25:25-30), or redeeming a relative from slavery (Lv 25:47-49). The role of a "redeemer" is not explicitly linked to marrying a deceased relative's widow in order to continue his family line (Dt 25:5-6; sometimes called "Levirate marriage"), but the two roles may have overlapped.

RUTH'S APPEAL TO BOAZ

3 Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, shouldn't I find
rest for you, so that you will be taken care of? 2 Now isn't Boaz our
relative? † Haven't you been working with his female servants? This
evening he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. 3 Wash, put on
perfumed oil, and wear your best clothes. Go down to the threshing floor, but
don't let the man know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking.
4 When he lies down, notice the place where he's lying, go in and uncover his
feet, and lie down. Then he will explain to you what you should do."
5 So Ruth said to her, "I will do everything you say." † 6 She went down to the
threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law had charged her to do.
7 After Boaz ate, drank, and was in good spirits, † he went to lie down at the
end of the pile of barley, and she came secretly, uncovered his feet, and lay
down.
8 At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a
woman! 9 So he asked, "Who are you? "
"I am Ruth, your servant," she replied. "Take me under your wing, † † for you
are a family redeemer." †
10 Then he said, "May the LORD bless you, † my daughter. You have shown
more kindness now than before, † because you have not pursued younger men,
whether rich or poor. 11 Now don't be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you
whatever you say, † since all the people in my town † know that you are a
woman of noble character. † 12 Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but
there is a redeemer closer than I am. 13 Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if

he wants to redeem you, that's good. † Let him redeem you. But if he doesn't want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, † I will. Now lie down until morning."
14 So she lay down at his feet until morning but got up while it was still dark. †
Then Boaz said, "Don't let it be known that a † woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he told Ruth, "Bring the shawl you're wearing and hold it out."
When she held it out, he shoveled six measures of barley into her shawl, and she † went into the town.
16 She went to her mother-in-law, Naomi, who asked her, "What happened, †
my daughter? "
Then Ruth told her everything the man had done for her. 17 She said, "He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said, † 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.' "
18 Naomi said, "My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won't rest unless he resolves this today."

3:5 Alt Hb tradition reads *say to me* **3:7** Lit *and his heart was glad* **3:9** Or *"Spread the edge of your garment* ; lit *"Spread the wing of your garment* ; Ru 2:12 **3:10** Lit *kindness at the last than at the first* **3:11** Some Hb mss, Orig, Syr, Tg, Vg read *say to me* **3:11** Lit *all the gate of my people* **3:14** Lit *up before a man could recognize his companion* **3:14** LXX; MT reads *the* **3:15** Some Hb mss, Aramaic, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *he* **3:16** Lit *"Who are you* **3:17** Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Syr, Tg read *said to me*
3:2 Dt 25:5-10 **3:9** Ezk 16:8 **3:9** Ru 2:12 **3:10** Ru 2:20 **3:11** Ru 2:1; Pr 12:4; 31:10 **3:13** Dt 25:5; Ru 4:5 **3:13** Jdg 8:19; 1Sm 14:39,45; 19:6; 2Sm 4:9; 12:5; 2Kg 2:2,6

3:1-4 Naomi devised a plan for Ruth to marry Boaz. The reason behind the instruction to **uncover his feet** is unclear, but the Hebrew word for "feet" is sometimes used as a euphemism for genitals. It may be that the author intends this as a double entendre. He has emphasized that Ruth is a Moabitess; she descends from a people known for sexual immorality (see Gn 19; Nm 25:1-3). It is late at night, at a **threshing floor** (also known to be a place of sexual immorality), and Boaz "ate, drank, and was in good spirits" (v. 7). It is possible that the author is setting up a situation that makes the reader nervous and uncomfortable, wondering whether the Moabite girl will seduce the upstanding Israelite man. In the end, she does not: Boaz and Ruth are people of great character, only interested in what is best for others. If this interpretation is correct, the author is playing on a stereotype in order to raise the reader's estimation of Ruth and of the goodness of God's values and character.

3:8-12 Despite Boaz's initial surprise, he not only did not see anything inappropriate about Ruth's request for marriage but even considered it an act of **kindness.** Evidently, although Boaz is a wealthy and significant man in the town, Ruth's request for marriage is seen as a sacrifice for the sake of Naomi. His statement **you have not pursued younger men** implies that Boaz is an older man. On Boaz being a **family redeemer**, see the note on 2:20.

3:11-13 Boaz knew that Ruth was **a woman of noble character.** Since Boaz himself was "a prominent man of noble character," the two are a good match. The Hebrew phrase used to describe Ruth here is also used more famously in Proverbs 31:10 of a **noble wife** (see also Pr 12:10). Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, but there was a closer relative who rightfully had the first opportunity to do so (vv. 12-13).

RUTH AND BOAZ MARRY

4 Boaz went to the gate of the town † and sat down there. Soon the family
redeemer Boaz had spoken about came by. Boaz said, “Come over
here † and sit down.” So he went over and sat down. 2 Then Boaz took
ten men of the town’s elders † and said, “Sit here.” And they sat down. 3 He
said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has returned from the territory of Moab, is
selling the portion of the field that belonged to our brother Elimelech. † 4 I
thought I should inform you: † Buy it back in the presence of those seated here
and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do it.
But if you do † not want to redeem it, tell me so that I will know, because there
isn’t anyone other than you to redeem it, and I am next after you.”
“I want to redeem it,” he answered.
5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from Naomi, you will
acquire † Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased man, to perpetuate the
man’s name on his property.” † †
6 The redeemer replied, “I can’t redeem it myself, or I will ruin my own
inheritance. Take my right of redemption, because I can’t redeem it.”
7 At an earlier period in Israel, a man removed his sandal † and gave it to the
other party in order to make any matter legally binding concerning the right of
redemption or the exchange of property. This was the method of legally binding
a transaction in Israel.
8 So the redeemer removed his sandal and said to Boaz, “Buy back the property
yourself.”
9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I am
buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and
Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon’s widow, as my
wife, to perpetuate the deceased man’s name on his property, so that his name
will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You
are witnesses today.”
11 All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, “We are
witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is entering your house like
Rachel and Leah, † who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful
in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. 12 May your house

become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, † because of the offspring the LORD will give you by this young woman."
13 Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, † has given birth to him." 16 Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became his nanny. 17 The neighbor women said, "A son has been born to Naomi," and they named him Obed. † He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

DAVID'S GENEALOGY FROM JUDAH'S SON

18 Now these are the family records of Perez:

Perez fathered Hezron,
19 Hezron fathered Ram, †
Ram fathered Amminadab,
20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
21 Salmon fathered Boaz,
Boaz fathered Obed,
22 Obed fathered Jesse,
and Jesse fathered David. †

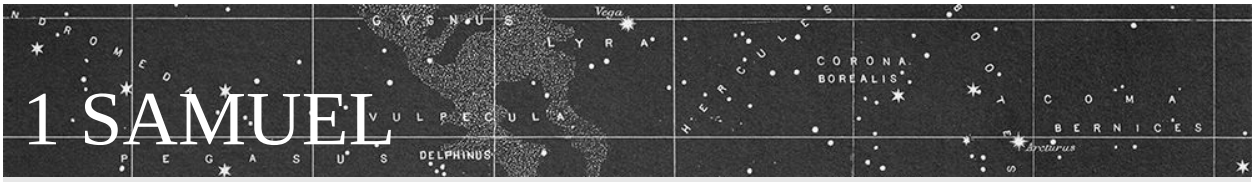
4:1 Or *said, "Come here Mr. So-and-so* **4:4** Lit *should uncover your ear, saying* **4:4** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *if he does* **4:5** Lit *Naomi and from* **4:5** Alt Hb tradition reads *Naomi, I will have already acquired from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead man, the privilege of raising up the name of the dead man on his property* **4:17** = Servant **4:19** LXX reads *Aram* ; Mt 1:3-4
4:1 Ru 3:11-12; 2Sm 15:2; 18:4,24,33; 19:8; Ps 127:5 **4:2** Dt 19:12; 21:3-6; 1Kg 21:8; Pr 31:23 **4:3** Lv 25:25 **4:5** Gn 38:6-11; Lv 25:23-34; Dt 25:5-10 **4:7** Dt 25:8-10 **4:11** Gn 29:25-30; 35:16-18 **4:12** Gn 38; 46:12; Ru 4:18 **4:15** Ru 1:16-17; 2:11-12 **4:18-22** Mt 1:3-6

4:6-10 The act of redemption involved both the acquisition of Elimelech's property and marrying Ruth (vv. 2-5). When the closer relative learned of the latter, he declined because of the problems for his **own**

inheritance presumably to arise if he were to marry Ruth. The text itself explains the **sandal** ritual (vv. 7-8). Boaz acquired both the **property** and a **wife.**

4:11-12 This blessing of Ruth would come true. Just as Rachel and Leah **together built the house of Israel** through bearing sons, so Ruth would bear a son who later became the grandfather of King David (vv. 13-22) and ancestor of Jesus Christ. As in the case of Tamar (see Gn 38), Ruth's marriage and inclusion in this line were unconventional.

4:14-17 Naomi's life had come full circle. At the beginning of the book, she had thought that God was against her (1:13,20). Indeed, she had been bereaved (1:2-5), but she had never been without Ruth (1:21-22; 4:15). Ruth's marriage and now the birth of **Obed** completed Naomi's restoration.



1 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel highlight a significant transition time in Israel's history. As 1 Samuel begins, Israel is a loosely organized tribal league living under poor spiritual leadership. God's plan for his people nonetheless continued as he raised up Samuel to guide Israel's transition from a theocracy to a monarchy. Saul's kingship constitutes the remainder of 1 Samuel, while David's kingship is largely the focus of 2 Samuel.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Early tradition suggests 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book. Some scholars believe Samuel was largely responsible for the material up to 1 Samuel 25, and that the prophets Nathan and Gad gave significant input to the rest (based on 1Ch 29:29). This proposal, however, must remain speculative because the books name no authors. First Samuel 27:6 suggests the book was not completed until perhaps a few generations after the division of the kingdom around 930 BC.

BACKGROUND: After Israel's conquest of the land during the days of Joshua, Israel entered a time of apostasy. The book of Judges describes recurrences of a cycle with predictable phases. First, the people sinned against the Lord and fell into idolatry. Second, the Lord raised up an adversary to afflict them and turn them back to him. Third, the people cried out to the Lord in repentance. Fourth, the Lord brought deliverance for them through a judge whom he raised up. The book of Judges' famous verse, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him" (Jdg 21:25), aptly describes the period. The book of 1 Samuel picks up the historical record toward the end of those stormy days.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel describe Israel's transition from a loosely organized tribal league under God (a theocracy) to centralized leadership under a king who answered to God (a monarchy). Samuel's life and ministry greatly shaped this period of restructuring as he consistently pointed people back to God.

Saul's rule highlighted the dangers to which the Israelites fell victim as they clamored for a king to lead them. Samuel's warnings fell on deaf ears (1Sm 8:10-20) because God's people were intent on becoming like the nations around them. In the end, they got exactly what they asked for, but they paid a terrible price. Saul's life stands as a warning to trust God's timing for life's provisions.

David's rule testified to the amazing works the Lord could and would do through a life yielded to him. Israel's second king seemed quite aware of God's blessing on his life and displayed a tender heart toward the things of God (2Sm 5:12; 7:1-2; 22:1-51; 23:1-7). Later generations would receive blessing because of David's life (Is 37:35). God's special covenant with David (2Sm 7:1-29) found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus, the son of David (Lk 1:32-33). The consequences of David's sin with Bathsheba, however, stand as a warning to all who experience sin's attraction. God holds his children accountable for their actions, and even forgiven sin can have terrible consequences.

STRUCTURE

The first seven chapters of 1 Samuel describe Samuel's birth, call, and initial ministry among the Israelites. Chapter 8 is a major turning point as the people ask for a king to rule them "the same as all the other nations have" (1Sm 8:5). Chapters 9–12 then describe Saul's selection—at God's direction, yet not his perfect will

for the time (1Sm 12:16-18).

First Samuel 13–31 describes Saul's victories and failures. Saul was a king with great physical stature and military skill (1Sm 14:47-52), but his heart was not one with the Lord (1Sm 13:14). His unwillingness to obey the Lord's commands ultimately outweighed his accomplishments, and chapters 16–31 describe his reign's downward spiral. During this time God raised up David and was preparing him for the day he would succeed Saul—a fact Saul gradually realized (1Sm 15:28; 24:20-21; 28:17).

Second Samuel 1–4 describes the struggle for Israel's throne that began with Saul's death. David was anointed king by the men of Judah (2Sm 2:4), but Abner anointed Ish-bosheth, Saul's oldest surviving son, as king over Israel (2Sm 2:8-9). A two-year civil war resulted in Ish-bosheth's death and in David's becoming king over all Israel.

Second Samuel 5–24 presents highlights of David's reign. God established a special covenant with David, promising to establish the throne of his kingdom forever (2Sm 7:1-29). David's sin with Bathsheba, however, brought disastrous consequences to his reign and became a turning point in 2 Samuel. In the end, David's repentance confirmed his designation as a man after God's heart, but his sin showed that even the king is not above breaking God's laws.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God was responsible for shaping Israel's destiny. He allowed Israel's choice of Saul to stand, but he judged Saul for his disobedience. He chose David, who by the end of 1 Samuel was not yet secure in his position as king. The Spirit of God is seen as the divine enabler: he came upon both Saul and David to empower their service.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This book teaches about humankind through telling the stories of three heroes: Samuel, Saul, and David. Samuel was a dedicated servant of God who nevertheless failed as a parent. Saul was a handsome, talented leader who failed in his primary task: glad obedience to God's revealed will. David's life (in 1 Samuel) demonstrates that those whom God chooses may come as a surprise to other humans, and that they may face great difficulties and yet serve God wholeheartedly.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This book shows that a right relationship with God inevitably brings with it obedience from the heart and that God values heart obedience much more than external conformity to religious rituals: "Then Samuel said: Does the LORD take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the LORD? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams" (15:22).

1 SAMUEL TIMELINE

1350–1150 BC

DEBORAH 1360?–1300?

GIDEON 1250?–1175?

The Olmec civilization flourishes in Central America, establishing a foundation for subsequent civilizations in the Americas. **1200**

The process of iron smelting is developed in Armenia. **1200–1000**

World's first recorded labor strike, Thebes, Egypt **1170**

1150–1000 BC

JEPHTHAH 1200?–1150?

RUTH 1175?–1125?

Events in Ruth **1140?**

Botanical gardens are developed by Assyrians during the reign of Tiglath-pileser I. **1114–976**

Events in 1 Samuel. **1105?–1010**

Saul is anointed king. **1050**

David becomes king of Judah. **1010**

Events in 2 Samuel. **1010–970**

Events in 1 Chronicles. **1010–970**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

1000–970 BC

SAMSON 1120?–1060?

SAMUEL 1105–1025

Iron technology advances throughout India. **1000**

The Chinese store ice for use in refrigeration. **1000**

Oats are cultivated in central Europe. **1000**

David conquers Jerusalem. **1000?**

David moves the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. **1000?**

Absalom's revolt. **975?**

Solomon becomes king. **970**

970–900 BC

SAUL 1080–1010

DAVID 1050–970

Solomon begins construction of the temple in Jerusalem. **966**

The temple is dedicated. **959**

Ascendancy of Neo-Assyrian Empire **950**

The Kingdom divides. **931?**

Israel: The Northern Kingdom **931–722**

Judah: The Southern Kingdom **931–586**

Etruscans emigrate from Lydia to Italy as a result of an extended famine. **900**

HANNAH'S VOW

1 There was a man from Ramathaim-zophim † in † the hill country of Ephraim. † His name was Elkanah † son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2 He had two wives, † the first named Hannah † and the second Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah was childless. 3 This man would go up from his town every year † to worship and to sacrifice † to the LORD of Armies at Shiloh, † where Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were the LORD's priests.

4 Whenever Elkanah offered a sacrifice, he always gave portions of the meat † to his wife Peninnah and to each of her sons and daughters. 5 But he gave a double † portion † to Hannah, for he loved her even though the LORD had kept her from conceiving. 6 Her rival would taunt her severely just to provoke her, because the LORD had kept Hannah from conceiving. 7 Year after year, when she went up to the LORD's house, † her rival taunted her in this way. Hannah would weep and would not eat. 8 "Hannah, why are you crying? " her husband Elkanah would ask. "Why won't you eat? Why are you troubled? Am I not better to you than ten sons? " †

9 On one occasion, Hannah got up after they ate and drank at Shiloh. † The priest Eli was sitting on a chair by the doorpost of the LORD's temple. †

10 Deeply hurt, Hannah prayed to the LORD and wept with many tears. †

11 Making a vow, † she pleaded, "LORD of Armies, if you will take notice of your servant's affliction, † remember and not forget me, and give your servant a son, † I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and his hair will never be cut." † †

12 While she continued praying in the LORD's presence, Eli watched her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying silently, † † and though her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long are you going to be drunk? † Get rid of your wine! "

15 "No, my lord," Hannah replied. "I am a woman with a broken heart. I haven't had any wine or beer; I've been pouring out my heart before the LORD. †

16 Don't think of me as a wicked woman; † I've been praying from the depth of my anguish and resentment." †
17 Eli responded, "Go in peace, † and may the God of Israel grant the request you've made of him." †
18 "May your servant find favor with you," † she replied. Then Hannah went on her way; she ate and no longer looked despondent. † †

SAMUEL'S BIRTH AND DEDICATION

19 The next morning Elkanah and Hannah got up early to worship before the LORD. Afterward, they returned home to Ramah. † Then Elkanah was intimate with his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. † 20 After some time, † Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, † because she said, "I requested him from the LORD."
21 When Elkanah and all his household went up to make the annual sacrifice † and his vow offering to the LORD, 22 Hannah did not go and explained to her husband, "After the child is weaned, I'll take him to appear in the LORD's presence † and to stay there permanently." †
23 Her husband Elkanah replied, "Do what you think is best, † † and stay here until you've weaned him. May the LORD confirm your † word." † So Hannah stayed there and nursed her son until she weaned him. 24 When she had weaned him, she took him with her to Shiloh, as well as a three-year-old bull, † half a bushel † of flour, and a clay jar of wine. † Though the boy was still young, † she took him to the LORD's house at Shiloh. † 25 Then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.
26 "Please, my lord," she said, "as surely as you live, † my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. 27 I prayed for this boy, † and since the LORD gave me what I asked him for, † 28 I now give the boy to the LORD. For as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD." † Then he † worshiped the LORD there. †

1:1 Or *from Ramathaim, a Zuphite from* **1:5** Or *gave only one* ; Hb obscure **1:9** LXX adds *and presented herself before the Lord* **1:11** Lit *a seed of men* **1:11** Lit *and no razor will go up on his head* **1:13** Lit *praying to her heart* **1:18** Lit *and her face was not to her again* **1:20** Lit *In the turning of the days* **1:20** In Hb, the

name *Samuel* sounds like the phrase “requested from God.” **1:23** Lit *what is good in your eyes* **1:23** DSS, LXX, Syr; MT reads *his* **1:24** DSS, LXX, Syr; MT reads *Shiloh with three bulls* **1:24** Lit *bull and an ephah* **1:24** Lit *And the youth was a youth* **1:28** DSS read *she* ; some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *they* **1:28** LXX reads *Then she left him there before the Lord*
1:1 1Sm 1:19 **1:1** Jos 17:14-18; Jdg 17:1 **1:1** 1Ch 6:22-28,33-38 **1:2** Dt 21:15-17 **1:2** Lk 2:36 **1:3** Ex 34:23; Dt 16:16; Lk 2:41 **1:3** Ex 23:14-17 **1:3** Jos 18:1 **1:4** Dt 12:17-18 **1:5** Gn 43:34; 48:22 **1:7** Jos 18:1 **1:8** Ru 4:15 **1:9** 1Sm 3:3 **1:10** 1Sm 30:6; 2Kg 4:27 **1:11** Nm 30:6-11 **1:11** Gn 29:32 **1:11** Nm 6:5; Jdg 13:5; 16:7 **1:13** Gn 24:42-45 **1:14** Ac 2:4,13 **1:15** Ps 62:8 **1:16** 1Sm 2:12 **1:16** Lk 6:45 **1:17** 1Sm 25:35; 2Kg 5:19; Mk 5:34 **1:17** Ru 2:13 **1:18** Ru 2:13 **1:18** Rm 15:13 **1:19** 1Sm 1:1; 2:11 **1:19** Gn 8:1; 30:22; 1Sm 1:11 **1:21** Dt 12:11; 1Sm 1:3 **1:22** Lk 2:22 **1:22** 1Sm 1:11,28 **1:23** Nm 30:10-11 **1:23** Nm 30:13 **1:24** Nm 15:9-10 **1:24** Jos 18:1; 1Sm 4:3-4 **1:26** 2Kg 2:2,4,6 **1:27** 1Sm 1:11-13 **1:27** 1Sm 1:17,20 **1:28** 1Sm 1:11

1:1 1 Samuel continues where Judges left off. There had been no king in Israel (see the note on Jdg 17:6), and both Eli and Samuel “judged Israel” (4:18; 7:15,17), like the judges before them (e.g., Jdg 3:10; 10:2-3; 12:7-14; 16:31). This book also describes the institution of the monarchy with Saul and then David reigning as king (see the notes on 8:4-9 and 8:19-20). Even the birth of Samuel is related to these first two Israelite kings and to the theme of kingship (see the note on 2:10).

1:9-11 Once again, God’s plan is to be advanced through a barren woman (e.g., Gn 11:30; 25:21; 29:31; Jdg 13:2-3). **Hannah** not only suffered her barrenness but also the taunts of her husband’s other wife (regarding polygamy, see the note on Gn 2:24). Though loved by her husband (vv. 4-5), Hannah may not always have been comforted by him (v. 8). She was also mistaken by Eli to be drunk (vv. 12-16). Nevertheless, she vowed to God that if he were to give her a son, the boy would be dedicated to him as a lifelong Nazirite (v. 11; see Nm 6:1-21).

1:26-28 The birth of Samuel was an answer to Hannah’s prayer (vv. 11-20). True to her vow, she gave him back to God after he was weaned (see vv. 22-24; 2:11).

HANNAH’S TRIUMPHANT PRAYER

2 Hannah prayed: †

My heart rejoices in the LORD; †
my horn is lifted up by the LORD.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation. †
2 There is no one holy like the LORD. †
There is no one besides you! †
And there is no rock like our God. †
3 Do not boast so proudly, or let arrogant words come out of your mouth, for the
LORD is a God of knowledge, and actions are weighed by him. †
4 The bows of the warriors are broken, †
but the feeble are clothed with strength. †

5 Those who are full hire themselves out for food, but those who are starving
hunger no more.
The woman who is childless gives birth to seven, †
but the woman with many sons pines away. †
6 The LORD brings death and gives life; †
he sends some down to Sheol, and he raises others up. †
7 The LORD brings poverty and gives wealth; †
he humbles and he exalts. †
8 He raises the poor from the dust †
and lifts the needy from the trash heap. †
He seats them with noblemen †
and gives them a throne of honor. †
For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; †
he has set the world on them. †
9 He guards the steps † of his faithful ones, †
but the wicked perish in darkness, †
for a person does not prevail by his own strength. †
10 Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered; † †
he will thunder in the heavens against them. †
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. †
He will give power to his king;
he will lift up the horn of his anointed. † †

11 Elkanah went home to Ramah, † but the boy served the LORD in the presence of the priest Eli. †

ELI'S FAMILY JUDGED

12 Eli's sons were wicked men; † they did not respect the LORD † 13 or the priests' share of the sacrifices from the people. When anyone offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged meat fork while the meat was boiling 14 and plunge it into the container, kettle, cauldron, or cooking

pot. † The priest would claim for himself whatever the meat fork brought up. This is the way they treated all the Israelites who came there to Shiloh. 15 Even before the fat was burned, † the priest's servant would come and say to the one who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast, because he won't accept boiled meat from you — only raw." 16 If that person said to him, "The fat must be burned first; then you can take whatever you want for yourself," † the servant would reply, "No, I insist that you hand it over right now. If you don't, I'll take it by force!" 17 So the servants' sin was very severe in the presence of the LORD, because the men treated the LORD's offering with contempt. †

18 Samuel served in the LORD's presence † —this mere boy was dressed in the linen ephod. † 19 Each year his mother made him a little robe † and took it to him when she went with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. † 20 Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife: † "May the LORD give you children by this woman in place of the one she † has given to the LORD." † Then they would go home.

21 The LORD paid attention to Hannah's need, † and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD. †

22 Now Eli was very old. He heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel † and how they were sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. † 23 He said to them, "Why are you doing these things? I have heard about your evil actions from all these people. 24 No, my sons, the news I hear the LORD's people spreading is not good. 25 If one person sins against another, God can intercede for him, but if a person sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" † But they would not listen to their father, since the LORD intended to kill them. † 26 By contrast, the boy Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people. †

27 A man of God came to Eli and said to him, † "This is what the LORD says: 'Didn't I reveal myself to your forefather's family † when they were in Egypt and belonged to Pharaoh's palace? † 28 Out of all the tribes of Israel, I chose

your house † to be my priests, to offer sacrifices on my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. † I also gave your forefather's family all the Israelite fire offerings. 29 Why, then, do all of you despise my sacrifices and offerings that I require at the place of worship? † You have honored your sons more than me, † by making yourselves fat with the best part of all of the offerings of my people Israel.'
30 "Therefore, this is the declaration of the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I did say that your family and your forefather's family would walk before me forever. † But now,' this is the LORD's declaration, 'no longer! For those who honor me I will honor, † but those who despise me will be disgraced. † 31 Look, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your forefather's house, so that none in your family will reach old age. † 32 You will see distress in the place of worship, † in spite of all that is good in Israel, and no one in your family will ever again reach old age. † 33 Any man from your family I do not cut off from my altar will bring grief † and sadness to you. All your descendants will die violently. † † 34 This will be the sign that will come to you concerning your two sons Hophni and Phinehas: † both of them will die on the same day. †
35 " 'Then I will raise up a faithful priest † for myself. He will do whatever is in my heart and mind. I will establish a lasting dynasty for him, † and he will walk before my anointed one for all time. † 36 Anyone who is left in your family will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread. He will say: Please appoint me to some priestly office so I can have a piece of bread to eat.' "

2:8 DSS, LXX add *He gives the vow of the one who makes a vow and he blesses the years of the just.* **2:9** Lit *feet* **2:10** DSS, LXX read *The Lord shatters those who dispute with him* **2:10** Or *Messiah* **2:20** DSS; MT reads *he* **2:27** Lit *the palace of your father* **2:28** Lit *selected him* **2:33** Lit *grief to your eyes* **2:33** DSS, LXX read *die by the sword of men* **2:33** Lit *die men*

2:1 Ps 72:20; Hab 3:1; Lk 1:46-55 **2:1** Ps 75:4-5,10; 92:10 **2:1** Is 12:2-3 **2:2** Ex 15:11 **2:2** 2Sm 22:32 **2:2** 2Sm 7:22; Ps 18:31 **2:3** Pr 16:2; 24:12 **2:4** Ps 37:15; 46:9 **2:4** Ps 18:39; Heb 11:32-34 **2:5** Ru 4:15; Ps 113:9 **2:5** Jr 15:9 **2:6** Dt 32:39 **2:6** Is 26:19 **2:7** Dt 8:17-18 **2:7** Jb 15:11; Jms 4:10 **2:8** Jb 42:10-12; Ps 75:7 **2:8** 2Sm 7:8; Dn 2:48; Jms 2:5 **2:8** Jb 36:7 **2:8** Jb 38:4-6; Ps 75:3 **2:8** Ps 113:7-8 **2:9** Ps 91:11-12; 1Pt 1:5 **2:9** Mt 8:12 **2:9** Ps 33:16-17 **2:10** Ps 2:9 **2:10** 1Sm 7:10; Ps 18:13-14 **2:10** Ps 96:13; 98:9 **2:10** 1Sm 2:35; 12:3; 16:6; Ps 89:24 **2:11** 1Sm 1:1,19 **2:11** 1Sm 1:28; 2:18; 3:1 **2:12** 1Sm 1:15 **2:12** Jr 2:8; 9:3,6 **2:14** Lv 7:29-34 **2:15** Lv 3:3-5,16 **2:16** Lv 7:25 **2:17** Mal 2:7-9 **2:18** 1Sm 2:11; 3:1 **2:18** 1Sm 2:28 **2:19** Ex 28:31 **2:19** 1Sm 1:3,21 **2:20** Lk 2:34 **2:20** 1Sm 1:11,22,28 **2:21** Gn 21:1 **2:21** 1Sm 2:26; 3:19-21; Lk 2:40 **2:22** 1Sm 2:13-17 **2:22** Ex 38:8 **2:25** Nm 15:30-31; Heb 10:26-27 **2:25** Ex 5:2; 14:17-18; Jos 11:18-20 **2:26** Lk 2:52 **2:27** Dt 33:1; Jdg 13:6 **2:27** Ex 4:14-16; 12:1,43 **2:28** Ex 28:1-4 **2:29** Dt 12:5-7 **2:29** Mt 10:37 **2:30**

Ex 29:9; 40:12-15; Nm 25:10-13 **2:30** Ps 50:23 **2:30** 1Kg 2:26-27 **2:31** 1Sm 4:11-18; 22:17-20 **2:32** 1Kg 2:26-27 **2:32** Zch 8:4 **2:34** 1Sm 10:7-9; 1Kg 13:3 **2:34** 1Sm 4:11 **2:35** 1Sm 3:20 **2:35** 1Sm 8:3-5; 1Kg 11:38 **2:35** 1Sm 10:9-10; 12:3; 16:13

2:1-10 Hannah's poetic prayer celebrates God's action on her behalf. She especially emphasizes his salvation of the weak and needy and his humbling of the self-sufficient and proud (vv. 3-8). These verses emphasize a theme, seen throughout the OT, that God reverses fortunes. Truly **a person does not prevail by his own strength.** This theme is seen again in Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55. Another significant part of Hannah's prayer is her mention of God's **king** and **anointed.** This not only ties the birth of Samuel to the theme of kingship in 1 and 2 Samuel (see the note on 1:1) but also shows that Hannah herself expected the coming of a king (see the note on Gn 49:8-12). Furthermore, these two words, along with the reference to **the ends of the earth**, link this passage to Psalm 2 (see vv. 2,8), which is interpreted as messianic prophecy in the NT (see Ac 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5).

2:17 Contrary to Leviticus 7:23-25, Eli's sons took meat portions before the fat had been burned (vv. 12-16) and as such **treated the LORD's offering with contempt.** They were also "sleeping with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting" (v. 22). Indeed, "the LORD intended to kill them" (v. 25). By contrast, "Samuel grew in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men" (v. 26; see also 3:19-4:1).

2:27-36 Despite Eli's high position, he was confronted by a **man of God** because he had **honored** [his] **sons more than** [God]**.** Eli knew about their sins but did not stop them (3:13). Consequently, the descendants of the house of Eli would **die violently** (see also 1Kg 2:26-27), and his two sons would both **die on the same day** (see 4:11).

SAMUEL'S CALL

3 The boy Samuel served the LORD in Eli's presence. † In those days the
word of the LORD was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread. †
2 One day Eli, whose eyesight was failing, † was lying in his usual
place. 3 Before the lamp of God had gone out, † Samuel was lying down in the
temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was located.
4 Then the LORD called Samuel, † and he answered, "Here I am." 5 He ran to
Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."
"I didn't call," Eli replied. "Go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.
6 Once again the LORD called, "Samuel! "
Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me."
"I didn't call, my son," he replied. "Go back and lie down."
7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not
yet been revealed to him. 8 Once again, for the third time, the LORD called
Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "Here I am; you called me."
Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy. 9 He told Samuel, "Go
and lie down. If he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.' "
So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 The LORD came, stood there, and called as before, “Samuel, Samuel! ”
Samuel responded, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”
11 The LORD said to Samuel, “I am about to do something in Israel that everyone
who hears about it will shudder. † † 12 On that day I will carry out against Eli
everything I said about his family, from beginning to end. † 13 I told him that I
am going to judge his family forever because of the iniquity he knows about: his
sons are cursing God, † and he has not stopped them. † 14 Therefore, I have
sworn to Eli’s family: The iniquity of Eli’s family will never be wiped out by
either sacrifice or offering.” †
15 Samuel lay down until the morning; then he opened the doors of the LORD’s
house. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16 but Eli called him and said,
“Samuel, my son.”
“Here I am,” answered Samuel.
17 “What was the message he gave you? ” Eli asked. “Don’t hide it from me.
May God punish you and do so severely if you hide anything from me that he
told you.” † 18 So Samuel told him everything and did not hide anything from
him. Eli responded, “He is the LORD. Let him do what he thinks is good.” † †
19 Samuel grew, † and the LORD was with him, † and he fulfilled everything
Samuel prophesied. † † 20 All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel
was a confirmed prophet of the LORD. † 21 The LORD continued to appear in
Shiloh, because there he revealed himself to Samuel by his word. †

3:4 DSS, LXX read *called, “Samuel! Samuel! ”* **3:11** Lit *about it, his two ears will tingle* ; Hb obscure **3:13** LXX, Old Lat; MT reads *them* **3:18** Lit *what is good in his eyes* **3:19** Lit *he let none of his words fall to the ground*

3:1 1Sm 2:11,18 **3:1** Ps 74:9; Ezk 7:26; Am 8:11-12 **3:2** 1Sm 4:15 **3:3** Ex 27:20-21 **3:11** 2Kg 21:12; Jr 19:3 **3:12** 1Sm 2:27-36 **3:13** Dt 17:12; 21:18 **3:14** Lv 15:31; Is 22:14 **3:17** 2Sm 3:35 **3:18** Ex 34:5-7; Lv 10:3; Jb 2:10; Is 39:8 **3:19** 1Sm 2:21 **3:19** Gn 21:22; 28:15 **3:19** 1Sm 9:6 **3:20** 1Sm 2:35 **3:21** 1Sm 3:10

3:1-2 The infrequency of prophetic messages and visions highlights the spiritual darkness of **those days.** Eli’s **failing eyesight** contributes symbolically to this motif as well (see also 4:15).

3:7-14 The Lord apparently called young Samuel with an audible voice. Although the boy did not recognize God’s voice at first, God persisted (vv. 4-7). With Eli’s help (vv. 8-9), Samuel responded to God properly on the fourth try (v. 10) and heard his message of judgment against **Eli’s family** for their serious sins (see the notes on 2:17 and 2:27-36).

3:19–4:1 The Lord continued to bless Samuel and **fulfilled everything Samuel prophesied** so that all Israel recognized him as a **prophet of the LORD** (see also 2:26).

And Samuel's words came to all Israel.

4 **THE ARK CAPTURED BY THE PHILISTINES**

Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle and † camped at Ebenezer † while the Philistines camped at Aphek. † 2 The Philistines lined up in battle formation against Israel, and as the battle intensified, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who struck down about four thousand men on the battlefield.

3 When the troops returned to the camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD defeat us today before the Philistines? † Let's bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh. Then it † will go with us and save us from our enemies." † 4 So the people sent men to Shiloh to bring back the ark of the covenant of the LORD of Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim. † Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. 5 When the ark of the covenant of the LORD entered the camp, all the Israelites raised such a loud shout that the ground shook. †

6 The Philistines heard the sound of the war cry and asked, "What's this loud shout in the Hebrews' camp? " When the Philistines discovered that the ark of the LORD had entered the camp, 7 they panicked. "A god has entered their camp! " they said. "Woe to us, nothing like this has happened before. † 8 Woe to us, who will rescue us from these magnificent gods? These are the gods that slaughtered the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. 9 Show some courage and be men, Philistines! † Otherwise, you'll serve the Hebrews just as they served you. † Now be men and fight! "

10 So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, † and each man fled to his tent. † The slaughter was severe — thirty thousand of the Israelite foot soldiers fell. 11 The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died. †

ELI'S DEATH AND ICHABOD'S BIRTH

12 That same day, a Benjaminite man ran † from the battle and came to Shiloh. His clothes were torn, † and there was dirt on his head. 13 When he arrived,

there was Eli sitting on his chair beside the road watching, † because he was anxious about the ark of God. When the man entered the city to give a report, the entire city cried out.

14 Eli heard the outcry and asked, "Why this commotion?" The man quickly came and reported to Eli. 15 At that time Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes didn't move † because he couldn't see. †

16 The man said to Eli, "I'm the one who came from the battle. † I fled from there today."

"What happened, my son?" † Eli asked.

17 The messenger answered, "Israel has fled from the Philistines, and also there was a great slaughter among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are both dead, and the ark of God has been captured." 18 When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off the chair by the city gate, † and since he was old and heavy, his neck broke and he died. Eli had judged Israel forty years.

19 Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and about to give birth. When she heard the news about the capture of God's ark and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband, she collapsed and gave birth because her labor pains came on her. 20 As she was dying, † the women taking care of her said, "Don't be afraid. You've given birth to a son!" † But she did not respond or pay attention. 21 She named the boy Ichabod, † saying, "The glory has departed from Israel," † referring to the capture of the ark of God † and to the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 "The glory has departed from Israel," she said, "because the ark of God has been captured."

4:1 LXX reads *In those days the Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel, and Israel went out to engage them in battle. They* **4:3** Or *he* **4:7** Lit *yesterday or the day before* **4:15** Lit *his eyes stood* ; 1Kg 14:4 **4:16** LXX reads *camp* **4:20** LXX reads *And in her time of delivery, she was about to die* **4:21** = Where Is Glory?

4:1 1Sm 7:12 **4:1** Jos 12:18; 1Sm 29:1 **4:3** Jos 7:7-8 **4:3** Nm 10:35; Jos 6:6 **4:4** Ex 25:22; Nm 7:89 **4:5** Jos 6:5,20 **4:9** 1Co 16:13 **4:9** Jdg 13:1; 1Sm 14:21 **4:10** Dt 28:15,25; 1Sm 4:2 **4:10** 2Sm 18:17; 2Kg 14:12 **4:11** 1Sm 2:34; Ps 78:56-64 **4:12** Jos 7:22; 1Sm 8:11 **4:12** Jos 7:6; 2Sm 1:2; 15:32; Neh 9:1 **4:13** 1Sm 1:9; 4:18 **4:15** 1Kg 14:4 **4:16** 2Sm 1:4 **4:18** 1Sm 4:13 **4:20** Gn 35:16-19 **4:21** Ps 26:8; Jr 2:11 **4:21** 1Sm 4:11

4:3-5 The decision to bring **the ark of the LORD's covenant** into the next battle was both superstitious and a tacit attempt to manipulate God into giving them victory. This tactic proved futile as Israel was defeated and the ark was captured (vv. 10-11).

4:17-21 The news of his sons' death and the capture of God's ark brought about Eli's own death. The ark

was the centerpiece of the tabernacle (see Ex 25:10-22) and the epicenter of God's presence and glory. Eli's daughter-in-law named her newborn son **Ichabod,** knowing the **glory** [had] **departed from Israel.**

THE ARK IN PHILISTINE HANDS

5 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer † to Ashdod, † 2 brought it into the temple of Dagon † † and placed it next to his statue. † 3 When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. † So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. 4 But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. This time, Dagon's head and both of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained. † 5 That is why, still today, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.

6 The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod. † He terrified † the people of Ashdod and its territory and afflicted them with tumors. † † †

7 When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of Israel's God must not stay here with us, because his hand is strongly against us and our god Dagon." 8 So they called all the Philistine rulers together † and asked, "What should we do with the ark of Israel's God? "

"The ark of Israel's God should be moved to Gath," they replied. So they moved the ark of Israel's God. 9 After they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against the city of Gath, † causing a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, from the youngest to the oldest, with an outbreak of tumors. †

10 The people of Gath then sent the ark of God to Ekron, but when it got there, the Ekronites cried out, "They've moved the ark of Israel's God to us to kill us and our people! " †

11 The Ekronites called all the Philistine rulers together. † They said, "Send the ark of Israel's God away. Let it return to its place so it won't kill us and our people! " † For the fear of death pervaded the city; God's hand was oppressing them. † 12 Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven. †

5:2 A Philistine god of the sea, grain, or storm **5:2** Lit *to Dagon* **5:4** LXX; Hb reads *Only Dagon remained*

on it **5:6** LXX adds *He brought up mice against them, and they swarmed in their ships. Then mice went up into the land and there was a mortal panic in the city*. **5:6** Perhaps bubonic plague **5:10** DSS, LXX read *"Why have you moved . . . people? "* **5:11** DSS, LXX read *"Why don't you return it to . . . people? "*
5:1 1Sm 4:1; 7:12 **5:1** Jos 13:3 **5:2** Jdg 16:23-24; 1Ch 10:8-10 **5:3** Is 46:1-9 **5:6** Ex 9:3; 1Sm 5:7,11 **5:6** 1Sm 6:5 **5:6** Dt 28:27; Ps 78:66 **5:8** 1Sm 5:11; 29:6-11 **5:9** 1Sm 5:11; 7:13 **5:9** 1Sm 5:6 **5:11** 1Sm 5:8 **5:11** 1Sm 5:6,9 **5:12** Ex 12:30

5:1-5 The Israelites were mistaken in thinking that taking the ark of the covenant into battle would give them victory, as this was attempted manipulation (4:3). Although the Philistines had defeated Israel and **captured the ark**, they had not defeated God (see 4:8). Moreover, God clearly demonstrated that he was greater than their god **Dagon** (vv. 2,7), who twice was found **fallen with his face to the ground before the ark** (see also the note on Ex 12:12). His **head and both of his hands were broken off.** Decapitation of enemies after a battle showed their unmistakable defeat; here the same action shows that Dagon is powerless before the Lord. This Philistine god is also mentioned in Judges 16:23 and 1 Chronicles 10:10.

5:6-12 Although the ark itself did not bear magical powers (see the note on 4:3-5), God continued to use it to demonstrate his power to the Philistines (see vv. 1-5). Wherever the ark would go, the residents of that city would be afflicted with **tumors** and apparently some deaths (see v. 12). The Lord had taught both the Israelites and the Philistines a lesson.

THE RETURN OF THE ARK

6 When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory for seven
months, 2 the Philistines summoned the priests and the diviners † and
pleaded, "What should we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we
can send it back to its place."
3 They replied, "If you send the ark of Israel's God away, do not send it without
an offering. † Send back a guilt offering to him, † and you will be healed. Then
the reason his hand hasn't been removed from you will be revealed." †
4 They asked, "What guilt offering should we send back to him? "
And they answered, "Five gold tumors and five gold mice † corresponding to
the number of Philistine rulers, † since there was one plague for both you † and
your rulers. 5 Make images of your tumors and of your mice that are destroying
the land. Give glory to Israel's God, † and perhaps he will stop oppressing
you, † † your gods, and your land. † 6 Why harden your hearts as the
Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened theirs? † When he afflicted them, didn't they
send Israel away, and Israel left? †
7 "Now then, prepare one new cart and two milk cows that have never been
yoked. † Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up.
8 Take the ark of the LORD, place it on the cart, and put the gold objects that

you’re sending him as a guilt offering in a box † beside the ark. † Send it off and let it go its way. 9 Then watch: If it goes up the road to its homeland toward Beth-shemesh, † it is the LORD who has made this terrible trouble for us. However, if it doesn’t, we will know that it was not his hand that punished † us — it was just something that happened to us by chance.”
10 The men did this: They took two milk cows, hitched them to the cart, and confined their calves in the pen. 11 Then they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, along with the box containing the gold mice and the images of their tumors. 12 The cows went straight up the road to Beth-shemesh. † They stayed on that one highway, † lowing as they went; they never strayed to the right or to the left. The Philistine rulers were walking behind them to the territory of Beth-shemesh.
13 The people of Beth-shemesh were harvesting wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they were overjoyed to see it. 14 The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh and stopped there near a large rock. The people of the city chopped up the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. † 15 The Levites † removed the ark of the LORD, along with the box containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. That day the people of Beth-shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD.
16 When the five Philistine rulers † observed this, they returned to Ekron that same day.
17 As a guilt offering to the LORD, the Philistines had sent back one gold tumor for each city: † Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. 18 The number of gold mice also corresponded to the number of Philistine cities of the five rulers, the fortified cities and the outlying villages. † The large rock † † on which the ark of the LORD was placed is still in the field of Joshua of Beth-shemesh today.
19 God struck down the people of Beth-shemesh because they looked inside the ark of the LORD. † † He struck down seventy persons. † The people mourned because the LORD struck them with a great slaughter. 20 The people of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who is able to stand in the presence of the LORD this holy God? † To whom should the ark go from here? ”

21 They sent messengers to the residents of Kiriath-jearim, † saying, “The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and get it.” †

6:3 DSS, LXX read *healed, and an atonement shall be made for you. Shouldn’t his hand be removed from you? ”* **6:4** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *them* **6:5** Lit *will lighten the heaviness of his hand from you* **6:18** Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX, Tg; other Hb mss read *meadow* **6:19** LXX reads *But the sons of Jeconiah did not rejoice with the men of Beth-shemesh when they saw the ark of the Lord.* **6:19** Some Hb mss, Josephus; other Hb mss read *70 men, 50,000 men* **6:21** Lit *and bring it up to you*
6:2 Gn 41:8; Ex 7:11; Is 2:6 **6:3** Dt 16:16 **6:3** Lv 5:15-16 **6:4** 1Sm 5:6,9,12; 6:17 **6:4** Jos 13:3; Jdg 3:3; 1Sm 6:17-18 **6:5** Jos 7:19; Is 42:2 **6:5** 1Sm 5:6,11 **6:5** 1Sm 5:3-4,7 **6:6** Ex 8:15,32; 9:34 **6:6** Ex 4:21; 12:31 **6:7** Nm 19:2 **6:8** 1Sm 6:4-5 **6:8** 1Sm 6:3 **6:9** Jos 15:10 **6:9** 1Sm 6:3 **6:12** 1Sm 6:9 **6:12** Nm 20:19 **6:14** 1Kg 19:21 **6:15** Nm 4:1-33 **6:16** Jos 13:3 **6:17** 1Sm 6:4 **6:18** Dt 3:5 **6:18** 1Sm 6:14-15 **6:19** Nm 4:15-20; 2Sm 6:7 **6:20** Nm 17:13; Ps 76:7; Ezk 44:9-16 **6:21** Jos 9:17; 15:9,60

6:5-6 The Philistines were aware of what God had done to **the Egyptians** centuries ago (see also 4:8), and they took care not to send the ark of the covenant back to Israel “without an offering” (v. 3), lest they subject themselves to further judgment from God (see the note on Ex 12:12). This offering corresponded to both “the number of Philistine rulers” and to the plague itself (v. 4). Despite Israel’s sins and inadequacies, God was ensuring that the Philistines would indeed **give glory to Israel’s God.**

6:7-12 The cows’ direct route to Beth-shemesh removed any remaining doubt about God’s involvement in all of this (see 5:6,9,11).

6:19-20 By looking **inside the ark** (see Nm 3:27-32; 4:15-20), the Israelites showed that they still lacked proper respect for **this holy God** (see also note on 2Sm 6:3-9).

7 So the people of Kiriath-jearim came for the ark of the LORD and took it to Abinadab’s house on the hill. † They consecrated his son Eleazar to take care of it.

VICTORY AT MIZPAH

2 Time went by until twenty years had passed since the ark had been taken to Kiriath-jearim. Then the whole house of Israel longed for the LORD. 3 Samuel told them, “If you † are returning to the LORD † with all your heart, † get rid of the foreign gods † and the Ashtoreths that are among you, dedicate yourselves to † the LORD, and worship only him. † Then he will rescue you from the Philistines.” 4 So the Israelites removed the Baals and the Ashtoreths † and only worshiped the LORD.

5 Samuel said, “Gather all Israel at Mizpah, † and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf.” † 6 When they gathered at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out in the LORD’s presence. † They fasted that day, † and there they confessed,

“We have sinned against the LORD.” † And Samuel judged the Israelites at Mizpah.
7 When the Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at Mizpah, their rulers marched up toward Israel. When the Israelites heard about it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. 8 The Israelites said to Samuel, “Don’t stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, so that he will save us from the Philistines.”
9 Then Samuel took a young lamb † and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on behalf of Israel, and the LORD answered him. † 10 Samuel was offering the burnt offering as the Philistines approached to fight against Israel. The LORD thundered loudly † against the Philistines that day and threw them into such confusion that they were defeated by Israel. †
11 Then the men of Israel charged out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines striking them down all the way to a place below Beth-car.
12 Afterward, Samuel took a stone and set it upright † between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, † explaining, “The LORD has helped us to this point.” 13 So the Philistines were subdued † and † did not invade Israel’s territory again. † The LORD’s hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel’s life. 14 The cities from Ekron to Gath, which they had taken from Israel, were restored; Israel even rescued their surrounding territories from Philistine control. There was also peace between Israel and the Amorites.
15 Samuel judged Israel throughout his life. † 16 Every year he would go on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah and would judge Israel at all these locations. 17 Then he would return to Ramah † because his home was there, he judged Israel there, and he built an altar to the LORD there.

7:3 Lit *you and set your hearts on* **7:12** = Stone of Help **7:13** LXX reads *The Lord humbled the Philistines and they*

7:1 2Sm 6:3-4 **7:3** Ex 20:3 **7:3** Dt 13:4; 1Ch 19:3 **7:3** Dt 6:5; 30:10; Jl 2:12-14 **7:3** Jos 24:14,23; Jdg 10:16 **7:3** Dt 6:13; Mt 4:10 **7:4** Jdg 2:13 **7:5** Jdg 20:1 **7:5** 1Sm 8:6; 12:17,19,23 **7:6** 1Sm 1:15; Ps 62:8; Lm 2:19 **7:6** Lv 16:29; Neh 9:1 **7:6** Jdg 10:10 **7:9** Lv 22:27 **7:9** Ps 99:6; Jr 15:1 **7:10** 1Sm 2:10; 2Sm 22:14 **7:10** Ex 23:27; Jos 10:10; Jdg 4:15 **7:12** Jos 4:9 **7:13** Jdg 13:1-15 **7:13** 1Sm 13:5 **7:15** 1Sm 7:6; 12:11 **7:17** 1Sm 1:1,19; 2:11

7:2-4 Though **Israel longed for the LORD** and wanted to return to him, Samuel made sure that they got **rid of the foreign gods** to **worship only him.** Since God requires exclusive worship (see Ex 20:3), genuinely

seeking him entails forsaking all other gods. Regarding **the Baals and the Ashtoreths**, see the note on Judges 3:7-11.

7:7-11 In addition to confessing sin (v. 6), the Israelites also needed deliverance from the Philistines (see v. 3). When the Philistines attacked at Mizpah, the Israelites asked Samuel to pray to God on their behalf (vv. 7-8). The **LORD answered him** and **thundered loudly against the Philistines** and routed them.

7:15-17 Regarding Samuel as a judge, see the note on 1:1.

ISRAEL'S DEMAND FOR A KING

8 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges over Israel. †
2 His firstborn son's name was Joel and his second was Abijah. They
were judges in Beer-sheba. † 3 However, his sons did not walk in his
ways — they turned toward dishonest profit, took bribes, and perverted justice. †
4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at Ramah. †
5 They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways.
Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations have." †
6 When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand
wrong, so he prayed to the LORD. 7 But the LORD told him, "Listen to the people
and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected
me as their king. † 8 They are doing the same thing to you that they have done
to me, † since the day I brought them out of Egypt until this day, abandoning
me and worshiping other gods. 9 Listen to them, but solemnly warn them †
and tell them about the customary rights of the king who will reign over them."
10 Samuel told all the LORD's words to the people who were asking him for a
king. 11 He said, "These are the rights of the king who will reign over you: He
will take your sons and put them to his use in his chariots, on his horses, or
running in front of his chariots. 12 He can appoint them for his use as
commanders of thousands or commanders of fifties, † to plow his ground and
reap his harvest, or to make his weapons of war and the equipment for his
chariots. 13 He can take your daughters to become perfumers, cooks, and bakers.
14 He can take your best fields, vineyards, and olive orchards and give them to
his servants. † 15 He can take a tenth of your grain and your vineyards and give
them to his officials and servants. 16 He can take your male servants, your
female servants, your best young men, † and your donkeys and use them for his

work. 17 He can take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves can become his servants. 18 When that day comes, you will cry out because of the king you've chosen for yourselves, † but the LORD won't answer you on that day." †
19 The people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We must have a king over us. 20 Then we'll be like all the other nations: our king will judge us, go out before us, † and fight our battles."

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY'S IMPACT ON GOVERNMENTS

The NT does not present an elaborate manifesto for the direct impact of Christianity on government. Christ indicates that the payment of taxes by his disciples is a legitimate imperative (Mt 22:15-22). Paul indicates that the civil magistrate is to be obeyed and respected as one established by God (Rm 13:1-7) and that the church is to pray for those in civil authority (1Tm 2:2). Elsewhere, Paul is happy to appeal to his Roman citizenship as a means of obtaining legal privileges (Ac 25).

THE ANCIENT CHURCH

In the late first century, the earliest portion of the post-apostolic period, the Roman government features not so much as something to be principally opposed by the church but as a source of martyrdom, as seen in the various letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (ca AD 107). Then, in the second century, the Greek apologists spent much time arguing that Christians actually make the best citizens and should therefore be tolerated within the empire. In short, they did not present Christianity as an idiom of protest but as something that was compatible with living as obedient citizens and subjects of Rome.

Sporadic persecution of the church was supplanted by more pan-imperial campaigns in the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries. The requirement to pledge allegiance to the emperor and to sacrifice to him as to a god precipitated widespread Christian opposition and apostasy. Eventually, at the start of the fourth century, Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity and a new era of church-state relations commenced.

Though often criticized, the world of Constantine and beyond brought many benefits to the church, including the end of formal persecution in the West. By the end of the fourth century, the rapprochement between church and state was such that Ambrose, having served as a regional governor, was called as Bishop of Milan before he was even baptized. The skills needed to rule the church were apparently thought to be the same as those needed to run the empire. In addition, in the case of Priscillian, an ascetic teacher of the late fourth century, we have the first example of a heretic being prosecuted by the civil authority. Right doctrine had become a concern of state enforcement, not just church discipline.

THE MIDDLE AGES

The Middle Ages (ca 500–1500) saw major struggles between church and state in both the West and East. In the East, Caesaropapism (the practice of combining church and state powers under the rulership of the

governmental head) was not an official dogma. Nevertheless, it was the practical position for the Byzantine Church, as the emperor exerted the right to appoint Patriarchs. This was also the practical position of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Tsars.

In the West, the pope's crowning of Charlemagne as Holy Roman Emperor in AD 800 and then the various so-called Investiture Controversies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries helped to define church and state relations in terms of an often uneasy standoff, with the church exhibiting military and political ambitions outside of the strictly ecclesiastical sphere.

THE REFORMATION

Magisterial Reformers like Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and Thomas Cranmer worked in coordination with the civil magistrate to effect reform of the church. This took different localized forms: Zwingli and Calvin were reforming in cities with moderately representative governments; Luther worked under a medieval feudal system; Cranmer labored under a monarch. This somewhat shaped their respective attitudes to church and state. Luther generally counseled nonresistance, seeing church and state as operating in two different spheres with different tools. Zwingli saw church and state as closely identified, especially on matters of discipline. Calvin sought to free the church in terms of its ministry from state interference, although he was never able to achieve this quite as he wished in Geneva. Cranmer laid the foundations for an English church that was essentially Erastian in concept, with the head of state functioning as the supreme governor of the church. Thus, the church was essentially an arm of the state, a position sketched out in the writings of the medieval English theologian, John Wycliffe.

Radical groups were initially associated with the Magisterial Reformers but came to advocate models of reformation that pressed beyond that which the civil magistrate was prepared to tolerate. The results were the Peasants' Rebellion in Germany in 1525 and later the violent seizure of the city of Munster by radicals in 1534–1535. After the Munster siege ended in a bloodbath, Anabaptism, under the influence of Menno Simons whose brother had perished in the siege, moved in a strongly pacifist and social separatist direction. It formed alternative, peaceful communities.

John Knox and Christopher Goodman radicalized the position of both Luther and Calvin and extended the right of rebellion to subjects if the head of state committed idolatry, specifically in the form of the promotion, tolerance, or practice of Roman Catholicism. This notion bore fruit in the seventeenth century in the covenanting political theology of Samuel Rutherford and others. It also provided the ideological conditions for the English Civil War.

THE MODERN ERA

The last two hundred years have seen a great diversity in the approaches of Christians to the church and to politics. In the Eastern Bloc during the Cold War, both Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy provided idioms of protest against the avowedly atheist totalitarian regimes.

Some have argued on both the Left and the Right that the Bible calls for the church to be an agent of fundamental social transformation. Thus, in South America, Roman Catholic liberation theology involved a basic synthesis of Christian and Marxist themes. Protestant Theonomists have looked more to premodern models of social organization and OT case law as having perennial biblical sanction; thus, they wish to establish Mosaic law and OT case laws as the laws of the land. (Some go so far as to say non-Christians should not vote or hold office.) In the United States, the Reagan era saw the appropriation of biblical rhetoric for political purposes in the dying years of the Cold War. This appears to have left a lasting legacy of a connection between conservative Christianity and conservative politics. This position has been intensified in recent decades by the partisan alignment on the issue of abortion and also by the increasing role played by the politics of sexual identity in public political discourse.

There are alternatives to the close identification of church and society that one finds in liberation theology, theonomy, and Christian America movements. A strand of Presbyterian thinking has emphasized the fundamentally spiritual nature of the church whereby on principle the church does not speak directly to the

political issues of the day but is careful to allow for Christian freedom on such matters. The church simply preaches the Word as it culminates in Christ and administers sacraments and discipline. In recent years this has sharpened into what is known as Two Kingdom Theology, which sees its roots in the Reformation, especially in the thought of Martin Luther. This is in some ways akin to certain forms of Anabaptist thinking which see the church as an alternative community to the world and as fulfilling its task not by directly transforming political institutions but by modeling an alternative way of life.

CARL R. TRUEMAN

21 Samuel listened to all the people's words and then repeated them to the LORD. † 22 "Listen to them," the LORD told Samuel. "Appoint a king for them." †

Then Samuel told the men of Israel, "Each of you, go back to your city."

8:8 LXX; MT omits *to me* **8:16** LXX reads *best cattle* **8:21** Lit *them in the Lord's ears*
8:1 Dt 16:18-19 **8:2** Gn 22:19; 1Kg 19:3; Am 5:5 **8:3** Ex 23:1-9 **8:4** 1Sm 7:17 **8:5** Dt 17:14-15 **8:7** Ex 16:8; 1Sm 10:19 **8:9** Ezk 3:18 **8:12** Nm 31:14; 1Sm 22:7 **8:14** 1Kg 21:7; Ezk 46:18 **8:18** Is 8:21 **8:18** Pr 1:25-28; Mc 3:4 **8:20** Nm 27:17; 1Sm 18:13; 2Ch 1:10 **8:22** 1Sm 8:7

8:4-9 God was not opposed to a human king over Israel and had said in Deuteronomy that they could have one (see Dt 17:15). The problem with the Israelites' request for a king here was their desire to be like all the other nations (vv. 5,19; see also Dt 17:14). This motive was at odds with God's will for them to be "a holy nation" (Ex 19:6), set apart from the others (Ex 19:5; Lv 20:24,26; Dt 7:6). Furthermore, it was a rejection of God as their King (v. 7; 10:19; see also the notes on vv. 19-20 and Jdg 8:22-23).

8:19-20 Though Samuel warned that their king would take their children, property, crops, servants, and even their freedom for his own purposes (vv. 11-17; see 14:52), the Israelites insisted that they wanted a king to **judge** [them]**, go out before** [them]**, and fight** [their] **battles** (see also the note on vv. 4-9). This king, however, was subject to God and to his law (12:13-15; Dt 17:14-20). The eventual institution of the kingship had been implicitly assumed in passages such as Genesis 17:16 and 49:8-12. The messianic king described in the latter passage, however, would not come until "the last days" (see the note on Gn 49:8-12).

SAUL ANOINTED KING

9 There was a prominent man of Benjamin named Kish † son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Becorath, son of Aphiah, son of a Benjaminite. 2 He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. † There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else. † †

3 One day the donkeys of Saul's father Kish wandered off. Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go look for the donkeys." 4 Saul and his servant went through the hill country of Ephraim † and then through the region of Shalishah, † but they didn't find them. They went through the region

of Shaalim † — nothing. Then they went through the Benjaminite region but still didn't find them.

5 When they came to the land of Zuph, † Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come on, let's go back, or my father will stop worrying about the donkeys and start worrying about us." †

6 "Look," the servant said, "there's a man of God † in this city who is highly respected; everything he says is sure to come true. † Let's go there now. Maybe he'll tell us which way we should go." †

7 "Suppose we do go," Saul said to his servant, "what do we take the man? The food from our packs is gone, and there's no gift to take to the man of God. † What do we have? "

8 The servant answered Saul: "Here, I have a little † silver. I'll give it to the man of God, and he will tell us which way we should go."

9 Formerly in Israel, a man who was going to inquire of God would say, "Come, let's go to the seer," for the prophet of today was formerly called the seer. †

10 "Good," Saul replied to his servant. "Come on, let's go." So they went to the city where the man of God was. 11 As they were climbing the hill to the city, they found some young women coming out to draw water † and asked, "Is the seer here? "

12 The women answered, "Yes, he is ahead of you. Hurry, he just now entered the city, because there's a sacrifice † for the people at the high place † today. 13 As soon as you enter the city, you will find him before he goes to the high place to eat. The people won't eat until he comes because he must bless the sacrifice; after that, the guests can eat. Go up immediately — you can find him now." 14 So they went up toward the city.

Saul and his servant were entering the city when they saw Samuel coming toward them on his way to the high place. 15 Now the day before Saul's arrival, the LORD had informed Samuel, † † 16 "At this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel. † He will save them from the Philistines because I have seen the affliction of my people, † for their cry has come to me." 17 When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD told him, "Here is the man I told you about; † he will govern my people."

18 Saul approached Samuel in the city gate and asked, “Would you please tell
me where the seer’s house is? ”
19 “I am the seer,” Samuel answered. † “Go up ahead of me to the high place
and eat with me today. When I send you off in the morning, I’ll tell you
everything that’s in your heart. 20 As for the donkeys that wandered away from
you three days ago, † don’t worry about them because they’ve been found. And
who does all Israel desire † but you and all your father’s family? ”
21 Saul responded, “Am I not a Benjaminite † from the smallest of Israel’s
tribes and isn’t my clan the least important of all the clans of the Benjaminite
tribe? † So why have you said something like this to me? ”
22 Samuel took Saul and his servant, brought them to the banquet hall, and gave
them a place at the head of the thirty † or so men who had been invited. 23 Then
Samuel said to the cook, “Get the portion of meat that I gave you and told you to
set aside.”
24 The cook picked up the thigh † and what was attached to it and set it before
Saul. Then Samuel said, “Notice that the reserved piece is set before you. Eat it
because it was saved for you for this solemn event at the time I said, ‘I’ve
invited the people.’ ” So Saul ate with Samuel that day. 25 Afterward, they went
down from the high place to the city, and Samuel spoke with Saul on the
roof. † †
26 They got up early, and just before dawn, Samuel called to Saul on the roof,
“Get up, and I’ll send you on your way! ” Saul got up, and both he and Samuel
went outside. 27 As they were going down to the edge of the city, Samuel said to
Saul, “Tell the servant to go on ahead of us, but you stay for a while, and I’ll
reveal the word of God to you.” So the servant went on.

9:2 Lit *From his shoulder and up higher than any of the people* **9:8** Lit *a quarter of a shekel* (about a tenth of an ounce) **9:15** Lit *had uncovered Samuel’s ear, saying* **9:19** Lit *answered Saul* **9:22** LXX reads *70* **9:25** LXX reads *city. They prepared a bed for Saul on the roof, and he slept.*

9:1 1Sm 14:51; 1Ch 9:36-39 **9:2** 1Sm 10:24 **9:2** 1Sm 10:23 **9:4** Jos 24:33 **9:4** 2Kg 4:42 **9:4** Jos 19:42 **9:5** 1Sm 1:1 **9:5** 1Sm 10:2 **9:6** Dt 33:1; 2Kg 5:8 **9:6** 1Sm 3:19 **9:6** Gn 24:42 **9:7** 1Kg 14:3; 2Kg 5:15; 8:8-9; Ezk 13:19 **9:9** 2Sm 24:11; 1Ch 9:22; 26:28; Is 30:10 **9:11** Gn 24:15; 29:9; Ex 2:16 **9:12** Nm 28:11-15 **9:12** 1Sm 7:17; 10:5 **9:15** 1Sm 15:1; Ac 13:21 **9:16** 1Sm 10:1 **9:16** Ex 3:7,9 **9:17** 1Sm 16:12 **9:20** 1Sm 9:3 **9:20** 1Sm 8:5; 12:13 **9:21** 1Sm 15:17 **9:21** Jdg 20:46-48 **9:24** Ex 29:22,27; Lv 7:32-33; Nm 18:18 **9:25** Dt 22:8; Ac 10:9

9:1-17 Saul would become the first king of Israel, but his lineage from the tribe of Benjamin clearly

distinguished him from the king promised in Genesis 49:8-12 who would come from the line of Judah. He was not the only tall man in 1 Samuel who would prove a failure (v. 2; see also 16:7; 17:4).

10 Samuel took the flask of oil, † poured it out on Saul's head, † kissed him, and said, "Hasn't the LORD anointed you † ruler over his inheritance? † † 2 Today when you leave me, you'll find two men at Rachel's Grave † at Zelzah in the territory of Benjamin. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you went looking for have been found, † and now your father has stopped being concerned about the donkeys and is worried about you, asking: What should I do about my son? '

3 "You will proceed from there until you come to the oak of Tabor. † Three men going up to God at Bethel † will meet you there, one bringing three goats, one bringing three loaves of bread, and one bringing a clay jar of wine. 4 They will ask how you are and give you two loaves † of bread, which you will accept from them.

5 "After that you will come to Gibeah of God † where there are Philistine garrisons. † When you arrive at the city, you will meet a group of prophets † coming down from the high place prophesying. † They will be preceded by harps, tambourines, flutes, and lyres. 6 The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully on you, † you will prophesy with them, † and you will be transformed. † 7 When these signs have happened to you, do whatever your circumstances require † † because God is with you. 8 Afterward, go ahead of me to Gilgal. I will come to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come to you and show you what to do."

9 When Saul turned around † to leave Samuel, God changed his heart, † and all the signs came about that day. 10 When Saul and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a group of prophets met him. Then the Spirit of God came powerfully on him, and he prophesied along with them.

11 Everyone who knew him previously and saw him prophesy with the prophets asked each other, "What has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets? " †

12 Then a man who was from there asked, "And who is their father? " †

As a result, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” became a popular saying.
13 Then Saul finished prophesying and went to the high place.
14 Saul’s uncle † asked him and his servant, “Where did you go?”
“To look for the donkeys,” Saul answered. “When we saw they weren’t there, we went to Samuel.” †
15 “Tell me,” Saul’s uncle asked, “what did Samuel say to you?”
16 Saul told him, “He assured us the donkeys had been found.” However, Saul did not tell him what Samuel had said about the matter of kingship.

SAUL RECEIVED AS KING

17 Samuel summoned the people to the LORD at Mizpah † 18 and said to the Israelites, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: † ‘I brought Israel out of Egypt, and I rescued you from the power of the Egyptians and all the kingdoms that were oppressing you.’ 19 But today you have rejected your God, † who saves you from all your troubles and afflictions. You said to him, ‘You † must set a king over us.’ † Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans.” †
20 Samuel had all the tribes of Israel come forward, and the tribe of Benjamin was selected. 21 Then he had the tribe of Benjamin come forward by its clans, and the Matrite clan was selected. † Finally, Saul son of Kish was selected. †
But when they searched for him, they could not find him. 22 They again inquired of the LORD, † “Has the man come here yet?”
The LORD replied, “There he is, hidden among the supplies.”
23 They ran and got him from there. When he stood among the people, he stood a head taller than anyone else. † † 24 Samuel said to all the people, “Do you see the one the LORD has chosen? † There is no one like him among the entire population.”
And all the people shouted, † “Long live the king!” †
25 Samuel proclaimed to the people the rights of kingship. † He wrote them on a scroll, which he placed in the presence of the LORD. † Then Samuel sent all the people home.

26 Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, † and brave men whose hearts God had touched went with him. 27 But some wicked men said, “How can this guy save us?” They despised him and did not bring him a gift, † but Saul said nothing. † †

10:1 LXX adds *And you will reign over the Lord’s people, and you will save them from the hand of their enemies all around. And this is the sign to you that the Lord has anointed you ruler over his inheritance.* **10:4** DSS, LXX read *wave offerings* **10:5** Or *governors* **10:7** Lit *do for yourself whatever your hand finds* **10:9** Lit *turned his shoulder* **10:9** Lit *God turned to him another heart* **10:19** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *You said, ‘No, you* **10:21** LXX adds *And he had the Matrite clan come forward, man by man.* **10:23** Lit *people, and he was higher than any of the people from his shoulder and up* **10:24** LXX reads *acknowledged and said* **10:27** DSS add *Nahash king of the Ammonites had been severely oppressing the Gadites and Reubenites. He gouged out the right eye of each of them and brought fear and trembling on Israel. Of the Israelites beyond the Jordan none remained whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh-gilead.* **10:27** Lit *gift, and he was like a mute person*

10:1 Ex 30:23-33; 1Sm 16:13; 2Kg 9:3,6 **10:1** 2Kg 9:1-3 **10:1** 1Sm 16:13; 26:9; 2Sm 1:14 **10:1** Dt 32:9; Ps 78:71 **10:2** Gn 35:19-20 **10:2** 1Sm 9:3-5 **10:3** Gn 35:8 **10:3** Gn 28:19; 35:1,3,7 **10:5** 1Sm 13:2-3 **10:5** 1Sm 19:20; 2Kg 2:3,5,15 **10:5** 2Kg 3:15; 1Ch 25:1-6 **10:6** Nm 11:25,29; Jdg 14:6 **10:6** Ec 9:10 **10:6** 1Sm 19:23-24 **10:7** Jos 1:5 **10:11** 1Sm 19:24; Am 7:14-15; Mt 13:54-57 **10:12** Gn 45:8; Jdg 17:10 **10:14** 1Sm 14:50 **10:14** 1Sm 9:4-6 **10:17** 1Sm 7:5 **10:18** Jdg 6:8-9 **10:19** 1Sm 8:6-7 **10:19** 1Sm 8:19 **10:19** Jos 7:14-18; 24:1; Pr 16:33 **10:20-21** Jos 7:16-18 **10:22** Ex 28:30; Nm 27:21; 1Sm 23:2,4,9-11 **10:23** 1Sm 9:2 **10:24** Dt 17:15; 2Sm 21:6 **10:24** 1Kg 1:25,34,39 **10:25** 1Sm 8:11-17 **10:25** Dt 17:18-20 **10:26** 1Sm 11:4; 15:34 **10:27** 1Kg 10:25; 2Ch 17:5

10:1-2 Samuel’s anointing of Saul marked the beginning of monarchy in Israel (see also v. 24).

10:8 Samuel instructed Saul to wait for him at Gilgal where Samuel himself would offer sacrifices. Sadly, Saul would fail to do this, and these initial instructions are thus linked to one of Saul’s major personal failings (see the note on 13:8-14).

10:9-13 As Samuel predicted (vv. 2-6), **all the signs came about that day.** Most notably, Saul met **a group of prophets** at Gibeah and prophesied with them because “the Spirit of God” came upon him (vv. 5-6,10). His divine transformation (v. 6) surprised those who had known Saul previously (vv. 11-13; see also 19:18-24).

10:21-24 Saul’s hesitance to be king was demonstrated again (see 10:16). After being selected, he could not be found because he was **hidden among the supplies.** His height only added to the ridiculous situation (v. 23). Samuel’s statement that there was **no one like him among the entire population** does not reflect well on Israel (see also 9:2).

10:27 Saul’s lack of response to these **wicked men** who **despised him** suggest weakness, though he does show mercy to these same men later (see 11:12-13).

SAUL’S DELIVERANCE OF JABESH-GILEAD

11 Nahash † † the Ammonite came up and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. †
All the men of Jabesh said to him, “Make a treaty † with us, and we will serve you.”

2 Nahash the Ammonite replied, “I’ll make one with you on this condition: that I
gouge out everyone’s right eye † and humiliate all Israel.” †
3 “Don’t do anything to us for seven days,” the elders of Jabesh said to him,
“and let us send messengers throughout the territory of Israel. If no one saves us,
we will surrender to you.”
4 When the messengers came to Gibeah, † Saul’s hometown, and told the terms
to † the people, all wept aloud. † 5 Just then Saul was coming in from the field
behind his oxen. “What’s the matter with the people? Why are they weeping?”
Saul inquired, and they repeated to him the words of the men from Jabesh.
6 When Saul heard these words, the Spirit of God suddenly came powerfully on
him, † and his anger burned furiously. 7 He took a team of oxen, cut them in
pieces, † and sent them throughout the territory of Israel by messengers who
said, “This is what will be done to the ox of anyone who doesn’t march behind
Saul and Samuel.” † As a result, the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and
they went out united. †
8 Saul counted them at Bezek. † There were three hundred thousand † †
Israelites and thirty thousand † men from Judah. 9 He told the messengers who
had come, “Tell this to the men of Jabesh-gilead: ‘Deliverance will be yours
tomorrow by the time the sun is hot.’ ” So the messengers told the men of
Jabesh, and they rejoiced.
10 Then the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Tomorrow we will come out, and
you can do whatever you want † to us.”
11 The next day Saul organized the troops into three divisions. † During the
morning watch, they invaded the Ammonite camp and slaughtered them until the
heat of the day. There were survivors, but they were so scattered that no two of
them were left together.

SAUL’S CONFIRMATION AS KING

12 Afterward, the people said to Samuel, “Who said that Saul should not †
reign over us? † Give us those men so we can kill them!” †
13 But Saul ordered, “No one will be executed this day, for today the LORD has
provided deliverance in Israel.” †

14 Then Samuel said to the people, “Come, let’s go to Gilgal, so we can renew
the kingship there.” 15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there in the LORD’s
presence † they made Saul king. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings † in
the LORD’s presence, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.
11:1 DSS, LXX read *About a month later, Nahash* **11:4** Lit *in the ears of* **11:8** LXX reads *600,000* **11:8** DSS, LXX read *70,000* **11:10** Lit *do what is good in your eyes* **11:12** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss omit *not*
11:1 1Sm 12:12 **11:1** 1Sm 12:12; 31:11 **11:1** 1Kg 20:34; Ezk 17:13 **11:2** Nm 16:14 **11:2** 1Sm 17:26; Ps 44:13 **11:4** 1Sm 10:26; 15:34 **11:4** Gn 27:38; Jdg 2:4 **11:6** Jdg 14:6; 1Sm 10:10 **11:7** Jdg 19:29 **11:7** Jdg 21:5,8,10 **11:7** Jdg 20:1 **11:8** Jdg 1:5 **11:8** Jdg 20:2 **11:11** Jdg 7:16 **11:12** 1Sm 10:27 **11:12** Lk 19:27 **11:13** Ex 14:13; 1Sm 19:5 **11:15** 1Sm 10:17 **11:15** 1Sm 10:8

11:1-11 The Lord had said that Saul would deliver Israel from the Philistines (9:16), and he also defeated the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead (see also 14:47). His empowerment by the **Spirit of God** prior to battle recalls the judges (v. 6; see the notes on Jdg 3:7-11 and 13:25).

SAMUEL’S FINAL PUBLIC SPEECH

12 Then Samuel said to all Israel, “I have carefully listened to everything
you said to me and placed a king over you. † 2 Now you can see that
the king is leading you. As for me, I’m old and gray, and my sons are here with
you. I have led you from my youth until now. 3 Here I am. Bring charges against
me before the LORD and his anointed: Whose ox or donkey have I taken? †
Whom have I wronged or mistreated? From whom have I accepted a bribe to
overlook something? † † † I will return it to you.”
4 “You haven’t wronged us, you haven’t mistreated us, and you haven’t taken
anything from anyone,” they responded.
5 He said to them, “The LORD is a witness against you, and his anointed is a
witness today that you haven’t found anything † in my hand.” †
“He is a witness,” they said.
6 Then Samuel said to the people, “The LORD, who appointed Moses and
Aaron † and who brought your ancestors up from the land of Egypt, is a
witness. † 7 Now present yourselves, so I may confront you before the LORD
about all the righteous acts he has done for you and your ancestors.
8 “When Jacob went to Egypt, † your ancestors cried out to the LORD, † and he
sent them Moses and Aaron, who led your ancestors out of Egypt and settled
them in this place. † 9 But they forgot the LORD their God, so he handed them

over to Sisera † commander of the army of Hazor, to the Philistines, and to the king of Moab. † These enemies fought against them. 10 Then they cried out to the LORD and said, ‘We have sinned, for we abandoned the LORD and worshiped the Baals and the Ashtoreths. Now rescue us from the power of our enemies, † and we will serve you.’ 11 So the LORD sent Jerubbaal, † Barak, † † Jephthah, † and Samuel. † He rescued you from the power of the enemies around you, and you lived securely. 12 But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was coming against you, you said to me, ‘No, we must have a king reign over us’ — even though the LORD your God is your king.

13 “Now here is the king you’ve chosen, † the one you requested. † Look, this is the king the LORD has placed over you. 14 If you fear the LORD, † worship and obey him, and if you don’t rebel against the LORD’s command, then both you and the king who reigns over you will follow the LORD your God. 15 However, if you disobey the LORD † and rebel against his command, the LORD’s hand will be against you † as it was against your ancestors. † †

16 “Now, therefore, present yourselves and see this great thing that the LORD will do before your eyes. † 17 Isn’t the wheat harvest today? † I will call on the LORD, and he will send thunder and rain so that you will recognize † what an immense evil you committed in the LORD’s sight by requesting a king for yourselves.” † 18 Samuel called on the LORD, and on that day the LORD sent thunder and rain. As a result, all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. †

19 They pleaded with Samuel, “Pray to the LORD your God for your servants † so we won’t die! For we have added to all our sins the evil of requesting a king for ourselves.” †

20 Samuel replied, “Don’t be afraid. Even though you have committed all this evil, don’t turn away from following the LORD. † Instead, worship the LORD with all your heart. 21 Don’t turn away to follow worthless † things that can’t profit or rescue you; they are worthless. † 22 The LORD will not abandon his people, † because of his great name and because he has determined to make you his own people. †

23 “As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for
you. † I will teach you the good and right way. 24 Above all, fear the Lord and
worship him faithfully with all your heart; consider the great things he has done
for you. † 25 However, if you continue to do what is evil, both you and your
king will be swept away.” †

12:3 LXX reads *bribe or a pair of shoes? Testify against me*. **12:3** Lit *bribe and will hide my eyes with it?* **12:6** LXX; MT omits *is a witness* **12:8** LXX reads *“When Jacob and his sons went to Egypt and Egypt humbled them* **12:11** LXX, Syr; MT reads *Bedan* ; Jdg 4:6; Heb 11:32 **12:15** LXX *against you and against your king* **12:17** Lit *know and see* **12:21** LXX reads *away after empty*

12:1 1Sm 8:5-22 **12:3** Ex 20:17; Nm 16:15 **12:3** Dt 16:19 **12:5** Ac 23:9; 24:20 **12:5** Ex 22:4 **12:6** Ex 6:26 **12:8** Ex 2:23-25 **12:8** Ex 3:1-10 **12:9** Jdg 4:1-2 **12:9** Jdg 2:11-15 **12:10** Jdg 2:18 **12:11** Jdg 6:11-12,32 **12:11** Jdg 4:6; 11:1 **12:11** Jdg 11:1 **12:11** 1Sm 7:10-14 **12:13** 1Sm 10:24 **12:13** 1Sm 8:5; Hs 13:11 **12:14** Jos 24:14 **12:15** Jos 24:20; Is 1:20 **12:15** 1Sm 5:9 **12:15** Lv 26:14-33; Jos 24:14-27 **12:16** Ex 14:13 **12:17** Pr 26:1 **12:17** 1Sm 8:7 **12:18** Ex 9:23-25,31; 1Kg 18:37-39; Pr 26:1 **12:19** Ex 9:28; Jr 15:1 **12:19** 1Sm 17:20 **12:20** Dt 11:16 **12:21** Is 44:9-20; Jr 2:8,11; Hab 2:18 **12:22** Jos 7:9; Ezk 36:22-28 **12:22** Dt 7:6-9; 1Pt 2:9 **12:23** Nm 21:7; 1Sm 7:5-9; Rm 1:9-10 **12:24** Dt 10:21; Ps 103:2-14 **12:25** 2Kg 17:6-7

12:1-5 After leading Israel to reaffirm Saul’s kingship at Gilgal (11:14-15), **Samuel** speaks to the Israelites at length in this chapter. Now old, he had faithfully served them throughout his whole life.

12:6-25 Samuel’s emphases in this lengthy speech are God’s bringing Israel out of Egypt into this land (vv. 6-8), their rebellion against God and his gracious deliverance of them through judges (vv. 9-11), and their request for a king (vv. 12-17). As stated twice earlier (8:7; 10:19), this request was an implicit rejection of God as King (v. 12) and as such was **an immense evil.** Much like Moses had done long ago (see Lv 26; Dt 28), Samuel also charged Israel and their new king to obey God (v. 14; see also vv. 20-21,24), lest **the Lord’s hand . . . be against** [them] (v. 15) and they **be swept away** (v. 25). Also like Moses, Samuel assured the Israelites that **the Lord will not abandon his people** (v. 22; see Dt 30:1-14) and that he would continue to pray for and teach them.

SAUL’S FAILURE

13 Saul was thirty years † old when he became king, and he reigned forty-
two years † over Israel. † 2 He chose three thousand men from Israel
for himself: two thousand were with Saul at Michmash † and in Bethel’s hill
country, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah † of Benjamin. He sent
the rest of the troops away, each to his own tent.
3 Jonathan attacked the Philistine garrison † † that was in Geba, † and the
Philistines heard about it. So Saul blew the ram’s horn throughout the land †
saying, “Let the Hebrews hear! ” † † 4 And all Israel heard the news, “Saul has
attacked the Philistine garrison, and Israel is now repulsive to the Philistines.”
Then the troops were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

5 The Philistines also gathered to fight against Israel: three thousand † chariots,
six thousand horsemen, and troops as numerous as the sand on the seashore. †
They went up and camped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven. † †
6 The men of Israel saw that they were in trouble because the troops were in a
difficult situation. They hid in caves, in thickets, among rocks, and in holes and
cisterns. † 7 Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and
Gilead.
Saul, however, was still at Gilgal, and all his troops were gripped with fear. 8 He
waited seven days for the appointed time that Samuel had set, † but Samuel
didn't come to Gilgal, and the troops were deserting him. 9 So Saul said, "Bring
me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." Then he offered the burnt
offering.
10 Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived. So Saul went
out to greet him, 11 and Samuel asked, "What have you done? "
Saul answered, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me and you didn't
come within the appointed days and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash,
12 I thought, 'The Philistines will now descend on me at Gilgal, and I haven't
sought the LORD's favor.' So I forced myself to offer the burnt offering."
13 Samuel said to Saul, "You have been foolish. † You have not kept the
command the LORD your God gave you. † It was at this time that the LORD
would have permanently established your reign over Israel, † 14 but now your
reign will not endure. † The LORD has found a man after his own heart, † † and
the LORD has appointed him as ruler over his people, because you have not done
what the LORD commanded." 15 Then Samuel went † from Gilgal to Gibeah in
Benjamin. Saul registered the troops who were with him, about six hundred men.
16 Saul, his son Jonathan, and the troops who were with them were staying in
Geba † of Benjamin, and the Philistines were camped at Michmash. 17 Raiding
parties † went out from the Philistine camp in three divisions. One division
headed toward the Ophrah † road leading to the land of Shual. 18 The next
division headed toward the Beth-horon † road, and the last division headed
down the border road that looks out over the Zeboim Valley † toward the
wilderness.

19 No blacksmith could be found in all the land of Israel † because the
Philistines had said, “Otherwise, the Hebrews will make swords or spears.”
20 So all the Israelites went to the Philistines to sharpen their plows, mattocks,
axes, and sickles. † 21 The price was two-thirds of a shekel † for plows and
mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for pitchforks and axes, and for putting a
point on a cattle prod. 22 So on the day of battle not a sword or spear could be
found in the hand of any of the troops who were with Saul † and Jonathan; only
Saul and his son Jonathan had weapons.

JONATHAN’S VICTORY OVER THE PHILISTINES

23 Now a Philistine garrison † took control of the pass at Michmash.

13:1 Some LXX mss; MT reads *was one year* **13:1** Text emended; MT reads *two years* **13:1** Some LXX mss omit v. 1 **13:3** Or *governor*, also in v. 4 **13:3** LXX reads *“The slaves have revolted”* **13:5** One LXX ms, Syr; MT reads *30,000* **13:5** LXX reads *Michmash, opposite Beth-horon to the south* **13:14** Lit *man according to his heart* **13:15** LXX reads *Samuel left Gilgal and went on his way, and the rest of the people followed Saul to join the people in his army. They went* **13:20** LXX; MT reads *plowshares* **13:21** Lit *of a pim* ; about one-fourth ounce of silver

13:2 1Sm 14:31 **13:2** 1Sm 10:26 **13:3** 1Sm 10:5 **13:3** 1Sm 13:16; 14:5 **13:3** Jdg 3:27; 6:34 **13:3** Nm 10:9; Jdg 3:27; 6:34 **13:5** Jos 11:4 **13:5** 1Sm 14:23 **13:6** Jdg 6:2 **13:8** 1Sm 10:8 **13:13** 2Ch 16:9 **13:13** 1Sm 15:22,28 **13:13** 1Sm 1:22 **13:14** 1Sm 15:28 **13:14** 1Sm 16:7; Ac 13:22 **13:16** 1Sm 13:2-3 **13:17** 1Sm 14:15 **13:17** Jos 18:23 **13:18** Jos 18:13-14 **13:18** Neh 11:34 **13:19** Jdg 5:8; 2Kg 24:14 **13:22** Jdg 5:8 **13:23** 1Sm 14:1; 2Sm 23:14

13:8-14 The Philistines’ preparation for battle put Saul and his troops under great distress at Gilgal (vv. 5-7). When Samuel had not arrived by the appointed time and Saul’s troops were deserting (see the note on 10:8), Saul took matters into his own hands and offered the burnt offering—contrary to Samuel’s earlier instructions. Saul made excuses when confronted by Samuel, but Samuel insisted that Saul had been **foolish** and disobedient. Consequently, God would not establish his **reign** (lit “kingdom”) and had found instead **a man after his own heart.** Israel’s first king was thus a failure because of his disobedience to the prophetic word (see also the notes on 8:19-20; 12:6-17; and 15:22-23).

13:19-22 The lack of **swords or spears** in Israel showed both the extent of Philistine oppression and the pathetic state of the Israelite army.

14 That same day Saul’s son Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his
weapons, “Come on, let’s cross over to the Philistine garrison on the
other side.” However, he did not tell his father.

2 Saul was staying under the pomegranate tree in Migron † on the outskirts of
Gibeah. † † The troops with him numbered about six hundred. † 3 Ahijah, †
who was wearing an ephod, † was also there. He was the son of Ahitub, the

brother of Ichabod † son of Phinehas, son of Eli the LORD's priest at Shiloh. †
But the troops did not know that Jonathan had left.
4 There were sharp columns † of rock on both sides of the pass † that Jonathan
intended to cross to reach the Philistine garrison. One was named Bozez and the
other Seneh; 5 one stood to the north in front of Michmash and the other to the
south in front of Geba. 6 Jonathan said to the attendant who carried his weapons,
"Come on, let's cross over to the garrison of these uncircumcised men. †
Perhaps the LORD will help us. Nothing can keep the LORD from saving, whether
by many or by few." †
7 His armor-bearer responded, "Do what is in your heart. You choose. I'm right
here with you whatever you decide."
8 "All right," Jonathan replied, "we'll cross over to the men and then let them
see us. 9 If they say, 'Wait until we reach you,' then we will stay where we are
and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come on up,' then we'll go up,
because the LORD has handed them over to us — that will be our sign."
11 They let themselves be seen by the Philistine garrison, and the Philistines
said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they've been
hiding!" 12 The men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armor-bearer.
"Come on up, and we'll teach you a lesson!" they said.
"Follow me," Jonathan told his armor-bearer, "for the LORD has handed them
over to Israel." † 13 Jonathan climbed up using his hands and feet, with his
armor-bearer behind him. Jonathan cut them down, and his armor-bearer
followed and finished them off. 14 In that first assault Jonathan and his armor-
bearer struck down about twenty men in a half-acre field.

A DEFEAT FOR THE PHILISTINES

15 Terror spread through the Philistine camp and the open fields to all the troops.
Even the garrison and the raiding parties † were terrified. The earth shook, †
and terror spread from God. † † 16 When Saul's watchmen in Gibeah of
Benjamin looked, they saw the panicking troops scattering in every direction.
17 So Saul said to the troops with him, "Call the roll and determine who has left
us." They called the roll and saw that Jonathan and his armor-bearer were gone.

18 Saul told Ahijah, “Bring the ark of God,” for it was with the Israelites † at
that time. 19 While Saul spoke to the priest, † the panic in the Philistine camp
increased in intensity. So Saul said to the priest, “Stop what you’re doing.” †
20 Saul and all the troops with him assembled and marched to the battle, and
there the Philistines were, fighting against each other in great confusion! †
21 There were Hebrews from the area who had gone earlier into the camp to join
the Philistines, but even they joined the Israelites † who were with Saul and
Jonathan. 22 When all the Israelite men who had been hiding in the hill country
of Ephraim † heard that the Philistines were fleeing, they also joined Saul and
Jonathan in the battle. 23 So the LORD saved Israel that day. †

SAUL’S RASH OATH

The battle extended beyond Beth-aven, 24 and the men of Israel were worn out
that day, for Saul had † placed the troops under an oath: † “The man who eats
food before evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies is cursed.”
So none of the troops tasted any food.
25 Everyone † went into the forest, and there was honey on the ground.
26 When the troops entered the forest, they saw the flow of honey, but none of
them ate any of it † because they feared the oath. 27 However, Jonathan had not
heard his father make the troops swear the oath. He reached out with the end of
the staff he was carrying and dipped it into the honeycomb. † When he ate the
honey, † he had renewed energy. † † 28 Then one of the troops said, “Your
father made the troops solemnly swear, ‘The man who eats food today is
cursed,’ and the troops are exhausted.”
29 Jonathan replied, “My father has brought trouble to the land. † Just look at
how I have renewed energy † because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How
much better if the troops had eaten freely today from the plunder they took from
their enemies! Then the slaughter of the Philistines would have been much
greater.”
31 The Israelites struck down the Philistines that day from Michmash † all the
way to Aijalon. † Since the Israelites were completely exhausted, 32 they rushed
to the plunder, † took sheep, goats, cattle, and calves, slaughtered them on the

ground, and ate meat with the blood still in it. 33 Some reported to Saul: “Look, the troops are sinning against the LORD by eating meat with the blood still in it.” †
Saul said, “You have been unfaithful. Roll a large stone over here at once.” 34 He then said, “Go among the troops and say to them, ‘Let each man bring me his ox or his sheep. Do the slaughtering here and then you can eat. Don’t sin against the LORD by eating meat with the blood in it.’ ” So every one of the troops brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. 35 Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had built an altar to the LORD. †
36 Saul said, “Let’s go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder them until morning. Don’t let even one remain! ”
“Do whatever you want,” † the troops replied.
But the priest † said, “Let’s approach God here.” †
37 So Saul inquired of God, † “Should I go after the Philistines? Will you hand them over to Israel? ” But God did not answer him that day. †
38 Saul said, “All you leaders of the troops, come here. Let us investigate † how this sin has occurred today. 39 As surely as the LORD lives who saves Israel, even if it is because of my son Jonathan, he must die! ” Not one of the troops answered him.
40 So he said to all Israel, “You will be on one side, and I and my son Jonathan will be on the other side.”
And the troops replied, “Do whatever you want.”
41 So Saul said to the LORD, “God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant today? If the unrighteousness is in me or in my son Jonathan, LORD God of Israel, give Urim; but if the fault is in your people Israel, give Thummim.” † † Jonathan and Saul were selected, and the troops were cleared of the charge.
42 Then Saul said, “Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan,” and Jonathan was selected. 43 Saul commanded him, “Tell me what you did.” †
Jonathan told him, “I tasted a little honey † with the end of the staff I was carrying. I am ready to die! ”
44 Saul declared to him, “May God punish me and do so severely † if you do not die, Jonathan! ”

45 But the people said to Saul, “Must Jonathan die, who accomplished such a great deliverance for Israel? No, as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, † for he worked with God’s help today.” † So the people redeemed Jonathan, and he did not die. 46 Then Saul gave up the pursuit of the Philistines, and the Philistines returned to their own territory.

SUMMARY OF SAUL’S KINGSHIP

47 When Saul assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies in every direction: against Moab, the Ammonites, † Edom, the kings of Zobah, † and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he caused havoc. † 48 He fought bravely, defeated the Amalekites, † and rescued Israel from those who plundered them.

49 Saul’s sons † were Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. The names of his two daughters were Merab, † his firstborn, and Michal, † the younger. 50 The name of Saul’s wife was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of his army was Abner son of Saul’s uncle Ner. † 51 Saul’s father was Kish. † Abner’s father was Ner son of Abiel.

52 The conflict with the Philistines was fierce all of Saul’s days, so whenever Saul noticed any strong or valiant man, he enlisted him. †

14:2 LXX reads *on top of the hill* **14:4** Lit *There was a tooth* **14:15** Or *and a great terror spread* **14:18** LXX reads *“Bring the ephod.” For he wore the ephod before Israel* **14:19** Lit *“Withdraw your hand”* **14:24** LXX adds *committed a great act of ignorance and* **14:25** Lit *All the land* **14:26** Lit *but there was none who raised his hand to his mouth* **14:27** Lit *he returned his hand to his mouth* **14:27** Lit *his eyes became bright* **14:29** Lit *how my eyes became bright* **14:36** Lit *Do what is good in your eyes,* also in v. 40 **14:38** Lit *know and see* **14:41** LXX; MT reads *said to the Lord, “God of Israel, give us the right decision.”* **14:47** LXX reads *he was victorious*

14:2 Is 10:28 **14:2** 1Sm 13:15-16 **14:2** 1Sm 13:15 **14:3** 1Sm 22:9-12,20 **14:3** 1Sm 2:28 **14:3** 1Sm 4:21 **14:3** 1Sm 1:3 **14:4** 1Sm 13:23 **14:6** 1Sm 17:26,36; Jr 9:25-26 **14:6** Jdg 7:4-7 **14:12** 2Sm 5:24 **14:15** 1Sm 13:17-18 **14:15** 1Sm 7:10 **14:15** 2Kg 7:6 **14:19** Nm 27:21 **14:20** Jdg 7:22; 2Ch 20:23 **14:21** 1Sm 29:4 **14:22** 1Sm 13:6 **14:23** Ex 14:30 **14:24** Jos 6:26 **14:27** 1Sm 14:43 **14:27** 1Sm 30:12 **14:29** 1Kg 18:17-18 **14:31** 1Sm 14:5 **14:31** Jos 10:12 **14:32** 1Sm 15:19 **14:33** Gn 9:4; Lv 17:10-12 **14:35** 1Sm 7:12,17 **14:36** 1Sm 14:3,18-19 **14:36** Jdg 18:5-6 **14:37** 1Sm 10:22 **14:37** 1Sm 28:6 **14:41** Ac 1:24 **14:43** Jos 7:19 **14:43** 1Sm 14:27 **14:44** 1Sm 25:22 **14:45** 2Sm 14:11; 1Kg 1:52; Ac 27:34 **14:45** Jn 3:21 **14:47** 1Sm 11:1-13 **14:47** 2Sm 8:3-10 **14:48** 1Sm 15:3,7 **14:49** 1Sm 31:2; 1Ch 10:2 **14:49** 1Sm 18:17-19 **14:49** 1Sm 18:20,27; 19:12; 2Sm 6:20-23 **14:50** 2Sm 2:8 **14:51** 1Sm 9:1,21 **14:52** 1Sm 8:11

14:6-14 Jonathan’s faith that God could save **by many or by few** was rewarded when he and his armor-bearer struck down twenty Philistines. The rationale behind the **sign** is not entirely clear (v. 10). Jonathan apparently saw the potential Philistine responses as a way for the sovereign Lord to show his will.

14:17 Saul finally discovered that **Jonathan and his armor-bearer** had left (see vv. 1,3).

14:18-19 Saul's request for the **ark of God** would seem to be for the purpose of seeking divine guidance, but the biblical text mentions no such request or any guidance given. Perhaps he abandoned the attempt once it became obvious that the fighting would begin.

14:20-23 Despite Saul's failures, God faithfully delivered Israel from the Philistines through him (see 9:16; 14:47-48). The self-destruction of the Philistines recalls Gideon's victory over the Midianites (see the note on Jdg 7:19-22).

14:29-30 The latent disunity between Saul and Jonathan is now clearly manifested (see vv. 1,3, 17,38-44). Although Jonathan's violation of his father's command was inadvertent (vv. 24-27), his response upon being confronted was to question the king's decision.

14:31-35 In placing his troops under oath not to eat (v. 24), Saul had put his men in a difficult position. Unable to take it anymore, they ended up taking from the plunder and eating **meat with the blood still in it**, which was forbidden (vv. 33-34; see also the note on Lv 3:17).

14:38-46 Saul once again spoke rashly in ordering the death penalty of the person responsible (see previous note). When **Jonathan** was revealed to be the one, Saul was prepared to put to death his own son (vv. 43-44) but was prevented from doing so by the people (v. 45). Thus, the disunity between Saul and Jonathan is shown again (see the note on 14:29-30). The people did not follow Saul in that instance either (see also vv. 31-33; 13:8).

SAUL REJECTED AS KING

15 Samuel told Saul, "The LORD sent me to anoint you as king over his
people Israel. † Now, listen to the words of the LORD. 2 This is what the
LORD of Armies says: 'I witnessed † what the Amalekites did to the Israelites
when they opposed them along the way as they were coming out of Egypt. †
3 Now go and attack the Amalekites and completely destroy everything they
have. † Do not spare them. Kill men and women, infants and nursing babies,
oxen and sheep, camels and donkeys.' " †
4 Then Saul summoned the troops and counted them at Telaim: two hundred
thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. 5 Saul came to the city
of Amalek and set up an ambush in the wadi. 6 He warned the Kenites, † "Since
you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came out of Egypt, † go on
and leave! Get away from the Amalekites, or I'll sweep you away with them."
So the Kenites withdrew from the Amalekites.
7 Then Saul struck down the Amalekites † from Havilah † all the way to
Shur, † which is next to Egypt. 8 He captured King Agag † of Amalek alive,
but he completely destroyed all the rest of the people with the sword. † 9 Saul
and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and choice

animals, † as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and unwanted things.
10 Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, 11 "I regret that I made Saul king, † for he has turned away from following me and has not carried out my instructions." † So Samuel became angry and cried out to the LORD all night. †
12 Early in the morning Samuel got up to confront Saul, but it was reported to Samuel, "Saul went to Carmel † where he set up a monument for himself. Then he turned around and went down to Gilgal." † 13 When Samuel came to him, Saul said, "May the LORD bless you. † I have carried out the LORD's instructions."
14 Samuel replied, "Then what is this sound of sheep, goats, † and cattle I hear? "
15 Saul answered, "The troops brought them from the Amalekites and spared the best sheep, goats, and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the LORD your God, † but the rest we destroyed." †
16 "Stop! " exclaimed Samuel. "Let me tell you what the LORD said to me last night."
"Tell me," he replied.
17 Samuel continued, "Although you once considered yourself unimportant, † have you not become the leader of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel 18 and then sent you on a mission and said: 'Go and completely destroy the sinful Amalekites. Fight against them until you have annihilated them.' 19 So why didn't you obey the LORD? Why did you rush on the plunder † and do what was evil in the LORD's sight? "
20 "But I did obey the LORD! " Saul answered. † "I went on the mission the LORD gave me: I brought back King Agag of Amalek, and I completely destroyed the Amalekites. 21 The troops took sheep, goats, and cattle from the plunder — the best of what was set apart for destruction — to sacrifice to the LORD your God at Gilgal." †
22 Then Samuel said:

Does the LORD † take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as
in obeying the LORD?

Look: to obey is better than sacrifice,
to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. †
23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination, †
and defiance is like wickedness † and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has rejected you as king. †

24 Saul answered Samuel, "I have sinned. † I have transgressed the LORD's command † and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them.
25 Now therefore, please forgive my sin † and return with me so I can worship the LORD."
26 Samuel replied to Saul, "I will not return with you. Because you rejected the word of the LORD, † the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."
27 When Samuel turned to go, Saul grabbed the corner of his robe, and it tore.
28 Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingship of Israel away from you today † and has given it to your neighbor who is better than you. †
29 Furthermore, the Eternal One of Israel † does not lie or change his mind, for he is not man who changes his mind." †
30 Saul said, "I have sinned. Please honor me † now before the elders of my people and before Israel. Come back with me so I can bow in worship to the LORD your God." † 31 Then Samuel went back, following Saul, and Saul bowed down to the LORD.
32 Samuel said, "Bring me King Agag of Amalek."
Agag came to him trembling, † for he thought, "Certainly the bitterness of death has come." † †
33 Samuel declared:

As your sword has made women childless,
so your mother will be childless among women. †

Then he hacked Agag to pieces before the LORD at Gilgal.

34 Samuel went to Ramah, † and Saul went up to his home in Gibeah † of Saul.
35 Even to the day of his death, Samuel never saw Saul again. † Samuel
mourned for Saul, † and the LORD regretted he had made Saul king over Israel.
15:2 LXX reads *I will avenge* **15:9** Lit *and the second ones* **15:14** Lit *sheep in my ears* **15:20** Lit *answered Samuel* **15:32** Hb obscure **15:32** LXX reads *"Is death bitter in this way? "* **15:32** Lit *turned*
15:1 1Sm 9:16 **15:2** Ex 17:8-16; Nm 24:20; Dt 25:17-19 **15:3** Nm 24:20; Dt 20:16-18 **15:3** Jos 6:17-21; 1Sm 22:19 **15:6** Jdg 1:16; 4:11 **15:6** Ex 18:9-10; Nm 10:29-32 **15:7** 1Sm 14:48 **15:7** Gn 16:7; 25:17-18 **15:7** Ex 15:22; 1Sm 27:8 **15:8** Nm 24:7; Est 3:1 **15:8** 1Sm 27:8; 30:1; 2Sm 8:12 **15:11** Gn 6:6-7; Ex 32:14; 2Sm 24:16 **15:11** 1Kg 9:6-7 **15:11** Ex 32:11-13; Lk 6:12 **15:12** Jos 15:55; 1Sm 25:2 **15:12** 1Sm 13:13-14 **15:13** Gn 14:19; 2Sm 2:5 **15:15** Gn 3:12-13 **15:14-15** Ex 32:21-24 **15:17** 1Sm 9:21 **15:19** 1Sm 14:32 **15:21** Ex 32:22-23 **15:22** Ps 40:6-8; 51:16-17; Is 1:11-15; Mc 6:6-8 **15:22** Heb 10:5-7 **15:23** Dt 18:10 **15:23** Gn 31:19,34 **15:23** 1Sm 8:7 **15:24** Nm 22:34; 2Sm 12:13; Ps 51:3-4 **15:24** Pr 29:25; Is 51:12-13 **15:25** Ex 10:17 **15:26** 1Sm 13:14; 16:1 **15:28** 1Sm 28:17-18 **15:27-28** 1Kg 11:30-36 **15:29** 1Ch 29:11; Ps 18:1-2 **15:29** Nm 23:19; Ezk 24:14 **15:30** Jn 12:43 **15:30** Is 29:13 **15:33** Gn 9:6; Jdg 1:7; Mt 7:2 **15:34** 1Sm 7:17 **15:34** 1Sm 11:4 **15:35** 1Sm 19:24 **15:35** 1Sm 16:1

15:1-3 The occasion for Saul's second major failure was this command to completely destroy **the Amalekites** and their livestock (see the note on 13:8-14). The Amalekites had fought against Israel shortly after the exodus from Egypt, and at that time God had said that he would **completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven** (Ex 17:14,16). Likewise, Balaam had prophesied that Amalek's "future is destruction" (Nm 24:20). Saul was supposed to carry out this plan of God. For a parallel to such utter destruction, see the note on Deuteronomy 7:1-6. Amalek was also connected with the land of Canaan (see Nm 13:29; Jdg 5:14; 12:15).

15:22-23 Saul was supposed to destroy all the Amalekites and their livestock (v. 3), but he spared their king and their best animals (v. 9). When confronted by Samuel, he once again made excuses (vv. 12-15,20-21; see 13:11-12). As Samuel explained, **to obey is better than sacrifice** (see vv. 15,21). For a second time, Saul had **rejected the word of the LORD**, and as a result, God **rejected** [him] **as king** (see the note on 13:8-14).

15:24 Saul finally admitted that he sinned because he **was afraid of the people.** As Proverbs 29:25 says, "The fear of mankind is a snare."

15:28-29 In 13:13-14, Samuel had warned that Saul's "reign" (lit "kingdom") would not be "permanently established" and would "not endure." Here Samuel said that Saul's **kingship** (lit "kingdom") was being **torn . . . away . . . today.** The Lord regretted making Saul king because of his repeated disobedience (vv. 11,35) and had decidedly rejected him as king.

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

16 The LORD said to Samuel, "How long are you going to mourn for
Saul, † since I have rejected him as king over Israel? † Fill your horn
with oil † and go. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem † because I have
selected a king from his sons."
2 Samuel asked, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me! "

The LORD answered, “Take a young cow with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’ † 3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will let you know what you are to do. † You are to anoint for me the one I indicate to you.” †

4 Samuel did what the LORD directed and went to Bethlehem. † When the elders of the town met him, they trembled † and asked, “Do † you come in peace? ” †

5 “In peace,” he replied. “I’ve come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves † and come with me to the sacrifice.” † Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. 6 When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab † and said, “Certainly the LORD’s anointed one is here before him.”

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the LORD sees, † for humans see what is visible, † but the LORD sees the heart.” †

8 Jesse called Abinadab † and presented him to Samuel. “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either,” Samuel said. 9 Then Jesse presented Shammah, † but Samuel said, “The LORD hasn’t chosen this one either.” 10 After Jesse presented seven of his sons to him, Samuel told Jesse, “The LORD hasn’t chosen any of these.” 11 Samuel asked him, “Are these all the sons you have? ”

“There is still the youngest,” † he answered, “but right now he’s tending the sheep.” Samuel told Jesse, “Send for him. We won’t sit down to eat until he gets here.” 12 So Jesse sent for him. He had beautiful eyes and a healthy, † handsome appearance. †

Then the LORD said, “Anoint him, for he is the one.” † 13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him † in the presence of his brothers, and the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully on David from that day forward. † Then Samuel set out and went to Ramah.

DAVID IN SAUL’S COURT

14 Now the Spirit of the LORD had left Saul, † and an evil spirit sent from the LORD began to torment him, 15 so Saul’s servants said to him, “You see that an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. 16 Let our lord command your servants

here in your presence to look for someone who knows how to play the lyre. Whenever the evil spirit from God comes on you, that person can play the lyre, and you will feel better." †
17 Then Saul commanded his servants, "Find me someone who plays well and bring him to me."
18 One of the young men answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is also a valiant man, † a warrior, eloquent, handsome, and the LORD is with him." †
19 Then Saul dispatched messengers to Jesse and said, "Send me your son David, who is with the sheep." 20 So Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a wineskin, and one young goat and sent them by his son David to Saul. †
21 When David came to Saul † and entered his service, Saul loved him very much, and David became his armor-bearer. 22 Then Saul sent word to Jesse: "Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor with me." 23 Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, † David would pick up his lyre and play, and Saul would then be relieved, feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

16:4 LXX reads *were astonished* **16:4** DSS, LXX read *"Seer, do* **16:5** LXX reads *and rejoice with me today* **16:7** LXX reads *God does not see as a man sees* **16:7** Lit *for the man sees according to the eyes* **16:12** Or *ruddy*

16:1 1Sm 15:35 **16:1** 1Sm 13:13-14; 15:23 **16:1** 1Sm 9:16; 10:1; 2Kg 9:1 **16:1** Ru 4:17-22 **16:2** 1Sm 20:29 **16:3** Ex 4:15; Ac 9:6 **16:3** Dt 17:14-15; 1Sm 9:16 **16:4** Gn 48:7; Lk 2:4 **16:4** 1Kg 2:13; 2Kg 9:22; 1Ch 12:17-18 **16:5** Gn 35:2; Ex 19:10 **16:6** 1Sm 17:13 **16:7** 1Kg 8:39; Jr 17:10; Lk 16:15; Jn 2:24-25 **16:8** 1Sm 17:13 **16:9** 1Sm 17:13 **16:11** 1Sm 17:12; 2Sm 13:3 **16:12** 1Sm 17:42 **16:12** 1Sm 9:17 **16:13** 1Sm 10:1 **16:13** Ps 51:10-12; Ezk 36:27; Ac 2:1-17 **16:14** 1Sm 11:6; 18:12; 28:15 **16:16** 1Sm 18:10; 19:9; 2Kg 3:15 **16:18** 1Sm 17:32-36 **16:18** 1Sm 3:19; 18:12-14 **16:20** 1Sm 10:4,27; Pr 18:16 **16:21** Gn 41:46; Pr 22:29 **16:23** 1Sm 16:14-16

16:6-13 Samuel's grief over Saul was interrupted when God sent him to anoint a new king (15:35–16:1). At first Samuel thought Jesse's firstborn son **Eliab** was the one (see 17:13), but he had mistakenly based his impression on Eliab's **appearance or his stature.** The Lord had rejected him because he saw not only **what is visible** but also **the heart.** After seven of Jesse's sons were passed over, his youngest, David, was sent for and anointed as king. T**he Spirit of the LORD** was upon him henceforth.

16:19-23 The Spirit of God was upon David (v. 13) but had left Saul, and an evil spirit tormented him (vv. 14-15). Saul's need for relief resulted in David entering his service to play the lyre and be his armor-bearer. David's musical ministry brought relief to Saul's distress brought about by the evil spirit (see also 18:10-11; note on 2Kg 3:15; see "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*).

DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH

17 The Philistines † gathered their forces for war at Socoh in Judah and
camped between Socoh † and Azekah † in Ephes-dammim. † 2 Saul
and the men of Israel gathered and camped in the Valley of Elah; † then they
lined up in battle formation to face the Philistines.
3 The Philistines were standing on one hill, and the Israelites were standing on
another hill with a ravine between them. 4 Then a champion named Goliath,
from Gath, † came out from the Philistine camp. He was nine feet, nine
inches † † tall 5 and wore a bronze helmet † and bronze scale armor that
weighed one hundred twenty-five pounds. † 6 There was bronze armor on his
shins, and a bronze javelin † was slung between his shoulders. 7 His spear
shaft † was like a weaver's beam, and the iron point of his spear weighed fifteen
pounds. † In addition, a shield-bearer † was walking in front of him.
8 He stood and shouted to the Israelite battle formations: "Why do you come out
to line up in battle formation? " He asked them, "Am I not a Philistine and are
you not servants of Saul? † Choose one of your men and have him come down
against me. 9 If he wins in a fight against me and kills me, we will be your
servants. But if I win against him and kill him, then you will be our servants and
serve us." † 10 Then the Philistine said, "I defy the ranks of Israel today. †
Send me a man so we can fight each other! " 11 When Saul and all Israel heard
these words from the Philistine, they lost their courage and were terrified.
12 Now David was the son of the Ephrathite † from Bethlehem of Judah named
Jesse. Jesse had eight sons † and during Saul's reign was already an old man.
13 Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war, and their names †
were Eliab, the firstborn, Abinadab, the next, and Shammah, the third, 14 and
David was the youngest. † The three oldest had followed Saul, 15 but David
kept going back and forth from Saul † to tend his father's flock in Bethlehem.
16 Every morning and evening for forty days the Philistine came forward and
took his stand. 17 One day Jesse had told his son David: "Take this half-
bushel † of roasted grain along with these ten loaves of bread † for your
brothers and hurry to their camp. 18 Also take these ten portions of cheese to the
field commander. † Check on the well-being of your brothers † and bring a

confirmation from them. 19 They are with Saul and all the men of Israel in the Valley of Elah fighting with the Philistines."
20 So David got up early in the morning, left the flock with someone to keep it, loaded up, and set out as Jesse had charged him.
He arrived at the perimeter of the camp † as the army was marching out to its battle formation shouting their battle cry. 21 Israel and the Philistines lined up in battle formation facing each other. 22 David left his supplies in the care of the quartermaster † and ran to the battle line. When he arrived, he asked his brothers how they were. 23 While he was speaking with them, suddenly the champion named Goliath, the Philistine from Gath, came forward from the Philistine battle line and shouted his usual words, † which David heard. 24 When all the Israelite men saw Goliath, they retreated from him terrified.
25 Previously, an Israelite man had declared: "Do you see this man who keeps coming out? He comes to defy Israel. The king will make the man who kills him very rich and will give him his daughter. † The king will also make the family of that man's father exempt from paying taxes in Israel." †
26 David spoke to the men who were standing with him: "What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? † Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine † that he should defy the armies † of the living God? " †
27 The troops told him about the offer, concluding, "That is what will be done for the man who kills him." †
28 David's oldest brother Eliab listened as he spoke to the men, and he became angry with him. † "Why did you come down here? " he asked. "Who did you leave those few sheep with in the wilderness? I know your arrogance and your evil heart — you came down to see the battle! "
29 "What have I done now? " protested David. "It was just a question." 30 Then he turned from those beside him to others in front of him and asked about the offer. The people gave him the same answer as before. †
31 What David said was overheard and reported to Saul, so he had David brought to him. 32 David said to Saul, "Don't let anyone be discouraged by † him; † your servant will go † and fight this Philistine! "

33 But Saul replied, “You can’t go fight this Philistine. You’re just a youth, and
he’s been a warrior since he was young.”
34 David answered Saul: “Your servant has been tending his father’s sheep.
Whenever a lion or a bear came and carried off a lamb from the flock, 35 I went
after it, struck it down, and rescued the lamb from its mouth. † If it reared up
against me, I would grab it by its fur, † strike it down, and kill it. 36 Your
servant has killed lions and bears; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one
of them, for he has defied the armies of the living God.” 37 Then David said,
“The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will
rescue me from the hand of this Philistine.” †
Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.” †
38 Then Saul had his own military clothes put on David. He put a bronze helmet
on David’s head and had him put on armor. 39 David strapped his sword on over
the military clothes and tried to walk, but he was not used to them. “I can’t walk
in these,” David said to Saul, “I’m not used to them.” So David took them off.
40 Instead, he took his staff in his hand † and chose five smooth stones from the
wadi and put them in the pouch, in his shepherd’s bag. Then, with his sling in his
hand, he approached the Philistine.
41 The Philistine came closer and closer to David, with the shield-bearer in front
of him. 42 When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him †
because he was just a youth, healthy † † and handsome. 43 He said to David,
“Am I a dog † that you come against me with sticks? ” † Then he cursed David
by his gods. † 44 “Come here,” the Philistine called to David, “and I’ll give
your flesh to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts! ” †
45 David said to the Philistine: “You come against me with a sword, spear, and
javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD of Armies, the God of
the ranks of Israel — you have defied him. † 46 Today, the LORD will hand you
over to me. Today, I’ll strike you down, remove your head, and give the
corpses † of the Philistine camp to the birds of the sky and the wild creatures of
the earth. Then all the world will know that Israel has a God, † 47 and this
whole assembly will know that it is not by sword or by spear that the LORD
saves, † for the battle is the LORD’s. † He will hand you over to us.”

48 When the Philistine started forward to attack him, David ran quickly to the
battle line to meet the Philistine. † 49 David put his hand in the bag, took out a
stone, slung it, and hit the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his
forehead, and he fell facedown to the ground. 50 David defeated the Philistine
with a sling and a stone. David overpowered the Philistine and killed him
without having a sword. 51 David ran and stood over him. He grabbed the
Philistine's sword, † pulled it from its sheath, and used it to kill him. Then he
cut off his head. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they fled. †
52 The men of Israel and Judah rallied, shouting their battle cry, and chased the
Philistines to the entrance of the valley and to the gates of Ekron. † † Philistine
bodies were strewn all along the Shaaraim road † to Gath and Ekron.
53 When the Israelites returned from the pursuit of the Philistines, they
plundered their camps. 54 David took Goliath's † head and brought it to
Jerusalem, but he put Goliath's weapons in his own tent.
55 † When Saul had seen David going out to confront the Philistine, he asked
Abner the commander of the army, "Whose son is this youth, Abner? " †
"Your Majesty, as surely as you live, I don't know," Abner replied.
56 The king said, "Find out whose son this young man is! "
57 When David returned from killing the Philistine, Abner took him and brought
him before Saul with the Philistine's head still in his hand. † 58 Saul said to
him, "Whose son are you, young man? "
"The son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem," † David answered.

17:4 DSS, LXX read *four cubits and a span* **17:4** Lit *was six cubits and a span* **17:5** Lit *helmet on his head* **17:5** Lit *5,000 shekels* **17:7** Lit *600 shekels* **17:17** Lit *this ephah* **17:18** Lit *the leader of 1,000* **17:32** Lit *let a man's heart fall over* **17:35** LXX reads *throat* ; lit *beard* **17:42** Or *ruddy* **17:43** Some LXX mss add *and stones? " And David said, "No! Worse than a dog! "* **17:46** LXX reads *give your limbs and the limbs* **17:52** LXX reads *Ashkelon* **17:54** Lit *the Philistine's* **17:55** LXX omits 1Sm 17:55–18:5

17:1 1Sm 13:5 **17:1** 2Ch 28:18 **17:1** Jos 10:10 **17:1** 1Ch 11:13 **17:2** 1Sm 21:9 **17:4** 2Sm 21:18-22; 1Ch 20:4-8 **17:6** 1Sm 17:45 **17:7** 2Sm 21:19; 1Ch 11:23 **17:7** 1Sm 17:41 **17:8** 1Sm 8:17 **17:8-9** 2Sm 2:12-16 **17:10** 1Sm 17:26,36,45 **17:12** Gn 35:19 **17:12** 1Sm 16:10-11; 1Ch 2:13-15 **17:13** 1Sm 16:6,8-9 **17:14** 1Sm 16:11 **17:15** 1Sm 16:21-23 **17:17** 1Sm 25:18 **17:18** Gn 37:13-14 **17:20** 1Sm 26:5,7 **17:22** Jdg 18:21; Is 10:28 **17:23** 1Sm 17:8-10 **17:25** Jos 15:16 **17:25** 1Sm 8:11 **17:26** 1Sm 11:2 **17:26** 1Sm 14:6; 17:36; Jr 9:25-26 **17:26** 1Sm 17:10 **17:26** Dt 5:26; 2Kg 19:4 **17:27** 1Sm 17:25 **17:28** Gn 37:4,8-36 **17:30** 1Sm 17:26-27 **17:32** Dt 20:1-4 **17:32** 1Sm 16:18 **17:35** Am 3:12 **17:37** 2Tm 4:17-18 **17:37** 1Sm 20:13 **17:40** Jdg 20:16 **17:42** Pr 16:18 **17:42** 1Sm 16:12 **17:43** 1Sm 24:14 **17:43** 1Kg 20:10 **17:44** 1Sm 17:46 **17:45** 2Ch 32:7-8; Ps 124:8; Heb 11:34 **17:46** 1Kg 18:36; 2Kg 19:19; Is 37:20 **17:47** Hs 1:7 **17:47** Ex 14:13-14; Ps 33:16-22; 44:4-8 **17:48** Ps 27:3 **17:51** 1Sm 21:9 **17:51** Heb 11:34 **17:52** Jos 15:11 **17:52** Jos 15:36 **17:55** 1Sm 16:17-

22; 17:25 **17:57** 1Sm 17:54 **17:58** 1Sm 17:12

17:1-11 The Israelites' struggles with **the Philistines** continued (see also 9:16; 14:52). The Philistines had **a champion named Goliath** who was over **nine feet** tall and heavily armed. It was decided that he would be their representative in a single combat challenge (v. 8). The winner of this fight between two soldiers would determine the outcome of the battle, avoiding a general conflict involving all.

17:26 David saw Goliath's taunts (vv. 8-10,16,23) as a **disgrace** to Israel and defiance of **the armies of the living God** (see also v. 36).

17:31-40 David's courage and faith contrasted with Israel's fear (see vv. 11,24). Despite the opposition of his oldest brother Eliab and of Saul (vv. 28,33), David persisted in his intention to fight Goliath. As a shepherd, he had defeated lions and bears, and he knew that God, who had rescued him from such animals, would **rescue** [him] **from the hand of this Philistine.** David did not go to battle with conventional military attire (vv. 38-39) but simply with his **staff**, **five smooth stones**, his **bag**, and his **sling**—not to be confused with a slingshot.

17:45-47 This contest was not merely between David and Goliath or Israel and Philistia but between the Lord and the gods of the Philistines. Goliath had not only defied "the armies of the living God" (vv. 26,36) but also God himself. Goliath and his weaponry were far inferior to the Lord, who would give him over to David so that **all the world will know that Israel has a God.** The outcome of universal knowledge of God is also found in Exodus 9:16; Joshua 4:23-24; 1 Kings 8:41-43; and Psalm 67:1-2. Moreover, **this whole assembly will know** that the battle is not won **by sword or by spear** but **is the LORD's** (see also Zch 4:6).

17:52-53 David's defeat of Goliath (vv. 48-51) encouraged the Israelites, who struck down many more Philistines and **plundered** their camps.

DAVID'S SUCCESS

18 When David had finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan was bound to
David in close friendship, † and loved him as much as he loved
himself. † 2 Saul kept David with him from that day on and did not let him
return to his father's house.
3 Jonathan made a covenant with David † because he loved him as much as
himself. 4 Then Jonathan removed the robe he was wearing and gave it to
David, † along with his military tunic, his sword, his bow, and his belt.
5 David marched out with the army and was successful in everything Saul sent
him to do. Saul put him in command of the fighting men, which pleased all the
people and Saul's servants as well.
6 As the troops were coming back, when David was returning from killing the
Philistine, the women came out from all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul, †
singing and dancing with tambourines, with shouts of joy, and with three-
stringed instruments. 7 As they danced, the women sang:

Saul has killed his thousands,

but David his tens of thousands. †

8 Saul was furious and resented this song. † "They credited tens of thousands to David," he complained, "but they only credited me with thousands. What more can he have but the kingdom?" † 9 So Saul watched David jealously from that day forward.

SAUL ATTEMPTS TO KILL DAVID

10 The next day an evil spirit sent from God came powerfully on Saul, † and he began to rave † inside the palace. David was playing the lyre as usual, † but Saul was holding a spear, † 11 and he threw it, thinking, "I'll pin David to the wall." † But David got away from him twice.

12 Saul was afraid of David, † because the LORD was with David † but had left Saul. † 13 Therefore, Saul sent David away from him and made him commander over a thousand men. David led the troops † 14 and continued to be successful in all his activities because the LORD was with him. † 15 When Saul observed that David was very successful, he dreaded him. 16 But all Israel and Judah loved David † because he was leading their troops. 17 Saul told David, "Here is my oldest daughter Merab. I'll give her to you as a wife, † if you will be a warrior for me and fight the LORD's battles." † But Saul was thinking, "I don't need to raise a hand against him; let the hand of the Philistines be against him." †

18 Then David responded, "Who am I, † and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel that I should become the king's son-in-law?" 19 When it was time to give Saul's daughter Merab to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife. †

DAVID'S MARRIAGE TO MICHAL

20 Now Saul's daughter Michal † loved David, and when it was reported to Saul, it pleased him. † 21 "I'll give her to him," Saul thought. "She'll be a trap for him, and the hand of the Philistines will be against him." † So Saul said to David a second time, "You can now be my son-in-law." †

22 Saul then ordered his servants, “Speak to David in private and tell him,
‘Look, the king is pleased with you, and all his servants love you. Therefore, you
should become the king’s son-in-law.’ ”
23 Saul’s servants reported these words directly to David, † but he replied, “Is it
trivial in your sight to become the king’s son-in-law? I am a poor commoner.” †
24 The servants reported back to Saul, “These are the words David spoke.”
25 Then Saul replied, “Say this to David: ‘The king desires no other bride-
price † except a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his
enemies.’ ” † Actually, Saul intended to cause David’s death at the hands of the
Philistines. †
26 When the servants reported these terms to David, he was pleased † to
become the king’s son-in-law. Before the wedding day arrived, † 27 David and
his men went out and killed two hundred † Philistines. He brought their
foreskins and presented them as full payment to the king to become his son-in-
law. Then Saul gave his daughter Michal to David as his wife. † 28 Saul
realized † that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved him,
29 and he became even more afraid of David. As a result, Saul was David’s
enemy from then on.
30 Every time the Philistine commanders came out to fight, † David was more
successful than all of Saul’s officers. † So his name became well known.

18:1 Lit *the life of Jonathan was bound to the life of David* **18:8** Lit *furious; this saying was evil in his eyes* **18:10** Or *prophesy* **18:20** Lit *Saul, the thing was right in his eyes* **18:23** Lit *words in David’s ears* **18:26** Lit *David, it was right in David’s eyes* **18:26** Lit *And the days were not full* **18:27** LXX reads *100* **18:28** Lit *saw and knew*

18:1 1Sm 20:17; 2Sm 1:26 **18:3** 1Sm 20:8,16; 23:18 **18:4** Gn 41:42 **18:6** Ex 15:20-21; Jdg 11:34 **18:7** 1Sm 21:11; 29:5 **18:8** 1Sm 15:28; 24:20 **18:10** 1Sm 16:14; 19:9 **18:10** 1Sm 16:23 **18:10** 1Sm 19:9 **18:11** 1Sm 19:10; 20:33 **18:12** 1Sm 18:15,29 **18:12** 1Sm 16:13,18 **18:12** 1Sm 16:14; 17:36,47; 2Sm 5:2 **18:13** 2Sm 5:2 **18:14** 1Sm 3:19; 16:18 **18:16** 1Sm 18:5 **18:17** 1Sm 17:25 **18:17** Nm 21:14; 1Sm 17:36-37; 25:28 **18:17** 1Sm 18:21,25 **18:18** 1Sm 9:21; 18:23; 2Sm 7:18 **18:19** Jdg 7:22; 2Sm 21:8; 1Kg 19:16 **18:20** 1Sm 18:28 **18:21** 1Sm 18:17 **18:21** 1Sm 18:20 **18:23** Gn 29:20; 34:12 **18:25** Gn 34:12; Ex 22:17 **18:25** 1Sm 14:24 **18:25** 1Sm 18:17 **18:27** 2Sm 3:14 **18:30** 2Sm 11:1 **18:30** 1Sm 18:5

18:1-9 Saul continued to lose power as **David** gained it. Saul had already been rejected by God as king (15:23,26-29) and was being tormented by an evil spirit (v. 10; 16:14). **Jonathan**, who had already challenged his father’s authority (14:29-30), became David’s close friend and pledged his loyalty through making **a covenant** with him (see also 20:16; 23:18). For more on covenants, see the note on Genesis 9:8-17. Furthermore, David was having success and increasing in popularity at Saul’s expense (vv. 5-7), much to the latter’s dismay (vv. 8-9).

18:10-11 Saul's troubles with **an evil spirit** continued (16:14) and were likely exacerbated by his insecurity and jealousy (vv. 8-9,12-15). He tried to **pin David to the wall** with a spear while the latter was trying to bring him relief by **playing the lyre as usual** (see 16:16-23). Saul would try to kill him again in 19:9-10.

18:25-29 Saul also attempted to harm David indirectly through offering one of his daughters in marriage if David would fight the Philistines (vv. 17,21,25). His first attempt failed when David declined to marry Merab (vv. 17-19), as did his second attempt when David successfully acquired double the original **bride-price** of **a hundred Philistine foreskins** in order to marry **Michal** (vv. 20-27). As before (16:18; 18:12,14), David prospered because **the LORD was with** him.

DAVID DELIVERED FROM SAUL

19 Saul ordered his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David. † But
Saul's son Jonathan liked David very much, † 2 so he told him: "My
father Saul intends to kill you. Be on your guard in the morning and hide in a
secret place and stay there. 3 I'll go out and stand beside my father in the field
where you are and talk to him about you. When I see what he says, I'll tell
you." †
4 Jonathan spoke well of David to his father Saul. He said to him: "The king
should not sin against his servant David. † He hasn't sinned against you; in fact,
his actions have been a great advantage to you. 5 He took his life in his hands
when he struck down the Philistine, † and the LORD brought about a great
victory for all Israel. † You saw it and rejoiced, so why would you sin against
innocent blood by killing David for no reason? " †
6 Saul listened to Jonathan's advice and swore an oath: "As surely as the LORD
lives, David will not be killed." 7 So Jonathan summoned David and told him all
these words. Then Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he served him as he did
before. †
8 When war broke out again, David went out and fought against the Philistines.
He defeated them with such great force that they fled from him.
9 Now an evil spirit sent from the LORD † came on Saul as he was sitting in his
palace holding a spear. † David was playing the lyre, † 10 and Saul tried to pin
David to the wall with the spear. † As the spear struck the wall, David eluded
Saul, ran away, and escaped that night. 11 Saul sent agents to David's house to
watch for him and kill him in the morning. † But his wife Michal † warned

David, “If you don’t escape tonight, you will be dead tomorrow!” 12 So she
lowered David from the window, and he fled and escaped. † 13 Then Michal
took the household idol and put it on the bed, placed some goat hair on its head,
and covered it with a garment. 14 When Saul sent agents to seize David, Michal
said, “He’s sick.” †
15 Saul sent the agents back to see David and said, “Bring him on his bed so I
can kill him.” 16 When the agents arrived, to their surprise, the household idol
was on the bed with some goat hair on its head.
17 Saul asked Michal, “Why did you deceive me like this? You sent my enemy
away, and he has escaped!”
She answered him, “He said to me, ‘Let me go! Why should I kill you?’”
18 So David fled and escaped and went to Samuel at Ramah † and told him
everything Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel left and stayed at
Naioth. †
19 When it was reported to Saul that David was at Naioth in Ramah, 20 he sent
agents to seize David. † However, when they saw the group of prophets
prophesying † with Samuel leading them, the Spirit of God came on Saul’s
agents, and they also started prophesying. 21 When they reported to Saul, he sent
other agents, and they also began prophesying. † So Saul tried again and sent a
third group of agents, and even they began prophesying. 22 Then Saul himself
went to Ramah. He came to the large cistern at Secu and asked, “Where are
Samuel and David?”
“At Naioth in Ramah,” someone said.
23 So he went to Naioth in Ramah. The Spirit of God also came on him, †
and as he walked along, he prophesied until he entered Naioth in Ramah. 24 Saul
then removed his clothes and also prophesied before Samuel; he collapsed and
lay naked † all that day and all that night. That is why they say, “Is Saul also
among the prophets?” †

19:1 1Sm 18:8-9 **19:1** 1Sm 18:1-3 **19:3** 1Sm 20:32-33 **19:4** Gn 44:22; Pr 17:13; Jr 18:20 **19:5** 1Sm 17:42-51 **19:5** 1Sm 11:13 **19:5** Dt 19:10-13; 1Sm 20:32 **19:7** 1Sm 16:21; 18:2,10,13 **19:9** 1Sm 16:14; 18:10-11 **19:9** 1Sm 18:10 **19:9** 1Sm 16:14-16; 18:10 **19:10** 1Sm 18:11; 20:33 **19:11** Ps 59 title **19:11** 1Sm 18:20 **19:12** Jos 2:15; Ac 9:23-25 **19:14** Jos 2:5 **19:18** 1Sm 7:17 **19:18** 2Kg 6:1-2 **19:20** 1Sm 19:11; Jn 7:32 **19:20** 1Sm 10:5-6,10 **19:21** Nm 11:25 **19:23** 1Sm 10:10 **19:24** Is 20:2; Mc 1:8 **19:20-24** 1Sm 10:5-13

19:1-7 His own attempts having failed so far, Saul ordered Jonathan and all his servants to help him **kill**

David. The loyal Jonathan (see 18:1-4), however, informed David and also pleaded with his father on his friend's behalf. Saul **swore an oath** that David would **not be killed**, but quickly went back on his word (vv. 9-20).

19:20-24 As had happened earlier as a sign of Saul's installation as king (see 10:5-13), the coming of **the Spirit of God** upon those seeking to capture David both thwarted Saul's plans and humiliated Saul.

JONATHAN PROTECTS DAVID

20 David fled from Naioth in Ramah and came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? † What did I do wrong? How have I sinned against your father so that he wants to take my life? "

2 Jonathan said to him, "No, you won't die. Listen, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without telling me. † So why would he hide this matter from me? This can't be true."

3 But David said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor with you. He has said, 'Jonathan must not know of this, or else he will be grieved.' " David also swore, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death." †

4 Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

5 So David told him, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon, † and I'm supposed to sit down and eat with the king. † Instead, let me go, and I'll hide in the countryside for the next two nights. † † 6 If your father misses me at all, say, 'David urgently requested my permission to go quickly to his hometown Bethlehem † for an annual sacrifice † there involving the whole clan.' 7 If he says, 'Good,' then your servant is safe, but if he becomes angry, you will know he has evil intentions. 8 Deal kindly with † your servant, for you have brought me into a covenant with you before the LORD. † If I have done anything wrong, † then kill me yourself; why take me to your father? "

9 "No! " Jonathan responded. "If I ever find out my father has evil intentions against you, wouldn't I tell you about it? "

10 So David asked Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly? "

11 He answered David, "Come on, let's go out to the countryside." So both of them went out to the countryside. 12 "By the LORD, the God of Israel, I will sound out my father by this time tomorrow or the next day. If I find out that he is

favorable toward you, will I not send for you and tell you? † 13 If my father
intends to bring evil on you, may God punish Jonathan and do so severely † if I
do not tell you † and send you away so you may leave safely. May the LORD be
with you, † just as he was with my father. 14 If I continue to live, show me
kindness † from the LORD, but if I die, 15 don't ever withdraw your kindness
from my household — not even when the LORD cuts off every one of David's
enemies from the face of the earth." † 16 Then Jonathan made a covenant with
the house of David, † saying, "May the LORD hold David's enemies
accountable." † † 17 Jonathan once again swore to David † in his love for him,
because he loved him as he loved himself. †

18 Then Jonathan said to him, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; † you'll be missed
because your seat will be empty. 19 The following day hurry down and go to the
place where you hid on the day this incident began and stay beside the rock Ezel.
20 I will shoot three arrows beside it as if I'm aiming at a target. 21 Then I will
send a servant and say, 'Go and find the arrows! ' Now, if I expressly say to the
servant, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you — get them,' then come,
because as the LORD lives, it is safe for you and there is no problem. 22 But if I
say this to the youth, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you! ' † then go, for the
LORD is sending you away. 23 As for the matter you and I have spoken about, †
the LORD will be a witness † between you and me forever." † 24 So David hid
in the countryside.

At the New Moon, the king sat down to eat the meal. 25 He sat at his usual place
on the seat by the wall. Jonathan sat facing him † and Abner took his place
beside Saul, but David's place was empty. † 26 Saul did not say anything that
day because he thought, "Something unexpected has happened; he must be
ceremonially unclean — yes, that's it, he is unclean." †

27 However, the day after the New Moon, the second day, David's place was
still empty, and Saul asked his son Jonathan, "Why didn't Jesse's son come to
the meal either yesterday or today? "

28 Jonathan answered, "David asked for my permission to go to Bethlehem. †
29 He said, 'Please let me go because our clan is holding a sacrifice in the town,

and my brother has told me to be there. So now, if I have found favor with you, let me go so I can see my brothers.' That's why he didn't come to the king's table."
30 Then Saul became angry with Jonathan and shouted, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you are siding with Jesse's son to your own shame and to the disgrace of your mother? † 31 Every day Jesse's son lives on earth you and your kingship are not secure. Now send for him and bring him to me — he must die! " †
32 Jonathan answered his father back: "Why is he to be killed? What has he done? " †
33 Then Saul threw his spear at Jonathan to kill him, † so he knew that his father was determined to kill David. † 34 He got up from the table fiercely angry and did not eat any food that second day of the New Moon, for he was grieved because of his father's shameful behavior toward David.
35 In the morning Jonathan went out to the countryside for the appointed meeting with David. A young servant was with him. 36 He said to the servant, "Run and find the arrows I'm shooting." † As the servant ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him. 37 He came to the location of the arrow that Jonathan had shot, but Jonathan called to him and said, "The arrow is beyond you, isn't it? " †
38 Then Jonathan called to him, "Hurry up and don't stop! " Jonathan's servant picked up the arrow and returned to his master. 39 He did not know anything; only Jonathan and David knew the arrangement. 40 Then Jonathan gave his equipment to the servant who was with him and said, "Go, take it back to the city."
41 When the servant had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone Ezel, fell facedown to the ground, and paid homage three times. † Then he and Jonathan kissed each other and wept with each other, though David wept more. †
42 Jonathan then said to David, "Go in the assurance the two of us pledged in the name of the LORD when we said: The LORD will be a witness between you and me and between my offspring and your offspring forever." † Then David left, and Jonathan went into the city.
20:2 Lit *without uncovering my ear* **20:5** Lit *countryside until the third night* **20:8** Or *Show loyalty to* **20:12** Lit *and uncover your ear* **20:13** Lit *severely — I will uncover your ear* **20:14** Or *loyalty*, also in v. 15 **20:16** Lit *Lord require it from the hand of David's enemies* **20:17** LXX; MT reads *Jonathan once again made*

David swear **20:23** LXX; MT omits *a witness* **20:25** Text emended; MT reads *Jonathan got up* **20:30** Lit *your mother's nakedness*
20:1 1Sm 24:9 **20:3** 1Sm 25:26; 2Kg 2:6 **20:5** Nm 10:10; 28:11-15; Am 8:5 **20:5** 1Sm 20:24,27 **20:5** 1Sm 19:2 **20:6** 1Sm 17:58 **20:6** Dt 12:5 **20:8** 1Sm 18:3; 20:16; 23:18 **20:8** 2Sm 14:32 **20:13** Ru 1:17; 1Sm 3:17 **20:13** 1Sm 18:12 **20:15** 2Sm 9:1 **20:16** 1Sm 18:3; 23:18 **20:16** Dt 23:21 **20:17** 1Sm 18:1 **20:18** Nm 10:10 **20:22** 1Sm 20:37 **20:23** 1Sm 20:14-15 **20:23** Gn 31:49,53 **20:25** 1Sm 20:18 **20:26** Lv 7:20-21; Nm 10:10 **20:28** 1Sm 20:6 **20:31** 2Sm 12:5 **20:32** 1Sm 19:5 **20:33** 1Sm 18:11; 19:10 **20:33** 1Sm 20:7 **20:36** 1Sm 20:20-21 **20:37** 1Sm 20:22 **20:41** Gn 42:6 **20:41** 1Sm 18:3 **20:42** 1Sm 20:15-23

20:1-17 Jonathan earlier had spoken to his father on David's behalf and secured a promise of safety (19:1-7). Saul's reneging on his word led David to come back to Jonathan a second time to ask what was going on. Jonathan agreed to notify David of Saul's intentions.

20:30-42 Saul's angry reaction after learning of David's absence confirmed David's fears (vv. 30-33; see also vv. 1-7). The arrangement between Jonathan and David involving **shooting arrows** had been agreed upon earlier (see vv. 19-22) and provided a cover for the two men to meet secretly (vv. 35-42). David had to flee, and the two friends tearfully parted.

DAVID FLEES TO NOB

21 David went to the priest Ahimelech † at Nob. † Ahimelech was afraid
to meet David, so he said to him, "Why are you alone and no one is
with you? "
2 David answered the priest Ahimelech, "The king gave me a mission, but he
told me, 'Don't let anyone know anything about the mission I'm sending you on
or what I have ordered you to do.' I have stationed my young men at a certain
place. 3 Now what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread or
whatever can be found."
4 The priest told him, "There is no ordinary bread on hand. However, there is
consecrated bread, † but the young men may eat it † only if they have kept
themselves from women." †
5 David answered him, "I swear that women are being kept from us, as always
when I go out to battle. † The young men's bodies † are consecrated † even on
an ordinary mission, so of course their bodies are consecrated today." 6 So the
priest gave him the consecrated bread, † for there was no bread there except the
Bread of the Presence † that had been removed from the presence of the LORD.
When the bread was removed, it had been replaced with warm bread.
7 One of Saul's servants, detained before the LORD, was there that day. His name
was Doeg the Edomite, † chief of Saul's shepherds.

8 David said to Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or sword on hand? I didn’t even bring my sword or my weapons since the king’s mission was urgent.”

9 The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, † whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want to take it for yourself, then take it, for there isn’t another one here.”
“There’s none like it! ” David said. “Give it to me.”

DAVID FLEES TO GATH

10 David fled that day from Saul’s presence and went to King Achish of Gath. †
11 But Achish’s servants said to him, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Don’t they sing about him during their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands? ” †

12 David took this to heart † and became very afraid of King Achish of Gath,
13 so he pretended to be insane in their presence. † He acted like a madman around them, † scribbling † on the doors of the city gate and letting saliva run down his beard.
14 “Look! You can see the man is crazy,” Achish said to his servants. “Why did you bring him to me? 15 Do I have such a shortage of crazy people that you brought this one to act crazy around me? Is this one going to come into my house? ” †

21:4 DSS; MT omits *may eat it* **21:5** Lit *vessels* **21:12** Lit *David placed these words in his heart* **21:13** Lit *madman in their hand* **21:13** LXX reads *drumming*
21:1 1Sm 14:3; Mk 2:26 **21:1** 1Sm 22:19 **21:4** Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9; Mt 12:3-4 **21:4** Ex 19:15 **21:5** 2Sm 11:11 **21:5** 1Th 4:4 **21:6** Mt 12:3-4; Mk 2:25 **21:6** Lv 24:5-9 **21:7** 1Sm 22:9; Ps 52 title **21:9** 1Sm 17:51 **21:10** Ps 56 title **21:11** 1Sm 18:7; 29:5 **21:13** Ps 34 title **21:13-15** Ps 34 title

21:3-6 The **Bread of the Presence** was set out on the table within the holy place of the tabernacle (Ex 25:30). As such, it was **consecrated** and was only to be eaten by the priests (see Lv 24:5-9). The consumption of this bread by David and his men here is referenced by Jesus to support prioritizing love for others over rigid application of Sabbath law (see Mt 12:1-13; Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-11). He recognized that such bread was only to be eaten by priests, but he also implied that the basic physical needs of David and his men took precedence and hence justified an exception (see also the notes on Lv 10:16-20 and Nm 9:6-13).

21:10-15 The servants of the king of Gath knew about David’s many victories, and David’s resulting fear led him to act **like a madman** so that he would be perceived as less of a threat.

SAUL’S INCREASING PARANOIA

22 So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. † When
David's brothers and his father's whole family heard, they went down
and joined him there. 2 In addition, every man who was desperate, in debt, or
discontented rallied around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred
men were with him. †
3 From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab where he said to the king of Moab,
"Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God will do
for me." 4 So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with
him the whole time David was in the stronghold.
5 Then the prophet Gad † said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold. Leave
and return to the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.
6 Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. At that time Saul was
in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree † at the high place. His spear was in
his hand, and all his servants were standing around him. 7 Saul said to his
servants, "Listen, men of Benjamin: Is Jesse's son going to give all of you fields
and vineyards? Do you think he'll make all of you commanders of thousands
and commanders of hundreds? † 8 That's why all of you have conspired against
me! Nobody tells me † when my own son makes a covenant with Jesse's son. †
None of you cares about me † or tells me † that my son has stirred up my own
servant to wait in ambush for me, as is the case today."
9 Then Doeg the Edomite, † who was in charge of Saul's servants, answered: "I
saw Jesse's son come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. † 10 Ahimelech
inquired of the LORD for him † and gave him provisions. † He also gave him the
sword of Goliath the Philistine." †

SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS

11 The king sent messengers to summon the priest Ahimelech son of Ahitub, and
his father's whole family, who were priests in Nob. All of them came to the
king. 12 Then Saul said, "Listen, son of Ahitub! "
"I'm at your service, † my lord," he said.
13 Saul asked him, "Why did you and Jesse's son conspire against me? You
gave him bread and a sword and inquired of God for him, so he could rise up

against me and wait in ambush, as is the case today.” †
14 Ahimelech replied to the king: “Who among all your servants is as faithful as David? † He is the king’s son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and honored in your house. 15 Was today the first time I inquired of God for him? † Of course not! Please don’t let the king make an accusation against your servant or any of my father’s family, for your servant didn’t have any idea † about all this.”
16 But the king said, “You will die, Ahimelech — you and your father’s whole family! ”
17 Then the king ordered the guards standing by him, “Turn and kill the priests of the LORD † because they sided with David. For they knew he was fleeing, but they didn’t tell me.” † But the king’s servants would not lift a hand to execute the priests of the LORD.
18 So the king said to Doeg, “Go and execute the priests! ” So Doeg the Edomite went and executed the priests himself. On that day, he killed eighty-five men † who wore linen ephods. † 19 He also struck down Nob, the city of the priests, with the sword — both men and women, infants and nursing babies, oxen, donkeys, and sheep. †
20 However, one of the sons of Ahimelech son of Ahitub escaped. His name was Abiathar, † and he fled to David. † 21 Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the LORD. 22 Then David said to Abiathar, “I knew that Doeg the Edomite † was there that day and that he was sure to report to Saul. I myself am responsible for † the lives of everyone in your father’s family. 23 Stay with me. Don’t be afraid, for the one who wants to take my life wants to take your life. † You will be safe with me.”

22:8 Lit *No one uncovers my ear* **22:8** Lit *or uncovers my ear* **22:15** Lit *didn’t know a thing, small or large* **22:17** Lit *didn’t uncover my ear* **22:22** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *I myself turn in*

22:1 Pss 57, 142 titles **22:2** 1Sm 23:13; 25:13 **22:5** 1Ch 21:9; 29:29; 2Ch 29:25 **22:6** Jdg 4:5; 1Sm 14:2 **22:7** 1Sm 8:12 **22:8** 1Sm 18:3; 20:16 **22:8** 1Sm 23:21 **22:9** Ps 52 title **22:9** 1Sm 21:1; Ps 52 title **22:10** 1Sm 10:22 **22:10** 1Sm 21:6,9 **22:10** 1Sm 21:2-9 **22:12** 1Sm 3:4-6; 2Sm 1:7 **22:13** 1Sm 22:8 **22:14** 1Sm 19:4-5 **22:15** 2Sm 5:19,23 **22:17** 2Kg 10:25; 2Ch 12:10 **22:18** 1Sm 2:31 **22:18** Ex 28:4; 1Sm 2:28 **22:19** 1Sm 2:18 **22:20** 1Sm 23:9; 30:7; 2Sm 2:1; 1Kg 2:26-27 **22:20** 1Sm 2:33 **22:22** 1Sm 21:7 **22:23** 1Kg 2:26

22:5 Even as David hid from Saul, God watched over him (see also the note on 23:7-14). Here he guided him to leave the **stronghold** and **return to the land of Judah.**

22:6-10 When Saul learned of David's whereabouts, he accused his servants of conspiracy and of not caring about him. The report of **Doeg the Edomite**, who had seen David and his men earlier (21:7), led to the slaughter of the priests of Nob (vv. 11-19).

22:18-23 Despite Ahimelech's honest testimony that he did not know David's business earlier (vv. 14-15; see 21:1-2), Saul believed Ahimelech had conspired against him (vv. 13,17; see also v. 8) and had Doeg execute the priests of Nob. David acknowledged to Abiathar that he had seen Doeg at Nob (see 21:7) and took responsibility for **the lives of everyone in** [his] **father's family.** Henceforth, Abiathar was to **stay** with David (see 23:6,9).

DELIVERANCE AT KEILAH

23 It was reported to David: "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah † and raiding the threshing floors."

2 So David inquired of the LORD: † "Should I launch an attack against these Philistines? "

The LORD answered David, "Launch an attack against the Philistines and rescue Keilah."

3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we're afraid here in Judah; how much more if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces! "

4 Once again, David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him: "Go at once to Keilah, for I will hand the Philistines over to you." † 5 Then David and his men went to Keilah, fought against the Philistines, drove their livestock away, and inflicted heavy losses on them. So David rescued the inhabitants of Keilah. 6 Abiathar son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, and he brought an ephod with him.

7 When it was reported to Saul that David had gone to Keilah, he said, "God has handed him over to me, for he has trapped himself by entering a town with barred gates." 8 Then Saul summoned all the troops to go to war at Keilah and besiege David and his men.

9 When David learned that Saul was plotting evil against him, he said to the priest Abiathar, † "Bring the ephod." †

10 Then David said, "LORD God of Israel, your servant has reliable information that Saul intends to come to Keilah and destroy the town because of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to him? Will Saul come down as your servant has heard? LORD God of Israel, please tell your servant."

The LORD answered, "He will come down."

12 Then David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah hand me and my men over to Saul? ”

“They will,” † the LORD responded.

13 So David and his men, numbering about six hundred, † left Keilah at once and moved from place to place. † When it was reported to Saul that David had escaped from Keilah, he called off the expedition. 14 David then stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. † Saul searched for him every day, but God did not hand David over to him. †

A RENEWED COVENANT

15 David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in Horesh when he saw that Saul had come out to take his life. 16 Then Saul’s son Jonathan came to David in Horesh and encouraged him in his faith † in God, † 17 saying, “Don’t be afraid, for my father Saul will never lay a hand on you. You yourself will be king over Israel, † and I’ll be your second-in-command. Even my father Saul knows it is true.” † 18 Then the two of them made a covenant in the LORD’s presence. † Afterward, David remained in Horesh, while Jonathan went home.

DAVID’S NARROW ESCAPE

19 Some Ziphites † came up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “David is † hiding among us in the strongholds in Horesh on the hill of Hachilah south of Jeshimon. 20 Now, whenever the king wants to come down, let him come down. Our part will be to hand him over to the king.” †

21 “May you be blessed by the LORD,” replied Saul, “for you have shown concern for me. † 22 Go and check again. Investigate † where he goes † and who has seen him there; they tell me he is extremely cunning. 23 Investigate † all the places where he hides. Then come back to me with accurate information, and I’ll go with you. If it turns out he really is in the region, I’ll search for him among all the clans † of Judah.” 24 So they went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness near Maon † in the Arabah south of Jeshimon, 25 and Saul and his men went to look for him. When David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. Saul heard of this and pursued David there.

26 Saul went along one side of the mountain and David and his men went along
the other side. Even though David was hurrying to get away from Saul, Saul and
his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them. † 27 Then a
messenger came to Saul saying, “Come quickly, because the Philistines have
raided the land! ” 28 So Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to engage
the Philistines. Therefore, that place was named the Rock of Separation. 29 From
there David went up and stayed in the strongholds of En-gedi. †

23:16 Lit *and strengthened his hand* **23:19** Lit *“Is David not . . . Jeshimon?* **23:22** Lit *Know and see* **23:22** Lit *watch his place where his foot will be* **23:23** Lit *See and know* **23:23** Or *thousands*
23:1 Jos 15:44; Neh 3:17-18 **23:2** 1Sm 23:4,6,9-12; 2Sm 5:19,23 **23:4** Jos 8:7; Jdg 7:7 **23:9** 1Sm 22:20 **23:9** 1Sm 23:6; 30:7 **23:12** Jdg 15:10-13; 1Sm 23:20 **23:13** 1Sm 22:2; 25:13 **23:13** 2Sm 15:20 **23:14** Jos 15:55; 2Ch 11:8 **23:14** Ps 32:7 **23:16** 1Sm 30:6 **23:17** 1Sm 16:1-13; 24:20-22 **23:17** 1Sm 20:31 **23:18** 1Sm 18:3; 20:12-17,42 **23:19** 1Sm 26:1; Ps 54 title **23:20** 1Sm 23:12 **23:21** 1Sm 22:8 **23:24** Jos 15:55; 1Sm 25:2 **23:26** Ps 17:9 **23:29** Jos 15:62; 2Ch 20:2

23:1-4 Though **Keilah** had been allotted to Judah (Jos 15:44), its location apparently made it susceptible to Philistine raids. In answer to David’s inquiries, God instructed him to fight the Philistines at Keilah.

23:7-14 News of Saul’s intent to trap David at Keilah led David to seek God again. The Lord confirmed that Saul would indeed come and that Keilah would hand David over. Truly God was protecting David (v. 14; see also 22:5), and he and his men **left Keilah at once and moved from place to place.**

23:15-18 David and Jonathan met again, and for a third time they **made a covenant** (see also 18:3; 20:16). Sadly, although Jonathan was right about David becoming king, he was wrong about becoming David’s **second-in-command** (see 31:2).

23:21-29 Saul continued his pursuit of David upon hearing a report from the Ziphites that David was nearby (vv. 19-20,25; see also 26:1). Saul’s initial response to the Ziphites **(May you be blessed by the LORD**, v. 21) shows yet again how twisted his thinking had become that he would say such a thing in connection with his desire to kill David. When Saul had drawn very close to David (v. 26), news of a Philistine raid forced him to call off his pursuit (vv. 27-28; see also note on 22:5).

DAVID SPARES SAUL

24 When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, † he was told,
“David is in the wilderness near En-gedi.” † 2 So Saul took three
thousand of Israel’s fit young men † and went to look for David and his men in
front of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 When Saul came to the sheep pens along
the road, a cave was there, and he went in to relieve himself. † † David and his
men were staying in the recesses of the cave, † 4 so they said to him, “Look,
this is the day the LORD told you about: ‘I will hand your enemy over to you so
you can do to him whatever you desire.’ ” Then David got up and secretly cut off
the corner of Saul’s robe.

5 Afterward, David's conscience bothered † † him because he had cut off the
corner of Saul's robe. † 6 He said to his men, "I swear before the LORD: I would
never do such a thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed. † I will never lift my
hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed." † 7 With these words David
persuaded † his men, and he did not let them rise up against Saul.
Then Saul left the cave and went on his way. 8 After that, David got up, went
out of the cave, and called to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked
behind him, David knelt low with his face to the ground and paid homage. †
9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of people who say, 'Look,
David intends to harm you'? 10 You can see with your own eyes that the LORD
handed you over to me today in the cave. † Someone advised me to kill you, †
but I † † took pity on you and said: I won't lift my hand against my lord, since
he is the LORD's anointed. 11 Look, my father! † Look at the corner of your robe
in my hand, for I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. Recognize † that I've
committed no crime or rebellion. I haven't sinned against you even though you
are hunting me down to take my life. †
12 "May the LORD judge between me and you, and may the LORD take vengeance
on you for me, but my hand will never be against you. † 13 As the old proverb
says, 'Wickedness comes from wicked people.' † My hand will never be against
you. 14 Who has the king of Israel come after? What are you chasing after? A
dead dog? A single flea? † 15 May the LORD be judge and decide between you
and me. May he take notice and plead my case and deliver † me from you." †
16 When David finished saying these things to him, Saul replied, "Is that your
voice, David my son?" † Then Saul wept aloud 17 and said to David, "You are
more righteous than I, for you have done what is good to me though I have done
what is evil to you. † 18 You yourself have told me today what good you did for
me: when the LORD handed me over to you, you didn't kill me. † 19 When a
man finds his enemy, does he let him go unharmed? † † May the LORD repay
you with good for what you've done for me today.

20 “Now I know for certain you will be king, and the kingdom of Israel will be
established † in your hand. † 21 Therefore swear to me by the LORD that you
will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father’s
family.” † 22 So David swore to Saul. Then Saul went back home, and David
and his men went up to the stronghold. †

24:3 Lit *to cover his feet* **24:5** Lit *David’s heart struck* **24:5** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss omit *robe* **24:7** Or *restrained* **24:10** LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *she* or *it* **24:10** Or *my eye* **24:11** Lit *Know and see* **24:15** Lit *render a verdict for* **24:19** Lit *go on a good way* **24:20** Or *will flourish*
24:1 1Sm 23:28-29 **24:1** 1Sm 23:19 **24:2** 1Sm 13:2; 26:2 **24:3** Jdg 3:24 **24:3** Pss 57, 142 titles **24:5** 2Sm 24:10 **24:6** 1Sm 26:9-11 **24:6** 1Sm 10:1 **24:8** 1Sm 25:23-24; 1Kg 1:31 **24:10** Ps 7:3-4 **24:10** 1Sm 24:4 **24:11** 2Kg 5:13 **24:11** 1Sm 23:14,23; 26:20 **24:12** 1Sm 26:10-11,23 **24:13** Mt 7:16-20; Lk 6:43-45 **24:14** 1Sm 26:20; 2Sm 9:8 **24:15** Ps 35:1 **24:16** 1Sm 26:17 **24:17** 1Sm 26:21 **24:18** 1Sm 26:23 **24:19** 1Sm 23:17; Pr 16:29 **24:20** 1Sm 13:14; 16:1-13 **24:21** Gn 21:23; 1Sm 20:14-17; 2Sm 21:6-8 **24:22** 1Sm 23:29

24:1-7 After resuming his pursuit of David, Saul unwittingly relieved himself in the same cave in which David and his men were hiding. Despite his men’s declaration that **this is the day the LORD told you about**, David merely **cut off the corner of Saul’s robe.** David had spared Saul’s life but, because of the symbolic importance of robes, the act may have symbolized taking the kingdom from Saul. David’s **conscience bothered him** for doing this to **the LORD’s anointed** (see also 26:7-12).

24:12 David’s restraint was rooted in both respect for “the LORD’s anointed” (vv. 6,10) and trust in God’s justice. He prayed, **may the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but my hand will never be against you** (see also vv. 13,15).

24:16-22 Saul recognized that David had mercifully spared his life and had repaid him good for evil. Nevertheless, Saul’s appreciation here would not prevent him for seeking David’s life again in the future.

DAVID, NABAL, AND ABIGAIL

25 Samuel died, † and all Israel assembled to mourn for him, † and they
buried him by his home in Ramah. † David then went down to the
Wilderness of Paran. † †

2 A man in Maon † had a business in Carmel; † he was a very rich man with
three thousand sheep and one thousand goats and was shearing his sheep in
Carmel. 3 The man’s name was Nabal, and his wife’s name, Abigail. The
woman was intelligent and beautiful, but the man, a Calebite, † was harsh and
evil in his dealings.
4 While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep,
5 so David sent ten young men instructing them, “Go up to Carmel, and when
you come to Nabal, greet him † in my name. 6 Then say this: ‘Long life to
you, † and peace to you, peace to your family, and peace to all that is yours. †

7 I hear that you are shearing. † When your shepherds were with us, we did not harass them, and nothing of theirs was missing the whole time they were in Carmel. † 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. So let my young men find favor with you, for we have come on a feast † day. † Please give whatever you have on hand to your servants and to your son David.’ ”
9 David’s young men went and said all these things to Nabal on David’s behalf, † and they waited. † 10 Nabal asked them, “Who is David? † Who is Jesse’s son? Many slaves these days are running away from their masters. 11 Am I supposed to take my bread, my water, and my meat that I butchered for my shearers and give them to these men? I don’t know where they are from.”
12 David’s young men retraced their steps. When they returned to him, they reported all these words. 13 He said to his men, “All of you, put on your swords! ” So each man put on his sword, and David also put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David while two hundred stayed with the supplies. †
14 One of Nabal’s young men informed Abigail, Nabal’s wife: “Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master, † but he screamed at them. 15 The men treated us very well. When we were in the field, we weren’t harassed † and nothing of ours was missing the whole time we were living among them. 16 They were a wall around us, both day and night, † the entire time we were with them herding the sheep. 17 Now consider carefully † what you should do, because there is certain to be trouble for our master and his entire family. He is such a worthless fool nobody can talk to him! ”
18 Abigail hurried, taking two hundred loaves of bread, two clay jars of wine, five butchered sheep, a bushel † of roasted grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on donkeys. †
19 Then she said to her male servants, “Go ahead of me. I will be right behind you.” † But she did not tell her husband Nabal.
20 As she rode the donkey down a mountain pass hidden from view, she saw David and his men coming toward her and met them. 21 David had just said, “I guarded everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness for nothing. He was not missing anything, yet he paid me back evil for good. 22 May God

punish me † and do so severely † if I let any of his males † survive until morning.” †
23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got off the donkey and knelt down with her face to the ground and paid homage to David. † 24 She knelt at his feet and said, “The guilt is mine, my lord, but please let your servant speak to you directly. Listen to the words of your servant. 25 My lord should pay no attention to this worthless fool Nabal, for he lives up to his name: † His name means ‘stupid,’ and stupidity is all he knows. † I, your servant, didn’t see my lord’s young men whom you sent. 26 Now my lord, as surely as the Lord lives and as you yourself live— it is the Lord who kept you from participating in bloodshed and avenging yourself † by your own hand—may your enemies and those who intend to harm my lord be like Nabal. † 27 Let this gift † your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive your servant’s offense, † for the Lord is certain to make a lasting dynasty for my lord † because he fights the Lord’s battles. † Throughout your life, may evil † not be found in you. †
29 “Someone is pursuing you and intends to take your life. My lord’s life is tucked safely in the place † where the Lord your God protects the living, but he is flinging away your enemies’ lives like stones from a sling. † 30 When the Lord does for my lord all the good he promised you and appoints you ruler over Israel, † 31 there will not be remorse or a troubled conscience for my lord because of needless bloodshed or my lord’s revenge. And when the Lord does good things for my lord, may you remember me your servant.” †
32 Then David said to Abigail, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, † who sent you to meet me today! 33 May your discernment be blessed, and may you be blessed. Today you kept me from participating in bloodshed and avenging myself by my own hand. † 34 Otherwise, as surely as the Lord God of Israel lives, who prevented me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, Nabal wouldn’t have had any males † left by morning light.” 35 Then David accepted what she had brought him and said, “Go home in peace. † See, I have heard what you said and have granted your request.” †

36 Then Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was in his house, holding a feast fit for a king. † Nabal's heart was cheerful, † and he was very drunk, so she didn't say anything † to him † until morning light.
37 In the morning when Nabal sobered up, † his wife told him about these events. His heart died † and he became a stone. 38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal dead. †
39 When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed be the LORD who championed my cause against Nabal's insults † and restrained his servant from doing evil. † The LORD brought Nabal's evil deeds back on his own head." †
Then David sent messengers to speak to Abigail about marrying him. 40 When David's servants came to Abigail at Carmel, they said to her, "David sent us to bring you to him as a wife."
41 She stood up, paid homage with her face to the ground, † and said, "Here I am, your servant, a slave to wash the feet of my lord's servants." † 42 Then Abigail got up quickly, and with her five female servants accompanying her, rode on the donkey following David's messengers. † And so she became his wife.
43 David also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, † and the two of them became his wives. 44 But Saul gave his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti † son of Laish, who was from Gallim. †

25:1 LXX reads *to Maon* **25:5** Or *Nabal, ask him for peace* **25:6** Lit *'To life* **25:7** Lit *you have shearers* **25:8** Lit *good* **25:9** Lit *name* **25:9** LXX reads *and he became arrogant* **25:17** Lit *Now know and see* **25:18** Lit *sheep, five seahs* **25:22** LXX; MT reads *David's enemies* **25:22** Lit *of those of his who are urinating against the wall* **25:25** Lit *for as is his name is, so he is* **25:25** Lit *and foolishness is with him* **25:28** Or *trouble* **25:29** Lit *bundle* **25:34** Lit *had anyone urinating against a wall* **25:36** Lit *Nabal's heart was good on him* **25:36** Lit *anything at all* **25:37** Lit *when the wine had gone out of Nabal* **25:37** Lit *Then his heart died within him*

25:1 1Sm 28:3 **25:1** Dt 34:8 **25:1** 2Kg 21:18; 2Ch 33:20 **25:1** Gn 21:21; Nm 10:12; 13:3 **25:2** 1Sm 23:24 **25:2** Jos 15:55 **25:3** Jos 15:13; 1Sm 30:14 **25:6** 1Ch 12:18 **25:7** 1Sm 23:24-25; 25:15-16 **25:8** Neh 8:10-12 **25:10** Jdg 9:28 **25:13** 1Sm 23:13; 30:9-10 **25:14** 1Sm 13:10; 15:13 **25:15** 1Sm 25:7,21 **25:16** Ex 14:22 **25:18** 2Sm 16:1; 1Ch 12:40 **25:19** Gn 32:16,20 **25:22** 1Sm 3:17; 20:13 **25:22** 1Kg 14:10 **25:23** 1Sm 20:41 **25:26** Heb 10:30 **25:26** 2Sm 18:32 **25:27** Gn 33:11; 1Sm 30:26 **25:28** 1Sm 25:24 **25:28** 1Sm 2:35; 22:14; 2Sm 7:11,16 **25:28** 1Sm 18:17 **25:28** 1Sm 24:11; Ps 7:3 **25:29** Jr 10:18 **25:30** 1Sm 13:14 **25:31** Gn 40:14; 1Sm 25:30 **25:32** Ex 18:10 **25:33** 1Sm 25:26 **25:35** 1Sm 20:42; 2Kg 5:19 **25:35** Gn 19:21 **25:36** 2Sm 13:23 **25:36** 1Sm 25:19 **25:38** 1Sm 26:10 **25:39** 1Sm 24:15 **25:39** 1Sm 25:26,34 **25:39** 2Sm 3:28-29 **25:41** 1Sm 25:23 **25:41** Mk 1:7 **25:42** Gn 24:61-67 **25:43** Jos 15:56 **25:44** 1Sm 18:27; 2Sm 3:14-15 **25:44** Is 10:30

25:1 Samuel had described himself as "old and gray" in 12:2, and the death of his great prophet is narrated

here. Samuel's death also related to the events described in 28:3-19.

25:10-16 David and his men had treated Nabal's men well and protected them (vv. 15-16), so Nabal's disrespectful and selfish response to a reasonable request (v. 8) provoked David. He prepared to attack. Indeed, Nabal was **a worthless fool**, as befits the meaning of his name (v. 25; see footnote I).

25:23-31 Abigail was a wise woman (v. 3; v. 33) and took immediate action upon hearing of her husband's harsh and foolish response. Bringing supplies of food with her (vv. 18-19; see vv. 8-11), she met David on the road as he approached to attack Nabal (vv. 20-23). She pleaded with him not to listen to Nabal but to restrain himself from bloodshed and to receive the provisions of food he had originally requested.

25:32-35 David wisely listened to Abigail and did not carry out his plan to destroy Nabal's men (v. 22). Although the present chapter is preceded and followed by instances in which David of his own volition spared Saul's life (24:3-7; 26:5-12), this incident involving Nabal shows that David was not immune to wanting to take matters into his own hands.

25:39-44 Nabal's death was followed by Abigail's remarriage to David. Regarding polygamy (vv. 43-44), see the note on Genesis 2:24.

DAVID AGAIN SPARES SAUL

26 Then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah saying, "David is hiding on
the hill of Hachilah opposite Jeshimon." † 2 So Saul, accompanied by
three thousand of the fit young men of Israel, † went immediately to the
Wilderness of Ziph to search for David there. 3 Saul camped beside the road at
the hill of Hachilah † opposite Jeshimon. David was living in the wilderness and
discovered Saul had come there after him. † 4 So David sent out spies and knew
for certain that Saul had come. 5 Immediately, David went to the place where
Saul had camped. He saw the place where Saul and Abner son of Ner, †
the commander of his army, were lying down. Saul was lying inside the inner circle
of the camp with the troops camped around him. 6 Then David asked Ahimelech
the Hethite † and Joab's brother Abishai † son of Zeruiah, "Who will go with
me into the camp † to Saul? "
"I'll go with you," answered Abishai.
7 That night, David and Abishai came to the troops, and Saul was lying there
asleep in the inner circle of the camp with his spear stuck in the ground by his
head. Abner and the troops were lying around him. 8 Then Abishai said to
David, "Today God has delivered your enemy to you. Let me thrust the spear
through him into the ground just once. I won't have to strike him twice! "
9 But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him, for who can lift a hand against
the LORD's anointed and be innocent? " † 10 David added, "As the LORD lives,

the LORD will certainly strike him down: † either his day will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. 11 However, because of the LORD, I will never lift my hand against the LORD's anointed. † Instead, take the spear and the water jug by his head, and let's go."
12 So David took the spear and the water jug by Saul's head, and they went their way. No one saw them, no one knew, and no one woke up; they all remained asleep because a deep sleep from the LORD † came over them. 13 David crossed to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance; there was a considerable space between them. 14 Then David shouted to the troops and to Abner son of Ner: "Aren't you going to answer, Abner? "
"Who are you who calls to the king? " Abner asked.
15 David called to Abner, "You're a man, aren't you? Who in Israel is your equal? So why didn't you protect your lord the king when one of the people came to destroy him? 16 What you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, all of you deserve to die † since you didn't protect your lord, the LORD's anointed. † Now look around; where are the king's spear and water jug that were by his head? "
17 Saul recognized David's voice and asked, "Is that your voice, my son David? " †
"It is my voice, my lord and king," David said. 18 Then he continued, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done? What crime have I committed? † 19 Now, may my lord the king please hear the words of his servant: If it is the LORD who has incited you against me, † then may he accept an offering. † But if it is people, † may they be cursed in the presence of the LORD, for today they have banished me from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD saying, † 'Go and worship other gods.' 20 So don't let my blood fall to the ground far from the LORD's presence, for the king of Israel has come out to search for a single flea, † like one who pursues a partridge in the mountains."
21 Saul responded, "I have sinned. † Come back, my son David, I will never harm you again because today you considered my life precious. I have been a fool! I've committed a grave error."

22 David answered, “Here is the king’s spear; have one of the young men come
over and get it. 23 The Lord will repay every man for his righteousness † and
his loyalty. I wasn’t willing to lift my hand against the Lord’s anointed, even
though the Lord handed you over to me today. † 24 Just as I considered your
life valuable today, so may the Lord consider my life valuable † and rescue me
from all trouble.” †
25 Saul said to him, “You are blessed, my son David. You will certainly do great
things and will also prevail.” † Then David went on his way, and Saul returned
home. †

26:16 Lit *you are sons of death*
26:1 1Sm 23:19; Ps 54 title **26:2** 1Sm 13:2; 24:2 **26:3** 1Sm 24:3 **26:3** 1Sm 23:15 **26:5** 1Sm 14:50-51; 17:55 **26:6** Gn 26:34; Jos 3:10; 1Kg 10:29; 2Kg 7:6 **26:6** 1Ch 2:15-16 **26:6** Jdg 7:10-11 **26:9** 1Sm 10:1; 24:6-7; 2Sm 1:14,16 **26:10** 1Sm 25:26,38 **26:11** Dt 32:35; 1Sm 24:6; 25:39; Rm 12:19 **26:12** Gn 2:21; 15:12 **26:16** 1Sm 20:31 **26:17** 1Sm 24:16; 26:21,25 **26:18** 1Sm 24:11 **26:19** 2Sm 16:11 **26:19** Gn 8:21 **26:19** 1Sm 24:9 **26:19** Jos 22:25-27 **26:20** 1Sm 24:14 **26:21** 1Sm 15:24,30; 24:17 **26:23** 1Sm 24:19 **26:23** 1Sm 24:10-12; 26:10-11 **26:24** 1Sm 18:30 **26:24** Ps 54:7 **26:25** 1Sm 24:19 **26:25** 1Sm 24:22

26:1 Once again, **the Ziphites** reported David’s whereabouts to Saul (see 23:19-20).

26:7-12 For a second time, David spared Saul’s life (see 24:3-7). Once again, David was told that Saul’s vulnerability was from God, who had **delivered** David’s **enemy** over to him (see also 24:4). David refused to approve killing Saul out of respect for **the Lord’s anointed** and in confidence that God would act on his behalf (vv. 9-11,23-24; see also 24:6-15).

26:16 David’s possession of the **spear** and **jug** proved he was telling the truth (see also 24:11).

26:19 This association between a land and its gods is also found in the book of Ruth (see the note on Ru 1:14-17).

DAVID FLEES TO ZIKLAG

27 David said to himself, “One of these days I’ll be swept away by Saul.
There is nothing better for me than to escape immediately to the land of
the Philistines. † Then Saul will give up searching for me everywhere
in Israel, and I’ll escape from him.” 2 So David set out with his six hundred
men † and went over to Achish son of Maoch, † the king of Gath. 3 David and
his men stayed with Achish in Gath. Each man had his family with him, †
and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, †
Nabal’s widow. 4 When it was reported to Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer
searched for him.

5 Now David said to Achish, “If I have found favor with you, let me be given a
place in one of the outlying towns, so I can live there. Why should your servant
live in the royal city with you?” 6 That day Achish gave Ziklag † to him, and it
still belongs to the kings of Judah today. 7 The length of time that David stayed
in Philistine territory amounted to a year and four months. †
8 David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, † the Girzites, † and
the Amalekites. † From ancient times they had been the inhabitants of the
region through Shur † as far as the land of Egypt. 9 Whenever David attacked
the land, he did not leave a single person alive, either man or woman, but he
took flocks, herds, donkeys, camels, and clothing. † Then he came back to
Achish, 10 who inquired, “Where did you raid today?” † †
David replied, “The south country of Judah,” “The south country of the
Jerahmeelites,” † or “The south country of the Kenites.” †
11 David did not let a man or woman live to be brought to Gath, for he said, “Or
they will inform on us and say, ‘This is what David did.’ ” This was David’s
custom during the whole time he stayed in the Philistine territory. 12 So Achish
trusted David, thinking, “Since he has made himself repulsive to his people
Israel, he will be my servant forever.”

27:8 Alt Hb tradition reads *Gezerites* **27:10** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg; LXX, Vg, DSS read *“Against whom did you raid today? ”*

27:1 1Sm 26:19 **27:2** 1Sm 25:13 **27:2** 1Sm 2:10; 1Kg 2:39 **27:3** 1Sm 30:3; 2Sm 2:3 **27:3** 1Sm 25:42-44 **27:6** Jos 15:31; 19:5; Neh 11:28 **27:7** 1Sm 29:1-11 **27:8** Jos 13:2,13 **27:8** Ex 17:8; 1Sm 15:7-8 **27:8** Ex 15:22 **27:9** 1Sm 15:3; Jb 1:3 **27:10** 1Sm 23:27 **27:10** 1Sm 30:29; 1Ch 2:9,25 **27:10** Jdg 1:16; 4:11

27:1-4 David again fled to the Philistine city of Gath (see 21:10-15). **Achish**, the king of Gath, had also been mentioned during David’s previous stay there.

27:8-12 David raided **the Geshurites, the Girizites, and the Amalekites**, but he told Achish that he had raided **Judah**, the **Jerahmeelites**, or the **Kenites** so that he would appear to have turned against Israel (v. 12). Last time he was in Gath, David pretended to be insane (21:13). Both of his stays in Philistine Gath were thus marked by deception.

SAUL AND THE MEDIUM

28 At that time, the Philistines † gathered their military units into one
army to fight against Israel. So Achish said to David, “You know, of
course, that you and your men must march out in the army † with me.”
2 David replied to Achish, “Good, you will find out what your servant can do.”

So Achish said to David, “Very well, I will appoint you as my permanent bodyguard.” †

SPIRITUALISM

Spiritualism is the belief that an individual can exert control on one’s world through worship of spirits. Spiritualism believes that the world consists of two interconnected realms: the spiritual realm and the material realm. Events in the material realm can be explained through a system of good and evil spirits at work. Spirits, ancestors, ghosts, witches, and other supernatural beings are believed to interfere with and interact with human life. Thus, they must be appeased or coerced in exchange for prosperity and a good life.

At its core, spiritualism is a human attempt to understand the misfortunes of life and to exert a semblance of authority over life. It seeks to effectively answer these questions: What is the meaning of life on earth, and how can death be explained? How can one attain a good life? How does one explain accidents and calamities? How does one plan for the future in the midst of many unknowns? How does a community of people maintain a moral order and deal with violations of community ethics?

Scripture clearly forbids human attempts at divination through the spirit world. Necromancy, defined as attempts to predict the future through contact with the dead, is forbidden in the OT (Lv 2:5-8; 19:31) and is considered detestable (Dt 18:9-14). King Saul, frustrated because the Lord did not answer his prayers, went to a medium and asked her to bring up a ghost in order for Saul to learn about his future. This act was noted as an example of his disobedience to God (1Ch 10:13).

SPIRITUALISM TODAY

In today’s Majority World context, spiritualism has been syncretized with various world religions. In many Southeast Asian countries, spiritualism is interwoven with formal religions as a result of the interaction between indigenous beliefs and established systems of religion. In Indonesia, spirit houses can often be found outside a home or a store to appease the local spirits. In Cambodia, the spirit houses hold offerings given to the *neak ta*, or the spirits of the deceased village founders. The people of Laos revere the *nak* spirit, a serpent-like creature, who is seen as the protector of the nation. Two practices—ancestor veneration and witchcraft—deserve a closer look.

Ancestor veneration has been historically understood by Western missionaries as worship of ancestral spirits, and therefore, forbidden. But it is important for Christians to comprehend the worldview of those who venerate ancestors in order to develop a proper response to it.

African and Asian religious beliefs recognize only one Supreme Being and several mediatory spirits. Unlike the Supreme Being, the mediatory spirits—such as ancestors—only have derived power. Although they are dead, they are considered “living-dead.” They are perceived to be present and active as mediators for members of their family and clans. As Kwame Bediako noted, there is a strong sense of mutual obligations, affection, and respect between the “living-dead” and the “living-living.”

An ancestor is one who has lived a virtuous and long life in the community. Such a pristine life cannot wish evil even after one has died. Therefore, ancestors are perceived to bestow blessings like good harvest, protection, fertility, and success in the present life. Because they lived a virtuous aged life and will continue with their good works in death, they are considered worthy of veneration (not worship). Furthermore, some ancestors are “glorified” and thus “serve” families outside of their own family and clan.

Another worldview issue commonly associated with Africa involves belief in witches and witchcraft

accusation. These matters are pervasive and complex. The word *witch*, for instance, can have positive or negative usage. In the Hausa language, *Maye* could mean exceptional ability. Nonetheless, the popular understanding of a witch is one who is oriented toward evil. Witches are malevolent cannibals.

In the religious consciousness of an average African, nothing simply happens. People want to know who, and not simply what, caused death, sickness, barrenness, lack of promotion, or poverty. Just who or what is behind all perceived misfortune? The need to name an agency becomes imminent. Unfortunately, it is the vulnerable and weak in society who usually become the victims of witchcraft accusation. Perceptions regarding who a witch is and what that witch can do need to be transformed by a God-centered view of reality.

SPIRITUALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Engaging spiritualism from a Christian worldview means engaging questions of ultimate reality. Developing a theology of the spirit world is critical for our engagement both in the Western world and in the Majority World, if we are to engage converts from other religions or those people whose cultural practices revolve around the worship of spirits. Harold Netland, an authority in the field of religious pluralism, cautions against seeing spiritualism as a sign that a culture is premodern or primitive in spite of the fact that its often considered a folk religion since forms of spiritualism can also be observed in modern culture alongside formal religions.

Missiological anthropologist Paul Hiebert observes that many Western missionaries often deny the existence of the spirit world, thus causing new converts to revert back to their old beliefs or to return to diviners who give them familiar answers for their present problems. Hiebert suggests that a key to developing a theology of the spirit world is to correct the flaw of “the excluded middle” in Western Christian thought. Western science has primarily focused on the immanent empirical world of human existence (that which can be confirmed by our senses), while Western Christian thought on the spirit world has primarily focused on the transcendent theistic world (heaven, hell, and eternity). Western missionaries, therefore, have traditionally not had robust understandings of the “middle world,” a world for which other religions and other cultures have developed complex systems which include beings like spirits, trolls, pixies, gnomes, and fairies that cannot be observed by our senses but are thought to occupy the human world nevertheless. Thus, historically, when Western missionaries encounter various forms of spirit worship, the tendency is to dismiss the reality of these spirits.

Following Paul’s example set at the Areopagus (Ac 17), Christians ought to respond to claims of spiritualism by affirming a God-centered view of reality rather than simply dismissing the presence of the spirit world. God created the world (Gn 1:1; Jn 1:3; Rv 4:11), and he continues to act in it through his providence, presence, and power (Jb 37:6-13; Ps 135:6; Col 1:17; Heb 1:3). The triune God is in active and direct relationship with humans, through his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who lives in us. Jesus Christ is supreme over all of creation, and “everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible” (Col 1:16). Our relationship with God is mediated through Christ—not through any other created beings. Individuals are therefore accountable for their own actions. As a result, our focus must be on God, on his divinely ordained principles for his creation, on our submission and obedience to him, and on our faith in his plan for our lives. We should not focus on how we might control our futures by manipulating God into doing our bidding. Instead, we worship God the Creator. Our trust must be in the Lord (Ps 37:3; Pr 3:5; Is 26:4).

FELIX THEONUGRAHA
ZACHS GAIYA

3 By this time Samuel had died, † all Israel had mourned for him and buried
him in Ramah, his city, † and Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from
the land. † 4 The Philistines gathered and camped at Shunem. So Saul gathered
all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the Philistine camp, he
was afraid and his heart pounded. 6 He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did
not answer him in dreams or by the Urim or by the prophets. † 7 Saul then said
to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I can go and consult
her."

His servants replied, "There is a woman at En-dor † who is a medium." †

8 Saul disguised himself † by putting on different clothes and set out with two
of his men. They came to the woman at night, and Saul said, "Consult a spirit for
me. † Bring up for me the one I tell you." †

9 But the woman said to him, "You surely know what Saul has done, † how he
has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you setting a trap
for me to get me killed? "

10 Then Saul swore to her by the LORD: "As surely as the LORD lives, no
punishment will come to you † from this."

11 "Who is it that you want me to bring up for you? " the woman asked.

"Bring up Samuel for me," he answered.

12 When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, and then she asked Saul, "Why
did you deceive me? You are Saul! "

13 But the king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see? "

"I see a spirit form † coming up out of the earth," the woman answered.

14 Then Saul asked her, "What does he look like? "

"An old man is coming up," she replied. "He's wearing a robe." † Then Saul
knew that it was Samuel, and he knelt low with his face to the ground and paid
homage. †

15 "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up? " Samuel asked Saul.

"I'm in serious trouble," replied Saul. "The Philistines are fighting against me
and God has turned away from me. † He doesn't answer me anymore, † either
through the prophets or in dreams. So I've called on you to tell me what I should
do."

16 Samuel answered, “Since the LORD has turned away from you and has
become your enemy, why are you asking me? 17 The LORD has done † exactly
what he said through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of your hand and
given it to your neighbor David. † 18 You did not obey the LORD and did not
carry out his burning anger against Amalek; † therefore the LORD has done this
to you today. 19 The LORD will also hand Israel over to the Philistines along with
you. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me, † † and the LORD will hand
Israel’s army over to the Philistines.”
20 Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground. He was terrified by Samuel’s words
and was also weak because he had not eaten anything all day and all night.
21 The woman came over to Saul, and she saw that he was terrified and said to
him, “Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands † and did
what you told me to do. 22 Now please listen to your servant. Let me set some
food in front of you. Eat and it will give you strength so you can go on your
way.”
23 He refused, saying, “I won’t eat,” but when his servants and the woman urged
him, he listened to them. † He got up off the ground and sat on the bed. †
24 The woman had a fattened calf at her house, and she quickly slaughtered it. †
She also took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread. 25 She served it to
Saul and his servants, and they ate. Afterward, they got up and left that night.

28:1 DSS, LXX read *battle* **28:10** Or *lives, you will not incur guilt* **28:13** Or *a god*, or *a divine being* **28:17** Some Hb, some LXX mss, Vg read *done to you* **28:19** LXX reads *sons will fall*

28:1 1Sm 29:1 **28:2** 1Sm 1:22,28 **28:3** 1Sm 25:1 **28:3** 1Sm 7:17 **28:3** Lv 19:31; 20:27; Dt 18:10-11 **28:6** Ex 28:30; Nm 27:21; 1Kg 3:5 **28:7** Jos 17:1; Ps 83:10 **28:7** Ac 16:16 **28:8** 2Ch 18:29; 35:21-22 **28:8** Is 8:19 **28:8** Dt 18:10-11 **28:9** 1Sm 28:3 **28:14** 1Sm 15:27 **28:14** 1Sm 24:8 **28:15** 1Sm 16:13-14; 18:12 **28:15** 1Sm 28:6 **28:17** 1Sm 15:28 **28:18** 1Sm 15:1-9 **28:19** 1Sm 31:2; Jb 3:17-19 **28:21** 1Sm 19:5 **28:23** 2Kg 5:13 **28:23** Est 1:6; Ezk 23:41 **28:24** Gn 18:6-7

28:1-2 David’s stay in Gath became even more awkward when he agreed to march **against Israel** with Achish’s army (see also the previous note and 29:1-11).

28:7-19 Saul’s wickedness found further expression through his consulting **a medium**, which was repeatedly forbidden in the Pentateuch (Lv 19:31; 20:6,27; Deuteronomy 18:10-11; see “Spiritism, Animism, and Cynicism in Biblical Times,” *p. 237*). The main function of a medium was to communicate with the spirit world, especially with the dead. As before (13:8-10; 15:24), a high-pressure situation revealed the true condition of his heart. Saul was afraid of the Philistines, and God was not answering him (vv. 5-6). Although he had banned all mediums and spiritists from the land (vv. 3,8), the king went against his own decree in covertly seeking a medium at En-dor. This again demonstrates the difference between prophecy in which God speaks in his own time and religious structures that attempt to force deities to provide information and help. The appearance of **the spirit** of a deceased person is unparalleled in

Scripture and should probably be considered exceptional, as perhaps is suggested by the woman's surprise (vv. 11-15). Apparently Saul could not see Samuel (vv. 12-14), but the two did converse (vv. 15-19). Ironically, Samuel only reinforced what God had said earlier (cp. 15:22-29) and informed Saul of his impending defeat and death.

PHILISTINES REJECT DAVID

29 The Philistines † brought all their military units together at Aphek † while Israel was camped by the spring in Jezreel. † 2 As the Philistine leaders were passing in review with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men † were passing in review behind them with Achish. 3 Then the Philistine commanders asked, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"
Achish answered the Philistine commanders, "That is David, servant of King Saul of Israel. He has been with me a considerable period of time. † From the day he defected until today, I've found no fault with him." †
4 The Philistine commanders, however, were enraged with Achish and told him, "Send that man back and let him return to the place you assigned him. † He must not go down with us into battle only to become our adversary during the battle. † What better way could he ingratiate himself with his master than with the heads of our men? 5 Isn't this the David they sing about during their dances:

Saul has killed his thousands,
but David his tens of thousands?" †

6 So Achish summoned David and told him, "As the LORD lives, you are an honorable man. I think it is good † to have you fighting † in this unit with me, because I have found no fault in you from the day you came to me until today. †
But the leaders don't think you are reliable. 7 Now go back quietly and you won't be doing anything the Philistine leaders think is wrong."
8 "But what have I done?" † David replied to Achish. "From the first day I entered your service until today, what have you found against your servant to keep me from going to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"
9 Achish answered David, "I'm convinced that you are as reliable as an angel of God. † But the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go into battle with us.' † 10 So get up early in the morning, you and your masters' servants

who came with you. † † When you've all gotten up early, go as soon as it's light." 11 So David and his men got up early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

29:3 Hb obscure **29:6** Lit *It was good in my eyes* **29:6** Lit *you going out and coming in* **29:10** LXX adds *and go to the place I appointed you to. Don't take this evil matter to heart, for you are good before me.* **29:1** 1Sm 28:1-2 **29:1** Jos 12:18; 1Sm 4:1 **29:1** 1Kg 18:19; 21:1; 2Kg 9:30 **29:2** 1Sm 28:1-2 **29:3** 1Sm 27:4-12 **29:4** 1Sm 27:6 **29:4** 1Sm 14:21 **29:5** 1Sm 18:7; 21:11 **29:6** 1Sm 27:8-12; 29:3 **29:8** 1Sm 27:10-12 **29:9** 2Sm 14:17,20; 19:27 **29:9** 1Sm 29:4 **29:10** 1Ch 12:19,22

29:1-7 David had agreed to fight with Achish (see the note on 28:1-2), but the other Philistine leaders objected to his serving alongside them. Achish eventually agreed with their concerns, sparing David from the awkward position of needing to fight against Israel (v. 11).

DAVID'S DEFEAT OF THE AMALEKITES

30 David and his men † arrived in Ziklag † on the third day. The Amalekites † had raided the Negev and attacked and burned Ziklag. 2 They also had kidnapped the women and everyone † in it from youngest to oldest. They had killed no one but had carried them off † as they went on their way.

3 When David and his men arrived at the town, they found it burned. Their wives, sons, and daughters had been kidnapped. 4 David and the troops with him wept loudly until they had no strength left to weep. 5 David's two wives, † Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had also been kidnapped. 6 David was in an extremely difficult position because the troops talked about stoning him, † for they were all very bitter over the loss of their sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. †

7 David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." † So Abiathar brought it to him, 8 and David asked the LORD: † "Should I pursue these raiders? Will I overtake them? " †

The LORD replied to him, "Pursue them, for you will certainly overtake them and rescue the people." †

9 So David and the six hundred men with him † went. They came to the Wadi Besor, where some stayed behind. † 10 David and four hundred of the men continued the pursuit, while two hundred stopped because they were too exhausted to cross the Wadi Besor.

11 David's men found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to
David. They gave him some bread to eat and water to drink. 12 Then they gave
him some pressed figs and two clusters of raisins. After he ate he revived, †ate for
he hadn't eaten food or drunk water for three days and three nights.
13 Then David said to him, "Who do you belong to? Where are you from? "
"I'm an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite man," he said. "My master
abandoned me when I got sick three days ago. 14 We raided the south country of
the Cherethites, † the territory of Judah, and the south country of Caleb, † and
we burned Ziklag." †
15 David then asked him, "Will you lead me to these raiders? "
He said, "Swear to me by God that you won't kill me or turn me over to my
master, and I will lead you to them."
16 So he led him, and there were the Amalekites, spread out over the entire area,
eating, drinking, and celebrating because of the great amount of plunder † they
had taken from the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah. 17 David
slaughtered them from twilight until the evening of the next day. † None of
them escaped, except four hundred young men who got on camels and fled. †
18 David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken; he also rescued his
two wives. 19 Nothing of theirs was missing from the youngest to the oldest,
including the sons and daughters, and all the plunder the Amalekites had taken.
David got everything back. † 20 He took all the flocks and herds, which were
driven ahead of the other livestock, and the people shouted, "This is David's
plunder! " †
21 When David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to go
with him and had been left at the Wadi Besor, † they came out to meet him and
to meet the troops with him. When David approached the men, he greeted them,
22 but all the corrupt and worthless men among those who had gone with David
argued, "Because they didn't go with us, we will not give any of the plunder we
recovered to them except for each man's wife and children. They may take them
and go."
23 But David said, "My brothers, you must not do this with what the LORD has
given us. He protected us and handed over to us the raiders who came against us.
24 Who can agree to your proposal? The share of the one who goes into battle is

to be the same as the share of the one who remains with the supplies. They will share equally." † 25 And it has been so from that day forward. David established this policy † as a law and an ordinance for Israel and it still continues today.

26 When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a gift for you † from the plunder of the LORD's enemies." † 27 He sent gifts † to those in Bethel, † in Ramoth of the Negev, † and in Jattir; † 28 to those in Aroer, † in Siphmoth, † and in Eshtemoa; † 29 to those in Racal, in the towns of the Jerahmeelites, † and in the towns of the Kenites; † 30 to those in Hormah, † in Bor-ashan, † and in Athach; 31 to those in Hebron, † and to those in all the places where David and his men had roamed. †

30:2 LXX; MT omits *and everyone* **30:25** *this policy* supplied for clarity **30:27** *He sent gifts* supplied for clarity

30:1-18 Gn 14:1-16 **30:1** 1Sm 27:6,8 **30:1** 1Sm 15:7; 27:8-10 **30:2** 1Sm 27:11 **30:5** 1Sm 25:42-43 **30:6** Ex 17:4 **30:6** 1Sm 23:16; Ps 18:2; 27:14 **30:7** 1Sm 23:6-9 **30:8** 1Sm 23:2,4 **30:8** Ex 15:9 **30:8** 1Sm 30:18 **30:9** 1Sm 27:2 **30:9** 1Sm 30:21 **30:12** Jdg 15:19 **30:14** 1Sm 30:16; 2Sm 8:18; Ezk 25:16 **30:14** Jos 14:13; 21:11-12 **30:14** 1Sm 30:1 **30:16** 1Sm 30:14 **30:17** 1Sm 11:11 **30:17** Jdg 7:12; 1Sm 15:3 **30:19** 1Sm 30:8 **30:20** 1Sm 30:26-31 **30:21** 1Sm 30:9-10 **30:24** Nm 31:25-27; Jos 22:8 **30:26** 1Sm 25:27 **30:26** 1Sm 18:17; 25:28 **30:27** Jos 15:30; 19:4 **30:27** Jos 19:8 **30:27** Jos 15:48; 21:14 **30:28** 1Ch 11:44 **30:28** 1Ch 27:27 **30:28** Jos 15:50 **30:29** 1Sm 27:10 **30:29** 1Sm 15:6 **30:30** Jos 12:14; 15:30; 19:4 **30:30** Jos 15:42; 19:7 **30:31** Nm 13:22; Jos 14:13-15; 21:11-13 **30:31** 1Sm 23:22

30:1-2 Achish had given **Ziklag** to David in 27:5-6.

30:6-8 Unlike Saul (see the note on 28:7-19), David sought God when he was in difficulty. When his men were considering stoning him because their families had been kidnapped, **David found strength in the LORD his God** and sought his guidance.

30:16-25 Having received God's guidance (v. 8), David defeated **the Amalekites** and **recovered everything the Amalekites had taken.** Despite some initial opposition (vv. 21-22), **the plunder** was shared equally between those who had gone into battle and those who stayed behind because of exhaustion (see also vv. 9-10). David did not want dissension over **what the LORD** [had] **given** and declared that the **share of the one who goes into battle is to be the same as the share of the one who remains with the supplies** (see also vv. 25-31).

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

31 The Philistines fought against Israel, † and Israel's men fled from them and were killed on Mount Gilboa. † 2 The Philistines pursued Saul and his sons and killed his sons, Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. 3 When the

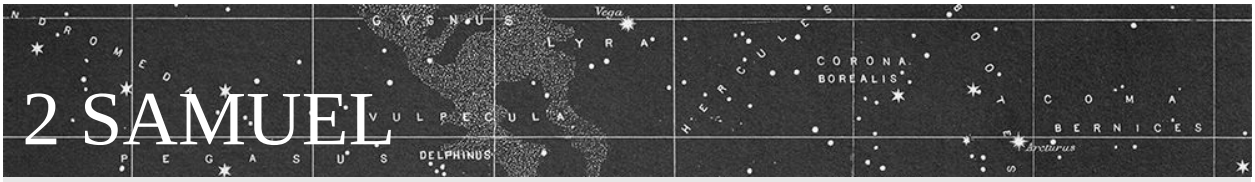
battle intensified against Saul, † the archers found him and severely wounded him. † 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, † "Draw your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men † will come and run me through and torture me! " But his armor-bearer would not do it because he was terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it. † 5 When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died with him. 6 So on that day, Saul died together with his three sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men.
7 When the men of Israel on the other side of the valley and on the other side of the Jordan saw that Israel's men had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned the cities and fled. So the Philistines came and settled in them.
8 The next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They cut off Saul's head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to spread the good news † in the temples of their idols † and among the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths † and hung his body † on the wall of Beth-shan. †
11 When the residents of Jabesh-gilead † heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all their brave men † set out, journeyed all night, and retrieved the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. When they arrived at Jabesh, they burned the bodies there. † 13 Afterward, they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree † in Jabesh † and fasted seven days.

31:3 LXX reads *and he was wounded under the ribs*

31:1-13 2Sm 1:12; 1Ch 10:1-12 **31:1** 1Sm 28:4 **31:3** 2Sm 1:6 **31:4** Jdg 9:54 **31:4** Jdg 14:3 **31:4** 2Sm 1:6,10 **31:9** 2Sm 1:20 **31:9** Jdg 16:23-24 **31:10** Jdg 2:13; 1Sm 7:3 **31:10** 1Sm 31:12; 2Sm 21:14 **31:10** Jos 17:11 **31:11** 1Sm 11:1-13 **31:12** 2Sm 2:4-7 **31:12** 2Ch 16:14 **31:13** 1Sm 22:6 **31:13** 2Sm 2:4-7; 21:12-14

31:1-4 As Samuel had predicted (28:19), Israel was defeated by the Philistines, and three of Saul's sons were killed. Saul was wounded by an arrow and ultimately committed suicide (vv. 3-4). His self-destruction was complete.

31:9-10 The Philistines' proclamation of the good news of their victory **in the temples of their idols** and their placement of Saul's armor **in the temple of the Ashtoreths** recalls their placement of the ark in the temple of Dagon (see the note on 5:1-5). Regarding "the Ashtoreths," see the note on Judges 3:7-11.



2 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION

See the Introduction to 1 Samuel for the introductory material.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is sovereign in carrying out his kingdom plans. His unconditional covenant with undeserving David (chap. 7) is as magnificent as his covenant with Abraham. This book also says a great deal about approaching God in worship. He desires the worship of his people, but only in the ways he has revealed, as the material about the ark of the covenant emphasizes.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Second Samuel throws the spotlight on one individual, David, who modeled magnificently that humans can accomplish great tasks for God when their hearts are passionately turned to pleasing him. On the other hand, David's sins and failures show that redeemed humans still must deal with the effects of the fall in their lives.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The account of David's adultery, Nathan's confrontation with the king, and David's subsequent repentance and restoration stand as a profound paradigm of salvation. The following exchange distills the message of redemption even today: "David responded to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' Then Nathan replied to David, 'And the LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die'" (12:13). David's reflection on this experience, Psalm 51, stands unsurpassed in Scripture on the relationship between confession of sin and divine forgiveness.

RESPONSES TO SAUL'S DEATH

1 After the death of Saul,† David returned from defeating the
Amalekites† and stayed at Ziklag two days. 2 On the third day a man

with torn clothes and dust on his head † came from Saul's camp. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. 3 David asked him, "Where have you come from? "
He replied to him, "I've escaped from the Israelite camp."
4 "What was the outcome? Tell me," David asked him.
"The troops fled from the battle," he answered. "Many of the troops have fallen and are dead. Also, Saul and his son Jonathan are dead." †
5 David asked the young man who had brought him the report, "How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? "
6 "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," † he replied, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear. At that very moment the chariots and the cavalry were closing in on him. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, so I answered: I'm at your service. 8 He asked me, 'Who are you? ' I told him: I'm an Amalekite. † 9 Then he begged me, 'Stand over me and kill me, for I'm mortally wounded, † but my life still lingers.' † 10 So I stood over him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen he couldn't survive. I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on his arm, and I've brought them here to my lord."
11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, † and all the men with him did the same. 12 They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening † for those who died by the sword — for Saul, his son Jonathan, the LORD's people, and the house of Israel.
13 David inquired of the young man who had brought him the report, "Where are you from? "
"I'm the son of a resident alien," he said. "I'm an Amalekite."
14 David questioned him, "How is it that you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed? " † 15 Then David summoned one of his servants and said, "Come here and kill him! " The servant struck him, and he died. †
16 For David had said to the Amalekite, "Your blood is on your own head † because your own mouth testified against you by saying, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.' "
17 David sang the following lament † for Saul and his son Jonathan, 18 and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is written in the

Book of Jashar: † †

19 The splendor of Israel lies slain on your heights.
How the mighty have fallen!
20 Do not tell it in Gath, don't announce it in the marketplaces of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, †
and the daughters of the uncircumcised will celebrate.
21 Mountains of Gilboa, let no dew or rain be on you,
or fields of offerings, †
for there the shield of the mighty was defiled † — the shield of Saul, no longer anointed with oil. †
22 Jonathan's bow never retreated, Saul's sword never returned unstained, †
from the blood of the slain,
from the flesh † of the mighty.
23 Saul and Jonathan, loved and delightful,
they were not parted in life or in death.
They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.
24 Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxurious things, who decked your garments with gold ornaments. †
25 How the mighty have fallen in the thick of battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.
26 I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.
You were such a friend to me.
Your love for me was more wondrous
than the love of women. †
27 How the mighty have fallen and the weapons of war have perished!

1:9 LXX reads *for terrible darkness has taken hold of me* **1:18** Or *of the Upright* **1:21** LXX reads *firstfruits* **1:22** Lit *empty* **1:22** Lit *fat*
1:1 1Sm 31:1-5 **1:1** 1Sm 30:1-20 **1:2** Jos 7:6; 1Sm 4:12 **1:4** 1Sm 31:6 **1:6-10** 1Sm 31:1-5; 1Ch 10:1-6 **1:8** Gn 36:12,16; Ex 17:8-16; Nm 24:20; Dt 25:19; 1Sm 15:1-34; 30:1-20; 1Ch 1:36 **1:9** Jdg 9:54 **1:11** Jos 7:6; 2Sm 3:31; 13:31 **1:12** 2Sm 3:35 **1:14** 1Sm 24:6; 26:6-12; 31:4 **1:15** 2Sm 4:10 **1:16** Jos 2:19; Mt 27:24-25; Ac 18:5-6 **1:17** 2Sm 3:33; 2Ch 35:24-25 **1:18** Jos 10:12-13 **1:20** 1Sm 31:8-9 **1:21** 1Sm 31:4 **1:21** 1Sm 10:1 **1:24** Ezk 16:1-11 **1:26** 1Sm 18:1-3

1:1 2 Samuel continues where 1 Samuel left off, with Saul's death.

1:6-16 This **Amalekite** probably thought that he would be rewarded for bringing news of Saul's death (vv. 6-10). Instead, the Amalekite was put to death by David because of his false testimony (cp. 31:3-4) that he had **killed the LORD's anointed.** David's respect for Saul and for the **LORD's anointed** continued to the end (see 1Sm 24:5; 26:9).

1:17 David's **lament for Saul and his son Jonathan** demonstrated his grief over them and confirms his innocence with respect to Saul's death (see vv. 19-24).

1:18 The Hebrew text translated **The Song of the Bow** consists only of the Hebrew word for "bow." As such, it is difficult to interpret and has been variously translated. Regarding the **Book of Jashar**, see the note on Joshua 10:8-15.

1:26 David grieved especially for Jonathan, whom he called his **brother** and **friend.** Jonathan had loved David "as much as he loved himself" (1Sm 18:1), and the two had made a covenant between them three times (1Sm 18:3; 20:16; 23:18).

DAVID, KING OF JUDAH

2 Some time later, David inquired of the LORD: † "Should I go to one of the towns of Judah? "
The LORD answered him, "Go."
Then David asked, "Where should I go? "
"To Hebron," † the LORD replied.
2 So David went there with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail, the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. † 3 In addition, David brought the men who were with him, each one with his family, and they settled in the towns near Hebron. † 4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. † They told David: "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul." †
5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, "The LORD bless you, because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord when you buried him. 6 Now, may the LORD show kindness and faithfulness to you, and I will also show the same goodness to you because you have done this deed. 7 Therefore, be strong † and valiant, for though Saul your lord is dead, the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."
8 Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, † took Saul's son Ish-bosheth † † and moved him to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin — over all Israel. 10 Saul's son Ish-bosheth was forty years old when he became king over Israel; he reigned for two years.

The house of Judah, however, followed David. 11 The length of time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months. †
12 Abner son of Ner and soldiers of Ish-bosheth son of Saul marched out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. 13 So Joab son of Zeruiah and David's soldiers marched out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. † The two groups took up positions on opposite sides of the pool.
14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have the young men get up and compete in front of us."
"Let them get up," Joab replied.
15 So they got up and were counted off — twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and twelve from David's soldiers. 16 Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his sword into his opponent's side so that they all died together. So this place, which is in Gibeon, is named Field of Blades. †
17 The battle that day was extremely fierce, and Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by David's soldiers. 18 The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. † Asahel was a fast runner, like one of the wild gazelles. † 19 He chased Abner and did not turn to the right or the left in his pursuit of him. 20 Abner glanced back and said, "Is that you, Asahel? "
"Yes it is," Asahel replied.
21 Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or left, seize one of the young soldiers, and take whatever you can get from him." But Asahel would not stop chasing him. 22 Once again, Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How could I ever look your brother Joab in the face? " †
23 But Asahel refused to turn away, so Abner hit him in the stomach with the butt of his spear. The spear went through his body, and he fell and died right there. As they all came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, they stopped, 24 but Joab and Abishai pursued Abner. By sunset, they had gone as far as the hill of Ammah, which is opposite Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon.
25 The Benjaminites rallied to Abner; they formed a unit and took their stand on top of a hill. 26 Then Abner called out to Joab: "Must the sword devour forever?

Don’t you realize this will only end in bitterness? How long before you tell the troops to stop pursuing their brothers? ”
27 “As God lives,” Joab replied, “if you had not spoken up, the troops wouldn’t have stopped pursuing their brothers until morning.” † 28 Then Joab blew the ram’s horn, and all the troops stopped; they no longer pursued Israel or continued to fight. 29 So Abner and his men marched through the Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan, marched all morning, † and arrived at Mahanaim. †
30 When Joab had turned back from pursuing Abner, he gathered all the troops. In addition to Asahel, nineteen of David’s soldiers were missing, 31 but they had killed 360 of the Benjaminites and Abner’s men. 32 Afterward, they carried Asahel to his father’s tomb in Bethlehem and buried him. Then Joab and his men marched all night and reached Hebron at dawn.
2:7 Lit *Therefore, strengthen your hands* **2:8** Some LXX mss read *Ishbaal* ; 1Ch 8:33; 9:39 **2:8** = Man of Shame **2:16** Or *Helkath-hazzurim* **2:29** Or *marched through the Bithron*
2:1 1Sm 23:1-12 **2:1** 1Sm 30:26-31; 2Sm 2:11; 5:5; 1Kg 2:11; 1Ch 3:4; 29:27 **2:2** 1Sm 25:42-43 **2:3** 1Sm 27:2-3; 30:9; 1Ch 12:1,23-37 **2:4** 1Sm 16:13; 2Sm 5:3-5 **2:4** 1Sm 31:11-13 **2:8** 1Sm 14:50 **2:11** 2Sm 5:5; 1Kg 2:11 **2:13** Jr 41:11-12 **2:18** 1Ch 2:16 **2:18** 1Ch 12:8; Sg 8:14 **2:22** 2Sm 3:27 **2:27** 2Sm 2:14 **2:29** 2Sm 2:8

2:1-4 As he had done on previous occasions (1Sm 23:2,4,10-12; 30:8), David **inquired of the LORD**, who instructed him to go **to Hebron.** He was anointed there as king over Judah (vv. 4,7,11). Meanwhile, Abner made Saul’s son Ish-bosheth king over the rest of Israel (vv. 8-9).

2:21-23 Asahel’s death would later be avenged by Joab (see 3:27).

CIVIL WAR

3 During the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David, † David was growing stronger † and the house of Saul was becoming weaker.
2 Sons were born to David in Hebron:

His firstborn was Amnon, †
by Ahinoam † the Jezreelite;
3 his second was Chileab,
by Abigail, † the widow of Nabal the Carmelite;

the third was Absalom, †
son of Maacah the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur; †
4 the fourth was Adonijah, †
son of Haggith;
the fifth was Shephatiah,
son of Abital;
5 the sixth was Ithream,
by David's wife Eglah.

These were born to David in Hebron. †
6 During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner kept acquiring more power in the house of Saul. † 7 Now Saul had a concubine whose name was Rizpah † daughter of Aiah, and Ish-bosheth questioned Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine? "
8 Abner was very angry about Ish-bosheth's accusation. "Am I a dog's head † † who belongs to Judah? " he asked. "All this time I've been loyal to the family of your father Saul, to his brothers, and to his friends and haven't betrayed you to David, but now you accuse me of wrongdoing with this woman!
9 May God punish Abner and do so severely if I don't do for David what the LORD swore to him: 10 to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish the throne of David over Israel and Judah † from Dan to Beer-sheba."
11 Ish-bosheth did not dare respond to Abner because he was afraid of him.
12 Abner sent messengers as his representatives to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make your covenant with me, and you can be certain I am on your side to turn all Israel over to you."
13 David replied, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. However, there's one thing I require of you: You will not see my face unless you first bring Saul's daughter Michal † when you come to see me."
14 Then David sent messengers to say to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, "Give me back my wife, Michal. I was engaged to her for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins." †

15 So Ish-bosheth sent someone to take her away from her husband, Paltiel son of Laish. † 16 Her husband followed her, weeping all the way to Bahurim. Abner said to him, “Go back.” So he went back.

THE ASSASSINATION OF ABNER

17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel: “In the past you wanted David to be king over you. 18 Now take action, because the LORD has spoken concerning David: ‘Through my servant David I will save my people Israel from the power of the Philistines and the power of all Israel’s enemies.’ ”
19 Abner also informed the Benjaminites and went to Hebron to inform David about all that was agreed on by Israel and the whole house of Benjamin. †
20 When Abner and twenty men came to David at Hebron, David held a banquet for him and his men.
21 Abner said to David, “Let me now go and I will gather all Israel to my lord the king. They will make a covenant with you, † and you will reign over all you desire.” So David dismissed Abner, and he went in peace.
22 Just then David’s soldiers and Joab returned from a raid and brought a large amount of plundered goods with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had dismissed him, and he had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and his whole army arrived, Joab was informed, “Abner son of Ner came to see the king, the king dismissed him, and he went in peace.”
24 Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Look here, Abner came to you. Why did you dismiss him? Now he’s getting away. 25 You know that Abner son of Ner came to deceive you and to find out about your military activities † and everything you’re doing.” 26 Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well † of Sirah, but David was unaware of it. 27 When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab pulled him aside to the middle of the city gate, as if to speak to him privately, and there Joab stabbed him in the stomach. So Abner died in revenge for the death of Asahel, † Joab’s brother. †
28 David heard about it later and said: “I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. 29 May it hang over Joab’s head and his father’s whole family, and may the house of Joab never be

without someone who has a discharge or a skin disease, † or a man who can only work a spindle, † or someone who falls by the sword or starves." 30 Joab and his brother Abishai killed Abner because he had put their brother Asahel to death in the battle at Gibeon. †

31 David then ordered Joab and all the people who were with him, "Tear your clothes, put on sackcloth, † and mourn over Abner." And King David walked behind the coffin. †

32 When they buried Abner in Hebron, the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept, 33 and the king sang a lament for Abner: †

Should Abner die as a fool dies?
34 Your hands were not bound, your feet not placed in bronze shackles.
You fell like one who falls victim to criminals.

And all the people wept over him even more.

35 Then they came to urge David to eat food while it was still day, but David took an oath: "May God punish me and do so severely if I taste bread or anything else before sunset! " † 36 All the people took note of this, and it pleased them. In fact, everything the king did pleased them. 37 On that day all the troops and all Israel were convinced that the king had no part in the killing of Abner son of Ner.

38 Then the king said to his soldiers, "You must know that a great leader has fallen in Israel today. 39 As for me, even though I am the anointed king, I have little power today. These men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too fierce for me. † May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil! " †

3:8 = a despised person **3:25** Lit *your going out and your coming in* **3:26** Or *cistern* **3:27** Lit *And he died for the blood of Asahel* **3:29** LXX reads *who uses a crutch* **3:31** Or *the bier* ; lit *the bed*
3:1 1Sm 20:16; 1Kg 12:19; 2Ch 21:7; Ps 122:5; Is 22:22; Zch 12:8,10; 13:1; Lk 1:27 **3:1** Jb 17:9 **3:2** 2Sm 13:1-29 **3:2** 1Sm 25:42-43 **3:3** 1Sm 25:3-42 **3:3** 2Sm 13:34; 14:23-25,33; 15:6,10-14; 18:9-12,33 **3:3** 1Sm 27:8; 2Sm 13:37-38; 14:32; 15:8 **3:4** 1Kg 1:5 **3:5** 1Ch 3:1-5 **3:6** 2Sm 2:8-9 **3:7** 2Sm 21:8-10 **3:8** Ex 22:31; 1Sm 17:43; 24:14; 2Sm 9:8; 16:9 **3:10** 1Sm 15:28; 16:1-13; 28:17; 1Ch 12:23 **3:13** 1Sm 14:49 **3:14** 1Sm 18:20-27 **3:15** 1Sm 25:44 **3:19** 1Ch 12:29 **3:21** 2Sm 3:12 **3:27** 2Sm 2:23; 1Kg 2:5,32 **3:29** Lv 14:2-8 **3:30** 2Sm 2:23 **3:31** Gn 37:34; Jos 7:6 **3:33** 2Sm 1:17; 2Ch 35:25 **3:35** 2Sm 12:17 **3:39** 2Sm 16:10; 19:22 **3:39** Ps 28:4; 2Tm 4:14

3:1 Though the conflict between the houses of David and Saul was **long**, David was getting **stronger** and would eventually become king over all Israel (5:3).

3:2-6 David's own family was growing, albeit through multiple wives (see also 1Sm 25:42-43). Regarding polygamy, see the note on Genesis 2:24. Major problems later arose through several of these sons (i.e., Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah).

3:8-12 Ish-bosheth's accusation could have been true, but it angered Abner so much that he planned **to transfer the kingdom** of Israel to David (see also vv. 17-21).

3:24-27 When Joab learned that Abner had just left after visiting the king (vv. 17-23), he sent for him and killed him "because he had put . . . Asahel to death" (see v. 30; 2:21-23).

3:28-37 David had been innocent of Saul's death, and he was innocent of Abner's as well. He mourned for both men and **sang a lament** both times (see note on 1:17). He held Joab's house responsible and was displeased with them (vv. 29,39).

THE ASSASSINATION OF ISH-BOSHETH

4 When Saul's son Ish-bosheth heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he
gave up, † and all Israel was dismayed. 2 Saul's son had two men who
were leaders of raiding parties: one named Baanah and the other Rechab,
sons of Rimmon the Beerothite of the Benjaminites. Beeroth is also considered
part of Benjamin, 3 and the Beerothites fled to Gittaim and still reside there as
aliens today.
4 Saul's son Jonathan had a son whose feet were crippled. He was five years old
when the report about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nanny † picked
him up and fled, but as she was hurrying to flee, he fell and became lame. His
name was Mephibosheth. †
5 Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out and arrived at
Ish-bosheth's house during the heat of the day while the king was taking his
midday nap. 6 They entered the interior of the house as if to get wheat and
stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rechab and his brother Baanah escaped.
7 They had entered the house while Ish-bosheth was lying on his bed in his
bedroom and stabbed and killed him. They removed his head, took it, and
traveled by way of the Arabah † all night. 8 They brought Ish-bosheth's head to
David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here's the head of Ish-bosheth son of
Saul, your enemy who intended to take your life. Today the LORD has granted
vengeance to my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."
9 But David answered Rechab and his brother Baanah, sons of Rimmon the
Beerothite, "As the LORD lives, the one who has redeemed my life from every
distress, † 10 when the person told me, 'Look, Saul is dead,' he thought he was
a bearer of good news, but I seized him and put him to death at Ziklag. † That

was my reward to him for his news! 11 How much more when wicked men kill a righteous man in his own house on his own bed! So now, should I not require his blood from you and purge you from the earth?” †

12 So David gave orders to the young men, and they killed Rechab and Baanah. They cut off their hands and feet and hung their bodies by the pool in Hebron, but they took Ish-bosheth’s head and buried it in Abner’s tomb in Hebron. †

4:1 Lit *his hands dropped* **4:4** Lit *His nurse*
4:4 2Sm 9:3-7 **4:7** Dt 1:1 **4:9** 1Kg 1:29 **4:10** 2Sm 1:2-15 **4:11** Gn 9:5-6 **4:12** 2Sm 3:32

4:1-7 After Abner’s death, the leadership of Israel quickly unraveled. Ish-bosheth and Israel were afraid, and two leaders of their **raiding parties**, **Rechab** and **Baanah**, assassinated Ish-bosheth in his own home. Jonathan’s crippled son **Mephibosheth** will enter the narrative later (see 9:1-13; 16:1-4; 19:24-30).

4:9-12 Much like the Amalekite who brought news of Saul’s death and claimed to have killed him (see note on 1:6-16), these two men wrongly thought David would reward them for bringing Ish-bosheth’s head to him (vv. 7-8). David informed them how he had treated the Amalekite messenger (v. 10) and had them put to death as well.

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL

5 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron † and said, “Here we are, your own flesh and blood. † † 2 Even while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led us out to battle and brought us back. † The LORD also said to you, ‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be ruler over Israel.’ ”

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron. King David made a covenant with them † at Hebron in the LORD’s presence, and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he began his reign; † he reigned forty years.
5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites † who inhabited the land. The Jebusites had said to David: “You will never get in here. Even the blind and lame can repel you” thinking, “David can’t get in here.”

7 Yet David did capture the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. †
8 He said that day, “Whoever attacks the Jebusites must go through the water

shaft to reach the lame and the blind who are despised by David." † For this reason it is said, "The blind and the lame will never enter the house." †
9 David took up residence in the stronghold, which he named the city of David. He built it up all the way around from the supporting terraces inward. 10 David became more and more powerful, † and the LORD God of Armies was with him. † 11 King Hiram of Tyre sent envoys to David; he also sent cedar logs, carpenters, and stonemasons, † and they built a palace for David. 12 Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.
13 After he arrived from Hebron, David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him. 14 These are the names of those born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, † Solomon, 15 Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet. †
17 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, † they all went in search of David, but he heard about it and went down to the stronghold. † 18 So the Philistines came and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.
19 Then David inquired of the LORD: † "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me? "
The LORD replied to David, "Attack, for I will certainly hand the Philistines over to you."
20 So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated them there and said, "Like a bursting flood, the LORD has burst out against my enemies before me." † Therefore, he named that place The Lord Bursts Out. † 21 The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.
22 The Philistines came up again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 So David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not attack directly, but circle around behind them and come at them opposite the balsam trees. 24 When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, act decisively, for then the LORD will have gone out ahead of you to strike down the army of the

Philistines.” † 25 So David did exactly as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Geba to Gezer.

5:1 Lit *your bone and your flesh* **5:8** Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Tg, Syr read *who despise David* **5:8** Or *temple*, or *palace* **5:20** Or *Baal-perazim* ; 2Sm 6:8; 1Ch 13:11

5:1-3 1Ch 11:1-3 **5:1** Gn 29:14 **5:2** 1Sm 18:5,12-16 **5:3** 2Sm 3:12-13,21 **5:4-5** 1Kg 2:11; 1Ch 29:26-27 **5:6** Jos 15:63; Jdg 1:21 **5:7** Lk 2:4 **5:10** 2Sm 3:1 **5:10** 1Ch 11:9 **5:11** 1Kg 5:1,10,18 **5:14** Lk 3:31 **5:11-16** 1Ch 3:5-8; 14:1-7 **5:17-25** 1Ch 14:8-17 **5:17** 1Sm 22:4-5; 2Sm 23:14 **5:19** 2Sm 2:1 **5:20** Is 28:21 **5:24** 2Kg 7:6

5:1-5 Led by Abner, Israel had already been making preparations for David to rule over them (see 3:12-21). The death of Ish-bosheth, Saul’s last surviving son (see 1Sm 31:2; 1Ch 8:33; 9:39), probably made this transition even more natural. David’s lengthy waiting period had finally concluded, and God fulfilled his promise to make him king over all Israel. He was a youth when Samuel anointed him (see 1Sm 16:13; 17:33), and he became king of Judah at age thirty and king of all Israel at thirty-seven.

5:6-12 After David became king over all Israel, he took **Jerusalem** and its stronghold, **Zion**—both of which would henceforth be associated with Israelite monarchy and God’s final, permanent, eschatological rule. The Lord continued to be with David (see also 1Sm 16:18; 18:12, 14,28), and he established his reign (v. 12).

5:13 David already had multiple **wives** (see the note on 3:2-6). Regarding polygamy, see the note on Genesis 2:24.

5:19-22 As before (see the note on 2:1-4), **David inquired of the LORD**, and he gave him guidance and victory (see also vv. 22-25).

DAVID MOVES THE ARK

6 David again assembled all the fit young men in Israel: † thirty thousand. 2 He and all his troops set out † to bring the ark of God from Baale-judah. † The ark bears the Name, the name of the LORD of Armies who is enthroned between the cherubim. † 3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and transported it from Abinadab’s house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, † sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart † 4 and brought it with the ark of God from Abinadab’s house on the hill. Ahio walked in front of the ark. 5 David and the whole house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all kinds of fir wood instruments, † lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums, † and cymbals. †

6 When they came to Nacon’s threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. 7 Then the LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah, † and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, † and he died there next to the ark of God. 8 David was angry because of the LORD’s outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place Outburst

Against Uzzah, † as it is today. 9 David feared the LORD that day and said,
"How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" 10 So he was not willing to
bring the ark of the LORD to the city of David; † instead, he diverted it to the
house of Obed-edom of Gath. 11 The ark of the LORD remained in his house
three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom † and his whole family.
12 It was reported to King David: "The LORD has blessed Obed-edom's family
and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God." So David went and had
the ark of God brought up from Obed-edom's house to the city of David with
rejoicing. † 13 When those carrying the ark of the LORD advanced six steps, he
sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. † 14 David was dancing † with all his
might before the LORD wearing a linen ephod. † 15 He and the whole house of
Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of the
ram's horn. 16 As the ark of the LORD was entering the city of David, † Saul's
daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and
dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.
17 They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent David
had pitched for it. † Then David offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings
in the LORD's presence. 18 When David had finished offering the burnt offering
and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of
Armies. 19 Then he distributed a loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake to
each one in the entire Israelite community, both men and women. † Then all the
people went home.
20 When David returned home to bless his household, † Saul's daughter Michal
came out to meet him. "How the king of Israel honored himself today!" she
said. "He exposed himself today in the sight of the slave girls of his subjects like
a vulgar person would expose himself."
21 David replied to Michal, "It was before the LORD who chose me over your
father and his whole family to appoint me ruler over the LORD's people Israel. †
I will dance before the LORD, 22 and I will dishonor myself and humble myself
even more. † † However, by the slave girls you spoke about, I will be
honored." 23 And Saul's daughter Michal had no child to the day of her death.

6:2 = Kiriath-jearim in 1Sm 7:1; 1Ch 13:6; 2Ch 1:4 **6:3** Or *And his brothers* **6:5** DSS, LXX read *with tuned instruments with strength, with songs* ; 1Ch 13:8 **6:5** = an Egyptian percussion instrument **6:8** Or *Perez-*

uzzah ; 2Sm 5:20 **6:14** Or *whirling* **6:22** LXX reads *more and I will be humble in your eyes* **6:22** Lit *more and I will be humble in my own eyes*
6:1 2Sm 10:9; 1Ch 19:10 **6:2-11** 1Ch 13:6-14 **6:2** Ex 25:22; 1Sm 4:4 **6:3** 1Ch 15:2,12-15 **6:5** Ps 150:3-5 **6:7** Ex 25:14; Nm 4:5,15,20 **6:7** 1Sm 6:19-20 **6:10** Lk 2:4 **6:11** 1Ch 26:4-8 **6:12** 1Ch 15:25 **6:13** 1Kg 8:1-5 **6:14** Ex 28:4-28; 1Sm 2:18 **6:16** Lk 2:4 **6:17** 1Ch 15:1; 2Ch 1:4 **6:12-19** 1Ch 15:25–16:3 **6:20** 1Ch 16:43 **6:21** 1Sm 13:14; 15:28

6:3-9 Prior to Saul's reign, **the ark** had been captured by the Philistines only to be returned to Israel (1Sm 4–6). It went first to Beth-shemesh and then to Kiriath-jearim, where it was kept at **Abinadab's house** (vv. 3-4; 1Sm 6:12–7:2). The Philistines, who perhaps did not know any better, had sent the ark back to Israel on a **new cart** (1Sm 6:7), and now the Israelites also used one to transport the ark to Jerusalem. The ark, however, was to be carried on poles by the Kohathite family of Levites (see Ex 25:12-14; Nm 4:4-20), and the celebratory occasion was cut short when **Uzzah** was struck down by God for steadying the ark with his hand. Although severe, this act of judgment is consistent with the fatal consequences encountered by those men of Beth-shemesh who had **looked inside the ark** previously (1Sm 6:19). In both instances, God used the ark to effectively communicate his own holiness to the Israelites (v. 9; see 1Sm 6:20). He had also communicated this to the Philistines when they had possession of it (see notes on 1Sm 5:1-5 and 6:5-6).

6:10-12 The Lord not only used the ark to demonstrate his holiness and judgment (see previous note) but also his goodness, for it brought blessing to **the house of Obed-edom.**

6:20-23 David's wife **Michal** showed disdain for David's exuberant worship even though he was legitimately humbling himself and honoring the Lord. Her resulting punishment of lifelong barrenness marked the end of the house of Saul, for Michal was his daughter.

THE LORD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

7 When the king had settled into his palace † and the LORD had given him
rest on every side from all his enemies, 2 the king said to the prophet
Nathan, † "Look, I am living in a cedar house while the ark of God sits
inside tent curtains." †
3 So Nathan told the king, "Go and do all that is on your mind, for the LORD is
with you."
4 But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: 5 "Go to my servant
David and say, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you to build me a house to
dwell in? † 6 From the time I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until today I
have not dwelt in a house; instead, I have been moving around with a tent as my
dwelling. † 7 In all my journeys with all the Israelites, have I ever spoken a
word to one of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people
Israel, asking: Why haven't you built me a house of cedar? '
8 "So now this is what you are to say to my servant David: 'This is what the
LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be
ruler over my people Israel. † 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone,

and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a great name † for you like that of the greatest on the earth. † 10 I will designate a place † for my people Israel and plant them, † so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they have done 11 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over my people Israel. † I will give you rest from all your enemies.

" 'The LORD declares to you: The LORD himself will make a house for you. 12 When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. † 13 He is the one who will build a house for my name, † and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. † 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. † When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a rod of men and blows from mortals. 15 But my faithful love will never leave him † as it did when I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. † 16 Your house and kingdom will endure before me † forever, † and your throne will be established forever.' " †

17 Nathan reported all these words and this entire vision to David.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

18 Then King David went in, † sat in the LORD's presence, and said,

Who am I, Lord GOD, and what is my house that you have brought me this far?

19 What you have done so far † was a little thing to you, Lord GOD, for you have also spoken about your servant's house in the distant future. And this is a revelation † for mankind, Lord GOD. 20 What more can David say to you? You know your servant, † Lord GOD. 21 Because of your word and according to your will, you have revealed all these great things to your servant.

22 This is why you are great, † Lord GOD. There is no one like you, and there is no God besides you, † as all we have heard confirms. 23 And who is like your people Israel? God came to one nation on earth in order to redeem a people for himself, to make a name for himself, and to perform for them † great and awesome acts, † driving out nations and their gods before your people you

redeemed for yourself from Egypt. † 24 You established your people Israel to be your own people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God. †
25 Now, LORD God, fulfill the promise forever that you have made to your servant and his house. Do as you have promised, 26 so that your name will be exalted forever, when it is said, "The LORD of Armies is God over Israel." The house of your servant David † will be established before you 27 since you, LORD of Armies, God of Israel, have revealed this to your servant when you said, "I will build a house for you." Therefore, your servant has found the courage to pray this prayer to you. 28 Lord GOD, you are God; your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. 29 Now, please bless your servant's house so that it will continue before you forever. For you, Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing your servant's house will be blessed forever. †

7:16 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *you* **7:19** Lit *Yet this* **7:19** Or *custom*, or *instruction* **7:23** Some Hb mss, Tg, Vg, Syr; other Hb mss read *you* **7:23** LXX; MT reads *acts for your land*
7:1 2Sm 5:11 **7:2** 2Sm 12:1-7; 1Kg 1:8-11,34-45; 2Ch 9:29; 29:25 **7:2** Ex 26:1; 1Ch 17:1 **7:5** 1Kg 5:3; 8:19; 1Ch 22:8; 28:3 **7:6** Ex 25:8-9; 26:1 **7:8** 1Sm 16:11-13 **7:9** Gn 11:4; 12:2; 2Sm 7:23; Neh 9:10; Is 55:13; 63:14; Jr 32:20 **7:9** 1Sm 18:14; 2Sm 5:10; 8:6 **7:10** 1Kg 8:21 **7:10** Ex 15:17; Ps 44:2; 80:8,16; Is 5:2; Jr 1:10; 2:21; 11:17; 12:2; 18:9; 24:6; 31:28; 32:41; 42:10; 45:4; Am 9:15 **7:11** Jdg 2:14-16; 1Sm 12:9-11 **7:12** Ac 13:23 **7:13** 1Kg 5:2-5; 6:12; 8:18-19; Ac 7:47 **7:13** Lk 1:32-33 **7:14** Ps 2:7; Heb 1:5; Rv 21:7 **7:15** Ps 89:21,28,33 **7:15** 1Sm 15:24-28 **7:16** Lk 1:32-33 **7:16** Ps 89:3-4,26-37; Ezk 34:23-24; Rv 11:15 **7:18-29** 1Ch 17:16-27 **7:20** Ps 139:1-4 **7:22** 1Ch 16:25; 2Ch 2:5 **7:22** Mk 12:32 **7:23** Dt 4:32-38 **7:24** Ex 6:7; Dt 26:18 **7:26** Lk 1:69 **7:29** 2Sm 22:51; Ps 89:28-29

7:4-7 The ark had been housed in the tabernacle, which was made of curtains (v. 2), but David's plan to build a more permanent structure (**a house** or "temple") was implicitly rejected by God, who had never asked for such a thing.

7:8-16 Having rejected David's plan to build a house for him (vv. 4-7), God instead announced that he would build **a house for** David (v. 11). God reminded David of what he had done for him (vv. 8-9) and declared what he would do for him in the future (vv. 9-16). Central to the latter is the promise of an eternal kingdom (vv. 11-16). Here "house" refers to a dynasty or royal line. If David's descendants sinned, they would be disciplined but never forsaken (vv. 14-15; see also 1Kg 11:39). His house, kingdom, and throne would endure **forever.** These promises are referred to elsewhere as "a covenant" (e.g., 23:5) and as such are often referred to as the "Davidic covenant." The references to **a great name** (v. 9) and **a descendant** (v. 12) connect this covenant to the promises made to Abraham (see the note on Gn 12:1-3), including the Abrahamic covenant (see the note on Gn 15:17-21). This suggests continuity between the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. Indeed, both are fulfilled in "Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1).

7:18-29 Although mentioned briefly in verse 13, David's original plan to build a house for God has faded into the background of the glorious promises of an eternal kingdom. He was overwhelmed by God's grace shown to him and to Israel (vv. 18-24), and he prayed for God to **fulfill** his word (vv. 25-29).

DAVID'S VICTORIES

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8 After this, David defeated the Philistines, † subdued them, and took Metheg-ammah † from Philistine control. † † 2 He also defeated the Moabites, and after making them lie down on the ground, he measured them off with a cord. He measured every two cord lengths of those to be put to death and one full length of those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's subjects and brought tribute. †

3 David also defeated Hadadezer † son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his control at the Euphrates River. 4 David captured seventeen hundred horsemen † and twenty thousand foot soldiers from him, and he hamstrung all the horses † and kept a hundred chariots. †

5 When the Arameans of Damascus † came to assist King Hadadezer of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand Aramean men. 6 Then he placed garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David's subjects and brought tribute. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went. †

7 David took the gold shields of Hadadezer's officers and brought them to Jerusalem. † 8 King David also took huge quantities of bronze from Betah † and Berothai, Hadadezer's cities.

9 When King Toi of Hamath † heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, 10 he sent his son Joram to King David to greet him and to congratulate him because David had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Toi and Hadadezer had fought many wars. Joram had items of silver, gold, and bronze with him. 11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had dedicated from all the nations he had subdued † — 12 from Edom, † Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, the Amalekites, and the spoil of Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 David made a reputation † for himself when he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites † in Salt Valley. † † 14 He placed garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites were subject to David. † The LORD made David victorious wherever he went. †

15 So David reigned over all Israel, administering justice and righteousness for all his people. †

16 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;
17 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech son of Abiathar were priests;
Seraiah was court secretary;
18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites
and the Pelethites; †
and David's sons were chief officials. †

8:1 Or *took control of the mother city* ; Hb obscure **8:1** LXX reads *them, and David took tribute out of the hand of the Philistines* **8:4** LXX, DSS read *1,000 chariots and 7,000 horsemen* **8:4** Or *chariot horses* **8:8** Some LXX mss, Syr read *Tebah* **8:12** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *Aram* ; 1Ch 18:11 **8:13** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *Arameans* ; 1Ch 18:12 **8:13** = the Dead Sea region **8:18** LXX; MT reads *were priests* ; 1Ch 18:17
8:1-18 1Ch 18:1-17 **8:1** 2Sm 3:18 **8:2** Nm 24:17 **8:3** 2Sm 10:16-19 **8:4** Jos 11:6 **8:5** Gn 14:15; Ac 9:2-27 **8:6** 2Sm 8:14 **8:7** 2Kg 11:10; 2Ch 23:9 **8:9** Gn 10:15-18; Ezk 47:16-17 **8:11** 1Kg 7:51; 1Ch 26:26 **8:13** 2Sm 7:9 **8:13** 2Kg 14:7 **8:14** Gn 25:23; 27:29-40; Nm 24:18 **8:14** Dt 20:4; 2Sm 8:6 **8:15** 1Kg 10:9; Ps 99:4; Jr 9:23; 22:3,15; 23:5; 33:15; Ezk 18:5 **8:18** 2Sm 23:20-23

8:1-14 David's continued success came from God, who **made David victorious wherever he went** (vv. 6,14).

8:15 The characterization of David **administering justice and righteousness for all his people** indicates that he was fulfilling his primary responsibility as king. This is essentially the same as the characterization of the Messiah in Jeremiah 23:5 and 33:15 as One who will "administer justice and righteousness in the land." This is the way God rules (Ps 99:4), and he requires such conduct from the earthly king of Israel and from mankind (e.g., 1Kg 10:9; Jr 22:3; Ezk 18:5).

DAVID'S KINDNESS TO MEPHIBOSHETH

9 David asked, "Is there anyone remaining from the family of Saul I can show kindness † to for Jonathan's sake?" † 2 There was a servant of Saul's family named Ziba. † They summoned him to David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"
"I am your servant," he replied.
3 So the king asked, "Is there anyone left of Saul's family that I can show the kindness of God to?"
Ziba said to the king, "There is still Jonathan's son who was injured in both feet." †

4 The king asked him, “Where is he? ”
Ziba answered the king, “You’ll find him in Lo-debar at the house of Machir son of Ammiel.” 5 So King David had him brought from the house of Machir son of Ammiel in Lo-debar.
6 Mephibosheth son of Jonathan son of Saul came to David, fell facedown, and paid homage. David said, “Mephibosheth! ”
“I am your servant,” he replied.
7 “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “since I intend to show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all your grandfather Saul’s fields, and you will always eat meals at my table.” †
8 Mephibosheth paid homage and said, “What is your servant that you take an interest in a dead dog † like me? ”
9 Then the king summoned Saul’s attendant Ziba and said to him, “I have given to your master’s grandson all that belonged to Saul and his family. 10 You, your sons, and your servants are to work the ground for him, and you are to bring in the crops so your master’s grandson will have food to eat. But Mephibosheth, your master’s grandson, is always to eat at my table.” Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.
11 Ziba said to the king, “Your servant will do all my lord the king commands.”
So Mephibosheth ate at David’s † table just like one of the king’s sons. 12 Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. † All those living in Ziba’s house were Mephibosheth’s servants. 13 However, Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king’s table. His feet had been injured.
9:11 LXX; Syr reads *the king’s* ; Vg reads *your* ; MT reads *my*
9:1 Gn 19:19; 24:12; 40:14; 47:29; Jos 2:12; Jdg 8:35; 2Sm 2:6 **9:1** 1Sm 18:3; 20:14-17,42 **9:2** 2Sm 16:1-4 **9:3** 2Sm 4:4 **9:7** 1Kg 2:7 **9:8** 1Sm 24:14; 2Sm 16:9 **9:12** 1Ch 8:34

9:1-7 David’s kindness to **Jonathan’s son** not only fulfilled promises he had made to Jonathan (see 1Sm 20:15,42) but also to Saul (see 1Sm 24:21-22). **Mephibosheth** was **injured in both feet** because of a fall when he was a boy (see 4:4). David graciously gave him **Saul’s fields** and allowed him to eat from the king’s table continually.

WAR WITH THE AMMONITES

10 Some time later, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun became king in his place. † 2 Then David said, “I’ll show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me.”

So David sent his emissaries to console Hanun concerning his father. However, when they arrived in the land of the Ammonites, 3 the Ammonite leaders said to Hanun their lord, “Just because David has sent men with condolences for you, do you really believe he’s showing respect for your father? Instead, hasn’t David sent his emissaries in order to scout out the city, spy on it, and demolish it?” †
4 So Hanun took David’s emissaries, shaved off half their beards, † cut their clothes in half at the hips, and sent them away. †
5 When this was reported to David, he sent someone to meet them, since they were deeply humiliated. The king said, “Stay in Jericho until your beards grow back; then return.”
6 When the Ammonites realized they had become repulsive to David, they hired twenty thousand foot soldiers from the Arameans of Beth-rehob and Zobah, one thousand men from the king of Maacah, and twelve thousand men from Tob.
7 David heard about it and sent Joab and all the elite troops. 8 The Ammonites marched out and lined up in battle formation at the entrance to the city gate while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were in the field by themselves. 9 When Joab saw that there was a battle line in front of him and another behind him, he chose some of Israel’s finest young men and lined up in formation to engage the Arameans. 10 He placed the rest of the forces under the command of his brother Abishai. They lined up in formation to engage the Ammonites.
11 “If the Arameans are too strong for me,” Joab said, “then you will be my help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I’ll come to help you.
12 Be strong! Let’s prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. † May the LORD’s will be done.” † †
13 Joab and his troops advanced to fight against the Arameans, and they fled before him. 14 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they too fled before Abishai and entered the city. So Joab withdrew from the attack against the Ammonites and went to Jerusalem.
15 When the Arameans saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they regrouped. 16 Hadadezer sent messengers to bring the Arameans who were beyond the Euphrates River, and they came to Helam with Shobach, commander of Hadadezer’s army, leading them.

17 When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan,
and went to Helam. Then the Arameans lined up to engage David in battle and
fought against him. 18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed
seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers. † He also
struck down Shobach commander of their army, who died there. 19 When all the
kings who were Hadadezer's subjects saw that they had been defeated by Israel,
they made peace with Israel and became their subjects. After this, the Arameans
were afraid to ever help the Ammonites again.

10:12 Lit *the Lord do what is good in his eyes* **10:18** Some LXX mss; MT reads *horsemen* ; 1Ch 19:18 **10:1-19** 1Ch 19:1-19 **10:3** 1Sm 11:1-10 **10:4** Is 50:6 **10:4** Is 7:20; 20:4 **10:12** Dt 31:6; Jos 1:6 **10:12** Ac 21:14

10:1-4 The Ammonites' suspicion of David was unfounded, and their mistreatment of David's men led to their defeat at Joab's hands.

DAVID'S ADULTERY WITH BATHSHEBA

11 In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his
officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged
Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem. †

2 One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the
palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing — a very beautiful woman. 3 So
David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, †
daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah † the Hethite? " †

4 David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with
her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. † Afterward,
she returned home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: "I
am pregnant."

6 David sent orders to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hethite." So Joab sent Uriah to
David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were
doing and how the war was going. 8 Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your
house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king
followed him. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master's
servants; he did not go down to his house.

10 When it was reported to David, "Uriah didn't go home," David questioned
Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a journey? Why didn't you go home? "

11 Uriah answered David, “The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in tents, and
my master Joab and his soldiers † are camping in the open field. How can I
enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? As surely as you live
and by your life, I will not do this! ” †
12 “Stay here today also,” David said to Uriah, “and tomorrow I will send you
back.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 Then David
invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. He went out
in the evening to lie down on his cot with his master’s servants, but he did not go
home.

URIAH’S DEATH ARRANGED

14 The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In
the letter he wrote:

Put Uriah † at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that
he is struck down and dies.
16 When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew
the best enemy soldiers were. 17 Then the men of the city came out and attacked
Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle; Uriah the Hethite
also died.
18 Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. 19 He
commanded the messenger, “When you’ve finished telling the king all the
details of the battle — 20 if the king’s anger gets stirred up and he asks you,
‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn’t you realize they would
shoot from the top of the wall? 21 At Thebez, who struck Abimelech son of
Jerubbesheth? † † Didn’t a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the top
of the wall so that he died? † Why did you get so close to the wall? ’ — then
say, ‘Your servant Uriah the Hethite is dead also.’ ” 22 Then the messenger left.
When he arrived, he reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. 23 The
messenger reported to David, “The men gained the advantage over us and came
out against us in the field, but we counterattacked right up to the entrance of the
city gate. 24 However, the archers shot down on your servants from the top of
the wall, and some of the king’s servants died. Your servant Uriah the Hethite is
also dead.”

25 David told the messenger, “Say this to Joab: ‘Don’t let this matter upset you
because the sword devours all alike. Intensify your fight against the city and
demolish it.’ Encourage him.”
26 When Uriah’s † wife heard that her husband Uriah had died, she mourned for
him. † 27 When the time of mourning ended, David had her brought to his
house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, the LORD considered
what David had done to be evil. †

11:3 DSS add *Joab’s armor-bearer* **11:11** Lit *servants* **11:21** LXX reads *Jerubbaal* **11:21** = Gideon **11:26** Lit *her husband*

11:1 2Sm 12:26-29; 1Ch 20:1 **11:3** 2Sm 12:24; Ps 51 **11:3** Mt 1:6 **11:4** Lv 15:18-30; 18:19 **11:11** 1Sm 21:5 **11:15** Mt 1:6 **11:21** Jdg 9:50-54 **11:26** Mt 1:6 **11:27** 2Sm 12:9; 15:19

11:1-4 While on his roof alone at night, David lusted after a woman who was bathing and committed adultery with her (see also Jms 1:14-15). Up to this point, David had been walking faithfully with God and experiencing his blessing. His adultery with Bathsheba and subsequent cover-up, however, was evil and would be severely punished by God (12:7-14).

11:5-17 David’s adultery became further complicated because Bathsheba became pregnant. His initial plan to cover up what he had done was to have **Uriah** come back to Jerusalem and **sleep with** [his] **wife** (v. 11). The ironic outcome was that Uriah, who had every right to sleep with his own wife, refused to do so out of respect for his fellow soldiers and held fast to this commitment even when he was made **drunk** (v. 13), whereas David had no right to sleep with another man’s wife and did so sober-mindedly without fear of God or man. His initial plan having failed, David sent Uriah back to Joab with **a letter** containing instructions to orchestrate his death.

11:25-27 Despite David’s callousness and cover-up, God knew the **evil** that he had done.

NATHAN’S PARABLE AND DAVID’S REPENTANCE

12 So the LORD sent Nathan to David. † When he arrived, he said to him:
There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The
rich man had very large flocks and herds, 3 but the poor man had nothing except
one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised her, and she grew up with him
and with his children. From his meager food she would eat, from his cup she
would drink, and in his arms she would sleep. She was like a daughter to him.
4 Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself
to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to
him. Instead, he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for his guest. †
5 David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan: “As the LORD lives, the
man who did this deserves to die! 6 Because he has done this thing and shown
no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb.” †

7 Nathan replied to David, “You are the man! This is what the Lord God of
Israel says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, † and I rescued you from Saul. 8 I
gave your master’s house to you and your master’s wives into your arms, † and
I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would
have given you even more. 9 Why then have you despised the Lord’s command
by doing what I consider † evil? † You struck down Uriah † the Hethite with
the sword and took his wife as your own wife — you murdered him with the
Ammonite’s sword. † 10 Now therefore, the sword will never leave your
house † because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hethite to be
your own wife.’
11 “This is what the Lord says, † ‘I am going to bring disaster on you from your
own family: I will take your wives and give them to another † before your very
eyes, and he will sleep with them in broad daylight. † 12 You acted in secret,
but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.’ ” †
13 David responded to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” †
Then Nathan replied to David, “And the Lord has taken away your sin; you will
not die. † 14 However, because you treated † the Lord with such contempt in
this matter, the son born to you will die.” † 15 Then Nathan went home.

THE DEATH OF BATHSHEBA’S SON

The Lord struck the baby that Uriah’s † wife had borne to David, and he
became deathly ill. 16 David pleaded with God for the boy. He fasted, went
home, and spent the night lying on the ground. † 17 The elders of his house
stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would
not eat anything with them.
18 On the seventh day the baby died. But David’s servants were afraid to tell
him the baby was dead. They said, “Look, while the baby was alive, we spoke to
him, and he wouldn’t listen to us. So how can we tell him the baby is dead? He
may do something desperate.”
19 When David saw that his servants were whispering to each other, he guessed
that the baby was dead. So he asked his servants, “Is the baby dead? ”
“He is dead,” they replied.

20 Then David got up from the ground. He washed, anointed himself, changed
his clothes, went to the LORD's house, and worshiped. Then he went home and
requested something to eat. So they served him food, and he ate.
21 His servants asked him, "Why have you done this? While the baby was alive,
you fasted and wept, but when he died, you got up and ate food."
22 He answered, "While the baby was alive, I fasted and wept because I thought,
'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let him live.' 23 But now
that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I'll go to him,
but he will never return to me." †

THE BIRTH OF SOLOMON

24 Then David comforted † his wife Bathsheba; he went to her and slept with
her. She gave birth to a son and named † him Solomon. † † The LORD loved
him, 25 and he sent a message through the prophet Nathan, who named † him
Jedidiah, † because of the LORD.

CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF RABBAH

26 Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites † and captured the royal
fortress. 27 Then Joab sent messengers to David to say, "I have fought against
Rabbah and have also captured its water supply. 28 Now therefore, assemble the
rest of the troops, lay siege to the city, and capture it. Otherwise I will be the one
to capture the city, and it will be named after me." 29 So David assembled all the
troops and went to Rabbah; he fought against it and captured it. 30 He took the
crown from the head of their king, † and it was placed on David's head. The
crown weighed seventy-five pounds † of gold, and it had a precious stone in it.
In addition, David took away a large quantity of plunder from the city. 31 He
removed the people who were in the city and put them to work with saws, iron
picks, and iron axes, and to labor at brickmaking. † He did the same to all the
Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

12:4 Lit *for the man who had come to him* **12:8** Lit *bosom* **12:9** Alt Hb tradition reads *what he considers* **12:11** Or *to your neighbor* **12:11** Lit *in the eyes of this sun* **12:12** Lit *and before the sun* **12:14** Alt Hb tradition, one LXX ms; MT reads *treated the enemies of* ; DSS read *treated the word of* **12:24** Alt Hb tradition reads *he named* **12:24** In Hb, the name *Solomon* sounds like "peace." **12:25** Or *prophet to name* **12:25** = Beloved of the Lord **12:30** LXX reads *of Milcom* ; some emend to *Molech* ; 1Kg 11:5,33 **12:30** Lit *a talent*

12:1 Ps 51 title **12:6** Ex 22:1; Lk 19:8 **12:7** 1Sm 16:13 **12:9** Nm 15:30-31; 1Sm 15:19 **12:9** Mt 1:6 **12:9**

2Sm 11:14-17 **12:10** 2Sm 12:18; 13:28-29; 18:14-18; 1Kg 2:22-25; 2Kg 11:1 **12:11-12** 2Sm 16:21-22 **12:13** 2Sm 24:10; Ps 32:5; 51:4 **12:13** Lv 20:10; 24:17; Ps 32:1-5; Pr 28:13 **12:14** 2Sm 12:18 **12:15** Mt 1:6 **12:16** 2Sm 13:31; Jb 1:20 **12:23** Jb 7:8-10 **12:24** Gn 37:35; Ps 23:4; 119:76,82 **12:24** 1Ch 22:9 **12:26-31** 1Ch 20:1-3 **12:31** Ex 1:13-14

12:7-15 As the prophet Samuel had confronted Saul earlier, so **Nathan** confronted King David, who had **despised the** LORD**'s command.** He had not only committed adultery with Uriah's wife but had **murdered him with the Ammonite's sword** and then married his widow (v. 9). The Lord's pronouncement of judgment marks a major turning point in David's life and in 2 Samuel. Although God's covenant with him had not been revoked (see the note on 7:8-16), violence would plague David's house (v. 10) and his own wives would be given away (v. 11). David's confession of sin was accepted, but God declared that Bathsheba's son would die (vv. 13-14).

12:23 David's statement **I'll go to him** is sometimes used to support the view that infants who die go to heaven.

12:24-25 Despite the shameful circumstances of his parents' marriage, God **loved** Solomon, who would become David's successor.

AMNON RAPES TAMAR

13 Some time passed. David's son Absalom † had a beautiful sister named Tamar, † and David's son Amnon † was infatuated with her.
2 Amnon was frustrated to the point of making himself sick over his sister Tamar because she was a virgin, but it seemed impossible to do anything to her.
3 Amnon had a friend named Jonadab, a son of David's brother Shimeah. †
Jonadab was a very shrewd man, 4 and he asked Amnon, "Why are you, the king's son, so miserable † every morning? Won't you tell me? "
Amnon replied, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."
5 Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend you're sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare a meal in my presence † so I can watch and eat from her hand.' "
6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my presence so I can eat from her hand."
7 David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Please go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare a meal for him."
8 Then Tamar went to his house while Amnon was lying down. She took dough, kneaded it, made cakes in his presence, and baked them. 9 She brought the pan and set it down in front of him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, "Everyone

leave me!” And everyone left him. 10 “Bring the meal to the bedroom,” Amnon
told Tamar, “so I can eat from your hand.” Tamar took the cakes she had made
and went to her brother Amnon’s bedroom. 11 When she brought them to him to
eat, he grabbed her and said, † “Come sleep with me, my sister!”
12 “Don’t, my brother!” she cried. “Don’t disgrace † me, for such a thing
should never be done in Israel. † Don’t commit this outrage! † 13 Where could
I ever go with my humiliation? And you — you would be like one of the
outrageous fools in Israel! Please, speak to the king, for he won’t keep me from
you.” 14 But he refused to listen to her, and because he was stronger than she
was, he disgraced her by raping her.
15 So Amnon hated Tamar with such intensity that the hatred he hated her with
was greater than the love he had loved her with. “Get out of here!” he said.
16 “No,” she cried, † “sending me away is much worse than the great wrong
you’ve already done to me!”
But he refused to listen to her. 17 Instead, he called to the servant who waited on
him: “Get this away from me, throw her out, and bolt the door behind her!”
18 Amnon’s servant threw her out and bolted the door behind her. Now Tamar
was wearing a long-sleeved † garment, because this is what the king’s virgin
daughters wore. 19 Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long-sleeved
garment she was wearing. She put her hand on her head † and went away crying
out.
20 Her brother Absalom said to her: “Has your brother Amnon been with you?
Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Don’t take this thing to heart.”
So Tamar lived as a desolate woman † in the house of her brother Absalom.

ABSALOM MURDERS AMNON

21 When King David heard about all these things, he was furious. † 22 Absalom
didn’t say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, because he hated Amnon
since he disgraced his sister Tamar.
23 Two years later, Absalom’s sheepshearers were at Baal-hazor near Ephraim,
and Absalom invited all the king’s sons. 24 Then he went to the king and said,
“Your servant has just hired sheepshearers. Will the king and his servants please
come with your servant?”

25 The king replied to Absalom, “No, my son, we should not all go, or we would be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he wasn’t willing to go, though he did bless him.
26 “If not,” Absalom said, “please let my brother Amnon go with us.”
The king asked him, “Why should he go with you?” 27 But Absalom urged him, so he sent Amnon and all the king’s sons. †
28 Now Absalom commanded his young men, “Watch Amnon until he is in a good mood from the wine. When I order you to strike Amnon, then kill him. Don’t be afraid. Am I not the one who has commanded you? Be strong and valiant!” † 29 So Absalom’s young men did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the rest of the king’s sons got up, and each fled on his mule.
30 While they were on the way, a report reached David: “Absalom struck down all the king’s sons; not even one of them survived!” 31 In response the king stood up, tore his clothes, and lay down on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. †
32 But Jonadab, son of David’s brother Shimeah, † spoke up: “My lord must not think they have killed all the young men, the king’s sons, because only Amnon is dead. In fact, Absalom has planned this † ever since the day Amnon disgraced his sister Tamar. 33 So now, my lord the king, don’t take seriously the report that says all the king’s sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.”
34 Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. When the young man who was standing watch looked up, there were many people coming from the road west of him from the side of the mountain. † 35 Jonadab said to the king, “Look, the king’s sons have come! It’s exactly like your servant said.” 36 Just as he finished speaking, the king’s sons entered and wept loudly. Then the king and all his servants also wept very bitterly. 37 But Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. † And David mourned for his son † every day.
38 After Absalom had fled to Geshur and had been there three years, 39 King David † longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon’s death.

13:11 Lit *said to her* **13:16** Lit *she said to him* **13:18** Or *an ornamented* ; Gn 37:3 **13:21** LXX, DSS add *but he did not grieve the spirit of Amnon his son, for he loved him because he was his firstborn* ; 1Kg 1:6 **13:27** LXX adds *And Absalom prepared a feast like a royal feast.* **13:32** Lit *In fact, it was established on the*

mouth of Absalom **13:34** LXX adds *And the watchman came and reported to the king saying, "I see men on the Horonaim road on the side of the mountain."* **13:37** Probably Amnon **13:39** DSS, LXX, Tg read *David's spirit*

13:1 2Sm 3:3 **13:1** 2Sm 14:27; 1Ch 3:9 **13:1** 2Sm 3:2 **13:3** 1Sm 16:9; 17:13; 1Ch 2:13 **13:4** Gn 41:19; 2Sm 3:1 **13:5** Jr 7:18 **13:12** Dt 21:14; Ru 2:15; 2Sm 19:3; Jb 19:3; Ps 35:4; 44:9; 136:23; Pr 28:7; Jr 14:3; 50:12; Ezk 36:32; 2Co 12:21 **13:12** Gn 20:9; 34:7; Lv 18:9; 20:17 **13:12** Dt 22:21; Jos 7:15; Jdg 19:23-24; 20:6; Jr 29:23 **13:19** Jr 2:37 **13:20** Is 54:1; 62:4 **13:28** Jos 1:9 **13:31** 2Sm 1:11 **13:32** 2Sm 13:3-5 **13:37** 2Sm 3:3; 1Ch 3:2

13:1-14 The Lord had said that he would punish David's family for his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah (12:10-12). Part of this judgment was that "the sword will never leave [David's] house" (12:10). In connection with this, David's firstborn son **Amnon** became infatuated with his half-sister **Tamar** and raped her. As a result, her full brother Absalom hated Amnon and would kill him to avenge his sister (vv. 22,32). David's tumble into sexual sin and murder was thus repeated by his sons.

13:21 David was **furious** about Amnon's rape of Tamar, but the text does not mention any further action taken (see also 1Kg 1:6).

13:28-29 Absalom's murder of Amnon both avenged his sister (v. 32) and began to fulfill God's word of judgment that "the sword will never leave [David's] house" (12:10).

13:37-39 Absalom fled to his maternal grandfather, **Talmai . . . king of Geshur** (see 3:3).

ABSALOM RESTORED TO DAVID

14 Joab son of Zeruiah realized that the king's mind was on Absalom.
2 So Joab sent someone to Tekoa † to bring a wise † woman from there. He told her, "Pretend to be in mourning: dress in mourning clothes and don't put on any oil. † Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. 3 Go to the king and speak these words to him." Then Joab told her exactly what to say. †
4 When the woman from Tekoa came † to the king, she fell facedown to the ground, paid homage, † and said, "Help me, Your Majesty! "
5 "What's the matter? " the king asked her.
"Sadly, I am a widow; my husband died," she said. † 6 "Your servant had two sons. They were fighting in the field with no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. 7 Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant and said, 'Hand over the one who killed his brother so we may put him to death for the life of the brother he murdered. We will eliminate the heir! ' They would extinguish my one remaining ember by not preserving my husband's name or posterity on earth." †
8 The king told the woman, "Go home. I will issue a command on your behalf."

9 Then the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “My lord the king, may any blame be on me † and my father’s family, and may the king and his throne be innocent.”
10 “Whoever speaks to you,” the king said, “bring him to me. He will not trouble you again! ”
11 She replied, “Please, may the king invoke the LORD your God, so that the avenger of blood will not increase the loss, and they will not eliminate my son! ” †

“As the LORD lives,” he vowed, “not a hair of your son will fall to the ground.” †
12 Then the woman said, “Please, may your servant speak a word to my lord the king? ”
“Speak,” he replied.
13 The woman asked, “Why have you devised something similar against the people of God? When the king spoke as he did about this matter, he has pronounced his own guilt. The king has not brought back his own banished one.
14 We will certainly die † and be like water poured out on the ground, which can’t be recovered. But God would not take away a life; he would devise plans so that the one banished from him does not remain banished.
15 “Now therefore, I’ve come to present this matter to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought: I must speak to the king. Perhaps the king will grant his servant’s request. 16 The king will surely listen in order to keep his servant from the grasp of this man who would eliminate both me and my son from God’s inheritance. 17 Your servant thought: May the word of my lord the king bring relief, for my lord the king is able to discern the good and the bad like the angel of God. † May the LORD your God be with you.”
18 Then the king answered the woman, “I’m going to ask you something; don’t conceal it from me! ”
“Let my lord the king speak,” the woman replied.
19 The king asked, “Did Joab put you up to † all this? ”
The woman answered. “As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or left from all my lord the king says. Yes, your servant Joab is the one who gave orders to me; he told your servant exactly what to say. † 20 Joab your servant has done this to address the issue indirectly, † but my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, knowing everything on earth.”

21 Then the king said to Joab, “I hereby grant this request. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.”
22 Joab fell with his face to the ground in homage and blessed the king. “Today,” Joab said, “your servant knows I have found favor with you, my lord the king, because the king has granted the request of your servant.”
23 So Joab got up, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom † to Jerusalem.
24 However, the king added, “He may return to his house, but he may not see my face.” So Absalom returned to his house, but he did not see the king. †
25 No man in all Israel was as handsome † and highly praised as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did not have a single flaw.
26 When he shaved his head — he shaved it at the end of every year because his hair got so heavy for him that he had to shave it off — he would weigh the hair from his head and it would be five pounds † according to the royal standard.
27 Three sons were born to Absalom, and a daughter named Tamar, who was a beautiful woman. 28 Absalom resided in Jerusalem two years but never saw the king. 29 Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab was unwilling to come to him. So he sent again, a second time, but he still would not come. 30 Then Absalom said to his servants, “See, Joab has a field right next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set fire to it! ” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire. †
31 Then Joab came to Absalom’s house and demanded, “Why did your servants set my field on fire? ”
32 “Look,” Absalom explained to Joab, “I sent for you and said, ‘Come here. I want to send you to the king to ask: Why have I come back from Geshur? I’d be better off if I were still there.’ So now, let me see the king. If I am guilty, let him kill me.”
33 Joab went to the king and told him. So David summoned Absalom, who came to the king and paid homage with his face to the ground before him. Then the king kissed Absalom.

14:3 Lit *Joab put the words into her mouth* **14:4** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *spoke* **14:19** Lit *“Is the hand of Joab in* **14:19** Lit *he put all these words into the mouth of your servant* **14:20** Lit *to go around the face of the matter* **14:24** Lit *king’s face* **14:26** Lit *200 shekels* **14:30** DSS, LXX add *So Joab’s servants came to him with their clothes torn and said, “Absalom’s servants have set the field on fire! ”*

14:2 2Ch 20:20; Am 1:1 **14:2** 2Sm 13:3; 14:20; 20:16; Jb 5:13 **14:2** Dn 10:2-3 **14:4** 1Sm 20:41; 25:23; 2Ch 20:18 **14:5** 2Sm 12:1 **14:7** Nah 1:14 **14:9** 1Sm 25:24 **14:11** Nm 35:19-21; Dt 19:12 **14:11** 1Sm 14:45; Dn

3:27; Lk 21:18; Ac 27:34 **14:14** Jn 8:51 **14:17** 2Sm 19:27 **14:23** 2Sm 13:38 **14:25** Gn 39:6; 1Sm 16:12,18; 17:42; 1Kg 1:6; Ps 45:2

14:13-17 For a second time, a story was used to communicate something to David (vv. 5-7; 12:1-4). Joab's purpose in sending this woman from Tekoa was to convince David to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem from his exile in Geshur (vv. 1-3,13-14). David detected Joab's hand behind all of this but still agreed to bring back Absalom (vv. 19-21).

14:23-32 Although Absalom was brought back to Jerusalem, David's refusal to see him for two years (vv. 24,28) frustrated and confused Absalom to the point that he set Joab's **field on fire** to get attention (vv. 29-32).

ABSALOM'S REVOLT

15 After this, Absalom got himself a chariot, horses, and fifty men to run
before him. † 2 He would get up early and stand beside the road
leading to the city gate. † Whenever anyone had a grievance to bring before the
king for settlement, Absalom called out to him and asked, "What city are you
from?" If he replied, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel,"
3 Absalom said to him, "Look, your claims are good and right, but the king does
not have anyone to listen to you." 4 He added, "If only someone would appoint
me judge in the land. Then anyone who had a grievance or dispute could come to
me, and I would make sure he received justice." 5 When a person approached to
pay homage to him, Absalom reached out his hand, took hold of him, and kissed
him. † 6 Absalom did this to all the Israelites who came to the king for a
settlement. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
7 When four † years had passed, Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go to
Hebron to fulfill a vow I made to the LORD. 8 For your servant made a vow when
I lived in Geshur of Aram, † saying: If the LORD really brings me back to
Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron." † †
9 "Go in peace," the king said to him. † So he went to Hebron.
10 Then Absalom sent agents throughout the tribes of Israel with this message:
"When you hear the sound of the ram's horn, † you are to say, 'Absalom has
become king in Hebron!' " †
11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem went with Absalom. They had been invited
and were going innocently, for they did not know the whole situation. 12 While
he was offering the sacrifices, Absalom sent for David's adviser Ahithophel the

Gilonite, † from his city of Giloh. So the conspiracy grew strong, and the people supporting Absalom continued to increase.
13 Then an informer came to David and reported, “The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom.”
14 David said to all the servants with him in Jerusalem, “Get up. We have to flee, or we will not escape from Absalom! † Leave quickly, or he will overtake us quickly, heap disaster on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.”
15 The king’s servants said to the king, “Whatever my lord the king decides, we are your servants.” 16 Then the king set out, and his entire household followed him. But he left behind ten concubines to take care of the palace. 17 So the king set out, and all the people followed him. They stopped at the last house 18 while all his servants marched past him. Then all the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and the people of Gath— six hundred men who came with him from there † — marched past the king.
19 The king said to Ittai of Gath, † “Why are you also going with us? Go back and stay with the new king since you’re both a foreigner and an exile from your homeland. 20 Besides, you only arrived yesterday; should I make you wander around with us today while I go wherever I can? Go back and take your brothers with you. May the LORD show you † kindness and faithfulness.”
21 But in response, Ittai vowed to the king, “As the LORD lives and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king is, whether it means life or death, your servant will be there! ” †
22 “March on,” David replied to Ittai. So Ittai of Gath marched past with all his men and the dependents who were with him. 23 Everyone in the countryside was weeping loudly while all the people were marching out of the city. As the king was crossing the Kidron Valley, all the people were marching past on the road that leads to the wilderness.
24 Zadok was also there, and all the Levites with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set the ark of God down, and Abiathar offered sacrifices † until the people had finished marching past. † 25 Then the king instructed Zadok, “Return the ark of God to the city. † If I find favor with the LORD, he will bring me back and allow me to see both it and its † dwelling

place. † 26 However, if he should say, ‘I do not delight in you,’ then here I am — he can do with me whatever pleases him.” † †
27 The king also said to the priest Zadok, † “Look, † return to the city in peace and your two sons with you: your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan. 28 Remember, I’ll wait at the fords † of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.” 29 So Zadok and Abiathar returned the ark of God to Jerusalem and stayed there.
30 David was climbing the slope of the Mount of Olives, † weeping as he ascended. His head was covered, † and he was walking barefoot. † All of the people with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they ascended.
31 Then someone reported to David: “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.”
“LORD,” David pleaded, “please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness! ” †
32 When David came to the summit where he used to worship God, Hushai the Archite † was there to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, “If you go away with me, you’ll be a burden to me, 34 but if you return to the city and tell Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, Your Majesty! Previously, I was your father’s servant, but now I will be your servant,’ then you can counteract Ahithophel’s counsel for me. 35 Won’t the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Report everything you hear from the palace to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. 36 Take note: their two sons are there with them—Zadok’s son Ahimaaz and Abiathar’s son Jonathan. Send them to tell me everything you hear.” 37 So Hushai, † David’s personal adviser, entered Jerusalem just as Absalom was entering the city.

15:7 Some LXX mss, Syr, Vg; other LXX mss, MT read *40* **15:8** Some LXX mss; MT omits *in Hebron* **15:20** LXX; MT omits Lit *May the Lord show you* **15:24** Or *Abiathar went up* **15:25** Or *his* **15:26** Lit *me what is good in his eyes* **15:27** LXX; MT reads *“Are you a seer?* **15:28** Alt Hb tradition reads *plains* **15:1** 1Sm 8:11; 1Kg 1:5 **15:2** Ru 4:1-11; 2Sm 19:8; Jb 29:7 **15:5** Gn 29:13; Ex 18:7; 1Sm 10:1; 2Sm 19:39 **15:8** 2Sm 13:37-38 **15:8** Gn 28:20-21; 1Sm 1:11 **15:9** Ex 4:18; Jdg 18:6; 1Sm 1:17; 2Kg 5:19; Lk 7:50; 8:48 **15:10** 2Sm 6:15; 1Kg 1:41; Jr 4:19,21; 6:17; 42:14; Am 2:2 **15:10** 1Kg 1:11,18,33-34; 2Kg 9:13 **15:12** 1Ch 27:33; Ps 41:9; 55:12-14 **15:14** Ps 3 title **15:18** 1Sm 27:2-7 **15:19** 2Sm 18:2 **15:21** Ru 1:16 **15:24** 2Sm 8:17; 20:25 **15:25** 1Sm 4:3 **15:25** Ps 43:3 **15:26** 1Sm 3:18 **15:27** 2Sm 8:17; 20:25-26; 1Kg 1:7-8 **15:30** Zch 14:4; Mt 21:1; 24:3; 26:30; Ac 1:12 **15:30** Est 6:12; Jr 14:3-4 **15:30** Jb 12:17,19; Is 20:2-4; Mc 1:8 **15:31** 2Sm 16:21; 17:14,23 **15:32** Jos 16:2 **15:37** 1Ch 27:33

15:7-14 The Lord’s judgment against David’s house was already underway and took a turn for the worse

with Absalom's rebellion (see the notes on 12:7-15 and 13:1-14). Absalom exalted himself overtly (v. 1) and covertly by sowing seeds of dissatisfaction with the king among the citizens (vv. 2-6). He later arranged to have himself declared king (vv. 7-10). His conspiracy had a large following, forcing David **to flee** for his life (vv. 12-14). This flight was a sorrowful one (vv. 23,30).

15:25-26 David's words indicate a submission to God's chastening hand (see previous note and the note on 16:10-12).

15:31 Ahithophel had been one of David's wisest advisers but had sided with Absalom (see v. 12; 16:23). David's prayer would be answered, and Hushai would be involved (vv. 32-37; 17:5-14).

ZIBA HELPS DAVID

16 When David had gone a little beyond the summit, † Ziba,
Mephibosheth's servant, † was right there to meet him. He had a pair of
saddled donkeys loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred clusters
of raisins, one hundred bunches of summer fruit, and a clay jar of wine. 2 The
king said to Ziba, "Why do you have these? "
Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride, the bread and
summer fruit are for the young men to eat, and the wine is for those to drink who
become exhausted in the wilderness."
3 "Where is your master's grandson? " the king asked.
"Why, he's staying in Jerusalem," Ziba replied to the king, "for he said, 'Today,
the house of Israel will restore my grandfather's kingdom to me.' " †
4 The king said to Ziba, "All that belongs to Mephibosheth is now yours! " †
"I bow before you," Ziba said. "May I find favor with you, my lord the king! "

SHIMEI CURSES DAVID

5 When King David got to Bahurim, a man belonging to the family of the house
of Saul was just coming out. † His name was Shimei son of Gera, † and he was
yelling curses as he approached. 6 He threw stones at David and at all the
royal † servants, the people and the warriors on David's right and left. 7 Shimei
said as he cursed: "Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, you wicked man! †
8 The LORD has paid you back for all the blood of the house of Saul in whose
place you became king, and the LORD has handed the kingdom over to your son
Absalom. Look, you are in trouble because you're a man of bloodshed! "
9 Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog †
curse my lord the king? † Let me go over and remove his head! "

10 The king replied, “Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? † He curses †
me this way because the LORD † told him, ‘Curse David! ’ † Therefore, who can
say, ‘Why did you do that? ’ ” 11 Then David said to Abishai and all his
servants, “Look, my own son, my own flesh and blood, † intends to take my
life † — how much more now this Benjaminite! Leave him alone and let him
curse me; the LORD has told him to. 12 Perhaps the LORD will see my affliction †
and restore goodness to me instead of Shimei’s curses today.” 13 So David and
his men proceeded along the road as Shimei was going along the ridge of the hill
opposite him. As Shimei went, he cursed David, threw stones at him, and kicked
up dust. 14 Finally, the king and all the people with him arrived † exhausted, so
they rested there.

ABSALOM’S ADVISERS

15 Now Absalom and all the Israelites came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel was also
with him. 16 When David’s friend Hushai the Archite came to Absalom, Hushai
said to Absalom, “Long live the king! Long live the king! ” †
17 “Is this your loyalty to your friend? ” Absalom asked Hushai. “Why didn’t
you go with your friend? ”
18 “Not at all,” Hushai answered Absalom. “I am on the side of the one that the
LORD, this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen. I will stay with him.
19 Furthermore, whom will I serve if not his son? As I served in your father’s
presence, I will also serve in yours.” †
20 Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give me your advice. What should we
do? ”
21 Ahithophel replied to Absalom, “Sleep with your father’s concubines whom
he left to take care of the palace. † When all Israel hears that you have become
repulsive to your father, everyone with you will be encouraged.” † 22 So they
pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father’s concubines
in the sight of all Israel. †
23 Now the advice Ahithophel gave in those days was like someone asking
about a word from God † — such was the regard that both David and Absalom
had for Ahithophel’s advice.

16:1 = Mount of Olives **16:6** Lit *all King David’s* **16:10** Alt Hb tradition reads *If he curses, and if the Lord*

16:11 Lit *son who came from my belly* **16:12** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; one Hb tradition reads *iniquity* ; alt Hb tradition reads *eyes* ; another Hb tradition reads *will look with his eye* **16:14** LXX adds *at the Jordan* **16:21** Lit *father, the hands of everyone with you will be strong*
16:1 2Sm 9:12 **16:3** 2Sm 19:26-27 **16:4** 2Sm 9:3-11 **16:5** 2Sm 3:16 **16:5** 2Sm 19:16; 1Kg 2:8-9,36-46 **16:7** Ex 22:28 **16:9** 1Sm 24:14; 2Sm 9:8 **16:9** Ex 22:28 **16:10** 2Sm 3:39; 19:22 **16:10** 1Sm 17:43; 2Sm 16:5; Ec 7:21-22 **16:10** 2Sm 12:11 **16:11** 2Sm 12:10-11 **16:16** 1Sm 10:24; 1Kg 1:25; 2Kg 11:12 **16:19** 2Sm 15:34 **16:21** 2Sm 15:16; 20:3 **16:22** 2Sm 12:11-12 **16:23** 2Sm 15:12

16:1-4 Ziba's claim would later be disputed by Mephibosheth (see 19:24-30). Mephibosheth was Saul's grandson (see 4:4).

16:10-12 David's humiliation continued with the cursing and antics of **Shimei** (vv. 5-8,13). Nevertheless, a chastened David refused to harm Shimei because he saw these things as from God (see also the note on 15:25-26). He endured curses in hopes that God would repay him with [restored] **goodness.**

16:16-19 As David instructed, **Hushai** went over to Absalom to frustrate Ahithophel (see 15:32-37).

16:20–17:4 Ahithophel had a reputation as an exceedingly skilled adviser (v. 23). Absalom's obedience to his advice to sleep **with his father's concubines** fulfilled God's word of judgment against David that his wives would be slept with in public (12:11-12; 15:16). Ahithophel also advised Absalom to take action quickly against David and to kill him only (17:1-4).

17 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me choose twelve thousand men, and
I will set out in pursuit of David tonight. 2 I will attack him while he is
weary and discouraged, † throw him into a panic, and all the people
with him will scatter. I will strike down only the king † 3 and bring all the
people back to you. When everyone returns except the man you're looking for,
all † the people will be at peace." 4 This proposal seemed right to Absalom and
all the elders of Israel.
5 Then Absalom said, "Summon Hushai the Archite also. Let's hear what he has
to say as well."
6 So Hushai came to Absalom, and Absalom told him: "Ahithophel offered this
proposal. Should we carry out his proposal? If not, what do you say? "
7 Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given this time is not
good." 8 Hushai continued, "You know your father and his men. They are
warriors and are desperate like a wild bear robbed of her cubs. † Your father is
an experienced soldier who won't spend the night with the people. 9 He's
probably already hiding in one of the caves † or some other place. If some of
our troops fall † first, someone is sure to hear and say, 'There's been a slaughter
among the people who follow Absalom.' 10 Then, even a brave man with the
heart of a lion † will lose heart † because all Israel knows that your father and

the valiant men with him are warriors. 11 Instead, I advise that all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba — as numerous as the sand by the sea † — be gathered to you and that you personally go into battle. 12 Then we will attack David wherever we find him, and we will descend on him like dew on the ground. Not even one will be left—neither he nor any of the men with him. 13 If he retreats to some city, all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag its stones † into the valley until not even a pebble can be found there." 14 Since the LORD had decreed † that Ahithophel's good advice be undermined † in order to bring about Absalom's ruin, Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than Ahithophel's advice."

DAVID INFORMED OF ABSALOM'S PLANS

15 Hushai then told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, "This is what † Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and this is what † I advised. 16 Now send someone quickly and tell David, 'Don't spend the night at the wilderness ford, † but be sure to cross over the Jordan, † † or the king and all the people with him will be devoured.' "

17 Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En-rogel, where a servant girl would come and pass along information to them. They in turn would go and inform King David, because they dared not be seen entering the city. 18 However, a young man did see them and informed Absalom. So the two left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and they climbed down into it. 19 Then his wife took the cover, placed it over the mouth of the well, and scattered grain on it so nobody would know anything.

20 Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house and asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan? "

"They passed by toward the water," † the woman replied to them. The men searched but did not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem.

21 After they had gone, Ahimaaz and Jonathan climbed out of the well and went and informed King David. They told him, "Get up and immediately ford the river, for Ahithophel has given this advice against you." 22 So David and all the people with him got up and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, there was no one who had not crossed the Jordan. 23 When Ahithophel realized that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his

hometown. He set his house in order and hanged himself. † So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.
24 David had arrived at Mahanaim by the time Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. 25 Now Absalom had appointed Amasa † over the army in Joab's place. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra † the Israelite; † † Ithra had married Abigail daughter of Nahash. † Abigail was a sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26 And Israel and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead. 27 When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash † from Rabbah † of the Ammonites, Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, † and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim † 28 brought beds, basins, † and pottery items. They also brought wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, † 29 honey, curds, sheep, goats, and cheese † from the herd for David and the people with him to eat. They had reasoned, "The people must be hungry, exhausted, and thirsty in the wilderness."

17:2 Lit *and weak of hands* **17:3** LXX reads *to you as a bride returns to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all* **17:9** Or *pits*, or *ravines* **17:9** Lit *And it will be when a falling on them at* **17:10** Lit *melt* **17:13** Lit *drag it* **17:15** Lit *"Like this and like this* **17:15** Lit *and like this and like this* **17:16** Some Hb mss; MT reads *plains* **17:16** *the Jordan* supplied for clarity **17:20** Or *brook* ; Hb obscure **17:25** Or *Jether* **17:25** Some LXX mss read *Ishmaelite* **17:25** Some LXX mss read *Jesse* **17:28** LXX reads *brought 10 embroidered beds with double coverings, 10 vessels* **17:28** LXX, Syr; MT adds *roasted grain* **17:29** Hb obscure

17:2 1Kg 22:31 **17:8** Pr 17:12; Hs 13:8 **17:10** Am 3:8 **17:11** Gn 22:17 **17:14** Pr 21:30; 1Co 1:19 **17:14** 2Sm 15:31-34 **17:16** 2Sm 15:28 **17:23** Mt 27:5 **17:25** 2Sm 19:13; 20:9-12; 1Kg 2:5,32 **17:25** 1Ch 2:13-17 **17:27** 2Sm 10:1-2 **17:27** 2Sm 12:26-29 **17:27** 2Sm 9:4 **17:27** 2Sm 19:31-32; 1Kg 2:7; Ezr 2:61

17:14 Hushai's contrived advice (vv. 7-13) was accepted because **the LORD had decreed that Ahithophel's good advice be undermined in order to bring about Absalom's ruin**, as David had prayed (15:31). Hushai also informed Zadok and Abiathar to send word to David to flee even further (vv. 15-16).

17:19-20 This woman's hiding of Jonathan and Ahimaaz recalls Rahab's hiding of the Israelite spies (Jos 2:1-7).

17:23 Some have suggested Ahithophel's suicide was because he knew that David would eventually regain power and he would be convicted of treason, but the biblical text does not explain his motive. The Bible does not make any ethical evaluation of suicide, but it is not pictured as honorable or as consistent with God's sovereign giving and taking of life.

ABSALOM'S DEFEAT

18 David reviewed his troops and appointed commanders of thousands and of hundreds over them. 2 He then sent out the troops, a third under

Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai of Gath. The king said to the troops, "I must also march out with you."

3 "You must not go!" † the people pleaded. "If we have to flee, they will not pay any attention to us. Even if half of us die, they will not pay any attention to us because you are worth † ten thousand of us. Therefore, it is better if you support us from the city."

4 "I will do whatever you think is best," the king replied to them. So he stood beside the city gate while all the troops marched out by hundreds and thousands.

5 The king commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "Treat the young man Absalom gently for my sake." All the people heard the king's orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

6 Then David's forces marched into the field to engage Israel in battle, which took place in the forest of Ephraim. 7 Israel's army was defeated by David's soldiers, and the slaughter there was vast that day — twenty thousand dead. 8 The battle spread over the entire area, and that day the forest claimed more people than the sword.

ABSALOM'S DEATH

9 Absalom was riding on his mule when he happened to meet David's soldiers. When the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak tree, Absalom's head was caught fast in the tree. The mule under him kept going, so he was suspended in midair. † 10 One of the men saw him and informed Joab. He said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree!"

11 "You just saw him!" Joab exclaimed. † "Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? I would have given you ten silver pieces † and a belt!"

12 The man replied to Joab, "Even if I had the weight of a thousand pieces of silver † in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For we heard the king command you, Abishai, and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for me.' † † 13 If I had jeopardized my own † life — and nothing is hidden from the king — you would have abandoned me."

14 Joab said, "I'm not going to waste time with you!" He then took three spears in his hand and thrust them into Absalom's chest. While Absalom was still alive in the oak tree, 15 ten young men who were Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him. 16 Joab blew the ram's horn, and the

troops broke off their pursuit of Israel because Joab restrained them. 17 They took Absalom, threw him into a large pit in the forest, and raised up a huge mound of stones over him. † And all Israel fled, each to his tent. †

18 When he was alive, Absalom had taken a pillar and raised it up † for himself in the King's Valley, † since he thought, "I have no son † to preserve the memory of my name." So he named the pillar after himself. It is still called Absalom's Monument today.

19 Ahimaaz son of Zadok † said, "Please let me run and tell the king the good news that the LORD has vindicated him by freeing him from his enemies."

20 Joab replied to him, "You are not the man to take good news today. You may do it another day, but today you aren't taking good news, because the king's son is dead." 21 Joab then said to a Cushite, "Go tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed to Joab and took off running.

22 However, Ahimaaz son of Zadok persisted and said to Joab, "No matter what, please let me also run behind the Cushite! "

Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to run since you won't get a reward? " †

23 "No matter what, I want to run! "

"Then run! " Joab said to him. So Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and outran the Cushite.

24 David was sitting between the city gates † when the watchman went up to the roof of the city gate and over to the wall. † The watchman looked out and saw a man running alone. 25 He called out and told the king.

The king said, "If he's alone, he bears good news."

As the first runner came closer, 26 the watchman saw another man running. He called out to the gatekeeper, "Look! Another man is running alone! "

"This one is also bringing good news," said the king.

27 The watchman said, "The way the first man runs looks to me like the way Ahimaaz son of Zadok runs." †

"This is a good man; he comes with good news," † the king commented.

28 Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well," and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground. He continued, "Blessed be the LORD your God! He delivered up the men who rebelled against my lord the king."

29 The king asked, “Is the young man Absalom all right? ”
Ahimaaz replied, “When Joab sent the king’s servant and your servant, I saw a big disturbance, but I don’t know what it was.”
30 The king said, “Move aside and stand here.” So he stood to one side.
31 Just then the Cushite came and said, “May my lord the king hear the good news: The LORD has vindicated you today by freeing you from all who rise against you! ”
32 The king asked the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom all right? ”
The Cushite replied, “I wish that the enemies of my lord the king, along with all who rise up against you with evil intent, would become like that young man.” †
33 The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber above the city gate and wept. As he walked, he cried, “My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son! ” †

18:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *because there would now be about* **18:9** Lit *was between heaven and earth* **18:11** Lit *Joab said to the man who told him* **18:11** About four ounces of silver **18:12** About 25 pounds of silver **18:12** Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *‘Protect, whoever, the young man Absalom’* ; Hb obscure **18:13** Alt Hb tradition reads *jeopardized his* **18:22** Or *you have no good news?*

18:3 2Sm 21:17 **18:12** 2Sm 18:5 **18:17** Jos 7:24-26; 8:29 **18:17** 1Sm 4:10; 2Sm 19:8; 20:1,22; 2Kg 8:21 **18:18** Gn 28:18; Dt 16:22; 1Sm 15:12; 2Kg 18:4 **18:18** Gn 14:17 **18:18** 2Sm 14:27 **18:19** 2Sm 15:36 **18:24** 2Sm 19:8 **18:24** 2Sm 13:34; 2Kg 9:17 **18:27** 2Kg 9:20 **18:27** 1Kg 1:42 **18:32** 1Sm 25:26 **18:33** 2Sm 19:4

18:9-10 Ironically, it was Absalom’s hair that got tangled in a tree and left him vulnerable. His hair had been emphasized as part of his strikingly handsome appearance (14:25-26).

18:14-15 Despite the king’s orders to spare Absalom (vv. 5,12-13), Joab killed him.

18:18 Absalom’s monument to himself demonstrated his vanity (see also 14:25-26; 15:1).

18:28-29 Perhaps hoping to receive favor or a reward, Ahimaaz insisted on delivering a report to David and deliberately did not mention Absalom’s death (see vv. 19-23).

18:33 As one would expect, David was deeply sorrowful over his son Absalom’s death (see vv. 5,12; 13:39).

DAVID’S KINGDOM RESTORED

19 It was reported to Joab, “The king is weeping. He’s mourning over Absalom.” 2 That day’s victory was turned into mourning for all the troops because on that day the troops heard, “The king is grieving over his son.” 3 So they returned to the city quietly that day like troops come in when they are humiliated after fleeing in battle. 4 But the king covered his face † and cried loudly, “My son Absalom! Absalom, my son, my son! ”

5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, “Today you have shamed
all your soldiers — those who saved your life as well as your sons, your wives,
and your concubines — 6 by loving your enemies and hating those who love
you! Today you have made it clear that the commanders and soldiers mean
nothing to you. In fact, today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us
were dead, it would be fine with you! †
7 “Now get up! Go out and encourage † your soldiers, for I swear by the LORD
that if you don’t go out, not a man will remain with you tonight. † This will be
worse for you than all the trouble that has come to you from your youth until
now! ”
8 So the king got up and sat in the city gate, † and all the people were told:
“Look, the king is sitting in the city gate.” Then they all came into the king’s
presence.
Meanwhile, each Israelite had fled to his tent. † 9 People throughout all the
tribes of Israel were arguing among themselves, saying, “The king rescued us
from the grasp of our enemies, † and he saved us from the grasp of the
Philistines, † but now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. † 10 But
Absalom, the man we anointed over us, has died in battle. So why do you say
nothing about restoring the king? ”
11 King David sent word to the priests Zadok and Abiathar: † “Say to the elders
of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to restore the king to his palace? The talk
of all Israel has reached the king at his house. 12 You are my brothers, my flesh
and blood. † † So why should you be the last to restore the king? ’ 13 And tell
Amasa, † ‘Aren’t you my flesh and blood? † May God punish me and do so
severely if you don’t become commander of my army from now on instead of
Joab! ’ ”
14 So he won over † all the men of Judah, and they unanimously sent word to
the king: “Come back, you and all your servants.” 15 Then the king returned.
When he arrived at the Jordan, Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and escort
him across the Jordan.
16 Shimei son of Gera, † the Benjaminite from Bahurim, hurried down with the
men of Judah to meet King David. 17 There were a thousand men from
Benjamin with him. Ziba, an attendant from the house of Saul, † with his fifteen

sons and twenty servants also rushed down to the Jordan ahead of the king.
18 They forded the Jordan to bring the king's household across and do whatever
the king desired. †
When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell facedown before the king
19 and said to him, "My lord, don't hold me guilty, and don't remember your
servant's wrongdoing on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. † May the
king not take it to heart. 20 For your servant knows that I have sinned. But look!
Today I am the first one of the entire house of Joseph to come down to meet my
lord the king."
21 Abishai son of Zeruiah asked, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this,
because he cursed the LORD's anointed? " †
22 David answered, "Sons of Zeruiah, do we agree on anything? † Have you
become my adversary today? Should any man be killed in Israel today? Am I not
aware that today I'm king over Israel? " 23 So the king said to Shimei, "You will
not die." Then the king gave him his oath. †
24 Mephibosheth, † Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had
not taken care of his feet, trimmed his mustache, or washed his clothes from the
day the king left until the day he returned safely. 25 When he came from
Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Mephibosheth, why didn't you
come with me? "
26 "My lord the king," he replied, "my servant Ziba betrayed me. Actually your
servant said: 'I'll saddle the donkey for myself † so that I may ride it and go
with the king' — for your servant is lame. † 27 Ziba slandered your servant to
my lord the king. † But my lord the king is like the angel of God, † so do
whatever you think best. † 28 For my grandfather's entire family deserves death
from my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your
table. † So what further right do I have to keep on making appeals to the king? "
29 The king said to him, "Why keep on speaking about these matters of yours? I
hereby declare: you and Ziba are to divide the land." †
30 Mephibosheth said to the king, "Instead, since my lord the king has come to
his palace safely, let Ziba take it all! "

31 Barzillai the Gileadite † had come down from Rogelim and accompanied the
king to the Jordan River to see him off at the Jordan. 32 Barzillai was a very old
man — eighty years old — and since he was a very wealthy man, he had
provided for the needs of the king while he stayed in Mahanaim. †
33 The king said to Barzillai, “Cross over with me, and I’ll provide for you † at
my side in Jerusalem.”
34 Barzillai replied to the king, “How many years of my life are left that I should
go up to Jerusalem with the king? 35 I’m now eighty years old. † Can I discern
what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or drinks?
Can I still hear the voice of male and female singers? Why should your servant
be an added burden to my lord the king? † 36 Since your servant is only going
with the king a little way across the Jordan, why should the king repay me with
such a reward? 37 Please let your servant return so that I may die in my own city
near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham: †
let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him what seems good to you.” †
38 The king replied, “Chimham will cross over with me, and I will do for him
what seems good to you, and whatever you desire from me I will do for you.”
39 So all the people crossed the Jordan, and then the king crossed. The king
kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and Barzillai returned to his home.
40 The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went with him. All the troops of
Judah and half of Israel’s escorted the king. 41 Suddenly, all the men of Israel
came to the king. They asked him, “Why did our brothers, the men of Judah,
take you away secretly and transport the king and his household across the
Jordan, along with all of David’s men? ”
42 All the men of Judah responded to the men of Israel, “Because the king is our
relative. Why does this make you angry? Have we ever eaten anything of the
king’s or been honored at all? ” †
43 The men of Israel answered the men of Judah: “We have ten shares in the
king, † so we have a greater claim to David than you. Why then do you despise
us? Weren’t we the first to speak of restoring our king? ” † But the words of the
men of Judah were harsher than those of the men of Israel.

19:6 Lit *be right in your eyes* **19:7** Lit *speak to the heart of* **19:12** Lit *my bone and my flesh* **19:13** Lit *my bone and my flesh?* **19:14** Lit *he turned the heart of* **19:18** Lit *do what is good in his eyes* **19:26** LXX, Syr, Vg read *said to him, ‘Saddle the donkey for me* **19:27** Lit *do what is good in your eyes* **19:33** LXX reads *for*

your old age ; Ru 4:15 **19:37** Lit *what is good in your eyes*, also in v. 38 **19:42** LXX reads *king's or has he given us a gift or granted us a portion*
19:4 2Sm 15:30 **19:7** Pr 14:28 **19:8** 2Sm 18:4,24,33 **19:8** 2Sm 18:17 **19:9** 2Sm 8:1-14 **19:9** 2Sm 5:20; 8:1 **19:9** 2Sm 15:14 **19:11** 2Sm 15:29 **19:12** Gn 29:14; 2Sm 5:1 **19:13** 2Sm 17:25 **19:16** 2Sm 16:5; 1Kg 2:8 **19:17** 2Sm 16:1-4 **19:19** 2Sm 16:5-13 **19:21** Ex 22:28 **19:22** 2Sm 3:39; 16:10 **19:23** 1Kg 2:8-9,37,46 **19:24** 2Sm 9:6 **19:26** 2Sm 4:4; 9:3 **19:27** 2Sm 16:1-4 **19:27** 2Sm 14:17,20 **19:28** 2Sm 9:1-13 **19:29** 2Sm 9:9; 16:4 **19:31** 1Kg 2:7 **19:32** 2Sm 17:27-29 **19:35** Ps 90:10 **19:35** 2Sm 15:33 **19:37** 1Kg 2:7; Jr 41:17 **19:43** 1Kg 11:31 **19:43** 2Sm 19:9-10

19:11-15 David sent word to the leaders of his tribe, asking them to take the lead in restoring him to the kingship. He also intended to make Amasa the **commander of** [his] **army** in place of Joab (v. 13).

19:16-23 Shimei had cursed David when he was fleeing Absalom (16:5-8,13), but he quickly changed his attitude. Although David promised not to kill him (vv. 22-23), he would later instruct Solomon to do so (1Kg 2:8-9). **Abishai son of Zeruiah** had also wanted to kill Shimei the first time (v. 21; 16:9), and David continued to express his frustration with the **sons of Zeruiah** (v. 22; see 3:39; 16:10).

19:24-27 Mephibosheth challenged Ziba's earlier claim that he was hoping to be given the throne (see the note on 16:1-4). Mephibosheth's physical appearance supported his words, and David chose to resolve the confusion by ordering the two men to **divide the land** (v. 29).

19:32 Barzillai **provided for** David at Mahanaim when he was fleeing from Absalom (see 17:27-29).

19:40-43 After Absalom's death, David called upon his tribe **(Judah)** to lead the way in restoring him as king over Israel (vv. 11-15), but this resulted in strife between Judah and the other tribes. Discord among the tribes of Israel had happened before and would happen again (see Jdg 8:1; 12:1-6; 20:1-48; 1Kg 12:16-20).

SHEBA'S REVOLT

20 Now a wicked man, a Benjaminite named Sheba son of Bichri, happened to be there. He blew the ram's horn and shouted:

We have no portion in David,
no inheritance in Jesse's son.
Each man to his tent, † Israel!

2 So all the men of Israel deserted David and followed Sheba son of Bichri, but the men of Judah from the Jordan all the way to Jerusalem remained loyal to their king. †
3 When David came to his palace in Jerusalem, he took the ten concubines he had left to take care of the palace and placed them under guard. † He provided for them, but he was not intimate with them. They were confined until the day of their death, living as widows.
4 The king said to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to me within three days and be here yourself." 5 Amasa went to summon Judah, but he took longer than

the time allotted him. 6 So David said to Abishai, “Sheba son of Bichri will do more harm to us than Absalom. Take your lord’s soldiers and pursue him, or he will find fortified cities and elude us.” †
7 So Joab’s men, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the warriors marched out under Abishai’s command; † they left Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of Bichri.
8 They were at the great stone in Gibeon when Amasa joined them. Joab was wearing his uniform and over it was a belt around his waist with a sword in its sheath. As he approached, the sword fell out. 9 Joab asked Amasa, “Are you well, my brother? ” Then with his right hand Joab grabbed Amasa by the beard to kiss him. † 10 Amasa was not on guard against the sword in Joab’s hand, and Joab stabbed him in the stomach with it and spilled his intestines out on the ground. Joab did not stab him again, and Amasa died. †
Joab and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of Bichri. 11 One of Joab’s young men had stood over Amasa saying, “Whoever favors Joab and whoever is for David, follow Joab! ” 12 Now Amasa had been writhing in his blood in the middle of the highway, and the man had seen that all the troops stopped. So he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him because he realized that all those who encountered Amasa were stopping. 13 When he was removed from the highway, all the men passed by and followed Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bichri.
14 Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah. All the Berites † came together and followed him. 15 Joab’s troops came and besieged Sheba in Abel of Beth-maacah. They built a siege ramp † against the outer wall of the city. While all the troops with Joab were battering the wall to make it collapse, 16 a wise woman called out from the city, “Listen! Listen! Please tell Joab to come here and let me speak with him.”
17 When he had come near her, the woman asked, “Are you Joab? ”
“I am,” he replied.
“Listen to the words of your servant,” she said to him.
He answered, “I’m listening.”
18 She said, “In the past they used to say, ‘Seek counsel in Abel,’ and that’s how they settled disputes. 19 I am one of the peaceful and faithful in Israel, but you’re trying to destroy a city that is like a mother in Israel. Why would you devour the LORD’s inheritance? ”

20 Joab protested: “Never! I would never devour or demolish! 21 That is not the
case. There is a man named Sheba son of Bichri, from the hill country of
Ephraim, who has rebelled against King David. Deliver this one man, and I will
withdraw from the city.”
The woman replied to Joab, “Watch! His head will be thrown over the wall to
you.” 22 The woman went to all the people with her wise counsel, † and they
cut off the head of Sheba son of Bichri and threw it to Joab. So he blew the
ram’s horn, and they dispersed from the city, each to his own tent. Joab returned
to the king in Jerusalem.

23 Joab commanded the whole army of Israel; †
Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and Pelethites;
24 Adoram † was over forced labor; †
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;
25 Sheva was court secretary;
Zadok and Abiathar were priests;
26 and in addition, Ira the Jairite was David’s priest.

20:1 Alt Hb tradition reads *gods* **20:6** Lit *and snatch away our eyes* **20:7** Lit *out following him* **20:14** LXX, Vg read *Bichrites* **20:24** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *Adoniram* ; 1Kg 4:6; 5:14
20:1-2 1Kg 12:16-17 **20:3** 2Sm 15:16; 16:21-22 **20:9** Mt 26:49; Mk 14:45; Lk 22:47 **20:10** 1Kg 2:5 **20:15** 2Kg 19:32; Is 37:33; Jr 6:6; Ezk 4:2; 26:8 **20:22** Ec 9:14-15 **20:23-26** 2Sm 8:16-18; 1Kg 4:3-6 **20:24** 1Kg 12:18

20:1-2 Seizing the opportunity, **Sheba** drew Israel to himself. Words very similar to his would be used later when most of the tribes rejected Rehoboam to follow Jeroboam (see 1Kg 12:16).

20:9-10 Joab had murdered Abner earlier (3:27), and now he murdered Amasa, who was about to replace him as commander of the army (19:13). David would remember these two evil acts and charge Solomon to punish Joab (1Kg 2:5-6).

20:14-22 Sheba’s rebellion left David with yet another major problem to deal with (vv. 1-2,4-6). Sheba hid in **Abel of Beth-maacah.** The destruction of this city was averted because a **wise woman** communicated with Joab and learned that he only wanted to apprehend Sheba (vv. 17-21). **Her wise counsel** was accepted by her people, who beheaded Sheba so that Joab’s forces withdrew. The woman from Tekoa had also been described as a “wise woman” (lit 14:2). These examples can be related to passages elsewhere about wise women (see 1Sm 25:3,33; Pr 1:20-33; 14:1; 31:10-31).

JUSTICE FOR THE GIBEONITES

21 During David's reign there was a famine for three successive years, so
David inquired † of the LORD. The LORD answered, "It is due to Saul
and to his bloody family, because he killed the Gibeonites."
2 The Gibeonites were not Israelites but rather a remnant of the Amorites. The
Israelites had taken an oath concerning them, † but Saul had tried to kill them in
his zeal for the Israelites and Judah. So David summoned the Gibeonites and
spoke to them. 3 He asked the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? How can
I make atonement so that you will bring a blessing on † the LORD's
inheritance? "
4 The Gibeonites said to him, "We are not asking for silver and gold from Saul
or his family, † and we cannot put anyone to death in Israel." †
"Whatever you say, I will do for you," he said.
5 They replied to the king, "As for the man who annihilated us and plotted to
destroy us so we would not exist within the whole territory of Israel, 6 let seven
of his male descendants be handed over to us so we may hang † them in the
presence of the LORD † at Gibeah of Saul, † the LORD's chosen." †
The king answered, "I will hand them over."
7 David spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the
oath of the LORD that was between David and Jonathan, Saul's son. † 8 But the
king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, who were the two sons whom Rizpah †
daughter of Aiah had borne to Saul, and the five sons whom Merab † †
daughter of Saul had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite 9 and
handed them over to the Gibeonites. They hanged † them on the hill in the
presence of the LORD; the seven of them died together. They were executed in
the first days of the harvest at the beginning of the barley harvest. †

THE BURIAL OF SAUL'S FAMILY

10 Rizpah, Aiah's daughter, took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on the
rock from the beginning of the harvest † until the rain poured down from
heaven on the bodies. She kept the birds of the sky from them by day and the
wild animals by night.

11 When it was reported to David what Saul's concubine Rizpah daughter of
Aiah had done, 12 he went and got the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from
the citizens of Jabesh-gilead. They had stolen them from the public square of
Beth-shan where the Philistines had hung the bodies the day the Philistines killed
Saul at Gilboa. † 13 David had the bones brought from there. They gathered up
the bones of Saul's family who had been hanged 14 and buried the bones of Saul
and his son Jonathan at Zela in the land of Benjamin in the tomb of Saul's father
Kish. They did everything the king commanded. After this, God was receptive to
prayer for the land. †

THE PHILISTINE GIANTS

15 The Philistines again waged war against Israel. David went down with his
soldiers, and they fought the Philistines, but David became exhausted. 16 Then
Ishbi-benob, one of the descendants of the giant, † whose bronze spear weighed
about eight pounds † and who wore new armor, intended to kill David. 17 But
Abishai son of Zeruiah came to his aid, struck the Philistine, and killed him.
Then David's men swore to him: "You must never again go out with us to battle.
You must not extinguish the lamp of Israel." †

18 After this, † there was another battle with the Philistines at Gob. At that time
Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Saph, who was one of the descendants of the
giant.

19 Once again there was a battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan son of
Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed † Goliath of Gath. The shaft of his spear
was like a weaver's beam. †

20 At Gath there was still another battle. A huge man was there with six fingers
on each hand and six toes on each foot — twenty-four in all. He, too, was
descended from the giant. 21 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan, son of David's
brother Shimei, killed him.

22 These four were descended from the giant in Gath and were killed by David
and his soldiers.

21:1 Lit *sought the face of* **21:3** Lit *will bless* **21:6** Or *impale*, or *expose* **21:8** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg; other Hb mss read *Michal* **21:9** Or *impaled*, or *exposed*, also in v. 13 **21:9** = March–April **21:10** = April to October **21:16** Or *Raphah*, also in vv. 18,20,22 **21:16** Lit *300* (shekels) **21:19** 1Ch 20:5 adds *the brother of* **21:2** Jos 9:3-17 **21:4** Nm 35:31-32 **21:4** Lv 24:21-22 **21:6** Nm 25:4 **21:6** 1Sm 15:34 **21:6** 1Sm 10:24 **21:7** 1Sm 18:3; 20:12-17; 23:18 **21:8** 2Sm 3:7 **21:8** 1Sm 18:19 **21:12** 1Sm 31:11-13 **21:14** 2Sm 24:25 **21:17**

2Sm 18:3; 1Kg 11:36; 15:4; 2Ch 21:7; Ps 132:17 **21:18-22** 1Ch 20:4-8 **21:19** 1Sm 17:7

21:1 The preceding chronological narrative fittingly concluded with the restoration of David to the kingship. 2 Samuel 21–24 consists of a sort of epilogue (see also Jdg 17–21), which depicts David as a good though flawed king who nevertheless received the blessing of "a permanent covenant" with God (23:5). Twice in these chapters David is found making effective atonement for sin—once for the sin of others and once for his own (21:1-9,14; 24:17-25). There are thus major differences between Saul and David. Saul's sin consisted of rebelling against God, and he refused to repent authentically. David's sins were socially repugnant, but he always knew that he must take his sin to God (see 24:17-25). He repented and found forgiveness in God's grace.

21:2 Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites is described in Joshua 9.

21:14 A famine in Israel led David to seek God, who revealed its cause to be Saul's killing of the Gibeonites (v. 1). David dealt with this bloodguilt by doing what the Gibeonites wanted (vv. 3-6), while at the same time sparing Jonathan's son Mephibosheth (v. 7). David also demonstrated his continuing concern for the house of the former king by retrieving and **burying the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan** (vv. 11-14). Whereas David made atonement for someone else's sin here, he would make atonement for his own in 24:17-24 (see also the note on 21:1). In both cases, his effectiveness is indicated by the statement that God **was receptive to his prayer** for the land (see also 24:24).

21:15-22 Unlike earlier passages that celebrated David's military feats (e.g., 8:1-14), this passage and 23:8-39 celebrate the feats of his men. The account of Abishai's feat also highlighted David's weakness (vv. 15-17).

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING

22 David spoke the words of this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the grasp of Saul. 2 He said: †

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, † and my deliverer, 3 my God, † my rock where I seek refuge.

My shield, the horn of my salvation, † my stronghold, † my refuge, †
and my Savior, you save me from violence.

4 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, †
and I was saved from my enemies.

5 For the waves of death engulfed me; †
the torrents of destruction terrified me.

6 The ropes of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. †

7 I called to the LORD in my distress; I called to my God. †
From his temple he heard my voice,
and my cry for help reached his ears.

8 Then the earth shook and quaked; the foundations of the heavens † trembled; †
they shook because he burned with anger. †
9 Smoke rose from his nostrils, and consuming fire came from his mouth; coals were set ablaze by it. †
10 He bent the heavens and came down, †
total darkness beneath his feet.
11 He rode on a cherub and flew, soaring † on the wings of the wind.
12 He made darkness a canopy around him, a gathering † of water and thick clouds. †
13 From the radiance of his presence, blazing coals were ignited.
14 The LORD thundered from heaven; the Most High made his voice heard. †
15 He shot arrows and scattered them; †
he hurled lightning bolts and routed them. †
16 The depths of the sea became visible, the foundations of the world were exposed at the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath † of his nostrils. †

17 He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he pulled me out of deep water. †
18 He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me,
for they were too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support.
20 He brought me out to a spacious place; †
he rescued me because he delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; †
he repaid me
according to the cleanness of my hands. †
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD †
and have not turned from my God to wickedness.

23 Indeed, I let all his ordinances † guide me †
and have not disregarded his statutes.
24 I was blameless before him and kept myself from my iniquity.
25 So the LORD repaid me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness † in his sight.

26 With the faithful you prove yourself faithful,
with the blameless
you prove yourself blameless,
27 with the pure you prove yourself pure;
but with the crooked
you prove yourself shrewd.
28 You rescue an oppressed people, †
but your eyes are set against the proud — you humble them. †
29 LORD, you are my lamp; the LORD illuminates my darkness. †
30 With you I can attack a barricade, †
and with my God I can leap over a wall. †
31 God — his way is perfect; †
the word of the LORD is pure. †
He is a shield to all who take refuge in him.

32 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is a rock? Only our God.
33 God is my strong refuge; †
he makes my way perfect. †
34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer and sets me securely
on the † heights. †
35 He trains my hands for war; †
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
36 You have given me the shield of your salvation; †
your help † exalts me.

37 You make a spacious place beneath me for my steps, and my ankles do not give way.
38 I pursue my enemies and destroy them; I do not turn back until they are wiped out.
39 I wipe them out and crush them, and they do not rise;
they fall beneath my feet.
40 You have clothed me with strength for battle; you subdue my adversaries beneath me. †
41 You have made my enemies retreat before me; †
I annihilate those who hate me.
42 They look, but there is no one to save them — they look to the LORD, but he does not answer them. †
43 I pulverize them like dust of the earth; I crush them and trample them like mud in the streets. †

44 You have freed me from the feuds among my people; †
you have preserved me as head of nations; a people I had not known serve me. †
45 Foreigners submit to me cringing; as soon as they hear, they obey me.
46 Foreigners lose heart and come trembling from their fortifications. †

47 The LORD lives — blessed be my rock!
God, the rock of my salvation, † is exalted.
48 God — he grants me vengeance and casts down peoples under me. †
49 He frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my adversaries;
you rescue me from violent men. †

50 Therefore I will give thanks to you among the nations, LORD; I will sing praises about your name. †
51 He is a tower of salvation for † his king; he shows loyalty to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever. †

22:3 LXX, Ps 18:2 read *my God* ; MT reads *God of* **22:8** Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *mountains* ; Ps 18:7
22:9 Or *him* **22:11** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *he was seen* **22:12** Or *sieve*, or *mass* ; Hb

obscure **22:23** Lit *Indeed, all his ordinances have been in front of me* **22:25** LXX, Syr, Vg read *to the cleanness of my hands* ; Ps 18:24 **22:30** Or *a ridge*, or *raiders* **22:33** DSS, some LXX mss, Syr, Vg read *God clothes me with strength* ; Ps 18:32 **22:33** Some LXX mss, Syr; MT reads *he sets free the blameless his way* ; Hb obscure **22:34** LXX; some Hb mss read *my* ; other Hb mss read *his* **22:34** Or *on my high places* **22:36** LXX reads *humility* ; Ps 18:35 **22:41** Lit *you gave me the neck of my enemies* **22:51** DSS read *he gives great victory to*

22:2-51 Ps 18:2-50 **22:2** Ps 31:3; 71:3 **22:3** Lk 1:69 **22:3** Ps 9:9; 59:9,16-17; 62:2,6 **22:3** Ps 14:6; 71:7; Jr 16:19 **22:4** 1Ch 16:25; Ps 48:1; 96:4 **22:5** Ps 42:7; Jnh 2:3 **22:6** Ps 116:3 **22:7** Ps 116:4; 120:1; Jnh 2:2 **22:8** Jdg 5:4; Ps 77:18; 97:4 **22:8** Jb 26:11 **22:10** Ps 144:5; Is 64:1 **22:12** Ps 97:2 **22:14** Jb 37:4 **22:15** Dt 32:23; Ps 7:13; 77:17; Hab 3:11 **22:15** Ps 144:6 **22:16** Jb 4:9; Is 30:33 **22:16** Ex 15:8 **22:17** Ps 144:7 **22:20** Ps 31:8; 118:5 **22:21** 1Sm 26:23; 1Kg 8:32; Ps 7:8 **22:21** Ps 24:3-4 **22:22** Pr 8:32 **22:23** Ps 119:30,102 **22:28** Ps 72:12-13 **22:28** Is 2:11-12,17; Lk 1:51 **22:29** Jb 29:3; Ps 27:1 **22:30** 2Sm 5:6-9 **22:31** Dt 32:4 **22:31** Ps 119:140 **22:35** Ps 144:1 **22:36** Eph 6:16-17 **22:40** Ps 44:5 **22:42** 1Sm 28:6; Pr 1:28 **22:43** Is 10:6; Mc 7:10; Zch 10:5 **22:44** 2Sm 2:8-10; 15:1-6; 20:1-2 **22:44** 2Sm 8:1-14; Is 55:5 **22:46** Mc 7:17 **22:47** Ps 89:26; 95:1 **22:48** Ps 144:2 **22:49** Ps 140:1 **22:50** Rm 15:9 **22:51** 2Sm 7:12-16; Lk 1:55

22:1-51 The middle part of this section consists of poetry: this is a psalm of thanksgiving followed by David's last words (23:1-7). The psalm celebrates God's deliverance from **all his enemies** and is very similar though not identical to Psalm 18.

22:2-6 David begins by praising God, who saved him from violence and **from** [his] **enemies.** He had been in life-threatening situations (vv. 5-6).

22:7-20 When David prayed, God heard (v. 7), and he acted dramatically and decisively on his behalf. God **came down** (v. 10), spoke with power (v. 14), routed David's enemies (v. 15), and delivered him **out of deep water,** bringing him into a **spacious place** (vv. 16,20).

22:21-25 These words should not be taken to imply that David thought that he had never sinned (see 12:13; 24:10). On the other hand, they do fit well with his life and conduct under Saul (see v. 1).

22:28 The Lord's deliverance of **an oppressed people** and his humbling of **the proud** recalls the reversal-of-fortune motif in Hannah's prayer (see 1Sm 2:1-10).

22:31 The statement that **the word of the LORD is pure** is echoed in Psalm 119:140 and Proverbs 30:5. These verses thus support the complete trustworthiness of the Bible.

22:32 The notion of God as **rock** is repeated here (see v. 3) and mentioned again in verse 47 (see also 23:3; 1Sm 2:2). Besides Psalm 18 (see the note on 22:1), the only other passages that have so many references to God as rock are Deuteronomy 32 (see vv. 4,15,18,30-31) and Psalm 62 (see vv. 2,6,7).

22:34 The precise meaning of this expression is difficult to determine, though the surrounding context suggests security and victory (see also Dt 32:13; Ps 18:33; Hab 3:19).

22:50-51 God had given David victory in battle so that he not only ruled his own country but was "head of nations" (v. 44). In connection with this, David pledged to praise God **among the nations.** The reference to **his king** and **his anointed** links David's psalm to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 (see v. 10). The identity of this ruler was unclear in Hannah's prayer but is here connected **to David and his descendants.** The Lord's deliverance of this king concerns not only him and his nation but is to be broadcast throughout the whole world.

DAVID'S LAST WORDS

23 These are the last words of David:

The declaration of David son of Jesse, †
the declaration of the man raised on high, †
the one anointed by the God of Jacob. †
This is the most delightful of Israel's songs.
2 The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me, his word was on my tongue. †
3 The God of Israel spoke; the Rock of Israel said to me,
"The one who rules the people with justice, who rules in the fear of God, †
4 is like the morning light when the sun rises on a cloudless morning,
the glisten of rain on sprouting grass."

5 Is it not true my house is with God?
For he has established a permanent covenant † with me, ordered and secured in every detail. †
Will he not bring about
my whole salvation and my every desire?
6 But all the wicked are like thorns raked aside; they can never be picked up by hand.
7 The man who touches them must be armed with iron and the shaft of a spear.
They will be completely burned up on the spot.

EXPLOITS OF DAVID'S WARRIORS

8 These are the names of David's warriors: †
Josheb-basshebeth the Tahchemonite was chief of the officers. † He wielded his spear † against eight hundred men that he killed at one time.
9 After him, Eleazar son of Dodo son of an Ahohite was among the three warriors with David when they defied the Philistines. The men of Israel retreated in the place they had gathered for battle, 10 but Eleazar stood his ground and attacked the Philistines until his hand was tired and stuck to his sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. Then the troops came back to him, but only to plunder the dead.
11 After him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had assembled in formation where there was a field full of lentils. The troops fled from the Philistines, 12 but Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field,

defended it, and struck down the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.
13 Three of the thirty leading warriors went down at harvest time and came to David at the cave of Adullam, † while a company of Philistines was camping in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 At that time David was in the stronghold, † and a Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 15 David was extremely thirsty † and said, "If only someone would bring me water to drink from the well at the city gate of Bethlehem! " 16 So three of the warriors broke through the Philistine camp and drew water from the well at the gate of Bethlehem. They brought it back to David, but he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out to the LORD. 17 David said, "LORD, I would never do such a thing! Is this not the blood of men who risked their lives? " So he refused to drink it. Such were the exploits of the three warriors.
18 Abishai, Joab's brother and son of Zeruiah, † was leader of the Three. † He wielded his spear against three hundred men and killed them, gaining a reputation among the Three. 19 Was he not more honored than the Three? He became their commander even though he did not become one of the Three. †
20 Benaiah son of Jehoiada † was the son of a brave man from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits. Benaiah killed two sons † of Ariel † of Moab, and he went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. 21 He also killed an Egyptian, an impressive man. Even though the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went down to him with a club, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and then killed him with his own spear. 22 These were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who had a reputation among the three warriors. 23 He was the most honored of the Thirty, but he did not become one of the Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.
24 Among the Thirty were

Joab's brother Asahel, †
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
25 Shammah the Harodite,
Elika the Harodite,

26 Helez the Paltite,
Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
27 Abiezer the Anathothite,
Mebunnai the Hushathite,
28 Zalmon the Ahohite,
Maharai the Netophathite,
29 Heleb son of Baanah the Netophathite,
Ittai son of Ribai from Gibeah of the Benjaminites,
30 Benaiah the Pirathonite,
Hiddai from the wadis of Gaash, †
31 Abi-albon the Arbathite,
Azmaveth the Barhumite,
32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
the sons of Jashen,
Jonathan son of † 33 Shammah the Hararite,
Ahiam son of Sharar the Hararite,
34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai son of the Maacathite,
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, †
35 Hezro the Carmelite,
Paarai the Arbite,
36 Igal son of Nathan from Zobah,
Bani the Gadite,
37 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer for Joab son of Zeruiah,
38 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,

39 and Uriah † the Hethite. †

There were thirty-seven in all.

23:1 Or *raised up by the high God* **23:8** Some Hb mss, LXX read *Three* **23:8** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, LXX read *He was Adino the Eznite* **23:15** Lit *And David craved* **23:18** Some Hb mss, Syr read *the Thirty* **23:20** LXX; MT omits *sons* **23:20** Or *two warriors* **23:30** Or *from Nahale-gaash* **23:32** Some LXX mss; MT omits *son of* ; 1Ch 11:34

23:1 Lk 3:32 **23:1** 1Sm 16:12-13; Ps 89:20 **23:2** Mt 22:43; 2Pt 1:21 **23:3** Ps 72:1-3; Is 11:1-5 **23:5** Gn 9:16; 17:7,19; 1Ch 16:17; Ps 105:10 **23:5** 2Sm 7:12-16; Ps 89:29; Is 55:3 **23:8-39** 1Ch 11:11-47 **23:13** 1Sm 22:1 **23:14** 1Sm 22:4-5 **23:18** 1Sm 26:3-6 **23:19** 1Ch 11:21 **23:20** 2Sm 8:18; 20:23 **23:24** 2Sm 2:18-23; 1Ch 27:7 **23:34** 2Sm 15:12 **23:39** Mt 1:6 **23:39** 2Sm 11:3-26

23:1-5 This text has several striking similarities to Numbers 24:1-19. First, the Hebrew construction translated here as **the declaration of** [x] **son of** [y] **. . . the declaration of the man** is found only here and in Numbers 24:3,15 (see also Pr 30:1). Second, both passages involve the main character speaking by God's **Spirit** (v. 2; Nm 24:2). Third, both have a Hebrew word that means **last** (*'acharon* in v. 1; *'acherit* in Nm 24:14). Fourth, Numbers 24 directly predicts the coming of the Messiah (see the notes on Nm 24:1-4,7-9,14-19), and 2 Samuel 23:1-5 concerns the Messiah's rule (vv. 3-4; see Ps 72:6-8; Is 11:1-5) and the **permanent covenant** made with David (v. 5), which is fulfilled by the Messiah (see the notes on 7:8-16 and Gn 49:8-12).

23:8-23 Prior to the preceding lengthy poetic section (22:1–23:7), the feats of David's men had been celebrated (see the note on 21:15-22). Another such section is found here. Once again, David's weakness is mentioned (vv. 15-17; see 21:15-17), and **the LORD brought about a great victory** not through David, but through others (vv. 10,12).

23:39 The mention of **Uriah the Hethite** reminds the reader of David's serious sins earlier (see 11:1-27).

DAVID'S MILITARY CENSUS

24 The LORD's anger burned against Israel again, and he stirred up David against them to say: "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah." †

2 So the king said to Joab, the commander of his army, "Go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba and register the troops so I can know their number." †

3 Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times more than they are † — while my lord the king looks on! But why does my lord the king want to do this? "

4 Yet the king's order prevailed over Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the king's presence to register the troops of Israel.

5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aroer, † south of the town in the middle of the valley, and then proceeded toward Gad and Jazer. 6 They went to

Gilead and to the land of the Hittites † and continued on to Dan-jaan and around to Sidon. 7 They went to the fortress of Tyre and all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites. Afterward, they went to the Negev of Judah at Beer-sheba.
8 When they had gone through the whole land, they returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. 9 Joab gave the king the total of the registration of the troops. There were eight hundred thousand valiant armed men † from Israel and five hundred thousand men from Judah. †
10 David's conscience troubled him † after he had taken a census of the troops. He said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I've done. Now, LORD, because I've been very foolish, † please take away your servant's guilt."

DAVID'S PUNISHMENT

11 When David got up in the morning, the word of the LORD had come to the prophet Gad, † David's seer: † 12 "Go and say to David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three choices. Choose one of them, and I will do it to you.' "
13 So Gad went to David, told him the choices, and asked him, "Do you want three † years of famine to come on your land, to flee from your foes three months while they pursue you, or to have a plague in your land three days? Now, consider carefully † what answer I should take back to the one who sent me."
14 David answered Gad, "I have great anxiety. Please, let us fall into the LORD's hands because his mercies are great, † but don't let me fall into human hands."
15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the appointed time, and from Dan to Beer-sheba seventy thousand men died. 16 Then the angel extended his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, † but the LORD relented concerning the destruction † and said to the angel who was destroying † the people, "Enough, withdraw your hand now! " The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah † the Jebusite. †
17 When David saw the angel striking the people, he said to the LORD, "Look, I am the one who has sinned; I am the one † who has done wrong. But these sheep, what have they done? Please, let your hand be against me and my father's family."

DAVID'S ALTAR

18 Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” 19 David went up in
obedience to Gad’s command, just as the LORD had commanded. 20 Araunah
looked down and saw the king and his servants coming toward him, so he went
out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground.
21 Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant? ”
David replied, “To buy the threshing floor from you in order to build an altar to
the LORD, so the plague on the people may be halted.” †
22 Araunah said to David, “My lord the king may take whatever he wants † and
offer it. Here are the oxen for a burnt offering and the threshing sledges and ox
yokes for the wood. † 23 Your Majesty, Araunah gives everything here to the
king.” Then he said to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.”
24 The king answered Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it from you for a price,
for I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”
David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for twenty ounces † of silver.
25 He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship
offerings. Then the LORD was receptive to prayer for the land, † and the plague
on Israel ended.

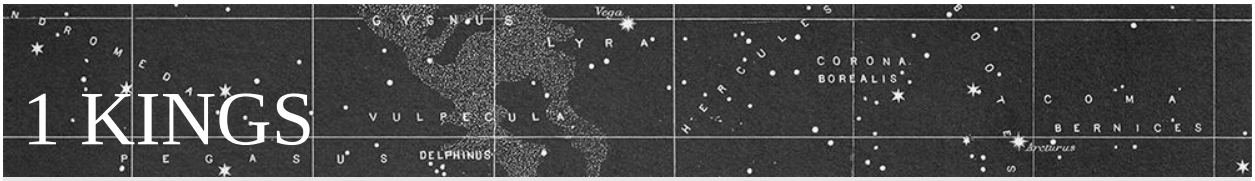
24:6 LXX; MT reads *of Tahtim-hodshi* ; Hb obscure **24:9** Lit *men of valor drawing the sword* **24:13** LXX; MT reads *seven* ; 1Ch 21:12 **24:13** Lit *Now, know and see* **24:16** = Ornan in 1Ch 21:15-28; 2Ch 3:1 **24:17** LXX reads *shepherd* **24:22** Lit *take what is good in his eyes* **24:24** Lit *50 shekels*

24:1-25 1Ch 21:1-28 **24:2** Nm 1:2-3; 1Sm 13:15 **24:3** Dt 1:11 **24:5** Dt 2:36; Jos 13:19,16 **24:9** Nm 1:45-46 **24:10** 1Sm 24:5 **24:10** Nm 12:9-12; 1Sm 13:13 **24:11** 1Sm 22:5 **24:11** 1Sm 9:9 **24:14** Ps 103:8-18; 119:156 **24:16** 2Kg 19:35 **24:16** Ex 32:14; Am 7:3-6 **24:16** 1Co 10:10 **24:16** 2Ch 3:1 **24:21** Nm 16:44-50 **24:22** 1Sm 6:14; 1Kg 19:21 **24:25** 2Sm 21:14

24:1-10 This section of 2 Samuel began with David effectively making atonement for sin (see the note on 21:1), and it also ends in this way. This time, the sin was his own. Counting his soldiers was an act of pride and self-reliance, as David himself seems to imply in his confession that he had **sinned greatly** and **been very foolish** (v. 10; see also v. 17; Dt 17:19-20).

24:12-15 David’s desire to **fall into the LORD’s hands** (v. 14) was an implicit choice of the **plague** (vv. 13,15).

24:17-25 The angel was stopped from further destruction while at the **threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite** (v. 16). David had been instructed to build an altar there so that the plague might end (vv. 18,21). The genuineness of his worship is demonstrated through his insistence on buying the threshing floor, animals, and wood from Araunah. David would not offer to God **burnt offerings that cost** [him] **nothing** (v. 24). After building the altar, he offered sacrifices, and the plague ended. David was not perfect, but he genuinely repented of his sin and effectively dealt with sin (see the note on 21:14).



1 KINGS

INTRODUCTION

The titles of these books are certainly descriptive of their contents: the history of the kings and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. First and Second Kings are part of a larger body of the OT known as the twelve Historical Books (Joshua–Esther). Originally, the books were just one book, but were divided by the translators of the Septuagint (the Gk translation of the OT; aka LXX).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Scholars cannot identify the authors of any portions of these books. Traditional guesses such as Samuel and Jeremiah lack evidence, although a prominent worshiper of the Lord like Jeremiah would have been influential in the circles that produced these books. Since the books clearly incorporated many earlier documents, the complete authorship would include all writers who contributed to the source documents of this work. At some point, the Holy Spirit worked in the human authors to authenticate the inspired, inerrant books of 1 and 2 Kings. The final stage of composition or compilation had to come after the release of Jehoiachin from Babylonian imprisonment (ca. 562 BC). That edition may have added only a postscript to a work completed years earlier, or it may have involved significant additions.

BACKGROUND: The history recorded in 1 and 2 Kings covers approximately 410 years. First Kings begins around 970 BC with the death of King David, and 2 Kings ends around 560 BC with the release of King Jehoiachin from prison. During this time, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms (930 BC), and both kingdoms went into exile (Israel in 722 BC and Judah in 587 BC).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

For the Bible writers, history could not have existed without God's purposes. This makes all history theological. The books of 1 and 2 Kings interpreted Hebrew history in light of OT covenant theology. The Babylonian exile created the need for this work of historical apologetics. The exiles needed to explain the failure of the religious program established by the sovereign God. In the Deuteronomic history—Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings—this failure was consistently explained as the failures of the people to live up to their part of the covenant.

STRUCTURE

The organizing principle of 1 and 2 Kings is not story or narrative. Kings is unique because its basic structural units were the formulaic royal records. Formal openers (1Kg 15:9-10) and closers (1Kg 15:23-24) usually identify the boundaries of these records. Then the writer could insert other types of literature before, between, and after the openers and closers: narratives, prayers, descriptions, *etc*. But the most important element was the evaluation of the ruler's faithfulness to the covenant (1Kg 15:11-15). All of these materials made up a history of covenant obedience or disobedience.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

First Kings emphasizes "one God, one temple." Because Israel's God is the one true Lord of all, he can be worshiped properly at the one place he has designated: the temple in Jerusalem. He will not tolerate the worship of rival deities (such as Baal). He will not long endure being worshiped in rival sites such as at the shrines of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel or on the "high places." The Spirit is present to inspire God's prophets.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This book looks at humanity by evaluating the kings' lives. The only thing that really mattered was whether a king did "right in the LORD's sight" (15:5,11; 22:43) or did "evil in the LORD's sight" (11:6).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

On one hand, 1 Kings emphasizes that salvation is entirely due to God's sovereign work. Solomon's temple dedication prayer emphasized this: "For you, Lord GOD, have set them apart as your inheritance from all peoples of the earth" (8:53). On the other hand, his people were expected to live in loyalty to the covenant, and kings and people are both evaluated according to the terms of the covenant established at Mount Sinai.

1 KINGS TIMELINE

1010–900 BC

DAVID 1010–970

SOLOMON 990–931

David becomes king of Judah. **1010**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

David conquers Jerusalem. **1000?**

Solomon becomes king. **970**

Temple construction begins. **966**

Temple of Solomon is dedicated. **959**

Kingdom divides: Rehoboam, king of Southern Kingdom; Jeroboam I, king of Northern Kingdom. **931**

900–800 BC

REHOBOAM 941–913

JEROBOAM 917–909

Pharaoh Shoshenq I (Shishak), founder of Egypt's 22nd Dynasty, invades Jerusalem and takes treasures from the temple and royal palaces. **926–917**

First temple reform under Asa. **897**

Omri makes Samaria his capital. **880**

Elijah's ministry **862–852**

Ben-hadad attacks Samaria. **857**
Elisha's ministry **850?–798?**
Joel's ministry **836–796?**
Second temple reform under Joash **812**

800–725 BC

AHAB 874–853

JOASH 835–796

Events in Amos **783–746**
First Olympiad is celebrated in Greece. **776**
The first eclipse of the sun is documented in Assyrian annals. **763**
Events in Hosea **750–722?**
Events in Micah **750–686**
Tiglath-pileser's invasions of Israel **745–732**
Isaiah's ministry **742–700**
Syro-Ephraimite War; Aram and Israel invade Judah. **735?**

725–575 BC

HEZEKIAH 715–686

JOSIAH 640–609

Samaria falls; Northern Kingdom is taken into exile by Assyrians. **722**
Third temple reform under Hezekiah **715**
Sennacherib's invasion of Judah **701**
Jeremiah's ministry **627–586?**
Fourth temple reform under Josiah **622**
Josiah is killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco. **609**
Nebuchadnezzar's three invasions of Judah **605, 597, 586**
Temple of Solomon is destroyed. **586**

DAVID'S LAST DAYS

1 Now King David was old and advanced in age.† Although they covered him with bedclothes, he could not get warm.† 2 So his servants said to him: "Let us† search for a young virgin for my lord the king.† She is to attend the king and be his caregiver. She is to lie by your side so that my lord the king will get warm." 3 They searched for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel; they found Abishag† the Shunammite†† and brought

her to the king. 4 The girl was of unsurpassed beauty, † and she became the king's caregiver. She attended to him, but he was not intimate with † her.

ADONIJAH'S BID FOR POWER

5 Adonijah son of Haggith † kept exalting himself, saying, "I will be king! " He prepared chariots, cavalry, and fifty men to run ahead of him. † † 6 But his father had never once infuriated † him by asking, "Why did you do that? " † In addition, he was quite handsome † and was born after Absalom. † 7 He conspired † with Joab son of Zeruiah † and with the priest Abiathar. † They supported † Adonijah, 8 but the priest Zadok, † Benaiah son of Jehoiada, † the prophet Nathan, † Shimei, † Rei, and David's royal guard † † did not side with Adonijah.

9 Adonijah sacrificed sheep, goats, cattle, and fattened cattle near the stone of Zoheleth, which is next to En-rogel. † He invited all his royal brothers and all the men of Judah, the servants of the king, † 10 but he did not invite the prophet Nathan, Benaiah, the royal guard, or his brother Solomon. †

NATHAN'S AND BATHSHEBA'S APPEALS

11 Then Nathan † said to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, † "Have you not heard that Adonijah son of Haggith has become king † and our lord David does not know it? † 12 Now please come and let me advise you. † Save your life and the life of your son Solomon. † 13 Go, approach King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, did you not swear to your servant: Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne? † So why has Adonijah become king? ' 14 At that moment, while you are still there speaking with the king, I'll come in after you and confirm your words." †

15 So Bathsheba went to the king in his bedroom. Since the king was very old, Abishag the Shunammite was attending to him. † 16 Bathsheba knelt low and paid homage to the king, and he asked, "What do you want? "

17 She replied, "My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, 'Your son Solomon is to become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on

my throne.’ 18 Now look, Adonijah has become king. And, † my lord the king,
you didn’t know it. 19 He has lavishly sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep.
He invited all the king’s sons, the priest Abiathar, and Joab the commander of
the army, but he did not invite your servant Solomon. 20 Now, my lord the king,
the eyes of all Israel are on you to tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord
the king after him. 21 Otherwise, when my lord the king rests with his fathers, †
I and my son Solomon will be regarded as criminals.” †
22 At that moment, while she was still speaking with the king, the prophet
Nathan arrived, † 23 and it was announced to the king, “The prophet Nathan is
here.” He came into the king’s presence and paid homage to him with his face to
the ground.
24 “My lord the king,” Nathan said, “did you say, ‘Adonijah is to become king
after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne’? 25 For today he went
down and lavishly sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep. He invited all the
sons of the king, the commanders of the army, and the priest Abiathar. And
look! They’re eating and drinking in his presence, and they’re saying, ‘Long live
King Adonijah! ’ 26 But he did not invite me — me, your servant — or the priest
Zadok or Benaiah son of Jehoiada or your servant Solomon. 27 I’m certain my
lord the king would not have let this happen without letting your servant †
know who will sit on my lord the king’s throne after him.”

SOLOMON CONFIRMED KING

28 King David responded by saying, “Call in Bathsheba for me.” So she came
into the king’s presence and stood before him. 29 The king swore an oath and
said, “As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every difficulty, †
30 just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel: Your son Solomon is to
become king after me, and he is the one who is to sit on my throne in my
place, † that is exactly what I will do this very day.” †
31 Bathsheba knelt low with her face to the ground, paying homage to the
king, † and said, “May my lord King David live forever! ” †
32 King David then said, “Call in the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, and
Benaiah son of Jehoiada for me.” † So they came into the king’s presence.
33 The king said to them, “Take my servants † with you, have my son Solomon

ride on my own mule, † and take him down to Gihon. † 34 There, the priest
Zadok and the prophet Nathan are to anoint him as king over Israel. † You are
to blow the ram's horn † and say, 'Long live King Solomon! ' † 35 You are to
come up after him, and he is to come in and sit on my throne. He is the one who
is to become king in my place; he is the one I have commanded to be ruler †
over Israel and Judah." †
36 "Amen," Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied to the king. "May the LORD, the
God of my lord the king, so affirm it. † 37 Just as the LORD was with my lord the
king, † so may he † be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the
throne of my lord King David." †
38 Then the priest Zadok, the prophet Nathan, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the
Cherethites, and the Pelethites † went down, had Solomon ride on King David's
mule, and took him to Gihon. 39 The priest Zadok took the horn of oil from the
tabernacle and anointed Solomon. † Then they blew the ram's horn, † and all
the people proclaimed, "Long live King Solomon! " † 40 All the people went up
after him, playing flutes and rejoicing with such a great joy † that the earth split
open from the sound. †

ADONIJAH HEARS OF SOLOMON'S CORONATION

41 Adonijah and all the invited guests who were with him † heard the noise as
they finished eating. Joab heard the sound of the ram's horn and said, "Why is
the town in such an uproar? " † 42 He was still speaking when Jonathan son of
Abiathar the priest, † suddenly arrived. Adonijah said, "Come in, for you are an
important man, and you must be bringing good news." †
43 "Unfortunately not," Jonathan answered him. "Our lord King David has made
Solomon king. 44 And with Solomon, the king has sent the priest Zadok, the
prophet Nathan, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and
they have had him ride on the king's mule. 45 The priest Zadok and the prophet
Nathan have anointed him king in Gihon. † They have gone up from there
rejoicing. The town has been in an uproar; that's the noise you heard.
46 Solomon has even taken his seat on the royal throne. †

47 “The king’s servants have also gone to congratulate our lord King David, saying, ‘May your God make the name of Solomon more well known than your name, and may he make his throne greater than your throne.’ † Then the king bowed in worship on his bed. † 48 And the king went on to say this: ‘Blessed be the LORD God of Israel! Today he has provided one to sit on my throne, † and I am a witness.’ ” †

49 Then all of Adonijah’s guests got up trembling and went their separate ways.

50 Adonijah was afraid of Solomon, so he got up and went to take hold of the horns of the altar. †

51 It was reported to Solomon: “Look, Adonijah fears King Solomon, and he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, ‘Let King Solomon first † swear to me that he will not kill his servant with the sword.’ ”

52 Then Solomon said, “If he is a man of character, not a single hair of his will fall to the ground, † but if evil is found in him, he dies.” † 53 So King Solomon sent for him, and they took him down from the altar. He came and paid homage to King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, “Go to your home.”

1:2 Lit *them* **1:3** Shunem was a town in the hill country of Issachar at the foot of Mt. Moreh; Jos 19:17-18. **1:4** Lit *he did not know* **1:5** Heralds announcing his procession **1:7** Lit *His words were* **1:8** Lit *David’s warriors* **1:18** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg, Syr; other Hb mss read *And now* **1:27** Some Hb mss, LXX; alt Hb tradition reads *servants* **1:37** Alt Hb tradition reads *so he will* **1:40** LXX reads *the land resounded with their noise* **1:48** Lit *and my eyes are seeing* **1:51** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *today*

1:1 2Sm 5:4; 1Kg 2:10-11; 1Ch 23:1 **1:1** Ec 4:11 **1:2** Est 2:2 **1:3** 1Kg 1:15; 2:17 **1:3** Jos 19:18; 1Sm 28:4 **1:4** Est 2:7 **1:5** 2Sm 3:4 **1:5** 2Sm 15:1 **1:6** 1Sm 3:13 **1:6** 2Sm 13:21 **1:6** 2Sm 14:25 **1:6** 2Sm 3:3-4 **1:7** 1Ch 11:6 **1:7** 1Sm 22:20-23; 2Sm 20:25 **1:7** 1Kg 2:22 **1:8** 2Sm 20:25; 1Ch 16:39-40 **1:8** 2Sm 8:18 **1:8** 2Sm 7:2; 2:1-25 **1:8** 1Kg 4:18 **1:8** 2Sm 23:8-39 **1:9** Jos 15:7; 18:16; 2Sm 17:17 **1:9** 2Sm 15:11-12 **1:10** 1Kg 1:8,26 **1:11** 2Sm 12:1,25; 1Kg 1:8,10 **1:11** 2Sm 12:24 **1:11** 2Sm 15:10; 1Kg 1:25; 2:15 **1:11** 2Sm 3:26; 1Kg 1:18; 2:32 **1:12** Pr 15:22 **1:12** 1Kg 15:29; 2Kg 10:11 **1:13** 1Kg 1:17,30; 1Ch 22:9-13 **1:14** 1Kg 1:22-27 **1:15** 1Kg 1:1-4 **1:21** Dt 31:16; 2Sm 7:12; 1Kg 2:10 **1:21** 1Kg 1:12 **1:22** 1Kg 1:14 **1:29** 2Sm 4:9 **1:30** 1Kg 1:13 **1:30** 1Kg 1:33-35 **1:31** 1Kg 1:16 **1:31** Neh 2:3; Dn 2:4; 3:9 **1:32** 1Kg 1:8,10,26 **1:33** 2Sm 20:6 **1:33** 2Sm 18:9; Est 6:8; Zch 9:9; Jn 12:14-15 **1:33** 2Ch 32:30; 33:14 **1:34** 1Sm 10:1; 16:3,13 **1:34** 2Sm 15:10 **1:34** 1Sm 10:24; 1Kg 1:25 **1:35** 1Sm 13:14 **1:35** 2Sm 2:4; 5:3 **1:36** Jr 28:6 **1:37** 1Sm 20:13 **1:37** 1Kg 1:47 **1:38** 2Sm 8:18 **1:39** 1Ch 29:22 **1:39** 2Kg 11:14 **1:39** 1Sm 10:24 **1:40** Ezr 6:16 **1:41** 1Kg 1:5,7-10 **1:41** 2Kg 11:12-13 **1:42** 2Sm 15:27,36 **1:42** 2Sm 18:26-27 **1:43-45** 1Kg 1:33-35 **1:46** 1Ch 29:23 **1:47** 1Kg 1:37 **1:47** Gn 47:31 **1:48** 2Sm 7:12; 1Kg 3:6 **1:50** Ex 21:12-14; 1Kg 2:28 **1:52** 1Sm 14:45; 2Sm 14:11; Ac 27:34 **1:52** 1Kg 2:23-25

1:1 Toward the end of 2 Samuel, David had been restored to the kingship following Absalom’s conspiracy and death. 1 Kings begins with David **old and advanced in age.** The Lord had made a covenant with him promising an enduring kingdom (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16), and he would soon need a successor. Moses’s prediction from long ago that Israel’s disobedience would lead to their exile would also be fulfilled in 1 and 2 Kings (see the note on Dt 4:25-31).

1:5-8 As Absalom his brother had done earlier (see 2Sm 15:1-13), **Adonijah** attempted to seize the kingship (see also vv. 9-10,25). The Lord's judgment on David for his sin with Bathsheba in the form of family troubles would continue (see the note on 2Sm 12:7-15). For his part, David had not properly taught or disciplined Adonijah (v. 6).

1:28-30 Recognizing the danger to their lives and to Solomon's, Nathan and Bathsheba quickly alerted David of Adonijah's conspiracy (vv. 11-27). David had already sworn to Bathsheba that Solomon would be his successor (vv. 13,17). This had been unmentioned previously, but God's special favor on Solomon fits with this (see 2Sm 12:24-25).

1:49-50 The instructions for Solomon's public installation as king included clear indications of David' s support and authority, such as his **own mule** (v. 33) and Solomon's sitting **on** [his] **throne** (v. 35). Solomon had thus become his father's co-regent (see vv. 39,43). **Adonijah** was thus revealed as a conspirator, and his guests scattered in fear (v. 49). Adonijah himself knew that his life was in danger and fled to **the altar** in hopes that his life would be spared (v. 50). Joab would act similarly in 2:28-30.

1:52 Adonijah's fate would depend on whether he showed himself **a man of character** or not. It turns out that **evil** would be **found in him**, and he would be put to death (see 2:13-25).

DAVID'S DYING INSTRUCTIONS TO SOLOMON

2 As the time approached for David to die, † he ordered his son Solomon,
2 "As for me, I am going the way of all of the earth. † Be strong and be
a man, † 3 and keep your obligation to the LORD your God to walk in his
ways and to keep his statutes, commands, ordinances, and decrees. This is
written in the law of Moses, so that you will have success in everything you
do † and wherever you turn, 4 and so that the LORD will fulfill his promise that
he made to me: 'If your sons guard their way to walk faithfully before me with
all their heart and all their soul, † you will never fail to have a man on the throne
of Israel.' †
5 "You also know what Joab son of Zeruiah did to me † and what he did to the
two commanders of Israel's army, Abner son of Ner † and Amasa son of
Jether. † He murdered them in a time of peace to avenge blood shed in war. He
spilled that blood on his own waistband and on the sandals of his feet. † 6 Act
according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray head descend to Sheol in
peace.
7 "Show kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite and let them be among
those who eat at your table † because they supported me when I fled from your
brother Absalom. †

8 “Keep an eye on Shimei son of Gera, the Benjaminite from Bahurim who is with you. He uttered malicious curses against me the day I went to Mahanaim. † But he came down to meet me at the Jordan River, and I swore to him by the LORD: ‘I will never kill you with the sword.’ † 9 So don’t let him go unpunished, for you are a wise man. You know how to deal with him to bring his gray head down to Sheol with blood.”

10 Then David rested with his fathers † and was buried in the city of David. †
11 The length of time David reigned over Israel was forty years: he reigned seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem. † 12 Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his kingship was firmly established. †

ADONIJAH’S FOOLISH REQUEST

13 Now Adonijah son of Haggith † came to Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother. She asked, “Do you come peacefully? ”

“Peacefully,” he replied, † 14 and then asked, “May I talk with you? ” †
“Go ahead,” she answered.

15 “You know the kingship was mine,” † he said. “All Israel expected me to be king, but then the kingship was turned over to my brother, † for the LORD gave it to him. † 16 So now I have just one request of you; don’t turn me down.” †
She said to him, “Go on.”

17 He replied, “Please speak to King Solomon since he won’t turn you down. Let him give me Abishag the Shunammite † as a wife.”

18 “Very well,” Bathsheba replied. “I will speak to the king for you.”

19 So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to speak to him about Adonijah. The king stood up to greet her, bowed to her, sat down on his throne, and had a throne placed for the king’s mother. † So she sat down at his right hand. †
20 Then she said, “I have just one small request of you. Don’t turn me down.”
“Go ahead and ask, mother,” the king replied, “for I won’t turn you down.”

21 So she said, “Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to your brother Adonijah as a wife.”

22 King Solomon answered his mother, “Why are you requesting Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Since he is my elder brother, † you might as well

ask the kingship for him, † for the priest Abiathar, and for Joab son of Zeruiah." † † 23 Then King Solomon took an oath by the LORD: "May God punish me and do so severely † if Adonijah has not made this request at the cost of his life. 24 And now, as the LORD lives — the one who established me, seated me on the throne of my father David, and made me a dynasty as he promised † — I swear Adonijah will be put to death today!" 25 Then King Solomon dispatched Benaiah son of Jehoiada, † who struck down Adonijah, and he died.

ABIATHAR'S BANISHMENT

26 The king said to the priest Abiathar, † "Go to your fields in Anathoth. † Even though you deserve to die, I will not put you to death today, since you carried the ark of the Lord GOD in the presence of my father David † and you suffered through all that my father suffered." † 27 So Solomon banished Abiathar from being the LORD's priest, and it fulfilled the LORD's prophecy he had spoken at Shiloh against Eli's family. †

JOAB'S EXECUTION

28 The news reached Joab. Since he had supported Adonijah † but not Absalom, † Joab fled to the LORD's tabernacle and took hold of the horns of the altar. †

29 It was reported to King Solomon: "Joab has fled to the LORD's tabernacle and is now beside the altar." Then Solomon sent † Benaiah son of Jehoiada † and told him, "Go and strike him down!" †

30 So Benaiah went to the tabernacle and said to Joab, "This is what the king says: 'Come out!'" †

But Joab said, "No, for I will die here."

So Benaiah took a message back to the king, "This is what Joab said, and this is how he answered me."

31 The king said to him, "Do just as he says. Strike him down and bury him in order to remove from me and from my father's family the blood that Joab shed without just cause. † 32 The LORD will bring back his own blood on his head because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, without my

father David's knowledge. With his sword, Joab murdered Abner † son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa † son of Jether, commander of Judah's army. 33 The responsibility for their deaths will come back to Joab and to his descendants † forever, but for David, his descendants, his dynasty, and his throne, there will be peace from the LORD forever." †

34 Benaiah son of Jehoiada † went up, struck down Joab, and put him to death. He was buried at his house in the wilderness. † 35 Then the king appointed Benaiah son of Jehoiada in Joab's place over the army, † and he appointed the priest Zadok in Abiathar's place.

SHIMEI'S BANISHMENT AND EXECUTION

36 Then the king summoned Shimei † and said to him, "Build a house for yourself in Jerusalem and live there, but don't leave there and go anywhere else. 37 On the day you do leave and cross the Kidron Valley, † know for sure that you will certainly die. Your blood will be on your own head." †

38 Shimei said to the king, "The sentence is fair; your servant will do as my lord the king has spoken." And Shimei lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

39 But then, at the end of three years, two of Shimei's slaves ran away to Achish † son of Maacah, king of Gath. † Shimei was informed, "Look, your slaves are in Gath." 40 So Shimei saddled his donkey and set out to Achish at Gath to search for his slaves. He went and brought them back from Gath.

41 It was reported to Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned. 42 So the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Didn't I make you swear by the LORD and warn you, saying, 'On the day you leave and go anywhere else, know for sure that you will certainly die'? And you said to me, 'The sentence is fair; I will obey.' 43 So why have you not kept the LORD's oath and the command that I gave you?" 44 The king also said, "You yourself know all the evil that you did to my father David. † Therefore, the LORD has brought back your evil on your head, 45 but King Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain established before the LORD forever." †

46 Then the king commanded Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down, and he died. So the kingdom was established in Solomon's

hand. †

2:5 LXX, Old Lat read *on my waistband and . . . my feet* ; v. 31 **2:14** Lit *then said, "I have a word for you."* **2:16** Lit *don't make me turn my face* **2:22** LXX, Vg, Syr read *kingship for him, and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah* **2:29** LXX adds *Joab a message: "What is the matter with you, that you have fled to the altar? " And Joab replied, "Because I feared you, I have fled to the Lord." And Solomon the king sent* **2:33** Lit *Their blood will return on the head of Joab and on the head of his seed*

2:1 Gn 47:29; Nm 27:13 **2:2** Jos 23:14 **2:2** Jos 1:6-7,9 **2:3** Dt 29:9; 1Ch 22:12-13 **2:4** Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37 **2:4** 2Sm 7:12-13; 1Kg 8:25; 9:5 **2:5** 2Sm 18:5,12,14 **2:5** 2Sm 3:27 **2:5** 2Sm 20:10 **2:7** 2Sm 9:7; 19:28 **2:7** 2Sm 19:31-39 **2:8** 2Sm 16:5-13 **2:8** 2Sm 19:16-23 **2:10** Ac 2:29; 13:36 **2:10** 2Sm 5:7 **2:11** 2Sm 5:4-5; 1Ch 29:27 **2:12** 1Kg 2:46; 1Ch 17:14 **2:13** 1Kg 1:5,51-53 **2:13** 1Sm 16:4-5 **2:15** 1Kg 1:11 **2:15** 1Kg 1:38-46 **2:15** 1Ch 23:9-10; 28:5,7; Dn 2:21; 4:17; Jn 19:11; Rm 13:1 **2:17** 1Kg 1:3-4,15 **2:19** 2Sm 15:16; 1Kg 15:13 **2:19** Ps 110:1; Mt 20:21 **2:22** 1Kg 1:6; 1Ch 3:2,5 **2:22** 2Sm 16:20-22 **2:22** 1Kg 1:7 **2:23** Ru 1:17; 1Sm 3:17 **2:24** 2Sm 7:11-13 **2:25** 1Kg 1:8,26,38 **2:26** 1Kg 1:7,19 **2:26** Jos 21:18; Jr 1:1 **2:26** 2Sm 15:24-25,29 **2:26** 1Sm 22:20-23; 2Sm 19:11 **2:27** 1Sm 2:31-35 **2:28** 1Kg 1:7 **2:28** 2Sm 18:1-5 **2:28** Ex 21:12-14; 1Kg 1:50 **2:29** 1Kg 1:8 **2:29** Ex 12:12,14; 2Sm 3:27; 18:14; 20:10 **2:30** Ex 21:14 **2:31** Nm 35:33; Dt 21:8-9 **2:32** 2Sm 3:26-27 **2:32** 2Sm 20:8-10 **2:33** 2Sm 3:28-29 **2:34** 2Kg 2:25 **2:34** 2Sm 2:32 **2:35** 1Kg 4:4 **2:36** 2Sm 16:5-13; 1Kg 2:8-9 **2:37** Jn 18:1 **2:37** Gn 2:17; 2Sm 1:16 **2:39** 1Sm 27:2 **2:39** Jos 13:3; 1Sm 6:16-17; 21:10 **2:44** 1Kg 2:8-9 **2:45** 2Sm 7:13 **2:46** 1Kg 2:12; 2Ch 1:1

2:1-4 Prior to his death, David charged Solomon to obey God and keep the law of Moses, as emphasized in Deuteronomy 17:18-20. This charge has several similarities to the one Joshua received from God in Joshua 1:2-9. In view of the previous leader's death, the new leader was to **be strong** and keep **the law of Moses** so that he would **have success** in all things (Jos 1:6-9). Solomon will be charged to obedience again by God himself (see 3:14; 6:12-13; 9:4-9). The Lord's promise of blessing to David's royal line if they obey him recalls the threat of punishment for disobedience in 2 Samuel 7:14 (see also 11:39). The requirement of obedience for the continuance of the Davidic dynasty is also found in other passages (see 8:25; 9:4-7).

2:5-9 At this time, David also charged Solomon to punish **Joab** and **Shimei**, which he did (see vv. 28-46).

2:22-24 Abishag had been King David's personal caregiver, who slept beside him to keep him warm in his old age (1:1-4). Adonijah's request was interpreted by Solomon as a clear power play (see 2Sm 3:7; 16:21-22), since in the ancient world a king's women (or harem) accompanied him to the throne. Adonijah paid for the request with his life.

2:26-27 Abiathar was guilty because he had joined Adonijah's conspiracy (1:7,19,25; 2:22), but Solomon spared him because of his earlier service under David (see the note on 1Sm 22:18-23). Since Abiathar was a descendant of Eli, his banishment from the priesthood **fulfilled the LORD's prophecy** against Eli that his line would no longer serve as priests (see 1Sm 2:35-36).

2:28-34 David had instructed Solomon to put Joab to death for murdering Abner and Amasa (vv. 5-6; see 2Sm 3:27; 20:9-10). The execution of Joab punished the responsible party and cleared David and his descendants from any guilt related to the two deaths (vv. 32-34). Joab **took hold of the horns of the altar** to try to save his own life, just as Adonijah had (1:50-51).

2:36-46 Despite his promise not to put him to death himself (see 2Sm 19:23), David instructed Solomon to punish Shimei for mistreating him as he fled from Absalom (vv. 8-9; see 2Sm 16:5-8,13). Shimei's violation of Solomon's terms (vv. 36-40) gave the king an appropriate reason to execute him.

THE LORD APPEARS TO SOLOMON

3 Solomon made an alliance † with Pharaoh king of Egypt by marrying
Pharaoh's daughter. † Solomon brought her to the city of David † until
he finished building his palace, † the LORD's temple, † and the wall
surrounding Jerusalem. † 2 However, the people were sacrificing on the high
places, † because until that time a temple for the LORD's name † had not been
built. 3 Solomon loved the LORD † by walking in the statutes of his father
David, † but he also sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.
4 The king went to Gibeon † to sacrifice there because it was the most famous
high place. He offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. † 5 At Gibeon
the LORD appeared to Solomon † in a dream at night. † God said, "Ask. † What
should I give you? "
6 And Solomon replied, "You have shown great and faithful love to your
servant, my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness,
righteousness, and integrity. † You have continued this great and faithful love
for him by giving him a son to sit on his throne, † as it is today. †
7 "LORD my God, you have now made your servant king in my father David's
place. † Yet I am just a youth with no experience in leadership. † † 8 Your
servant is among your people you have chosen, † a people too many to be
numbered or counted. † 9 So give your servant a receptive heart to judge † your
people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great
people of yours? " †
10 Now it pleased the Lord that Solomon had requested this. 11 So God said to
him, "Because you have requested this and did not ask for long life † or riches
for yourself, † or the death † of your enemies, but you asked discernment for
yourself to administer justice, † 12 I will therefore do what you have asked. † I
will give you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has never been
anyone like you before and never will be again. † 13 In addition, I will give you
what you did not ask for: both riches and honor, † so that no king will be your
equal during your entire life. † 14 If you walk in my ways and keep my statutes
and commands just as your father David did, I will give you a long life." †

15 Then Solomon woke up † and realized it had been a dream. † He went to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant, † and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. † Then he held a feast † for all his servants.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM

16 Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. † 17 One woman said, "Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was in the house. 18 On the third day after I gave birth, she also had a baby and we were alone. No one else † was with us in the house; just the two of us were there. 19 During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. 20 She got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while your servant was asleep. She laid him in her arms, and she put her dead son in my arms. 21 When I got up in the morning to nurse my son, I discovered he was dead. That morning, when I looked closely at him I realized that he was not the son I gave birth to."

22 "No," the other woman said. "My son is the living one; your son is the dead one."

The first woman said, "No, your son is the dead one; my son is the living one." So they argued before the king.

23 The king replied, "This woman says, 'This is my son who is alive, and your son is dead,' but that woman says, 'No, your son is dead, and my son is alive.' "

24 The king continued, "Bring me a sword." So they brought the sword to the king. 25 And the king said, "Cut the living boy in two and give half to one and half to the other."

26 The woman whose son was alive spoke to the king because she felt great compassion † † for her son. "My lord, give her the living baby," she said, "but please don't have him killed! "

But the other one said, "He will not be mine or yours. Cut him in two! "

27 The king responded, "Give the living baby to the first woman, and don't kill him. She is his mother." 28 All Israel heard about the judgment the king had given, and they stood in awe of the king because they saw that God's wisdom † was in him to carry out justice.

3:1 Lit *Solomon made himself a son-in-law* **3:6** Lit *and uprightness of heart with you* **3:7** Lit *am a little youth and do not know to go out or come in* **3:11** Lit *for many days* **3:11** Lit *life* **3:18** Lit *No stranger* **3:26** Lit *because her compassion grew hot*

3:1 Dt 7:3; 1Kg 7:8; 9:24; Ezr 9:14 **3:1** 2Sm 5:7; 7:8; 9:10 **3:1** 2Sm 7:1-2 **3:1** 2Sm 6:1,14; 1Kg 6:37; 7:51 **3:1** 1Kg 9:15 **3:2** Dt 12:13-14 **3:2** Dt 14:23 **3:3** Dt 6:5 **3:3** 1Kg 3:14 **3:4** Jos 9:3-27; 21:17 **3:4** 2Ch 1:3,6 **3:5-15** 2Ch 1:7-13 **3:5** Nm 12:6; 1Kg 9:2; 11:9 **3:5** Mt 7:7; Jn 15:7 **3:6** 1Kg 1:48 **3:6** 1Kg 2:4; 9:4; 2Ch 1:8 **3:7** 2Ch 1:8 **3:7** 1Ch 29:1; Jr 1:6-7 **3:8** Ex 19:5-6; Dt 7:6 **3:8** Gn 15:5; 22:17 **3:9** Dt 1:16-17 **3:9** 2Ch 1:10 **3:11** Jms 4:3 **3:11** 1Ch 22:12 **3:12** 1Jn 5:14-15 **3:12** 1Kg 4:29-31; 10:23-24 **3:13** Mt 6:33; Lk 12:31 **3:13** 1Kg 10:23 **3:14** 1Kg 3:6; Pr 3:1-2 **3:15** Gn 41:7 **3:15** Dn 2:3; 4:5 **3:15** 2Sm 6:12 **3:15** 1Sm 11:15 **3:15** 1Kg 8:65 **3:16** Dt 16:18-19; 2Sm 15:2-4 **3:26** Gn 43:30; Jr 31:20; Hs 11:8 **3:28** 2Sm 14:20; 1Kg 3:9,11-12

3:1 Solomon's marriage to **Pharaoh's daughter**, although not explicitly forbidden by the law of Moses (see Dt 7:1-5), was still questionable. It involved an **alliance with Pharaoh** (see also the note on 5:12), which would seem to relate to importing horses from Egypt (see 10:28). In another context, Israel's reliance on Egypt was condemned (Is 31:1-3), and returning to Egypt to acquire horses was forbidden in Deuteronomy 17:16.

3:2 The people's **sacrificing on the high places** is mentioned repeatedly in 1 and 2 Kings as a persistent sin (see 22:43; 2Kg 12:3; 14:4; 15:4,35). Israel was to offer sacrifices only at designated locations, such as the tabernacle or the temple (see Lv 17:2-6; note on Dt 12:2-14).

3:3 At this point in his life, Solomon **loved the LORD** and mostly followed the good example of his father David. But he worshiped at **the high places** as well (see previous note). Later, the biblical author says in regards to Solomon's marriages to pagans and eventual idolatry that "unlike his father David, he did not remain loyal to the LORD" (11:6). David, though imperfect (see 15:5), is repeatedly used as the standard by which Israelite kings are measured (e.g., 14:8; 15:3,11; 2Kg 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2).

3:5 For the first of two times, **the LORD appeared to Solomon** (v. 5; 9:2; 11:9).

3:7-14 Solomon essentially requested wisdom for governing Israel justly (vv. 7-9). The Lord was pleased to grant him **a wise and understanding heart** and **riches and honor** as well, while at the same time charging him to **walk in** [his] **ways and keep** [his] **statutes and commandments** (v. 14). David had similarly charged Solomon earlier (see the note on 2:1-4).

3:24-28 Solomon's wise handling of this case demonstrated to all Israel that God had indeed given him wisdom (see previous note).

SOLOMON'S OFFICIALS

4 King Solomon reigned over all Israel, † 2 and these were his officials: †

Azariah son of Zadok, priest;

3 Elihoreph and Ahijah the sons of Shisha, secretaries;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud, court historian;

4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada, in charge of the army;
Zadok and Abiathar, priests;

5 Azariah son of Nathan, in charge of the deputies;
Zabud son of Nathan, a priest and adviser to the king;

6 Ahishar, in charge of the palace;

and Adoniram son of Abda, in charge of forced labor.

7 Solomon had twelve deputies for all Israel. They provided food for the king
and his household; each one made provision for one month out of the year. †
8 These were their names:

Ben-hur, in the hill country of Ephraim;

9 Ben-deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-
hanan;

10 Ben-hesed, in Arubboth (he had Socoh and the whole land of
Hepher);

11 Ben-abinadab, in all Naphath-dor (Taphath daughter of Solomon
was his wife);

12 Baana son of Ahilud, in Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth-shean
which is beside Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-
meholah, as far as the other side of Jokmeam;

13 Ben-geber, in Ramoth-gilead (he had the villages of Jair son of
Manasseh, which are in Gilead, and he had the region of Argob,
which is in Bashan, sixty great cities with walls and bronze bars);

14 Ahinadab son of Iddo, in Mahanaim;

15 Ahimaaz, in Naphtali (he also had married a daughter of
Solomon — Basemath);

16 Baana son of Hushai, in Asher and Bealoth;

17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah, in Issachar;

18 Shimei son of Ela, in Benjamin;

19 Geber son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, the country of King
Sihon of the Amorites and of King Og of Bashan.

There was one deputy in the land of Judah. †

SOLOMON'S PROVISIONS

20 Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand by the sea; † they were eating,
drinking, and rejoicing. 21 Solomon ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates
River to the land of the Philistines and as far as the border of Egypt. † They
offered tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. †
22 Solomon's provisions for one day were 150 bushels † of fine flour and 300
bushels † of meal, 23 ten fattened cattle, twenty range cattle, and a hundred
sheep and goats, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and pen-fed poultry, † †
24 for he had dominion over everything west of the Euphrates from Tiphsah to
Gaza and over all the kings west of the Euphrates. He had peace on all his
surrounding borders. 25 Throughout Solomon's reign, Judah and Israel lived in
safety from Dan to Beer-sheba, † each person under his own vine and his own
fig tree. † 26 Solomon had forty thousand † stalls of horses for his chariots, and
twelve thousand horsemen. † 27 Each of those deputies for a month in turn
provided food for King Solomon and for everyone who came to King Solomon's
table. They neglected nothing. 28 Each man brought the barley and the straw for
the chariot teams and the other horses † to the required place according to his
assignment. †

SOLOMON'S WISDOM AND LITERARY GIFTS

29 God gave Solomon wisdom, very great insight, and understanding † as vast
as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom
of all the people of the East, † greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. † 31 He
was wiser than anyone † — wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, † and Heman,
Calcol, and Darda, sons of Mahol. † His reputation extended to all the
surrounding nations. †
32 Solomon spoke 3,000 proverbs, † and his songs numbered 1,005. † 33 He
spoke about trees, from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing out of the
wall. He also spoke about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. 34 Emissaries of all
peoples, sent by every king on earth who had heard of his wisdom, came to
listen to Solomon's wisdom. †

4:19 LXX; MT omits *of Judah* **4:22** Lit *30 cors* **4:22** Lit *60 cors* **4:23** Hb obscure **4:26** 2Ch 9:25 reads

4,000 stalls **4:28** Lit *judgment*
4:1 2Sm 5:5; 8:15 **4:2** 1Kg 12:6 **4:7** 1Kg 4:27 **4:20** Gn 22:17; 1Kg 3:8 **4:21** Gn 15:18; 2Ch 9:26 **4:21** 2Sm 8:2,6 **4:22-23** 1Kg 10:5; Neh 5:18 **4:25** Jdg 20:1; 1Sm 3:20 **4:25** Mc 4:3-4; Zch 3:10 **4:26** Dt 17:16; 1Kg 10:26; 2Ch 1:14 **4:28** Est 8:10,14 **4:29** 1Kg 3:12 **4:30** Gn 29:1 **4:30** Is 19:11; Ac 7:22 **4:31** 1Kg 3:12 **4:31** 1Ch 15:19; Pss 88, 89 titles **4:31** 1Ch 2:6 **4:31** 1Kg 10:1,6 **4:32** Pr 1:1; Ec 9:12 **4:32** Sg 1:1 **4:34** 1Kg 10:1,6

4:1-19 The list of **officials** suggests an organized, well-established kingdom (vv. 1-6; see also 2Sm 8:15-18). The list of **deputies** is also indicative of a well-supplied kingdom (vv. 7-19; see also vv. 22-23,27-28). At this time, the Israelites "lived in safety . . . each person under his own vine and his own fig tree" (v. 25; see also v. 20).

4:20-21 The Israelites being **as numerous as the sand by the sea** recalls God's promise to Abraham (see Gn 32:13). Solomon's rule **from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far as the border of Egypt** was quite extensive, as David's had been (2Sm 8:1-14; see also Gn 15:18-21). Israel enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity under Solomon (vv. 20,24-25). These, however, would not endure —as the subsequent narrative will show. In contrast, the Messiah's kingdom will be one of everlasting peace (Is 9:7), and it will reach to "the ends of the earth" (Pss 2:8; 72:8).

4:26 Regarding Solomon's numerous **horses**, see the note on 10:14-29.

4:29-34 Despite the limited scope of Solomon's original request (see 3:7-9), God also gave him wisdom in other areas, including the natural world (v. 33), so that his fame spread to other lands.

HIRAM'S BUILDING MATERIALS

5 King Hiram of Tyre † sent his emissaries to Solomon when he heard that he had been anointed king in his father's place, † for Hiram had always been friends with David. †
2 Solomon sent this message to Hiram: 3 "You know my father David was not able to build a temple for the name of the LORD his God. This was because of the warfare all around him until the LORD put his enemies under his feet. † 4 The LORD my God has now given me rest on every side; there is no enemy or crisis. † 5 So I plan to build a temple for the name of the LORD my God, † according to what the LORD promised my father David: 'I will put your son on your throne in your place, and he will build the temple for my name.' †
6 "Therefore, command that cedars from Lebanon be cut down for me. My servants will be with your servants, and I will pay your servants' wages according to whatever you say, for you know that not a man among us knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians." †
7 When Hiram heard Solomon's words, he rejoiced greatly and said, "Blessed be the LORD today! † He has given David a wise son to be over this great people! "

8 Then Hiram sent a reply to Solomon, saying, “I have heard your message; I will do everything you want regarding the cedar and cypress timber. 9 My servants will bring the logs down from Lebanon to the sea, and I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place you indicate. I will break them apart there, and you can take them away. You then can meet my needs by providing my household with food.” †

10 So Hiram provided Solomon with all the cedar and cypress timber he wanted, 11 and Solomon provided Hiram with one hundred thousand bushels † of wheat as food for his household and one hundred ten thousand gallons † of oil from crushed olives. † Solomon did this for Hiram year after year.

12 The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he had promised him. † There was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty. †

SOLOMON’S WORKFORCE

13 Then King Solomon drafted forced laborers from all Israel; † the labor force numbered thirty thousand men. 14 He sent ten thousand to Lebanon each month in shifts; one month they were in Lebanon, two months they were at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. 15 Solomon had seventy thousand porters and eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountains, † 16 not including his thirty-three hundred † deputies † in charge of the work. They supervised the people doing the work. 17 The king commanded them to quarry large, costly stones to lay the foundation of the temple with dressed stones. † 18 So Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders, † along with the Gebalites, † quarried the stone and prepared the timber and stone for the temple’s construction.

5:11 Lit *20,000 cors* **5:11** LXX reads *20,000 baths* ; MT reads *20 cors* **5:16** Some LXX mss read *3,600* ; 2Ch 2:2,18

5:1 2Ch 2:3 **5:1** 1Kg 1:34,39 **5:1** 2Sm 5:11; 1Ch 14:1 **5:3** 1Ch 28:2-3 **5:4** 1Kg 4:24-25 **5:5** 2Ch 2:4 **5:5** 2Sm 7:12-13 **5:6** 2Ch 2:8 **5:7** 1Kg 10:9 **5:9** 2Ch 2:16; Ezr 3:7 **5:11** 2Ch 2:10 **5:12** 1Kg 3:12 **5:12** 1Kg 15:19 **5:13** 1Kg 4:6; 9:15 **5:15** 2Ch 2:17-18 **5:16** 1Kg 9:23 **5:17** 1Kg 6:7; 1Ch 22:2 **5:18** 1Kg 5:6,9 **5:18** Jos 13:5

5:2-5 Solomon’s message to Hiram king of Tyre shows that he sees himself as the fulfillment of God’s promise to David that he would **put** [David’s] **son on** [his] **throne in** [his] **place, and he** [would] **build the temple for** [God’s] **name** (see 2Sm 7:13). Solomon’s plans notwithstanding (v. 5; 8:15-21), his disobedience ultimately led to the tearing away of the kingdom from his son (11:11). Thus, the throne of

Solomon's kingdom was not established forever (see also the note on 9:4-9); other passages look forward to the Messiah to build the temple of God (Zch 6:12-13).

5:12 Solomon had made an alliance with Egypt (see the note on 3:1), and here he **made a treaty** with Tyre (v. 1).

5:13-18 Adoniram, who **was in charge of the forced labor**, had been mentioned earlier as one of Solomon's officials (4:6). The reader learns here that he was over a drafted labor force of **thirty-thousand** Israelites. Solomon's use of forced labor was a source of complaint during his son Rehoboam's reign (12:4) and contrasts with the construction of the tabernacle by volunteers (see the note on Ex 35:21–36:7).

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

6 Solomon began to build the temple for the LORD in the four hundred eightieth year † after the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of his reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, which is the second month. † † 2 The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD † was ninety feet † long, thirty feet † wide, and forty-five feet † high. † 3 The portico in front of the temple sanctuary was thirty feet long extending across the temple's width, and fifteen feet deep † in front of the temple. † 4 He also made windows with beveled frames † for the temple. †

5 He then built a chambered structure † along the temple wall, encircling the walls of the temple, that is, the sanctuary and the inner sanctuary. † And he made side chambers † all around. † 6 The lowest chamber was 7 1/2 feet † wide, the middle was 9 feet † wide, and the third was 10 1/2 feet † wide. He also provided offset ledges for the temple all around the outside so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls. 7 The temple's construction used finished stones cut at the quarry so that no hammer, chisel, or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. †

8 The door for the lowest † side chamber was on the right side of the temple. They † went up a stairway † to the middle chamber, and from the middle to the third. 9 When he finished building the temple, † he paneled it with boards and planks of cedar. 10 He built the chambers along the entire temple, joined to the temple with cedar beams; † each story was 7 1/2 feet high.

11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: † 12 "As for this temple you are building — if you walk in my statutes, observe my ordinances, and keep all my

commands by walking in them, † I will fulfill my promise to you, which I made to your father David. † 13 I will dwell among the Israelites and not abandon my people Israel.” †

14 When Solomon finished building the temple, † † 15 he paneled the interior temple walls with cedar boards; from the temple floor to the surface of the ceiling he overlaid the interior with wood. He also overlaid the floor with cypress boards. † 16 Then he lined thirty feet of the rear of the temple with cedar boards from the floor to the surface of the ceiling, † and he built the interior as an inner sanctuary, the most holy place. † 17 The temple, that is, the sanctuary in front of the most holy place, † was sixty feet † long. 18 The cedar paneling inside the temple was carved with ornamental gourds † and flower blossoms. Everything was cedar; † not a stone could be seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary † inside the temple to put the ark of the LORD’s covenant † there. 20 The interior of the sanctuary was thirty feet long, thirty feet wide, and thirty feet high; he overlaid it with pure gold. † He also overlaid the cedar altar. 21 Next, Solomon overlaid the interior of the temple with pure gold, and he hung † gold chains † across the front of the inner sanctuary † and overlaid it with gold. 22 So he added the gold overlay to the entire temple until everything was completely finished, including the entire altar † that belongs to the inner sanctuary.

23 In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim † 15 feet † high out of olive wood. 24 One wing of the first cherub was 7 1/2 feet long, and the other wing was 7 1/2 feet long. The wingspan was 15 feet from tip to tip. 25 The second cherub also was 15 feet; both cherubim had the same size and shape. 26 The first cherub’s height was 15 feet and so was the second cherub’s. 27 Then he put the cherubim inside the inner temple. Since their wings were spread out, the first one’s wing touched one wall while the second cherub’s wing touched the other † wall, and in the middle of the temple their wings were touching wing to wing. † 28 He also overlaid the cherubim with gold.

29 He carved all the surrounding temple walls with carved engravings —
cherubim, † palm trees, and flower blossoms — in the inner and outer
sanctuaries. 30 He overlaid the temple floor with gold in both the inner and the
outer sanctuaries.
31 For the entrance of the inner sanctuary, he made olive wood doors. † The
pillars of the doorposts were five-sided. † 32 The two doors were made of olive
wood. He carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on them and
overlaid them with gold, hammering gold over the cherubim and palm trees.
33 In the same way, he made four-sided † olive wood doorposts for the
sanctuary entrance. 34 The two doors † were made of cypress wood; the first
door had two folding sides, and the second door had two folding panels. 35 He
carved cherubim, palm trees, and flower blossoms on them and overlaid them
with gold applied evenly over the carving. 36 He built the inner courtyard †
with three rows of dressed stone † and a row of trimmed cedar beams.
37 The foundation of the LORD's temple was laid in Solomon's fourth year in the
month of Ziv. 38 In his eleventh year in the month of Bul, which is the eighth
month, † the temple was completed in every detail and according to every
specification. † So he built it in seven years. †

6:1 April–May **6:2** Lit *60 cubits* **6:2** Lit *20 cubits*, also in vv. 3,16,20 **6:2** Lit *30 cubits* **6:3** Lit *10 cubits wide* **6:4** Hb obscure **6:5** Lit *built the temple of chamber* **6:5** Lit *made ribs* or *sides* **6:6** Lit *five cubits*, also in vv. 10,24 **6:6** Lit *six cubits* **6:6** Lit *seven cubits* **6:8** LXX, Tg; MT reads *middle* **6:8** = People **6:8** Hb obscure **6:11-14** LXX omits these vv. **6:16** LXX; MT omits *of the ceiling* ; 1Kg 6:15 **6:17** Lit *front of me* ; Hb obscure **6:17** Lit *40 cubits* **6:21** Lit *he caused to pass across* **6:23** Lit *10 cubits*, also in vv. 24,25,26 **6:27** Lit *the second* **6:31** Hb obscure **6:33** Hb obscure **6:38** = October–November

6:1 Ac 13:20 **6:1** 1Kg 6:37; 2Ch 3:1-2; Ezr 3:8 **6:2** Ezr 5:11 **6:2** 2Ch 3:3; Ezk 41:1 **6:3** 2Ch 3:4; Ezk 40:49 **6:4** Ezk 41:16 **6:5** 1Kg 6:16,19-21 **6:5** Jr 35:2; Ezk 41:5-6 **6:7** 1Kg 5:17 **6:9** 1Kg 6:1,14,38 **6:9-10** 1Kg 5:6,8,10 **6:11** 1Kg 3:5,11-15; 9:2 **6:12** 1Kg 11:10 **6:12** 2Sm 7:12-16; 1Kg 9:5 **6:13** Lv 26:11; Jos 1:5-6; Heb 13:5 **6:14** 1Kg 6:1,38 **6:15** 1Kg 5:8,10; 7:7; Ezk 41:16 **6:16** Ex 26:33-34; 1Kg 8:6; Heb 9:3 **6:18** 1Kg 7:24 **6:18** 1Kg 5:8,10 **6:19** Ezk 41:3-4 **6:19** Dt 10:16; Jos 3:11 **6:20** 2Ch 3:8-9 **6:21** 2Ch 3:14; Mt 27:51 **6:21** 2Ch 3:16 **6:22** 1Kg 7:48; Heb 9:3-4 **6:23-27** Ex 25:18-22; 2Ch 3:10-13 **6:27** 2Ch 5:8 **6:29** Ezk 41:18,25 **6:31-32** Ezk 41:23 **6:34-35** Ezk 41:23-25 **6:36** 2Ch 4:9; Jr 36:10 **6:36** 1Kg 7:12; Ezr 6:4 **6:38** 1Kg 6:1,14 **6:38** 1Kg 7:1

6:1 The traditional dating of the exodus to 1446 BC is derived from this verse combined with the traditional dating of the beginning of Solomon's reign to 970 BC.

6:11-13 The detailed account of Solomon's construction of the temple is interrupted by a message from God to Solomon, once again charging him to obey his commandments (see also the note on 3:7-14). Solomon's building of the temple evidently was no guarantee that he would continue following God.

Neither was Solomon's fulfillment of God's promise to David as assured as he thought it to be (see the notes on 5:2-5; 8:15-21; 9:4-9).

6:14-18 The extensive use of **cedar** in the temple contrasted with the tabernacle, which was a mobile structure (see 2Sm 7:6-7).

6:20-22 The overlaying of the temple **with pure gold** contributed to its magnificence (see also vv. 28,30,32,35). Solomon took in twenty-five tons of gold annually and constructed other things from it as well (10:14-22).

SOLOMON'S PALACE COMPLEX

7 Solomon completed his entire palace complex after thirteen years of construction. † 2 He built the House of the Forest of Lebanon. † It was one hundred fifty feet † long, seventy-five feet † wide, and forty-five feet † high on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on top of the pillars. 3 It was paneled above with cedar at the top of the chambers that rested on forty-five pillars, fifteen per row. 4 There were three rows of window frames, facing each other † in three tiers. † † 5 All the doors and doorposts had rectangular frames, the openings facing each other † in three tiers. 6 He made the hall of pillars seventy-five feet long and forty-five feet wide. A portico was in front of the pillars, and a canopy with pillars † was in front of them. 7 He made the Hall of the Throne where he would judge † — the Hall of Judgment. It was paneled with cedar from the floor to the rafters. † 8 Solomon's own palace where he would live, in the other courtyard behind the hall, was of similar construction. And he made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, his wife. † †

9 All of these buildings were of costly stones, cut to size and sawed with saws on the inner and outer surfaces, from foundation to coping and from the outside to the great courtyard. 10 The foundation was made of large, costly stones twelve and fifteen feet † long. 11 Above were also costly stones, cut to size, as well as cedar wood. 12 Around the great courtyard, as well as the inner courtyard of the LORD's temple and the portico of the temple, were three rows of dressed stone and a row of trimmed cedar beams. †

13 King Solomon had Hiram † † brought from Tyre. 14 He was a widow's son from the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a bronze craftsman.

Hiram had great skill, † understanding, and knowledge to do every kind of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and carried out all his work. †

THE BRONZE PILLARS

15 He cast two bronze pillars, † each 27 feet † high and 18 feet † in circumference. † † 16 He also made two capitals † of cast bronze to set on top of the pillars; 7 1/2 feet † was the height of the first capital, and 7 1/2 feet was also the height of the second capital. 17 The capitals on top of the pillars had gratings of latticework, wreaths † made of chainwork — seven for the first capital and seven for the second.

18 He made the pillars with two encircling rows of pomegranates on the one grating to cover the capital on top; he did the same for the second capital. 19 And the capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were shaped like lilies, six feet † high. 20 The capitals on the two pillars were also immediately above the rounded surface next to the grating, and two hundred pomegranates † were in rows encircling each † capital. 21 He set up the pillars at the portico † of the sanctuary: he set up the right pillar and named it Jachin; † then he set up the left pillar and named it Boaz. † † 22 The tops of the pillars were shaped like lilies. Then the work of the pillars was completed. †

THE BASIN

23 He made the cast metal basin, † † 15 feet † from brim to brim, perfectly round. It was 7 1/2 feet high and 45 feet in circumference. 24 Ornamental gourds † encircled it below the brim, ten every half yard, † completely encircling the basin. † The gourds were cast in two rows when the basin was cast. 25 It stood on twelve oxen, † three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The basin was on top of them and all their hindquarters were toward the center. 26 The basin was three inches † thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim of a cup or of a lily blossom. It held eleven thousand gallons. †

THE BRONZE WATER CARTS

27 Then he made ten bronze water carts. † † Each water cart was 6 feet long, 6
feet wide, and 4 1/2 feet † high. 28 This was the design of the carts: They had
frames; the frames were between the cross-pieces, 29 and on the frames between
the cross-pieces were lions, oxen, and cherubim. † On the cross-pieces there
was a pedestal above, and below the lions and oxen were wreaths of hanging †
work. 30 Each cart † had four bronze wheels with bronze axles. Underneath the
four corners of the basin were cast supports, each next to a wreath. 31 And the
water cart's opening inside the crown on top was eighteen inches † wide. The
opening was round, made as a pedestal twenty-seven inches † wide. On it were
carvings, but their frames were square, not round. 32 There were four wheels
under the frames, and the wheel axles were part of the water cart; each wheel
was twenty-seven inches † tall. 33 The wheels' design was similar to that of
chariot wheels: their axles, rims, spokes, and hubs were all of cast metal. 34 Four
supports were at the four corners of each water cart; each support was one piece
with the water cart. 35 At the top of the cart was a band nine inches † high
encircling it; also, at the top of the cart, its braces and its frames were one piece
with it. 36 He engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees † on the plates of its
braces and on its frames, wherever each had space, with encircling wreaths.
37 In this way he made the ten water carts using the same casting, dimensions,
and shape for all of them.

BRONZE BASINS AND OTHER UTENSILS

38 Then he made ten bronze basins † — each basin held 220 gallons † and each
was six feet wide — one basin for each of the ten water carts. 39 He set five
water carts on the right side of the temple and five on the left side. He put the
basin near the right side of the temple toward the southeast. † 40 Then Hiram
made † the basins, the shovels, and the sprinkling basins.

COMPLETION OF THE BRONZE WORKS

So Hiram finished all the work that he was doing for King Solomon on the
LORD's temple: 41 two pillars; † bowls for the capitals that were on top of the
two pillars; the two gratings for covering both bowls of the capitals that were on
top of the pillars; † 42 the four hundred pomegranates for the two gratings (two

rows of pomegranates for each grating covering both capitals' bowls on top of the pillars †); 43 the ten water carts; † the ten basins on the water carts; †
44 the basin; † the twelve oxen underneath the basin; † 45 and the pots, shovels, and sprinkling basins. † All the utensils that Hiram made for King Solomon at the LORD's temple were made of burnished bronze. 46 The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth † and Zarethan. †
47 Solomon left all the utensils unweighed because there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined. †

COMPLETION OF THE GOLD FURNISHINGS

48 Solomon also made all the equipment in the LORD's temple: the gold altar; the gold table that the Bread of the Presence was placed on; † 49 the pure gold lampstands in front of the inner sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left; † the gold flowers, lamps, and tongs; 50 the pure gold ceremonial bowls, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, ladles, † and firepans; † and the gold hinges for the doors of the inner temple (that is, the most holy place) and for the doors of the temple sanctuary.

51 So all the work King Solomon did in the LORD's temple was completed. †
Then Solomon brought in the consecrated things of his father David † — the silver, the gold, and the utensils — and put them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple. †

7:2 Lit *100 cubits* **7:2** Lit *50 cubits*, also in v. 6 **7:2** Lit *30 cubits*, also in vv. 6,23 **7:4** Lit *frames, window to window* **7:4** Lit *three times* ; = at 3 different places, also in v. 5 **7:5** Lit *frames, opposing window to window* **7:6** Hb obscure **7:7** Syr, Vg; MT reads *floor* **7:8** Lit *daughter he had taken* **7:10** Lit *ten cubits and eight cubits* **7:13** = Huram in 2Ch 4:11 **7:15** Lit *18 cubits* **7:15** Lit *12 cubits* **7:15** LXX adds *and the thickness of the pillar was four fingers hollowed and similarly the second pillar* **7:16** Lit *five cubits*, also in v. 23 **7:17** Lit *tassels* **7:19** Lit *four cubits*, also in vv. 27,38 **7:20** Lit *encircling the second* **7:21** = He Will Establish **7:21** = In Him Is Strength **7:23** Lit *sea* **7:23** Lit *10 cubits* **7:24** Lit *10 per cubit* **7:26** Lit *a handbreadth* **7:26** Lit *2,000 baths* **7:27** Lit *bronze stands* **7:27** Lit *three cubits* **7:29** Or *hammered-down* **7:31** Lit *a cubit* **7:31** Lit *one and a half cubits* **7:32** Lit *was one and a half cubits* **7:35** Lit *half a cubit* **7:38** Lit *40 baths* **7:50** Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms*
7:1 1Kg 9:10; 2Ch 8:1 **7:2** 1Kg 10:21; 2Ch 9:16 **7:3-4** 1Kg 10:16-17 **7:7** 1Kg 3:16-28 **7:8** 1Kg 3:1; 9:24; 2Ch 8:11 **7:12** 1Kg 6:36 **7:13** 1Kg 5:1-11; 2Ch 2:13-14 **7:14** Ex 31:2-5 **7:14** 2Ch 4:11 **7:15** 2Kg 25:16-17; 2Ch 3:15 **7:15** 1Kg 7:41 **7:16** 1Kg 7:42; 2Kg 25:17 **7:20** 2Ch 3:16; 4:13 **7:21** 1Kg 6:3 **7:21** 2Ch 3:17 **7:22** 2Kg 25:17 **7:23** 2Kg 25:13; 1Ch 18:8; 2Ch 4:6 **7:24** 1Kg 6:18 **7:24** 2Ch 4:3 **7:25** 2Kg 16:17; 2Ch 4:4-5; Jr 52:20 **7:27** 2Kg 25:13; 2Ch 4:14 **7:29** 1Kg 6:29,32 **7:30** 2Kg 16:17 **7:36** 1Kg 6:29 **7:38** Ex 30:18; 2Ch 4:6 **7:39** 2Ch 4:10 **7:40-51** 2Ch 4:11–5:1 **7:41** 1Kg 7:15 **7:41** 1Kg 7:17 **7:42** 1Kg 7:20 **7:43** 1Kg 7:27 **7:43** 1Kg 7:38 **7:44** 1Kg 7:23 **7:44** 1Kg 7:25 **7:45** Ex 27:3 **7:46** Gn 33:17 **7:46** Jos 3:16; 1Kg 4:12 **7:47** 1Ch 22:3,14

7:48 Ex 25:30; 30:1-3; 2Ch 29:18 **7:49** Ex 25:31-36 **7:50** 2Kg 25:15 **7:51** 1Kg 6:37-38 **7:51** 2Sm 8:9-12; 2Ch 5:1 **7:51** 2Ch 36:18

7:1 The temple had taken seven years to complete (6:38), but Solomon spent **thirteen years** on his own **palace.** Like his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter (see the note on 3:1), this raises suspicions regarding Solomon's character. As was the case for God's charge to obedience in 6:11-13, the account of the palace's construction (vv. 1-12) interrupts the description of the temple's.

7:13-14 This **Hiram** was not the same person as Hiram king of Tyre mentioned in 5:1, as 2 Chronicles 2:11-14 makes clear. He **had great skill, understanding, and knowledge** in working with bronze—much like Bezalel, who led the construction of the tabernacle, had such ability in various kinds of craftsmanship (see Ex 31:2-5; 35:30-35). Nevertheless, Bezalel's skills were apparently more extensive, and he was also "filled with God's Spirit" (Ex 31:3; 35:31). He was also from the line of Judah (see the note on Ex 31:1-11), whereas Hiram's mother was **from the tribe of Naphtali** but his father was from Tyre.

7:40-45 Hiram thus finished the work in bronze that Solomon had commissioned him to do (see vv. 13-14).

7:48-51 Solomon also made golden **equipment** for the temple. The tabernacle had been originally designed with a golden altar of incense, a table, and a lampstand (see Ex 25:23-40; 30:1-10), and these may have been brought together with the ark and the tent of meeting from the city of David (8:4; see also Nm 4:15; 18:3).

SOLOMON'S DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

8 At that time Solomon assembled the elders † of Israel, † all the tribal heads † and the ancestral leaders of the Israelites before him at Jerusalem in order to bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from the city of David, † that is Zion. † 2 So all the men of Israel were assembled in the presence of King Solomon in the month of Ethanim, which is the seventh month, † at the festival. †

3 All the elders † of Israel came, and the priests † picked up the ark. † 4 The priests and the Levites brought the ark of the LORD, the tent of meeting, † and the holy utensils that were in the tent. † 5 King Solomon and the entire congregation of Israel, who had gathered around him and were with him in front of the ark, were sacrificing sheep, goats, and cattle that could not be counted or numbered, because there were so many. † 6 The priests brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the most holy place † beneath the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim were spreading their wings over † the place of the ark, so that the cherubim covered the ark and its poles from above. † 8 The poles were so long that their ends were seen from the holy place in front of the inner sanctuary, but they were not

seen from outside the sanctuary; they are still there today. † 9 Nothing was in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had put there at Horeb, † † where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of the land of Egypt. †

10 When the priests came out of the holy place, the cloud filled the LORD's temple, † 11 and because of the cloud, the priests were not able to continue ministering, for the glory † of the LORD filled the temple.

12 Then Solomon said:

The LORD said that he would dwell in total darkness. †

13 I have indeed built an exalted temple † for you, a place
for your dwelling forever. †

14 The king turned around and blessed † the entire congregation of Israel while they were standing. 15 He said:

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel!
He spoke directly to my father David,
and he has fulfilled the promise † by his power.
He said,

16 "Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, †
I have not chosen a city to build a temple in among any of the tribes of Israel,
so that my name † would be there.
But I have chosen David to rule my people Israel." †

17 My father David had his heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel. †

18 But the LORD said to my father David, "Since your heart was set on building a temple for my name, you have done well to have this desire. † †

19 Yet you are not the one to build it; instead, your son, your own offspring,
will build it for my name." †

20 The LORD has fulfilled what he promised.
I have taken the place of my father David, †

and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised. †
I have built the temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.
21 I have provided a place there for the ark, where the LORD's covenant is that he made with our ancestors
when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. †

SOLOMON'S PRAYER

22 Then Solomon stood † before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. † 23 He said:

LORD God of Israel, there is no God like you
in heaven above or on earth below, †
who keeps the gracious covenant
with your servants who walk before you
with all their heart. †
24 You have kept what you promised to your servant, my father David.
You spoke directly to him
and you fulfilled your promise by your power as it is today. †
25 Therefore, LORD God of Israel, keep what you promised
to your servant, my father David:
You will never fail to have a man
to sit before me on the throne of Israel, †
if only your sons take care to walk before me as you have walked before me. †
26 Now LORD † God of Israel, please confirm what you promised
to your servant, my father David. †

27 But will God indeed live on earth?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you, much less this temple I have built. †
28 Listen † to your servant's prayer and his petition, †
LORD my God, so that you may hear the cry and the prayer that your servant prays before you today,
29 so that your eyes may watch over this temple night and day, †

toward the place where you said,
"My name will be there," †
and so that you may hear the prayer
that your servant prays toward this place.
30 Hear the petition of your servant †
and your people Israel,
which they pray toward this place. †
May you hear in your dwelling place in heaven.
May you hear and forgive.

31 When a man sins against his neighbor and is forced to take an oath, † †
and he comes to take an oath
before your altar in this temple,
32 may you hear in heaven and act.
May you judge your servants,
condemning the wicked man by bringing
what he has done on his own head
and providing justice for the righteous
by rewarding him according to his righteousness. †

33 When your people Israel are defeated before an enemy, because they have sinned against you, †
and they return to you and praise your name, and they pray and plead with you
for mercy in this temple,
34 may you hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel.
May you restore them to the land
you gave their ancestors. †

35 When the skies are shut and there is no rain, because they have sinned against you, †
and they pray toward this place
and praise your name,
and they turn from their sins
because you are afflicting them, †
36 may you hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants

and your people Israel,
so that you may teach them the good way
they should walk in. †
May you send rain on your land
that you gave your people for an inheritance. †

37 When there is famine in the land, when there is pestilence,
when there is blight or mildew, locust or grasshopper, †
when their enemy besieges them
in the land and its cities, †
when there is any plague or illness,
38 every prayer or petition that any person or that all your people Israel may have — they each know their own affliction † † — as they spread out their hands toward this temple, †
39 may you hear in heaven, your dwelling place, and may you forgive, act, and give to everyone according to all their ways, since you know each heart, for you alone know every human heart, †
40 so that they may fear † you all the days they live on the land †
you gave our ancestors.

41 Even for the foreigner who is not of your people Israel but has come from a distant land †
because of your name —
42 for they will hear of your great name, strong hand, † and outstretched arm, and will come † and pray toward this temple — 43 may you hear in heaven, your dwelling place, and do according to all the foreigner asks.
Then all peoples of earth will know † your name, to fear you as your people Israel do
and to know that this temple I have built
bears your name.

44 When your people go out to fight against their enemies, †
wherever you send them,

and they pray to the LORD in the direction of the city you have chosen †
and the temple I have built for your name, 45 may you hear their prayer
and petition in heaven and uphold their cause. †

46 When they sin against you — for there is no one who does not sin † — and
you are angry with them
and hand them over to the enemy,
and their captors deport them to the enemy's country † — whether distant
or nearby —
47 and when they come to their senses †
in the land where they were deported
and repent and petition you in their captors' land: "We have sinned
and done wrong;
we have been wicked," †
48 and when they return to you with all their heart and all their soul in the land
of their enemies who took them captive, †
and when they pray to you in the direction of their land that you gave
their ancestors,
the city you have chosen, †
and the temple I have built for your name, 49 may you hear in heaven,
your dwelling place, their prayer and petition and uphold their cause.
50 May you forgive your people who sinned against you
and all their rebellions † against you, and may you grant them compassion
before their captors,
so that they may treat them compassionately. †
51 For they are your people and your inheritance; †
you brought them out of Egypt,
out of the middle of an iron furnace. †
52 May your eyes be open to your servant's petition and to the petition
of your people Israel, listening to them whenever they call to you.
53 For you, Lord GOD, have set them apart as your inheritance from all peoples
of the earth,
as you spoke through your servant Moses

when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt. †

SOLOMON'S BLESSING

54 When Solomon finished praying this entire prayer and petition to the LORD,
he got up from kneeling before the altar of the LORD, with his hands spread out
toward heaven, † 55 and he stood and blessed the whole congregation of
Israel † with a loud voice: 56 "Blessed be the LORD! He has given rest † to his
people Israel according to all he has said. Not one of all the good promises he
made through his servant Moses has failed. † 57 May the LORD our God be with
us as he was with our ancestors. May he not abandon us or leave us † 58 so that
he causes us to be devoted † to him, † to walk in all his ways, and to keep his
commands, statutes, and ordinances, which he commanded our ancestors.
59 May my words with which I have made my petition before the LORD be near
the LORD our God day and night. May he uphold his servant's cause and the
cause of his people Israel, as each day requires. † 60 May all the peoples of the
earth know that the LORD is God. There is no other! † 61 Be wholeheartedly
devoted to the LORD our God † to walk in his statutes and to keep his
commands, as it is today."
62 The king and all Israel with him were offering sacrifices in the LORD's
presence. 63 Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD:
twenty-two thousand cattle and one hundred twenty thousand sheep and goats. †
In this manner the king and all the Israelites dedicated † the LORD's temple. †
64 On the same day, the king consecrated the middle of the courtyard that was in
front of the LORD's temple because that was where he offered the burnt offering,
the grain offering, and the fat of the fellowship offerings † since the bronze altar
before the LORD was too small to accommodate the burnt offerings, the grain
offerings, and the fat of the fellowship offerings. †
65 Solomon and all Israel with him — a great assembly, from the entrance of
Hamath † † to the Brook of Egypt † — observed the festival at that time † in
the presence of the LORD our God, seven days, and seven more days — fourteen
days. † † 66 On the fifteenth day † he sent the people away. So they blessed
the king and went to their homes † rejoicing and with happy hearts for all the

goodness that the LORD had done for his servant David and for his people Israel. †

8:2 = September–October **8:7** LXX; MT reads *toward* **8:9** = Sinai **8:18** Lit *well because it was with your heart* **8:26** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg, 2Ch 6:16; other Hb mss omit *Lord* **8:28** Lit *Turn* **8:31** Lit *and he lifts a curse against him to curse him* **8:37** Lit *land of its gates* **8:38** Lit *know in his heart of a plague* **8:44** Some Hb mss, some ancient versions, 2Ch 6:34; other Hb mss read *enemy* **8:47** Lit *they return to their heart* **8:50** Lit *rebellions that they have rebelled* **8:58** Lit *causes our hearts to be inclined* **8:65** Or *from Lebo-hamath* **8:65** Temple dedication lasted seven days, and the Festival of Shelters lasted seven days. **8:66** Lit *the eighth day* **8:66** Lit *tents*

8:1 Ex 3:16; Nm 11:16 **8:1-11** 2Ch 5:2-14 **8:1** Nm 1:5-16; 7:2 **8:1** 2Sm 5:7 **8:1** 2Sm 6:12-15,17 **8:2** Lv 23:34; Dt 16:13-15; 1Kg 8:65 **8:3** Nm 11:16 **8:3** Dt 31:9; Jos 3:3,6 **8:3** 2Sm 6:12,17 **8:4** 2Ch 1:3 **8:4** 2Ch 5:4-5 **8:5** 2Ch 1:6; 30:24 **8:6** 1Kg 6:19 **8:6-7** 1Kg 6:23-28 **8:8** Ex 25:13-15; 37:4-5 **8:9** Ex 25:21; Dt 10:5 **8:9** Ex 24:7-8; Dt 4:13 **8:10** Ex 40:34-35; 2Ch 7:1 **8:11** 2Ch 7:2; Ezk 10:4,18-19; 43:4-5 **8:12** Ex 20:21; Lv 16:2; Dt 5:22 **8:13** 2Sm 7:13 **8:13** Ps 132:14 **8:14** Ex 39:43; 2Sm 6:18; 1Kg 8:55 **8:15** 2Sm 7:15-16,25 **8:16** 2Sm 7:6; 1Ch 17:5 **8:16** Dt 12:5,11 **8:16** 1Sm 16:1; 2Sm 7:8 **8:17** 2Sm 7:2-3; 1Ch 22:7 **8:18** 2Ch 6:8 **8:19** 2Sm 7:12-13; 1Kg 5:5; Ac 7:47 **8:20** 2Sm 7:12 **8:20** 1Ch 28:5-6 **8:21** Dt 31:26; 1Kg 8:9 **8:22-53** 2Ch 6:12-42 **8:22** 1Kg 8:54; 2Ch 6:12 **8:23** 1Sm 2:2; 2Sm 7:22 **8:23** Dt 7:16; Neh 1:5; Dn 9:4 **8:24** 2Sm 7:15-16 **8:25** 1Kg 2:4; 9:5 **8:25** 1Kg 9:4-9; 2Ch 7:17-22 **8:26** 2Sm 7:25 **8:27** 2Ch 2:6; Ac 7:47; 17:24 **8:28** Php 4:6 **8:29** 2Ch 7:15; Neh 1:6 **8:29** Dt 12:11 **8:30** Neh 1:6; Dn 9:4 **8:30** Dn 6:10 **8:31** Ex 22:11; Jos 7:19; Jn 9:24 **8:32** Dt 25:1 **8:33** Lv 26:17,25,39 **8:33-34** Lv 26:40-42 **8:35** Dt 28:23-24 **8:35** Dt 30:1-3; Am 4:7-8 **8:36** 1Sm 12:23 **8:36** Dt 11:14; Jl 2:23 **8:37** Lv 26:16,25-26 **8:38** 2Ch 6:29 **8:38** Ex 9:29; 2Ch 6:29 **8:39** 1Sm 16:7; 1Ch 28:9 **8:40** Dt 6:13 **8:40** Dt 12:1 **8:41** Lv 24:22; Dt 10:18-19 **8:42** Dt 3:24 **8:42** 1Kg 10:1 **8:43** Jos 4:24; 1Sm 17:46 **8:44** Dt 12:11; 1Ch 5:20; 2Ch 14:11 **8:45** Ps 9:4; 140:12 **8:46** Rm 3:10,23 **8:46** Lv 26:33-34 **8:47** Lv 26:40-42; Neh 1:6; Dn 9:5 **8:48** Jr 29:10-14 **8:48** Dn 6:10 **8:50** 2Kg 25:28; 2Ch 30:9 **8:51** Ex 32:11; Dt 9:26,29 **8:51** Dt 4:20 **8:53** Ex 19:5-6; Dt 9:26-29 **8:54** 2Ch 6:12-13 **8:55** Nm 6:23-26; 2Sm 6:18 **8:56** Dt 12:10; 1Ch 22:18; Heb 3:18-19 **8:56** Jos 21:45; 23:15 **8:57** Dt 31:6; Jos 1:5; Heb 13:5 **8:58** Jos 24:23; Jr 31:33; Php 2:13 **8:59** Pr 30:8; Mt 6:11 **8:60** Dt 6:4; Jos 4:24; Mk 12:32 **8:61** Dt 6:5; 1Kg 9:4; 11:4 **8:62-63** 1Ch 29:21; 2Ch 7:4-5; Ezr 6:16-17 **8:63** Dt 20:5; Ezr 6:16; Neh 12:27 **8:63** 2Ch 7:5 **8:64** Lv 6–7 **8:64** 2Ch 7:7 **8:65** Nm 13:21; 34:8 **8:65** Gn 15:18 **8:65** Lv 23:36; 1Kg 8:2 **8:65** 2Ch 7:9 **8:66** 2Ch 7:10

8:1 The completion of the temple and its furnishings (7:51) meant that it was time to bring in **the ark of the LORD's covenant.** David had brought it to **the city of David** (see 2Sm 6:1-15), which refers to the stronghold of Zion that he had taken from the Jebusites (2Sm 5:6-9).

8:3-4 The reference to "poles" in verses 7-8 suggests that the priests had carried the ark properly (see the note on 2Sm 6:3-9).

8:10-11 The placement of the ark in "the inner sanctuary of the temple" (v. 6) was followed by the filling of the temple with **the cloud** and **the glory of the LORD.** This had also happened after the tabernacle was completed (Ex 40:34-35).

8:13 Solomon had **indeed built an exalted temple**, but the temple would not last **forever** (see 9:7-8; 2Kg 25:9). Regarding the phrase, **a place for your dwelling**, see the note on v. 27.

8:15-21 Solomon's address to the congregation of Israelites cited God's promises to David (vv. 15-19; see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16). Whereas God said in 2 Samuel 7:12-13 that David's "descendant" would "build a house for [his] name," Solomon says that David's **son** will build it and that he himself is the fulfillment of God's promise (vv. 19-20; 5:5). This, however, is not so certain (see the note on 5:2-5), as the fulfillment of this promise through Solomon was conditioned on his obedience (see the notes on 6:11-13 and 9:4-9). Strangely enough, Solomon recognizes at least some aspects of this conditionality (see vv. 24-26).

8:27 On the one hand, Solomon claimed to have built for God "a place for [his] dwelling" (v. 13). On the

other, he freely confessed that if heaven itself **cannot contain** [God], then how much less a physical building like the temple, as magnificent as it was (see also 9:3). He also repeatedly refers to heaven as God's dwelling place (e.g., 30,39,43,49). The Lord's words in Isaiah 66:1 confirm this: "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. Where could you possibly build a house for me?" (see also Ac 7:47-50).

8:28-30 The majority of Solomon's prayer of dedication for the temple has little to do with sacrifice but with asking God to hear **prayer** offered in it (vv. 28,31,33) or toward it (vv. 29,30,35,44,48). He desired that God listen to his people Israel "whenever they call" (v. 52).

8:31-32 An **oath** could be taken before the **altar**, signaling a dependency on God to act in justice (see Ex 22:10-12; Nm 5:19-22).

8:33 Several of Solomon's requests involve situations in which Israel is experiencing the consequences of their sin (vv. 33,35,46; see Dt 28:15-37). In each case, Solomon asks God to forgive his people if they repent (vv. 33-36,47-50). Repentance, not sacrifice, is thus emphasized as the condition for forgiveness (see also 1Sm 15:22-23; 2Ch 7:13-14).

8:39 The alternatively comforting and sobering truth that God **alone** [knows] **every human heart** is the basis for the prayer that God gives **to everyone, according to all their ways** (see also 1Sm 16:7; Heb 4:13).

8:41-43 The scope of Solomon's prayers was not limited to Israel but extended to **the foreigner** who might come **from a distant land because of [the Lord's] name.** His request that God answer the prayers of a foreigner was so that **all peoples of earth will know** [God's] **name** (see also the notes on Ex 9:13-16 and 1Sm 17:45-47). Solomon's desire is echoed in Isaiah 56:7, which predicts that God's house will be "a house of prayer for all nations."

8:46-50 Solomon's aside, **for there is no one who does not sin**, is a profound statement about the pervasiveness of sin in the human race; it is akin to Paul's statement that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rm 3:23). This prayer assumes a situation in which Israel had sinned and consequently been exiled to a foreign land, just as Moses predicted (see the note on Dt 4:25-31). Also in line with Moses (see Dt 30:1-6), Solomon prayed that God would forgive and restore Israel when they repent in captivity (vv. 47-50). **We have sinned and done wrong; we have been wicked** was prayed nearly verbatim by the exiled Daniel centuries later (Dn 9:5).

8:56 Solomon's words are reminiscent of Joshua 21:45. The Lord is indeed faithful to **all the good promises he made**, but his threats of punishment for disobedience are also genuine (see 9:6-9; note on Jos 23:12-16).

8:61 Sadly, Solomon would not heed his own charge to the Israelites that they **be wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD.** In his old age, Solomon worshiped idols and "was not wholeheartedly devoted to" him (11:4).

8:65 The **festival** that Solomon and Israel celebrated was probably the Festival of Shelters, which was held during the seventh month (see v. 2). It was normally celebrated for seven days (Lv 23:33-36,39-43).

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

9 When Solomon finished building the temple of the LORD,† the royal palace, and all that Solomon desired to do,† 2 the LORD appeared to Solomon a second time just as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.† 3 The LORD said to him:

I have heard your prayer and petition you have made before me. I have consecrated this temple you have built, to put † my name there forever; † my eyes and my heart will be there at all times. †
4 As for you, if you walk before me as your father David walked, with a heart of integrity and in what is right, doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep my statutes and ordinances, † 5 I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel. †
6 If you or your sons turn away from following me and do not keep my commands — my statutes that I have set before you — and if you go and serve other gods and bow in worship to them, † 7 I will cut off Israel from the land I gave them, † and I will reject † the temple I have sanctified for my name. † Israel will become an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples. †
8 Though this temple is now exalted, † everyone who passes by will be appalled and will scoff. † They will say: Why did the LORD do this to this land and this temple? † 9 Then they will say: Because they abandoned the LORD their God who brought their ancestors out of the land of Egypt. They held on to other gods and bowed in worship to them and served them. Because of this, the LORD brought all this ruin on them. †

KING HIRAM'S TWENTY TOWNS

10 At the end of twenty years during which Solomon had built the two houses, the LORD's temple and the royal palace † — 11 King Hiram of Tyre † having supplied him with cedar and cypress logs and gold † for his every wish † — King Solomon gave Hiram twenty towns in the land of Galilee. 12 So Hiram went out from Tyre to look over the towns that Solomon had given him, but he was not pleased with them. 13 So he said, "What are these towns you've given me, my brother? " So he called them the Land of Cabul, † as they are still called today. † 14 Now Hiram had sent the king nine thousand pounds † of gold. †

SOLOMON'S FORCED LABOR

15 This is the account of the forced labor † that King Solomon had imposed to
build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the supporting terraces, † the wall of
Jerusalem, † and Hazor, † Megiddo, † and Gezer. † 16 Pharaoh king of Egypt
had attacked and captured Gezer. He then burned it, killed the Canaanites who
lived in the city, and gave it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife. †
17 Then Solomon rebuilt Gezer, Lower Beth-horon, † 18 Baalath, † Tamar † †
in the Wilderness of Judah, 19 all the storage cities that belonged to Solomon,
the chariot cities, † the cavalry cities, † and whatever Solomon desired to
build † in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or anywhere else in the land of his dominion.
20 As for all the peoples who remained of the Amorites, Hethites, Perizzites,
Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not Israelites — 21 their descendants who
remained in the land after them, those whom the Israelites were unable to
destroy completely † — Solomon imposed forced labor on them; it is still this
way today. † 22 But Solomon did not consign the Israelites to slavery; † they
were soldiers, his servants, his commanders, his captains, and commanders of
his chariots and his cavalry. 23 These were the deputies † who were over
Solomon's work: 550 who supervised the people doing the work. †

SOLOMON'S OTHER ACTIVITIES

24 Pharaoh's daughter moved from the city of David † to the house that
Solomon had built for her; † he then built the terraces. †
25 Three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings
on the altar he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them in the
LORD's presence. † So he completed the temple. †
26 King Solomon put together a fleet of ships at Ezion-geber, † which is near
Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea in the land of Edom. 27 With the fleet, Hiram
sent his servants, experienced seamen, along with Solomon's servants. 28 They
went to Ophir † and acquired gold there — sixteen tons † — and delivered it to
Solomon. †

9:3 Or *by putting* **9:7** Lit *send from my presence* **9:8** Some ancient versions read *temple will become a ruin* **9:8** Lit *hiss* **9:13** = Like Nothing **9:14** Lit *120 talents* **9:18** Alt Hb traditions, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *Tadmor* ; 2Ch 8:4 **9:18** Tamar was a city in southern Judah; Ezk 47:19; 48:28. **9:28** Lit *420 talents*
9:1-9 2Ch 7:11-22 **9:1** 1Kg 7:1-2; 2Ch 7:11 **9:2** 1Kg 3:5; 11:9 **9:3** 1Kg 8:29 **9:3** 2Ch 6:40 **9:4** 1Kg 3:6,14;

11:4,6; 1Ch 28:9 **9:5** 2Sm 7:12,15-16; 1Kg 2:4 **9:6** Dt 28:15; 1Kg 11:10; 1Ch 28:9 **9:7** Lv 26:33; Dt 28:63 **9:7** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 8:20 **9:7** Dt 28:37 **9:8** Lv 26:32; Dt 29:24; Mt 23:38 **9:9** Dt 29:25; 31:29 **9:10** 1Kg 6:38; 7:1; 2Ch 8:1 **9:11** 1Kg 5:1 **9:11** Dt 17:17 **9:11** 1Kg 5:10 **9:11-13** 2Ch 8:2 **9:14** Dt 17:17 **9:15** 1Kg 5:13-16 **9:15** 2Sm 5:9 **9:15** 1Kg 3:1 **9:15** Jos 11:1 **9:15** Jos 17:11 **9:15** Jdg 1:29 **9:16** 1Kg 3:1; 7:8 **9:17** Jos 16:3; 2Ch 8:5 **9:18** Jos 19:44 **9:19** 1Kg 10:26 **9:19** 1Kg 4:26 **9:19** 1Kg 9:1 **9:20-21** Jdg 1:21-36; 3:1; 2Ch 8:7-8 **9:21** Jdg 1:28,35; Ezr 2:55,58 **9:22** Lv 25:39 **9:23** 1Kg 5:16 **9:22-23** 2Ch 8:9-10 **9:24** 2Sm 5:7 **9:24** 1Kg 7:8; 2Ch 8:11 **9:24** 1Kg 9:15; 11:27; 2Ch 32:5 **9:25** Dt 16:16 **9:25** 2Ch 8:16 **9:26** Nm 33:48; 1Kg 22:48 **9:27-28** 1Kg 10:11; 22:48-49 **9:28** 1Kg 9:11,14

9:2 The **second time** God appeared to Solomon was after the completion and dedication of the temple. The first time had been in a dream at Gibeon (3:5). To have God appear to him twice was a special privilege, for which Solomon would be held accountable (11:9).

9:4-9 For a third time, God charged Solomon to obey his commands (v. 4; 3:14; 6:12-13). If Solomon did so, God would **establish** his **royal throne over Israel forever.** The king, however, would disobey, and his throne was not established (11:11). The wording in v. 5 is similar to 2 Samuel 7:13, which suggests that Solomon was not the fulfillment of this promise to David (see also the notes on 5:2-5 and 6:11-13). As in 2 Samuel 7:14, God threatened Solomon and his descendants with judgment if they disobeyed him (see the note on Dt 4:25-31). Israel indeed would lose its **land** and the glorious **temple** would be destroyed by the Babylonians (2Kg 25:9). Together, they would be a laughingstock to the surrounding nations (vv. 7-8; see also Dt 28:37), a sad contrast to Solomon's hopes in 8:41-43.

9:20-23 The subjugation of **the peoples** of the land to forced labor also had been practiced earlier (Jdg 1:28,30,33,35). No **Israelites** were made permanent slaves, but thirty thousand of them were drafted to work one out of every three months (see the note on 5:13-18).

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

10 The queen of Sheba † heard about Solomon's fame † connected with
the name of the LORD and came to test him with riddles. † 2 She came
to Jerusalem with a very large entourage, with camels bearing † spices, gold in
great abundance, and precious stones. † She came to Solomon and spoke to him
about everything that was on her mind. 3 So Solomon answered all her
questions; nothing was too difficult for the king to explain to her. 4 When the
queen of Sheba observed all of Solomon's wisdom, the palace he had built, †
5 the food at his table, † his servants' residence, his attendants' service and their
attire, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he offered at the LORD's temple, it
took her breath away.
6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your words
and about your wisdom is true. 7 But I didn't believe the reports until I came and
saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half. Your wisdom and
prosperity far exceed the report I heard. † 8 How happy are your men. † How
happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in your presence hearing

your wisdom. † 9 Blessed be the LORD your God! He delighted in you and put you on the throne of Israel, † because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel. † He has made you king to carry out justice and righteousness." †

10 Then she gave the king four and a half tons † of gold, † a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. Never again did such a quantity of spices arrive as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 In addition, Hiram's fleet that carried gold from Ophir brought from Ophir a large quantity of almug † wood and precious stones. † 12 The king made the almug wood into steps for the LORD's temple and the king's palace and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before did such almug wood arrive, and the like has not been seen again.

13 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba her every desire — whatever she asked — besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she, along with her servants, returned to her own country. †

SOLOMON'S WEALTH

14 The weight † of gold that came to Solomon annually was twenty-five tons, †

15 besides what came from merchants, † traders' merchandise, and all the Arabian kings and governors of the land. †

16 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; fifteen pounds † of gold went into each shield. 17 He made three hundred small shields of hammered gold; nearly four pounds † of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. †

18 The king also made a large ivory throne and overlaid it with fine gold. 19 The throne had six steps; there was a rounded top at the back of the throne, armrests on either side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the armrests. 20 Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps, one at each end. Nothing like it had ever been made in any other kingdom.

21 All of King Solomon's drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the House of the Forest of Lebanon † were pure gold. † There was no silver, since it was considered as nothing in Solomon's time, 22 for the king had ships of

Tarshish † at sea with Hiram's fleet, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. † †
23 King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and in wisdom. † 24 The whole world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom that God had put in his heart. † 25 Every man would bring his annual tribute: items † of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, † spices, and horses and mules. †
26 Solomon accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen † and stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. † 27 The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, † and he made cedar † as abundant as sycamore in the Judean foothills. 28 Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue. † The king's traders bought them from Kue at the going price. † 29 A chariot was imported from Egypt for fifteen pounds † of silver, and a horse for nearly four pounds. † In the same way, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram through their agents. †
10:8 LXX, Syr read *your wives* **10:10** Lit *120 talents* **10:11** = algum in 2Ch 2:8; 9:10-11 **10:14** Lit *666 talents* **10:16** Lit *600* (shekels) **10:17** Lit *three minas* **10:22** Or *baboons* **10:25** Or *vessels*, or *weapons* **10:25** Or *fragrant balsam* **10:28** = Cilicia **10:29** Lit *600 shekels* **10:29** Lit *150 shekels*
10:1 2Ch 9:1; Mt 12:42 **10:1-10** 2Ch 9:1-12 **10:1** Jdg 14:12-14 **10:2** Gn 24:10 **10:2** 1Kg 10:10 **10:4** 1Kg 7:1 **10:5** 1Kg 4:22-23 **10:7** 1Ch 29:25 **10:8** Pr 8:34 **10:9** 2Sm 22:20; 1Kg 5:7 **10:9** 1Ch 17:22; 2Ch 2:11 **10:9** 2Sm 8:15 **10:10** 1Kg 9:28 **10:11** 1Kg 9:27-28 **10:12-13** 2Ch 9:11-12 **10:14-25** 2Ch 9:13-24 **10:15** 2Ch 1:16 **10:14-15** 1Kg 9:28; 10:2 **10:17** 1Kg 7:2-5 **10:21** 1Kg 7:2-5 **10:21** 1Kg 9:28 **10:22** Jnh 1:3 **10:22** 1Kg 9:26-28; 22:48 **10:23** 1Kg 3:13 **10:24** 1Kg 3:28; 10:1 **10:23-25** 2Ch 9:22-24 **10:26** 1Kg 4:26 **10:26** 1Kg 9:19 **10:27** Dt 17:17 **10:27** 1Kg 5:10; 2Ch 1:15 **10:28** Dt 17:16; 2Ch 9:28 **10:29** 2Ch 1:17

10:6-9 Sheba was in southern Arabia. Its queen coming to Israel to hear Solomon's great wisdom and her praise of the Lord (v. 9; see also v. 24) recalls Solomon's prayer in 8:41-43 and parallels the coming of all nations to Zion "in the last days" to learn from God (Is 2:2-4). Her many gifts parallel the future day in which "the treasures of all the nations will come" into a glorious temple (Hg 2:6-9) **10:14-29** Solomon had staggering amounts of gold (vv. 14-15,22,25), so much so that silver **was considered as nothing in Solomon's time** (v. 21; see also v. 27). He also accumulated numerous chariots, horsemen, horses, and wives (vv. 26-29; 4:26; 11:1-3). These were all in conflict with Deuteronomy 17:16-17, which specifically forbade the king from accumulating horses, wives, and gold.

SOLOMON'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD

11 King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: † Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite

women † 2 from the nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, “You must not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn your heart away to follow their gods.” † To these women Solomon was deeply attached † in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives who were princesses and three hundred who were concubines, † and they turned his heart away. †

4 When Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away to follow other gods. He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God, as his father David had been. † 5 Solomon followed Ashtoreth, † the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, † the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites. † 6 Solomon did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, and unlike his father David, he did not remain loyal to the LORD.

7 At that time, Solomon built a high place † for Chemosh, † the abhorrent idol of Moab, and for Milcom, † † the abhorrent idol of the Ammonites, on the hill across from Jerusalem. † 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who were burning incense and offering sacrifices to their gods.

9 The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. † 10 He had commanded him about this, so that he would not follow other gods, but Solomon did not do what the LORD had commanded. †

11 Then the LORD said to Solomon, “Since you have done this † and did not keep my covenant and my statutes, which I commanded you, I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. † 12 However, I will not do it during your lifetime for the sake of your father David; † I will tear it out of your son’s hand. 13 Yet I will not tear the entire kingdom away from him. I will give one tribe to your son † for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem that I chose.”

SOLOMON’S ENEMIES

14 So the LORD raised up † Hadad the Edomite as an enemy against Solomon. He was of the royal family in Edom. 15 Earlier, when David was in Edom, Joab, the commander of the army, had gone to bury the dead and had struck down

every male in Edom. 16 For Joab and all Israel had remained there six months,
until he had killed every male in Edom. † 17 Hadad fled to Egypt, along with
some Edomites from his father's servants. At the time Hadad was a small boy.
18 Hadad and his men set out from Midian and went to Paran. † They took men
with them from Paran and went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, † who gave
Hadad a house, ordered that he be given food, and gave him land. 19 Pharaoh
liked Hadad so much † that he gave him a wife, the sister of his own wife,
Queen Tahpenes. 20 Tahpenes's sister gave birth to Hadad's son Genubath.
Tahpenes herself weaned him in Pharaoh's palace, and Genubath lived there
along with Pharaoh's sons.
21 When Hadad heard in Egypt that David rested with his fathers and that Joab,
the commander of the army, was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me leave, so
I may go to my own country."
22 But Pharaoh asked him, "What do you lack here with me for you to want to
go back to your own country? "
"Nothing," he replied, "but please let me leave."
23 God raised up Rezon son of Eliada as an enemy † against Solomon. Rezon
had fled from his master King Hadadezer of Zobah † 24 and gathered men to
himself. He became leader of a raiding party when David killed the Zobaites.
He † went to Damascus, † lived there, and became king in Damascus. 25 Rezon
was Israel's enemy throughout Solomon's reign, adding to the trouble Hadad
had caused. He reigned over Aram † † and loathed Israel.
26 Now Solomon's servant, † Jeroboam son of Nebat, was an Ephraimite from
Zeredah. His widowed mother's name was Zeruah. Jeroboam rebelled † against
Solomon, 27 and this is the reason he rebelled against the king: Solomon had
built the supporting terraces † and repaired the opening in the wall of the city of
his father David. 28 Now the man Jeroboam was capable, and Solomon noticed
the young man because he was getting things done. So he appointed him over
the entire labor force of the house of Joseph. †
29 During that time, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite † met Jeroboam on the
road as Jeroboam came out of Jerusalem. Now Ahijah had wrapped himself with
a new cloak, and the two of them were alone in the open field. 30 Then Ahijah

took hold of the new cloak he had on, tore it into twelve pieces, † 31 and said to Jeroboam, “Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I am about to tear the kingdom out of Solomon’s hand. I will give you ten tribes, 32 but one tribe will remain his for the sake of my servant David † and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I chose out of all the tribes of Israel. † 33 For they have abandoned me; they have bowed down to Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, to Chemosh, the god of Moab, and to Milcom, the god of the Ammonites. † They have not walked in my ways to do what is right in my sight and to carry out my statutes and my judgments as his father David did. †
34 “ ‘However, I will not take the whole kingdom from him but will let him be ruler all the days of his life for the sake of my servant David, whom I chose and who kept my commands and my statutes. 35 I will take ten tribes of the kingdom from his son and give them to you. 36 I will give one tribe † to his son, † so that my servant David will always have a lamp before me † in Jerusalem, the city I chose for myself to put my name there. † 37 I will appoint you, † and you will reign as king † over all you want, † and you will be king over Israel.
38 “ ‘After that, if you obey all I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight in order to keep my statutes and my commands as my servant David did, I will be with you. † I will build you a lasting dynasty just as I built for David, † and I will give you Israel. 39 I will humble David’s descendants, because of their unfaithfulness, but not forever.’ ” † †
40 Therefore, Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, † but he fled to Egypt, † to King Shishak of Egypt, † where he remained until Solomon’s death.

SOLOMON’S DEATH

41 The rest of the events of Solomon’s reign, along with all his accomplishments and his wisdom, are written in the Book of Solomon’s Events. † 42 The length of Solomon’s reign in Jerusalem over all Israel totaled forty years. †
43 Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David. His son Rehoboam † became king in his place. †

11:2 Lit *Solomon clung* **11:7** Lit *Molech* **11:11** Lit *“Since this was with you* **11:19** Lit *Hadad found much favor in Pharaoh’s eyes* **11:24** LXX; Hb reads *They* **11:25** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *Edom* **11:38-39** LXX omits *and I will give . . . but not forever*

11:1 1Kg 3:1; 7:8 **11:1** Neh 13:23-27 **11:2** Dt 7:3-4 **11:3** 2Sm 5:13; Est 2:14-15; Sg 6:8 **11:3** Dt 17:17 **11:4** 1Kg 8:61; 9:4; 15:3,14; 1Ch 29:19 **11:5** Jdg 2:13; 10:6; 1Kg 11:33 **11:5** Lv 18:21 **11:5** Jdg 2:13; 1Sm 7:3-4 **11:7** Nm 33:52; 1Kg 3:2-3 **11:7** Nm 21:29 **11:7** 1Kg 11:33 **11:7** 2Kg 23:13 **11:9** 1Kg 3:5; 9:2 **11:10** 1Kg 6:12; 9:6-7 **11:11** 1Kg 11:29-31 **11:12** 2Sm 7:12-16; 2Kg 19:34; 20:6 **11:12-13** 1Kg 11:31-32 **11:14** 1Kg 5:4; 1Ch 5:26 **11:15-16** 2Sm 8:13-14; 1Ch 18:12-13 **11:18** Nm 10:12; Dt 1:1 **11:18** 1Kg 3:1 **11:23** 1Kg 5:4 **11:23** 2Sm 8:3 **11:24** 2Sm 8:5 **11:25** Gn 10:22; 2Sm 10:19 **11:26** 1Kg 11:11 **11:26** 1Kg 11:40; 2Ch 13:6 **11:27** 1Kg 9:15,24 **11:28** 1Kg 5:13-16; 12:4 **11:29** 1Kg 12:15; 14:2 **11:30** 1Sm 15:27-28; 1Kg 11:11-13 **11:32** 2Sm 7:15-16 **11:30-32** 1Kg 11:11-13 **11:33** 1Kg 11:5,7 **11:33** 1Kg 3:14; 11:9-11 **11:36** 1Kg 12:16-17 **11:34-36** 1Kg 3:14; 11:12-13 **11:36** 2Sm 21:17; 1Kg 15:4; 2Kg 8:19 **11:36** 1Kg 8:29; 11:13 **11:37** 1Kg 11:11 **11:37** 1Kg 14:7 **11:37** 2Sm 3:21 **11:38** Jos 1:5; 1Kg 3:14; 11:11 **11:38** 2Sm 7:11,27 **11:39** Ezk 37:15-28; Am 9:11-12 **11:40** 1Kg 11:26-28 **11:40** 1Kg 12:2 **11:40** 1Kg 14:25-26; 2Ch 12:2-9 **11:41** 1Kg 15:7,23; 2Ch 9:29 **11:42** 2Sm 5:5 **11:43** 1Kg 12:1 **11:42-43** 2Ch 9:30-31

11:1-8 Like Israelites in earlier generations (see Jdg 3:6), Solomon intermarried with the peoples of the land (vv. 1-2; see the note on Dt 7:1-6). His large number of foreign wives and concubines were primarily intended to secure international and domestic alliances and for economic benefit, but they **turned his heart away** from the Lord. His idolatry in his old age was both sad and shocking (vv. 4-8). Despite being repeatedly charged to obedience by God (3:14; 6:12-13; 9:4-5) and by his father (2:2-4; see also 8:61), Solomon **was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD.** Thus, God would not fulfill David's promises through Solomon by establishing his throne forever (see the notes on vv. 11-13 and 9:4-9). The reader is also led to expect the eventual destruction of the temple as well as exile (6:12-13; 9:6-9).

11:9 The fact that God **had appeared** to Solomon **twice** (3:5; 9:2) made him especially culpable.

11:11-13 Obedience would have led to the establishment of Solomon's throne (2:2-4; 3:14; 6:12-13; 9:4-5); his disobedience led to the loss of much of his kingdom (see the note on vv. 1-8). Nevertheless, for the sake of David, God would divide the kingdom during the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam and would allow him to retain rule over one tribe (vv. 12-13; 12:20). The Lord's faithfulness to his covenant with David despite the sins of his successors is repeated elsewhere (vv. 32,34,36,39; 15:4; 2Kg 8:19; 20:6; 25:27-30).

11:14-26 The existence of these enemies to Solomon (vv. 14,23,26) contrasts with Solomon's claim in 5:4.

11:29-39 The prophet Ahijah announced to **Jeroboam** that he would become king over **ten tribes** of Israel because of Solomon's idolatry (see the note on vv. 11-13). The mention of only eleven tribes when there were a total of twelve may relate to Benjamin's allegiance to Judah (see 12:21,23). The Lord was disciplining Solomon and the house of David (vv. 32,34,36,39) while remaining faithful to the Davidic covenant (see the notes on 15:3-5 and 2Sm 7:8-16). Like Solomon, Jeroboam was also charged to follow David's example of obedience to God and was promised a **lasting dynasty** if he did (v. 38; see the note on 3:3).

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

12 Then Rehoboam † went to Shechem, † for all Israel † had gone to
Shechem to make him king. † 2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard
about it, he stayed in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon's
presence. † Jeroboam stayed in Egypt. † 3 But they summoned him, and
Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam:

4 “Your father made our yoke harsh. † You, therefore, lighten your father’s
harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us, † and we will serve you.”
5 Rehoboam replied, “Go away for three days and then return to me.” So the
people left. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders † who had served
his father Solomon when he was alive, asking, “How do you advise me to
respond to this people? ”
7 They replied, “Today if you will be a servant to this people and serve them,
and if you respond to them by speaking kind words to them, they will be your
servants forever.” †
8 But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him † and consulted
with the young men who had grown up with him and attended him. 9 He asked
them, “What message do you advise that we send back to this people who said to
me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’? ”
10 Then the young men who had grown up with him told him, “This is what you
should say to this people who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy,
but you, make it lighter on us! ’ This is what you should tell them: ‘My little
finger is thicker than my father’s waist! 11 Although my father burdened you
with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with
whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips.’ ” † †
12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the
king had ordered: “Return to me on the third day.” 13 Then the king answered
the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given him 14 and spoke
to them according to the young men’s advice: “My father made your yoke
heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I
will discipline you with barbed whips.”
15 The king did not listen to the people, because this turn of events came from
the LORD † to carry out his word, which the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the
Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat. † 16 When all Israel saw that the king had
not listened to them, the people answered him:

What portion do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. †
Israel, return to your tents;

David, now look after your own house! †

So Israel went to their tents, 17 but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah. †

18 Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, † † who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to get into the chariot and flee to Jerusalem. 19 Israel is still in rebellion against the house of David today. †

REHOBOAM IN JERUSALEM

20 When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, † they summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. † No one followed the house of David except the tribe of Judah alone. † 21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, † he mobilized one hundred eighty thousand fit young soldiers from the entire house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin † to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon. 22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah, † the man of God: 23 "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, to the whole house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, 24 'This is what the LORD says: You are not to march up and fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Each of you return home, for this situation is from me.' " †

So they listened to the word of the LORD and went back according to the word of the LORD.

JEROBOAM'S IDOLATRY

25 Jeroboam built Shechem † in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built Penuel. † 26 Jeroboam said to himself, "The kingdom might now return to the house of David. † 27 If these people regularly go to offer sacrifices in the LORD's temple in Jerusalem, † the heart of these people will return to their lord, King Rehoboam of Judah. They will kill me and go back to the king of Judah." 28 So the king sought advice.

Then he made two golden calves, and he said to the people, "Going to Jerusalem is too difficult for you. Israel, here are your gods † who brought you up from the

land of Egypt.” † 29 He set up one in Bethel, † and put the other in Dan. †
30 This led to sin; † the people walked in procession before one of the calves all
the way to Dan. † †
31 Jeroboam also made shrines † on the high places † and made priests from
the ranks of the people who were not Levites. † 32 Jeroboam made a festival in
the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival in Judah. †
He offered sacrifices on the altar; he made this offering in Bethel to sacrifice to
the calves he had made. He also stationed the priests in Bethel for the high
places he had made. † 33 He offered sacrifices on † the altar he had set up in
Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. He chose this month on his
own. † He made a festival for the Israelites, offered sacrifices on the altar, and
burned incense. †

12:2 LXX, Vg read *Jeroboam returned from Egypt* ; 2Ch 10:2 **12:11** Lit *with scorpions*, also in v. 14 **12:18** LXX reads *Adoniram* ; 1Kg 4:6; 5:14 **12:28** Or *here is your God*, or *here is your god* **12:30** Some LXX mss read *calves to Bethel and the other to Dan* **12:31** Lit *a house* **12:33** Or *He went up to*
12:1-19 2Ch 10:1-19 **12:1** Jos 12:1; 1Kg 12:25 **12:1** 2Sm 20:1-2; 1Kg 12:16-17 **12:1** Jdg 9:6 **12:2** 1Kg 11:40 **12:4** 1Sm 8:11-18 **12:4** 1Kg 4:20 **12:6** 1Kg 4:2-19 **12:7** 2Ch 10:7; Pr 15:1 **12:8** Lv 19:32 **12:10-11** Ex 1:13-14; 5:6-9; 2Ch 10:10-11 **12:15** Dt 2:30; 1Kg 12:24 **12:15** 1Kg 11:29-39 **12:16** 2Sm 5:3,5 **12:16** 2Sm 20:1 **12:17** 1Kg 11:13,36 **12:18** 2Sm 20:24; 1Kg 4:6; 5:14 **12:19** 2Kg 21:17 **12:20** 1Kg 12:3 **12:20** 1Kg 11:11 **12:20** 1Kg 11:13,36 **12:21-24** 2Ch 11:1-4 **12:21** 2Sm 19:17 **12:22** 2Ch 12:5,7 **12:24** 1Kg 12:15 **12:25** Gn 12:6; Jdg 9:6; 1Kg 12:1 **12:25** Jdg 8:8-9,17 **12:26** 1Kg 11:38 **12:27** Dt 12:5-7,14 **12:28** Ex 32:4,8 **12:29** Gn 12:8; 28:19 **12:29** Jdg 18:29 **12:30** 1Kg 13:34; 2Kg 17:21 **12:30** Ex 20:4-6; Dt 5:8-10 **12:31** 1Kg 3:3; 11:7 **12:31** 2Kg 17:32 **12:32** Lv 23:33-34; Nm 29:12 **12:32** 2Ch 11:15 **12:33** Nm 15:39 **12:33** 2Kg 23:15

12:4 Solomon’s building projects evidently had laid a heavy burden on the Israelites (see 5:13-18; 9:15-23).

12:7 The elders who had served Solomon advised Rehoboam to choose the path of humility and **servant** leadership.

12:12-17 Rehoboam’s foolish rejection of the elders’ advice and his acceptance of the young men’s was the means by which God fulfilled his word to take most of the kingdom away from Solomon and give it to Jeroboam (vv. 15-17; 11:11-13,31-39).

12:20-24 As God had said (11:13), Rehoboam retained control over one tribe, which was his own **tribe of Judah** (11:13,32,36). The mention of Benjaminite **soldiers** indicated that at least some of this tribe remained loyal to him too (vv. 21,23; see the note on 11:29-39). Another prophet named **Shemaiah** (cp. 11:29-31) instructed Rehoboam’s soldiers not to fight against the other Israelites (v. 22).

12:25-33 Though God had promised Jeroboam that obedience to his commands would ensure a “lasting dynasty” (see 11:38-39), the new king of the northern kingdom of Israel feared that he would lose power if his people went to the southern kingdom of Judah to worship at the **temple in Jerusalem.** As a result, he set up **two golden calves** within his own territory at **Dan** and **Bethel** for the Israelites to worship. These locations were at the northern and southern extremes of his kingdom, respectively. Both locations were

associated with traditions of divine encounters (e.g. Jacob's dream at Bethel), and Bethel was across the border from Jerusalem. Thus, Jeroboam could argue that they were legitimate alternatives to the temple. This sin recalls what the Israelites' ancestors had done at Mount Sinai (Ex 32:4) and would ensnare the northern kingdom of Israel throughout its existence (e.g., 13:34; 14:16; 15:34; 2Kg 17:16,21-23). Jeroboam appealed to a desire for convenience, although ironically some would make the lengthy journey to Dan at the northern border to worship the golden calf there (vv. 28-29). His false religious system was patterned after the true worship of God (vv. 28,31-33).

JUDGMENT ON JEROBOAM

13 A man of God † came, however, from Judah to Bethel by the word of
the LORD while Jeroboam was standing beside the altar to burn
incense. † 2 The man of God cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD:
"Altar, altar, this is what the LORD says, 'A son will be born to the house of
David, named Josiah, and he will sacrifice on you the priests of the high places
who are burning incense on you. Human bones will be burned on you.' " † 3 He
gave a sign † that day. He said, "This is the sign that the LORD has spoken: 'The
altar will now be ripped apart, and the ashes that are on it will be poured out.' " †
4 When the king heard the message that the man of God had cried out against
the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar and said,
"Arrest him! " But the hand he stretched out against him withered, and he could
not pull it back to himself. 5 The altar was ripped apart, and the ashes poured
from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word
of the LORD.
6 Then the king responded to the man of God, "Plead for the favor of the LORD
your God and pray for me † so that my hand may be restored to me." So the
man of God pleaded for the favor of the LORD, and the king's hand was restored
to him and became as it had been at first.
7 Then the king declared to the man of God, "Come home with me, refresh
yourself, and I'll give you a reward." †
8 But the man of God replied, "If you were to give me half your house, † I still
wouldn't go with you, and I wouldn't eat food or drink water in this place, 9 for
this is what I was commanded by the word of the LORD: † 'You must not eat
food or drink water or go back the way you came.' " 10 So he went another way;
he did not go back by the way he had come to Bethel.

THE OLD PROPHET AND THE MAN OF GOD

11 Now a certain old prophet was living in Bethel. † His son † came and told
him all the deeds that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. His sons also
told their father the words that he had spoken to the king. † 12 Then their father
asked them, “Which way did he go? ” His sons had seen † the way taken by the
man of God who had come from Judah. 13 Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the
donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him, and he got on it. 14 He
followed the man of God and found him sitting under an oak tree. He asked him,
“Are you the man of God who came from Judah? ”
“I am,” he said.
15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat some food.”
16 But he answered, “I cannot go back with you or accompany you; I will not eat
food or drink water with you in this place. 17 For a message came to me by the
word of the LORD: ‘You must not eat food or drink water there † or go back by
the way you came.’ ”
18 He said to him, “I am also a prophet † like you. An angel spoke to me by the
word of the LORD: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat
food and drink water.’ ” The old prophet deceived him, † 19 and the man of God
went back with him, ate food in his house, and drank water.
20 While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet
who had brought him back, 21 and the prophet cried out to the man of God who
had come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because you rebelled
against the LORD’s command and did not keep the command that the LORD your
God commanded you — 22 but you went back and ate food and drank water in
the place that he said to you, “Do not eat food and do not drink water” — † your
corpse will never reach the grave of your fathers.’ ” †
23 So after he had eaten food and after he had drunk, the old prophet saddled the
donkey for the prophet he had brought back. 24 When he left, † a lion
attacked † him along the way and killed him. † His corpse was thrown on the
road, and the donkey was standing beside it; the lion was standing beside the
corpse too.
25 There were men passing by who saw the corpse thrown on the road and the
lion standing beside it, and they went and spoke about it in the city where the old
prophet lived. 26 When the prophet who had brought him back from his way

heard about it, he said, “He is the man of God who disobeyed the LORD’s command. The LORD has given him to the lion, and it has mauled and killed him, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke to him.”
27 Then the old prophet instructed his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” They saddled it, † 28 and he went and found the corpse thrown on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse or mauled the donkey. 29 So the prophet lifted the corpse of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back. The old prophet came into the city to mourn and to bury him. 30 Then he laid the corpse in his own grave, † and they mourned over him: “Oh, my brother! ” †
31 After he had buried him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones, 32 for the message that he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel † and against all the shrines of the high places † in the cities of Samaria † is certain to happen.” †
33 Even after this, † Jeroboam did not repent † of his evil way but again made priests for the high places from the ranks of the people. † He ordained whoever so desired it, and they became priests of the high places. † 34 This was the sin that caused the house of Jeroboam to be cut off and obliterated from the face of the earth. †

13:11 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *sons* **13:12** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *sons showed him* **13:23-24** LXX reads *donkey, and he turned* 24*and left, and* **13:24** Lit *met*
13:1 1Kg 12:22; 2Kg 23:17 **13:1** 1Kg 12:32-33 **13:2** 2Kg 23:15-16 **13:3** Is 7:14 **13:3** Jn 2:11,18 **13:6** Jms 5:16 **13:7** 1Sm 9:7; 2Kg 5:15 **13:8** Nm 22:18; Est 5:3; Mk 6:23 **13:9** 1Kg 13:1 **13:11** 1Kg 12:32; 13:1 **13:11** 1Kg 13:2-6 **13:16-17** 1Kg 13:8-9 **13:18** 1Jn 4:1 **13:18** Dt 13:1-3 **13:21-22** 1Kg 13:8-9 **13:22** 1Kg 13:30 **13:24** 1Kg 20:36 **13:27** 1Kg 13:13 **13:30** 1Kg 13:22,24 **13:30** Jr 22:18 **13:32** 1Kg 13:1-3 **13:32** 1Kg 12:31-32; 2Kg 17:29 **13:32** 1Kg 16:28-29,32 **13:32** 2Kg 23:16 **13:33** 1Kg 13:1-6,24 **13:33** 1Kg 12:28-33; 13:1; Ac 26:20 **13:33** 1Kg 12:31 **13:33** Jdg 17:5; 2Ch 13:9 **13:34** 1Kg 12:28-33; 2Kg 17:21-23

13:4-6 The prophetic activity in recent chapters continues into this one (see 11:29-39; 12:15,22-24). This time an anonymous **man of God** declared that a descendant of David named “Josiah” would execute judgment on the “high places” that Jeroboam had set up (vv. 1-2; 12:31-32; 2Kg 23:15-20). Jeroboam’s opposition to this prophetic message resulted in instant judgment on his **hand.** Even kings were subject to prophets who were backed by the word of God.

13:20-26 The man of God had done well to decline Jeroboam’s invitation (vv. 7-9), but he was deceived by an “old prophet” in Bethel (v. 11) into disobeying God’s command not to **eat food** or **drink water** or go back the way [he] came (v. 9; vv. 16-17,21-22,26). His mistake seems to have been in believing that the

word of God had somehow changed or been nullified. God's word stands firm and will surely be fulfilled (e.g., 2:27; 12:15; 13:5; 14:18; 16:34).

13:31-34 The unusual circumstances of the man of God's death convinced the old prophet from Bethel that the prophecy against Bethel and the high places would come true (see previous note). Nevertheless, Jeroboam continued in his false worship, which would result in the utter destruction of his house (see 11:38).

DISASTER ON THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM

14 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became sick. † 2 Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go disguise yourself, † so they won't know that you're Jeroboam's wife, and go to Shiloh. † The prophet Ahijah is there; it was he who told about me becoming king over this people. † 3 Take with you ten loaves of bread, some cakes, and a jar of honey, † and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy."

4 Jeroboam's wife did that: she went to Shiloh and arrived at Ahijah's house. Ahijah could not see; he was blind † due to his age. † 5 But the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming soon to ask you about her son, for he is sick. You are to say such and such to her. When she arrives, she will be disguised." †

6 When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet entering the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you disguised? † I have bad news for you. 7 Go tell Jeroboam, 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: I raised you up from among the people, appointed you ruler over my people Israel, 8 tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you. † But you were not like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what is right in my sight. 9 You behaved more wickedly than all who were before you. † In order to anger me, you have proceeded to make for yourself other gods and cast images, † but you have flung me behind your back. † 10 Because of all this, I am about to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam:

I will wipe out all of Jeroboam's males, †
both slave and free, † in Israel; I will sweep away the house of Jeroboam
as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone! †

11 Anyone who belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, the dogs will eat,
and anyone who dies in the field,
the birds † will eat, †
for the LORD has spoken! ’

12 “As for you, get up and go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the boy will die. † 13 All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He alone out of Jeroboam’s house will be given a proper burial because out of the house of Jeroboam something favorable to the LORD God of Israel was found in him. †
14 The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel, who will wipe out the house of Jeroboam. † This is the day, yes, † even today! 15 For the LORD will strike Israel so that they will † shake as a reed shakes in water. He will uproot Israel from this good soil that he gave to their ancestors. † He will scatter them beyond the Euphrates † because they made their Asherah poles, angering the LORD. † 16 He will give up Israel because of Jeroboam’s sins that he committed and caused Israel to commit.” †
17 Then Jeroboam’s wife got up and left and went to Tirzah. † As she was crossing the threshold of the house, the boy died. 18 He was buried, and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through his servant the prophet Ahijah. †
19 As for the rest of the events of Jeroboam’s reign, how he waged war † and how he reigned, note that they are written in the Historical Record of Israel’s Kings. 20 The length of Jeroboam’s reign was twenty-two years. He rested with his fathers, and his son Nadab became king in his place. †

JUDAH’S KING REHOBOAM

21 Now Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, reigned in Judah. † Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king; he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city where the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put his name. † Rehoboam’s mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonite. †
22 Judah did what was evil in the LORD’s sight. † They provoked him to jealous anger † more than all that their ancestors had done with the sins they committed.

23 They also built for themselves high places, † sacred pillars, † and Asherah
poles on every high hill and under every green tree; 24 there were even male cult
prostitutes in the land. † They imitated all the detestable practices of the nations
the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites. †
25 In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, King Shishak of Egypt † went to war
against Jerusalem. † 26 He seized the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the
treasuries of the royal palace. He took everything. He took all the gold shields
that Solomon had made. † 27 King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace
them and committed them into the care of the captains of the guards † † who
protected the entrance to the king's palace. 28 Whenever the king entered the
LORD's temple, the guards would carry the shields, then they would take them
back to the armory. † †
29 The rest of the events of Rehoboam's reign, † along with all his
accomplishments, are written about in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
30 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout their reigns. †
31 Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city
of David. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. † His son
Abijam † † became king in his place.

14:4 Lit *see, for his eyes stood* ; 1Sm 4:15 **14:10** Lit *eliminate Jeroboam's one who urinates against the wall* **14:10** Or *males, even the weak and impaired* ; Hb obscure **14:11** Lit *birds of the sky* **14:14** Hb obscure **14:15** *so that they will* supplied for clarity **14:27** Lit *the runners* **14:28** Lit *the chamber of the runners* **14:31** = Abijah in 2Ch 13

14:1 1Kg 14:12,17-18 **14:2** 1Sm 28:8; 2Sm 14:2-3 **14:2** Jos 18:1 **14:2** 1Kg 11:29-39 **14:3** 1Sm 9:7-8 **14:4** 1Sm 3:2; 4:15 **14:5** 2Sm 14:1-2 **14:6** 1Sm 28:12 **14:7-8** 1Kg 11:28-31; 16:2 **14:9** 1Kg 16:25,30 **14:9** 1Kg 11:33; 12:28-33 **14:9** Neh 9:26; Ps 50:17 **14:10** 1Kg 15:29; 21:21-22 **14:11** 1Kg 16:4; 21:24 **14:12** 1Kg 14:17 **14:13** 2Ch 12:12; 19:3 **14:14** 1Kg 15:27-29 **14:15** Dt 29:28 **14:15** 2Kg 15:29; 17:6 **14:15** Ex 34:14-15; Dt 12:3-4 **14:16** 1Kg 12:28-33; 13:34; 15:30 **14:17** 1Kg 15:33; Sg 6:4 **14:18** 1Kg 14:12-13 **14:19** 1Kg 14:30; 2Ch 13:2-20 **14:20** 1Kg 15:25-26 **14:21** 1Kg 12:1-24 **14:21** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 9:3; 11:32,36 **14:21** 2Ch 12:13 **14:22** 2Kg 17:19; 2Ch 12:1,14 **14:22** Dt 32:21 **14:23** 1Kg 3:2; 12:31 **14:23** Ex 23:24; Dt 16:21-22 **14:24** Dt 23:17 **14:24** Ex 23:24; Dt 18:9; 2Kg 16:3; 17:15; 21:2; 3Jn 11 **14:25** 1Kg 11:40 **14:25-28** 2Ch 12:2-11 **14:26** 1Kg 10:16-17 **14:27** 1Sm 22:17; 2Sm 15:1 **14:28** 1Kg 10:17 **14:29-31** 2Ch 12:15-16 **14:30** 1Kg 12:21-24; 15:6 **14:31** 1Kg 14:21 **14:31** 1Kg 15:1-8; 2Ch 11:20; 13:1–14:1

14:6-16 Ahijah was the prophet who had initially prophesied to Jeroboam that he would become king over Israel (11:29-39). Despite his blindness, God had revealed to him that Jeroboam's wife would come seeking him (vv. 4-6). The prophet declared that Jeroboam had not followed David's example of obedience, and the men of his house consequently would be wiped out (vv. 7-11,14; see 11:38). Moreover, their sick son Abijah would die (vv. 1,12-13), and Israel would be exiled because of **Jeroboam's sins** and

the people's participation in them (vv. 15-16; 2Kg 17). The northern kingdom of Israel's fate is thus made clear here (see the note on 9:4-9).

14:21 The text reveals here that Rehoboam was the child of Solomon's intermarriage with an **Ammonite** woman (see also v. 31), who was likely related to the latter's idolatry in his old age (11:1-8).

14:22-27 Judah did **evil in the LORD's sight** and thus continued along the downward path Solomon had taken in his old age (11:4-8). They engaged in widespread idolatry (v. 23) and even had **male cult prostitutes in the land** (v. 24). The latter had been forbidden in Deuteronomy 23:17 and likely related to Canaanite worship practices. Much of Solomon's amassed wealth was seized by **Shishak** king **of Egypt** when he attacked Jerusalem (vv. 25-27; 10:14-21; see the note on 2Kg 16:8). For more on **Asherah poles**, see the note on Judges 3:7-11.

JUDAH'S KING ABIJAM

15 In the eighteenth year of Israel's King Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijam
became king over Judah, 2 and he reigned three years in Jerusalem. †
His mother's name was Maacah † daughter † of Abishalom.
3 Abijam walked in all the sins his father before him had committed, †
and he was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God as his ancestor David had been. † 4 But for the sake of David, the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up his son after him and by preserving Jerusalem. † 5 For David did what was right in the LORD's sight, and he did not turn aside from anything he had commanded him all the days of his life, † except in the matter of Uriah † the Hethite.
6 There had been war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of Rehoboam's life. † 7 The rest of the events of Abijam's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † There was also war between Abijam and Jeroboam. † 8 Abijam rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. † His son Asa became king in his place. †

JUDAH'S KING ASA

9 In the twentieth year of Israel's King Jeroboam, † Asa became king of Judah,
10 and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's † name was Maacah † daughter of Abishalom.
11 Asa did what was right in the LORD's sight, as his ancestor David had done. †
12 He banished the male cult prostitutes † from the land and removed all of the

idols that his fathers had made. † 13 He also † removed his grandmother † Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. Asa chopped down her obscene image and burned it † in the Kidron Valley. † 14 The high places were not taken away, † but Asa was wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his entire life. † 15 He brought his father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into the LORD's temple: silver, gold, and utensils. †

16 There was war between Asa and King Baasha of Israel throughout their reigns. † 17 Israel's King Baasha went to war against Judah. † He built Ramah † in order to keep anyone from leaving or coming to King Asa of Judah. 18 So Asa withdrew all the silver and gold that remained in the treasuries of the LORD's temple † and the treasuries of the royal palace and gave it to his servants. Then King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad † son of Tabrimmon son of Hezion king of Aram who lived in Damascus, † saying, 19 "There is a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. † Look, I have sent you a gift of silver and gold. Go and break your treaty with King Baasha of Israel † so that he will withdraw from me."

20 Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, † Dan, † Abel-beth-maacah, † all Chinnereth, † and the whole land of Naphtali. † 21 When Baasha heard about it, he quit building Ramah and stayed in Tirzah. † 22 Then King Asa gave a command to everyone without exception in Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had built it with. Then King Asa built Geba † of Benjamin and Mizpah † with them.

23 The rest of all the events of Asa's reign, † along with all his might, all his accomplishments, and the cities he built, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † But in his old age he developed a disease in his feet. †

24 Then Asa rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his ancestor David. † His son Jehoshaphat † became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING NADAB

25 Nadab son of Jeroboam † became king over Israel in the second year of
Judah's King Asa; he reigned over Israel two years. 26 Nadab did what was evil
in the LORD's sight and walked in the ways of his father and the sin he had
caused Israel to commit. †
27 Then Baasha † son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against
Nadab, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon † of the Philistines while
Nadab and all Israel were besieging Gibbethon. 28 In the third year of Judah's
King Asa, † Baasha killed Nadab † and reigned in his place.
29 When Baasha became king, he struck down the entire house of Jeroboam. †
He did not leave Jeroboam any survivors but † destroyed his family according
to the word of the LORD he had spoken through his servant Ahijah the
Shilonite. † 30 This was because Jeroboam had angered † the LORD God of
Israel by the sins he had committed and had caused Israel to commit. †
31 The rest of the events of Nadab's reign, along with all his accomplishments,
are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 32 There was war
between Asa and King Baasha of Israel throughout their reigns. †

ISRAEL'S KING BAASHA

33 In the third year of Judah's King Asa, Baasha son of Ahijah became king over
all Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah † twenty-four years. 34 He did what was evil
in the LORD's sight and walked in the ways of Jeroboam and the sin he had
caused Israel to commit. †

15:2 Possibly granddaughter, also in v. 10; 2Ch 13:2 **15:10** Lit *mother's* **15:13** Lit *mother* **15:29** Lit *Jeroboam anyone breathing until he* **15:30** Lit *provoked in the provocation of*
15:1-2 2Ch 13:1-2 **15:2** 1Kg 15:10,13; 2Ch 13:2 **15:3** 1Kg 14:21-22 **15:3** 1Kg 9:4; 11:4 **15:4** 2Sm 21:17; 1Kg 11:36; 2Ch 21:7 **15:5** 1Kg 9:4; 14:8 **15:5** 2Sm 11:3,15-17; 12:9-10 **15:6** 1Kg 14:30; 2Ch 12:15 **15:7** 1Kg 14:29 **15:7** 2Ch 13:4-20 **15:8** 1Kg 14:31; 2Ch 14:1 **15:8** 1Kg 14:31; 2Ch 14–16 **15:9** 1Kg 15:1 **15:10** 1Kg 15:2 **15:11** 1Kg 9:4-5; 2Ch 14:2 **15:12** Dt 23:17; 1Kg 14:24 **15:11-12** 1Kg 11:7; 14:23; 2Ch 14:3,5 **15:13-15** 2Ch 15:16-18 **15:13** Ex 32:20 **15:13** 2Kg 23:6 **15:14** 1Kg 22:43 **15:14** 1Kg 8:61; 15:3 **15:15** 1Kg 7:51 **15:16** 1Kg 15:32 **15:17-22** 2Ch 16:1-6 **15:17** Jos 18:25 **15:18** 1Kg 14:26 **15:18** 1Kg 20:1 **15:18** 1Kg 11:23-24 **15:19** 1Kg 5:12; 2Ch 16:7 **15:19** 1Kg 15:27-28 **15:20** 2Kg 15:29 **15:20** Jdg 18:29; 1Kg 12:29 **15:20** 2Sm 20:15; 2Kg 15:29 **15:20** Jos 11:2; 12:3 **15:20** Jos 19:32-39; 1Kg 20:34 **15:21** 1Kg 14:17; 15:33; 16:8,15-18 **15:22** Jos 18:24; 21:17 **15:22** Jos 11:3; 2Ch 16:6 **15:23-24** 2Ch 16:11-14 **15:23** 1Kg 14:29; 15:7 **15:23** 2Ch 16:12 **15:24** 1Kg 14:31; 15:8 **15:24** 1Kg 22:41-50 **15:25** 1Kg 14:20 **15:26** 1Kg 14:16; 15:30,34 **15:27** 1Kg 14:14; 15:16 **15:27** Jos 19:44; 1Kg 16:15 **15:28** 1Kg 15:8-24; 2Ch 14–16 **15:28** 1Kg 16:8-10 **15:29** 1Kg 13:34 **15:29** 1Kg 14:10 **15:30** 1Kg 14:7-9 **15:31** 1Kg 14:19; 16:5 **15:32** 1Kg 15:16 **15:33** 1Kg 15:21 **15:34** 1Kg 14:16

15:3-5 Rehoboam's successor in Judah was his son **Abijam**, who sinned like **his father** and did not follow David's example of obedience. The biblical author acknowledges that David was not perfect (v. 5). Despite the sins of his descendants, God continued to be faithful to the Davidic covenant (see the notes on 11:29-39 and 2Kg 8:16-19).

15:11-15 Abijam's successor **Asa** was a good king, who followed David's example of obedience. **He banished the male cult prostitutes** allowed during Rehoboam's reign and removed the idols of his predecessors (see the note on 14:22-27). Asa did not get rid of the **high places,** however (v. 14; see the note on 3:2).

15:16 The wars that had gone on between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah continued (see vv. 6-7; 14:30). The division of the nation into two kingdoms evidently did not put an end to their conflicts. Baasha's ascension to the throne is discussed in vv. 27-30.

15:18 Asa's payment **to Ben-hadad** further depleted the wealth Solomon had stockpiled (see the note on 14:22-27).

15:25-30 Jeroboam's son **Nadab** succeeded him as king of Israel. Like the other kings who would follow him, Nadab **did what was evil in the LORD's sight** and followed in the sins of Jeroboam (see v. 34; 16:19,25-26,30-31; note on 12:25-33). Baasha's killing of Nadab along with the **entire house of Jeroboam** fulfilled God's word of judgment against Jeroboam's house for his sin (vv. 27-30; see the note on 14:6-16). Whereas David's line would continue to rule Judah, the ruling family of Israel would change multiple times (see the notes on 16:1-4; 21:19-24).

15:34 Baasha was also an **evil** king who continued in the sin of the golden calves (see the note on vv. 25-30).

16 Now the word of the LORD came to Jehu † son of Hanani † against
Baasha: 2 "Because I raised you up from the dust † and made you ruler
over my people Israel, † but you have walked in the ways of Jeroboam and have
caused my people Israel to sin, † angering me with their sins, 3 take note: I will
eradicate Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of
Jeroboam son of Nebat: †

4 Anyone who belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, the dogs will eat,
and anyone who is his and dies in the field, the birds † will eat." †

5 The rest of the events of Baasha's reign, along with all his accomplishments
and might, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 6 Baasha
rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. His son Elah became king in his
place. 7 But through the prophet Jehu † son of Hanani the word of the LORD also
had come against Baasha and against his house because of all the evil he had
done in the LORD's sight. His actions angered the LORD, and Baasha's house
became like the house of Jeroboam, because he had struck it down. †

ISRAEL'S KING ELAH

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Judah's King Asa, Elah son of Baasha became king
over Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah † two years.
9 His servant Zimri, † commander of half his chariots, conspired against him
while Elah was in Tirzah getting drunk † in the house of Arza, who was in
charge of the household † at Tirzah. 10 In the twenty-seventh year of Judah's
King Asa, Zimri went in, struck Elah down, killing him. Then Zimri became
king in his place. †
11 When he became king, as soon as he was seated on his throne, Zimri struck
down the entire house of Baasha. He did not leave a single male, † † including
his kinsmen and his friends. 12 So Zimri destroyed the entire house of Baasha,
according to the word of the LORD he had spoken against Baasha through the
prophet Jehu. † 13 This happened because of all the sins of Baasha and those of
his son Elah, which they committed and caused Israel to commit, angering the
LORD God of Israel † with their worthless idols. †
14 The rest of the events of Elah's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are
written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. †

ISRAEL'S KING ZIMRI

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Judah's King Asa, Zimri became king for seven
days in Tirzah. † Now the troops were encamped against Gibbethon of the
Philistines. † 16 When these troops heard that Zimri had not only conspired but
had also struck down the king, then all Israel made Omri, the army commander,
king over Israel that very day in the camp. 17 Omri along with all Israel marched
up from Gibbethon and besieged Tirzah. † 18 When Zimri saw that the city was
captured, he entered the citadel of the royal palace and burned it down over
himself. He died 19 because of the sin he committed by doing what was evil in
the LORD's sight and by walking in the ways of Jeroboam and the sin he caused
Israel to commit. †
20 The rest of the events of Zimri's reign, along with the conspiracy that he
instigated, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. 21 At that time
the people of Israel were divided: half the people followed Tibni son of Ginath,

to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22 However, the people who followed Omri proved stronger than those who followed Tibni son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri became king.

ISRAEL'S KING OMRI

23 In the thirty-first year of Judah's King Asa, Omri became king over Israel, and he reigned twelve years. He reigned six years in Tirzah, † 24 then he bought the hill of Samaria † from Shemer for 150 pounds † of silver, and he built up the hill. He named the city he built Samaria † based on the name Shemer, the owner of the hill.

25 Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight; he did more evil than all who were before him. † 26 He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat in every respect and continued in his sins that he caused Israel to commit, angering the LORD God of Israel with their worthless idols. † 27 The rest of the events of Omri's reign, along with his accomplishments and the might he exercised, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. 28 Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. His son Ahab became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING AHAB

29 Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Judah's King Asa; Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 But Ahab son of Omri did what was evil in the LORD's sight more than all who were before him. † 31 Then, as if following the sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat were not enough, he married Jezebel, † the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, † and then proceeded to serve Baal and bow in worship to him. †

32 He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal † that he had built in Samaria. 33 Ahab also made an Asherah pole. † Ahab did more to anger the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him. †

34 During his reign, Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho. At the cost of Abiram his firstborn, he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his youngest, he finished its gates, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through Joshua son of Nun. †

16:4 Lit *birds of the sky* **16:11** Lit *leave him one who urinates against the wall* **16:24** Lit *for two talents*
16:24 = Belonging to Shemer's Clan

16:1 1Kg 16:7; 2Ch 19:2 **16:1** 2Ch 16:7-10 **16:2** 1Sm 2:8 **16:2** 1Kg 14:7 **16:2** 1Kg 15:26,34 **16:3** 1Kg 14:10; 15:29 **16:4** 1Kg 14:11; 21:24 **16:5** 1Kg 14:19; 15:31 **16:7** 1Kg 16:1; 2Ch 19:2 **16:7** 1Kg 15:27,29 **16:8** 1Kg 15:21 **16:9** 2Kg 9:30-33 **16:9** 1Sm 25:36; 1Kg 20:12,16; Pr 31:4-5; Eph 5:18 **16:9** 1Kg 18:3 **16:10** 1Kg 15:28 **16:11** 1Sm 25:22; 1Kg 15:29 **16:12** 1Kg 16:1-4 **16:13** 1Kg 15:26,30 **16:13** Dt 32:21; 1Kg 12:28-33 **16:14** 1Kg 15:31 **16:15** 1Kg 15:21 **16:15** 1Kg 15:27 **16:17** 1Kg 14:17 **16:19** 1Kg 12:28-33 **16:23** 1Kg 15:21 **16:24** 1Kg 13:32 **16:25** 1Kg 14:9; 16:30 **16:25-26** 1Kg 16:13,19 **16:30** 1Kg 14:9; 16:25 **16:31** Dt 7:3-4; 1Kg 18:4,13; Rv 2:20 **16:31** 1Kg 11:5 **16:31** Jdg 2:11 **16:32** 2Kg 10:21,26-27 **16:33** 2Kg 13:6 **16:33** 1Kg 16:30 **16:34** Jos 6:26

16:1-4 Yet another prophet, **Jehu son of Hanani**, comes on the scene to declare God's judgment on Baasha and his **house** for his disobedience (see the note on 13:4-6). The longevity of a ruling family depended not on political skill or military might but on obedience to God (see 6:12-13; 9:4-9; 11:38). Like Jeroboam's, Baasha's house would also be wiped out entirely (see the note on 15:25-30).

16:8-12 Baasha's son **Elah** succeeded him as king, and he was killed by **Zimri**, one of his military leaders. After taking the throne, he **struck down the entire house of Baasha** (v. 11), thus fulfilling the word of God spoken through Jehu (v. 12; see previous note).

16:16-18 Zimri's reign in Tirzah lasted a mere seven days (v. 15). News of Elah's death reached the Israelite troops, who instead made **Omri**, **the army commander**, **king.** He besieged Tirzah and Zimri, knowing that he was doomed, burned down the citadel of the royal palace on himself.

16:23-26 Omri shifted the capital of the northern kingdom from Tirzah to **Samaria** (see vv. 8,15,29; 14:17; 15:33). He was like the kings of Israel who preceded him but worse, doing **more evil than all who were before him** (see the note on 15:25-30).

16:29-33 Omri's son was the infamous **Ahab**, who was Israel's worst king yet (v. 30; 21:25). He not only continued in the sins of Jeroboam but married **Jezebel**, a wicked Sidonian princess, and worshiped **Baal** and **Asherah.** Regarding these two gods, see the note on Judges 3:7-11.

16:34 This incident serves as another reminder of God's faithfulness to his word, even during dark times (see the note on 13:20-26).

ELIJAH ANNOUNCES FAMINE

17 Now Elijah † the Tishbite, from the Gilead settlers, † † said to Ahab,
"As the LORD God of Israel lives, † in whose presence I stand, there
will be no dew or rain during these years except by my command! " †
2 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 3 "Leave here, turn eastward, and
hide † at the Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. 4 You are to drink from
the wadi. I have commanded the ravens † to provide for you there."
5 So he proceeded to do what the LORD commanded. Elijah left and lived at the
Wadi Cherith where it enters the Jordan. 6 The ravens kept bringing him bread
and meat in the morning and in the evening, † and he would drink from the
wadi. 7 After a while, the wadi dried up because there had been no rain in the
land.

ELIJAH AND THE WIDOW

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him: 9 “Get up, go to Zarephath † that
belongs to Sidon and stay there. Look, I have commanded a woman who is a
widow to provide for you there.” 10 So Elijah got up and went to Zarephath.
When he arrived at the city gate, there was a widow gathering wood. Elijah
called to her and said, “Please bring me a little water in a cup and let me
drink.” † 11 As she went to get it, he called to her and said, “Please bring me a
piece of bread in your hand.”

12 But she said, “As the LORD your God lives, † I don’t have anything baked —
only a handful of flour in the jar and a bit of oil † in the jug. Just now, I am
gathering a couple of sticks in order to go prepare it for myself and my son so
we can eat it and die.” †

13 Then Elijah said to her, “Don’t be afraid; go and do as you have said. But first
make me a small loaf from it and bring it out to me. Afterward, you may make
some for yourself and your son, 14 for this is what the LORD God of Israel says,
‘The flour jar will not become empty and the oil jug will not run dry until the
day the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.’ ” †

15 So she proceeded to do according to the word of Elijah. Then the woman,
Elijah, and her household ate for many days. † 16 The flour jar did not become
empty, and the oil jug did not run dry, according to the word of the LORD he had
spoken through † Elijah.

THE WIDOW’S SON RAISED

17 After this, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. His illness
got worse until he stopped breathing. † 18 She said to Elijah, “Man of God, †
why are you here? † Have you come to call attention to my iniquity † so that
my son is put to death? ”

19 But Elijah said to her, “Give me your son.” So he took him from her arms,
brought him up to the upstairs room † where he was staying, and laid him on his
own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the LORD † and said, “LORD my God, have you
also brought tragedy on the widow I am staying with by killing her son? ”
21 Then he stretched himself out over the boy three times. † He cried out to the
LORD and said, “LORD my God, please let this boy’s life come into him again! ”

22 So the LORD listened to Elijah, and the boy's life came into him again, and he lived. † 23 Then Elijah took the boy, brought him down from the upstairs room into the house, and gave him to his mother. † Elijah said, "Look, your son is alive."

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know you are a man of God † and the LORD's word from your mouth is true." †

17:1 LXX reads *from Tishbe of Gilead* **17:16** Lit *by the hand of*
17:1 1Kg 17–19; 2Kg 1–2; Mal 4:5; Mt 11:14 **17:1** Jdg 12:4 **17:1** 1Kg 18:10; 22:14 **17:1** Dt 11:16-17; Jms 5:17; Rv 11:6 **17:3** 1Kg 18:4 **17:4** 1Kg 17:9; Jb 38:41; Lk 12:24 **17:6** Ex 16:8 **17:9** Ob 20; Lk 4:26 **17:10** Gn 24:17; Jn 4:7 **17:12** 1Kg 17:1 **17:12** 2Kg 4:2-7 **17:12** Gn 21:14,16 **17:14** 1Kg 17:1; Php 4:19 **17:15** Mt 6:11 **17:17** Ac 9:37 **17:18** 1Kg 12:22 **17:18** 2Sm 16:10; 2Kg 3:13 **17:18** Lk 5:8 **17:19** Ac 9:37,39 **17:20** 2Kg 4:33 **17:21** 2Kg 4:34; Ac 20:10 **17:22** Lk 7:14 **17:23** Lk 7:15; Heb 11:35 **17:24** Jn 3:2 **17:24** 1Kg 22:16; Jn 17:17

17:1 This section, running through 2Kg 9:3, focuses on the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, differing from the back and forth accounts of respective kings of Israel and Judah that precede and follow it. The preceding chapters had already seen prophets frequently bringing messages to kings (see the notes on 13:4-6 and 16:1-4). As was the case for the prophets mentioned previously, little background is given about **Elijah.** His pronouncement of drought is in keeping with punishments for disobedience listed by Moses (8:35; Dt 28:22-24).

17:2-16 Despite the drought on the land of Israel, God provided for the prophet Elijah through miraculous means, first through **ravens** and then through a reluctant **widow** whose supplies were multiplied. **Zarephath** in **Sidon** was located in modern-day Lebanon and was thus a territory outside the land of Israel. In this passage the biblical author continues to emphasize the trustworthiness of **the word of the LORD** and even does so through the lips of the widow (v. 24; see the note on 13:20-26).

ELIJAH'S MESSAGE TO AHAB

18 After a long time, the word of the LORD † came to Elijah in the third year: † "Go and present yourself to Ahab. † I will send rain on the surface of the land." 2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

The famine was severe in Samaria. † 3 Ahab called for Obadiah, who was in charge of the palace. † Obadiah was a man who greatly feared the LORD † 4 and took a hundred prophets and hid them, fifty men to a cave, and provided them with food and water when Jezebel † slaughtered the LORD's prophets. † 5 Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go throughout the land to every spring and to every wadi. Perhaps we'll find grass so we can keep the horses and mules alive and not have to destroy any cattle." † 6 They divided the land between them in order to cover it. Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went the other way by himself.

7 While Obadiah was walking along the road, Elijah suddenly met him. † When
Obadiah recognized him, he fell facedown and said, “Is it you, my lord Elijah? ”
8 “It is I,” he replied. “Go tell your lord, ‘Elijah is here! ’ ” †
9 But Obadiah said, “What sin have I committed, † that you are handing your
servant over to Ahab to put me to death? 10 As the LORD your God lives, there is
no nation or kingdom where my lord has not sent someone to search for you.
When they said, ‘He is not here,’ he made that kingdom or nation swear they had
not found you.
11 “Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, “Elijah is here! ” ’ 12 But when I leave you,
the Spirit of the LORD may carry you off † to some place I don’t know. Then
when I go report to Ahab and he doesn’t find you, he will kill me. But I, your
servant, have feared the LORD from my youth. 13 Wasn’t it reported to my lord
what I did when Jezebel slaughtered the LORD’s prophets? I hid a hundred of the
prophets of the LORD, fifty men to a cave, and I provided them with food and
water. 14 Now you say, ‘Go tell your lord, “Elijah is here! ” ’ He will kill me! ”
15 Then Elijah said, “As the LORD of Armies lives, † in whose presence I stand,
today I will present myself to Ahab.”
16 Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told him. Then Ahab went to meet Elijah.
17 When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is that you, the one ruining
Israel? ” †
18 He replied, “I have not ruined Israel, but you and your father’s family have,
because you have abandoned the LORD’s commands † and followed the Baals. †
19 Now summon all Israel to meet me at Mount Carmel, † along with the 450
prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah † who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL

20 So Ahab summoned all the Israelites and gathered the prophets at Mount
Carmel. 21 Then Elijah approached all the people and said, “How long will you
waver between two opinions? † † If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal,
follow him.” † But the people didn’t answer him a word.
22 Then Elijah said to the people, “I am the only remaining prophet of the
LORD, † but Baal’s prophets are 450 men. 23 Let two bulls be given to us. They
are to choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and place it on the wood

but not light the fire. I will prepare the other bull and place it on the wood but not light the fire. 24 Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. † The God who answers with fire, he is God."
All the people answered, "That's fine."
25 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Since you are so numerous, choose for yourselves one bull and prepare it first. Then call on the name of your god but don't light the fire."
26 So they took the bull that he gave them, prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no sound; † no one answered. Then they danced † around the altar they had made.
27 At noon Elijah mocked them. He said, "Shout loudly, for he's a god! Maybe he's thinking it over; maybe he has wandered away; † or maybe he's on the road. Perhaps he's sleeping and will wake up!" † 28 They shouted loudly, and cut themselves † with knives and spears, according to their custom, until blood gushed over them. 29 All afternoon they kept on raving until the offering of the evening sacrifice, † but there was no sound; no one answered, no one paid attention. †
30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near me." So all the people approached him. Then he repaired the LORD's altar that had been torn down: †
31 Elijah took twelve stones — according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, "Israel will be your name" † — 32 and he built an altar † with the stones in the name of the LORD. Then he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold about four gallons. † † 33 Next, he arranged the wood, cut up the bull, and placed it on the wood. He said, "Fill four water pots with water and pour it on the offering to be burned and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "A second time!" and they did it a second time. And then he said, "A third time!" and they did it a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; he even filled the trench with water.
36 At the time for offering the evening sacrifice, † the prophet Elijah approached the altar and said, "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, † today let it be known † that you are God in Israel and I am your servant, and that at your word I have done all these things. 37 Answer me, LORD! Answer me

so that this people will know that you, the LORD, are God † and that you have turned their hearts back."
38 Then the LORD's fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 When all the people saw it, they fell facedown † and said, "The LORD, he is God! The LORD, he is God! " †
40 Then Elijah ordered them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! † Do not let even one of them escape." So they seized them, and Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon † and slaughtered them there. † 41 Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a rainstorm." †
42 So Ahab went to eat and drink, but Elijah went up to the summit of Carmel. † He bent down on the ground and put his face between his knees. † 43 Then he said to his servant, "Go up and look toward the sea."
So he went up, looked, and said, "There's nothing."
Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."
44 On the seventh † time, he reported, "There's a cloud as small as a man's hand coming up from the sea."
Then Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Get your chariot ready and go down so the rain doesn't stop you.' "
45 In a little while, the sky grew dark with clouds and wind, and there was a downpour. So Ahab got in his chariot and went to Jezreel. † 46 The power of the LORD † was on Elijah, and he tucked his mantle under his belt † and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

18:8 The Hb words translated *'Elijah is here'* also mean *'Look, my God is the Lord'* **18:21** Lit *you hobble on two crutches?* **18:26** Or *hobbled* **18:27** Or *has turned aside* ; possibly to relieve himself **18:32** LXX reads *trench containing two measures of seed* **18:32** Lit *altar corresponding to a house of two seahs of seed* **18:1** 1Kg 17:8 **18:1** 1Kg 17:1; Jms 5:17 **18:1** 1Kg 16:29-33 **18:2** 1Kg 16:24,29 **18:3** 1Kg 16:9 **18:3** Neh 7:2; Pr 3:5-6 **18:4** 1Kg 16:31; Rv 2:20 **18:4** 1Kg 18:13 **18:5** Gn 47:4 **18:7** 2Kg 1:6-8 **18:9** 1Kg 17:18 **18:12** 2Kg 2:16; Ac 8:39 **18:15** 1Kg 17:1 **18:17** Jos 7:25; 1Kg 21:20 **18:18** 1Kg 9:9; 16:25-26 **18:18** 1Kg 16:31-32 **18:19** Jos 19:26; 2Kg 2:25 **18:19** 1Kg 16:33; 22:6 **18:21** 2Kg 17:41 **18:21** Jos 24:15; Mt 6:24 **18:22** 1Kg 19:10,14 **18:24** Gn 4:26; Rm 10:13 **18:26** Jr 10:5; 1Co 8:4 **18:27** Hab 2:19 **18:28** Lv 19:28; Dt 14:1 **18:29** Ex 29:39,41 **18:29** 1Sm 4:20; 2Kg 19:16; Ps 115:4-8; Is 16:12 **18:30** 1Kg 19:10 **18:31** Gn 32:28; 35:10; 2Kg 17:34 **18:32** Gn 12:7,8; 22:9 **18:36** 1Kg 18:29 **18:36** Ex 3:6; 4:5 **18:36** Nm 16:28 **18:37** Jos 4:24; Jn 11:42 **18:39** Lv 9:24; Mt 17:6 **18:39** 1Kg 18:21,24 **18:40** 1Kg 18:19,22 **18:40** Jdg 4:7; 5:21 **18:40** Dt 13:5; 2Kg 10:24-25 **18:41** 1Kg 17:1; 18:1 **18:42** 1Kg 18:19 **18:42** 1Sm 12:17; Jms 5:18 **18:44** Jos 6:15; Lk 12:54 **18:45** Jos 17:16; Jdg 6:33 **18:46** 2Kg 3:15 **18:46** Ex 12:11; 2Kg 4:29; 9:1; Jr 1:17; 1Pt 1:13

18:12 Ahab had looked far and wide in vain for Elijah (v. 10), and Obadiah believed that Elijah could be carried off to some other location by the Spirit when he went to tell Ahab of his coming (see also 2Kg 2:16).

18:17-18 Ahab accused Elijah of being **the one ruining Israel** because he had declared that there would be a drought that would only end at his command (17:1). The truth was that it was Ahab's idolatry that had brought God's just judgment upon Israel (v. 18; see the note on 17:1). Moreover, it was God who had said that there would soon be rain (v. 1).

18:27-29 Elijah's taunts further highlighted the futility of praying to Baal. Despite 450 of Baal's prophets shouting, dancing, and slashing themselves, there was no response.

18:30-32 Not only was **the LORD**'s **altar** broken down, but Elijah's use of **twelve stones** was a symbol of the ultimate unity of the nation of Israel and a reminder that it had been divided.

18:35-39 In contrast with what the prophets of Baal did (vv. 26-29), Elijah's drenching of his offering and his simple prayer made it all the more clear that the Lord alone is God (see vv. 21). Despite Israel's worship of the golden calves and of Baal, God mercifully still sought to turn them back to him (v. 37).

18:40 The killing of **the prophets of Baal** was in keeping with Moses's instructions about false prophets in Deuteronomy 13:5-10 and 18:20.

18:41-45 As God had said it would (v. 1), rain finally fell. Elijah's posture and sending his servant to **look toward the sea . . . seven times** suggest humble waiting for God to act according to his word (see also 2Kg 5:10).

ELIJAH'S JOURNEY TO HOREB

19 Ahab told Jezebel † everything that Elijah had done † and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. † 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "May the gods punish me and do so severely † if I don't make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow! "

3 Then Elijah became afraid † † and immediately ran for his life. † When he came to Beer-sheba † that belonged to Judah, he left his servant there, † 4 but he went on a day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a broom tree † and prayed that he might die. He said, "I have had enough! LORD, take my life, † for I'm no better than my fathers." 5 Then he lay down and slept under the broom tree.

Suddenly, an angel touched him. † The angel told him, "Get up and eat." 6 Then he looked, and there at his head was a loaf of bread baked over hot stones, and a jug of water. † So he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 Then the angel of the LORD † returned for a second time and touched him. He said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." 8 So he got up, ate, and drank. Then on

the strength from that food, he walked forty days and forty nights † to Horeb, the mountain of God. † 9 He entered a cave † there and spent the night.

ELIJAH'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE LORD

Suddenly, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" †

10 He replied, "I have been very zealous † for the LORD God of Armies, but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, † torn down your altars, † and killed your prophets † with the sword. I alone am left, † and they are looking for me to take my life." †

11 Then he said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the LORD's presence." †

At that moment, the LORD passed by. † A great and mighty wind † was tearing at the mountains and was shattering cliffs before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, † but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake there was a fire, † but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. † 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle † and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Suddenly, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of Armies," he replied, "but the Israelites have abandoned your covenant, torn down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they're looking for me to take my life." †

15 Then the LORD said to him, "Go and return by the way you came to the Wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you are to anoint Hazael † as king over Aram. 16 You are to anoint Jehu † son of Nimshi as king over Israel and Elisha † son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. 17 Then Jehu will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, † and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of Jehu. † 18 But I will leave seven thousand in Israel † — every knee that has not bowed to Baal † and every mouth that has not kissed him." †

ELISHA'S APPOINTMENT AS ELIJAH'S SUCCESSOR

19 Elijah left there and found Elisha † son of Shaphat as he was plowing. Twelve teams of oxen were in front of him, and he was with the twelfth team. Elijah walked by him and threw his mantle over him. † 20 Elisha left the oxen, ran to follow Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you." †

"Go on back," he replied, "for what have I done to you? "

21 So he turned back from following him, took the team of oxen, and slaughtered † them. With the oxen's wooden yoke and plow, † he cooked the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him. †

19:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *He saw* **19:21** Or *sacrificed*
19:1 1Kg 16:31; 18:4,14 **19:1** 1Kg 18:30-38 **19:1** 1Kg 18:40 **19:2** 1Sm 3:17; 1Kg 20:10; 2Kg 6:31 **19:3** Pr 29:25 **19:3** Gn 31:21 **19:3** Gn 21:31; Jdg 20:1 **19:3** Gn 22:5; Mt 14:23; 26:36 **19:4** Jb 30:4 **19:4** Nm 11:15; Jnh 4:3,8 **19:5** Gn 28:11-16 **19:6** 1Kg 17:10-11 **19:7** Gn 16:7,9,11 **19:8** Ex 24:18; Mt 4:2 **19:8** Ex 3:1; 4:27 **19:9** Ex 33:22 **19:9** Gn 3:9 **19:10** Nm 25:13; Ac 22:3 **19:10** Dt 31:16 **19:10** 1Kg 18:30 **19:10** 1Kg 18:4,13; Ac 7:52 **19:10** 1Kg 18:22 **19:10** 1Kg 19:2,14; Rm 11:3 **19:11** Ex 19:20 **19:11** Ex 33:21-22 **19:11** Ezk 1:4; Ac 2:2 **19:11** Am 1:1; Rv 6:12; 16:18 **19:12** Ex 3:2 **19:12** Zch 4:6,10 **19:13** Ex 3:6 **19:14** 1Kg 19:10; Rm 11:3 **19:15** 2Kg 8:8-15 **19:16** 2Kg 19:1-10 **19:16** 1Kg 19:19 **19:17** 2Kg 9:14–10:25 **19:17** 2Kg 2:24; 8:1 **19:18** Rm 11:4 **19:18** 1Kg 16:31 **19:18** Hs 13:2 **19:19** 1Kg 19:16-17 **19:19** 2Kg 2:8,13-14 **19:20** Mt 8:21-22 **19:21** 1Sm 6:14; 2Sm 24:22 **19:21** Lk 14:26,33

19:1-5 Jezebel had killed God's prophets before (18:5,13), and she had all the more reason to kill Elijah after the scene on Mount Carmel. Elijah's fear and despair here show that he was "a human being as we are" (Jms 5:17).

19:11-13 Just as Moses had a special encounter with God at Horeb centuries before (Ex 33:18–34:8), so did Elijah (see v. 8). The significance of Elijah's encounter seems to be that God often works through subtle means. He does reveal himself through unusual displays of power (see 18:38), but he manifests himself more regularly through his word (vv. 12-13; Ex 34:6-7).

19:14 The depth of Elijah's discouragement is suggested by his repetition of his previous response to God's question (see v. 10), despite the dramatic encounter he just had (vv. 11-13). Elijah's claim to be the only one left (see also v. 10; 18:22) was not only false (v. 18) but also unjustified given his conversation with Obadiah (18:13).

19:15-18 The Lord dealt with Elijah's discouragement and loneliness by sending him back to anoint three leaders who would execute judgment on Israel and by informing him that there was a remnant of **seven thousand in Israel** who had not turned to Baal. **Jehu** in particular would be the instrument of God's vengeance against the house of Ahab for their crimes (see the note on 2Kg 9:1-10).

19:19 Elijah's **mantle** was associated with his ministry and power (see 2Kg 2:8,13-14).

VICTORY OVER BEN-HADAD

20 Now King Ben-hadad † of Aram assembled his entire army. Thirty-
two kings, † along with horses and chariots, were with him. He
marched up, besieged Samaria, † and fought against it. 2 He sent messengers
into the city to King Ahab of Israel and said to him, “This is what Ben-hadad
says: 3 ‘Your silver and your gold are mine! And your best wives and children
are mine as well! ’ ” †
4 Then the king of Israel answered, “Just as you say, my lord the king: I am
yours, along with all that I have.”
5 The messengers then returned and said, “This is what Ben-hadad says: ‘I have
sent messengers to you, saying: You are to give me your silver, your gold, your
wives, and your children. 6 But at this time tomorrow I will send my servants to
you, † † and they will search your palace and your servants’ houses. They will
lay their hands on and take away whatever is precious to you.’ ”
7 Then the king of Israel called for all the elders of the land and said,
“Recognize † that this one is only looking for trouble, † for he demanded my
wives, my children, my silver, and my gold, and I didn’t turn him down.”
8 All the elders and all the people said to him, “Don’t listen or agree.”
9 So he said to Ben-hadad’s messengers, “Say to my lord the king, ‘Everything
you demanded of your servant the first time, I will do, but this thing I cannot
do.’ ” So the messengers left and took word back to him.
10 Then Ben-hadad sent messengers to him and said, “May the gods punish me
and do so severely † if Samaria’s dust † amounts to a handful for each of the
people who follow me.”
11 The king of Israel answered, “Say this: ‘Don’t let the one who puts on his
armor boast † like the one who takes it off.’ ”
12 When Ben-hadad heard this response, while he and the kings were drinking †
in their quarters, † he said to his servants, “Take your positions.” So they took
their positions against the city.
13 A prophet approached King Ahab of Israel and said, “This is what the LORD
says: ‘Do you see this whole huge army? Watch, I am handing it over to you
today so that you may know that I am the LORD.’ ” †
14 Ahab asked, “By whom? ”

And the prophet said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘By the young men of the provincial leaders.’ ”

Then he asked, “Who is to start the battle? ” †
He said, “You.”

15 So Ahab mobilized the young men of the provincial leaders, and there were 232. After them he mobilized all the Israelite troops: 7,000. † 16 They marched out at noon while Ben-hadad and the thirty-two kings † who were helping him were getting drunk in their quarters. 17 The young men of the provincial leaders marched out first. Then Ben-hadad sent out scouts, and they reported to him, saying, “Men are marching out of Samaria.” †

18 So he said, “If they have marched out in peace, † take them alive, and if they have marched out for battle, take them alive.”

19 The young men of the provincial leaders and the army behind them marched out from the city, 20 and each one struck down his opponent. † So the Arameans fled and Israel pursued them, † but King Ben-hadad of Aram escaped on a horse with the cavalry. 21 Then the king of Israel marched out and attacked the cavalry and the chariots. He inflicted a severe slaughter on Aram.

22 The prophet approached the king of Israel and said to him, “Go and strengthen yourself, then consider carefully † what you should do, for in the spring † the king of Aram will attack you.”

23 Now the king of Aram’s servants said to him, “Their gods are gods of the hill country. † That’s why they were stronger than we were. Instead, we should fight with them on the plain; then we will certainly be stronger than they are. 24 Also do this: remove each king from his position and appoint captains in their place. 25 Raise another army for yourself like the army you lost — horse for horse, chariot for chariot — and let’s fight with them on the plain; and we will certainly be stronger than they are.” The king listened to them and did it.

26 In the spring, Ben-hadad mobilized the Arameans and went up to Aphek † to battle Israel. 27 The Israelites mobilized, gathered supplies, and went to fight them. The Israelites camped in front of them like two little flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the landscape. †

28 Then the man of God † approached and said to the king of Israel, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because the Arameans have said: The LORD is a god of the mountains and not a god of the valleys, † I will hand over all this whole huge army to you. Then you will know that I am the LORD.’ ” †

29 They camped opposite each other for seven days. On the seventh day, † the battle took place, and the Israelites struck down the Arameans — one hundred thousand foot soldiers in one day. 30 The ones who remained fled into the city of Aphek, and the wall fell on those twenty-seven thousand remaining men.

Ben-hadad also fled and went into an inner room † in the city. 31 His servants said to him, “Consider this: we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. So let’s put sackcloth around our waists † and ropes around our heads, and let’s go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will spare your life.”

32 So they dressed with sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, went to the king of Israel, and said, “Your servant Ben-hadad says, ‘Please spare my life.’ ”

So he said, “Is he still alive? He is my brother.”

33 Now the men were looking for a sign of hope, so they quickly picked up on this † and responded, “Yes, it is your brother Ben-hadad.”

Then he said, “Go and bring him.”

So Ben-hadad came out to him, and Ahab had him come up into the chariot.

34 Then Ben-hadad said to him, “I restore to you the cities that my father took from your father, † and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, like my father set up in Samaria.” †

Ahab responded, “On the basis of this treaty, I release you.” So he made a treaty with him and released him.

AHAB REBUKED BY THE LORD

35 One of the sons of the prophets † said to his fellow prophet by the word of the LORD, “Strike me! ” But the man refused to strike him.

36 He told him, “Because you did not listen to the LORD, mark my words: When you leave me, a lion will kill you.” † When he left him, a lion attacked and killed him.

37 The prophet found another man and said to him, “Strike me!” So the man
struck him, inflicting a wound. 38 Then the prophet went and waited for the king
on the road. He disguised † himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 As the
king was passing by, he cried out to the king and said, “Your servant marched
out into the middle of the battle. Suddenly, a man turned aside and brought
someone to me and said, ‘Guard this man! If he is ever missing, it will be your
life in place of his life, † or you will weigh out seventy-five pounds † of silver.’
40 But while your servant was busy here and there, he disappeared.”
The king of Israel said to him, “That will be your sentence; you yourself have
decided it.” †
41 He quickly removed the bandage from his eyes. The king of Israel recognized
that he was one of the prophets. 42 The prophet said to him, “This is what the
LORD says: ‘Because you released from your hand the man I had set apart for
destruction, † it will be your life in place of his life and your people in place of
his people.’ ” 43 The king of Israel left for home resentful and angry, † and he
entered Samaria.

20:6 Lit *take all the delight of your eyes* **20:7** Lit *“Know and see* **20:12** Lit *booths*, also in v. 16 **20:22** Lit *then know and see* **20:33** Some Hb mss, alt Hb tradition, LXX; other Hb mss read *they hastened and caught hold; “Is this it?”* **20:39** Lit *a talent*

20:1 1Kg 15:18,20 **20:1** 1Kg 22:31 **20:1** 1Kg 16:24,29 **20:3** 2Kg 24:14-16; Dn 1:3-4 **20:6** Lm 2:4; Ezk 24:16,21,25 **20:7** 2Kg 5:7 **20:10** 1Kg 19:2; 2Kg 6:31 **20:10** 2Sm 22:43 **20:11** Pr 27:1 **20:12** 1Kg 16:9 **20:13** 1Kg 20:28 **20:14** Jdg 1:1; 20:18 **20:15** Jdg 7:2 **20:16** 1Kg 20:1 **20:17** 1Kg 16:24 **20:18** 2Kg 14:8 **20:20** 2Sm 2:15-16 **20:20** 1Sm 14:13-14,22 **20:22** 2Sm 11:1 **20:23** 1Kg 14:23; Ps 139:7-12 **20:26** 2Kg 13:17 **20:27** Jdg 6:5; 1Sm 13:5 **20:28** 1Kg 17:18 **20:28** 1Kg 20:23 **20:28** 1Kg 20:13 **20:29** Jos 6:15 **20:30** 1Kg 22:25 **20:31** Gn 37:34 **20:34** 1Kg 15:20 **20:34** 2Sm 8:6 **20:35** 2Kg 2:3,5,7 **20:36** 1Kg 13:24 **20:38** 1Kg 14:2 **20:39** Jos 2:14; 2Kg 10:24 **20:40** 2Sm 12:5 **20:42** 1Kg 19:16 **20:43** 1Kg 21:4

20:22-28 Ahab was counseled in his battles against Ben-hadad not by Elijah but by an unnamed prophet (vv. 13-14,22,28), which incidentally supported God’s statement that there remained seven thousand who were loyal to him (19:18). The Lord was also demonstrating to Ahab that he is **the LORD** (vv. 13,28). Contrary to the beliefs of the Arameans, he is not merely a god **of the hill country**; he is God over all creation (v. 23).

20:35-36 The fellow prophet’s refusal to **strike** the prophet was indeed an act of disobedience to **the word of the LORD** (see the note on 13:20-26). The prophet needed to be wounded in order to appropriately confront Ahab (vv. 37-43).

20:41-43 Contrary to God’s will, Ahab spared Ben-hadad and made a treaty with him (vv. 32-34). The Aramean king had been **set apart for destruction**, and Ahab and his people would pay the price (v. 42), just as the prophet had illustrated (vv. 39-40).

AHAB AND NABOTH’S VINEYARD

21 Some time passed after these events. Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard; it was in Jezreel † next to the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. † 2 So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, “Give me your vineyard † so I can have it for a vegetable garden, since it is right next to my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in its place, or if you prefer, I will give you its value in silver.”

3 But Naboth said to Ahab, “I will never give my fathers’ inheritance † to you.”

4 So Ahab went to his palace resentful and angry † because of what Naboth the Jezreelite had told him. He had said, “I will not give you my fathers’ inheritance.” He lay down on his bed, turned his face away, † and didn’t eat any food. †

5 Then his wife Jezebel came to him and said to him, “Why are you so upset that you refuse to eat? ”

6 “Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite,” he replied. “I told him: Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you wish, I will give you a vineyard in its place. But he said, ‘I won’t give you my vineyard! ’ ”

7 Then his wife Jezebel said to him, “Now, exercise your royal power over Israel. Get up, eat some food, and be happy. For I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.” † 8 So she wrote letters † in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal. † She sent the letters to the elders † and nobles who lived with Naboth in his city. 9 In the letters, she wrote:

Proclaim a fast † and seat Naboth at the head of the people. 10 Then seat two wicked men † opposite him and have them testify against him, saying, “You have cursed God and the king! ” † Then take him out and stone him to death. †

11 The men of his city, the elders and nobles who lived in his city, did as Jezebel had sent word to them, just as it was written in the letters she had sent them. 12 They proclaimed a fast and seated Naboth at the head of the people. 13 The two wicked men came in and sat opposite him. Then the wicked men testified against Naboth in the presence of the people, saying, “Naboth has cursed God and the king! ” So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death with stones. 14 Then they sent word to Jezebel: “Naboth has been stoned to death.” †

15 When Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, “Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite who

refused to give it to you for silver,† since Naboth isn't alive, but dead."
16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take possession of it.

THE LORD'S JUDGMENT ON AHAB

17 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite:† 18 "Get up and go to meet King Ahab of Israel,† who is in Samaria.† He's in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. 19 Tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you murdered† and also taken possession?'† Then tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where the dogs licked up Naboth's blood, the dogs will also lick up your blood!'"†
20 Ahab said to Elijah, "So, my enemy, you've found me, have you?"†
He replied, "I have found you because you devoted† yourself to do what is evil in the LORD's sight. 21 This is what the LORD says:† 'I am about to bring disaster on you and will eradicate your descendants:

I will wipe out all of Ahab's males,†
both slave and free,† in Israel;†

22 I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam† son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha† son of Ahijah, because you have angered me and caused Israel to sin.'† 23 The LORD also speaks of Jezebel: 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the plot of land† at Jezreel:†

24 Anyone who belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and anyone who dies in the field, the birds† will eat.'"†

25 Still, there was no one like Ahab, who devoted himself to do what was evil in the LORD's sight, because his wife Jezebel incited him.† 26 He committed the most detestable acts by following idols† as the Amorites† had, whom the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.
27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put sackcloth over his body, and fasted. He lay down in sackcloth† and walked around subdued.

28 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 29 “Have you seen
how Ahab has humbled himself before me? I will not bring the disaster during
his lifetime, † because he has humbled himself before me. I will bring the
disaster on his house during his son’s lifetime.” †

21:21 LXX; MT omits *This is what the Lord says* **21:21** Lit *eliminate Ahab’s one who urinates against the wall* **21:21** Or *males, even the weak and impaired* ; Hb obscure **21:23** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg, 2Kg 9:36; other Hb mss, LXX read *the rampart* **21:24** Lit *birds of the sky*

21:1 Jdg 6:33; 1Kg 18:45 **21:1** 1Kg 20:1 **21:2** 1Sm 8:14 **21:3** Lv 25:23; Nm 36:7 **21:4** 1Kg 20:43 **21:4** 2Kg 20:2 **21:4** 1Sm 28:23 **21:7** 1Sm 8:14 **21:8** 2Sm 11:14 **21:8** Est 3:12; 8:8,10 **21:8** 1Kg 20:7 **21:9** 1Sm 7:5-6; 2Ch 20:2-4 **21:10** Dt 13:13 **21:10** Ex 20:16; 23:1; Dt 5:20; Ac 6:11 **21:10** Lv 24:15-16 **21:14** Lv 24:16 **21:15** 1Kg 21:2-3 **21:17** 1Kg 17:2,8 **21:18** 1Kg 18:1 **21:18** 1Kg 16:29; 2Ch 22:9 **21:19** Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17 **21:19** Lv 25:23 **21:19** 1Kg 22:38 **21:20** 1Kg 18:17 **21:20** 2Kg 17:17; Rm 7:14 **21:21** 2Kg 9:8 **21:22** 1Kg 14:10-11 **21:22** 1Kg 16:3-4 **21:22** 1Kg 12:30 **21:23** 2Kg 9:10,30-37 **21:24** 1Kg 14:11; 16:4 **21:25** 1Kg 16:30-33 **21:26** 2Kg 17:12 **21:26** Gn 15:16; 2Kg 21:11 **21:27** Gn 37:34; 2Sm 3:31; 2Kg 6:30 **21:29** 2Kg 20:19; 2Ch 32:26 **21:29** 2Kg 9:25-37; 10:6-11

21:2-3 Naboth’s **vineyard** was important for his livelihood and probably was the place where his ancestors were buried. Thus, it was personally important to him, and he had no desire to part with it in a business transaction.

21:7-14 Jezebel’s evil scheme involved accusations from false witnesses against Naboth. They said that he had **cursed God and the king,** and so he was consequently stoned (vv. 10,13). With Naboth out of the picture, Ahab could **take possession** of his vineyard (vv. 15-16).

21:17 Elijah, last seen calling Elisha to be his successor (19:19-21), reenters the narrative here to confront Ahab at Naboth’s vineyard.

21:19-24 As punishment against Ahab, God decreed that dogs would lick his blood where they had licked Naboth’s (cp. 22:38). **Ahab’s males** would be wiped out (v. 21), and his **house** would become like Jeroboam’s and Baasha’s (v. 22; see the note on 15:25-30). Furthermore, the evil **Jezebel** would be eaten by dogs (v. 23; 9:30-37).

21:27-29 Because Ahab humbled himself (v. 27), God mercifully delayed the punishment on his family.

JEHOSHAPHAT’S ALLIANCE WITH AHAB

22 There was † a lull of three years † without war between Aram and
Israel. 2 However, in the third year, King Jehoshaphat † of Judah went
to visit the king of Israel. † 3 The king of Israel had said to his servants, “Don’t
you know that Ramoth-gilead † is ours, but we’re doing nothing to take it from
the king of Aram? ” 4 So † he asked Jehoshaphat, “Will you go with me to fight
Ramoth-gilead? ” †
Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, “I am as you are, my people as your
people, my horses as your horses.” † 5 But Jehoshaphat said to the king of

Israel, “First, please ask what the LORD’s will is.” †

6 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, about four hundred men, † and asked them, “Should I go against Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain? ”

They replied, “March up, and the Lord will hand it over to the king.” †

7 But Jehoshaphat asked, “Isn’t there a prophet of the LORD here anymore? † Let’s ask him.”

8 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man who can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him † because he never prophesies good about me, † but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.”

“The king shouldn’t say that! ” Jehoshaphat replied.

9 So the king of Israel called an officer and said, “Hurry and get Micaiah son of Imlah! ”

10 Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, † clothed in royal attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were on the threshing floor † at the entrance to the gate of Samaria, and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them. 11 Then Zedekiah † son of Chenaanah made iron horns † and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You will gore the Arameans with these until they are finished off.’ ” 12 And all the prophets were prophesying the same: “March up to Ramoth-gilead † and succeed, for the LORD will hand it over to the king.”

MICAIAH’S MESSAGE OF DEFEAT

13 The messenger † who went to call Micaiah instructed him, “Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably.”

14 But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, † I will say whatever the LORD says to me.” †

15 So he went to the king, and the king asked him, “Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war, or should we refrain? ”

Micaiah told him, “March up and succeed. The LORD will hand it over to the king.”

16 But the king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD? ”

17 So Micaiah said:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
like sheep without a shepherd. †
And the LORD said, “They have no master;
let everyone return home in peace.” †

18 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster? ”
19 Then Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, † and the whole heavenly army † was standing by him at his right hand and at his left hand. 20 And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? ’ † So one was saying this and another was saying that.
21 “Then a spirit came forward, stood in the LORD’s presence, and said, ‘I will entice him.’
22 “The LORD asked him, ‘How? ’
“He said, ‘I will go and become a lying spirit † in the mouth of all his prophets.’
“Then he said, ‘You will certainly entice him and prevail. † Go and do that.’
23 “You see, the LORD has put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you.”
24 Then Zedekiah † son of Chenaanah came up, hit Micaiah on the cheek, and demanded, “Did † the Spirit of the LORD leave me to speak to you? ” †
25 Micaiah replied, “You will soon see when you go to hide in an inner chamber on that day.” †
26 Then the king of Israel ordered, “Take Micaiah and return him to Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash, the king’s son, † 27 and say, ‘This is what the king says: Put this guy in prison † and feed him only a little bread and water † until I come back safely.’ ”
28 But Micaiah said, “If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me.” † Then he said, “Listen, all you people! ” † †

AHAB’S DEATH

29 Then † the king of Israel and Judah's King Jehoshaphat went up to Ramoth-
gilead. † 30 But the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise † myself
and go into battle, but you wear your royal attire." So the king of Israel disguised
himself and went into battle. †
31 Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, † "Do
not fight with anyone at all † except the king of Israel." †
32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they shouted, "He must be
the king of Israel! " So they turned to fight against him, but Jehoshaphat cried
out. 33 When the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel,
they turned back from pursuing him.
34 But a man drew his bow † without taking special aim and struck the king of
Israel through the joints of his armor. So he said to his charioteer, "Turn around
and take me out of the battle, † for I am badly wounded! " † 35 The battle raged
throughout that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the
Arameans. He died that evening, † and blood from his wound flowed into the
bottom of the chariot. 36 Then the cry rang out in the army as the sun set,
declaring:

Each man to his own city,
and each man to his own land! †

37 So the king died and was brought to Samaria. They buried the king in
Samaria. † 38 Then someone washed the chariot at the pool of Samaria. The
dogs licked up his blood, and the prostitutes bathed in it, according to the word
of the LORD that he had spoken. †
39 The rest of the events of Ahab's reign, along with all his accomplishments,
including the ivory palace † he built, and all the cities he built, are written in the
Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 40 Ahab rested with his fathers, † and his
son Ahaziah † became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOSHAPHAT

41 Jehoshaphat † son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of
Israel's King Ahab. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became

king; he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. 43 He walked in all the ways of his father Asa; † he did not turn away from them but did what was right in the LORD's sight. However, the high places were not taken away; † the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. † 44 Jehoshaphat also made peace with the king of Israel. †

45 The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign, along with the might he exercised and how he waged war, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 46 He eradicated from the land the rest of the male cult prostitutes who were left from the days of his father Asa. † 47 There was no king in Edom; † a deputy served as king. 48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish † to go to Ophir † for gold, but they did not go because the ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. † 49 At that time, Ahaziah † son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships," but Jehoshaphat was not willing. 50 Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the city of his ancestor David. † His son Jehoram † became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING AHAZIAH

51 Ahaziah † son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria † in the seventeenth year of Judah's King Jehoshaphat, † and he reigned over Israel two years. 52 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. † He walked in the ways of his father, † in the ways of his mother, † and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin. † 53 He served Baal and bowed in worship to him. † He angered the LORD God of Israel just as his father had done. †

22:24 Lit *"Which way did* **22:27** Lit *him on bread of oppression and water of oppression* **22:28** LXX omits *Then he said, "Listen, all you people! "* **22:31** Lit *with small or with great* **22:34** LXX; MT reads *camp* **22:43** LXX, Syr, Vg read *he did not remove the high places*

22:1-9 2Ch 18:1-8 **22:1** 1Kg 20:1,26 **22:2** 1Kg 15:24 **22:2** 2Ch 18:2 **22:3** Dt 4:43; Jos 20:8; 1Kg 4:13 **22:4-6** 2Kg 3:7-8 **22:4** 2Kg 8:18,27 **22:4** 2Kg 3:7 **22:5** 1Sm 23:1-5; Jms 4:15 **22:6** 1Kg 18:19 **22:6** 1Kg 13:18 **22:7** 2Kg 1:3; 3:11; 5:8 **22:8** 1Kg 18:17; 21:20 **22:8** Am 5:10 **22:10-12** 2Ch 18:9-11 **22:10** Jdg 6:37 **22:11** 1Kg 22:24 **22:11** Dt 33:17; Zch 1:18-21 **22:12** 1Kg 4:13 **22:13-28** 2Ch 18:12-27 **22:14** 1Kg 18:10,15 **22:14** Nm 22:28; 24:13 **22:17** Nm 27:16-17; Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34 **22:17** 1Kg 22:35-36 **22:19** Is 6:1; Dn 7:9 **22:19** Jb 1:6; Dn 7:10; Heb 1:7 **22:20** 1Kg 22:4 **22:22** Jdg 9:23; 1Sm 16:14; Jr 20:7; Ezk 14:9 **22:22** 2Th 2:11 **22:24** 1Kg 22:11 **22:24** 2Ch 18:23 **22:25** 1Kg 20:30 **22:26** 1Kg 22:40 **22:27** 2Ch 16:10; Heb 11:36 **22:28** Dt 18:22 **22:28** Mc 1:2 **22:29-33** 2Ch 18:28-32 **22:29** 1Kg 22:4 **22:30** 1Sm 28:8 **22:30** 2Ch 35:22 **22:31** 1Kg

20:1,16 **22:31** 2Ch 18:30 **22:34** 2Kg 9:24 **22:34** 2Ch 35:23 **22:34-35** 1Kg 22:17,28; 2Ch 18:33-34 **22:36** 2Sm 20:1; 1Kg 12:16; 22:17; 2Kg 14:12 **22:37** 1Kg 16:28 **22:38** 1Kg 21:19 **22:39** Am 3:15 **22:39** 1Kg 16:27 **22:40** 1Kg 16:28 **22:40** 2Kg 1:2 **22:41** 2Ch 20:31 **22:43** 1Kg 15:11 **22:43** 1Kg 15:14 **22:44** 1Kg 22:2,4 **22:45** 1Kg 15:23; 2Ch 20:34 **22:46** 1Kg 15:12 **22:47** 2Sm 8:14; 2Kg 3:9 **22:48** 1Kg 10:22 **22:48** 1Kg 9:28 **22:48** 1Kg 9:26 **22:49** 1Kg 22:40,51 **22:50** 1Kg 15:24; 2Ch 21:1 **22:50** 2Kg 1:17 **22:51** 1Kg 22:40 **22:51** 1Kg 16:24 **22:51** 1Kg 22:41-50 **22:52** 1Kg 15:26 **22:52** 1Kg 21:25-26 **22:52** 1Kg 16:31; 18:4; 21:25 **22:52** 1Kg 12:28-33 **22:53** Jdg 2:11; 1Kg 16:32 **22:53** 1Kg 16:33; 21:25

22:2-4 According to v. 44, Jehoshaphat king of Judah "made peace with the king of Israel." This is not the only time he would agree to fight alongside one of them (2Kg 3:7).

22:8 Though they mentioned **the LORD** (vv. 6,12), the four hundred prophets that Ahab had summoned were false prophets. His response to Jehoshaphat's question reveals that he only liked prophets who told him what he wanted to hear (see 2Tm 4:3). Ahab hated **Micaiah** because **he never prophesies good . . . only disaster** (see also v. 18; note on vv. 17-23). Micaiah is thus an example of a true prophet who re-speaks God's word regardless of its reception (see Dt 18:18-22). By contrast, false prophets supported the king and gave a so-called word from the deity that was politically or personally expedient.

22:15-16 In this humorous interaction, the prophet Micaiah first told Ahab what he wanted to hear, but Ahab knew he wasn't telling the truth (see vv. 8,18).

22:17-23 Having been charged to tell the truth, Micaiah declared that the Israelites were **like sheep without a shepherd** and should go home instead of into battle (v. 17). This confirmed Ahab's beliefs that Micaiah typically had a negative message from God. What the king failed to consider was that the prophet had been telling him the truth all along, and his prophecies always concerned **disaster** because of Ahab's constant rebellion against the Lord. Previously he had likewise considered Elijah to be a troublemaker and his personal enemy (see 18:17-18; 21:20). Micaiah's response to Ahab was to inform him that a **lying spirit** had gone out among his prophets to entice him to go to Ramoth Gilead and die in battle (vv. 19-23). This was the means by which God had **pronounced disaster** on Ahab.

22:26-29 Ahab did not listen to Micaiah's warning, as God had predicted (vv. 20-22).

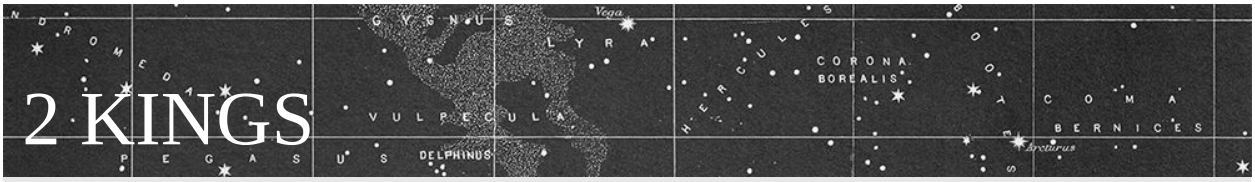
22:34-38 Despite his precautions, Ahab died in battle. His death by an arrow shot **without taking special aim** suggests God's providence and faithfulness to what he had said in vv. 20-22. The **dogs** licking up Ahab's blood also fulfilled what God had spoken through Elijah earlier (21:19).

22:43 Like his father Asa, Jehoshaphat was a good king but was not able to remove **the high places** (see the note on 15:11-15).

22:44 Jehoshaphat's **peace with the king of Israel** was reflected in his going to war with Ahab (see the note on vv. 2-4).

22:46 For more on **male cult prostitutes**, see the notes on 14:22-27 and 15:11-15.

22:51-53 Ahab's son **Ahaziah** succeeded him, and he followed in the evil pattern of his father.



2 KINGS

INTRODUCTION

See the Introduction to 1 Kings for the introductory material.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Like Judges and 2 Chronicles, 2 Kings shows the severity of God in judging those who rebel against him. Deuteronomy had promised divine condemnation on those who were unfaithful to the Lord. The story of 2 Kings is largely one of disloyalty, and God's "educational program" meant teaching his people that he values faithfulness to him above all else, even if that means exiling them. The book ends with a ray of hope: God's promises about an everlasting Davidic dynasty are intact, for the king, Jehoiachin, is still alive.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Like 1 Kings, this book evaluates people by just one criterion: did they do "right in the LORD's sight" (2Kg 12.2) or not? Tragically, for the most part both kings and people did not (see 17:22-23). The author reached the following verdict about the last king of Judah: "Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as Jehoiakim had done. Because of the LORD's anger, it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he finally banished them from his presence" (24:19-20).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

God's prophets in 2 Kings (Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Huldah, and Isaiah are named) called people to repent for their religious apostasy and to worship the Lord alone. Hezekiah is the model of trust in the Lord for salvation (18:5-6). Turning from the sin of idolatry, when accompanied by a desire for God's glory to be displayed, may even bring salvation from military threats. (See Hezekiah's prayer and God's response in 19:15-37.)

AHAZIAH'S SICKNESS AND DEATH

1 After Ahab's death, Moab † rebelled against Israel. † 2 Ahaziah † had
fallen through the latticed window of his upstairs room in Samaria † and
was injured. So he sent messengers, instructing them, "Go inquire of
Baal-zebub, † † the god of Ekron, † whether I will recover from this injury." †
3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, † "Go and meet the
messengers of the king of Samaria † and say to them, 'Is it because there is no
God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?
4 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You will not get up from your sickbed;
you will certainly die.' " Then Elijah left.
5 The messengers returned to the king, who asked them, "Why have you come
back? "
6 They replied, "A man came to meet us and said, 'Go back to the king who sent
you and declare to him: This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God
in Israel that you're sending these men to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of
Ekron? Therefore, you will not get up from your sickbed; you will certainly
die.' "
7 The king asked them, "What sort of man came up to meet you and spoke those
words to you? "
8 They replied, "A hairy man with a leather belt around his waist." †
He said, "It's Elijah the Tishbite." †
9 So King Ahaziah sent a captain with his fifty men † to Elijah. When the
captain went up to him, he was sitting on top of the hill. He announced, "Man of
God, † the king declares, 'Come down! ' "
10 Elijah responded to the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down
from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." Then fire came down from
heaven and consumed him and his fifty men. †
11 So the king sent another captain with his fifty men to Elijah. He took in the
situation † and announced, "Man of God, this is what the king says: 'Come
down immediately! ' "
12 Elijah responded, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven
and consume you and your fifty men." So a divine fire † came down from
heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.
13 Then the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. The third captain went

up and fell on his knees in front of Elijah and begged him, “Man of God, † please let my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours be precious to you. † 14 Already fire has come down from heaven and consumed the first two captains with their companies, but this time let my life be precious to you.”

15 The angel of the LORD † said to Elijah, “Go down with him. Don’t be afraid of him.” † So he got up and went down with him to the king.

16 Then Elijah said to King Ahaziah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron — is it because there is no God in Israel for you to inquire of his will? — you will not get up from your sickbed; you will certainly die.’ ”

17 Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Since he had no son, Joram † † became king in his place. This happened in the second year of Judah’s King Jehoram † son of Jehoshaphat. † 18 The rest of the events of Ahaziah’s reign, along with his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel’s Kings. † †

1:2 = Lord of the Flies **1:11** Lit *He answered* **1:12** Lit *a fire of God* **1:17** Lit *Jehoram* ; 2Kg 8:16 **1:17** LXX omits *in the second year . . . Jehoshaphat* **1:18** LXX adds 4 more vv. here similar to 2Kg 3:1-3.
1:1 Gn 19:37; 2Sm 8:2 **1:1** 2Kg 3:5 **1:2** 1Kg 22:40,51-53 **1:2** 1Kg 16:24; 22:51 **1:2** Jdg 10:6 **1:2** Jos 13:3; 2Kg 1:16 **1:2** 2Kg 8:8-9 **1:3** 1Kg 19:7 **1:3** 1Sm 28:7-8 **1:8** Zch 13:4; Mt 3:4 **1:8** 1Kg 17:1 **1:9** 2Kg 6:13-14 **1:9** 1Kg 13:1 **1:10** 1Kg 18:36-38 **1:13** 1Kg 13:1 **1:13** 1Sm 26:21; Ps 72:14 **1:15** 1Kg 19:7; 2Kg 1:3 **1:15** Jr 1:17; Ezk 2:6 **1:17** 2Kg 3:1-3 **1:17** 1Kg 22:50 **1:18** 1Kg 22:39

1:2-4 Following the example of his father Ahab, Ahaziah also worshiped Baal (see 1Kg 16:31-32; 22:53). **Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron** seems to have been a local variation of Baal (see the note on Jdg 3:7-11). Elijah intercepted Ahaziah’s messengers, confronted the king for inquiring of an idol rather than God, and declared that the king consequently would die (see v. 17).

1:9-12 Ahaziah’s initial two attempts to seize Elijah failed and resulted in the deaths of both groups of soldiers. As at Mount Carmel (1Kg 18:38), **fire came down from heaven.** Even a king did not have sufficient power to command the **man of God** to come down from the mountain (see the notes on 2:23-24; 1Kg 13:4-6).

1:13-15 The proper approach to Elijah was one of humility (see also 1Kg 21:27-29).

ELIJAH IN THE WHIRLWIND

2 The time had come for the LORD to take Elijah up to heaven † in a whirlwind. † Elijah and Elisha † were traveling from Gilgal, † 2 and Elijah said to Elisha, † “Stay here; † the LORD is sending me on to Bethel.” †

But Elisha replied, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” † So they went down to Bethel.

3 Then the sons of the prophets † who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? ” †

He said, “Yes, I know. Be quiet.”

4 Elijah said to him, “Elisha, stay here; the LORD is sending me to Jericho.” †

But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho.

5 Then the sons of the prophets who were in Jericho came up to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today? ”

He said, “Yes, I know. Be quiet.”

6 Elijah said to him, “Stay here; the LORD is sending me to the Jordan.” †

But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on.

7 Fifty men from the sons of the prophets came and stood observing them at a distance while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 8 Elijah took his mantle, † rolled it up, and struck the water, which parted to the right and left. Then the two of them crossed over on dry ground. † 9 When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I can do for you before I am taken from you.”

So Elisha answered, “Please, let me inherit two shares of your spirit.” †

10 Elijah replied, “You have asked for something difficult. If you see me being taken from you, † you will have it. If not, you won’t.”

11 As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire with horses of fire † suddenly appeared and separated the two of them. Then Elijah went up into heaven in the whirlwind. † 12 As Elisha watched, he kept crying out, “My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel! ” †

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH

When he could see him no longer, he took hold of his own clothes, tore them in two, † 13 picked up the mantle † that had fallen off Elijah, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He took the mantle Elijah had dropped, and

he struck the water. “Where is the LORD God of Elijah? ” he asked. He struck the water himself, and it parted to the right and the left, and Elisha crossed over.
15 When the sons of the prophets from Jericho who were observing saw him, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” They came to meet him and bowed down to the ground in front of him.
16 Then the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, “Since there are fifty strong men here with your servants, please let them go and search for your master. Maybe the Spirit of the LORD has carried him away and put him on one of the mountains or into one of the valleys.” †
He answered, “Don’t send them.”
17 However, they urged him to the point of embarrassment, † so he said, “Send them.” They sent fifty men, who looked for three days but did not find him.
18 When they returned to him in Jericho † where he was staying, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go? ”
19 The men of the city said to Elisha, “My lord can see that even though the city’s location is good, the water is bad and the land unfruitful.” †
20 He replied, “Bring me a new bowl and put salt in it.” †
After they had brought him one, 21 Elisha went out to the spring, threw salt in it, † and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I have healed this water. No longer will death or unfruitfulness result from it.’ ” 22 Therefore, the water still remains healthy today according to the word that Elisha spoke.
23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. † As he was walking up the path, some small boys came out of the city and jeered at him, † chanting, “Go up, baldy! Go up, baldy! ” 24 He turned around, looked at them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. † Then two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the children. 25 From there Elisha went to Mount Carmel, † and then he returned to Samaria. †
2:1 Gn 5:24; Heb 11:5 **2:1** 2Kg 2:11 **2:1** 1Kg 19:16-21 **2:1** Jos 4:19; 2Kg 4:38 **2:2** 1Kg 19:16,19-21 **2:2** Ru 1:15 **2:2** 1Kg 12:28-29 **2:2** 1Sm 1:26; 2Kg 4:30 **2:3** 1Sm 10:5; 1Kg 20:35; 2Kg 4:1,38 **2:3** Gn 5:24 **2:4** Jos 6:16; 1Kg 16:34 **2:6** Jos 3:8; Mt 3:5-6,13 **2:8** 1Kg 19:13,19 **2:8** Ex 14:21-22; Jos 3:14-17 **2:9** Nm 11:16-25; Dt 21:15-17 **2:10** Ac 1:9-11 **2:11** 2Kg 6:17 **2:11** 2Kg 2:1 **2:12** 2Kg 13:14 **2:12** Gn 37:29,34 **2:13** 1Kg 19:19 **2:16** 1Kg 18:12; Ac 8:39 **2:17** Jdg 3:25; 2Kg 8:11 **2:18** 2Kg 2:4 **2:19** Dt 28:15-18; Jos 6:26; 1Kg 16:34 **2:20** Lv 2:13; Nm 18:19 **2:21-22** Ex 15:25-26; 2Kg 4:41; 6:6 **2:23** 2Kg 2:2-3 **2:23** 2Ch 36:16; Ps 31:17-18 **2:24** Lv 26:21-22; Neh 13:25 **2:25** 1Kg 18:19-20 **2:25** 1Kg 16:24; 2Kg 1:2

2:1 Like Enoch (Gn 5:24), Elijah did not die. Other passages link God's work with the Hebrew word translated here as **whirlwind** (e.g., Job 38:1; 40:6; Jr 23:19; 30:23; Ezk 1:4; 13:11,13). This connection communicates God's power and sometimes also his judgment.

2:9-10 Elisha was called to follow Elijah and serve him (1Kg 19:19-21), and he was faithful to the end. His insistence on staying with his master (vv. 2-6) was rewarded when Elijah offered him one last favor of his choice (see also 1Kg 3:5). Elisha's request for **two shares of your spirit** was analogous to the double portion inherited by a firstborn son (Dt 21:17). He wanted to continue what Elijah had been doing.

2:11-12 A **chariot of fire** and **horses of fire** appear in even greater numbers in 6:17 and suggest spiritual power superior to that of earthly chariots and horses (see Ex 15:1,4; Pss 20:7; 68:17; Is 31:1-3). In addition, the Lord's chief rival Baal was known as the storm-god whose weapons were thunder and lightning and who rode on the clouds. Here it is Yahweh, the one true God, who comes this way to take his servant. Elisha's cry of **"My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!"** was also spoken over him at the end of his life (13:14).

2:13-15 Elisha's taking up of Elijah's **mantle** and parting the waters with it showed that the **spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha** and that he indeed was Elijah's successor (see also the notes on vv. 23-24; 3:12-14,20; 4:3-6).

2:16 Ahab's servant Obadiah had also believed that Elijah could be suddenly transported from one place to another by the Spirit of God (see 1Kg 18:12).

2:23-24 The boys' taunting of Elisha was disrespectful of the prophet and the God he served, and some of them were **mauled** by **two female bears.**

ISRAEL'S KING JORAM

3 Joram son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria during the eighteenth year of Judah's King Jehoshaphat, and he reigned twelve years. † 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not like his father and mother, † for he removed the sacred pillar of Baal his father had made. 3 Nevertheless, Joram clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. † He did not turn away from them.

MOAB'S REBELLION AGAINST ISRAEL

4 King Mesha of Moab † was a sheep breeder. He used to pay † the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams, † 5 but when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. † 6 So King Joram marched out from Samaria at that time and mobilized all Israel. 7 Then he sent a message to King Jehoshaphat † of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. † Will you go with me to fight against Moab? "

Jehoshaphat said, “I will go. I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.” †
8 He asked, “Which route should we take? ”
He replied, “The route of the Wilderness of Edom.”
9 So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom † set out. After they had traveled their indirect route for seven days, they had no water for the army or the animals with them.
10 Then the king of Israel said, “Oh no, the LORD has summoned these three kings, only to hand them over to Moab.”
11 But Jehoshaphat said, “Isn’t there a prophet of the LORD here? Let’s inquire of the LORD through him.” †
One of the servants of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat, † who used to pour water on Elijah’s hands, is here.”
12 Jehoshaphat affirmed, “The word of the LORD is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went to him. †
13 However, Elisha said to King Joram of Israel, “What do we have in common? Go to the prophets of your father and your mother! ” †
But the king of Israel replied, “No, because it is the LORD who has summoned these three kings to hand them over to Moab.”
14 Elisha responded, “By the life of the LORD of Armies, † before whom I stand: If I did not have respect for King Jehoshaphat of Judah, † I wouldn’t look at you; I would not take notice of you. 15 Now, bring me a musician.” †
While the musician played, † the LORD’s hand † came on Elisha. 16 Then he said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig ditch after ditch in this wadi.’ 17 For the LORD says, ‘You will not see wind or rain, but the wadi will be filled with water, † and you will drink — you and your cattle and your animals.’ 18 This is easy in the LORD’s sight. † He will also hand Moab over to you. † 19 Then you will attack every fortified city and every choice city. You will cut down every good tree and stop up every spring. You will ruin every good piece of land with stones.”
20 About the time for the grain offering † the next morning, water suddenly came from the direction of Edom and filled the land.

21 All Moab had heard that the kings † had come up to fight against them. So
all who could bear arms, from the youngest to the oldest, were summoned and
took their stand at the border. 22 When they got up early in the morning, the sun
was shining on the water, and the Moabites saw that the water across from them
was red like blood. † 23 "This is blood! " they exclaimed. "The kings † have
crossed swords † and their men have killed one another. So, to the spoil,
Moab! "
24 However, when the Moabites came to Israel's camp, the Israelites attacked
them, and they fled from them. So Israel went into the land attacking the
Moabites. 25 They would destroy the cities, and each of them would throw a
stone to cover every good piece of land. They would stop up every spring and
cut down every good tree. This went on until only the buildings of Kir-
hareseth † were left. Then men with slings surrounded the city and attacked it.
26 When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took
seven hundred swordsmen with him to try to break through to the king of
Edom, † but they could not do it. 27 So he took his firstborn son, † who was to
become king in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering on the city wall.
Great wrath was on the Israelites, and they withdrew from him and returned to
their land.

3:23 Or *have been laid waste*

3:1 2Kg 1:17 **3:2** 1Kg 21:25-26 **3:3** 1Kg 16:31-32 **3:4** Gn 19:37; 2Kg 1:1 **3:4** 2Sm 8:2 **3:4** Is 16:1-2 **3:5** 2Kg 1:1 **3:7** 1Kg 22:41-50 **3:7** 2Kg 1:1 **3:7** 1Kg 22:4 **3:9** 1Kg 22:47; 2Kg 8:20 **3:11** 1Kg 22:7 **3:11** 1Kg 19:16,19-21; 2Kg 2:9 **3:12** 2Kg 2:25 **3:13** 1Kg 18:19,22; 22:6 **3:14** 1Kg 17:1; 2Kg 5:16 **3:14** 1Kg 22:41-50 **3:15** 1Sm 10:5 **3:15** 1Sm 16:23 **3:15** Ezk 3:14 **3:17** Ps 107:35; Is 32:2 **3:18** Gn 18:14 **3:18** 2Kg 3:7 **3:20** Ex 29:39-40 **3:21** 2Kg 3:9 **3:22** Ex 7:17,20 **3:23** 2Kg 3:9 **3:25** Jr 48:31,36 **3:26** 2Kg 3:9 **3:27** Dt 12:31; 2Kg 16:3

3:1-3 Ahaziah, who had no son, was succeeded by his brother **Joram** (1:17). Joram also did **evil in the LORD's sight** but was not as bad as his parents, Ahab and Jezebel. He removed his father's **sacred pillar of Baal** but continued in the worship of the golden calves Jeroboam instituted years prior.

3:7 For a second time, Jehoshaphat king of Judah went to war with a king of Israel (see the note on 1Kg 22:2-4).

3:11 As before, Jehoshaphat called for a **prophet of the LORD** (see 1Kg 22:7).

3:12-14 In the spirit of his master Elijah, Elisha took up a confrontational stance toward Joram and the house of Ahab (see the note on 2:13-15).

3:15 The use of music to facilitate the work of God is also found in 1 Samuel 16:16-23.

3:20 Just as fire fell from heaven at **the time for the grain offering** at the evening sacrifice (1Kg 18:36), so water came in the morning "according to the time of the offering of the sacrifice" (lit v. 20). The Hebrew phrases underlying these two passages are almost identical. Thus, they serve as both another link

between the ministries of Elijah and Elisha and as a subtle reminder of the legitimate worship that took place in Judah at the temple in Jerusalem (see Ex 29:38-39; Nm 28:3-4).

3:27 The king of Moab's horrific act of child sacrifice accords with the worship of Molech described elsewhere (see notes on Lv 18:6-26 and 20:1-8).

THE WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED

4 One of the wives of the sons of the prophets † cried out to Elisha, "Your servant, my husband, has died. You know that your servant feared the LORD. † Now the creditor is coming to take my two children as his slaves." †

2 Elisha asked her, "What can I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house? "

She said, "Your servant has nothing in the house except a jar of oil." †

3 Then he said, "Go out and borrow empty containers from all your neighbors. Do not get just a few. † 4 Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour oil into all these containers. Set the full ones to one side." 5 So she left.

After she had shut the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing her containers, and she kept pouring. † 6 When they were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another container."

But he replied, "There aren't any more." Then the oil stopped.

7 She went and told the man of God, † and he said, "Go sell the oil and pay your debt; you and your sons can live on the rest." †

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN'S HOSPITALITY

8 One day Elisha went to Shunem. † A prominent woman who lived there persuaded him to eat some food. So whenever he passed by, he stopped there to eat. † 9 Then she said to her husband, "I know that the one who often passes by here is a holy man of God, 10 so let's make a small, walled-in upper room and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp there for him. Whenever he comes, he can stay there." †

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN'S SON

11 One day he came there and stopped at the upstairs room to lie down. 12 He ordered his attendant Gehazi, † "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her and she stood before him.
13 Then he said to Gehazi, "Say to her, 'Look, you've gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? † Can we speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army? ' "
She answered, "I am living among my own people."
14 So he asked, "Then what should be done for her? "
Gehazi answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is old."
15 "Call her," Elisha said. So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the doorway.
16 Elisha said, "At this time next year you will have a son in your arms." †
Then she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, do not lie to your servant." †
17 The woman conceived and gave birth to a son at the same time the following year, as Elisha had promised her.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON RAISED

18 The child grew and one day went out to his father and the harvesters. †
19 Suddenly he complained to his father, "My head! My head! "
His father told his servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 So he picked him up and took him to his mother. The child sat on her lap until noon and then died.
21 She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut him in, and left.
22 She summoned her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so I can hurry to the man of God and come back again."
23 But he said, "Why go to him today? It's not a New Moon or a Sabbath." †
She replied, "Everything is all right." †
24 Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Go fast; don't slow the pace for me unless I tell you." 25 So she came to the man of God at Mount Carmel. †
When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his attendant Gehazi, †
"Look, there's the Shunammite woman. † 26 Run out to meet her and ask, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your son all right? ' "
And she answered, "Everything's all right."

27 When she came up to the man of God at the mountain, she clung to his feet. † Gehazi came to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone — she is in severe anguish, † and the LORD has hidden it from me. He hasn’t told me.”
28 Then she said, “Did I ask my lord for a son? Didn’t I say, ‘Do not lie to me? ’ ” †
29 So Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tuck your mantle † under your belt, take my staff with you, and go. If you meet anyone, don’t stop to greet him, and if a man greets you, don’t answer him. † Then place my staff on the boy’s face.”
30 The boy’s mother said to Elisha, “As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” † So he got up and followed her.
31 Gehazi went ahead of them and placed the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or sign of life, so he went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy didn’t wake up.” †
32 When Elisha got to the house, he discovered the boy lying dead on his bed. †
33 So he went in, closed the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. † 34 Then he went up and lay on the boy: † he put mouth to mouth, eye to eye, hand to hand. While he bent down over him, the boy’s flesh became warm. † 35 Elisha got up, went into the house, and paced back and forth. Then he went up and bent down over him again. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. †
36 Elisha called Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman.” He called her and she came. Then Elisha said, “Pick up your son.” 37 She came, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; she picked up her son and left. †

THE DEADLY STEW

38 When Elisha returned to Gilgal, † there was a famine † in the land. The sons of the prophets † were sitting before him. † He said to his attendant, “Put on the large pot and make stew for the sons of the prophets.”
39 One went out to the field to gather herbs and found a wild vine from which he gathered as many wild gourds as his garment would hold. Then he came back and cut them up into the pot of stew, but they were unaware of what they were. †

40 They served some for the men to eat, but when they ate the stew they cried out, “There’s death in the pot, † man of God! ” And they were unable to eat it.
41 Then Elisha said, “Get some flour.” He threw it into the pot and said, “Serve it for the people to eat.” And there was nothing bad in the pot. †

THE MULTIPLIED BREAD

42 A man from Baal-shalishah † came to the man of God with his sack full of † twenty loaves of barley bread from the first bread of the harvest. Elisha said, “Give it to the people to eat.” †
43 But Elisha’s attendant asked, “What? Am I to set this before a hundred men? ” †
“Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said, “for this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat, and they will have some left over.’ ” 44 So he set it before them, and as the LORD had promised, they ate and had some left over. †

4:39 *of what they were* added for clarity **4:42** Or *with some heads of fresh grain and*
4:1 2Kg 2:3,15 **4:1** Pr 1:7; 9:10 **4:1** Lv 25:39-41 **4:2** 1Kg 17:12 **4:3** 2Kg 3:16 **4:5** Mt 14:17-21 **4:7** 1Kg 12:22 **4:7** 1Kg 17:16 **4:8** Jos 19:18 **4:8** Mt 10:40-42; 3Jn 5-8 **4:10** 1Kg 17:19 **4:12** 2Kg 4:29-31; 5:20-27 **4:13** 2Kg 4:2 **4:16** Gn 18:9-14; Lk 1:7-13 **4:16** 2Kg 4:28 **4:18** Ru 2:3 **4:23** Nm 10:10; 28:11 **4:23** 2Sm 18:28; 2Kg 4:26 **4:25** 1Kg 18:19-20 **4:25** 2Kg 4:12 **4:25** 2Kg 4:8,12 **4:27** Mt 28:9 **4:27** Ru 1:19-21; 1Sm 1:15; Zch 12:10 **4:28** 2Kg 4:16 **4:29** 1Kg 18:46; 2Kg 9:1 **4:29** Lk 10:4 **4:30** 2Kg 2:2,4,6 **4:31** Jn 11:11 **4:32** 2Kg 4:21 **4:33** Mt 6:6 **4:34** 1Kg 17:21-23 **4:34** Ac 20:10 **4:35** 2Kg 8:5 **4:37** Heb 11:35 **4:38** 2Kg 2:1 **4:38** Lv 26:26; 2Kg 8:1 **4:38** 2Kg 2:3,5,7 **4:38** Lk 10:39; Ac 22:3 **4:40** Ex 10:17 **4:41** Ex 15:25; 2Kg 2:21 **4:42** 1Sm 9:4 **4:42** Mt 14:17 **4:43** Lk 9:13; Jn 6:9 **4:43-44** Mt 14:20

4:3-6 Elisha’s miracle concerning the widow’s jar of oil resembles Elijah’s miracle earlier concerning the Sidonian widow’s jar of flour and jug of oil (1Kg 17:8-16; see the note on 2:13-15). Both wonders demonstrated the power of God to supply those in need.

4:18-20 Elijah had raised the Sidonian widow’s son (1Kg 17:17-24), and now Elisha would perform a similar sign for a Shunammite woman who frequently hosted him (vv. 8-10). She had been childless, but Elisha promised her that she would bear a son (vv. 13-17,28).

4:27 Although secrets were sometimes revealed to prophets directly by God (e.g., 5:25-26; 6:8-12; 1Kg 14:2-6; Dn 2:19-23; Am 3:7), this evidently was not always the case, since it depended on God’s will.

4:32-35 Elisha’s initial attempt to raise the boy through having Gehazi hurry ahead and lay Elisha’s staff on him was ineffective (vv. 29-31). Elijah had stretched himself out over the Sidonian widow’s son in order to revive him (1Kg 17:21), and Elisha’s actions upon arrival were similar (vv. 34-35).

4:42-44 This miracle resembles on a smaller scale Jesus’s miracles of feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000 (see Mt 14:13-21; 15:32-39).

NAAMAN’S DISEASE HEALED

5 Naaman, † commander of the army for the king of Aram, was a man important to his master and highly regarded † because through him, the LORD had given victory to Aram. The man was a valiant warrior, but he had a skin disease. †

2 Aram had gone on raids † and brought back from the land of Israel a young girl who served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his skin disease."
4 So Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said. 5 Therefore, the king of Aram said, "Go, and I will send a letter with you to the king of Israel."

So he went and took with him 750 pounds † of silver, 150 pounds † of gold, and ten sets of clothing. † 6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, and it read:

When this letter comes to you, note that I have sent you my servant Naaman for you to cure him of his skin disease.

7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes † and asked, "Am I God, † killing and giving life that this man expects me to cure a man of his skin disease? Recognize † that he is only picking a fight with me." †
8 When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, "Why have you torn your clothes? Have him come to me, and he will know there is a prophet in Israel." † 9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha's house.

10 Then Elisha sent him a messenger, † who said, "Go wash † seven times † in the Jordan and your skin will be restored and you will be clean."
11 But Naaman got angry and left, saying, "I was telling myself: He will surely come out, stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand † over the place and cure the skin disease. 12 Aren't Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? † Couldn't I wash in them and be clean? " So he turned and left in a rage. †

13 But his servants approached and said to him, "My father, † if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more should you do it when he only tells you, 'Wash and be clean'? " 14 So Naaman

went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the command of the man of God. Then his skin was restored and became like the skin of a small boy, and he was clean. †

15 Then Naaman and his whole company went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, “I know there’s no God in the whole world except in Israel. † Therefore, please accept a gift † from your servant.”

16 But Elisha said, “As the LORD lives, † in whose presence I stand, I will not accept it.” † Naaman urged him to accept it, but he refused.

17 Naaman responded, “If not, please let your servant be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry, † for your servant will no longer offer a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but the LORD. † 18 However, in a particular matter may the LORD pardon your servant: When my master, the king of Aram, goes into the temple of Rimmon to bow in worship while he is leaning on my arm, † † and I have to bow in the temple of Rimmon — when I bow † in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon your servant in this matter.”

19 So he said to him, “Go in peace.” †

GEHAZI’S GREED PUNISHED

After Naaman had traveled a short distance from Elisha, 20 Gehazi, † the attendant of Elisha the man of God, thought, “My master has let this Aramean Naaman off lightly by not accepting from him what he brought. As the LORD lives, † I will run after him and get something from him.”

21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw someone running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and asked, “Is everything all right? ”

22 Gehazi said, “It’s all right. † My master has sent me to say, ‘I have just now discovered that two young men from the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them seventy-five pounds † of silver and two sets of clothing.’ ” †

23 But Naaman insisted, “Please, accept one hundred fifty pounds.” † He urged Gehazi and then packed one hundred fifty pounds of silver in two bags with two sets of clothing. Naaman gave them to two of his attendants who carried them ahead of Gehazi. 24 When Gehazi came to the hill, † † he took the gifts from them and deposited them in the house. Then he dismissed the men, and they left.

25 Gehazi came and stood by his master. “Where did you go, Gehazi?” Elisha asked him.
He replied, “Your servant didn’t go anywhere.”
26 “And my heart didn’t go † † when the man got down from his chariot to meet you,” Elisha said. “Is this a time to accept silver and clothing, olive orchards and vineyards, flocks and herds, and male and female slaves? 27 Therefore, Naaman’s skin disease will cling to you and your descendants forever.” So Gehazi went out from his presence diseased, resembling snow. † †

5:5 Lit *10 talents* **5:5** Lit *6,000 shekels* **5:7** Lit *Know and see* **5:18** Lit *worship, and he leans on my hand* **5:18** LXX, Vg read *when he bows himself* **5:22** Lit *a talent* **5:23** Lit *two talents* **5:24** Or *citadel* **5:26** Or *“Did not my heart go* **5:27** A reference to whiteness or flakiness of the skin
5:1 Lk 4:27 **5:1** Ex 11:3 **5:1** 2Kg 7:3,8 **5:2** 2Kg 6:23; 13:20 **5:5** Jdg 14:12; 2Kg 5:22 **5:7** Gn 37:29; 2Kg 11:14 **5:7** Gn 30:2 **5:7** 1Kg 20:7 **5:8** 1Kg 22:7 **5:10** Nm 5:1-4 **5:10** Jn 9:7 **5:10** Lv 14:7 **5:11** Ex 7:19 **5:12** Is 8:6 **5:12** Pr 14:17; 19:11 **5:13** 2Kg 2:12; 6:21; 13:14 **5:14** Lk 4:27 **5:15** Jos 2:11; 1Sm 17:46-47 **5:15** Gn 33:11 **5:16** 1Kg 17:1; 2Kg 3:14 **5:16** Gn 14:22-23 **5:17** Ex 20:24 **5:17** Dt 6:4 **5:18** 2Kg 7:2 **5:19** 1Sm 1:17 **5:20** 2Kg 4:12,31 **5:20** Ex 20:7 **5:21-22** 2Kg 4:26 **5:22** 2Kg 5:5 **5:24** 2Kg 1:9 **5:26** 2Kg 2:9,15 **5:27** Ex 4:6; Nm 12:10

5:1 It was typical for peoples and kings in the ancient world to give credit for victories to their own deities. Here, however, the narrator states that **the LORD had given victory to Aram**. This emphasizes that Yahweh is the only God, and therefore he gives victory or defeat in every nation, whether that people worships him or not.

5:6-8 Both the king of Aram’s letter and the king of Israel’s response are humorous. The latter had no idea how to handle the situation and saw the former as a troublemaker. However, this situation would serve to demonstrate to the Gentile Naaman that **there is a prophet in Israel** (v. 8; see vv. 3,15).

5:13-14 Elisha’s message to Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan (v. 10; see also 1Kg 18:43) required faith and was initially despised by the Aramean commander (vv. 11-12). After his servants’ appeal, he obeyed and was healed, just as the prophet had said (vv. 13-14).

5:15 Naaman’s confession of faith that **there’s no God in the whole world except in Israel** is remarkable. Even during a time of national apostasy in the northern kingdom, God had drawn this Gentile military leader to himself. He would henceforth worship Yahweh alone (v. 17). Jesus referred to both Naaman and the Sidonian widow as examples of Gentiles who were blessed by God even as Israelites rejected him (see Mt 4:24-27). Many other passages in the OT express the desire that all nations would come to know God (e.g., Ex 9:13-16; Jos 4:23-24; 1Sm 17:46; 1Kg 8:41-43; Ps 67:1-2).

5:18-19 Naaman’s request for mercy from God because he was required to accompany the king of Aram into the temple of Rimmon and to bow seems to have been granted by Elisha. The Aramean god Rimmon is only mentioned here in the OT.

5:25-27 Gehazi’s greed and deception were unacceptable (contrast Elisha’s response in v. 16), and he was found out and punished for it.

THE FLOATING AX HEAD

6 The sons of the prophets † said to Elisha, “Please notice that the place
where we live under your supervision † is too small for us. 2 Please let
us go to the Jordan where we can each get a log and can build ourselves
a place to live there.”
“Go,” he said.
3 Then one said, “Please come with your servants.”
“I’ll come,” he answered.
4 So he went with them, and when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees.
5 As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron ax head fell into the water,
and he cried out, “Oh, my master, it was borrowed! ” †
6 Then the man of God † asked, “Where did it fall? ”
When he showed him the place, the man of God cut a piece of wood, threw it
there, and made the iron float. † 7 Then he said, “Pick it up.” So he reached out
and took it.

THE ARAMEAN WAR

8 When the king of Aram † was waging war against Israel, he conferred with
his servants, “My camp will be at such and such a place.”
9 But the man of God † sent word to the king of Israel: “Be careful passing by
this place, for the Arameans are going down there.” 10 Consequently, the king of
Israel sent word to the place the man of God had told him about. The man of
God repeatedly † warned the king, so the king would be on his guard.
11 The king of Aram was enraged because of this matter, and he called his
servants and demanded of them, “Tell me, which one of us is for the king of
Israel? ”
12 One of his servants said, “No one, my lord the king. Elisha, the prophet in
Israel, tells the king of Israel even the words you speak in your bedroom.”
13 So the king said, “Go and see where he is, so I can send men to capture him.”
When he was told, “Elisha is in Dothan,” † 14 he sent horses, chariots, and a
massive army there. They went by night and surrounded the city.
15 When the servant of the man of God got up early and went out, he discovered
an army with horses and chariots surrounding the city. So he asked Elisha, “Oh,
my master, what are we to do? ”

16 Elisha said, “Don’t be afraid, † for those who are with us outnumber those who are with them.” †
17 Then Elisha prayed, “LORD, please open his eyes and let him see.” So the LORD opened the servant’s eyes, and he saw that the mountain was covered with horses and chariots of fire † all around Elisha.
18 When the Arameans came against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, “Please strike this nation with blindness.” † So he struck them with blindness, † according to Elisha’s word. 19 Then Elisha said to them, “This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will take you to the man you’re looking for.” And he led them to Samaria. † 20 When they entered Samaria, Elisha said, “LORD, open these men’s eyes and let them see.” So the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw that they were in the middle of Samaria.
21 When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “Should I kill them, † should I kill them, my father? ”
22 Elisha replied, “Don’t kill them. Do you kill those you have captured with your sword or your bow? Set food and water in front of them so they can eat and drink and go to their master.” †
23 So he prepared a big feast for them. When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. The Aramean raiders † did not come into Israel’s land again.

THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA

24 Some time later, King Ben-hadad † of Aram brought all his military units together and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. 25 So there was a severe famine † in Samaria, and they continued the siege against it until a donkey’s head sold for thirty-four ounces † of silver, and a cup † of dove’s dung † sold for two ounces † of silver. †
26 As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, “My lord the king, help! ”
27 He answered, “If the LORD doesn’t help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor or the winepress? ” † 28 Then the king asked her, “What’s the matter? ” †

She said, “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him today. Then we will eat my son tomorrow.’ 29 So we boiled my son and ate him, and I said to her the next day, ‘Give up your son, and we will eat him,’ † but she has hidden her son.”

30 When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes. † Then, as he was passing by on the wall, the people saw that there was sackcloth † under his clothes next to his skin. 31 He announced, “May God punish me and do so severely † if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today.”

32 Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders † were sitting with him. The king sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger got to him, Elisha said to the elders, “Do you see how this murderer † has sent someone to remove my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door to keep him out. Isn’t the sound of his master’s feet behind him? ”

33 While Elisha was still speaking with them, the messenger † came down to him. Then he said, “This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer? ” †

6:1 Lit *we are living before you* **6:10** Lit *not once and not twice* **6:18** Or *a blinding light* **6:25** Lit *for 80* ; “shekels” is assumed **6:25** Lit *a fourth of a kab* **6:25** Or *seedpods*, or *wild onions* **6:25** Lit *for five* ; “shekels” is assumed **6:33** Some emend to *king*

6:1 1Sm 10:5; 2Kg 2:3,5,7; 4:38 **6:5** Ex 22:14 **6:6** 2Kg 4:8-9 **6:6** Ex 15:25; 2Kg 2:21; 4:41 **6:8** 2Kg 8:28-29 **6:9** 2Kg 4:8-9 **6:13** Gn 37:17 **6:16** Ex 14:13 **6:16** 2Ch 32:7 **6:17** 2Kg 2:11; Ps 34:7 **6:18** Gn 19:11 **6:19** 1Kg 16:24; 2Kg 3:6 **6:21** 2Kg 2:12; 5:13 **6:22** 2Ch 28:8-15; Rm 12:20 **6:23** 2Kg 5:2; 24:2 **6:24** 1Kg 20:1 **6:25** 2Kg 4:38; 8:1 **6:25** Lv 26:26 **6:27** Hs 9:2 **6:26-28** 2Sm 14:4-5 **6:28-29** Lv 26:29; Dt 28:53,57 **6:30** 1Kg 21:27 **6:30** Gn 37:34 **6:31** 1Kg 19:2 **6:32** Ezk 8:1; 14:1 **6:32** Lk 12:31-32 **6:33** Jb 2:9; Is 8:21

6:8-12 Without anyone telling him, Elisha had known about Gehazi’s lie (5:20-27), and he likewise knew about the movements of the Aramean camp.

6:15-17 Having properly identified the problem, the king of Aram sent **an army with horses and chariots** to capture Elisha (v. 15). Despite this sizeable force, the prophet encouraged his servant not to fear because they were in fact well-protected by **horses and chariots of fire** (v. 17). A “chariot of fire with horses of fire” had also taken Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind (2:11). In both passages, God’s superior spiritual forces encourage trust in him.

6:18 Elisha had prayed for God to open his servant’s eyes to the horses and chariots of fire (v. 17), and now he prayed for the Arameans to be struck with blindness. Later he would pray for their eyes to be opened again (see v. 20).

6:25 These highly overpriced items reflected the seriousness of the famine (see 7:1,16), as did the horror of cannibalism (see vv. 28-29).

6:31 Just as Elijah had been blamed for Israel’s troubles that actually arose from their own sins (see 1Kg 18:17-18), so was Elisha.

7 Elisha replied, “Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says:
‘About this time tomorrow at Samaria’s gate, six quarts † of fine flour
will sell for a half ounce of silver † and twelve quarts † of barley will
sell for a half ounce of silver.’ ” †
2 Then the captain, the king’s right-hand man, † † responded to the man of
God, † “Look, even if the LORD were to make windows in heaven, could this
really happen? ” †
Elisha announced, “You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but you won’t eat
any of it.” †
3 Now four men with a skin disease † were at the entrance to the city gate. They
said to each other, “Why just sit here until we die? 4 If we say, ‘Let’s go into the
city,’ we will die there because the famine is in the city, but if we sit here, we
will also die. So now, come on. Let’s surrender to the Arameans’ camp. † If
they let us live, we will live; if they kill us, we will die.”
5 So the diseased men got up at twilight to go to the Arameans’ camp. When
they came to the camp’s edge, they discovered that no one was there, 6 for the
Lord † had caused the Aramean camp to hear the sound of chariots, horses, and
a large army. † The Arameans had said to each other, “The king of Israel must
have hired the kings of the Hittites † and the kings of Egypt † to attack us.”
7 So they had gotten up and fled † at twilight, abandoning their tents, horses,
and donkeys. The camp was intact, and they had fled for their lives.
8 When these diseased men came to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent
to eat and drink. Then they picked up the silver, gold, and clothing and went off
and hid them. They came back and entered another tent, picked things up, and
hid them. † 9 Then they said to each other, “We’re not doing what is right.
Today is a day of good news. † If we are silent and wait until morning light, our
punishment will catch up with us. So let’s go tell the king’s household.”
10 The diseased men came and called to the city’s gatekeepers and told them,
“We went to the Aramean camp and no one was there — no human sounds.
There was nothing but tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents were intact.”
11 The gatekeepers called out, and the news was reported to the king’s
household.

12 So the king got up in the night and said to his servants, “Let me tell you what
the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving, † so they have left
the camp to hide in the open country, thinking, ‘When they come out of the city,
we will take them alive and go into the city.’ ” †
13 But one of his servants responded, “Please, let messengers take five of the
horses that are left in the city. Their fate is like the entire Israelite community
who will die, † so let’s send them and see.”
14 The messengers took two chariots with horses, and the king sent them after
the Aramean army, saying, “Go and see.” 15 So they followed them as far as the
Jordan. They saw that the whole way was littered with clothes and equipment the
Arameans had thrown off in their haste. The messengers returned and told the
king.
16 Then the people went out and plundered the Aramean camp. † It was then
that six quarts of fine flour sold for a half ounce of silver and twelve quarts of
barley sold for a half ounce of silver, according to the word of the LORD. †
17 The king had appointed the captain, his right-hand man, † to be in charge of
the city gate, but the people trampled him in the gate. He died, just as the man of
God had predicted when the king had come to him. 18 When the man of God
had said to the king, “About this time tomorrow twelve quarts of barley will sell
for a half ounce of silver and six quarts of fine flour will sell for a half ounce of
silver at Samaria’s gate,” 19 this captain had answered the man of God, “Look,
even if the LORD were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen? ”
Elisha had said, “You will in fact see it with your own eyes, but you won’t eat
any of it.” † 20 This is what happened to him: the people trampled him in the
city gate, and he died.

7:1 Lit *a seah*, also in vv. 16,18 **7:1** Lit *for a shekel*, also in vv. 16,18 **7:1** Lit *two seahs*, also in vv. 16,18 **7:2** Lit *captain, upon whose hand the king leaned*, also in v. 17 **7:6** Some Hb mss read *Lord* **7:13** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *left in it. Indeed, they are like the whole multitude of Israel that are left in it; indeed, they are like the whole multitude of Israel who will die.*

7:1 2Kg 7:18 **7:2** 2Kg 5:18; 7:17 **7:2** 2Kg 4:8-9 **7:2** Mal 3:10 **7:2** 2Kg 7:17 **7:3** Nm 5:2-4; 2Kg 5:1 **7:4** 2Kg 6:24 **7:6** 2Sm 5:24; 2Kg 5:16-17 **7:6** 1Kg 10:29 **7:6** 2Ch 12:2-3 **7:7** Jdg 7:21 **7:8** Jos 7:21 **7:9** Pr 15:27; 21:17-18 **7:12** 2Kg 6:25 **7:12** Jos 8:4-12 **7:16** 2Kg 7:8 **7:16** 2Kg 7:1-2 **7:17** 2Kg 7:2 **7:18-19** 2Kg 7:1-2

7:1-2 Despite the siege against Samaria and the resultant serious famine, Elisha boldly declared that there would be plenty of food tomorrow, as indicated by the predicted prices of grain (see the note on 6:25). The captain would pay for his unbelief with his own life (see vv. 17-20).

7:3 Once again, those having **a skin disease** play a major part in the narrative (see 5:1). These four men

discovered that the Arameans had fled and had left everything behind (vv. 5-7).

7:16-19 Confirmed knowledge of the end of the siege led to the Israelites plundering the Aramean camp and the fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy spoken the day before (see the note on vv. 1-2). The repetition of the prophecy along with the captain's response emphasizes the serious consequences of failing to believe the prophetic word.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S LAND RESTORED

8 Elisha said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, † "Get ready, you and your household, and go live as a resident alien wherever you can. For the LORD has announced a seven-year famine, † and it has already come to the land."

2 So the woman got ready and did what the man of God said. She and her household lived as resident aliens in the land of the Philistines for seven years.

3 When the woman returned from the land of the Philistines at the end of seven years, † she went to appeal to the king for her house and field. †

4 The king had been speaking to Gehazi, † the attendant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me all the great things Elisha has done."

5 While he was telling the king how Elisha restored the dead son to life, the woman whose son he had restored to life came to appeal to the king for her house and field. So Gehazi said, "My lord the king, this is the woman and this is the son Elisha restored to life." †

6 When the king asked the woman, she told him the story. So the king appointed a court official for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, along with all the income from the field from the day she left the country until now."

ARAM'S KING HAZAEL

7 Elisha came to Damascus † while King Ben-hadad † of Aram was sick, and the king was told, "The man of God † has come here." 8 So the king said to Hazael, † "Take a gift † with you and go meet the man of God. Inquire of the LORD through him, 'Will I recover from this sickness?' " †

9 Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him a gift: forty camel-loads of all the finest products of Damascus. When he came and stood before him, he said, "Your son, † King Ben-hadad of Aram, has sent me to ask you, 'Will I recover from this sickness?' "

10 Elisha told him, “Go say to him, ‘You are sure to † recover.’ But the LORD has shown me that he is sure to die.” 11 Then he stared steadily at him until he was ashamed. †

The man of God wept, † 12 and Hazael asked, “Why is my lord weeping? ”
He replied, “Because I know the evil you will do to the people of Israel. You will set their fortresses on fire. You will kill their young men with the sword. You will dash their children to pieces. You will rip open their pregnant women.” †

13 Hazael said, “How could your servant, a mere dog, † do such a mighty deed? ”

Elisha answered, “The LORD has shown me that you will be king over Aram.” †
14 Hazael left Elisha and went to his master, who asked him, “What did Elisha say to you? ”
He responded, “He told me you are sure to recover.” 15 The next day Hazael took a heavy cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it over the king’s face. Ben-hadad died, and Hazael reigned in his place.

JUDAH’S KING JEHORAM

16 In the fifth year † of Israel’s King Joram † son of Ahab, Jehoram † † son of Jehoshaphat became king of Judah, replacing his father. † † 17 He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. †
18 He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for Ahab’s daughter was his wife. He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight. †
19 For the sake of his servant David, the LORD was unwilling to destroy Judah, since he had promised to give a lamp † to David and his sons forever. †
20 During Jehoram’s reign, Edom rebelled against Judah’s control and appointed their own king. † 21 So Jehoram crossed over to Zair with all his chariots. Then at night he set out to attack the Edomites who had surrounded him and the chariot commanders, but his troops fled to their tents. † 22 So Edom is still in rebellion against Judah’s control today. Libnah † also rebelled at that time.
23 The rest of the events of Jehoram’s reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah’s Kings. † 24 Jehoram rested with

his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and his son Ahaziah became king in his place. †

JUDAH'S KING AHAZIAH

25 In the twelfth year of Israel's King Joram son of Ahab, † Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah. † 26 Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, granddaughter of Israel's King Omri. † 27 He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab and did what was evil in the LORD's sight like the house of Ahab, † for his father had married into † the house of Ahab.

28 Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to fight against King Hazael † of Aram in Ramoth-gilead, † and the Arameans wounded Joram. 29 So King Joram returned to Jezreel † to recover from the wounds that the Arameans had inflicted on him in Ramoth-gilead † when he fought against Aram's King Hazael. † Then Judah's King Ahaziah son of Jehoram went down to Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab since Joram was ill.

8:10 Alt Hb tradition reads *You will not* **8:16** = The Lord is Exalted **8:16** Lit *Judah; Jehoshaphat had been king of Judah* **8:27** Lit *for he was related by marriage to* **8:29** Lit *Ramah*

8:1 2Kg 4:8-37 **8:1** Gn 41:27,54 **8:3** 2Kg 7:1-2 **8:3** Dt 15:1-6 **8:4** 2Kg 4:12; 5:20-27 **8:5** 2Kg 4:35 **8:7** 1Kg 11:24 **8:7** 2Kg 6:24 **8:7** 2Kg 5:20 **8:8** 1Kg 19:15,17 **8:8** 1Kg 14:3 **8:8** 2Kg 1:2 **8:9** 2Kg 5:13 **8:11** Jdg 3:25; 2Kg 2:17 **8:11** Lk 19:41 **8:12** 1Kg 19:17; 2Kg 10:32-33; 13:3 **8:13** 2Sm 9:8 **8:13-15** 1Kg 19:15 **8:16-24** 2Ch 21:5-20 **8:16** 2Kg 1:17; 3:1 **8:16** 2Ch 21:1 **8:16** 1Kg 22:50 **8:17** 2Ch 21:5 **8:18** 2Ch 21:6 **8:19** 1Kg 11:36; 15:4 **8:19** 2Ch 21:7 **8:20** 1Kg 22:47; 2Kg 3:9 **8:21** 2Sm 18:17; 19:8 **8:22** Jos 21:13; 2Kg 19:8 **8:23** 1Kg 22:39; 2Kg 1:18 **8:24** 1Kg 22:40; 2Kg 1:17 **8:25-29** 2Ch 22:1-6 **8:25** 2Kg 9:29 **8:26** 1Kg 16:23; 2Ch 22:2 **8:27** 2Ch 22:3 **8:28** 1Kg 19:15 **8:28** 1Kg 22:3,29 **8:29** 1Kg 21:1 **8:29** 2Kg 9:15

8:1-2 Elimelech's family likewise had gone to live in another country because of a famine in Israel (Ru 1:1-2).

8:3-7 The Lord graciously and providentially arranged for the timing of the woman's appeal to coincide with Gehazi's conversation with the king about the feats of Elisha so that her property was restored.

8:10 See the footnote for an alternate way to understand this difficult verse.

8:12-13 The Lord had said earlier that Hazael would execute judgment on Israel (see 1Kg 19:15-17), and Elisha wept because he knew the horrors that Hazael would bring upon his people (see 10:32-33; 12:17-18; 13:3,22).

8:16-19 Jehoshaphat had fought alongside of Ahab and Joram (3:7; 1Kg 22:2-4), and the relationship between Israel and Judah became even closer through his son Jehoram's marriage to Ahab's daughter (see also v. 26). The negative result was that Jehoram king of Judah **walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done** (v. 18). Nevertheless, God's faithfulness to His covenant with David made him **unwilling to destroy Judah** (v. 19; see notes on 1Kg 11:29-39 and 15:3-5).

8:25-27 The negative impact of Jehoram's marriage to Ahab's daughter Athaliah (i.e., Omri's granddaughter, see 1Kg 16:28) continued through his son Ahaziah, who succeeded him (see also 11:1-3). He too **walked in the way of the house of Ahab** (v. 27). Analogous to what Deuteronomy 7:1-5 warns against, his close relationship to Ahab's family influenced him to worship idols.

JEHU ANOINTED AS ISRAEL'S KING

9 The prophet Elisha called one of the sons of the prophets † and said, "Tuck your mantle † under your belt, take this flask of oil † with you, and go to Ramoth-gilead. † 2 When you get there, look for Jehu † son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. Go in, get him away from his colleagues, and take him to an inner room. 3 Then take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, 'This is what the LORD says: "I anoint you king over Israel." ' † Open the door and escape. Don't wait." 4 So the young prophet † went to Ramoth-gilead.
5 When he arrived, the army commanders were sitting there, so he said, "I have a message for you, commander."
Jehu asked, "For which one of us? "
He answered, "For you, commander."
6 So Jehu got up and went into the house. The young prophet poured the oil on his head and said, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I anoint you king over the LORD's people, Israel. 7 You are to strike down the house of your master Ahab so that I may avenge the blood shed by the hand of Jezebel — the blood of my servants the prophets and of all the servants of the LORD. † 8 The whole house of Ahab will perish, and I will wipe out all of Ahab's males, † both slave and free, † in Israel. † 9 I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. † 10 The dogs will eat Jezebel in the plot of land at Jezreel — no one will bury her.' " †
Then the young prophet opened the door and escaped.
11 When Jehu came out to his master's servants, they asked, "Is everything all right? Why did this crazy person † come to you? "
Then he said to them, "You know the sort and their ranting."
12 But they replied, "That's a lie! Tell us! "
So Jehu said, "He talked to me about this and that and said, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' "

13 Each man quickly took his garment and put it under Jehu on the bare steps. † † They blew the ram's horn † and proclaimed, "Jehu is king! " †

14 Then Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. †
Joram and all Israel had been at Ramoth-gilead on guard against King Hazael of Aram. 15 But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that the Arameans had inflicted on him when he fought against Aram's King Hazael. Jehu said, "If you commanders wish to make me king, † then don't let anyone escape from the city to go tell about it in Jezreel."

JEHU KILLS JORAM AND AHAZIAH

16 Jehu got into his chariot and went to Jezreel since Joram was laid up there and King Ahaziah of Judah had gone down to visit Joram. 17 Now the watchman †
was standing on the tower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu's mob approaching and shouted, "I see a mob! "
Joram responded, "Choose a rider and send him to meet them and have him ask, 'Do you come in peace? ' " †

18 So a horseman went to meet Jehu and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Do you come in peace? ' "

Jehu replied, "What do you have to do with peace? † Fall in behind me."
The watchman reported, "The messenger reached them but hasn't started back."

19 So he sent out a second horseman, who went to them and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Do you come in peace? ' "
Jehu answered, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me."

20 Again the watchman reported, "He reached them but hasn't started back. Also, the driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi † — he drives like a madman."

21 "Get the chariot ready! " Joram shouted, and they got it ready. Then King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah set out, each in his own chariot, and met Jehu at the plot of land of Naboth the Jezreelite. † 22 When Joram saw Jehu he asked, "Do you come in peace, Jehu? "
He answered, "What peace can there be as long as there is so much prostitution and sorcery from your mother Jezebel? " †

23 Joram turned around and fled, shouting to Ahaziah, "It's treachery, †
Ahaziah! "

24 Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow
went through his heart, and he slumped down in his chariot. † 25 Jehu said to
Bidkar his aide, “Pick him up and throw him on the plot of ground belonging to
Naboth the Jezreelite. † For remember when you and I were riding side by side
behind his father Ahab, and the LORD uttered this pronouncement against him:
26 ‘As surely as I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons yesterday’
— this is the LORD’s declaration — ‘so will I repay you on this plot of land’ —
this is the LORD’s declaration. So now, according to the word of the LORD, pick
him up and throw him on the plot of land.” †
27 When King Ahaziah of Judah saw what was happening, he fled up the road
toward Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him, shouting, “Shoot him too! ” So they shot
him in his chariot † at Gur Pass near Ibleam, † but he fled to Megiddo † and
died there. † 28 Then his servants carried him to Jerusalem in a chariot and
buried him in his fathers’ tomb in the city of David. † 29 It was in the eleventh
year of Joram son of Ahab that Ahaziah had become king over Judah. †

JEHU KILLS JEZEBEL

30 When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard about it, so she painted her eyes, †
fixed her hair, † and looked down from the window. 31 As Jehu entered the city
gate, she said, “Do you come in peace, Zimri, † killer of your master? ”
32 He looked up toward the window and said, “Who is on my side? Who? ” Two
or three eunuchs † looked down at him, 33 and he said, “Throw her down! ” So
they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered on the wall and on the
horses, and Jehu rode over her. †
34 Then he went in, ate and drank, and said, “Take care of this cursed † woman
and bury her, since she’s a king’s daughter.” † 35 But when they went out to
bury her, they did not find anything but the skull, the feet, and the hands. 36 So
they went back and told him, and he said, “This fulfills the LORD’s word that he
spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: ‘In the plot of land at Jezreel, the
dogs will eat Jezebel’s flesh. † 37 Jezebel’s corpse will be like manure † on the
surface of the ground in the plot of land at Jezreel so that no one will be able to
say: This is Jezebel.’ ”

9:4 Or *the young man, the attendant of the prophet* **9:8** Lit *wipe out Ahab’s one who urinates against a wall*

9:8 Or *males, even the weak and impaired* ; Hb obscure **9:13** Lit *on the bones of the steps* **9:15** Lit *"If your desire exists* **9:18** Lit *What to you and to peace*, also in v. 19 **9:27** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT omits *So they shot him* **9:30** Lit *made her head pleasing*

9:1 2Kg 2:3,5,7 **9:1** 2Kg 4:29 **9:1** 1Sm 10:1; 16:1; 1Kg 1:39 **9:1** 1Kg 22:3,29; 2Kg 8:28-29 **9:2** 1Kg 19:16-17; 2Kg 9:14 **9:3** 2Ch 22:7 **9:7** 1Kg 18:4; 21:15 **9:8** 1Kg 21:21; 2Kg 10:17 **9:9** 1Kg 16:3-5,11-12 **9:10** 1Kg 21:23; 2Kg 9:30-37 **9:11** 1Sm 10:11; Mk 3:21 **9:13** Mt 21:8 **9:13** 2Sm 15:10 **9:13** 1Kg 1:39 **9:14-16** 2Kg 8:28-29; 2Ch 22:6 **9:17** 1Sm 14:16 **9:17** 1Sm 16:4 **9:20** 1Kg 19:17; 2Kg 9:2 **9:21** 1Kg 21:1-7 **9:22** 1Kg 16:30-33; 2Ch 21:13 **9:23** 2Kg 11:14 **9:24** 1Kg 22:34-35 **9:25** 1Kg 21:1 **9:25-26** 1Kg 21:13,19,24 **9:27** Jos 17:11; Jdg 1:27 **9:27** 2Kg 23:29 **9:27** 2Ch 22:7,9 **9:27-28** 2Kg 23:30; 2Ch 22:9 **9:29** 2Kg 8:25 **9:30** Jr 4:30; Ezk 23:40 **9:31** 1Kg 16:9-20 **9:32** Est 1:10; 2:14 **9:33** Ps 7:5 **9:34** 1Kg 21:21-24 **9:34** 1Kg 16:31 **9:36** 1Kg 21:23; 2Kg 9:10 **9:37** Jr 8:1-2; Zph 1:17

9:1-10 In connection with Hazael (see the note on 8:12-13), God had said earlier that he would also judge Israel through Jehu (see 1Kg 19:15-17). As king of Israel, he was to carry out God's judgment against the house of Ahab (vv. 6-10) that had been declared earlier (see the note on 1Kg 21:19-24). Elijah had lamented Jezebel's killing of God's prophets, and the time had come for God to avenge their blood (see 1Kg 18:4,13; 19:10,14).

9:16 Joram had been injured in battle while fighting against Hazael (8:28). Ahaziah's allegiance to Joram would lead to his own demise (see v. 27).

9:21-25 Jehu's confrontation with Joram and Ahaziah took place **at the plot of land of Naboth the Jezreelite** (v. 21), the very site that Ahab had wrongly seized and where judgment against his house had been pronounced by Elijah (see 1Kg 21:1-24). Joram's body was fittingly thrown there (vv. 25-26). Ahaziah was killed also (vv. 27-29), and Jezebel's body was eaten by dogs in fulfillment of the word of God (vv. 30-37).

JEHU KILLS THE HOUSE OF AHAB

10 Since Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria, † Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the rulers of Jezreel, † to the elders, and to the guardians of Ahab's sons, † saying:

2 Your master's sons are with you, and you have chariots, horses, a fortified city, and weaponry, so when this letter † arrives 3 select the most qualified † of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

4 However, they were terrified and reasoned, "Look, two kings † couldn't stand against him; how can we? "

5 So the overseer of the palace, the overseer of the city, the elders, and the guardians sent a message to Jehu: "We are your servants, and we will do whatever you tell us. We will not make anyone king. Do whatever you think is right." † †

6 Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying:

If you are on my side, and if you will obey me, bring me the heads of your master's sons † at this time tomorrow at Jezreel.
All seventy of the king's sons were being cared for by the city's prominent men.
7 When the letter came to them, they took the king's sons and slaughtered all seventy, put their heads in baskets, and sent them to Jehu at Jezreel. 8 When the messenger came and told him, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons," the king said, "Pile them in two heaps at the entrance of the city gate until morning."
9 The next morning when he went out and stood at the gate, he said to all the people, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him. † But who struck down all these? 10 Know, then, that not a word the LORD spoke against the house of Ahab will fail, † for the LORD has done what he promised through his servant Elijah." † 11 So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel — all his great men, close friends, and priests — leaving him no survivors.
12 Then he set out and went to Samaria. On the way, while he was at Beth-eked of the Shepherds, 13 Jehu met the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah and asked, "Who are you? "
They answered, "We're Ahaziah's † relatives. We've come down to greet the king's sons and the queen mother's † sons."
14 Then Jehu ordered, "Take them alive." So they took them alive and then slaughtered them at the pit of Beth-eked — forty-two men. He didn't spare any of them. †
15 When he left there, he found Jehonadab son of Rechab † coming to meet him. He greeted him and then asked, "Is your heart one with mine? " †
"It is," Jehonadab replied.
Jehu said, "If it is, † give me your hand." †
So he gave him his hand, and Jehu pulled him up into the chariot with him.
16 Then he said, "Come with me and see my zeal † for the LORD! " So he let him ride with him in his chariot. 17 When Jehu came to Samaria, he struck down all who remained from the house of Ahab in Samaria until he had annihilated his house, according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah. †

JEHU KILLS THE BAAL WORSHIPERS

Jehu Kills the Baal Worshipers

18 Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, “Ahab served
Baal † a little, but Jehu will serve him a lot. 19 Now, therefore, summon to me
all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. † None must be
missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing will not live.”
However, Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the servants of Baal.
20 Jehu commanded, “Consecrate a solemn assembly † for Baal.” So they called
one.
21 Then Jehu sent messengers throughout all Israel, and all the servants of
Baal † came; no one failed to come. † They entered the temple of Baal, † and it
was filled from one end to the other. 22 Then he said to the custodian of the
wardrobe, “Bring out the garments for all the servants of Baal.” So he brought
out their garments.
23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab entered the temple of Baal, and Jehu
said to the servants of Baal, “Look carefully to see that there are no servants of
the LORD here among you — only servants of Baal.” 24 Then they went in to
offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.
Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside, and he warned them, “Whoever
allows any of the men I am placing in your hands to escape will forfeit his life
for theirs.” † 25 When he finished offering the burnt offering, Jehu said to the
guards and officers, “Go in and kill them. Don’t let anyone out.” † So they
struck them down with the sword. Then the guards and officers threw the bodies
out and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. 26 They brought out the
pillar of the temple of Baal and burned it, 27 and they tore down the pillar †
of Baal. Then they tore down the temple of Baal and made it a latrine † — which it
still is today.

EVALUATION OF JEHU’S REIGN

28 Jehu eliminated Baal worship from Israel, 29 but he did not turn away from
the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit — worshiping
the gold calves that were in Bethel and Dan. † 30 Nevertheless, the LORD said to
Jehu, “Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in my sight and
have done to the house of Ahab all that was in my heart, four generations of your
sons will sit on the throne of Israel.” †

31 Yet Jehu was not careful to follow the instruction of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart. He did not turn from the sins that Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.

32 In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. † Hazael † defeated the Israelites throughout their territory 33 from the Jordan eastward: the whole land of Gilead — the Gadites, the Reubenites, and the Manassites — from Aroer † which is by the Arnon Valley † through Gilead to Bashan. †

34 The rest of the events of Jehu's reign, along with all his accomplishments and all his might, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 35 Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz † became king in his place. 36 The length of Jehu's reign over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years. †

10:1 LXX; MT reads *of Ahab* **10:3** Lit *the good and the upright* **10:5** Lit *Do what is good in your eyes* **10:6** Lit *heads of the men of the sons of your master* **10:15** Lit *heart upright like my heart is with your heart* **10:15** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *mine? " Jehonadab said, "It is and it is* **10:21** LXX adds *— all his priests and all his prophets —* **10:33** Lit *Arnon Valley and Gilead and Bashan*

10:1 1Kg 16:24,29 **10:1** 1Kg 21:1; 2Kg 9:30 **10:2** 2Kg 5:6 **10:4** 2Kg 9:24,27 **10:5** Jos 9:8,11; 1Kg 20:4,32; 2Kg 18:14 **10:9** 2Kg 9:14-24 **10:10** 2Kg 9:7-10 **10:10** 1Kg 21:19-29 **10:13** 2Kg 9:27-29 **10:13** 1Kg 2:19 **10:14** 2Ch 22:8 **10:15** Jr 35:6-19 **10:15** Ezr 10:19 **10:16** 1Kg 19:10 **10:17** 1Kg 21:19-21; 2Kg 9:8 **10:18** 1Kg 16:31-32 **10:19** 1Kg 18:19; 22:6 **10:20** Jl 1:14 **10:21** 1Kg 22:6 **10:21** 1Kg 16:32 **10:24** 1Kg 20:39 **10:25** 1Kg 18:40 **10:27** 1Kg 14:23; 2Kg 3:2 **10:27** Ezr 6:11 **10:29** 1Kg 12:28-29 **10:30** 2Kg 15:12 **10:32** 2Kg 13:25 **10:32** 1Kg 19:17; 2Kg 8:12 **10:33** Dt 2:36; Jdg 11:26 **10:33** Nm 21:13 **10:34** 2Kg 1:18 **10:35** 2Kg 13:1 **10:36** 2Kg 1:17

10:4 The **two kings** were Joram and Ahaziah whom Jehu had just killed (see 9:24-27). These leaders were terrified and chose not to fight Jehu but to do as he pleased (vv. 2-3,5).

10:6-11 Jehu had been charged to strike down the house of Ahab, including all of Ahab's males (9:7-8). He carried this forward by having Ahab's seventy sons killed (see 1Kg 21:21).

10:13-14 Ahaziah was related to the house of Ahab through his mother Athaliah, as these relatives may have been as well (see 9:6-10).

10:25-28 Through a ruse, Jehu gathered the servants of Baal into the temple of this god (vv. 18-24). He had them all slaughtered and turned the temple into a **latrine**. He **eliminated Baal worship from Israel**.

10:29-30 Despite eliminating Baal worship in Israel, Jehu continued in the sins of Jeroboam. For the good that he did in destroying the house of Ahab, God rewarded him with four more generations of rule for his descendants (see 15:12).

10:32-33 The Lord punished Israel through Hazael, as he had predicted (see the note on 8:12-13).

ATHALIAH USURPS THE THRONE

11 When Athaliah, † Ahaziah's mother, † saw that her son was dead, †
she proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs. 2 Jehosheba, † who was
King Jehoram's daughter and Ahaziah's † sister, secretly rescued Joash son of
Ahaziah from among the king's sons who were being killed and put him and the
one who nursed him in a bedroom. So he was hidden from Athaliah and was not
killed. 3 Joash was in hiding with her in the LORD's temple six years while
Athaliah reigned over the land.

ATHALIAH OVERTHROWN

4 In † the seventh year, Jehoiada † sent for the commanders of hundreds, the
Carites, and the guards. † He had them come to him in the LORD's temple, where
he made a covenant with them and put them under oath. He showed them the
king's son 5 and commanded them, "This is what you are to do: A third of you
who come on duty on the Sabbath † are to provide protection for the king's
palace. 6 A third are to be at the Foundation † Gate and a third at the gate
behind the guards. You are to take turns providing protection for the palace. † †
7 "Your two divisions that go off duty on the Sabbath are to provide the king
protection at the LORD's temple. 8 Completely surround the king with weapons
in hand. Anyone who approaches the ranks is to be put to death. Be with the king
in all his daily tasks." † †
9 So the commanders of hundreds did everything the priest Jehoiada
commanded. They each brought their men — those coming on duty on the
Sabbath and those going off duty — and came to the priest Jehoiada. † 10 The
priest gave to the commanders of hundreds King David's spears and shields †
that were in the LORD's temple. 11 Then the guards stood with their weapons in
hand surrounding the king — from the right side of the temple to the left side, by
the altar and by the temple.
12 Jehoiada brought out the king's son, put the crown † on him, gave him the
testimony, † † and made him king. They anointed † him and clapped their
hands and cried, "Long live the king! " †
13 When Athaliah † heard the noise from the guard and the crowd, she went out
to the people at the LORD's temple. † 14 She looked, and there was the king

standing by the pillar † according to the custom. The commanders and the trumpeters were by the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. † Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed "Treason! Treason! " †

15 Then the priest Jehoiada † ordered the commanders of hundreds † in charge of the army, "Take her out between the ranks, and put to death by the sword anyone who follows her," for the priest had said, "She is not to be put to death in the LORD's temple." † 16 So they arrested her, and she went through the horse entrance † to the king's palace, where she was put to death. †

JEHOIADA'S REFORMS

17 Then † Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people that they would be the LORD's people † and another covenant between the king and the people. † † 18 So all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed its altars and images to pieces, † and they killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, at the altars. †

Then Jehoiada the priest appointed guards for the LORD's temple. † 19 He took the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards, † and all the people of the land, and they brought the king from the LORD's temple. They entered the king's palace by way of the guards' gate. Then Joash † sat on the throne of the kings. 20 All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for they had put Athaliah to death by the sword in the king's palace.

JUDAH'S KING JOASH

21 Joash † † was seven years old when he became king. †

11:6 See 2Ch 23:5; MT here reads *Sur* **11:6** Hb obscure **11:8** Lit *king when he goes out and when he comes in* **11:12** Or *him the copy of the covenant,* or *him a diadem,* or *him jewels* **11:17** Some Gk versions, 2Ch 23:16 omit *and another covenant between the king and the people* **11:21** = The Lord Has Bestowed
11:1 2Ch 22:10 **11:1** 2Kg 8:26 **11:1** 2Kg 9:27 **11:2** 2Kg 11:21; 12:1 **11:2** 2Kg 8:25 **11:4-16** 2Ch 23:1-15 **11:4** 2Kg 11:15,17 **11:4** 2Kg 11:19 **11:5** 1Ch 9:25 **11:4-6** 2Ch 23:1-2 **11:8** Nm 27:16-17 **11:9** 2Ch 23:8 **11:10** 2Sm 8:7; 1Ch 18:7 **11:12** 2Sm 1:10 **11:12** Ex 31:18; 2Kg 23:3 **11:12** 1Kg 1:39 **11:12** 1Sm 10:24 **11:13** 2Kg 11:1 **11:13** 2Ch 23:12 **11:14** 2Kg 23:3; 2Ch 34:31 **11:14** Nm 10:7-10; 1Kg 1:39-40 **11:14** 2Kg 9:23 **11:15** 2Kg 11:4 **11:15** 1Kg 11:4; 2Ch 23:1 **11:15** 1Kg 2:30 **11:16** Neh 3:28 **11:16** Gn 9:6; Lv 24:17; 2Kg 11:1 **11:17-20** 2Ch 23:16-21 **11:17** Jos 24:25; 2Ch 34:31 **11:17** 1Sm 10:25; 2Sm 5:3 **11:18** Dt 12:2-3; 2Kg 10:26-27 **11:18** 1Kg 18:40 **11:18** 2Ch 23:18 **11:19** 2Kg 11:4,6 **11:19** 2Kg 11:2-3,12 **11:21–12:3** 2Ch 24:1-4 **11:21** 2Kg 11:2

11:1-3 The ruling family of Judah was not yet rid of the evil influence of the house of Ahab (see the note on 8:25-27). **Athaliah** was a daughter of Ahab who had married Jehoram king of Judah (8:18,26), and she killed **all the royal heirs** except for one. If not for Jehosheba's brave rescue of **Joash**, the line of David would have been cut off. The Lord's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom was thus upheld through this woman (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16).

11:12-16 Jehoiada the priest led the plan to install the boy Joash as king (vv. 3-11). Contrary to her claims of **treason** against her (v. 14), Athaliah was guilty and was put to death.

11:17-18 The godly priest led Judah to make a covenant to **be the LORD's people.** Jehu had destroyed the temple of Baal in Israel (10:26-28), but **Baal** worship had evidently entered Judah—probably during the reign of Jehoram who had married Athaliah (see 8:18).

12 In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash became king, and he reigned forty
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beer-
sheba. † 2 Throughout the time the priest Jehoiada † instructed † him,
Joash did what was right in the LORD's sight. † 3 Yet the high places were not
taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high
places. †

REPAIRING THE TEMPLE

4 Then † Joash said to the priests, "All the dedicated silver brought to the
LORD's temple, † census silver, † silver from vows, † and all silver voluntarily
given † for the LORD's temple — 5 each priest is to take it from his assessor †
and repair whatever damage is found in the temple." † †
6 But by the twenty-third year † of the reign of King Joash, the priests had not
repaired the damage † to the temple. † 7 So King Joash called the priest
Jehoiada † and the other priests and asked, "Why haven't you repaired the
temple's damage? Since you haven't, don't take any silver from your assessors;
instead, hand it over for the repair of the temple." 8 So the priests agreed that
they would receive no silver from the people and would not be the ones to repair
the temple's damage.
9 Then the priest Jehoiada took a chest, † bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside
the altar on the right side as one enters the LORD's temple; the priests who
guarded the threshold put into the chest all the silver that was brought to the
LORD's temple. † 10 Whenever they saw there was a large amount of silver in
the chest, the king's secretary † and the high priest would go bag up and tally
the silver found in the LORD's temple. † 11 Then they would give the weighed

silver to those doing the work — those who oversaw the LORD's temple. They in turn would pay it out to those working on the LORD's temple — the carpenters, the builders, 12 the masons, and the stonecutters — and would use it to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the damage to the LORD's temple † and for all expenses for temple repairs.
13 However, no silver bowls, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, trumpets, or any articles of gold or silver † were made for the LORD's temple from the contributions † brought to the LORD's temple. 14 Instead, it was given to those doing the work, and they repaired the LORD's temple with it. 15 No accounting was required from the men who received the silver to pay those doing the work, since they worked with integrity. † 16 The silver from the guilt offering and the sin offering was not brought to the LORD's temple since it belonged to the priests. †

ARAMEAN INVASION OF JUDAH

17 At that time King Hazael † of Aram marched up and fought against Gath and captured it. Then he planned to attack Jerusalem. † 18 So King Joash of Judah took all the items consecrated by himself and by his ancestors — Judah's kings Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah — as well as all the gold found in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and in the king's palace, and he sent them to King Hazael of Aram. † Then Hazael withdrew from Jerusalem.

JOASH ASSASSINATED

19 The rest of the events of Joash's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 20 Joash's servants conspired against him and attacked him † at Beth-millo † on the road that goes down to Silla. 21 It was his servants Jozabad † son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer who attacked him. He died † and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and his son Amaziah became king in his place. †

12:5 Hb obscure **12:5** Lit *repair the breach of the temple wherever there is found a breach* **12:6** Lit *breach* in 2Kg 12:5-12 **12:13** Lit *silver* **12:21** Some Hb mss, LXX read *Jozacar* ; 2Ch 24:26 reads *Zabad*
12:1 2Kg 11:2,21; 2Ch 24:1 **12:2** 2Kg 11:4,17 **12:2** Mal 2:6-7 **12:2** Dt 12:25; 2Sm 8:15 **12:3** 1Kg 3:3; 2Kg 14:4; 15:35 **12:4-12** 2Ch 24:5-12 **12:4** 2Kg 22:4 **12:4** Ex 30:13-16 **12:4** Lv 27:2-28 **12:4** Ex 35:5 **12:5** 2Kg 22:5 **12:6** 2Kg 11:21 **12:6** 2Ch 24:5 **12:7-8** 2Kg 11:4-6 **12:9** 2Ch 23:1; 24:8 **12:9** Mk 12:41; Lk 21:1 **12:10** 2Sm 8:17; 2Kg 19:2 **12:10** 2Ch 24:11 **12:11-12** 2Kg 22:5-6; 2Ch 24:11-12 **12:13** 1Kg 7:48,50-51; 2Ch

24:14 **12:15** 2Kg 22:7; 2Ch 34:12 **12:16** Lv 4:24,29; 5:15-18; 7:7 **12:17** 1Kg 19:17; 2Kg 8:12; 10:32 **12:17-21** 2Ch 24:23-27 **12:18** 2Kg 16:8; 18:15-16 **12:19** 1Kg 22:45 **12:20** 2Kg 14:5 **12:20** Jdg 9:6 **12:21** 2Ch 24:26 **12:21** 2Kg 14:1; 2Ch 24:27

12:2-3 Under the influence of Jehoiada's wise teaching, Joash walked uprightly with God for much of his life (though see 2Ch 24:15-22). The **high places** continued to be a problem however (see the note on 1Kg 3:2).

12:4-8 Joash confronted the priests for collecting money for the repair of the temple but not proceeding with the work.

12:17-18 King Hazael of Aram not only invaded Israel (see the note on 10:32-33) but also Judah.

ISRAEL'S KING JEHOAHAZ

13 In the twenty-third year of Judah's King Joash † son of Ahaziah,
Jehoahaz † son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, and he
reigned seventeen years. 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight and
followed the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he
did not turn away from them. † 3 So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, †
and he handed them over to King Hazael † of Aram and to his son Ben-hadad †
during their reigns.
4 Then Jehoahaz sought the LORD's favor, and the LORD heard him, for he saw
the oppression the king of Aram inflicted on Israel. † 5 Therefore, the LORD
gave Israel a deliverer, † and they escaped from the power of the Arameans.
Then the people of Israel returned to their former way of life, † 6 but they didn't
turn away from the sins that the house of Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.
Jehoahaz continued them, † and the Asherah pole also remained standing in
Samaria. 7 Jehoahaz did not have an army left, except for fifty horsemen, ten
chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers, because the king of Aram had destroyed
them, † making them like dust at threshing. †
8 The rest of the events of Jehoahaz's reign, along with all his accomplishments
and his might, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. †
9 Jehoahaz rested with his fathers, and he was buried in Samaria. His son
Jehoash † became king in his place.

ISRAEL'S KING JEHOASH

10 In the thirty-seventh year of Judah's King Joash, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. 11 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away from all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit, but he continued them. †
12 The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with all his accomplishments and the power he had to wage war against Judah's King Amaziah, † are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. 13 Jehoash rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam † sat on his throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

ELISHA'S DEATH

14 When Elisha became sick with the illness from which he died, King Jehoash of Israel went down and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel! " †
15 Elisha responded, "Get a bow and arrows." So he got a bow and arrows. †
16 Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Grasp the bow." So the king grasped it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. 17 Elisha said, "Open the east window." So he opened it. Elisha said, "Shoot! " So he shot. † Then Elisha said, "The LORD's arrow of victory, yes, the arrow of victory over Aram. You are to strike down the Arameans in Aphek † until you have put an end to them."
18 Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows! " So he took them. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground! " So he struck the ground three times and stopped. 19 The man of God † was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to them, but now you will strike down Aram only three times." 20 Then Elisha died and was buried. †
Now Moabite raiders † used to come into the land in the spring of the year. 21 Once, as the Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a raiding party, so they threw the man into Elisha's tomb. When he touched Elisha's bones, the man revived and stood up! †

GOD'S MERCY ON ISRAEL

22 King Hazael † of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz,
23 but the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, † and turned
toward them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. † He was
not willing to destroy them. Even now he has not banished them from his
presence. †
24 King Hazael of Aram died, and his son Ben-hadad † became king in his
place. 25 Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took back from Ben-hadad son of
Hazael the cities that Hazael had taken in war from Jehoash's father Jehoahaz.
Jehoash defeated Ben-hadad three times and recovered the cities of Israel. †

13:5 Lit *Israel dwelt in their tents as formerly* **13:9** Lit *Joash*
13:1 2Kg 12:1 **13:1** 2Kg 10:35 **13:2** 1Kg 12:26-33 **13:3** Dt 31:17; Jdg 2:14 **13:3** 2Kg 8:12; 12:17 **13:3** 2Kg 13:24-25 **13:4** Ex 3:7-9; Nm 21:7-9; 2Kg 14:26 **13:5** Jdg 2:18; 2Kg 13:25; 14:25,27 **13:6** 2Kg 13:2 **13:7** 2Kg 10:32-33 **13:7** Am 1:3 **13:8-9** 2Kg 1:17-18; 10:34-36 **13:11** 1Kg 12:28-33 **13:12-13** 2Kg 14:15-16 **13:13** 2Kg 14:23 **13:14** 2Kg 2:12 **13:15** 1Sm 20:20 **13:17** Jos 8:18 **13:17** 1Kg 20:26 **13:19** 2Kg 5:20 **13:20** 2Kg 2:1,11 **13:20** 2Kg 3:7; 24:2 **13:21** Mt 27:52 **13:22** 1Kg 19:17; 2Kg 8:12-13 **13:23** 1Kg 8:28 **13:23** Ex 2:24 **13:23** 2Kg 14:27 **13:24** 2Kg 13:3 **13:25** 2Kg 10:32

13:1-2 In accordance with God's promise (see 10:30), Jehu's son **Jehoahaz** succeeded him as king. Like his predecessors, he continued in the sins of Jeroboam.

13:3-5 The Lord continued to afflict Israel for its sins through Hazael king of Aram (see also vv. 7,23; note on 10:32-33). When Jehoahaz sought God, **he saw the oppression** and mercifully **gave Israel a deliverer.** Sadly, Israel still did not turn from sin (v. 6).

13:14 Jehoash's reaction to Elisha's illness **(My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel)** is the same as Elisha's reaction to Elijah's departure in a whirlwind (see the note on 2:11-12) and indicates the king's great respect for the prophet (see also 6:21).

13:18-19 Just as Elisha had instructed a widow to collect as many empty containers as possible in which to pour oil (see 4:1-6), the prophet wanted the king to shoot many arrows into the ground. His limited obedience limited the victories he would gain over Aram to three (see v. 25). Just as the oil kept flowing until there were no containers left, the king would have gained complete victory over Aram if he had shot **five or six times.**

13:22-23 The Lord had been gracious to Judah because of his covenant with David (see the notes on 8:16-19; 1Kg 11:29-39; and 15:3-5); likewise, he was gracious to Israel because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see also the note on 14:25-27).

13:25 As Elisha had said, Jehoash defeated Aram three times (see vv. 18-19).

JUDAH'S KING AMAZIAH

14 In † the second year of Israel's King Jehoash † † son of Jehoahaz, †
Amaziah † son of Joash became king of Judah. 2 He was twenty-five
years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Jehoaddan; † she was from Jerusalem. 3 He did what was right in the LORD's sight, but not like his ancestor David. He did everything his father Joash had done. † 4 Yet the high places were not taken away, and the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places. †
5 As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, Amaziah killed his servants who had killed his father the king. † 6 However, he did not put the children of the killers to death, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses where the LORD commanded, "Fathers are not to be put to death because of children, and children are not to be put to death because of fathers; instead, each one will be put to death for his own sin." †
7 Amaziah killed ten thousand Edomites in Salt Valley. † He took Sela † in battle and called it Joktheel, † which is still its name today. 8 Amaziah then sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, and challenged him: "Come, let's meet face to face." †
9 King Jehoash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, saying, "The thistle in Lebanon once sent a message to the cedar † in Lebanon, † saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as a wife.' Then a wild animal in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 10 You have indeed defeated Edom, and you have become overconfident. † † Enjoy your glory and stay at home. Why should you stir up such trouble that you fall — you and Judah with you? "
11 But Amaziah would not listen, so King Jehoash of Israel advanced. He and King Amaziah of Judah met face to face at Beth-shemesh † that belonged to Judah. 12 Judah was routed before Israel, and each man fled to his own tent. †
13 King Jehoash of Israel captured Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash, † son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh. Then Jehoash went to Jerusalem and broke down two hundred yards † of Jerusalem's wall from the Ephraim Gate † to the Corner Gate. † 14 He took all the gold and silver, all the articles found in the LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace, and some hostages. † Then he returned to Samaria.

JEHOASH'S DEATH

15 The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with his accomplishments, his might, and how he waged war against King Amaziah of Judah, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 16 Jehoash rested with his fathers, and he was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son Jeroboam became king in his place.

AMAZIAH'S DEATH

17 Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash lived fifteen years after the death of Israel's King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz. † 18 The rest of the events of Amaziah's reign are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 19 A conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem, † and he fled to Lachish. † However, men were sent after him to Lachish, and they put him to death there. 20 They carried him back † on horses, and he was buried in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. †

21 Then all the people of Judah took Azariah, † † who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 22 After Amaziah the king rested with his fathers, Azariah rebuilt Elath † † and restored it to Judah.

ISRAEL'S KING JEROBOAM

23 In the fifteenth year of Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash, Jeroboam † son of Jehoash became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. 24 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away from all the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. †

25 He restored Israel's border † from Lebo-hamath † as far as the Sea of the Arabah, † according to the word the LORD, the God of Israel, had spoken through his servant, the prophet Jonah † son of Amittai from Gath-hepher. †

26 For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter † for both slaves and free people. † There was no one to help Israel. 27 The LORD had not said he would blot out the name of Israel under heaven, † so he delivered † them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash.

28 The rest of the events of Jeroboam's reign — along with all his accomplishments, the power he had to wage war, and how he recovered for

Israel Damascus † and Hamath, † which had belonged to Judah † — are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 29 Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. His son Zechariah became king in his place. †

14:1 Lit *Joash*, also in vv. 23,27 **14:1** Lit *Joahaz* **14:2** Alt Hb tradition, some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg, 2Ch 25:1; other Hb mss, LXX read *Jehoaddin* **14:10** Lit *and your heart has lifted you* **14:13** Lit *Jehoash* **14:13** Lit *400 cubits* **14:21** = Uzziah in 2Ch 26:1 **14:22** = Eloth in 2Ch 26:2 **14:26** Hb obscure **14:28** Lit *recovered Damascus and for Judah in Israel* ; Hb obscure

14:1-14 2Ch 25:1-24 **14:1** 2Ch 25:1 **14:1** 2Kg 13:10 **14:3** 2Kg 12:2 **14:4** 1Kg 3:3; 2Kg 12:3; 16:4 **14:5** 2Kg 12:20 **14:6** Dt 24:16; Jr 31:30; Ezk 18:4,20 **14:7** 2Sm 8:13 **14:7** Jdg 1:36 **14:7** Jos 15:38 **14:8** 2Sm 2:14-17 **14:9** 1Kg 4:33 **14:9** Jdg 9:8-15 **14:10** Dt 8:14; 2Ch 26:16; 34:25 **14:11** Jos 19:38; 21:16 **14:12** 2Sm 18:17; 1Kg 22:36 **14:13** Neh 8:16; 12:39 **14:13** 2Ch 25:23; Zch 14:10 **14:14** 1Kg 7:51; 14:26; 2Kg 12:18 **14:15-16** 2Kg 13:12-13 **14:17** 2Ch 25:25-28 **14:18** 2Kg 12:19 **14:19** 2Ch 25:27 **14:19** Jos 10:31; 2Kg 18:14 **14:20** 2Kg 9:28 **14:20** 2Kg 12:21 **14:21** 2Kg 15:13; 2Ch 26:1-2 **14:22** 1Kg 9:26; 2Kg 16:6 **14:23** 2Kg 13:13 **14:24** 1Kg 12:30; 15:30 **14:25** 2Kg 13:25 **14:25** 1Kg 8:65 **14:25** Nm 34:3-9 **14:25** Jnh 1:1; Mt 12:39 **14:25** Jos 19:13 **14:26** Ex 3:7-9; Dt 32:36; 2Kg 13:4 **14:27** Dt 29:20; 2Kg 13:3 **14:27** Jdg 6:14 **14:28** 2Sm 8:5; 1Kg 11:24 **14:28** 2Sm 8:9; 2Ch 8:3 **14:28** 2Kg 13:8 **14:29** 2Kg 13:12-13; 15:8

14:3 Amaziah was a good king but did not meet the standard of David.

14:5-6 The murder of Amaziah's father Joash was described in 12:20-21. Amaziah evidently knew the Scripture that forbade putting children to death for the sins of their fathers and abided by it (see Dt 24:16). The kings were supposed to live in accordance with Scripture (Dt 17:18-20), and perhaps it is telling that there have been few references to **the law of Moses** in 1 and 2 Kings thus far (see 1Kg 2:3).

14:9-10 Jehoash's point was that Amaziah's challenge was foolish. Amaziah was the lowly **thistle** that would soon be **trampled.** Stories are also used elsewhere in Scripture to make a point (e.g., Jdg 9:7-15). Amaziah's stubbornness led to a humiliating defeat (vv. 11-14).

14:23-24 This **Jeroboam** is sometimes referred to as Jeroboam II. He is not to be confused with Jeroboam of Nebat, who made the golden calves (1Kg 12:26-30).

14:25-27 Despite Israel continuing in its sins, God mercifully helped the nation again (see also 13:4-5,22-23). The reference to **Jonah son of Amittai** is the only mention of this prophet in the OT outside of the book that bears his name (see Jnh 1:1).

JUDAH'S KING AZARIAH

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Israel's King Jeroboam, Azariah † † son of Amaziah became king of Judah. † 2 He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. 3 Azariah did what was right in the LORD's sight † just as his father Amaziah had done. 4 Yet the high places were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places. †

5 The LORD afflicted the king, and he had a serious skin disease until the day of his death. † He lived in quarantine, † † while Jotham, † the king's son, was over the household governing the people of the land. †
6 The rest of the events of Azariah's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 7 Azariah rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His son Jotham became king in his place. †

ISRAEL'S KING ZECHARIAH

8 In the thirty-eighth year of Judah's King Azariah, Zechariah † son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria for six months. 9 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight as his fathers had done. † He did not turn away from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. †
10 Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He struck him down publicly, † killed him, and became king in his place. † 11 As for the rest of the events of Zechariah's reign, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. † 12 The word of the LORD that he spoke to Jehu was, "Four generations of your sons will sit on the throne of Israel," † and it was so.

ISRAEL'S KING SHALLUM

13 In the thirty-ninth year of Judah's King Uzziah, † Shallum son of Jabesh became king; he reigned in Samaria † a full month. 14 Then Menahem son of Gadi came up from Tirzah † to Samaria and struck down Shallum son of Jabesh there. He killed him and became king in his place. 15 As for the rest of the events of Shallum's reign, along with the conspiracy that he formed, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

ISRAEL'S KING MENAHEM

16 At that time, starting from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphsah, † all who were in it, and its territory because they wouldn't surrender. † He ripped open all the pregnant women. †
17 In the thirty-ninth year of Judah's King Azariah, Menahem son of Gadi became king over Israel, and he reigned ten years in Samaria. 18 He did what

was evil in the LORD's sight. Throughout his reign, he did not turn away from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. †

19 King Pul † † of Assyria invaded the land, so Menahem gave Pul seventy-five thousand pounds † of silver so that Pul would support him to strengthen his grasp on the kingdom. † 20 Then Menahem exacted twenty ounces † of silver from each of the prominent men of Israel to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria withdrew and did not stay there in the land. †

21 The rest of the events of Menahem's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.
22 Menahem rested with his fathers, and his son Pekahiah became king in his place. †

ISRAEL'S KING PEKAHIAH

23 In the fiftieth year of Judah's King Azariah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years. 24 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight and did not turn away from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. †

25 Then his officer, Pekah † son of Remaliah, conspired against him † and struck him down in Samaria at the citadel of the king's palace † — with Argob and Arieh. † There were fifty Gileadite men with Pekah. He killed Pekahiah and became king in his place.

26 As for the rest of the events of Pekahiah's reign, along with all his accomplishments, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

ISRAEL'S KING PEKAH

27 In the fifty-second year of Judah's King Azariah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years. 28 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight. He did not turn away from the sins Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit.

29 In the days of King Pekah of Israel, King Tiglath-pileser † of Assyria came and captured Ijon, † Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee — all the land of Naphtali † — and deported the people to Assyria. †

30 Then Hoshea † son of Elah organized a conspiracy against Pekah son of Remaliah. He attacked him, killed him, † and became king in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah.
31 As for the rest of the events of Pekah's reign, along with all his accomplishments, they are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings.

JUDAH'S KING JOTHAM

32 In the second year of Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah, Jotham † son of Uzziah became king of Judah. 33 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, † and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. 34 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his father Uzziah had done. † 35 Yet the high places were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.
Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple. † 36 The rest † of the events of Jotham's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 37 In those days the LORD began sending Aram's King Rezin and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah. † 38 Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of his ancestor David. † His son Ahaz became king in his place.

15:1 = Uzziah in 2Ch 26:3 **15:5** Lit *in a house of exemption from duty* **15:10** Some LXX mss read *down at Ibleam* ; Hb uncertain **15:13** = Azariah, also in vv. 30,32,34 **15:19** = Tiglath-pileser **15:19** Lit *1,000 talents* **15:20** Lit *50 shekels* **15:25** Hb obscure

15:1 2Kg 14:21 **15:1-3** 2Ch 26:3-5 **15:3** 1Kg 14:8 **15:4** 2Kg 14:3-4 **15:5** 2Ch 26:16-21 **15:5** Lv 13:46 **15:5** 2Kg 15:32; 2Ch 27:1; Mc 1:1 **15:5** 2Ch 26:16-21 **15:6** 2Kg 14:18 **15:6-7** 2Ch 26:22-23 **15:8** 2Kg 14:29 **15:9** 2Kg 14:24 **15:9** 1Kg 12:28-33; 13:33-34 **15:10** 2Kg 12:20 **15:11** 2Kg 13:8 **15:12** 2Kg 10:30 **15:13** 1Kg 16:24 **15:14** 1Kg 14:17 **15:16** 1Kg 4:24 **15:16** Dt 20:11 **15:16** 2Kg 8:12; Hs 13:16; Am 1:13 **15:18** 1Kg 12:28-33; 15:26 **15:19** 1Ch 5:25-26 **15:19** 2Kg 14:5 **15:20** 2Kg 12:18 **15:22** 2Kg 14:29 **15:24** 1Kg 12:28-33 **15:25** 2Ch 28:6 **15:25** 2Kg 12:20 **15:25** 1Kg 16:8 **15:29** 1Ch 5:6,26 **15:29** 1Kg 15:29 **15:29** Jos 19:32-39 **15:29** 2Kg 17:6 **15:30** 2Kg 17:1 **15:30** 2Kg 12:20 **15:32** 2Kg 15:5,7 **15:33-35** 2Ch 27:1-3 **15:34-35** 2Kg 15:3-4 **15:35** 2Ch 27:3 **15:36-38** 2Ch 27:7-9 **15:36** 2Kg 14:18 **15:37** 2Kg 16:5; Is 7:1 **15:38** 2Kg 15:7

15:3 Like his father Amaziah, **Azariah**, also known as "Uzziah" (see vv. 13,30,32), was a good king.

15:10-12 The assassination of **Zechariah** by **Shallum** brought an end to the rule of the house of Jehu over Israel. As God had promised, four generations of Jehu's sons had been king of Israel (see 10:30).

15:13-14 Shallum himself ruled only one month before being killed by Menahem.

15:19-20 Assyria enters the scene here for the first time in 1 and 2 Kings. **King Pul**, also known as Tiglath-pileser (see footnote on v. 19), exacted a large amount **of silver** from Menahem and would continue to trouble Israel (see v. 29).

15:23-25 Political instability in Israel continued with **Pekah** killing **Pekahiah** son of Menahem (see vv. 10-14,30).

15:29-30 This time **King Tiglath-pileser** (the "King Pul" mentioned in 15:19-20) captured **all the land of Naphtali** and deported its **people to Assyria.**

JUDAH'S KING AHAZ

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, † Ahaz † son of Jotham became king of Judah. 2 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God like his ancestor David † 3 but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. † He even sacrificed his son in the fire, † imitating the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites. † 4 He sacrificed and burned incense † on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. †

5 Then † Aram's King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah came to wage war against Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz but were not able to conquer him. † 6 At that time Aram's King Rezin recovered Elath for Aram and expelled the Judahites from Elath. † Then the Arameans came to Elath, and they still live there today. †

7 So Ahaz sent messengers † to King Tiglath-pileser † of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. March up and save me from the grasp of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me." 8 Ahaz also took the silver and gold found in the LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace and sent them to the king of Assyria as a bribe. † 9 So the king of Assyria listened to him † and marched up to Damascus and captured it. † He deported its people to Kir † but put Rezin to death.

AHAZ'S IDOLATRY

10 King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet King Tiglath-pileser † of Assyria. When he saw the altar that was in Damascus, King Ahaz sent a model of the altar and complete plans for its construction to the priest Uriah. † 11 Uriah built the altar according to all the instructions King Ahaz sent from Damascus. Therefore, by the time King Ahaz came back from Damascus, the priest Uriah

had completed it. 12 When the king came back from Damascus, he saw the altar. Then he approached the altar † and ascended it. † 13 He offered his burnt offering † and his grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and splattered the blood of his fellowship offerings † on the altar. 14 He took the bronze altar † that was before the LORD in front of the temple between his altar and the LORD's temple, and put it on the north side of his altar.

15 Then King Ahaz commanded the priest Uriah, "Offer on the great altar the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, and the king's burnt offering and his grain offering. Also offer the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings. Splatter on the altar all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of sacrifice. The bronze altar will be for me to seek guidance." † 16 The priest Uriah did everything King Ahaz commanded.

17 Then King Ahaz cut off the frames of the water carts † † and removed the bronze basin from each of them. He took the basin † † from the bronze oxen that were under it and put it on a stone pavement. 18 To satisfy the king of Assyria, he removed from the LORD's temple the Sabbath canopy they had built in the palace, and he closed the outer entrance for the king.

AHAZ'S DEATH

19 The rest † of the events of Ahaz's reign, along with his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 20 Ahaz rested with his fathers † and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and his son Hezekiah became king in his place.

16:3 Lit *even made his son pass through the fire* **16:12** Or *and offered on it:* **16:15** Hb obscure **16:17** Lit *the stands* **16:17** Lit *sea*

16:1-4 2Ch 28:1-4 **16:1** Is 1:1; 7:1 **16:2** 1Kg 14:8 **16:3** 2Kg 17:9-10 **16:3** Dt 18:10; 2Kg 21:6; 2Ch 33:6 **16:4** 1Kg 22:17 **16:4** Dt 12:2 **16:5-6** 2Ch 28:5-6; Is 7:1-9 **16:5** 2Kg 15:37; Is 7:1 **16:6** 1Kg 9:26 **16:6** 2Ch 26:2 **16:7** 2Ch 28:16 **16:7** 2Kg 15:29; 1Ch 5:26 **16:8** 1Kg 15:19; 2Kg 12:17-18; 18:15 **16:9** 2Ch 28:21 **16:9** Am 1:3-5 **16:9** Is 22:6; Am 9:7 **16:10** 2Kg 15:29 **16:10** Is 8:2 **16:12** 2Ch 26:16 **16:13** Ex 29:40 **16:13** Lv 7:11-21 **16:14** Ex 40:24 **16:17** 1Kg 7:27-28 **16:17** 1Kg 7:23-25 **16:19-20** 2Ch 28:26-27 **16:19** 2Kg 15:36 **16:20** Is 14:28

16:2-4 Unlike his father Jotham, **Ahaz** was an evil king who followed the bad example of the kings of Israel (see 8:18), **sacrificed his son in the fire** (see Lv 18:21; Dt 18:10), and worshiped **on the high places.**

16:5 This attack **against Jerusalem** is described in further detail in Isaiah 7:1-16. Known as the Syro-

Ephraimite War, it may have been motivated by Judah's pro-Assyrian position at the time. Israel (led by **Pekah**) and Damascus (led by **Rezin**) apparently attempted to force Judah to join them in rebellion against the Assyrians.

16:8 Once again, the temple **treasuries** were depleted (see also 12:18; 14:14; 20:17; 24:13; 1Kg 14:26; 15:18).

16:10-18 Ahaz evidently was impressed **by the altar that was in Damascus** and had a replica built at the temple in Jerusalem. He not only offered sacrifices on this unsanctioned altar but even moved **the bronze altar** from its proper location and relegated it to a minor role (vv. 13-15). Ahaz also made additional changes to the temple Solomon had built, some of which were to appease the king of Assyria (vv. 17-18; see 1Kg 7:23-40).

ISRAEL'S KING HOSHEA

17 In the twelfth year of Judah's King Ahaz, Hoshea † son of Elah
became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. 2 He did
what was evil in the LORD's sight, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded
him. †
3 King Shalmaneser † of Assyria attacked him, † and Hoshea became his
vassal and paid him tribute. 4 But the king of Assyria caught Hoshea in a
conspiracy: He had sent envoys to So king of Egypt † and had not paid tribute
to the king of Assyria as in previous years. † Therefore the king of Assyria
arrested him and put him in prison. 5 The king of Assyria invaded the whole
land, marched up to Samaria, and besieged it for three years. †

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, † the king of Assyria captured Samaria. He
deported † the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah, along the Habor
(Gozan's river), and in the cities of the Medes. †

WHY ISRAEL FELL

7 This disaster happened because the people of Israel sinned against the LORD
their God who had brought them out of the land of Egypt from the power of
Pharaoh king of Egypt † and because they worshiped † other gods. † 8 They
lived according to the customs of the nations that the LORD had dispossessed
before the Israelites † and according to what the kings of Israel did. † 9 The
Israelites secretly did things † against the LORD their God that were not right.

They built high places in all their towns from watchtower † to fortified city.
10 They set up for themselves sacred pillars † and Asherah poles † on every
high hill and under every green tree. † 11 They burned incense there on all the
high places just like the nations that the LORD had driven out before them had
done. They did evil things, angering the LORD. 12 They served idols, although
the LORD had told them, “You must not do this.” † 13 Still, the LORD warned †
Israel and Judah through every prophet and every seer, saying, “Turn from your
evil ways and keep my commands and statutes according to the whole law I
commanded your ancestors and sent to you through my servants the prophets.” †
14 But they would not listen. Instead they became obstinate like † their
ancestors who did not believe the LORD their God. † 15 They rejected his
statutes and his covenant he had made with their ancestors † and the warnings
he had given them. They followed worthless idols and became worthless
themselves, † following the surrounding nations the LORD had commanded them
not to imitate. †
16 They abandoned all the commands of the LORD their God. They made cast
images † for themselves, two calves, and an Asherah pole. † They bowed in
worship to all the stars in the sky † and served Baal. † 17 They sacrificed their
sons and daughters in the fire † † and practiced divination and interpreted
omens. † They devoted themselves to do what was evil in the LORD’s sight and
angered him. †
18 Therefore, the LORD was very angry with Israel, and he removed them from
his presence. † Only the tribe of Judah remained. † 19 Even Judah did not keep
the commands of the LORD their God † but lived according to the customs Israel
had practiced. † 20 So the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, punished
them, and handed them over to plunderers until he had banished them from his
presence. †

SUMMARY OF ISRAEL’S HISTORY

21 When the LORD tore † Israel from the house of David, Israel made Jeroboam
son of Nebat king. † Then Jeroboam led Israel away from following the LORD

and caused them to commit immense sin. 22 The Israelites persisted in all the sins that Jeroboam committed and did not turn away from them. † 23 Finally, the LORD removed Israel from his presence just as he had declared through all his servants the prophets. So Israel has been exiled to Assyria from their homeland to this very day. †

FOREIGN REFUGEES IN ISRAEL

24 Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in place of the Israelites in the cities of Samaria. The settlers took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities. †
25 When they first lived there, they did not fear the LORD. So the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them. † 26 The settlers said to the king of Assyria, "The nations that you have deported and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the requirements of the god of the land. Therefore he has sent lions among them that are killing them because the people don't know the requirements of the god of the land."
27 Then the king of Assyria issued a command: "Send back one of the priests you deported. † Have him go and live there so he can teach them the requirements of the god of the land." 28 So one of the priests they had deported came and lived in Bethel, † and he began to teach them how they should fear the LORD.
29 But the people of each nation were still making their own gods in the cities where they lived and putting them in the shrines of the high places that the people of Samaria had made. † 30 The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire † to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32 They feared the LORD, but they also made from their ranks priests for the high places, who were working for them at the shrines of the high places. † 33 They feared the LORD, but they also worshiped their own gods † according to the practice of the nations from which they had been deported.
34 They are still observing the former practices to this day. None of them fear the LORD or observe the statutes and ordinances, the law and commandments that

the LORD had commanded the descendants of Jacob, whom he had given the name Israel. † 35 The LORD made a covenant with Jacob's descendants and commanded them, "Do not fear other gods; do not bow in worship to them; † do not serve them; do not sacrifice to them. † 36 Instead fear the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power † and an outstretched arm. † You are to bow down to him, and you are to sacrifice to him. 37 You are to be careful always † to observe the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandments he wrote for you; do not fear other gods. 38 Do not forget the covenant that I have made with you. † Do not fear other gods, 39 but fear the LORD your God, and he will rescue you from all your enemies." †
40 However, these nations would not listen but continued observing their former practices. 41 They feared the LORD but also served their idols. Still today, their children and grandchildren continue doing as their fathers did. †

17:4 Lit *as year by year* **17:7** Lit *feared* **17:9** Or *Israelites spoke words* **17:14** Lit *they stiffened their neck like the neck of* **17:17** Lit *They made their sons and daughters pass through the fire*
17:1 2Kg 15:30 **17:2** 2Kg 15:24,28 **17:3** Hs 10:14 **17:3** 2Kg 18:9-12 **17:4** Is 31:1 **17:5** 2Kg 18:9-10; Hs 13:16 **17:6** Hs 1:4; 13:16 **17:6** Dt 28:64; 29:27-28 **17:6** 1Ch 5:26 **17:7** Jos 24:5-7 **17:7** Jdg 6:10 **17:8** Lv 18:3; Dt 18:9 **17:8** 2Kg 16:3; 17:19 **17:9** 2Kg 18:8 **17:10** Ex 23:24 **17:10** 1Kg 14:15,23; 15:13; 2Kg 18:4 **17:10** Dt 12:2 **17:12** Ex 20:4-5 **17:13** Neh 9:29-30 **17:13** 1Kg 9:6-9; 18:18-21 **17:14** Ex 32:9; 33:3; Nm 14:11 **17:15** Ex 24:6-8 **17:15** Jr 2:5; Rm 1:21-23 **17:15** Dt 12:30-31 **17:16** 1Kg 12:28 **17:16** 1Kg 14:15,23 **17:16** 2Kg 21:3 **17:16** 1Kg 16:31-33; Am 5:26; Zph 1:5 **17:17** 2Kg 16:3 **17:17** Lv 19:26; Dt 18:10-12; 2Kg 16:3 **17:17** 1Kg 21:20 **17:18** 2Kg 17:6 **17:18** 1Kg 11:13,32,36 **17:19** 1Kg 14:22-23 **17:19** 2Kg 16:3 **17:20** 2Kg 15:29; 17:6 **17:21** 1Kg 11:11,31 **17:21** 1Kg 12:20 **17:21-22** 1Kg 12:28-33 **17:23** 2Kg 17:6,13 **17:24** Ezr 4:10 **17:25** 1Kg 13:24 **17:27** 2Kg 17:6 **17:28** 1Kg 12:29,32-33 **17:29** 1Kg 12:31; 13:32 **17:31** 2Kg 17:17 **17:32** Jdg 17:5-13; 1Kg 12:31; 13:33 **17:33** Zph 1:5 **17:34** Gn 32:28; 35:10 **17:35** Ex 20:5; Dt 5:9; Jdg 6:10 **17:35** Dt 5:9 **17:36** Ex 14:15-30 **17:36** Ex 6:6; 9:15 **17:37** Dt 5:32 **17:38** Dt 4:23; 6:12 **17:39** Ex 23:22; Dt 20:1-4; 23:14 **17:41** 1Kg 18:21; Ezr 4:2; Mt 6:24

17:1-6 Hoshea was the last king of the northern kingdom of Israel. His futile attempt to seek help from Egypt after not paying tribute money to Assyria led to his imprisonment (vv. 3-4). **King Shalmaneser of Assyria** subsequently besieged Samaria and deported the Israelites. This took place in 722 BC and marked the fall of the northern kingdom.

17:7 The biblical author gives an extended commentary in vv. 7-23 regarding the reasons why the northern kingdom fell and was exiled. He had previously commented on each king of Israel and Judah, noting whether he "did what was evil in the LORD's sight" (e.g., v. 2) or "did what was right in the LORD's sight" (e.g., 15:34).

17:13 The Lord did not watch silently as Israel worshiped other gods but sent prophets to call them back to his law (see also v. 23; 18:12).

17:14 The Israelites' stubborn disobedience is linked here to a lack of faith in God. Their ancestors had failed in this way in generations past (see Nm 14:11; Ps 78:22,32).

17:15 The sobering reality is that the Israelites became like the **worthless idols** they pursued (see Jr 2:5). Who or what a people worships has a formative impact on them.

17:16 The **two calves** were the ones that Jeroboam had made (vv. 21-23; 1Kg 12:26-29).

17:19 Though the kingdom of **Judah** still existed, its people were also guilty and would be similarly punished (see 21:13).

17:20,23 The exile of the Israelites for their sins had been threatened by the prophets. Moses himself had spoken of this several times (e.g., Dt 4:25-31; 28:36-37,63-65).

17:33 The cities of Samaria were resettled with foreigners, who began to fear God (vv. 24-28) but still continued to worship their own gods (see also vv. 40-41). God, however, calls for exclusive worship (vv. 35-39; see Ex 20:3).

JUDAH'S KING HEZEKIAH

18 In the third year of Israel's King Hoshea † son of Elah, Hezekiah † son of Ahaz became king of Judah. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi † daughter of Zechariah. 3 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his ancestor David had done. † 4 He removed the high places, shattered the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah poles. † He broke into pieces the bronze snake that Moses made, † for until then the Israelites were burning incense to it. It was called Nehushtan. †

5 Hezekiah relied on the LORD God of Israel; † not one of the kings of Judah was like him, either before him or after him. † 6 He remained faithful to the LORD † and did not turn from following him but kept the commands the LORD had commanded Moses.

7 The LORD was with him, and wherever he went he prospered. † He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. † 8 He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, † from watchtower † to fortified city.

REVIEW OF ISRAEL'S FALL

9 In the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Israel's King Hoshea son of Elah, Assyria's King Shalmaneser marched against Samaria and besieged it. † 10 The Assyrians captured it at the end of three years. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Israel's King Hoshea, Samaria was captured. 11 The king of Assyria deported the Israelites to Assyria

and put them in Halah, along the Habor (Gozan's river), and in the cities of the Medes, † 12 because they did not listen to the LORD their God but violated his covenant — all he had commanded Moses the servant of the LORD. They did not listen, and they did not obey. †

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION

13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Assyria's King Sennacherib attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. † 14 So King Hezekiah of Judah sent word to the king of Assyria at Lachish: † "I have done wrong; † withdraw from me. Whatever you demand from me, I will pay." The king of Assyria demanded eleven tons † of silver and one ton † of gold from King Hezekiah of Judah. 15 So Hezekiah gave him all the silver found in the LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king's palace.

16 At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold from the doors of the LORD's sanctuary and from the doorposts he had overlaid and gave it to the king of Assyria. †

17 Then the king of Assyria sent the field marshal, † the chief of staff, and his royal spokesman, along with a massive army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. † They advanced and came to Jerusalem, and † they took their position by the aqueduct of the upper pool, by the road to the Launderer's Field. † 18 They called for the king, but Eliakim † son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebnah † the court secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came out to them. †

THE ROYAL SPOKESMAN'S SPEECH

19 Then † the royal spokesman said to them, "Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: 'What are you relying on? † † 20 You think mere words are strategy and strength for war. Who are you now relying on so that you have rebelled against me? † 21 Now look, you are relying on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff † that will pierce the hand of anyone who grabs it and leans on it. † This is what Pharaoh king of Egypt is to all who rely on him. 22 Suppose you say to me, "We rely on the LORD our God." Isn't he the one

whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, † saying to Judah and to Jerusalem, “You must worship at this altar in Jerusalem” ? ’
23 “So now, make a bargain with my master the king of Assyria. I’ll give you two thousand horses if you’re able to supply riders for them! 24 How then can you drive back a single officer † among the least of my master’s servants? How can you rely on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? 25 Now, have I attacked this place to destroy it without the LORD’s approval? † The LORD said to me, ‘Attack this land and destroy it.’ ”
26 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebnah, and Joah said to the royal spokesman, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, † since we understand it. Don’t speak with us in Hebrew † within earshot of the people on the wall.”
27 But the royal spokesman said to them, “Has my master sent me to speak these words only to your master and to you? Hasn’t he also sent me to the men who sit on the wall, destined with you to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine? ” †
28 The royal spokesman stood and called out loudly in Hebrew: “Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria. 29 This is what the king says: ‘Don’t let Hezekiah deceive † you; he can’t rescue you from my power. † 30 Don’t let Hezekiah persuade you to rely on the LORD by saying, “Certainly the LORD will rescue us! This city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.” ’ †
31 “Don’t listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: ‘Make peace † with me and surrender to me. Then each of you may eat from his own vine and his own fig tree, † and each may drink water from his own cistern
32 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land — a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey † — so that you may live † and not die. But don’t listen to Hezekiah when he misleads you, saying, “The LORD will rescue us.” 33 Has any of the gods of the nations ever rescued † his land from the power of the king of Assyria? 34 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? † Have they rescued Samaria from my power? †

35 Who among all the gods of the lands has rescued his land from my power? So will the LORD rescue Jerusalem from my power? ’ ” †
36 But the people kept silent; they did not answer him at all, for the king’s command was, “Don’t answer him.” 37 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, † came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn † and reported to him the words of the royal spokesman.

18:2 = Abijah in 2Ch 29:1 **18:4** = A Bronze Thing **18:14** Lit *300 talents* **18:14** Lit *30 talents* **18:17** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *and came and* **18:19** Lit *‘What is this trust which you trust* **18:26** Lit *Judahite*, also in v. 28 **18:31** Lit *a blessing* **18:34** Some LXX mss, Old Lat read *Sepharvaim? Where are the gods of the land of Samaria?*

18:1 2Kg 17:1 **18:1** 2Ch 28:27 **18:2-3** 2Ch 29:1-2 **18:4** 2Kg 17:10; 18:22; 2Ch 31:1 **18:4** Nm 21:5-9 **18:5** 2Kg 19:10 **18:5** 1Kg 3:12; 2Kg 23:25 **18:6** Dt 10:20; Jos 23:8 **18:7** Gn 39:2-3; 1Sm 18:14 **18:7** 2Kg 16:7 **18:8** 2Ch 28:18; Is 14:29 **18:8** 2Kg 17:9 **18:9** 2Kg 17:3-7 **18:10-11** 2Kg 17:6; 1Ch 5:26 **18:12** 1Kg 9:6; 2Kg 17:7-18; Dn 9:6,10 **18:13** 2Ch 32:1; Is 36:1 **18:14** 2Kg 19:8 **18:14** Is 24:5; 33:8 **18:15-16** 2Kg 12:18; 16:8; 2Ch 16:2 **18:17** Is 20:1 **18:17** 2Ch 32:9 **18:17** 2Kg 20:20; Is 7:3 **18:18** 2Kg 19:2; Is 22:20 **18:18** Is 22:15 **18:17-18** Is 36:2-3 **18:19-37** Is 36:4-22 **18:19** 2Kg 18:5; 2Ch 32:10 **18:20** 2Kg 18:7 **18:21** Is 30:2-3,7 **18:21** Ezk 29:6-7 **18:22** 2Kg 18:4; 2Ch 31:1; 32:11-12 **18:24** Is 10:8 **18:25** 2Kg 19:6,22; 24:3; 2Ch 35:21 **18:26** Ezr 4:7; Dn 2:4 **18:26-27** Is 36:11-12 **18:29** 2Kg 19:10 **18:29** 2Ch 32:15 **18:30** 2Ch 32:18 **18:31** 1Kg 4:25 **18:32** Dt 8:7-9; 11:12 **18:32** Dt 30:19 **18:33** 2Kg 19:12; Is 10:10-11 **18:34** 2Kg 17:24; 19:13 **18:35** 2Ch 32:14; Ps 2:1-4; Dn 3:15 **18:37** 2Kg 18:26; 19:2 **18:37** 2Kg 6:30; Is 33:7

18:3-6 Hezekiah **did what was right in the LORD’s sight** and took action against idolatry, **relied on the LORD**, and faithfully **kept** the law of Moses—as kings were supposed to do (see the note on 1Kg 2:1-4). In this respect, he was unparalleled among the kings of Judah (v. 5; see also 23:25). As a result, “the LORD was with him” and “he prospered” (v. 7).

18:9-12 Hezekiah was king of Judah when the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. The Israelites’ defeat and exile is recounted here and attributed once again to their disobedience to God (see 17:7-13).

18:15-16 Regarding the repeated depletion of the temple treasures, see the note on 16:8.

18:21 There is no indication that Hezekiah was **relying on Egypt**, as Assyria’s royal spokesman asserted. Hoshea had done this (see the note on 17:1-6), but Hezekiah was trusting in God (v. 5; 19:15-19).

18:25 The claim to have **the LORD’s approval** to attack Jerusalem was also almost certainly false propaganda meant to demoralize the Judahites (see also the previous note).

18:26 Hezekiah’s officials evidently knew both **Aramaic**, the language of the Assyrian empire, and **Hebrew**, whereas the inhabitants of Jerusalem knew only Hebrew. The Assyrians spoke in Hebrew in order to make a direct appeal to the people to surrender so that they would not have to eat and drink their own waste in a siege (v. 27).

18:31-35 For a third time (see vv. 22,30), the arrogant Assyrian official attacked the Israelites’ faith in the Lord. He said that Hezekiah **misleads** with promises that **the LORD will rescue** (v. 32). It is not difficult to see why the unbelieving spokesman thought that just as other gods had failed to deliver their people from Assyria, so it would also be with God in the case of his people living in Jerusalem (19:10-13). He was wrong (see the note on 19:14-19).

HEZEKIAH SEEKS ISAIAH'S COUNSEL

19 When King Hezekiah heard their report, he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, † and went into the LORD's temple. † 2 He sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, † and the leading priests, who were wearing sackcloth, † to the prophet Isaiah † son of Amoz. 3 They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: 'Today is a day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace, for children have come to the point of birth, † but there is no strength to deliver them. 4 Perhaps the LORD your God † will hear † all the words of the royal spokesman, whom his master the king of Assyria sent to mock the living God, and will rebuke † him for the words that the LORD your God has heard. Therefore, offer a prayer for the surviving remnant.' " †
5 So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, 6 who said to them, "Tell your master, 'The LORD says this: Don't be afraid † because of the words you have heard, with which the king of Assyria's attendants † have blasphemed † me. 7 I am about to put a spirit in him, and he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, † where I will cause him to fall by the sword.' " †

SENNACHERIB'S DEPARTING THREAT

8 When † the royal spokesman heard that the king of Assyria had pulled out of Lachish, † he left and found him fighting against Libnah. † 9 The king had heard concerning King Tirhakah of Cush, "Look, he has set out to fight against you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Say this to King Hezekiah of Judah: 'Don't let your God, on whom you rely, † deceive you by promising that Jerusalem will not be handed over to the king of Assyria. †
11 Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries: They completely destroyed them. Will you be rescued? 12 Did the gods of the nations † that my predecessors destroyed rescue them — nations such as Gozan, † Haran, † Rezeph, and the Edenites † in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of † Sepharvaim, Hena, or Ivvah? ' " †

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

14 Hezekiah took † the letter † from the messengers' hands, read it, then went up to the LORD's temple, and spread it out before the LORD. † 15 Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD:

LORD God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, † you are God — you alone — of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. †

16 Listen closely, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see. † Hear the words that Sennacherib has sent to mock the living God. † 17 LORD, it is true that the kings of Assyria have devastated the nations and their lands. † 18 They have thrown their gods into the fire, for they were not gods but made by human hands — wood and stone. † So they have destroyed them. 19 Now, LORD our God, please save us from his power so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are God — you alone. †

GOD'S ANSWER THROUGH ISAIAH

20 Then † Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "The LORD, the God of Israel says, 'I have heard your prayer † to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria.' † 21 This is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

Virgin Daughter Zion †
despises you and scorns you;
Daughter Jerusalem
shakes her head behind your back. †

22 Who is it you mocked and blasphemed? †
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel! †

23 You have mocked the Lord † through † your messengers. †
You have said, 'With my many chariots †
I have gone up to the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon.
I cut down its tallest cedars,
its choice cypress trees.
I came to its farthest outpost,

its densest forest.
24 I dug wells and drank water in foreign lands.
I dried up all the streams of Egypt †
with the soles of my feet.’

25 Have you not heard? †
I designed it long ago;
I planned it in days gone by.
I have now brought it to pass, †
and you have crushed fortified cities
into piles of rubble.
26 Their inhabitants have become powerless, dismayed, and ashamed.
They are plants of the field,
tender grass,
grass on the rooftops, †
blasted by the east wind. †

27 But I know your sitting down, †
your going out and your coming in,
and your raging against me.
28 Because your raging against me and your arrogance have reached my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose †
and my bit in your mouth;
I will make you go back
the way you came.

29 “This will be the sign † for you: This year you will eat what grows on its own, and in the second year what grows from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 30 The surviving remnant † of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward. 31 For a remnant will go out from Jerusalem, and survivors, from Mount Zion. † The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this. †

32 Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: He will not
enter this city,
shoot an arrow here,
come before it with a shield,
or build up a siege ramp against it. †
33 He will go back the way he came,
and he will not enter this city.

This is the LORD's declaration.

34 I will defend this city and rescue it for my sake and for the sake of my
servant David." †

DEFEAT AND DEATH OF SENNACHERIB

35 That night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next morning — there were all the dead bodies! † 36 So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and left. He returned home and lived in Nineveh. †
37 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech † and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped to the land of Ararat. † Then his son Esar-haddon † became king in his place.

19:13 Or *king of Lair,* **19:23** Many mss read *Lord* **19:23** Lit *by the hand of* **19:26** DSS; MT reads *blasted before standing grain* ; Is 37:27
19:1 1Kg 21:27; 2Kg 18:37; Ps 69:11 **19:1** 2Ch 32:20; Is 37:1 **19:2** 2Kg 18:26,37 **19:2** 2Sm 3:31 **19:2** Is 1:1; 2:1 **19:3** Hs 13:13 **19:4** 1Sm 17:26; 2Kg 18:35 **19:4** Jos 14:12; 2Sm 16:12 **19:4** Ps 50:21 **19:4** 2Kg 19:30; Is 1:9 **19:6** Is 37:6 **19:6** 2Kg 18:17 **19:6** 2Kg 18:22-25,30,35 **19:7** 2Kg 7:6 **19:7** 2Kg 19:35-37 **19:8-13** Is 37:8-13 **19:8** 2Kg 18:14 **19:8** Jos 10:29 **19:10** 2Kg 18:5 **19:10** 2Kg 18:29-30 **19:12** 2Kg 18:33,35 **19:12** 2Kg 17:6 **19:12** Gn 11:31 **19:12** Is 37:12 **19:13** 2Kg 18:34 **19:14-19** Is 37:14-20 **19:14** 2Kg 5:7 **19:14** Is 37:14 **19:15** Ex 25:22 **19:15** Gn 1:1; 2Kg 5:15; Is 44:6 **19:16** Dn 9:18 **19:16** 2Kg 19:4; Ps 31:2; Is 37:17 **19:17** 2Kg 18:34 **19:18** Is 44:9-20; Jr 10:3-5; Ac 17:29 **19:19** 1Kg 8:42-43; Is 43:10-11 **19:20-34** Is 37:21-35 **19:20** 2Kg 20:5 **19:20** Is 37:21 **19:21** Jr 14:17; Lm 2:13 **19:21** Ps 22:7-8; 109:25; Mt 27:39 **19:22** 2Kg 19:4,6 **19:22** Is 5:24; 30:11-15; Jr 51:5 **19:23** 2Kg 18:17; 19:4 **19:23** Ps 20:7; Jr 50:37 **19:24** Is 19:6 **19:25** Is 40:21; 45:7 **19:25** Is 10:5 **19:26** Ps 129:6 **19:27** Ps 139:1-2 **19:28** Ezk 19:9; 29:4; 38:4 **19:29** Ex 3:14; 2Kg 20:8-9; Is 7:14 **19:30** 2Kg 19:4; 2Ch 32:22-23 **19:31** Is 10:20 **19:31** Is 9:7 **19:32** Is 8:7-10 **19:34** 1Kg 11:12-13; 2Kg 20:6; Is 31:5 **19:35** 2Ch 32:21; Is 37:36 **19:36** Jnh 1:2 **19:37** 2Kg 17:31 **19:37** Gn 8:4; Jr 51:27 **19:37** Gn 10:11; Ezr 4:2

19:1-7 Hezekiah's response to a report of these threats was one of deep humility (v. 1). He also sent a message to the prophet **Isaiah**, asking him to pray (vv. 2-4). Isaiah replied with an encouragement that God had heard the Assyrians' blasphemy and would cause Sennacherib to **return to his own land** where he would be put to death (vv. 5-7).

19:14-19 Soon, just as God had said in vv. 7-8, Sennacherib would turn back toward his own land. His threat in vv. 10-13 reiterated what the Assyrian spokesman had said earlier (see the note on 18:31-35), but Hezekiah knew the flaw in their reasoning and identified it in his prayer. God is not like the so-called gods that the Assyrians had conquered. Those **were not gods** (v. 18), and God alone *is* God (v. 15), **the living God** (vv. 4,16) who **made the heavens and the earth.** He is also the **God of Israel** (v. 15), and Hezekiah appealed to him for salvation **so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that** [he is] **God** (v. 19). Hezekiah was praying in the **temple** (v. 14), and Solomon's prayer of dedication for this same temple had expressed a similar desire for worldwide knowledge of God (see the note on 1Kg 8:41-43).

19:20-23 Isaiah sent another message to Hezekiah declaring the word of God, reaffirming that he had heard the mockery and blasphemy of Assyria (see vv. 5-7). As the true God who had ordained Sennacherib's steps (vv. 25-26), he would also punish the arrogant king (vv. 27-28).

19:34 God was zealous to deliver Israel (v. 31), both for his own sake and for David's. This statement shows that God acted out of a deep concern for his own name and for his promises to David (see 20:6; notes on 13:22-23 and Ex 9:13-16).

19:35-37 The Lord's judgment on the Assyrian army was dramatic and devastating. As God had said (see vv. 7,32-33), Sennacherib returned to his own land where two of his sons killed him. His death **while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch** ironically demonstrated that it was his own god that was impotent, not the Lord (see the note on 18:31-35).

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

20 In those days † Hezekiah became terminally ill. † The prophet Isaiah † son of Amoz came and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your house in order, for you are about to die; you will not recover.' " †
2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall † and prayed to the LORD,
3 "Please, LORD, remember † how I have walked before you faithfully and wholeheartedly and have done what pleases you." † † And Hezekiah wept bitterly. †
4 Isaiah had not yet gone out of the inner courtyard when the word of the LORD came to him: 5 "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader † of my people, 'This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; † I have seen your tears. Look, I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the LORD's temple. 6 I will add fifteen years to your life. I will rescue you and this city from the grasp of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.' " †
7 Then Isaiah said, "Bring a lump of pressed figs." So they brought it and applied it to his infected skin, and he recovered. †

8 Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, “What is the sign † that the LORD will heal me and
that I will go up to the LORD’s temple on the third day? ”
9 Isaiah said, “This is the sign † to you from the LORD that he will do what he
has promised: Should the shadow go ahead ten steps or go back ten steps? ”
10 Then Hezekiah answered, “It’s easy for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. No,
let the shadow go back ten steps.” 11 So the prophet Isaiah called out to the
LORD, and he brought the shadow † back the ten steps it had descended on the
stairway of Ahaz. † †

HEZEKIAH’S FOLLY

12 At that time † Merodach-baladan † son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent
letters and a gift to Hezekiah since he heard that he had been sick. 13 Hezekiah
listened to the letters and showed the envoys his whole treasure house — the
silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil — and his armory, and
everything that was found in his treasuries. There was nothing in his palace and
in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. †
14 Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, “Where did
these men come from and what did they say to you? ”
Hezekiah replied, “They came from a distant country, from Babylon.”
15 Isaiah asked, “What have they seen in your palace? ”
Hezekiah answered, “They have seen everything in my palace. There isn’t
anything in my treasuries that I didn’t show them.”
16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: 17 ‘Look, the days
are coming when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored
up until today will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left,’ † says the
LORD. 18 ‘Some of your descendants — who come from you, whom you father
— will be taken away, † and they will become eunuchs † in the palace of the
king of Babylon.’ ” †
19 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is
good,” † for he thought: Why not, if there will be peace and security during my
lifetime?

HEZEKIAH’S DEATH

20 The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign, along with all his might and how
he made the pool † and the tunnel and brought water into the city, † are written
in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 21 Hezekiah rested with his fathers,
and his son Manasseh became king in his place. †

20:3 Lit *what is good in your eyes* **20:11** Lit *shadow on the steps* **20:11** Tg, Vg; DSS read *on the steps of Ahaz's roof chamber* ; Is 38:8 **20:12** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, some Vg mss, Is 39:1; other Hb mss read *Berodach-baladan* **20:18** Or *court officials*

20:1-11 Is 38:1-8 **20:1** 2Ch 32:24 **20:1** Is 1:1; 2:1 **20:1** 2Sm 17:23 **20:2** 1Kg 21:4 **20:3** Neh 5:19; 13:14,22,31 **20:3** 2Kg 18:3-6 **20:3** 2Sm 12:21-22 **20:5** 1Sm 9:16; 10:1 **20:5** Ps 39:12 **20:6** 2Kg 19:34 **20:7** Is 38:21 **20:8** Jdg 6:17,37,39 **20:9** Is 38:7 **20:11** Jos 10:12-14; Is 38:8 **20:12-19** Is 39:1-8 **20:13** 2Ch 32:27 **20:17** 2Kg 24:13; 2Ch 36:10 **20:18** 2Kg 24:12; 2Ch 33:11 **20:18** Dn 1:3-7,11 **20:19** 1Sm 3:18; 2Kg 22:20 **20:20** Neh 3:16; Is 7:3 **20:20** 2Ch 32:30 **20:20** 2Kg 16:19 **20:20-21** 2Ch 32:32-33

20:2-3 Although Isaiah had already brought him a message from God saying that he would die (v. 1), Hezekiah prayed to God to **remember** him. God heard his prayer and gave him fifteen more years of life (vv. 4-6).

20:8-10 Once again, Hezekiah was given a **sign** accompanying an answer to prayer (see 19:29).

20:16-18 Hezekiah foolishly showed off his treasures to the Babylonian visitors (vv. 12-15), and Isaiah declared that these treasures would **be carried off to Babylon** as a result. Some of his descendants would also be **eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.** Judah would indeed be defeated and exiled by the Babylonians.

20:19 Hezekiah's response seems selfish, though some have suggested that it reflects his acceptance of God's plan of judgment.

JUDAH'S KING MANASSEH

21 Manasseh † was twelve years old when he became king, and he
reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was
Hephzibah. † 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, † imitating the
detestable practices of the nations that the LORD had dispossessed before the
Israelites. † 3 He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had
destroyed † and reestablished the altars for Baal. He made an Asherah, † as
King Ahab of Israel had done; † he also bowed in worship to all the stars in the
sky † and served them. 4 He built altars in the LORD's temple, † where the LORD
had said, "Jerusalem is where I will put my name." † 5 He built altars to all the
stars in the sky † in both courtyards of the LORD's temple. † 6 He sacrificed his
son in the fire, † † practiced witchcraft and divination, and consulted mediums

and spiritists. † He did a huge amount of evil in the LORD's sight, angering him. †
7 Manasseh set up the carved image of Asherah, which he made, in the temple that the LORD had spoken about to David and his son Solomon: "I will establish my name forever in this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. † 8 I will never again cause the feet of the Israelites to wander from the land I gave to their ancestors if only they will be careful to do all I have commanded them — the whole law that my servant Moses commanded them." † 9 But they did not listen; Manasseh caused them to stray so that they did worse evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites. †
10 The LORD said through his servants the prophets, 11 "Since King Manasseh of Judah has committed all these detestable acts † — worse evil than the Amorites † who preceded him had done — and by means of his idols has also caused Judah to sin, 12 this is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I am about to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that everyone who hears about it will shudder. † † 13 I will stretch over Jerusalem the measuring line used on Samaria and the mason's level used on the house of Ahab, † and I will wipe † Jerusalem clean as one wipes a bowl — wiping it and turning it upside down. 14 I will abandon the remnant † of my inheritance and hand them over to their enemies. They will become plunder and spoil to all their enemies, 15 because they have done what is evil in my sight and have angered me from the day their ancestors came out of Egypt until today.' " †
16 Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem with it from one end to another. † This was in addition to his sin that he caused Judah to commit, so that they did what was evil in the LORD's sight.

MANASSEH'S DEATH

17 The rest † of the events of Manasseh's reign, along with all his accomplishments and the sin that he committed, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. † 18 Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in the garden of his own house, the garden of Uzza. His son Amon became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING AMON

19 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, † and he reigned two
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz;
she was from Jotbah. 20 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as his
father Manasseh had done. † 21 He walked in all the ways his father had
walked; he served the idols his father had served, and he bowed in worship to
them. † 22 He abandoned the LORD God of his ancestors † and did not walk in
the ways of the LORD. †
23 Amon's servants conspired against him and put the king to death in his own
house. † 24 The common people † killed † all who had conspired against King
Amon, and they made his son Josiah † king in his place.
25 The rest of the events of Amon's reign, along with his accomplishments, are
written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. 26 He was buried in his tomb
in the garden of Uzza, and his son Josiah became king in his place.

21:6 Lit *He made his son pass through the fire* **21:12** Lit *about it, his two ears will tingle* ; Hb obscure
21:24 Lit *The people of the land*
21:1-9 2Ch 33:1-9 **21:1** Is 62:4 **21:2** 2Kg 20:16; Jr 15:4 **21:2** 2Kg 16:3 **21:3** 2Kg 18:4; 2Ch 31:1 **21:3** 2Kg 23:26 **21:3** 1Kg 16:32-33 **21:3** 2Kg 17:16; 23:5 **21:4** 2Kg 16:10-16 **21:4** Dt 12:11,14; 1Kg 11:13 **21:5** 2Kg 23:4-5 **21:5** 1Kg 7:12; 2Kg 23:12 **21:6** Lv 18:21; 2Kg 16:3; 2Ch 28:3 **21:6** Lv 19:26,31; Dt 18:10-12; 2Kg 23:24 **21:6** 2Kg 23:26 **21:7** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 11:32 **21:8** 2Sm 7:10; 1Kg 9:1-9 **21:9** 1Kg 14:9 **21:11** 2Kg 21:2; 24:3-4 **21:11** Gn 15:16; 1Kg 21:16 **21:12** 1Sm 3:11; Jr 19:3 **21:13** Is 34:11; Am 7:7-8 **21:13** 2Kg 23:27 **21:14** 2Kg 19:4; Jr 6:9 **21:15** Ex 32:22; Jr 25:7 **21:16** 2Kg 24:4 **21:17-18** 2Ch 33:18-20 **21:17** 2Kg 20:20 **21:19-24** 2Ch 33:21-25 **21:20** 2Kg 21:2-7,11,16 **21:21** 2Kg 16:2 **21:22** 1Kg 11:33 **21:22** 2Kg 22:17 **21:23** 2Kg 12:20; 14:19 **21:24** 2Kg 14:5 **21:24** 2Kg 22:1

21:1-9 Manasseh was a very evil king, as this lengthy list of sins show. He imitated the practices of the Canaanites (v. 2) and of Ahab (v. 3). He undid some of the good that his father Hezekiah had done and even set up altars to others gods within the temple. He also **sacrificed his son**, a descendant of David, **in the fire.**

21:10-14 Manasseh and the inhabitants of Judah not only failed to meet the condition of obedience necessary for their continued dwelling in the land (v. 8) but also did **worse evil** than the nations God had driven out of Canaan (vv. 9,11). The people had thus seriously offended God (see the note on Dt 7:1-6) and would be judged. Judah would fall to a foreign nation and be exiled, just as Israel had been (vv. 13-14).

21:19-22 Amon was also an evil king and followed in the bad example of his father Manasseh (see vv. 2-9).

JUDAH'S KING JOSIAH

22 Josiah † was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned
thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the

daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. † 2 He did what was right in the LORD's sight and walked in all the ways of his ancestor David; † he did not turn to the right or the left. †

JOSIAH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

3 In the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the king sent the court secretary Shaphan son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, to the LORD's temple, † saying, 4 "Go up to the high priest Hilkiah so that he may total up the silver brought into the LORD's temple — the silver the doorkeepers have collected from the people. † 5 It is to be given to those doing the work — those who oversee the LORD's temple. They in turn are to give it to the workmen in the LORD's temple to repair the damage. † 6 They are to give it to the carpenters, builders, and masons to buy timber and quarried stone to repair the temple. † 7 But no accounting is to be required from them for the silver given to them since they work with integrity." †

THE BOOK OF THE LAW FOUND

8 The high priest Hilkiah told the court secretary Shaphan, “I have found the book of the law † in the LORD’s temple,” and he gave the book to Shaphan, who read it.

9 Then the court secretary Shaphan went to the king and reported, † “Your servants have emptied out the silver that was found in the temple and have given it to those doing the work — those who oversee the LORD’s temple.” 10 Then the court secretary Shaphan told the king, “The priest Hilkiah has given me a book,” and Shaphan read it in the presence of the king. †

11 When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. †

12 Then he commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam † son of Shaphan, Achbor † son of Micaiah, the court secretary Shaphan, and the king’s servant Asaiah: 13 “Go and inquire of the LORD for me, the people, and all Judah about the words in this book that has been found. For great is the LORD’s wrath that is kindled against us because our ancestors have not obeyed the words of this book in order to do everything written about us.” †

HULDAH’S PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT

14 So † the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess † Huldah, wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, † son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem in the Second District. † They spoke with her.

15 She said to them, “This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Say to the man who sent you to me, 16 ‘This is what the LORD says: I am about to bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants, fulfilling † all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read, † 17 because they have abandoned me and burned incense to other gods in order to anger me with all the work of their hands. My wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched.’ † 18 Say this to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the LORD: ‘This is what the LORD God of Israel says: As for the words that you heard, † 19 because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD † when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would

become a desolation and a curse, † and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I myself have heard' — this is the LORD's declaration. 20 'Therefore, I will indeed gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace. † Your eyes will not see all the disaster that I am bringing on this place.' "

Then they reported † to the king.

22:9 Lit *and returned a word to the king and said* **22:16** *fulfilling* supplied for clarity **22:20** Lit *returned a word*

22:1-2 2Ch 34:1-2 **22:1** Jos 15:39 **22:2** 1Kg 14:8 **22:2** Dt 5:32; Jos 1:7 **22:3** 2Ch 34:8 **22:4** 2Kg 12:4,9-10 **22:5** 2Kg 12:5 **22:6** 2Kg 12:11-12 **22:7** 2Kg 12:15; 1Co 4:2 **22:8** Dt 31:24-26; 2Ch 34:14-15 **22:10** Dt 17:18-20 **22:11** Gn 37:34; Jos 7:6 **22:12** 2Kg 25:22; Jr 26:24 **22:12** 2Ch 34:20 **22:13** Dt 29:24-28; 31:17-18 **22:14-20** 2Ch 34:22-28 **22:14** Ex 15:20 **22:14** 2Ch 34:22 **22:14** Zph 1:10 **22:16** Dt 29:27; Dn 9:11-14 **22:17** Dt 29:25-26; 1Kg 9:9 **22:18** 2Ch 34:26 **22:19** 1Sm 24:5; 1Kg 21:29 **22:19** Dt 28:15; Jr 26:6 **22:20** 2Kg 20:19; 23:30

22:1-2 After two bad kings came **Josiah**, one of Judah's better kings (see the note on 23:24-25).

22:5-7 Temple repairs had also been undertaken earlier under Joash (see 12:4-16).

22:8-10 The discovery of **the book of the law** in the temple indicates that the law of Moses had been severely neglected for some time (see v. 13; note on 14:5-6). The Israelites and their kings had failed miserably in their responsibility to heed Scripture (see 21:8; Dt 17:18-20).

22:11-13 Josiah's response to **the words of the book of the law** indicated that he understood its teaching that God would judge his people for their disobedience (see Dt 28:15-68). The prophetess Huldah confirmed this (vv. 14-17).

22:19-20 Although God would bring disaster on Judah (see also 21:13-14), Josiah's responsiveness and humility resulted in his being spared from having to experience it (see also 20:19).

COVENANT RENEWAL

23 So the king sent messengers, † and they gathered all the elders † of Judah and Jerusalem to him. 2 Then the king went to the LORD's temple with all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the prophets — all the people from the youngest to the oldest. He read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant † that had been found in the LORD's temple. † 3 Next, the king stood by the pillar † † and made a covenant † in the LORD's presence to follow the LORD and to keep his commands, his decrees, and his statutes with all his heart and with all his soul † in order to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book; all the people agreed to † the covenant. †

JOSIAH'S REFORMS

4 Then the king commanded the high priest Hilkiah † and the priests of the
second rank † and the doorkeepers to bring out of the LORD's sanctuary all the
articles made for Baal, Asherah, and all the stars in the sky. † He burned them
outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron and carried their ashes to Bethel. †
5 Then he did away with the idolatrous priests the kings of Judah had appointed
to burn incense at the high places † in the cities of Judah and in the areas
surrounding Jerusalem. They had burned incense to Baal, and to the sun, moon,
constellations, and all the stars in the sky. † 6 He brought out the Asherah
pole † from the LORD's temple to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem. He
burned it at the Kidron Valley, † beat it to dust, † and threw its dust on the
graves of the common people. † † 7 He also tore down the houses of the male
cult prostitutes † that were in the LORD's temple, in which the women were
weaving tapestries † for Asherah. †
8 Then Josiah brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and he defiled the
high places † from Geba † to Beer-sheba, † where the priests had burned
incense. He tore down the high places of the city gates at the entrance of the gate
of Joshua the governor of the city (on the left at the city gate). 9 The priests of
the high places, however, did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem;
instead, they ate unleavened bread with their fellow priests. †
10 He defiled Topheth, † which is in Ben Hinnom Valley, † so that no one
could sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire † † to Molech. † 11 He did away
with the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They had been
at the entrance of the LORD's temple in the precincts by the chamber of Nathan-
melech, the eunuch. He also burned the chariots of the sun. †
12 The king tore down the altars that the kings of Judah had made on the roof †
of Ahaz's upper chamber. † He also tore down the altars that Manasseh had
made † in the two courtyards of the LORD's temple. Then he smashed them †
there and threw their dust into the Kidron Valley. 13 The king also defiled the
high places that were across from Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of
Destruction, which King Solomon of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the abhorrent
idol of the Sidonians; for Chemosh, the abhorrent idol of Moab; and for Milcom,

the detestable idol of the Ammonites. † 14 He broke the sacred pillars into pieces, † cut down the Asherah poles, † then filled their places with human bones.
15 He even tore down the altar at Bethel † and the high place † that had been made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. He burned the high place, crushed it to dust, and burned the Asherah. † 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the mountain. He sent someone to take the bones out of the tombs, and he burned them on the altar. † He defiled it according to the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God † who proclaimed these things. †
17 Then he said, "What is this monument I see? "
The men of the city told him, "It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things that you have done to the altar at Bethel." †
18 So he said, "Let him rest. Don't let anyone disturb his bones." So they left his bones undisturbed with the bones of the prophet who came from Samaria. †
19 Josiah also removed all the shrines of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to anger the LORD. † Josiah did the same things to them that he had done at Bethel. 20 He slaughtered on the altars all the priests of those high places, † and he burned human bones on the altars. † Then he returned to Jerusalem.

PASSOVER OBSERVED

21 The king commanded all the people, "Observe the Passover of the LORD your God as written in the book of the covenant." † 22 No such Passover had ever been observed from the time of the judges who judged Israel through the entire time of the kings of Israel and Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, the LORD's Passover was observed in Jerusalem. †

FURTHER ZEAL FOR THE LORD

24 In addition, Josiah eradicated the mediums, the spiritists, † household idols, † images, and all the abhorrent things † that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem. He did this in order to carry out the words of the law that were written in the book that the priest Hilkiah found in the LORD's

temple. † 25 Before him there was no king like him who turned to the LORD with
all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength † according to all the
law of Moses, and no one like him arose after him. †
26 In spite of all that, the LORD did not turn from the fury of his intense burning
anger, which burned against Judah because of all the affronts with which
Manasseh had angered him. † 27 For the LORD had said, "I will also remove
Judah from my presence just as I have removed Israel. † I will reject this city
Jerusalem, that I have chosen, and the temple about which I said, 'My name will
be there.' " †

JOSIAH'S DEATH

28 The rest of the events of Josiah's reign, † along with all his
accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings.
29 During his reign, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt † marched up to help the king
of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went to confront him, and at
Megiddo † when Neco saw him he killed him. 30 From Megiddo his servants
carried his dead body in a chariot, brought him into Jerusalem, and buried him in
his own tomb. † Then the common people † took Jehoahaz son of Josiah,
anointed him, and made him king in place of his father. †

JUDAH'S KING JEHOAHAZ

31 Jehoahaz † was † twenty-three years old when he became king, and he
reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal † daughter
of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 32 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight
just as his ancestors had done. † 33 Pharaoh Neco imprisoned him at Riblah †
in the land of Hamath † to keep him from reigning in Jerusalem, and he
imposed on the land a fine of seventy-five hundred pounds † of silver and
seventy-five pounds † of gold.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOIAKIM

34 Then † Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim † son of Josiah king in place of his
father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. † But Neco took

Jehoahaz and went to Egypt, and he died there. † 35 So Jehoiakim gave the
silver and the gold to Pharaoh, but at Pharaoh's command he taxed the land to
give it. He exacted the silver and the gold from the common people, each
according to his assessment, † to give it to Pharaoh Neco.
36 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned
eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah;
she was from Rumah. 37 He did what was evil † in the LORD's sight just as his
ancestors had done.

23:3 2Ch 34:31 reads *platform* **23:3** Lit *people took a stand in* **23:6** Lit *the sons of the people* **23:7** Or *clothing* **23:10** Lit *could make his son or daughter pass through the fire* **23:12** Text emended; MT reads *he ran from* **23:16** LXX adds *when Jeroboam stood by the altar of the feast. And he turned and raised his eyes to the tomb of the man of God* **23:30** Lit *the people of the land*, also in v. 35 **23:33** Lit *100 talents* **23:33** Lit *one talent*

23:1 2Ch 34:29-32 **23:1** 2Kg 10:1 **23:2** Dt 31:10-13 **23:2** 2Kg 22:8 **23:3** 1Kg 7:15; 2Kg 11:14 **23:3** 2Kg 11:17 **23:3** Dt 6:4-6; 13:4 **23:3** Ex 24:3-8; Jos 24:14-28 **23:4** 2Kg 22:8,14 **23:4** 2Kg 25:18; Jr 35:4; 52:24 **23:4** 2Kg 21:3,7; 2Ch 33:3 **23:4** 2Kg 23:15 **23:5** 2Kg 16:4 **23:5** 2Kg 21:3 **23:6** 1Kg 14:15,23; 2Kg 18:4; 21:7 **23:6** 1Kg 15:13 **23:6** 2Kg 23:15 **23:6** 2Ch 34:4; Jr 26:23 **23:7** Dt 23:17; 1Kg 14:24; 15:12 **23:7** Ex 38:8; Ezk 16:16 **23:8** 2Kg 18:4 **23:8** Jos 21:17; 1Kg 15:22 **23:8** 1Sm 3:20 **23:9** Ezk 44:10-14 **23:10** Is 30:33; Jr 7:31-32 **23:10** Jos 15:8 **23:10** Lv 18:21; 20:2-5 **23:10** 1Kg 11:7; Jr 32:35 **23:11** Dt 4:19; Ezk 8:16 **23:12** Jr 19:13; Zph 1:4-5 **23:12** 2Kg 20:11 **23:12** 2Kg 21:5; 2Ch 33:5 **23:13** 1Kg 11:5-8 **23:14** Ex 23:24 **23:14** 2Kg 18:4 **23:15** 1Kg 13:1-3 **23:15** 1Kg 12:28-33 **23:15** 2Kg 23:6 **23:16** 2Ch 34:5 **23:16** 1Kg 13:2 **23:17** 1Kg 13:1,31-32 **23:18** 1Kg 13:29-31 **23:19** 2Ch 34:6-7 **23:20** 1Kg 12:31; 13:2 **23:20** 2Kg 10:25; 11:18; 2Ch 34:5 **23:21** Nm 9:1-14; Dt 16:1-8; 2Ch 35:1-6 **23:22-23** 2Ch 35:18-19 **23:24** Lv 19:31; 2Kg 21:6 **23:24** Gn 31:19 **23:24** Dt 7:26; 2Kg 16:3 **23:24** 2Kg 22:8; 23:2-3 **23:25** Dt 6:4-9; 2Kg 23:3 **23:25** 1Kg 3:12; 2Kg 18:5 **23:26** 2Kg 21:11-13; Jr 15:4 **23:27** 2Kg 18:11-12 **23:27** Dt 12:11; 1Kg 9:3; 2Kg 21:4 **23:28-30** 2Ch 35:20-27 **23:29** Jr 46:2 **23:29** Jdg 5:19 **23:30** 2Kg 9:28 **23:30** 2Ch 36:1 **23:31** 1Ch 3:15; Jr 22:11 **23:31-33** 2Ch 36:2-3 **23:31** 2Kg 24:18 **23:32** 2Kg 21:2-7 **23:33** 2Kg 25:6 **23:33** 1Kg 8:65 **23:34-37** 2Ch 36:4-5 **23:34** 1Ch 3:15 **23:34** 2Kg 24:17; 2Ch 36:4 **23:34** Jr 22:11-12; Ezk 19:3-4 **23:35** Ex 30:12-16; Lv 27:2-8 **23:37** Jr 22:13-19; 36:1-26

23:1-3 Josiah proceeded with reforms in accordance with what was commanded in the recently discovered book (see 22:8-10). He led the people to commit themselves to follow God's commands and took decisive action against the many forms of idolatry found in his kingdom (see vv. 4-20).

23:12-15 Previous kings **Ahaz**, **Manasseh**, and **Solomon** were responsible for some of the idolatrous worship that had been going on.

23:16-18 Josiah's defilement of **the altar at Bethel** by burning human bones on it fulfilled the prophecy of this unnamed **man of God** (cp. 1Kg 13:2). Upon learning of his tomb's proximity, Josiah commanded that his remains be left undisturbed.

23:21-23 God had commanded that **the Passover** be celebrated every year (Ex 12:1-14; Lv 23:4-5; Nm 9:2-3), but the Israelites had neglected it from the **time of the judges** until Josiah's celebration.

23:24-25 Josiah's zeal to obey the Scripture in ridding the land of idolatry was unparalleled among the kings of Judah (see also the note on 18:3-6). In language reminiscent of Deuteronomy 6:5, he **turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength according to all the law of Moses** (see also v. 3). Nevertheless, the reforms were external and the hearts of the people were not turned

exclusively and faithfully to God. Thus, God's plan to punish Judah for its disobedience had not changed (vv. 26-27; see also 1Kg 9:6-9).

23:34 Following Jehoahaz's imprisonment by Pharaoh Neco (v. 33), his brother **Eliakim** (i.e., **Jehoiakim**) was made king.

JEHOIAKIM'S REBELLION AND DEATH

24 During † Jehoiakim's reign, † King Nebuchadnezzar † of Babylon † attacked. † Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years, and then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 The LORD sent Chaldean, Aramean, † Moabite, † and Ammonite raiders against Jehoiakim. He sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD he had spoken through his servants the prophets. † 3 Indeed, this happened to Judah at the LORD's command to remove them from his presence. † It was because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all he had done, † 4 and also because of all the innocent blood he had shed. He had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, † and the LORD was not willing to forgive.

5 The rest of the events of Jehoiakim's reign, along with all his accomplishments, are written in the Historical Record of Judah's Kings. †

6 Jehoiakim rested with his fathers, and his son Jehoiachin became king in his place. †

7 Now the king of Egypt did not march out of his land again, † for the king of Babylon took everything that had belonged to the king of Egypt, † from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River. †

JUDAH'S KING JEHOIACHIN

8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. † 9 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as his father had done.

DEPORTATIONS TO BABYLON

10 At that time † the servants of King Nebuchadnezzar † of Babylon marched up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. 11 King Nebuchadnezzar of

Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it. 12 King
Jehoiachin of Judah, along with his mother, his servants, his commanders, and
his officials, † surrendered to the king of Babylon. †
So the king of Babylon took him captive in the eighth year of his reign. 13 He
also carried off from there all the treasures of the LORD's temple and the
treasures of the king's palace, and he cut into pieces all the gold articles that
King Solomon of Israel had made † for the LORD's sanctuary, just as the LORD
had predicted. † 14 He deported all Jerusalem and all the commanders and all
the best soldiers † — ten thousand captives † including all the craftsmen and
metalsmiths. † Except for the poorest people of the land, † no one remained.
15 Nebuchadnezzar deported Jehoiachin to Babylon. He took the king's mother,
the king's wives, his officials, and the leading men of the land into exile from
Jerusalem to Babylon. † 16 The king of Babylon brought captive into Babylon
all seven thousand of the best soldiers and one thousand craftsmen and
metalsmiths — all strong and fit for war. 17 And the king of Babylon made
Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's † uncle, king in his place and changed his name to
Zedekiah. †

JUDAH'S KING ZEDEKIAH

18 Zedekiah † was twenty-one years old when he became king, † and he
reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal † daughter
of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 19 Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's
sight just as Jehoiakim had done. † 20 Because of the LORD's anger, † it came
to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he finally banished them from his
presence. † Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. †

24:12 Or *eunuchs* **24:17** Lit *his*
24:1-6 2Ch 36:6-8 **24:1** 2Kg 23:26-27 **24:1** 2Kg 24:10-11; Dn 1:1 **24:1** 2Kg 20:14 **24:1** Jr 35:11 **24:2** 2Kg 6:23 **24:2** 2Kg 13:20 **24:2** 2Kg 23:27 **24:3** 2Kg 18:25 **24:3** 2Kg 23:26 **24:4** 2Kg 21:16 **24:5** 2Kg 23:28 **24:5-6** Jr 22:18-19 **24:7** Jr 37:5-7 **24:7** Jr 46:2 **24:7** Gn 15:18; 1Kg 4:21; Is 27:12 **24:8-9** 2Ch 36:9; Jr 22:24-30 **24:10-17** 2Ch 36:10 **24:10** 2Kg 24:1; Dn 1:1 **24:12** 2Kg 25:27; Jr 22:24-30 **24:13** 1Kg 7:48-50 **24:13** 2Kg 20:16-18; Is 39:5-7 **24:14** Jr 24:1 **24:14** Jr 52:28 **24:14** Jr 24:1; 29:2 **24:14** 2Kg 25:12 **24:15** 2Ch 36:10; Jr 22:24-28 **24:17** 1Ch 3:15; 2Ch 36:11; Jr 1:3 **24:18** Jr 27:1; 28:1 **24:18-20** 2Ch 36:11-12; Jr 52:1-3 **24:18** 2Kg 23:31 **24:19** 2Kg 23:37 **24:20** Dt 4:26; 29:27; 2Kg 23:26 **24:20** 2Kg 13:23 **24:20** 2Ch 36:13; Ezk 17:15

24:1-4 Jehoiakim's reign saw the first of three invasions by **King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** (see v. 10;

25:1). Judah's punishment by Babylon and other foreign nations was in fulfillment of the word of God **spoken through his servants the prophets** (see also 20:16-18). Special mention had also been made of **the sins of Manasseh** in 23:26 (see also 21:16).

24:10-16 Jehoiachin's reign also saw an invasion by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon (see previous note). The ruler took captive Jehoiachin and many other leaders to Babylon, and he also took **all the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king's palace** (see also the notes on 16:8 and 20:16-18).

24:20 Zedekiah was the last king of Judah, and his rebellion against Babylon would lead to the end of the kingdom of Judah.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

25 In the ninth year † of Zedekiah's reign, † on the tenth day of the tenth
month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem
with his entire army. † They laid siege to the city and built a siege wall against
it all around. † 2 The city was under siege until King Zedekiah's eleventh year.
3 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that
the common people had no food. † 4 Then the city was broken into, † and all
the warriors fled † at night by way of the city gate between the two walls near
the king's garden, † even though the Chaldeans surrounded the city. As the king
made his way along the route to the Arabah, † 5 the Chaldean army pursued
him and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. Zedekiah's entire army left him
and scattered. † 6 The Chaldeans seized the king † and brought him up to the
king of Babylon † at Riblah, † and they passed sentence on him. 7 They
slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes. Finally, the king of Babylon
blinded Zedekiah, bound him in bronze chains, and took him to Babylon. †

JERUSALEM DESTROYED

8 On † the seventh day of the fifth month — which was the nineteenth year of
King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon — Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, a
servant of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. † 9 He burned the LORD's
temple, † the king's palace, † and all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned
down † all the great houses. 10 The whole Chaldean army with the captain of
the guards tore down the walls † surrounding Jerusalem. 11 Nebuzaradan, the
captain of the guards, deported the rest of the people who remained in the city,
the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the

population. † 12 But the captain of the guards left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and farmers. †
13 Now † the Chaldeans broke into pieces the bronze pillars † of the LORD's temple, the water carts, and the bronze basin, † † which were in the LORD's temple, and carried the bronze to Babylon. † 14 They also took the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes, and all the bronze articles used in the priests' service. † 15 The captain of the guards took away the firepans and sprinkling basins — whatever was gold or silver. †
16 As for the two pillars, the one basin, and the water carts that Solomon had made for the LORD's temple, the weight of the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. † 17 One pillar was twenty-seven feet † tall and had a bronze capital on top of it. The capital, encircled by a grating and pomegranates of bronze, stood five feet † high. The second pillar was the same, with its own grating. †
18 The captain of the guards † also took away Seraiah † the chief priest, Zephaniah † the priest of the second rank, and the three doorkeepers. 19 From the city he took a court official † who had been appointed over the warriors; five trusted royal aides † † found in the city; the secretary of the commander of the army, who enlisted the people of the land for military duty; and sixty men from the common people † who were found within the city. 20 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. † 21 The king of Babylon put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile from its land. †

GEDALIAH MADE GOVERNOR

22 King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon appointed Gedaliah † son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, over the rest of the people he left in the land of Judah. † 23 When all the commanders of the armies — they and their men — heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. † The commanders included Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite — they

and their men. † 24 Gedaliah swore an oath to them and their men, assuring them, “Don’t be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well for you.” †
25 In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck down Gedaliah, and he died. Also, they killed the Judeans and the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. † 26 Then all the people, from the youngest to the oldest, and the commanders of the army, left and went to Egypt, for they were afraid of the Chaldeans. †

JEHOIACHIN PARDONED

27 On † the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Judah’s King Jehoiachin, in the year Evil-merodach became king of Babylon, he pardoned King Jehoiachin † of Judah and released him † from prison. † 28 He spoke kindly † to him and set his throne over the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. † 29 So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and he dined regularly in the presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life. † 30 As for his allowance, a regular allowance † was given to him by the king, a portion for each day, for the rest of his life.

25:13 Lit *sea* **25:17** Lit *18 cubits* **25:17** Lit *three cubits* **25:19** Or *eunuch* **25:19** Lit *five men who look on the king’s face* **25:19** Lit *the people of the land* **25:27** *and released him* supplied for clarity
25:1 Jr 32:1 **25:1-7** Jr 39:1-7; 52:4-11 **25:1** Jr 21:2; 34:1-2; Ezk 24:2 **25:1** Ezk 21:22 **25:3** 2Kg 6:24-25; Lm 4:9-10 **25:4** Jr 39:2 **25:4** Ezk 33:21 **25:4** Neh 3:15 **25:4** Dt 2:8 **25:5** Lv 26:36; Ezk 12:14; 17:21 **25:6** Jr 34:21-22 **25:6** Jr 32:4 **25:6** Nm 34:11; 2Kg 23:33; Jr 52:9 **25:7** Jr 39:6-7; Ezk 12:13 **25:8-12** Jr 39:8-10; 52:12-16 **25:8** 2Kg 24:12; Jr 39:9; 52:12 **25:9** 1Kg 9:8; 2Ch 36:19 **25:9** Jr 39:8; Am 2:5 **25:9** Jr 17:27 **25:10** 2Kg 24:13; Neh 1:3; Jr 50:15 **25:11** 2Ch 36:20; Jr 5:19; 39:1-9 **25:12** 2Kg 24:14; Jr 39:10; 40:7 **25:13-21** Jr 52:17-27 **25:13** 2Kg 20:17; 2Ch 36:18; Jr 52:17 **25:13** 1Kg 7:23; 2Ch 4:2-4 **25:13** Jr 27:19-22 **25:14** Ex 27:3; 1Kg 7:47-50; 2Ch 4:16 **25:15** 2Kg 24:13; Jr 15:13; 20:5 **25:16** 1Kg 7:47 **25:17** 1Kg 7:15-22 **25:18** Jr 39:9-13; 52:12-16,24 **25:18** 1Ch 6:14; Ezr 7:1 **25:18** Jr 21:1; 29:25,29 **25:19** Jr 52:25 **25:20** 2Kg 23:33 **25:21** Dt 28:63-64; 2Kg 23:27 **25:22** Jr 39:14; 40:7-9 **25:22** Is 1:9; Jr 40:5 **25:23** Jos 18:26 **25:23** Jr 40:7-8 **25:24** Jr 40:9 **25:25** Jr 41:1-2 **25:26** Is 30:2; Jr 43:4-7 **25:27-30** Jr 52:31-34 **25:27** 2Kg 24:12 **25:27** Gn 40:13,20 **25:28** 1Kg 8:50 **25:28** Ezr 5:5; 7:6,28 **25:29** 2Sm 9:7 **25:30** Gn 43:34; Neh 12:47

25:7 One of the last sights Zedekiah saw was the execution of his sons (see also Ezk 12:13).

25:9-12 Having already plundered the temple and the king’s palace (see 24:13), Nebuchadnezzar **burned** them along with all the houses in Jerusalem and **deported the rest of the people who remained in the city** (see 24:12-16). Only **the poorest** were left behind (see 24:14).

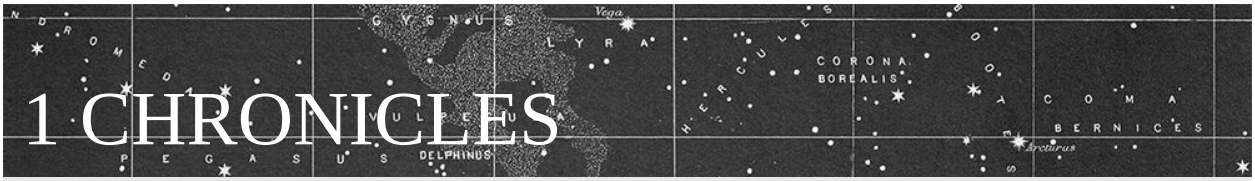
25:13-17 Solomon’s glorious temple had been plundered (24:13) and burned (v. 9), and now its bronze

articles were being dismantled and taken to Babylon. The Lord had said to Solomon that something like this would happen if the Israelites were disobedient to his law (see 1Kg 9:6-9). Judgment had finally come.

25:21 Judah's exile in 586 BC fulfilled the words of Moses and the prophets (e.g., 24:2; Dt 4:25-28).

25:26 The Israelites' flight to Egypt was a sad reversal of their exodus from there. The Lord did not want them to return (Dt 17:16), and their journey was associated with punishment for their disobedience (Dt 28:68).

25:27-30 Despite Israel's downward trend in 1 and 2 Kings ending in the fall and exile of both Israel and Judah, these books end on a positive note with a subtle reminder of God's continuing faithfulness to his promises to David, reflected by the favor shown to the captive king **Jehoiachin.** The Lord had not forgotten his covenant and would still bring through this royal line one whose throne would be established forever (see the notes on 8:16-19 and 2Sm 7:8-16).



1 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

The word *Chronicles* in Hebrew has the meaning of an ongoing account, almost like a journal or diary or minutes taken at a meeting. They are the first and second books of a four-book series that includes Ezra and Nehemiah. Together these four books provide a priestly history of Israel from the time of Adam to the rebuilding of the house of God and the walls of Jerusalem. At one time the book of Chronicles was probably one single scroll, which was divided later for convenience by those who translated the OT into Greek (the Septuagint, aka LXX).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: An ancient tradition ascribes the authorship of Chronicles to Ezra. The author must have lived some time after the return of the Jews to Israel from the Babylonian exile. He also had a strong interest in the reimplementation of the law and the temple, and he must have had access to historical records. All of these criteria suit Ezra, and this identification is corroborated by the fact that the last verses of Chronicles are the first verses of the book of Ezra. However, since the book does not explicitly claim Ezra for its author, in these notes we will refer to him simply as the "Chronicler."

BACKGROUND: The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles include extensive genealogies from the time of Adam and take the reader up to the period of the nation's exile and restoration. First Chronicles gives us the genealogies and focuses on the reign of King David. Second Chronicles focuses on all the kings who followed David up to the exile and restoration. It covers the same time period as 1 and 2 Kings, but 2 Chronicles focuses exclusively on the kings of Judah. The content of the books necessitates that they were written sometime after the return from the exile, perhaps the middle of the fifth century BC.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Chronicles brings together many dimensions of biblical revelation, such as historical events (as recounted in Genesis through Kings), temple ritual (as prescribed in Leviticus), sin and judgment (as preached by the prophets), and even some psalms. Because a recurring theme is that God will always accept people who return to him no matter how wicked they may have been, it has been called, perhaps a little whimsically, "The Gospel According to Ezra." The books of 1 and 2 Chronicles give us the big picture of OT history, capturing the Davidic covenant in light of Israel's history back to Adam and pointing to the eternal continuation of that covenant through the reign of the Messiah.

STRUCTURE

The Hebrew Bible divides its books into three categories: the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. In this arrangement, the books of Samuel and Kings are counted among the Prophets, whereas Chronicles belongs to the Writings. This classification may be partially due to the fact that Chronicles repeats information, such as the genealogies of Genesis and the histories of the kings of Judah from the books of Samuel and Kings. Still the Chronicler uses this repeated content to support his own point, and he also adds a lot of information that we find in Chronicles alone. He limits his discussion of the various kings almost entirely to those of Judah, the southern kingdom.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is sovereign in carrying out his kingdom plans. His unconditional covenant with undeserving David (chap. 17) is as magnificent as his covenant with Abraham. He desires the worship of his people in the ways he has revealed. (See alternative reading of 28:12 for the Holy Spirit's work in revealing the plans for temple construction.) David's concern for the ark of the covenant, his preparation for building the temple, and his organizing the priests and Levites properly show this.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The long genealogies at the beginning of 1 Chronicles show that God cares for people as individuals. Each one has worth as created in the image of God. If a historian took the trouble to discover and preserve these lists that may seem tedious, how much more does God care for the "little people" who can appear to be insignificant. Moreover, David modeled magnificently that humans can accomplish great tasks for God when their hearts are passionately turned to pleasing him.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The book's clearest teaching on salvation as the gift of God is David's psalm of thanksgiving when the ark of the covenant was finally moved into a tent (chap. 16). The conclusion especially demonstrates that the purpose of salvation is to bring glory to God: "Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. And say: 'Save us, God of our salvation; gather us and rescue us from the nations so that we may give thanks to your holy name and rejoice in your praise. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting'" (16:34-36).

1 CHRONICLES TIMELINE

1010–900 BC

DAVID 1010–970

With the death of Saul, David becomes king of Judah. **1010**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

David moves the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. **1000**

God's covenant with David **995**

Solomon becomes Israel's third king. **970**

Construction of the temple begins. **966**

Solomon dedicates the temple. **959**

900–825 BC

ASA 911–870

Notched flute is developed in Peru and Chile. **900**

First temple repair and reform under Asa **897**

Jehoshaphat **872–848**
Jehoram **853–841**
Ahaziah **841**
Etruscans settle in central Italy. **850–800**
Athaliah **841–835**

825–715 BC

JOASH 835–796

Second temple reform under Joash **812**
Amaziah **796–767**
Uzziah **792–740**
First Olympiad in Greece **776**
Traditional date for the founding of Rome **753**
Jotham **750–732**
Ahaz **735–716**

715–600 BC

HEZEKIAH 715–687

JOSIAH 641–609

Third temple reform under Hezekiah **715**
Manasseh **697–643**
Amon **643–641**
Fourth temple reform under Josiah **622**
Jehoahaz **609**
Jehoiakim **609–598**

600–425 BC

ZEDEKIAH 597–586

Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar II becomes the largest city on earth. **600**
Jehoiachin **598–597**
The temple in Jerusalem is destroyed under Zedekiah. **586**
Temple of Artemis in Ephesus, third of seven wonders of the ancient world **550**
Statue of Zeus at Olympia, fourth of seven wonders of the ancient world **466–456**

FROM ADAM TO ABRAHAM

1 Adam, † Seth, Enosh,
2 Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared,
3 Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech,

4 Noah, Noah's sons: †
Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

5 Japheth's † sons: Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal,
Meshech, and Tiras.
6 Gomer's sons: Ashkenaz, Riphath, † and Togarmah.
7 Javan's sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and Rodanim. †

8 Ham's sons: Cush, Mizraim, † Put, and Canaan.
9 Cush's sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raama, and Sabteca.
Raama's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
10 Cush fathered Nimrod, who was the first to become a great
warrior on earth.
11 Mizraim † fathered the people of Lud, Anam, Lehab, Naphtuh,
12 Pathrus, Casluh (the Philistines came from them), and
Caphtor. †
13 Canaan fathered Sidon as his firstborn and Heth, 14 as well as
the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, 15 Hivites, Arkites, Sinites,
16 Arvadites, Zemarites, and Hamathites.

17 Shem's † sons: Elam, Asshur, Arpachshad, Lud, Aram, Uz,
Hul, Gether, and Meshech.
18 Arpachshad fathered Shelah, and Shelah fathered Eber. 19 Two
sons were born to Eber. One of them was named Peleg † because
the earth was divided during his lifetime, and the name of his
brother was Joktan. 20 Joktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph,
Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 21 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22 Ebal, Abimael,
Sheba, 23 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All of these were Joktan's

sons.

24 Shem, † Arpachshad, Shelah,
25 Eber, Peleg, Reu,
26 Serug, Nahor, Terah,
27 and Abram (that is, Abraham).

ABRAHAM'S DESCENDANTS

28 Abraham's sons: Isaac and Ishmael.

29 These † are their family records: Nebaioth, Ishmael's firstborn,
Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 30 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadad,
Tema, 31 Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah.
These were Ishmael's sons.

32 The sons † born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine: Zimran,
Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.
Jokshan's sons: Sheba and Dedan.
33 Midian's sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah.
All of these were Keturah's descendants.

34 Abraham † fathered Isaac.
Isaac's sons: Esau and Israel. †
35 Esau's † sons: Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam, and Korah.
36 Eliphaz's sons: Teman, Omar, Zephi, Gatam, and Kenaz; and by
Timna, Amalek. †
37 Reuel's sons: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

THE EDOMITES

THE EDOMITES

38 Seir's † sons: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and
Dishan.
39 Lotan's sons: Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.
40 Shobal's sons: Alian, Manahath, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam.
Zibeon's sons: Aiah and Anah.
41 Anah's son: Dishon.
Dishon's sons: Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran.
42 Ezer's sons: Bilhan, Zaavan, and Jaakan.
Dishan's sons: Uz and Aran.

43 These † were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom
before any king reigned over the Israelites:
Bela son of Beor.
Bela's town was named Dinhabah.
44 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah † reigned
in his place.
45 When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites †
reigned in his place.
46 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian
in the territory of Moab, reigned in his place.
Hadad's town was named Avith.
47 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place.
48 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the Euphrates
River reigned in his place.
49 When Shaul died, Baal-hanan son of Achbor reigned
in his place.
50 When Baal-hanan died, Hadad reigned in his place.

Hadad's city was named Pai, and his wife's name was Mehetabel
daughter of Matred, daughter of Me-zahab.
51 Then Hadad died.

Edom's † chiefs: Timna, Alvah, † Jetheth, 52 Oholibamah, Elah,
Pinon, 53 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, 54 Magdiel, and Iram.
These were Edom's chiefs.

1:4 LXX; MT omits *Noah's sons* **1:6** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *Diphath* ; Gn 10:3 **1:7** Some Hb mss, Syr read *Dodanim* ; Gn 10:4 **1:8** = Egypt **1:19** = Division **1:36** LXX; MT reads *and Timna and Amalek* ; Gn 36:12 **1:51** Alt Hb tradition reads *Aliah*
1:1-4 Gn 4:25–5:32 **1:5-7** Gn 10:2-4 **1:11-16** Gn 10:13-18 **1:12** Dt 2:23; Am 9:7 **1:17-23** Gn 10:21-29 **1:24-27** Gn 11:10-26; Lk 3:34-36 **1:29-31** Gn 25:12-16 **1:32-33** Gn 25:1-4 **1:34** 1Ch 1:28 **1:34** Gn 25:24-26; 32:28 **1:35-37** Gn 36:4-5,9-14 **1:38-42** Gn 36:20-30 **1:43-50** Gn 36:31-39 **1:44** Is 34:6 **1:45** Jb 2:11 **1:51-54** Gn 36:40-43

1:1 The most obvious feature of 1 and 2 Chronicles is the sheer amount of material they share with the books of Samuel and Kings. However, 1 and 2 Chronicles do have unique features, such as the lengthy section of genealogies at the beginning (1:1–9:44). Unlike Samuel and Kings viewed together, Chronicles begins with **Adam** the first man and ends with the decree of Cyrus (2Ch 36:22-23; see also the note on 1Ch 9:1-2). As such, Jerome called it a "chronicle of the whole of sacred history." Another feature unique to Chronicles is its focus on the Davidic line of kings in Israel and later in Judah (see the note on 2Ch 11:13-17). The kings of the northern kingdom of Israel receive far less attention than they do in 1 and 2 Kings. Furthermore, Chronicles goes into even greater detail about the temple than Kings does (see 1Ch 22–29).

1:10 The Hebrew text underlying this statement about **Nimrod** is identical to the corresponding Hebrew text in Genesis 10:8. The surrounding genealogy itself matches what is found in Genesis, leading some scholars to believe that the author of Chronicles used existing Scripture in the composition of his book (see also the notes on vv. 43-54; 2:3,7; 5:1; 10:1-12).

1:43-54 This passage is almost identical to Genesis 36:31-43 and gives further evidence that the author of Chronicles had access to and used existing Scripture in the composition of his work (see previous note).

ISRAEL'S SONS

2 These † were Israel's sons:
Reuben, Simeon, Levi,
Judah, Issachar, Zebulun,
2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin,
Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

JUDAH'S DESCENDANTS

JUDAH'S DESCENDANTS

3 Judah's † sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah. † These three were born to him by
Bath-shua the Canaanite woman. Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the LORD's
sight, so he put him to death. 4 Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar bore Perez and
Zerah to him. Judah had five sons in all.

5 Perez's sons: Hezron and Hamul.

6 Zerah's sons: Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara † † — five
in all.

7 Carmi's son: Achar, † † who brought trouble on Israel when he
was unfaithful by taking the things set apart for destruction.

8 Ethan's son: Azariah.

9 Hezron's sons, who were born to him: Jerahmeel, Ram, and
Chelubai. †

10 Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
a leader of Judah's descendants.

11 Nahshon fathered Salma, and Salma fathered Boaz.

12 Boaz fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Jesse.

13 Jesse fathered Eliab, his firstborn; Abinadab was born second,
Shimea third, 14 Nethanel fourth, Raddai fifth, 15 Ozem sixth, and
David seventh. 16 Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail.
Zeruiah's three sons: Abishai, Joab, and Asahel. 17 Amasa's
mother was Abigail, and his father was Jether the Ishmaelite.

18 Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah and by Jerioth. These
were Azubah's sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19 When Azubah died, Caleb
married Ephrath, and she bore Hur to him. 20 Hur fathered Uri, and Uri fathered
Bezalel. 21 After this, Hezron slept with the daughter of Machir the father of
Gilead. † Hezron had married her when he was sixty years old, and she bore

Segub to him. 22 Segub fathered Jair, who possessed twenty-three towns in the land of Gilead. 23 But Geshur and Aram captured † Jair's Villages † along with Kenath and its surrounding villages — sixty towns. All these were the descendants of Machir father of Gilead. 24 After Hezron's death in Caleb-ephrathah, his wife Abijah bore † Ashhur to him. He was the father of Tekoa.

25 The sons of Jerahmeel, Hezron's firstborn: Ram, his firstborn,
Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel had another wife
named Atarah, who was the mother of Onam.

27 The sons of Ram, Jerahmeel's firstborn: Maaz, Jamin, and Eker.

28 Onam's sons: Shammai and Jada.

Shammai's sons: Nadab and Abishur. 29 Abishur's wife was
named Abihail, who bore Ahban and Molid to him.

30 Nadab's sons: Seled and Appaim. Seled died without children.

31 Appaim's son: Ishi.

Ishi's son: Sheshan.

Sheshan's descendant: Ahlai.

32 The sons of Jada, brother of Shammai: Jether and Jonathan.
Jether died without children.

33 Jonathan's sons: Peleth and Zaza. These were the descendants of
Jerahmeel.

34 Sheshan had no sons, only daughters, but he did have an
Egyptian servant whose name was Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his
daughter in marriage to his servant Jarha, and she bore Attai to him.

36 Attai fathered Nathan, and Nathan fathered Zabad.

37 Zabad fathered Ephlal, and Ephlal fathered Obed.

38 Obed fathered Jehu, and Jehu fathered Azariah.

39 Azariah fathered Helez, and Helez fathered Elasah.

40 Elasah fathered Sismai, and Sismai fathered Shallum.
41 Shallum fathered Jekamiah, and Jekamiah fathered Elishama.

42 The sons of Caleb brother of Jerahmeel: Mesha, his firstborn,
fathered Ziph, and Mareshah, his second son, † fathered Hebron.
43 Hebron's sons: Korah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema.
44 Shema fathered Raham, who fathered Jorkeam, and Rekem
fathered Shammai.
45 Shammai's son was Maon, and Maon fathered Beth-zur.
46 Caleb's concubine Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza, and
Gazez. Haran fathered Gazez.
47 Jahdai's sons: Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and
Shaaph.
48 Caleb's concubine Maacah was the mother of Sheber and
Tirhanah. 49 She was also the mother of Shaaph, Madmannah's
father, and of Sheva, the father of Machbenah and Gibea. Caleb's
daughter was Achsah.
50 These were Caleb's descendants.

The sons of Hur, Ephrathah's firstborn:
Shobal fathered Kiriath-jearim;
51 Salma fathered Bethlehem,
and Hareph fathered Beth-gader.

52 These were the descendants of Shobal the father of Kiriath-jearim: Haroeh, half of the Manahathites, † 53 and the families of Kiriath-jearim — the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites, and Mishraites. The Zorathites and Eshtaolites descended from these.
54 Salma's descendants: Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth-beth-joab, and half of the Manahathites, the Zorites, 55 and the families of scribes who lived in

Jabez — the Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites. These are the Kenites who
came from Hammath, the father of Rechab's family.

2:6 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *Darda* ; 1Kg 4:31 **2:7** = Trouble; Achan in Jos 7:1,16-26 **2:9** = Caleb **2:23** Lit *took from them* **2:23** Or *captured Havvoth-jair* **2:24** LXX, Vg read *death, Caleb slept with Ephrath (Hezron's wife was Abijah) and she bore* **2:42** Lit *and the sons of Mareshah* **2:52** Lit *Manuhoth* **2:1-2** Gn 35:22-26; 46:8-25 **2:3-4** Gn 38:6-30 **2:3** Gn 38:2-5; 46:12; Nm 26:19-22 **2:6** 1Kg 4:31 **2:7** Jos 7:1,16-26 **2:21** Nm 26:29

2:1-2 The genealogy shifts here from Edom, the descendants of Esau, to Israel, the descendants of Jacob. What follows is a focus on Judah, the tribe of David (vv. 3-15; 3:1-24). This is in keeping with the emphasis of 1 and 2 Chronicles as a whole (see the note on 1:1).

2:3 The statement about **Er**, Judah's firstborn, is almost identical to Genesis 38:7 and suggests the biblical author's awareness of this passage (see the note on 1:10).

2:7 Achar, also known as Achan, was the one who stole plunder from Jericho. His characterization as **unfaithful** matches what is said in Joshua 7:1.

2:10-17 After Jacob's sons are listed (vv. 1-2), Judah, Israel's leading tribe (see 5:2; note on Nm 2:3-9), is considered next. The focus narrows even further on the line of David here and in 3:1-24. The three sons of **Zeruiah** were his relatives and will be part of the subsequent narrative. **Amasa** was also a relative and is known primarily through passages pertaining to him in 2 Samuel 17–20, since he does not reappear in 1 and 2 Chronicles.

2:18-20 After tracing the line of David through Hezron's son Ram (v. 9), the genealogy traces the lineage of another important descendant of Judah, **Bezalel** son of Uri, son of Hur. This was the Bezalel who led the construction of the tabernacle in Moses's day (e.g., Ex 31:2; 35:30). The biblical author will refer to him again when Solomon builds the temple (2Ch 1:5).

2:25 Jerahmeel was another of Hezron's sons (see vv. 9-10,18,42).

DAVID'S DESCENDANTS

3 These † were David's sons who were born to him in Hebron:

Amnon was the firstborn, by Ahinoam of Jezreel;
Daniel was born second, by Abigail of Carmel;

2 Absalom son of Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur,
was third;
Adonijah son of Haggith was fourth;

3 Shephatiah, by Abital, was fifth;
and Ithream, by David's wife Eglah, was sixth.

4 Six sons were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven

years and six months, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years. †

5 These † sons were born to him in Jerusalem:

Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon. † These four were born to him by Bath-shua † daughter of Ammiel.

6 David's other sons: Ibhar, Elishua, † † Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet — nine sons.

9 These were all David's sons, with their sister Tamar, † in addition to the sons by his concubines.

JUDAH'S KINGS

10 Solomon's son was Rehoboam;
his son was Abijah, his son Asa,

his son Jehoshaphat, 11 his son Jehoram, † †
his son Ahaziah, his son Joash,

12 his son Amaziah, his son Azariah,

his son Jotham, 13 his son Ahaz,
his son Hezekiah, his son Manasseh,

14 his son Amon, and his son Josiah.

15 Josiah's sons:
Johanan was the firstborn, Jehoiakim second,
Zedekiah third, and Shallum fourth.

16 Jehoiakim's sons:
his sons Jeconiah and Zedekiah.

DAVID'S LINE AFTER THE EXILE

17 The sons of Jeconiah the captive:

his sons Shealtiel, 18 Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah.

19 Pedaiah's sons: Zerubbabel and Shimei.

Zerubbabel's sons: Meshullam and Hananiah, with their sister Shelomith; 20 and five others — Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-hesed.

21 Hananiah's descendants: Pelatiah, Jeshaiah, and the sons of Rephaiah, Arnan, Obadiah, and Shecaniah. †

22 The son † of Shecaniah: Shemaiah.

Shemaiah's sons: Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat — six.

23 Neariah's sons: Elioenai, Hizkiah, and Azrikam — three.

24 Elioenai's sons: Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani — seven.

3:6 Lit *Elishama* ; 2Sm 5:15; 1Ch 14:5 **3:11** Lit *Joram* **3:11** = The Lord is Exalted **3:21** LXX reads *Jeshaiah, his son Rephaiah, his son Arnan, his son Obadiah, and his son Shecaniah* **3:22** LXX; MT reads *sons*
3:1-4a 2Sm 3:2-5 **3:4** 2Sm 2:11; 5:4-5 **3:5-8** 2Sm 5:14-16; 1Ch 14:4-7 **3:5** 2Sm 12:24-25 **3:5** 2Sm 11:3 **3:6** 2Sm 5:15; 1Ch 14:5 **3:9** 2Sm 13:1

3:1-9 David's lineage was given in 2:10-17, and here his family is highlighted. The opening chapters of 1 Chronicles have thus begun with the forefather of the human race, Adam (1:1), followed by a survey of many generations while emphasizing David's lineage.

3:10-24 The emphasis on David's line continues with a listing of his descendants who sat upon his throne. Details of their respective reigns will be given later in 2 Chronicles. The reference to **Jeconiah the captive** (v. 17) is a reminder that the biblical author has composed his work after the falls of Israel and Judah (see 2Ch 36:22-23) and expects the reader to view it from that perspective (see also 5:6,22,26; 6:15; note on 9:1-2). He even lists seven more generations after Jeconiah.

JUDAH'S DESCENDANTS

4 Judah's sons: † Perez, Hezron, Carmi, Hur, and Shobal.
2 Reaiah son of Shobal fathered Jahath, and Jahath fathered

Ahumai and Lahad.
These were the families of the Zorathites.

3 These were Etam's sons: † Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash, and their sister was named Hazzelelponi.

4 Penuel fathered Gedor, and Ezer fathered Hushah.
These were the sons of Hur, Ephrathah's firstborn and the father of Bethlehem:

5 Ashhur fathered Tekoa and had two wives, Helah and Naarah.

6 Naarah bore Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari to him.
These were Naarah's sons.

7 Helah's sons: Zereth, Zohar, † and Ethnan. 8 Koz fathered Anub, Zobebah, † and the families of Aharhel son of Harum.

9 Jabez † was more honored than his brothers. His mother named him Jabez and said, "I gave birth to him in pain."
10 Jabez called out to the God of Israel: "If only you would bless me, extend my border, let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm, so that I will not experience pain." † And God granted his request.

11 Chelub brother of Shuhah fathered Mehir, who was the father of Eshton. 12 Eshton fathered Beth-rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of Irnahash. These were the men of Recah.

13 Kenaz's sons: Othniel and Seraiah.

Othniel's sons: Hathath and Meonothai. †

14 Meonothai fathered Ophrah,
and Seraiah fathered Joab, the ancestor of those in the Craftsmen's Valley, † for they were craftsmen.

15 The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Naam.
Elah's son: Kenaz.

16 Jehallelel’s sons: Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel.

17 Ezrah’s sons: Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. Mered’s wife
Bithiah gave birth to Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of
Eshtemoa. 18 These were the sons of Pharaoh’s daughter Bithiah;
Mered had married her. His Judean wife gave birth to Jered the
father of Gedor, Heber the father of Soco, and Jekuthiel the father
of Zanoah. 19 The sons of Hodiah’s wife, the sister of Naham: the
father of Keilah the Garmite and the father of Eshtemoa the
Maacathite.

20 Shimon’s sons: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon.
Ishi’s sons: Zoheth and Ben-zoheth.

21 The sons of Shelah son of Judah: Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, the families of the guild † of linen workers at Beth-ashbea, 22 Jokim, the men of Cozeba; and Joash and Saraph, who married Moabites † and returned to Lehem. † These names are from ancient records. 23 They were the potters and residents of Netaim and Gederah. They lived there in the service of the king.

SIMEON’S DESCENDANTS

24 Simeon’s sons: † Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah, and Shaul;

25 Shaul’s sons: his son Shallum, his son Mibsam, and his son
Mishma.

26 Mishma’s sons: his son Hammuel, his son Zaccur, and his son
Shimei.

27 Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers did not have many children, so their whole family did not become as numerous as the Judeans. 28 They lived in Beer-sheba, Moladah, Hazar-shual, 29 Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth-marcaboth, Hazar-susim, Beth-biri, and Shaaraim. These were their cities until David became king. 32 Their villages

were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and Ashan — five cities, 33 and all their surrounding villages as far as Baal. These were their settlements, and they kept a genealogical record for themselves.

34 Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah,
35 Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, son of Seraiah, son of Asiel,
36 Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel,
Benaiah, 37 and Ziza son of Shiphi, son of Allon, son of Jedaiah,
son of Shimri, son of Shemaiah —

38 these mentioned by name were leaders in their families. Their ancestral houses increased greatly. 39 They went to the entrance of Gedor, to the east side of the valley to seek pasture for their flocks. 40 They found rich, good pasture, and the land was broad, peaceful, and quiet, † for some Hamites had lived there previously.
41 These † who were recorded by name came in the days of King Hezekiah of Judah, attacked the Hamites' tents and the Meunites who were found there, and set them apart for destruction, † as they are today. Then they settled in their place because there was pasture for their flocks. 42 Now five hundred men from these sons of Simeon went with Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the descendants of Ishi, as their leaders to Mount Seir. † 43 They struck down † the remnant of the Amalekites who had escaped, and they still live there today.

4:3 LXX; MT reads *father* **4:7** Alt Hb tradition reads *Izhar* **4:8** Or *Hazzobebah* **4:9** In Hb, the name *Jabez* sounds like "he causes pain." **4:10** Or *not cause any pain* **4:13** LXX, Vg; MT omits *and Meonothai* **4:14** Or *the Ge-harashim* **4:21** Lit *house* **4:22** Or *who ruled over Moab* **4:22** Tg, Vg; MT reads *and Jashubi Lehem* **4:1** 1Ch 2:5,18,50 **4:24** Gn 46:10 **4:40** Jdg 18:7-10 **4:41** 1Ch 4:33-38 **4:41** Nm 21:3; Dt 2:34; 7:2; 13:15; Jos 6:17-21 **4:42** Gn 36:8-9 **4:43** 1Sm 15:7-8; 30:17

4:1 The genealogy returns to other descendants of Judah, as it had earlier (see 2:18-55).

4:9-10 This brief discussion of Jabez's prayer highlights the fact that God hears prayer (see the note on 5:20-22).

4:24 The extended treatment of Judah's descendants finally ended (2:3–4:23). Besides Levi and Benjamin, the other tribes are considered more briefly in this next section (see the notes on 6:1 and 8:1).

REUBEN'S DESCENDANTS

5 These were the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel. He was the firstborn, † but his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph † son of Israel, because Reuben defiled his father's bed. † He is not listed in the genealogy according to birthright. 2 Although Judah became strong among his brothers † and a ruler came from him, † the birthright was given to Joseph.

3 The sons of Reuben, Israel's firstborn: †
Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.
4 Joel's sons: his son Shemaiah,
his son Gog, his son Shimei,
5 his son Micah, his son Reaiah,
his son Baal, 6 and his son Beerah.

Beerah was a leader of the Reubenites, and King Tiglath-pileser † of Assyria took him into exile. 7 His relatives by their families as they are recorded in their family records: †

Jeiel the chief, Zechariah,
8 and Bela son of Azaz,
son of Shema, son of Joel.

They settled in Aroer † as far as Nebo and Baal-meon. 9 They also settled in the east as far as the edge of the desert that extends to the Euphrates River, because their herds had increased in the land of Gilead. † 10 During Saul's reign they waged war against the Hagrites, † who were defeated by their power. And they lived in their tents throughout the region east of Gilead.

GAD'S DESCENDANTS

11 The sons † of Gad lived next to them in the land of Bashan as far as Salecah: †

12 Joel the chief, Shapham the second in command, Janai, and
Shaphat in Bashan.
13 Their relatives according to their ancestral houses: Michael,
Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jacan, Zia, and Eber — seven.
14 These were the sons of Abihail son of Huri,
son of Jaroah, son of Gilead,
son of Michael, son of Jeshishai,
son of Jahdo, son of Buz.
15 Ahi son of Abdiel, son of Guni, was head of their ancestral
family. † 16 They lived in Gilead, in Bashan and its surrounding
villages, and throughout the pasturelands of Sharon. † 17 All of
them were registered in the genealogies during the reigns of Judah's
King Jotham † and Israel's King Jeroboam. †

18 The descendants of Reuben and Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh had
44,760 warriors who could serve † in the army — men who carried shield and
sword, drew the bow, and were trained for war. 19 They waged war against the
Hagrites, † Jetur, † Naphish, and Nodab. 20 They received help against these
enemies because they cried out to God in battle, and the Hagrites and all their
allies were handed over to them. † He was receptive to their prayer because they
trusted in him. † 21 They captured the Hagrites' livestock — fifty thousand of
their camels, two hundred fifty thousand sheep, and two thousand donkeys — as
well as one hundred thousand people. 22 Many of the Hagrites were killed
because it was God's battle. † And they lived there in the Hagrites' place †
until the exile. †

HALF THE TRIBE OF MANASSEH

23 The descendants of half the tribe of Manasseh settled in the land from Bashan
to Baal-hermon (that is, Senir † or Mount Hermon); they were numerous.
24 These were the heads of their ancestral families: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel,

Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were valiant warriors, famous men, and heads of their ancestral houses. 25 But they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors. They prostituted themselves † with the gods of the nations † God had destroyed before them. † 26 So the God of Israel roused the spirit of King Pul † (that is, Tiglath-pileser †) of Assyria, and he took the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh into exile. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and Gozan's river, where they are until today.

5:6 LXX; MT reads *Tilgath-pilneser* **5:15** Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in v. 24 **5:25** Lit *the peoples of the land* **5:26** LXX; MT reads *Tilgath-pilneser*

5:1 Gn 29:32; 1Ch 2:1 **5:1** Gn 48:15-22 **5:1** Gn 35:22; 49:4 **5:2** Gn 49:8-10 **5:2** Mc 5:2; Mt 2:6 **5:3** Gn 46:9; Nm 26:5-9 **5:7** 1Ch 5:17 **5:8** Nm 32:34; Jos 12:2 **5:9** Jos 22:8-9 **5:10** 1Ch 5:19-21; 11:38; 27:31 **5:11-12** Gn 46:16; Nm 26:15-18 **5:11** Dt 3:10 **5:16** 1Ch 27:29 **5:17** 2Kg 15:5,32 **5:17** 2Kg 14:16,28 **5:18** Nm 1:3 **5:19** 1Ch 5:10 **5:19** 1Ch 1:31 **5:20** 2Ch 14:11-13 **5:20** Ps 9:10; 20:7-8 **5:22** Jos 23:10; 2Ch 32:8 **5:22** 1Ch 4:41 **5:22** 2Kg 15:29; 17:6 **5:23** Dt 3:9 **5:25** Ex 34:15 **5:25** 2Kg 17:7-8 **5:26** 2Kg 15:19,29

5:1 The statement that **Reuben defiled his father's bed** uses the same vocabulary as Genesis 49:4 and probably was adapted from it (see the note on 1:10). It refers to the time when Reuben slept with Bilhah, his father's concubine, in Genesis 35:22. The giving of the **birthright** to Joseph's sons instead of Reuben is also consistent with Genesis 48–49.

5:6 Once again (see the note on 3:10-24), the biblical author refers to **exile** before he has even started telling the story about David and his line (see 1Ch 10). The exile in view concerns the northern kingdom (see v. 26).

5:20-22 As Jabez had done (see the note on 4:9-10), these soldiers **cried out to God in battle** and were answered by him. The Lord heard their prayer **because they trusted in him** (see also the note on 2Ch 7:13-14).

5:25-26 Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh were exiled to Assyria because, by worshiping idols, **they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors.** The description of sin as being an act of unfaithfulness is common in 1 and 2 Chronicles (e.g., 2:7; 9:1; 10:13; 2Ch 12:2; 29:6; 30:7; 36:14).

THE LEVITES

6 Levi's † sons: Gershom, † Kohath, and Merari.
2 Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
3 Amram's children: Aaron, Moses, and Miriam.
Aaron's sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.
4 Eleazar fathered Phinehas; †
Phinehas fathered Abishua;
5 Abishua fathered Bukki;

Bukki fathered Uzzi;
6 Uzzi fathered Zerahiah;
Zerahiah fathered Meraioth;
7 Meraioth fathered Amariah;
Amariah fathered Ahitub;
8 Ahitub fathered Zadok;
Zadok fathered Ahimaaz;
9 Ahimaaz fathered Azariah;
Azariah fathered Johanan;
10 Johanan fathered Azariah, who served as priest in the temple
that Solomon built in Jerusalem;
11 Azariah fathered Amariah;
Amariah fathered Ahitub;
12 Ahitub fathered Zadok;
Zadok fathered Shallum;
13 Shallum fathered Hilkiah;
Hilkiah fathered Azariah;
14 Azariah fathered Seraiah;
and Seraiah fathered Jehozadak.
15 Jehozadak went into exile when the LORD sent Judah and
Jerusalem into exile at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. †

16 Levi's † sons: Gershom, Kohath, and Merari.
17 These are the names of Gershom's sons: Libni and Shimei.
18 Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
19 Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi.
These are the Levites' families according to their fathers:

20 Of Gershom: his son Libni,
his son Jahath, his son Zimmah,
21 his son Joah, his son Iddo,
his son Zerah, and his son Jeatherai.
22 Kohath's sons: his son Amminadab,
his son Korah, his son Assir,
23 his son Elkanah, his son Ebiasaph,
his son Assir, 24 his son Tahath,
his son Uriel, his son Uzziah,
and his son Shaul.
25 Elkanah's sons: Amasai and Ahimoth,
26 his son Elkanah, his son Zophai,
his son Nahath, 27 his son Eliab,
his son Jeroham, and his son Elkanah.
28 Samuel's sons: his firstborn Joel, † †
and his second son Abijah.
29 Merari's sons: Mahli, his son Libni,
his son Shimei, his son Uzzah,
30 his son Shimea, his son Haggiah,
and his son Asaiah.

THE MUSICIANS

31 These are the men David put in charge of the music in the LORD's temple †
after the ark came to rest there. † 32 They ministered with song in front of the
tabernacle, the tent of meeting, until Solomon built the LORD's temple in
Jerusalem, and they performed their task according to the regulations given to
them. 33 These are the men who served with their sons.

From the Kohathites: Heman the singer,
son of Joel, son of Samuel,
34 son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham,
son of Eliel, son of Toah,
35 son of Zuph, son of Elkanah,
son of Mahath, son of Amasai,
36 son of Elkanah, son of Joel,
son of Azariah, son of Zephaniah,
37 son of Tahath, son of Assir,
son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah,
38 son of Izhar, son of Kohath,
son of Levi, son of Israel.

39 Heman's relative was Asaph, who stood at his right hand:
Asaph son of Berechiah, son of Shimea,
40 son of Michael, son of Baaseiah,
son of Malchijah, 41 son of Ethni,
son of Zerah, son of Adaiah,
42 son of Ethan, son of Zimmah,
son of Shimei, 43 son of Jahath,
son of Gershom, son of Levi.

44 On the left, their relatives were Merari's sons:
Ethan son of Kishi, son of Abdi,
son of Malluch, 45 son of Hashabiah,
son of Amaziah, son of Hilkiah,
46 son of Amzi, son of Bani,
son of Shemer, 47 son of Mahli,

son of Mushi, son of Merari,
son of Levi.

AARON'S DESCENDANTS

48 Their relatives, the Levites, were assigned to all the service of the tabernacle,
God's temple. 49 But Aaron and his sons did all the work of the most holy place.
They presented the offerings on the altar of burnt offerings † and on the altar of
incense † to make atonement for Israel according to all that Moses the servant
of God had commanded. †

50 These † are Aaron's sons: his son Eleazar,
his son Phinehas, his son Abishua,
51 his son Bukki, his son Uzzi,
his son Zerahiah, 52 his son Meraioth,
his son Amariah, his son Ahitub,
53 his son Zadok, and his son Ahimaaz.

THE SETTLEMENTS OF THE LEVITES

54 These were the places assigned to Aaron's descendants from the Kohathite
family for their settlements in their territory, because the first lot was for
them. † 55 They † were given Hebron in the land of Judah and its surrounding
pasturelands, 56 but the fields and settlements around the city were given to
Caleb son of Jephunneh. 57 Aaron's descendants were given: †
Hebron (a city of refuge), Libnah and its pasturelands, Jattir, Eshtemoa and its
pasturelands, 58 Hilen † and its pasturelands, Debir and its pasturelands,
59 Ashan and its pasturelands, and Beth-shemesh and its pasturelands. 60 From
the tribe of Benjamin they were given Geba and its pasturelands, Alemeth and its
pasturelands, and Anathoth and its pasturelands. They had thirteen towns in all
among their families.
61 To the rest of the Kohathites, ten towns from half the tribe of Manasseh were
assigned by lot. †

62 The Gershomites were assigned thirteen towns from the tribes of Issachar,
Asher, Naphtali, and Manasseh in Bashan according to their families.
63 The Merarites were assigned by lot twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben,
Gad, and Zebulun according to their families. † 64 So the Israelites gave these
towns and their pasturelands to the Levites. † 65 They assigned by lot the towns
named above † from the tribes of the descendants of Judah, Simeon, and
Benjamin.
66 Some † of the families of the Kohathites were given towns from the tribe of
Ephraim for their territory:
67 Shechem (a city of refuge) with its pasturelands in the hill country of
Ephraim, Gezer and its pasturelands, 68 Jokmeam and its pasturelands, Beth-
horon and its pasturelands, 69 Aijalon and its pasturelands, and Gath-rimmon
and its pasturelands. 70 From half the tribe of Manasseh, Aner and its
pasturelands, and Bileam and its pasturelands were given to the rest of the
families of the Kohathites.
71 The Gershomites received:
Golan in Bashan and its pasturelands, and Ashtaroth and its pasturelands from
the families of half the tribe of Manasseh. 72 From the tribe of Issachar they
received Kedesh and its pasturelands, Daberath and its pasturelands, 73 Ramoth
and its pasturelands, and Anem and its pasturelands. 74 From the tribe of Asher
they received Mashal and its pasturelands, Abdon and its pasturelands, 75 Hukok
and its pasturelands, and Rehob and its pasturelands. 76 From the tribe of
Naphtali they received Kedesh in Galilee and its pasturelands, Hammon and its
pasturelands, and Kiriathaim and its pasturelands.
77 The rest of the Merarites received:
From the tribe of Zebulun they received Rimmono and its pasturelands and
Tabor and its pasturelands. 78 From the tribe of Reuben across the Jordan at
Jericho, to the east of the Jordan, they received Bezer in the desert and its
pasturelands, Jahzah and its pasturelands, 79 Kedemoth and its pasturelands, and
Mephaath and its pasturelands. 80 From the tribe of Gad they received Ramoth
in Gilead and its pasturelands, Mahanaim and its pasturelands, 81 Heshbon and
its pasturelands, and Jazer and its pasturelands.

6:1 In Hb Levi's son's name is spelled "Gershon" here and many other places **6:28** Some LXX mss, Syr, Arabic; other Hb mss omit *Joel* ; 1Sm 8:2 **6:58** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *Hilez*

6:1-3 Gn 46:11; Ex 6:16,18,20,23; Nm 26:57-60 **6:4** Ex 6:25 **6:15** 2Kg 24:1-2,10,14; 25:1,8,11,21; 1Ch 9:1 **6:16-19** Ex 6:16-19 **6:28** 1Sm 8:2 **6:31** 1Ch 15:16-22; 16:4-6 **6:31** 2Sm 6:17; 1Ch 15:25–16:1 **6:49** Ex 27:1-8 **6:49** Ex 30:1-7 **6:49** Ex 30:10-16 **6:50-53** 1Ch 6:4-8 **6:54** Jos 21:4,10 **6:55-56** Jos 14:13; 15:13 **6:57** Jos 21:13,19 **6:61** Jos 21:5; 1Ch 6:66-70 **6:63** Jos 21:7; 1Ch 6:77-81 **6:64** Jos 21:3,41-42 **6:65** 1Ch 6:57-60 **6:66-81** Jos 21:20-40

6:1 Levi is another tribe that receives relatively greater attention than the others (see the note on 4:24). The reason for this is likely the Levites' role in the temple (see 1Ch 23–26). The lines of Moses, and of Aaron and the priests, are given first (vv. 1-15).

6:15 The exile of Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh had been referenced in 5:26. Here the southern kingdom's **exile** by Babylon is mentioned (see the note on 3:10-24).

6:31-46 David's appointment of **men** to be **in charge of music** at the temple will be explained in greater detail in 1 Chronicles 25. **Heman**, **Asaph**, and **Ethan** (perhaps also known as Jeduthun) will be repeatedly mentioned later in that context (see 15:17,19; 25:1,6; 2Ch 5:12).

6:54-64 The giving of cities to the priests and Levites had been arranged through Moses and Joshua (see Nm 35 and Jos 21).

ISSACHAR'S DESCENDANTS

7 Issachar's sons: † Tola, Puah, Jashub, and Shimron —
four.

2 Tola's sons: Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and
Shemuel, the heads of their ancestral families. † During David's
reign, 22,600 descendants of Tola were recorded as valiant warriors
in their family records. †

3 Uzzi's son: Izrahiah.

Izrahiah's sons: Michael, Obadiah, Joel, Isshiah. All five of them
were chiefs. 4 Along with them, they had 36,000 troops for battle
according to the family records of their ancestral families, for they
had many wives and children. 5 Their tribesmen who were valiant
warriors belonging to all the families of Issachar totaled 87,000 in
their genealogies.

BENJAMIN'S DESCENDANTS

6 Three † of Benjamin's sons: Bela, Becher, and Jediael.

7 Bela’s sons: Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri — five. They
were valiant warriors and heads of their ancestral families; 22,034
were listed in their genealogies.
8 Becher’s sons: Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri,
Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth; all these were Becher’s
sons. 9 Their family records were recorded according to the heads
of their ancestral families — 20,200 valiant warriors.
10 Jediael’s son: Bilhan.
Bilhan’s sons: Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan,
Tarshish, and Ahishahar. 11 All these sons of Jediael listed by
family heads were valiant warriors; there were 17,200 who could
serve in the army. 12 Shuppim and Huppim were sons of Ir, and the
Hushim were the sons of Aher.

NAPHTALI’S DESCENDANTS

13 Naphtali’s sons: † Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and Shallum — Bilhah’s
sons.

MANASSEH’S DESCENDANTS

14 Manasseh’s † sons through his Aramean concubine: Asriel and
Machir the father of Gilead. 15 Machir took wives from Huppim
and Shuppim. The name of his sister was Maacah. Another
descendant was named Zelophehad, but he had only daughters.
16 Machir’s wife Maacah gave birth to a son, and she named him
Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam
and Rekem.
17 Ulam’s son: Bedan. These were the sons of Gilead son of
Machir, son of Manasseh. 18 His sister Hammolecheth gave birth
to Ishhod, Abiezer, and Mahlah.

19 Shemida’s sons: Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

EPHRAIM’S DESCENDANTS

20 Ephraim’s † sons: Shuthelah, and his son Bered,
his son Tahath, his son Eleadah,
his son Tahath, 21 his son Zabad,
his son Shuthelah, also Ezer, and Elead.

The men of Gath, born in the land, killed them because they went down to raid their cattle. 22 Their father Ephraim mourned a long time, and his relatives † came to comfort him. 23 He slept with his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. So he named him Beriah, because there had been misfortune in his home. † 24 His daughter was Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper Beth-horon † and Uzzen-sheerah,

25 his son Rephah, † his son Resheph,
his son Telah, his son Tahan,
26 his son Ladan, his son Ammihud,
his son Elishama, 27 his son Nun,
and his son Joshua. †

28 Their holdings and settlements were Bethel † and its surrounding villages; Naaran to the east, Gezer and its villages to the west, and Shechem and its villages as far as Ayyah and its villages, 29 and along the borders of the descendants of Manasseh, Beth-shean, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor with their surrounding villages. The sons of Joseph son of Israel lived in these towns.

ASHER’S DESCENDANTS

30 Asher's † sons: Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, and Beriah, with their
sister Serah.
31 Beriah's sons: Heber, and Malchiel, who fathered Birzaith.
32 Heber fathered Japhlet, Shomer, and Hotham, with their sister
Shua.
33 Japhlet's sons: Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These were
Japhlet's sons.
34 Shemer's sons: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram.
35 His brother Helem's sons: Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal.
36 Zophah's sons: Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, 37 Bezer,
Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran, and Beera.
38 Jether's sons: Jephunneh, Pispa, and Ara.
39 Ulla's sons: Arah, Hanniel, and Rizia.
40 All these were Asher's descendants. They were the heads of
their ancestral families, chosen men, valiant warriors, and chiefs
among the leaders. The number of men listed in their genealogies
for military service was 26,000.

7:2 Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in vv. 4,7,9,40 **7:22** Or *his brothers* **7:23** In Hb, the name *Beriah* sounds like "in misfortune." **7:25** Probably Ephraim's son
7:1 Gn 46:13 **7:2** 2Sm 24:1-9 **7:6-12** Gn 46:21; Nm 26:38-41; 1Ch 8 **7:13** Gn 46:24-25 **7:14-19** Nm 26:29-34 **7:20-21a** Nm 26:35-36 **7:24** Jos 16:3,5 **7:27** Ex 17:9-14; 24:13 **7:28** Jos 16:2 **7:30-31** Gn 46:17; Nm 26:44-46

7:1 As was the case for Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh earlier (5:1-26), Issachar and the following tribes are treated more briefly.

BENJAMIN'S DESCENDANTS

8 Benjamin † fathered Bela, his firstborn; Ashbel was born
second, Aharah third, 2 Nohah fourth, and Rapha fifth.
3 Bela's sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, † 4 Abishua, Naaman,

Ahoah, 5 Gera, Shephuphan, and Huram.

6 These were Ehud's sons, who were the heads of the families living in Geba and who were deported to Manahath: 7 Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera. Gera deported them and was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

8 Shaharaim had sons in the territory of Moab after he had divorced his wives Hushim and Baara. 9 His sons by his wife Hodesh: Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10 Jeuz, Sachia, and Mirmah. These were his sons, family heads. 11 He also had sons by Hushim: Abitub and Elpaal.

12 Elpaal's sons: Eber, Misham, and Shemed who built Ono and Lod and its surrounding villages, 13 Beriah and Shema, who were the family heads of Aijalon's residents and who drove out the residents of Gath, 14 Ahio, † Shashak, and Jeremoth.

15 Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ishpah, and Joha were Beriah's sons.

17 Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Izliah, and Jobab were Elpaal's sons.

19 Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath were Shimei's sons.

22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah, 25 Iphdeiah, and Penuel were Shashak's sons.

26 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri were Jeroham's sons.

28 These † were family heads, chiefs according to their family records; they lived in Jerusalem.

29 Jeiel † † fathered Gibeon and lived in Gibeon. His wife's name

was Maacah. 30 Abdon was his firstborn son, then Zur, Kish, Baal,
Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio, Zecher, 32 and Mikloth who fathered
Shimeah. These also lived opposite their relatives in Jerusalem,
with their other relatives.

33 Ner fathered Kish, Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered
Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal. †

34 Jonathan's son was Merib-baal, † and Merib-baal fathered
Micah.

35 Micah's sons: Pithon, Melech, Tarea, and Ahaz.

36 Ahaz fathered Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah fathered Alemeth,
Azmaveth, and Zimri, and Zimri fathered Moza.

37 Moza fathered Binea. His son was Raphah, his son Elasah, and
his son Azel.

38 Azel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam,
Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these were
Azel's sons.

39 His brother Eshek's sons: Ulam was his firstborn, Jeush second,
and Eliphelet third.

40 Ulam's sons were valiant warriors and archers. † They had
many sons and grandsons — 150 of them.
All these were among Benjamin's sons.

8:3 Or *Gera father of Ehud* ; Jdg 3:15 **8:13-14** LXX reads *Gath* 14*and their brother* **8:29** LXX; MT omits *Jeiel* ; 1Ch 9:35 **8:33** = Man of Baal **8:34** = Baal Contends **8:40** Lit *valiant ones who string the bow* **8:1-5** Gn 46:21; Nm 26:38-41; 1Ch 7:6-12 **8:28-38** 1Ch 9:34-44 **8:29** 1Ch 9:35

8:1 Though already mentioned in 7:6-12**, Benjamin** is revisited at length in this chapter (see the note on 4:24). Saul's lineage (vv. 29-38) is repeated in 9:35-44 and links with the events narrated in 10:1-14.

AFTER THE EXILE

9 All Israel was registered in the genealogies that are written in the Book
of the Kings of Israel. But Judah was exiled † to Babylon because of
their unfaithfulness. 2 The first † to live in their towns on their own
property again were Israelites, priests, Levites, and temple servants. †

3 These people from the descendants of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim,
and Manasseh settled in Jerusalem:
4 Uthai son of Ammihud, son of Omri, son of Imri, son of Bani, a
descendant † of Perez son of Judah;
5 from the Shilonites:
Asaiah the firstborn and his sons;
6 and from the descendants of Zerah:
Jeuel and their relatives — 690 in all.

7 The Benjaminites: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Hodaviah, son
of Hassenuah;
8 Ibneiah son of Jeroham;
Elah son of Uzzi, son of Michri;
Meshullam son of Shephatiah, son of Reuel, son of Ibnijah;
9 and their relatives according to their family records — 956 † in
all. All these men were heads of their ancestral families. †

10 The priests: † Jedaiah; Jehoiarib; Jachin;
11 Azariah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of
Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief official † of God's temple;
12 Adaiah son of Jeroham, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah;
Maasai son of Adiel, son of Jahzerah, son of Meshullam, son of
Meshillemith, son of Immer;

13 and their relatives, the heads of their ancestral families — 1,760
in all. They were capable men employed in the ministry of God's
temple.

14 The Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of
Hashabiah of the Merarites;
15 Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah, son of Mica, son of
Zichri, son of Asaph;
16 Obadiah son of Shemaiah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun;
and Berechiah son of Asa, son of Elkanah who lived in the
settlements of the Netophathites.

17 The gatekeepers: † Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their
relatives.
Shallum was their chief; 18 he was previously stationed at the
King's Gate on the east side. † These were the gatekeepers from
the camp of the Levites.
19 Shallum son of Kore, son of Ebiasaph, son of Korah and his
relatives from his father's family, † the Korahites, were assigned to
guard the thresholds of the tent. † Their ancestors had been
assigned to the LORD's camp as guardians of the entrance. † 20 In
earlier times Phinehas son of Eleazar had been their leader, and the
LORD was with him. † 21 Zechariah son of Meshelemiah was the
gatekeeper at the entrance to the tent of meeting. †

22 The total number of those chosen to be gatekeepers at the thresholds was 212.
They were registered by genealogy in their settlements. David and the seer
Samuel had appointed them † to their trusted positions. 23 So they and their
sons were assigned as guards to the gates of the LORD's temple, which had been
the tent-temple. 24 The gatekeepers were on the four sides: east, west, north, and

south. 25 Their relatives came from their settlements † at fixed times to be with them seven days, † 26 but the four chief gatekeepers, who were Levites, were entrusted with the rooms and the treasuries of God's temple. † 27 They spent the night in the vicinity of God's temple, because they had guard duty and were in charge of opening it every morning. †

28 Some of them were in charge of the utensils used in worship. They would count them when they brought them in and when they took them out. 29 Others were put in charge of the furnishings and all the utensils of the sanctuary, † as well as the fine flour, † wine, oil, incense, and spices. 30 Some of the priests' sons mixed the spices. † 31 A Levite called Mattithiah, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, was entrusted with baking the bread. † 32 Some of the Kohathites' relatives were responsible for preparing the rows of the Bread of the Presence † every Sabbath.

33 The singers, † the heads of the Levite families, stayed in the temple chambers and were exempt from other tasks because they were on duty day and night. †

34 These † were the heads of the Levite families, chiefs according to their family records; they lived in Jerusalem.

SAUL'S FAMILY

35 Jeiel fathered Gibeon and lived in Gibeon. His wife's name was Maacah. 36 Abdon was his firstborn son, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38 Mikloth fathered Shimeam. These also lived opposite their relatives in Jerusalem with their other relatives.

39 Ner fathered Kish, Kish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Eshbaal.

40 Jonathan's son was Merib-baal, and Merib-baal fathered Micah.

41 Micah's sons: Pithon, Melech, Tahrea, and Ahaz. †

42 Ahaz fathered Jarah;
Jarah fathered Alemeth. Azmaveth. and Zimri:

Zimri fathered Moza.

43 Moza fathered Binea.

His son was Rephaiah, his son Elasah, and his son Azel.

44 Azel had six sons, and these were their names: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. These were Azel's sons.

9:4 Lit *Bani, from the sons* **9:9** Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in v. 13 **9:19** Lit *the house of his father* **9:19** = the temple **9:31** Lit *with things prepared in pans* **9:41** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg, Arabic; MT omits *and Ahaz* ; 1Ch 8:35

9:1 1Ch 6:15 **9:2-9** Neh 11:3-9 **9:2** Ezr 2:43,58; 8:20 **9:9** Neh 11:8 **9:10-16** Neh 11:10-18 **9:11** Jr 20:1 **9:17-22a** 1Ch 26:1-19; Ezr 2:42; Neh 7:45; 11:19 **9:18** Ezk 46:1-2 **9:19** Nm 4:1-20; 26:11; 1Ch 6:22 **9:20** Nm 25:7-13 **9:21** 1Ch 26:2,14 **9:22** 1Ch 26:1 **9:25** 1Ch 9:16 **9:25** 2Kg 11:5,7; 2Ch 23:8 **9:26** Neh 12:25 **9:27** 1Sm 3:3,15; 1Ch 23:30-32 **9:29** Nm 3:31 **9:29** 1Ch 23:29 **9:30** Ex 30:23-25 **9:32** Lv 24:5-9 **9:33** 1Ch 6:31-47; 25:1 **9:33** Ps 134:1 **9:34-44** 1Ch 8:28-38

9:1-2 The biblical author concludes the preceding genealogies by stating that **all Israel was registered in the genealogies.** His perspective of looking back on the exile resurfaces (see the notes on 1:1 and 3:10-24). Regarding **unfaithfulness** in Chronicles, see the note on 5:25-26.

9:17-27 Such **gatekeepers** will be mentioned repeatedly in 1 Chronicles (15:18,23-24; 16:38; 23:5; 26:1-19).

9:39 The repetition of Saul's genealogy (see 8:29-38) serves as a transition to the narrative concerning him that begins in 10:1.

THE DEATH OF SAUL AND HIS SONS

10 The Philistines † fought against Israel, and Israel's men fled from them. Many were killed on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines pursued Saul and his sons and killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua. 3 When the battle intensified against Saul, the archers spotted him and severely wounded him. 4 Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through with it, or these uncircumcised men will come and torture me." But his armor-bearer would not do it because he was terrified. Then Saul took his sword and fell on it. 5 When his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his own sword and died. 6 So Saul and his three sons died — his whole house died together.

7 When all the men of Israel in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled. So the Philistines came and settled in them.

8 The next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and
his sons dead on Mount Gilboa. 9 They stripped Saul, cut off his head, took his
armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to spread the
good news to their idols and the people. 10 Then they put his armor in the temple
of their gods and hung his skull in the temple of Dagon. †
11 When all Jabesh-gilead heard of everything the Philistines had done to Saul,
12 all their brave men set out and retrieved the body of Saul and the bodies of his
sons and brought them to Jabesh. They buried their bones under the oak † in
Jabesh † and fasted seven days.
13 Saul died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD because he did not keep the
LORD's word. † He even consulted a medium for guidance, † 14 but he did not
inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over
to David son of Jesse. †

10:12 Or *terebinth*, or *large tree*
10:1-12 1Sm 31:1-13 **10:10** 1Sm 5:1-4; 17:54 **10:12** 2Sm 21:12-14 **10:13** 1Sm 13:13-14; 15:23 **10:13** 1Sm 28:7 **10:14** 1Sm 15:28; 1Ch 12:23

10:1-12 This account of Saul's death closely resembles 1 Samuel 31:1-13 and was probably dependent on it (see the note on 1:10). In keeping with his focus on David and his line (see the notes on 1:1 and 3:10-24), the author of Chronicles has left out details concerning almost all of Saul's life and has included only his demise because it leads directly to David's reign (see the following note). Regarding **Dagon** (v. 10), see the notes on Judges 16:21-30 and 1 Samuel 5:1-5.

10:13-14 Rather than going into great length about Saul's failures, the biblical author characterizes him as having **died for his unfaithfulness to the LORD** through his disobedience. Among other things (see the notes on 1Sm 13:8-14 and 15:22-23), Saul **consulted a medium for guidance** rather than seeking God (1Sm 28:3-20; see "Spiritualism," *p. 350*). Saul's sins resulted in God taking the kingdom from him and giving it to David (see 1Sm 13:14; 15:28; 28:17).

DAVID'S ANOINTING AS KING

11 All Israel † came together to David at Hebron and said, "Here we are,
your own flesh and blood. † 2 Even previously when Saul was king,
you were leading Israel out to battle and bringing us back. The LORD your God
also said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will be ruler over
my people Israel.' "
3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron. David made a covenant
with them at Hebron in the LORD's presence, and they anointed David king over
Israel, in keeping with the LORD's word through Samuel. †

DAVID'S CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

4 David † and all Israel marched to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus); the Jebusites who
inhabited the land were there. † 5 The inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You
will never get in here." Yet David did capture the stronghold of Zion, that is, the
city of David.
6 David said, "Whoever is the first to kill a Jebusite will become chief
commander." Joab † son of Zeruiah went up first, so he became the chief.
7 Then David took up residence in the stronghold; therefore, it was called the
city of David. 8 He built up the city all the way around, from the supporting
terraces to the surrounding parts, and Joab restored the rest of the city. 9 David
steadily grew more powerful, † and the LORD of Armies was with him.

EXPLOITS OF DAVID'S WARRIORS

10 The following were the chiefs of David's warriors who, together with all
Israel, strongly supported him in his reign to make him king according to the
LORD's word about Israel. † 11 This † is the list of David's warriors: Jashobeam
son of Hachmoni was chief † of the Thirty; † he wielded his spear against three
hundred and killed them at one time.
12 After him, Eleazar son of Dodo † the Ahohite was one of the three warriors.
13 He was with David at Pas-dammim when the Philistines had gathered there
for battle. There was a portion of a field full of barley, where the troops had fled
from the Philistines. † 14 But Eleazar and David † took their stand in the
middle of the field and defended it. They killed the Philistines, and the LORD
gave them a great victory.
15 Three of the thirty chief men went down to David, to the rock at the cave of
Adullam, † while the Philistine army was encamped in the Valley of
Rephaim. † 16 At that time David was in the stronghold, † and a Philistine
garrison † was at Bethlehem. 17 David was extremely thirsty † and said, "If
only someone would bring me water to drink from the well at the city gate of
Bethlehem! " 18 So the Three broke through the Philistine camp and drew water
from the well at the gate of Bethlehem. They brought it back to David, but he
refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out to the LORD. 19 David said, "I would
never do such a thing in the presence of my God! How can I drink the blood of

these men who risked their lives?” For they brought it at the risk of their lives. So he would not drink it. Such were the exploits of the three warriors.

20 Abishai, † Joab’s brother, was the leader of the Three. † He raised his spear against three hundred men and killed them, gaining a reputation among the Three. 21 He was more honored than the Three and became their commander even though he did not become one of the Three.

22 Benaiah son of Jehoiada † was the son of a brave man † from Kabzeel, a man of many exploits. Benaiah killed two sons of Ariel of Moab, † and he went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. 23 He also killed an Egyptian who was seven and a half feet tall. † Even though the Egyptian had a spear in his hand like a weaver’s beam, † Benaiah went down to him with a club, snatched the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and then killed him with his own spear. 24 These were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada, who had a reputation among the three warriors. 25 He was the most honored of the Thirty, but he did not become one of the Three. David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

26 The best soldiers † were

Joab’s brother Asahel, †
Elhanan son of Dodo of Bethlehem,
27 Shammoth the Harorite,
Helez the Pelonite,
28 Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite,
Abiezer the Anathothite,
29 Sibbecai the Hushathite,
Ilai the Ahohite,
30 Maharai the Netophathite,
Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite,
31 Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah of the Benjaminites,
Benaiah the Pirathonite,

32 Hurai from the wadis of Gaash,
Abiel the Arbathite,
33 Azmaveth the Baharumite,
Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
34 the sons of † † Hashem the Gizonite,
Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite,
35 Ahiam son of Sachar the Hararite,
Eliphal son of Ur,
36 Hepher the Mecherathite,
Ahijah the Pelonite,
37 Hezro the Carmelite,
Naarai son of Ezbai,
38 Joel the brother of Nathan,
Mibhar son of Hagri,
39 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer for Joab son of Zeruiah,
40 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,
41 Uriah the Hethite,
Zabad son of Ahlai,
42 Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, chief of the Reubenites,
and thirty with him,
43 Hanan son of Maacah,
Joshaphat the Mithnite,
44 Uzzia the Ashterathite,
Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite,
45 Jediael son of Shimri and his brother Joha the Tizite,

46 Eliel the Mahavite,
Jeribai and Joshaviah, the sons of Elnaam,
Ithmah the Moabite,
47 Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

11:1 Lit *your bone and your flesh* **11:11** Alt Hb tradition reads *Three* **11:14** Lit *But they* **11:17** Lit *And David craved* **11:20** Syr reads *Thirty* **11:22** Or *was a valiant man* **11:22** Or *He killed two Moabite warriors* **11:23** Lit *who measured five cubits* **11:34** LXX omits *the sons of*; 2Sm 23:32
11:1-3 2Sm 5:1-3 **11:3** 1Sm 16:1-13 **11:4-9** 2Sm 5:6-10 **11:4** Jos 15:8,63; Jdg 1:21 **11:6** 2Sm 8:16; 1Ch 18:15 **11:9** 2Sm 3:1 **11:10** 1Ch 11:3 **11:11-25** 2Sm 23:8-23 **11:11** 1Ch 12:18 **11:12** 1Ch 27:4 **11:13** 2Sm 23:11-12 **11:15** 1Sm 22:1 **11:15** 1Ch 14:9 **11:16** 1Sm 22:4-5; 2Sm 5:9 **11:16** 1Sm 10:5 **11:20** 1Sm 26:6; 2Sm 18:2 **11:22** 2Sm 8:18; 20:23; 23:20-23; 1Kg 1:8; 1Ch 18:17; 27:5-6,34 **11:23** 1Sm 17:7; 1Ch 20:5 **11:26-47** 2Sm 23:24-39 **11:26** 2Sm 2:18-23 **11:34** 2Sm 23:32

11:3 Though unmentioned previously in 1 Chronicles, several passages in 1 Samuel relate to Samuel's pledge that David would become king over Israel (1Sm 13:14; 15:28; 16:1-13).

11:9-10 Whereas 2 Samuel gave details regarding the gradual transfer of the kingdom to David (see 2Sm 2:4; 3:1; 5:3-5), the emphasis here is that **the LORD of Armies was with him** and that he became king over **all Israel** (see also vv. 1,4; 9:1; 12:38), **according to the LORD's word** (see also v. 3; 12:23).

DAVID'S FIRST SUPPORTERS

12 The following were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still banned from the presence of Saul son of Kish. † They were among the warriors who helped him in battle. 2 They were archers who could use either the right or left hand, both to sling stones and shoot arrows from a bow. † They were Saul's relatives † from Benjamin:

3 Their chief was Ahiezer son of Shemaah the Gibeathite.
Then there was his brother Joash;
Jeziel and Pelet sons of Azmaveth;
Beracah, Jehu the Anathothite;
4 Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a warrior among the Thirty and a leader over the Thirty;
Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite;
5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, Shephatiah the Haruphite;

6 Elkanah, Isshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites;
7 and Joelah and Zebadiah, the sons of Jeroham from Gedor.

8 Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the desert. They were
valiant warriors, trained for battle, expert with shield and spear. Their faces were
like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as gazelles on the mountains. †

9 Ezer was the chief, Obadiah second, Eliab third,
10 Mishmannah fourth, Jeremiah fifth,
11 Attai sixth, Eliel seventh,
12 Johanan eighth, Elzabad ninth,
13 Jeremiah tenth, and Machbannai eleventh.

14 These Gadites were army commanders; the least of them was a match for a
hundred, and the greatest of them for a thousand. † 15 These are the men who
crossed the Jordan in the first month † when it was overflowing all its banks, †
and put to flight all those in the valleys to the east and to the west.
16 Other Benjaminites and men from Judah also went to David at the
stronghold. † 17 David went out to meet them and said to them, “If you have
come in peace to help me, my heart will be united with you, but if you have
come to betray me to my enemies even though my hands have done no wrong,
may the God of our ancestors look on it and judge.”
18 Then the Spirit enveloped † † Amasai, † chief of the Thirty, and he said:

We are yours, David,
we are with you, son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
and peace to him who helps you, †
for your God helps you.

So David received them and made them leaders of his troops.

19 Some Manassites defected to David when he went with the Philistines to fight against Saul. However, they did not help the Philistines because the Philistine rulers sent David away after a discussion. They said, “It will be our heads if he defects to his master Saul.” † 20 When David went to Ziklag, some men from Manasseh defected to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, chiefs of thousands in Manasseh. 21 They helped David against the raiders, † for they were all valiant warriors and commanders in the army. 22 At that time, men came day after day to help David until there was a great army, like an army of God. † †

DAVID’S SOLDIERS IN HEBRON

23 The numbers of the armed troops who came to David at Hebron to turn Saul’s kingdom over to him, † according to the LORD’s word, † were as follows:

24 From the Judahites: 6,800 armed troops bearing
shields and spears.

25 From the Simeonites: 7,100 valiant warriors ready for war.

26 From the Levites: 4,600 27 in addition to Jehoiada, leader of the house of Aaron, with 3,700 men; 28 and Zadok, † a young valiant warrior, with 22 commanders from his father’s family. †

29 From the Benjaminites, the relatives of Saul: † 3,000 (up to that time the majority of the Benjaminites maintained their allegiance to the house of Saul).

30 From the Ephraimites: 20,800 valiant warriors who were famous men in their ancestral families. †

31 From half the tribe of Manasseh: 18,000 designated by name to come and make David king.

32 From the Issacharites, who understood the times † and knew what Israel should do: 200 chiefs with all their relatives
under their command.

33 From Zebulun: 50,000 who could serve in the army, trained for battle with all kinds of weapons of war, with one purpose †
to help David. †
34 From Naphtali: 1,000 commanders accompanied by 37,000 men with shield and spear.
35 From the Danites: 28,600 trained for battle.
36 From Asher: 40,000 who could serve in the army, trained for battle.
37 From across the Jordan — from the Reubenites, Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh: 120,000 men equipped with all the military weapons of war.

38 All these warriors, lined up in battle formation, came to Hebron wholeheartedly determined to make David king over all Israel. All the rest of Israel was also of one mind to make David king. † 39 They spent three days there eating and drinking with David, for their relatives had provided for them. 40 In addition, their neighbors from as far away as Issachar, Zebulun, and Naphtali came and brought food on donkeys, camels, mules, and oxen — abundant provisions of flour, fig cakes, raisins, wine and oil, herds, and flocks. † Indeed, there was joy in Israel.

12:15 = Nisan (March–April) **12:18** Lit *clothed* ; Jdg 6:34; 2Ch 24:20 **12:22** Or *like the ultimate army* **12:28** Lit *the house of his father* **12:30** Lit *the house of their fathers* **12:33** LXX; MT omits *David* **12:1** 1Sm 27:1-7 **12:2** Jdg 3:15; 20:16 **12:2** 1Ch 12:29 **12:8** 2Sm 2:18 **12:14** Lv 26:8; Dt 32:30; Is 30:17 **12:15** Jos 3:15; 4:18 **12:16** 1Sm 22:1-2 **12:18** Jdg 6:34; 2Ch 24:20 **12:18** 1Ch 2:17 **12:18** 1Sm 25:5-6 **12:19** 1Sm 29:1-11 **12:21** 1Sm 30:1-20 **12:22** Gn 32:1-2; Jos 5:13-15 **12:23** 1Sm 15:28; 1Ch 10:14 **12:23** 1Ch 11:10 **12:28** 2Sm 8:17; 1Ch 6:8,53; 9:11; 15:11; 16:39 **12:29** 1Ch 12:2 **12:32** Est 1:13 **12:33** Ps 12:2 **12:38** 2Sm 5:1-3 **12:40** 1Sm 25:18

12:1 The preceding list of warriors had “strongly supported” David “to make him king” (11:10). When Saul was still alive, David had also been supported **at Ziklag** (see v. 20; 1Sm 27:5-6; 30:1-31) and at “the stronghold” (v. 16; 1Sm 23:14,19,29) by men from various tribes. Included were men from Benjamin (vv. 2-7), Gad (vv. 8-15), Judah (v. 16), and Manasseh (vv. 19-22). The effect is to reinforce the Israelites’ unanimous support of David (see vv. 24-37 and the following note).

12:18 The Israelites’ support of David (see the previous note) was in agreement with the will of God (see the note on 13:1-10), as shown through this brief prophetic message from **Amasai.** His speaking through **the Spirit** gave divine authentication to his word of blessing on David. The thought behind the statement

peace to him who helps you resembles the Abrahamic blessing: “I will bless those who bless you” (Gn 12:3) and “those who bless you will be blessed” (Gn 27:29; Nm 24:9).

12:22-23 As 11:9 said, “David steadily grew more powerful” in accordance with God’s word to make him king over all Israel. Likewise, his army continued to grow daily to the point that they were **a great army, like an army of God.** David’s increase in power is once again linked to **the LORD’s word.**

12:38-40 David’s warriors came from all twelve tribes (vv. 24-37; see also the note on v. 1). They were **wholeheartedly determined to make David king over all Israel** and the other Israelites were **of one mind** to do the same. His rule thus had the complete support of the nation and of God himself (see v. 23).

DAVID AND THE ARK

13 David consulted with all his leaders, the commanders of hundreds and
of thousands. 2 Then he said to the whole assembly of Israel, “If it
seems good to you, and if this is from the LORD our God, let us spread
out and send the message to the rest of our relatives in all the districts of Israel,
including the priests and Levites in their cities with pasturelands, † that they
should gather together with us. 3 Then let us bring back the ark of our God, for
we did not inquire of him † † in Saul’s days.” 4 Since the proposal seemed
right to all the people, the whole assembly agreed to do it.
5 So David assembled all Israel, † from the Shihor of Egypt to the entrance of
Hamath, † † to bring the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim. † 6 David † and all
Israel went to Baalah † (that is, Kiriath-jearim that belongs to Judah) to take
from there the ark of God, which bears the name of the LORD who is enthroned
between the cherubim. † 7 At Abinadab’s house † they set the ark of God on a
new cart. Uzzah and Ahio † were guiding the cart.
8 David and all Israel were dancing with all their might before God with songs
and with lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets. † 9 When they came
to Chidon’s threshing floor, † Uzzah reached out to hold the ark because the
oxen had stumbled. 10 Then the LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah, and he
struck him dead because he had reached out to the ark. † So he died there in the
presence of God. †
11 David was angry because of the LORD’s outburst against Uzzah, so he named
that place Outburst Against Uzzah, † as it is still named today. 12 David feared
God that day and said, “How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?” 13 So
David did not bring the ark of God home † to the city of David; instead, he

diverted it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath. † 14 The ark of God remained with Obed-edom's family in his house for three months, and the LORD blessed his family and all that he had.

13:3 Or *did not seek it* **13:5** Or *to Lebo-hamath* **13:7** Or *And his brothers* **13:11** Or *Perez-uzzah* **13:13** Lit *to himself*

13:2 Nm 35:1-8 **13:3** 1Sm 7:1-2; 1Ch 10:14; 15:13 **13:5** 2Sm 6:1; 1Ch 15:3 **13:5** 1Kg 8:65 **13:5** 1Sm 6:21; 7:1 **13:6-14** 2Sm 6:2-11 **13:6** Jos 15:9 **13:6** 2Kg 19:15 **13:7** 1Sm 7:1 **13:8** 1Ch 15:16 **13:9** 2Sm 6:6 **13:10** 1Ch 15:13,15 **13:10** Lv 10:2 **13:13** 1Ch 26:4-5; 2Ch 25:23-24

13:1-10 With the support of all the people (vv. 1-4), David assembled the Israelites to bring the ark from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem (vv. 5-7). Despite their celebration, Uzzah was struck down by God because he steadied the ark with his hand as it was being transported (vv. 8-10). They had not followed God's instructions regarding its transportation, and God was justly angry with them (see 15:2,11-15). The unity of purpose between David and Israel was actually counterproductive because they acted contrary to the Word of God as written in Scripture (see Ex 25:12-14; Nm 4:4-20). David came away from this incident with a greater sense of awe towards God and his ark (v. 12).

13:14 The blessing that God brought on **Obed-edom's family** through the presence of the ark showed his goodness and provides a fuller picture of his character in light of his judgment on Uzzah (vv. 9-10).

GOD'S BLESSING ON DAVID

14 King Hiram of Tyre sent envoys to David, † along with cedar logs, stonemasons, and carpenters to build a palace for him. 2 Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and that his kingdom had been exalted for the sake of his people Israel.

3 David took more wives in Jerusalem, and he became the father of more sons and daughters. 4 These † are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

8 When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over all Israel, they all went in search of David; when David heard of this, he went out to face them. 9 Now the Philistines had come and raided in the Valley of Rephaim, † 10 so David inquired of God, "Should I attack the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?"

The LORD replied, "Attack, and I will hand them over to you."

11 So the Israelites went up to Baal-perazim, and David defeated the Philistines there. Then David said, "Like a bursting flood, God has used me to burst out against my enemies." Therefore, they named that place The Lord Bursts Out. †

12 The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David ordered that they be
burned in the fire.
13 Once again the Philistines raided in the valley. 14 So David again inquired of
God, and God answered him, “Do not pursue them directly. Circle around them
and attack them opposite the balsam trees. 15 When you hear the sound of
marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle, for God will have
gone out ahead of you to strike down the army of the Philistines.” 16 So David
did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army from
Gibeon to Gezer. 17 Then David’s fame spread throughout the lands, and the
LORD caused all the nations to be terrified of him. †

14:11 Or *Baal-perazim*

14:1-17 2Sm 5:11-25 **14:4-7** 1Ch 3:5-8 **14:9** 1Ch 11:15; 14:13 **14:17** Ex 15:14-16; Dt 2:25

14:1-2 David received a confirmation of God’s establishment of him as king when Hiram of Tyre sent men **to build a palace for him** (see also 11:3,10; 12:23).

14:3 Regarding polygamy, see the note on Genesis 2:24.

14:11 The use of the Hebrew word *parats* (“**to burst out**” or “outburst”) here and in 13:11 links God’s defeat of the Philistines to his striking down of Uzzah (see also 15:13).

14:17 David inquired of God twice (vv. 10,14), and God rewarded him with two defeats of the Philistines (vv. 11,16). As a result, **David’s fame spread throughout the lands**, and God caused **all the nations** to fear him.

THE ARK COMES TO JERUSALEM

15 David built houses for himself in the city of David, and he prepared a
place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. † 2 Then David said,
“No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD has chosen
them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever.” †
3 David assembled all Israel at Jerusalem † to bring the ark of the LORD to the
place he had prepared for it. † 4 Then he gathered together the descendants of
Aaron and the Levites: 5 From the Kohathites, Uriel the leader and 120 of his
relatives; 6 from the Merarites, Asaiah the leader and 220 of his relatives;
7 from the Gershomites, † Joel the leader and 130 of his relatives; 8 from the
Elizaphanites, Shemaiah the leader and 200 of his relatives; 9 from the
Hebronites, Eliel the leader and 80 of his relatives; 10 from the Uzzielites,
Amminadab the leader and 112 of his relatives.

11 David summoned the priests Zadok † and Abiathar † and the Levites Uriel,
Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 He said to them, “You are the
heads of the Levite families. You and your relatives must consecrate
yourselves † so that you may bring the ark of the LORD God of Israel to the
place I have prepared for it. † 13 For the LORD our God burst out in anger
against us because you Levites were not with us the first time, for we didn’t
inquire of him about the proper procedures.” † 14 So the priests and the Levites
consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 Then
the Levites carried the ark of God the way Moses had commanded according to
the word of the LORD: on their shoulders with the poles. †
16 Then David told the leaders of the Levites to appoint their relatives as singers
and to have them raise their voices with joy accompanied by musical instruments
— harps, lyres, and cymbals. † 17 So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel;
from his relatives, Asaph son of Berechiah; and from their relatives the
Merarites, Ethan son of Kushaiah. 18 With them were their relatives second in
rank: Zechariah, Jaaziel, † Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah,
Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, and the gatekeepers Obed-edom
and Jeiel. 19 The singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan were to sound the bronze
cymbals; 20 Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and
Benaiah were to play harps according to *Alamoth* † 21 and Mattithiah,
Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah were to lead the music
with lyres according to the *Sheminith*. 22 Chenaniah, the leader of the Levites in
music, was to direct the music because he was skillful. 23 Berechiah and
Elkanah were to be gatekeepers for the ark. 24 The priests, Shebaniah,
Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, were to blow
trumpets † before the ark of God. Obed-edom and Jehiah were also to be
gatekeepers for the ark.
25 David, † the elders of Israel, and the commanders of thousands went with
rejoicing to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-
edom. † 26 Because God helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the
covenant of the LORD, with God’s help, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven
rams. †

27 Now David was dressed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who
were carrying the ark, as well as the singers and Chenaniah, the music leader of
the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. 28 So all Israel brought up the ark of
the covenant of the LORD with shouts, the sound of the ram's horn, trumpets, and
cymbals, and the playing of harps and lyres. 29 As the ark of the covenant of the
LORD was entering the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from
the window and saw King David leaping † and dancing, and she despised him in
her heart.

15:7 = Gershonites **15:18** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *Zechariah son and Jaaziel* **15:20** This may refer to a high pitch, perhaps a tune sung by soprano voices; the Hb word means "young women" ; Ps 46 title **15:29** Or *whirling*

15:1 1Ch 16:1; 17:1-5 **15:2** Nm 4:15; Dt 10:8 **15:3** 1Ch 13:5 **15:3** 2Sm 6:12,17; 1Ch 15:12 **15:11** 1Ch 12:28; 18:16; 24:3,6,31; 27:17; 29:22 **15:11** 1Sm 22:20-23; 1Kg 1:7; 2:26-27,35; 1Ch 27:34 **15:12** Ex 19:14; 2Ch 35:6 **15:12** 1Ch 15:1,3 **15:13** 2Sm 6:3; 1Ch 13:7 **15:15** Ex 25:12-15; Nm 4:6,15 **15:16** 1Ch 13:8; 25:1 **15:24** 1Ch 16:6 **15:25-29** 2Sm 6:12-16 **15:25** 1Ch 13:13 **15:26** Nm 23:1-4,29

15:2-15 David had learned his lesson from the Uzzah incident (see the note on 13:1-10). This time he had the ark transported by the Levites **the way Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.**

15:17 Heman, **Asaph**, and **Ethan** were appointed as singers who would also sound bronze cymbals (see also v. 19). These same three men were mentioned earlier with reference to being in charge of music at the temple (6:31-46).

15:28 With music playing, David and **all Israel** joyfully and properly brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem, this time without incident (see the note on vv. 2-15).

16 They † brought the ark of God and placed it inside the tent David had
pitched for it. † Then they offered burnt offerings and fellowship
offerings in God's presence. 2 When David had finished offering the burnt
offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the
LORD. 3 Then he distributed to each and every Israelite, both men and women, a
loaf of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake.

4 David appointed some of the Levites to be ministers before the ark of the
LORD, to celebrate the LORD God of Israel, and to give thanks and praise to him.
5 Asaph was the chief and Zechariah was second to him. Jeiel, Shemiramoth,
Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel played the harps and
lyres, while Asaph sounded the cymbals 6 and the priests Benaiah and Jahaziel
blew the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.

DAVID'S PSALM OF THANKSGIVING

7 On that day David decreed for the first time that thanks be given to the LORD
by Asaph and his relatives:

8 Give thanks † to the LORD; call on his name; proclaim his deeds among
the peoples. †
9 Sing to him; sing praise to him; tell about all his wondrous works!
10 Honor his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
11 Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. †
12 Remember the wondrous works he has done, †
his wonders, and the judgments he has pronounced, † †
13 you offspring of Israel his servant, Jacob's descendants — his chosen ones.

14 He is the LORD our God; his judgments govern the whole earth. †
15 Remember his covenant forever — the promise he ordained for a thousand
generations, 16 the covenant he made with Abraham, swore † to Isaac, †
17 and confirmed to Jacob as a decree, and to Israel as a permanent covenant: †
18 "I will give the land of Canaan to you as your inherited portion." †

19 When they † were few in number, very few indeed, † and resident aliens
in Canaan 20 wandering from nation to nation and from one kingdom
to another,
21 he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their behalf: †
22 "Do not touch my anointed ones or harm my prophets." †

23 Let the whole earth sing † to the LORD.
Proclaim his salvation from day to day.
24 Declare his glory among the nations, his wondrous works among all peoples.

25 For the LORD is great and highly praised; †
he is feared above all gods. †
26 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, †
but the LORD made the heavens. †
27 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

28 Ascribe to the LORD, families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory
and strength.
29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; bring an offering and come
before him.

Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; †
30 let the whole earth tremble † before him.

The world is firmly established;
it cannot be shaken.
31 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, †
and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns! "
32 Let the sea and all that fills it resound; let the fields and everything in them
exult. †
33 Then the trees of the forest will shout for joy before the LORD, for he
is coming to judge the earth.

34 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. †
35 And say: † "Save us, God of our salvation; gather us and rescue us from
the nations so that we may give thanks to your holy name and rejoice
in your praise.
36 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel †
from everlasting to everlasting."

Then all the people said, "Amen" and "Praise the LORD."
37 So David left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the LORD's
covenant to minister regularly † before the ark according to the daily
requirements. † 38 He assigned Obed-edom † and his † sixty-eight relatives.
Obed-edom son of Jeduthun and Hosah † were to be gatekeepers. 39 David left
the priest Zadok and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the
high place in Gibeon † 40 to offer burnt offerings regularly, morning and
evening, to the LORD on the altar of burnt offerings and to do everything that was
written in the law of the LORD, which he had commanded Israel to keep. †
41 With them were Heman, † Jeduthun, and the rest who were chosen and

designated by name † to give thanks to the LORD — for his faithful love endures forever. † 42 Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets and cymbals to play and musical instruments of God. † Jeduthun's sons were at the city gate.
43 Then all the people went home, and David returned home to bless his household. †

16:12 Lit *judgments of his mouth* **16:16** Lit *and his oath* **16:19** One Hb ms, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *you* **16:38** LXX, Syr, Vg; Hb reads *their*
16:1-3 2Sm 6:17-19 **16:1** 1Ch 15:1 **16:8-22** Ps 105:1-15 **16:8** 1Kg 8:43; 2Kg 19:19 **16:11** Ps 24:6 **16:12** Ps 103:2 **16:12** Ps 78:43-68 **16:14** Ps 48:10 **16:16** Gn 17:2; 22:16-18; 26:3 **16:17** Gn 35:11-12 **16:18** Gn 13:15 **16:19** Gn 34:30; Dt 7:7 **16:21** Gn 12:17; 20:3; Ex 7:15-18 **16:22** Gn 20:7 **16:23-33** Ps 96 **16:25** Ps 144:3-6 **16:25** Ps 89:7 **16:26** Lv 19:4 **16:26** Ps 102:25 **16:29** Ps 29:2 **16:30-31** Ps 93:1 **16:31** Is 44:23; 49:13 **16:32** Ps 98:7 **16:34** Ps 106:1; 136:1 **16:35-36a** Ps 106:47-48 **16:36** 1Kg 8:15,56; Ps 72:18 **16:37** 1Ch 16:4-5 **16:37** 2Ch 8:14; Ezr 3:4 **16:38** 1Ch 13:13 **16:38** 1Ch 26:10 **16:39** 1Kg 3:4; 1Ch 21:29 **16:40** Ex 29:38-42; Nm 28:3-4 **16:41** 1Ch 6:33 **16:41** 1Ch 25:1-6 **16:41** 2Ch 5:13 **16:42** 1Ch 25:7; 2Ch 7:6; 29:27 **16:43** 2Sm 6:19-20

16:8 Transporting the ark to Jerusalem was not merely an Israelite affair but led to David's psalm that called for God's mighty deeds to be proclaimed **among the peoples** (see the notes on 22:1; 2Ch 2:11-12; 6:32-33; 9:1-8,23-24). Various sections of vv. 8-36 resemble respective portions of three psalms (see the following notes). Verses 8-22 is almost identical to Psalm 105:1-15. The differences in vv. 13,15 (see Ps 105:6,8) serve to focus additional attention on Israel and their need to "remember his covenant." Despite Israel's failures and present exile (see the note on 9:1-2), God would be faithful to his promise "for a thousand generations" (v. 15).

16:23-33 These verses are similar to Psalm 96. Even more than the previous section (v. 8), this one repeatedly proclaims that God alone is the God of all nations (e.g., vv. 23-26,30). All other gods **are idols** (v. 26), so the peoples ought to give glory to God (v. 28), who alone is King (v. 31) and **is coming to judge the earth** (v. 33).

16:34-36 The words of v. 34, sometimes with slight variation, are commonly found not only in Psalms (e.g., 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1) but also in Chronicles (e.g., v. 41; 2Ch 5:13; 7:3,6; 20:21). Verses 35-36 are very similar to Psalm 106:47-48, which incidentally is the conclusion of Book IV in the Psalms (see Pss 106–107). The prayer that God **gather . . . and rescue . . . from the nations** (v. 35) would have particularly fit a readership in exile (see the notes on 3:10-24 and 9:1-2).

THE LORD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

17 When David † had settled into his palace, he said to the prophet Nathan, "Look! I am living in a cedar house while the ark of the LORD's covenant is under tent curtains." †
2 So Nathan told David, "Do all that is on your mind, for God is with you."
3 But that night † the word of God came to Nathan: 4 "Go to David my servant and say, 'This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. † 5 From the time I brought Israel out of Egypt until today I have not

dwelt in a house; instead, I have moved from one tent site to another, and from one tabernacle location to another. † † 6 In all my journeys throughout Israel, have I ever spoken a word to even one of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, asking: Why haven't you built me a house of cedar? ' †

7 "So now this is what you are to say to my servant David: 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. † 8 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a name for you like that of the greatest on the earth. 9 I will designate a place for my people Israel and plant them, † so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they have done 10 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over my people Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies.

" 'Furthermore, I declare to you that the LORD himself will build a house for you. 11 When your time comes to be with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who is one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12 He is the one who will build a house for me, † and I will establish his throne forever. 13 I will be his father, and he will be my son. † I will not remove my faithful love from him as I removed it from the one who was before you. † 14 I will appoint him over my house and my kingdom forever, and his throne will be established forever.' " †

15 Nathan reported all these words and this entire vision to David.

DAVID'S PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

16 Then † King David went in, sat in the LORD's presence, and said,

Who am I, LORD God, and what is my house that you have brought me this far?

17 This was a little thing to you, † God, for you have spoken about your servant's house in the distant future. You regard me as a man of distinction, † LORD God. 18 What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? You know your servant. 19 LORD, you have done this whole great thing, making known all these great promises for the sake of your servant and according to your will. † 20 LORD, there is no one like you, and there is no God besides you,

as all we have heard confirms. 21 And who is like your people Israel? God, you
came to one nation on earth to redeem a people for yourself, to make a name for
yourself through great and awesome works by driving out nations before your
people you redeemed from Egypt. † 22 You made your people Israel your own
people forever, and you, LORD, have become their God. †
23 Now, LORD, let the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and
his house be confirmed forever, and do as you have promised. 24 Let your name
be confirmed and magnified forever in the saying, "The LORD of Armies, the
God of Israel, is God over Israel." May the house of your servant David be
established before you. 25 Since you, my God, have revealed to † † your
servant that you will build him a house, your servant has found courage to pray
in your presence. 26 LORD, you indeed are God, and you have promised this good
thing to your servant. 27 So now, you have been pleased to bless your servant's
house that it may continue before you forever. For you, LORD, have blessed it,
and it is blessed forever.

17:5 Lit *I was from tent to tent and from tabernacle* **17:17** Lit *thing in your eyes* **17:17** Hb obscure **17:25** Lit *have uncovered the ear of*

17:1-2 2Sm 7:1-3 **17:1** Hg 1:4 **17:3-15** 2Sm 7:4-17 **17:4** 1Ch 22:7-8; 28:2-3 **17:5** Ex 40:2-3; 2Sm 7:6 **17:6** 2Sm 7:7 **17:7** 1Sm 16:11-13 **17:9** Ex 15:17 **17:12** 1Kg 5:2-5; 6:14,38; 8:17-20; 2Ch 6:2 **17:13** Heb 1:5 **17:13** 1Sm 15:23-28; 1Ch 10:14 **17:14** Ps 89:29,36 **17:16-27** 2Sm 7:18-29 **17:19** Is 37:35 **17:21** Dt 4:32-38 **17:22** Ex 6:7; 19:5-6 **17:25** Ex 6:7; 19:5-6

17:1 David had become king over all Israel according to the word of God (11:3,10; 12:23) with the support of the whole nation, and he had brought the ark to Jerusalem. The next major event was God making a covenant with him, which resulted from his desire to build a more permanent structure for the ark.

17:10-14 Though David wanted to build a house (temple) for the ark, God instead declared that he would build a **house** (dynasty) for David (v. 10). One of David's descendants would be the one to **build a house for** [him] (v. 12), and his throne would be established forever (vv. 12,14; see the note on 22:7-13). Given the end of the Davidic dynasty through the fall of the kingdom of Judah (see the notes on 3:10-24 and 9:1-2), this prophecy has messianic overtones (see the note on 29:22-25). This covenant that God made with David (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16) further emphasizes the divine approval of his reign (see 11:3,10; 12:23) and relates to Chronicles' focus on Davidic kings (see the notes on 1:1 and 29:22-25).

17:17 David recognized that God's promises concerned **the distant future** (see also v. 27).

DAVID'S MILITARY CAMPAIGNS

18 After this, † David defeated the Philistines, subdued them, and took
Gath and its surrounding villages from Philistine control. 2 He also
defeated the Moabites, and they became David's subjects and brought tribute.

3 David also defeated King Hadadezer of Zobah at Hamath when he went to
establish his control at the Euphrates River. 4 David captured one thousand
chariots, seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers from him,
hamstrung all the horses, and kept a hundred chariots. †
5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to assist King Hadadezer of Zobah, †
David struck down twenty-two thousand Aramean men. 6 Then he placed
garrisons † † in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David's
subjects and brought tribute. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.
7 David took the gold shields carried by Hadadezer's officers and brought them
to Jerusalem. 8 From Tibhath and Cun, Hadadezer's cities, David also took huge
quantities of bronze, from which Solomon made the bronze basin, † the pillars,
and the bronze articles. †
9 When King Tou of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of
King Hadadezer of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Hadoram to King David to greet
him and to congratulate him because David had fought against Hadadezer and
defeated him, for Tou and Hadadezer had fought many wars. Hadoram brought
all kinds of gold, silver, and bronze items. 11 King David also dedicated these to
the LORD, along with the silver and gold he had carried off from all the nations
— from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites.
12 Abishai son of Zeruiah struck down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Salt
Valley. 13 He put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites were subject to
David. The LORD made David victorious wherever he went.
14 So David reigned over all Israel, † administering justice and righteousness
for all his people.

15 Joab † son of Zeruiah was over the army;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was court historian;
16 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelech † † son of Abiathar
were priests;
Shavsha was court secretary;
17 Benaiah son of Jehoiada † was over the Cherethites
and the Pelethites;

and David's sons were the chief officials at the king's side.

18:4 Or *chariot horses* **18:6** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss omit *garrisons* ; 2Sm 8:6 **18:8** Lit *sea* **18:16** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *Abimelech* ; 2Sm 8:17
18:1-13 2Sm 8:1-14 **18:5** 1Ch 18:9; 19:6 **18:6** 2Sm 8:6 **18:8** 1Kg 7:15-47; 2Ch 3:15–4:18 **18:14-17** 2Sm 8:15-18 **18:15** 1Ch 11:6 **18:16** 2Sm 8:17; 1Ch 24:6,31 **18:17** 2Sm 23:20-23

18:6 The Lord's blessing on David also was evident through his many military successes (vv. 1-13; see the note on 17:10-14). He continued to win battles because the **LORD made David victorious wherever he went** (see also v. 13).

18:8 These **bronze articles** would be used in the temple.

18:14 Regarding David's **administering justice and righteousness**, see the note on 2 Samuel 8:15.

WAR WITH THE AMMONITES

19 Some time later, † King Nahash of the Ammonites died, and his son
became king in his place. 2 Then David said, "I'll show kindness to
Hanun son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me."
So David sent messengers to console him concerning his father. However, when
David's emissaries arrived in the land of the Ammonites to console him, 3 the
Ammonite leaders said to Hanun, "Just because David has sent men with
condolences for you, do you really believe he's showing respect for your father?
Instead, haven't his emissaries come in order to scout out, overthrow, and spy on
the land?" 4 So Hanun took David's emissaries, shaved them, cut their clothes
in half at the hips, and sent them away. †
5 It was reported to David about his men, so he sent messengers to meet them,
since the men were deeply humiliated. The king said, "Stay in Jericho until your
beards grow back; then return."
6 When the Ammonites realized † they had made themselves repulsive to
David, Hanun and the Ammonites sent thirty-eight tons † of silver to hire
chariots and horsemen from Aram-naharaim, Aram-maacah, and Zobah. †
7 They hired thirty-two thousand chariots and the king of Maacah with his army,
who came and camped near Medeba. † The Ammonites also came together from
their cities for the battle.
8 David heard about this and sent Joab and all the elite troops. 9 The Ammonites
marched out and lined up in battle formation at the entrance of the city while the
kings who had come were in the field by themselves. 10 When Joab saw that

there was a battle line in front of him and another behind him, he chose some of Israel's finest young men † † and lined up in formation to engage the Arameans. 11 He placed the rest of the forces under the command of his brother Abishai. They lined up in formation to engage the Ammonites.
12 "If the Arameans are too strong for me," Joab said, "then you'll be my help. However, if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I'll help you. 13 Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. † May the LORD's will be done." †
14 Joab and the people with him approached the Arameans for battle, and they fled before him. 15 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they likewise fled before Joab's brother Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab went to Jerusalem.
16 When the Arameans realized that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers to summon the Arameans who were beyond the Euphrates River. They were led by Shophach, the commander of Hadadezer's army.
17 When this was reported to David, he gathered all Israel and crossed the Jordan. He came up to the Arameans and lined up against them. When David lined up to engage them, they fought against him. 18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed seven thousand of their charioteers and forty thousand foot soldiers. He also killed Shophach, commander of the army. 19 When Hadadezer's subjects saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his subjects. After this, the Arameans were never willing to help the Ammonites again.
19:6 Lit *1,000 talents* **19:10** Lit *Israel's choice ones* **19:13** Lit *the Lord do what is good in his eyes*
19:1-5 2Sm 10:1-5 **19:4** Is 7:20; 20:4 **19:6-19** 2Sm 10:6-19 **19:6** 1Ch 18:5,9 **19:7** Nm 21:30; Jos 13:9,16; Is 15:2 **19:10** 2Sm 6:1 **19:13** Jos 1:6

19:14-19 David and his men continued to have military victories one after another (see the note on 18:6).

CAPTURE OF THE CITY OF RABBAH

20 In the spring † when kings march out to war, † Joab led the army and destroyed the Ammonites' land. He came to Rabbah and besieged it, but David remained in Jerusalem. † Joab attacked Rabbah and demolished it. 2 Then David took the crown from the head of their king, † † † and it was placed on David's head. He found that the crown weighed seventy-five

pounds † of gold, and there was a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a large quantity of plunder from the city. 3 He brought out the people who were in it and put them to work with saws, † iron picks, and axes. † † David did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

THE PHILISTINE GIANTS

4 After this, † a war broke out with the Philistines at Gezer. At that time Sibbecai the Hushathite killed Sippai, a descendant of the Rephaim, † † and the Philistines were subdued.

5 Once again there was a battle with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath of Gath. The shaft of his spear was like a weaver's beam. †

6 There was still another battle at Gath where there was a man of extraordinary stature with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot — twenty-four in all. He, too, was descended from the giant. † 7 When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of David's brother Shimei killed him.

8 These were the descendants of the giant in Gath killed by David and his soldiers.

20:1 Lit *At the time of the return of the year* **20:2** LXX, Vg read *of Milcom* **20:2** = Molech; 1Kg 11:5,7 **20:2** Lit *a talent* **20:3** Text emended; MT reads *and sawed them with the saw* ; 2Sm 12:31 **20:3** Text emended; MT reads *saws* ; 2Sm 12:31 **20:4** Or *the Rephaites* **20:6** Or *Raphah*, also in v. 8

20:1-3 2Sm 12:26-31 **20:1** 2Sm 11:1 **20:2** 1Kg 11:5,7 **20:3** 2Sm 12:31 **20:4-8** 2Sm 21:18-22 **20:4** Gn 14:5; Dt 2:11 **20:5** 1Sm 17:7; 1Ch 11:23

20:1 The author of Chronicles decided not to include David's sin with Bathsheba here (see 2Sm 11). He does, however, include other examples of David's imperfection (13:1-10; 21:1-8).

DAVID'S MILITARY CENSUS

21 Satan † † rose up against Israel and incited David † to count the people of Israel. 2 So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count Israel from Beer-sheba to Dan and bring a report to me so I can know their number." †

3 Joab replied, "May the LORD multiply the number of his people a hundred times over! † My lord the king, aren't they all my lord's servants? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel? "

4 Yet the king's order prevailed over Joab. So Joab left and traveled throughout
Israel and then returned to Jerusalem. 5 Joab gave the total troop registration to
David. In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand armed men †
and in Judah itself four hundred seventy thousand armed men. 6 But he did not
include Levi and Benjamin in the count because the king's command was
detestable to him. 7 This command was also evil in God's sight, so he afflicted
Israel.
8 David said to God, "I have sinned greatly because I have done this thing. Now,
please take away your servant's guilt, for I've been very foolish." †

DAVID'S PUNISHMENT

9 Then † the LORD instructed Gad, † David's seer, † 10 "Go and say to David,
'This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three choices. Choose one of
them for yourself, and I will do it to you.' "
11 So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Take
your choice: 12 three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your
foes with the sword of your enemy overtaking you, or three days of the sword of
the LORD — a plague on the land, the angel of the LORD bringing destruction to
the whole territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I should take back to the
one who sent me."
13 David answered Gad, "I'm in anguish. Please, let me fall into the LORD's
hands because his mercies are very great, † but don't let me fall into human
hands."
14 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand Israelite men died.
15 Then God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but when the angel was
about to destroy the city, † the LORD looked, relented concerning the
destruction, † and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough,
withdraw your hand now!" The angel of the LORD was then standing at the
threshing floor of Ornan † the Jebusite.
16 When David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth
and heaven, with his drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem,
David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, † fell facedown. 17 David said to
God, "Wasn't I the one who gave the order to count the people? I am the one
who has sinned and acted very wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done?

LORD my God, please let your hand be against me and against my father's family, but don't let the plague be against your people."

DAVID'S ALTAR

18 So the angel of the LORD ordered Gad † to tell David to go and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. † 19 David went up at Gad's command spoken in the name of the LORD.

20 Ornan was threshing wheat when he turned and saw the angel. His four sons, who were with him, hid. 21 David came to Ornan, and when Ornan looked and saw David, he left the threshing floor and bowed to David with his face to the ground.

22 Then David said to Ornan, "Give me this threshing-floor plot so that I may build an altar to the LORD on it. Give it to me for the full price, so the plague on the people may be stopped."

23 Ornan said to David, "Take it! My lord the king may do whatever he wants. † See, I give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering — I give it all."

24 King David answered Ornan, "No, I insist on paying the full price, for I will not take for the LORD what belongs to you or offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

25 So David gave Ornan fifteen pounds of gold † for the plot. 26 He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and he answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. †

27 Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

28 At that time, David offered sacrifices there when he saw that the LORD answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 29 The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at the high place in Gibeon, † 30 but David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was terrified of the sword of the LORD's angel.

21:1 Or *An adversary* ; Jb 1:6; Zch 3:1-2 **21:5** Lit *men drawing the sword* **21:15** Lit *but as he was destroying* **21:15-28** = Araunah in 2Sm 24:16-24 **21:23** Lit *do what is good in his eyes* **21:25** Lit *600 shekels of gold by weight*

21:1 Jb 1:6; Zch 3:1-2 **21:1-8** 2Sm 24:1-10 **21:2** 1Ch 27:23-24 **21:3** Dt 1:11 **21:8** 2Sm 12:13 **21:9-17** 2Sm 24:11-17 **21:9** 1Ch 29:29 **21:9** 1Sm 9:9; 2Sm 24:11; 1Ch 25:5 **21:13** Ps 51:1; 130:4,7 **21:15** Ex 32:14; 1Sm 15:11; 2Sm 24:16; Am 7:3,6; Jnh 3:9-10 **21:16** 1Kg 21:27 **21:18-27** 2Sm 24:18-25 **21:18** 2Ch 3:1 **21:26** Lv

9:24; Jdg 6:21 **21:29** 1Kg 3:4; 1Ch 16:39

21:1-6 David had erred in his first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem (see the note on 13:1-10), and he erred again by counting his troops. Joab opposed this self-reliant act as one that would **bring guilt on Israel** (v. 3) but was overruled by the king (v. 4). The numbers Joab gathered were not even complete because **the king's command was detestable to him** (v. 6; see also 27:23-24).

21:13 Despite David's confession of his sin (v. 8), God still punished him. His wish to **fall into the LORD's hands** was an implicit choice of the third option. As David rightly believed, God's **mercies are very great**, and the Lord did relent (v. 15).

21:14 The deaths of **seventy-thousand Israelite men** fit David's sin of trusting in the large number of his troops (see the note on vv. 1-6).

22 Then David said, "This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel." †

DAVID'S PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE

2 So David gave orders to gather the resident aliens that were in the land of Israel, † and he appointed stonecutters to cut finished stones for building God's house. † 3 David supplied a great deal of iron to make the nails for the doors of the gates and for the fittings, together with an immeasurable quantity of bronze, † 4 and innumerable cedar logs because the Sidonians and Tyrians had brought a large quantity of cedar logs to David. † 5 David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly great and famous and glorious in all the lands. † Therefore, I will make provision for it." So David made lavish preparations for it before his death.

6 Then he summoned his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 "My son," David said to Solomon, "It was in my heart to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, † 8 but the word of the LORD came to me: 'You have shed much blood and waged great wars. You are not to build a house for my name because you have shed so much blood on the ground before me. † 9 But a son will be born to you; he will be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies, † for his name will be Solomon, † † and I will give peace and quiet to Israel during his reign. † 10 He is the one who will build a house for my name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' †

11 “Now, my son, may the LORD be with you, † and may you succeed in
building the house of the LORD your God, as he said about you. 12 Above all,
may the LORD give you insight and understanding when he puts you in charge of
Israel so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. † 13 Then you will
succeed if you carefully follow the statutes and ordinances the LORD commanded
Moses for Israel. † Be strong and courageous. Don’t be afraid or discouraged. †
14 “Notice I have taken great pains to provide for the house of the LORD — 3,775
tons of gold, 37,750 tons of silver, † † and bronze and iron that can’t be
weighed because there is so much of it. I have also provided timber and stone,
but you will need to add more to them. 15 You also have many workers:
stonecutters, masons, carpenters, and people skilled in every kind of work 16 in
gold, silver, bronze, and iron — beyond number. Now begin the work, and may
the LORD be with you.” †
17 Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon: 18 “The
LORD your God is with you, isn’t he? And hasn’t he given you rest on every
side? † For he has handed the land’s inhabitants over to me, and the land has
been subdued before the LORD and his people. 19 Now determine in your mind
and heart to seek the LORD your God. † Get started building the LORD God’s
sanctuary so that you may bring the ark of the LORD’s covenant and the holy
articles of God to the temple that is to be built † for the name of the LORD.” †

22:9 In Hb, the name *Solomon* sounds like “peace.” **22:14** Lit *100,000 talents of gold and 1,000,000 talents of silver*

22:1 1Ch 21:18-28; 2Ch 3:1 **22:2** 1Kg 9:20-21; 2Ch 2:17 **22:2** 1Kg 5:17-18 **22:3** 1Ch 29:2,7 **22:4** 1Kg 5:6-10 **22:5** 1Ch 29:1 **22:7** 2Sm 7:2-3; 1Ch 17:1-2; 28:2 **22:8** 1Ch 28:3 **22:9** 1Kg 4:20,25 **22:9** 2Sm 12:24-25 **22:9** 1Ch 28:5 **22:10** 2Sm 7:13-14; 1Ch 17:12-13; 28:6-7 **22:11** 1Ch 22:16 **22:12** 1Kg 3:9-12; 2Ch 1:10-12 **22:13** 1Ch 28:7 **22:13** Jos 1:6-9 **22:14** 1Ch 29:4 **22:16** 1Ch 22:11 **22:18** 1Ch 22:9; 23:25 **22:19** 1Ch 28:9 **22:19** 1Kg 8:6,21; 2Ch 5:7 **22:19** 1Ch 22:7

22:1 The plague against Israel because of David’s sin was stopped because of David’s prayers and sacrifices “at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite,” a Gentile (21:15,18-28). David’s declaration signifying that this would be the future site of the temple **(the house of the LORD)** links the preceding chapter integrally to those that follow (see also 2Ch 3:1) and to his earlier expressed desire for the nations to know God (see the notes on 16:8,23-33). In an important sense, both the survival of Jerusalem and the temple itself were made to depend in part on this Gentile (see 21:15,18).

22:2-5 Having chosen the temple site (v. 1), David proceeded to make preparations for its construction through securing workers and materials (vv. 2-4,14-16). The temple was both to be **exceedingly great** for God’s sake and **glorious in all the lands** (v. 5; see also 29:1; 2Ch 2:5). Its reputation was thus to be known throughout the earth.

22:7-13 David's instructions to Solomon include an explanation as to why he was not allowed to build the temple. David had **shed much blood** through his many wars (vv. 7-8; 28:3), whereas Solomon would be a **man of rest**, with a reign characterized by **peace and quiet** (v. 9; Is 9:6-7). He would build the temple and his throne would be established forever (v. 10; 17:12-14). Solomon, however, would only experience such success if he obeyed God (vv. 12-13). Likewise, a later passage directly states that the promises in v. 10 were conditioned on his obedience (see the note on 28:2-10; 2Ch 6:16). 1 Kings clearly indicates that Solomon did not follow David's charge to obey God (see the note on 1Kg 11:1-8).

22:16 For a second time (see v. 11), David blessed Solomon with the words **may the LORD be with you** (see also v. 18; 28:20; 2Ch 1:1). God had been with David (11:9; 17:2), and Cyrus's decree permitting the reconstruction of the temple would also be accompanied by this blessing (2Ch 36:23).

THE DIVISIONS OF THE LEVITES

23 When David was old and full of days, † he installed his son Solomon as king over Israel. † 2 Then he gathered all the leaders of Israel, the priests, and the Levites. 3 The Levites thirty years old or more were counted; † the total number of men was thirty-eight thousand by headcount. † 4 "Of these," David said, "twenty-four thousand are to be in charge of the work on the LORD's temple, † six thousand are to be officers and judges, † 5 four thousand are to be gatekeepers, and four thousand are to praise the LORD with the instruments that I have made for worship." †

6 Then David divided them into divisions according to Levi's sons: † Gershom, † Kohath, and Merari.

7 The Gershonites: Ladan and Shimei.

8 Ladan's sons: Jehiel was the first, then Zetham, and Joel — three.

9 Shimei's sons: Shelomoth, Haziel, and Haran — three. Those were the heads of the families of Ladan.

10 Shimei's sons: Jahath, Zizah, † Jeush, and Beriah. Those were Shimei's sons — four. 11 Jahath was the first and Zizah was the second; however, Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons, so they became one family † and received a single assignment.

12 Kohath's sons: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel — four.

13 Amram's sons: † Aaron and Moses.

Aaron, along with his descendants, † was set apart forever to consecrate the most holy things, to burn incense in the presence of the LORD, † to minister to him, and to pronounce blessings in his name forever. 14 As for Moses the man of God, † his sons were named among the tribe of Levi.

15 Moses's sons: Gershom and Eliezer.

16 Gershom's sons: Shebuel was first.

17 Eliezer's sons were Rehabiah, first; Eliezer did not have any other sons, but Rehabiah's sons were very numerous.

18 Izhar's sons: Shelomith was first.

19 Hebron's sons: Jeriah was first, Amariah second, Jahaziel third, and Jekameam fourth.

20 Uzziel's sons: Micah was first, and Isshiah second.

21 Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi.
Mahli's sons: Eleazar and Kish.

22 Eleazar died having no sons, only daughters. Their cousins, the sons of Kish, married them.

23 Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth — three.

24 These were the descendants of Levi by their ancestral families † — the family heads, according to their registration by name in the headcount — twenty years old or more, who worked in the service of the LORD's temple. † 25 For David said, "The LORD God of Israel has given rest to his people, † and he has come to stay in Jerusalem forever. 26 Also, the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the equipment for its service" † — 27 for according to the last words of David, the Levites twenty years old or more were to be counted — 28 "but their duty will be to assist the descendants of Aaron with the service of the LORD's temple, being responsible for the courts and the chambers, the purification of all the holy things, and the work of the service of God's temple — 29 as well as the rows of the Bread of the Presence, † the fine flour for the

grain offering, † the wafers of unleavened bread, the baking, † † the mixing, † and all measurements of volume and length. † 30 They are also to stand every morning to give thanks and praise to the LORD, and likewise in the evening. 31 Whenever burnt offerings are offered to the LORD on the Sabbaths, New Moons, † and appointed festivals, they are to offer them regularly in the LORD's presence according to the number prescribed for them. † 32 They are to carry out their responsibilities for the tent of meeting, for the holy place, † and for their relatives, the descendants of Aaron, † in the service of the LORD's temple."

23:6 Lit *Gershon* **23:10** LXX, Vg; MT reads *Zina* **23:11** Lit *a father's house* **23:24** Lit *the house of their fathers* **23:29** Lit *the griddle*

23:1 1Ch 29:28 **23:1** 1Ch 28:5; 29:22 **23:3** Nm 4:3-49 **23:3** 1Ch 23:24 **23:4** Ezr 3:8-9 **23:4** 1Ch 26:29 **23:5** 1Ch 15:16 **23:6** 1Ch 6:1 **23:13** Ex 6:20 **23:13** Ex 28:1 **23:13** Ex 30:6-10 **23:14** Dt 33:1; Ps 90 title **23:24** Nm 10:17,21 **23:25** 1Ch 22:9,18 **23:26** Nm 4:5,15; 7:9 **23:29** Lv 24:5-9 **23:29** Lv 6:20 **23:29** 1Ch 9:31 **23:29** Lv 6:14-15; 7:12 **23:29** Ex 29:40; 30:13; Lv 19:35-36 **23:31** Is 1:13-14 **23:31** Lv 23:2-4 **23:32** Nm 1:53; 1Ch 9:27 **23:32** Nm 3:6-9,38

23:1-5 David made Solomon king over Israel and gathered the leaders, the priests, and the Levites to assist him. The Levites had properly brought the ark into Jerusalem (see 15:1-15), and they also had prominent roles in the temple service (see the note on 6:1).

23:26-32 The Levites had been responsible for transporting the tabernacle and its articles from one place to another (see Nm 4), but this would no longer be necessary once the temple was constructed. Their duties therefore changed to assisting the priests in the temple service (see also the note on 2Ch 7:7). This included giving **thanks and praise to the LORD** every morning and evening (v. 30).

THE DIVISIONS OF THE PRIESTS

24 The divisions of the descendants of Aaron were as follows: Aaron's sons were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. † 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and they had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests. † 3 Together with Zadok † from the descendants of Eleazar and Ahimelech from the descendants of Ithamar, David divided them according to the assigned duties of their service. 4 Since more leaders were found among Eleazar's descendants than Ithamar's, they were divided accordingly: sixteen heads of ancestral families † were from Eleazar's descendants, and eight heads of ancestral families were from Ithamar's. 5 They † were assigned by lot, for there were officers of the sanctuary and officers of God among both Eleazar's and Ithamar's descendants.

6 The secretary, Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded them in the
presence of the king and the officers, the priest Zadok, Ahimelech † son of
Abiathar, and the heads of families of the priests and the Levites. One ancestral
family † was taken for Eleazar, and then one for Ithamar.

7 The first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah,
8 the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim,
9 the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin,
10 the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah, †
11 the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah,
12 the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim,
13 the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,
14 the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer,
15 the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to Happizzez,
16 the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to Jehezkel,
17 the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul,
18 the twenty-third to Delaiah, and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

19 These had their assigned duties for service when they entered the LORD's
temple, according to their regulations, which they received from their ancestor
Aaron, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

THE REST OF THE LEVITES

20 As for the rest of Levi's sons:
from Amram's sons: Shubael;
from Shubael's sons: Jehdeiah.
21 From Rehabiah:
from Rehabiah's sons: Isshiah was the first.

22 From the Izharites: Shelomoth;
from Shelomoth's sons: Jahath.
23 Hebron's † † sons:
Jeriah the first, Amariah the second,
Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth.
24 From Uzziel's sons: Micah;
from Micah's sons: Shamir.
25 Micah's brother: Isshiah;
from Isshiah's sons: Zechariah.
26 Merari's sons: Mahli and Mushi,
and from his sons, Jaaziah his son. †
27 Merari's sons, by his son Jaaziah: †
Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri.
28 From Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons.
29 From Kish, from Kish's sons: Jerahmeel.
30 Mushi's sons: Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth.

Those were the descendants of the Levites according to their ancestral families. † 31 They also cast lots the same way as their relatives the descendants of Aaron did in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the families of the priests and Levites — the family heads and their younger brothers alike. †

24:4 Lit *house of fathers* **24:6** Lit *father's house* **24:23** Some Hb mss, some LXX mss; other Hb mss omit *Hebron's* ; 1Ch 23:19 **24:26** Or *Mushi; Jaaziah's sons: Beno.* **24:27** Or *sons, Jaaziah: Beno,* **24:30** Lit *the house of their fathers*
24:1 Ex 6:23 **24:2** Lv 10:1-2 **24:3** 1Ch 15:11; 24:6,31 **24:5-6** 1Ch 24:31 **24:6** 2Sm 8:17; 1Ch 18:16; 24:31 **24:10** Neh 12:4; Lk 1:5 **24:23** 1Ch 23:19 **24:31** 1Ch 24:5-6

24:2 Regarding the deaths of **Nadab and Abihu**, see the note on Leviticus 10:1-2.

24:3-6 The priests were also organized for the temple service and assigned their duties by lot (see also v. 19).

THE LEVITICAL MUSICIANS

THE LEVITICAL MUSICIANS

25 David and the officers of the army also set apart some of the sons of
Asaph, Heman, † and Jeduthun, who were to prophesy † accompanied
by lyres, harps, and cymbals. † This is the list of the men who performed their
service:

2 From Asaph's sons:
Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and Asarelah, sons of Asaph, under
Asaph's authority, who prophesied under the authority of the king.
3 From Jeduthun: † Jeduthun's sons:
Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei, † Hashabiah, and Mattithiah —
six — under the authority of their father Jeduthun, prophesying to
the accompaniment of lyres, giving thanks and praise to the LORD.
4 From Heman: Heman's sons:
Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shebuel, Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani,
Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir,
and Mahazioth. 5 All these sons of Heman, the king's seer, † were
given by the promises of God to exalt him, † for God had given
Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

6 All these men were under their own fathers' authority for the music in the
LORD's temple, with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of God's temple.
Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the king's authority. 7 They numbered
288 together with their relatives who were all trained and skillful in music for
the LORD. 8 They cast lots for their duties, young and old alike, teacher as well as
pupil. †

9 The first lot for Asaph fell to Joseph, his sons, and his relatives —	12 †
to Gedaliah the second: him, his relatives, and his sons —	12
10 the third to Zaccur, his sons, and his relatives —	12
11 the fourth to Izri, † his sons, and his relatives —	12

12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
14 the seventh to Jesarelah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
15 the eighth to Jeshaiah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
16 the ninth to Mattaniah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
17 the tenth to Shimei, his sons, and his relatives — 12
18 the eleventh to Azarel, † his sons, and his relatives — 12
19 the twelfth to Hashabiah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
20 the thirteenth to Shubael, his sons, and his relatives — 12
21 the fourteenth to Mattithiah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
22 the fifteenth to Jeremoth, his sons, and his relatives — 12
23 the sixteenth to Hananiah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
24 the seventeenth to Joshbekashah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
25 the eighteenth to Hanani, his sons, and his relatives — 12
26 the nineteenth to Mallothi, his sons, and his relatives — 12
27 the twentieth to Eliathah, his sons, and his relatives — 12
28 the twenty-first to Hothir, his sons, and his relatives — 12
29 the twenty-second to Giddalti, his sons, and his relatives — 12
30 the twenty-third to Mahazioth, his sons, and his relatives — 12
31 and the twenty-fourth to Romamti-ezer, his sons, and his relatives — 12.

25:3 One Hb ms, LXX; other Hb mss omit *Shimei* **25:5** Lit *by the words of God to lift a horn* **25:9** LXX; MT lacks *his sons, and his relatives — 12* **25:11** Variant of Zeri **25:18** Variant of Uzziel
25:1 1Ch 6:33,39 **25:1** 2Kg 3:15 **25:1** 1Ch 15:16; 25:6 **25:3** 1Ch 16:41-42 **25:5** 1Sm 9:9; 2Sm 24:11; 1Ch 21:9 **25:8** 1Ch 26:13

25:1 These three musical leaders and their sons had been mentioned earlier (see the notes on 6:13-46 and 15:17). Their prophesying (see also vv. 2-3) may have consisted of the singing of lyrics centered on declaring truths about God and praising him, not necessarily on predicting the future (see also note on 1Sm 16:19-23).

THE LEVITICAL GATEKEEPERS

26 The following were the divisions of the gatekeepers:

From the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of Asaph.

2 Meshelemiah had sons:
Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second,
Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth,
3 Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth,
and Eliehoenai the seventh.
4 Obed-edom also had sons:
Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second,
Joah the third, Sachar the fourth,
Nethanel the fifth, 5 Ammiel the sixth,
Issachar the seventh, and Peullethai the eighth,
for God blessed him.
6 Also, to his son Shemaiah were born sons who ruled their ancestral families † because they were strong, capable men.
7 Shemaiah's sons: Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad; his relatives Elihu and Semachiah were also capable men. 8 All of these were among the sons of Obed-edom with their sons and relatives; they were capable men with strength for the work — sixty-two from Obed-edom.
9 Meshelemiah also had sons and relatives who were capable men — eighteen.
10 Hosah, † from the Merarites, also had sons: Shimri the first (although he was not the firstborn, his father had appointed him as the first), 11 Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, and Zechariah the fourth. The sons and relatives of Hosah were thirteen in all.

12 These divisions of the gatekeepers, under their leading men, had duties for
ministering in the LORD's temple, just as their relatives did. 13 They cast lots for
each temple gate according to their ancestral families, young and old alike. †
14 The lot for the east gate fell to Shelemiah. † They also cast lots for his son
Zechariah, an insightful counselor, and his lot came out for the north gate.
15 Obed-edom's was the south gate, and his sons' lot was for the storehouses;
16 it was the west gate and the gate of Shallecheth on the ascending highway for
Shuppim and Hosah.
There were guards stationed at every watch. 17 There were six Levites each
day † on the east, four each day on the north, four each day on the south, and
two pair at the storehouses. 18 As for the court on the west, there were four at the
highway and two at the court. 19 Those were the divisions of the gatekeepers
from the descendants of the Korahites and Merarites.

THE LEVITICAL TREASURERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS

20 From the Levites, Ahijah was in charge of the treasuries of God's temple and
the treasuries of what had been dedicated. † 21 From the sons of Ladan, who
were the descendants of the Gershonites through Ladan and were the family
heads belonging to Ladan the Gershonite: Jehieli. 22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham
and his brother Joel, were in charge of the treasuries of the LORD's temple.
23 From the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites:
24 Shebuel, a descendant of Moses's son Gershom, was the officer in charge of
the treasuries. 25 His relatives through Eliezer: his son Rehabiah, his son
Jeshaiah, his son Joram, his son Zichri, and his son Shelomith. † 26 This
Shelomith and his relatives were in charge of all the treasuries of what had been
dedicated by King David, † by the family heads who were the commanders of
thousands and of hundreds, and by the army commanders. 27 They dedicated
part of the plunder from their battles for the repair of the LORD's temple. 28 All
that the seer Samuel, Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner, and Joab son of
Zeruiah had dedicated, along with everything else that had been dedicated, were
in the care of Shelomith and his relatives.
29 From the Izrahites: Chenaniah and his sons had duties outside the temple † †
as officers and judges † over Israel. 30 From the Hebronites: Hashabiah † and

his relatives, 1,700 capable men, had assigned duties in Israel west of the Jordan for all the work of the LORD and for the service of the king. 31 From the Hebronites: Jerijah † was the head of the Hebronites, according to the family records of his ancestors. A search was made in the fortieth year of David's reign and strong, capable men were found among them at Jazer † in Gilead. 32 There were among Jerijah's relatives 2,700 capable men who were family heads. King David appointed them over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh as overseers in every matter relating to God and the king. †

26:6 Lit *the house of their fathers*, also in v. 13 **26:14** Variant of Meshelemiah **26:17** LXX; MT omits *each day* **26:25** Or *Shelomoth*, also in vv. 26,28 **26:29** *the temple* added for clarity
26:10 1Ch 16:38 **26:13** 1Ch 24:5,31; 25:8 **26:20** 1Ch 26:24,26; 28:12; Ezr 2:69 **26:26** 2Sm 8:11; 1Ch 18:7-11 **26:29** Neh 11:16 **26:29** 1Ch 23:4 **26:30** 1Ch 27:17 **26:31** 1Ch 23:19 **26:31** 1Ch 6:81 **26:32** 2Ch 19:11

26:1 The temple was also to have numerous **gatekeepers** (see 23:5). This role has been mentioned in several other passages so far (see the note on 9:17-27).

26:20-32 Some Levites had charge over **the treasuries** (vv. 20-28), and still others served as **officers and judges over Israel** (vv. 29-32).

DAVID'S SECULAR OFFICIALS

27 This is the list of the Israelites, the family heads, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, and their officers who served the king in every matter to do with the divisions that were on rotated military duty each month throughout † the year. There were 24,000 in each division:

2 Jashobeam son of Zabdiel was in charge of the first division, †
for the first month; 24,000 were in his division. 3 He was a
descendant of Perez and chief of all the army commanders for the
first month.

4 Dodai the Ahohite was in charge of the division for the second
month, and Mikloth was the leader; 24,000 were in his division.

5 The third army commander, as chief for the third month, was
Benaiah son of the priest Jehoiada; 24,000 were in his division.
6 This Benaiah was a mighty man among the Thirty and over the
Thirty, and his son Ammizabad was in charge † of his division.

7 The fourth commander, for the fourth month, was Joab's brother
Asahel, and his son Zebadiah was commander after him; 24,000
were in his division.

8 The fifth, for the fifth month, was the commander Shamhuth the
Izrahite; 24,000 were in his division.

9 The sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira son of Ikkesh the Tekoite;
24,000 were in his division.

10 The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite from
the descendants of Ephraim; 24,000 were in his division.

11 The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbecai the Hushathite, a
Zerahite; 24,000 were in his division.

12 The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anathothite, a
Benjaminite; 24,000 were in his division.

13 The tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, a
Zerahite; 24,000 were in his division.

14 The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the
Pirathonite from the descendants of Ephraim; 24,000 were in his
division.

15 The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite,
of Othniel's family; † 24,000 were in his division.

16 The following were in charge of the tribes of Israel:
For the Reubenites, Eliezer son of Zichri was the chief official;
for the Simeonites, Shephatiah son of Maacah;

17 for the Levites, Hashabiah son of Kemuel; for Aaron, Zadok;

18 for Judah, Elihu, one of David's brothers; for Issachar, Omri son
of Michael;

19 for Zebulun, Ishmaiah son of Obadiah;
for Naphtali, Jerimoth son of Azriel;

20 for the Ephraimites, Hoshea son of Azaziah;
for half the tribe of Manasseh, Joel son of Pedaiah;
21 for half the tribe of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo son of Zechariah;
for Benjamin, Jaasiel son of Abner;
22 for Dan, Azarel son of Jeroham.
Those were the leaders of the tribes of Israel. †

23 David didn't count the men aged twenty or under, for the LORD had said he would make Israel as numerous as the stars of the sky. † 24 Joab son of Zeruiah began to count them, but he didn't complete it. There was wrath against Israel because of this census, † and the number was not entered in the Historical Record † of King David.

25 Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the king's storehouses.
Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storehouses in the country, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses.
26 Ezri son of Chelub was in charge of those who worked in the fields tilling the soil.
27 Shimei the Ramathite was in charge of the vineyards.
Zabdi the Shiphmite was in charge of the produce of the vineyards for the wine cellars.
28 Baal-hanan the Gederite was in charge of the olive and sycamore trees † in the Judean foothills. †
Joash was in charge of the stores of olive oil.
29 Shitrai the Sharonite was in charge of the herds that grazed in Sharon, † while Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the herds in the valleys.
30 Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels.
Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys.

31 Jaziz the Hagrite † was in charge of the flocks.
All these were officials in charge of King David's property.

32 David's uncle Jonathan was a counselor; he was a man of understanding and a scribe. Jehiel son of Hachmoni attended † the king's sons. 33 Ahithophel † was the king's counselor. Hushai † the Archite was the king's friend. 34 After Ahithophel came Jehoiada son of Benaiah, † then Abiathar. † Joab was the commander of the king's army. †

27:1 Lit *that came in and went out month by month for all months of* **27:6** LXX; MT omits *in charge* **27:15** Lit *belonging to Othniel* **27:24** LXX; MT reads *the number of the Historical Record* **27:28** Or *the Shephelah* **27:32** Lit *was with*

27:2-15 2Sm 23:8-30; 1Ch 11:11-31 **27:22** 1Ch 28:1 **27:23** Gn 15:5 **27:24** 2Sm 24:1-15; 1Ch 21:1-7 **27:28** 1Kg 10:27; 2Ch 1:15 **27:29** 1Ch 5:16 **27:31** 1Ch 5:10,18-21; 11:38 **27:33** 2Sm 15:12 **27:33** 2Sm 15:32,37 **27:34** 2Sm 8:18; 1Kg 1:8; 1Ch 11:22-24; 18:17; 27:5-6 **27:34** 1Sm 22:20-23; 1Kg 1:7; 2:26-27,35; 1Ch 15:11; 18:16; 24:6 **27:34** 1Ch 11:6

27:1 The next list has to do with the military units on duty for each month (vv. 2-15).

27:23-24 Regarding this census, see the note on 21:1-6.

DAVID COMMISSIONS SOLOMON TO BUILD THE TEMPLE

28 David assembled all the leaders of Israel in Jerusalem: † the leaders of the tribes, the leaders of the divisions in the king's service, the commanders of thousands and the commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and cattle of the king and his sons, along with the court officials, the fighting men, † and all the best soldiers. 2 Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Listen to me, my brothers and my people. It was in my heart to build a house as a resting place for the ark of the LORD's covenant † and as a footstool † for our God. I had made preparations to build, 3 but God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my name because you are a man of war and have shed blood.' †

4 "Yet the LORD God of Israel chose me out of all my father's family † to be king over Israel forever. † For he chose Judah as leader, † and from the house of Judah, my father's family, and from my father's sons, † he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5 And out of all my sons † — for the LORD has given me many sons — he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of

the LORD's kingdom over Israel. † 6 He said to me, † 'Your son Solomon is the one who is to build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7 I will establish his kingdom forever if he perseveres in keeping my commands and my ordinances as he is doing today.' †
8 "So now in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and follow all the commands of the LORD your God so that you may possess this good land and leave it as an inheritance to your descendants forever.
9 "As for you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him wholeheartedly and with a willing mind, † for the LORD searches every heart and understands the intention of every thought. † If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will reject you forever. † 10 Realize now that the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong, and do it." †
11 Then David gave his son Solomon the plans † for the portico † of the temple and its buildings, treasuries, upstairs rooms, inner rooms, and a room for the mercy seat. † 12 The plans contained everything he had in mind † † for the courts of the LORD's house, all the surrounding chambers, the treasuries † of God's house, and the treasuries for what is dedicated. 13 Also included were plans for the divisions of the priests and the Levites; all the work of service in the LORD's house; all the articles of service of the LORD's house; 14 the weight of gold for all the articles for every kind of service; the weight of all the silver articles for every kind of service; 15 the weight of the gold lampstands † and their gold lamps, including the weight of each lampstand and its lamps; the weight of each silver lampstand and its lamps, according to the service of each lampstand; 16 the weight of gold for each table for the rows of the Bread of the Presence and the silver for the silver tables; 17 the pure gold for the forks, sprinkling basins, and pitchers; the weight of each gold dish; the weight of each silver bowl; 18 the weight of refined gold for the altar of incense; † and the plans for the chariot of † † the gold cherubim that spread out their wings and cover the ark of the LORD's covenant. †

19 David concluded, “By the LORD’s hand on me, he enabled me to understand
everything in writing, all the details of the plan.” †
20 Then David said to his son Solomon, “Be strong and courageous, † and do
the work. Don’t be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with
you. He won’t leave you or abandon you † until all the work for the service of
the LORD’s house is finished. 21 Here are the divisions of the priests and the
Levites for all the service of God’s house. † Every willing person of any skill †
will be at your disposal for the work, and the leaders and all the people are at
your every command.”

28:12 Or *he received from the Spirit* **28:18** Or *chariot, that is* ; Ps 18:10; Ezk 1:5,15 **28:19** Hb obscure **28:1** 1Ch 23:2; 27:1-31 **28:1** 1Ch 11:10-47 **28:2** 2Sm 7:1-3; 1Ch 17:1-2; 22:7 **28:2** Ps 132:7; Is 66:1 **28:3** 1Ch 22:8 **28:4** 1Sm 16:6-13 **28:4** 1Ch 17:23,27 **28:4** Gn 49:8-10; 1Ch 5:2 **28:4** 1Sm 16:1 **28:5** 1Ch 3:1-9; 14:3-7 **28:5** 1Ch 22:9 **28:6-7** 2Sm 7:13-14; 1Ch 22:10 **28:7** 1Ch 22:13 **28:9** 1Kg 8:61; 1Ch 29:17-19 **28:9** Gn 6:5; 1Sm 16:7; Ps 139 **28:9** 2Ch 15:2; Jr 29:13 **28:10** 1Ch 22:13 **28:11** Ex 25:9,40; 1Ch 28:19 **28:11** 1Kg 6:3 **28:11** Ex 25:17-22 **28:12** 1Ch 28:19 **28:12** 1Ch 26:20,22,24,26; Ezr 2:69 **28:15** Ex 25:31-39 **28:18** Ex 30:1-10 **28:18** Ps 18:10 **28:18** Ex 25:18-22; 1Kg 8:6-7; 2Ch 5:7-8 **28:20** Jos 1:6-7; 1Ch 22:13; 2Ch 32:7 **28:20** Dt 31:6; Jos 1:5,9; Heb 13:5 **28:21** 1Ch 28:13 **28:21** Ex 35:25-35; 36:1-2

28:1 The cumulative impression left by the many preceding lists is that of both a well-established kingdom and of extensive preparations for building the temple. Whereas David had spoken to Solomon individually about building it (22:6-16) and to the leaders of Israel briefly about helping him (22:17-19), he now gathered them all together along with the army to speak to them at length about the upcoming construction project.

28:2-10 David’s message to this group of leaders mirrors what he told Solomon earlier. He had wanted to build a temple but was forbidden by God because he had fought many wars (vv. 2-3; 22:7-8). The Lord had made a covenant with David that his kingdom would endure forever (v. 4; see 17:27), and he had chosen Solomon as his successor (v. 5; 22:9). Although Solomon was charged with obedience earlier (22:12-13), what is even clearer this time around is that God’s promise to **establish his kingdom forever** will only be fulfilled **if he perseveres in keeping** [God’s] **commands** (v. 7; see also 2Ch 6:16; 7:17-18). David publicly charged Solomon and the leaders to obey God so that they might **possess this good land and leave it as an inheritance to** [their] **descendants forever** (v. 8). As it turned out, Solomon’s son Rehoboam lost much of this land when the kingdom divided, and most of the tribes followed Jeroboam (see 2Ch 10:16-19). Solomon’s partial responsibility is strongly suggested through the mention of his “heavy yoke” (2Ch 10:4) and of Ahijah’s prophecy (2Ch 9:29; 10:15; see 1Kg 11:29-39).

28:11-12 David then gave Solomon the **plans** (Hb *tavnit*; translated “pattern” in Ex 25:9,40) **for the temple.** These plans had been understood by David with God’s help (v. 19; see also footnote on v. 19), in a way similar to Moses’s reception of the plans for the tabernacle.

28:20-21 The charge in v. 20 resembles the one Joshua received in Joshua 1:5-9. Regarding God’s presence with Solomon, see the note on 22:16. As in the case of the tabernacle (see Ex 36:2), willing and skilled workers staffed the construction project.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE

29 Then King David said to all the assembly, “My son Solomon — God
has chosen him alone — is young and inexperienced. The task is
great † because the building will not be built for a human but for the
LORD God. † 2 So to the best of my ability I’ve made provision for the house of
my God: † gold for the gold articles, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze,
iron for the iron, and wood for the wood, as well as onyx, stones for
mounting, † antimony, † † stones of various colors, all kinds of precious
stones, and a great quantity of marble. 3 Moreover, because of my delight in the
house of my God, I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the
house of my God over and above all that I’ve provided for the holy house: 4 100
tons † † of gold (gold of Ophir †) and 250 tons † of refined silver for
overlaying the walls of the buildings, 5 the gold for the gold work and the silver
for the silver, for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now who will
volunteer to consecrate himself to the LORD today? ”
6 Then the leaders of the households, the leaders of the tribes of Israel, the
commanders of thousands and of hundreds, † and the officials in charge of the
king’s work † gave willingly. 7 For the service of God’s house they gave 185
tons † of gold and 10,000 gold coins, † † 375 tons † of silver, 675 tons † of
bronze, and 4,000 tons † of iron. 8 Whoever had precious stones gave them to
the treasury of the LORD’s house under the care of Jehiel † the Gershonite.
9 Then the people rejoiced because of their leaders’ willingness to give, for they
had given to the LORD wholeheartedly. † King David also rejoiced greatly.

DAVID’S PRAYER

10 Then David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly. David said,
May you be blessed, LORD God of our father Israel, from eternity to eternity.
11 Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor
and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to you.
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. † 12 Riches
and honor come from you, and you are the ruler of everything. † Power and
might are in your hand, and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength

to all. † 13 Now therefore, our God, we give you thanks and praise your glorious name.
14 But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? For everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your own hand. † 15 For we are aliens and temporary residents in your presence as were all our ancestors. † Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. † 16 LORD our God, all this wealth that we've provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand; everything belongs to you. 17 I know, my God, that you test the heart † and that you are pleased with what is right. † I have willingly given all these things with an upright heart, and now I have seen your people who are present † here giving joyfully and † willingly to you. 18 LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our ancestors, keep this desire forever in the thoughts of the hearts of your people, and confirm their hearts toward you. 19 Give my son Solomon an undivided heart to keep and to carry out all your commands, your decrees, and your statutes, † and to build the building for which I have made provision. †
20 Then David said to the whole assembly, "Blessed be the LORD your God." So the whole assembly praised the LORD God of their ancestors. † They knelt low and paid homage to the LORD and the king. †
21 The following day they offered sacrifices to the LORD and burnt offerings to the LORD: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, along with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. † 22 They ate and drank with great joy in the LORD's presence that day.

THE ENTHRONEMENT OF SOLOMON

Then, for a second time, † they made David's son Solomon king; they anointed him † as the LORD's ruler, † and Zadok as the priest. 23 Solomon sat on the LORD's throne as king in place of his father David. He prospered, and all Israel obeyed him. † 24 All the leaders and the mighty men, and all of King David's sons as well, pledged their allegiance to King Solomon. 25 The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel † and bestowed on him such royal majesty as had not been bestowed on any king over Israel before him. †

A SUMMARY OF DAVID'S LIFE

26 David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. † 27 The length of his reign over
Israel was forty years; he reigned in Hebron for seven years and in Jerusalem for
thirty-three. † 28 He died at a good old age, † full of days, † riches, and honor,
and his son Solomon became king in his place. 29 As for the events of King
David's reign, from beginning to end, note that they are written in the Events of
the Seer Samuel, † the Events of the Prophet Nathan, † and the Events of the
Seer Gad, † 30 along with all his reign, his might, and the incidents that affected
him and Israel and all the kingdoms of the surrounding lands.

29:2 Or *mosaic* **29:2** In Hb, the word *antimony* is similar to "turquoise" ; Ex 28:18. **29:4** Lit *3,000 talents* **29:4** Lit *7,000 talents* **29:7** Lit *5,000 talents* **29:7** Or *drachmas*, or *darics* **29:7** Lit *10,000 talents* **29:7** Lit *18,000 talents* **29:7** Lit *100,000 talents* **29:14** Lit *and from your hand we have given to you* **29:17** Lit *found* **29:17** Or *now with joy I've seen your people who are present here giving* **29:22** LXX, Tg, Vg; MT omits *him*

29:1 1Ch 22:5 **29:1** 1Ch 29:19 **29:2** 1Ch 22:3-5 **29:2** Ex 28:18 **29:4** 1Ch 22:14 **29:4** 1Kg 9:28 **29:6** 1Ch 27:1; 28:1 **29:6** 1Ch 27:25-31 **29:7** Ezr 2:69; Neh 7:70 **29:8** 1Ch 23:8 **29:9** 1Kg 8:61; 1Ch 28:9; 2Co 9:7 **29:11** Mt 6:13; Rv 5:13 **29:12** 2Ch 1:12 **29:12** 2Ch 20:6 **29:15** Lv 25:23; Heb 11:13 **29:15** Jb 14:2,10-12 **29:17** 1Ch 28:9 **29:17** Ps 15:2 **29:19** Ps 72:1 **29:19** 1Ch 29:2 **29:20** Jos 22:33 **29:20** Ex 4:31 **29:21** 1Kg 8:62-63 **29:22** 1Ch 23:1 **29:22** 1Kg 1:33-39 **29:23** 1Kg 2:12 **29:25** 2Ch 1:1 **29:25** 1Kg 3:13; 2Ch 1:12 **29:26** 1Ch 18:14 **29:27** 2Sm 5:4-5; 1Kg 2:11 **29:28** Gn 15:15; Ac 13:36 **29:28** 1Ch 23:1 **29:29** 1Sm 9:9 **29:29** 2Sm 7:2-4; 12:1-7 **29:29** 1Sm 22:5

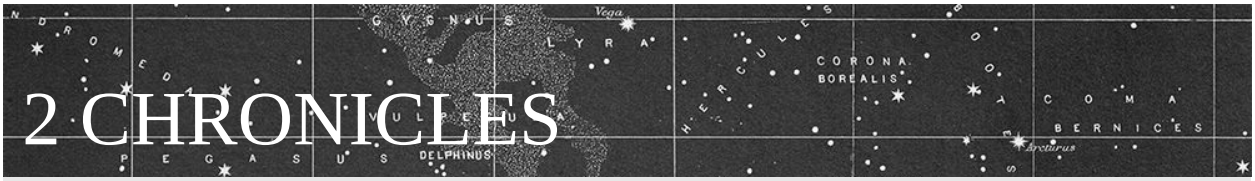
29:1 The extensive preparations for the temple (like those for the tabernacle) were appropriate given that it was not **for a human but for the LORD God** (see the note on 22:2-5; 2Ch 2:5-6).

29:6-9 David's deep interest in this project was evident through his donation of his own "personal treasures" for the work (v. 3). Having set the example, he appealed to the other leaders to respond similarly (v. 5), which they did **wholeheartedly.** This voluntary, generous giving is reminiscent of the building of the tabernacle (see the note on Ex 35:21–36:7).

29:11-16 David in this part of the prayer repeatedly asserted that all things belong to God. The kingdom is his (v. 11; see also v. 23; 28:5) and riches are his (vv. 12,16). On this basis, David recognized that he and the Israelites were merely giving back to God what was already his (v. 14). They, as mere **aliens and temporary residents** on this earth (v. 15), were unworthy to do this.

29:18-19 David also prayed for the Israelites and Solomon to continue in their devotion to God.

29:22-25 Solomon became king over **all Israel** (v. 23), just as David had been (v. 26). His sitting **on the LORD's throne** emphasizes God's sovereignty and his selection of David's line (see the note on 17:10-14). The kingdom was, in fact, God's (v. 11). This aligns with its endurance and with the eventual rule of the Messiah. The people (28:8) and the temple (17:14) were also God's.



2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

See the Introduction to 1 Chronicles for the introductory material.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Second Chronicles shows that God blesses faithfulness to him and punishes his people when they turn away from him. God's "educational program" meant teaching his people that he values allegiance to him above all else. The book ends with a note of hope: the Israelite exiles have been permitted to return home in order to rebuild their temple. God's Spirit is noted as inspiring certain priests and prophets.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Second Chronicles focuses at length on Solomon, whose splendid rule in Jerusalem was a preview of Christ's everlasting reign in the new Jerusalem (Mt 12:42; Rv 21–22). As in 2 Kings, the worth of the kings is determined only by whether they did right or evil in the sight of the Lord.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

As in 2 Kings, God's prophets in 2 Chronicles called both king and people to repent for religious apostasy and to worship the Lord alone. (Isaiah and Jeremiah are known from their writings; Shemaiah, Oded, Micaiah, Eliezer, and Huldah are less familiar.) Four kings led Judah to turn from sin, repair the temple, and recommit to wholehearted worship of the Lord (Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah).

SOLOMON'S REQUEST FOR WISDOM

1 Solomon son of David strengthened his hold on his kingdom.† The LORD his God was with him and highly exalted him.† 2 Then Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel — the family heads.† 3 Solomon and

the whole assembly with him went to the high place that was in Gibeon† because God's tent of meeting, which the LORD's servant Moses had made† in the wilderness, was there. 4 Now David had brought the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place† he had set up for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem,† 5 but he put† the bronze altar, which Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, had made,† in front of the LORD's tabernacle. Solomon and the assembly inquired of him† there. 6 Solomon offered sacrifices there in the LORD's presence on the bronze altar at the tent of meeting; he offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.†

7 That night† God appeared to Solomon and said to him: "Ask. What should I give you? "

8 And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great and faithful love to my father David, and you have made me king in his place.† 9 LORD God, let your promise to my father David now come true.† For you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth.† 10 Now grant me wisdom and knowledge so that I may lead these people,† for who can judge this great people of yours? "

11 God said to Solomon, "Since this was in your heart, and you have not requested riches, wealth, or glory, or for the life of those who hate you, and you have not even requested long life, but you have requested for yourself wisdom and knowledge that you may judge my people over whom I have made you king, 12 wisdom and knowledge are given to you. I will also give you riches, wealth, and glory, unlike what was given to the kings who were before you, or will be given to those after you."† 13 So Solomon went to Jerusalem from† the high place that was in Gibeon in front of the tent of meeting, and he reigned over Israel.

SOLOMON'S HORSES AND WEALTH

14 Solomon† accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horsemen,† which he stationed in the chariot cities† and with the king in Jerusalem. 15 The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar as abundant as sycamore in the Judean foothills. 16 Solomon's horses came from Egypt and Kue.† The king's traders would get them from Kue at the going price. 17 A chariot could be imported from Egypt for fifteen pounds† of silver and a horse for nearly four pounds.† In the same way, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram through their agents.

1:4 Vg; MT omits *the place* **1:5** Some Hb mss, Tg, Syr; other Hb mss, LXX, Vg read *but there was* **1:5** Or *it* **1:13** LXX, Vg; MT reads *to* **1:16** = Cilicia **1:17** Lit *600 shekels* **1:17** Lit *150 shekels*
1:1 1Kg 2:12,46 **1:1** 1Ch 29:25 **1:2** 1Ch 28:1 **1:3** 1Kg 3:4 **1:3** Ex 36:8-38 **1:4** 1Ch 13:1-14; 15:25–16:1 **1:5** Ex 31:2-11; 38:1-7 **1:6** 1Kg 3:4 **1:7-13** 1Kg 3:5-15 **1:8** 1Ch 28:5 **1:9** 2Sm 7:12-16 **1:9** Gn 13:16; 22:17 **1:10** 1Sm 18:16; 2Sm 5:2 **1:12** 1Ch 29:25; 2Ch 9:22 **1:14-17** 1Kg 10:26-29; 2Ch 9:25-28 **1:14** 1Kg 4:26 **1:14** 1Kg 9:19

1:1 This book resumes the narrative of 1 Chronicles. For issues that relate to both books, see the note on 1 Chronicles 1:1. Solomon had become king and enjoyed the favor of God (see also 1Ch 29:22-25). **The LORD his God was with him** (see also 1Ch 28:20), just as David had prayed (see the note on 1Ch 22:16).

1:3-5 The biblical author emphasizes the tabernacle's continuity up to this point by referring to the **tent of meeting** which Moses made (v. 3), **the ark** (v. 4), and the **bronze altar** which Bezalel had made (v. 5). **Bezalel** had been mentioned in the genealogies earlier (see the note on 1Ch 2:18-20).

1:11-13 Solomon's request for **wisdom and knowledge** that he might govern Israel well (vv. 7-10) pleased God, who not only granted his request but also promised to give him unequaled **riches, wealth, and glory.** This is partially described in vv. 14-17 (see also 9:1-28).

SOLOMON'S LETTER TO HIRAM

2 Solomon decided to build a temple for the name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself,† 2 so he assigned 70,000 men as porters, 80,000 men as stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 as supervisors over them.†
3 Then Solomon sent word to King Hiram†† of Tyre:†
Do for me what you did for my father David. You sent him cedars to build him a house to live in.† 4 Now I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God in order to dedicate it to him for burning fragrant incense before him,† for displaying the rows of the Bread of the Presence continuously,† and for sacrificing burnt offerings for the morning and the evening,† the Sabbaths† and the New Moons, and the appointed festivals of the LORD our God. This is ordained for Israel permanently. 5 The temple that I am building will be great, for our God is greater than any of the gods.† 6 But who is able to build a temple for him, since even heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain him?† Who am I then that I should build a temple for him except as a place to burn incense before him? 7 Therefore, send me an artisan who is skilled in engraving to work with gold, silver, bronze, and iron, and with purple, crimson, and blue yarn. He will work with the artisans who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem,† appointed by my father David.† 8 Also, send me cedar, cypress, and algum†† logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants know how to cut the trees of Lebanon. Note that my servants will be with your servants† 9 to prepare logs for me in abundance because the temple I am building will be great and wondrous. 10 I

will give your servants, the woodcutters who cut the trees, one hundred thousand bushels† of wheat flour, one hundred thousand bushels of barley, one hundred ten thousand gallons† of wine, and one hundred ten thousand gallons of oil.

HIRAM'S REPLY

11 Then King Hiram of Tyre wrote a letter† and sent it to Solomon:
Because the LORD loves his people, he set you over them as king.†
12 Hiram also said:
Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who made the heavens and the earth!† He gave King David a wise son with insight and understanding,† who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal palace for himself.† 13 I have now sent Huram-abi,† a skillful man who has understanding.† 14 He is the son of a woman from the daughters of Dan. His father is a man of Tyre. He knows how to work with gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, with purple, blue, crimson yarn, and fine linen. He knows how to do all kinds of engraving and to execute any design that may be given him. I have sent him to be with your artisans and the artisans of my lord, your father David. 15 Now, let my lord send the wheat, barley, oil, and wine to his servants as promised.† 16 We will cut logs from Lebanon, as many as you need, and bring them to you as rafts by sea to Joppa. You can then take them up to Jerusalem.†

SOLOMON'S WORKFORCE

17 Solomon took a census of all the resident alien men in the land of Israel, after the census that his father David had conducted,† and the total was 153,600. 18 Solomon made 70,000 of them porters, 80,000 stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 supervisors to make the people work.†

2:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *Huram* ; 2Sm 5:11; 1Kg 5:1-2 **2:8** = almug in 1Kg 10:11-12 **2:10** Lit *20,000 cors* **2:10** Lit *20,000 baths* **2:11** Lit *Tyre said in writing* **2:13** Lit *Huram my father* **2:1** 1Kg 5:5; 2Ch 2:12 **2:2** 1Kg 5:15-16; 9:23; 2Ch 2:18; 8:10 **2:3** 2Sm 5:11; 1Kg 5:1-2 **2:3-10** 1Kg 5:2-6,10-11 **2:3** 1Ch 14:1 **2:4** Ex 30:7 **2:4** Ex 25:30 **2:4** Ex 29:38-42 **2:4** Nm 28:9-10 **2:5** Ex 15:11; 1Ch 16:25 **2:6** 1Kg 8:27; 2Ch 6:18 **2:7** Ex 31:3-5; 2Ch 2:13-14 **2:7** 1Ch 22:14-16; 28:21 **2:8** 1Kg 10:11-12 **2:8-9** 2Ch 9:10-11 **2:11** 1Kg 10:9; 2Ch 9:8 **2:12** Ps 33:6; 102:25 **2:12** 1Kg 5:7 **2:12** 2Ch 2:1 **2:13-14** 1Kg 7:14 **2:15** 2Ch 2:10 **2:16** 1Kg 5:8-9 **2:17** 2Sm 24:1-9; 1Ch 21:1-5 **2:18** 1Kg 5:15-16; 2Ch 2:2

2:1 In keeping with the preceding narrative, Chronicles focus on Solomon as temple-builder. The building of his palace and his other projects are passed over quickly (see also 8:1-6,11,17-18) in comparison to Kings (see 1Kg 7:1-12; 9:10-19,24-28). Likewise, his famously wise decision concerning a maternity case is unmentioned in Chronicles (see 1Kg 3:16-28).

2:5-6 The temple was to be great, **for our God is greater than any of the gods** (see also the notes on 1Ch 16:8,23-33 and 29:1). On the other hand, Solomon recognized that the temple could not **contain** the Lord

and was merely a place to offer sacrifices before him (v. 6; 6:18; 7:12). Other passages will add that the temple would also be a place of prayer (6:19-40; 7:15).

2:11-12 The statement of praise to God from this Gentile king recalls David's words of thanksgiving spoken earlier when the ark was successfully transported to Jerusalem (see the notes on 1Ch 16:8,23-33). Just as the securing of the temple site was partially dependent on a Gentile (see the note on 1Ch 22:1), so was its construction (vv. 3-16).

2:17-18 These laborers had been mentioned in v. 2, and these verses further explain that these men were foreigners.

BUILDING THE TEMPLE

3 Then Solomon began† to build the LORD's temple in Jerusalem on
Mount Moriah† where the LORD† had appeared to his father David, at the
site David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan† the Jebusite.
2 He began to build on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of
his reign. 3 These are Solomon's foundations† for building God's temple: the
length† was ninety feet,† and the width thirty feet.† 4 The portico, which was
across the front extending across the width of the temple, was thirty feet wide;
its height was thirty feet;† he overlaid its inner surface with pure gold. 5 The
larger room† he paneled with cypress wood, overlaid with fine gold, and
decorated with palm trees and chains. 6 He adorned the temple with precious
stones for beauty, and the gold was the gold of Parvaim. 7 He overlaid the
temple — the beams, the thresholds, its walls and doors — with gold,† and he
carved cherubim on the walls.†

THE MOST HOLY PLACE

8 Then he made the most holy place; its length corresponded to the width of the
temple, 30 feet, and its width was 30 feet.† He overlaid it with forty-five
thousand pounds† of fine gold. 9 The weight of the nails was twenty ounces† of
gold, and he overlaid the ceiling with gold.
10 He made† two cherubim of sculptured work, for the most holy place, and he
overlaid them with gold. 11 The overall length of the wings of the cherubim was
30 feet: the wing of one was 7 1/2 feet,† touching the wall of the room; its other
wing was 7 1/2 feet, touching the wing of the other cherub. 12 The wing of the
other† cherub was 7 1/2 feet, touching the wall of the room; its other wing was
7 1/2 feet, reaching the wing of the other cherub. 13 The wingspan of these
cherubim was 30 feet. They stood on their feet and faced the larger room.†

14 He made the curtain of blue, purple, and crimson yarn and fine linen, and he wove cherubim into it.†

THE BRONZE PILLARS

15 In front of the temple† he made two pillars, each 27 feet† high. The capital on top of each was 7 1/2 feet high. 16 He had made chainwork in the inner sanctuary and also put it on top of the pillars.† He made a hundred pomegranates and fastened them into the chainwork. 17 Then he set up the pillars in front of the sanctuary, one on the right and one on the left. He named the one on the right Jachin† and the one on the left Boaz.†

3:1 LXX; Tg reads *the angel of the Lord* ; MT reads *he* **3:1** = Araunah in 2Sm 24:16-24 **3:3** Tg reads *The measurements which Solomon decreed* **3:3** Lit *length — cubits in the former measure —* **3:3** Lit *60 cubits* **3:3** Lit *20 cubits*, also in vv. 4,8,11,13 **3:4** LXX, Syr; MT reads *120 cubits* **3:5** Lit *The house* **3:8** Lit *600 talents* **3:9** Lit *50 shekels* **3:11** Lit *five cubits*, also in vv. 12,15 **3:12** Syr, Vg; MT reads *the one* **3:13** Lit *the house* **3:15** Syr reads *18 cubits* (27 feet); Hb reads *35 cubits* (52 1/2 feet) **3:17** = He Will Establish **3:17** = Strength Is in Him

3:1-4 1Kg 6:1-3 **3:1** Gn 22:2 **3:7** 1Kg 6:20-22 **3:7** 1Kg 6:29-35 **3:8** 1Kg 6:16 **3:10-13** 1Kg 6:23-28 **3:14** Ex 26:31 **3:15-17** 1Kg 7:15-22; 2Kg 25:17; Jr 52:21-23 **3:16** 1Kg 6:21; 7:17

3:1 Here continuity with the past is emphasized again (see the note on 1:3-5). Not only was the temple site the one that David had chosen (see the note on 1Ch 22:1), but it was also **Mount Moriah**, where Abraham had nearly sacrificed Isaac centuries before (Gn 22:2). The temple in process was thus linked to these two great men, Abraham and David, and their costly sacrifices (Gn 22:2; 1Ch 21:24). The Lord had made covenants with each of these men, and both would find their fulfillment in the Messiah (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16).

3:6 Parvaim is mentioned only here in the OT and is usually taken as a geographical term, though its precise location is unknown.

3:8 The astounding amount of **gold** used to overlay the most holy place was in keeping with the need for the temple to be magnificent for God’s sake (see the note on 2:5-6).

THE ALTAR, RESERVOIR, AND BASINS

4 He made a bronze altar† 30 feet† long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet† high.
2 Then he made the cast metal basin,†† 15 feet from brim to brim, perfectly round. It was 7 1/2 feet† high and 45 feet† in circumference. 3 The likeness of oxen† was below it, completely encircling it, ten every half yard,† completely surrounding the basin. The oxen were cast in two rows when the basin was cast. 4 It stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The basin was on top of them and all their hindquarters were toward the center. 5 The basin was three inches† thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim of a cup or a lily blossom. It could hold eleven thousand gallons.†

6 He made ten basins for washing and he put five on the right and five on the left.† The parts of the burnt offering were rinsed in them,† but the basin was used by the priests for washing.

THE LAMPSTANDS, TABLES, AND COURTS

7 He made the ten gold lampstands according to their specifications and put them in the sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left.† 8 He made ten tables and placed them in the sanctuary, five on the right and five on the left.† He also made a hundred gold bowls.

9 He made the courtyard† of the priests and the large court, and doors for the court. He overlaid the doors with bronze. 10 He put the basin on the right side, toward the southeast.† 11 Then Huram†† made† the pots, the shovels, and the bowls.

COMPLETION OF THE BRONZE FURNISHINGS

So Huram finished doing the work that he was doing for King Solomon in God's temple: 12 two pillars; the bowls and the capitals on top of the two pillars; the two gratings for covering both bowls of the capitals that were on top of the pillars; 13 the four hundred pomegranates for the two gratings (two rows of pomegranates for each grating covering both capitals' bowls on top of the pillars†). 14 He also made the water carts†† and the basins on the water carts. 15 The one basin and the twelve oxen underneath it, 16 the pots, the shovels, the forks, and all their utensils — Huram-abi†† made them for King Solomon for the LORD's temple. All these were made of polished bronze. 17 The king had them cast in clay molds in the Jordan Valley between Succoth and Zeredah. 18 Solomon made all these utensils in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

COMPLETION OF THE GOLD FURNISHINGS

19 Solomon also made all the equipment in God's temple: the gold altar; the tables on which to put the Bread of the Presence;† 20 the lampstands and their lamps of pure gold to burn in front of the inner sanctuary according to specifications;† 21 the flowers, lamps, and gold tongs — of purest gold; 22 the wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, ladles,† and firepans — of purest gold; and the entryway to the temple, its inner doors to the most holy place, and the doors of the temple sanctuary — of gold.

4:1 Lit *20 cubits* **4:1** Lit *10 cubits,* also in v. 2 **4:2** Lit *sea* **4:2** Lit *five cubits* **4:2** Lit *30 cubits* **4:3** = gourds

in 1Kg 7:24 **4:3** Lit *10 per cubit* **4:5** Lit *a handbreadth* **4:5** Text emended; MT reads *3,000 baths* in 1Kg 7:26 **4:11** = Hiram in 1Kg 7:13,40,45 **4:14** Lit *the stands* **4:16** Lit *Huram my father* **4:22** Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms*
4:1 Ex 27:1-2; 2Kg 16:14 **4:2-5** 1Kg 7:23-26; Ezk 47:1-12; Rv 22:1 **4:6** 1Kg 7:38-39 **4:6** Ezk 40:38 **4:7** Ex 37:17-24; 1Kg 7:49 **4:8** 1Kg 7:48 **4:9** 1Kg 6:36 **4:10** 1Kg 7:39 **4:11** 1Kg 7:13,40,45 **4:11–5:1** 1Kg 7:40-51 **4:13** 1Kg 7:20 **4:14** 1Kg 7:27-37 **4:16** 1Kg 7:14; 2Ch 2:13 **4:19** Lv 24:5-9 **4:20** Ex 25:31-40; 2Ch 4:7

4:11 Huram had been sent by the king of Tyre to assist Solomon in construction (2:13-14).

5 So all the work Solomon did for the LORD's temple was completed. Then Solomon brought the consecrated things of his father David — the silver, the gold, and all the utensils — and put them in the treasuries of God's temple.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE DEDICATION

2 At that time† Solomon assembled at Jerusalem the elders of Israel — all the tribal heads, the ancestral chiefs of the Israelites — in order to bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the city of David,† that is, Zion. 3 So all the men of Israel were assembled in the king's presence at the festival; this was in the seventh month.†
4 All the elders of Israel came, and the Levites picked up the ark. 5 They brought up the ark, the tent of meeting, and the holy utensils that were in the tent. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 6 King Solomon and the entire congregation of Israel who had gathered around him were in front of the ark sacrificing sheep, goats, and cattle that could not be counted or numbered because there were so many. 7 The priests brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the most holy place, beneath the wings of the cherubim.† 8 And the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark so that the cherubim formed a cover above the ark and its poles. 9 The poles were so long that their ends were seen from the holy place†† in front of the inner sanctuary, but they were not seen from outside; they are still there today. 10 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had put in it at Horeb,†† where the LORD had made a covenant with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt.
11 Now all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves regardless of their divisions.† When the priests came out of the holy place, 12 the Levitical singers dressed in fine linen and carrying cymbals, harps, and lyres† were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing trumpets.† The Levitical singers were descendants of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun and

their sons† and relatives. 13 The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise
and thank the LORD with one voice. They raised their voices, accompanied by
trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments,† in praise to the LORD:

For he is good;
his faithful love endures forever.†

The temple, the LORD's temple, was filled with a cloud.† 14 And because of the
cloud, the priests were not able to continue ministering, for the glory of the LORD
filled God's temple.†

5:3 = Tishri (September–October) **5:9** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *the ark* ; 1Kg 8:8 **5:10** = Sinai

5:2-14 1Kg 8:1-11 **5:2** 2Ch 1:4 **5:7** 2Ch 3:10 **5:9** 1Kg 8:8 **5:10** Dt 10:2-5; Heb 9:4 **5:11** 1Ch 24:1-5 **5:12** 1Ch 13:8; 15:16,24 **5:12** 2Ch 7:6 **5:12** 1Ch 25:1-4 **5:13** 1Ch 16:42 **5:13** 1Ch 16:34; 2Ch 7:3 **5:13** Ex 40:34-35; Lv 16:2; Nm 9:15-16 **5:14** Ex 13:21-22; 40:34-38; Dt 4:11; 5:22; 31:14-15; 2Ch 7:1-3

5:2-3 Having completed the temple, Solomon gathered the Israelites to bring in the ark.

5:4-5 Fittingly, **the Levites** carried the ark and the other articles. David and the Israelites had erred earlier in having others carry the ark and learned their lesson (see the notes on 1Ch 13:1-10 and 15:2-15).

5:10 This reminder that the ark contained **the two tablets that Moses had put in it at Horeb** links the temple to the covenant God made with Israel at Sinai (see 6:11; Jr 31:31-34).

5:11-14 Music had accompanied the transportation of the ark earlier (see 1Ch 13:8; 15:16-29), and David had prepared the Levites to continue this ministry at the temple (see 1Ch 25). **Asaph**, **Heman**, **and Jeduthun** had been designated leaders of this work earlier (see the notes on 1Ch 6:31-46 and 15:17). Slight variations of **he is good; his faithful love endures forever** appear elsewhere in Chronicles (see the note on 1Ch 16:34-36). The filling of the temple **with a cloud** and the priests' consequent inability to continue ministering parallel what happened after the tabernacle was completed (7:2; Ex 40:34-35).

SOLOMON'S DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE

Then Solomon said:†

6 The LORD said he would dwell in total darkness,†
2 but I have built an exalted temple for you, a place for your residence forever.

3 Then the king turned and blessed the entire congregation of Israel while they
were standing. 4 He said:

Blessed be the LORD God of Israel!
He spoke directly to my father David,
and he has fulfilled the promise
by his power.

He said,
5 “Since the day I brought my people Israel out of the land of Egypt,†
I have not chosen a city to build a temple in among any of the tribes of Israel,
so that my name would be there,
and I have not chosen a man
to be ruler over my people Israel.
6 But I have chosen Jerusalem so that my name will be there,†
and I have chosen David
to be over my people Israel.”†

7 My father David had his heart set on building a temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.†
8 However, the LORD said to my father David, “Since it was your desire to build a temple for my name, you have done well to have this desire.
9 Yet, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own offspring, will build the temple for my name.”
10 So the LORD has fulfilled what he promised.
I have taken the place of my father David
and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised.
I have built the temple for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.
11 I have put the ark there, where the LORD’s covenant is that he made with the Israelites.†

SOLOMON’S PRAYER

12 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his hands. 13 For Solomon had made a bronze platform 7 1/2 feet† long, 7 1/2 feet wide, and 4 1/2 feet† high and put it in the court. He stood on it,† knelt down in front of the entire congregation of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven.† 14 He said:

LORD God of Israel, there is no God like you
in heaven or on earth,†
who keeps his gracious covenant
with your servants who walk before you
with all their heart.†
15 You have kept what you promised to your servant, my father David.

You spoke directly to him,
and you fulfilled your promise by your power, as it is today.†
16 Therefore, LORD God of Israel, keep what you promised
to your servant, my father David:
"You will never fail to have a man
to sit before me on the throne of Israel,†
if only your sons guard their way to walk in my Law as you have walked before me."
17 Now, LORD God of Israel, please confirm what you promised to your servant David.

18 But will God indeed live on earth with humans?
Even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain you,†
much less this temple I have built.
19 Listen† to your servant's prayer and his petition, LORD my God, so that you may hear the cry and the prayer that your servant prays before you,
20 so that your eyes watch over this temple day and night,
toward the place where you said
you would put your name;†
and so that you may hear the prayer
your servant prays toward this place.
21 Hear the petitions of your servant and your people Israel,
which they pray toward this place.
May you hear in your dwelling place in heaven.
May you hear and forgive.

22 If a man sins against his neighbor and is forced to take an oath†
and he comes to take an oath
before your altar in this temple,
23 may you hear in heaven and act.
May you judge your servants,
condemning the wicked man by bringing
what he has done on his own head
and providing justice for the righteous
by rewarding him according to his righteousness.

24 If your people Israel are defeated before an enemy, because they have sinned against you,
and they return to you and praise your name, and they pray and plead for mercy before you in this temple,
25 may you hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel.
May you restore them to the land
you gave them and their ancestors.

26 When the skies are shut and there is no rain because they have sinned against you,
and they pray toward this place
and praise your name,
and they turn from their sins
because you are afflicting†† them, 27 may you hear in heaven and forgive the sin of your servants
and your people Israel,
so that you may teach them the good way
they should walk in.
May you send rain on your land
that you gave your people for an inheritance.

28 When there is famine in the land, when there is pestilence,
when there is blight or mildew, locust or grasshopper, when their enemies besiege them
in the land and its cities,†††
when there is any plague or illness,
29 every prayer or petition that any person or that all your people Israel may have — they each know their own affliction† and suffering — as they spread out their hands toward this temple, 30 may you hear in heaven, your dwelling place, and may you forgive and give to everyone†
according to all their ways, since you know each heart, for you alone know the human heart,†
31 so that they may fear you and walk in your ways
all the days they live on the land
you gave our ancestors.

32 Even for the foreigner who is not of your people Israel but has come from a distant land
because of your great name
and your strong hand and outstretched arm:†
when he comes and prays toward this temple, 33 may you hear in heaven in your dwelling place, and do all the foreigner asks you.
Then all the peoples of the earth will know your name, to fear you as your people Israel do
and know that this temple I have built
bears your name.†

34 When your people go out to fight against their enemies, wherever you send them,
and they pray to you
in the direction of this city you have chosen†
and the temple that I have built for your name, 35 may you hear their prayer and petition in heaven and uphold their cause.

36 When they sin against you — for there is no one who does not sin† — and you are angry with them
and hand them over to the enemy,
and their captors deport them
to a distant or nearby country,
37 and when they come to their senses in the land where they were deported
and repent and petition you in their captors' land, saying: "We have sinned and done wrong;
we have been wicked,"
38 and when they return to you with all their mind and all their heart in the land of their captivity where they were taken captive, and when they pray in the direction of their land that you gave their ancestors,
and the city you have chosen,
and toward the temple I have built for your name, 39 may you hear their prayer and petitions in heaven, your dwelling place,
and uphold their cause.†
May you forgive your people
who sinned against you.

40 Now, my God, please let your eyes be open
and your ears attentive
to the prayer of this place.†
41 Now therefore:†

Arise, LORD God, come to your resting place, you and your powerful ark.
May your priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and may your faithful people rejoice in goodness.
42 LORD God, do not reject your anointed one;†
remember the promises to your servant David.†

6:13 Lit *five cubits* **6:13** Lit *three cubits* **6:19** Lit *Turn* **6:22** Lit *and he lifts a curse against him to curse him* **6:26** LXX, Vg; MT reads *answering* ; 1Kg 8:35 **6:28** Lit *land of its gates* **6:28** Lit *if his* (Israel's) *enemies besiege him in the land of his gates* ; Jos 2:7; Jdg 16:2-3 **6:29** Lit *plague* **6:30** Lit *give for the man* **6:39** Lit *and do their judgment*, or *justice* **6:42** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *ones* ; Ps 132:10
6:1-42 1Kg 8:12-53 **6:1** Ex 20:21; Dt 4:11; 5:22 **6:5-9** 2Sm 7:1-13 **6:6** 2Ch 12:13 **6:6** 1Ch 28:4 **6:7** 2Sm 7:2-3; 1Ch 22:7 **6:11** 2Ch 5:7,10 **6:13** Ex 9:29,33; Ezr 9:5; Neh 8:4 **6:13** 1Kg 8:54 **6:14** Ex 15:11; Dt 3:24 **6:14** Dt 7:9 **6:15** 1Ch 22:9-10 **6:16** 1Kg 2:4; 2Ch 7:18 **6:18** 2Ch 2:6 **6:20** Dt 12:11 **6:26** 1Kg 8:35 **6:28** Jos 2:7; Jdg 16:2-3 **6:30** 1Sm 16:7; 1Ch 28:9 **6:32** Is 56:6-8; Zch 8:20-23; 14:16-21 **6:33** 2Ch 7:14 **6:34** Dt 12:11 **6:36** Jb 15:14-16; Jms 3:2; 1Jn 1:8-10 **6:40** 2Ch 7:15; Neh 1:6,11; Ps 17:1 **6:41-42** Ps 132:8-10 **6:42** 1Ch 16:8-22; Ps 105:1-15; Is 55:3

6:2 Despite Solomon's intention that this temple be **a place for** [God's] **residence forever**, it would be destroyed because of Israel's disobedience (cp. 7:19-22; 36:18-19).

6:4-10 Solomon's citation of God's promises to David reflect what his father said earlier in 1 Chronicles 28:2-10 (see note).

6:16 Referencing God's promises to David once again (see previous note), Solomon brings out the conditions: the Davidic dynasty in Israel will continue **if only** [David's] **sons guard their way to walk in** [God's] **Law as** [David] **walked before** [him] (see also 7:17-18; notes on 1 Chronicles 22:7-13 and 28:2-10). Solomon himself affirmed this aspect of God's promises (see also v. 17). His son Rehoboam, however, would not reign over all Israel (10:16-19), implying that the condition had not been met.

6:18 For a second time, Solomon confessed that **even heaven, the highest heaven, cannot contain** God—much less this temple (2:6).

6:24-27 Solomon asked that besides just being a place to offer incense and sacrifice (2:6; 7:12), the temple be a place where prayer is answered by God (v. 21; see the note on 1Kg 8:28-30). The situations described here are ones in which Israel had sinned but was repenting and asking for forgiveness. The statement that contrite Israelites would **praise** [God's] **name** (vv. 24,26) relates to other passages that mention praising God in the temple (see notes on 5:11-14 and 1Ch 16:34-36).

6:30 The Lord's ability to answer prayer properly and to do justice is based on his special knowledge of the human heart (see also v. 23).

6:32-33 Solomon's request that God hear prayer offered by worshipers was not limited to the Israelites but extended to **the foreigner** who **has come from a distant land** (v. 32). Answered prayer would serve an evangelistic purpose because **all the people of the earth will know** [the Lord's] **name** (v. 33; see the note on 1Ch 16:8,23-33).

6:36-39 This part of Solomon's prayer describes a time when Israel is in exile. Although the exile is not narrated until 2 Chronicles 36, it has been repeatedly mentioned earlier and is part of the perspective advanced by the biblical author (see the notes on 1Ch 1:1 and 3:10-24). Such a dire situation had been predicted by Moses (Dt 4:25-28) but so was Israel's genuine repentance **with all their mind and all their heart** (see Dt 4:29-30; 30:2). Solomon's request that God hear prayer at that time was thus also a prayer that he would fulfill his age-old promises (Dt 4:29-31; 30:3-7).

6:42 The end of Solomon's lengthy prayer emphasizes the link between the Davidic line and the temple.

THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES

7 When Solomon finished praying,† fire descended from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices,† and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests were not able to enter the LORD's temple because the glory of the LORD filled the temple of the LORD. 3 All the Israelites were watching when the fire descended and the glory of the LORD came on the temple. They bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground. They worshiped and praised the LORD:

For he is good,
for his faithful love endures forever.†

4 The king and all the people were offering sacrifices in the LORD's presence.† 5 King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand cattle and one hundred twenty thousand sheep and goats. In this manner the king and all the people dedicated God's temple. 6 The priests and the Levites were standing at their stations. The Levites had the musical instruments of the LORD, which King David had made to give thanks to the LORD — "for his faithful love endures forever" — when he offered praise with them.† Across from the Levites, the priests were blowing trumpets, and all the people were standing. 7 Since the bronze altar that Solomon had made† could not accommodate the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat of the fellowship offerings, Solomon first consecrated the middle of the courtyard† that was in front of the LORD's temple and then offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings there.†
8 So Solomon and all Israel with him — a very great assembly, from the entrance to Hamath† to the Brook of Egypt — observed the festival at that time for seven days. 9 On the eighth day† they held a sacred assembly,† for the dedication of the altar lasted seven days and the festival seven days. 10 On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people home,† rejoicing and

with happy hearts for the goodness the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for his people Israel.
11 So Solomon finished the LORD's temple and the royal palace. Everything that had entered Solomon's heart to do for the LORD's temple and for his own palace succeeded.†

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

12 Then the LORD appeared to Solomon at night and said to him:
I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple of sacrifice.† 13 If I shut the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the grasshopper to consume the land, or if I send pestilence on my people,† 14 and my people, who bear my name, humble themselves, pray and seek my face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land.† 15 My eyes will now be open and my ears attentive to prayer from this place.† 16 And I have now chosen and consecrated this temple so that my name may be there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there at all times.†
17 As for you, if you walk before me as your father David walked, doing everything I have commanded you, and if you keep my statutes and ordinances, 18 I will establish your royal throne, as I promised your father David: You will never fail to have a man ruling in Israel.†
19 However, if you turn away and abandon my statutes and my commands that I have set before you and if you go and serve other gods and bow in worship to them,† 20 then I will uproot Israel from the soil that I gave them, and this temple that I have sanctified for my name I will banish from my presence;† I will make it an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples.† 21 As for this temple, which was exalted, everyone who passes by will be appalled and will say:† Why did the LORD do this to this land and this temple? 22 Then they will say: Because they abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors who brought them out of the land of Egypt. They clung to other gods and bowed in worship to them and served them. Because of this, he brought all this ruin on them.

7:8 Or *from Lebo-hamath* **7:9** = the day after the festival, or the 15th day **7:10** Lit *people to their tents*
7:1-10 1Kg 8:54 **7:1** Gn 15:7-17; Lv 9:24; Jdg 6:21-24; 1Kg 18:24,38 **7:3** 1Ch 16:41; 2Ch 5:13; 20:21; Ezr 3:11; Ps 106:1; Jr 33:11 **7:4-5** 1Kg 8:62-63 **7:6** 1Ch 15:16-21; 16:42; 23:5; 2Ch 29:26-30; Neh 12:36 **7:7** 2Ch 4:1 **7:7-10** 1Kg 8:64-66 **7:7** Lv 7:30-31 **7:9** Lv 23:36 **7:11-22** 1Kg 9:1-9 **7:12** Dt 12:5,11 **7:13** 2Ch 6:26-28 **7:14** 2Ch 6:37-39 **7:15** 2Ch 6:20,40 **7:16** 2Ch 7:12 **7:18** 2Ch 6:16 **7:19** Lv 26:14; Dt 28:15 **7:20** Lv 26:33; Dt 29:28; 1Kg 14:15 **7:20** Dt 28:37 **7:21-22** Dt 29:24-25

7:1-3 The temple had been built on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (3:1), where **fire . . . from**

heaven had consumed David's sacrifice there earlier (see 1Ch 21:26). A similar dramatic display of divine approval happened after Solomon's prayer, and **the glory of the LORD filled the temple** (see 5:14).

7:7 So many offerings could not fit on the **bronze altar**, which led to the consecration of part of the courtyard for offering sacrifices. For another adaptation made for practical reasons, see the note on 1 Chronicles 23:26-32.

7:8 The mention of **Solomon and all Israel**, . . . **a very great assembly**, celebrating at the temple is a high point in Chronicles (see also 30:23-26; 35:18). The festival was the Festival of Shelters, which was held in the seventh month (see v. 10; Lv 23:33-36,39-43).

7:13-14 This well-known passage is found in the context of Solomon's completion and dedication of the temple. Solomon had asked that God hear the prayers of his repentant people (see the note on 6:24-27), and God agreed to do so. His faithfulness to this promise to reward humble faith in him will be demonstrated in the subsequent narrative (e.g., 12:7-12; 13:13-18; 14:11-15; 20:1-23).

7:17-22 As mentioned several times already, the continuance of the Davidic monarchy depended on obedience to God (see the notes on 6:16 and 1Ch 28:2-10). Likewise, Israel's residence in the land and the continued existence of the temple depended on it too (vv. 19-22). The following narrative will describe the people's failure to obey God and the consequent exile of the nation, the end of Davidic rule, and the temple's destruction.

SOLOMON'S LATER BUILDING PROJECTS

8 At the end of twenty years† during which Solomon had built the LORD's
temple and his own palace — 2 Solomon had rebuilt the cities Hiram†
gave him and settled Israelites there — 3 Solomon went to Hamath-
zobah and seized it. 4 He built Tadmor in the wilderness along with all the
storage cities that he built in Hamath. 5 He built Upper Beth-horon and Lower
Beth-horon† — fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars† — 6 Baalath, all the
storage cities that belonged to Solomon, all the chariot cities, the cavalry cities,
and everything Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, or anywhere
else in the land of his dominion.
7 As for all the peoples who remained of the Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites,
Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not from Israel† — 8 their descendants who
remained in the land after them, those the Israelites had not completely
destroyed — Solomon imposed forced labor on them; it is this way today.†
9 But Solomon did not consign the Israelites to be slaves for his work; they were
soldiers, commanders of his captains, and commanders of his chariots and his
cavalry. 10 These were King Solomon's deputies: 250 who supervised the
people.
11 Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh from the city of David to the house
he had built for her,† for he said, "My wife must not live in the house† of King
David of Israel because the places the ark of the LORD has come into are holy."

PUBLIC WORSHIP ESTABLISHED AT THE TEMPLE

12 At that time† Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the LORD's altar
he had made in front of the portico.† 13 He followed the daily requirement† for
offerings according to the commandment of Moses† for Sabbaths, New Moons,
and the three annual appointed festivals: the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the
Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Shelters.† 14 According to the ordinances
of his father David, he appointed the divisions of the priests over their service,†
of the Levites over their responsibilities to offer praise and to minister before the
priests following the daily requirement,† and of the gatekeepers by their
divisions with respect to each temple gate,† for this had been the command of
David, the man of God.† 15 They did not turn aside from the king's command
regarding the priests and the Levites concerning any matter or concerning the
treasuries.† 16 All of Solomon's work was carried out from the day the
foundation was laid for the LORD's temple until it was finished. So the LORD's
temple was completed.

SOLOMON'S FLEET

17 At that time† Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Eloth† on the seashore in
the land of Edom. 18 So Hiram† sent ships to him by his servants along with
crews of experienced seamen. They went with Solomon's servants to Ophir,
took from there seventeen tons† of gold, and delivered it to King Solomon.†

8:2 = the king of Tyre **8:11** LXX reads *city* **8:18** Lit *Huram* **8:18** Lit *450 talents*
8:1-10 1Kg 9:10-23 **8:5** 1Ch 7:24 **8:5** 2Ch 14:7 **8:7** Gn 15:18-21 **8:8** 1Kg 4:6; 9:21 **8:11** 1Kg 3:1; 7:8; 9:24
8:12-13 1Kg 9:25 **8:12** 2Ch 4:1 **8:13** Ex 29:38-42 **8:13** Nm 28:3 **8:13** Ex 23:14-17 **8:14** 1Ch 24:1-3 **8:14**
1Ch 25:1 **8:14** 1Ch 26:1,13 **8:14** Neh 12:24,36 **8:15** 1Ch 26:20-28 **8:17-18** 1Kg 9:26-28 **8:17** 2Kg 14:22
8:18 2Ch 9:10,13

8:13-15 The completion and dedication of the temple was followed by the proper execution of the temple service. These verses emphasize Solomon's obedience to Moses and to his father David, who had received instructions concerning the temple and its service from God (1Ch 28:11-19). David's designation as a **man of God** (v. 14) suggests that he was a prophet (see 11:2; 25:7-9; 30:16; Ac 2:30).

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

9 The queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fame,† so she came to test
Solomon with difficult questions at Jerusalem with a very large
entourage, with camels bearing spices, gold in abundance, and precious
stones. She came to Solomon and spoke with him about everything that was on
her mind. 2 So Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for
Solomon to explain to her. 3 When the queen of Sheba observed Solomon's

wisdom, the palace he had built, 4 the food at his table, his servants' residence, his attendants' service and their attire, his cupbearers and their attire, and the burnt offerings he offered at the LORD's temple, it took her breath away.
5 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your words and about your wisdom is true. 6 But I didn't believe their reports until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, I was not even told half of your great wisdom! You far exceed the report I heard. 7 How happy are your men.†† How happy are these servants of yours, who always stand in your presence hearing your wisdom. 8 Blessed be the LORD your God! He delighted in you and put you on his throne as king for the LORD your God.† Because your God loved Israel enough to establish them forever, he has set you over them as king to carry out justice and righteousness."†
9 Then she gave the king four and a half tons† of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. There never were such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 10 In addition, Hiram's servants and Solomon's servants who brought gold from Ophir† also brought algum wood and precious stones. 11 The king made the algum wood into walkways for the LORD's temple and for the king's palace and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before had anything like them been seen in the land of Judah.
12 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba her every desire, whatever she asked — far more than she had brought the king. Then she, along with her servants, returned to her own country.

SOLOMON'S WEALTH

13 The weight of gold that came to Solomon† annually was twenty-five tons,† 14 besides what was brought by the merchants and traders. All the Arabian kings and governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon.
15 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; 15 pounds† of hammered gold went into each shield. 16 He made three hundred small shields of hammered gold; 7 1/2 pounds† of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.†
17 The king also made a large ivory throne and overlaid it with pure gold. 18 The throne had six steps; there was a footstool covered in gold for the throne, armrests on either side of the seat, and two lions standing beside the armrests. 19 Twelve lions were standing there on the six steps, one at each end. Nothing like it had ever been made in any other kingdom.

20 All of King Solomon’s drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the
House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver, since it was
considered as nothing in Solomon’s time, 21 for the king’s ships kept going to
Tarshish† with Hiram’s servants, and once every three years the ships of
Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.†
22 King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the world in riches and wisdom.†
23 All the kings of the world wanted an audience with Solomon to hear the
wisdom God had put in his heart. 24 Each of them would bring his own gift —
items† of silver and gold, clothing, weapons,†† spices, and horses and mules —
as an annual tribute.
25 Solomon† had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve
thousand horsemen.† He stationed them in the chariot cities and with the king in
Jerusalem. 26 He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates River to the land of
the Philistines and as far as the border of Egypt.† 27 The king made silver as
common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar as abundant as sycamore in
the Judean foothills. 28 They were bringing horses for Solomon from Egypt and
from all the countries.

SOLOMON’S DEATH

29 The remaining events† of Solomon’s reign, from beginning to end, are
written in the Events of the Prophet Nathan, the Prophecy of Ahijah the
Shilonite, and the Visions of the Seer Iddo concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat.†
30 Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years. 31 Solomon
rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David.† His son
Rehoboam became king in his place.

9:7 LXX, Old Lat read *wives* ; 1Kg 10:8 **9:9** Lit *120 talents* **9:13** Lit *666 talents* **9:15** Lit *600* (shekels) **9:16** Lit *300* (shekels) **9:21** Or *baboons* **9:24** Or *vessels*, or *weapons* **9:24** LXX reads *resin* **9:24** Or *fragrant balsam*

9:1-12 1Kg 10:1-13; Mt 12:42; Lk 11:31 **9:7** 1Kg 10:8 **9:8** 1Ch 28:5; 29:23 **9:8** Dt 7:8; 2Ch 2:11 **9:10** 2Ch 8:18 **9:13-24** 1Kg 10:14-25 **9:16** 1Kg 7:2-5 **9:21** 2Ch 20:36-37 **9:22** 1Kg 3:13; 2Ch 1:12 **9:25-28** Dt 17:16; 1Kg 10:26-29; 2Ch 1:14-17 **9:25** 1Kg 4:26 **9:26** Gn 15:18; 1Kg 4:21,24 **9:29-31** 1Kg 11:41-43 **9:29** 1Ch 29:29; 2Ch 12:15; 13:22 **9:31** 1Kg 2:10

9:1-8 The visit of **the queen of Sheba** demonstrated that Solomon’s reputation for wisdom had reached other lands (see also v. 23; 1:12; 6:32-33). It therefore foreshadows the fulfillment of the prophecy that “all nations” and “many peoples” will go up to Zion “in the last days” to receive instruction from God himself (Is 2:2-4) and to bring their treasures (Hg 2:6-9). David, in fact, had desired this very thing (see the note on 1Ch 16:8,23-33). The queen of Sheba was also impressed by Solomon’s kingdom (vv. 3-4). Her reference to Solomon sitting on **his throne as king for the LORD** serves as a reminder that the throne was God’s (v. 8; see the note on 1Ch 29:22-25).

9:9-19 The Lord had promised that Solomon's wealth would be unprecedented and unequaled by his successors (1:12), and he fulfilled this promise (see v. 22). In addition to the vast amount of annual gold income (v. 13), the spices, musical instruments, and royal pomp of this period were unparalleled (vv. 9,11,19).

9:23-24 Not only did the queen of Sheba come to hear Solomon's wisdom (see the note on vv. 1-8), but so did **all the kings of the world**, who came bearing gifts. This scene foreshadows what is predicted in Isaiah 2:2-4 and Hg 2:6-9 (see also the notes on 17:11 and 1Ch 16:8,23-33).

9:26 Solomon's dominion was extensive but not as extensive as the Messiah's will be, since it will include all nations (Gn 49:10; Pss 2:8; 72:8-11).

9:29 Ahijah the Shilonite was mentioned in 1Kg 11:29-39, where he declared to Jeroboam that God would give him most of the kingdom of Israel because of Solomon's sins (see 10:15).

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

10 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem,† for all Israel had gone to Shechem
to make him king. 2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard about it — for
he was in Egypt where he had fled from King Solomon's presence —
Jeroboam returned from Egypt.† 3 So they summoned him. Then Jeroboam and
all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam: 4 "Your father made our yoke harsh.
Therefore, lighten your father's harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us,
and we will serve you."
5 Rehoboam replied, "Return to me in three days." So the people left.
6 Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had attended his father
Solomon when he was alive, asking, "How do you advise me to respond to this
people? "
7 They replied, "If you will be kind to this people and please them by speaking
kind words to them, they will be your servants forever."
8 But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him, and he consulted
with the young men who had grown up with him, the ones attending him. 9 He
asked them, "What message do you advise we send back to this people who said
to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'? "
10 Then the young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is what you
should say to the people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but
you, make it lighter on us! ' This is what you should say to them: 'My little
finger is thicker than my father's waist! 11 Now therefore, my father burdened
you with a heavy yoke, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you
with whips, but I, with barbed whips.' "†

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, just as
the king had ordered, saying, “Return to me on the third day.” 13 Then the king
answered them harshly. King Rehoboam rejected the elders’ advice 14 and spoke
to them according to the young men’s advice, saying, “My father made your
yoke heavy,†† but I will add to it; my father disciplined you with whips, but I,
with barbed whips.”
15 The king did not listen to the people because the turn of events came from
God,† in order that the LORD might carry out his word that he had spoken
through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.†
16 When† all Israel saw†† that the king had not listened to them, the people
answered the king:

What portion do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Israel, each to your tent;
David, look after your own house now!

So all Israel went to their tents. 17 But as for the Israelites living in the cities of
Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.
18 Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram,†† who was in charge of the forced
labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. However, King Rehoboam managed
to get into his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. 19 Israel is in rebellion against the
house of David until today.

10:11 Lit *with scorpions*, also in v. 14 **10:14** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *I will make your yoke heavy* ; 1Kg 12:14 **10:16** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss omit *saw* ; 1Kg 12:16 **10:18** = Adoram in 1Kg 12:18

10:1-19 1Kg 12:1-20 **10:2** 1Kg 11:40 **10:14** 1Kg 12:14 **10:15** 2Ch 25:16-20 **10:15** 1Kg 11:29-39 **10:16-17** 2Sm 20:1-2 **10:16** 1Kg 12:16 **10:18** 1Kg 4:6; 5:14; 12:18

10:1 In keeping with Ahijah’s prophecy (see v. 15; 1Kg 11:29-39), most of the kingdom would be taken from Solomon’s son. **Rehoboam** could have been king over **all Israel** like David and Solomon, but his harsh response led to the rebellion of most Israelite tribes (vv. 13-17).

10:2 The reason for Jeroboam’s flight to Egypt is not given in Chronicles but is explained in 1 Kings He had been “over the entire labor force of the house of Joseph” (v. 28) when he received Ahijah’s prophecy of his eventual rule (vv. 29-39). **Jeroboam** fled because Solomon wanted to kill him (v. 40).

10:4 Solomon evidently had laid a heavy burden on the Israelites through his various construction projects.

10:16-19 Israel’s rebellion against **King Rehoboam** marks a major turning point in Chronicles. Henceforth, the sons of David would be kings of Judah only, not of **all Israel.** This division of the kingdom was from God, who fulfilled his word spoken through Ahijah (v. 15; 11:4). The throne was God’s (see the

note on 1Ch 29:22-25), and he had taken away some of the power from the house of David (see the note on 1Ch 28:2-10).

REHOBOAM IN JERUSALEM

11 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem,† he mobilized the house of Judah and Benjamin — one hundred eighty thousand fit young soldiers — to fight against Israel to restore the reign to Rehoboam. 2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah,† the man of God: 3 "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people: 4 'This is what the LORD says: You are not to march up and fight against your brothers.† Each of you return home, for this incident has come from me.' "†

So they listened to what the LORD said and turned back from going against Jeroboam.

JUDAH'S KING REHOBOAM

5 Rehoboam stayed in Jerusalem, and he fortified cities†† in Judah. 6 He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are fortified cities in Judah and in Benjamin. 11 He strengthened their fortifications and put leaders in them with supplies of food, oil, and wine. 12 He also put large shields and spears in each and every city to make them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.

13 The priests and Levites from all their regions throughout Israel took their stand with Rehoboam, 14 for the Levites left their pasturelands and their possessions† and went to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons refused to let them serve as priests of the LORD.† 15 Jeroboam appointed his own priests for the high places,† the goat-demons,† and the golden calves he had made.† 16 Those from every tribe of Israel who had determined in their hearts to seek the LORD their God followed the Levites to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their ancestors. 17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years,† because they walked in the ways of David and Solomon for three years.

18 Rehoboam married Mahalath, daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail daughter of Jesse's son Eliab.† 19 She bore sons to him: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20 After her, he married Maacah daughter†† of

Absalom. She bore Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith to him. 21 Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than all his wives and concubines. He acquired eighteen wives† and sixty concubines and was the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

22 Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as chief, leader among his brothers, intending to make him king.† 23 Rehoboam also showed discernment by dispersing some of his sons to all the regions of Judah and Benjamin and to all the fortified cities. He gave them plenty of provisions and sought many wives for them.

11:5 Lit *he built cities for a fortress* **11:20** Possibly *granddaughter*, also in v. 21; 2Ch 13:2
11:1-4 1Kg 12:21-24 **11:2** 2Ch 12:5-7,15 **11:4** 2Ch 28:8-11 **11:4** 2Ch 10:15 **11:5** 2Ch 8:2-6; 11:23 **11:14** Nm 35:2-5 **11:14** 2Ch 13:9 **11:15** Ex 34:16-17 **11:15** Lv 17:7 **11:15** 1Kg 12:25-33; 13:33 **11:17** 2Ch 12:1 **11:18** 1Sm 16:6 **11:20** 2Ch 13:2 **11:21** Dt 17:17 **11:22** Dt 21:15-17

11:2-4 The prophet Ahijah's ministry was highlighted in the previous chapter (see 10:15), and here the message of the prophet **Shemaiah to Rehoboam** is mentioned (see also 12:5-8). As was fitting, the Israelites were obedient to God's message given through the prophet (see also 15:1-7; 20:20).

11:13-17 The priests and Levites . . . **throughout Israel** joined Rehoboam because of Jeroboam's false worship. Likewise, everyone else **from every tribe of Israel who had determined . . . to seek the LORD their God** went with them to worship in Jerusalem, where the temple was. Along with God's promises to David and his line, the presence of the temple was another reason for Chronicles' focus on Judah (see the note on 1Ch 1:1). Rehoboam's obedience, however, was short-lived (12:1).

SHISHAK'S INVASION

12 When Rehoboam had established his sovereignty and royal power,† he abandoned the law of the LORD — he and all Israel with him. 2 Because they were unfaithful to the LORD, in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, King Shishak† of Egypt went to war against Jerusalem† 3 with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 cavalrymen, and countless people who came with him from Egypt — Libyans,† Sukkiim, and Cushites. 4 He captured the fortified cities† of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

5 Then the prophet Shemaiah† went to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them: "This is what the LORD says: 'You have abandoned me; therefore, I have abandoned you to Shishak.' "†

6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is righteous."†

7 When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves, the LORD's message came to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them but

will grant them a little deliverance.† My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak.† 8 However, they will become his servants so that they may recognize the difference between serving me and serving the kingdoms of other lands."†

9 So King Shishak of Egypt went to war† against Jerusalem.† He seized the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the treasuries of the royal palace. He took everything. He took the gold shields that Solomon had made.† 10 King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and committed them into the care of the captains of the guards† who protected the entrance to the king's palace. 11 Whenever the king entered the LORD's temple, the guards would carry the shields and take them back to the armory.† 12 When Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger turned away from him, and he did not destroy him completely.† Besides that, conditions were good in Judah.†

REHOBOAM'S LAST DAYS

13 King Rehoboam† established his royal power in Jerusalem. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put his name.† Rehoboam's mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. 14 Rehoboam did what was evil, because he did not determine in his heart to seek the LORD.†

15 The events† of Rehoboam's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the Events of the Prophet Shemaiah† and of the Seer Iddo concerning genealogies.† There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout their reigns. 16 Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. His son Abijah†† became king in his place.

12:10 Lit *the runners* **12:11** Lit *the chamber of the runners* **12:16** = Abijam in 1Kg 14:31–15:8
12:1 2Ch 11:17; 12:13 **12:2** 1Kg 11:40 **12:2** 1Kg 14:25 **12:3** 2Ch 16:8; Nah 3:9 **12:4** 2Ch 11:5-12 **12:5** 2Ch 11:2 **12:5** Dt 28:15,25; 2Ch 15:2 **12:6** Ex 9:27; Dn 9:14 **12:7** 1Kg 21:29 **12:7** 2Ch 34:25-27; Ps 78:38 **12:8** Dt 28:47-48 **12:9-11** 1Kg 14:25-28 **12:9** 2Ch 12:2 **12:9** 2Ch 9:15-16 **12:12** 2Ch 12:6-7 **12:12** 2Ch 19:3 **12:13-14** 1Kg 14:21-22 **12:13** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 9:3 **12:14** 2Ch 19:3 **12:15-16** 1Kg 14:29-31 **12:15** 2Ch 12:5 **12:15** 2Ch 9:29; 13:22 **12:16** 1Kg 14:31–15:8

12:2 Rehoboam and the Israelites **were unfaithful to the LORD**, just as Saul had been (1Ch 10:13) and Judah would be (1Ch 9:1). For more on "unfaithfulness" in Chronicles, see the note on 1 Chronicles 5:25-26.

12:5 Shemaiah the prophet made clear to Rehoboam and Judah that the war with Shishak was a direct result of God's judgment on them for abandoning him. God had said repeatedly that his blessing depended on obedience (see the notes on 6:16 and 7:17-22).

12:6-8 In the spirit of 7:13-14 (see the note there), the humble response of the king and the leaders led God

to lessen the severity of his judgment (see also v. 12). Nevertheless, they were still made Shishak's **servants**, and the treasuries of the temple and palace were seized (v. 9).

12:13-14 Rehoboam's mother was an **Ammonite**, which may have influenced both his own wickedness and Solomon's idolatry, described in 1Kg 11:1-8.

JUDAH'S KING ABIJAH

13 In the eighteenth year† of Israel's King Jeroboam, Abijah† became king over Judah, 2 and he reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Micaiah†† daughter of Uriel; she was from Gibeah.
There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah set his army of warriors in order with four hundred thousand fit young men. Jeroboam arranged his mighty army of eight hundred thousand fit young men in battle formation against him. 4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim,† which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, "Jeroboam and all Israel, hear me. 5 Don't you know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel to David and his descendants forever† by a covenant of salt?† 6 But Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord.† 7 Then worthless and wicked men gathered around him to resist Rehoboam son of Solomon when Rehoboam was young, inexperienced, and unable to assert himself against them.
8 "And now you are saying you can assert yourselves against the LORD's kingdom, which is in the hand of one of David's sons. You are a vast number and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods.††
9 Didn't you banish the priests of the LORD, the descendants of Aaron and the Levites, and make your own priests like the peoples of other lands do?† Whoever comes to ordain himself† with a young bull and seven rams may become a priest† of what are not gods.†
10 "But as for us, the LORD is our God. We have not abandoned him; the priests ministering to the LORD are descendants of Aaron, and the Levites serve at their tasks. 11 They offer a burnt offering and fragrant incense to the LORD every morning and every evening,† and they set the rows of the Bread of the Presence on the ceremonially clean table.† They light the lamps of the gold lampstand every evening. We are carrying out the requirements of the LORD our God, while you have abandoned him.† 12 Look, God and his priests are with us at our head. The trumpets are ready to sound the charge against you. Israelites, don't fight against the LORD God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."†

13 Now Jeroboam had sent an ambush† around to advance from behind them. So
they were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. 14 Judah turned
and discovered that the battle was in front of them and behind them, so they
cried out to the LORD.† Then the priests blew the trumpets, 15 and the men of
Judah raised the battle cry. When the men of Judah raised the battle cry, God
routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.† 16 So the Israelites
fled before Judah, and God handed them over to them.† 17 Then Abijah and his
people struck them with a mighty blow, and five hundred thousand fit young
men of Israel were killed. 18 The Israelites were subdued at that time. The
Judahites succeeded because they depended on the LORD, the God of their
ancestors.
19 Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured some cities from him: Bethel,
Jeshanah, and Ephron,† along with their surrounding villages. 20 Jeroboam no
longer retained his power† during Abijah's reign; ultimately, the LORD struck
him† and he died.†
21 However, Abijah grew strong, acquired fourteen wives, and fathered twenty-
two sons and sixteen daughters. 22 The rest of the events of Abijah's reign,
along with his ways and his sayings, are written in the Writing† of the Prophet
Iddo.†

13:1 = Abijam in 1Kg 14:31–15:8 **13:2** LXX, Syr, Arabic read *Maacah* ; 1Kg 15:2; 2Ch 11:22 **13:8** Or *God* ; 1Kg 12:28 **13:19** Alt Hb tradition reads *Ephrain* **13:20** Lit *He did not restrain the power of Jeroboam* **13:1-2** 1Kg 15:1-2,7 **13:2** 1Kg 15:2; 2Ch 11:20,22 **13:4** Jos 18:22 **13:5** 2Sm 7:12-16 **13:5** Lv 2:13; Nm 18:19 **13:6** 1Kg 11:26 **13:8** 1Kg 12:28 **13:9** 2Ch 11:14 **13:9** Ex 29:29-33 **13:9** 1Kg 13:33 **13:9** Jr 2:11; 5:7 **13:11** Ex 29:38; 2Ch 2:4 **13:11** Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9 **13:11** Ex 25:31-40 **13:12** Nm 10:8-9 **13:13** Jos 8:4-9 **13:14** 2Ch 14:11 **13:15** 2Ch 14:12 **13:16** 2Ch 16:8 **13:20** 1Sm 25:38 **13:20** 1Kg 14:20 **13:22** 2Ch 24:27 **13:22** 1Kg 15:7; 2Ch 9:29; 12:15

13:4-9 Abijah's words to Jeroboam and Israel declare again God's promises **to David** and his line and the illegitimacy of the northern kingdom's worship of **the golden calves** (see the notes on 11:13-17 and 25:7-9). Meanwhile, Judah continued to be ruled by a descendant of David and worshiped at the temple in Jerusalem (vv. 10-12).

13:13-18 Israel's forces outnumbered Judah's (v. 3). When Jeroboam ambushed Judah, they recognized their trouble and **cried out to the LORD** for help. God aided Judah (vv. 15-16), who struck down **five hundred thousand fit young men of Israel** (v. 17). The biblical author emphasizes again the spiritual reasons for this turn of events: **they depended on the LORD** (see also the notes on 12:5,6-8).

14 Abijah rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. His
son Asa became king in his place.† During his reign the land
experienced peace for ten years.

JUDAH'S KING ASA

2 Asa did what was good and right† in the sight of the LORD his God. 3 He
removed the pagan altars and the high places. He shattered their sacred pillars
and chopped down their Asherah poles.† 4 He told the people of Judah to seek
the LORD God of their ancestors and to carry out the instruction and the
commands. 5 He also removed the high places and the shrines† from all the
cities of Judah,† and the kingdom experienced peace under him.
6 Because the land experienced peace, Asa built fortified cities in Judah.† No
one made war with him in those days because the LORD gave him rest.† 7 So he
said to the people of Judah, "Let's build these cities and surround them with
walls and towers, with doors and bars.† The land is still ours because we sought
the LORD our God. We sought him and he gave us rest on every side." So they
built and succeeded.

THE CUSHITE INVASION

8 Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah bearing large shields
and spears,† and two hundred eighty thousand from Benjamin bearing regular
shields and drawing the bow. All these were valiant warriors. 9 Then Zerah the
Cushite came against them with an army of one million men and three hundred†
chariots. They came as far as Mareshah. 10 So Asa marched out against him and
lined up in battle formation in Zephathah Valley at Mareshah.†
11 Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God:† "LORD, there is no one besides you
to help the mighty and those without strength. Help us, LORD our God, for we
depend on you,† and in your name we have come against this large army. LORD,
you are our God. Do not let a mere mortal hinder you."
12 So the LORD routed the Cushites before Asa and before Judah,† and the
Cushites fled. 13 Then Asa and the people who were with him pursued them as
far as Gerar.† The Cushites fell until they had no survivors, for they were
crushed before the LORD and his army. So the people of Judah carried off a great
supply of loot. 14 Then they attacked all the cities around Gerar because the
terror of the LORD was on them.† They also plundered all the cities, since there
was a great deal of plunder in them. 15 They also attacked the tents of the
herdsmen and captured many sheep and camels. Then they returned to
Jerusalem.

14:5 Or *incense altars* **14:9** Syr, Arabic read *30,000*

14:1 1Kg 15:8 **14:2-3** 1Kg 15:11-12 **14:3** Ex 34:13; Dt 7:5 **14:5** 2Ch 34:4,7 **14:6** 2Ch 11:5 **14:6** 2Ch 15:15 **14:7** 2Ch 8:5 **14:8** 2Ch 13:3 **14:10** 2Ch 11:8 **14:11** 2Ch 13:14 **14:11** 2Ch 13:18 **14:12** 2Ch 13:15 **14:13** Gn 10:19 **14:14** 2Ch 17:10

14:2-7 The Lord gave **Asa** rest because he led Judah to seek him and removed idolatrous altars and high places from the land.

14:11-14 Once again, an outnumbered army of Judah was victorious because of its dependence on God (see the note on 13:13-18). This time the foe was a massive Cushite army (vv. 8-10). Asa's prayer confesses Judah's dependence on God and his strength (v. 11). He answered by giving them a triumphant victory (vv. 12-14).

REVIVAL UNDER ASA

15 The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded.† 2 So he went out to
meet Asa and said to him, "Asa and all Judah and Benjamin, hear me.
The LORD is with you† when you are with him. If you seek him, he will
be found by you,† but if you abandon him, he will abandon you.† 3 For many
years Israel has been without the true God,† without a teaching priest, and
without instruction,† 4 but when they turned to the LORD God of Israel in their
distress and sought him, he was found by them. 5 In those times there was no
peace for those who went about their daily activities because the residents of the
lands had many conflicts. 6 Nation was crushed by nation and city by city, for
God troubled them with every possible distress. 7 But as for you, be strong;
don't give up,† for your work has a reward."†
8 When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the
prophet, he took courage and removed the abhorrent idols from the whole land
of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities he had captured in the hill country of
Ephraim.† He renovated the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of
the LORD's temple.† 9 Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, as well as those
from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing among
them, for they had defected to him from Israel in great numbers when they saw
that the LORD his God was with him.†
10 They were gathered in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of
Asa's reign. 11 At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred cattle and
seven thousand sheep and goats from all the plunder they had brought.† 12 Then
they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their ancestors with all
their heart and all their soul.† 13 Whoever would not seek the LORD God of
Israel would be put to death, young or old,† man or woman.† 14 They took an
oath to the LORD in a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets, and with rams'
horns. 15 All Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn it with all their

mind. They had sought him with all their heart, and he was found by them.† So the LORD gave them rest on every side.†
16 King Asa† also removed Maacah, his grandmother,†† from being queen
mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. Asa chopped down
her obscene image, then crushed it and burned it in the Kidron Valley.† 17 The
high places were not taken away from Israel; nevertheless, Asa was
wholeheartedly devoted his entire life.† 18 He brought his father's consecrated
gifts and his own consecrated gifts into God's temple: silver, gold, and utensils.
19 There was no war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

15:7 Lit *don't let your hands drop* **15:13** Or *insignificant or great* **15:16** Lit *mother* ; 1Kg 15:2; 2Ch 11:22 **15:17** Lit *wholehearted all his days*

15:1 2Ch 20:14; 24:20 **15:2** 2Ch 20:17 **15:2** Dt 4:29; 2Ch 15:15; Jr 29:13-14 **15:2** 1Ch 28:9 **15:3** 1Kg 12:28-33 **15:3** Lv 10:8-11; 2Ch 17:9 **15:7** Jos 1:7,9 **15:8** 2Ch 13:19 **15:8** 2Ch 4:1; 8:12 **15:9** 2Ch 11:16 **15:11** 2Ch 14:13-15 **15:12** 2Ch 23:16 **15:13** Ex 22:20; Dt 13:6-9; 17:2-7 **15:15** 2Ch 15:2 **15:15** 2Ch 14:6-7 **15:16-18** 1Kg 15:13-15 **15:16** 1Kg 15:2; 2Ch 11:22 **15:16** 2Ch 14:2-5

15:1-7 This lengthier prophetic message serves as another reminder of the importance of the role of the prophets (see also the notes on 11:2-4 and 20:20-23). **Azariah** exhorted King Asa, the nation of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin to continue to be faithful to God and to seek him so that they could be blessed. When the Israelites in the past had done this, they had experienced his blessing. The Lord being with his people was not guaranteed but was contingent on them being **with him** (v. 2).

15:8-9 In response to this prophetic word, Asa continued his purge of idolatry from the land of Judah (see 14:2-7) and carried it forward in Benjamin and in parts of Ephraim. He also renovated the bronze altar and gathered not only Judah and Benjamin but also defectors from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon to seek God (see vv. 10-15). The Lord blessed Asa because of his faithfulness to him (vv. 9,15,17).

ASA'S TREATY WITH ARAM

16 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa,† Israel's King Baasha went to war
against Judah. He built Ramah in order to keep anyone from leaving or
coming to King Asa of Judah. 2 So Asa brought out the silver and gold
from the treasuries of the LORD's temple and the royal palace and sent it to
Aram's King Ben-hadad, who lived in Damascus, saying, 3 "There's a treaty
between me and you, between my father and your father. Look, I have sent you
silver and gold. Go break your treaty with Israel's King Baasha so that he will
withdraw from me."
4 Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies to the
cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim,† and all the storage cities†
of Naphtali. 5 When Baasha heard about it, he quit building Ramah and stopped
his work. 6 Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones

of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had built it with. Then he built Geba and Mizpah with them.

HANANI'S REBUKE OF ASA

7 At that time, the seer Hanani† came to King Asa of Judah and said to him,
"Because you depended on the king of Aram and have not depended on the LORD
your God,† the army of the king of Aram has escaped from you. 8 Were not the
Cushites and Libyans a vast army with many chariots and horsemen?† When
you depended on the LORD, he handed them over to you.† 9 For the eyes of the
LORD roam throughout the earth† to show himself strong for those who are
wholeheartedly devoted to him.† You have been foolish in this matter.
Therefore, you will have wars from now on." 10 Asa was enraged with the seer
and put him in prison† because of his anger over this. And Asa mistreated some
of the people at that time.

ASA'S DEATH

11 Note that the events† of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the
Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign,
Asa developed a disease in his feet, and his disease became increasingly severe.
Yet even in his disease he didn't seek the LORD but only the physicians. 13 Asa
rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 He was
buried in his own tomb that he had made for himself in the city of David. They
laid him out in a coffin that was full of spices and various mixtures of prepared
ointments;† then they made a great fire in his honor.†

16:4 *Abel-beth-maacah* in 1Kg 15:20 **16:4** = all Chinnereth in 1Kg 15:20 **16:10** Lit *the house of stocks* **16:1-6** 1Kg 15:17-22 **16:7** 1Kg 16:1; 2Ch 19:2 **16:7** 2Ch 14:11 **16:8** 2Ch 12:3 **16:8** 2Ch 14:9-13 **16:9** Gn 6:8; Ps 33:18; 34:15; Pr 15:3; Zch 4:10; 1Pt 3:12 **16:9** 2Ch 15:17 **16:11-14** 1Kg 15:23-24 **16:14** Gn 50:2; Jn 12:7; 19:39-40 **16:14** 2Ch 21:19

16:7-9 Though Asa had relied on God when fighting against Cush (14:8-15), he dealt with Baasha king of Israel by securing the support of Aram through paying Ben-hadad to switch his allegiance from Israel to Judah (vv. 1-3). Though this was effective (vv. 4-6), **the seer Hanani** confronted Asa for having **depended on the king of Aram** instead of God (see also 13:18; 14:11). As a result, Aram would escape from Asa's hand, and he would henceforth be at war (see also 14:5-7; 15:15,19).

16:12 Sadly, Asa's lack of dependence on God continued when **he didn't seek the LORD but only the physicians** regarding his disease (see also previous note).

JUDAH'S KING JEHOSHAPHAT

17 His son Jehoshaphat became king in his place† and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 He stationed troops in every fortified city of Judah† and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured.†
3 Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the former ways of his father David.† He did not seek the Baals 4 but sought the God of his father and walked by his commands, not according to the practices of Israel.† 5 So the LORD established the kingdom in his hand. Then all Judah brought him tribute, and he had riches and honor in abundance.† 6 His mind rejoiced in the LORD's ways, and he again† removed the high places and Asherah poles from Judah.†

JEHOSHAPHAT'S EDUCATIONAL PLAN

7 In the third year of his reign, Jehoshaphat sent his officials — Ben-hail,† Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah — to teach in the cities of Judah.† 8 The Levites with them were Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah,† Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah; the priests, Elishama and Jehoram, were with these Levites. 9 They taught throughout Judah, having the book of the LORD's instruction with them.† They went throughout the towns of Judah and taught the people.
10 The terror of the LORD was on all the kingdoms of the lands that surrounded Judah,† so they didn't fight against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some of the Philistines also brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat, and the Arabs brought him flocks: 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.†

JEHOSHAPHAT'S MILITARY MIGHT

12 Jehoshaphat grew stronger and stronger. He built fortresses† and storage cities in Judah 13 and carried out great works in the towns of Judah. He had fighting men, valiant warriors, in Jerusalem. 14 These are their numbers according to their ancestral families.† For Judah, the commanders of thousands:

1. Adnah the commander and three hundred thousand valiant warriors with him;
2. 15 next to him, Jehohanan the commander and two hundred

eighty thousand with him;

3. 16 next to him, Amasiah son of Zichri, the volunteer† of the LORD, and two hundred thousand valiant warriors with him;
4. 17 from Benjamin, Eliada, a valiant warrior, and two hundred thousand with him armed with bow and shield;
5. 18 next to him, Jehozabad and one hundred eighty thousand with him equipped for war.

19 These were the ones who served the king, besides those he stationed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.†

17:3 Some Hb mss, LXX omit *David* **17:7** = Son of Power **17:8** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Arabic read *Zechariah* **17:14** Lit *the house of their fathers*

17:1 1Kg 15:24 **17:2** 2Ch 11:5 **17:2** 2Ch 15:8 **17:4** 1Kg 12:28 **17:5** 2Ch 18:1 **17:6** 2Ch 14:2-3 **17:6** 2Ch 15:17 **17:7** 2Ch 15:3; 35:3 **17:9** Dt 6:4-9; 17:18; 28:58,61; 29:21; 30:10; 31:24,26; Jos 1:8; 8:31,34; 23:6; 24:26 **17:10** 2Ch 14:14 **17:11** 2Ch 9:14; 26:8 **17:12** 2Ch 27:4 **17:16** Jdg 5:2,9; 1Ch 29:9 **17:19** 2Ch 17:2

17:3-6 The **LORD was with Jehoshaphat** because he followed David's example of obedience (see also 7:17; 15:2). He sought God, who **established the kingdom in his hand** and protected him (see vv. 10-11).

17:7-9 Jehoshaphat's plan to teach the Scriptures throughout Judah was carried out by his **officials** and **the Levites**, who play such a prominent role in Chronicles in the service of God (e.g., 11:13-16; 13:9-10; 19:8-11; see also the notes on 1Ch 15:2-15; 23:1-5).

17:11 The bringing of **tribute** to Jehoshaphat by foreign nations recalls Solomon's reign and foreshadows the rule of the Messiah over all nations (see the notes on 9:1-8,23-24).

JEHOSHAPHAT'S ALLIANCE WITH AHAB

18 Now Jehoshaphat† had riches and honor in abundance,† and he made an alliance with Ahab through marriage.†† 2 Then after some years, he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab sacrificed many sheep, goats, and cattle for him and for the people who were with him. Then he persuaded him to attack Ramoth-gilead, 3 for Israel's King Ahab asked Judah's King Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to Ramoth-gilead? "

He replied to him, "I am as you are, my people as your people; we will be with you in the battle." 4 But Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "First, please ask what the LORD's will is."

5 So the king of Israel gathered the prophets, four hundred men, and asked them, "Should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war or should I refrain? "

They replied, "March up, and God will hand it over to the king."

6 But Jehoshaphat asked, “Isn’t there a prophet of the LORD here anymore? Let’s ask him.”†
7 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “There is still one man who can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.”
“The king shouldn’t say that,” Jehoshaphat replied.
8 So the king of Israel called an officer and said, “Hurry and get Micaiah son of Imlah! ”
9 Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, clothed in royal attire, were each sitting on his own throne. They were sitting on the threshing floor at the entrance to Samaria’s gate,† and all the prophets were prophesying in front of them. 10 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah made iron horns and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You will gore the Arameans with these until they are finished off.’ ” 11 And all the prophets were prophesying the same, saying, “March up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the LORD will hand it over to the king.”

MICAIAH’S MESSAGE OF DEFEAT

12 The messenger who went to call Micaiah instructed him, “Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably.”
13 But Micaiah said, “As the LORD lives, I will say whatever my God says.”††
14 So he went to the king, and the king asked him, “Micaiah, should we go to Ramoth-gilead for war, or should I† refrain? ”
Micaiah said, “March up and succeed, for they will be handed over to you.”
15 But the king said to him, “How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD? ”
16 So Micaiah said:

I saw all Israel scattered on the hills
like sheep without a shepherd.†
And the LORD said, “They have no master;
let each return home in peace.”

17 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “Didn’t I tell you he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster? ”

18 Then Micaiah said, “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD
sitting on his throne, and the whole heavenly army was standing at his right hand
and at his left hand.† 19 And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice King Ahab of
Israel to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? ’ So one was saying this and
another was saying that.
20 “Then† a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will entice
him.’
“The LORD asked him, ‘How? ’
21 “So he said, ‘I will go and become a lying spirit in the mouth of all his
prophets.’
“Then he said, ‘You will entice him and also prevail. Go and do that.’
22 “Now, you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit into the mouth of† these
prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you.”
23 Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah came up, hit Micaiah on the cheek, and
demanded, “Which way did the spirit from the LORD leave me to speak to you? ”
24 Micaiah replied, “You will soon see when you go to hide in an inner chamber
on that day.”†
25 Then the king of Israel ordered, “Take Micaiah and return him† to Amon, the
governor of the city,† and to Joash, the king’s son, 26 and say, ‘This is what the
king says: Put this guy in prison† and feed him only a little bread and water†
until I come back safely.’ ”
27 But Micaiah said, “If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through
me.” Then he said, “Listen, all you people! ”†

AHAB’S DEATH

28 Then the king of Israel and Judah’s King Jehoshaphat went up to Ramoth-
gilead. 29 But the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and
go into battle, but you wear your royal attire.” So the king of Israel disguised
himself, and they went into battle.†
30 Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, “Do not fight
with anyone at all† except the king of Israel.”
31 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they shouted, “He must be
the king of Israel! ” So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out†
and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him. 32 When the chariot
commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they turned back from
pursuing him.

33 But a man drew his bow without taking special aim and struck the king of Israel through the joints of his armor. So he said to the charioteer, “Turn around and take me out of the battle,† for I am badly wounded! ”† 34 The battle raged throughout that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then he died at sunset.

18:1 Lit *made himself a son-in-law to Ahab* ; 1Kg 3:1; Ezr 9:14 **18:13** LXX, Vg add *to me* ; 1Kg 22:14 **18:14** LXX reads *we* ; 1Kg 22:15 **18:22** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg add *all* ; 1Kg 22:23 **18:26** Lit *him on bread of oppression and water of oppression* **18:30** Lit *with small or with great* **18:33** LXX, Vg; MT reads *camp*

18:1-34 1Kg 22:1-35 **18:1** 2Ch 17:5 **18:1** 1Kg 3:1; 2Kg 8:18; Ezr 9:14 **18:6** 2Kg 3:11 **18:9** Ru 4:1 **18:13** Nm 22:35,38; 24:13 **18:16** Nm 27:16-17; Ezk 34:5-8; Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34 **18:18** Is 6:1-5; Dn 7:9-10 **18:20-21** Dt 13:1-5; 1Sm 16:14; Jr 27:9-10; Ezk 14:9; 2Th 2:9-12 **18:24** 1Kg 20:30 **18:25** 2Ch 18:8 **18:25** 2Ch 34:8 **18:26** 2Ch 16:10 **18:27** Mc 1:2 **18:29** 2Ch 35:22 **18:31** 2Ch 13:14-15 **18:33** 2Ch 35:23

18:1-2 Jehoshaphat’s alliance with the wicked Ahab drew him into a joint military effort, which would be criticized by the prophet Jehu (see 19:2; 21:6).

18:5 Although these **four hundred** so-called **prophets** claimed to speak for God (see also vv. 9-11), they were not genuine prophets of God (see v. 6).

18:7 Despite being a prophet of God, **Micaiah** was hated by Ahab **because he never prophesies good . . . but only disaster.** This was because he was a true prophet, faithfully declaring whatever God revealed whether it was favorably received or not (see the note on 1Kg 22:8). The king of Israel thus resembles those who gather teachers around them to tell them what they want to hear (see 2Tm 4:3).

18:12-13 As Micaiah explained, the fact that the false prophets were unanimously encouraging Ahab to go to war had absolutely no bearing on the true prophet’s duty to **say whatever . . . God says.**

18:17 Ahab’s view of Micaiah was confirmed (see v. 7), but the king failed to recognize that the prophet was speaking the truth (see the following note).

18:25-26 Ahab’s assumption that he would **come back safely** from battle showed that he did not believe Micaiah’s prediction that he would go to his death at Ramoth-gilead (see vv. 18-22).

18:33-34 Despite Ahab’s disguise (v. 29), God fulfilled his own word when Ahab was struck by an arrow and later died. On the other hand, he protected Jehoshaphat after he cried out to him (v. 31).

JEHU’S REBUKE OF JEHOSHAPHAT

19 King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned to his home in Jerusalem in peace. 2 Then Jehu† son of the seer Hanani went out to confront him† and said to King Jehoshaphat, “Do you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD?† Because of this, the LORD’s wrath is on you.† 3 However, some good is found in you, for you have eradicated the Asherah poles from the land and have decided to seek God.”†

JEHOSHAPHAT’S REFORMS

4 Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and once again he went out among the people
from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the
LORD, the God of their ancestors.† 5 He appointed judges in all the fortified
cities of the land of Judah, city by city.† 6 Then he said to the judges, “Consider
what you are doing, for you do not judge for a mere mortal, but for the LORD,
who is with you in the matter of judgment.† 7 And now, may the terror of the
LORD be on you. Watch what you do, for there is no injustice or partiality or
taking bribes with the LORD our God.”†
8 Jehoshaphat also appointed in Jerusalem some of the Levites and priests and
some of the Israelite family heads for deciding the LORD’s will and for settling
disputes of the residents of† Jerusalem. 9 He commanded them, saying, “In the
fear of the LORD, with integrity, and wholeheartedly, you are to do the following:
10 For every dispute that comes to you from your brothers who dwell in their
cities — whether it regards differences of bloodguilt, law, commandment,
statutes, or judgments† — you are to warn them, so they will not incur guilt
before the LORD and wrath will not come on you and your brothers.† Do this, and
you will not incur guilt.
11 “Note that Amariah, the chief priest, is over you in all matters related to the
LORD, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all
matters related to the king, and the Levites are officers in your presence. Be
strong; may the LORD be with those who do what is good.”†

19:2 Lit *to his face* **19:8** LXX, Vg; MT reads *disputes and they returned to*
19:2 1Kg 16:1; 2Ch 20:34 **19:2** 2Ch 18:1,3 **19:2** 2Ch 24:18 **19:3** 2Ch 12:14; 17:4,6 **19:4** 2Ch 15:8-13 **19:5** Dt 16:18-20 **19:6** Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17 **19:7** Gn 18:25; Dt 10:17-18; 32:4 **19:10** Dt 17:8 **19:10** 2Ch 19:2 **19:11** 1Ch 28:20

19:1-3 Although Jehoshaphat returned safely to Jerusalem, Jehu confronted him for assisting Ahab, who was wicked and an enemy of God (see 18:1-2; 20:35-37). Jehoshaphat was guilty of participating in Ahab’s sins (see 1Tm 5:22).

19:4-11 Jehoshaphat’s installation of judges **in all the fortified cities . . . of Judah** recalls Moses’s appointment of God-fearing men to decide disputes among Israelites (vv. 4-7; see the note on Ex 18:17-26). As is the case elsewhere in Chronicles, **the Levites and priests** were also involved with this important responsibility (vv. 8-11; see the notes on 17:7-9; 20:14-17).

WAR AGAINST EASTERN ENEMIES

20 After this, the Moabites and Ammonites, together with some of the
Meunites,†† came to fight against Jehoshaphat. 2 People came and told
Jehoshaphat, “A vast number from beyond the Dead Sea and from
Edom† has come to fight against you; they are already in Hazazon-tamar”† (that

is, En-gedi). 3 Jehoshaphat was afraid, and he resolved† to seek the LORD. Then he proclaimed a fast† for all Judah, 4 who gathered to seek the LORD. They even came from all the cities of Judah to seek him.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S PRAYER

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the LORD's temple before the new courtyard. 6 He said:
LORD, God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven,† and do you not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations?† Power and might are in your hand, and no one can stand against you. 7 Are you not our God who drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel† and who gave it forever to the descendants of Abraham† your friend? 8 They have lived in the land and have built you a sanctuary in it for your name and have said, 9 "If disaster comes on us — sword or judgment, pestilence or famine† — we will stand before this temple and before you, for your name is in this temple.† We will cry out to you because of our distress, and you will hear and deliver."
10 Now here are the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir.† You did not let Israel invade them when Israel came out of the land of Egypt, but Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them.† 11 Look how they repay us by coming to drive us out of your possession that you gave us as an inheritance. 12 Our God, will you not judge them?† For we are powerless before this vast number that comes to fight against us. We do not know what to do, but we look to you.††

GOD'S ANSWER

13 All Judah was standing before the LORD with their dependents, their wives, and their children. 14 In the middle of the congregation, the Spirit of the LORD came on† Jahaziel (son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite from Asaph's descendants), 15 and he said, "Listen carefully, all Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat. This is what the LORD says: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast number,† for the battle is not yours, but God's.† 16 Tomorrow, go down against them. You will see them coming up the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley facing the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17 You do not have to fight this battle. Position yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD.† He

is with you, Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged.† Tomorrow, go out to face them, for the LORD is with you.' "†
18 Then Jehoshaphat knelt low with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD to worship him.† 19 Then the Levites from the sons of the Kohathites and the Korahites† stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel shouting loudly.

VICTORY AND PLUNDER

20 In the morning they got up early and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. As they were about to go out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be established;† believe in his prophets, and you will succeed." 21 Then he consulted with the people and appointed some to sing for the LORD and some to praise the splendor of his holiness.† When they went out in front of the armed forces, they kept singing:†

Give thanks to the LORD, for his faithful love endures forever.†

22 The moment they began their shouts and praises, the LORD set an ambush† against the Ammonites, Moabites, and the inhabitants of Mount Seir who came to fight against Judah, and they were defeated. 23 The Ammonites and Moabites turned against the inhabitants of Mount Seir and completely annihilated them.† When they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped destroy each other.†
24 When Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked for the large army, but there were only corpses lying on the ground; nobody had escaped. 25 Then Jehoshaphat and his people went to gather the plunder. They found among them† an abundance of goods on the bodies† and valuable items. So they stripped them until nobody could carry any more. They were gathering the plunder for three days because there was so much. 26 They assembled in the Valley of Beracah† on the fourth day, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore, that place is still called the Valley of Beracah today.
27 Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem turned back with Jehoshaphat their leader, returning joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD enabled them to rejoice over their enemies. 28 So they came into Jerusalem to the LORD's temple with harps, lyres, and trumpets.

29 The terror of God† was on all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 Then Jehoshaphat's kingdom was quiet, for his God gave him rest on every side.†

SUMMARY OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN

31 Jehoshaphat became king over Judah.† He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. 32 He walked in the ways of Asa his father; he did not turn away from it but did what was right in the LORD's sight. 33 However, the high places were not taken away;† the people had not yet set their hearts on the God of their ancestors.†

34 The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign from beginning to end are written in the Events of Jehu† son of Hanani, which is recorded in the Book of Israel's Kings.†

JEHOSHAPHAT'S FLEET OF SHIPS

35 After this,† Judah's King Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Israel's King Ahaziah, who was guilty of wrongdoing. 36 Jehoshaphat formed an alliance with him to make ships to go to Tarshish,† and they made the ships in Ezion-geber. 37 Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you formed an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD has broken up what you have made." So the ships were wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish.

20:1 LXX; MT reads *Ammonites* ; 2Ch 26:7 **20:2** Some Hb mss, Old Lat; other Hb mss read *Aram* **20:12** Lit *but on you our eyes* **20:21** Lit *saying* **20:25** LXX reads *found cattle* **20:25** Some Hb mss, Old Lat, Vg read *goods, garments* **20:26** = Blessing

20:1 2Ch 26:7 **20:2** Gn 14:7 **20:3** 2Ch 19:3 **20:3** 1Sm 7:6; Ezr 8:21 **20:6** Dt 4:39 **20:6** 1Ch 29:11 **20:7** Ps 135:10-12 **20:7** Is 41:8 **20:9** 2Ch 6:28-30 **20:9** 2Ch 6:20 **20:10** 2Ch 20:1,22 **20:10** Nm 20:14-21; Dt 2:4-9 **20:12** Jdg 11:27 **20:12** Ps 25:15; 121:1-2 **20:14** 2Ch 15:1; 24:20 **20:15** Ex 14:13; 2Ch 32:7-8 **20:15** 1Sm 17:47; 2Ch 13:15; 14:12 **20:17** Ex 14:13-14 **20:17** Jos 1:9 **20:17** 2Ch 15:2 **20:18** 2Ch 7:3 **20:19** Ex 6:18; 1Ch 9:19 **20:20** Is 7:9 **20:21** 1Ch 16:29; Ps 29:2 **20:21** 1Ch 16:34; 2Ch 5:13; 7:3; Ps 118:1,29; 136:1 **20:22** 2Ch 13:13 **20:23** Ezk 38:21; Hg 2:22; Zch 14:13 **20:23** Jdg 7:22; 1Sm 14:20 **20:29** 2Ch 14:14; 17:10 **20:30** 2Ch 14:6-7; 15:15 **20:31-34** 1Kg 22:41-45 **20:33** 2Ch 17:6 **20:33** 2Ch 19:3 **20:34** 2Ch 19:2 **20:34** 1Kg 16:1,7 **20:35-37** 1Kg 22:48-49 **20:36** 2Ch 9:21

20:1-4 Jehoshaphat's response to the approach of a vast army of Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites was to **seek the LORD** and proclaim a **fast.** Once again, a king's dependence on God (or lack thereof) was shown through his response to an attacking foreign army (see 13:13-18; 14:8-15; 16:1-9).

20:9-10 Jehoshaphat and the assembly had gathered in the temple (v. 5), and in his prayer he referenced Solomon's earlier prayer of dedication for the same temple (v. 9; see 6:20,28-30). At that time, God had promised to hear the humble, repentant prayers of his people (see the note on 7:13-14). Jehoshaphat also

appealed to God on the basis of Israel's sparing of these peoples long ago in obedience to God's command (v. 10; see Dt 2:9,19).

20:14-17 Jehoshaphat and Judah had humbly and urgently sought God with fasting and waited on his direction (vv. 3-12). In accordance with his promise in 7:13-14 (see note), God heard their prayer and answered through a prophetic message spoken by a Levite (v. 14; see also the note on 17:7-9). The **Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel** at this critical time just as the "Spirit of God" had come upon Azariah earlier (see the note on 15:1-7). Jahaziel declared that Jehoshaphat and Judah did not need to fear because the battle was God's, and he would fight for them the following day.

20:20-23 True to his word, God himself won the victory for Israel (see previous note). Judah's faith in God and in his prophets who delivered his word was rewarded as it had been before (see the notes on 11:2-4 and 15:1-7). Whereas Levites singing and praising God had been connected with the temple earlier (see the notes on 1Ch 23:26-32 and 25:1), here they were instrumental in this military victory (vv. 19,21-22). The bearer of the recent prophetic message, Jahaziel, was likewise a descendant of Asaph the musician (v. 14; see the note on 1Ch 6:31-46). The musical worship of God was thus not intended to be restricted to the temple. Such worship can carry great power and has major significance to life in general. See "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*.

20:26-28 After their victory, which God had given through singing and praising him, Judah continued to praise God.

20:32-33 Despite Jehoshaphat's overall pattern of obedience, the nation **had not yet set their hearts on the God of their ancestors.**

20:35-37 Jehoshaphat had been rebuked for making **an alliance** with Ahab earlier (see the notes on 18:1-2 and 19:1-3), and he was rebuked again for making the same mistake with Ahab's son **King Ahaziah** (see 1Kg 22:51).

JEHORAM BECOMES KING OVER JUDAH

21 Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. His son Jehoram† became king in his place.† 2 He had brothers, sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of King Jehoshaphat of Judah.† 3 Their father had given them many gifts of silver, gold, and valuable things, along with fortified cities† in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn. 4 When Jehoram had established himself over his father's kingdom, he strengthened his position by killing with the sword all his brothers as well as some of the princes of Israel.

JUDAH'S KING JEHORAM

5 Jehoram† was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done,† for Ahab's daughter was his wife.† He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, 7 but for the sake of the covenant the LORD had made with

David, he was unwilling to destroy the house of David since the LORD had promised† to give a lamp† to David and to his sons forever.
8 During Jehoram's reign, Edom rebelled against Judah's control and appointed their own king. 9 So Jehoram crossed into Edom with his commanders and all his chariots. Then at night he set out to attack the Edomites who had surrounded him and the chariot commanders. 10 And now Edom is still in rebellion against Judah's control today. Libnah also rebelled at that time against his control because he had abandoned the LORD, the God of his ancestors. 11 Jehoram also built high places† in the hills† of Judah, and he caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves,† and he led Judah astray.

ELIJAH'S LETTER TO JEHORAM

12 Then a letter came to Jehoram from the prophet Elijah, saying:
This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor David says: "Because you have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat† or in the ways of King Asa of Judah† 13 but have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel,† have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves like the house of Ahab† prostituted itself, and also have killed your brothers,† your father's family, who were better than you, 14 the LORD is now about to strike your people, your sons, your wives, and all your possessions with a horrible affliction.
15 You yourself will be struck with many illnesses, including a disease of the intestines, until your intestines come out day after day because of the disease."†

JEHORAM'S LAST DAYS

16 The LORD roused the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs† who lived near the Cushites to attack Jehoram.† 17 So they went to war against Judah and invaded it. They carried off all the possessions found in the king's palace and also his sons and wives; not a son was left to him except Jehoahaz,†† his youngest son.
18 After all these things, the LORD afflicted him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 This continued day after day until two full years passed. Then his intestines came out because of his disease, and he died from severe† illnesses. But his people did not hold a fire in his honor like the fire in honor of his fathers.†
20 Jehoram† was thirty-two years old when he became king; he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He died to no one's regret†† and was buried in the city of

David but not in the tombs of the kings.†

21:1 = Joram **21:2** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg, Arabic; other Hb mss read *Israel* **21:11** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg read *cities* **21:17** LXX, Syr, Tg read *Ahaziah* **21:19** Lit *evil* **21:20** Lit *He walked in no desirability* **21:1** 1Kg 22:50 **21:3** 2Ch 11:5 **21:5-10** 2Kg 8:17-22 **21:6** 1Kg 12:28-30 **21:6** 2Ch 18:1 **21:7** 2Sm 7:12-17; 1Kg 11:13 **21:7** 1Kg 11:36; 15:4 **21:11** 1Kg 11:7 **21:11** Lv 20:5 **21:12** 2Ch 17:3-4 **21:12** 2Ch 14:2-5 **21:13** 2Ch 21:6 **21:13** 1Kg 16:31-33 **21:13** 2Ch 21:4 **21:15** 2Ch 21:18-19 **21:16** 2Ch 17:11; 22:1 **21:16** 2Ch 33:11 **21:17** 2Ch 25:23 **21:19** 2Ch 16:14 **21:20** 2Kg 8:17,24 **21:20** Jr 22:18,28 **21:20** 2Ch 24:25

21:4 Jehoram's murder of **all his brothers** was evil and put the continuance of the line of David at risk.

21:6 Jehoram was allied with the evil **house of Ahab** through marriage (see also 18:1).

21:7 Despite the wickedness of Jehoram, God did not destroy **the house of David** because of his faithfulness to his covenant with David (see the note on 1Ch 17:10-14). Nevertheless, God still punished Jehoram through the rebellions of Edom and Libnah (vv. 8-10; see also vv. 16-17).

21:12 The prophet **Elijah**, who played such a prominent role in Kings, appears only here in Chronicles. This letter to Jehoram was not mentioned in Kings.

21:14-15 Due to his many serious sins (vv. 12-13), Jehoram would be punished severely. His people, his family, and his own person would be struck by God (see vv. 18-19; 22:1).

21:16-17 The Lord continued to punish Jehoram through foreign peoples, this time through **the Philistines and the Arabs** (see vv. 8-10).

JUDAH'S KING AHAZIAH

22 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, because the troops that had come with the Arabs† to the camp had killed all the older sons.† So Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah. 2 Ahaziah† was twenty-two† years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, granddaughter† of Omri.

3 He walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother gave him evil advice. 4 So he did what was evil in the LORD's sight like the house of Ahab, for they were his advisers after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5 He also followed their advice and went with Joram† son of Israel's King Ahab to fight against King Hazael of Aram, in Ramoth-gilead. The Arameans† wounded Joram, 6 so he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds they inflicted on him in Ramoth-gilead† when he fought against King Hazael of Aram. Then Judah's King Ahaziah† son of Jehoram went down to Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab since Joram was ill.

7 Ahaziah's downfall came from God when he went to Joram.† When Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi,† whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab.† 8 So when Jehu executed judgment

on the house of Ahab,† he found the rulers of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who were serving Ahaziah, and he killed them. 9 Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah,† and Jehu's soldiers captured him (he was hiding in Samaria). So they brought Ahaziah to Jehu, and they killed him. The soldiers buried him, for they said, "He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat who sought the LORD with all his heart."† So no one from the house of Ahaziah had the strength to rule the kingdom.

ATHALIAH USURPS THE THRONE

10 When† Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother, saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs† of the house of Judah. 11 Jehoshabeath,† the king's daughter, rescued Joash son of Ahaziah from the king's sons who were being killed and put him and the one who nursed him in a bedroom. Now Jehoshabeath was the daughter of King Jehoram and the wife of the priest Jehoiada. Since she was Ahaziah's sister, she hid Joash from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. 12 While Athaliah reigned over the land, he was hiding with them in God's temple six years.

22:1 Lit *the former ones* **22:2** Some LXX mss, Syr; MT reads *42* ; 2Kg 8:26 **22:2** Lit *daughter* **22:5** = Jehoram **22:5** Lit *Rammites* **22:6** Lit *in Ramah* **22:6** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *Azariah* **22:10** Lit *seed* **22:11** = Jehosheba; 2Kg 11:2

22:1 2Ch 21:16 **22:2-6** 2Kg 8:24-29 **22:7** 2Ch 10:15 **22:7** 2Kg 9:21 **22:7** 2Kg 9:6-7 **22:8** 2Kg 10:11-14 **22:9** 2Kg 9:27-28 **22:9** 2Ch 17:4 **22:10-12** 2Kg 11:1-3

22:1 As God had said, Jehoram's family would be struck (21:14), and only **his youngest son** survived the attack of the Arabs. Just as he had killed his brothers (21:4), all but one of his sons were killed (see also 21:17).

22:3-4 Judah continued to be dragged down through its connection to the evil **house of Ahab** (18:1; 21:13). Jehoram had married Ahab's daughter Athaliah (21:6), and she **gave evil advice** to Ahaziah. This entangling relationship ultimately led to Ahaziah's death (vv. 5-9).

22:10-11 For a third time, a large number of **royal heirs** was put death (see 21:4; 22:1). The rescue of **Joash** was critical for the continuance of the Davidic line of kings. It seems natural to perceive the sovereign hand of God at work in preserving David's descendants because of his covenant with their forefather.

ATHALIAH OVERTHROWN

23 Then, in the seventh year,† Jehoiada summoned his courage and took the commanders of hundreds into a covenant with him: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri. 2 They made a circuit throughout

Judah. They gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah and the family heads of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.
3 Then the whole assembly made a covenant with the king in God's temple. Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son! He will reign, just as the LORD promised† concerning David's sons. 4 This is what you are to do: a third of you, priests and Levites who are coming on duty on the Sabbath,† are to be gatekeepers. 5 A third are to be at the king's palace, and a third are to be at the Foundation Gate, and all the troops will be in the courtyards of the LORD's temple. 6 No one is to enter the LORD's temple but the priests and those Levites who serve;† they may enter because they are holy, but all the people are to obey the requirement of the LORD. 7 Completely surround the king with weapons in hand. Anyone who enters the temple is to be put to death. Be with the king in all his daily tasks."†
8 So the commanders of hundreds did everything the priest Jehoiada commanded. They each brought their men — those coming on duty on the Sabbath and those going off duty on the Sabbath — for the priest Jehoiada did not release the divisions.† 9 The priest Jehoiada gave to the commanders of hundreds King David's spears, shields, and quivers† that were in God's temple. 10 Then he stationed all the troops with their weapons in hand surrounding the king — from the right side of the temple to the left side, by the altar and by the temple.
11 They brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the testimony,† and made him king. Jehoiada and his sons anointed him and cried, "Long live the king! "†
12 When Athaliah heard the noise from the troops, the guards, and those praising the king, she went to the troops in the LORD's temple. 13 As she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar† at the entrance. The commanders and the trumpeters were by the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets† while the singers with musical instruments were leading the praise. Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed, "Treason! Treason! "
14 Then the priest Jehoiada sent out the commanders of hundreds, those in charge of the army, saying, "Take her out between the ranks, and put anyone who follows her to death by the sword," for the priest had said, "Don't put her to death in the LORD's temple." 15 So they arrested her, and she went by the entrance of the Horse Gate† to the king's palace, where they put her to death.

JEHOIADA'S REFORMS

JEHOIADA'S REFORMS

16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the king, and the people
that they would be the LORD's people. 17 So all the people went to the temple of
Baal and tore it down. They smashed its altars and images and killed Mattan, the
priest of Baal, at the altars.†
18 Then Jehoiada put the oversight of the LORD's temple into the hands of the
Levitical priests,† whom David had appointed† over the LORD's temple, to offer
burnt offerings to the LORD as it is written in the law of Moses,† with rejoicing
and song ordained by† David. 19 He stationed gatekeepers† at the gates of the
LORD's temple so that nothing unclean could enter for any reason. 20 Then he
took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the
people, and all the people of the land and brought the king down from the
LORD's temple. They entered the king's palace through the Upper Gate and
seated the king on the throne of the kingdom. 21 All the people of the land
rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for they had put Athaliah to death by the sword.

23:7 Lit *king when he comes in and when he goes out* **23:9** Or *spears and large and small shields* **23:13** LXX reads *post* **23:18** Lit *song on the hands of*

23:1-21 2Kg 11:4-20 **23:3** 2Ch 21:7 **23:4** 1Ch 9:25 **23:6** 1Ch 23:28-32 **23:8** 1Ch 24:1 **23:11** Ex 25:16,21; 31:18 **23:11** 1Sm 10:24 **23:13** Nm 10:7-10 **23:15** Neh 3:28; Jr 31:40 **23:17** Dt 13:6-9; 1Kg 18:40 **23:18** 2Ch 5:5 **23:18** 1Ch 23:6,25-31 **23:18** 2Kg 14:6; 2Ch 17:9; Ezr 7:6; Neh 8:1 **23:19** 1Ch 9:22

23:2 The Levites again played a key role, this time in the installation of Joash as king (see also the notes on 17:7-9 and 20:20-23).

23:3 Jehoiada's plan to overthrow Athaliah and install Joash as ruler was based on God's promises to David. This plan intertwines several key concerns in Chronicles: Davidic kings, the temple, and the Levites (vv. 4-13).

23:16-19 Jehoiada led the Israelites to make a **covenant** with God, which resulted in their destruction of the **temple of Baal.** He also made provisions for the **oversight of the LORD's temple**, as David had done earlier (see 1Ch 23–26).

JUDAH'S KING JOASH

24 Joash† was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beer-
sheba. 2 Throughout the time of the priest Jehoiada, Joash did what was
right in the LORD's sight.† 3 Jehoiada acquired two wives for him, and he was
the father of sons and daughters.

REPAIRING THE TEMPLE

4 Afterward,† Joash took it to heart to renovate† the LORD's temple. 5 So he
gathered the priests and Levites and said, "Go out to the cities of Judah and
collect silver from all Israel to repair the temple of your God as needed year by
year,† and do it quickly."
However, the Levites did not hurry. 6 So the king called Jehoiada the high priest
and said, "Why haven't you required the Levites to bring from Judah and
Jerusalem the tax imposed by the LORD's servant Moses and the assembly of
Israel for the tent† of the testimony? 7 For the sons of that wicked Athaliah
broke into the LORD's temple and even used the sacred things of the LORD's
temple for the Baals."
8 At the king's command a chest was made and placed outside the gate of the
LORD's temple. 9 Then a proclamation† was issued in Judah and Jerusalem that
the tax God's servant Moses imposed on Israel in the wilderness be brought to
the LORD. 10 All the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought the tax, and put
it in the chest until it was full. 11 Whenever the chest was brought by the Levites
to the king's overseers, and when they saw that there was a large amount of
silver, the king's secretary and the high priest's deputy came and emptied the
chest, picked it up, and returned it to its place. They did this daily and gathered
the silver in abundance. 12 Then the king and Jehoiada gave it to those in charge
of the labor on the LORD's temple, who were hiring stonecutters and carpenters
to renovate the LORD's temple, also blacksmiths and coppersmiths to repair the
LORD's temple.†
13 The workmen did their work, and through them the repairs progressed. They
restored God's temple to its specifications and reinforced it. 14 When they
finished, they presented the rest of the silver to the king and Jehoiada, who made
articles for the LORD's temple with it — articles for ministry and for making
burnt offerings, and ladles† and articles of gold and silver. They regularly
offered burnt offerings in the LORD's temple throughout Jehoiada's life.

JOASH'S APOSTASY

15 Jehoiada died when he was old and full of days; he was 130 years old at his
death. 16 He was buried in the city of David with the kings† because he had
done what was good in Israel with respect to God and his temple.
17 However, after Jehoiada died, the rulers of Judah came and paid homage to
the king. Then the king listened to them, 18 and they abandoned the temple of
the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and served the Asherah poles and the

idols.† So there was wrath† against Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs.
19 Nevertheless, he sent them prophets† to bring them back to the LORD; they
admonished them, but the people would not listen.†
20 The Spirit of God enveloped†† Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood
above the people and said to them, “This is what God says, ‘Why are you
transgressing the LORD’s commands so that you do not prosper?† Because you
have abandoned the LORD, he has abandoned you.’ ”† 21 But they conspired
against him and stoned him at the king’s command in the courtyard of the
LORD’s temple.† 22 King Joash didn’t remember the kindness that Zechariah’s
father Jehoiada had extended to him, but killed his son. While he was dying, he
said, “May the LORD see and demand† an account.”

ARAMEAN INVASION OF JUDAH

23 At the turn of the year, an Aramean army attacked Joash.† They entered
Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the leaders of the people among them and
sent all the plunder to the king of Damascus. 24 Although the Aramean army
came with only a few men, the LORD handed over† a vast army to them because
the people of Judah had abandoned† the LORD, the God of their ancestors. So
they executed judgment on Joash.

JOASH ASSASSINATED

25 When† the Arameans saw that Joash had many wounds, they left him. His
servants conspired against him, and killed him on his bed, because he had shed
the blood of the sons of the priest Jehoiada. So he died, and they buried him in
the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.†
26 Those who conspired against him were Zabad, son of the Ammonite woman
Shimeath, and Jehozabad, son of the Moabite woman Shimrith.†† 27 The
accounts concerning his sons, the many divine pronouncements about him, and
the restoration† of God’s temple are recorded in the Writing† of the Book of the
Kings. His son Amaziah became king in his place.

24:14 Or *dishes*, or *spoons* ; lit *palms* **24:20** Lit *clothed* **24:26** = Shomer in 2Kg 12:21
24:1-2 2Kg 11:21; 12:1-2 **24:2** 2Ch 26:4-5 **24:4-12** 2Kg 12:4-12 **24:4** 2Ch 24:7 **24:5** Ex 30:12-16; 2Ch 34:9-10; Neh 10:32; Mt 17:24 **24:6** Nm 1:50 **24:9** 2Ch 36:22 **24:12** 2Kg 22:4-6 **24:16** 2Ch 21:20; 24:25 **24:18** Ex 34:12-14 **24:18** Jos 22:20 **24:19** Jr 7:25 **24:19** Neh 9:30; Ps 81:8-11; Jr 11:6-8 **24:20** Jdg 6:34; 1Ch 12:18 **24:20** Nm 14:41 **24:20** 2Ch 15:2 **24:21** Neh 9:26; Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51 **24:22** Gn 9:5 **24:23** 2Kg 12:17 **24:24** 2Ch 16:7-8 **24:24** 2Ch 24:20 **24:25-27** 2Kg 12:19-21 **24:25** 2Ch 24:16 **24:26** 2Kg 12:21 **24:27** 2Ch 24:12 **24:27** 2Ch 13:22

24:2 Jehoiada’s strong spiritual leadership was a positive influence on Joash (see also the note on vv. 17-

25).

24:4-7 Joash wanted **to repair the temple** quickly, but **the Levites did not hurry** and were slow in bringing the money collected to support this work (v. 6). This is a rare instance in Chronicles in which the Levites were not doing what they were supposed to do (see also 30:15; the notes on 17:7-9 and 20:20-23).

24:17-25 Sadly, Joash's faithfulness to God did not continue after Jehoiada's death (see v. 2). The king foolishly **listened** to **the rulers of Judah** and **abandoned** God and the temple for idols (vv. 17-18). The Lord was angry with Joash and sent **prophets** to warn Judah, but to no avail (vv. 18-19). One such prophetic message came through **Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest**, who declared that the people's abandonment of God would lead to God's abandonment of them (v. 20; see also vv. 23-24). Despite the many good things that Zechariah's father Jehoiada had done for the nation, Joash and the people callously stoned Zechariah (v. 21). Joash would be killed by his servants (v. 25).

JUDAH'S KING AMAZIAH

25 Amaziah† became king when he was twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem. 2 He did what was right in the LORD's sight but not wholeheartedly.†

3 As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp,† he executed his servants who had killed his father the king. 4 However, he did not put their children to death, because — as it is written in the Law, in the book of Moses,† where the LORD commanded — "Fathers are not to die because of children, and children are not to die because of fathers, but each one will die for his own sin."†

AMAZIAH'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST EDOM

5 Then Amaziah gathered Judah and assembled them according to ancestral families,† according to commanders of thousands, and according to commanders of hundreds. He numbered those twenty years old or more† for all Judah and Benjamin. He found there to be three hundred thousand fit young men who could serve in the army, bearing spear and shield.† 6 Then for 7,500 pounds† of silver he hired one hundred thousand valiant warriors from Israel.

7 However, a man of God† came to him and said, "King, do not let Israel's army go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel — all the Ephraimites. 8 But if you go with them, do it! Be strong for battle! But God will make you stumble before the enemy,† for God has the power to help† or to make one stumble."

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "What should I do about the 7,500 pounds of silver I gave to Israel's division? "

The man of God replied, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this."

10 So Amaziah released the division that came to him from Ephraim to go home.
But they got very angry with Judah and returned home in a fierce rage.
11 Amaziah strengthened his position and led his people to the Salt Valley. He
struck down ten thousand Seirites,† 12 and the Judahites captured ten thousand
alive. They took them to the top of a cliff where they threw them off, and all of
them were dashed to pieces.
13 As for the men of the division that Amaziah sent back so they would not go
with him into battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth-horon,
struck down three thousand of their people, and took a great deal of plunder.
14 After Amaziah came from the attack on the Edomites, he brought the gods of
the Seirites and set them up as his gods. He worshiped before them and burned
incense to them.† 15 So the LORD's anger was against Amaziah, and he sent a
prophet to him, who said, "Why have you sought a people's gods that could not
rescue their own people from you? "†
16 While he was still speaking to him, the king asked, "Have we made you the
king's counselor? Stop, why should you lose your life? "
So the prophet stopped, but he said, "I know that God intends to destroy you,
because you have done this and have not listened to my advice."

AMAZIAH'S WAR WITH ISRAEL'S KING JOASH

17 King Amaziah of Judah took counsel† and sent word to Jehoash† son of
Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, and challenged him: "Come, let's meet
face to face."
18 King Jehoash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, saying, "The
thistle in Lebanon sent a message to the cedar in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your
daughter to my son as a wife.' Then a wild animal in Lebanon passed by and
trampled the thistle.† 19 You have said, 'Look, I† have defeated Edom,' and you
have become overconfident†† that you will get glory. Now stay at home. Why
stir up such trouble so that you fall and Judah with you? "
20 But Amaziah would not listen, for this turn of events was from God in order
to hand them over to their enemies because they went after the gods of Edom.
21 So King Jehoash of Israel advanced. He and King Amaziah of Judah met face
to face at Beth-shemesh that belonged to Judah. 22 Judah was routed before
Israel, and each man fled to his own tent. 23 King Jehoash of Israel captured
Judah's King Amaziah son of Joash, son of Jehoahaz,†† at Beth-shemesh. Then
Jehoash took him to Jerusalem and broke down two hundred yards† of

Jerusalem's wall from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate.†† 24 He took all the gold, silver, all the utensils that were found with Obed-edom† in God's temple, the treasures of the king's palace, and the hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

AMAZIAH'S DEATH

25 Judah's King Amaziah† son of Joash lived fifteen years after the death of Israel's King Jehoash son of Jehoahaz. 26 The rest of the events of Amaziah's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

27 From the time Amaziah turned from following the LORD, a conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. However, men were sent after him to Lachish, and they put him to death there. 28 They carried him back on horses and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah.††

25:3 LXX, Syr; MT reads *was strong on him* ; 1Kg 14:4 **25:5** Lit *house of fathers* **25:6** Lit *100 talents*, also in v. 9 **25:11** = Edomites, also in v. 14 **25:17** Lit *Joash* **25:19** Some LXX mss, Old Lat, Tg, Vg; MT reads *you* **25:19** Lit *and your heart has lifted you* **25:23** = Ahaziah in 2Kg 14:13 **25:23** Lit *400 cubits* **25:23** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss read *to Happoneh* **25:28** Some Hb mss read *city of David*
25:1-4 2Kg 14:2-6 **25:2** 2Kg 25:14 **25:4** 2Ch 17:9; 23:18 **25:4** Dt 24:16; Jr 31:30; Ezk 18:4,20 **25:5** Nm 1:3 **25:5** 2Ch 26:13 **25:7** 2Kg 4:9 **25:8** Ps 64:7-8 **25:8** 2Ch 14:11; 20:6 **25:14** 2Ch 28:23 **25:15** 2Ch 25:11-12 **25:17-24** 2Kg 14:8-14 **25:18** Jdg 9:8-15 **25:19** 2Ch 26:16; 32:25 **25:23** 2Ch 21:17; 22:1 **25:23** 2Kg 14:13 **25:24** 1Ch 26:15 **25:25-28** 2Kg 14:17-20 **25:28** 2Kg 14:20

25:3-4 The murder of Amaziah's father Joash by these servants was described in 24:25-26.

25:7-9 Although Amaziah had already hired many soldiers from Israel (v. 6), **a man of God** instructed him not to allow these troops to fight with him because of God's disfavor with Israel (v. 7; see also the notes on 11:13-17 and 13:4-9). This prophet assured Amaziah that God had the power to give victory or defeat in battle (v. 8) and was able to make up for the financial loss (v. 9).

25:14-16 Despite his victory over Seir (vv. 11-12), Amaziah brought back their gods and worshiped them (v. 14). In the ancient world, taking the gods of a defeated people expressed victory over them. At the same time, worshiping those gods was often thought to gain their favor. In a polytheistic worldview, it is ideal to have the favor of as many gods as possible. A prophet confronted Amaziah for worshiping **gods that could not rescue their own people** (v. 15). Amaziah angrily commanded the prophet to stop, or he would lose his life (v. 16). His wickedness and stubbornness would lead to his destruction (see vv. 17-28).

25:20 Amaziah's stubbornness and pride got him in trouble with Jehoash king of Israel (vv. 17-19,21-24). All this was from God, who was punishing Amaziah for worshiping **the gods of Edom.**

JUDAH'S KING UZZIAH

26 All the people† of Judah took Uzziah,† who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 2 After Amaziah the king rested with his fathers, Uzziah rebuilt Eloth†† and restored it to Judah.

3 Uzziah was sixteen years old† when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two
years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem.
4 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as his father Amaziah had done.
5 He sought God† throughout the lifetime of Zechariah, the teacher of the fear††
of God. During the time that he sought the LORD, God gave him success.†

UZZIAH'S EXPLOITS

6 Uzziah went out to wage war against the Philistines,† and he tore down the
wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod. Then he built cities in
the vicinity of Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against the
Philistines, the Arabs that live in Gur-baal, and the Meunites. 8 The
Ammonites† paid tribute to Uzziah,† and his fame spread as far as the entrance
of Egypt, for God made him very powerful. 9 Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem
at the Corner Gate,† the Valley Gate,† and the corner buttress, and he fortified
them. 10 Since he had many cattle both in the Judean foothills† and the plain, he
built towers in the desert and dug many wells.† And since he was a lover of the
soil, he had farmers and vinedressers in the hills and in the fertile lands.†
11 Uzziah had an army equipped for combat that went out to war by division
according to their assignments, as recorded by Jeiel the court secretary and
Maaseiah the officer under the authority of Hananiah, one of the king's
commanders. 12 The total number of family heads was 2,600 valiant warriors.
13 Under their authority was an army of 307,500 equipped for combat, a
powerful force to help the king against the enemy.† 14 Uzziah provided the
entire army with shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and slingstones. 15 He
made skillfully designed devices in Jerusalem to shoot arrows and catapult large
stones for use on the towers and on the corners. So his fame spread even to
distant places, for he was wondrously helped until he became strong.

UZZIAH'S DISEASE

16 But when he became strong, he grew arrogant,† and it led to his own
destruction. He acted unfaithfully against the LORD his God by going into the
LORD's sanctuary to burn incense on the incense altar.† 17 The priest Azariah,†
along with eighty brave priests of the LORD, went in after him. 18 They took their
stand† against King Uzziah and said, "Uzziah, you have no right to offer incense
to the LORD† — only the consecrated priests, the descendants of Aaron, have the

right to offer incense.† Leave the sanctuary, for you have acted unfaithfully!
You will not receive honor from the LORD God."
19 Uzziah, with a firepan in his hand to offer incense, was enraged. But when he
became enraged with the priests, in the presence of the priests in the LORD's
temple beside the altar of incense, a skin disease† broke out on his forehead.
20 Then Azariah the chief priest and all the priests turned to him and saw that he
was diseased on his forehead. They rushed him out of there. He himself also
hurried to get out because the LORD had afflicted him. 21 So King Uzziah was
diseased to the time of his death.† He lived in quarantine†† with a serious skin
disease and was excluded from access to the LORD's temple, while his son
Jotham was over the king's household governing the people of the land.
22 Now the prophet Isaiah† son of Amoz wrote about the rest of the events of
Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end. 23 Uzziah rested with his fathers, and he
was buried with his fathers in the burial ground of the kings' cemetery,† for they
said, "He has a skin disease." His son Jotham became king in his place.

26:1 = Azariah in 2Kg 14:21 **26:2** LXX, Syr, Vg read *Elath* **26:5** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Arabic; other Hb mss, Vg read *visions* **26:8** LXX reads *Meunites* **26:10** Or *the Shephelah* **26:10** Or *in Carmel* **26:21** Lit *in a house of exemption from duty*

26:1-2 2Kg 14:21-22 **26:2** 1Kg 9:26; 2Kg 14:22; 16:6 **26:3-4** 2Kg 15:2-3 **26:5** 2Ch 24:2 **26:5** Dn 1:17 **26:5** 2Ch 15:2 **26:6** Is 14:29 **26:8** 2Ch 17:11 **26:9** 2Ch 25:23 **26:9** Neh 2:13,15; 3:13 **26:10** Gn 26:18-21 **26:13** 2Ch 25:5 **26:16** Dt 32:15; 2Ch 25:19 **26:16** 1Kg 13:1-4 **26:17** 1Ch 6:10 **26:18** 2Ch 19:2 **26:18** Nm 16:39-40 **26:18** Ex 30:7-8 **26:19** 2Kg 5:25-27 **26:21-23** 2Kg 15:5-7 **26:21** Lv 13:46 **26:22** Is 1:1 **26:23** 2Ch 21:20

26:3-5 Like Joash earlier (24:2), **Uzziah** was faithful to God and experienced his blessing for as long as his spiritual guide was alive (see vv. 16-21). The Lord helped him in battle and made him very powerful (vv. 7-8).

26:16 Uzziah's strength led to pride (see Dt 6:10-15; 8:11-20), and his pride led to a fall (see Pr 16:18). Like others in Chronicles, he **acted unfaithfully against the LORD** (see the notes on 12:2 and 1Ch 5:25-26) by entering the temple sanctuary to offer incense, which only priests were permitted to do (vv. 17-18).

26:19-21 Like Amaziah (25:16), Uzziah also responded angrily when confronted about his sin. Nevertheless, his forehead broke out in a **skin disease**, which afflicted him until his death. Disobedience to divine truth bore serious consequences (see the note on 20:20-23).

JUDAH'S KING JOTHAM

27 Jotham was twenty-five years old† when he became king, and he
reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.† His mother's name was Jerushah
daughter of Zadok. 2 He did what was right in the LORD's sight just as
his father Uzziah had done. In addition, he didn't enter the LORD's sanctuary,†
but the people still behaved corruptly.

3 Jotham built the Upper Gate of the LORD's temple, and he built extensively on
the wall of Ophel.† 4 He also built cities in the hill country of Judah and
fortresses and towers in the forests.† 5 He waged war against the king of the
Ammonites. He overpowered the Ammonites, and that year they gave him 7,500
pounds† of silver, 50,000 bushels† of wheat, and 50,000 bushels of barley. They
paid him the same in the second and third years. 6 So Jotham strengthened his
position because he did not waver in obeying† the LORD his God.†
7 As for the rest of the events† of Jotham's reign, along with all his wars and his
ways, note that they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.
8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen
years in Jerusalem. 9 Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of
David. His son Ahaz became king in his place.

27:5 Lit *100 talents* **27:5** Lit *10,000 cors* **27:6** Lit *he established his ways before*
27:1-3 2Kg 15:33-35 **27:1** 2Ch 27:8 **27:2** 2Ch 26:16-18 **27:3** 2Ch 33:14; Neh 3:26-27 **27:4** 2Ch 11:5 **27:6** 2Ch 26:5 **27:7-9** 2Kg 15:36-38

27:6 Like his father, **Jotham** was a good king (v. 2) and was **strengthened** because of his obedience to God (see 26:5).

JUDAH'S KING AHAZ

28 Ahaz was twenty years old† when he became king, and he reigned
sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the LORD's
sight† like his ancestor David, 2 for he walked in the ways of the kings
of Israel† and made cast images of the Baals.† 3 He burned incense in Ben
Hinnom Valley† and burned his children in†† the fire, imitating the detestable
practices of the nations the LORD had dispossessed before the Israelites.† 4 He
sacrificed and burned incense on the high places,† on the hills, and under every
green tree.
5 So the LORD his God handed Ahaz over† to the king of Aram. He attacked him
and took many captives to Damascus.
Ahaz was also handed over to the king of Israel, who struck him with great
force: 6 Pekah son of Remaliah killed one hundred twenty thousand in Judah in
one day — all brave men — because they had abandoned the LORD God of their
ancestors. 7 An Ephraimite warrior named Zichri killed the king's son Maaseiah,
Azrikam governor of the palace, and Elkanah who was second to the king.
8 Then the Israelites took two hundred thousand captives from their brothers —

women, sons, and daughters.† They also took a great deal of plunder from them and brought it to Samaria.
9 A prophet of the LORD named Oded was there. He went out to meet the army that came to Samaria and said to them, “Look, the LORD God of your ancestors handed them over to you because of his wrath against Judah,† but you slaughtered them in a rage that has reached heaven.† 10 Now you plan to reduce the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, to slavery. Are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11 Listen to me and return the captives you took from your brothers,† for the LORD’s burning anger is on you.”
12 So some men who were leaders of the Ephraimites — Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai — stood in opposition to those coming from the war. 13 They said to them, “You must not bring the captives here, for you plan to bring guilt on us from the LORD to add to our sins and our guilt. For we have much guilt, and burning anger is on Israel.”
14 The army left the captives and the plunder in the presence of the officers and the congregation. 15 Then the men who were designated by name† took charge of the captives and provided clothes for their naked ones from the plunder. They clothed them, gave them sandals, food and drink,† dressed their wounds, and provided donkeys for all the feeble. The Israelites brought them to Jericho, the City of Palms,† among their brothers. Then they returned to Samaria.
16 At that time King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria for help.† 17 The Edomites came again, attacked Judah, and took captives.† 18 The Philistines also raided the cities of the Judean foothills† and the Negev of Judah.† They captured and occupied Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, and Gederoth, as well as Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo with their surrounding villages. 19 For the LORD humbled Judah because of King Ahaz of Judah,† who threw off restraint in Judah and was unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Then King Tiglath-pileser†† of Assyria came against Ahaz; he oppressed him and did not give him support.† 21 Although Ahaz plundered the LORD’s temple and the palace of the king and of the rulers and gave the plunder to the king of Assyria, it did not help him.
22 At the time of his distress, King Ahaz himself became more unfaithful to the LORD. 23 He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him; he said, “Since the gods of the kings of Aram are helping them, I will sacrifice to

them so that they will help me.”† But they were the downfall of him and of all Israel.
24 Then Ahaz gathered up the utensils of God’s temple, cut them into pieces,† shut the doors of the LORD’s temple,† and made himself altars on every street corner in Jerusalem.† 25 He made high places in every city of Judah to offer incense to other gods, and he angered the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

AHAZ’S DEATH

26 As for the rest of his deeds† and all his ways, from beginning to end, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. 27 Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in the city, in Jerusalem, but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah became king in his place.

28:3 LXX, Syr, Tg read *and passed his children through* **28:18** Or *the Shephelah* **28:19** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss read *Israel* **28:20** Text emended; MT reads *Tilgath-pilneser* ; 1Ch 5:6,26
28:1-6 2Kg 16:2-4 **28:1** 2Ch 27:2 **28:2** 2Ch 22:3 **28:2** Ex 34:17 **28:3** Jos 15:8; 18:16; 2Kg 23:10; Jr 7:29-34; 19:2-6 **28:3** Lv 18:21; 2Kg 16:3; 2Ch 33:6 **28:3** 2Ch 33:2 **28:4** 2Ch 28:25 **28:5** 2Ch 24:24 **28:8** 2Ch 11:4 **28:9** Is 47:6 **28:9** Ezr 9:6; Rv 18:5 **28:11** 2Ch 28:8 **28:15** 2Ch 28:12 **28:15** 2Kg 6:22; Pr 25:21-22 **28:15** Dt 34:3 **28:16** 2Kg 16:7 **28:17** Ob 10-14 **28:18** Ezk 16:57 **28:20** 1Ch 5:26 **28:20** 2Ch 28:16 **28:23** Jr 44:17-18 **28:24** 2Kg 16:17 **28:24** 2Ch 29:7 **28:24** 2Ch 30:14; 33:3-5 **28:26-27** 2Kg 16:19-20

28:5-6 Ahaz was an evil king who worshiped idols (vv. 1-4). Consequently, God punished him through **Aram** and **Israel** (see also the note on 25:20).

28:9-11 Despite the sins of Ahaz and Judah, God sent **a prophet** to confront the army of the northern kingdom of Israel and instruct them to **return the captives** they had taken (see v. 8). They complied (vv. 12-15).

28:16-25 Like so many other kings in Chronicles, Ahaz was **unfaithful to the LORD** (see notes on 26:16 and 1Ch 5:25-26). He not only relied on **Assyria** (v. 16), who did not help him (vv. 19-20), but worshiped **the gods of Damascus** (vv. 22-23), among others (v. 25). He even **plundered the LORD’s temple** (v. 21) and **shut** its doors (v. 24). As a result, **the LORD humbled Judah** (v. 19).

JUDAH’S KING HEZEKIAH

29 Hezekiah was twenty-five years old† when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abijah† daughter of Zechariah. 2 He did what was right in the LORD’s sight† just as his ancestor David had done.
3 In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the LORD’s temple and repaired them.† 4 Then he brought in the priests and Levites and gathered them in the eastern public square.† 5 He said to them, “Hear me, Levites. Consecrate yourselves† now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove everything impure from the holy place. 6 For

our fathers were unfaithful and did what is evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They abandoned him, turned their faces away from the LORD's dwelling place, and turned their backs on him.†† 7 They also closed the doors of the portico, extinguished the lamps, did not burn incense, and did not offer burnt offerings in the holy place of the God of Israel. 8 Therefore, the wrath of the LORD was on Judah and Jerusalem, and he made them an object of terror, horror, and mockery,†† as you see with your own eyes. 9 Our fathers fell by the sword, and our sons, our daughters, and our wives are in captivity because of this.† 10 It is in my heart now to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel† so that his burning anger may turn away from us. 11 My sons, don't be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand in his presence, to serve him, and to be his ministers and burners of incense."†

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

12 Then the Levites stood up:

1. Mahath† son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah from the Kohathites;
2. Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel from the Merarites;†
3. Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah from the Gershonites;
4. 13 Shimri and Jeuel from the Elizaphanites;
5. Zechariah and Mattaniah from the Asaphites;
6. 14 Jehiel† and Shimei from the Hemanites;
7. Shemaiah and Uzziel from the Jeduthunites.

15 They gathered their brothers together, consecrated themselves,† and went according to the king's command by the words of the LORD† to cleanse the LORD's temple.†

16 The priests went to the entrance of the LORD's temple to cleanse it. They took all the unclean things they found in the LORD's sanctuary to the courtyard of the LORD's temple. Then the Levites received them and took them outside to the Kidron Valley.† 17 They began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the portico of the

LORD's temple. They consecrated the LORD's temple for eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.
18 Then they went inside to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed the whole temple of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the table for the rows of the Bread of the Presence and all its utensils. 19 We have set up and consecrated all the utensils that King Ahaz rejected during his reign† when he became unfaithful. They are in front of the altar of the LORD."

RENEWAL OF TEMPLE WORSHIP

20 King Hezekiah got up early, gathered the city officials, and went to the LORD's temple. 21 They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he told the descendants of Aaron, the priests, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. 22 So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests received the blood and splattered it on the altar.† They slaughtered the rams and splattered the blood on the altar. They slaughtered the lambs and splattered the blood on the altar. 23 Then they brought the goats for the sin offering right into the presence of the king and the congregation, who laid their hands on them.† 24 The priests slaughtered the goats and put their blood on the altar for a sin offering, to make atonement for all Israel,† for the king said that the burnt offering and sin offering were for all Israel.
25 Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the LORD's temple with cymbals, harps, and lyres† according to the command of David,† Gad the king's seer,† and the prophet Nathan.† For the command was from the LORD through his prophets. 26 The Levites stood with the instruments of David,† and the priests with the trumpets.†
27 Then Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. When the burnt offerings began, the song of the LORD and the trumpets began, accompanied by the instruments of King David of Israel. 28 The whole assembly was worshiping, singing the song, and blowing the trumpets — all this continued until the burnt offering was completed. 29 When the burnt offerings were completed, the king and all those present with him bowed down and worshiped.†
30 Then King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites to sing praise to the LORD in the words of David and of the seer Asaph. So they sang praises with rejoicing and knelt low and worshiped.

31 Hezekiah concluded, “Now you are consecrated† to the LORD. Come near and
bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the LORD’s temple.” So the congregation
brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all those with willing hearts† brought
burnt offerings. 32 The number of burnt offerings the congregation brought was
seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a
burnt offering to the LORD. 33 Six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and
goats were consecrated.
34 However, since there were not enough priests, they weren’t able to skin all
the burnt offerings, so their Levite brothers helped them† until the work was
finished and until the priests consecrated themselves. For the Levites were more
conscientious†† to consecrate themselves than the priests were.†
35 Furthermore, the burnt offerings were abundant, along with the fat of the
fellowship offerings† and with the drink offerings† for the burnt offering.
So the service of the LORD’s temple was established. 36 Then Hezekiah and all
the people rejoiced over how God had prepared the people, for it had come about
suddenly.

29:1 = Abi in 2Kg 18:2 **29:6** Lit *and they gave the back of the neck* **29:8** Lit *hissing* **29:14** Alt Hb tradition reads *Jehuel* **29:31** Lit *Now you have filled your hands* **29:34** Lit *upright of heart* ; Ps 32:11; 64:10 **29:1-2** 2Kg 18:2-3 **29:2** 2Ch 28:1; 34:2 **29:3** 2Ch 28:24; 29:7 **29:4** Ezr 10:9; Neh 8:1 **29:5** 2Ch 29:15,34; 35:6 **29:6** Ezk 8:16 **29:8** Dt 28:25; Jr 25:18 **29:9** 2Ch 28:5-8,17 **29:10** 2Ch 23:16 **29:11** Nm 3:6; 8:6 **29:12** 2Ch 31:13 **29:12** Nm 3:19-20 **29:15** 2Ch 29:5 **29:15** 2Ch 30:12 **29:15** 1Ch 23:28 **29:16** 2Ch 15:16 **29:19** 2Ch 28:24 **29:22** Lv 4:18 **29:23** Lv 4:15 **29:24** Lv 4:26 **29:25** 1Ch 15:16; 25:6 **29:25** 2Ch 8:14 **29:25** 2Sm 24:11 **29:25** 2Sm 7:2; 1Ch 29:29 **29:26** 1Ch 23:5 **29:26** 2Ch 5:12 **29:29** 2Ch 20:18 **29:31** Ex 35:5,22; Ezr 1:4,6; 3:5 **29:34** 2Ch 35:11 **29:34** Ps 32:11; 64:10 **29:34** 2Ch 30:3 **29:35** Lv 3:16 **29:35** Nm 15:5-10

29:3-11 Ahaz had left the temple in serious need of restoration (28:21,24). One of Hezekiah’s first acts as king was to reopen the temple doors and to begin repairs (v. 3). He called the priests and Levites to **consecrate** [themselves] **. . . and consecrate the temple of the LORD**, which needed to be purified and have its service restored (vv. 5-7). Earlier failures in this regard had led to the wrath of God (vv. 8-9). A temple renovation had also taken place earlier under Joash (24:4-14; see also 34:8-15). For more on the **Levites** in Chronicles, see the note on 17:7-9.

29:15 The purification and restoration of the temple was in accordance with **the words of the LORD** (see also vv. 5-9).

29:24 Hezekiah not only made sacrifices for Judah (v. 21) but for **all Israel** (see also 30:1). For more on “all Israel” in Chronicles, see the notes on 1 Chronicles 11:9-10 and 29:22-25.

29:25-26 The restoration of the temple service necessarily included the reinstitution of its divinely ordained musical worship (see 1Ch 25).

29:34 The Levites again emerged as key players in the work of God (see the note on 17:7-9), even more so than **the priests** in this instance (see also 30:3).

29:36 The restoration of the temple and its service had been brought about by God **suddenly.** Isaiah 66:8 also celebrates a work of God that came about quickly.

CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER

30 Then Hezekiah sent word throughout all Israel and Judah, and he also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh to come to the LORD's temple in Jerusalem to observe the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel.† 2 For the king and his officials and the entire congregation in Jerusalem decided to observe the Passover of the LORD in the second month,† 3 because they were not able to observe it at the appropriate time. Not enough of the priests had consecrated themselves,† and the people hadn't been gathered together in Jerusalem. 4 The proposal pleased the king and the congregation, 5 so they affirmed the proposal and spread the message throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba to Dan,† to come to observe the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel in Jerusalem, for they hadn't observed it often,† as prescribed.†

6 So the couriers† went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the hand of the king and his officials, and according to the king's command, saying, "Israelites, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel so that he may return to those of you who remain, who have escaped the grasp of the kings of Assyria.† 7 Don't be like your fathers and your brothers who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their ancestors† so that he made them an object of horror† as you yourselves see. 8 Don't become obstinate†† now like your fathers did. Give your allegiance† to the LORD, and come to his sanctuary that he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God so that he may turn his burning anger away from you,† 9 for when you return to the LORD, your brothers and your sons will receive mercy in the presence of their captors and will return to this land.† For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful;† he will not turn his face away from you if you return to him."

10 The couriers traveled from city to city in the land of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but the inhabitants† laughed at them and mocked them.† 11 But some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.† 12 Also, the power of God was at work in Judah to unite them† to carry out the command of the king and his officials by the word of the LORD.

13 A very large assembly of people was gathered in Jerusalem to observe the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14 They proceeded to take away the altars that were in Jerusalem,† and they took away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.† 15 They slaughtered the Passover lamb† on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were

ashamed, and they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the LORD's temple. 16 They stood at their prescribed posts,† according to the law of Moses, the man of God. The priests splattered the blood received from the Levites, 17 for there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves, and so the Levites were in charge of slaughtering the Passover lambs for every unclean person to consecrate the lambs to the LORD.† 18 A large number of the people — many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun — were ritually unclean, yet they had eaten the Passover† contrary to what was written.† But Hezekiah had interceded for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement on behalf of 19 whoever sets his whole heart on seeking God,† the LORD, the God of his ancestors, even though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary." 20 So the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people.† 21 The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread seven days with great joy,† and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day after day with loud instruments. 22 Then Hezekiah encouraged†† all the Levites who performed skillfully before the LORD. They ate at the appointed festival for seven days, sacrificing fellowship offerings and giving thanks to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.†

23 The whole congregation decided to observe† seven more days, so they observed seven days with joy, 24 for King Hezekiah of Judah contributed one thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep for the congregation. Also, the officials contributed one thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep for the congregation,† and many priests consecrated themselves.† 25 Then the whole assembly of Judah with the priests and Levites, the whole assembly that came from Israel, the resident aliens who came from the land of Israel, and those who were living in Judah, rejoiced. 26 There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for nothing like this was known since the days of Solomon son of David, the king of Israel.†

27 Then the priests and the Levites† stood to bless the people,† and God heard them, and their prayer came into his holy dwelling place† in heaven.

30:5 Or *in great numbers* **30:5** Lit *often, according to what is written* **30:8** Lit *Don't stiffen your neck* **30:8** Lit *hand* **30:10** Lit *but they* **30:12** Lit *to give them one heart* **30:22** Lit *spoke to the heart of*
30:1 Ex 12:1-28; 13:1-10 **30:2** Nm 9:6-14; 2Ch 30:13,15 **30:3** 2Ch 29:34 **30:5** Jdg 20:1 **30:6** Est 8:14; Jb 9:25; Jr 51:31 **30:6** 2Ch 28:20 **30:7** Ezk 20:13 **30:7** 2Ch 29:8 **30:8** Ex 32:9 **30:8** 2Ch 29:10 **30:9** Dt 30:2-3 **30:9** Ex 34:6-7; Mc 7:18 **30:10** 2Ch 36:16 **30:11** 2Ch 30:18,21,25 **30:14** 2Ch 28:24 **30:14** 2Ch 29:16 **30:15** 2Ch 30:2-3 **30:16** 2Ch 35:10,15 **30:17** 2Ch 29:34 **30:18** Nm 9:10 **30:18** Ex 12:43-49 **30:19** 2Ch 19:3 **30:20** Ps 41:4; Hs 14:4 **30:21** Ex 12:15; 13:6 **30:22** 2Ch 32:6 **30:22** Ezr 10:11 **30:23** 1Kg 8:65 **30:24** 2Ch 35:7-8 **30:24** 2Ch 29:34; 30:3 **30:26** 2Ch 7:8-10 **30:27** 2Ch 23:18 **30:27** Nm 6:23-27 **30:27** Dt 26:15; Ps 68:5

30:1 Despite the division of the Israelites' nation into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah (see 1Ch 10), **Hezekiah sent word throughout all Israel and Judah** to call the people to come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover (see also v. 5).

30:6-9 The Israelites had not celebrated the Passover annually as they should have (v. 5), and the northern kingdom had been worshiping golden calves since its inception (see 11:14-16; 13:8-9). The upcoming Passover was thus an opportunity for all Israel to **return to the LORD . . . so that he may return** to those remaining in the land (v. 6). Some had already been taken captive by the Assyrians (see 29:9; 1Ch 5:25-26; 2Kg 17). Nevertheless, Hezekiah believed genuine repentance would lead to their return (v. 9; see also 7:13-14; Dt 30:2-6).

30:10-12 Sadly, some **mocked** the messengers who called them to celebrate the Passover at Jerusalem, **but some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.** There were also some who came from Ephraim and Issachar (v. 18).

30:18-20 Although some of the Israelites were **ritually unclean** yet had **eaten the Passover** (v. 18), **the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people** (v. 20). The Passover was not perfectly executed (see also vv. 2-5), but God apparently recognized their genuine desire to seek him (see also the note on 7:7).

30:21-22 The Passover celebration also included the music of the Levites and priests with their **instruments**, which is not surprising given Chronicles' emphasis on such ministry (see the note on 29:25-26).

30:23-26 This is another high point in Chronicles, in which people from Judah and Israel continued to celebrate the Passover for an additional seven days with great joy. Nothing like this had happened **since the days of Solomon** (see the notes on 7:8 and 35:18). The Lord's pleasure with this is implied through his hearing of the prayer of the priests and Levites (v. 27).

REMOVAL OF IDOLATRY

31 When all this was completed, all Israel who had attended went out to the cities of Judah and broke up the sacred pillars, chopped down the Asherah poles, and tore down the high places and altars† throughout Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, to the last one.† Then all the Israelites returned to their cities, each to his own possession.

OFFERINGS FOR LEVITES

2 Hezekiah reestablished the divisions† of the priests and Levites for the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, for ministry, for giving thanks, and for praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD,† each division corresponding to his service among the priests and Levites. 3 The king contributed† from his own possessions† for the regular morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings of the Sabbaths, of the New Moons, and of the appointed feasts, as written in the law of the LORD.† 4 He told the people who lived in Jerusalem to give a contribution† for the priests and Levites so that they could devote their energy to the law of the LORD. 5 When the word spread, the Israelites gave

liberally of the best of the grain, new wine, fresh oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field, and they brought in an abundance, a tenth† of everything.
6 As for the Israelites and Judahites who lived in the cities of Judah, they also brought a tenth of the herds and flocks, and a tenth of the dedicated things that were consecrated to the LORD their God.† They gathered them into large piles.
7 In the third month they began building up the piles, and they finished in the seventh month. 8 When Hezekiah and his officials came and viewed the piles, they blessed the LORD and his people Israel.
9 Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the piles. 10 The chief priest Azariah, of the household of Zadok,† answered him, “Since they began bringing the offering to the LORD’s temple, we eat and are satisfied and there is plenty left over because the LORD has blessed his people; this abundance is what is left over.”†
11 Hezekiah told them to prepare chambers† in the LORD’s temple, and they prepared them. 12 The offering, the tenth, and the dedicated things were brought faithfully. Conaniah the Levite was the officer in charge of them, and his brother Shimei was second.† 13 Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were deputies under the authority of Conaniah and his brother Shimei by appointment of King Hezekiah and of Azariah the chief official of God’s temple.
14 Kore son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, was over the freewill offerings to God to distribute the contribution to the LORD and the consecrated things.† 15 Eden,† Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah in the cities of the priests† were to distribute it faithfully under his authority to their brothers by divisions, whether large or small. 16 In addition, they distributed it to males registered by genealogy three†† years old and above; to all who would enter the LORD’s temple for their daily duty,† for their service in their responsibilities according to their divisions. 17 They distributed also to those recorded by genealogy of the priests by their ancestral families and the Levites twenty years old and above,† by their responsibilities in their divisions;
18 to those registered by genealogy — with all their dependents, wives, sons, and daughters — of the whole assembly (for they had faithfully consecrated themselves as holy); 19 and to the descendants of Aaron, the priests, in the common fields of their cities,† in each and every city. There were men who were

registered by name† to distribute a portion to every male among the priests and to every Levite recorded by genealogy.
20 Hezekiah did this throughout all Judah. He did what was good and upright and true before the LORD his God.† 21 He was diligent in every deed that he began in the service of God's temple, in the instruction and the commands, in order to seek his God, and he prospered.
31:1 Lit *Manasseh, until finishing* **31:3** Lit *The king's portion* **31:16** Or *30* ; 1Ch 23:3
31:1 2Kg 18:4 **31:2** 1Ch 23:6-23; 24:1-19 **31:2** 1Ch 23:28-31 **31:3** 2Ch 35:7 **31:3** Nm 28 **31:4** Nm 18:8
31:5 Neh 13:12 **31:6** Lv 27:30; Dt 14:28 **31:10** 1Ch 6:8-9 **31:10** Mal 3:10 **31:11** 1Kg 6:5 **31:12** 2Ch 35:9
31:14 1Ch 26:26-28 **31:15** 2Ch 29:12 **31:15** Jos 21:9-19 **31:16** 1Ch 23:3 **31:16** Ezr 3:4 **31:17** 1Ch 23:24
31:19 Lv 25:34; Nm 35:2-5 **31:19** 2Ch 31:12-15 **31:20** 2Kg 20:3; 22:2

31:2-10 After reestablishing **the divisions of the priests and Levites** for the temple service (v. 2), Hezekiah called the Israelites to contribute to this work, which they did generously (vv. 4-10).

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION

32 After these faithful deeds, King Sennacherib of Assyria came and entered Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities and intended† to break into them.† 2 Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he planned† war on Jerusalem, 3 so he consulted with his officials and his warriors about stopping up the water of the springs that were outside the city, and they helped him. 4 Many people gathered and stopped up all the springs† and the stream that flowed through the land;† they said, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find abundant water?" 5 Then Hezekiah strengthened his position by rebuilding the entire broken-down wall† and heightening the towers and the other outside wall.† He repaired the supporting terraces† of the city of David, and made an abundance of weapons and shields.
6 He set military commanders over the people and gathered the people in the square of the city gate. Then he encouraged them,†† saying, 7 "Be strong and courageous!† Don't be afraid or discouraged before the king of Assyria or before the large army that is with him, for there are more with us than with him.† 8 He has only human strength,† but we have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles."† So the people relied on the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.

SENNACHERIB'S SERVANT'S SPEECH

9 After this,† while King Sennacherib of Assyria with all his armed forces besieged† Lachish, he sent his servants to Jerusalem against King Hezekiah of Judah and against all those of Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, 10 "This is

what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: ‘What are you relying on that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? 11 Isn’t Hezekiah misleading you to give you over to death by famine and thirst when he says, “The LORD our God will keep us from the grasp of the king of Assyria”? 12 Didn’t Hezekiah himself remove his high places and his altars† and say to Judah and Jerusalem, “You must worship before one altar, and you must burn incense on it”?
13 “ ‘Don’t you know† what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Have any of the national gods of the lands been able to rescue their land from my power? 14 Who among all the gods of these nations that my predecessors completely destroyed was able to rescue his people from my power, that your God should be able to deliver you from my power?† 15 So now,† don’t let Hezekiah deceive you, and don’t let him mislead you like this. Don’t believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people from my power or the power of my fathers. How much less will your God rescue you from my power! ’ ”
16 His servants said more against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. 17 He also wrote letters to mock the LORD, the God of Israel, saying against him:
Just like the national gods of the lands that did not rescue their people from my power, so Hezekiah’s God will not rescue his people from my power.†
18 Then they called out loudly in Hebrew† to the people of Jerusalem, who were on the wall, to frighten and discourage them in order that he might capture the city. 19 They spoke against the God of Jerusalem like they had spoken against the gods of the peoples of the earth, which were made by human hands.

DELIVERANCE FROM SENNACHERIB

20 King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this and cried out to heaven,† 21 and the LORD sent an angel who annihilated every valiant warrior, leader, and commander in the camp of the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned in disgrace to his land. He went to the temple of his god, and there some of his own children struck him down with the sword.†
22 So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from the power of all others. He gave them rest†† on every side. 23 Many were bringing an offering to the LORD to Jerusalem and valuable gifts to King Hezekiah of Judah, and he was exalted in the eyes of all the nations after that.†

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND PRIDE

24 In those days Hezekiah became sick to the point of death, so he prayed to the LORD, and he spoke to him and gave him a miraculous sign.† 25 However, because his heart was proud,† Hezekiah didn't respond according to the benefit that had come to him. So there was wrath on him, Judah, and Jerusalem.† 26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart — he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem — so the LORD's wrath didn't come† on them during Hezekiah's lifetime.†

HEZEKIAH'S WEALTH AND WORKS

27 Hezekiah had abundant riches and glory, and he made himself treasuries for silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields, and every desirable item. 28 He made warehouses for the harvest of grain, new wine, and fresh oil, and stalls for all kinds of cattle, and pens for flocks. 29 He made cities for himself, and he acquired vast numbers of flocks and herds, for God gave him abundant possessions.

30 This same Hezekiah blocked the outlet of the water of the Upper Gihon† and channeled it smoothly downward and westward to the city of David.† Hezekiah succeeded in everything he did. 31 When the ambassadors of Babylon's rulers† were sent† to him to inquire about the miraculous sign† that happened in the land, God left him to test him and discover what was in his heart.†

HEZEKIAH'S DEATH

32 As for the rest of the events† of Hezekiah's reign and his deeds of faithful love, note that they are written in the Visions of the Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz,† and in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.† 33 Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried on the ascent to the tombs of David's descendants. All Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem paid him honor at his death. His son Manasseh became king in his place.

32:1 Lit *said to himself* **32:2** Lit *that his face was for* **32:6** Lit *he spoke to their hearts* **32:8** Lit *With him an arm of flesh* **32:9** Lit *with his dominion was against* **32:18** Lit *Judahite* **32:22** Lit *He led them* ; Ps 23:2 **32:31** LXX, Tg, Vg; MT reads *of Babylon sent*

32:1 2Kg 18:13; Is 36:1 **32:4** 2Kg 20:20 **32:4** 2Ch 32:30 **32:5** 2Ch 25:23 **32:5** 2Kg 25:4 **32:5** 2Sm 5:9; 1Kg 9:15 **32:6** 2Ch 30:22 **32:7** Dt 31:6; Jos 1:6-9; 10:25; 1Ch 22:13; Ps 31:24 **32:7** 2Kg 6:16; 1Jn 4:4 **32:8** 2Ch 20:17; Is 31:3; Jr 17:5 **32:9-12** 2Kg 18:17-22; Is 36:2-7 **32:12** 2Ch 31:1 **32:13-14** 2Kg 18:33-35; Is 36:18-20 **32:14** Is 10:9-11 **32:15-18** 2Kg 18:28-30; Is 36:13-15 **32:17** 2Ch 32:14 **32:20** 2Kg 19:15; Is 37:15-16 **32:21** 2Kg 19:35-37; Is 37:36-38 **32:22** Ps 23:2 **32:23** 2Sm 8:10; 2Ch 9:23-24 **32:24** 2Kg 20:1-3,8-11; Is 38:1-3,7-8 **32:25** 2Ch 26:16; 32:31 **32:25** 2Ch 24:18 **32:26** Jr 26:18-19 **32:26** 2Kg 20:18-19; Is 39:7-8 **32:30** 1Kg 1:33 **32:30** 2Kg 20:20 **32:31** 2Kg 20:12; Is 39:1 **32:31** 2Ch 32:24 **32:31** Dt 8:2; 13:3 **32:32-33**

2Kg 20:20-21 **32:32** Is 36:1–39:8 **32:32** 2Kg 18:9–20:19

32:6-8 Hezekiah had done much good in turning the nation back to God through the celebration of the Passover and the restoration of the worship of God at the temple (see 31:20-21). Nevertheless, he would be tested when Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded his land (v. 1). After making some preparation (vv. 2-5), Hezekiah encouraged his people that **there are more with us than with him** because **we have the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.**

32:10-17 Through his messengers, **Sennacherib of Assyria** questioned Hezekiah and Judah's faith in God (v. 11). No other gods had been able to stand up to Assyria so far, and the enemy king declared that God would be no different (vv. 13-15). He even **wrote letters to mock the LORD, the God of Israel** (v. 17) and foolishly considered him to be like **the gods of the peoples of the earth, which were made by human hands.**

32:20-23 Hezekiah and Isaiah took this threat to God in prayer, and he **annihilated** the Assyrian army. God judged Sennacherib so that he **returned in disgrace to his land.** There he was killed in the temple of his god by some of his own sons. It was Sennacherib's god who could not protect him (see previous note), whereas God showed his own supremacy. As a result, the surrounding nations **exalted** the LORD and Hezekiah.

32:24-26 Hezekiah was not a perfect man. Despite God giving him a **miraculous sign** related to a serious illness, Hezekiah's **heart was proud**, **so there was wrath on him, Judah, and Jerusalem.** Later, he **humbled himself**, so God delayed bringing his judgment (see 2Kg 20).

JUDAH'S KING MANASSEH

33 Manasseh was twelve years old† when he became king, and he reigned
fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight,
imitating the detestable practices of the nations that the LORD had
dispossessed before the Israelites.† 3 He rebuilt the high places that his father
Hezekiah had torn down† and reestablished the altars for the Baals. He made
Asherah poles, and he bowed in worship to all the stars in the sky and served
them. 4 He built altars† in the LORD's temple, where the LORD had said,
"Jerusalem is where my name will remain forever."† 5 He built altars to all the
stars in the sky in both courtyards† of the LORD's temple. 6 He passed his sons
through the fire in Ben Hinnom Valley.† He practiced witchcraft, divination, and
sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists.† He did a huge amount of evil in
the LORD's sight, angering him.
7 Manasseh† set up a carved image of the idol, which he had made, in God's
temple† that God had spoken about to David and his son Solomon: "I will
establish my name forever†† in this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have
chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.† 8 I will never again remove the feet of the
Israelites from the land where I stationed your†† ancestors,† if only they will be
careful to do all I have commanded them through Moses — all the law, statutes,

and judgments.” 9 So Manasseh caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem
to stray so that they did worse evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed
before the Israelites.

MANASSEH’S REPENTANCE

10 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they didn’t listen.† 11 So he
brought against them the military commanders of the king of Assyria. They
captured Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him
to Babylon.† 12 When he was in distress, he sought the favor of the LORD his
God and earnestly humbled himself† before the God of his ancestors. 13 He
prayed to him, and the LORD was receptive to his prayer. He granted his request†
and brought him back to Jerusalem, to his kingdom. So Manasseh came to know
that the LORD is God.†
14 After this, he built the outer wall of the city of David from west of Gihon† in
the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate;† he brought it around the Ophel,† and
he heightened it considerably. He also placed military commanders in all the
fortified cities of Judah.
15 He removed the foreign gods and the idol† from the LORD’s temple, along
with all the altars that he had built on the mountain of the LORD’s temple and in
Jerusalem, and he threw them outside the city. 16 He built† the altar of the LORD
and offered fellowship and thank offerings on it. Then he told Judah to serve the
LORD, the God of Israel. 17 However, the people still sacrificed at the high
places,† but only to the LORD their God.

MANASSEH’S DEATH

18 The rest of the events† of Manasseh’s reign, along with his prayer† to his
God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the
God of Israel, are written in the Events of Israel’s Kings. 19 His prayer and how
God was receptive to his prayer, and all his sin and unfaithfulness and the sites
where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and carved images before he
humbled himself, they are written in the Events of Hozai. 20 Manasseh rested
with his fathers, and he was buried in his own house. His son Amon became
king in his place.

JUDAH’S KING AMON

21 Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two
years in Jerusalem. 22 He did what was evil in the LORD’s sight, just as his father

Manasseh had done.† Amon sacrificed to all the carved images that his father Manasseh had made, and he served them. 23 But he did not humble himself before the LORD like his father Manasseh humbled himself;† instead, Amon increased his guilt.

24 So his servants conspired against him and put him to death† in his own house.

25 The common people† killed all who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place.

33:7 LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; 2Kg 21:7; MT reads *name for Elom* **33:8** LXX, Syr, Vg read *land I gave to their* ; 2Kg 21:8 **33:16** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Arabic; other Hb mss, LXX, Vg read *restored* **33:25** Lit *The people of the land*

33:1-9 2Kg 21:1-9 **33:2** 2Ch 28:3 **33:3** 2Kg 18:4; 2Ch 31:1 **33:4** 2Ch 28:24 **33:4** 2Ch 7:16 **33:5** 2Ch 4:9 **33:6** 2Kg 16:3; 2Ch 28:3 **33:6** Lv 19:31; 20:27; 2Kg 23:24 **33:7-8** 1Kg 9:1-9 **33:7** Dt 16:21 **33:7** 2Kg 21:7 **33:7** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 11:32 **33:8** 2Kg 21:8 **33:8** 2Sm 7:10 **33:10** 2Kg 21:10-16 **33:11** 2Ch 36:6 **33:12** 2Ch 32:26 **33:13** Ezr 8:23 **33:13** Dn 4:32 **33:14** 1Kg 1:33; 2Ch 32:30 **33:14** Neh 3:3 **33:14** 2Ch 27:3 **33:15** 2Ch 33:3-7 **33:17** 2Ch 32:12 **33:18-25** 2Kg 21:17-24 **33:18** 2Ch 33:12-13 **33:22** 2Ch 33:2 **33:23** 2Ch 33:12,19 **33:24** 2Ch 25:27

33:1-7 Manasseh was a very evil king who undid much of the good Hezekiah had worked so hard to accomplish (vv. 2-3,6). He not only worshiped idols but did so in the temple of God (vv. 4-5,7). Under his leadership, Judah "did worse evil than the nations that the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites" (v. 9).

33:10-13 The LORD spoke to Manasseh and Judah (presumably through prophets), but to no avail. He also punished them through a foreign power, **Assyria.** (Manasseh was taken captive to Babylon, where he sought God's favor and **earnestly humbled himself.** The Lord graciously heard his petition, and he was allowed to return to Jerusalem (v. 13; see 7:13-14). Manasseh then recognized **that the LORD is God**, and he took measures to turn his people back to him (vv. 15-17).

33:21-23 Amon was also an evil king like **his father Manasseh**, except **he did not humble himself before the LORD** like Manasseh had (33:12).

JUDAH'S KING JOSIAH

34 Josiah was eight years old† when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2 He did what was right in the LORD's sight and walked in the ways of his ancestor David;† he did not turn aside to the right or the left.

JOSIAH'S REFORM

3 In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still a youth, Josiah began to seek the God of his ancestor David,† and in the twelfth year he began to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherah poles, the carved images,† and the cast images. 4 Then in his presence the altars of the Baals were torn down, and he chopped down the shrines† that were above them. He shattered the Asherah poles, the carved images, and the cast images, crushed them to dust, and

scattered† them over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them.† 5 He burned the bones of the priests on their altars.† So he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 He did the same in the cities† of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali and on their surrounding mountain shrines.† 7 He tore down the altars, and he smashed the Asherah poles and the carved images to powder. He chopped down all the shrines throughout the land of Israel and returned to Jerusalem.†

JOSIAH'S REPAIR OF THE TEMPLE

8 In the eighteenth year of his reign,† in order to cleanse the land and the temple, Josiah sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, along with Maaseiah the governor† of the city and the court historian Joah son of Joahaz, to repair the temple of the LORD his God.

9 So they went to the high priest Hilkiah† and gave him the silver brought into God's temple. The Levites and the doorkeepers had collected it from Manasseh, Ephraim,† and from the entire remnant of Israel, and from all Judah, Benjamin, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They gave it to those doing the work — those who oversaw the LORD's temple. They gave it to the workmen who were working in the LORD's temple, to repair and restore the temple; 11 they gave it to the carpenters and builders and also used it to buy quarried stone and timbers — for joining and making beams — for the buildings that Judah's kings had destroyed.

12 The men were doing the work with integrity. Their overseers were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites from the Merarites, and Zechariah and Meshullam from the Kohathites as supervisors. The Levites were all skilled with musical instruments.† 13 They were also over the porters and were supervising all those doing the work task by task. Some of the Levites were secretaries, officers, and gatekeepers.

THE RECOVERY OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW

14 When they brought out the silver that had been deposited in the LORD's
temple, the priest Hilkiah found the book of the law of the LORD written by the
hand of Moses.† 15 Consequently,† Hilkiah told the court secretary Shaphan, "I
have found the book of the law in the LORD's temple," and he gave the book to
Shaphan.
16 Shaphan took the book to the king, and also reported, "Your servants are
doing all that was placed in their hands. 17 They have emptied out the silver that
was found in the LORD's temple and have given it to the overseers and to those
doing the work." 18 Then the court secretary Shaphan told the king, "The priest
Hilkiah gave me a book," and Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.†
19 When the king heard the words of the law, he tore his clothes.† 20 Then he
commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, the court
secretary Shaphan, and the king's servant Asaiah, 21 "Go and inquire of the
LORD for me and for those remaining in Israel and Judah, concerning the words
of the book that was found. For great is the LORD's wrath that is poured out on
us† because our ancestors have not kept the word of the LORD in order to do
everything written in this book."

HULDAH'S PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT

22 So Hilkiah and those the king had designated† went to the prophetess Huldah,
the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. She
lived in Jerusalem in the Second District. They spoke with her about this.
23 She said to them, "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: Say to the man
who sent you to me, 24 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to bring disaster
on this place and on its inhabitants,† fulfilling† all the curses written in the book
that they read in the presence of the king of Judah,† 25 because they have
abandoned me† and burned incense to other gods so as to anger me with all the
works of their hands. My wrath will be poured out on this place, and it will not
be quenched.' 26 Say this to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of the
LORD: 'This is what the LORD God of Israel says: As for the words that you
heard, 27 because† your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God
when you heard his words against this place and against its inhabitants, and
because you humbled yourself before me, and you tore your clothes and wept
before me, I myself have heard' — this is the LORD's declaration. 28 'I will

indeed gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster that I am bringing on this place and on its inhabitants.' "†
Then they reported to the king.

AFFIRMATION OF THE COVENANT BY JOSIAH AND THE PEOPLE

29 So the king sent messengers and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 The king went up to the LORD's temple with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the Levites — all the people from the oldest to the youngest. He read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the LORD's temple.† 31 Then the king stood at his post† and made a covenant in the LORD's presence† to follow the LORD and to keep his commands, his decrees, and his statutes with all his heart and with all his soul† in order to carry out the words of the covenant written in this book.†
32 He had all those present in Jerusalem and Benjamin agree† to it. So all the inhabitants of Jerusalem carried out the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.
33 So Josiah removed everything that was detestable from all the lands belonging to the Israelites,† and he required all who were present in Israel to serve the LORD their God. Throughout his reign they did not turn aside from following the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

34:4 Lit *incense altars*, also in v. 7 **34:6** One Hb tradition reads *Naphtali with their swords* ; alt Hb tradition, Syr, Vg read *Naphtali, the ruins all around* ; Hb obscure **34:22** LXX; MT omits *designated* **34:24** *fulfilling* supplied for clarity **34:32** Lit *take a stand.*
34:1-2 2Kg 22:1-2 **34:2** 2Ch 29:2 **34:3** 1Ch 28:9; 2Ch 11:16; 14:4; 15:12 **34:3** 2Ch 33:22 **34:4** Ex 32:20 **34:4** 2Kg 23:6 **34:5** 2Kg 23:5,8,16,20 **34:6** 2Kg 23:15,19 **34:7** 2Ch 31:1 **34:8-12** 2Kg 22:3-7 **34:8** 2Ch 18:25 **34:9** 2Ch 34:14; 35:8 **34:9** 2Ch 30:10,18 **34:12** 1Ch 25:1 **34:14** Dt 31:24-26 **34:15-32** 2Kg 22:8–23:3 **34:18** Dt 17:18-20 **34:19** Jos 7:6 **34:21** 2Ch 29:8 **34:24** 2Ch 36:15-21 **34:24** Dt 28:15-68 **34:25** 2Ch 33:3 **34:27-28** 1Kg 21:29; 2Ch 12:6-7; 32:26 **34:28** Is 57:1-2 **34:30** Neh 8:1-3 **34:31** 2Kg 11:14; 2Ch 30:16 **34:31** 2Ch 23:16; 29:10 **34:31** Dt 6:4-6 **34:31** Ex 24:3-8; Jos 24:14-28 **34:33** 2Ch 34:3-7

34:1-6 Josiah was a good king who began seeking God while a teenager. He cleansed **Judah and Jerusalem** from the idolatry that had arisen (vv. 3-5). His efforts even extended to **the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali**. Hezekiah's earlier purge had likewise extended "to Ephraim and Manasseh" (31:1).

34:8-11 The temple was once again in need of purification and restoration, as it had been under Joash and Hezekiah (see 24:4-14; 29:3-11). The present effort under Josiah was funded not only by Judah and Benjamin but also by **Manasseh, Ephraim, and from the entire remnant of Israel** (see also the note on 30:10-12).

34:12-13 The Levites again led the way in this important work (see the note on 17:7-9).

34:14-21 While collecting money that had been deposited in the temple (see v. 9), Hilkiah the high priest found a copy of **the book of the law of the LORD written by the hand of Moses** (v. 14). Upon hearing the words of Scripture, Josiah **tore his clothes** and commanded his servants to **inquire of the LORD** (vv. 18-21).

34:23-28 The prophetess Huldah declared that God was about to bring **disaster** on Judah because of their idolatry (vv. 23-25). Because Josiah's **heart was tender** and he **humbled** himself (v. 27), however, he would die in peace and would not see this destruction.

34:29-33 Despite the prophetess Huldah's proclamation of judgment, Josiah earnestly tried to turn the people back to God. He gathered the people to hear the reading of Scripture, led them to make a covenant to obey God, and cleansed the land of idolatry.

JOSIAH'S PASSOVER OBSERVANCE

35 Josiah observed the LORD's Passover† and slaughtered the Passover
lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.† 2 He appointed the
priests to their responsibilities and encouraged them to serve in the
LORD's temple.† 3 He said to the Levites who taught all Israel† the holy things
of the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the temple built by Solomon son of David king
of Israel. Since you do not have to carry it on your shoulders,† now serve the
LORD your God and his people Israel.
4 "Organize your ancestral families† by your divisions† according to the written
instruction of King David of Israel and that of his son Solomon.† 5 Serve in the
holy place by the groupings of the ancestral families† for your brothers, the lay
people,† and according to the division of the Levites by family.† 6 Slaughter the
Passover lambs,† consecrate yourselves,† and make preparations for your
brothers to carry out the word of the LORD through Moses."
7 Then Josiah donated thirty thousand sheep, lambs, and young goats, plus three
thousand cattle from his own possessions, for the Passover sacrifices for all the
lay people who were present.
8 His officials also donated willingly for the people, the priests, and the Levites.
Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, chief officials of God's temple, gave twenty-six
hundred Passover sacrifices and three hundred cattle for the priests. 9 Conaniah†
and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad,
officers of the Levites, donated five thousand Passover sacrifices for the Levites,
plus five hundred cattle.
10 So the service was established; the priests stood at their posts and the Levites
in their divisions according to the king's command.† 11 Then they slaughtered
the Passover lambs, and while the Levites were skinning the animals,† the

priests splattered the blood† they had been given.† 12 They removed the burnt
offerings so that they might be given to the groupings of the ancestral families†
of the lay people to offer to the LORD, according to what is written in the book of
Moses; they did the same with the cattle. 13 They roasted the Passover lambs
with fire according to regulation.† They boiled the holy sacrifices in pots,
kettles, and bowls; and they quickly brought them to the lay people.
14 Afterward, they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, since
the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were busy offering up burnt offerings and
fat until night. So the Levites made preparations for themselves and for the
priests, the descendants of Aaron.
15 The singers, the descendants of Asaph, were at their stations according to the
command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer.† Also, the
gatekeepers were at each temple gate.† None of them left their tasks because
their Levite brothers had made preparations for them.
16 So all the service of the LORD was established that day for observing the
Passover and for offering burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to
the command of King Josiah. 17 The Israelites who were present in Judah also
observed the Passover at that time and the Festival of Unleavened Bread for
seven days.† 18 No Passover had been observed† like it in Israel since the days
of the prophet Samuel. None of the kings of Israel ever observed a Passover like
the one that Josiah observed with the priests, the Levites, all Judah, the Israelites
who were present in Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 In the eighteenth
year of Josiah's reign, this Passover was observed.

JOSIAH'S LAST DEEDS AND DEATH

20 After all this† that Josiah had prepared for the temple, King Neco of Egypt†
marched up to fight at Carchemish† by the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to
confront him. 21 But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, "What is the issue
between you and me, king of Judah?† I have not come against you today† but I
am fighting another dynasty.† God told me to hurry. Stop opposing God who is
with me; don't make him destroy you! "
22 But Josiah did not turn away from him; instead, in order to fight with him he
disguised himself.†† He did not listen to Neco's words from the mouth of God,
but went to the Valley of Megiddo† to fight. 23 The archers shot King Josiah,
and he said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded! "† 24 So
his servants took him out of the war chariot, carried him in his second chariot,

and brought him to Jerusalem. Then he died, and they buried him in the tomb of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned† for Josiah. 25 Jeremiah chanted a dirge† over Josiah, and all the male and female singers still speak of Josiah in their dirges today. They established them as a statute for Israel, and indeed they are written in the Dirges.

26 The rest of the events† of Josiah's reign, along with his deeds of faithful love according to what is written in the law of the LORD, 27 and his words, from beginning to end, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

35:4 Lit *the house of your fathers* **35:5** Lit *the house of the fathers* **35:5** Lit *the sons of the people*, also in vv. 7,12,13 **35:11** LXX, Vg, Tg; MT omits *blood* **35:11** Lit *splattered from their hand* **35:12** Lit *house of fathers* **35:21** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; MT reads *Not against you, you today* **35:21** Lit *house* **35:22** LXX reads *he was determined*

35:1 2Kg 23:21 **35:1** Ex 12:6; Nm 9:3 **35:2** 2Ch 29:11 **35:3** 2Ch 17:8-9; Neh 8:7 **35:3** 1Ch 23:26 **35:4** 1Ch 9:10-13 **35:4** 2Ch 8:14 **35:5** Ezr 6:18 **35:6** 2Ch 35:1,11 **35:6** 2Ch 29:5 **35:9** 2Ch 31:12-13 **35:10** 2Ch 35:5 **35:11** 2Ch 29:34 **35:13** Ex 12:8-9 **35:15** 1Ch 25:1 **35:15** 1Ch 26:12-19 **35:17** 2Ch 30:21 **35:18-19** 2Kg 23:22-23 **35:20-25** 2Kg 23:29-30a **35:20** Jr 46:2 **35:20** Is 10:9 **35:21** Jdg 11:12; 2Ch 25:19 **35:22** 2Ch 18:29 **35:22** Jdg 5:19 **35:23** 2Ch 18:33 **35:24** Zch 12:11 **35:25** Jr 22:10; Lm 4:20 **35:26-27** 2Kg 23:28

35:1-14 For a second time, a good king of Judah led the nation in celebrating the **Passover.** Hezekiah had done the same in 2 Chronicles 30. The biblical author's inclusion of these two Passover celebrations toward the end of Chronicles serves as a reminder of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and likewise anticipates a future work of salvation (see the note on 36:22-23).

35:18 This Passover during Josiah's reign was even greater than the already notable one under Hezekiah (see the note on 30:23-26).

35:20-24 Despite the many good things Josiah had done, his life ended through a foolish decision. He unnecessarily got involved in the affairs of Neco king of Egypt, in spite of that king's warnings which came **from the mouth of God** (v. 22). In the battle, Josiah was shot by an arrow and died soon after.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOAHAZ

36 Then† the common people† took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in place of his father.

2 Jehoahaz† was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 The king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and fined the land seventy-five hundred pounds† of silver and seventy-five pounds† of gold.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOIAKIM

4 Then King Neco of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took his brother Jehoahaz and brought him to Egypt.†

5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned
eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his
God.† 6 Now King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked him† and bound him
in bronze† shackles to take him to Babylon.† 7 Also Nebuchadnezzar took some
of the articles of the LORD's temple to Babylon and put them in his temple in
Babylon.†
8 The rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim,† the detestable actions he committed, and
what was found against him, are written in the Book of Israel's Kings. His son
Jehoiachin became king in his place.

JUDAH'S KING JEHOIACHIN

9 Jehoiachin was eighteen† years old† when he became king, and he reigned
three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was evil in the LORD's
sight. 10 In the spring†† Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to
Babylon along with the valuable articles of the LORD's temple. Then he made
Jehoiachin's brother Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.†

JUDAH'S KING ZEDEKIAH

11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old† when he became king, and he reigned
eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his
God and did not humble himself† before the prophet Jeremiah at the LORD's
command.† 13 He also rebelled against† King Nebuchadnezzar who had made
him swear allegiance by God. He became obstinate†† and hardened his heart
against returning to the LORD, the God of Israel. 14 All the leaders of the priests
and the people multiplied their unfaithful deeds, imitating all the detestable
practices of the nations, and they defiled the LORD's temple that he had
consecrated in Jerusalem.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

15 But the LORD, the God of their ancestors sent word against them by the hand
of his messengers, sending them time and time again,† for he had compassion on
his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they kept ridiculing God's
messengers,† despising his words,† and scoffing at his prophets, until the LORD's
wrath was so stirred up against his people that there was no remedy.† 17 So he
brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans,† who killed their fit young
men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary. He had no pity on young

men or young women, elderly or aged; he handed them all over to him. 18 He took everything to Babylon — all the articles of God's temple, large and small, the treasures of the LORD's temple, and the treasures of the king and his officials.
19 Then the Chaldeans burned God's temple.† They tore down Jerusalem's wall, burned all its palaces, and destroyed all its valuable articles.
20 He deported those who escaped from the sword to Babylon, and they became servants to him and his sons until the rise of the Persian† kingdom.† 21 This fulfilled the word of the LORD through Jeremiah,† and the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation† until seventy years were fulfilled.

THE DECREE OF CYRUS

22 In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia,† in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken through† Jeremiah,† the LORD roused the spirit of King Cyrus† of Persia to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and also to put it in writing:
23 This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: The LORD, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build him a temple at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD his God be with him.

36:1 Lit *the people of the land* **36:2** = Joahaz, also in v. 4 **36:3** Lit *100 talents* **36:3** Lit *one talent* **36:9** Some Hb mss, LXX; 2Kg 24:8; other Hb mss read *eight* **36:10** Lit *At the return of the year* **36:13** Lit *He stiffened his neck* **36:20** LXX reads *Median* **36:22** Lit *Lord by the mouth of*
36:1-4 2Kg 23:30b-34 **36:4** Jr 22:10-12 **36:5** 2Kg 23:36-37; Jr 22:13-18 **36:6** 2Kg 24:1 **36:6** 2Ch 33:11 **36:6** Jr 22:18-19 **36:7** 2Kg 24:1-4; Jr 22:13-19; 25:1-9; Dn 1:1; Hab 1:6 **36:8** 2Kg 24:5-6 **36:9-10** 2Kg 24:8-17 **36:10** 2Sm 11:1 **36:10** Jr 37:1 **36:11-13** 2Kg 24:18-20; Jr 52:1-3 **36:12** 2Ch 33:23 **36:12** Jr 21:3-7 **36:13** Ezk 17:15 **36:13** 2Ch 30:8 **36:15** Jr 7:13; 25:3,11-12 **36:16** 2Ch 30:10; Jr 5:12-13 **36:16** Pr 1:24-32 **36:16** Ezr 5:12 **36:17** 2Kg 25:1-7; Jr 52:4-11 **36:19-20** 2Kg 25:9-11; Jr 52:13-15 **36:20** Jr 27:7 **36:21** Jr 25:11-12; 29:10 **36:21** Lv 25:4; 26:33 **36:22-23** Ezr 1:1-3 **36:22** Jr 25:11-14; 27:22; 29:10-14; 33:7-10 **36:22** Is 44:28; 45:1

36:6-7 Judah had already been troubled by Egypt (vv. 2-4), and now the even mightier **Babylon** came to afflict them. Jehoiakim was attacked by **Nebuchadnezzar** and taken as a prison to Babylon, along with some of the utensils of the temple. A similar thing would happen with his son, Jehoiachin (v. 10).

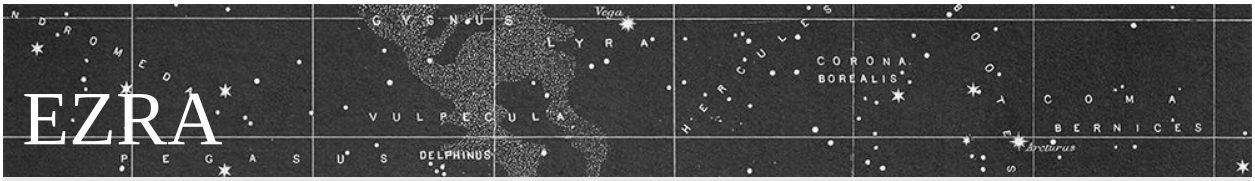
36:11 Zedekiah was the last king of Judah. He rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar (v. 13) and would experience the fall of the kingdom and the utter destruction of the temple, as well as the exile of the people (vv. 17-20).

36:14-16 Judah was guilty of having **defiled the LORD's temple that he had consecrated.** The Lord had repeatedly sent them prophets to declare his word because **he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place.** Nevertheless, they ridiculed his messengers so that the wrath of God could not be avoided (see the notes on 15:1-7 and 20:20-23).

36:20-21 As mentioned earlier in Chronicles (see the note on 1Ch 9:1-2), Judah was exiled **to Babylon.**

This fulfilled the words of the prophet **Jeremiah** that the land would enjoy **its Sabbath rest** (see Jr 25:1-14).

36:22-23 Just as Jeremiah's prophecy of judgment and exile came true (see previous note), so his promise of restoration after exile began to come true through the decree of **Cyrus**, who permitted anyone among God's people to return to Jerusalem to build a temple for the Lord (see "A Biblical View of History," *p. 525*). In light of the importance of the temple in Chronicles and its association with the line of David (see the notes on vv. 14-16 and 1Ch 1:1), these concluding lines give strong hope for a new work of God involving a son of David, the building of a temple, and a return from exile.



EZRA

INTRODUCTION

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah bear the names of the key person in each of the books. Until the third century AD, though, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah were regarded as a single book. Each contains material found in the other, and they complete each other. The separation of the book in the Christian community took place through the influence of the Vulgate, the Latin translation prepared by Jerome who, following Origen before him, separated Ezra-Nehemiah into two distinct books. In the Jewish community, Ezra and Nehemiah were not separated into two distinct books until the fifteenth-century printing of the Hebrew Bible. In the Hebrew Bible, Ezra-Nehemiah is part of the third division of the canon, called the Writings (Hb *ketuvim*).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Ezra and Nehemiah are anonymous. Ancient Jewish sources usually credit Ezra as the author of Ezra-Nehemiah. More likely Ezra-Nehemiah was written by the "Chronicler," the person (or persons) responsible for 1 and 2 Chronicles. Not only is Ezra-Nehemiah linked to Chronicles at its introduction (Ezr 1:1-2 = 2Ch 36:22-23), it also shares many similarities in language, terminology, themes, and perspective.

BACKGROUND: It is probably safe to assume that Ezra-Nehemiah was written soon after the conclusion of Nehemiah's ministry. Most likely the book was written no later than 400 BC.

In Ezra-Nehemiah it is clear that Ezra came to Jerusalem first, probably in 458 BC, and that Nehemiah followed him thirteen years later, probably in 445 BC. Nehemiah made no mention of Ezra, his ministry, or his reforms. Ezra and Nehemiah appear together in only two texts (Neh 8:9; 12:36). The two events in which Ezra and Nehemiah were together were significant. In Nehemiah 8, the context is the reading of the law to the people, while in Nehemiah 12 the two joyous processions walking around the city walls in the dedication ceremony include Ezra (Neh 12:36) and Nehemiah (Neh 12:38).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The events which occurred in Ezra and Nehemiah, the rebuilt the temple, the stabilizing of Jerusalem, and the Jewish community that developed, all played key roles in the life and ministry of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. The rebuilt temple may have paled in comparison to the temple that Solomon built, but it would serve the Jews for centuries until Christ removed the need for a physical temple.

STRUCTURE

Ezra-Nehemiah was written in two related but distinct languages—Hebrew and Aramaic. The Hebrew sections generally reflect the style of the postexilic era with some evidence of the impact of Aramaic on the language. Aramaic, a Semitic language similar to Hebrew, occurs in two sections in the book of Ezra (4:8–6:18; 7:12-26). During the Persian period (ca. 540 to 330 BC), Aramaic was the official language of diplomacy and commerce.

Ezra-Nehemiah is similar to Samuel and Kings, and especially Chronicles, in that many sources were utilized in its composition. These include two major types of sources. Much of Ezra-Nehemiah consists of material from the Ezra Memoir and the Nehemiah Memoir. The Ezra Memoir, usually written in the first person, includes Ezra 7–10, along with Nehemiah 8 and probably chapter 9 as well; embedded in this memoir are lists and records from other sources used by Ezra. The composition of the Nehemiah Memoir is

regarded as including Nehemiah 1–7 as well as 11–13. But here also Nehemiah incorporated lists and records in his memoir. Ezra-Nehemiah also contains many lists, genealogies, inventories, letters, and census records throughout the book. For a community attempting to reestablish itself after the disaster of 586 BC and the subsequent exile to Babylon, this material was crucial in reordering their life as a community.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Because God is righteous, he acts on behalf of his people. This includes working through pagan kings (who issue decrees) and godly teachers (who teach his Word to his people). Further, as the last two chapters show, God may require his people to forsake family ties for the sake of following his will.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

S

As with 1 Chronicles, Ezra has many lists of names. Although such lists may seem tedious today, they show the importance of each individual in God's purposes. If the author made the effort to preserve all these names and numbers, then how much more does God care about individuals! This perspective is strengthened by observing that the work of restoring worship (altar and temple) was a community task. The work accomplished for God was done by people working together more than by a great leader.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The people who returned from exile were cured of the idolatry that had taken their ancestors into captivity. Ezra revives an emphasis found in Mosaic law: without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Lv 17:11). Thus the first concern of the returning Israelites was to reinstate an altar on which to offer the appointed sacrifices (Ezr 3:1-6). Only secondarily were they concerned with the temple (6:13-18). As throughout the OT era, personal trust in God is expressed through participation in the right sacrifices and through obeying God's law.

EZRA TIMELINE

615–590 BC

Neco II of Egypt commissions Phoenician sailors to be the first to sail around the continent of Africa. **615–595**

Nebuchadnezzar's three invasions of Judah **605, 597, 586**

Events in Obadiah **605–586?**

Daniel is among those taken from Jerusalem to Babylon. **605**

Temple of Solomon is destroyed. **586**

590–560 BC

590–560 BC

Events in Ezekiel **593–571**

Athens has two years with no archon (ruler), hence the term anarchy. **589**

Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, is born. **581**

Aesop, slave of Xanthus of Samos, is credited with collecting and creating fables. They were probably committed to writing at a later time. **570**

Nebuchadnezzar II's successor, Evil-Merodach, releases Judah's King Jehoiachin, who had been a prisoner for 36 years. **561**

560–530 BC

Battle of Thymbra between Cyrus the Great and Croesus, commander of the Lydian army **546**

Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar. Cyrus captures Babylon without resistance. **539**

Cyrus's decree allows return of Jews from exile. **538**

Events in Ezra **538–457**

Second temple construction under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership **536–515**

530–500 BC

Cambyses, son of Cyrus **530–522**

Aeschylus, Greek tragedian **(525–456)** many of whose plays dealt with the Persian invasion of Greece, participated in the Greek victories at Marathon and Salamis.

Darius I or Darius the Great **521–486**

Events in Haggai **520**

Events in Zechariah **520–518**

Second temple dedicated **515**

500–480 BC

Greeks develop instruments for surveying. **500**

Sugar cane cultivated in India **500**

Greeks, outnumbered almost five to one, defeat Persians in Battle of Marathon through superior military intelligence and strategy, forestalling Persian expansion into Europe. **490**

Events in Esther **486–465**

Greek victory over Persians in Battle of Salamis, **480**, and Plain of Plataea, **479**, thwarted Persian expansion into Europe.

480–445 BC

Xerxes I, Ahasuerus, husband of Esther **486–465**

Esther's reign **479–465?**

Esther saves the Jews within the Persian Empire. **474?**

Ezra goes to Jerusalem. **458**

Nehemiah, cupbearer to Artaxerxes, learns of the disrepair of Jerusalem's walls and leads and effort that restores the walls. **445**

THE DECREE OF CYRUS

1 In † the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of
the LORD spoken through Jeremiah, † the LORD roused the spirit † of
King Cyrus to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and to
put it in writing:
2 This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The LORD, the God of the heavens,
has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build him a
house at Jerusalem in Judah. † 3 Any of his people among you, may his God be
with him, and may he go to Jerusalem in Judah and build the house of the LORD,
the God of Israel, † the God who is in Jerusalem. 4 Let every survivor, †
wherever he resides, be assisted by the men of that region with silver, gold,
goods, and livestock, along with a freewill offering for the house of God in
Jerusalem.”

RETURN FROM EXILE

5 So the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites
— everyone whose spirit God had roused † — prepared to go up and rebuild the
LORD’s house in Jerusalem. 6 All their neighbors supported them † † with silver
articles, gold, goods, livestock, and valuables, in addition to all that was given as
a freewill offering. 7 King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the LORD’s
house that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and had placed in the
house of his gods. † 8 King Cyrus of Persia had them brought out under the
supervision of Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar
the prince of Judah. † 9 This was the inventory:

30 gold basins, 1,000 silver basins,
29 silver knives, 10 30 gold bowls,
410 various † silver bowls, and 1,000 other articles.

11 The gold and silver articles totaled 5,400. Sheshbazzar brought all of them
when the exiles went up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

1:6 Lit *strengthened their hands* **1:10** Or *similar*
1:1 2Ch 36:22-23 **1:1** Jr 25:12; 29:10-14 **1:1** Ezr 7:27 **1:2-3** Is 44:28; 45:1,13; Dn 9:17 **1:3** Dn 6:26 **1:4** Neh 1:2; Is 10:20-22 **1:5** Ezr 1:1 **1:6** Ezr 6:22 **1:7** 2Ch 36:7,10,18; Dn 1:2; 5:2-3 **1:8** Ezr 5:14,16

1:1-4 The book of Ezra begins with the decree of **King Cyrus of Persia**, who allowed exiled Israelites

within his kingdom to return to their homeland to build the temple **at Jerusalem.** This act of a Gentile king came about because God **roused the spirit** of Cyrus in order to fulfill his own word **spoken through Jeremiah** (v. 1). Chronicles also ends with a shortened form of this decree (see 2Ch 36:22-23). Though some have read Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah as a more or less continuous story because of their chronological relationship, others have treated Chronicles separately because it has some of its own unique concerns and emphases (see the notes on Chronicles). On the other hand, Ezra and Nehemiah have much in common and have even been treated as one book by some since ancient times (see the note on Neh 1:1).

1:5-6 Just as God had moved Cyrus to issue his decree (vv. 1-4), he also moved the **family heads of Judah and Benjamin, along with the priests and Levites** to return to Jerusalem to build the temple (see also 4:1). In accordance with the decree (v. 4), they were assisted by their neighbors. This is reminiscent of their ancestors' exodus from Egypt (see Ex 12:35-36).

THE EXILES WHO RETURNED

2 These † now are the people of the province who came from those captive exiles King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon † had deported to Babylon. † They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town.
2 They came with Zerubbabel, † Jeshua, † Nehemiah, Seraiah, † Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, and Baanah.

The number of the Israelite men included †

3 Parosh's descendants †	2,172
4 Shephatiah's descendants	372
5 Arah's descendants	775
6 Pahath-moab's descendants: Jeshua's and Joab's descendants	2,812
7 Elam's descendants	1,254
8 Zattu's descendants	945
9 Zaccai's descendants	760
10 Bani's descendants	642
11 Bebai's descendants	623
12 Azgad's descendants	1,222
13 Adonikam's descendants †	666
14 Bigvai's descendants	2,056
15 Adin's descendants	454
16 Ater's descendants: of Hezekiah	98

17 Bezai’s descendants 323
18 Jorah’s descendants 112
19 Hashum’s descendants 223
20 Gibbar’s descendants 95
21 Bethlehem’s † people 123
22 Netophah’s men 56
23 Anathoth’s men 128
24 Azmaveth’s people 42
25 Kiriatharim’s, Chephirah’s, and Beeroth’s people 743
26 Ramah’s † and Geba’s people 621
27 Michmas’s men 122
28 Bethel’s and Ai’s † men 223
29 Nebo’s people 52
30 Magbish’s people 156
31 the other Elam’s people 1,254
32 Harim’s people 320
33 Lod’s, Hadid’s, and Ono’s people 725
34 Jericho’s † people 345
35 Senaah’s people 3,630
36 The priests included
Jedaiah’s descendants of the house of Jeshua 973
37 Immer’s descendants 1,052
38 Pashhur’s descendants 1,247
39 and Harim’s descendants 1,017
40 The Levites included
Jeshua’s and Kadmiel’s descendants
from Hodaviah’s descendants 74
41 The singers included
Asaph’s † descendants 128

42 The gatekeepers' † descendants included
Shallum's descendants, Ater's descendants,
Talmon's descendants, Akkub's descendants,
Hatita's descendants, Shobai's descendants, in all 139

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF HISTORY

Christians believe that the God of the Bible is the Lord of history. The history of everything—from an individual human life to the vast universe—is under God's sovereign control. By using the word *history*, I certainly mean the great stories of wars, kings, and political affairs, but I also mean the quieter narratives of forgotten people, those who do not appear in history books. Many are forgotten to human history, but they appear in God's view of it no matter how humble they are. Christ tells us that God does not even forget sparrows, and we are worth much more than they. Even the hairs of our heads are counted by him (Lk 12:6-7). God has never overlooked anything or anyone.

Nevertheless, God does not directly cause everything to happen in history. Most notably, he does not cause evil, for he is not the author of sin. On the other hand, nothing happens without his permission or consent, not even a sparrow's death (Mt 10:29). Critics have argued that this distinction between God allowing evil to occur but not actually causing it is a hollow one. Christians, however, affirm that God is absolutely holy, that he directs history toward the ultimate triumph of good, and that he has permitted evil and suffering to enter the world by the agency of fallen people and the devil.

HISTORY AND GOD'S PURPOSE

As opposed to secular or materialistic philosophies that see no overarching point to history or human existence, Christians have a linear, purposeful view of the past, present, and future. As Christian historian David Bebbington has written in his book *Patterns in History*, Christians embrace three core convictions about history: "that God intervenes in it; that he guides it in a straight line; and that he will bring it to the conclusion that he has planned" (p. 43). These ideas are central to the Christian belief in God's providence. God created the world with purpose—primarily to glorify himself—and since the fall of humanity in the garden of Eden, God has also been working out a plan of redemption, also for his own glory. As The Westminster Confession of Faith puts it, "God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence."

God even plays a sustaining role in what might, at first glance, seem to be the "natural" things of history and everyday life. Hebrews 1:2-3 tells us that God the Father made the universe through the Son, who sustains "all things by his powerful word." Through Christ "all things hold together" (Col 1:17). God is, in a sense, always intervening to sustain and preserve his creatures and all creation. He has not even relinquished control of forces such as gravity or time.

But God also intervenes in special ways and particular places and times to accomplish his purposes. One could cite any number of examples. For instance, God raised up King Cyrus of Persia in order to bring about the return of the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1 and 2 Chronicles 36:22 both speak of how God "roused the spirit of King Cyrus" to decree the return of the exiles, in spite of the fact that Cyrus probably worshiped pagan gods. In Isaiah 44:28, God calls Cyrus his "shepherd" who would fulfill all God's "pleasure" with regard to his chosen people, the Jews.

The fact of God's sovereignty over history is not just a dry philosophical proposition, but it lies at the heart of our personal trust in God's loving control over our lives. We all experience disappointments, and sometimes tragedies, and in those times many are tempted to wonder where God is. What is he doing? Does he not care? It proves a great comfort to know that nothing takes God by surprise; moreover, "all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rm 8:28). We may not understand or like what is happening in the moment, but it is reassuring to know that God remains sovereign over everything—not only in our lives, but throughout the entire universe.

HISTORY AND HUMILITY

A great challenge for Christians regarding history is our limited ability to discern God's purposes. Our limitations come from living in a time-bound state and having minds only partially redeemed from the effects of the fall of humankind. God, conversely, is not bound by time or space; he is infinitely powerful and holy. Humans simply do not share God's level of understanding, as he says in Isaiah 55:8: "My thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways." Joseph had no idea when he was sold into slavery in Genesis 37 that it would result in his elevation to authority in Pharaoh's court as well as in the deliverance of his family. Yet in Genesis 50:20, Joseph makes a statement to his brothers that reveals a humble and wonderful shift in perspective: "You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result."

Because of our limited understanding of God's specific purposes, we should be humble about asserting that we know exactly what God is doing in history, except in matters such as those revealed in Scripture. In some cases, we may safely assert that God was moving in a certain event, or in a person's life, including our own. Seminal events in church history, such as the Reformation of the sixteenth century, or the Great Awakening of the eighteenth century, have obvious marks of God's providence, as do heroic Christian lives such those of Lottie Moon, the missionary to nineteenth-century China, or the great revival preacher Billy Graham. Of course, signs of God's providential role never mean that the event or person in question is sinless or perfect, unless the person in view is Christ himself.

Understanding God's role in other historical episodes, such as the creation of the United States, requires more reflection and caution. Many American Christians eagerly assert that America's founding was a special work of God's providence. Indeed, a number of the Founding Fathers saw it that way as well. We must certainly agree that America's independence from Britain, just as with any similar political transformation, happened by God's sovereign permission. But we must also remember that God's primary purpose in history is the building of his kingdom, not the building of a nation (outside of biblical Israel).

Similarly, we must be cautious about asserting that we understand God's purposes in allowing natural disasters or the acts of sinful people. In the wake of events such as the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, or Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans in 2005, certain Christians said these events were products of God's wrath. But other Christians contended that we are not given such direct insight into the workings of God's providence, absent the divine knowledge reserved for the Bible's prophetic authors. If New Orleans, for instance, was subject to God's judgment, then why not other American cities? And what of the godly people and churches that were devastated by the storm and floods? Does every hurricane represent God's judgment? Or just particularly devastating ones? The more we think about such questions, the harder it is for us, with our restricted vision, to know just what to make of such events from the divine perspective.

Though God does not permit us to understand the purpose for everything that happens in history, Scripture does certainly give assurance that God controls it all. It also tells us about God's most important purposes in history, especially about the redemption of believers in Jesus Christ and the building of the kingdom of God to his glory.

THOMAS S. KIDD

43 The temple servants † included

Ziha's descendants, Hasupha's descendants,
Tabbaoth's descendants, 44 Keros's descendants,
Siaha's descendants, Padon's descendants,
45 Lebanah's descendants, Hagabah's descendants,
Akkub's descendants, 46 Hagab's descendants,
Shalmai's † descendants, Hanan's descendants,
47 Giddel's descendants, Gahar's descendants,
Reaiah's descendants, 48 Rezin's descendants,
Nekoda's descendants, Gazzam's descendants,
49 Uzza's descendants, Paseah's descendants,
Besai's descendants, 50 Asnah's descendants,
Meunim's † descendants, Nephusim's † descendants,
51 Bakbuk's descendants, Hakupha's descendants,
Harhur's descendants, 52 Bazluth's descendants,
Mehida's descendants, Harsha's descendants,
53 Barkos's descendants, Sisera's descendants,
Temah's descendants, 54 Neziah's descendants,
and Hatipha's descendants.

55 The descendants of Solomon's servants † included
Sotai's descendants, Hassophereth's descendants,
Peruda's descendants, 56 Jaalah's descendants,
Darkon's descendants, Giddel's descendants,
57 Shephatiah's descendants, Hattil's descendants,
Pochereth-hazzebaim's descendants, and Ami's descendants.
58 All the temple servants

and the descendants of Solomon's servants 392.

59 The following are those who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addan, and Immer but were unable to prove that their ancestral families † and their lineage were Israelite:

60 Delaiah's descendants,
Tobiah's descendants,
Nekoda's descendants 652

61 and from the descendants of the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, the descendants of Hakkoz, the descendants of Barzillai — who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and who bore their name. 62 These searched for their entries in the genealogical records, but they could not be found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood. 63 The governor † ordered them not to eat the most holy things until there was a priest who could consult the Urim and Thummim. †

64 The whole combined assembly numbered 42,360

65 not including their 7,337 male and female servants,
and their 200 male and female singers. †

66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules,

67 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys.

GIFTS FOR THE WORK

68 After they arrived at the LORD's house in Jerusalem, some of the family heads gave freewill offerings † for the house of God in order to have it rebuilt on its original site. 69 Based on what they could give, they gave 61,000 gold coins, † 6,250 pounds † of silver, and 100 priestly garments to the treasury † for the project. 70 The priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, temple servants, and some of the people settled in their towns, and the rest of Israel settled in their towns. †

2:1 Nebuchadnezzar reigned 605–562 BC **2:2** Lit *the men of the people of Israel* **2:46** Alt Hb tradition reads *Shamlai's* **2:50** Alt Hb tradition reads *Meinim's* **2:50** Alt Hb tradition reads *Nephisim's* **2:59** Lit *that the house of their fathers* **2:69** Or *drachmas*, or *darics* **2:69** Lit *5,000 minas*

2:1-70 Neh 7:6-73 **2:1** 2Ch 36:17-20 **2:2** 1Ch 3:19; Ezr 3:2; Hg 1:1; Zch 4:6 **2:2** Hg 1:1; Zch 3:1-10 **2:2** Neh 12:1 **2:3** Ezr 8:3; 10:25; Neh 3:25 **2:13** Ezr 8:13 **2:21** Mc 5:2; Mt 2:1,6 **2:26** Jr 31:15; Mt 2:18 **2:28** Gn 12:8; Jos 7:2; 8:9 **2:34** Jos 4:19; 5:13; 6:1-25 **2:41** 1Ch 25:1; 2Ch 5:12; 35:15 **2:42** 1Ch 9:17-32; Neh 12:25-26 **2:43** Ezr 8:20 **2:55** Neh 11:3 **2:63** Ezr 6:7; Neh 5:14; Hg 1:1 **2:63** Ex 28:30; Lv 8:8; Nm 27:21; Neh 7:65 **2:65** 2Ch 35:25 **2:68** Nm 15:3; Ezr 1:4 **2:69** Ezr 8:33-34 **2:70** 1Ch 9:2; Neh 11:3

2:59 The preservation of **Israelite** identity as set apart to God and separate from other nations was an important issue for those who had returned (see also vv. 62-63) since it related to obedience to the law of Moses (9:1-3; 10:1-11; see the note on Neh 10:28-39).

SACRIFICE RESTORED

3 When the seventh month arrived, † and the Israelites were in their towns, the people gathered as one in Jerusalem. † 2 Jeshua son of Jozadak and his brothers the priests along with Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel † and his brothers began to build the altar of Israel's God in order to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. †
3 They set up the altar on its foundation and offered burnt offerings for the morning and evening on it to the LORD even though they feared the surrounding peoples. † 4 They celebrated the Festival of Shelters as prescribed, and offered burnt offerings each day, based on the number specified by ordinance for each festival day. † 5 After that, they offered the regular burnt offering and the offerings for the beginning of each month † † and for all the LORD's appointed holy occasions, as well as the freewill offerings brought to † the LORD.
6 On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, † even though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.
7 They gave money to the stonecutters and artisans, and gave food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so they would bring cedar wood from Lebanon to Joppa by sea, † according to the authorization given them by King Cyrus of Persia. †

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

8 In the second month of the second year after they arrived at God's house in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jozadak, † and the rest of their brothers, including the priests, the Levites, and all who had returned to Jerusalem from the captivity, began to build. They appointed the Levites who were twenty years old or more to supervise the work on the LORD's house. †
9 Jeshua with his sons and brothers, Kadmiel with his sons, and the sons of Judah † and of Henadad, with their sons and brothers, the Levites, † joined together to supervise those working on the house of God.

TEMPLE FOUNDATION COMPLETED

TEMPLE FOUNDATION COMPLETED

10 When the builders had laid the foundation of the LORD's temple, the priests, dressed in their robes and holding trumpets, and the Levites descended from Asaph, † holding cymbals, took their positions to praise the LORD, as King David of Israel had instructed. † 11 They sang with praise and thanksgiving to the LORD: "For he is good; his faithful love to Israel endures forever." † Then all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD because the foundation of the LORD's house had been laid. †

12 But many of the older priests, Levites, and family heads, who had seen the first temple, wept loudly when they saw the foundation of this temple, † but many others shouted joyfully. 13 The people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shouting from that of the † weeping, † because the people were shouting so loudly. And the sound was heard far away.

3:5 Lit *for the new moons* **3:5** Lit *well as those of everyone making a freewill offering to* **3:9** Or *Hodaviah* ; Neh 7:43; 1 Esdras 5:58 **3:13** Lit *the people*

3:1 Lv 23:23-43; Nm 29:1-38 **3:1** Neh 7:73–8:1 **3:2** Ezr 3:8; 5:2; Hg 1:1; 2:21,23 **3:2** Ex 27:1-8 **3:3** Ezr 4:4 **3:4** Lv 23:33-43; Nm 29:12-38; Neh 8:13-18; Zch 14:16 **3:5** Nm 28:11-14; 1Sm 20:5 **3:6** Lv 23:23-25; Nm 29:1-6 **3:7** 1Kg 5:1-11; 2Ch 2:3-16 **3:7** Ezr 1:2; 6:3-5 **3:8** Ezr 4:3; 5:2; Hg 1:1 **3:8** 1Ch 23:4,24 **3:9** Ezr 2:40 **3:10** Ezr 2:41 **3:10** 1Ch 6:31; 25:1,6; 2Ch 29:25-26; Neh 12:24,45 **3:11** 1Ch 16:34; 2Ch 5:13; 7:3; Neh 12:31 **3:11** Hg 2:18; Zch 4:9 **3:12** Hg 2:3 **3:13** Ps 126:5-6

3:1-5 Two important leaders for this community of returnees were **Jeshua son of Jozadak** and **Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel** (see also v. 8; 2:2; 4:2-3; 5:3). Jeshua (also called Joshua) was the high priest, and Zerubbabel was the governor and a descendant of David (see Hg 1:1). They led the effort to rebuild the temple by starting with the **altar**, where they began to offer sacrifices to God. **The surrounding peoples** would be a source of trouble for this Israelite community (see 4:1-16).

3:8-9 Several months after the altar was built and the sacrifices reinstituted (v. 1), the Israelites **began to build** the rest of the temple. They had also made arrangements to bring **stonecutters**, **artisans**, and **cedar wood** (v. 7).

3:10-13 The laying of the temple foundation was a momentous occasion and was accompanied by music and celebration (see "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*). Nevertheless, this joyous response was mixed with a sorrowful one, which was expressed by the older people who had seen Solomon's temple (v. 12). While laying the foundation was a positive development, it drew attention to the fact that the new structure would pale in comparison to Solomon's glorious temple (see also Hg 2:3). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah have multiple instances of such tensions between positive developments and signs that not all was well (see also Ezr 9–10; Neh 5:1-13; 9:36-37; 13:4-28).

OPPOSITION TO REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

4 When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin † heard that the returned exiles † † were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, 2 they

approached Zerubbabel and the family heads and said to them, “Let us build with you, for we also worship your God and have been sacrificing to him † since the time King Esar-haddon of Assyria brought us here.” †
3 But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the other heads of Israel’s families answered them, “You may have no part with us in building a house for our God, † since we alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia has commanded us.” † 4 Then the people who were already in the land † discouraged † the people of Judah and made them afraid † to build. 5 They also bribed officials to act against them to frustrate their plans † throughout the reign of King Cyrus of Persia and until the reign of King Darius of Persia. †

OPPOSITION TO REBUILDING THE CITY

6 At the beginning of the reign of Ahasuerus, † the people who were already in the land † wrote an accusation against the residents of Judah and Jerusalem.
7 During the time of King Artaxerxes of Persia, † Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his colleagues wrote to King Artaxerxes. The letter was written in Aramaic † and translated. †

8 Rehum the chief deputy and Shimshai the scribe † wrote a letter to King Artaxerxes concerning Jerusalem as follows:

9 From Rehum † the chief deputy, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their colleagues — the judges and magistrates † from Tripolis, Persia, Erech, Babylon, Susa † (that is, the people of Elam), † 10 and the rest of the peoples whom the great and illustrious Ashurbanipal † deported and settled in the cities of Samaria † and the region west of the Euphrates River. †
11 This is the text of the letter they sent to him:
To King Artaxerxes from your servants, the men from the region west of the Euphrates River: 12 Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came from you have returned to us at Jerusalem. They are rebuilding that rebellious and evil city, finishing its walls, and repairing its foundations. 13 Let it now be known to the king that if that city is rebuilt and its walls are finished, † they will not pay tribute, duty, or land tax, † and the royal revenue † will suffer. 14 Since we

have taken an oath of loyalty to the king, † and it is not right for us to witness his dishonor, we have sent to inform the king 15 that a search should be made in your fathers' record books. † In these record books you will discover and verify that the city is a rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces. There have been revolts in it since ancient times. That is why this city was destroyed. 16 We advise the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are finished, you will not have any possession west of the Euphrates.

ARTAXERXES'S REPLY

17 The king sent a reply to his chief deputy Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their colleagues living in Samaria and elsewhere in the region west of the Euphrates River:
Greetings.

18 The letter you sent us has been translated and read † † in my presence. 19 I issued a decree and a search was conducted. It was discovered that this city has had uprisings against kings since ancient times, and there have been rebellions and revolts in it. 20 Powerful kings have also ruled over Jerusalem and exercised authority over the whole region west of the Euphrates River, and tribute, duty, and land tax were paid to them. 21 Therefore, issue an order for these men to stop, so that this city will not be rebuilt until a further decree has been pronounced by me. † 22 See that you not neglect this matter. Otherwise, the damage will increase and the royal interests † will suffer.

23 As soon as the text of King Artaxerxes's letter was read to Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their colleagues, † they immediately went to the Jews in Jerusalem and forcibly stopped them.

REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE RESUMED

24 Now the construction of God's house in Jerusalem had stopped and remained at a standstill until the second year of the reign of King Darius of Persia. †

4:1 Lit *the sons of the exile* **4:2** Alt Hb tradition reads *have not been sacrificing* **4:4** Lit *people of the land*, also in v. 6 **4:4** Lit *weakened the hands of* **4:7** Ezr 4:8–6:18 is written in Aramaic. **4:9** Lit *Then Rehum* **4:9** Or *ambassadors* **4:9** Aramaic obscure **4:10** Lit *Osnappar* **4:13** Aramaic obscure **4:14** Lit *have eaten the salt of the palace* **4:18** Or *been read clearly* **4:22** Lit *the kings*

4:1 Neh 2:19-20 **4:1** Ezr 1:11; 2:1 **4:2** 2Kg 17:24,27-32; 19:37; Is 37:38 **4:3** Neh 2:20 **4:3** Ezr 1:1-4 **4:4** Ezr 3:3 **4:5** Neh 6:12-13; 13:2 **4:5** Ezr 5:5; 6:1 **4:6** Est 1:1; Dn 9:1 **4:6** Ezr 3:3 **4:7** Ezr 7:1; Neh 2:1 **4:7** Dn 1:4; 2:4 **4:8-9** Ezr 4:17,23-24 **4:9** Neh 1:1; Est 1:2; Dn 8:2 **4:10** 2Kg 17:24 **4:10-11** Ezr 4:16-17,20 **4:13** Ezr 4:16,21; Neh 1:3 **4:13** Ezr 4:20; 7:24 **4:15** Ezr 5:17; 6:1 **4:18** Neh 8:8 **4:21** Neh 2:5,7-8 **4:23** Ezr 4:8-10,17

4:24 Ezr 4:1-5; Hg 1:1,14

4:1-5 Potential opposition to the building of the temple from neighbors had been hinted at earlier (3:3) and manifested after their help was refused. Despite appearances, these neighbors were **enemies of Judah and Benjamin.** They attempted to discourage the builders and even **bribed officials** in order to **frustrate their plans** (vv. 4-5; see also the note on Neh 2:10). One example was the accusatory letter sent to Artaxerxes, alleging that Jerusalem had a history of rebellion and its reconstruction would be harmful to the kingdom (vv. 6-16).

4:21-24 As a result of the letter (vv. 11-16), Artaxerxes investigated further and found that Jerusalem had been both powerful and troublesome in the past (vv. 19-20). He then ordered the builders **to stop.**

5 But when the prophets Haggai and Zechariah son of Iddo † prophesied
to the Jews who were in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of
Israel who was over them, 2 Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Jeshua son
of Jozadak † began to rebuild God's house in Jerusalem. The prophets of God †
were with them, helping them.
3 At that time Tattenai the governor of the region west of the Euphrates River,
Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues † came to the Jews and asked, "Who gave
you the order to rebuild this temple and finish this structure?" † † 4 They also
asked them, "What are the names of the workers † who are constructing this
building?" 5 But God was watching † over † the Jewish elders. These men
wouldn't stop them until a report was sent to Darius, so that they could receive
written instructions about this matter.

THE LETTER TO DARIUS

6 This is the text of the letter that Tattenai the governor of the region west of the
Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues, the officials in the
region, sent to King Darius. 7 They sent him a report, written as follows:
To King Darius:
All greetings.
8 Let it be known to the king that we went to the house of the great God in the
province of Judah. It is being built with cut † stones, and its beams are being set
in the walls. This work is being done diligently and succeeding through the
people's efforts. † 9 So we questioned the elders and asked, "Who gave you the
order to rebuild this temple and finish this structure?" 10 We also asked them
for their names, so that we could write down the names of their leaders for your
information.

11 This is the reply they gave us: We are the servants of the God of the heavens
and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, which
a great king of Israel built and finished. † 12 But since our fathers angered the
God of the heavens, he handed them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,
the Chaldean, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon. †
13 However, in the first year of King Cyrus of Babylon, he issued a decree to
rebuild the house of God. † 14 He also took from the temple in Babylon the gold
and silver articles of God's house that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the
temple in Jerusalem and carried them to the temple in Babylon. † He released
them from the temple in Babylon to a man named Sheshbazzar, the governor by
the appointment of King Cyrus. † 15 Cyrus told him, "Take these articles, put
them in the temple in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its
original site." † 16 Then this same Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundation of
God's house in Jerusalem. † It has been under construction from that time until
now, † but it has not been completed.
17 So if it pleases the king, let a search of the royal archives † in Babylon be
conducted to see if it is true that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to rebuild
the house of God in Jerusalem. † Let the king's decision regarding this matter
be sent to us. †

5:3 Or *finish its furnishings*, also in v. 9 **5:4** One Aramaic ms, LXX, Syr; MT reads *Then we told them exactly what the names of the men were* **5:5** Lit *But the eye of their God was* **5:8** Or *huge* **5:17** Lit *treasure house*

5:1 Ezr 6:14; Hg 1:1; Zch 1:1 **5:2** Ezr 3:2,8,10 **5:2** Ezr 6:14 **5:3** Ezr 6:6,13 **5:3** Ezr 1:1-4; 5:9,13; 6:3 **5:5** Ezr 7:6,9,28; 8:18,22,31 **5:8** Ezr 6:3-4 **5:11** 1Kg 6:1,37-38 **5:12** 2Ch 36:19-20 **5:13** 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4 **5:14** 2Ch 36:7,10,18; Ezr 1:7; Dn 5:2-3 **5:14** Ezr 1:8,11 **5:15** Ezr 6:5 **5:16** Ezr 3:10 **5:16** Ezr 5:1-5 **5:17** 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4 **5:17** Ezr 6:1-12

5:1-2 The construction of the temple had been stopped (see previous note), but it restarted through the prophetic ministry of **Haggai** and **Zechariah.** Zerubbabel the governor and Jeshua the high priest led the renewed effort (see the note on 3:1-5).

5:3-5 Naturally, the restarting of the temple project caught the attention of **Tattenai the governor of the region.** Nevertheless, **God was watching over the Jewish elders**, and the builders were allowed to continue until an inquiry had been made with **Darius** the king.

5:13-16 The Israelites appealed to Cyrus' **decree** (1:1-4) to explain why they had restarted their work on the temple. They reminded Tattenai and his associates that Cyrus had even brought out the temple **articles** that had been taken by Nebuchadnezzar to be put back in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

DARIUS'S SEARCH

6 King Darius gave the order, and they searched † in the library of Babylon in the archives. † † 2 But it was in the fortress of Ecbatana in the province of Media † that a scroll was found with this record written on it:

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, he issued a decree † concerning the house of God in Jerusalem: Let the house be rebuilt as a place for offering sacrifices, and let its original foundations be retained. † Its height is to be ninety feet † and its width ninety feet, † 4 with three layers of cut † stones and one of timber. † The cost is to be paid from the royal treasury. † † 5 The gold and silver articles of God's house that Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and carried to Babylon must also be returned. They are to be brought to the temple in Jerusalem where they belong † and put into the house of God. †

DARIUS'S DECREE

6 Therefore, you must stay away from that place, Tattenai governor of the region west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and your † colleagues, the officials in the region. † 7 Leave the construction of the house of God alone. Let the governor † and elders of the Jews rebuild this house of God on its original site.

8 I hereby issue a decree concerning what you are to do, so that the elders of the Jews can rebuild the house of God: The cost is to be paid in full to these men out of the royal revenues † from the taxes of the region west of the Euphrates River, so that the work will not stop. 9 Whatever is needed — young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings to the God of the heavens, or wheat, salt, wine, and oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem — let it be given to them every day without fail, † 10 so that they can offer sacrifices of pleasing aroma to the God of the heavens and pray for the life of the king and his sons. †

11 I also issue a decree concerning any man who interferes with this directive: Let a beam be torn from his house and raised up; he will be impaled on it, and his house will be made into a garbage dump because of this offense. † 12 May the God who caused his name to dwell there † overthrow any king or people

who dares † to harm or interfere with this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have issued the decree. Let it be carried out diligently.
13 Then Tattenai governor of the region west of the Euphrates River, Shethar-bozenai, and their colleagues † diligently carried out what King Darius had decreed. 14 So the Jewish elders continued successfully with the building under the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah son of Iddo. † They finished the building according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, † Darius, and King Artaxerxes † of Persia. 15 This house was completed on the third day of the month of Adar † in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

TEMPLE DEDICATION AND THE PASSOVER

16 Then the Israelites, including the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles, celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. 17 For the dedication of God's house they offered one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, and four hundred lambs, as well as twelve male goats † as a sin offering for all Israel — one for each Israelite tribe. 18 They also appointed the priests by their divisions and the Levites by their groups to the service of God in Jerusalem, according to what is written in the book of Moses. †
19 The exiles † observed the Passover † on the fourteenth day of the first month. 20 All of the priests and Levites were ceremonially clean, because they had purified themselves. They killed the Passover lamb for themselves, their priestly brothers, and all the exiles. † 21 The Israelites who had returned from exile † ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the uncleanness of the Gentiles of the land † † in order to worship the LORD, the God of Israel. 22 They observed the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days † with joy, because the LORD had made them joyful, having changed the Assyrian king's attitude toward them, so that he supported them † in the work on the house of the God of Israel. †

6:1 Lit *Babylon where the treasures were stored* **6:3** Lit *be brought forth* **6:3** Lit *60 cubits* **6:4** Or *huge* **6:4** Lit *the king's house* **6:5** Lit *Jerusalem, to its place,* **6:6** Lit *their* **6:12** Lit *who stretches out its hand* **6:21** Lit *land to them* **6:22** Lit *strengthened their hands*
6:1 Ezr 5:17 **6:1** Ezr 4:15 **6:2** Dn 9:1; Ac 2:9 **6:3** 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4 **6:3** 1Kg 6:2 **6:4** 1Kg 6:36; Ezr 5:8 **6:4** Ezr 3:7 **6:5** Ezr 1:7 **6:6** Ezr 5:3,6; 6:13 **6:7** Neh 5:14; Hg 1:1 **6:8** Ezr 7:20 **6:9** Ezr 7:17,20-22 **6:10**

Ezr 7:23; 1Tm 2:1-2 **6:11** Est 2:23; 9:14 **6:12** Dt 12:5; 2Ch 6:2 **6:13** Ezr 5:3,6; 6:6 **6:14** Ezr 5:1; Hg 1:1; Zch 1:1 **6:14** Ezr 1:1-4; 6:3-5 **6:14** Ezr 7:12-26 **6:15** Est 3:7 **6:16-17** 2Ch 7:4-5 **6:18** Ex 29; Nm 18; 1Ch 24 **6:19** Ezr 1:11; 2:1 **6:19** Ex 12:1-11; Nm 28:16 **6:20** 2Ch 30:15-17 **6:21** Ezr 1:11; 2:1 **6:21** Ezr 9:11; Neh 10:28 **6:22** Ex 12:14-20; Dt 16:3-8 **6:22** Ezr 6:8-12

6:6-12 Darius launched a search for the decree of Cyrus, which was found (5:17–6:5). As a result, he commanded Tattenai and his colleagues to stay away from Jerusalem and not to obstruct the construction project (vv. 6-7). Moreover, the project was to be funded by the taxes of their region and whatever animals were needed were to be supplied to them (vv. 8-10). Anyone who disobeyed these commands would face the severest of punishments (vv. 11-12). The Lord was with his people in this effort and was watching over them so that the temple was completed (vv. 14-15).

6:16-17 The dedication of the rebuilt temple was done **with joy.** Although many of those who had returned were from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi (see 1:5; 3:8-9; 4:1), the offering of **twelve male goats** showed their concern for all twelve tribes. Other passages show this concern for the unity of the nation as well (see also 2:2,70; 3:1; 6:21; 8:35). The prophets had predicted the eventual regathering of the whole nation (see Ezk 37:15-24; Hs 1:11).

6:22 The Lord's presence with the Israelites who had returned is emphasized here. Previous passages had referred to his involvement with them (1:1; 5:1,5; see also 7:6,9,27-28; 8:18,21-23,31).

EZRA'S ARRIVAL

7 After these events, during the reign of King Artaxerxes † of Persia, Ezra —

Seraiah's † son, Azariah's son,
Hilkiah's † son, 2 Shallum's son,
Zadok's † son, Ahitub's son,
3 Amariah's son, Azariah's son,
Meraioth's son, 4 Zerahiah's son,
Uzzi's son, Bukki's son,
5 Abishua's son, Phinehas's son,
Eleazar's son, the chief priest Aaron's son †

6 — came up from Babylon. He was a scribe skilled in the law of Moses, † which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he requested † because the hand of the LORD his God was on him. †
7 Some of the Israelites, priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and temple

servants † accompanied him to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.
8 Ezra † came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, during the seventh year of the king. 9 He began the journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month † and arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month † since the gracious hand of his God was on him. † 10 Now Ezra had determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach † its statutes and ordinances in Israel.

LETTER FROM ARTAXERXES

11 This is the text of the letter King Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest and scribe, an expert in matters of the LORD's commands and statutes for Israel: †
12 Artaxerxes, king of kings, † to Ezra the priest, an expert in the law of the God of the heavens: Greetings.
13 I issue a decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including their priests and Levites, who want to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. † 14 You are sent by the king and his seven counselors † to evaluate Judah and Jerusalem according to the law of your God, which is in your possession. 15 You are also to bring the silver and gold the king and his counselors have willingly given to the God of Israel, † whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, † 16 and all the silver and gold you receive throughout the province of Babylon, together with the freewill offerings given by the people and the priests to the house of their God in Jerusalem. † 17 Then you are to be diligent to buy with this money bulls, rams, and lambs, along with their grain and drink offerings, and offer them on the altar at the house of your God in Jerusalem. † 18 You may do whatever seems best to you and your brothers with the rest of the silver and gold, according to the will of your God. 19 Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles given to you for the service of the house of your God. † 20 You may use the royal treasury † to pay for anything else needed for the house of your God. †
21 I, King Artaxerxes, issue a decree to all the treasurers in the region west of the Euphrates River: †

Whatever Ezra the priest, an expert in the law of the God of the heavens, asks of you must be provided in full, † 22 up to 7,500 pounds † of silver, 500 bushels † of wheat, 550 gallons † of wine, 550 gallons of oil, and salt without limit. † 23 Whatever is commanded by the God of heaven must be done diligently for the house of the God of the heavens, so that wrath will not fall on the realm of the king and his sons. † 24 Be advised that you do not have authority to impose tribute, duty, and land tax on any priests, Levites, singers, doorkeepers, temple servants, or other servants of this house of God.

25 And you, Ezra, according to † God's wisdom that you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to judge all the people in the region west of the Euphrates who know the laws of your God and to teach anyone who does not know them. † 26 Anyone who does not keep the law of your God and the law of the king, let the appropriate judgment be executed against him, whether death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment. †

27 Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who has put it into the king's mind † to glorify the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, † 28 and who has shown favor to me before the king, † his counselors, and all his powerful officers. So I took courage because I was strengthened by the hand of the LORD my God, † † and I gathered Israelite leaders to return with me. †

7:8 LXX, Syr, Vg read *They* **7:11** Ezr 7:12-26 is written in Aramaic. **7:20** Lit *the king's house* **7:22** Lit *100 talents* **7:22** Lit *100 cors* **7:22** Lit *100 baths* **7:22** Lit *without instruction* **7:25** Lit *to your* **7:28** Lit *because the hand of the Lord my God was on me*

7:1 Ezr 4:7; 6:14; Neh 2:1 **7:1** 2Kg 25:18-21; Jr 52:24-27 **7:1** 2Kg 22:4; 23:4 **7:2** 1Sm 8:17; 1Kg 1:7-8; 2:35 **7:1-5** 1Ch 6:3-15 **7:6** Ezr 7:11-12,21 **7:6** Neh 2:4-8 **7:6** Ezr 7:28; 8:22; Neh 2:8,18 **7:7** Ezr 2:1-58; Neh 7:6-60 **7:9** Ezr 8:15,21,31 **7:9** Ezr 8:32 **7:9** Ezr 7:28; 8:18,31; Neh 2:8,18 **7:10** Neh 8:1-8 **7:12** Ezk 26:7; Dn 2:37 **7:13** Ezr 1:3 **7:14** Est 1:14 **7:15** Hg 2:8 **7:15** Dt 12:5-6; 2Ch 6:2 **7:16** Ex 3:22; Ezr 1:6 **7:17** Nm 15:1-14; Ezr 6:9 **7:19** Ezr 8:33 **7:20** Ezr 6:4,8; 7:22-23 **7:21** Ezr 4:10; 7:25 **7:21** Ezr 6:8 **7:23** Ezr 6:10 **7:25** Ezr 7:10; Neh 8:1-3,8 **7:26** Ezr 6:11 **7:27** Ezr 6:22 **7:27** Is 60:7,13 **7:28** Ezr 9:9 **7:28** Ezr 7:6; 8:18 **7:28** Ezr 8:1-14,16

7:1-6 Ezra appears here for the first time in the book that bears his name. His genealogy shows that he was from the priestly line (vv. 1-5). He was also **a scribe skilled in the law of Moses**, who had come from Babylon and enjoyed the favor of both the Persian king and of God (see also vv. 11-12).

7:10 Having presumably lived in exile without a temple for his whole life (see v. 6), Ezra did not have to fulfill priestly duties related to temple service (see also the note on 1Ch 23:26-32) and instead devoted himself wholeheartedly to **study**, to **obey**, and to **teach** the Scriptures.

7:12-20 This decree was in the same spirit as the earlier decrees of Cyrus (1:1-4) and Darius (6:3-12). Israelites were permitted to go with Ezra back to Jerusalem (v. 13), and the temple restoration was to be

well-supported (vv. 15-20). Ezra himself was highly respected as **an expert in the law of the God of the heavens** who could rightly apply it to the situation in Judah and Jerusalem (v. 14).

7:21-24 Artaxerxes had already mentioned that the "royal treasury" would supply whatever was necessary for the temple and its service (v. 20), and here he specifically ordered **all the treasurers in the region west of the Euphrates** to ensure this (see also 6:8-9). Like Darius (6:10), Artaxerxes desired God's favor on him and his sons (v. 23). He even commanded that tax not be imposed on the **priests, Levites**, and others involved with the temple service.

7:25-26 Ezra, the respected priest and biblical scholar, was to appoint leaders in that region and to teach God's laws to **anyone who does not know them.** Along with Persian law, this law was to be enforced.

7:27-28 Ezra recognized God's work in granting him and the Israelites favor before the Persian king. For other examples of God's blessing on the Israelites of this time, see the note on 6:22.

THOSE RETURNING WITH EZRA

8 These are the family heads and the genealogical records of those who returned with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes: †

2 Gershom, from Phinehas's descendants;
Daniel, from Ithamar's descendants;
Hattush, from David's descendants,
3 who was of Shecaniah's descendants; †
Zechariah, from Parosh's † descendants,
and 150 men † with him who were registered by genealogy;
4 Eliehoenai son of Zerahiah
from Pahath-moab's descendants, †
and 200 men with him;
5 Shecaniah † son of Jahaziel
from Zattu's descendants,
and 300 men with him;
6 Ebed son of Jonathan
from Adin's descendants, †
and 50 men with him;
7 Jeshaiah son of Athaliah

from Elam’s descendants,
and 70 men with him;
8 Zebadiah son of Michael
from Shephatiah’s descendants,
and 80 men with him;
9 Obadiah son of Jehiel
from Joab’s descendants,
and 218 men with him;
10 Shelomith † son of Josiphiah
from Bani’s descendants,
and 160 men with him;
11 Zechariah son of Bebai
from Bebai’s descendants,
and 28 men with him;
12 Johanan son of Hakkatan
from Azgad’s descendants,
and 110 men with him;
13 these are the last ones, from Adonikam’s descendants, †
and their names are
Eliphelet, Jeuel, and Shemaiah,
and 60 men with them;
14 Uthai and Zaccur †
from Bigvai’s descendants,
and 70 men with them.

15 I gathered them at the river † that flows to Ahava, † and we camped there for three days. I searched among the people and priests, but found no Levites † there. 16 Then I summoned the leaders: Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan,

Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and Meshullam, † as well as the teachers
Joiarib and Elnathan. 17 I sent them to Iddo, the leader at Casiphia, with a
message for † him and his brothers, the temple servants † at Casiphia, that they
should bring us ministers for the house of our God. 18 Since the gracious hand of
our God was on us, † they brought us Sherebiah † — a man of insight from the
descendants of Mahli, a descendant of Levi son of Israel — along with his sons
and brothers, 18 men, 19 plus Hashabiah, † along with Jeshaiah, from the
descendants of Merari, and his brothers and their sons, 20 men. 20 There were
also 220 of the temple servants, † who had been appointed by David and the
leaders for the work of the Levites. All were identified by name.

PREPARING TO RETURN

21 I proclaimed a fast † by the Ahava River, † so that we might humble
ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us, our dependents,
and all our possessions. 22 I did this because I was ashamed to ask the king for
infantry and cavalry to protect us from enemies during the journey, since we had
told him, “The hand of our God is gracious to all who seek him, but his fierce
anger is against all who abandon him.” † 23 So we fasted and pleaded with our
God about this, and he was receptive to our prayer.

24 I selected twelve of the leading priests, along with Sherebiah, † Hashabiah,
and ten of their brothers. 25 I weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the
articles — the contribution for the house of our God that the king, his
counselors, his leaders, and all the Israelites who were present had offered. 26 I
weighed out to them 24 tons † of silver, silver articles weighing 7,500
pounds, † 7,500 pounds of gold, 27 twenty gold bowls worth a thousand gold
coins, † and two articles of fine gleaming bronze, as valuable as gold. †
28 Then I said to them, “You are holy to the LORD, and the articles are holy. The
silver and gold are a freewill offering † to the LORD God of your fathers.
29 Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the LORD’s
house before the leading priests, Levites, and heads of the Israelite families in
Jerusalem.” 30 So the priests and Levites took charge of the silver, the gold, and

the articles that had been weighed out, to bring them to the house of our God in Jerusalem. †

ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

31 We set out from the Ahava River on the twelfth day of the first month to go to Jerusalem. We were strengthened by our God, † † and he kept us from the grasp of the enemy and from ambush along the way. † 32 So we arrived at Jerusalem and rested there for three days. † 33 On the fourth day the silver, the gold, and the articles were weighed out in the house of our God into the care of the priest Meremoth son of Uriah. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with him. The Levites Jozabad † son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui were also with them. 34 Everything was verified by number and weight, and the total weight was recorded at that time.

35 The exiles who had returned from the captivity † offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, and seventy-seven lambs, along with twelve male goats as a sin offering. All this was a burnt offering for the LORD. † 36 They also delivered the king's edicts to the royal satraps and governors of the region west of the Euphrates, † so that they would support the people and the house of God. †

8:3 Or *males* ; also in vv. 4-14 **8:5** LXX, 1 Esdras 8:32; MT reads *the descendants of Shecaniah* **8:10** Some LXX mss, 1 Esdras 8:36; MT reads *the descendants of Shelomith* **8:14** Alt Hb tradition, some LXX mss read *Zabud* **8:15** Or *canal* **8:17** Lit *Casiphia, and I put in their mouth the words to speak to* **8:21** Or *Canal*, also in v. 31 **8:26** Lit *650 talents* **8:26** Lit *100 talents* **8:27** Or *1,000 drachmas*, or *1,000 darics* **8:31** Lit *The hand of our God was on us*

8:1 Ezr 7:7 **8:3** 1Ch 3:22 **8:3** Ezr 2:3; 10:25 **8:4** Ezr 2:6 **8:6** Ezr 2:15; Neh 7:20 **8:13** Ezr 2:13 **8:15** Ezr 8:21,31 **8:15** Ezr 2:40; 7:7 **8:16** Ezr 10:15 **8:17** Ezr 2:43; Neh 7:46 **8:18** Ezr 7:6 **8:18** Ezr 8:24; Neh 8:7 **8:19** Neh 12:24 **8:20** Ezr 2:43; 7:7 **8:21** Is 58:3-8 **8:22** Dt 31:6,17 **8:24** Neh 10:9,11 **8:25-27** Ezr 7:15-20 **8:28** Ezr 1:4; 2:68-69 **8:29-30** Neh 13:4-5,9 **8:31** Ezr 7:9; Neh 2:18 **8:31** Ezr 8:21-22 **8:32** Neh 2:11 **8:33** Neh 11:16 **8:35** Ezr 2:1; 6:16 **8:35** Lv 1:3-15; 2Ch 29:24,27,31-35 **8:36** Ezr 7:21,25 **8:36** Ezr 7:21-24

8:17-20 Ezra realized he had "no Levites" in his traveling group (v. 15) and sent **to Iddo** for some (vv. 16-17). The Lord again demonstrated his favor through the sending of **Sherebiah**, **Hashabiah**, and others (vv. 18-20). These two men and those with them would be made responsible for transporting silver, gold, and temple articles to Jerusalem (vv. 24-30).

8:21-23 Though he could have asked the king for military protection for the journey, Ezra did not because he had mentioned his confidence in God's protection over **all who seek him.** By the Ahava River, Ezra **proclaimed a fast** so that God would indeed grant such protection. Ezra's faith and his humble fast worked together hand-in-hand, and God graciously granted their request (see also v. 31).

8:35 The sacrifice of **twelve bulls for all Israel** showed a concern for the unity of all twelve tribes (see

also the note on 6:16-17).

ISRAEL'S INTERMARRIAGE

9 After these things had been done, the leaders approached me and said:
"The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites have not separated
themselves † from the surrounding peoples whose detestable practices †
are like those of the Canaanites, Hethites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites,
Moabites, Egyptians, and Amorites. † 2 Indeed, the Israelite men † have taken
some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy
seed † has become mixed with the surrounding peoples. † The leaders † and
officials have taken the lead in this unfaithfulness!" † 3 When I heard this
report, I tore my tunic and robe, pulled out some of the hair from my head and
beard, and sat down devastated. †

EZRA'S CONFESSION

4 Everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel † gathered around
me, because of the unfaithfulness of the exiles, † while I sat devastated until the
evening offering. † 5 At the evening offering, I got up from my time of
humiliation, with my tunic and robe torn. Then I fell on my knees and spread out
my hands to the LORD my God. † 6 And I said: †
My God, I am ashamed and embarrassed to lift my face toward you, my God,
because our iniquities are higher than our heads and our guilt is as high as the
heavens. † 7 Our guilt has been terrible from the days of our fathers until the
present. Because of our iniquities we have been handed over, along with our
kings and priests, to the surrounding kings, and to the sword, captivity,
plundering, and open shame, † as it is today. 8 But now, for a brief moment,
grace has come from the LORD our God to preserve a remnant † for us and give
us a stake † in his holy place. Even in our slavery, God has given us a little
relief and light to our eyes. † 9 Though we are slaves, † our God has not
abandoned us in our slavery. He has extended grace to us in the presence of the
Persian kings, † giving us relief, so that we can rebuild the house of our God
and repair its ruins, † to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem.

10 Now, our God, what can we say in light of † this? For we have abandoned
the commands 11 you gave through your servants the prophets, saying: “The
land you are entering to possess is an impure land. The surrounding peoples have
filled it from end to end with their uncleanness by their impurity and detestable
practices. † 12 So do not give your daughters to their sons in marriage or take
their daughters for your sons. † Never pursue their welfare or prosperity, † so
that you will be strong, eat the good things of the land, and leave it as an
inheritance to your sons forever.” 13 After all that has happened to us because of
our evil deeds and terrible guilt — though you, our God, have punished us less
than our iniquities deserve and have allowed us to survive † † — 14 should we
break your commands again and intermarry with the peoples who commit these
detestable practices? † Wouldn’t you become so angry with us that you would
destroy us, leaving neither remnant nor survivor? † 15 LORD God of Israel, you
are righteous, for we survive as a remnant † today. Here we are before you with
our guilt, though no one can stand in your presence because of this. †

9:2 Lit *they* **9:2** Lit *hand of the leaders* **9:10** Lit *say after* **9:13** Lit *and gave us a remnant like this*
9:1 Ezk 5:10-12 **9:1** Dt 12:29-31; Ezr 9:11 **9:1** Gn 15:18; Lv 18:24-30; Dt 7:1 **9:2** Dt 14:2 **9:2** Dt 7:1-4; Ezr 9:12; Neh 13:1-3,23 **9:2** Neh 13:28 **9:3** 2Kg 18:37–19:2; Neh 1:4; Dn 9:3 **9:4** Ezr 10:3; Is 66:2,5 **9:4** Ezr 2:1; 6:16 **9:4** Ex 29:38-39 **9:5** Ex 9:29; Dn 6:10 **9:6-15** Neh 1:5-11; Dn 9:4-19 **9:6** Jr 51:9; Rv 18:5 **9:7** Neh 9:30,36; Dn 9:7 **9:8** Is 10:20-22 **9:8** Is 10:23 **9:8** 1Sm 14:29 **9:9** Neh 9:36 **9:9** 2Kg 25:28; Ezr 6:22 **9:9** Ezr 1:4; 7:12-20 **9:10-11** Dt 12:29-31; Ezr 9:1 **9:12** Dt 7:1-4; Ezr 9:2; Neh 13:23-28 **9:12** Dt 7:3; 23:6 **9:13** Is 10:20-22 **9:14** Ezr 9:1-2; Neh 13:23-28 **9:14** Dt 29:26-28 **9:15** Neh 1:3 **9:15** Ps 130:3

9:6-9 Despite repeated demonstrations of God’s favor (see 8:31 and the note on 6:22), not all was well (see also the note on 3:10-13). Those who had returned, including the priests, Levites, leaders, and officials, had intermarried with the idolatrous surrounding peoples (vv. 1-2; see also the note on Neh 9:1-3). Moses had forbidden this long ago (see the note on Dt 7:1-6), and the sin had repeatedly led to idolatry (see the notes on Jdg 2:20-3:6 and 1Kg 11:1-8)—just as he had warned. The issue had nothing to do with ethnicity, for marriage to foreigners was allowed (see Joseph, Moses, and Boaz). This was an issue of faith: Israel was to be a separate people, committed to fidelity to God’s covenant. Those from other nations were welcome to commit themselves to God and fully join the covenant community (e.g. Rahab, Ruth), but intermarriage without conversion frequently led to apostasy (e.g. Solomon). Ezra was distraught (v. 3), and others “who trembled at the words of the God of Israel” mourned with him over “the unfaithfulness of the exiles” (v. 4). He confessed the Israelites’ guilt before God for their sins (see also vv. 10-15). He also acknowledged that as subjects of Persia they were still **slaves**, even though they had been allowed to return to their land (v. 9; see also the note on Neh 9:32-37). The Israelites were clearly in need of spiritual transformation, just as they had been throughout their history.

SENDING AWAY FOREIGN WIVES

10 While Ezra prayed and confessed, weeping and falling facedown † before the house of God, an extremely large assembly of Israelite men, women, and children gathered around him. The people also wept bitterly. †
2 Then Shecaniah son of Jehiel, † an Elamite, responded to Ezra: “We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the surrounding peoples, † but there is still hope for Israel in spite of this. 3 Let us therefore make a covenant before our God † to send away all the foreign wives and their children, according to the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at the command of our God. † Let it be done according to the law. 4 Get up, for this matter is your responsibility, † and we support you. Be strong and take action! ” †
5 Then Ezra got up and made the leading priests, Levites, and all Israel take an oath to do what had been said; so they took the oath. † 6 Ezra then went from the house of God and walked to the chamber of Jehohanan son of Eliashib, where he spent the night. † He did not eat food or drink water, because he was mourning over the unfaithfulness of the exiles. †
7 They circulated a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the exiles should gather at Jerusalem. 8 Whoever did not come within three days would forfeit all his possessions, † according to the decision of the leaders and elders, and would be excluded † from the assembly of the exiles.
9 So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered in Jerusalem within the three days. On the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people sat in the square at the house of God, † trembling because of this matter and because of the heavy rain. 10 Then the priest Ezra stood up and said to them, “You have been unfaithful by marrying foreign women, adding to Israel’s guilt. † 11 Therefore, make a confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the surrounding peoples and your foreign wives.”
12 Then all the assembly responded loudly: “Yes, we will do as you say! 13 But there are many people, and it is the rainy season. We don’t have the stamina to stay out in the open. This isn’t something that can be done in a day or two, for we have rebelled terribly in this matter. 14 Let our leaders represent the entire assembly. Then let all those in our towns who have married foreign women

come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of each town, in order to avert the fierce anger of our God † concerning † this matter." 15 Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah opposed this, with Meshullam † and Shabbethai the Levite supporting them.

16 The exiles did what had been proposed. The priest Ezra selected men † who were family heads, all identified by name, to represent † their ancestral families. † They convened on the first day of the tenth month to investigate the matter, 17 and by the first day of the first month they had dealt with all the men who had married foreign women.

THOSE MARRIED TO FOREIGN WIVES

18 The following were found to have married foreign women from the descendants of the priests:

from the descendants of Jeshua son of Jozadak and his brothers:
Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19 They pledged † to send
their wives away, and being guilty, they offered a ram from the
flock for their guilt; †

20 Hanani and Zebadiah from Immer's † descendants;
21 Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah
from Harim's † descendants;
22 Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah
from Pashhur's † descendants.

23 The Levites: †

Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah,
and Eliezer.

24 The singers: †

Eliashib.

The gatekeepers: †

Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25 The Israelites: †

Parosh's descendants: † Ramiah, Izziah, Malchijah, Mijamin,
Eleazar, Malchijah, † and Benaiah;
26 Elam's descendants: † Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi,
Jeremoth, and Elijah;
27 Zattu's descendants: † Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth,
Zabad, and Aziza;
28 Bebai's descendants: † Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai,
and Athlai;
29 Bani's descendants: † Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub,
Sheal, and Jeremoth;
30 Pahath-moab's descendants: † Adna, Chelal, Benaiah,
Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh;
31 Harim's descendants: † Eliezer, Isshijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah,
Shimeon, 32 Benjamin, Malluch, and Shemariah;
33 Hashum's descendants: † Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet,
Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei;

34 Bani's descendants: † Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35 Benaiah,
Bedeiah, Cheluhi, 36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37 Mattaniah,
Mattenai, Jaasu, 38 Bani, Binnui, Shimei, 39 Shelemiah, Nathan,
Adaiah, 40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41 Azarel, Shelemiah,

Shemariah, [42] Shallum, Amariah, and Joseph;

[43] Nebo's descendants: † Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel, and Benaiah.

[44] All of these † had married foreign women, and some of the wives had given birth to children. †

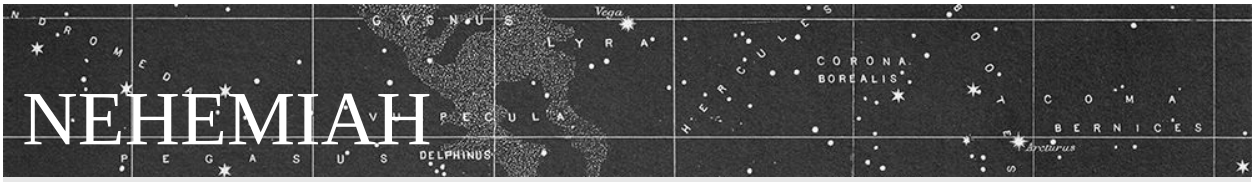
10:6 1 Esdras 9:2, Syr; MT, Vg read *he went* **10:8** Lit *would set apart all his possessions for destruction* **10:14** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *until* **10:16** 1 Esdras 9:16, Syr; MT, Vg read *priest and men were selected* **10:16** Lit *name, for* **10:16** Lit *the house of their fathers* **10:19** Lit *gave their hand* **10:25** Some LXX mss, 1 Esdras 9:26 read *Hashabiah*

10:1 Ezr 9:3,5; Neh 1:4; Dn 9:3-4,20 **10:1** Ezr 3:12-13 **10:2** Ezr 10:26 **10:2** Ezr 9:1-2; 10:18,44; Neh 13:23-28 **10:3** 2Ch 34:31 **10:3** Ezr 9:4 **10:4** Ezr 7:25-26 **10:4** Jos 1:6-9 **10:5** Neh 10:29-30; 13:25 **10:6** Dt 9:18-19 **10:7-8** Ezr 7:26 **10:9** Neh 8:1 **10:10** Ezr 9:1-2; Neh 13:23-27 **10:14** 2Ch 29:10; 30:8 **10:15** Ezr 8:16 **10:19** Lv 5:14–6:7 **10:20** 1Ch 24:14 **10:21** 1Ch 24:8 **10:22** 1Ch 9:12 **10:23** Ezr 2:40 **10:24** Ezr 2:41 **10:24** Ezr 2:42 **10:25-43** Ezr 2:3-35; Neh 7:8-38 **10:25** Ezr 2:3 **10:26** Ezr 2:7; 10:2 **10:27** Ezr 2:8 **10:28** Ezr 2:11 **10:29** Ezr 2:10 **10:30** Ezr 2:6 **10:31** Ezr 2:32 **10:33** Ezr 2:19 **10:34** Ezr 2:10 **10:43** Ezr 2:29 **10:44** Ezr 10:18-43 **10:44** Neh 13:24

10:10-11 Ezra was called upon to lead the effort in sending away these **foreign wives** (see also vv. 2-4). He made the whole nation take an oath to do this (v. 5) and also called a mandatory meeting at Jerusalem for all (vv. 7-9). At this meeting, Ezra confronted them with their sin and commanded them to confess and to send away their foreign women.

10:16-17 Due to weather and the extent of the problem (v. 13), the community was unable to deal with the sin of intermarriage completely on that day (see v. 9). They did, however, set a plan in place involving their leaders (v. 14), which was carried out effectively.

10:18-44 This list drives home the extent and seriousness of the sin of intermarriage among the exiles. Intermarriage among the Israelites who had returned is also mentioned in Nehemiah 13:23-27. As stated in 9:1-2, those guilty of marrying **foreign women** with no desire to align themselves with Israel's God included **priests** and **Levites.** A few **singers** and **gatekeepers** were guilty as well.



NEHEMIAH

INTRODUCTION

See the Introduction to Ezra for Nehemiah's introductory material.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God works on behalf of his people to enable them to accomplish his purposes. He works through kings; he sends good leaders (such as Ezra and Nehemiah). Further, God does not change, even though the circumstances of his people change. The same God who had graciously revealed himself at Mount Sinai as the covenant-making God a thousand years before (ca 1446 BC) still wanted Israel to be in a covenant relationship with him (10:29).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Nehemiah shows that there are really only two kinds of people: those who oppose God and his purposes and those who identify with God and his purposes. Equally evident in this book (as in Leviticus) is the concept that God's holiness requires his redeemed people to live different from the pagans that surround them. Although Ezra and Nehemiah fulfilled different personal roles, each illustrates someone who was wholly committed to God and whom God used to accomplish kingdom purposes.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Nehemiah teaches the doctrine of salvation as clearly as any OT book. It contains no more profound confession of sin at the community level than Nehemiah 9: salvation means acknowledging and turning away from wrongdoing and then clinging steadfastly to God.

1 The words of Nehemiah † son of Hacaliah:

NEWS FROM JERUSALEM

During the month of Chislev † in the twentieth year, † when I was in the fortress city of Susa, † 2 Hanani, † one of my brothers, arrived with men from Judah, and I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant † that had survived the exile. † 3 They said to me, “The remnant in the province, † who survived the exile, are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem’s wall has been broken down, and its gates have been burned.” †

NEHEMIAH’S PRAYER

4 When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying † before the God of the heavens. † 5 I said, †
LORD, the God of the heavens, the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant with those who love him † and keep his commands, † 6 let your eyes be open and your ears be attentive † to hear your servant’s prayer that I now pray to you day and night † for your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins † we have committed against you. Both I and my father’s family have sinned. † 7 We have acted corruptly toward you and have not kept the commands, statutes, and ordinances you gave your servant Moses. † 8 Please remember what you commanded your servant Moses: “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. † 9 But if you return to me and carefully observe my commands, even though your exiles were banished to the farthest horizon, † I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I chose to have my name dwell.” † 10 They are your servants and your people. You redeemed them by your great power and strong hand. † 11 Please, Lord, let your ear be attentive † to the prayer of your servant and to that of your servants who delight to revere your name. Give your servant success today, † and grant him compassion in the presence of this man. † †

At the time, I was the king’s cupbearer. †

1:6 Lit *sins of the Israelites* **1:9** Lit *skies* **1:11** = the king
1:1 Neh 10:1 **1:1** Zch 7:1 **1:1** Ezr 7:1,8; Neh 2:1 **1:1** Est 1:2; Dn 8:2 **1:2** Neh 7:2 **1:2** Ezr 9:8,15; Is 10:20-22 **1:2** Ezr 1:11 **1:3** Ezr 2:1; Neh 11:3 **1:3** Ezr 4:12-13,16; Neh 2:13 **1:4** Ezr 9:3; 10:1; Ps 35:13; Dn 9:3; Lk 2:37; Ac 13:3 **1:4** Ezr 1:2; Neh 2:4 **1:5-11** Dn 9:4-19 **1:5** Dt 6:5; 7:9-11; Rm 8:28 **1:5** Dn 9:4 **1:6** 2Ch 6:40 **1:6** Ps 88:1-2; 2Tm 1:3 **1:6** Dn 9:5,8,20 **1:7** 2Ch 29:6; Dn 9:5-6,11 **1:8** Dt 4:25-27; 28:64; Dn 9:7 **1:9** Dt 30:1-5 **1:10** Dt 9:29; Dn 9:15 **1:11** 2Ch 6:40 **1:11** Gn 24:12 **1:11** Neh 2:1 **1:11** Gn 40:20

1:1 The book of Nehemiah shares many of the same concerns as the book of Ezra, and they have been considered to be one book by some since ancient times. Both books concern the community of Israelites who had returned from exile, and both describe key construction projects (i.e., the temple and the walls of Jerusalem, respectively). Moreover, both mention Ezra teaching the Scriptures to the Israelites (e.g., Ezr 7; Neh 8).

1:2-4 Nehemiah was living in exile in Susa as the royal cupbearer (vv. 1,11) when he inquired **about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant** (the Israelites) who had returned there. He was deeply grieved to learn they were **in great trouble and disgrace**, as the city wall was **broken down** and the gates **burned** (2:3). More importantly, he was **fasting and praying**, confessing the sins of Israel and asking God for favor before the king (vv. 5-11; see also 2:4; the note on 4:4-5).

NEHEMIAH SENT TO JERUSALEM

2 During the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, †
when wine was set before him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I
had never been sad in his presence, 2 so the king said to me, “Why are
you † sad, when you aren’t sick? This is nothing but sadness of heart.” †
I was overwhelmed with fear 3 and replied to the king, “May the king live
forever! Why should I † not be sad when the city where my ancestors are buried
lies in ruins and its gates have been destroyed by fire? ” †
4 Then the king asked me, “What is your request? ”
So I prayed to the God of the heavens † 5 and answered the king, “If it pleases
the king, and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah and to
the city where my ancestors are buried, † † so that I may rebuild it.” †
6 The king, with the queen seated beside him, asked me, “How long will your
journey take, and when will you return? ” So I gave him a definite time, † and it
pleased the king to send me.
7 I also said to the king: “If it pleases the king, let me have letters written to the
governors of the region west of the Euphrates River, † so that they will grant me
safe passage until I reach Judah. † 8 And let me have a letter written to Asaph,
keeper of the king’s forest, so that he will give me timber to rebuild the gates of
the temple’s fortress, † the city wall, and the home where I will live.” † † The
king granted my requests, for the gracious hand of my God was on me. †
9 I went to the governors of the region west of the Euphrates and gave them the
king’s letters. † The king had also sent officers of the infantry and cavalry with
me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite † and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard

that someone had come to pursue the prosperity of the Israelites, they were greatly displeased. †

PREPARING TO REBUILD THE WALLS

11 After I arrived in Jerusalem and had been there three days, † 12 I got up at night and took a few men with me. I didn't tell anyone what my God had laid on my heart to do for Jerusalem. The only animal I took † was the one I was riding. 13 I went out at night through the Valley Gate toward the Serpent's † Well and the Dung Gate, † and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. † 14 I went on to the Fountain Gate † and the King's Pool, † but farther down it became too narrow for my animal to go through. 15 So I went up at night by way of the valley and inspected the wall. Then heading back, I entered through the Valley Gate † and returned. 16 The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, for I had not yet told the Jews, priests, nobles, officials, or the rest of those who would be doing the work. 17 So I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned. † Come, let's rebuild Jerusalem's wall, † so that we will no longer be a disgrace." 18 I told them how the gracious hand of my God had been on me, † and what the king had said to me.

They said, "Let's start rebuilding," and their hands were strengthened † to do this good work.

19 When Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, † and Geshem the Arab † heard about this, they mocked and despised us, and said, "What is this you're doing? Are you rebelling against the king? "

20 I gave them this reply, "The God of the heavens is the one who will grant us success. We, his servants, will start building, but you have no share, right, or historic claim in Jerusalem." †

2:2 Lit *"Why is your face* **2:3** Lit *my face* **2:5** Lit *city, the house of the graves of my fathers,* **2:8** Lit *enter* **2:12** Lit *animal with me* **2:13** Or *Dragon's* **2:18** Lit *they put their hands*

2:1 Ezr 7:1,8; Neh 1:1 **2:1-2** Pr 15:13 **2:3** Ezr 4:12,21; Neh 1:3 **2:4** Neh 1:4 **2:5** Neh 1:3 **2:5** Ezr 4:21; Dn 9:18 **2:6** Neh 13:6 **2:7** Ezr 4:8-9; 8:36 **2:7** Ezr 8:22 **2:8** Neh 7:2 **2:8** Ezr 3:7 **2:8** Ezr 7:6; Neh 2:18 **2:9** Ezr 8:36 **2:10** Jos 16:3,5; 18:13 **2:10** Neh 4:7 **2:11** Ezr 8:32 **2:13** Neh 3:13 **2:13** Ezr 4:12; Neh 1:3 **2:14** Neh 3:15; 12:37 **2:14** 2Kg 18:17; 20:20 **2:15** Neh 3:13 **2:17** Ezr 4:12; Neh 1:3; 2:3 **2:17** Neh 2:5 **2:18** Ezr 7:9;

Neh 2:8 **2:19** Neh 4:7 **2:19** Neh 6:1,6 **2:19-20** Ezr 4:3-4

2:2 Nehemiah was probably afraid. Being **sad** in the king's presence could have caused offense.

2:7-8 Nehemiah had prayed twice regarding his desire to return to Jerusalem to repair it (see v. 4; 1:9-11), and God answered his prayer (vv. 6,8). The king even gave him **letters** granting safe passage and supplies of lumber.

2:10 As was the case in the book of Ezra, there were some who opposed the Israelites' construction efforts (see also the note on Ezr 4:1-5). **Sanballat**, governor of Samaria, and **Tobiah**, governor of the Transjordan, were powerful and influential men who would repeatedly mock and trouble them (see v. 19; 4:1-3,7-9; 6:1-14).

2:12-16 Though God had laid this project on Nehemiah's heart, he covertly **inspected the walls** and gates of Jerusalem before disclosing his intentions to others.

2:17-18 Having completed his inspection of the walls and gates, Nehemiah shared his **rebuilding** plan with the leaders, who agreed to participate. The ruinous state of Jerusalem's walls and gates was a disgrace to Israel, especially to those Israelites who had returned to live there (see also 1:3).

2:20 In response to the insults of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem (v. 19; see the note on v. 10), Nehemiah affirmed that God would grant him success and that these three men would have no part in it.

REBUILDING THE WALLS

3 The high priest Eliashib † and his fellow priests began rebuilding the
Sheep Gate. † They dedicated it and installed its doors. After building
the wall to the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel, † they
dedicated it. 2 The men of Jericho † built next to Eliashib, † and next to them
Zaccur son of Imri built.

FISH GATE

3 The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. † They built it with beams and
installed its doors, bolts, and bars. † 4 Next to them Meremoth † son of Uriah,
son of Hakkoz, made repairs. Beside them Meshullam † son of Berechiah, son
of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok son of Baana made repairs.
5 Beside them the Tekoites † made repairs, but their nobles did not lift a finger
to help † their supervisors.

OLD GATE, BROAD WALL, AND TOWER OF THE OVENS

6 Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah repaired the Old †
Gate. † They built it with beams and installed its doors, bolts, and bars. 7 Next
to them the repairs were done by Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite,

and the men of Gibeon † and Mizpah, who were under the authority † † of the governor † of the region west of the Euphrates River. † 8 After him Uzziel son of Harhaiah, the goldsmith, † made repairs, and next to him Hananiah son of the perfumer made repairs. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. †
9 Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. 10 After them Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs across from his house. † Next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah made repairs. 11 Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab made repairs to another section, as well as to the Tower of the Ovens. † 12 Beside him Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs — he and his daughters.

VALLEY GATE, DUNG GATE, AND FOUNTAIN GATE

13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They rebuilt it and installed its doors, bolts, and bars, and repaired five hundred yards † of the wall to the Dung Gate. † 14 Malchijah son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem, † repaired the Dung Gate. † He rebuilt it and installed its doors, bolts, and bars.
15 Shallun † son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. † He rebuilt it and roofed it. Then he installed its doors, bolts, and bars. He also made repairs to the wall of the Pool of Shelah † near the king's garden, † as far as the stairs that descend from the city of David. †
16 After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, † made repairs up to a point opposite the tombs of David, † as far as the artificial pool † and the House of the Warriors. † 17 Next to him the Levites † made repairs under Rehum son of Bani. Beside him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, † made repairs for his district. 18 After him their fellow Levites made repairs under Binnui † son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah. 19 Next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, made repairs to another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the Angle. †

THE ANGLE, WATER GATE, AND TOWER ON THE OPHEL

20 After him Baruch son of Zabbai † diligently repaired another section, from
the Angle to the door of the house of the high priest Eliashib. † 21 Beside him
Meremoth † son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz, made repairs to another section, from
the door of Eliashib's † house to the end of his house. 22 And next to him the
priests from the surrounding area made repairs.
23 After them Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. Beside
them Azariah son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, made repairs beside his house.
24 After him Binnui † son of Henadad made repairs to another section, from the
house of Azariah to the Angle and the corner. 25 Palal son of Uzai made repairs
opposite the Angle and tower that juts out from the king's upper palace, † † by
the courtyard of the guard. † Beside him Pedaiah son of Parosh 26 and the
temple servants † living on Ophel † made repairs opposite the Water Gate †
toward the east and the tower that juts out. 27 Next to him the Tekoites † made
repairs to another section from a point opposite the great tower that juts out, as
far as the wall of Ophel. †

HORSE GATE, INSPECTION GATE, AND SHEEP GATE

28 Each of the priests made repairs above the Horse Gate, † each opposite his
own house. 29 After them Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his house.
And beside him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, guard of the East Gate, made
repairs. 30 Next to him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun the sixth son of
Zalaph made repairs to another section.
After them Meshullam son of Berechiah made repairs opposite his room.
31 Next to him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, † made repairs to the house of
the temple servants † and the merchants, opposite the Inspection † Gate, and as
far as the upstairs room on the corner. 32 The goldsmiths † and merchants made
repairs between the upstairs room on the corner and the Sheep Gate. †

3:5 Lit *not bring their neck to the work of* **3:6** Or *Jeshanah* **3:7** Or *Mizpah, the seat* **3:13** Lit *1,000 cubits* **3:15** Some Hb mss, Syr read *Shallum* **3:18** Some Hb mss, Syr, LXX; Neh 3:24; other Hb mss, Vg read *Bavvai* **3:20** Alt Hb tradition, Vg read *Zaccai* ; Ezr 2:9 **3:25** Or *and the upper tower that juts out from the palace* **3:31** Or *Muster*

3:1 Neh 12:10; 13:4,7,28 **3:1** Neh 3:32; 12:39; Jn 5:2 **3:1** Neh 12:39; Zch 14:10 **3:2** Ezr 2:34; Neh 7:36 **3:2** Neh 12:10 **3:3** Neh 12:39; Zph 1:10 **3:3** Neh 6:1; 7:1 **3:4** Ezr 8:33 **3:4** Ezr 10:15; Neh 3:30; 6:17-18 **3:5** Neh 3:27; Am 1:1 **3:6** Neh 12:39 **3:7** Jos 9:3 **3:7** 2Kg 25:23; Jr 40:5-12 **3:7** Neh 2:7-8; 5:14 **3:7** Neh 2:7,9 **3:8** Neh 3:31,32 **3:8** 2Ch 32:5; Neh 12:38 **3:10** Neh 3:23,28 **3:11** 2Ch 26:9; Neh 12:38 **3:13** Neh 2:13 **3:14**

Jr 6:1 **3:14** Neh 2:13 **3:15** Neh 2:14; 12:37 **3:15** Is 8:6; Jn 9:7 **3:15** 2Kg 25:4 **3:15** Neh 12:37 **3:16** Jos 15:58; 1Ch 2:45 **3:16** 1Kg 2:10; Ac 2:29 **3:16** 2Kg 20:20; Is 22:9-11 **3:16** 2Sm 23:8-39 **3:17** Ezr 2:40; Neh 7:43 **3:17** 1Sm 23:1-5 **3:19** 2Ch 26:9 **3:20** Neh 3:1; 12:10 **3:21** Ezr 8:33 **3:21** Neh 3:1 **3:24** Ezr 8:33 **3:25** Neh 12:37 **3:25** Jr 32:2 **3:26** Ezr 2:43,55-58; 7:7 **3:26** Ezr 8:20; Neh 11:21 **3:26** Neh 8:1 **3:27** Neh 3:5; Am 1:1 **3:27** Neh 11:21 **3:28** 2Ch 23:15 **3:31** Neh 3:8 **3:31** Neh 7:46-56 **3:32** Neh 3:8,21 **3:32** Neh 3:1; Jn 5:2

3:1 From the beginning, the reconstruction of the walls and gates had to be a group effort (2:16-18). Even **the high priest** participated.

3:12 Whereas certain nobles did not lend a hand (v. 5), the **daughters** of Shallum did make repairs.

3:16 This **Nehemiah** was probably not the same Nehemiah as the one who had spearheaded this building. There was at least one other man also named Nehemiah (see Ezr 2:2).

3:16-32 The collaborative effort to rebuild the walls and gates of Jerusalem was remarkable for its involvement of rulers (vv. 16-17), Levites (vv. 17-18), priests (vv. 22,28), citizens (vv. 19-21,23-25,30), temple servants (vv. 26,31), goldsmiths, and merchants (vv. 31-32).

PROGRESS IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION

4 When Sanballat † heard that we were rebuilding the wall, † he became furious. He mocked the Jews † 2 before his colleagues and the powerful men † of Samaria, † and said, “What are these pathetic Jews doing? Can they restore it by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they ever finish it? Can they bring these burnt stones † back to life from the mounds of rubble? ” † 3 Then Tobiah the Ammonite, † who was beside him, said, “Indeed, even if a fox † climbed up what they are building, he would break down their stone wall! ”

4 Listen, our God, for we are despised. Make their insults return on their own heads and let them be taken as plunder to a land of captivity. 5 Do not cover their guilt or let their sin be erased from your sight, because they have angered † the builders. †

6 So we rebuilt the wall until the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had the will to keep working. †

7 When Sanballat, Tobiah, and the Arabs, † Ammonites, and Ashdodites heard that the repair to the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the gaps were being closed, † they became furious. † 8 They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and throw it into confusion. 9 So we prayed to our God and stationed a guard because of them day and night.

10 In Judah, it was said: †

The strength of the laborer fails,
since there is so much rubble.
We will never be able
to rebuild the wall.

11 And our enemies said, “They won’t realize it † until we’re among them and
can kill them and stop the work.” 12 When the Jews who lived nearby arrived,
they said to us time and again, † “Everywhere you turn, they attack † us.” 13 So
I stationed people behind the lowest sections of the wall, at the vulnerable areas.
I stationed them by families with their swords, spears, and bows. 14 After I made
an inspection, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the
people, † “Don’t be afraid of them. † Remember the great and awe-inspiring
Lord, and fight for your countrymen, your sons and daughters, your wives and
homes.” †

SWORD AND TROWEL

15 When our enemies heard that we knew their scheme and that God had
frustrated it, every one of us returned to his own work on the wall. 16 From that
day on, half of my men did the work while the other half held spears, shields,
bows, and armor. † The officers supported all the people of Judah, 17 who were
rebuilding the wall. The laborers who carried the loads worked with one hand
and held a weapon with the other. 18 Each of the builders had his sword strapped
around his waist while he was building, and the trumpeter was beside me.
19 Then I said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest of the people: † “The
work is enormous and spread out, and we are separated far from one another
along the wall. † 20 Wherever you hear the trumpet sound, rally to us there. Our
God will fight for us! ” † 21 So we continued the work, while half of the men
were holding spears from daybreak until the stars came out. 22 At that time, I
also said to the people, “Let everyone and his servant spend the night inside
Jerusalem, so that they can stand guard by night and work by day.” 23 And I, my
brothers, my servants, and the men of the guard with me never took off our
clothes. Each carried his weapon, even when washing. †

4:2 Or *the army* **4:5** Or *provoked you in front of* **4:10** Lit *Judah said* **4:11** Lit *won’t know or see* **4:12** Lit *us 10 times* **4:12** Or *again from every place, “You must return to* **4:23** Lit *Each his weapon the water*
4:1 Neh 2:10,19; 4:7 **4:1** Neh 2:17,19 **4:1** Neh 2:19 **4:2** Ezr 4:9-10 **4:2** 2Ch 26:19 **4:2** 2Ch 26:19; Neh 1:3

4:3 Neh 2:10,19; 6:1,14 **4:3** Lm 5:18 **4:4-5** Neh 6:14; Jr 18:23 **4:6** Neh 2:20; 6:1,15 **4:7** Neh 2:19 **4:7** Neh 4:2-3 **4:7** Neh 2:10 **4:14** Neh 2:16 **4:14** Dt 1:29; Ezr 3:3; 4:4 **4:14** 2Sm 10:12 **4:16** 2Ch 18:33 **4:19** Neh 2:16 **4:19** Neh 3:1-32 **4:20** Nm 10:1-9; Dt 1:30

4:1-3 The progress of the construction project angered Sanballat, who **mocked the Jews before his colleagues and the powerful men of Samaria.** Tobiah the Ammonite joined him in casting doubt on the success of their efforts. These two influential men had been "greatly displeased" earlier about this work (see the note on 2:10).

4:4-5 As he had done previously, Nehemiah responded to challenges with prayer (see 1:4-11; 2:4). The insults of Sanballat and Tobiah were serious, and he prayed that God would take notice and punish the two men who had **angered the builders.**

4:7-14 As the building progressed (v. 6), Sanballat, Tobiah, and their associates stepped up opposition to it. Whereas they had used mockery earlier (see the note on vv. 1-3), now they planned to **fight against Jerusalem** and **kill them and stop the work.** This plot seems to have resulted in discouragement among the builders (vv. 10,12). Nehemiah characteristically responded with prayer (v. 9), and he also took practical measures of both stationing guards for protection (vv. 9,13) and encouraging the people (v. 14).

4:15-23 Under duress and having made necessary adjustments (see the previous note), the repair of the wall continued (v. 15). They built the wall and simultaneously were on guard against attack (vv. 16-19,21-23), all the while trusting in God (v. 20).

SOCIAL INJUSTICE

5 There was a widespread outcry from the people and their wives against
their Jewish countrymen. 2 Some were saying, "We, our sons, and our
daughters are numerous. Let us get grain so that we can eat and live."
3 Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, vineyards, and homes to
get grain during the famine." † 4 Still others were saying, "We have borrowed
money to pay the king's tax † on our fields and vineyards. † 5 We and our
children are just like our countrymen and their children, yet we are subjecting
our sons and daughters to slavery. † Some of our daughters are already
enslaved, † but we are powerless † because our fields and vineyards belong to
others."
6 I became extremely angry † when I heard their outcry and these complaints.
7 After seriously considering the matter, I accused the nobles and officials,
saying to them, "Each of you is charging his countrymen interest." † So I called
a large assembly against them 8 and said, "We have done our best to buy back
our Jewish countrymen who were sold to foreigners, but now you sell your own
countrymen, and we have to buy them back." † They remained silent and could
not say a word. † 9 Then I said, "What you are doing isn't right. Shouldn't you

walk in the fear of our God † and not invite the reproach of our foreign enemies? † 10 Even I, as well as my brothers and my servants, have been lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop charging this interest. †
11 Return their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and houses to them immediately, along with the percentage † of the money, grain, new wine, and fresh oil † that you have been assessing them."
12 They responded: "We will return these things and require nothing more from them. † We will do as you say."
So I summoned the priests and made everyone take an oath † to do this. 13 I also shook the folds of my robe and said, "May God likewise shake from his house and property everyone who doesn't keep this promise. May he be shaken out † and have nothing! "
The whole assembly said, "Amen," and they praised the LORD. Then the people did as they had promised. †

GOOD AND BAD GOVERNORS

14 Furthermore, from the day King Artaxerxes † appointed me to be their governor in the land of Judah — from the twentieth year until his thirty-second year, twelve years † — I and my associates never ate from the food allotted to the governor. 15 The governors † who preceded me had heavily burdened the people, taking from them food and wine as well as a pound † of silver. Their subordinates also oppressed the people, but because of the fear of God, I didn't do this. † 16 Instead, I devoted myself to the construction of this wall, † and all my subordinates were gathered there for the work. We didn't buy any land. †
17 There were 150 Jews and officials, as well as guests from the surrounding nations at my table. † 18 Each † day, one ox, six choice sheep, and some fowl were prepared for me. An abundance of all kinds of wine was provided every ten days. † But I didn't demand the food allotted to the governor, because the burden on the people was so heavy.

19 Remember me favorably, my God, for all that I have done for this people. †

5:5 Lit *but there is not the power in our hand* **5:10** Or *us forgive these debts* **5:11** Lit *hundred* **5:15** Lit *40 shekels* **5:18** Lit *And that which was prepared each*
5:3 Hg 1:5-11 **5:4** Ezr 4:13; 7:24 **5:2-4** Dt 15:7-8 **5:5** Lv 25:39-43 **5:5** Ex 21:7-11 **5:6** Ex 11:8; Eph 4:26-27

5:7 Ex 22:25; Dt 23:19-20 **5:8** Ex 21:8; Lv 25:39-42 **5:8** Jr 8:9 **5:9** Lv 25:36 **5:9** 2Sm 12:14; Neh 4:4 **5:11** Neh 10:37 **5:12** Neh 10:31 **5:12** Ezr 10:5 **5:13** Ac 18:6 **5:13** Ezr 10:4-5; Neh 13:25 **5:14** Ezr 4:7; 7:1 **5:14** Neh 13:6 **5:15** Ezr 5:3,14; Hg 1:1 **5:15** Lv 25:36 **5:16** Neh 4:1; 6:1; 2Th 3:7-10 **5:16** Neh 5:3,7,11 **5:17** 1Kg 4:27; 18:19 **5:18** 1Kg 4:22-23 **5:19** Neh 13:14,22,31

5:9-13 Not only were there challenges from without, but also from within. Whereas Sanballat and Tobiah were to blame for the former (see the notes on 4:1-3,7-14), the fault for the latter lay with the Israelites (see the note on Ezr 3:10-13). Famine and poverty had led some Jews to sell family members "to slavery" (v. 5) since they could not pay their debts. Also, they were mortgaging their fields, vineyards, and homes to their countrymen—who were exacerbating the situation by charging interest (vv. 1-4,7; see Dt 23:20). After investigating the matter, Nehemiah confronted "the nobles and officials" (v. 7). Ironically, they had been freed from bondage to another nation in exile, but now they were putting each other in bondage (v. 8). Nehemiah commanded them to stop their wrongdoing, and they promised to do so.

5:14-18 In contrast with those nobles and officials who had wrongly charged interest (vv. 7-12), Nehemiah had not abused his authority by laying unnecessary burdens upon the people for his own selfish reasons. He acted in this way **because of the fear of God** (see v. 9; 7:2).

ATTEMPTS TO DISCOURAGE THE BUILDERS

6 When Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies † heard that I had rebuilt the wall and that no gap was left in it † — though at that time I had not installed the doors in the city gates † — 2 Sanballat and Geshem † sent me a message: "Come, let's meet together in the villages of † the Ono Valley." † They were planning to harm me.

3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing important work and cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

4 Four times they sent me the same proposal, and I gave them the same reply.

5 Sanballat † sent me this same message a fifth time by his aide, who had an open letter in his hand. 6 In it was written:

It is reported among the nations — and Geshem † † agrees — that you and the Jews plan to rebel. This is the reason you are building the wall. According to these reports, you are to become their king 7 and have even set up the prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim on your behalf: "There is a king in Judah." † These rumors will be heard by the king. So come, let's confer together.

8 Then I replied to him, "There is nothing to these rumors you are spreading; you are inventing them in your own mind." † 9 For they were all trying to intimidate † us, saying, "They will drop their hands from † the work, † and it will never be finished."

But now, my God, strengthen my hands. †

ATTEMPTS TO INTIMIDATE NEHEMIAH

10 I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, son of Mehetabel, who was restricted to his house. He said:

Let's meet at the house of God,
inside the temple.
Let's shut the temple doors
because they're coming to kill you.
They're coming to kill you tonight! †

11 But I said, "Should a man like me run away? How can someone like me enter the temple and live? † I will not go." 12 I realized that God had not sent him, because of the prophecy he spoke against me. Tobiah and Sanballat † had hired him. 13 He was hired, so that I would be intimidated, † do as he suggested, sin, and get a bad reputation, in order that they could discredit me.

14 My God, remember † Tobiah and Sanballat for what they have done, and also the prophetess Noadiah † and the other prophets who wanted to intimidate me.

THE WALL COMPLETED

15 The wall was completed † in fifty-two days, on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul. † 16 When all our enemies † heard this, all the surrounding nations were intimidated † and lost their confidence, † for they realized that this task had been accomplished by our God. †

17 During those days, the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, † and Tobiah's letters came to them. 18 For many in Judah were bound by oath † to him, since he was a son-in-law of Shecaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam † son of Berechiah. 19 These nobles kept mentioning Tobiah's good deeds to me, and they reported my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate † me.

6:2 Or *together at Kephirim in* **6:6** Lit *Gashmu* **6:9** Or *will give up on* **6:10** Or *by night* **6:16** Lit *and fell greatly in their eyes*

6:1 Neh 2:10,19 **6:1** Neh 4:6-7 **6:1** Neh 3:1 **6:2** Neh 2:10 **6:2** 1Ch 8:12 **6:5** Neh 2:10 **6:6** Neh 2:19 **6:7** Zch 9:9 **6:8** Jb 13:4; Ps 52:2 **6:9** Ezr 3:3 **6:9** Ezr 4:4 **6:9** Neh 5:19; 13:22; Ps 138:3 **6:10-11** Nm 18:7 **6:12** Neh 2:10; 6:1 **6:13** Ezr 3:3 **6:14** Neh 13:29 **6:14** Rv 2:20 **6:15** Neh 4:1,7; 6:1 **6:15** Ezr 6:15 **6:16** Neh 2:10; 6:1 **6:16** Ezr 3:3 **6:16** Ex 14:25 **6:17** Neh 6:1; 13:4-5,7-8 **6:18** Ezr 10:5 **6:18** Neh 3:4,30 **6:19** Neh 6:9,13

6:1-9 Sanballat and Tobiah continued to oppose the rebuilding (see the notes on 4:1-3,7-14). **Geshem** had been mentioned in 2:19. Sanballat and Geshem repeatedly tried to get Nehemiah to **meet** them so that they could harm him. When that didn't work, they spread rumors that the Jews would **rebel** against the Persian Empire and Nehemiah was going to be made **king** over Israel. As before, Nehemiah met this trial with prayer (see v. 14 and the note on 4:4-5).

6:12-14 Having been refused several times already (vv. 1-9), Nehemiah's enemies tried an indirect approach of hiring a false prophet to request a meeting so that Nehemiah would be discredited (vv. 10-13). He again prayed that God would **remember** his enemies (see also 1:8; 5:19; and the note on 13:14).

6:15-16 The wall was finished in a mere **fifty-two days.** Even the **surrounding nations** recognized **that this task had been accomplished by . . . God.** The same Lord who had laid this project on the heart of Nehemiah (2:12) had faithfully seen it through to completion, despite many obstacles.

THE EXILES RETURN

7 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had the doors installed,† the gatekeepers,† singers, and Levites were appointed. 2 Then I put my brother Hanani† in charge of Jerusalem,† along with Hananiah,† commander of the fortress,† because he was a faithful man who feared God† more than most. 3 I said to them, "Do not open the gates of Jerusalem until the sun is hot, and let the doors be shut and securely fastened while the guards are on duty. Station the citizens of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some at their homes."†

4 The city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and no houses had been built yet.† 5 Then my God put it into my mind† to assemble the nobles, the officials, and the people to be registered by genealogy. I found the genealogical record of those who came back first, and I found the following written in it:†

6 These are the people of the province who went up among the captive exiles deported by King Nebuchadnezzar† of Babylon. Each of them returned to Jerusalem and Judah, to his own town.† 7 They came with Zerubbabel,† Jeshua,† Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

The number of the Israelite men included†

8 Parosh’s descendants †	2,172
9 Shephatiah’s descendants	372
10 Arah’s descendants	652
11 Pahath-moab’s descendants: Jeshua’s and Joab’s descendants	2,818
12 Elam’s descendants	1,254
13 Zattu’s descendants	845
14 Zaccai’s descendants	760
15 Binnui’s descendants	648
16 Bebai’s descendants	628
17 Azgad’s descendants	2,322
18 Adonikam’s descendants †	667
19 Bigvai’s descendants	2,067
20 Adin’s descendants †	655
21 Ater’s descendants: of Hezekiah	98
22 Hashum’s descendants	328
23 Bezai’s descendants	324
24 Hariph’s descendants	112
25 Gibeon’s † descendants	95
26 Bethlehem’s † and Netophah’s † men	188
27 Anathoth’s † men	128
28 Beth-azmaveth’s men	42
29 Kiriath-jearim’s, Chephirah’s, and Beeroth’s men	743
30 Ramah’s and Geba’s men	621
31 Michmas’s men	122
32 Bethel’s and Ai’s men †	123
33 the other Nebo’s men	52
34 the other Elam’s people	1,254
35 Harim’s people	320

36 Jericho's people † 345
37 Lod's, † Hadid's, and Ono's people 721
38 Senaah's people 3,930.
39 The priests included
Jedaiah's † descendants of the house of Jeshua 973
40 Immer's descendants 1,052
41 Pashhur's descendants 1,247
42 Harim's descendants 1,017.
43 The Levites † included
Jeshua's descendants: of Kadmiel
Hodevah's descendants 74.
44 The singers † included
Asaph's descendants 148.
45 The gatekeepers † included
Shallum's descendants, Ater's descendants,
Talmon's descendants, Akkub's descendants,
Hatita's descendants, Shobai's descendants 138.
46 The temple servants † included

Ziha's descendants, Hasupha's descendants,
Tabbaoth's descendants, 47 Keros's descendants,
Sia's descendants, Padon's descendants,
48 Lebanah's descendants, Hagabah's descendants,
Shalmai's descendants, 49 Hanan's descendants,
Giddel's descendants, Gahar's descendants,
50 Reaiah's descendants, Rezin's descendants,
Nekoda's descendants, 51 Gazzam's descendants,
Uzza's descendants, Paseah's descendants,
52 Besai's descendants, Meunim's descendants,

Nephishesim's † descendants, 53 Bakbuk's descendants,
Hakupha's descendants, Harhur's descendants,
54 Bazlith's descendants, Mehida's descendants,
Harsha's descendants, 55 Barkos's descendants,
Sisera's descendants, Temah's descendants,
56 Neziah's descendants, Hatipha's descendants.

57 The descendants of Solomon's servants † included

Sotai's descendants, Sophereth's descendants,
Perida's descendants, 58 Jaala's descendants,
Darkon's descendants, Giddel's descendants,
59 Shephatiah's descendants, Hattil's descendants,
Pochereth-hazzebaim's descendants, Amon's descendants.

60 All the temple servants
and the descendants of Solomon's servants † 392.

61 The following † are those who came from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but were unable to prove that their ancestral families † and their lineage were Israelite:

62 Delaiah's descendants,
Tobiah's descendants,
and Nekoda's descendants 642

63 and from the priests: the descendants of Hobaiah, the descendants of Hakkoz, and the descendants of Barzillai — who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and who bore their name. 64 These searched for their entries in the genealogical records, but they could not be found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood. 65 The governor † ordered them not to eat the most holy things until there was a priest who could consult the Urim and Thummim. †

42,360

42,360

66 The whole combined assembly numbered

67 not including their 7,337 male and female servants,
as well as their 245 male and female singers.

68 They had 736 horses, 245 mules, †

69 435 camels, and 6,720 donkeys. †

70 Some of the family heads contributed to the project. The governor gave 1,000 gold coins, † 50 bowls, and 530 priestly garments to the treasury. 71 Some of the family heads gave 20,000 gold coins and 2,200 silver minas to the treasury for the project. 72 The rest of the people gave 20,000 gold coins, 2,000 silver minas, and 67 priestly garments. 73 The priests, Levites, gatekeepers, temple singers, some of the people, temple servants, and all Israel settled in their towns. †

PUBLIC READING OF THE LAW

When the seventh month † came and the Israelites had settled in their towns,

7:7 Lit *the men of the people of Israel* **7:25** = Gibbar's in Ezr 2:20 **7:52** Alt Hb tradition reads *Nephushesim's* **7:61** Lit *the house of their fathers* **7:68** Some Hb mss, LXX; Ezr 2:66; other Hb mss omit v. 68 **7:70** Or *drachmas*, or *darics* ; also in vv. 71,72

7:1 Neh 6:1 **7:1** Ezr 2:40-42; Neh 7:43-45 **7:2** Neh 1:2 **7:2** Neh 3:9,12 **7:2** Neh 10:23 **7:2** Neh 2:8 **7:2** 1Kg 18:3; Neh 5:9,15 **7:3** Neh 4:13,16,22-23 **7:4** Neh 11:1 **7:5** Pr 2:6 **7:5-73** Ezr 2:1-70 **7:6** 2Ch 36:20 **7:6** Ezr 2:1 **7:7** Hg 1:1 **7:7** Ezr 2:2; 5:2; Zch 3:3,8 **7:8** Ezr 2:3; 8:3; 10:25; Neh 3:25 **7:18** Ezr 2:13; 8:13 **7:20** Ezr 2:15; 8:6 **7:26** Ezr 2:21; Mc 5:2 **7:26** 2Sm 23:28; 2Kg 25:23; Ezr 2:22 **7:27** Ezr 2:23; Neh 11:32; Jr 1:1 **7:32** Gn 12:8; Jos 7:2; Ezr 2:28 **7:36** Jos 6:1; Ezr 2:34; Neh 3:2 **7:37** 1Ch 8:12; Ezr 2:33; Ac 9:32 **7:39** 1Ch 24:7; Ezr 2:36 **7:43** Ezr 2:40; 7:7; 8:15; Neh 13:30 **7:44** 1Ch 15:16; Ezr 2:41-43 **7:45** 1Ch 9:17-27 **7:46** Neh 11:21 **7:57** 1Kg 9:21; Ezr 2:55 **7:60** Ezr 2:58 **7:61-62** Ezr 2:59-60 **7:65** Ezr 2:63; 5:14 **7:65** Ex 28:30; Lv 8:8; Ezr 2:63 **7:69-72** Ezr 2:64-70 **7:73** 1Ch 9:2; Ezr 2:70; Neh 7:6 **7:73** Lv 23:23-43; Ezr 3:1

7:5 As was the case earlier (see the note on Ezr 2:59), much importance was attached to Israelite identity as being distinct from neighboring peoples. The list found in vv. 8-69 is almost identical to the one found in Ezra 2.

7:61-65 Israelite identity was so important (see previous note) that priests who could not prove their lineage **were disqualified from the priesthood.**

8 all the people gathered together † at the square in front of the Water Gate. † They asked the scribe Ezra † to bring the book of the law of Moses † that the LORD had given Israel. 2 On the first day of the seventh month, † the priest Ezra † brought the law † before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding. 3 While he was facing the

square in front of the Water Gate, † he read out of it from daybreak until noon before the men, the women, and those who could understand. All the people listened attentively † to the book of the law. † 4 The scribe Ezra stood on a high wooden platform † made for this purpose. Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah stood beside him on his right; to his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hash-baddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5 Ezra opened the book in full view of all the people, since he was elevated above everyone. As he opened it, all the people stood up. 6 Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and with their hands uplifted † all the people said, "Amen, Amen! " † Then they knelt low and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. †

7 Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, and Pelaiah, † who were Levites, † † explained the law † to the people as they stood in their places. 8 They read out of the book of the law of God, translating and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was read. 9 Nehemiah the governor, † Ezra the priest and scribe, † and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all of them, "This day † is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." † For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the law. 10 Then he said to them, "Go and eat what is rich, drink what is sweet, and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, † since today † is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, because the joy of the LORD is your strength." † † 11 And the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, † since today † is holy. Don't grieve." 12 Then all the people began to eat and drink, send portions, and have a great celebration, † because they had understood the words that were explained to them.

FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS OBSERVED

13 On the second day, the family heads of all the people, along with the priests and Levites, † assembled before the scribe Ezra † to study the words of the law. 14 They found written in the law how the LORD had commanded through Moses that the Israelites should dwell in shelters during the festival of the seventh month. † 15 So they proclaimed and spread this news throughout their towns

and in Jerusalem, saying, “Go out to the hill country and bring back branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make shelters, just as it is written.” † 16 The people went out, brought back branches, and made shelters for themselves on each of their rooftops † and courtyards, the court of the house of God, the square by the Water Gate, † and the square by the Ephraim Gate. † 17 The whole community that had returned from exile † made shelters and lived in them. The Israelites had not celebrated like this from the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day. † And there was tremendous joy. † 18 Ezra † read out of the book of the law of God † every day, from the first day to the last. The Israelites celebrated the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day there was an assembly, according to the ordinance. †

8:3 Lit *The ears of all the people listened* **8:7** Vg, 1 Esdras 9:48; MT reads *Pelaiah and the Levites* **8:10** Or *stronghold* **8:18** Some Hb mss, Syr read *They*

8:1 Ezr 3:1 **8:1** Neh 3:26; 8:16 **8:1** Ezr 7:6,11-12; Neh 8:9,13 **8:1** 2Ch 34:14; Neh 8:7-9,13-14,18 **8:2** Lv 23:23; Nm 29:1-6; Neh 6:15 **8:2** Ezr 7:1-5 **8:2** Neh 8:7,18 **8:3** Neh 3:26 **8:3** Dt 28:61; 2Ch 17:9; 25:4; 34:14-15 **8:4** 2Ch 6:13 **8:6** 1Tm 2:8 **8:6** Neh 5:13 **8:6** 2Ch 20:18 **8:7** Neh 9:4-5 **8:7** Ezr 8:15,18-19; Neh 7:43 **8:7** Lv 10:11; Mal 2:6,8 **8:9** Neh 5:14-15 **8:9** Ezr 7:1-6 **8:9** Nm 29:1-6 **8:9** Ezr 3:12-13; 10:1,6 **8:10** 2Sm 6:19; Est 9:22 **8:10** Nm 29:1-6 **8:10** Dt 16:11,14-15 **8:11** Ps 46:10 **8:11** Nm 29:1-6 **8:12** Est 9:22 **8:13** Neh 10:28-29 **8:13** Ezr 7:6; Neh 8:1,9 **8:14** Jn 7:2 **8:14-15** Lv 23:4,34-42 **8:16** Dt 22:8 **8:16** Neh 3:26; 8:1; 12:37 **8:16** 2Ch 25:23 **8:17** Ezr 1:11; Neh 7:6 **8:17** 2Ch 7:9; Ezr 3:4 **8:17** 2Ch 30:21 **8:18** Neh 8:1,3 **8:18** Lv 23:34-36

8:1-5 As was the case in the book of Ezra, the completion of a construction project was followed by the teaching of Scripture by **Ezra** (see Ezr 6:15; 7:1-11; 9:1–10:11). The meeting took place outside **at the square in front of the Water Gate.** There were gathered **men, women, and all who could listen with understanding**; they listened for several hours (v. 3). That the people stood when Ezra **opened the book** (v. 5), and not when Ezra himself ascended the platform (v. 4), suggests that respect was due primarily to God’s Word and his authority rather than to the human teacher.

8:7-12 Assisting Ezra were Levites who **explained the law to the people** (v. 7) and gave **the meaning so that the people could understand what was read** (v. 8). The people grieved as they heard the Scriptures read, presumably because of their failures, and needed to be instructed and encouraged not to do so.

8:13-14 Led by Ezra, the community continued to hear from the Scriptures on the next day. They learned that they were to celebrate the Festival of Shelters that month (v. 14; see Lv 23:33-36,39-43), which they did (vv. 15-18).

8:18 Part of their celebration of the Festival of Shelters included Ezra reading Scripture on all **seven days** of the feast.

NATIONAL CONFESSION OF SIN

9 On the twenty-fourth day of this month † the Israelites assembled; they were fasting, wearing sackcloth, and had put dust on their heads. †

2 Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners, † and they stood † and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. †

LITERATURE AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Wherever humans gather, they tell stories. Storytelling is a distinctly human activity found nowhere else in creation. Literature expresses in writing the shared experiences that people have lived or have imagined.

For millennia, literature, or more broadly narrative, has held an instructional role across cultures. Once literacy was attained, writers used it to explain what was valued in their cultures: What does it mean to be honorable? How do we relate to nature? How do we live under the specter of death? Who (or what) is God? What is love? One of the best ways to understand a culture's worldview, in fact, is to read its literature.

Literature is significantly more effective than other means of discourse precisely because it is affective: it evokes emotions that enhance our thoughts in order to create lasting insights. In this way, literature cultivates empathy, through which we can step into other people's shoes.

Stories and poems thus allow us to share others' experiences. We may become friends with the characters; we may laugh with them, cry for them, and even pattern our own lives after those we find in literature. Reading literature helps to prevent the sense of isolation and even egocentrism that can easily slip into our lives.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

For Christians, the quintessential work of literature is the Bible itself, with its incredible range of history, poetry, and narratives. It contains the greatest masterworks of the ages—material that may be mined repeatedly for moral insights. Even secular thinkers and atheists often note that an understanding of the Bible's basic contents is necessary for any educated person.

The Bible employs many genres of literature in its communication of truth. Likewise, it uses many common literary techniques such as allegory, metaphor, hyperbole, and many others.

Appreciating Scripture as a literary triumph, however, in no way undercuts its unique status as the authoritative, written revelation of God to his creation. The Bible is not merely just another human story; it is the inspired Word of God. While it displays the qualities we recognize in other written works, its unique status exalts it above all other stories, both thematically and theologically. Indeed, just as Christ is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2, KJV), God is the ultimate Author of the Bible. We rightly expect him to produce a work of exquisite perfection.

Moreover, understanding the literary qualities and techniques employed by the Scriptures is important to their interpretation. Without such tools, we may create weak or even false theological positions based on misreadings of the text. When Jesus said, "I am the gate for the sheep" (Jn 10:7), he employs a metaphor that helps us to see his role as the ultimate gatekeeper to eternity. His is the name by which all must be saved. A slavish literality would actually short-change the theological force of the declaration, which is foundational to understanding the exclusivity of Christ.

LITERATURE AND CHRISTIANITY

In the West, most literary traditions are either rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition or are deeply complementary to them through the heritage of the Greco-Roman world. Rare is the work prior to the twentieth century that is not in some way generated with a foundational understanding of humankind that underlies the Christian faith. More recent literature may claim to make such a break, but even when it reacts against orthodoxy, it still touches on many of its presuppositions.

Christian thinkers have always wrestled with the right way to handle literature where it reflects divergent worldviews. Since Cyprian and Tertullian, some critics have called non-Christian thought worthless to the faithful, a charge that was countered by Augustine in particular. Augustine believed that because God created truth, just as he created gold, we have the right to reclaim truth, in this case literary gold, from those who have mixed it with error.

The wise reader will read literature in one hand with the Bible in the other, panning for the metaphorical gold that Augustine identified. In secular literature, we can see the foreshadowing of the truth that comes by the light of Christ. Such works struggle with brokenness, alienation, sin, and death—all of which culminate in a longing for something more, the kind of reconciliation that anticipates the Redeemer who will restore all things.

LITERATURE AND CHRISTIAN MISSION

Acts 7:22 tells us that "Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions." Daniel likewise learned the literature of Babylon (Dn 1:17), which prepared him for his important calling. Believers are expected to prepare themselves to serve an unbelieving world, and understanding literature is foundational to being able to communicate with our culture or others. Just as Paul quoted from secular writers at the Areopagus (Ac 17), Christians are wise to develop the kind of cultural relevance that allows them to communicate the gospel in effective ways.

Someone who is undertaking a mission trip to another culture would be wise to read translations of the poetry and stories of that other culture; this act of cultural humility pays significant dividends not only in understanding the other people group's worldview but also in developing a genuine love for the people who love those stories. When traveling to India, for example, it is the wise Christian who reads the *Ramayana*, their national epic, which contains many tales that can provide gospel bridges to transformational relationships.

Finally, literature provides an incredible opportunity for Western Christian thinkers to engage our own culture. As our society becomes increasingly post-literate, the stories that we tell and share with others continue to have power to reach into their lives. History has shown that the intellectual culture of Christianity is both durable and effective in reflecting a Christian worldview. For example, while most of Europe now shows little commitment to Christian thought, a visit to almost any town in Europe will include a tour of the churches and cathedrals, whose stained-glass windows and architecture still provide witness to the faith that created them. In the same way, well-written literature persists for decades and even centuries. Works such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the medieval dream-vision *The Pearl* continue to communicate Christian ideas long after their authors' deaths.

THE POWER OF GOOD LITERATURE

Good literature always finds a hearing because it owes its power to something transcendent to the drabness of everyday life. Literature that reflects the timeless truths of Christianity enjoys a matchless power—that of the faith communicated as the purest form of truth.

Advances in technology have allowed literature to find fresh platforms for exposure to new readers across the globe. While literature gives voice to the past, it also anticipates the future vision of Revelation 7:9, with "every nation, tribe, people, and language" giving praise to God. In this way, our present lives are enriched through the novels, stories, plays, and poems from around the world. Christian thinkers have a responsibility to include literature in the development of their own intellect and character, as they explore the worldviews that fill the globe and develop their own understanding of the Christian worldview.

GENE C. FANT

3 While they stood in their places, † they read from the book of the law of the LORD their God for a fourth of the day and spent another fourth of the day † in confession † and worship of the LORD their God. 4 Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani stood on the raised platform built for the Levites † and cried out loudly to the LORD their God. 5 Then the Levites — Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah † — said, "Stand up. Blessed be the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting." †

Blessed be your glorious name, †
and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise.
6 You, † LORD, are the only God. † †
You created the heavens,
the highest heavens with all their stars, the earth and all that is on it,
the seas and all that is in them.
You give life to all of them, †
and all the stars of heaven worship you. †
7 You, the LORD, are the God who chose Abram
and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, †
and changed his name to Abraham. †
8 You found his heart faithful in your sight, †
and made a covenant with him
to give the land of the Canaanites,
Hethites, Amorites, Perizzites,
Jebusites, and Girgashites —
to give it to his descendants. †
You have fulfilled your promise,
for you are righteous.

9 You saw the oppression of our ancestors in Egypt †
and heard their cry at the Red Sea.

10 You performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, all his officials, and all the people of his land, †
for you knew how arrogantly they treated our ancestors.
You made a name for yourself
that endures to this day.
11 You divided the sea before them, and they crossed through it on dry ground. †
You hurled their pursuers into the depths like a stone into raging water. †
12 You led them with a pillar of cloud by day, and with a pillar of fire by night,
to illuminate the way they should go. †
13 You came down on Mount Sinai, †
and spoke to them from heaven.
You gave them impartial ordinances, reliable instructions, and good statutes and commands.
14 You revealed your holy Sabbath to them, and gave them commands, statutes, and instruction through your servant Moses. †
15 You provided bread from heaven † for their hunger; you brought them water from the rock † for their thirst.
You told them to go in and possess the land you had sworn † to give them. †

16 But our ancestors acted arrogantly; they became stiff-necked and did not listen to your commands.
17 They refused to listen and did not remember your wonders
you performed among them. †
They became stiff-necked and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. † †
But you are a forgiving God,
gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, †
and you did not abandon them.
18 Even after they had cast an image of a calf for themselves and said,
"This is your god who brought you out of Egypt," †
and they had committed terrible blasphemies, 19 you did not abandon them in the wilderness because of your great compassion.

During the day the pillar of cloud
never turned away from them,
guiding them on their journey.
And during the night the pillar of fire illuminated the way they should go. †

20 You sent your good Spirit † to instruct them.
You did not withhold your manna † from their mouths, and you gave them water for their thirst. †

21 You provided for them in the wilderness forty years, †
and they lacked nothing.
Their clothes did not wear out,
and their feet did not swell. †

22 You gave them kingdoms and peoples and established boundaries for them.
They took possession
of the land of King Sihon † of Heshbon and of the land of King Og of Bashan. †

23 You multiplied their descendants like the stars of the sky †
and brought them to the land
you told their ancestors to go in and possess.

24 So their descendants went in and possessed the land: You subdued the Canaanites who inhabited the land before them and handed their kings and the surrounding peoples over to them, †
to do as they pleased with them.

25 They captured fortified cities and fertile land and took possession of well-supplied houses, cisterns cut out of rock, vineyards,
olive groves, and fruit trees in abundance. †
They ate, were filled,
became prosperous, and delighted in your great goodness.

26 But they were disobedient and rebelled against you.
They flung your law behind their backs †
and killed your prophets †
who warned them
in order to turn them back to you.
They committed terrible blasphemies.

27 So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them.
In their time of distress, they cried out to you, and you heard from heaven.
In your abundant compassion
you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the power of their enemies.
28 But as soon as they had relief, they again did what was evil in your sight.
So you abandoned them to the power of their enemies, who dominated them.
When they cried out to you again,
you heard from heaven and rescued them many times in your compassion. †
29 You warned them to turn back to your law, but they acted arrogantly
and would not obey your commands.
They sinned against your ordinances,
which a person will live by if he does them. †
They stubbornly resisted, †
stiffened their necks, and would not obey.
30 You were patient with them for many years, and your Spirit warned them through your prophets, †
but they would not listen.
Therefore, you handed them over to the surrounding peoples. †
31 However, in your abundant compassion, you did not destroy them or abandon them, †
for you are a gracious and compassionate God. †

32 So now, our God — the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant † — do not view lightly all the hardships that have afflicted us, our kings and leaders,
our priests and prophets,
our ancestors and all your people,
from the days of the Assyrian kings † until today.
33 You are righteous concerning all that has happened to us, because you have acted faithfully,
while we have acted wickedly. †
34 Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey your law
or listen to your commands

and warnings you gave them.

35 When they were in their kingdom, with your abundant goodness that you gave them, and in the spacious and fertile land you set before them, †
they would not serve you or turn from their wicked ways.

36 Here we are today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors so that they could enjoy its fruit and its goodness.

Here we are — slaves in it! †

37 Its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have set over us,
because of our sins.
They rule over our bodies
and our livestock as they please. †
We are in great distress.

ISRAEL'S VOW OF FAITHFULNESS

38 In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement † in writing on a sealed document containing the names of our leaders, Levites, and priests. †

9:6 LXX reads *And Ezra said: You* **9:6** Lit *are alone* **9:15** Lit *lifted your hand* **9:17** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *in their rebellion* **9:22** One Hb ms, LXX; other Hb mss, Vg read *of Sihon, even the land of the king* **9:29** Lit *They gave a stubborn shoulder*

9:1 Neh 7:73; 8:2 **9:1** 1Sm 4:12; Neh 1:4; Dn 9:3 **9:2** Ezr 6:21; 10:11; Neh 13:3 **9:2** Neh 8:5 **9:2** Neh 1:6; Dn 9:4,20 **9:3** Neh 8:5,7 **9:3** Neh 8:3 **9:3** Neh 1:6 **9:4** Neh 8:4 **9:4-5** Neh 8:7 **9:5** 1Ch 16:36; Ps 41:13; 106:48 **9:5** 1Ch 29:13 **9:6** Dt 6:4 **9:6** 2Kg 19:15 **9:6** Ps 89:5-7; Lk 2:13 **9:7** Gn 11:28,31 **9:7** Gn 17:5 **9:8** Gn 15:6; 22:15-18 **9:8** Gn 15:18-21 **9:9** Ex 3:7; 14:10-14,31 **9:10** Ex 3:20; 10:1 **9:11** Ex 14:21-22 **9:11** Ex 14:26-28 **9:12** Dt 1:32-33 **9:13** Ex 19:20 **9:13-14** Ex 20:1-17 **9:15** Ex 16:4 **9:15** Ex 17:6 **9:15** Dt 1:8,21 **9:16-17** Dt 1:26-33 **9:17** Nm 14:4 **9:17** Ex 34:6; Ps 86:15; 103:8 **9:17-18** Ex 32:4 **9:19** Ex 16:4; 17:6 **9:20** Nm 11:17; Neh 9:30 **9:20** Ex 16:14-15 **9:20** Ex 17:6 **9:21** Dt 2:7; 29:5 **9:21** Dt 8:4 **9:22** Nm 21:21-35 **9:23** Gn 15:5; 22:17 **9:24** Jos 11:23 **9:25** Dt 6:11; 11:11-12 **9:26** 1Kg 14:9 **9:26** 1Kg 18:4; 19:10 **9:26-28** Jdg 2:6–3:6 **9:29** Lv 18:5; Dt 30:16 **9:30** 2Kg 17:13-18; Neh 9:20; Dn 9:6; 1Pt 1:10-12 **9:30** Jr 16:10-13 **9:31** Jr 4:27 **9:31** Neh 9:17 **9:32** Neh 1:5; Dn 9:4 **9:32** 2Kg 15:19; 17:3-6 **9:33** Dn 9:7-8,14 **9:35** Neh 9:25 **9:35-36** Dt 28:47-48 **9:37** Dt 28:33,51 **9:38** 2Ch 23:16 **9:38** Neh 10:1-39

9:1-3 Later that month (see 8:2,13), the Israelites gathered again around the Scriptures. This time grieving over their sins was appropriate (cp. 8:8-12). The mention of separating **themselves from all foreigners** suggests the sin of intermarriage with idolatrous neighbors was again in view (see Ezr 9:1).

9:5-15 The first part of the Israelites' prayer of confession praises God who both created the universe and graciously chose their forefather Abram (vv. 5-7; see "Agnosticism and Secularism," *p. 620*). God promised him land as a part of the covenant he had made with him (v. 8), and he later brought out Abraham's descendants from Egypt so that they might possess this land (vv. 9-15).

9:16-19 Despite the Israelites' rebellion and disobedience, God, who is gracious and compassionate, **did not abandon them** and continued to guide them in the wilderness (see also the note on v. 31).

9:23-26 As God promised, the Israelites entered the land and took possession of it. Nevertheless, they continued to be **disobedient and rebelled** against God, who punished them through foreign enemies (vv. 27-28).

9:31 Despite centuries of sin leading ultimately to the nation's exile, God did not **abandon them, for** [he is] **a gracious and compassionate God.** The faithfulness of God had been mentioned earlier (see the note on vv. 16-19).

9:32-37 As the Israelites continued to confess their sins and God's righteous judgment, they also asked him to take notice of their current hardship (v. 32). Although they had returned to the land, they were **slaves in** it (v. 36) and were **in great distress** (v. 37). They needed a new act of salvation from God, just as their forefathers had experienced long ago in Egypt (see also the note on Ezr 9:6-9).

9:38–10:29 The **leaders, Levites, and priests** agreed to keep the law of Moses, with an emphasis on a few particulars (see the note on 10:28-39). Nehemiah is the first person listed (10:1).

10 Those whose seals were on the document were

the governor Nehemiah † son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah,
2 Seraiah, † Azariah, Jeremiah,
3 Pashhur, † Amariah, Malchijah,
4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch,
5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
8 Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah.
These were the priests.

9 The Levites † were
Jeshua son of Azaniah,
Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel,
10 and their brothers
Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
11 Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah,
12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,

13 Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu.

14 The heads of the people † were
Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,
15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,
16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, †
17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,
18 Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,
19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,
21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,
22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
23 Hoshea, Hananiah, † Hasshub,
24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,
25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
26 Ahijah, Hanan, Anan,
27 Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

28 The rest of the people — the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, and temple servants, along with their wives, sons, and daughters, everyone who is able to understand † and who has separated themselves from the surrounding peoples † to obey the law of God — 29 join with their noble brothers and commit themselves with a sworn oath † † to follow the law of God given through God's servant Moses † and to obey carefully all the commands, ordinances, and statutes of the LORD our Lord.

DETAILS OF THE VOW

30 We will not give our daughters in marriage to the surrounding peoples and will not take their daughters as wives for our sons. †
31 When the surrounding peoples bring merchandise or any kind of grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or a holy day. †
We will also leave the land uncultivated in the seventh year † and will cancel every debt. †
32 We will impose the following commands on ourselves: To give an eighth of an ounce of silver † yearly for the service of the house of our God: † 33 the bread displayed before the LORD, † † the daily grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the Sabbath and New Moon offerings, † the appointed festivals, the holy things, the sin offerings to atone for Israel, † and for all the work of the house of our God.
34 We have cast lots † among the priests, Levites, and people for the donation of wood by our ancestral families † at the appointed times each year. They are to bring the wood to our God's house to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, † as it is written in the law.
35 We will bring the firstfruits of our land and of every fruit tree to the LORD's house year by year. † 36 We will also bring the firstborn of our sons and our livestock, as prescribed by the law, and will bring the firstborn of our herds and flocks to the house of our God, † to the priests who serve in our God's house.
37 We will bring a loaf from our first batch of dough † to the priests at the storerooms of the house of our God. We will also bring the firstfruits of our grain offerings, of every fruit tree, and of the new wine and fresh oil. † A tenth of our land's produce belongs to the Levites, for the Levites are to collect the one-tenth offering in all our agricultural towns. † 38 A priest from Aaron's descendants is to accompany the Levites when they collect the tenth, † and the Levites are to take a tenth of this offering to the storerooms of the treasury in the house of our God. † 39 For the Israelites and the Levites are to bring the contributions of grain, new wine, and fresh oil to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary are kept † and where the priests who minister are, along with the gatekeepers and singers. We will not neglect the house of our God. †

10:29 Lit *and enter in a curse and in an oath* **10:32** Lit *give one-third of a shekel* **10:33** Lit *rows of bread* **10:34** Lit *the house of our fathers*
10:1 Neh 5:14; 8:9; 12:26 **10:2-8** Neh 12:1-7,11-21 **10:3** 1Ch 9:12 **10:9-13** Neh 8:7; 9:4-5; 12:8-9 **10:14-27** Ezr 2:1-61; Neh 7:6-63 **10:16** Ezr 8:6 **10:23** Neh 7:2 **10:28** Neh 8:2-3 **10:28** Neh 9:2; 13:3 **10:29** Ezr 10:5; Neh 5:12 **10:29** Neh 8:1 **10:30** Ex 34:16; Neh 13:23 **10:31** Neh 13:16 **10:31** Ex 23:10-11; Lv 25:1-7 **10:31** Dt 15:1-3 **10:32** Ex 30:11-16; Mt 17:24 **10:33** Lv 24:5-9 **10:33** Nm 10:10 **10:33** Nm 28:2–29:39 **10:34** Lv 16:8; Neh 11:1 **10:34** Lv 6:12-13; Neh 13:31 **10:35** Lv 26:1-10; Nm 18:12-13 **10:36** Ex 13:2,12-13 **10:37** Lv 23:17; Nm 15:20-21; Ezk 44:30 **10:37** Nm 18:12-13 **10:37** Lv 27:30 **10:38** Nm 18:26 **10:38** Neh 13:12-13 **10:39** Dt 12:6,11 **10:39** Neh 13:10-11

10:28-39 The commitment to keep **the law of God** given through Moses also involved separation **from the surrounding peoples** (see also the note on Ezr 2:59). The Israelites had been guilty of intermarriage with their idolatrous neighbors earlier (see Ezr 9:1-3; 10:1-11), and this sin is the first one mentioned in the present vow (v. 30). They also promised to keep the Sabbath laws (v. 31) and to provide financial support for the temple service (vv. 32-39).

RESETTLING JERUSALEM

11 Now the leaders of the people stayed in Jerusalem, † and the rest of the people cast lots † for one out of ten to come and live in Jerusalem, the holy city, † while the other nine-tenths remained in their towns. † 2 The people blessed all the men who volunteered † to live in Jerusalem.

3 These are the heads of the province who stayed in Jerusalem † (but in the villages of Judah each lived on his own property in their towns † — the Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants, and descendants of Solomon's servants † — 4 while some of the descendants of Judah and Benjamin settled in Jerusalem):

Judah's † descendants: Athaiah son of Uzziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of Perez's descendants; 5 and Maaseiah son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, a descendant of the Shilonite. 6 The total number of Perez's descendants, who settled in Jerusalem, was 468 capable men.

7 These were Benjamin's descendants: Sallu son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiah, 8 and after him Gabbai and Sallai: 928. 9 Joel son of Zichri was the officer over them, and Judah son of Hassenuah was second in command over the city.

10 The priests: Jedaiah son of Joiarib, Jachin, and 11 Seraiah son of Hilkiah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, the chief official of God's temple, 12 and their relatives who did the work at the temple: 822. Adaiah

son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah [13] and his relatives, the heads of families: 242. Amashsai son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, [14] and their relatives, capable men: 128. Zabdiel son of Haggedolim, was their chief.
[15] The Levites: Shemaiah son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni; [16] and Shabbethai and Jozabad, from the heads of the Levites, who supervised the work outside the house of God; [17] Mattaniah son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, the one † who began the thanksgiving in prayer; † Bakbukiah, second among his relatives; and Abda son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. † [18] All the Levites in the holy city: † 284.
[19] The gatekeepers: Akkub, Talmon, and their relatives, who guarded the city gates: 172.
[20] The rest of Israel, the priests, and the Levites were in all the villages of Judah, each on his own inherited property. † [21] The temple servants lived on Ophel; † Ziha and Gishpa supervised the temple servants.

THE LEVITES AND PRIESTS

[22] The leader of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the descendants of Asaph, who were singers for the service of God's house. [23] There was, in fact, a command of the king regarding them, and an ordinance regulating the singers' † daily tasks.
[24] Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, of the descendants of Zerah † son of Judah, was the king's † agent † in every matter concerning the people.
[25] As for the farming settlements with their fields:

Some of Judah's descendants lived in Kiriath-arba †
and Dibon and their surrounding villages, † and Jekabzeel and its settlements;
[26] in Jeshua, Moladah, † Beth-pelet,
[27] Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba † and its surrounding villages;
[28] in Ziklag † and Meconah and its surrounding villages;

29 in En-rimmon, Zorah, † Jarmuth, † and
30 Zanoah † and Adullam with their settlements;
in Lachish † with its fields and Azekah †
and its surrounding villages.
So they settled from Beer-sheba † to Hinnom Valley. †

31 Benjamin's descendants:
from Geba, † † Michmash, † Aija,
and Bethel † and its surrounding villages,
32 Anathoth, † Nob, † Ananiah,
33 Hazor, † Ramah, † Gittaim, †
34 Hadid, Zeboim, † Neballat,
35 Lod, and Ono, † in Craftsmen's Valley.
36 Some of the Judean divisions of Levites were in Benjamin.

11:17 Lit *the head* **11:24** Lit *was at the king's hand* **11:31** Or *descendants from Geba lived in*
11:1 Neh 7:4 **11:1** Neh 10:34 **11:1** Neh 11:18; Is 48:2; Rv 11:2; 21:2 **11:1** Ezr 2:70; Neh 7:73 **11:2** Jdg 5:9 **11:3** 1Ch 9:2-34 **11:3** Neh 7:73; 11:20 **11:3** Neh 7:39-43,46-60 **11:4-19** 1Ch 9:3-21 **11:17** 1Ch 6:31,39; 2Ch 5:12 **11:17** 1Ch 16:42 **11:18** Neh 11:1; Rv 21:2 **11:20** Nm 36:3; Neh 11:3 **11:21** Neh 3:26 **11:22-23** 1Ch 15:16; Neh 7:44 **11:24** Gn 38:30; 1Ch 2:43 **11:24** Neh 2:1; 5:14 **11:25** Jos 14:15 **11:25** Jos 3:9,17 **11:26** Jos 15:26-28 **11:27** 2Sm 17:11 **11:28** 1Sm 27:6 **11:29** Jos 15:33 **11:29** Jos 10:5 **11:30** Jos 15:34-35 **11:30** Jos 10:3; 15:39 **11:30** Jos 10:10 **11:30** Jos 15:27 **11:30** 2Kg 23:10 **11:31** Jos 21:17 **11:31** 1Sm 13:2 **11:31** Jos 12:9 **11:32** Jos 21:18; Jr 1:1 **11:32** 1Sm 21:1; 22:9 **11:33** Jos 11:1 **11:33** Jos 18:25 **11:33** 2Sm 4:3 **11:34** 1Sm 13:18 **11:35** 1Ch 8:12; Ac 9:32

11:1-2 Few people were living in Jerusalem (7:4), and the Israelite community ensured that it would be sufficiently populated by casting lots for **one out of** every **ten** to live there. The others stayed **in their towns.**

11:4-19 Most of those who had returned from exile were from the tribes of **Judah**, **Benjamin**, and Levi (see Ezr 1:5-6), which explains the similar demographics of those who were to live in Jerusalem (vv. 4,7,10,15).

12 These † are the priests and Levites † who went up with Zerubbabel †
son of Shealtiel and with Jeshua:

Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush,
3 Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
4 Iddo, † Ginnethoi, Abijah, †
5 Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah,
6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, †
7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, Jedaiah.

These were the heads of the priests and their relatives in the days of Jeshua. †
8 The Levites:

Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel,
Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah † —
he and his relatives were in charge of the songs of praise.
9 Bakbukiah, Unni, † and their relatives stood opposite them
in the services.
10 Jeshua fathered Joiakim,
Joiakim fathered Eliashib,
Eliashib † fathered Joiada,
11 Joiada fathered Jonathan,
and Jonathan fathered Jaddua. †

12 In the days of Joiakim, the heads of the priestly families were

Meraiah	of Seraiah,
Hananiah	of Jeremiah,
13 Meshullam	of Ezra,
Jehohanan	of Amariah,
14 Jonathan	of Malluchi,
Joseph	of Shebaniah,

15 Adna of Harim,
Helkai of Meraioth,
16 Zechariah of Iddo,
Meshullam of Ginnethon,
17 Zichri of Abijah,
Piltai of Moadiah, of Miniamin,
18 Shammua of Bilgah,
Jehonathan of Shemaiah,
19 Mattenai of Joiarib,
Uzzi of Jedaiah,
20 Kallai of Sallai,
Eber of Amok,
21 Hashabiah of Hilkiah,
and Nethanel of Jedaiah.

22 In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the heads of the families of the Levites and priests were recorded while Darius the Persian ruled. 23 Levi's descendants, the family heads, were recorded in the Book of the Historical Events † during the days of Johanan son of Eliashib. 24 The heads of the Levites — Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua son of Kadmiel, along with their relatives opposite them — gave praise and thanks, division by division, as David the man of God had prescribed. † 25 This included Mattaniah, † Bakbukiah, and Obadiah. Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the city gates. † 26 These served in the days of Joiakim son of Jeshua, son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor † and Ezra the priest and scribe. †

DEDICATION OF THE WALL

27 At the dedication of the wall † of Jerusalem, they sent for the Levites wherever they lived and brought them to Jerusalem to celebrate the joyous dedication with thanksgiving and singing accompanied by cymbals, harps, and lyres. † 28 The singers gathered from the region around Jerusalem, from the settlements of the Netophathites, † 29 from Beth-gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth, for they had built settlements for themselves around

Jerusalem. 30 After the priests and Levites had purified themselves, they purified
the people, the city gates, and the wall. †
31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up on top of the wall, and I appointed two
large processions that gave thanks. One went to the right on the wall, toward the
Dung Gate. † 32 Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed, 33 along with
Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35 and
some of the priests' sons with trumpets, and Zechariah son of Jonathan, son of
Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph
followed 36 as well as his relatives — Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai,
Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David, the man of
God. † Ezra the scribe † went in front of them. 37 At the Fountain Gate † they
climbed the steps of the city of David † on the ascent of the wall and went
above the house of David to the Water Gate † on the east.
38 The second thanksgiving procession went to the left, and I followed it with
half the people along the top of the wall, past the Tower of the Ovens † to the
Broad Wall, † 39 above the Ephraim Gate, † and by the Old Gate, † the Fish
Gate, † the Tower of Hananel, and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep
Gate. † They stopped at the Gate of the Guard. † 40 The two thanksgiving
processions stood in the house of God. So did I and half of the officials
accompanying me, 41 as well as the priests:

Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin,
Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah,
and Hananiah, with trumpets;
42 and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar,
Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer.

Then the singers sang, with Jezrahiah as the leader. 43 On that day they offered
great sacrifices and rejoiced because God had given them great joy. † The
women and children also celebrated, and Jerusalem's rejoicing was heard far
away. †

SUPPORT OF THE LEVITES' MINISTRY

44 On that same day men were placed in charge of the rooms † that housed the supplies, contributions, firstfruits, and tenths. † The legally required portions for the priests and Levites † were gathered from the village fields, because Judah was grateful to the priests and Levites who were serving. † 45 They performed the service of their God and the service of purification, along with the singers and gatekeepers, † as David and his son Solomon had prescribed. † 46 For long ago, in the days of David and Asaph, † there were heads † of the singers and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. † 47 So in the days of Zerubbabel † and Nehemiah, † all Israel contributed the daily portions † for the singers and gatekeepers. They also set aside daily portions for the Levites, and the Levites set aside daily portions † for Aaron's descendants.

12:9 Alt Hb tradition reads *Unno* **12:10-11** These men were high priests. **12:46** Alt Hb tradition reads *there was a head*

12:1-7 Neh 12:12-21 **12:1** Ezr 2:1-2; 7:7 **12:1** Ezr 3:2 **12:4** Neh 12:16; Zch 1:1 **12:4** 1Ch 24:10 **12:6** 1Ch 24:7 **12:7** Ezr 2:2; 3:2 **12:8** Neh 11:17 **12:10** Neh 3:20 **12:23** 1Ch 9:14-22 **12:24** 1Ch 16:4; 23:30; 2Ch 29:25 **12:25** Neh 11:17 **12:25** 1Ch 26:15,17; Ezr 2:42; Neh 11:19 **12:26** Neh 5:14; 10:1 **12:26** Neh 8:1-2,9 **12:27** Ezr 6:16 **12:27** 1Ch 15:16 **12:28** 1Ch 2:54; 9:16 **12:30** Neh 13:22,30 **12:31** Neh 2:13 **12:36** 1Ch 15:16,19-21; 2Ch 8:14; Neh 12:24 **12:36** Neh 8:1,4 **12:37** Neh 2:14 **12:37** Neh 3:15 **12:37** Neh 3:26; 8:1 **12:38** Neh 3:11 **12:38** Neh 3:8 **12:39** 2Kg 14:13; Neh 8:16 **12:39** Neh 3:6 **12:39** Neh 3:3 **12:39** Neh 3:1; Jn 5:2 **12:39** Neh 3:25 **12:43** Ezr 6:16-17,22 **12:43** Ezr 3:13 **12:44** Neh 13:4,13 **12:44** Neh 10:37-39 **12:44** Neh 7:39-43 **12:44** Dt 18:8 **12:45** Neh 7:44-45 **12:45** 2Ch 8:14 **12:46** 2Ch 29:30 **12:46** 1Ch 9:33 **12:47** Neh 7:7; Hg 1:1 **12:47** Neh 1:1; 5:14 **12:47** Neh 11:23 **12:47** Nm 18:21

12:24 Instructions from David to the Levites to praise God can be found in 1 Chronicles 23:26-32 (see the note).

12:27-31 Like the dedication of Solomon's temple long ago, **the dedication of the wall** was accompanied by the Levite musicians (see the note on 2Ch 5:11-14).

12:36 Leading the first of these processions along the wall was **Ezra the scribe.** His prominent position serves as another reminder of the importance of the Scriptures (see notes on Ezr 8).

12:43 The dedication of the wall was a joyous occasion, and the sound of celebration **was heard** from **far away.** This is similar to what happened when the foundation of the temple was laid (see Ezr 3:12-13).

12:44-47 These **contributions** had been promised in 10:32-39.

NEHEMIAH'S FURTHER REFORMS

13 At that time † the book of Moses † was read publicly to † the people. † The command was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite † should ever enter the assembly of God, † 2 because they did not

meet the Israelites with food and water. Instead, they hired Balaam against them to curse them, † but our God turned the curse into a blessing. † 3 When they heard the law, they separated all those of mixed descent † from Israel.

4 Now before this, the priest Eliashib † had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. † He was a relative † of Tobiah † 5 and had prepared a large room for him where they had previously stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, and the tenths of grain, new wine, and fresh oil † prescribed for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, along with the contributions for the priests. †

6 While all this was happening, I was not in Jerusalem, because I had returned to King Artaxerxes † of Babylon † in the thirty-second year of his reign. † It was only later that I asked the king for a leave of absence † 7 so I could return to Jerusalem. Then I discovered the evil that Eliashib had done on behalf of Tobiah by providing him a room in the courts of God's house. 8 I was greatly displeased and threw all of Tobiah's household possessions out of the room. 9 I ordered that the rooms be purified, † and I had the articles of the house of God restored there, along with the grain offering and frankincense. † 10 I also found out that because the portions for the Levites had not been given, † each of the Levites and the singers performing the service had gone back to his own field. †

11 Therefore, I rebuked the officials, asking, "Why has the house of God been neglected?" † I gathered the Levites and singers together and stationed them at their posts. † 12 Then all Judah brought a tenth of the grain, new wine, and fresh oil into the storehouses. † 13 I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses the priest Shelemiah, the scribe Zadok, and Pedaiah of the Levites, with Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah to assist them, because they were considered trustworthy. † They were responsible for the distribution to their colleagues. †

14 Remember me for this, my God, and don't erase the deeds of faithful love I have done for the house of my God and for its services. †

15 At that time I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in stores of grain and loading them on donkeys, along with wine, grapes, and figs. All kinds of goods were being brought to Jerusalem on

the Sabbath day. So I warned them against selling food on that day. † 16 The Tyrians living there were importing fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah in Jerusalem. †
17 I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them: “What is this evil you are doing — profaning the Sabbath day? † 18 Didn’t your ancestors do the same, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and on this city? † And now you are rekindling his anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath! ”
19 When shadows began to fall on the city gates of Jerusalem just before the Sabbath, I gave orders that the city gates be closed and not opened until after the Sabbath. † I posted some of my men at the gates, so that no goods could enter during the Sabbath day. † 20 Once or twice the merchants and those who sell all kinds of goods camped outside Jerusalem, 21 but I warned them, “Why are you camping in front of the wall? If you do it again, I’ll use force † against you.” After that they did not come again on the Sabbath. 22 Then I instructed the Levites to purify themselves † and guard the city gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. †
Remember me for this also, my God, † and look on me with compassion according to the abundance of your faithful love. †
23 In those days I also saw Jews who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. † 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples but could not speak Hebrew. † † 25 I rebuked them, cursed them, beat some of their men, and pulled out their hair. † I forced them to take an oath † before God and said, “You must not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters as wives for your sons or yourselves! † 26 Didn’t King Solomon of Israel sin in matters like this? There was not a king like him among many nations. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, yet foreign women drew him into sin. †
27 Why then should we hear about you doing all this terrible evil and acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women? ” † 28 Even one of

the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, † had become a son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. † So I drove him away from me. †
29 Remember them, my God, for defiling the priesthood as well as the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites. †
30 So I purified them from everything foreign † and assigned specific duties to each of the priests and Levites. † 31 I also arranged for the donation of wood at the appointed times and for the firstfruits. †
Remember me, my God, with favor. †

13:1 Lit *read in the ears of* **13:4** Or *an associate* **13:21** Lit *again, I will send a hand* **13:24** Lit *Judahite*
13:1 Neh 12:27 **13:1** Dt 28:61; Neh 8:1-3 **13:1** Neh 9:3 **13:1** Neh 13:23 **13:1** Dt 23:3 **13:2** Nm 22:2-11; 23:7; 24:10; Dt 23:3-5 **13:2** Dt 23:4-5 **13:3** Dt 23:3,6 **13:4** Neh 12:10,22-23 **13:4** Neh 12:44 **13:4** Neh 2:10; 6:14 **13:5** Neh 12:44 **13:5** Nm 13:21-32; Dt 14:28-29; 26:12-15 **13:6** Neh 2:1-8 **13:6** Ezr 5:13 **13:6** Neh 2:1; 5:14 **13:6** Neh 1:11; 2:6 **13:9** 1Ch 23:28; 2Ch 29:5; Neh 13:30 **13:9** Neh 12:44 **13:10** Dt 12:19; Neh 12:44,47 **13:10** 2Ch 29:5 **13:11** Neh 10:37-39; Mal 3:10 **13:11** Neh 12:44-45 **13:12** Neh 10:37-38 **13:13** Neh 7:2; Ac 6:1-5; 1Co 4:2 **13:13** Neh 12:47 **13:14** Neh 5:19; 13:31 **13:15** Ex 20:8-11; Dt 5:12-15 **13:16** Neh 10:31 **13:17** Ex 20:8-11 **13:18** Ezr 9:10-11,13; Jr 17:21-23 **13:19** Lv 23:32 **13:19** Neh 7:1,3; Jr 17:21-22 **13:22** Neh 12:30; 13:30 **13:22** Ex 20:8 **13:22** Neh 5:19; 13:14,31 **13:22** Neh 1:5; 9:17,27,31 **13:23** Dt 23:3; Ezr 9:1-2; Neh 13:1-3; Mal 2:11 **13:24** Est 1:22; 8:9 **13:25** Ezr 9:3; Is 50:6 **13:25** Ezr 10:5 **13:25** Ezr 9:1-2; Neh 10:30 **13:26** 1Kg 3:13; 11:1-10 **13:27** Ezr 9:1-2 **13:28** Neh 12:10,22-23 **13:28** Neh 2:10; 4:1; 6:1 **13:28** Lv 21:10,13-15 **13:29** Neh 6:14; Mal 2:4-8 **13:30** Neh 10:30 **13:30** Neh 12:44-47 **13:31** Neh 10:34-36 **13:31** Neh 5:19; 13:14,22

13:1-3 The Israelites also separated themselves from **all those of mixed descent.** Such separation related to obedience to the law of Moses (see also the note on 10:28-39). The concern was not ethnic, for Israelites were allowed to marry foreigners. Rather, the issue was religious: to marry unbelieving spouses was to invite compromise and apostasy (see the note on Ezr 9:6-9). The story of Moab's hiring **Balaam** in order to curse the Israelites is told in Numbers 22–24.

13:4-9 While Nehemiah was away (v. 6), **Eliashib** the priest, a relative of **Tobiah** the Ammonite, prepared a room in the temple courts for this enemy of Israel (see the notes on 4:1-3,4-5,7-14). Nehemiah took swift action upon learning of it.

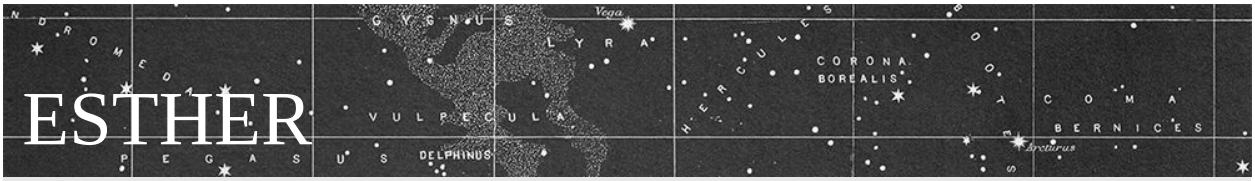
13:10-12 Despite Israel's promise not to neglect the temple (10:39) and their recent obedience in this regard (12:44-47), Nehemiah learned that each Levite **had gone back to his own field** because they were not being given their **portions.** As he had done before (see the previous note), he confronted those responsible and righted the situation.

13:14 As he had done previously (5:19), Nehemiah repeatedly prayed in this chapter that God would remember him favorably for his service (see vv. 22,29,31).

13:15-22 The Israelites had promised not only to support the temple service but also to keep the Sabbath (see the note on 10:28-39). Nehemiah discovered that they were breaking this law as well and warned them that they were **rekindling** [God's] **anger** (v. 18). He again took decisive action to prevent further violations of this law (see the previous note).

13:23-28 The **Jews** (Israelites) were also guilty of intermarriage with their idolatrous neighbors. Nehemiah was furious (v. 25) and warned them of Solomon's unfaithfulness in this area (v. 26). Thus, the Israelites

had violated all three of the laws that they had specifically mentioned earlier when they had vowed to keep the law of Moses (see vv. 10-22 and the note on 10:28-39). The conclusion of the book of Nehemiah thus painfully illustrates that the Israelites' hearts had not changed; they were still in need of the new covenant (see the notes on Dt 30:1-6 and Ezr 3:10-13).



ESTHER

INTRODUCTION

Esther is a unique book. It is the only book in the Bible that never mentions God, although his presence is implied due to Mordecai's allusion to divine providence (4:14). At times the book seems rather secular; historically this has contributed to questions regarding its place in the canon of the synagogue and the church. Esther is tightly connected with specific historical events, yet it is also a piece of literature, a narrative with all of the literary features necessary to make it a great story. It is a book in which its purposes are not always explicitly stated but are derived from the story as a whole.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: As in most OT books, the author of the book is unknown. In the Jewish Talmud it is suggested that the members of the Great Synagogue wrote the book. However, it is hard to imagine this prestigious group of religious scholars writing a book that mentions the Persian king 190 times but never mentions God. Many early writers, Jewish as well as Christian, suggested Mordecai as the author.

BACKGROUND: The story of Esther is rooted in the historical situation of King Xerxes (Ahasuerus), who ruled as king of Persia from 486–465 BC.

Mid-twentieth century critical scholars tended to date the book late, even into the second century BC. However, most now argue for an earlier date. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 showed that the Hebrew of Esther was very different from the Hebrew of the first century BC. Also, there are no Greek words in the text of Esther, which would suggest that it was written before Alexander the Great's conquest (ca. 333 BC) made Greek the language of the region. Most likely the book was written in the fourth century BC.

The book gives every indication of being a historical narrative. For that reason the alleged historical anomalies in the text raise for many interpreters problems in accepting the historicity of the story. While it is regrettable not to have any extant extrabiblical confirmation of the main characters in the story (Esther, Haman, Mordecai), several points must be considered.

First, there are few extant Persian records for Xerxes' reign; thus, very few historical figures are known from this time. Moreover, the Greek writers, especially Herotodus, were writing their history particularly as it related to the Greeks—not as court historians for the Persians—thus, their material is selective and would leave unmentioned many significant figures. Second, the absence of extrabiblical evidence does not mean these people did not exist. Third, while there is no positive extrabiblical confirmation of these individuals, they appear in an account that even ardent critics acknowledge as being remarkably accurate in its description of the Persian era.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Without ever mentioning God directly, the book of Esther underscores the providence of God. God's promise to give the Jews an eternal ruler remained in place, even in the face of threatened annihilation. Esther shows us that many Jews remained faithful to their God even in exile. They kept their identity as God's people through the synagogues that developed as the centers of the Jewish community wherever Jews settled. The synagogues would later play a significant role as the gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire, for these served as natural starting places for the deliverance of the gospel in the towns visited by the apostles (e.g., Ac 9:20; 17:1-2; 18:19; 19:8).

STRUCTURE

The Hebrew of the Masoretic Text used as the basis for the Christian Standard Bible is a fairly straightforward text. It is written in a form of late biblical Hebrew common to the postexilic era and found in other biblical books of that time, such as Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Daniel. Like Ezra-Nehemiah, Esther shows the growing influence of Aramaic in its grammar and vocabulary, as well as the presence of many Persian words.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The book reveals the providence of God in caring for his covenant people. Although many evils —including satanic opposition—may come against God's people, nothing ever happens beyond God's ability to work all things "together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose" (Rm 8:28).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The villainy of Haman demonstrates human depravity at its worst; the integrity of Mordecai shows the enormous good that one person can do. Esther's story (like Joseph's in Genesis) demonstrates that when God's people face difficult circumstances they are to act courageously and risk themselves for a righteous cause rather than give in to "fate" or "being unlucky."

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

God will accomplish his redemptive purposes. If Haman's edict to destroy the Jews had succeeded, the coming of the Jews' ultimate deliverer, Jesus the Messiah-King, would have been imperiled. God's plan to save cannot be thwarted, and he has always taken the initiative to bring about salvation.

ESTHER TIMELINE

625–600 BC

Nineveh is sacked by the Babylonians and the Medes. The Assyrian Empire collapses. **612**

Nebuchadnezzar's three invasions of Judah **605, 597, 586**

Events in Daniel **605–530**

Prince Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeats the Egyptians at the Battle of Carchemish. **605**

Nebuchadnezzar II becomes king of Babylon. **604**

600–550 BC

Jeremiah's Ministry **627–586?**

Events in Obadiah **605–586?**

Events in Ezekiel **593–571**

Lamentations **586**

Temple of Solomon is destroyed. **586**

Nebuchadnezzar dies; is succeeded by Evil-Merodach. **562**

Evil-Merodach pardons Judah's King Jehoiachin. **561**

550–500 BC

Cyrus the Great defeats King Astyages of Media at Pasargadae. **550**

Cyrus diverts the waters of the Euphrates and launches a surprise attack against the ancient city of Babylon, taking it without a struggle. **539**

Cyrus's decree allows return of Jews from exile. **538**

Cyrus is killed in a campaign against the Massagetae of central Asia and his son Cambyses is crowned king of Persia. **530**

500–470 BC

Events in Esther **486–465**

Ahasuerus's 180-day feast; Vashti is deposed. **483**

Esther becomes queen of Persia **479**

Golden Age of Greek art **477–431**

At Haman's request, a royal decree is issued for the annihilation of the Jews in the Persian Empire. **474**

Esther intercedes with Ahasuerus for her people. **474**

First celebration of Purim **473**

470–430 BC

Events in Malachi **460**

Ezra goes to Jerusalem. **458**

Events in Nehemiah **445–430**

Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt under Nehemiah's leadership. **445**

Athens is defeated by Sparta, second Peloponnesian War. **431–404**

Greek philosopher Empedocles speculates that the world is made up of four elements: earth, air, water, and fire. **495-435**

430–400 BC

Greek historian Xenophon is born. **431**

Greek playwright Sophocles writes *Oedipus the King*. **429**

The marble figure of *Nike* in the Temple of Athena **407**

Thucydides' *History* is finished. **403**

VASHTI ANGERS THE KING

1 These events took place during the days of Ahasuerus, † who ruled 127 provinces † from India to Cush. 2 In those days King Ahasuerus reigned

from his royal throne † in the fortress at Susa. † 3 He held a feast † in the third year of his reign for all his officials and staff, the army of Persia and Media, † the nobles, † and the officials from the provinces. 4 He displayed the glorious wealth of his kingdom and the magnificent splendor of his greatness † for a total of 180 days.

5 At the end of this time, the king held a week-long banquet † in the garden courtyard † of the royal palace † for all the people, from the greatest to the least, † who were present in the fortress of Susa. † 6 White and violet linen hangings were fastened with fine white and purple linen cords to silver rods on marble † columns. Gold and silver couches † were arranged on a mosaic pavement of red feldspar, † marble, mother-of-pearl, and precious stones.

7 Drinks were served in an array of gold goblets, † each with a different design. Royal wine flowed freely, according to the king's bounty. † 8 The drinking was according to royal decree: "There are no restrictions." The king had ordered every wine steward in his household to serve whatever each person wanted. 9 Queen Vashti also gave a feast for the women of King Ahasuerus's palace.

10 On the seventh day, when the king was feeling good from the wine, † Ahasuerus commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, † Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carkas — the seven eunuchs † who personally served him — 11 to bring Queen Vashti before him with her royal crown. He wanted to show off her beauty to the people and the officials, because she was very beautiful. † 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command that was delivered by his eunuchs. The king became furious and his anger burned within him. †

THE KING'S DECREE

13 The king consulted the wise men † who understood the times, † † for it was his normal procedure to confer with experts in law and justice. 14 The most trusted ones † were Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. They were the seven officials † of Persia and Media † who had personal access to the king † and occupied the highest positions in the kingdom. † 15 The king asked, "According to the law, what should be done with

Queen Vashti, since she refused to obey King Ahasuerus's command that was delivered by the eunuchs? "
16 Memucan said in the presence of the king and his officials, "Queen Vashti has wronged not only the king, but all the officials and the peoples who are in every one of King Ahasuerus's provinces. † 17 For the queen's action will become public knowledge to all the women and cause them to despise their husbands and say, 'King Ahasuerus ordered Queen Vashti brought before him, but she did not come.' 18 Before this day is over, the noble women of Persia and Media who hear about the queen's act will say the same thing to all the king's officials, resulting in more contempt and fury.
19 "If it meets the king's approval, he should personally issue a royal decree. Let it be recorded in the laws of Persia and Media, so that it cannot be revoked: † Vashti is not to enter King Ahasuerus's presence, and her royal position is to be given to another woman who is more worthy than she. † 20 The decree the king issues will be heard throughout his vast kingdom, † so all women will honor their husbands, † from the greatest to the least." †
21 The king and his counselors approved the proposal, and he followed Memucan's advice. 22 He sent letters to all the royal provinces, to each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language, † that every man should be master of his own house and speak in the language of his own people.

1:6 Or *alabaster* **1:6** Or *of porphyry* **1:13** Or *understood propitious times* **1:14** Lit *Those near him*
1:1 Ezr 4:6; Dn 9:1 **1:1** Est 8:9; 9:30 **1:2** 1Kg 1:46 **1:2** Ezr 4:9; Neh 1:1; Dn 8:2 **1:3** Gn 40:20; 1Kg 3:15; Est 2:18 **1:3** Dn 5:28 **1:3** Est 6:9; Dn 1:3 **1:4** Dn 4:28-30 **1:5** Est 2:18 **1:5** 2Kg 21:18; Est 7:7-8 **1:5** Est 2:8 **1:5** Est 1:20 **1:5** Ezr 4:9 **1:6** Est 7:8; Ezk 23:41; Am 6:4 **1:7** Dn 5:1-3 **1:7** Est 2:18 **1:10** 2Sm 13:28 **1:10** Est 7:9 **1:10** 2Kg 20:18; Est 2:21; 6:14; Mt 19:12 **1:11** Est 2:7 **1:12** Est 7:7; Pr 19:12 **1:13** Jr 10:7; Dn 2:2,12; Mt 2:1 **1:13** 1Ch 12:32 **1:14** Ezr 7:14 **1:14** Dn 5:28 **1:14** 2Kg 25:19 **1:14** Dn 2:48-49 **1:16** Est 1:1,3,5; 9:30 **1:19** Est 8:8; Dn 6:8,15 **1:19** Est 2:2,4,17 **1:20** Est 1:1; 8:9 **1:20** Est 1:10-12; Eph 5:22,24,33; Col 3:18; 1Tm 2:12; 1Pt 3:1 **1:20** Est 1:5 **1:22** Neh 13:24; Est 3:12; 8:9

1:1 The book of Esther is set in the Persian kingdom during the fifth century BC. The most notable feature of this book is the lack of any mention of "LORD" or "God." Although such explicit references are absent, his presence and activity are evident nevertheless through his sovereign orchestration of many circumstances leading to the salvation of Israel (see the notes on 2:9,17,21-23; 5:9-14; 6:1-3). In this way, the book serves as a reminder that although God sometimes does work through obvious miracles, signs, and wonders, he often works through more subtle means (see the notes on Ru 2:3; 1Kg 19:11-13).

1:3-12 These verses reveal that King Ahasuerus was given to pride, extravagance, alcohol, and anger. Nevertheless, God reigns and was still in control (see the note on v. 1; Pr 21:1). Ahasuerus commanded that **Queen Vashti** come **before him with her royal crown** in order **to show off her beauty** (v. 11). Jewish tradition teaches that she was expected to appear naked, but there is no historical evidence to

support this. Rather, she probably thought the request to parade her beauty was demeaning and beneath her high status. It was usually concubines who were expected to act in this way.

1:21 Ahasuerus was also given to following bad advice (see the previous note; 3:8-11). **Memucan ’s counsel** recast Vashti’s embarrassment of the king as though it were a threat to the authority of husbands throughout the entire kingdom (vv. 16-20). This would not be the first time a relatively minor incident would be blown out of proportion (see 3:1-6).

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW QUEEN

2 Some time later, † when King Ahasuerus’s rage † had cooled down, he remembered Vashti, what she had done, and what was decided against her. † 2 The king’s personal attendants suggested, “Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. † 3 Let the king appoint commissioners † in each province of his kingdom, so that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to the harem at the fortress of Susa. † Put them under the supervision of Hegai, the king’s eunuch, † keeper of the women, † and give them the required beauty treatments. 4 Then the young woman who pleases the king † will become queen instead of Vashti.” † This suggestion pleased the king, and he did accordingly.

5 In the fortress of Susa, there was a Jewish man named Mordecai † son of Jair, son of Shimei, † son of Kish, † a Benjaminite. 6 He had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the other captives when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took King Jeconiah of Judah into exile. † 7 Mordecai was the legal guardian of his cousin † Hadassah (that is, Esther), because she had no father or mother. The young woman had a beautiful figure and was extremely good-looking. When her father and mother died, Mordecai had adopted her as his own daughter. †

8 When the king’s command and edict became public knowledge and when many young women were gathered at the fortress of Susa under Hegai’s supervision, Esther was taken to the palace, into the supervision of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9 The young woman pleased him and gained his favor so that he accelerated the process of the beauty treatments and the special diet that she received. He assigned seven hand-picked female servants to her from the palace and transferred her and her servants to the harem’s best quarters.

10 Esther did not reveal her ethnicity or her family background, because Mordecai had ordered her not to make them known. 11 Every day Mordecai took

a walk in front of the harem's courtyard to learn how Esther was doing and to see what was happening to her.
12 During the year before each young woman's turn to go to King Ahasuerus, the harem regulation required her to receive beauty treatments with oil of myrrh for six months and then with perfumes and cosmetics for another six months.
13 When the young woman would go to the king, she was given whatever she requested to take with her from the harem to the palace. 14 She would go in the evening, and in the morning she would return to a second harem under the supervision of the king's eunuch Shaashgaz, keeper of the concubines. † She never went to the king again, unless he desired her and summoned her by name. †

ESTHER BECOMES QUEEN

15 Esther was the daughter of Abihail, † the uncle of Mordecai who had adopted her as his own daughter. When her turn came to go to the king, she did not ask for anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch, keeper of the women, suggested. Esther gained favor in the eyes of everyone who saw her. †
16 She was taken to King Ahasuerus in the palace in the tenth month, the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. † 17 The king loved Esther more than all the other women. She won more favor and approval from him than did any of the other virgins. He placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. † 18 The king held a great banquet for all his officials and staff. † It was Esther's banquet. He freed his provinces from tax payments and gave gifts worthy of the king's bounty. †

MORDECAI SAVES THE KING

19 When the virgins † were gathered a second time, Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate. † 20 (Esther had not revealed her family background or her ethnicity, as Mordecai had directed. She obeyed Mordecai's orders, as she always had while he raised her.) 21 During those days while Mordecai was sitting at the King's Gate, Bigthan and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs † who guarded the entrance, became infuriated and planned to assassinate † King Ahasuerus. 22 When Mordecai learned of the plot, he reported it to Queen

Esther, and she told the king on Mordecai's behalf. † 23 When the report was investigated and verified, both men were hanged on the gallows. † This event was recorded in the Historical Record in the king's presence.

2:7 Lit *uncle's daughter* **2:21** Lit *and they sought to stretch out a hand against*

2:1 Est 1:3,10 **2:1** Est 1:12; 7:10 **2:1** Est 1:10-12,16-21 **2:2** 1Kg 1:2 **2:3** Gn 41:34 **2:3** Neh 1:1; Est 1:1; Dn 8:2 **2:3** Est 1:10 **2:3** Est 2:8-9,12-13 **2:4** Est 2:17 **2:4** Est 1:19 **2:5** Ezr 2:2; Est 2:15; 3:2 **2:5** 2Sm 6:5-13 **2:5** 1Sm 9:1 **2:6** 2Kg 24:10-15; 2Ch 36:10; Jr 24:1; 29:1-2 **2:7** Est 9:29 **2:14** 1Kg 11:3; Dn 5:2 **2:14** Est 4:11 **2:15** Est 9:29 **2:15** Est 5:2,8 **2:16** Est 1:2 **2:17** Est 1:10-11; 2:4 **2:18** Est 1:3 **2:18** Est 1:7 **2:19** Est 2:12-14 **2:19** Est 5:13 **2:21** Est 1:10,12; 2:3,14 **2:22** Est 6:2-3 **2:23** Gn 40:19,22; Est 5:14; 7:9-10

2:1-4 King Ahasuerus's anger is mentioned again in v. 1 (1:12), and he now must deal with the practical consequences of his banishment of Vashti (see 1:19). The result was a kingdom-wide search for a new queen.

2:5-7 Mordecai was an exiled Jew who had become the guardian of **his cousin** Esther when her parents died. She **was extremely good looking** and was taken as a part of the search for a new queen (v. 8). Mordecai's instruction to Esther not to reveal her ethnic background is mentioned twice (vv. 10,20; see also 3:6).

2:9 The Lord's own favor is subtly evident through Hegai's favor toward Esther so that **he accelerated the process . . . she received** (see also the notes on 1:1 and 5:1-5).

2:17 Esther also received favor from King Ahasuerus, who chose her to be queen (see the previous note).

2:21-23 Although this passage concerning Mordecai's report of the assassination plot may seem out of place, its critical importance to the development of the narrative will become clear. Furthermore, it was because of God's wise timing that Mordecai was not immediately rewarded for his good deed (see the note on 6:1-3).

HAMAN'S PLAN TO KILL THE JEWS

3 After all this took place, King Ahasuerus honored Haman, son of Hammedatha the Agagite. † He promoted him in rank and gave him a higher position than all the other officials. † 2 The entire royal staff at the King's Gate † bowed down and paid homage to Haman, because the king had commanded this to be done for him. But Mordecai would not bow down or pay homage. † 3 The members of the royal staff at the King's Gate asked Mordecai, "Why are you disobeying the king's command?" 4 When they had warned him day after day † and he still would not listen to them, they told Haman in order to see if Mordecai's actions would be tolerated, since he had told them he was a Jew.

5 When Haman saw that Mordecai was not bowing down or paying him homage, he was filled with rage. † 6 And when he learned of Mordecai's ethnic

identity, it seemed repugnant to Haman to do away with † Mordecai alone. He planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews, † throughout Ahasuerus's kingdom. †

7 In the first month, the month of Nisan, in King Ahasuerus's twelfth year, † the Pur — that is, the lot — was cast before Haman for each day in each month, and it fell on the twelfth month, † the month Adar. † 8 Then Haman informed King Ahasuerus, "There is one ethnic group, scattered throughout the peoples in every province of your kingdom, † keeping themselves separate. Their laws are different from everyone else's and they do not obey the king's laws. † It is not in the king's best interest to tolerate them. † 9 If the king approves, let an order be drawn up authorizing their destruction, and I will pay 375 tons of silver to † the officials for deposit in the royal treasury." †

10 The king removed his signet ring † from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of the Jewish people. † 11 Then the king told Haman, "The money and people are given to you to do with as you see fit."

12 The royal scribes were summoned † on the thirteenth day of the first month, and the order was written exactly as Haman commanded. It was intended for the royal satraps, † the governors of each of the provinces, and the officials of each ethnic group and written for each province in its own script and to each ethnic group in its own language. † It was written in the name of King Ahasuerus † and sealed with the royal signet ring. † 13 Letters were sent by couriers † to each of the royal provinces telling the officials to destroy, kill, and annihilate all the Jewish people — young and old, women and children — and plunder their possessions on a single day, † the thirteenth day of Adar, the twelfth month. †

14 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed to all the peoples so that they might get ready for that day. 15 The couriers left, spurred on by royal command, and the law was issued in the fortress of Susa. † The king and Haman sat down to drink, while the city of Susa was in confusion. †

3:6 Lit *to stretch out a hand against* **3:9** Lit *will weigh 10,000 silver talents on the hands of* **3:13** LXX adds the text of Ahasuerus's letter here.

3:1 Ex 17:8-16; 1Sm 15:20 **3:1** Est 1:3,21; 2:18 **3:2** Est 2:19,21 **3:2** Est 5:9 **3:4** Gn 39:10 **3:5** Est 1:12; 2:21; 7:7; Dn 3:19 **3:6** Est 6:10 **3:6** Est 9:24; Ps 83:2-4 **3:7** Est 1:2; 2:16 **3:7** Est 9:24-28 **3:7** Ezr 6:15 **3:8** Est 1;1; 8:11,17; 9:2 **3:8** Jr 29:7; Ac 16:20-21 **3:8** Ezr 4:12-15 **3:9** Est 4:7 **3:10** Gn 41:42; Est 8:2,8,10; Hg 2:23 **3:10** Est 7:6; 9:10 **3:12** Est 8:9 **3:12** Ezr 8:36 **3:12** Est 1:22; 8:9 **3:12** 1Kg 21:8 **3:12** Est 8:10 **3:13** 2Ch 30:6; Est 8:14 **3:13** Est 8:11-13; 9:10 **3:14-15** Est 8:13-14 **3:15** Est 7:1; 8:15

3:1-6 The king once again showed his foolishness, this time by honoring an arrogant and evil man (see the note on 1:3-12,21). The promotion of **Haman** adds an increased sense of danger and uncertainty to the developing narrative (see also vv. 10,15; note on 1:3-12). Haman was not only infuriated at Mordecai for not bowing down to him, but **planned to destroy all of Mordecai's people, the Jews** (see the note on 2:5-7).

3:8-11 The king again followed bad advice (see the note on 1:21). Having deposed his previous wife Vashti, he was unwittingly authorizing the execution of his present wife Esther. His **signet ring** carried with it his own royal authority.

MORDECAI APPEALS TO ESTHER

4 When Mordecai learned all that had occurred, † he tore his clothes, †
put on sackcloth and ashes, † went into the middle of the city, and cried
loudly and bitterly. † 2 He went only as far as the King's Gate, † since
the law prohibited anyone wearing sackcloth from entering the King's Gate.
3 There was great mourning among the Jewish people in every province where
the king's command and edict † came. They fasted, wept, and lamented, and
many lay in sackcloth and ashes. †
4 Esther's female servants and her eunuchs came and reported the news to her,
and the queen was overcome with fear. † She sent clothes for Mordecai to wear
so that he would take off his sackcloth, but he did not accept them. 5 Esther
summoned Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs who attended her, and dispatched
him to Mordecai to learn what he was doing and why. † 6 So Hathach went out
to Mordecai in the city square in front of the King's Gate. 7 Mordecai told him
everything that had happened as well as the exact amount of money Haman had
promised to pay the royal treasury for the slaughter of the Jews. †
8 Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa ordering
their destruction, so that Hathach might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and
command her to approach the king, implore his favor, and plead with him
personally for her people. † 9 Hathach came and repeated Mordecai's response
to Esther.

10 Esther spoke to Hathach and commanded him to tell Mordecai, 11 “All the
royal officials and the people of the royal provinces know that one law applies to
every man or woman who approaches the king in the inner courtyard † and who
has not been summoned — the death penalty — † unless the king extends the
gold scepter, allowing that person to live. † I have not been summoned to
appear before the king † for the last † thirty days.” 12 Esther’s response was
reported to Mordecai.
13 Mordecai told the messenger to reply to Esther, “Don’t think that you will
escape the fate of all the Jews because you are in the king’s palace. 14 If you
keep silent at this time, relief and deliverance will come to the Jewish people
from another place, † but you and your father’s family will be destroyed. Who
knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this.” †
15 Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16 “Go and assemble all the Jews who can
be found in Susa and fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days, † night or
day. I and my female servants will also fast † in the same way. After that, I will
go to the king even if it is against the law. † If I perish, I perish.” † 17 So
Mordecai went and did everything Esther had commanded him.

4:5 Lit *what is this and why is this* **4:11** Lit *king these*

4:1 Est 3:7-15 **4:1** 2Sm 1:11; 3:31; Ezr 9:3 **4:1** Is 58:5; Dn 9:3 **4:1** Ex 11:6 **4:2** Est 2:19; 3:2 **4:3** Est 3:12-15 **4:3** Est 8:17; Is 58:5; Dan 9:3; Jnh 3:5-6 **4:4** Est 7:6 **4:7** Est 3:9-15 **4:8** Est 7:3-4 **4:11** Est 5:1 **4:11** Dn 2:9,12-13 **4:11** Est 5:2; 8:4 **4:11** Est 2:14 **4:14** Gn 50:20 **4:14** Gn 45:5-7 **4:16** Est 5:1; Jl 1:14 **4:16** Est 9:31 **4:16** Est 5:1-2 **4:16** Gn 43:14

4:8-12 News of the command to kill all Jews on “the thirteenth day of . . . the twelfth month” (3:13) was met with mourning by Jews throughout the kingdom, including Mordecai (4:1-3). Esther learned about the royal order through a message from her uncle in which he urged her to plead for mercy before the king. Esther’s initial response, however, was hesitant, emphasizing the possibly of **the death penalty** for anyone who approached the king uninvited (v. 11). Although Esther had her own quarters, she may not have slept with the king frequently because of his many concubines. Nevertheless, that she had not appeared before him **for the last thirty days** may indicate that she had fallen out of favor. This, in turn, may explain her hesitancy.

4:13-16 Mordecai insisted that Esther go before the king, and his words indirectly reflect confidence in God’s preservation of the Jews **(deliverance will come to the Jewish people from another place)** and his sovereign purpose behind Esther becoming queen (**Who knows, perhaps you have come to your royal position for such a time as this)**. Esther courageously agreed to approach the king after three days of fasting (and presumably prayer), despite the risk to her own life.

ESTHER APPROACHES THE KING

5 On the third day, † Esther dressed in her royal clothing and stood in the inner courtyard † of the palace facing it. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal courtroom, † facing its entrance. 2 As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the courtyard, she gained favor in his eyes. The king extended the gold scepter in his hand toward Esther, and she approached and touched the tip of the scepter. †
3 "What is it, Queen Esther?" the king asked her. "Whatever you want, even to half the kingdom, will be given to you." †
4 "If it pleases the king," Esther replied, "may the king and Haman come today to the banquet † I have prepared for them."
5 The king said, "Hurry, and get Haman so we can do as Esther has requested." So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared.
6 While drinking the † wine, † the king asked Esther, "Whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you want, even to half the kingdom, will be done."
7 Esther answered, "This is my petition and my request: 8 If I have found favor in the eyes of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and perform my request, † may the king and Haman come to the banquet I will prepare for them. † Tomorrow I will do what the king has asked."
9 That day Haman left full of joy and in good spirits. † † But when Haman saw Mordecai at the King's Gate, and Mordecai didn't rise or tremble in fear at his presence, Haman was filled with rage toward Mordecai. † 10 Yet Haman controlled himself and went home. He sent for his friends and his wife Zeresh † to join him. 11 Then Haman described for them his glorious wealth and his many sons. He told them all how the king had honored him and promoted him in rank over the other officials and the royal staff. † 12 "What's more," Haman added, "Queen Esther invited no one but me to join the king at the banquet she had prepared. I am invited again tomorrow to join her with the king. 13 Still, none of this satisfies me since I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's Gate all the time."
14 His wife Zeresh and all his friends told him, "Have them build a gallows seventy-five feet † tall. † Ask the king in the morning to hang Mordecai on it.

Then go to the banquet with the king and enjoy yourself." The advice pleased Haman, so he had the gallows constructed. †

5:1 Lit *house* **5:6** Lit *During the banquet of* **5:9** Lit *left rejoicing and good of heart* **5:14** Lit *50 cubits*
5:1 Est 4:16 **5:1** Est 4:11 **5:2** Est 8:4 **5:3** Est 7:2; Mk 6:23 **5:4** Est 1:3,5; 2:18 **5:6** Est 1:7-8,10; 7:1-2 **5:8** Est 7:3; 8:5 **5:8** Est 6:14 **5:9** 1Kg 8:66; 2Ch 7:10; Pr 15:15 **5:9** Est 2:19; 3:2,5 **5:10** Est 6:13 **5:11** Est 3:1 **5:14** Est 6:4; 7:9-10 **5:14** Est 6:13

5:1-5 Yet again, Esther received favor (see the notes on 2:9,17), and this time it saved her life (vv. 1-2). The king graciously heard and granted her request that he and Haman attend a banquet she had prepared (vv. 3-5).

5:9-14 The ultimate reason why Esther did not reveal her intentions at the first banquet is not entirely clear (vv. 6-8), but it gave Haman a chance to become infuriated with Mordecai again while on his way home (v. 9) and to prepare to have him hanged (vv. 12-14). The Lord's sovereign hand is evident through such timing (see the note on 1:1).

MORDECAI HONORED BY THE KING

6 That night sleep escaped † the king, so he ordered the book recording daily events to be brought and read to the king. 2 They found the written report of how Mordecai had informed on Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs who guarded the entrance, when they planned to assassinate King Ahasuerus. † 3 The king inquired, "What honor and special recognition have been given to Mordecai for this act?" †

The king's personal attendants replied, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 The king asked, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman was just entering the outer court of the palace to ask the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows he had prepared for him. †

5 The king's attendants answered him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

"Have him enter," the king ordered. 6 Haman entered, and the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king wants to honor?" †

Haman thought to himself, "Who is it the king would want to honor more than me?" 7 Haman told the king, "For the man the king wants to honor: 8 Have them bring a royal garment that the king himself has worn † and a horse the king himself has ridden, † which has a royal crown on its head. 9 Put the garment and the horse under the charge of one of the king's most noble officials. † Have them clothe the man the king wants to honor, parade him on the horse through the city square, and proclaim before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king wants to honor.' "

10 The king told Haman, “Hurry, and do just as you proposed. Take a garment
and a horse for Mordecai the Jew, † who is sitting at the King’s Gate. Do not
leave out anything you have suggested.”
11 So Haman took the garment and the horse. He clothed Mordecai and paraded
him through the city square, crying out before him, “This is what is done for the
man the king wants to honor.”
12 Then Mordecai returned to the King’s Gate, † but Haman hurried off for
home, mournful and with his head covered. † 13 Haman told his wife Zeresh
and all his friends † everything that had happened. His advisers and his wife
Zeresh said to him, “Since Mordecai is Jewish, and you have begun to fall before
him, you won’t overcome him, because your downfall is certain.” † 14 While
they were still speaking with him, the king’s eunuchs † arrived and rushed
Haman to the banquet Esther had prepared. †

6:1 Dn 6:18 **6:1-2** Est 2:21-23 **6:3** Est 10:2-3; Dn 2:48 **6:4** Est 5:14 **6:6** Est 3:8-9 **6:8-9** Gn 41:42-43 **6:8** 1Kg 1:33 **6:9** Est 5:11 **6:10** Est 3:6 **6:12** Est 5:9,13 **6:12** 2Sm 15:30 **6:13** Est 5:10,14 **6:13** Dt 32:10; Zch 2:8 **6:14** Est 1:10-11 **6:14** Est 5:7-8

6:1-3 Tension is building in the narrative on the night between Esther’s two banquets, since she has not yet made her appeal and Haman is about to request permission to hang Mordecai (see the previous note). God uses the king’s insomnia to turn the tide against Haman (see the note on 1:1). As the royal records were read to the king, he was reminded of Mordecai’s earlier good deed, which had been recorded (2:23) but not rewarded.

6:6-11 Blinded by arrogance (see Pr 16:18), Haman thought the king wanted to honor him and listed honors that he desired for himself (vv. 6-9). Instead, Haman was told to bestow these on Mordecai as a belated reward for his good deed (vv. 10-11; see the previous note). Not only was Haman thus humiliated, but he never had the opportunity to request that Mordecai be hanged. Even Haman’s wife and friends recognized that his “downfall” was imminent (v. 13).

HAMAN IS EXECUTED

7 The king and Haman came to feast † † with Esther the queen. 2 Once
again, on the second day while drinking wine, † the king asked Esther,
“Queen Esther, whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you
seek, even to half the kingdom, will be done.” †
3 Queen Esther answered, “If I have found favor in your eyes, Your Majesty,
and if the king is pleased, † spare my life; this is my request. And spare my
people; this is my desire. † 4 For my people and I have been sold † to

destruction, death, and extermination. † If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, † I would have kept silent. Indeed, the trouble wouldn't be worth burdening the king."
5 King Ahasuerus spoke up and asked Queen Esther, "Who is this, and where is the one who would devise such a scheme?" † †
6 Esther answered, "The adversary and enemy † is this evil Haman."
Haman stood terrified † before the king and queen. 7 The king arose in anger † and went from where they were drinking wine to the palace garden. † † Haman remained to beg Queen Esther for his life because he realized the king was planning something terrible for him. † 8 Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, † Haman was falling on the couch † where Esther was reclining. The king exclaimed, "Would he actually violate the queen while I am in the house?" As soon as the statement left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. †
9 Harbona, one of the king's eunuchs, † said: "There is a gallows seventy-five feet † tall at Haman's house that he made for Mordecai, † who gave the report that saved † the king." †
The king said, "Hang him on it."
10 They hanged Haman on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai. † Then the king's anger subsided. †

7:1 Lit *drink* **7:5** Lit *who would fill his heart to do this* **7:7** Lit *the garden of the house*, also in v. 8 **7:8** Or *the house of wine* **7:9** Lit *50 cubits* **7:9** Lit *who spoke good for*
7:1 Gn 40:20 **7:2** Est 5:6 **7:2** Est 5:3,6 **7:3** Est 2:17; 5:8 **7:3** Est 4:12-14 **7:4** Est 3:9,13; 4:7 **7:4** Est 3:13; 8:11; 9:5-10 **7:4** Dt 28:48,68 **7:5** Est 3:5-6,8-9 **7:6** Est 3:10 **7:6** Est 4:4 **7:7** Est 1:12; Pr 20:2 **7:7** Est 1:5-6 **7:7** Est 6:13 **7:8** Est 1:6 **7:8** Est 6:12; Jb 9:24 **7:9** Est 1:12 **7:9** Est 5:14 **7:9** Est 2:21-23; 6:1-2 **7:10** Est 5:14; Ps 7:16; 94:23; Pr 11:5,6; Dn 6:24 **7:10** Est 1:12; 2:1

7:3-6 At the second banquet (see the notes on 5:1-5,9-14), Esther revealed that she and her people had been **sold to destruction, death, and extermination** by Haman.

7:8-10 Already angry (v. 7), the king became even more so when he returned and saw Haman **falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.** Whatever the cause or motivation, touching the king's wife called for the death penalty. The downfall of Haman was complete when he was hanged on the very **gallows** he had intended for Mordecai (see also the notes on 6:1-3,6-11).

ESTHER INTERVENES FOR THE JEWS

8 That same day King Ahasuerus awarded Queen Esther the estate † of Haman, the enemy of the Jews. † Mordecai entered the king's presence because Esther had revealed her relationship to Mordecai. † 2 The king removed his signet ring he had recovered from Haman † and gave it to Mordecai, and Esther put him in charge of Haman's estate.

3 Then Esther addressed the king again. † She fell at his feet, wept, and begged † him to revoke the evil of Haman the Agagite † and his plot he had devised against the Jews. † 4 The king extended the gold scepter † toward Esther, so she got up and stood before the king.

5 She said, "If it pleases the king and I have found favor before him, if the matter seems right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, † let a royal edict be written. Let it revoke the documents the scheming Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite wrote to destroy the Jews who are in all the king's provinces. † 6 For how could I bear to see the disaster that would come on my people? † How could I bear to see the destruction of my relatives? " †

7 King Ahasuerus said to Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, "Look, I have given Haman's estate to Esther, † and he was hanged on the gallows because he attacked † the Jews. † 8 Write in the king's name whatever pleases you † concerning the Jews, and seal it with the royal signet ring. † A document written in the king's name and sealed with the royal signet ring cannot be revoked." †

9 On the twenty-third day of the third month † — that is, the month Sivan — the royal scribes were summoned. Everything was written exactly as Mordecai † commanded for the Jews, to the satraps, † the governors, and the officials of the 127 provinces from India to Cush. † The edict was written for each province in its own script, for each ethnic group in its own language, † and to the Jews in their own script and language.

10 Mordecai wrote in King Ahasuerus's name and sealed the edicts with the royal signet ring. He sent the documents by mounted couriers, † who rode fast horses † bred in the royal stables.

11 The king's edict gave the Jews in each and every city the right to assemble
and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and annihilate every ethnic and
provincial army hostile to them, including women and children, and to take their
possessions as spoils of war. † 12 This would take place on a single day
throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth day of the
twelfth month, the month Adar. †
13 A copy of the text, issued as law throughout every province, was distributed
to all the peoples † so the Jews could be ready to avenge themselves against
their enemies on that day. 14 The couriers rode out in haste on their royal horses
at the king's urgent command. The law was also issued in the fortress of Susa. †
15 Mordecai went from the king's presence clothed in royal purple and white,
with a great gold crown and a purple robe of fine linen. † The city of Susa
shouted and rejoiced, † 16 and the Jews celebrated † with gladness, joy, and
honor. † 17 In every province and every city, wherever the king's command and
his law reached, joy and rejoicing took place among the Jews. There was a
celebration and a holiday. † † And many of the ethnic groups of the land
professed themselves to be Jews because fear of the Jews † had overcome them.
8:7 Lit *stretched out his hand against* **8:16** Lit *had light* **8:17** Lit *good day*
8:1 Est 3:9; 5:11 **8:1** Est 3:10; 7:6 **8:1** Est 2:7,10 **8:2** Est 3:10,12 **8:3** Est 7:3-4,6 **8:3** Est 7:7 **8:3** Ex 17:8-16; Est 3:1 **8:3** Est 3:5-6,8-15 **8:4** Est 4:11; 5:2 **8:5** Est 2:17; 5:8; 7:3 **8:5** Est 3:13-14 **8:6** Est 4:13-14; 7:3-4 **8:6** Est 3:13 **8:7** Est 3:9; 5:11; 8:1; Pr 13:22 **8:7** Est 7:9-10 **8:8** Est 3:11 **8:8** Est 3:10,12; 8:2; Hg 2:23 **8:8** Est 1:19; Dn 6:8,12 **8:9** Est 3:7,12 **8:9** Est 3:12 **8:9** Ezr 8:36 **8:9** Est 1:1; 3:13; 9:30 **8:9** Neh 13:24; Est 1:22; 3:12 **8:10** Est 3:12-13 **8:10** 1Kg 4:26,28 **8:11** Est 3:13; 9:10 **8:12** Est 3:7 **8:13** Est 3:14 **8:14** Est 3:15 **8:15** Gn 41:42; Est 5:11; Dn 5:29 **8:15** Est 3:15 **8:16** Ezr 4:1-3; Ps 97:11 **8:17** Est 4:3 **8:17** Dt 11:25; Est 9:3

8:1-2 The humiliation of Haman continued after his death, when his **estate** was given to Esther and Mordecai was honored in the way that he had been earlier (3:10).

8:7-12 The **edict** issued earlier could not be revoked but another one could be issued. Mordecai oversaw such an edict (vv. 9-10), which gave the Jews the right to defend themselves on the same day that Haman had commanded that they be destroyed (v. 12; 3:13).

8:16-17 Jews throughout the kingdom were overjoyed with the news of the edict, and many others allied themselves with them (see also 6:13; 9:3).

VICTORIES OF THE JEWS

9 The king's command and law † went into effect on the thirteenth day of
the twelfth month, † the month Adar. On the day when the Jews'

enemies † had hoped to overpower them, just the opposite happened. The Jews overpowered those who hated them. † 2 In each of King Ahasuerus's provinces † the Jews assembled in their cities to attack those who intended to harm them. † Not a single person could withstand them; fear of them † fell on every nationality. †
3 All the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and the royal civil administrators † † aided the Jews because they feared Mordecai. † 4 For Mordecai exercised great power in the palace, † and his fame spread throughout the provinces as he became more and more powerful. †
5 The Jews put all their enemies to the sword, killing and destroying them. † They did what they pleased to those who hated them. 6 In the fortress of Susa † the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men, 7 including Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vaizatha. 10 They killed these ten sons † of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. † However, they did not seize † any plunder. †
11 On that day the number of people killed in the fortress of Susa was reported to the king. 12 The king said to Queen Esther, "In the fortress of Susa the Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men, including Haman's ten sons. What have they done in the rest of the royal provinces? Whatever you ask will be given to you. Whatever you seek will also be done." †
13 Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, may the Jews who are in Susa also have tomorrow † to carry out today's law, † and may the bodies of Haman's ten sons † be hung on the gallows." † 14 The king gave the orders for this to be done, so a law was announced in Susa, and they hung the bodies of Haman's ten sons. 15 The Jews in Susa assembled again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar † and killed three hundred men in Susa, but they did not seize any plunder. †
16 The rest of the Jews in the royal provinces assembled, defended themselves, and gained relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand † of those who hated them, † but they did not seize any plunder. 17 They fought on

the thirteenth day of the month of Adar and rested on the fourteenth, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing.
18 But the Jews in Susa had assembled on the thirteenth and the fourteenth days of the month. They rested on the fifteenth day of the month, and it became a day of feasting and rejoicing. † 19 This explains why the rural Jews who live in villages observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar as a time of rejoicing and feasting. It is a holiday when they send gifts to one another. †
20 Mordecai † recorded these events and sent letters to all the Jews in all of King Ahasuerus's provinces, both near and far. 21 He ordered † them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar every year 22 because during those days the Jews gained relief from † their enemies. That was the month when their sorrow was turned into rejoicing and their mourning into a holiday. † They were to be days of feasting, † rejoicing, and of sending gifts to one another and to the poor.
23 So the Jews agreed to continue the practice they had begun, as Mordecai had written them to do. 24 For Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, † had plotted against the Jews to destroy them. He cast the Pur — that is, the lot — to crush and destroy them. † 25 But when the matter was brought before the king, † he commanded by letter that the evil plan Haman had devised against the Jews return on his own head † and that he should be hanged with his sons on the gallows. † 26 For this reason these days are called Purim, from the word Pur. † Because of all the instructions in this letter as well as what they had witnessed and what had happened to them, 27 the Jews bound themselves, their descendants, and all who joined † with them to a commitment that they would not fail to celebrate these two days each and every year according to the written instructions and according to the time appointed. 28 These days are remembered and celebrated by every generation, family, province, and city, so that these days of Purim will not lose their significance in Jewish life † and their memory will not fade from their descendants. †
29 Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, † along with Mordecai the Jew, † wrote this second letter with full authority † to confirm the letter about Purim. 30 He

sent letters with assurances of peace and security † to all the Jews who were in the 127 provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, 31 in order to confirm these days of Purim at their proper time just as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had established them and just as they had committed themselves and their descendants to the practices of fasting † and lamentation. † 32 So Esther's command confirmed these customs of Purim, which were then written into the record.

9:2 Lit *cities to send out a hand against the seekers of their evil* **9:3** Lit *and those who do the king's work*; Est 3:9 **9:10** Lit *not put their hands on*, also in vv. 15,16 **9:16** Some LXX mss read *10,107*; other LXX mss read *15,000* **9:28** LXX reads *will be celebrated into all times* **9:30** Or *of peace and faithfulness*

9:1 Est 8:7-8,10 **9:1** Est 3:7; 8:12 **9:1** Est 3:10; 7:6; 8:1 **9:1** 2Sm 22:41; Est 3:5 **9:2** Est 1:1; 8:9; 9:30 **9:2** Est 8:17 **9:2** Est 3:12,14; 8:13,17 **9:3** Est 3:12; 8:9 **9:3** Est 8:17 **9:4** Est 10:2-3 **9:4** 2Sm 3:1; 1Ch 11:9 **9:5** Est 3:13 **9:6** Est 1:2; 3:15; 8:14 **9:10** Est 5:11 **9:10** Est 3:10; 7:6; 8:1 **9:10** Est 3:13; 8:11 **9:12** Est 5:6; 7:2; 8:8 **9:13** Est 8:12; 9:1 **9:13** Est 8:11 **9:13** Est 5:11 **9:13** Est 7:9-10 **9:15** Est 9:1 **9:15** Est 8:11 **9:16** Lv 26:7-8; Est 9:5 **9:18** Est 8:16-17 **9:19** Neh 8:10,12; Est 9:22 **9:20** Est 8:15 **9:21** Est 8:15; 9:3-4 **9:22** Est 4:14 **9:22** Ps 30:11 **9:22** Est 8:17 **9:24** Est 3:1,10; 7:6 **9:24** Est 3:6-7 **9:25** Est 7:3-6 **9:25** Ps 7:16 **9:25** Est 5:14; 7:9-10; 9:13-14 **9:26** Est 3:7 **9:27** Est 8:17; Is 56:3,6; Zch 2:11 **9:28** Jos 4:6-7; 1Co 11:24-25 **9:29** Est 2:7,15 **9:29** Est 3:4-6; 5:13 **9:29** Est 8:8; Dn 6:8 **9:31** Est 4:16 **9:31** Est 4:1-3

9:1-2 Instead of being a day on which the Jews were destroyed, **the thirteenth day of the twelfth month** ended up being a day of victory for the Jews.

9:6-15 These verses focus on the Jews in **Susa.** Perhaps because opposition against the dispersed Israelites was more intense there, Esther asked the king to permit these Jews to defend themselves on the next day also and to hang the bodies of Haman's sons (v. 13). Thus, the Jews in Susa defended themselves **on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar** also**.**

9:20-28 The Jews in Susa rested on the fifteenth of the month, whereas the Jews elsewhere in the kingdom rested on the fourteenth (vv. 17-19). Both days were designated as a holiday (vv. 21-22) called **Purim, from the word Pur** (meaning "lot").

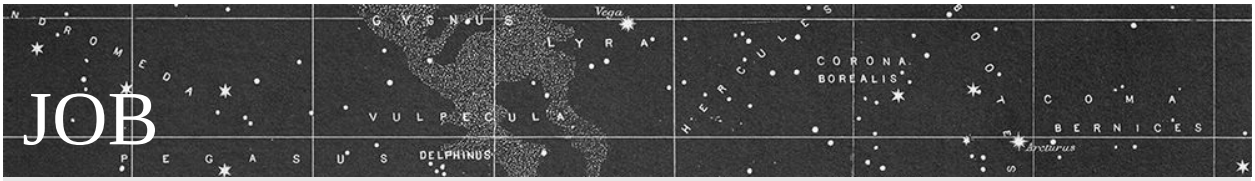
MORDECAI'S FAME

10 King Ahasuerus imposed a tax throughout the land † even to the farthest shores. † † 2 All of his powerful and magnificent accomplishments † and the detailed account of Mordecai's great rank with which the king had honored him, † have they not been written in the Book of the Historical Events of the Kings of Media and Persia? † 3 Mordecai the Jew was second only to King Ahasuerus. † He was famous among the Jews and highly esteemed by many of his relatives. † He continued to pursue prosperity for his people and to speak for the well-being of all his descendants. †

10:1 Or *imposed forced labor on the land and the coasts of the sea*

10:1 Est 1:1; 8:9 **10:1** Is 11:11; 24:15 **10:2** Est 1:4 **10:2** Est 8:15 **10:2** Est 2:23; 6:1-2 **10:3** Gn 41:40-43; 2Ch 28:7; Est 8:15; Dn 5:7 **10:3** Est 8:16-17 **10:3** Neh 2:10

10:2-3 Mordecai's promotion to a powerful position and the honor he enjoyed have already been mentioned several times previously (8:2,7-10,15; 9:3-4,20-23,29-31) and are referenced here again at the close of the book.



JOB

INTRODUCTION

The book of Job is named after the central character and speaker. The narrative deals with a man who lost everything and the subsequent discussions he had about the reason for his suffering. God alone had the final word and eventually restored all that Job had lost.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author of Job is unknown, but he was a learned man whose knowledge embraced the heavens (22:12; 38:32-33) and earth (26:7-8; 28:9-11; 37:11,16). His knowledge touched on foreign lands (28:16,19), various products (6:19), and human professions (7:6; 9:26; 18:8-10; 28:1-11). He was familiar with plants (14:7-9) and animals (4:10-11; 38:39–39:30; 40:15–41:34). He was a wise man, familiar with traditional wisdom (6:5-6; 17:5; 28:12,28), but was above all a man of spiritual sensitivity (1:1,5,8; 2:3; 14:14-15; 16:11-21; 19:23-27; 23:10; 34:26-28; 40:1-5; 42:1-6). He was doubtless an Israelite as confirmed by his frequent use of God's covenant name (Yahweh).

BACKGROUND: The story of Job is set in the patriarchal period. In that era wealth consisted of the possession of cattle and servants. Like other OT patriarchal family heads, Job performed priestly duties, including offering sacrifices for his family. Like the patriarchs, Job lived to be more than a hundred years old. Geographically, the action took place in the northern Arabian Peninsula, in the land of Uz (1:1), often associated with Edom. Job's three friends also had Edomite or southern associations, as did the young Elihu (see notes at 2:11; 32:2-3).

Although Job is set in the patriarchal period, its date of writing is unknown. Jewish tradition places the authorship of Job in the time of Moses.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Job teaches that suffering comes to everyone, the righteous and unrighteous alike. God does not always keep the righteous from danger or suffering. Ultimately God controls all of life's situations, including limiting the power of Satan. God's comfort and strength are always available to the trusting soul.

Although the book of Job does take note of the problem of suffering, it focuses more on the nature of human conduct before a sovereign and holy God. In harmony with the rest of Scripture, the book teaches that even a consistent practice of religion is insufficient without a genuine heart relationship with God (Dt 6:4-6; Ps 86:11-12; Mt 22:37). The answer to life's problems and goals lies in a proper reverence for him who is perfect in all his being and actions. Man needs not just to confess God but to surrender everything to him. By letting him truly be God in every area of life, a person will find him sufficient.

STRUCTURE

The writer was a skilled storyteller, artistically characterizing the distinctions between the protagonist (Job), antagonist (Satan), and literary foils (the three friends and Elihu). The characterization demonstrates that God himself is the ultimate protagonist (or "hero") of the story. Satan was as much challenging God as Job's piety. Although Job's three "comforters" applied traditional wisdom to Job's situation, each did it in a different way. Eliphaz, the rationalist, reasoned with Job (15:17-18); Bildad, the apologist, sought to defend God (25:1-6); and Zophar acted much like a prosecutor (11:1-6). The youthful Elihu served as a mediating influence in order to prepare for the divine speeches that follow (33:23-26). The writer constructed a well-

developed plot built around dramatic dialogue. The fact that he related the account of Job's test in story form does not mean that Job was not a real person who underwent a real test.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Job reveals God in his heavenly court (Is 6 and Ezk 1 may be compared). The book shows that God permits an adversary (Satan) to challenge his sovereign righteousness but that God's glory is served in the end. Job's expectation of a coming Redeemer (19:25) was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The creative work of God's Spirit is evident in such texts as Job 33:4.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The prose sections of Job (chaps. 1–2 and 42) show that human behavior is on display before supernatural powers. The poetic sections (chaps. 3–41) show that, however logical it appears, human reasoning alone can never penetrate the mind of God. Job and his counselors reached only partial truth about suffering, and only when God revealed himself did the inadequacy of human wisdom become evident.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Job 1 is consistent with Genesis in showing a family head offering sacrifices for the sins of his own family members. Job's personal confession of faith anticipated both the coming of Christ and the resurrection (19:25-26).

JOB TIMELINE

2300–2100 BC

JOB 2100?–1900?

Eheduanna, the daughter of Sargon of Akkad, is the world's oldest known author whose works are written in cuneiform. **2285–2250**

The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba, Egyptian parallel to Job **2280–2050**

The Great Ziggurat at Ur **2200**

2100–2000 BC

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

ISAAC 2066–1866

Death in combat of Ur-nammu (king of Sumer, Ur, and Akkad) who standardized the weights and measures, and formulated a system of law that tried to establish justice for the underprivileged **2095**

2000–1900 BC

JACOB 2006–1859

The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant, Egyptian parallel to Job **2000**

Man and His God, Sumerian parallel to Job **2000**

1900–1850 BC

JOSEPH 1915–1805

MOSES 1826–1406

Potter's wheel introduced to Crete **1900**

Egyptian town of El Lahun gives evidence of town planning with streets at right angles. **1900**

Mesopotamian mathematicians discover what later came to be called the "Pythagorean theorem." **1900**

Multiplication tables appear in Mesopotamia. **1900**

Khnumhotep II, an architect of Pharaoh Amenemhet II, develops encryption. **1900**

1850–1100 BC

JOSHUA 1490?–1380?

The Admonition of Ipu–wer, Egyptian parallel of Job **1850–1600**

Ludlul Bel Nemeqi, Tabu–utul–Bel, Babylonian parallel to Job **1700**

Epic of Keret, Canaanite, extant copy **1360**. Original date unknown *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*, Mesopotamian **1290**

The Babylonian Theodicy, Mesopotamian **1100**

JOB AND HIS FAMILY

1 There was a man in the country of Uz † named Job. † He was a man of complete integrity, † who feared God and turned away from evil. †
2 He had seven sons and three daughters. † 3 His estate included seven thousand sheep and goats, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, † and a very large number of servants. Job was the greatest man among all the people of the east. †
4 His sons used to take turns having banquets at their homes. They would send an invitation to their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5 Whenever a round of banqueting was over, Job would send for his children and purify them, rising early in the morning to offer burnt offerings for † all of them. For Job thought, "Perhaps my children have sinned, having cursed God in their hearts." † This was Job's regular practice.

SATAN'S FIRST TEST OF JOB

6 One day the sons of God † came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan † also came with them. 7 The LORD asked Satan, “Where have you come from? ”

“From roaming through the earth,” † Satan answered him, “and walking around on it.”

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, † who fears God and turns away from evil.” †

9 Satan answered the LORD, “Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 Haven’t you placed a hedge around † him, his household, and everything he owns? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 But stretch out your hand and strike † everything he owns, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

12 “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “everything he owns is in your power. However, do not lay a hand on Job himself.” So Satan left the LORD’s presence.

13 One day when Job’s sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house, 14 a messenger came to Job and reported: “While the oxen were plowing and the donkeys grazing nearby, 15 the Sabeans † swooped down and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you! ”

16 He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “God’s fire fell from heaven. † It burned the sheep and the servants and devoured them, and I alone have escaped to tell you! ”

17 That messenger was still speaking when yet another came and reported: “The Chaldeans formed three bands, made a raid on the camels, and took them away. They struck down the servants with the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you! ”

18 He was still speaking when another messenger came and reported: “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother’s house. 19 Suddenly a powerful wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on the young people so that they died, and I alone have escaped to tell you! ”

20 Then Job stood up, tore † his robe, and shaved † his head. He fell to the ground and worshiped, 21 saying:

Naked I came from my mother's womb, †
and naked I will leave this life. † †
The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away.
Blessed be the name of the LORD. †

22 Throughout all this Job did not sin or blame God for anything. † †

1:5 Lit *for the number of* **1:6** Or *the adversary* **1:21** Lit *will return there* ; Ps 139:13,15 **1:22** Lit *or ascribe blame to God*
1:1 Jr 25:20; Lm 4:21 **1:1** Ezk 14:14,20; Jms 5:11 **1:1** Jb 2:3; 8:20; 9:20-22 **1:1** Jb 28:28; Pr 3:7 **1:2** Jb 42:13 **1:3** Jb 42:12 **1:3** 1Kg 4:30; Is 11:14; Jr 49:28; Ezk 25:4,10 **1:5** Jb 42:8 **1:6** Gn 6:2,4; Jb 2:1; 38:7 **1:7** 1Pt 5:8 **1:8** Ps 25:21; Pr 29:10 **1:8** Jb 28:28; Pr 3:7; 13:19; 14:16; 16:6,17 **1:10** Ps 34:7 **1:11** Jb 2:5; 4:5; 5:19 **1:15** Gn 10:7; Jb 6:19; Is 45:14 **1:16** Gn 19:24; 1Kg 18:38; 2Kg 1:10-14 **1:20** Gn 37:29,34; Jos 7:6; Jb 2:12 **1:20** Jr 7:29; Ezk 7:18; Mc 1:16 **1:21** Jb 3:10-11; 10:17-18; Jr 20:17-18 **1:21** Ps 139:13,15 **1:21** Jb 38:1; Ps 113:2; 118:26 **1:22** Jb 2:10

1:1 Perhaps more than any other biblical book, the book of Job wrestles with the problem of suffering. Job **was a man of complete integrity, who feared God and turned away from evil** (see also v. 8; 2:3), but he would experience intense sorrow and anguish. Though the reader knows about the conversations between God and Satan, Job did not (see the notes on vv. 20-22 and 2:10). Thus, one of the messages of the book is that God has greater purposes for our suffering than we can see (see Gn 50:20; Rm 8:28). The **country of Uz** is also mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20 and Lamentations 4:21. It was outside the nation of Israel, though its exact location is uncertain.

1:4-5 This brief passage illustrates Job's faith in God and sensitivity to sin (see v. 1). He offered sacrifices for his children just in case they had sinned by cursing God in their hearts.

1:8-11 God drew attention to the character and faith of Job (see also v. 1; 28:28; Pr 3:7; 16:6). Nevertheless, Satan accused Job of fearing God only because God had blessed him so abundantly (v. 10). He also claimed that Job would **surely curse** [God] **to** [his] **face** if these gifts were taken away. At issue is the so-called "Retribution Principle" which states that, generally speaking, obedience leads to blessing and disobedience leads to consequences. This idea is taught throughout the Bible, from the covenant blessings and curses (Lv 26; Dt 28) to the teaching about consequences in Proverbs. Here Satan is reversing the principle and suggesting that blessing has led to obedience.

1:12 God's granting of permission shows that Satan, though powerful, is still subject to his rule and authority. See "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*; "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454*.

1:20-22 Job lost his wealth and children in a single day (vv. 13-19), but he recognized that **the LORD gives, and the LORD takes away.** Thus, he **did not sin or blame God for anything.** Satan's accusation was thus proven false (v. 11). Job mourned, but also worshiped God (v. 20). Although he did not know about the conversation between God and Satan (vv. 6-12; see the note on v. 1), he recognized God's sovereignty in the midst of his terrible circumstances and even praised him (v. 21; see also the note on 2:10).

SATAN'S SECOND TEST OF JOB

2 One day the sons of God † came again to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them to present himself before the LORD.
2 The LORD asked Satan, “Where have you come from? ”
“From roaming through the earth,” Satan answered him, “and walking around on it.”
3 Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? No one else on earth is like him, a man of perfect integrity, † who fears God and turns away from evil. † He still retains his integrity, even though you incited me against him, to destroy him for no good reason.”
4 “Skin for skin! ” Satan answered the LORD. “A man will give up everything he owns in exchange for his life. 5 But stretch out your hand and strike † his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.”
6 “Very well,” the LORD told Satan, “he is in your power; only spare his life.”
7 So Satan left the LORD’s presence and infected Job with terrible boils from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. † 8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery to scrape himself while he sat among the ashes. †
9 His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die! ”
10 “You speak as a foolish woman speaks,” he told her. “Should we accept only good from God and not adversity? ” Throughout all this Job did not sin in what he said. †

JOB’S THREE FRIENDS

11 Now when Job’s three friends — Eliphaz the Temanite, † Bildad the Shuhite, † and Zophar the Naamathite — heard about all this adversity that had happened to him, each of them came from his home. They met together to go and sympathize with him and comfort † him. 12 When they looked from a distance, they could barely recognize him. They wept aloud, † and each man tore his robe and threw dust into the air and on his head. † 13 Then they sat on the ground with him seven days and nights, † but no one spoke a word to him because they saw that his suffering † was very intense.

2:10 Lit *sin with his lips*
2:1 Gn 6:2,4; Jb 1:6; 38:7 **2:3** Jb 6:29 **2:3** Jb 1:1,8; 28:28; Pr 3:7 **2:5** Jb 1:11; 4:5; 19:21 **2:7** Dt 28:27,35

2:8 2Sm 13:19; Jb 42:6 **2:11** Gn 36:34; 1Ch 1:45; Jb 42:9 **2:11** Gn 25:2; Jb 8:1; 18:1 **2:11** Jb 42:11; Ps 69:20; Jr 16:5 **2:12** Jdg 21:2; Ru 1:9,14; 2Sm 13:36 **2:12** Jos 7:6; Lm 2:10; Ezk 27:30 **2:13** Gn 50:10; Ezk 3:15; 45:21 **2:13** Gn 34:5; Jb 16:6; Ps 39:2

2:1-6 For a second time, God and Satan have a conversation that is known to the reader but not to Job or those in the narrative (see 1:6-12). God continued to affirm Job's godliness and described Satan's schemes against him as being **for no good reason** (v. 3). In other words, Job's suffering did not come as consequences for any particular sin. Although proven wrong once already (see the previous note), Satan claimed Job would **surely curse** [God] **to** [his] **face** if his person was harmed (vv. 4-5). For Satan's need of God's permission (v. 6), see the note on 1:12.

2:10 Job had been afflicted with "terrible boils" all over his body (v. 7), leading his wife to suggest that he forsake his "integrity" and "curse God" (v. 9). Though Job did not know what had transpired in heaven between God and Satan, he rebuked her and continued to recognize God's sovereignty, even in the midst of excruciating pain (see the notes on 1:1,20-22). To be sure, Satan was involved, but the **adversity** was still, in an important sense, from God (see also v. 3; 42:11). Again, Job had not sinned through anything he said (see also 1:22).

JOB'S OPENING SPEECH

3 After this, Job began to speak and cursed the day he was born. 2 He said:

3 May the day I was born perish, and the night that said,
"A boy is conceived." †
4 If only that day had turned to darkness!
May God above not care about it,
or light shine on it.
5 May darkness and gloom † reclaim it, and a cloud settle over it.
May what darkens the day terrify it.
6 If only darkness had taken that night away!
May it not appear † among the days of the year or be listed in the calendar. †
7 Yes, may that night be barren; may no joyful shout † be heard in it.
8 Let those who curse days condemn † it, those who are ready to rouse Leviathan. †
9 May its morning stars grow dark.
May it wait for daylight but have none;
may it not see the breaking † of dawn.
10 For that night did not shut the doors of my mother's womb,
and hide sorrow from my eyes.

11 Why was I not stillborn; why didn't I die as I came from the womb? †
12 Why did the knees receive me, and why were there breasts for me to nurse? †
13 Now I would certainly be lying down in peace; I would be asleep. †
Then I would be at rest †
14 with the kings and counselors † of the earth, who rebuilt ruined cities
for themselves, 15 or with princes who had gold, who filled their houses †
with silver.
16 Or why was I not hidden like a miscarried child, †
like infants who never see daylight?
17 There the wicked † cease to make trouble, and there the weary find rest.
18 The captives are completely at rest; †
they do not hear a taskmaster's voice. †
19 Both small and great are there, and the slave is set free from his master. †

20 Why is light given to one burdened with grief, and life to those
whose existence is bitter, †
21 who wait for death, † but it does not come, and search for it more than
for hidden treasure, 22 who are filled with much joy and are glad
when they reach the grave? †
23 Why is life given to a man whose path is hidden, †
whom God has hedged in?
24 I sigh when food † is put before me, †
and my groans pour out like water. †
25 For the thing I feared has overtaken me, and what I dreaded has happened
to me. †
26 I cannot relax or be calm; I have no rest, † for turmoil has come.

First Series of Speeches

3:6 LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; MT reads *rejoice* **3:6** Lit *or enter the number of months* **3:9** Lit *the eyelids* **3:24** Or *My sighing serves as my food*
3:3 Jb 5:7; Pr 23:25; Is 7:14 **3:5** Jb 10:21-22; 12:22; 28:3 **3:7** Jb 20:5; Ps 63:5 **3:8** Nm 22:11,17; Jb 5:3; Pr 11:26 **3:8** Jb 41; Ps 74:14; 104:26 **3:10-11** Jb 1:21; 10:17-18; Jr 20:17-18 **3:12** Sg 8:1; Is 66:12; Jl 2:16 **3:13** Ps 13:3; Jr 51:39,57; Mt 8:24 **3:13** Jb 17:16; Dn 12:13; Rv 14:13 **3:14** Is 14:9; Jr 51:57; Ezk 32:29

3:15 Jb 17:13; 30:23; Ec 12:5 **3:16** Nm 12:12; Ps 58:8; Ec 6:3 **3:17** Jb 9:22; 11:20; 18:5 **3:18** Pr 1:33; Jr 30:10; 46:27 **3:18** Ex 3:7; 5:10,13-14; Jb 39:7 **3:19** Jb 9:22; Ec 9:2-3; Is 14:9-10 **3:20** Jb 23:2; Ps 71:20; Lm 1:4 **3:21** 1Kg 19:4; Jb 7:15; Jnh 4:3 **3:22** Jb 5:26; 10:19; 17:1 **3:23** Jb 19:8; Lm 3:9; Hs 2:6 **3:24** Jb 6:7; 33:20; Ps 102:4 **3:24** Ps 6:6; 22:1,14; 32:3 **3:25** Jb 9:28; 13:11; 30:15 **3:26** Jb 30:17; Pr 25:2; Ec 2:23

3:1 When Job finally broke the silence, he did not curse God, though he **cursed the day he was born.** He reasoned that if he had been stillborn (v. 11; see also v. 16), then he would not have experienced this intense suffering (v. 13).

3:8 Leviathan is mentioned five times in the Bible (41:1; Pss 74:14; 104:26; Is 27:1). On the surface, the word seems to refer to some kind of mighty sea creature, which nevertheless was created by God (Gn 1:21) and hence subject to him. Here and in every other instance perhaps except one (i.e., Ps 104:26), however, "Leviathan" seems to refer to an evil supernatural being, which was indeed created by God but remains subject to him (see the notes on 26:12-13 and 41:1-11).

3:20-26 Job lamented that life is given to those like him who are so burdened with bitter suffering that they would rather die so that their pain might cease (see also 10:18-19). Whereas Satan earlier had said that God had "placed a hedge" around him (1:10), now Job believed that he had been **hedged in** by God (v. 23; see also 38:8).

ELIPHAZ SPEAKS

Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

4 2 Should anyone try to speak with you when you are exhausted?
Yet who can keep from speaking?
3 Indeed, you have instructed many and have strengthened † weak hands.
4 Your words have steadied the one who was stumbling and braced the knees that were buckling. †
5 But now that this has happened to you, you have become exhausted.
It strikes † you, and you are dismayed.
6 Isn't your piety your confidence, and the integrity of your life † your hope? †
7 Consider: Who has perished when he was innocent?
Where have the honest † been destroyed? †
8 In my experience, those who plow injustice and those who sow trouble † reap the same. †
9 They perish at a single blast † from God and come to an end by the breath of his nostrils. †
10 The lion may roar and the fierce lion † growl, but the teeth of young lions are broken. †

11 The strong lion dies if it catches no prey, and the cubs of the lioness are scattered. †

12 A word was brought to me in secret; my ears caught a whisper of it. †
13 Among unsettling thoughts from visions in the night, †
when deep sleep † comes over men, 14 fear and trembling came over me †
and made all my bones shake.
15 I felt a draft † on my face, and the hair on my body stood up.
16 A figure stood there, but I could not recognize its appearance; a form loomed before my eyes.
I heard a whispering voice:
17 "Can a mortal be righteous before God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker? " †
18 If God puts no trust in his servants and he charges his angels with foolishness, † †
19 how much more those who dwell in clay houses, †
whose foundation is in the dust,
who are crushed like a moth!
20 They are smashed to pieces from dawn to dusk; they perish forever while no one notices. †
21 Are their tent cords not pulled up?
They die without wisdom. †

4:6 Lit *ways* **4:7** Or *the upright*, or *those with integrity* **4:15** Or *a spirit* **4:18** Or *error* ; Hb obscure
4:3 Jb 26:2; Is 35:3; Heb 12:12 **4:4** Dt 3:28; Jb 16:15; Is 41:10 **4:5** Jb 5:19; 6:7; 19:21 **4:6** Jb 11:18; Ps 119:116; Jr 17:7 **4:7** Jb 8:20; Ps 37:25; Pr 12:21 **4:8** Jb 5:7; 15:35; Is 59:4 **4:8** Ps 7:15; Pr 22:8; Hs 8:7 **4:9** 2Sm 22:26; Jb 37:10; Is 30:33 **4:9** Ex 15:8-10; Ps 18:15; 2Th 2:8 **4:10** Ps 10:9; 17:12; 22:13,21 **4:10** Jb 29:17; Ps 3:7; 58:6 **4:11** Ps 59:11; Pr 20:8,20; Is 33:3 **4:12** Jb 13:1; 33:16; 36:10,15 **4:13** Jb 7:14; 20:8; 33:15 **4:13** Gn 2:21; 15:12; Jb 33:15 **4:14** Jb 21:6; Ps 55:5; 119:120 **4:17** Jb 15:14; 25:4; Pr 20:9 **4:18** Jb 15:15; 21:22; 25:5 **4:19** Jb 10:9; 33:6; Is 64:8 **4:20** Jb 14:2; 20:7; Ps 90:5-6 **4:21** Jb 36:12; Pr 5:23; 10:21

4:1 Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends who had come to comfort him (2:11). Teman is closely associated with Edom in the OT (e.g., Jr 49:20; Ezk 25:12-13; Am 1:11-12), both of which are sometimes associated with wisdom (Jr 49:7; Ob8-9). The conversation between Job and his three friends in Job 4–31 concerns the nature of wisdom and the limits of human knowledge. None of them know the true reason for Job's suffering. The friends blame Job and insist that his pain must be the result of sin. Job insists that the answers lie with God. In the end, Job's position is affirmed while God is angry with the friends for what they said (42:7-8).

4:5 Having heard Job's lament in the previous chapter, Eliphaz pointed out that although Job had strengthened others when they were weak (vv. 3-4), now Job was **dismayed** because of his own trial. While true, these words seem to lack compassion (see 5:17; 6:27; 16:2).

4:6-8 Eliphaz wrongly believed that Job's suffering necessarily meant that he had sinned. Eliphaz was limited by his own **experience** (v. 8; see also the notes on 5:2-7 and 15:17) and did not account for God's secret, mysterious purposes. Job's suffering fell outside of Eliphaz's preconceived framework of strict retribution in this life.

4:17-21 Although he referred in passing to the overall uprightness of Job's life (v. 6), Eliphaz also stated the obvious: no man is more **righteous** or **pure** than God (v. 17), which he reinforced by asserting mankind's inferiority to angels (vv. 18-21). Eliphaz may have been suggesting that since Job was still a sinner, some sin of his was being punished (see also 5:17; 6:24). This, of course, was not the case (see also the notes on Jb 1–2).

5 Call out! Will anyone answer you?
Which of the holy ones † will you turn to?
2 For anger kills a fool, and jealousy slays the gullible. †
3 I have seen a fool taking root, but I immediately pronounced a curse on his home.
4 His children are far from safety.
They are crushed at the city gate, †
with no one to rescue them.
5 The hungry consume his harvest, even taking it out of the thorns. †
The thirsty † pant for his children's wealth.
6 For distress does not grow out of the soil, and trouble does not sprout from the ground.
7 But humans are born for trouble †
as surely as sparks fly upward.

8 However, if I were you, I would appeal to God and would present my case to him. †
9 He does great † and unsearchable things, wonders without number. †
10 He gives rain to the earth and sends water to the fields. †
11 He sets the lowly on high, and mourners are lifted to safety. †
12 He frustrates the schemes of the crafty so that they † achieve no success.
13 He traps the wise in their craftiness so that the plans of the deceptive

are quickly brought to an end. †

14 They encounter darkness by day, and they grope at noon
as if it were night. †

15 He saves the needy from their sharp words † †
and from the clutches of the powerful.

16 So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth. †

17 See how happy is the person whom God corrects; so do not reject the discipline of the Almighty.

18 For he wounds but he also bandages; he strikes, but his hands also heal. †

19 He will rescue you from six calamities; no harm will touch you in seven.

20 In famine he will redeem you from death, and in battle, from the power of the sword. †

21 You will be safe from slander †
and not fear destruction when it comes. †

22 You will laugh at destruction and hunger and not fear the land's wild creatures.

23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you. †

24 You will know that your tent is secure, †
and nothing will be missing when you inspect your home.

25 You will also know that your offspring will be many and your descendants like the grass of the earth.

26 You will approach the grave † in full vigor, †
as a stack of sheaves is gathered in its season.

27 We have investigated this, and it is true!
Hear it and understand it for yourself.

5:5 Hb obscure **5:5** Aq, Sym, Syr, Vg; MT reads *snares* **5:12** Lit *their hands* **5:15** Lit *from the sword of their mouth* ; Ps 55:21; 59:7 **5:21** Lit *be hidden from the whip of the tongue*
5:1 Jb 15:15; Ps 89:5-7; Dn 4:17 **5:2** Pr 12:16; 14:18; 19:19 **5:4** Jb 31:21; Pr 22:22; Is 29:21 **5:7** Jb 4:8; 15:35; Is 59:4 **5:8** Jb 13:18; 23:4; Lm 3:59 **5:9** Jb 9:10; 37:5; Ps 71:19 **5:9** Jb 42:5; Ps 40:5; 72:18 **5:10** Jb 36:27-28; 38:26-28; Jr 14:22 **5:11** 1Sm 2:7; Ps 113:6-7; Mt 5:4 **5:13** Ps 9:15-16; Is 29:14; 1Co 3:19 **5:14** Dt 28:29; Jb 12:25; Is 59:10 **5:15** Ps 55:21; 59:7 **5:16** Ps 63:11; 107:42; Rm 3:19 **5:18** Dt 32:39; 1Sm 2:6; Hs 6:1 **5:20** Ps 33:19; 37:19; 144:10 **5:21** Ps 27:5; 31:20; 91:5 **5:23** Ps 91:12; Ezk 34:25; Hs 2:18 **5:24** Jb 8:6;

12:6; 21:9 **5:26** Jb 3:22; 10:19; 17:1 **5:26** Gn 15:15; 25:8; Jb 21:23

5:2-7 Eliphaz again appealed to his limited experience **(I have seen)** to argue that the wicked are punished in this life (vv. 2-5; see the note on 4:6-8). In his view, **distress** and **trouble** do not arise naturally (v. 6) but are the result of man's own sin.

5:17 While on the one hand Eliphaz suggested that Job appeal to God, presumably on the basis of his blamelessness (v. 8; see also the notes on 4:6-8,17-21), he also implied that Job was at least partially in the wrong (see also 6:24). He saw Job as the **person** whom **God corrects** and who should **not reject the discipline of the Almighty** (see also Pr 3:11-12) because he would be restored in due time (vv. 18-26).

5:27 Eliphaz's self-confidence that what he has said is **true** is ironic given God's later verdict: "You have not spoken the truth about me" (42:7).

JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ

6 Then Job answered:

2 If only my grief could be weighed and my devastation † placed with it
on the scales. †
3 For then it would outweigh the sand of the seas!
That is why my words are rash.
4 Surely the arrows of the Almighty have pierced † me; my spirit drinks
their poison.
God's terrors are arrayed against me. †
5 Does a wild donkey bray over fresh grass or an ox low over its fodder?
6 Is bland food eaten without salt?
Is there flavor in an egg white? †
7 I refuse to touch them; they are like contaminated food. †

8 If only my request would be granted and God would provide what I hope for:
9 that he would decide to crush me, to unleash his power and cut me off!
10 It would still bring me comfort, and I would leap for joy in unrelenting pain
that I have not denied † the words of the Holy One. †

11 What strength do I have, that I should continue to hope?
What is my future, that I should be patient?
12 Is my strength that of stone, or my flesh made of bronze?
13 Since I cannot help myself, the hope for success has been banished from me.

14 A despairing man should receive loyalty from his friends, † †
even if he abandons the fear of the Almighty.
15 My brothers are as treacherous as a wadi, as seasonal streams that overflow
16 and become darkened † because of ice, and the snow melts into them.
17 The wadis evaporate in warm weather; they disappear from their channels in hot weather.
18 Caravans turn away from their routes, go up into the desert, and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for these streams.
The traveling merchants of Sheba hope for them.
20 They are ashamed because they had been confident of finding water.
When they arrive there, they are disappointed. †
21 So this is what you have now become to me. †
When you see something dreadful, you are afraid.
22 Have I ever said: "Give me something"
or "Pay a bribe for me from your wealth"
23 or "Deliver me from the enemy's hand"
or "Redeem me from the hand of the ruthless"?

24 Teach me, and I will be silent.
Help me understand what I did wrong.
25 How painful honest words can be!
But what does your rebuke prove?
26 Do you think that you can disprove my words or that a despairing man's words are mere wind? †
27 No doubt you would cast lots for a fatherless child and negotiate a price to sell your friend. †

28 But now, please look at me; I will not lie to your face. †
29 Reconsider; don't be unjust.
Reconsider; my righteousness † is still the issue.
30 Is there injustice on my tongue or can my palate not taste disaster? †

6:4 Lit *Almighty are in* **6:6** Hb obscure **6:10** Lit *hidden* **6:14** Lit *To the despairing his friend loyalty* **6:16** Or *turbid* **6:21** Alt Hb tradition reads *So you have now become nothing*
6:2 Jb 30:13; Ps 57:1; Pr 19:13 **6:2** Jb 31:6; Dn 5:27; Mc 6:11 **6:4** Jb 30:15; Ps 38:2; 88:16 **6:7** Jb 3:24;

33:20; Ps 107:18 **6:10** Jb 22:22; 23:12; Ps 119:102 **6:14** Jb 19:21; Ps 38:11; Pr 17:17 **6:20** Jr 14:3; Jl 1:11; Am 4:8 **6:26** Jb 8:2; 15:2; 16:3 **6:27** Jl 3:3; Nah 3:10; 2Pt 2:3 **6:28** Jb 24:25; 27:4; 34:6 **6:29** Jb 2:3 **6:30** Jb 12:11; 27:4

6:2-13 Job's **grief** and **devastation** continued to overwhelm him (vv. 2-3), so much so that he repeated his wish to die (vv. 8-13; see the note on 3:20-26). That Job picked up where he left off previously emphasizes how irrelevant Eliphaz's preceding words were. Though Job rightly recognized God's sovereignty in the midst of these tragedies (see the notes on 1:20-22 and 2:10), he depicts God as an archer who has shot him with poisonous **arrows** (v. 4; 16:12-13). Job believed God had become his enemy and was directly opposing him (e.g., 7:12-14,20; 9:17-18,34; 13:21,24-27; 14:19-20), which was not true (see 1:11-12; 2:5-7). The Lord was not angry with him, as is the case elsewhere when his "arrows" are mentioned in genuine connection with his wrath (see Dt 32:23 and Ps 38:1-2).

6:14-21 Despite their journey and initial silence (2:11-13), Job criticized Eliphaz and his friends (**you** is plural in v. 21) for their lack of **loyalty** (v. 14), comparing them to a dry **wadi** that disappoints the thirsty.

6:24 Job understood Eliphaz's insinuations as implying that he had done **wrong** (see the notes on 4:17-21 and 5:17). He rightly insisted that he had not (vv. 24-26) and called Eliphaz and his friends both cruel and traitorous (**you** is plural in v. 27; see also vv. 14-15).

6:28-30 Job continued to defend his innocence as he pleaded with his friends to recognize that his **righteousness** was at stake (see also 27:2; 34:5-6).

7 Isn't each person consigned to forced labor † on earth?
Are not his days like those of a hired worker?
2 Like a slave he longs for shade; like a hired worker he waits for his pay.
3 So I have been made to inherit months of futility, and troubled nights have been assigned to me. †
4 When I lie down I think, "When will I get up?"
But the evening drags on endlessly,
and I toss and turn until dawn.
5 My flesh is clothed with maggots and encrusted with dirt. †
My skin forms scabs † and then oozes. †
6 My days pass more swiftly than a weaver's shuttle; they come to an end without hope. †
7 Remember that my life is but a breath.
My eye will never again see anything good. †
8 The eye of anyone who looks on me will no longer see me.
Your eyes will look for me, but I will be gone. †

9 As a cloud fades away and vanishes, so the one who goes down to Sheol †
will never rise again.
10 He will never return to his house; his hometown will no longer
remember † him. †

11 Therefore I will not restrain my mouth.
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness
of my soul.
12 Am I the sea † † or a sea monster, †
that you keep me under guard?
13 When I say, "My bed will comfort me, and my couch will ease
my complaint,"
14 then you frighten me with dreams, and terrify me with visions, †
15 so that I prefer strangling † — death rather than life in this body. † †
16 I give up! I will not live forever.
Leave me alone, † for my days are a breath. †

17 What is a mere human, that you think so highly of him and pay
so much attention to him? †
18 You inspect him every morning, and put him to the test every moment. †
19 Will you ever look away from me, or leave me alone long enough
to swallow? †
20 If I have sinned, what have I done to you, Watcher of humanity?
Why have you made me your target, †
so that I have become a burden to you? †
21 Why not forgive my sin and pardon my iniquity? †
For soon I will lie down in the grave. †
You will eagerly seek me, but I will be gone. †

7:5 Or *and dirty scabs* **7:5** Lit *skin hardens* **7:10** Lit *know* **7:12** Or *the sea god* **7:15** Or *suffocation* **7:15** Lit *than my bones* **7:16** Or *are futile* **7:19** Lit *swallow my saliva?* **7:20** Alt Hb tradition, LXX; MT, Vg read *myself*
7:1 Jb 14:14; Is 40:2 **7:3** Jb 30:17; Ps 6:6; 42:3 **7:5** Dt 28:35; Ps 38:5; Is 1:6 **7:6** Jb 14:19; 17:15; 19:10 **7:7** Jb 9:25; Ps 78:39; Jms 4:14 **7:8** Jb 7:21; 20:9; Ps 37:36 **7:9** Jb 11:8; 14:13; 17:13,16 **7:10** Jb 8:18; 20:9; Ps

103:16 **7:12** Jb 26:12; Ps 74:13 **7:12** Ps 148:7; Is 27:1; Ezk 32:2 **7:14** Jb 4:13; 20:8; 33:15 **7:15** 1Kg 19:4; Jb 3:21; Jnh 4:3 **7:16** Jb 7:19; 10:20; Ps 39:13 **7:17** Ps 8:4; 144:3; Heb 2:6 **7:18** Ps 17:3; 73:14; 139:23 **7:20** Jb 16:12; Lm 3:12 **7:21** Jb 11:6; 13:23; 15:5 **7:21** Jb 17:16; 20:11; Is 26:19 **7:21** Jb 3:13; 7:8; Ps 37:36

7:3-5 Job was tormented even at night since he had difficulty sleeping (vv. 3-4); perhaps this was related to his painful boils (see 2:7). He was also experiencing nightmares (v. 14).

7:6-7 Job was despairing, as shown through his belief that he was **without hope** and would **never again see anything good** (cp. Jb 42:10-16).

7:12-21 For the first time, Job speaks directly to God using the pronoun **you.** He had already expressed his belief that God had shot him with poisonous arrows (see the note on 6:2-13), and now he directly asked God why he was tormenting him so (vv. 12,17-18,20) and requested that he stop (vv. 16,19; see 10:20). Job also asked what sin he had committed to deserve the trials he was enduring (vv. 20-21; see 6:24-30). Of course, there were none (see the notes on Jb 1–2).

BILDAD SPEAKS

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2 How long will you go on saying these things?
Your words † are a blast of wind. †
3 Does God pervert justice? †
Does the Almighty pervert what is right? †
4 Since your children sinned against him, he gave them over to their rebellion.
5 But if you earnestly seek † God and ask the Almighty for mercy, †
6 if you are pure and upright, then he will move even now on your behalf and
restore the home where your righteousness dwells. †
7 Then, even if your beginnings were modest, your final days will be
full of prosperity. †

8 For ask the previous generation, and pay attention to what
their fathers discovered, †
9 since we were born only yesterday and know nothing.
Our days on earth are but a shadow. †
10 Will they not teach you and tell you and speak from their understanding?
11 Does papyrus grow where there is no marsh?
Do reeds flourish without water?
12 While still uncut shoots, they would dry up quicker than any other plant.

13 Such is the destiny † of all who forget God; the hope of the godless † will perish.

14 His source of confidence is fragile; †

what he trusts in is a spider's web. †

15 He leans on his web, but it doesn't stand firm.

He grabs it, but it does not hold up.

16 He is a well-watered plant in the sunshine; his shoots spread out over his garden.

17 His roots are intertwined around a pile of rocks.

He looks for a home among the stones.

18 If he is uprooted † from his place, it will deny knowing him, saying, "I never saw you." †

19 Surely this is the joy of his way of life; yet others will sprout from the dust.

20 Look, God does not reject a person of integrity, and he will not support † evildoers. †

21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with a shout of joy. †

22 Your enemies will be clothed with shame; †

the tent † of the wicked will no longer exist.

8:13 Lit *Such are the ways* **8:14** Or *cut off* ; Hb obscure **8:18** Or *destroyed* **8:20** Lit *grasp the hand of* **8:2** Jb 11:2; Pr 10:19; Ec 5:3 **8:2** Jb 6:26; 15:2; 16:3 **8:3** 2Ch 19:6; Jb 34:12; Ps 9:16 **8:3** Gn 18:25; Jb 34:17; Rm 3:5 **8:5** Ps 63:1; 78:34; Is 26:9 **8:5** Jb 9:15; 33:24; Ps 30:8 **8:6** Jb 22:23; 42:10; Pr 3:33 **8:7** Jb 36:11; 42:10,12; Jms 5:11 **8:8** Dt 4:32; 32:7; Jb 15:18 **8:9** Ps 102:11; 144:4; Ec 6:12 **8:13** Jb 13:16; 15:34; 27:8 **8:14-15** Jb 27:18; Is 59:5; Mt 7:26-27 **8:18** Jb 7:10; 20:7; Ps 37:36 **8:20** Gn 18:25; Jb 36:6; 2Pt 2:9 **8:21** Jb 33:26; Ps 27:6; 47:5 **8:22** Ps 35:26; 109:29; 132:18 **8:22** Jb 18:6,14; Ps 52:5; Pr 14:11

8:2 In contrast with Eliphaz, **Bildad** harshly confronted Job, calling his words **a blast of wind.**

8:3-7 Like Eliphaz (see the note on 4:6-8), Bildad also believed that just as God justly deals with the righteous and wicked in this life according to their conduct (see also vv. 8-19), so one could infer backward from consequences to actions. This is fallacious reasoning, however, and went beyond the doctrine of retribution. This led Bildad to the misguided conclusion that Job's **children** died because God was punishing them for their sins (vv. 3-4). On the other hand, Job would be restored if he sought God, asked for mercy, and was **pure and upright** (vv. 5-7). Bildad's counsel seems to unfairly call Job's character into question yet again (see the note on 6:24).

8:20-21 Bildad affirmed that **God does not reject a person of integrity**, which ironically was who Job really was (1:1,8; 2:3). Job's struggle, however, was rooted in his experiencing disasters in spite of his integrity. Bildad's belief in Job's restoration seems to indicate that he believed Job would satisfy the necessary conditions in vv. 5-6 and contrasts with Job's despair (see the notes on 6:2-13 and 7:6-7).

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD

9 Then Job answered:

2 Yes, I know what you've said is true, but how can a person be justified
before God? †
3 If one wanted to take † him to court, he could not answer God † once
in a thousand times. †
4 God is wise † and all-powerful.
Who has opposed him and come out unharmed?
5 He removes mountains without their knowledge, overturning them
in his anger. †
6 He shakes the earth from its place so that its pillars tremble.
7 He commands the sun not to shine and seals off the stars. †
8 He alone stretches out the heavens †
and treads on the waves of the sea. †
9 He makes the stars: the Bear, † Orion, the Pleiades, †
and the constellations † of the southern sky.
10 He does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number. †
11 If he passed by me, I wouldn't see him; †
if he went by, I wouldn't recognize him.
12 If he snatches something, who can stop † him?
Who can ask him, "What are you doing? " †
13 God does not hold back his anger; Rahab's † assistants cringe in fear
beneath him!

14 How then can I answer him or choose my arguments against him?
15 Even if I were in the right, I could not answer.
I could only beg my Judge for mercy. †
16 If I summoned him and he answered me, I do not believe he would
pay attention to what I said.
17 He batters me with a whirlwind †
and multiplies my wounds without cause.

18 He doesn’t let me catch my breath but fills me with bitter experiences.
19 If it is a matter of strength, look, he is the powerful one! †
If it is a matter of justice, who can summon † him? †
20 Even if I were in the right, my own mouth would condemn me; †
if I were blameless, my mouth would declare me guilty.

21 Though I am blameless, I no longer care about myself;
I renounce my life. †
22 It is all the same. Therefore I say, “He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.” †
23 When catastrophe † brings sudden death, he mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 The earth † is handed over to the wicked; he blindfolds † its judges. †
If it isn’t he, then who is it?

25 My days fly by faster than a runner; † †
they flee without seeing any good. †
26 They sweep by like boats made of papyrus, like an eagle swooping down on its prey. †
27 If I said, “I will forget my complaint, change my expression, and smile,”
28 I would still live in terror of all my pains. †
I know you will not acquit me. †
29 Since I will be found guilty, †
why should I struggle in vain?
30 If I wash myself with snow, and cleanse my hands with lye,
31 then you dip me in a pit of mud, and my own clothes despise me!

32 For he is not a man like me, that I can answer him, †
that we can take each other to court.
33 There is no mediator between us, to lay his hand on both of us.
34 Let him take his rod away from me so his terror will no longer frighten me. †
35 Then I would speak and not fear him.

But that is not the case; I am on my own.

9:3 Or *court, God would not answer him* **9:8** Or *and walks on the back of the sea god* **9:9** Or *Aldebaran* **9:9** Or *chambers* **9:12** Or *dissuade* **9:19** LXX; MT reads *me* **9:23** Or *whip* ; Hb obscure **9:24** Or *land* **9:24** Lit *covers the faces of* **9:25** = a royal messenger
9:2 Jb 25:4; Ps 143:2; Rm 3:20 **9:3** Jb 13:19; 33:13; 40:2 **9:3** Jb 9:14; 37:19; 40:2 **9:4** Jb 11:6; 12:13; 36:5 **9:5** Jdg 5:5; Ps 18:7; Mc 1:4 **9:7** Is 13:10; Ezk 32:8; Jl 2:10,31 **9:8** Ps 104:2-3; Is 40:22; 44:24 **9:9** Jb 38:31-32; Is 40:26; Am 5:8 **9:10** Jb 5:9; Ps 40:5; 72:18 **9:11** Jb 23:8-9; 35:14 **9:12** Jb 11:10; Is 45:9; Rm 9:20 **9:13** Jb 26:12; Ps 89:10; Is 51:9 **9:15** Jb 8:5; 10:15 **9:17** Jb 30:22; Ps 83:15; Jnh 1:4 **9:19** Jb 9:4; Is 28:2; 40:26 **9:19** Jr 49:19; 50:44 **9:20** Jb 9:28; 40:8; Is 50:9 **9:21** Jb 7:16; 10:1 **9:22** Jb 3:19; Ec 9:2-3; Is 14:3-11 **9:24** Jb 12:6,17; Is 29:14; 44:25 **9:25** 2Sm 18:19-33; 1Kg 1:5; Est 3:13,15 **9:25** Jb 7:7; Ps 78:39; Jms 4:14 **9:26** Jb 39:29; Is 18:2; Hab 1:8 **9:28** Jb 3:25; 13:11; 31:23 **9:28** Jb 10:14; Jl 3:21; Nah 1:3 **9:29** Jb 9:20; 40:8; Is 50:9 **9:32** Jb 41:13; Ps 143:2; Ec 6:10 **9:34** Jb 6:4; 13:21; Ps 39:10

9:2-4 Job acknowledged Bildad's point that God is just (8:3), but he doubted whether appealing to him would be effective (v. 2), as Bildad suggested (8:5-7). The reason had less to do with God's justice than with his vastly superior wisdom and power. As a result, Job was utterly inadequate to oppose him (vv. 3-4; 40:2-5), though he would change his stance (see the note on 23:3-5). Ironically, this is precisely God's point later when he finally breaks the silence (Jb 38–41).

9:14-16 Having given several examples of God's superior wisdom and power (vv. 5-13), Job repeated his point that, as a mere man, he was inadequate to dispute with God (see previous note).

9:17-18 Job again attributed his sufferings to the direct action of God (see the note on 6:2-13). Though Job was unaware, he had been given into Satan's hand (1:12-12; 2:5-7). He says that his suffering was **without cause** (v. 17); the same Hebrew word is used when God himself described Satan's scheme (2:3). Job characterizes his distress as being struck by **a whirlwind.** This image of overwhelming, destructive power reappears when God answers Job "from the whirlwind" (see the note on 38:1; 40:6).

9:21-24 Job's claim to be **blameless** is valid, since the same Hebrew word is used to characterize him (1:1,8; 2:3). Because of the calamities that had come upon him, he declared, contrary to the strict retribution espoused by his friends (see the notes on 4:6-8 and 8:3-7), that God **destroys both the blameless and the wicked** (v. 22; 21:22-26). Moreover, Job generalized his experience (see also the notes on 4:6-8 and 12:3-6) so as to say that God **mocks the despair of the innocent** and perpetuates injustice (v. 24).

9:32-35 Job's wish for a **mediator** was based in his earlier lament that he was not equal to God and could not hope to go **to court** with him (see the notes on vv. 2-4,14-16).

10 I am disgusted with my life. †
I will give vent to my complaint
and speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say to God, "Do not declare me guilty!
Let me know why you prosecute me.
3 Is it good for you to oppress, to reject the work of your hands, †
and favor † the plans of the wicked? †
4 Do you have eyes of flesh, or do you see as a human sees?

5 Are your days like those of a human, or your years like those of a man, †
6 that you look for my iniquity †
and search for my sin,
7 even though you know that I am not wicked and that there is no one who can rescue from your power? †

8 “Your hands shaped me and formed me. †
Will you now turn and destroy me?
9 Please remember that you formed me like clay.
Will you now return me to dust? †
10 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese?
11 You clothed me with skin and flesh, and wove me together with bones and tendons. †
12 You gave me life and faithful love, and your care has guarded my life.

13 “Yet you concealed these thoughts in your heart; I know that this was your hidden plan: †
14 if I sin, you would notice, †
and would not acquit me of my iniquity. †
15 If I am wicked, woe to me!
And even if I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head.
I am filled with shame †
and have drunk deeply of † my affliction. †
16 If I am proud, † you hunt me like a lion and again display your miraculous power against me. †
17 You produce new witnesses † against me and multiply your anger toward me.
Hardships assault me, wave after wave. †

18 “Why did you bring me out of the womb? †
I should have died and never been seen.

19 I wish † I had never existed but had been carried from the womb
to the grave. †
20 Are my days not few? Stop it! †
Leave me alone, so that I can smile a little 21 before I go to a land of darkness
and gloom, †
never to return.
22 It is a land of blackness like the deepest darkness, gloomy and chaotic,
where even the light is like † the darkness."

10:3 Lit *shine on* **10:13** Lit *was with you* **10:14** Lit *notice me* **10:15** Or *and look at* **10:16** Lit *If he lifts up* **10:17** Or *You bring fresh troops* **10:17** Lit *Changes and a host are with me* **10:19** Lit *As if* **10:20** Alt Hb tradition reads *Will he not leave my few days alone?* **10:22** Lit *chaotic, and shines as*
10:1 Jb 7:16; 9:21; Ps 95:10; 119:158; 139:21; Ezk 6:9; 20:43; 36:31 **10:3** Ps 128:2 **10:3** Ps 1:1; Jb 21:16; 22:18 **10:5** Jb 36:26; Ps 90:4; 2Pt 3:8 **10:6** Jb 13:23,26; 14:17; 22:5 **10:7** Dt 32:39; Is 43:13 **10:8** Gn 2:7,8,19; Ps 34:15; 94:9; Is 29:16; 43:1,7,21; 44:2,21,24; 45:9,11; 49:5; 64:8; Jr 1:5; 18:6; Zch 12:1 **10:9** Gn 2:7; Jb 4:19; 34:15 **10:11** Ps 139:13 **10:14** Ex 34:7; Jb 7:21; Am 3:2 **10:15** Hab 2:16 **10:15** Jb 9:15; Ps 25:18; Is 3:11 **10:16** Jb 5:9; Is 38:13; Lm 3:10 **10:18** Jb 1:21; 10:18-19; Jr 20:17-18 **10:19** Jb 3:22; 5:26; 17:1 **10:21** Jb 3:5;12:22; 28:3

10:2 Job asked God to vindicate him and to tell him why he was afflicting him (see the notes on 6:2-13; 7:12-21; 19:6-7; 23:8-9). Part of his struggle had to do with wanting to know why (see 13:24; 21:7; 24:1).

10:8 The Hebrew word for **destroy** used by Job is the same as the one used by God in 2:3, when he said that Satan "incited [him] . . . to destroy him for no good reason."

10:17-21 Although God had dealt kindly with him in the past (vv. 10-12; 29:1-25), Job mistakenly saw God as increasingly angry toward him (v. 17; see also the note on 6:2-13). As before, he wished he had never been born (vv. 18-19; see 3:20-26) and asked God again to **leave** [him] **alone** (v. 20; see 7:16,19).

ZOPHAR SPEAKS

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

2 Should this abundance of words † go unanswered and such a talker †
be acquitted?
3 Should your babbling put others to silence, so that you can keep on ridiculing
with no one to humiliate you?
4 You have said, "My teaching † is sound, and I am pure in your sight."
5 But if only God would speak and open his lips against you!
6 He would show you the secrets of wisdom, †
for true wisdom has two sides.

Know then that God has chosen to overlook some of your iniquity. †

7 Can you fathom the depths of God or discover the limits of the Almighty? †
8 They are higher than the heavens — what can you do?
They are deeper than Sheol — what can you know? †
9 Their measure is longer than the earth and wider than the sea.

10 If he passes by and throws someone in prison or convenes a court, who can stop him? †
11 Surely he knows which people are worthless.
If he sees iniquity, will he not take note of it? †
12 But a stupid person will gain understanding as soon as a wild donkey is born a human!

13 As for you, if you redirect your heart and spread out your hands to him in prayer — 14 if there is iniquity in your hand, remove it, and don't allow injustice to dwell in your tents — 15 then you will hold your head high, free from fault.
You will be firmly established and unafraid. †
16 For you will forget your suffering, recalling it only as water that has flowed by.
17 Your life will be brighter than noonday; its darkness † will be like the morning. †
18 You will be confident, because there is hope. †
You will look carefully about and lie down in safety. †

19 You will lie down with no one to frighten you, and many will seek your favor. †
20 But the sight of the wicked † will fail.
Their way of escape will be cut off,
and their only hope is their last breath. †

11:2 Lit *a man of lips* **11:17** Text emended; MT reads *noonday; you are dark, you*
11:2 Jb 8:2; Pr 10:19; Ec 5:3 **11:4** Dt 32:2; Pr 4:2; Is 29:24 **11:6** Jb 28:12; 38:36; Ec 7:23,25 **11:6** Ezr 9:13;

Ps 103:10 **11:7** Ec 3:11; 8:17; Rm 11:33 **11:8** Dt 30:12-13; Ps 139:8-9; Am 9:2-3 **11:10** Jb 9:12; 23:13; Rv 3:7 **11:11** Jb 34:25; Ps 10:14 **11:15** Jb 22:26; Ps 119:6; 1Jn 3:21 **11:17** Jb 17:12; Ps 37:6; Is 58:8,10 **11:18** Jb 4:6; Ps 119:116; Jr 17:7 **11:18** Jb 24:23; Ps 4:8; Pr 3:24 **11:19** Ps 45:12; Pr 19:6; 29:26 **11:20** Jb 3:17; 9:22; 18:5 **11:20** Jb 8:13; Pr 10:28; 11:7

11:2-3 The third of Job's friends, **Zophar**, now takes his turn. His opening words indicate that he felt that Job was way out of line and needed to be put in his place.

11:5-6 Zophar also thought one could reverse the principle of retribution (see the notes on 4:6-8 and 8:3-7). He was convinced from Job's current distress that he had sinned, and this friend even declared that **God has chosen to overlook some of your iniquity.** In other words, Job was getting off easy! This is difficult to believe, since the reader knows that Satan had been given permission to afflict him with anything but death (2:6). Job had expressed the wish that God would tell him how he had sinned (see 7:20; 10:2). Zophar also wished for this, but so that Job would be proven wrong.

11:13-20 Having already accused Job of sin (v. 6), Zophar called him to repent of it (vv. 13-14). Doing so would bring about restoration (vv. 15-19), whereas the alternative was destruction (v. 20).

JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR

12 Then Job answered:

2 No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!
3 But I also have a mind like you; I am not inferior to you.
Who doesn't know the things you are talking about? † †

4 I am a laughingstock to my † friends, by calling on God, who answers me. †
The righteous and upright man is a laughingstock. †
5 The one who is at ease † holds calamity in contempt and thinks it is prepared
for those whose feet are slipping.
6 The tents of robbers are safe, †
and those who trouble God are secure;
God holds them in his hands. † †

7 But ask the animals, and they will instruct you; ask the birds of the sky,
and they will tell you. †
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will instruct you; let the fish of the sea inform you.
9 Which of all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this? †
10 The life of every living thing is in his hand, as well as the breath
of all mankind. †
11 Doesn't the ear test words as the palate tastes food?

12 Wisdom is found with the elderly, and understanding comes with long life. †

13 Wisdom and strength belong to God; counsel and understanding are his. †
14 Whatever he tears down cannot be rebuilt; whoever he imprisons cannot be released. †
15 When he withholds water, everything dries up, and when he releases it, it destroys the land. †
16 True wisdom and power belong to him.
The deceived and the deceiver are his.
17 He leads counselors away barefoot and makes judges go mad. †
18 He releases the bonds † put on by kings †
and fastens a belt around their waists.
19 He leads priests away barefoot and overthrows established leaders. †
20 He deprives trusted advisers of speech and takes away the elders' good judgment.
21 He pours out contempt on nobles and disarms † the strong.
22 He reveals mysteries from the darkness and brings the deepest darkness into the light. †
23 He makes nations great, then destroys them; he enlarges nations, † then leads them away.
24 He deprives the world's leaders of reason, and makes them wander in a trackless wasteland. †
25 They grope around in darkness without light; he makes them stagger like a drunkard. †

12:3 Lit *With whom are not such things as these?* **12:4** Lit *his* **12:4** Lit *him* **12:6** Or *secure; to those who bring their god in their hands* **12:18** Text emended; MT reads *discipline* **12:21** Lit *and loosens the belt of* **12:3** Jb 13:2; 15:9; 16:2 **12:4** Jb 30:1,9; Jr 20:7; Lm 3:14 **12:5** Ps 123:4; Am 6:1 **12:6** Jb 5:24; 8:6; 21:9 **12:6** Ps 73:11; Jr 12:1; Mt 5:45 **12:7** Jb 35:11; Mt 6:26 **12:9** Ru 1:13; Jb 19:21; Is 41:20 **12:10** Gn 2:7; Jb 27:3; 33:4 **12:12** Jb 12:20; 32:7,9; Ps 119:100 **12:13** Jb 9:4; 36:5; 38:36 **12:14** Jb 11:10; Is 22:22; Rv 3:7 **12:15** Is 41:18; 42:15; 44:3,27 **12:17** Jb 9:24; Is 29:14; 44:25 **12:18** Jb 12:21; Is 45:1 **12:19** Is 40:23; Lk 1:52 **12:22** Ps 90:8; Dn 2:22; 1Co 4:5 **12:23** Ex 34:24; Is 9:3; 26:15 **12:24** Ps 107:40; Dn 4:33 **12:25** Dt 28:29; Jb 5:14; Is 59:10

12:2 Zophar had harshly spoken to Job (see 11:2-3), and Job responded in kind sarcastically, declaring to his friends that **wisdom will die with** [them]**.**

12:3-6 Part of Job's frustration with his friends was that they were condescendingly telling him things he obviously knew (v. 3; see also v. 9; 9:2; 13:1-2). For example, Job knew that God is righteous (4:17; 8:3), wise (11:7-9), and powerful (9:4; 11:10). Nevertheless, his friends were **at ease** and did not respect Job and his pain (vv. 4-5). They also did not consider that Job's situation could have been an exception to their rigid understanding of God's justice (v. 6). Job, however, again generalized his personal experience (see also the note on 9:21-24).

12:12 This had been Bildad's point earlier (8:8-10), but complete **wisdom** and strength belong to God alone (vv. 13,16; 9:4; Pr 21:30).

13 2 Look, my eyes have seen all this; my ears † have heard and understood it.
Everything you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. †
3 Yet I prefer to speak to the Almighty and argue my case before God. †
4 You use lies like plaster; you are all worthless healers. †
5 If only you would shut up and let that be your wisdom!

6 Hear now my argument, and listen to my defense. †
7 Would you testify unjustly on God's behalf or speak deceitfully for him?
8 Would you show partiality † to him or argue the case in his defense?
9 Would it go well if he examined you?
Could you deceive him as you would deceive a man? †
10 Surely he would rebuke you if you secretly showed partiality.
11 Would God's majesty not terrify you? †
Would his dread not fall on you?
12 Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ash; †
your defenses are made of clay.

13 Be quiet, † and I will speak.
Let whatever comes happen to me.
14 I will put † myself at risk †
and take my life in my own hands.
15 Even if he kills me, I will hope in him. †
I will still defend † my ways before him.
16 Yes, this will result in my deliverance, for no godless person † can appear before him.

17 Pay close attention to my words; let my declaration ring in your ears.
18 Now then, I have prepared my case; †
I know that I am right.
19 Can anyone indict me?
If so, I will be silent and die.

20 Only grant these two things to me, God, so that I will not have to hide from your presence: 21 remove your hand from me, and do not let your terror frighten me. †
22 Then call, and I will answer, †
or I will speak, and you can respond to me.
23 How many iniquities † and sins have I committed? †
Reveal to me my transgression and sin.
24 Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy? †
25 Will you frighten a wind-driven leaf?
Will you chase after dry straw?
26 For you record bitter accusations against me and make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
27 You put my feet in the stocks and stand watch over all my paths,
setting a limit for the soles † of my feet.

28 A person wears out like something rotten, like a moth-eaten garment. †

13:6 Lit *to the claims of my lips* **13:13** Lit *quiet before me* **13:14** LXX; MT reads *Why do I put* **13:14** Lit *I take my flesh in my teeth* **13:15** Some Hb mss read *I will be without hope* **13:23** Lit *sins are to me* **13:27** Lit *paths. You mark a line around the roots*
13:1 Jb 4:12; 33:16; 36:10,15 **13:2** Jb 12:3; 15:9; 16:2 **13:3** Jb 5:8; 23:4; 40:2 **13:4** Jb 16:2; Ps 69:20; Ec 4:1 **13:8** Dt 10:17; Jb 32:21; 34:19 **13:9** Ps 44:21; Pr 18:17; Jr 17:10 **13:11** Ex 15:16; Jb 31:23; Is 2:10 **13:12** 1Sm 24:13; Pr 26:7,9; Is 44:20 **13:15** Jb 13:3; 15:3; 23:7 **13:16** Jb 8:13; 15:34; 27:8 **13:18** Jb 5:8; 23:4; Lm 3:59 **13:21** Jb 6:4; 9:34; Ps 39:10 **13:22** Jb 9:16; 14:15; Jr 33:3 **13:23** Jb 7:21; 10:6,14; Is 43:25 **13:24** Jb 19:11; 33:10; Lm 2:5 **13:28** Ps 102:26; Is 50:9; 51:8

13:1-2 Having affirmed again God's wisdom and power (12:13-25), Job reiterated that he was **not inferior** to his friends in knowledge (see also the note on 12:3-6).

13:3 Whereas earlier Job had said that he could not dispute with God (see the notes on 9:2-4,14-16,32-35), he now wanted to **speak to the Almighty and argue** [his] **case** (see also the note on vv. 20-27). What he wanted was risky, but perhaps he felt he had little to lose (see v. 13).

13:4-12 Job continued forcefully confronting his friends (see 12:2-5). He accused them of speaking

falsehood (vv. 4,7) and preferred that they keep silent (v. 5; Pr 17:28). His claim that God **would rebuke** them if they had shown partiality was true (v. 10; 42:7-8).

13:15 In the midst of his pain, despair, and confusion, there were nevertheless moments when Job expressed hope in God (see also 14:13-17; 16:19; 19:25-27). This is one of them, in which he declared that he would believe in him until the end (see also v. 16).

13:20-27 Job asked God to stop afflicting him and to give him a hearing (vv. 20-22; see also the note on v. 3). He vehemently rejected his friends' view that his suffering was because of sin and argued that his upright life (see vv. 15-19) meant that he did not deserve the distress he was experiencing (vv. 23-26). Once again, he misunderstood God as having become his **enemy** (v. 24; see the note on 6:2-13).

14 Anyone born of woman is short of days and full of trouble. †
2 He blossoms like a flower, then withers; †
he flees like a shadow and does not last.
3 Do you really take notice of one like this?
Will you bring me into judgment against you? † †
4 Who can produce something pure from what is impure?
No one!
5 Since a person's days are determined and the number of his months depends
on you, and since you have set † limits he cannot pass, †
6 look away from him and let him rest so that he can enjoy his day
like a hired worker. †

7 There is hope for a tree: If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its shoots will not die.
8 If its roots grow old in the ground and its stump starts to die in the soil,
9 the scent of water makes it thrive and produce twigs like a sapling. †
10 But a person dies and fades away; he breathes his last — where is he?
11 As water disappears from a lake and a river becomes parched and dry,
12 so people lie down never to rise again.
They will not wake up until the heavens are no more; †
they will not stir from their sleep.

13 If only you would hide me in Sheol †
and conceal me until your anger † passes.
If only you would appoint a time for me

and then remember me.
14 When a person dies, will he come back to life?
If so, I would wait † all the days of my struggle †
until my relief comes.
15 You would call, and I would answer you.
You would long for the work of your hands. †
16 For then you would count my steps †
but would not take note † of my sin.
17 My rebellion would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.

18 But as a mountain collapses and crumbles and a rock is dislodged from its place,
19 as water wears away stones and torrents wash away the soil from the land, so you destroy a man's hope. †
20 You completely overpower him, and he passes on; you change his appearance and send him away.
21 If his sons receive honor, he does not know it; if they become insignificant, he is unaware of it. †
22 He feels only the pain of his own body and mourns only for himself.

Second Series of Speeches

14:3 LXX, Syr, Vg read *him* **14:5** Lit *set his*
14:1 Jb 5:7; 15:35; Is 59:4 **14:2** Ps 103:15-16; Is 40:6-7; Jms 1:10-11 **14:3** Jb 22:4; Ps 143:2; 144:3 **14:5** Jb 21:21; Ps 39:4; 90:12 **14:6** Jb 7:16; 10:20; Ps 39:13 **14:9** Jb 29:19; Ps 1:3; Jr 17:8 **14:12** Is 51:6; Rv 20:11; 21:1 **14:13** Jb 11:8; 17:16; Am 9:2 **14:13** Jb 16:9; 19:11; Ps 30:5 **14:14** Jb 6:8; 13:13; 35:14 **14:14** Jb 7:1; Is 40:2 **14:15** Jb 9:16; 10:3; 13:22 **14:16** Jb 10:6; 31:4; 34:21 **14:16** Jb 10:14; 33:11; Ps 130:3 **14:19** Jb 7:6; 17:15; 19:10 **14:21** Jb 21:21; Ec 9:5; Is 63:16

14:1 Job lamented that human life is **short** and **full of trouble** (see also 9:22-24; 12:6).

14:13-17 Though having lamented the solemnity of death (vv. 7-12), Job also hoped for God to be kind to him after death (see also the notes on 13:15 and 19:25-27). He wished that after death God would **remember** him (v. 13), converse with him (v. 15), and forget all his sins (vv. 16-17).

14:19-20 Job concluded his speech and the first round of speeches with yet another lament that God had overwhelmed him with calamity.

ELIPHAZ SPEAKS

15 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 Does a wise man answer with empty † counsel †
or fill himself † with the hot east wind?
3 Should he argue † with useless talk or with words that serve no good purpose?
4 But you even undermine the fear of God and hinder meditation before him.
5 Your iniquity † teaches you what to say, and you choose the language
of the crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, not I; your own lips testify against you. †

CHRISTIANS AND SUFFERING

Suffering is a common human experience. No matter one's wealth, pedigree, or status in life, suffering touches each individual at some point. Pain is no respecter of persons. If one takes an existential or postmodern view of life, then suffering is something to avoid at all costs, for life is what you make it. Suffering is out of place in these types of worldviews, for they do not account for the existence of pain and evil due to their relativistic underpinnings of life apart from God.

A biblical worldview, however, provides a rational explanation for the problem of pain and suffering in the world. But one must come to the problem of pain with a coherent biblical worldview that values the life that God intends to develop in order to fully grasp it. God's value system is counterintuitive to a worldview that seeks to gain pleasure and avoid pain, an outlook in which one's god is experientially self-derived and self-determined. On the contrary, the God of the Bible seeks to break humans free from the tyranny of self and to provide life that is truly life (Jn 10:10). With this foundation in mind, our approach to the problem of suffering takes on new, life-giving dimensions that shape our response to the various forms of pain all humans encounter.

Oneness with God was the original intention for humankind in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve though, broke out on their own, distrusting the union that God had developed for them with himself (Gn 3:6-7). The result of that original sin is that all humankind is now born separated from the life of God (Rm 5:12), and the whole of creation is negatively affected (Rm 8:19-22). The sin of autonomy, if never repented of, leads to eternal destruction (Jn 3:36). Only through Christ can one be saved from the destructive forces of independence (Rm 6:23). While salvation happens positionally at the moment of conversion, salvation from independence continues to be worked out through the pattern of Christian maturity and growth (sanctification). One of God's chief tools to wean a believer off the preconverted strategy of autonomy and onto the life-giving source of Christ is suffering.

The lie of the preconverted self is that self is sufficient for life. God often penetrates this lie when a non-Christian is suffering. Humans are stripped of self-sufficiency as weakness exposes the human soul for what it is: precariously limited and finite. Exposing the true state of affairs of the soul is the kindest thing God can do. This shock of ultimate reality is intended to lead the human soul back to its original state of trusting dependence on the Creator. The "thorns and thistles" so common in this life after the fall (Gn 3:17-18) provide fertile soil for humans to embrace their need for a Savior. When a believer is exposed to suffering

because of these same imperfections in this world, God uses this too for good (1Pt 1:6-7). Suffering provides an ongoing experience of the soul's true state of affairs that drives one back to the safety of the arms of God; only he has the power to deliver from death. In God's economy, spiritual death or separation from him is far worse than any other fate that could befall a human.

One dimension of the life-giving work of suffering in the sanctification of a believer is spelled out in Romans 8:28-30. Paul states that God works all things together for the good of those who love him (Rm 8:28), even those things that humans may deem to be bad. The ultimate good that God is working conforms the believer into "the image of his Son" (Rm 8:29). This is God's highest purpose; and to accomplish it he has all things at his disposal, even pain and suffering.

What good does pain do to promote growth into the image of the Son of God? God knows that the human's proclivity toward autonomy is the most dangerous and destructive strategy the enemy uses against the non-believer. Even after conversion, autonomy continues to compel and constrain the believer as an unconscious habit. But through allowing suffering, God helps the Christian to leave the patterns of this world, namely autonomy, in order to depend more fully on him.

Suffering, contrary to the world's view, offers some potent benefits to the believer who will let God work to accomplish his goal of shaping Christ in him. One of the most important benefits of suffering is that it provides believers with the opportunity to despair of self and learn to trust in God, for the temptation to rely on self does not disappear at conversion. The apostle Paul, speaking of his own experience, had the sentence of death on him "so that [he] would not trust in [himself] but in God who raises the dead" (2Co 1:9). While we Christians may be united positionally with Christ, it is in suffering that believers begin to learn experientially how to turn from depending on self and turn to God for deliverance. This is a learned skill taught in the moments of testing and trial.

While our initial reaction to suffering often is to figure out a way to escape the pain, there is great benefit in looking at trials with an understanding of God's heart of love toward us. In enduring suffering with hearts full of trust in God's goodness, we will grow in the spiritual maturity that the biblical author, James, knows will happen within those who do (Jms 1:2-4). Everyone is enrolled in the school of life, but God does not force everyone to learn. Willingness and humility are necessary ingredients to learn, grow, and mature. Without these, one will go through the school of life and not learn anything of eternal value. But with openness toward God, one can learn how to live according to the intention of the original Designer. The focus, then, for the believer, is to allow suffering to promote a broken spirit over the tendency to lean on preconverted strategies and to embrace instead God's eternal value system.

While we are not in control of adversity, we are in control of how we respond to the trials that come our way. James 1:4 reassures believers that "endurance [must] have its full effect, so that [we] may be mature and complete, lacking nothing." God matures believers, but it's our responsibility to recognize his work as such. This takes faith to consider that what God is doing, forming Christ in the believer, is more valuable than relieving pain. "Now without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb 11:6). This perspective that believers can exercise faith and thus please God can provide joy in the midst of suffering. Hardship bonds the believer's heart to God, showing ongoing faith and dependence on his provision and goodness.

The author of Hebrews reassures believers that those who have been trained by the discipline of the Lord will yield the "peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb 12:11). The believer's response to the curriculum of suffering is to die to self-sufficiency and open to Christ's sufficiency, so that God can conform us to the image of his Son (2Co 12:9). This is a critical part of character transformation. God does not wave a magic wand over the believer to produce righteousness. He trains us into such a life. We cannot be intentional about the content or specific outcome of adversity; we can only be intentional in our response to it. Therefore, a biblical response to discipline is to intentionally seek God's heart in the midst of suffering and ask him to produce the character fruit he desires to see.

God's ultimate vision for humanity is for us to find our life in him (Rv 21:3). At the end of this life, a new life will appear. It will be the restoration of all things, where the dwelling of God will be with humankind as he originally intended. "The one who conquers," the Lord promises "will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son" (Rv 21:7). This is the larger story of God's love: bringing people into his

family and being the Father that he longs to be to us. We are all enrolled in the school of life. The question each one needs to answer in the midst of suffering is whether or not he will let God do his good work to make him look more like his Son.

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7 Were you the first human ever born, or were you brought forth
before the hills? †
8 Do you listen in on the council of God, or have a monopoly on wisdom? †
9 What do you know that we don't?
What do you understand that is not clear to us?
10 Both the gray-haired and the elderly are with us— older than your father.
11 Are God's consolations not enough for you, even the words that deal gently
with you?
12 Why has your heart misled you, and why do your eyes flash
13 as you turn your anger † against God and allow such words to leave
your mouth?

14 What is a mere human, that he should be pure, †
or one born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
15 If God puts no trust in his holy ones †
and the heavens are not pure in his sight, †
16 how much less one who is revolting and corrupt, †
who drinks injustice † like water?

17 Listen to me and I will inform you.
I will describe what I have seen,
18 what the wise have declared and not concealed, that came from
their ancestors, †
19 to whom alone the land was given when no foreigner passed among them.
20 A wicked person writhes in pain all his days, throughout the number of
years reserved for the ruthless.
21 Dreadful sounds fill his ears; when he is at peace, a robber attacks him.

22 He doesn't believe he will return from darkness; he is destined for the sword. †

23 He wanders about for food, asking, "Where is it? "
He knows the day of darkness is at hand.

24 Trouble † and distress terrify him, overwhelming him like a king prepared for battle.

25 For he has stretched out his hand † against God and has arrogantly opposed the Almighty.

26 He rushes headlong at him with his thick, studded shields.

27 Though his face is covered with fat †
and his waistline bulges with it,

28 he will dwell in ruined cities, in abandoned houses destined to become piles of rubble. †

29 He will no longer be rich; his wealth will not endure.
His possessions † will not increase in the land.

30 He will not escape from the darkness; flames will wither his shoots,
and by the breath of God's mouth, he will depart. †

31 Let him not put trust in worthless things, being led astray, for what he gets in exchange will prove worthless.

32 It will be accomplished before his time, and his branch will not flourish.

33 He will be like a vine that drops its unripe grapes †
and like an olive tree that sheds its blossoms.

34 For the company of the godless † will have no children, and fire will consume the tents of those who offer bribes.

35 They conceive trouble † and give birth to evil; their womb † prepares deception. †

15:2 Lit *windy* ; Jb 16:3 **15:2** Lit *his belly* **15:13** Or *spirit* **15:27** Lit *with his fat* **15:29** Text emended; MT reads *Their gain*
15:2 Jb 2:10; 6:26; 27:12 **15:3** Jb 13:3,15; 23:7 **15:5** Jb 13:23,26; 14:17; 22:5 **15:6** 2Sm 1:16; Jb 9:20; Lk 19:22 **15:7** Jb 38:21; Ps 90:2; Pr 8:25 **15:8** Jr 23:18; Rm 11:34; 1Co 2:11 **15:14** Jb 4:17; 25:4; Pr 20:9 **15:15** Jb 5:1; Ps 89:5-7; Dn 4:17 **15:15** Jb 4:18; 21:22; 25:5 **15:16** Ps 14:3; 53:3 **15:16** Jb 34:7; Ps 14:3 **15:18** Dt 4:32; 32:7; Jb 8:8 **15:22** Dt 32:41-42; Jb 19:29; Is 66:16 **15:24** 1Sm 22:2; Jb 36:19; Ps 107:6,13,19,28 **15:25** Is 5:25; 9:16,20; Jr 21:5 **15:28** Jb 3:14; Ps 109:10; Is 5:9 **15:30** Jb 4:9; 22:20; 2Th 2:8 **15:33** Is 18:5; Jr 31:29-30; Ezk 18:2 **15:34** Jb 8:13; 13:16; 27:8 **15:35** Jb 4:8; 5:7; Is 59:4 **15:35** Jb 32:19;

37:1; Pr 20:27,30 **15:35** Ps 7:14; Is 59:4; Hs 10:13

15:1-6 Eliphaz's second speech accused Job of saying **useless** things (vv. 2-3), even to the point of committing sin (vv. 4-6; see also vv. 13,25).

15:14-16 Eliphaz made a similar point in his first speech, also through comparing man to angels and to God (see the note on 4:17-21). Whereas the first time he argued that man cannot "be more pure than his Maker" (4:17), this time he argued that man cannot be righteous at all (v. 14). Now convinced of Job's sin (see previous note), Eliphaz characterized him as **revolting and corrupt** (v. 16). Eliphaz had been more indirect earlier, and now he confronted Job directly.

15:17 Eliphaz appealed to his experience before (see the notes on 4:6-8 and 5:2-7), and he did so here again **(what I have seen).** In v. 18 he added an appeal to the longstanding tradition of wise men (see also 5:27), as Bildad had similarly done (see 8:8-10).

15:20 Eliphaz's view that the justice of God is manifested through strict retribution in this life has not changed (see the note on 4:6-8). In particular, the wicked **writhes in pain all his days.** Whereas previously he had encouraged Job with the prospect of restoration (5:17-26), this time Eliphaz seemed to be warning him with the certainty of judgment on the wicked (see the notes on vv. 1-6; 18:5; 20:4-5).

15:29-31 Eliphaz may have been indirectly referring to Job (see also v. 25; note on 18:11-21).

JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ

16 Then Job answered:

2 I have heard many things like these.
You are all miserable comforters. †
3 Is there no end to your empty † † words?
What provokes you that you continue testifying?
4 If you were in my place I could also talk like you.
I could string words together against you and shake my head at you.
5 Instead, I would encourage you with my mouth, and the consolation
from my lips would bring relief. †
6 If I speak, my suffering is not relieved, and if I hold back, does any of it leave
me?
7 Surely he † has now exhausted me.
You have devastated my entire family.
8 You have shriveled me up † — it has become a witness; my frailty rises up
against me and testifies to my face.
9 His anger tears at me, and he harasses † me.
He gnashes his teeth at me.

My enemy pierces me with his eyes.

10 They open their mouths against me and strike my cheeks with contempt; †
they join themselves together against me.

11 God hands me over to the unjust; †
he throws me to the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but he shattered me; he seized me by the scruff of the neck
and smashed me to pieces.

He set me up as his target; †

13 his archers † surround me.
He pierces my kidneys without mercy
and pours my bile on the ground.

14 He breaks through my defenses again and again; †

he charges at me like a warrior. †

15 I have sewn sackcloth over my skin; I have buried my strength †
in the dust. †

16 My face has grown red with weeping, and darkness † covers my eyes,
17 although my hands are free from violence †
and my prayer is pure.

18 Earth, do not cover my blood; may my cry for help find no resting place. †

19 Even now my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is in the heights! †

20 My friends scoff at me as I weep before God.

21 I wish that someone might argue for a man with God †

just as anyone † would for a friend.

22 For only a few years will pass before I go the way of no return.

16:3 Lit *windy* ; Jb 15:2 **16:7** Or *it* **16:8** Or *have seized me* ; Hb obscure **16:11** LXX, Vg; MT reads *to a boy* **16:13** Or *arrows* **16:14** Lit *through me, breach on breach* **16:15** Lit *horn* **16:21** Lit *a son of man*
16:2 Jb 13:4; Ps 69:20; Ec 4:1 **16:3** Jb 15:2 **16:5** Dt 3:28; Jb 4:4; Is 41:10 **16:9** Gn 49:23; Jb 30:21; Ps 55:3 **16:10** 1Kg 22:24; Lm 3:30; Mc 5:1 **16:12** Jb 7:20; Lm 3:12 **16:14** Jb 30:14; Jl 2:7 **16:15** Jb 30:19; Ps 7:5; 75:10 **16:16** Ps 44:19; 107:10; Jr 13:16 **16:17** Is 53:9; 59:6; Jnh 3:8 **16:18** Gn 4:10; Is 26:21; Ezk 24:7-8 **16:19** Jb 22:12; Rm 1:9; 1Th 2:5 **16:21** Jb 31:35; Ec 6:10; Is 45:9

16:2-5 The conversation between Job and his friends had not led to mutual understanding. Both sides believed the other to be saying **empty** things (8:2; 11:2-3; 15:2-6), and both sides believed the other to be

condescending (12:3; 13:1-2; 15:9; 16:2). The friends were indeed **miserable comforters** (see the notes on 4:5 and 6:14-21,24), who did not respect Job's distress (vv. 4-5; 12:5; 21:34). Accordingly, Job's speech eventually moves away from addressing his friends.

16:7-14 Job continued to insist that God was the immediate, direct cause of his suffering (see also 19:8-13,21-22). For example, he had torn at him in anger (v. 9), become his enemy (v. 9), smashed him to pieces (v. 12), and set him up as a target to be shot with arrows mercilessly (vv. 12-13). The reader, however, knows that God had not struck Job but had given him into Satan's hand (see 1:11-12; 2:5-7; the note on 6:2-13).

16:17-19 Despite Eliphaz's certainty that Job had sinned (see the notes on 15:1-6,14-16), Job insisted that he was innocent (v. 17; see 9:21). This was also another moment in which Job showed confidence that God saw him and would favor him again (v. 19; see also the notes on 13:15 and 14:13-17).

17 My spirit is broken.
My days are extinguished.
A graveyard † awaits me.
2 Surely mockers surround † me, and my eyes must gaze at their rebellion. †
3 Accept my pledge! Put up security for me. †
Who else will be my sponsor? †
4 You have closed their minds to understanding, therefore you will not honor them.
5 If a man denounces his friends for a price, the eyes of his children will fail.
6 He has made me an object of scorn to the people; I have become a man people spit at. † †
7 My eyes have grown dim from grief, and my whole body has become but a shadow.
8 The upright are appalled † at this, and the innocent are roused against the godless.
9 Yet the righteous person will hold to his way, and the one whose hands are clean † will grow stronger.
10 But come back and try again, all of you. †
I will not find a wise man among you.
11 My days have slipped by; my plans have been ruined,
even the things dear to my heart.

12 They turned night into day and made light seem near in the face of darkness. †
13 If I await Sheol as my home, spread out my bed in darkness,
14 and say to corruption, “You are my father,”
and to the maggot, “My mother” or “My sister,” †
15 where then is my hope? †
Who can see any hope for me?
16 Will it go down to the gates of Sheol, †
or will we descend together to the dust?

17:2 Lit *are with* **17:3** Or *Who is there that will shake hands with me?* **17:6** Lit *become a spitting to the faces* **17:10** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *them*
17:1 Jb 3:22; 5:26; 10:19 **17:2** Ps 22:7; 119:51; Jr 20:7 **17:3** Gn 43:9; Ps 119:122; Pr 6:1 **17:6** Nm 12:14; Is 50:6; Mt 27:30 **17:8** Jb 18:20; 21:5; Dn 4:19 **17:9** 2Sm 22:21; Jb 22:30; Ps 24:4 **17:12** Jb 11:17; Ps 37:6; Is 58:8,10 **17:14** Jb 3:15; 30:23; Ec 12:5 **17:15** Jb 7:6; 14:19; 19:10 **17:16** Jb 7:9; 11:8; 14:13

BILDAD SPEAKS

18 Then Bildad the Shuhite † replied:

2 How long until you stop talking?
Show some sense, and then we can talk.
3 Why are we regarded as cattle, as stupid in your sight?
4 You who tear yourself in anger † — should the earth be abandoned on your account, or a rock be removed from its place?

5 Yes, the light † of the wicked † is extinguished; the flame of his fire does not glow.
6 The light in his tent grows dark, †
and the lamp beside him is put out.
7 His powerful stride is shortened, and his own schemes trip him up. †
8 For his own feet lead him into a net, and he strays into its mesh.
9 A trap catches him by the heel; a noose seizes him.
10 A rope lies hidden for him on the ground, and a snare waits for him along the path.
11 Terrors frighten him on every side †
and harass him at every step.

12 His strength is depleted; disaster lies ready for him to stumble. †
13 Parts of his skin are eaten away; death's firstborn consumes his limbs.
14 He is ripped from the security of his tent and marched away to the king of terrors.
15 Nothing he owned remains in his tent.
Burning sulfur † is scattered over his home.
16 His roots below dry up, and his branches above wither away. †
17 All memory † of him perishes from the earth; he has no name anywhere. †
18 He is driven from light to darkness and chased from the inhabited world.
19 He has no children or descendants among his people, no survivor where he used to live. †
20 Those in the west are appalled † at his fate, while those in the east tremble in horror.
21 Indeed, such is the dwelling of the unjust man, and this is the place of the one who does not know God. †

18:4 Lit *He who tears himself in his anger* **18:12** Or *disaster hungers for him* **18:17** Or *name in the streets* **18:1** Jb 2:11; 8:1; 25:1 **18:5** Jb 21:17; Pr 13:9; 24:20 **18:5** Jb 3:17; 9:22; 11:20 **18:6** Jb 8:22; 18:14; Ps 52:5 **18:7** Jb 5:13; Pr 4:12 **18:11** Jb 20:25; 27:20; Jr 6:25 **18:15** Gn 19:24; Ps 11:6; Ezk 38:22 **18:16** Is 5:24; Hs 9:16; Am 2:9 **18:17** Ps 34:16; 109:13,15; Pr 10:7 **18:19** Gn 21:23; Is 14:22; Lm 2:22 **18:20** Jr 2:12; Ezk 27:35; 32:10 **18:21** Jb 21:28; Jr 9:3; 1Th 4:5

18:2-4 Bildad continued the antagonistic tone of the conversation (see the note on 16:2-5). Job's repeated rejection of his friends' so-called wisdom did not help (17:4,10). Bildad thought Job was foolish and felt insulted by Job (vv. 2-3). Whereas Job had accused God of tearing him to pieces (16:9), Bildad asserted that Job had done it to himself (v. 4). His belief in strict retribution was unchanged (see the note on 8:3-7).

18:5 Like Eliphaz (see the note on 15:20), Bildad earlier had mentioned the possibility of restoration (see 8:5-7,20-22), but now he emphasized the doom of **the wicked.** This suggests that he believed Job to be in genuine danger of suffering this fate (see the following note and the note on 20:4-5).

18:11-21 Much of the description here aligns with Job's experience and as such appears to be an indirect reference to him (see the note on 15:29-31). Particularly relevant are the mentions of multiple disasters (v. 11), physical suffering (vv. 12-13), loss of possessions (v. 15), death of children (v. 19), and the horrified reaction of onlookers (v. 20; see 2:12).

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD

19 Then Job answered:
2 How long will you torment me and crush me with words?

3 You have humiliated me ten times now, and you mistreat † me without shame. †

4 Even if it is true that I have sinned, my mistake concerns only † me.

5 If you really want to appear superior † to me and would use my disgrace as evidence against me, 6 then understand that it is God who has wronged me and caught me in his net. †

7 I cry out: “Violence! ” but get no response; †
I call for help, but there is no justice.

8 He has blocked † my way so that I cannot pass through; he has veiled my paths with darkness. †

9 He has stripped me of my honor and removed the crown from my head.

10 He tears me down on every side so that I am ruined. †
He uproots my hope like a tree. †

11 His anger † burns against me, and he regards me as one of his enemies. †

12 His troops advance together; they construct a ramp † against me and camp † around my tent.

13 He has removed my brothers from me; my acquaintances have abandoned me. †

14 My relatives stop coming by, and my close friends have forgotten me.

15 My house guests † and female servants regard me as a stranger; I am a foreigner in their sight. †

16 I call for my servant, but he does not answer, even if I beg him with my own mouth.

17 My breath is offensive to my wife, and my own family † finds me repulsive.

18 Even young boys scorn me.
When I stand up, they mock me. †

19 All of my best friends † despise me, †
and those I love have turned against me. †

20 My skin and my flesh cling to my bones; I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth.

21 Have mercy on me, my friends, † have mercy, for God's hand † has struck me. †
22 Why do you persecute me as God does?
Will you never get enough of my flesh?

23 I wish that my words were written down, that they were recorded on a scroll
24 or were inscribed in stone forever by an iron stylus and lead!
25 But I know that my Redeemer lives, † †
and at the end he will stand on the dust. †
26 Even after my skin has been destroyed, †
yet I will see God in † my flesh. †
27 I will see him myself; my eyes will look at him, and not as a stranger. †
My heart longs † within me. †

28 If you say, "How will we pursue him, since the root of the problem lies with him?" †
29 then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings punishment by the sword, †
so that you may know there is a judgment.

19:3 Hb obscure **19:4** Lit *mistake lives with* **19:10** Lit *gone* **19:12** Lit *they raise up their way* **19:15** Or *The resident aliens in my household* **19:17** Lit *and the sons of my belly* **19:19** Lit *of the men of my council* **19:25** Or *know my living Redeemer* **19:26** Lit *skin which they destroyed*, or *skin they destroyed in this way* **19:26** Or *apart from* **19:27** Or *not a stranger* **19:27** Lit *My kidneys grow faint* **19:28** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *me*
19:3 Gn 31:7; Nm 14:22; Pr 25:8 **19:5** Ps 35:26; 38:16; 55:12 **19:6** Jb 27:2; Lm 3:5; Ezk 12:13 **19:7** Jb 30:20; Lm 3:8; Hab 1:2 **19:8** Jb 3:23; Lm 3:9; Hs 2:6 **19:8** Jb 29:3; 30:26; Is 59:9 **19:10** Dt 28:63; Jb 24:20; Ps 52:5 **19:11** Jb 16:9; 21:17; 40:11 **19:11** Jb 13:24; 33:10; Lm 2:5 **19:12** Ps 27:3; Is 29:3; Jr 50:29 **19:13** Ps 31:11; 38:11; 88:8,18 **19:15** Gn 31:15; Ps 69:8; Mt 10:36 **19:18** 2Kg 2:23; Jb 29:8 **19:19** Jb 30:10; Ps 89:38; Am 5:10 **19:19** Ps 41:9; 55:11-12; Jn 13:18 **19:21** Jb 6:14; Ps 38:11; Pr 17:17 **19:21** Ru 1:13; Jb 12:9; Is 41:20 **19:21** Jb 1:11; 2:5; 6:7 **19:25** Jb 16:19; Pr 23:11; Jr 50:34 **19:25** Is 44:6; 48:12; Rv 1:17-18 **19:26** Ps 17:15; Is 6:1; 1Co 13:12 **19:27** Ps 73:26; 84:2; 119:81 **19:29** Jb 15:22; Is 66:16; Ezk 32:10

19:2-3 Job had wished that his friends would stop talking (13:5); instead, their arrogant insistence was tormenting and crushing him (see also v. 5; 16:2-5).

19:6-7 While Job maintained his innocence as before, he took it a step further by declaring that God **has wronged** [him]. Psalm 119:78 and Lamentations 3:36 both use the same Hebrew verb in a similar

construction to indicate unjust treatment. Along these lines, Job also lamented that **there is no justice** (see also Hab 1:2) and that God was not answering him (see the note on 10:2).

19:21-22 Job pleaded with his friends to be gracious to him. Their words had hurt him deeply (vv. 2-3). He also continued to see God as directly attacking him (see also vv. 8-13 and the note on 16:7-14).

19:25-27 This is another moment when Job's faith shines (see the note on 13:15). Despite the disasters he was suffering, he believed that his **Redeemer** is living (see footnote v. 25) and that after death he indeed would **see him.** Job also expressed hope beyond the grave in 14:13-17 (see note).

ZOPHAR SPEAKS

20 Then Zophar the Naamathite † replied:

2 This is why my unsettling thoughts compel me to answer, because
I am upset! †

3 I have heard a rebuke that insults me, and my understanding †
makes me reply. †

4 Don't you know that ever since antiquity, from the time a human was placed
on earth, 5 the joy of the wicked has been brief and the happiness
of the godless has lasted only a moment? †

6 Though his arrogance reaches heaven, and his head touches the clouds, †
7 he will vanish forever like his own dung.
Those who know † him will ask, "Where is he? " †

8 He will fly away like a dream and never be found; he will be chased away
like a vision in the night. †

9 The eye that saw him will see him no more, †
and his household will no longer see him. †

10 His children will beg from † the poor, for his own hands must give back
his wealth.

11 His frame may be full of youthful vigor, but it will lie down with him
in dust. †

12 Though evil tastes sweet in his mouth and he conceals it under his tongue,
13 though he cherishes it and will not let it go but keeps it in his mouth, †
14 yet the food in his stomach turns into cobras' venom inside him.

15 He swallows wealth but must vomit it up; God will force it from his stomach.
16 He will suck the poison of cobras; a viper's fangs † will kill him. †
17 He will not enjoy the streams, the rivers flowing with honey and curds. †
18 He must return the fruit of his labor without consuming it; he doesn't enjoy the profits from his trading.
19 For he oppressed and abandoned the poor; he seized a house he did not build. †

20 Because his appetite is never satisfied, †
he does not let anything he desires escape.
21 Nothing is left for him to consume; †
therefore, his prosperity will not last.
22 At the height of his success † distress will come to him; †
the full weight of misery † will crush him.
23 When he fills his stomach, God will send his burning anger against him, raining † it down on him while he is eating. †
24 If he flees from an iron weapon, an arrow from a bronze bow will pierce him.
25 He pulls it out of his back, the flashing tip out of his liver. †
Terrors come over him. †
26 Total darkness is reserved for his treasures.
A fire unfanned by human hands will consume † him; it will feed on what is left in his tent.
27 The heavens will expose his iniquity, †
and the earth will rise up against him. †
28 The possessions in his house will be removed, flowing away on the day of God's anger.
29 This is the wicked person's lot † from God, the inheritance God ordained for him.

20:2 Lit *because of my feeling within me* **20:3** Lit *and a spirit from my understanding* **20:7** Lit *have seen* **20:10** Or *children must compensate* **20:16** Lit *tongue* **20:20** Lit *Because he does not know ease in his stomach* **20:22** Lit *In the fullness of his excess* **20:22** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *the hand of everyone in misery* **20:23** Text emended; MT reads *him, against his flesh* **20:25** Or *gallbladder*
20:1 Jb 2:11; 11:1; 42:9 **20:3** Jb 19:3; 32:18; Ac 2:20 **20:5** Jb 8:12-13; Ps 37:35-36; 92:7 **20:6** Gn 11:4; Is

14:13-14; Ob 3-4 **20:7** Jb 4:20; Ps 90:5-6; Jms 4:14 **20:8** Ps 73:20; 90:5; Is 29:7 **20:9** Jb 7:8,21; Ps 37:36 **20:9** Jb 7:10; 8:18; Ps 103:16 **20:11** Jb 7:21; 17:16; Ps 7:5 **20:12-13** Ps 10:7; Pr 9:17; 20:17 **20:16** Dt 32:33; Pr 23:32; Is 59:5 **20:17** Dt 32:13; Jb 29:6; Ps 36:8 **20:19** Dt 28:30; Is 5:8; Mc 2:2 **20:20-21** Jb 15:29; Pr 17:1; Ec 5:13 **20:22** Jdg 2:15; Jb 21:17; Zph 1:17 **20:23** Gn 19:24; Ps 11:6; Ezk 38:22 **20:25** Jb 18:11; 27:20; Jr 6:25 **20:26** Jb 15:34; Ps 21:9; 50:3 **20:27** Jb 13:23,26; 15:5; 22:5 **20:27** Dt 4:26; Jb 16:18-19; Ps 50:4 **20:29** Jb 27:13; 31:2; Ps 17:14

20:2-3 Zophar had been arrogant the first time (11:2-3), and his pride had been offended again.

20:4-5 Although he goes on about them at length (vv. 4-29), Zophar's views of strict retribution in this life were unchanged (see the note on 11:5-6). Like Eliphaz and Bildad (see the notes on 15:20 and 18:5), he had mentioned the possibility of restoration earlier (11:13-19) but focused on the judgment of the wicked this time. What this suggests in the second round of the conversation (Jb 15–21) is that Job's friends had given up urging him to repent and instead threatened him implicitly with descriptions of the fate of the wicked.

20:19 Zophar may have been suggesting that Job had sinned in this way before (see also 22:6-9). Verses 22,28 could also be indirect references to Job.

20:29 Since he does not speak during the third round of speeches (Jb 22–31), these are Zophar's last words in the book of Job, and they serve as a fitting conclusion to his position. As described above in detail, he was convinced that the joy of the wicked is brief and that they will be punished by God in this life (vv. 4-28). Though their sins may be hidden, they will be revealed eventually (vv. 12-15,27).

JOB'S REPLY TO ZOPHAR

21 Then Job answered:

2 Pay close attention to my words; let this be the consolation you offer.

3 Bear with me while I speak; then after I have spoken, you may continue mocking.

4 As for me, is my complaint † against a human being?
Then why shouldn't I be impatient?

5 Look at me and shudder; †

put your hand over your mouth. †

6 When I think about it, I am terrified and my body trembles † in horror.

7 Why do the wicked continue to live, growing old and becoming powerful?

8 Their children are established while they are still alive, †
and their descendants, before their eyes.

9 Their homes are secure and free of fear; †

no rod from God strikes them. †

10 Their bulls breed without fail; their cows calve and do not miscarry.

11 They let their little ones run around like lambs; their children skip about,
12 singing to the tambourine and lyre and rejoicing at the sound of the flute. †
13 They spend † their days in prosperity †
and go down to Sheol in peace.
14 Yet they say to God, “Leave us alone!
We don’t want to know your ways. †
15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him, and what will we gain by pleading with him? ” †
16 But their prosperity is not of their own doing.
The counsel of the wicked is far from me! †

17 How often is the lamp † of the wicked put out?
Does disaster † come on them?
Does he apportion destruction in his anger?
18 Are they like straw before the wind, like chaff † a storm sweeps away?
19 God reserves a person’s punishment for his children. †
Let God repay the person himself, so that he may know it.
20 Let his own eyes see his demise; let him drink from the Almighty’s wrath! †
21 For what does he care about his family once he is dead, †
when the number of his months has run out? †

22 Can anyone teach God knowledge, †
since he judges the exalted ones? †
23 One person dies in excellent health, †
completely secure † and at ease.
24 His body is † well fed, †
and his bones are full of marrow. †
25 Yet another person dies with a bitter † soul, having never tasted prosperity.
26 But they both lie in the dust, and worms cover them. †

27 I know your thoughts very well, the schemes by which you would wrong me.

28 For you say, “Where now is the nobleman’s house? ”
and “Where are the tents † the wicked lived in? ”
29 Have you never consulted those who travel the roads?
Don’t you accept their reports? †
30 Indeed, the evil person is spared from the day of disaster, rescued from the day of wrath.
31 Who would denounce his behavior to his face?
Who would repay † him for what he has done?
32 He is carried to the grave, and someone keeps watch over his tomb.
33 The dirt on his grave is † sweet to him.
Everyone follows behind him,
and those who go before him are without number.

34 So how can you offer me such futile comfort?
Your answers are deceptive.

Third Series of Speeches

21:8 Lit *established before them with them* **21:13** Alt Hb tradition reads *fully enjoy* **21:17** Lit *their disaster* **21:22** Probably angels **21:23** Lit *in bone of his perfection* **21:23** Text emended; MT reads *health, all at ease* **21:24** Or *His sides are* ; Hb obscure **21:24** Lit *is full of milk* **21:24** Lit *and the marrow of his bones is watered* **21:29** Lit *signs* **21:33** Lit *The clods of the wadi are*
21:4 Jb 7:11; 10:1; 27:13 **21:5** Jb 17:8; 18:20; Dn 4:19 **21:5** Jdg 18:19; Jb 29:9; 40:4 **21:6** Jb 4:14; Ps 55:5; 119:120 **21:9** Jb 5:24; 8:6; 12:6 **21:9** Jb 9:34; Ps 73:5 **21:12** Jb 30:31; Ps 81:2; 150:4 **21:13** Jb 36:11; Ps 37:7; 73:12 **21:14** Jb 22:17; Ps 95:10; Pr 1:29 **21:15** Ex 5:2; Jb 34:9; Mal 3:14 **21:16** Jb 22:18; Ps 1:1; Pr 1:10 **21:17** Jb 18:5; Pr 13:9; 24:20 **21:18** Ps 1:4; 35:5; Is 17:13 **21:19** Ex 20:5; Jr 31:29; Lm 5:7 **21:20** Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; Jr 25:15 **21:21** Jb 14:21; Ec 9:5; Is 63:16 **21:21** Jb 14:5; Ps 39:4; 90:12 **21:22** Is 40:13-14; Rm 11:34; 1Co 2:16 **21:25** 1Sm 1:10; Jb 7:11; 10:1 **21:26** Jb 20:11; Ec 9:2-3; Is 14:11 **21:28** Jb 8:22; 18:21; Ps 55:15 **21:31** Dt 7:10; Jb 34:11; Ps 62:12

21:7 Job directly contradicted Zophar’s assertion that the “joy of the wicked” is “brief” (20:5). Rather, **the wicked continue to live, growing old and becoming powerful**, which Job illustrates in vv. 8-16. Thus, the strict retribution in this life that Zophar and the others espoused is false (see the notes on 15:20; 18:2-4; 20:4-5).

21:17-21 Continuing his counterargument against strict retribution (see previous note), Job this time contradicted Bildad’s assertion that **the lamp of the wicked** is **put out** (see 18:5-6). Along these same lines, he lamented that God does not punish the wicked person during his lifetime but causes his children to experience the consequences after the person is already gone (vv. 19-21; see also vv. 30-31; and the note on 27:13-23).

21:22-26 Job’s preceding refutation of strict retribution leads to the heart of the issue: the inscrutable ways and wisdom of God (v. 22). For example, one person lives a prosperous life, whereas another lives a bitter one (vv. 23-25). At the same time, both die (vv. 23,25-26; see 9:22).

21:27 Job's friends had harmed him with their insinuations and accusations that he was in the wrong (see 19:2-3,21-22 and the note on 20:4-5).

21:34 Job had already called his friends "miserable comforters" (16:2), and now he similarly referred to their words as **futile comfort.**

ELIPHAZ SPEAKS

22 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 Can a man be of any use to God?
Can even a wise man be of use to him?
3 Does it delight the Almighty if you are righteous?
Does he profit if you perfect your behavior? †

4 Does he correct you and take you to court because of your piety? †
5 Isn't your wickedness abundant and aren't your iniquities endless?
6 For you took collateral † from your brothers without cause, stripping off their clothes and leaving them naked.
7 You gave no water to the thirsty and withheld food from the famished, †
8 while the land belonged to a powerful man and an influential man lived on it.
9 You sent widows away empty-handed, and the strength of the fatherless † was † crushed.
10 Therefore snares surround you, and sudden dread terrifies † you, 11 or darkness, so you cannot see, and a flood of water covers you. †

12 Isn't God as high as the heavens?
And look at the highest stars — how lofty they are!
13 Yet you say, "What does God know?
Can he judge through total darkness? †
14 Clouds † veil him so that he cannot see, as he walks on the circle of the sky."
15 Will you continue on the ancient path that wicked men have walked?
16 They were snatched away before their time, and their foundations † were washed away by a river.
17 They were the ones who said to God, "Leave us alone! "
and "What can the Almighty do to us? " † †

18 But it was he who filled their houses with good things.
The counsel of the wicked is far from me!
19 The righteous see this and rejoice; the innocent mock them, saying, †
20 "Surely our opponents are destroyed, and fire has consumed what they left behind." †

21 Come to terms with God and be at peace; †
in this way † good will come to you.
22 Receive instruction from his mouth, †
and place his sayings † in your heart.
23 If you return † to the Almighty, you will be renewed.
If you banish injustice from your tent
24 and consign your gold to the dust, the gold of Ophir † to the stones in the wadis, 25 the Almighty will be your gold and your finest silver.
26 Then you will delight † in the Almighty and lift up your face to God. †
27 You will pray to him, and he will hear you, †
and you will fulfill your vows.
28 When you make a decision, it will be carried out, †
and light will shine on your ways. †
29 When others are humiliated and you say, "Lift them up,"
God will save the humble. † †
30 He will even rescue the guilty one, who will be rescued by the purity of your hands. †

22:9 LXX, Syr, Vg, Tg read *you have* **22:17** LXX, Syr; MT reads *them* **22:21** Lit *peace; by them* **22:28** Lit *out for you* **22:29** Lit *bowed of eyes*
22:2-3 Jb 35:7; Ps 16:2; Lk 17:10 **22:4** Jb 14:3; Ps 143:2 **22:6** Ex 22:26; Dt 24:6,17; Ezk 18:12 **22:7** Jb 31:17; Is 58:7; Mt 25:42 **22:9** Jb 24:3; Is 10:2; Ezk 22:7 **22:10** Jb 3:25; 23:15; 31:23 **22:11** Jb 38:34; Ps 69:1-2; Lm 3:54 **22:13** Ps 73:11; Is 29:15; Ezk 8:12 **22:14** 2Sm 22:12; Jb 26:8; 37:11 **22:16** Jb 4:19; Lm 4:11; Ezk 30:4 **22:17** Jb 21:14; Ps 95:10; 107:42 **22:19** Ps 52:6; 58:10; Pr 1:26-27 **22:20** Jb 1:16; 4:9; 15:30 **22:21** Ps 119:165; Pr 3:2; Is 27:5 **22:22** Dt 8:3; Pr 2:6; Mal 2:7 **22:22** Jb 6:10; 23:12; Ps 119:102 **22:23** Is 31:6; 55:7; Mal 3:7 **22:24** 1Kg 9:28; Jb 28:16; Is 13:12 **22:26** Jb 27:10; Ps 37:4; Is 55:2 **22:26** Jb 11:15; 27:10; Is 58:14 **22:27** Jb 33:26; Ps 50:14; Is 58:9 **22:28** Pr 4:18; Is 60:3; Dn 12:3 **22:29** Ps 18:27; Mt 23:12; 1Pt 5:5 **22:30** 2Sm 22:21; Jb 17:9; Ps 24:4

22:4-11 Going beyond what he said in his second speech (see the notes on 15:1-6,20), Eliphaz asserted that

Job's **wickedness** was **abundant** and his **iniquities endless.** In particular, he accused him of callous cruelty to his needy neighbors (vv. 6-9; see also 20:19). According to the logic that one could reason from consequences back to actions (see the note on 4:6-8), this was why Job was suffering the way he was (vv. 10-11). Eliphaz's earlier indirectness and insinuations (see the notes on 4:17-21 and 5:17) have been unmasked: he believed Job had sinned and was suffering as a result.

22:21-30 Eliphaz's last remarks to Job consist of one more appeal to repent (vv. 21-23; see also 5:17; 8:5-7; 11:13-18). He was convinced that Job had acted wickedly (vv. 4-9,15) but could be restored (vv. 21,25-30).

JOB'S REPLY TO ELIPHAZ

23 Then Job answered:

2 Today also my complaint is bitter. † †
His † hand is heavy despite my groaning.
3 If only I knew how to find him, so that I could go to his throne.
4 I would plead my case before him †
and fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would learn how † he would answer me; and understand what he would say to me.
6 Would he prosecute † me forcefully?
No, he would certainly pay attention to me.
7 Then an upright man could reason † with him, and I would escape from my Judge † † forever.

8 If I go east, he is not there, and if I go west, I cannot perceive him. †
9 When he is at work to the north, I cannot see him; when he turns south, I cannot find him.
10 Yet he knows the way I have taken; †
when he has tested me, † I will emerge as pure gold.
11 My feet have followed in his tracks; I have kept to his way † and not turned aside.
12 I have not departed from the commands from his lips; I have treasured †
the words † from his mouth more than my daily food.

13 But he is unchangeable; who can oppose him?

He does what he desires. †

14 He will certainly accomplish what he has decreed for me, and he has many more things like these in mind. †

15 Therefore I am terrified † in his presence; when I consider this, I am afraid of him.

16 God has made my heart faint; †
the Almighty has terrified me.

17 Yet I am not destroyed † by the darkness, †
by the thick darkness that covers my face.

23:2 Syr, Tg, Vg; MT reads *rebellion* **23:2** LXX, Syr; MT reads *My* **23:5** Lit *the words* **23:7** Or *judgment* **23:10** Lit *way with me* **23:12** LXX, Vg read *treasured in my bosom* **23:14** Lit *these with him* **23:17** Or *silenced*
23:2 Jb 7:11; 10:1; 21:4 **23:4** Jb 5:8; 13:18; 35:14 **23:6** Jb 13:19; 33:13; Is 45:9 **23:7** Jb 13:3,15; 15:3 **23:7** Gn 18:25; Is 33:22; Jr 11:20 **23:8** Jb 9:11; 35:14 **23:10** Ps 17:3; 66:10; 1Pt 1:7 **23:11** Jb 17:9; Ps 17:5; 44:18 **23:12** Jb 6:10; 22:22; Ps 119:102-103,111 **23:13** Ps 115:3; Is 14:27; Dn 4:35 **23:15** Jb 4:14; 22:10; 23:15 **23:16** Dt 20:3; Is 7:4; Jr 51:46 **23:17** Jb 19:8; 29:3; 30:26

23:3-5 Rather than respond to Eliphaz, Job expressed his wish to meet God and dispute with him. Whereas earlier he did not think himself adequate to do such a thing (see the notes on 9:2-4,14-16,32-35), now he wanted not only to **go to his throne** but also to **fill** [his own] **mouth with arguments.** Job has gone too far, as God will make clear (Jb 38–41).

23:8-9 The Lord's silence and apparent absence continued to burden Job (see the note on 10:2), such that he was in "darkness" (v. 17; 19:8).

23:13-16 His own desires notwithstanding, Job lamented that God's power and will superseded his and could not be resisted.

24 Why does the Almighty not reserve times for judgment? †
Why do those who know him never see his days?

2 The wicked displace boundary markers.
They steal a flock and provide pasture for it.

3 They drive away the donkeys owned by the fatherless †
and take the widow's ox as collateral.

4 They push the needy off the road; the poor of the land are forced into hiding. †

5 Like wild donkeys in the wilderness, the poor go out to their task of foraging for food; the desert provides nourishment for their children.

6 They gather their fodder in the field and glean the vineyards of the wicked.

7 Without clothing, they spend the night naked, having no covering against the cold. †
8 Drenched by mountain rains, they huddle against † the rocks, shelterless.
9 The fatherless infant is snatched from the breast; the nursing child of the poor is seized as collateral. †
10 Without clothing, they wander about naked.
They carry sheaves but go hungry. †
11 They crush olives in their presses; †
they tread the winepresses, but go thirsty.
12 From the city, men † groan; the mortally wounded cry for help,
yet God pays no attention to this crime. †

13 The wicked are those who rebel against the light.
They do not recognize its ways
or stay on its paths.
14 The murderer rises at dawn to kill the poor and needy,
and by night he becomes a thief.
15 The adulterer's eye watches for twilight, thinking, "No eye will see me,"
and he covers his face.
16 In the dark they break † into houses; by day they lock themselves in, †
never experiencing the light.
17 For the morning is like darkness to them.
Surely they are familiar with the terrors of darkness!

18 They float † on the surface of the water.
Their section of the land is cursed,
so that they never go to their vineyards.
19 As dry ground and heat snatch away the melted snow, so Sheol † steals those who have sinned.
20 The womb forgets them; worms feed on them;
they are remembered † no more.
So injustice is broken like a tree.

21 They prey on † the childless woman who is unable to conceive, and do not
deal kindly with the widow.
22 Yet God drags away † the mighty by his power; when he rises up, they have
no assurance of life.
23 He gives them a sense of security, so they can rely on it, †
but his eyes † watch over their ways.
24 They are exalted for a moment, then gone; they are brought low
and shrivel up like everything else. †
They wither like heads of grain. †

25 If this is not true, then who can prove me a liar †
and show that my speech is worthless?

24:8 Lit *they embrace* **24:9** Text emended; MT reads *breast; they seize collateral against the poor* **24:11** Lit *olives between their rows* **24:12** One Hb ms, Syr read *the dying* **24:16** Lit *dig* **24:16** Lit *they seal for themselves* **24:18** Lit *are insignificant* **24:21** LXX, Tg read *They harm* **24:22** Or *God prolongs the life of* **24:24** LXX reads *like a mallow plant in the heat*
24:1 Ec 9:12; Is 2:12; Ac 1:7 **24:3** Dt 27:19; Jb 22:9; 31:21 **24:4** Jdg 5:6; Pr 28:28; Am 2:7 **24:7** Ex 22:26-27; Dt 24:12-13; Jb 22:6 **24:10** Dt 24:19; 2Tm 2:6; Jms 5:4 **24:12** Jb 1:22; Ps 69:26 **24:19** Jb 7:9; Ps 9:17; Pr 27:20 **24:20** Jb 18:17; Pr 10:7; Jr 11:19 **24:23** Jb 11:18; Ps 4:8; Pr 3:24 **24:23** Ps 11:4; Pr 15:3; Jr 16:17 **24:24** Jb 14:21; Ps 37:10; 106:43 **24:25** Jb 6:28; 27:4; 34:6

24:1 Job revisited his earlier complaint that the wicked prosper in this life (see the notes on 21:7,17-21), which is depicted in vv. 2-17. He lamented that **the Almighty** [does] **not reserve times for judgment** and that "God pays no attention to this crime"(v. 12).

24:18-24 These verses have posed a challenge to scholars because they seem to conflict with Job's words in the present speech and elsewhere. He had repeatedly lamented the wicked prospering in this life (see previous note), but this section describes their punishment through death, similar to what his friends had argued. Nevertheless, Job had affirmed that the wicked are still subject to death (9:22; 21:22-26), in agreement with these verses (see also 27:7-23).

BILDAD SPEAKS

25 Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2 Dominion and dread † belong to him, the one who establishes harmony
in his heights.
3 Can his troops be numbered?
Does his light not shine on everyone?
4 How can a human be justified before God? †

How can one born of woman be pure? †

5 If even the moon does not shine and the stars are not pure in his sight, †

6 how much less a human, who is a maggot, a son of man, † who is a worm! †

25:6 Or *a mere mortal*
25:2 2Ch 20:29; Jb 13:11; Ps 36:1 **25:4** Jb 9:2; Ps 143:2; Rm 3:20 **25:4** Jb 4:17; 15:14; Pr 20:9 **25:5** Jb 4:18; 15:15; 21:22 **25:6** Ps 8:4; 22:6; Is 41:14

25:2-6 This is the last time any of Job's three friends speak, since Zophar spoke only twice (see the note on 20:29). Bildad speaks briefly here, appealing to the greatness of God and the impossibility of a man to **be justified before God**, as had been stated before (see 4:17-21; 9:2; 15:14-16).

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD

26 Then Job answered:

2 How you have helped † the powerless and delivered the arm that is weak!

3 How you have counseled the unwise †
and abundantly provided insight!

4 With whom did you speak these words?
Whose breath came out of your mouth?

5 The departed spirits tremble beneath the waters and all that inhabit them. †

6 Sheol † is naked before God, and Abaddon † has no covering. †

7 He stretches the northern skies over empty space; he hangs the earth on nothing.

8 He wraps up the water in his clouds, yet the clouds do not burst beneath its weight. †

9 He obscures the view of his throne, spreading his cloud over it.

10 He laid out the horizon on the surface of the waters †
at the boundary between light and darkness.

11 The pillars that hold up the sky tremble, astounded at his rebuke. †

12 By his power he stirred † the sea, and by his understanding he crushed Rahab. †

13 By his breath the heavens gained their beauty; his hand pierced
the fleeing serpent. † †
14 These are but the fringes of his ways; how faint is the word we hear of him!
Who can understand his mighty thunder?

26:13 = Leviathan
26:2 Jb 4:3; Is 35:3; Heb 12:12 **26:3** Jb 11:6; Ps 73:24; Jms 1:5 **26:5** Ps 88:10; Is 26:14,19; Rv 20:13 **26:6** Ps 30:3,9; Pr 1:12; Is 5:14 **26:6** Jb 28:22; Pr 27:20; Rv 9:11 **26:6** Ps 139:8; Pr 15:11; Heb 4:13 **26:8** Jb 37:11; 38:9; Pr 30:4 **26:10** Ps 104:9; Pr 8:27,29; Jr 5:22 **26:11** 2Sm 22:16; Ps 18:15; 104:7 **26:12** Is 51:15; Jr 31:35 **26:12** Jb 9:13; Ps 89:10; Is 51:9 **26:13** Jb 41; Ps 33:6; Is 27:1

26:2-4 Job employed sarcasm again (12:2) as he began his final defense before his friends. He will speak again, but only to God (see 40:3-5; 42:1-6).

26:12-13 Job had previously cited God's power over **Rahab**, ostensibly a fearsome sea creature, as evidence of his greatness (9:13; see also 7:12; Ps 89:10; Is 51:9). A **fleeing serpent** is mentioned only once elsewhere in Isaiah 27:1, where it is equated with "Leviathan" (see the note on 3:8). All three designators often suggest a figurative reference to an evil spiritual being, most likely Satan (see Gn 3:1 and the note on 41:1-11).

26:14 Job again recognized God's surpassing power, citing the preceding examples (vv. 5-13) as **but the fringes of his ways.**

27 Job continued his discourse, saying:

2 As God lives, who has deprived me of justice, †
and the Almighty who has made me bitter, †
3 as long as my breath is still in me and the breath from God remains
in my nostrils, †
4 my lips will not speak unjustly, and my tongue will not utter deceit.
5 I will never affirm that you are right.
I will maintain my integrity † † until I die.
6 I will cling to my righteousness and never let it go.
My conscience † will not accuse me as long as I live!

7 May my enemy be like the wicked and my opponent like the unjust.
8 For what hope does the godless person † have when he is cut off, when God
takes away his life? †
9 Will God hear his cry when distress comes on him?
10 Will he delight † in the Almighty?

Will he call on God at all times?
11 I will teach you about God's power.
I will not conceal what the Almighty has planned. †
12 All of you have seen this for yourselves, why do you keep up this empty talk? †

13 This is a wicked man's lot † from God, the inheritance the ruthless receive from the Almighty.
14 Even if his children increase, they are destined for the sword; his descendants will never have enough food.
15 Those who survive him will be buried by the plague, yet their widows will not weep for them. †
16 Though he piles up silver like dust and heaps up fine clothing like clay —
17 he may heap it up, but the righteous will wear it, and the innocent will divide up his silver. †
18 The house he built is like a moth's cocoon or a shelter set up by a watchman. †
19 He lies down wealthy, but will do so no more; when he opens his eyes, it is gone.
20 Terrors overtake him like a flood; †
a storm † wind sweeps him away at night.
21 An east wind picks him up, and he is gone; it carries him away from his place.
22 It blasts at him without mercy, while he flees desperately from its force.
23 It claps † its hands at him and scoffs at him from its place.

27:5 Lit *will not remove my integrity from me* **27:11** Lit *what is with the Almighty*
27:2 Jb 19:6; 34:5 **27:2** Ex 1:14; Ru 1:20; Jb 3:20 **27:3** Gn 2:7; Jb 12:10; 33:4 **27:5** Jb 2:3,9; 31:6; Pr 11:3 **27:6** Ac 24:16; 1Co 4:4; Rv 9:11 **27:8** Jb 17:8; 20:5; 36:13 **27:8** Jb 8:13; Mt 16:26; Lk 12:20 **27:10** Jb 22:26; Ps 37:4; Is 55:2 **27:12** Jb 2:10; 15:2 **27:13** Jb 20:29; 31:2; Ps 17:14 **27:15** Jb 18:19; Ps 78:64; Jr 22:10 **27:17** Pr 13:22; 28:8; Ec 2:26 **27:18** Jb 4:19; Is 1:8; Jnh 4:5 **27:20** Jb 18:11; 20:25; Jr 6:25 **27:20** Jb 21:18; Ps 83:15; Is 29:6 **27:23** Nm 24:10; Jb 34:37; Lm 2:15

27:1 The introductory formula used here (and in 29:1) differs from the preceding ones (e.g., 3:1; 6:1; 9:1; 12:1; 16:1), which sets apart Job's concluding remarks to his friends.

27:2-6 As he had done in 19:6-7 (see note), Job called God's justice into question (v. 2; 34:5). He also

declared to his friends that he would **never affirm that** [they] **are right** (v. 5; **you** is plural). Furthermore, he referred to them as his "enemy" (vv. 7-12).

27:13-23 Job wished that God would judge the wicked while they were still alive (see the notes on 21:7,17-21 and 24:1), but he also recognized God's justice through their deaths and their shameful legacy (see also the note on 24:18-24).

A HYMN TO WISDOM

28 Surely there is a mine for silver and a place where gold is refined.
2 Iron is taken from the ground, and copper is smelted from ore.
3 A miner puts an end to the darkness; he probes † the deepest recesses for
ore in the gloomy darkness.
4 He cuts a shaft far from human habitation, in places unknown to those
who walk above ground.
Suspended far away from people,
the miners swing back and forth.
5 Food may come from the earth, but below the surface the earth is transformed
as by fire.
6 Its rocks are a source of lapis lazuli, †
containing flecks of gold.
7 No bird of prey knows that path; no falcon's eye has seen it.
8 Proud beasts have never walked on it; no lion has ever prowled over it.
9 The miner uses a flint tool and turns up ore from the root of the mountains.
10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, and his eyes spot every treasure.
11 He dams up the streams from flowing †
so that he may bring to light what is hidden.

12 But where can wisdom † be found, and where is understanding located?
13 No one can know its value, †
since it cannot be found in the land of the living.
14 The ocean depths say, "It's not in me,"
while the sea declares, "I don't have it." †
15 Gold cannot be exchanged for it, and silver cannot be weighed out
for its price.
16 Wisdom cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, †

in precious onyx or lapis lazuli. †
17 Gold and glass do not compare with it, and articles of fine gold
cannot be exchanged for it. †
18 Coral and quartz are not worth mentioning.
The price of wisdom is beyond pearls.
19 Topaz from Cush cannot compare with it, and it cannot be valued
in pure gold.

20 Where then does wisdom come from, and where is understanding located?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living thing and concealed from the birds
of the sky.
22 Abaddon and Death † say, “We have heard news of it with our ears.”
23 But God understands the way to wisdom, and he knows its location.
24 For he looks to the ends of the earth and sees everything under the heavens.
25 When God fixed the weight of the wind and distributed the water
by measure, †
26 when he established a limit † for the rain †
and a path for the lightning,
27 he considered wisdom and evaluated it; he established it and examined it.
28 He said to mankind, “The fear of the Lord —that is wisdom.
And to turn from evil is understanding.” †

28:3 Lit *probes all* **28:11** LXX, Vg read *He explores the sources of the streams* **28:13** LXX reads *way* **28:26** Or *decree*
28:6 Ex 24:10; Ezk 1:26; Rv 21:19 **28:12** Jb 28:20; Pr 16:16; Ec 7:23,25 **28:14** Dt 30:11-13; Ps 92:5; Rm 11:33 **28:16** 1Kg 9:28; 10:11; Jb 22:24 **28:16** Pr 3:14-16; 8:10-11; 16:16 **28:17** Ps 119:72; Pr 8:19; 20:15 **28:22** Jb 25:6; Ps 49:14; Pr 27:20 **28:25** Ps 135:7; Pr 30:4; Is 40:12 **28:26** Jb 5:10; 37:6; 38:25 **28:28** Dt 4:6; Pr 1:7; 9:10

28:1-11 Though the focus on wisdom in this chapter seems an abrupt change of topic, there is no question that such a focus highlights one of the central themes of the book. Job has already been presented as a wise man (1:1,8; 2:3; Pr 1:7) seeking understanding regarding his present suffering (see the note on 10:2). The extended metaphor of mining illustrates searching diligently in an unfrequented place for a hidden thing of great value, which parallels the search for wisdom (see following note).

28:12-19 Although precious metals can be discovered (see previous note), wisdom **cannot be found in the land of the living** (v. 13). Moreover, it is even more valuable than the precious metals for which men expend so much effort to unearth (vv. 15-19). Likewise, wisdom requires great effort to find. Proverbs 2:1-5 agrees with this and even uses many of the same words and themes. In the book of Job, the friends had relied on human wisdom to find the answer to Job’s suffering. They had reasoned with their best logic, but

it proved inadequate. There was no way that they could have known the real reasons for Job's suffering. The reasons were mysteries in heaven.

28:20-23 Wisdom cannot be found as precious metals are found with physical eyes (vv. 12-14,20-21), but **God understands the way to wisdom, and he knows its location.** This begins to answer the questions posed in vv. 12,20 (see following note).

28:27-28 Though wisdom "is hidden from the eyes of every living thing" (v. 21), God knows where it is because he "sees everything under the heavens" (vv. 23-24). For Job and for all of mankind, the **fear of the LORD** is wisdom, and **to turn from evil is understanding**—just as Job's life had been characterized earlier (1:1,8; 2:3). Such wisdom, paradoxically, is not marked by complete knowledge (e.g., 1:5) but by acknowledgement of God's perfect wisdom, character, and moral standards.

JOB'S FINAL CLAIM OF INNOCENCE

29 Job continued his discourse, saying:

2 If only I could be as in months gone by, in the days when God watched over me,
3 when his lamp shone above my head, and I walked through darkness by his light! †
4 I would be as I was in the days of my youth when God's friendship † rested on my tent, 5 when the Almighty was still with me and my children were around me,
6 when my feet were bathed in curds and the rock † poured out streams of oil for me!

7 When I went out to the city gate †
and took my seat in the town square,
8 the young men saw me and withdrew, while older men stood to their feet.
9 City officials stopped talking and covered their mouths with their hands. †
10 The noblemen's voices were hushed, and their tongues stuck to the roof of their mouths. †
11 When they heard me, they blessed me, and when they saw me, they spoke well of me. †
12 For I rescued the poor who cried out for help, and the fatherless child who had no one to support him. †
13 The dying blessed me, and I made the widow's heart rejoice.
14 I clothed myself in righteousness, †

and it enveloped me;
my just decisions were like a robe and a turban.
15 I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. †
16 I was a father to the needy, and I examined the case of the stranger.
17 I shattered the fangs of the unjust †
and snatched the prey from his teeth.

18 So I thought, "I will die in my own nest and multiply my days as the sand. †
19 My roots will have access to water, †
and the dew will rest on my branches all night.
20 My whole being will be refreshed within me, and my bow will be renewed in my hand." †

21 Men listened to me with expectation, waiting silently for my advice.
22 After a word from me they did not speak again; my speech settled on them like dew. †
23 They waited for me as for the rain and opened their mouths as for spring showers.
24 If I smiled at them, they couldn't believe it; they were thrilled at † the light of my countenance.
25 I directed their course and presided as chief.
I lived as a king among his troops,
like one who comforts those who mourn.

29:11 Lit *When an ear heard, it called me blessed, and when an eye saw, it testified for me* **29:18** Or *as the phoenix* **29:24** Lit *they did not cast down*
29:3 Jb 11:17; Ps 18:28; 119:105 **29:4** Ps 25:14; 55:14; Pr 3:32 **29:6** Dt 32:13; Jb 20:17; Ps 81:16 **29:7** Dt 25:7; 2Sm 15:2; 2Ch 32:6; Ps 69:12; Am 5:10 **29:9** Jdg 18:19; Jb 21:5; 40:4 **29:10** Ps 22:15; Ezk 3:26 **29:12** Ex 22:22; Dt 24:17; 27:19; Jb 6:27; 31:21; Ps 10:14; 72:12; Pr 21:13 **29:14** Ps 132:9; Is 59:17; Eph 6:14 **29:15** Is 35:6; 42:7,16; Mt 11:5 **29:17** Jb 4:10; Ps 3:7; 58:6 **29:19** Jb 14:9; Ps 1:3; Ezk 31:7 **29:20** Gn 49:24; Is 40:31; 41:1 **29:22** Dt 32:2

29:2-8 In Job's final defense, he began by recalling the many blessings he enjoyed prior to his present trials. Among them were God's favor (vv. 2-5), his children (v. 6), prosperity (v. 6), and the respect of his community (vv. 7-8,21-25).

29:12-17 Job had been kind to the needy, contrary to what his friends alleged (20:19; 22:6-9).

29:18-20 In those days, Job had thought he would live out the rest of his days enjoying these many blessings.

30 But now they mock † me, men younger than I am,
whose fathers I would have refused to put with my sheep dogs.
2 What use to me was the strength of their hands?
Their vigor had left them.
3 Emaciated from poverty and hunger, they gnawed the dry land,
the desolate wasteland by night.
4 They plucked mallow † † among the shrubs, and the roots of the broom tree were their food.
5 They were banished from human society; people shouted at them as if they were thieves.
6 They are living on the slopes of the wadis, among the rocks and in holes in the ground.
7 They bray among the shrubs; they huddle beneath the thistles.
8 Foolish † men, without even a name.
They were forced to leave the land.

9 Now I am mocked by their songs; †
I have become an object of scorn to them.
10 They despise me and keep their distance from me; †
they do not hesitate to spit † in my face.
11 Because God has loosened my † bowstring and oppressed me, they have cast off restraint in my presence. †
12 The rabble † rise up at my right; they trap † my feet and construct their siege ramp † against me. †
13 They tear up my path; they contribute to my destruction, †
without anyone to help them.
14 They advance as through a gaping breach; they keep rolling in through the ruins. †
15 Terrors † are turned loose against me; they chase my dignity away like the wind, and my prosperity has passed by like a cloud.

16 Now my life is poured out before me, and days of suffering † have seized me.

17 Night pierces my bones, but my gnawing pains never rest. †
18 My clothing is distorted with great force; he chokes me by the neck of my garment. †
19 He throws me into the mud, and I have become like dust and ashes. †

20 I cry out to you for help, but you do not answer me; †
when I stand up, you merely look at me.
21 You have turned against me with cruelty; you harass † me with your strong hand.
22 You lift me up on the wind and make me ride it; you scatter me in the storm. †
23 Yes, I know that you will lead me to death — the place † appointed for all who live.

24 Yet no one would stretch out his hand against a ruined person †
when he cries out to him for help
because of his distress. †
25 Have I not wept for those who have fallen on hard times?
Has my soul not grieved for the needy? †
26 But when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, darkness † came.
27 I am churning within † and cannot rest; days of suffering confront me.
28 I walk about blackened, but not by the sun. †
I stood in the assembly and cried out for help.
29 I have become a brother to jackals and a companion of ostriches.
30 My skin blackens and flakes off, †
and my bones burn with fever. †
31 My lyre is used for mourning and my flute for the sound of weeping. †

30:4 Or *saltwort* **30:11** Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Vg read *his* **30:12** Hb obscure **30:12** Lit *stretch out* **30:12** Lit *and raise up their destructive paths* **30:18** Hb obscure **30:24** Lit *a heap of ruins* **30:27** Lit *My bowels boil* **30:28** Or *walk in sunless gloom* **30:30** Lit *blackens away from me*
30:1 Jb 12:4; Jr 20:7; Lm 3:14 **30:4** Jb 12:4; Jr 20:7; Lm 3:14 **30:8** Pr 26:7,12; Ec 7:5; Is 32:5-6 **30:9** Jb 12:4; 30:1; Lm 3:14 **30:10** Jb 19:19; Ps 89:38; Am 5:10 **30:10** Nm 12:14; Is 50:6; Mt 26:67 **30:11** Jb 12:18;

29:20; Ps 32:9 **30:12** Jb 16:10; 19:12; Ps 140:4-5 **30:13** Jb 6:2; Ps 57:1; Pr 19:13 **30:14** Jb 16:14; Jl 2:7 **30:15** Jb 18:11; 27:20; Ps 73:19 **30:16** Jb 10:15; 30:27; 36:21 **30:17** Jb 33:19; Ps 6:2; 38:3 **30:19** Jb 16:15; Ps 7:5; 75:10 **30:20** Jb 19:7; Ps 18:41; 88:13-14 **30:21** Gn 49:23; Jb 16:9; Ps 55:3 **30:22** Jb 9:17; Ps 83:15; Jnh 1:4 **30:23** Jb 3:15; 17:13; Ec 12:5 **30:24** Jb 12:5; 31:29; Pr 24:22 **30:25** Jb 5:15; 24:4,14; 31:19 **30:26** Jb 19:8; Is 59:9; Lm 3:2 **30:30** Ps 102:3; Lm 4:8; 5:10 **30:31** Is 24:8; Ezk 26:13; Mt 11:17

30:1 Whereas Job had been like a “chief” and a “king” in his community (29:25), now he was mocked by the lowly in his society (see also vv. 2-8).

30:11 The mockery Job experienced was because of the disasters God had brought on him.

30:20-23 Job speaks to God directly and again lamented his silence (v. 20) and his apparent **cruelty** (vv. 21-23; see also the notes on 6:2-13 and 16:7-14).

30:25-26 Though Job had **wept** for others who were in trouble, none had comforted him (16:2; 19:2-3).

31 I have made a covenant with my eyes. †
How then could I look at a young woman? † †
2 For what portion † would I have from God above, or what inheritance from the Almighty on high?
3 Doesn’t disaster come to the unjust and misfortune to evildoers?
4 Does he not see my ways and number all my steps? †

5 If I have walked in falsehood or my foot has rushed to deceit,
6 let God weigh me on accurate scales, †
and he will recognize my integrity. †

7 If my step has turned from the way, my heart has followed my eyes,
or impurity has stained my hands, †
8 let someone else eat what I have sown, and let my crops be uprooted. †

9 If my heart has gone astray over a woman or I have lurked at my neighbor’s door,
10 let my own wife grind grain for another man, and let other men sleep with † her.
11 For that would be a disgrace; it would be an iniquity deserving punishment. †
12 For it is a fire that consumes down to Abaddon; it would destroy my entire harvest. †

13 If I have dismissed the case of my male or female servants when they made
a complaint against me,
14 what could I do when God stands up to judge?
How should I answer him when he calls me to account?
15 Did not the one who made me in the womb also make them?
Did not the same God form us both in the womb? †

16 If I have refused the wishes of the poor or let the widow's † eyes go blind,
17 if I have eaten my few crumbs alone without letting the fatherless
eat any of it — 18 for from my youth, I raised him as his father, and since the
day I was born † I guided the widow — 19 if I have seen anyone dying
for lack of clothing or a needy person without a cloak, †
20 if he † did not bless me while warming himself with the fleece
from my sheep, 21 if I ever cast my vote † against a fatherless child when I
saw that I had support in the city gate, †
22 then let my shoulder blade fall from my back, and my arm be pulled
from its socket.
23 For disaster from God terrifies me, and because of his majesty I could not do
these things. †

24 If I placed my confidence in gold or called fine gold my trust, †
25 if I have rejoiced because my wealth is great or because my own hand
has acquired so much, 26 if I have gazed at the sun when it was shining or at
the moon moving in splendor, †
27 so that my heart was secretly enticed and I threw them a kiss, †
28 this would also be an iniquity deserving punishment, for I would have denied
God above.

29 Have I rejoiced over my enemy's distress, or become excited when trouble
came his way?
30 I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for his life with a curse.
31 Haven't the members of my household said, "Who is there who has not
had enough to eat at Job's table? "

32 No stranger had to spend the night on the street, for I opened my door
to the traveler.
33 Have I covered my transgressions † as others do †
by hiding my iniquity in my heart †
34 because I greatly feared the crowds and because the contempt of the clans
terrified me, so I grew silent and would not go outside?

35 If only I had someone to hear my case! †
Here is my signature; let the Almighty answer me.
Let my Opponent compose his indictment.
36 I would surely carry it on my shoulder and wear it like a crown. †
37 I would give him an account of all my steps; I would approach him
like a prince.

38 If my land cries out against me and its furrows join in weeping,
39 if I have consumed its produce without payment or shown contempt
for its tenants, †
40 then let thorns † grow instead of wheat and stinkweed † instead of barley.

The words of Job are concluded.

31:1 Or *a virgin* **31:10** Lit *men kneel down over* **31:18** Lit *and from my mother's womb* **31:20** Lit *his loins* **31:21** Lit *I raise my hand* **31:27** Lit *and my hand kissed my mouth* **31:33** Or *as Adam* **31:39** Lit *or caused the breath of its tenants to breathe out*

31:1 Pr 4:25; Is 33:15; 2Pt 2:14 **31:1** Ex 22:6; Pr 17:24; Mt 5:28 **31:2** Jb 20:29; 27:13; Ps 17:14 **31:4** Jb 14:16; 34:21; Pr 5:21 **31:6** Jb 6:2; Dn 5:27; Mc 6:11 **31:6** Jb 2:3,9; 27:5; Pr 11:3 **31:7** Nm 15:39; Jb 23:11; Ps 7:3 **31:8** Lv 26:16; Dt 28:30; Jb 20:18 **31:11** Gn 38:24; Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22,24 **31:12** Jb 26:6; 28:22; Pr 6:27-29 **31:15** Ps 119:73; 139:13; Jr 1:5 **31:16** Jb 22:9; 24:3,21; 29:13 **31:19** Ex 22:26; Jb 22:6 **31:21** Jb 5:4; Pr 22:22; Is 29:21 **31:23** Jb 13:11; 22:10; 23:15 **31:24** Ps 52:7; Mt 6:19; Mk 10:24 **31:26** Dt 4:19; 17:3; Ezk 8:16 **31:33** Jb 7:21; 22:5; 33:9 **31:33** Ps 32:3-5; Pr 28:13; 1Jn 1:8-10 **31:35** Jb 16:21; Ec 6:10; Is 45:9 **31:36** Pr 4:9; 12:4; 17:6 **31:40** Gn 3:18; Is 34:13; Hs 9:6 **31:40** Pr 24:31; Is 5:2; Hs 10:4

31:1 Having cited his kindness to the needy (29:12-17), Job gave as another example of his innocence, his abstention from lust (see the notes on 6:28-30 and 16:17-19). He knew that God would know of such an offense (vv. 2-4).

31:5-12 Job continued his defense of his blamelessness with statements that he was innocent of **falsehood** and adultery (see previous note).

31:13-23 Job had also treated his **servants** fairly (vv. 13-15,31) and the **needy** kindly (vv. 16-23,32; see also the note on 29:12-17) **31:24-30** Neither had Job trusted in his wealth or committed idolatry (see the notes on vv. 1,5-12,13-23). He had not **rejoiced over** [his] **enemy's distress** or desired harm for him either (vv. 29-30).

31:35-37 Having concluded his final defense, Job again wished for a hearing with **the Almighty.** He boldly called him to **compose his indictment** and even said he would approach **like a prince** (v. 37). These words are similar to those found in 23:3-5 (see note).

ELIHU'S ANGRY RESPONSE

32 So these three men quit answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. † 2 Then Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite † from the family of Ram became angry. He was angry at Job because he had justified † himself rather than God. 3 He was also angry at Job's three friends because they had failed to refute him and yet had condemned him. †
4 Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job because they were all older than he.
5 But when he saw that the three men could not answer Job, he became angry.
6 So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite replied:

I am young in years,
while you are old;
therefore I was timid and afraid
to tell † you what I know.
7 I thought that age should speak and maturity should teach wisdom.
8 But it is the spirit in a person— the breath † from the Almighty— that gives anyone understanding.
9 It is not only the old who are wise or the elderly who understand how to judge.
10 Therefore I say, "Listen to me.
I too will declare what I know."
11 Look, I waited for your conclusions; I listened to your insights
as you sought for words.
12 I paid close attention to you.
Yet no one proved Job wrong;
not one of you refuted his arguments.
13 So do not claim, "We have found wisdom; let God deal with him, not man."
14 But Job has not directed his argument to me, and I will not respond to him with your arguments.

15 Job's friends are dismayed and can no longer answer; words have left them.

16 Should I continue to wait now that they are silent, now that they stand there
and no longer answer?
17 I too will answer; †
yes, I will tell what I know.
18 For I am full of words, and my spirit † compels me to speak. †
19 My heart † is like unvented wine; it is about to burst like new wineskins. †
20 I must speak so that I can find relief; I must open my lips and respond.
21 I will be partial to no one, †
and I will not give anyone an undeserved title.
22 For I do not know how to give such titles; otherwise, my Maker
would remove me in an instant.

32:3 Alt Hb tradition reads *condemned God* **32:17** Lit *answer my part* **32:18** Lit *and the spirit of my belly* **32:19** Lit *belly*
32:1 Jb 10:7; 33:9; 34:5-6 **32:2** Gn 22:21; Jr 25:23 **32:2** Jb 33:32; Jr 3:11; Ezk 16:51-52 **32:6** Jb 15:17; 36:2 **32:8** Gn 2:7; Jb 33:4; Is 42:5 **32:18** Jb 19:3; 32:18; Ac 4:20 **32:19** Jb 15:35; 37:1; Pr 20:27,30 **32:21** Dt 10:17; Jb 13:8; 34:19

32:1-3 Job's three friends were finally silenced because **he was righteous in his own eyes** (see also 33:32). This description uses language distinct from that characterizing the foolish (Pr 12:15) and humans with their limited understanding (Pr 16:2; 21:2). **Elihu** was angry at Job for having **justified himself rather than God** (v. 2; 4:17; 19:6; 27:2) and at his friends for having **condemned him** (v. 3; see the notes on 11:5-6 and 15:1-6). His words provide a transition from the conversation up to this point (see vv. 12-14) to God's words beginning in 38:1.

32:4-9 Although Elihu was younger than Job's three friends, God would be angry with them and not with him (42:7-9). Though Scripture does encourage respect for the aged (e.g., Lv 19:32; Pr 16:31; 20:29), wisdom does not come automatically with age (vv. 8-9; Ps 119:98-100; 1Tm 4:12).

ELIHU CONFRONTS JOB

33 But now, Job, pay attention to my speech, and listen to all my words.
2 I am going to open my mouth; my tongue will form words on my palate.
3 My words come from my upright † heart, and my lips speak
with sincerity what they know.
4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty †
gives me life. †
5 Refute me if you can.
Prepare † your case against me; take your stand. †

6 I am just like you before God; I was also pinched off from a piece of clay. †
7 Fear † of me should not terrify you; no pressure from me should weigh you down.

8 Surely you have spoken in my hearing, and I have heard these very † words:
9 “I am pure, without transgression; I am clean and have no iniquity. †
10 But he finds reasons to oppose me; he regards me as his enemy. †
11 He puts my feet in the stocks; he stands watch † over all my paths.”

12 But I tell you that you are wrong in this matter, since God is greater than man. †
13 Why do you take † him to court for not answering anything a person asks? †
14 For God speaks time and again, but a person may not notice it.
15 In a dream, a vision † in the night, when deep sleep comes over people †
as they slumber on their beds,
16 he uncovers their ears †
and terrifies them † with warnings, 17 in order to turn a person from his actions and suppress the pride of a person.
18 God spares his soul from the Pit, †
his life from crossing the river of death. †
19 A person may be disciplined on his bed † with pain and constant distress in his bones, †
20 so that he detests bread, and his soul despises his favorite food. †
21 His flesh wastes away to nothing, †
and his unseen bones stick out.
22 He draws near to the Pit, and his life to the executioners.
23 If there is an angel † on his side, one mediator out of a thousand,
to tell a person what is right for him †
24 and to be gracious to him and say, “Spare him from going down to the Pit;
I have found a ransom,” †

25 then his flesh will be healthier † than in his youth, and he will return
to the days of his youthful vigor. †
26 He will pray to God, and God will delight in him.
That person will see his face † with a shout of joy, and God will restore
his righteousness to him. †
27 He will look at men and say, “I have sinned and perverted what was right; yet
I did not get what I deserved. †
28 He redeemed my soul from going down to the Pit, and I will continue to see
the light.”
29 God certainly does all these things two or three times to a person
30 in order to turn him back from the Pit, so he may shine with the light of life. †
31 Pay attention, Job, and listen to me.
Be quiet, and I will speak.
32 But if you have something to say, † answer me; speak, for I would like
to justify you.
33 If not, then listen to me; be quiet, and I will teach you wisdom.

33:8 Lit *heard a sound of* **33:13** Lit *court, for he does not answer all his words* **33:16** LXX; MT reads *and seals* **33:18** Or *from perishing by the sword* **33:21** Lit *away from sight* **33:23** Or *to vouch for a person’s uprightness* **33:25** Hb obscure **33:27** Lit *and the same was not to me* **33:32** Lit *If there are words*
33:3 1Kg 9:4; Ps 25:21; 119:7 **33:4** Jb 27:2; 32:8; 35:13 **33:4** Gn 2:7; Jb 27:3; Is 30:33 **33:5** Jb 23:4; 32:14; 37:19 **33:5** 1Sm 17:16; Ps 2:2; Jr 46:4,14 **33:6** Jb 4:19; 10:9; 13:12 **33:7** Jb 20:25; Ps 55:4; 88:15 **33:9** Jb 9:21; 11:4; 34:6 **33:10** Jb 13:24; 19:11; Lm 2:5 **33:11** Jb 10:14; 14:16; Ps 130:3 **33:12** Jb 4:17; 9:2; 15:14 **33:13** Jb 9:3; 13:19; 40:2 **33:15** Jb 4:13; 7:14; 20:8 **33:15** Gn 2:21; 15:12; Jb 4:13 **33:16** Jb 4:12; 13:1; 36:10,15 **33:18** Jb 33:28,30; 36:16; Ps 30:9 **33:19** Jb 7:13; Ps 41:3; Hs 7:14 **33:19** Jb 30:17; Ps 6:2; 38:3 **33:20** Jb 3:24; 6:7; Ps 102:4 **33:23** Ex 23:20,23; Ps 34:7; Is 63:9 **33:24** Ex 30:12; Ps 49:7; Pr 21:18 **33:25** Dt 34:7; 2Kg 5:14; Jb 20:11 **33:26** Gn 33:10; Ps 11:7; 17:15 **33:26** Ps 23:3; 51:12; 1Jn 1:9 **33:30** Ps 56:13; Jn 1:4,9

33:8-18 Elihu addressed Job’s complaint that God was afflicting him even though he had done no wrong (vv. 8-11; see also 9:21; 10:7; 13:18,24-27) and that God had not answered him (v. 13). Elihu contested that Job was **wrong in this matter** (v. 12) because **God speaks time and again** through various means such as dreams, **but a person may not notice it** (v. 14). Job himself had been having nightmares (7:13-15). Elihu’s suggestion that such terror (see also vv. 19-30) can be the divine means of preventing catastrophic sin (vv. 17-18) does not seem to speak to Job’s situation, but it does give an alternative to the strict retribution espoused by his friends. Furthermore, he does not want Job to cast God as an adversary but as One who wants to preserve his life (vv. 29-30; see also the note on 35:10-11).

34 Then Elihu continued, † saying:

2 Hear my words, you wise ones, and listen to me, you knowledgeable ones.
3 Doesn't the ear test words as the palate tastes food?
4 Let us judge for ourselves what is right; let us decide together what is good.
5 For Job has declared, "I am righteous, yet God has deprived me of justice. †
6 Would I lie about my case? †
My wound † is incurable, though I am without transgression."
7 What man is like Job?
He drinks derision † like water.
8 He keeps company with evildoers and walks with wicked men.
9 For he has said, "A man gains nothing when he becomes God's friend." †

10 Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding.
It is impossible for God to do wrong,
and for the Almighty to act unjustly. †
11 For he repays † a person according to his deeds, and he gives him what his conduct deserves. †
12 Indeed, it is true that God does not act wickedly and the Almighty does not pervert justice. †
13 Who gave him authority over the earth?
Who put him in charge of the entire world? †
14 If he put his mind to it and withdrew the spirit † and breath he gave, 15 every living thing would perish together and mankind would return to the dust. †

16 If you have understanding, hear this; listen to what I have to say.
17 Could one who hates justice govern the world?
Will you condemn the mighty Righteous One, †
18 who says to a king, "Worthless man! "
and to nobles, "Wicked men! "? †
19 God is not partial † to princes and does not favor the rich over the poor, for they are all the work of his hands.
20 They die suddenly in the middle of the night; people shudder, then pass away.
Even the mighty are removed without effort.

21 For his eyes watch over a man's ways, and he observes all his steps. †
22 There is no darkness, no deep darkness, where evildoers can hide. †
23 God does not need to examine a person further, that one should † approach him in court.
24 He shatters the mighty without an investigation and sets others in their place. †
25 Therefore, he recognizes their deeds †
and overthrows them by night, and they are crushed.
26 In full view of the public, †
he strikes them for their wickedness,
27 because they turned aside from following him and did not understand any of his ways
28 but caused the poor to cry out to him, and he heard the outcry of the needy. †
29 But when God is silent, who can declare him guilty?
When he hides his face, who can see him?
Yet he watches over both individuals and nations, 30 so that godless men should not rule or ensnare the people.

31 Suppose someone says to God, "I have endured my punishment;
I will no longer act wickedly.
32 Teach me what I cannot see; if I have done wrong, I won't do it again."
33 Should God repay you on your terms when you have rejected his?
You must choose, not I!
So declare what you know.
34 Reasonable men will say to me, along with the wise men who hear me,
35 "Job speaks without knowledge; †
his words are without insight."
36 If only Job were tested to the limit, because his answers are like those of wicked men.
37 For he adds rebellion to his sin; he scornfully claps † in our presence, while multiplying † his words against God.

34:1 Lit *answered* **34:6** Lit *arrow* **34:11** Lit *and like a path of a man, he causes him to find* **34:23** Some emend to *God has not appointed a time for man to* **34:26** Lit *In a place of spectators*

34:5 Jb 10:7; 27:2; 33:9 **34:6** Jb 6:28; 24:25; 27:4 **34:7** Jb 15:16; Pr 19:28 **34:9** Ex 5:2; Jb 21:15; Mal 3:14 **34:10** Dt 32:4; Ps 92:15; Rm 9:14 **34:11** Dt 7:10; Jb 21:31; Is 59:18 **34:12** 2Ch 19:6; Jb 8:3; Ps 9:16 **34:13** Jb 38:4; Ps 50:12; Is 40:12-14 **34:14** Ps 104:29; Ec 3:19; 12:7 **34:15** Gn 2:7; Jb 4:19; 10:9 **34:17** Gn 18:25; 2Sm 23:3; Rm 3:5 **34:18** Ex 22:28; Jb 12:21; Ps 107:40 **34:19** Dt 10:17; Jb 13:8; 32:21 **34:21** Jb 14:16; 31:4; Pr 5:21 **34:22** Ps 139:12; Am 9:2-3; Heb 4:13 **34:24** Jb 12:19; Ps 2:9; Dn 2:21 **34:25** Jb 11:11; Ps 10:14 **34:28** Ex 3:7; 22:23; Jms 5:4 **34:35** Jb 35:16; 38:2; 42:3 **34:37** Nm 24:10; Jb 27:23; Lm 2:15 **34:37** Jb 16:4; 35:16; Ezk 35:13

34:5-9 For a second time (see the note on 33:8-18), Elihu took issue with something Job had said (vv. 8-9). In particular, Job had implied that God was unjust for bringing these trials to him (v. 5; 27:2) and that there was little benefit to being righteous (v. 9). Indeed, Job had at points forcefully lamented the injustice of this life (see the notes on 9:21-24 and 21:7,17-21; though see the note on 24:18-24). Contrary to what Job asserted in 19:6 and 27:2, Elihu insisted that God is just—even in Job's situation (vv. 10-12).

34:16-20 Elihu cited several examples of God's justice (vv. 18-20) to reinforce his point (see the previous note). The implication is that God is not **one who hates justice** and should not be **condemn**[ed] by anyone, including Job (v. 17).

34:29-30 Job had wanted to dispute with God (23:3-5; 31:35-37; 33:13), but Elihu reminded him that God did not owe him an answer or explanation (v. 29; see also 33:12). He is not **guilty** because he is **silent.**

34:35-37 Elihu was not saying that Job's suffering resulted from his sin but that he had sinned in some of the things he had said in the midst of his pain (see the notes on 32:1-3; 33:8-18; 34:5-9).

35 Then Elihu continued, saying:

2 Do you think it is just when you say, "I am righteous before God"?

3 For you ask, "What does it profit you, †

and what benefit comes to me, if I do not sin? " †

4 I will answer you and your friends with you.

5 Look at the heavens and see; gaze at the clouds high above you.

6 If you sin, how does it affect God?

If you multiply your transgressions, what does it do to him?

7 If you are righteous, what do you give him, or what does he receive from your hand? †

8 Your wickedness affects a person like yourself, and your righteousness, a son of man. †

9 People cry out because of severe oppression; they shout for help because of the power of the mighty. †

10 But no one asks, "Where is God my Maker, †

who provides us with songs in the night, †

11 who gives us more understanding than the animals of the earth and makes us
wiser than the birds of the sky? ” †
12 There they cry out, but he does not answer, because of the pride
of evil people. †
13 Indeed, God does not listen to empty cries, and the Almighty does not
take note of it — 14 how much less when † you complain †
that you do not see him,
that your case † is before him and you are waiting † for him.
15 But now, because God’s anger does not punish and he does not pay attention
to transgression, †
16 Job opens his mouth in vain and multiplies words without knowledge. †

35:3 Some emend to *me* **35:8** Or *a mere mortal* **35:14** Or *how then can* **35:14** Lit *say* **35:15** LXX, Vg; MT reads *folly*, or *arrogance* ; Hb obscure
35:3 Jb 9:29; 21:15; 34:9 **35:7** Jb 22:3; 41:11; Rm 11:35 **35:9** Ex 2:23; Jb 24:12; 34:28 **35:10** Dt 32:6; Is 51:13; Jr 2:8 **35:10** Ps 42:8; 77:6; Ac 16:25 **35:11** Jb 12:7; Mt 6:26 **35:12** Pr 1:28; Is 1:15; Zch 7:13 **35:14** Jb 13:18; 23:4; 31:13 **35:14** Jb 6:8; 13:13; 14:14 **35:16** Jb 15:2; 21:22; 34:35

35:2-8 For a third time (see the notes on 33:8-18 and 34:5-9), Elihu responded directly to Job’s complaint against God regarding whether there was any benefit to being righteous compared to being wicked (9:22-23; 21:7,17-21). Elihu’s point seems to be that although sin does not injure God (v. 6), it does harm the sinner himself and other humans (v. 8).

35:10-11 Elihu’s words bring out God’s attributes of kindness and grace (see also 33:18,29-30).

35:16 Elihu’s characterization of Job as one who **multiplies words without knowledge** (see also 34:35-37) foreshadows God’s opening words to Job (38:2; 42:3).

36 Then Elihu continued, saying:

2 Be patient with me a little longer, and I will inform you, for there is still
more to be said on God’s behalf.
3 I will get my knowledge from a distant place and ascribe justice to my Maker.
4 Indeed, my words are not false; one who has complete knowledge is with you.

5 Yes, God is mighty, but he despises no one; he understands all things. † †
6 He does not keep the wicked alive, †
but he gives justice to the oppressed.
7 He does not withdraw his gaze from the righteous, but he seats them forever
with enthroned kings, and they are exalted.

8 If people are bound with chains and trapped by the cords of affliction,
9 God tells them what they have done and how arrogantly they have transgressed.
10 He opens their ears † to correction and tells them to repent from iniquity.
11 If they listen and serve him, they will end their days in prosperity
and their years in happiness. †
12 But if they do not listen, they will cross the river of death †
and die without knowledge. †

13 Those who have a godless heart harbor anger; even when God binds them, they do not cry for help.
14 They die in their youth; their life ends among male cult prostitutes. †
15 God rescues the afflicted by their affliction; he instructs them by their torment.

16 Indeed, he lured you from the jaws † of distress to a spacious and unconfined place.
Your table was spread with choice food.
17 Yet now you are obsessed with the judgment due the wicked; judgment and justice have seized you.
18 Be careful that no one lures you with riches; †
do not let a large ransom † lead you astray. †
19 Can your wealth † or all your physical exertion keep you from distress? †
20 Do not long for the night when nations will disappear from their places.
21 Be careful that you do not turn to iniquity, for that is why you have been tested by † affliction.

22 Look, God shows himself exalted by his power.
Who is a teacher like him?
23 Who has appointed his way for him, and who has declared, “You have done wrong”? †
24 Remember that you should praise his work, which people have sung about. †
25 All mankind has seen it; people have looked at it from a distance. †

26 Yes, God is exalted beyond our knowledge; †
the number of his years cannot be counted. †
27 For he makes waterdrops evaporate; †
they distill the rain into its † mist, †
28 which the clouds pour out and shower abundantly on mankind.
29 Can anyone understand how the clouds spread out or how the thunder roars
from God's pavilion? †
30 See how he spreads his lightning † around him and covers the depths
of the sea.
31 For he judges the nations with these; he gives food in abundance. †
32 He covers his hands with lightning and commands it to hit its mark.
33 The † thunder declares his presence; †
the cattle also, the approaching storm.

36:5 Lit *he is mighty in strength of heart* **36:12** Or *will perish by the sword* **36:16** Lit *from a mouth of narrowness* **36:18** Or *you into mockery* **36:18** Or *bribe* **36:19** Or *cry for help* **36:21** Or *for you have preferred this to* **36:27** Lit *he draws in waterdrops* **36:27** Or *his* **36:33** Lit *His,* or *Its* **36:33** Lit *thunder announces concerning him* or *it*
36:5 Jb 9:4; 12:13; 38:36 **36:6** Gn 18:25; Jb 8:20; 2Pt 2:9 **36:10** Jb 4:12; 13:1; 33:16 **36:11** Jb 21:13; 22:2; Is 1:19 **36:12** Jb 4:21; 33:18; Hs 4:6 **36:14** Dt 23:17; 1Kg 14:24; 22:46 **36:18** 1Sm 12:3; Ps 26:10; Am 5:12 **36:19** 1Sm 22:2; Jb 15:24; Ps 107:6,13,19,28 **36:23** Jb 34:10,13; Is 40:13-14; Rm 11:34 **36:24** Ps 92:5; 104:33; Rv 15:3 **36:25** Ps 19:3; Rm 1:19-20; Heb 11:13 **36:26** Jb 9:10; 37:5,23; Ec 8:17 **36:26** Ps 90:2; 102:24,27; Heb 1:12 **36:27** Gn 2:6; Jb 38:28; Ps 147:8 **36:29** Jb 26:14; 37:16; Ps 105:39 **36:30** 2Sm 22:15; Jb 38:28; Ps 18:14 **36:31** Jb 37:13; Ps 136:25; Ac 14:17

36:3 Elihu ascribed his wisdom to God himself (see also 32:8; 33:4).

36:5 Elihu's emphasis on the power and wisdom of God (see also v. 22) prepares the way for God's own words to be given soon. He also affirmed God's justice again (vv. 6-7; see the notes on 34:5-9,16-20).

36:15 Elihu returned to the idea that God can use suffering to teach, even though no sin was committed (see vv. 7-10; note on 33:8-18).

36:22-24 Elihu reminded Job that God has great power, and there is no **teacher like him.** In other words, his strength and understanding far surpass that of humans so that no one can rightly say to him, **"You have done wrong"** (v. 23), as Job had (19:6; 27:2). Instead, **his work** should be honored (v. 24).

36:26-33 Elihu continued on the themes of God's great wisdom and power (v. 26; see the notes on vv. 5,22-24), using a powerful storm as an illustration (see also the note on 38:1). His wisdom is evident through his role in the production of rain (vv. 27-28), through his understanding of **how the clouds spread out** and **how the thunder roars** (v. 29), and through **how he spreads his lightning** (v. 30). His power is self-evident through his control over all of these natural elements, which he even uses both to provide for mankind and to judge them (vv. 28,31; 37:13). Even these forces are subject to his careful oversight (v. 32). The Hebrew word for **mark** used in v. 32 is closely related to the one translated "target" in 7:20.

37 My heart † pounds at this and leaps from my chest. †
2 Just listen to his thunderous voice and the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
3 He lets it loose beneath the entire sky; his lightning to the ends † of the earth.

4 Then there comes a roaring sound; God thunders † with his majestic voice.
He does not restrain the lightning
when his rumbling voice is heard.
5 God thunders wondrously with his voice; he does great things that we cannot comprehend.
6 For he says to the snow, † "Fall to the earth,"
and the torrential rains, his mighty torrential rains, 7 serve as his sign to all mankind, so that all men may know his work.
8 The wild animals enter their lairs and stay in their dens. †
9 The windstorm comes from its chamber, and the cold from the driving north winds.
10 Ice is formed by the breath of God, †
and watery expanses are frozen.
11 He saturates clouds with moisture; †
he scatters his lightning through them.
12 They swirl about, turning round and round at his direction, accomplishing everything he commands them over the surface of the inhabited world.
13 He causes this to happen for punishment, for his land, or for his faithful love.

14 Listen to this, Job.
Stop and consider God's wonders.
15 Do you know how God directs his clouds or makes their lightning flash?
16 Do you understand how the clouds float, those wonderful works of him who has perfect knowledge?
17 You whose clothes get hot when the south wind brings calm to the land,
18 can you help God spread out the skies as hard as a cast metal mirror?
19 Teach us what we should say to him; †
we cannot prepare our case because of our darkness.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?

Can a man speak when he is confused?
21 Now no one can even look at the sun when it is in the skies,
after a wind has swept through and cleared the clouds away. †
22 Yet out of the north he comes, shrouded in a golden glow; awesome † majesty surrounds him.
23 The Almighty — we cannot reach him — he is exalted in power!
He will not violate justice and abundant righteousness, 24 therefore, men fear him.
He does not look favorably on any who are wise † in heart.

37:1 Lit *from its place* **37:21** Lit *and cleaned them*
37:1 Jb 15:35; 32:19; Pr 20:27,30 **37:3** Jb 38:13; Is 11:12; Ezk 7:2 **37:4** Jb 40:9; Ps 18:3; 29:3 **37:6** Jb 6:16; 24:19; 38:22 **37:8** Jb 38:40; Ps 104:22; Am 3:4 **37:10** 2Sm 22:21; Jb 4:9; Is 30:33 **37:11** Jb 26:8; 36:29; 38:9 **37:19** Jb 9:3,14; 40:2; Jms 1:5 **37:22** Ex 15:11; Dt 7:21; Hab 3:2 **37:24** Pr 3:7; 26:5,12,16; 28:11

37:1-5 God is even mightier than the storm Elihu just described. In particular, his **voice** (vv. 2,4,5) is to be feared, since it commands the storm (see v. 6). Elihu again emphasized the inferiority of human understanding (v. 5; 36:26).

37:6-12 Elihu continued his use of a storm as an illustration of God's power and wisdom. The winter storm described here is instructive to men in understanding **his work** (v. 7), perhaps since it provides an example of his strength and a reminder of their frailty and need for humility (v. 8). Again, Elihu emphasized that God is in control of all of these powerful elements (vv. 6,10). Although they may seem out of control, they are actually moving **at his direction, accomplishing everything he commands** (v. 12).

37:13 A winter storm can serve the purpose of punishment, but it may instead be **for his land, or for his faithful love** (see the note on 36:26-33). This fits with Elihu's belief that Job's suffering, metaphorically described as a storm (see the note on 9:17-18), was not because of his sin but was for other reasons.

37:14-18 In keeping with his emphasis on God's superior wisdom and power (see the notes on 36:26-33 and 37:6-12), Elihu confronted Job with the fact that he could not understand how God orchestrates the elements of a storm nor could he participate with him in the sustenance of the universe.

37:23-24 Elihu appropriately concluded his remarks with both another affirmation of God's greatness and justice and with an encouragement to **fear him** (see also 28:28).

THE LORD SPEAKS

38 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. † He said:

2 Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words? †
3 Get ready to answer me like a man; when I question † you, you will inform me.
4 Where were you when I established † the earth?

Tell me, if you have † understanding.
5 Who fixed its dimensions? Certainly you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 What supports its foundations?
Or who laid its cornerstone
7 while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God † shouted for joy?

8 Who enclosed the sea behind doors when it burst from the womb,
9 when I made the clouds its garment and total darkness its blanket, † †
10 when I determined its boundaries †
and put its bars and doors in place,
11 when I declared: "You may come this far, but no farther; your proud waves stop here"?

A BIBLICAL BASIS FOR SCIENCE

A popular myth in our culture says that science and theology have always been at war with each other. It may come as a surprise to learn that most historians of science believe this idea to be untrue. In fact, the Bible provided some of the key intellectual foundations for the development of the sciences in the West.

GOD AS MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE

The first foundation is the expectation of regularity in nature, which stems from the Bible's monotheistic view of God. Polytheistic and pantheistic religions see the universe as run by committee, with unpredictable events arising from conflicts among the many supernatural personalities involved. As a result, nature is seen as capricious, without any expectation of regularity.

By contrast, the Bible presents God as the sole Master and Commander of the universe (Ps 89:11-13; Is 48:12-13) which he spoke into existence (Pss 33:6-9; 148:5) and over which he rules (Is 40:26). Since one God is in control of nature and has said that he does not change (Nm 23:19; Mal 3:6), we can expect his universe to run in a regular way. This is more than an inference: God explicitly says that he established the heavens and earth to follow regular laws (Gn 8:22; Jr 33:20,25).

SCIENCE AS A WORTHY PURSUIT

Another foundation is the Bible's teaching that the study of nature is a worthy pursuit in gaining wisdom and glorifying God. God's creation is good, and even though it is corrupted by sin, we are encouraged to learn from it (Ps 19:1; Pr 6:6). Psalm 104 and Job 38–39 praise God's wisdom, sovereignty, and control over creation.

Scientists such as Isaac Newton and Johannes Kepler often stated that they sought to glorify God by

studying his creation. In his letter to the Grand Duchess Christina, Galileo remarked, “The glory and greatness of Almighty God are marvelously discerned in all His works and divinely read in the open book of Heaven.” By contrast, many world religions view nature in a dualistic manner, regarding the spiritual world as good and the material world as evil. So studying the physical world focuses one’s attention in the wrong direction.

THE COMPLEXITY OF GOD’S WORLD

A third biblical foundation for science is that God’s creation is not simple to understand. God informs us that “[His] thoughts are not [our] thoughts, and [our] ways are not [his] ways” (Is 55:8; see also Pr 25:2). Yet “The LORD founded the earth by wisdom and established the heavens by understanding” (Pr 3:19). This suggests that through difficult work we may be able to glimpse some of God’s wisdom. When doing science, as Kepler quipped, we are “thinking God’s thoughts after Him.”

GOD’S CONTINGENCY

The last foundation to mention here is God’s contingency: God created the world as he wanted it to be; he was not bound by outside constraints like human logic or philosophical principles. God “does whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the depths” (Ps 135:6; see also 115:3). Therefore, we cannot predict how God created; we must study God’s handiwork itself to see what he has done. Thus, good science is based on direct observations and experiments while theories are held tentatively until proven beyond doubt.

TENSIONS BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THEOLOGY

While the Bible is not a scientific textbook, we find that it provides the correct perspectives for viewing nature and the proper motivations for studying it. Science is arguably one of the tasks mankind is commissioned to do: Adam was to “name” the animals in the garden of Eden (Gn 2:19), and he was given stewardship over the earth (Gn 1:28), a task that required study and wisdom for it to be done well. Although the Bible has higher priorities than explaining how the heavens work, biblical descriptions of nature are profoundly true while simply stated. Examples are the creation event in Genesis 1:1 (see also Is 44:24; Heb 11:3), and the heavens and the earth’s wearing out over time (Ps 102:25-26), an echo of the second law of thermodynamics.

If the study of nature was historically grounded in biblical insights, how did the modern tensions between science and theology arise? The drift started in the late 1600s when the philosophers of the Enlightenment freed themselves from the shackles of Aristotle and other ancient authorities by attempting to rely only on reason and experience to establish truth claims. Newton’s discovery of the laws of motion and gravity led philosophers and theologians away from a theistic view (where God is actively involved in nature) to a deistic view (where God created the universe but now allows it to operate via laws he established). In the 1800s, T. H. Huxley and others desired to ground all knowledge on physical cause and effect, removing religious authority from society and replacing it with the authority of science. This narrowed the practice of science, limiting it to purely naturalistic explanations of the world.

Thus, the issues between the sciences and theology today hinge on the religious differences between naturalism and theism. In other words, should we view the universe as purely a machine which God cannot touch, or as a musical instrument which God plays for his glory? The difference is profound with respect to the explanations we can accept for natural phenomena. For example, if naturalism is assumed, something like Darwinism must be the “scientific” explanation for how life developed, because God’s guidance or intervention in nature is ruled out a priori. Any naturalistic explanation must be preferred, no matter how implausible it is, because others would not be naturalistic. Unfortunately, by ignoring some possible answers, science today may be missing the truth. This is perhaps most evident in the fields of biology, psychology, and the social sciences where the abandonment of man’s special place in creation in favor of explaining him as a machine or an animal has led to the devaluing of human life and personhood.

Strikingly, this philosophical shift in the foundation of science from theism to naturalism leaves people with little justification to pursue science. Better technology can earn one fame and fortune, a military advantage, or more comfortable living, but naturalistically minded scientists have no reason to expect mathematics to explain and predict how the universe behaves, no reason to expect the world to operate in a regular manner, and no explanation for what put the "material" in materialism in the first place. The ad hoc nature of the naturalistic presupposition has become more glaring with the recognition that our universe is not eternal but had a beginning and that the physical laws and constants themselves appear to be fine-tuned to allow for the possibility of complex, intelligent life. Naturalists sometimes suggest that our universe is just one among countless universes in a so-called multiverse, and that with so many universes the chances were good that at least one would turn out to be fine-tuned for life. But importantly, there is no evidence indicating that other universes exist.

CHRISTIANS AND SCIENCE

Is it possible for the sciences to return to a biblical basis? Certainly for Christians it is. We should look beyond the naturalistic, materialistic, and mechanistic blinders that limit the perspective of our culture, choosing to see that "the world is charged with the grandeur of God" (Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur"). Christians who marvel at the wisdom, power, and creativity demonstrated in God's handiwork, as the biblical writers and early scientists did, have a strong motive to pursue the sciences even if their colleagues espouse a narrower viewpoint.

The fine-tuning of our universe and the fact that it had a beginning strongly imply that Someone is behind it. So too does the dizzying complexity of life, which is becoming more evident as biochemistry unravels the secrets of life. If, through continued discoveries like these, the naturalistic straitjacket on valid scientific explanations comes to be seen for what it is—a theologically motivated restriction—perhaps science will soon shed naturalism, just as it shed its Aristotelian and Platonic straitjackets in the past. Perhaps then it will return to its theistic roots—the most fruitful perspective for viewing nature.

JOHN A. BLOOM

12 Have you ever in your life commanded the morning or assigned the dawn its place,
13 so it may seize the edges of the earth and shake the wicked out of it?
14 The earth is changed as clay is by a seal; its hills stand out like the folds of a garment.
15 Light † is withheld from the wicked, and the arm raised in violence is broken.

16 Have you traveled to the sources of the sea or walked in the depths of the oceans?
17 Have the gates † of death been revealed to you?
Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the extent of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all this.

19 Where is the road to the home of light?
Do you know where darkness lives,
20 so you can lead it back to its border?
Are you familiar with the paths to its home?
21 Don't you know? You were already born; †
you have lived so long! †
22 Have you entered the place where the snow is stored?
Or have you seen the storehouses of hail, †
23 which I hold in reserve for times of trouble, for the day of warfare and battle?
†
24 What road leads to the place where light is dispersed? †
Where is the source of the east wind that spreads across the earth?

25 Who cuts a channel for the flooding rain or clears the way for lightning,
26 to bring rain on an uninhabited land, on a desert with no human life, †
27 to satisfy the parched wasteland and cause the grass to sprout? †
28 Does the rain have a father?
Who fathered the drops of dew? †
29 Whose womb did the ice come from?
Who gave birth to the frost of heaven
30 when water becomes as hard as stone, †
and the surface of the watery depths is frozen? †

31 Can you fasten the chains of the Pleiades or loosen the belt of Orion?
32 Can you bring out the constellations † in their season and lead the Bear †
and her cubs? †
33 Do you know the laws † of heaven?
Can you impose its † authority on earth?
34 Can you command † the clouds so that a flood of water covers you? †
35 Can you send out lightning † bolts, and they go?
Do they report to you: "Here we are"?

36 Who put wisdom † in the heart †
or gave the mind understanding?
37 Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?
Or who can tilt the water jars of heaven
38 when the dust hardens like cast metal and the clods of dirt stick together?

39 Can you hunt prey for a lioness or satisfy the appetite of young lions †
40 when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait within their lairs?
41 Who provides the raven's food †
when its young cry out to God
and wander about for lack of food?

38:4 Lit *know* **38:9** Lit *swaddling clothes* **38:10** Lit *I broke my statute on it* **38:15** Lit *Their light* **38:21** Lit *born; the number of your days is great* **38:24** Or *where lightning is distributed* **38:26** Lit *no man in it* **38:30** Lit *water hides itself as the stone* **38:32** Or *Mazzaroth* ; Hb obscure **38:32** Or *lead Aldebaran* **38:33** Or *God's* **38:34** Lit *lift up your voice to* **38:36** Or *the inner self* ; Ps 51:6
38:1 2Kg 2:11; Jb 40:6; Ezk 13:11,13 **38:2** Jb 34:35; 35:16; 42:3 **38:3** 2Sm 11:7; Jb 40:7; 42:4 **38:4** Ps 89:11; 102:25; 104:5 **38:7** Gn 6:2,4; Jb 1:6; 2:1 **38:9** 2Sm 22:10; Jb 22:13; 37:11 **38:17** Ps 9:13; 107:18; Is 38:10 **38:21** Jb 15:7; Ps 90:2; Pr 8:25 **38:22** Ex 9:18; Ps 105:32; Is 28:17 **38:23** Jos 10:11; Is 30:30; Rv 16:21 **38:27** Gn 1:11; 2Sm 23:4; Ps 107:35 **38:28** Jb 5:10; Ps 147:8; Jr 14:22 **38:29-30** Jb 37:10; Ps 147:16-17 **38:31-32** Jb 9:9; Is 40:26; Am 5:8 **38:33** Jr 31:35; 33:25 **38:34** Jb 22:11; Ps 69:1-2; Lm 3:54 **38:35** Ex 19:16; Ps 18:14; 97:4 **38:36** Jb 28:12,18,20; Ps 51:6; Ec 2:26 **38:39** Ps 104:21; 145:15-16 **38:41** 1Kg 17:4,6; Ps 147:9; Lk 12:24

38:1 The Lord finally broke his silence. Job had described his suffering as though he were being battered by a **whirlwind** (see the notes on 9:17-18; 13:25; 30:22), and at long last God spoke from such a wind. The implication is that God was not absent but was with Job in the midst of overwhelming trials (see the note on 10:2). Indeed, he has complete power over a storm (see the notes on 36:26-33 and 37:6-12) so that it serves his purposes (see the note on 37:13). He knows its path and the exact quantities of its various elements (see 28:25-26; 38:22-30). Likewise, he knew the details of Job's trials (1:12; 2:6).

38:2-7 In calling God's justice into question and wanting to argue with him (19:6; 23:3-5; 27:2; 31:35-37), Job had spoken ignorantly and irreverently. Although he was not "a worm" (25:6), he was no match for the Almighty either (v. 3). The Lord reminded Job that he was not present at creation and did not understand it either (vv. 4-7; see also the note on 37:14-18).

38:8-11 God sets limits even for something as powerful as the sea and its **proud waves** (vv. 10-11). Earlier, he was described as setting a limit for rain and hence for a storm (28:26). Job's trial was also a "storm" (9:17; see the note on v. 1), and God had set limits for it too. Satan was not given free rein over Job (1:12; 2:6), and Job's trial would come to an end soon (42:10).

38:22-30 As Elihu had pointed out (see 36:27–37:18), God has complete control over **snow**, **hail**, **wind**, **rain**, and **ice**—all of which serve his purposes (vv. 23,26-27).

38:31-35 Like the other questions, those posed here are rhetorical. Not only was Job vastly inferior in understanding and in age to God (e.g., vv. 2,4,18-21), but he was severely lacking in power in comparison to him.

38:36-41 God's wisdom is shown through the fact that he imparts it to others (v. 36), and his complete understanding of the universe, and his provision for living things (vv. 37-41).

39 Do you know when mountain goats give birth?
Have you watched the deer in labor?
2 Can you count the months they are pregnant †
so you can know the time they give birth?
3 They crouch down to give birth to their young; they deliver their newborn. †
4 Their offspring are healthy and grow up in the open field.
They leave and do not return. †

5 Who set the wild donkey free?
Who released the swift donkey from its harness?
6 I made the desert † its home, and the salty † wasteland its dwelling.
7 It scoffs at the noise of the village and never hears the shouts of a driver. †
8 It roams the mountains for its pastureland, searching for anything green.
9 Would the wild ox be willing to serve you?
Would it spend the night by your feeding trough?
10 Can you hold the wild ox † to a furrow by its harness?
Will it plow the valleys behind you?
11 Can you depend on it because its strength is great?
Would you leave it to do your hard work?
12 Can you trust the wild ox to harvest your grain and bring it to your threshing floor?

13 The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, but are her feathers and plumage like the stork's? † †
14 She abandons her eggs on the ground and lets them be warmed in the sand.
15 She forgets that a foot may crush them or that some wild animal may trample them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as if they were not her own, with no fear that her labor may have been in vain.
17 For God has deprived her of wisdom; he has not endowed her with understanding. †

18 When she proudly † spreads her wings, she laughs at the horse and its rider.

19 Do you give strength to the horse?
Do you adorn his neck with a mane? †
20 Do you make him leap like a locust?
His proud snorting fills one with terror.
21 He paws † in the valley and rejoices in his strength; he charges into battle. †
22 He laughs at fear, since he is afraid of nothing; he does not run from the sword.
23 A quiver rattles at his side, along with a flashing spear and a javelin.
24 He charges ahead † with trembling rage; he cannot stand still at the trumpet's sound.
25 When the trumpet blasts, he snorts defiantly. †
He smells the battle from a distance;
he hears the officers' shouts and the battle cry.

26 Does the hawk take flight by your understanding and spread its wings to the south?
27 Does the eagle soar at your command and make its nest † on high?
28 It lives on a cliff where it spends the night; its stronghold is on a rocky crag.
29 From there it searches for prey; †
its eyes penetrate the distance.
30 Its brood gulps down blood, and where the slain are, it is there. †

39:2 Lit *months they fulfill* **39:3** Or *they send away their labor pains* **39:4** Lit *return to them* **39:13** Hb obscure **39:18** Hb obscure **39:19** Hb obscure **39:21** LXX, Syr; MT reads *They dig* **39:21** Lit *he goes out to meet the weaponry* **39:24** Lit *He swallows the ground* **39:25** Lit *he says, "Aha! "*
39:6 Jb 24:5; 38:26; Jr 2:24 **39:6** Dt 29:23; Ps 107:34; Jr 17:6 **39:7** Ex 3:7; 5:10,13-14; Jb 3:18 **39:10** Nm 23:22; 24:8; Dt 33:17 **39:13** Ps 104:17; Jr 8:7; Zch 5:9 **39:17** Jb 35:11; 38:36 **39:27** Jr 49:16; Ob 4; Hab 2:9 **39:29** Jb 9:26; Hab 1:8 **39:30** Ezk 39:17; Mt 24:28; Lk 17:37

39:1-4 God's knowledge of the birthing process of **mountain goats** seems to highlight his understanding even of obscure aspects of the universe.

39:5-8 The **wild donkey** was given its freedom and its desolate home away from the rule of man by God. This gives further emphasis to God's sovereignty and design, applied to wild animals (see also the note on 38:8-11).

39:9-12 The **wild ox** is a powerful animal that does not listen to humans but is still subject to God (see also

v. 7). Elihu had made a similar point regarding the unpredictable forces of a storm being subject to God (see the note on 37:6-12). Job's suffering was under this same control (see the notes on 38:1,8-11).

39:13-18 The discussion of the **ostrich** serves as a reminder that God alone has complete wisdom and sovereignly imparts it to living things (vv. 17-18; 28:23-28; 38:36-38). Elihu had already mentioned that God "gives us more understanding than the animals of the earth and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky" (35:11; see also 28:7-8,21).

39:19-25 God not only imparts wisdom (vv. 17-18), but he is the One who imparts **strength** (vv. 19-20). He gives this to the powerful, fearless **horse.**

39:26-30 God's wisdom is also evident through his creation of flying birds, such as the **hawk** and **eagle.**

40 The LORD answered Job:

2 Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him?
Let him who argues with God give an answer. †

3 Then Job answered the LORD:

4 I am so insignificant. How can I answer you? †
I place my hand over my mouth.
5 I have spoken once, and I will not reply; twice, but now I can add nothing. †

6 Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind: †

7 Get ready to answer me like a man; When I question † you, you will inform me.
8 Would you really challenge my justice?
Would you declare me guilty † to justify yourself? †
9 Do you have an arm like God's?
Can you thunder with a voice like his?

10 Adorn yourself with majesty † and splendor, and clothe yourself with honor and glory.
11 Pour out your raging anger; †
look on every proud person and humiliate him. †
12 Look on every proud person and humble him; †
trample the wicked where they stand. †
13 Hide them together in the dust; imprison them in the grave. †

14 Then I will confess to you that your own right hand † can deliver you. †

15 Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you.
He eats grass like cattle.
16 Look at the strength of his back †
and the power in the muscles of his belly.
17 He stiffens his tail like a cedar tree; the tendons of his thighs are woven firmly together.
18 His bones are bronze tubes; his limbs are like iron rods.
19 He is the foremost of God's works; †
only his Maker can draw the sword against him.
20 The hills yield food for him, while all sorts of wild animals play there.
21 He lies under the lotus plants, hiding in the protection † of marshy reeds.
22 Lotus plants cover him with their shade; the willows by the brook surround him.
23 Though the river rages, Behemoth is unafraid; he remains confident, even if the Jordan surges up to his mouth.
24 Can anyone capture him while he looks on, †
or pierce his nose with snares?

40:2 Lit *God respond to it* **40:12** Lit *wicked in their place* **40:13** Lit *together; bind their faces in the hidden place* **40:16** Or *waist* **40:21** Lit *plants, in the hiding place* **40:24** Lit *capture it in its eyes*
40:4 Ezr 9:6; Jb 29:9; 42:6 **40:5** Jb 9:3,15; 33:14; Ps 62:11 **40:6** Jb 38:1; Jr 30:23; Ezk 13:11,13 **40:7** 2Sm 11:7; Jb 38:3; 42:4 **40:8** Jb 9:20,28; Ps 37:33; Is 50:9 **40:8** Jb 32:2; Ps 51:4; Rm 3:4 **40:10** Ps 93:1; 96:6; 104:1 **40:11** Jb 14:13; 19:11; 21:17 **40:11** Is 2:11; Ezk 21:26; Dn 4:37 **40:12** Ps 18:27; Is 13:11; 63:3 **40:14** Ps 17:7; 20:6; 108:6 **40:14** Ps 3:8; 49:7; 62:2 **40:19** Jb 26:14; Pr 8:22

40:1-5 Prior to beginning the second part of his speech (v. 6), God challenged Job directly to **correct him** and to **give an answer** (v. 2). Job said earlier that he wanted to argue with God (23:3-5; 31:35-37), but here he recognized that he was a mere man and utterly inadequate to do so.

40:6 The second part of God's response to Job was also **from the whirlwind** (see the note on 38:1) and begins by addressing Job's allegation of injustice (see the following note).

40:7-14 Job had essentially accused God of being unjust (v. 8; see 19:6; 27:2). The Lord's answer focuses on his power to **humble** the proud (v. 12) and **imprison them in the grave** (v. 13). Since Job obviously could not do this (see also 38:37-38), God, without directly defending his justice per se (see 38:13-15), rejected Job's challenge on these grounds.

40:15-24 God gives another example of an animal that is not subject to man but is under the control of God (see the note on 39:9-12). Man cannot capture **behemoth**, for **only his Maker can draw the sword against him** (v. 19). Because this creature **eats grass** (v. 15) and spends much of its time in marshes and

rivers (vv. 21-23), it has been believed by many to be the hippopotamus. It could also be an animal now extinct.

41 Can you pull in Leviathan † with a hook †
or tie his tongue down with a rope?
2 Can you put a cord † through his nose or pierce his jaw with a hook? †
3 Will he beg you for mercy or speak softly to you?
4 Will he make a covenant with you so that you can take him as a slave forever? †
5 Can you play with him like a bird or put him on a leash † for your girls?
6 Will traders bargain for him or divide him among the merchants?
7 Can you fill his hide with harpoons or his head with fishing spears?
8 Lay a † hand on him.
You will remember the battle
and never repeat it!
9 Any hope of capturing him proves false.
Does a person not collapse at the very sight of him?
10 No one is ferocious enough to rouse Leviathan; †
who then can stand against me?
11 Who confronted me, that I should repay him?
Everything under heaven belongs to me. †

12 I cannot be silent about his limbs, his power, and his graceful proportions.
13 Who can strip off his outer covering?
Who can penetrate his double layer of armor? † †
14 Who can open his jaws, †
surrounded by those terrifying teeth?
15 His pride is in his rows of scales, closely sealed together.
16 One scale is so close to another †
that no air can pass between them.
17 They are joined to one another, so closely connected † they cannot be separated.
18 His snorting † flashes with light, while his eyes are like the rays † of dawn.

19 Flaming torches shoot from his mouth; fiery sparks fly out!
20 Smoke billows from his nostrils †
as from a boiling pot or burning reeds.
21 His breath sets coals ablaze, and flames pour out of his mouth.
22 Strength resides in his neck, and dismay dances before him.
23 The folds of his flesh are joined together, solid as metal † and immovable.
24 His heart is as hard as a rock, as hard as a lower millstone!
25 When Leviathan rises, the mighty † are terrified; they withdraw because of his thrashing.
26 The sword that reaches him will have no effect, nor will a spear, dart, or arrow.
27 He regards iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood.
28 No arrow can make him flee; slingstones become like stubble to him.
29 A club is regarded as stubble, and he laughs † at the sound of a javelin.
30 His undersides are jagged potsherds, spreading the mud like a threshing sledge. †
31 He makes the depths seethe like a cauldron; he makes the sea like an ointment jar.
32 He leaves a shining wake behind him; †
one would think the deep had gray hair!
33 He has no equal on earth — a creature devoid of fear!
34 He surveys everything that is haughty; he is king over all the proud beasts. †

41:2 Lit *reed* **41:5** Lit *or bind him* **41:8** Lit *your* **41:13** LXX; MT reads *double bridle* **41:14** Lit *open the doors of his face* **41:16** Lit *One by one they approach* **41:17** Lit *another; they cling together and* **41:18** Or *sneezing* **41:18** Lit *eyelids* **41:23** Lit *together, hard on him* **41:25** Or *the divine beings* **41:32** Lit *a path* **41:34** Lit *the children of pride*
41:1 Jb 3:8; Ps 104:26; Is 27:1 **41:1** Is 19:8; Hab 1:15 **41:2** 2Kg 19:28; Jb 40:24; Is 37:29 **41:4** Ex 21:6; Dt 15:17; 1Sm 27:12 **41:10** Jb 3:8; Jr 50:44 **41:11** Ps 24:1; Rm 11:35; 1Co 10:26 **41:13** Jr 46:4; 51:3 **41:20** 2Sm 22:9; Jb 39:20; Ps 18:8 **41:29** 2Ch 30:10; Jb 39:7,18; Hab 1:10 **41:30** Is 41:15; Am 1:3

41:1-11 God concludes his words to Job with the mention of an even more fearsome creature that can overpower man but is subject to God (vv. 10-11). **Leviathan** might be identified as the crocodile or even as a creature now extinct.

41:18-21 This description has been explained as the misty exhaling associated with a crocodile or whale.

41:33-34 One of the key characteristics of Leviathan is his pride (see also v. 15). He is the greatest of all creatures and knows it. Nevertheless, he is still vastly inferior to his Creator (vv. 10-11). His association

with **the proud beasts** (v. 34) implies that he knows nothing of wisdom (28:8; see the note on 39:13-18) and that he will be judged (40:10-14).

JOB REPLIES TO THE LORD

42 Then Job replied to the LORD:

2 I † know that you can do anything and no plan of yours
can be thwarted. †

3 You asked, "Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance? " †
Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me
to † know. †

4 You said, "Listen now, and I will speak.
When I question † you, you will inform me."

5 I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes † have seen you.

6 Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes. † †

7 After the LORD had finished speaking † to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "I am angry with you and your two friends, for you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. 8 Now take seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer a burnt offering for yourselves. Then my servant Job will pray for you. † I will surely accept his prayer and not deal with you as your folly deserves. For you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." 9 Then Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD had told them, and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

GOD RESTORES JOB

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and doubled his previous possessions. † 11 All his brothers, sisters, and former acquaintances † came to him and dined with him in his house. They sympathized with him and comforted him concerning all the adversity the LORD had brought on him. Each one gave him a piece of silver † † and a gold earring. †

12 So the LORD blessed the last part of Job's life more than the first. He owned
fourteen thousand sheep and goats, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of
oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. 13 He also had seven sons and three
daughters. 14 He named his first daughter Jemimah, his second Keziah, and his
third Keren-happuch. † 15 No women as beautiful as Job's daughters could be
found in all the land, and their father granted them an inheritance with their
brothers.
16 Job lived 140 years after this and saw his children and their children to the
fourth generation. 17 Then Job died, old and full of days. †

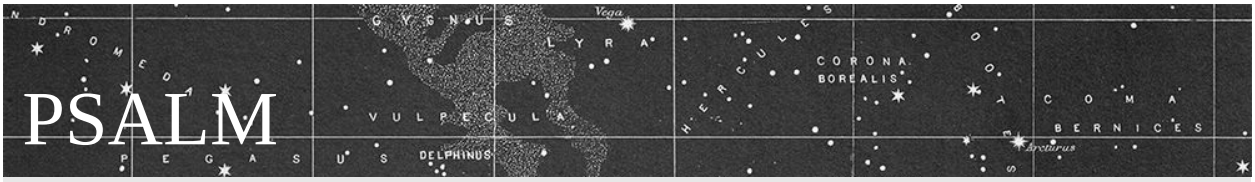
42:2 Alt Hb tradition reads *You* **42:3** Lit *me, and I did not* **42:6** LXX reads *I despise myself and melt; I consider myself dust and ashes* **42:6** Lit *I reject and I relent, concerning dust and ashes* **42:7** Lit *speaking these words* **42:11** Lit *a qesitah* ; the value of this currency is unknown

42:2 Gn 18:14; Jr 23:20; Mt 19:26 **42:3** Jb 34:35; 35:16; 38:2 **42:3** Ps 40:5; 131:1; 139:6 **42:4** Jb 38:3; 40:7 **42:5** Jb 19:27; Ps 123:1-2; 141:8 **42:8** Gn 20:17; Nm 23:1; 1Jn 5:16 **42:10** Ps 14:7; Is 40:2; Mt 5:44 **42:11** Jb 2:11; 19:13 **42:11** Gn 33:19; Jos 24:32 **42:11** Gn 24:22; 35:4; Hs 2:13 **42:14** Ps 45:8; Sg 2:14; Jr 4:30 **42:17** Gn 25:8; 35:29; 1Ch 29:28

42:2-6 The Lord had emphasized his power and control over the forces of nature, wild animals, and Leviathan, which implied the same regarding Job's trials (see the notes on 38:1,8-11). Unlike his first response to God (40:3-5), Job this time recognized that God had a plan and repented for saying things beyond his understanding. This was despite never finding out about the conversation in heaven between God and Satan that led to all of this.

42:7-9 God himself disapproved of the words of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, who needed Job's gracious help to atone for their **folly.** They had assumed that Job's suffering had resulted from some sin of his.

42:12-17 Following Job's prayer for his friends (v. 10), God blessed Job even more than he had before. His possessions were doubled, and he had many more children. Job's restoration is itself an example of God's justice and kindness. Believers will not receive their complete reward in this life but in eternity (see Rm 8:18; 2Co 4:17).



PSALM

INTRODUCTION

The word for psalms in Hebrew is *Tehilîm*, which means "praise." The English title is derived from the Greek translation (LXX) *Psalmoi*, which means "songs of praise." Praise directed to the Lord, the God of Israel, is certainly the primary emphasis in the psalms. Some have referred to the Psalms as Israel's hymnbook, which is partially true but overall is insufficient to account for all that is in the Psalms. More than one-third of the collection is made up of prayers to God.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Since the book is a collection of many different psalms written over a long time, there is not just one author for this collection. By far the most common designation in the titles is "Of David," which may refer to David as the author of those psalms. David's role as a musician in Saul's court (1Sm 16:14-23) as well as his many experiences as a shepherd, a soldier, and a king make him a likely candidate for writing many of these psalms.

The problem is that the mention of his name in the titles consists of an ambiguous Hebrew construction. It is nothing more than a preposition attached to David's name. The preposition could be translated "written by," "belonging to," "for," or "about." This does nothing more than relate the psalms bearing that title to David in some way but not necessarily naming him as author. The translation "Of David" accurately conveys this same ambiguity.

Other titles include the designations of Solomon (Pss 72; 172), Asaph (Pss 50; 70–83), the sons of Korah (Pss 42; 44–49), Ethan (Ps 89), Heman son of Korah (Ps 88), and Moses (Ps 90). In all of these the same ambiguity about authorship applies. In the case of Asaph, although he was one of David's chief musicians (1Ch 6:39), the name itself became associated with a group of musicians bearing the same name (Ezr 2:40-41; see note on Ps 50 title). This might explain why an apparently postexilic psalm (Ps 74) includes the title "of Asaph."

BACKGROUND: The book of Psalms consists of many different hymns and prayers composed by individuals but used by the community. If one were to take the names in the titles as authors, the date of composition ranges from the time of Moses (fifteenth century BC) to a time following the exile (sixth century BC or later). Some of the titles contain historical information that might indicate the setting of the composition, although even this (like the authorship) is ambiguous. They might not refer to the date of composition but to the setting of its contents, being composed some time after the events had taken place. This is a more likely scenario since some of these psalms describe life-threatening situations, where composing a psalm in the heat of the moment would not have been a top priority. In many cases, these psalms include thanksgiving sections as well, showing that they were written after God had answered the prayers.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The relationship between God's activities in the lives of his people and their responses to them is the most significant contribution of this book. God never spoke directly in any of the psalms, as he often did in the narratives and prophets. They are written from the human perspective as authors work their way through various life situations. The struggle to understand how God's attributes, particularly his sovereignty and goodness, relate to life experiences is a major theme in the collection. These words are from people whose

faith in God had been tested. They wrestled with how God was dealing with them personally and as a community.

STRUCTURE

The book of Psalms is a book of poetry. Hebrew poetry lacks rhyme and regular meter, but uses parallelism wherein lines are balanced and complete a thought. Some parallelism is synonymous, where the second line echoes the first. Antithetic parallelism uses a contrast between the two segments, and in synthetic parallelism the second segment completes the idea in the first segment.

The psalms can be divided into classes. There are hymns (145–150) and songs of thanksgiving (30–32). Psalms of lament (38–39) are prayers or cries to God on the occasion of distressful situations. Royal psalms (2; 110) are concerned with the earthly king of Israel. Enthronement psalms (96; 98) celebrate the kingship of the Lord. Penitential psalms (32; 38; 51) express contrition and repentance, and wisdom or didactic psalms (19; 119) tend to be proverbial.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The book of Psalms celebrates God as Creator. He is also Redeemer and Covenant-Maker. Many attributes of God are praised throughout the Psalter. The Spirit is God's active agent in accomplishing his purposes. (Ps 51:11 and Is 63:10-11 are the only OT passages referring to the Holy Spirit by name.) TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The essential teaching of the book of Psalms about the human race is that God desires and enables people to praise and thank him. Humans reach their highest potential only when they seek joy and fulfillment in the Creator rather than in the creation. The psalms note the extremes of human existence. Psalm 8 shows the glory of humanity as made by God. On the other hand, the many psalms that mention enemies of God and of God's people show the shameful sinfulness to which humans may fall.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The quotation of Psalm 32:1-2 by Paul in Romans 4:7-8 demonstrates that justification by faith was the same in OT times as in NT times. Other passages, such as Psalm 51, confirm that the psalmists' perspective was that salvation was initiated by the God of the covenant and was his gift to those who trusted in his *chesed* (usually translated "faithful love" or "kindness").

PSALMS TIMELINE

3000–1600 BC

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

ISAAC 2066–1866

Hymn to the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, Ebla **3000–2000**

Lament for Ur, Sumerian **2000–1500**

1600–1500 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

Psalm 90, a prayer of Moses the man of God *Hymn to Ishtar*, Sumero–Akkadian **1600**

Hymns to Amun, Egypt **1550–1350**

Book of the Dead, Egyptian texts appear on mummy wrappings. **1500**

Rig Veda, a collection of over one thousand hymns in Sanskrit, the oldest known major work in an Indo–European language **1500**

1500–1300 BC

The Phoenicians develop a twenty-two-letter alphabet that consisted of consonants only. It was read from right to left and became an important step in the development of the modern Western alphabet. **1600**

Hymn of Amenhotep II, Egypt **1450–1425**

Ba'al and Anat, Ugarit **1400**

Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**

"Hymn to the Sun," Akhenaten **1375–1358**

1300–900 BC

DAVID 1050?–970

Saul is anointed king. **1050**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

Thirty-seven Psalms of David, fourteen of which are tied to events in David's life Solomon becomes king. **970**

Proverbs **970**

Song of Songs **970?**

Ecclesiastes **935?**

Israel divides into northern and southern kingdoms. **931**

900–700 BC

Babylonian music makes use of five-tone and seven-tone scales. **800–700**

Fall of Damascus to Tiglath-pileser of Assyria **732**

Fall of Samaria to the Assyrians **722**

Assyrians invade Judah but fail to capture Jerusalem. **701**

Greek poet Hesiod writes the *Theogony*, the oldest surviving account of the origin of the Greek gods. **700**

700–400 BC

Babylonians invade the southern kingdom on three occasions. Each time Judeans are taken to Babylon as exiles. **605, 597, 586**

Cyrus's decree allows return of Jews from exile. **538**

Second temple is dedicated. **516**

Jerusalem's walls are rebuilt. **445**

Latest of the psalms are composed, including Psalm 137. These reflect Israel's exile and restoration.
400

BOOK I (Psalms 1–41)

THE TWO WAYS

1 How happy is the one who does not walk in the advice of the wicked
or stand in the pathway with sinners
or sit in the company of mockers! †
2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD's instruction, and he meditates on it day and night. †
3 He is like a tree planted beside flowing streams †
that bears its fruit in its season †
and whose leaf does not wither. †
Whatever he does prospers. †

4 The wicked are not like this; instead, they are like chaff that the wind blows away. †
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand up in the judgment, †
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, †
but the way of the wicked leads to ruin. †

1:3 Or *beside irrigation channels*
1:1 Ps 26:4-5; Pr 4:14-15 **1:2** Jos 1:8; Ps 40:8; 119:14-16 **1:3** Rv 22:2 **1:3** Ps 92:12-14; Jr 17:8 **1:3** Dt 5:33 **1:4** Jb 21:18; Ps 35:5; Hs 13:3 **1:5** Ps 5:5; 9:16; 76:7; Jr 25:31 **1:6** Jb 34:21; Ps 37:18; Nah 1:7; Jn 10:14; 2Tm 2:19 **1:6** Pr 21:12; Jn 3:16

CORONATION OF THE SON

2 Why † do the nations rage †
and the peoples plot in vain? †
2 The kings of the earth take their stand, †
and the rulers conspire together

against the LORD and his Anointed One: † †
3 "Let's tear off their chains and throw their ropes off of us." †

4 The one enthroned † in heaven laughs; the Lord ridicules them. †
5 Then he speaks to them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath: †
6 "I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain." †

7 I will declare the LORD's decree.
He said to me, "You are my Son; †
today I have become your Father. †
8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance and the ends of the earth your possession. †
9 You will break them with an iron scepter; you will shatter them like pottery." †

10 So now, kings, be wise; receive instruction, you judges of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with reverential awe and rejoice with trembling. †
12 Pay homage to † the Son or he will be angry and you will perish in your rebellion, † †
for his anger may ignite at any moment. †
All who take refuge in him are happy. †

2:2 Or *anointed one* **2:4** Lit *who sits* **2:7** Or *son*, also in v. 12 **2:12** Lit *Kiss* **2:12** Lit *perish in the way*
2:1-2 Ac 4:25-26 **2:1** Is 17:12-13 **2:1** Ps 83:2-3 **2:2** Jr 49:19; 50:44 **2:2** 1Sm 2:10; 12:3,5; 2Sm 22:51; Ps 18:50; 20:6; 28:8 **2:3** Is 58:6; Jr 5:5; Nah 1:13 **2:4** Ps 37:13; 59:8 **2:5** Ps 90:7 **2:6** Ps 48:2; Is 24:23 **2:7** Mt 3:17; Lk 3:22; Ac 13:33; Heb 1:5; 5:5 **2:8** Jos 23:4; Ps 111:6 **2:8-9** Ps 89:23; Rv 2:26-27; 12:5; 19:15 **2:11** Heb 12:28 **2:12** Jn 3:18 **2:12** 2Th 1:7-8 **2:12** Ps 5:11; 34:8,22

CONFIDENCE IN TROUBLED TIMES

A psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom. †

3 LORD, how my foes increase!
There are many who attack me. †
2 Many say about me, "There is no help for him in God." †

Selah

EMPEROR AND KING WORSHIP IN BIBLICAL TIMES

In the ancient Near Eastern world, kings held a status far above that of ordinary humans. It was not just that they had more power or authority; they were regarded as a higher order of being. They were intrinsically superhuman. Their superiority rested in their special tie to the gods.

In some texts, kings are called the "images" of the gods. Egyptian pharaohs such as Ahmose I, Hatshepsut, Amenhotep III, and Merneptah are explicitly referred to as the image or likeness of a god (often the god Amun). Some Mesopotamian texts also refer to kings as the image of a god. The oldest example is from the Tikulti-Ninurta Epic, an Assyrian text from the late thirteenth century BC. It describes king Tikulti-Ninurta as the image of the high god Enlil. Other Assyrian monarchs are said to be the image of Marduk.

In every case, describing the king as the image of a god raised him above the rest of humanity. Ordinary people were never said to be made in a god's image. In one text, the court astrologer Asharedu the Older flatters an Assyrian king by telling him that he is the image of Marduk. That is, the uniqueness of the king was that he was Marduk's image; other people were not.

Kings were more than mere images of gods. In Egypt, Pharaoh Thutmose III was regarded as the earthly manifestation of the god Horus, and his subordinates routinely spoke of the pharaoh's divine status. When in the fifteenth century BC, for example he proposed to his war council a plan for taking the city of Megiddo, his staff officers knew it was a risky strategy. Nevertheless, they submitted since, as they declared, he was the son of the god Amun. Throughout Egyptian history, the status of the pharaoh as a divine being worthy to be called a god was regarded as a given.

The full deification of the reigning king was fairly rare in early Mesopotamia, but there are a few examples of it. King Naram-Sin of Agade (2254–2218 BC) left behind a monument that shows he had a kind of divine status since it portrays him in a horned helmet, an emblem of deity. Ur-Nammu of Ur (2112–2095 BC) was raised to divine status on his death. But if the Mesopotamian texts are less consistent about treating the king as a full-fledged god, they are no less clear than the Egyptian material in asserting that the king was superhuman.

A classic example of this is from the Epic of Gilgamesh. This is the first great epic poem; it celebrates the life of the hero Gilgamesh, king of Uruk. The poem describes Gilgamesh as the ideal king, and it asserts that what enabled him to fulfill the royal ideal is that he was two-thirds divine.

From the start of Mesopotamian civilization, kings were represented as semidivine and as superior to all other humans. Ancient monuments would depict the kings as gigantic figures, towering over other men; eventually texts about them would mark their names with a special sign (called a "determinative") that was otherwise reserved for gods. To be a king was to be semidivine.

The ideal of divine kingship was linked to a nation's religious system, but it also served as propaganda. To question a king's authority was not merely treason but also blasphemy. The ideal set a great distance between the king and his court and a much greater distance between the king and the common people. Divine kingship asserts that the king deserves to rule because he is a higher order of being than everyone else. He is of the gods.

Several factors explain this phenomenon among the early royals. The first is the nature of ancient paganism. It treated inanimate objects such as the sun and stars as gods, and it asserted that natural entities such as rivers contained or embodied a deity. Certain animals could be regarded as especially sacred. In Egypt, a live bull was kept in a sacred shrine and called "the Apis." It was associated with the god Ptah and was the focus of enormous devotion and religious ceremony. In light of a religion like this, it is not difficult

to imagine that certain people could be treated as semidivine.

Second, the phenomenon of hero-worship no doubt contributed to this system. Even today it is common for people to be so devoted to a political leader that any criticism of him is seen as tantamount to blasphemy. The ancient ideology took this kind of devotion to its natural conclusion and proclaimed kings to be divine beings.

Third, then as now, people with great authority were surrounded by "Yes-men." An ancient king could at will either kill a man or promote him to high office, and thus flatterers were anxious to outdo one another. The highest flattery one could give was to call the king a god.

Fourth, ancient kings were accomplished propagandists, as illustrated by the many monuments they created. In these monuments, the kings stride across the earth and slay their enemies at will. In numerous monumental inscriptions, Pharaoh Ramesses II claimed that at the battle of Kadesh he, through his divine majesty (and almost single-handedly), defeated the entire Hittite army. In reality, the battle was a stalemate and Ramesses was saved from ruin by the timely arrival of some Egyptian divisions. The state encouraged divine kingship because it was extremely useful politically.

The system persisted for centuries. Alexander the Great declared himself to be the son of Zeus, and Roman emperors were given religious honors in life and deified at death. The king's loyal followers no doubt took his semidivine status seriously, and those who did not believe it were wise enough to keep their thoughts to themselves. Christians of the early church were persecuted for refusal to burn incense to Caesar because Christians understood that such worship should be offered to God alone. They were willing to honor human rulers (1Pt 2:17), but would do no more than that.

Genesis 1:26 asserts that man is made in the image of God. This is true both for humanity as a corporate whole and for each individual person, both male and female. The Israelites knew well the ancient ideology of divine kingship, but from Genesis 1 they would have understood that the peasant woman grinding grain at the wheel had as much claim to being made in God's image as did any pharaoh.

But the point of Genesis is not that because we are all made in God's image, we are therefore all kings and queens. Rather, it is that being in the image of God is a function of being human and not a function of being a king. The highest dignity a creature can possess is to be made in God's image. Also, a king is by definition one man ruling absolutely over other people. The power to "rule" in Gn 1:28 does not involve one person ruling others; instead, all people rule over lower creation. Genesis 1 is therefore radically opposed to the royal ideology. All people, since they are made in God's image, rule the subhuman creations of this world. No king, on the false pretense that he alone is made in God's image, can rule all people.

When the Israelites did choose a king, he was not called the exclusive "image of God" and was certainly not regarded as a god. He was "the LORD's anointed" (1Sm 24:6). In addition, the Israelite king was required to keep a copy of God's law nearby precisely to remind him to fear the Lord so that "his heart [would] not be exalted above his countrymen" (Dt 17:20). No Israelite king was innately superior to the rest of the people, and all were subject to the judgment of the one God who shows no partiality (10:17).

DUANE A. GARRETT

3 But you, LORD, are a shield around me, †
my glory, † and the one who lifts up my head. †
4 I cry aloud to the LORD, and he answers me from his holy mountain. †

Selah

5 I lie down and sleep; I wake again because the LORD sustains me. †

6 I will not be afraid of thousands of people who have taken their stand against me on every side. †

7 Rise up, LORD! †
Save me, my God!
You strike all my enemies on the cheek; †
you break the teeth of the wicked. †
8 Salvation belongs to the LORD; †
may your blessing be on your people. †

Selah

3:title 2Sm 15:13-17 **3:1** 2Sm 15:12; Ps 69:4 **3:2** Ps 22:7-8; 71:11 **3:3** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 119:114 **3:3** Ps 62:7 **3:3** Ps 110:7 **3:4** Ps 2:6; 43:3; 48:1 **3:5** Lv 26:6; Ps 4:8; Pr 3:24 **3:6** Ps 23:4; 27:3; 118:10-13 **3:7** Ps 7:6 **3:7** Jb 16:10; Mc 5:1 **3:7** Ps 58:6 **3:8** Jnh 2:9; Rv 7:10; 19:1 **3:8** Dt 26:15

A NIGHT PRAYER

For the choir director: with stringed instruments. † A psalm of David.

4 Answer me when I call, God, who vindicates me. † †
You freed me from affliction; †
be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

2 How long, exalted ones, † will my honor be insulted? †
How long will you love what is worthless †
and pursue a lie?
Selah 3 Know that the LORD has set apart the faithful for himself;

the LORD will hear when I call to him.
4 Be angry † and do not sin; †
on your bed, reflect in your heart and be still. †
Selah 5 Offer sacrifices in righteousness † †

and trust in the LORD. †

6 Many are asking, “Who can show us anything good?”
Let the light of your face shine on us, LORD. †

7 You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain
and new wine abound. †
8 I will both lie down and sleep in peace, †
for you alone, LORD, make me live in safety. †

4:1 Or *God of my righteousness* **4:2** Lit *long, sons of a man* **4:4** Or *Tremble* **4:5** Or *Offer right sacrifices* **4:title** Ps 6 title; Is 38:20; Hab 3:19 **4:1** Ps 7:8; 26:1; 35:24 **4:1** Ps 25:17; 107:6,13 **4:2** Ps 69:7-10,19-20 **4:2** Ps 12:2 **4:4** Eph 4:26 **4:4** Ps 77:6; 119:55 **4:5** Dt 33:19; Ps 51:19 **4:5** Ps 37:3,5; 62:8 **4:6** Nm 6:25; Ps 80:3 **4:7** Is 9:3 **4:8** Ps 3:5 **4:8** Lv 25:18; Dt 12:10; Jr 32:37; Ezk 34:25

THE REFUGE OF THE RIGHTEOUS

For the choir director: with the flutes. A psalm of David.

5 Listen to my words, LORD; consider my sighing. †
2 Pay attention to the sound of my cry, †
my King and my God, †
for I pray to you.

3 In the morning, † LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I plead my case
to you † and watch expectantly.

4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil cannot dwell
with you. †
5 The boastful cannot stand in your sight; †
you hate all evildoers. †
6 You destroy those who tell lies; †
the LORD abhors violent and treacherous people. †

7 But I enter your house by the abundance of your faithful love; †
I bow down toward your holy temple
in reverential awe of you. †
8 LORD, lead me in your righteousness †

because of my adversaries;
make your way straight before me. †

9 For there is nothing reliable in what they say; †
destruction is within them;
their throat is an open grave;
they flatter with their tongues. †
10 Punish them, God; let them fall by their own schemes. †
Drive them out † because of their many crimes, for they rebel against you. †

11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; †
let them shout for joy forever.
May you shelter them, †
and may those who love your name boast about you. †
12 For you, LORD, bless the righteous one; you surround him with favor like a shield. †

5:1 Ps 38:9 **5:2** Ps 28:2 **5:2** Ps 84:3 **5:3** Ps 88:13 **5:3** Jb 13:18; 23:4; Ps 50:21 **5:4** Ps 92:15 **5:5** Ps 1:5; 73:3; 75:4 **5:5** Jb 8:20; Ps 11:5; 45:7 **5:6** Rv 21:8 **5:6** Ps 55:23 **5:7** Ps 69:13; 86:5,15; 106:45; Is 63:7 **5:7** Ps 138:2 **5:8** Ps 27:11 **5:8** Pr 4:11 **5:9** Ps 52:2 **5:9** Ps 12:3; Pr 26:28; Rm 3:13 **5:10** Ps 9:16; 35:8; 141:10 **5:10** Mt 13:41-42 **5:10** Pr 17:11 **5:11** Ps 2:12; 64:10 **5:11** Ps 31:20; 61:4 **5:11** Ps 9:2 **5:12** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 18:2; 28:7; 119:114

A PRAYER FOR MERCY

For the choir director: with stringed instruments, according to *Sheminith*. † A psalm of David.

6 LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger; do not discipline me in your wrath. †
2 Be gracious to me, LORD, for I am weak; † †
heal me, † LORD, for my bones are shaking; †
3 my whole being is shaken with terror. †
And you, LORD — how long? †

4 Turn, LORD! Rescue me; save me because of your faithful love. †

5 For there is no remembrance of you in death; who can thank you in Sheol? †

6 I am weary from my groaning; †
with my tears I dampen my bed
and drench my couch every night. †
7 My eyes are swollen from grief; †
they grow old because of all my enemies.

8 Depart from me, all evildoers, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping. †
9 The LORD has heard my plea for help; †
the LORD accepts my prayer. †
10 All my enemies will be ashamed and shake with terror; they will turn back † and suddenly be disgraced. †

6:2 Or *sick*
6:title 1Ch 15:21; Ps 12 title **6:1** Ps 38:1; Jr 10:24 **6:2** Ps 142:6 **6:2** Ps 41:4; Jr 17:14 **6:2** Jb 4:14 **6:3** Jb 9:28; Jn 12:27 **6:3** Nm 14:27; Ps 13:1-2; 35:17; 79:5; 80:4 **6:4** Ps 31:16; 109:26 **6:4-5** Ps 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17; Ec 9:10; Is 38:18 **6:6** Ps 69:3; 119:28 **6:6** Ps 42:3; 102:9 **6:7** Jb 17:7; Ps 31:9; 88:9 **6:8** Ps 18:6; 34:6; 40:1 **6:9** Ps 28:6 **6:9** Ps 3:4; 66:19-20 **6:10** Ex 23:27 **6:10** Ps 71:13

PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

A *Shiggaion* of David, which he sang to the LORD concerning the words of Cush, a Benjaminite.

7 LORD my God, I seek refuge in you; †
save me from all my pursuers and rescue me †
2 or they † will tear me like a lion, ripping me apart with no one to rescue me. †

3 LORD my God, if I have done this, if there is injustice on my hands, †
4 if I have done harm to one at peace with me †
or have plundered † my adversary without cause, †
5 may an enemy pursue and overtake me; may he trample me to the ground †

and leave my honor in the dust. †

Selah

6 Rise up, LORD, in your anger; lift yourself up against the fury
of my adversaries; †
awake for me; † †
you have ordained a judgment. †
7 Let the assembly of peoples gather around you; †
take your seat on high over it. †
8 The LORD judges the peoples; †
vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity. †

9 Let the evil of the wicked come to an end, †
but establish the righteous. †
The one who examines the thoughts and emotions †
is a righteous God. †
10 My shield is with God, †
who saves the upright in heart. †
11 God is a righteous judge and a God who shows his wrath every day. †

12 If anyone does not repent, he will sharpen his sword; †
he has strung his bow and made it ready. †
13 He has prepared his deadly weapons; he tips his arrows with fire. †

14 See, the wicked one is pregnant with evil, conceives trouble, and gives birth
to deceit. †
15 He dug a pit and hollowed it out but fell into the hole he had made. †
16 His trouble comes back on his own head; his own violence comes down
on top of his head. †

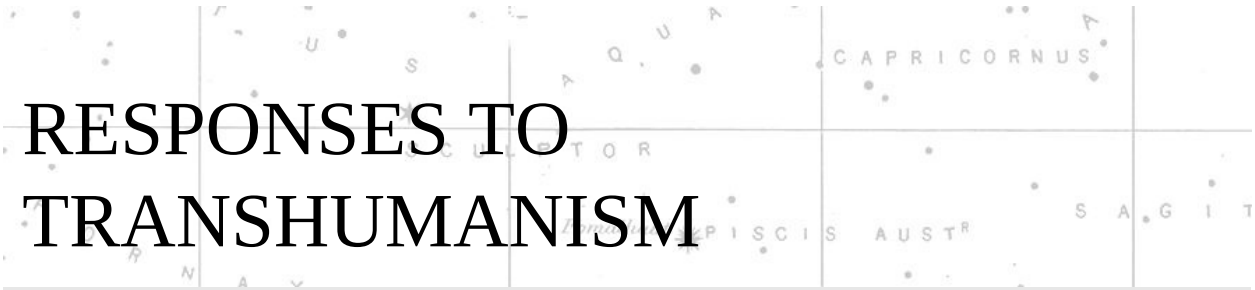
17 I will thank the LORD for his righteousness; I will sing about the name of the
LORD Most High. †

7:2 Lit *he* **7:4** Or *me and have spared* **7:6** LXX reads *awake, Lord my God* **7:9** Lit *examines hearts and kidneys*
7:1 Ps 11:1; 31:1; 71:1 **7:1** Ps 31:15 **7:2** Ps 57:4; Is 5:29 **7:3** 1Sm 24:11 **7:4** Ps 55:20 **7:4** 1Sm 24:11; 26:18 **7:5** Am 2:7 **7:3-5** Jb 31:5-40 **7:6** Ps 3:7; 17:13 **7:6** Ps 59:4 **7:6** Jr 15:3 **7:7** Ps 22:27 **7:7** Ps 68:18 **7:8** Ps 96:13; 98:9 **7:8** Ps 26:1; 35:24; 43:1 **7:9** Ps 94:23 **7:9** Is 9:7 **7:9** Heb 4:12 **7:10** 2Sm 22:3; Ps 18:2; 144:2 **7:10** Ps 36:10 **7:11** Ps 9:4; Is 11:4 **7:12** Nm 22:23; Dt 32:41 **7:12** Ps 37:14 **7:13** Ps 18:14; 45:5; 64:7; 144:6 **7:14** Jb 15:35; Is 59:4; Jms 1:15 **7:15** Ps 9:15; 57:6; Pr 26:27; 28:10 **7:16** 1Sm 25:39; 1Kg 2:33; Est 9:25 **7:17** Ps 9:2; 71:15-16

GOD'S GLORY, HUMAN DIGNITY

For the choir director: on the *Gittith*. † A psalm of David.

8 LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth! †
You have covered the heavens with your majesty. † †
2 From the mouths of infants and nursing babies, †
you have established a stronghold †
on account of your adversaries
in order to silence the enemy and the avenger.



RESPONSES TO TRANSHUMANISM

Most of us at one time or another have wished to be a little taller, thinner, or healthier. Most of us have desired to be a little more intelligent, more self-controlled, perhaps even a little more virtuous. These desires seem universal, but now, with the advancements in modern technology, a movement called transhumanism wants to make these enhancements and many others available to all.

Generously defined, *transhumanism* is "a loosely defined movement that has developed gradually over the past two decades. It promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and the human organism opened up by the advancement of technology" (Nick Bostrom, "Transhumanist Values").

More ominously described, "Transhumanists view human nature as a work in progress, a half-baked beginning that we can learn to remold in desirable ways. Current humanity need not be the endpoint of evolution" (ibid.). While the second description is worded more blatantly, the ideas that make it ominous

are present in the first definition.

Two further terms help give perspective to transhumanism—the *transhuman* and the *posthuman*. A transhuman refers to an intermediary form between the human and the posthuman. A posthuman is a possible future being whose capacities exceed those of present humans to the extent that it is no longer clearly human by current standards. Thus, a transhumanist supports transhumanism's effort toward the posthuman by way of the transhuman.

In practice, there are many elements of transhumanism that are consistent with a biblical view of human nature and the human condition. Pronounced efforts to relieve human suffering and foster virtues that sustain human flourishing motivate transhumanist labors. Indeed, there is such significant overlap with the gospel and the transhumanist narrative that a prominent transhumanist website responds to why so many call it the "new religion." In an uncanny way, transhumanism tells a story of redemption: it has a view of the human predicament and why "salvation" is needed. It has a view of the nature of salvation and of what that salvation consists. It even has a vision of the future that could be called eschatological hope.

From a biblical perspective, however, transhumanism is rooted in key assumptions about human nature, the human condition, and the nature of reality that are antithetical to a biblical understanding of each. So, despite the superficial similarities, transhumanism represents a different gospel.

THE BELIEFS OF TRANSHUMANISTS

The transhumanist movement, according to Nick Bostrom, a transhumanist philosopher from the University of Oxford, has roots in secular humanist thinking, but extends beyond it. Secular humanism chooses to begin with several beliefs about the nature of reality and knowledge, beliefs that are shared equally by transhumanists. The first few statements of the secular *Humanist Manifesto I*, *II* and now *III* pronounce these beliefs.

First, there is a fundamental denial of God. Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, without supernaturalism, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good of humanity (*III*).

Second, human life arises from a naturalistic evolutionary process. Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the result of a continuous process (*I*). Holding an organic view of life, humanists find that the traditional dualism of mind and body must be rejected (*I*).

Third, consistent with its denial of supernaturalism, knowledge about and from God is denied and only naturalistic knowledge is available. Knowledge of the world is derived by observation, experimentation, and rational analysis. Humanists find that science is the best method for determining this knowledge as well as for solving problems and developing beneficial technologies (*III*).

These so-called beneficial technologies are those through which transhumanism extends beyond secular humanism.

According to Humanity Plus, an international transhumanist organization, transhumanists "are not limited to traditional humanistic methods, such as education and cultural development. We can also use technological means that will eventually enable us to move beyond what some would think of as human." This organization boasts over six thousand members from more than a hundred countries, with many affiliated organizations.

TRANSHUMANISM VERSUS THE GOSPEL

The "move beyond human" idea is where the movement's superficial similarities with the gospel appear. A key term used in transhumanist writing is *enhancement*. In the opening definition it is in reference to the use of emergent technologies to enhance the human condition. This includes such things as vaccinations and using technology to eradicate deadly diseases and unnecessary human suffering.

Bringing healing to those in pain, aid to those in need, and care for the aged are certainly consistent with the gospel. Many transhumanists even appeal to the words and work of Jesus as support for their efforts, claiming that Jesus did not simply accept sickness and death as "the Father's will," but sought to alleviate

suffering. Indeed, Jesus exerted great effort in healing as a sign of his ministry. When questioned by John the Baptist's disciples (Mt 11:2-6), Jesus directly pointed to this part of his ministry as verification of his identity.

The transhumanist appeal to Jesus fails, however, when two things are considered. When the words and work of Jesus are kept in context, it becomes clear that Jesus's healing signified that God's kingdom had come and the power of sin had been broken. The healing and restoring were not ends—restoring life for life's sake—but means that signified that God in human form had come to redeem the world from sin.

While a biblical understanding of the brokenness of the human condition is shared with transhumanists, what causes that human predicament, and how redemption occurs, are drastically different. Because the brokenness of the human body is a result of sin's effects on the world, simply "enhancing" the body will never truly heal the human condition (Lk 5:31-32 and Mk 7:23).

A second related consideration is the nature of Jesus's healing and the distinction between restoration and alteration. When Jesus heals the blind, he restores sight. While technology has created the possibility of restoring sight to the blind by way of small cameras and "neural prostheses," bearing witness to the wonder of human ingenuity, technology used to "upgrade" natural sight to long-range zoom or night vision is alteration rather than restoration. Thus, the move toward the posthuman is made.

It is here that the presuppositions of transhumanism become evident. If there is no God and humans are a work in progress, then man's current limitations are a predicament and are in no way linked to sin. Implicit in this belief is that all current biological limitations are humanity's problem. These limitations are both physical and intellectual, so if the human organism can be enhanced, then overcoming current limitations is inherently good and is a step toward "redemption." Technology becomes the savior and "techno-sapiens" are born.

Consider this comment by transhumanist philosopher Max More: "The transhumans or posthumans we may become as individuals or as a species may quite possibly share our current DNA, but implants, regenerative medicine, medical nanotechnology, neural-computer interfaces, and other technologies and cultural practices are likely to gradually render our chromosomes almost vestigial components of our individual and species identity" ("H+: True Transhumanism," 2009).

Biblically understood, the life of Jesus gives a glimpse of the truly human life. In our fallen condition we might be called merely human. The truly human life did not see biological limitations as something to be overcome. When Jesus was thirsty, he drank; when hungry, he ate; when tired, he slept. None of these are portrayed as inherently problematic—something to be overcome—but as a source of delight in God the Father's provision. Jesus's resurrection likewise gives perspective to our current life. Jesus was resurrected to new life. This was not simply an enhanced version of his previous human life; rather, it consisted of a glorious resurrection body that will never again face death.

Another question worth considering is how the transhumanist knows that humanity could be so much more than it currently is. Interestingly, Bostrom suggests, "the limitations of the human mode of being are so pervasive and familiar that we often fail to notice them, and to question them requires manifesting an almost childlike naiveté." If current limitations are so pervasive, how would it occur to us to question them? Here, it seems, is a tacit recognition that humans were created in God's image and that we were made for eternity (Gn 1:27; Ec 3:11). Because of sin, all of creation, human nature particularly, is in an unnatural state. Implicit in the transhumanist life view is the recognition of this and the impulse to fight against it is right. The problem, however, is that the remedy suggested is the precise move that brought about our unnatural state. It was, and always will be wrong to extend the hand for fruit that promises to make us like God.

Proper hope, then, is not in technologically enhanced "ageless bodies and indefinite life spans," but rather our final resurrection. Our resurrection bodies will be like Christ's—glorious and no longer subject to death or decay. While the transhumanist hopes for such a reality in this life, prior to death, our hope is for the next life, when death is finally overcome. It is then that "this corruptible body [will] be clothed with incorruptibility . . . thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 15:53,57).

3 When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you set in place, †
4 what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man † that you look after him? †
5 You made him little less than God † †
and crowned him with glory and honor.
6 You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: †
7 all the sheep and oxen, as well as the animals in the wild,
8 the birds of the sky, and the fish of the sea
that pass through the currents of the seas. †

9 LORD, our Lord, how magnificent is your name throughout the earth!

8:1 Lit *earth, which has set your splendor upon the heavens* **8:2** LXX reads *established praise* **8:4** Or *a mere mortal* **8:5** LXX reads *angels* **8:5** Or *heavenly beings* ; Hb Elohim
8:title Pss 81; 84 titles **8:1** Is 12:4 **8:1** Ps 113:4; 148:13 **8:2** Mt 21:16 **8:3** Ps 33:6; 136:9 **8:4** Jb 7:17-18; Ps 144:3 **8:4-6** 1Co 15:27; Eph 1:22; Heb 2:5-8 **8:7-8** Gn 1:26,28

CELEBRATION OF GOD'S JUSTICE

For the choir director: according to *Muth-labben*. A psalm of David.

9 I will thank the LORD with all my heart; I will declare all your wondrous works. †
2 I will rejoice and boast about you; †
I will sing about your name, Most High. †

3 When my enemies retreat, they stumble and perish before you. †
4 For you have upheld my just cause; †
you are seated on your throne as a righteous judge. †

5 You have rebuked the nations: †
You have destroyed the wicked; †
you have erased their name forever and ever. †
6 The enemy has come to eternal ruin.
You have uprooted the cities,
and the very memory of them has perished. †

7 But the LORD sits enthroned forever; †
he has established his throne for judgment. †
8 And he judges the world with righteousness; he executes judgment on the nations with fairness. †
9 The LORD is a refuge for the persecuted, a refuge in times of trouble. †
10 Those who know your name trust in you because you have not abandoned
those who seek you, LORD. †

11 Sing to the LORD, who dwells in Zion; †
proclaim his deeds among the nations. †
12 For the one who seeks an accounting for bloodshed remembers them; †
he does not forget the cry of the oppressed. †

13 Be gracious to me, LORD; consider my affliction at the hands of those who hate me. †
Lift me up from the gates of death, †
14 so that I may declare all your praises.
I will rejoice in your salvation †
within the gates of Daughter Zion.

15 The nations have fallen into the pit they made; their foot is caught in the net they have concealed. †
16 The LORD has made himself known; he has executed justice, †
snaring the wicked
by the work of their hands. †

Higgaion. Selah

17 The wicked will return to Sheol † — all the nations that forget God. †
18 For the needy will not always be forgotten; the hope of the oppressed †
will not perish forever. †

19 Rise up, LORD! Do not let mere humans prevail; let the nations be judged
in your presence. †
20 Put terror in them, LORD; †
let the nations know they are only humans. †

Selah

9:18 Alt Hb tradition reads *humble*
9:1 1Ch 16:9,24; Ps 26:7; 96:3; 105:2 **9:2** Ps 5:11 **9:2** Ps 7:17; 92:1 **9:3** Lv 26:37; Ps 27:2; 92:9 **9:4** 1Kg 8:45,49,59; 2Ch 6:35,39 **9:4** Ps 7:11 **9:5** Is 17:3 **9:5** Ps 68:2 **9:5** Zch 13:2 **9:6** Ps 34:16 **9:7** Ps 29:10; 102:12; Lm 5:19 **9:7** Ps 89:14 **9:8** Ps 96:13; 98:9; Rv 19:11 **9:9** Ps 14:6; Is 14:32 **9:10** Ps 37:28; 94:14 **9:11** Ps 76:2 **9:11** 1Ch 16:8; Ps 105:1 **9:12** Gn 9:5 **9:12** Ps 12:5; Pr 22:22-23 **9:13** Ps 69:14 **9:13** Ps 30:3; 86:13 **9:14** 1Sm 2:1 **9:15** Ps 7:15; 57:6; Pr 28:10 **9:16** Is 56:1 **9:16** Ps 3:7; Is 11:4 **9:17** Ps 31:17; 49:14; 55:15 **9:17** Jb 8:13; Ps 50:22 **9:18** Ps 12:5; 72:4 **9:19** Ps 82:8; 110:6 **9:20** Ps 14:5 **9:20** Ps 62:9

NEED FOR GOD'S JUSTICE

10 LORD, † † why do you stand so far away? †
Why do you hide in times of trouble? †
2 In arrogance the wicked relentlessly pursue their victims; let them be caught
in the schemes they have devised. †

3 For the wicked one boasts about his own cravings; †
the one who is greedy curses † and despises the LORD. †
4 In all his scheming, the wicked person arrogantly thinks, †
"There's no accountability,
since there's no God." †
5 His ways are always secure; †
your lofty judgments have no effect on him; †
he scoffs at all his adversaries. †

6 He says to himself, “I will never be moved — from generation to generation without calamity.” †
7 Cursing, deceit, and violence fill his mouth; trouble and malice are under his tongue. †
8 He waits in ambush near settlements; †
he kills the innocent in secret places.
His eyes are on the lookout for the helpless; †
9 he lurks in secret like a lion in a thicket.
He lurks in order to seize a victim;
he seizes a victim and drags him in his net.
10 So he is oppressed and beaten down; helpless people fall because of the wicked one’s strength. †
11 He says to himself, “God has forgotten; he hides his face and will never see.” †

12 Rise up, LORD God! Lift up your hand. †
Do not forget the oppressed. †
13 Why has the wicked person despised God?
He says to himself, “You will not demand an account.” †
14 But you yourself have seen trouble and grief, observing it in order to take the matter into your hands. †
The helpless one entrusts himself to you; you are a helper of the fatherless. †
15 Break the arm of the wicked, evil person, †
until you look for his wickedness,
but it can’t be found. †

16 The LORD is King forever and ever; †
the nations will perish from his land. †
17 LORD, you have heard the desire of the humble; you will strengthen their hearts.
You will listen carefully, †

18 doing justice for the fatherless and the oppressed so that mere humans
from the earth may terrify them no more. †

10:1 Some Hb mss, LXX connect Pss 9–10. **10:1** Together Pss 9–10 form a partial acrostic. **10:3** Or *he blesses the greedy* **10:4** Lit *wicked according to the height of his nose* **10:5** Or *prosperous* **10:5** Lit *judgments are away from in front of him*
10:1 Ps 22:1; 35:22; 38:21; 71:12 **10:1** Jb 13:24; Ps 44:24; 88:14 **10:2** Ps 7:15-16 **10:3** Ps 49:6 **10:3** 2Pt 2:3 **10:4** Ps 14:1; 53:1 **10:5** Ps 52:7 **10:6** Ps 49:11; Rv 18:7 **10:7** Ps 73:8; 140:3; Rm 3:13-14 **10:8** Ps 59:3 **10:8** Ps 64:4; 94:6 **10:8-10** Ps 17:11-12; Pr 28:15 **10:11** Jb 22:13; Ps 59:3 **10:12** Mc 5:9 **10:12** Ps 9:12 **10:13** Ps 73:11 **10:14** Ps 33:13-15 **10:14** Ps 68:5; 146:9 **10:15** Ps 37:17 **10:15** Ps 89:32 **10:16** Ex 15:18; Ps 29:10; Rv 11:15 **10:16** Dt 8:20 **10:17** 2Ch 7:14; Ps 34:15 **10:18** Ex 22:22-24; Dt 10:18

REFUGE IN THE LORD

For the choir director. Of David.

11 I have taken refuge in the LORD. †
How can you say to me,
"Escape to the mountains † like a bird! †
2 For look, the wicked string bows; they put their arrows on bowstrings
to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart. †
3 When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? " †

4 The LORD is in his holy temple; †
the LORD—his throne is in heaven. †
His eyes watch;
his gaze † examines everyone. †
5 The LORD examines the righteous, but he hates the wicked
and † those who love violence. †
6 Let him rain burning coals † and sulfur on the wicked; let a scorching wind be
the portion in their cup. †
7 For the LORD is righteous; he loves righteous deeds.
The upright will see his face. †

11:1 Lit *your mountain* **11:4** Lit *eyelids* **11:4** Or *examines the descendants of Adam* **11:5** Or *righteous and the wicked, and he hates* **11:6** Sym; MT reads *rain snares, fire*
11:1 Ps 7:1; 31:1; 71:1 **11:1** Ps 121:1 **11:2** Ps 37:14; 64:4 **11:3** Ps 82:5 **11:4** Ps 27:4; Hab 2:20 **11:4** Ps 103:19; Is 66:1; Ac 7:49 **11:4-5** Ps 33:13-15 **11:6** Ezk 38:22 **11:7** Ps 17:15; Rv 22:4

OPPRESSION BY THE WICKED

OPPRESSION BY THE WICKED

For the choir director: according to *Sheminith*. † A psalm of David.

12 Help, LORD, for no faithful one remains; the loyal have disappeared
from the human race. † †

2 They lie to one another; they speak with flattering lips and deceptive hearts. †

3 May the LORD cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaks boastfully. †

4 They say, "Through our tongues we have power; our lips are our own —
who can be our master? " †

5 "Because of the devastation of the needy and the groaning of the poor,
I will now rise up," says the LORD.
"I will provide safety for the one who longs for it." †

6 The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined
in an earthen furnace, purified seven times. †

7 You, LORD, will guard us; †
you will protect us † from this generation forever. †

8 The wicked prowl † all around, and what is worthless is exalted
by the human race. †

12:1 Or *the descendants of Adam*, also in v. 8 **12:7** Some Hb mss, LXX, Jer; other Hb mss read *them* **12:7** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *him* **12:8** Lit *walk about*
12:title 1Ch 15:21; Ps 6 title **12:1** Ps 14:2-3; 53:2-3; Mc 7:2 **12:2** Ps 41:6; 144:8; Jr 9:8 **12:3** Ps 5:9 **12:4** Ps 73:8-9 **12:5** Ps 9:18; 72:4 **12:6** Ps 18:30; 119:140; Pr 30:5 **12:7** Ps 37:28; 97:10 **12:8** Ps 4:2; 119:37

A PLEA FOR DELIVERANCE

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

13 How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me? †

2 How long will I store up anxious concerns † within me, agony in my mind
every day?
How long will my enemy dominate me? †

3 Consider me and answer, LORD my God.
Restore brightness to my eyes; †
otherwise, I will sleep in death.
4 My enemy will say, “I have triumphed over him,”
and my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. †

5 But I have trusted in your faithful love; †
my heart will rejoice in your deliverance. †
6 I will sing to the LORD because he has treated me generously. †

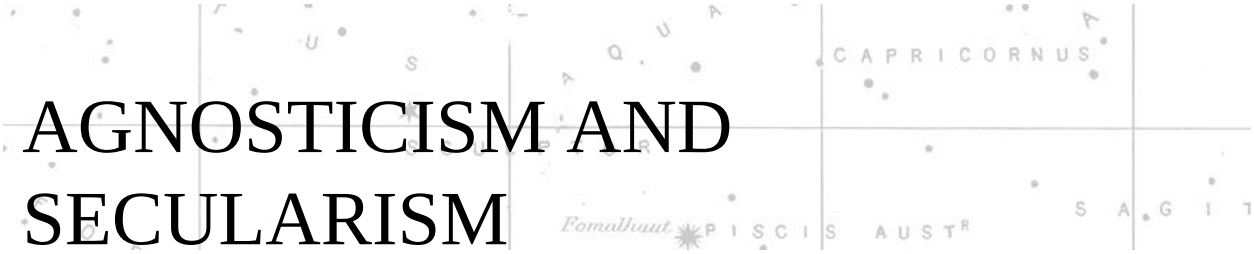
13:2 Or *up counsels*
13:1 Jb 13:24; Ps 44:24; 89:46 **13:2** Ps 6:3; 38:6; 42:9 **13:3** Ezr 9:8; Ps 19:8; Pr 29:13 **13:4** Ps 89:42 **13:5** Ps 52:8 **13:5** Ps 9:14 **13:6** Ps 119:17; 142:7

A PORTRAIT OF SINNERS

For the choir director. Of David.

14 The fool says in his heart, “There’s no God.” †
They are corrupt; they do vile deeds.
There is no one who does good.
2 The LORD looks down from heaven on the human race † †
to see if there is one who is wise,
one who seeks God.
3 All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt.
There is no one who does good,
not even one. †

4 Will evildoers never understand?
They consume my people as they consume bread; †
they do not call on the LORD. †



AGNOSTICISM AND SECULARISM

The term *agnosticism* derives from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge," with the prefix *a–* meaning "not" and the suffix *–ism* meaning "belief." In a generic sense, agnosticism can mean the belief that one does not or cannot know something, whatever that might be (e.g., someone may be "agnostic" about whether humans will ever travel to other planets).

Its original and most common usage, however, is specifically in reference to the belief that humans cannot know whether God exists. T. H. Huxley (1825–1895) coined the term in 1869 to denote his own belief that questions about the reality of nonempirical concepts such as God's existence or life after death were "insoluble," beyond the capacity of human minds to know. David Hume (1711–1776) had argued that it was never rational to believe that a miracle had occurred, regardless of the apparent evidence for it. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) had argued that all of the philosophical proofs for God's existence failed. With the rise of evolutionary theory, for which Huxley was a noted advocate, arguments for God's existence from nature also seemed to have been overturned. The result was that in the second half of the nineteenth century, many people felt that there were no good reasons to accept religion or belief in God.

So-called soft or weak agnostics are unsure as to whether God exists, but they do not think the question is necessarily beyond investigation. So-called hard or strong agnostics like Huxley, on the other hand, are convinced that such questions are in principle unanswerable; they believe that the nature of the problem is such that no one can know whether God exists.

AGNOSTICISM AND ATHEISM

The boundary between agnosticism and atheism is a fuzzy one. Agnostics have often denied being atheists while stating in one way or another that they disbelieve in God.

For example, Robert Ingersoll (1833–1899), in an 1896 lecture entitled "Why I Am an Agnostic," explained that while he did not know if there was a God, he believed there was "no supernatural power that can answer prayer—no power that worship can persuade or change—no power that cares for man." The belief that there is no supernatural power that can answer prayer would seem to qualify as a type of atheism.

On the other side, atheists often define *atheism* not as the dogmatic assertion of God's nonexistence but as the lack of belief that God exists—it's a lack of belief, however, they try to justify rationally. In his book *The God Delusion*, atheist Richard Dawkins proposed a continuum between strong theism (belief that God certainly exists) and strong atheism (belief that God certainly does not exist), with agnosticism in the midrange of the continuum. Dawkins considered himself to be very close to strong atheism with only modest reservation. He said, "I cannot know for certain but I think God is very improbable, and I live my life on the assumption that he is not there." Dawkins's statement here is actually fairly representative of most people who identify themselves as agnostics: they disavow certainty as to God's nonexistence, but they feel confident in living their lives on the assumption that he is not there.

AGNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The Bible presents a two-pronged response to disbelief in God, whether cast as agnosticism or atheism. First, Scripture teaches that God has made himself known through the natural world. People who reject God "suppress the truth," because since the creation of the world "his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen . . . being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse" (Rm 1:18,20; see also Neh 9:6; Ps 19:1-6; Ac 17:24-28). Recent advances in science furnish abundant evidence in support of the Bible's teaching on this point. It is now beyond reasonable doubt that the universe had a beginning, and the evidence is mounting that life was initiated on earth by a supremely intelligent Creator.

Second, God has acted to reveal himself even more directly in order to restore humans to a relationship with him. He did so by speaking to various individuals such as Abraham and Moses, by miraculously freeing the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt, and by demonstrating his sovereign rule in Israel's

history (Gn 12:1-3; 17:1-5; Ex 3; Dt 4:32-39; Neh 9:7-15; Is 43:10-13). God has supremely revealed himself in Jesus Christ, who is God the Son incarnate (Jn 1:1-18). The Bible itself is a collection of writings inspired by God the Holy Spirit, who spoke through human authors (2Tm 3:15-17; 2Pt 1:20-21). This same Spirit illuminates people's minds to accept God's revelation of the good news of Jesus Christ (1Co 2:10-16).

AGNOSTICISM AND SECULARISM

Secularism as a worldview attempts to state positively what can be believed once one has concluded that life should be lived on the assumption that God is not there. The English word *secular* (from the Lat *saeculum*, meaning "age," "world") means anything pertaining to regular, earthly, mundane life (work, marriage, family, politics), as distinguished from religious or sacred matters (church, prayer, theology, Scripture). In this classic sense, there is nothing wrong or controversial about something being called secular.

Secularism, however, is a belief that all of human life and society should be secular. George Holyoake (1817–1906), who coined the term in 1851, defined it to mean "giving the precedence to the duties of this life, over those which pertain to another world" (Christianity and Secularism). Secularism focuses on the material world, seeks knowledge through science alone, and separates morality from religion.

In the twentieth century, secularism came to be known by the term *secular humanism*: this designation is understood as a positive, life-affirming worldview that inculcates such values as tolerance, respect, and kindness without any religious or spiritual foundation. Groups of influential secularists issued statements advocating their worldview in a work entitled *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933) and *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973). Secular humanists include both self-described agnostics and atheists.

SECULARISM AND SECULARIZATION

Secularism is closely associated in the modern world with secularization, so much so that the two terms are often used synonymously or interchangeably. To be precise, secularism is a belief or worldview whereas secularization is a corresponding movement or social process. Specifically, *secularization* is the process of removing religious, theological, or spiritual elements or influences from various aspects of society. The "separation of church and state" is an example of secularization.

The older, more moderate secularization removed ecclesiastical control or authority from government, as in the United States Constitution's Bill of Rights prohibiting the imposition of a religious test by the government on any candidate or official. The newer, more radical secularization is an overt campaign to bar religious expression or influence in government, politics, or civic matters—as in efforts to remove references to the Ten Commandments from government properties or to prohibit school teachers from expressing religious opinions in state-funded classrooms.

Moderate secularization was driven by the belief that religious institutional control of government, as when states recognized specific Christian denominations as the official state religion, interfered with the free expression and practice of religion in public life by those with different religious beliefs. Radical secularization, on the other hand, is driven by the belief that religious beliefs and values should have no influence in public life and so should be marginalized and limited wherever and as much as possible. This radical secularization, then, presupposes secularism as a worldview; it assumes that religious or spiritual beliefs and values are of no practical significance or benefit to society.

SECULARISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Secularism presupposes that God either does not exist or is irrelevant to human life, assumptions countered by the Bible's teaching noted above that God has made himself known in many ways. Scripture is clear that every aspect of life is to be seen in the light of the Creator. Followers of Jesus seek God's kingdom above all else (Mt 6:33). Their whole lives are geared toward loving God and other people (Mk 12:28-31). Far from irrelevant to society, a biblical worldview is the foundation of an enlightened view of relationships

between men and women and of social matters of class and ethnicity (Gl 3:28).

Agnosticism and secularism are in the end unrealistic ways of viewing the world. The biblical worldview, according to which God exists, humans are fallen in sin, and God is at work to restore our relationship with him (Ps 14), is the only sound foundation for life.

ROBERT M. BOWMAN JR.

5 Then † they will be filled with dread, for God is with those
who are † righteous. †
6 You sinners frustrate the plans of the oppressed, †
but the LORD is his refuge. †

7 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come from Zion!
When the LORD restores the fortunes of his people, †
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad. †

14:2 Or *the descendants of Adam* **14:5** Or *There* **14:5** Lit *with the generation of the* **14:7** Or *restores his captive people*
14:1 Ps 10:4; 53:1 **14:2** Ps 33:13-15 **14:1-3** Ps 12:1; 53:1-3; Mc 7:2; Rm 3:10-12 **14:4** Ps 27:2; Mc 3:3 **14:4** Is 64:7 **14:5** Ps 53:5 **14:6** Ezr 4:5 **14:6** Ps 9:9; 94:22 **14:7** Ps 53:6

A DESCRIPTION OF THE GODLY

A psalm of David.

15 LORD, who can dwell in your tent? †
Who can live on your holy mountain? †

2 The one who lives blamelessly, practices righteousness, and acknowledges
the truth in his heart † — 3 who does not slander with his tongue, †
who does not harm his friend
or discredit his neighbor, †
4 who despises the one rejected by the LORD †
but honors those who fear the LORD, †
who keeps his word whatever the cost, †
5 who does not lend his silver at interest †

or take a bribe against the innocent † — the one who does these things will never be shaken. †

15:4 Lit *in his eyes the rejected is despised*
15:1 Ps 61:4 **15:1** Ps 43:3 **15:1-2** Ps 24:3-5; Is 33:14-16 **15:3** Pr 10:18 **15:3** Pr 3:29 **15:4** Gn 14:17-24; Ps 119:63 **15:4** Lv 5:4; Dt 23:21-23 **15:5** Lv 25:35-38; Dt 33:19 **15:5** Ex 23:18; Dt 16:19 **15:5** Ps 16:8; 112:6

CONFIDENCE IN THE LORD

A *Miktam* of David. †

16 Protect me, God, for I take refuge in you. †
2 I † said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; I have nothing good besides you." † †
3 As for the holy people who are in the land, †
they are the noble ones.
All my delight is in them.
4 The sorrows of those who take another god for themselves will multiply;
I will not pour out their drink offerings of blood, and I will not speak their names with my lips. †

5 LORD, you are my portion †
and my cup of blessing;
you hold my future. †
6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. †

7 I will bless the LORD who counsels me † — even at night when my thoughts trouble me. † †
8 I always let the LORD guide me. †
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken. †

9 Therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices;
my body also rests securely. †

10 For you will not abandon me to Sheol; †
you will not allow your faithful one to see decay. †
11 You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; †
at your right hand are eternal pleasures. †

16:2 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Jer; other Hb mss read *You* **16:2** Or *"Lord, my good; there is none besides you."* **16:5** Or *allotted portion* **16:7** Or *at night my heart instructs me* **16:8** Lit *I place the Lord in front of me always*
16:title Pss 56–60 titles **16:1** Ps 94:22 **16:2** Ps 73:25 **16:3** Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:19 **16:4** Ex 23:13; Jos 23:7 **16:5** Nm 18:20; Ps 119:57; Lm 3:24 **16:6** Jr 3:19 **16:7** Ps 73:24 **16:7** Ps 77:6 **16:8** Ps 15:5; 112:6 **16:9** Ps 4:7-8; 13:5 **16:10** Ps 49:10; 86:13 **16:10** Jb 33:18,28; Ps 30:3; 103:4; Ac 13:35 **16:11** Ps 21:6 **16:8-11** Ac 2:25-28

A PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

A prayer of David.

17 LORD, hear a just cause; †
pay attention to my cry;
listen to my prayer —
from lips free of deceit. †
2 Let my vindication come from you, for you see what is right. †
3 You have tested my heart; †
you have examined me at night.
You have tried me and found nothing evil; †
I have determined that my mouth will not sin. †
4 Concerning what people do: by the words from your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent. †
5 My steps are on your paths; my feet have not slipped. †

6 I call on you, God, because you will answer me; †
listen closely to me; hear what I say.
7 Display the wonders of your faithful love, †
Savior of all who seek refuge †
from those who rebel against your right hand. †
8 Protect me as the pupil of your eye; †

hide me in the shadow of your wings †
9 from † the wicked who treat me violently, †
my deadly enemies who surround me. †

10 They are uncaring; † †
their mouths speak arrogantly. †
11 They advance against me; † now they surround me. †
They are determined †
to throw me to the ground. †
12 They are † like a lion eager to tear, like a young lion lurking in ambush. †

13 Rise up, LORD!
Confront him; bring him down. †
With your sword, save me from the wicked. †
14 With your hand, LORD, save me from men, from men of the world
whose portion is in this life:
You fill their bellies with what you have in store; their sons are satisfied,
and they leave their surplus to their children. †

15 But I will see your face in righteousness; †
when I awake, I will be satisfied with your presence. † †

17:3 Or *evil; my mouth will not sin* **17:7** Or *love, you who save with your right hand those seeking refuge from adversaries* **17:9** Lit *from the presence of* **17:9** Or *who plunder me* **17:10** Lit *have closed up their fat* **17:11** Vg; MT reads *Our steps* **17:11** Lit *They set their eyes* **17:12** Lit *He is* **17:15** Lit *form*
17:1 Ps 9:4 **17:1** Jb 27:4; Ps 34:13; 1Pt 3:10 **17:2** Ps 26:1; 43:1 **17:3** Ps 66:10; Zch 13:9 **17:3** Jb 23:10; Ps 26:2 **17:4** Pr 4:14-15 **17:5** Jb 23:11 **17:6** Ps 86:7 **17:7** Ps 85:7 **17:7** Ps 7:1 **17:8** Pr 7:2 **17:8** Ps 36:7; 57:1; 63:7; 91:1,4 **17:9** Ps 18:48 **17:10** Ps 119:70 **17:10** Ps 31:18 **17:11** Ps 88:17 **17:11** Ps 37:14; 62:4 **17:12** Ps 7:2; 10:9 **17:13** Ps 55:23 **17:13** Ps 7:12 **17:14** Ps 73:3-7 **17:15** Ps 11:7; Rv 22:4 **17:15** Ps 16:11; 21:6; 73:28

PRAISE FOR DELIVERANCE

For the choir director. Of the servant of the LORD, David, who spoke the words of this song to the LORD on the day the LORD rescued him from the grasp of all his enemies and from the power of Saul. † He said:

18 I love you, LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, †
my God, my rock where I seek refuge,
my shield † and the horn of my salvation, †
my stronghold.
3 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, †
and I was saved from my enemies. †

4 The ropes of death were wrapped around me; the torrents of destruction terrified me. †
5 The ropes of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. †
6 I called to the LORD in my distress, and I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice, †
and my cry to him reached his ears. †

7 Then the earth shook and quaked; the foundations of the mountains trembled; †
they shook because he burned with anger.
8 Smoke rose from his nostrils, and consuming fire came from his mouth; coals were set ablaze by it. † †
9 He bent the heavens and came down, †
total darkness beneath his feet.
10 He rode on a cherub and flew, soaring on the wings of the wind. †
11 He made darkness his hiding place, dark storm clouds his canopy around him. †
12 From the radiance of his presence, †
his clouds swept onward with hail and blazing coals.
13 The LORD thundered from † heaven; the Most High made his voice heard. † †
14 He shot his arrows and scattered them; he hurled † lightning bolts and routed them. †

15 The depths of the sea became visible, the foundations of the world
were exposed, at your rebuke, LORD, at the blast of the breath
of your nostrils. †

16 He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he pulled me out of deep water. †
17 He rescued me from my powerful enemy and from those who hated me,
for they were too strong for me. †
18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was
my support. †
19 He brought me out to a spacious place; †
he rescued me because he delighted in me. †

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; †
he repaid me
according to the cleanness of my hands. †
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD and have not turned from my God
to wickedness. †
22 Indeed, I let all his ordinances guide me †
and have not disregarded his statutes. †
23 I was blameless toward him †
and kept myself from my iniquity.
24 So the LORD repaid me according to my righteousness, †
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight. †

25 With the faithful you prove yourself faithful,
with the blameless
you prove yourself blameless,
26 with the pure you prove yourself pure;
but with the crooked
you prove yourself shrewd. †
27 For you rescue an oppressed people, †

but you humble those with haughty eyes. †
28 LORD, you light my lamp; my God illuminates my darkness. †
29 With you I can attack a barricade, †
and with my God I can leap over a wall. †

30 God — his way is perfect; †
the word of the LORD is pure. †
He is a shield to all who take refuge in him. †
31 For who is God besides the LORD? †
And who is a rock? Only our God. †
32 God — he clothes me with strength †
and makes my way perfect.
33 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer †
and sets me securely on the heights. † †
34 He trains my hands for war; †
my arms can bend a bow of bronze. †
35 You have given me the shield of your salvation; your right hand upholds me, †
and your humility exalts me.
36 You make a spacious place beneath me for my steps, †
and my ankles do not give way. †

37 I pursue my enemies and overtake them; I do not turn back until they are wiped out. †
38 I crush them, and they cannot get up; they fall beneath my feet. †
39 You have clothed me with strength for battle; †
you subdue my adversaries beneath me. †
40 You have made my enemies retreat before me; † †
I annihilate those who hate me. †

41 They cry for help, but there is no one to save them † — they cry to the LORD,
but he does not answer them. †
42 I pulverize them like dust before the wind; †
I trample them † like mud in the streets. †

43 You have freed me from the feuds among the people; you have appointed me
the head of nations; †
a people I had not known serve me. †
44 Foreigners submit to me cringing; as soon as they hear they obey me. †
45 Foreigners lose heart and come trembling from their fortifications. †

46 The LORD lives — blessed be my rock!
The God of my salvation is exalted. †
47 God — he grants me vengeance †
and subdues peoples under me. †
48 He frees me from my enemies.
You exalt me above my adversaries;
you rescue me from violent men. †
49 Therefore I will give thanks to you among the nations, LORD; I will sing
praises about your name. †
50 He gives great victories to his king; †
he shows loyalty to his anointed,
to David and his descendants forever. †

18:8 Or *him* **18:13** Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg, Jer; other Hb mss read *in* **18:13** Some Hb mss read *voice, with hail and blazing coals* **18:14** Or *multiplied* **18:22** Lit *Indeed, all his ordinances have been in front of me* **18:29** Or *a ridge,* or *raiders* **18:33** Or *on my high places* **18:40** Or *You gave me the necks of my enemies* **18:42** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg; other Hb mss read *I poured them out*
18:title 2Sm 22 **18:2** Ps 62:7; 94:22 **18:2** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 5:12; 28:7; 119:114 **18:2** 1Sm 2:1,10; Lk 1:69 **18:3** Ps 48:1; 96:4; 145:3 **18:3** Ps 138:7 **18:4** Ps 124:4 **18:5** Ps 116:3 **18:6** Ps 3:4 **18:6** Ps 34:15 **18:7** Is 13:13; Hg 2:6 **18:8** Ps 21:9; 50:3 **18:9** Ps 144:5; Is 64:1 **18:10** Ps 104:3 **18:11** Ps 97:2 **18:12** Ps 50:2; Is 60:3 **18:13** Ps 29:3; 104:7 **18:14** Ps 144:6 **18:15** Ex 15:8; Ps 106:9; Nah 1:4 **18:16** Ps 144:7 **18:17** Ps 35:10; 59:1; 142:6 **18:18** Ps 55:22; 59:16 **18:19** Ps 31:8; 118:5 **18:19** Ps 41:11 **18:20** Ps 7:8 **18:20** Ps 24:4 **18:21** Jb 23:11; Ps 119:101 **18:22** Lv 18:4-5 **18:23** Dt 18:13; Ps 37:18; 119:1 **18:24** 2Ch 6:23 **18:24** Ps 24:4 **18:25-26** Mt 16:27; Rv 22:12 **18:27** Ps 72:12 **18:27** Ps 138:6 **18:28** Ps 112:4; Is 42:16 **18:29** Mt 19:26; Php 4:13 **18:30** Dt 32:4 **18:30** Ps 19:7 **18:30** Ps 91:4; 144:2 **18:31** Dt 32:39; 1Sm 2:2; Ps 86:8 **18:31**

Ps 62:2 **18:32** Is 45:5 **18:33** Hab 3:19 **18:33** Dt 32:13; Is 58:14 **18:34** Ps 144:1 **18:34** Jb 29:20 **18:35** Ps 89:21 **18:36** Ps 31:8; 118:5 **18:36** Ps 66:9; Pr 4:12 **18:37** Ps 44:5 **18:38** Ps 36:12 **18:39** 1Sm 2:4 **18:39** 1Ch 17:10; Ps 81:14 **18:40** Ex 23:27 **18:40** Dt 7:10 **18:41** Ps 50:22 **18:41** Mc 3:4 **18:42** 2Kg 13:7 **18:42** Is 10:6; Mc 7:10 **18:43** 2Sm 8:1-14 **18:43** Is 55:5 **18:44** Dt 33:29; Ps 66:3 **18:45** Mc 7:17 **18:46** Ps 62:2,6 **18:47** 2Sm 4:8; Ps 94:1 **18:47** Ps 47:3; 144:2 **18:48** Ps 59:1; 140:1 **18:49** Rm 15:9 **18:50** Ps 144:10 **18:50** 2Sm 7:12-13; Ps 89:4,29

THE WITNESS OF CREATION AND SCRIPTURE

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

19 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse † proclaims
the work of his hands. †
2 Day after day they pour out speech; night after night
they communicate knowledge. †
3 There is no speech; there are no words; their voice is not heard.
4 Their message † has gone out to the whole earth, and their words to the ends
of the world. †

In the heavens he has pitched a tent for the sun. †
5 It is like a bridegroom coming from his home; it rejoices like an athlete
running a course.
6 It rises from one end of the heavens and circles to their other end; †
nothing is hidden from its heat.

7 The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; †
the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. †
8 The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; †
the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. †
9 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; †
the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous. †
10 They are more desirable than gold — than an abundance of pure gold; †
and sweeter than honey
dripping from a honeycomb. †

11 In addition, your servant is warned by them, and in keeping them there is an abundant reward. †

GENERAL REVELATION

One powerful question underlies discussion and debate of any religious issue: what is the source of our knowledge of God? This question determines all others because the source on which we depend—whether experience, tradition, society, Scripture, or science—determines the questions we ask and the answers we give. Christians believe that their knowledge of God comes from God's revelation of himself to humanity. When we recognize this self-disclosure and call it "revelation," we mean at least three things.

1. First, God initiates this self-disclosure freely. By his very nature, God communicates.
2. Second, God initiates it in order to reveal something about himself.
3. Third, he initiates it in order to display his glory and to evoke worship from humanity.

Christians usually divide this revelation into two types: special and general. In special revelation, God reveals himself through signs and miracles, the words of the prophets and apostles, the person and work of Christ, and the writings of Christian Scripture. This type of revelation is special because it is provided to particular people in specific times and places; it enables them to come to true and saving knowledge of the triune God.

In general revelation, God reveals himself through creation, history, and the moral law he has given to all people everywhere. This type of revelation is general because it is provided to all people of all times, and it provides a basic understanding of God and his moral law. It establishes the facts of God's existence and humanity's moral responsibility, but is not sufficient to save fallen humans, who without exception have turned their minds and wills against God. Although general revelation is sufficient to show humans their need to worship and obey the one true God, fallen sinners ultimately reject it and reject him (Rm 1:18-32).

THE FACT OF GENERAL REVELATION

The OT contains many passages that speak of the reality of general revelation. Genesis 1–2 teaches that God created humans in his image and likeness. When one looks at humans, one sees an image and likeness of God. Job 38–41 teaches that God has revealed himself through earth and sea, the rising of the sun, snow and hail, wind and rain, frost and ice, the constellations, the animal kingdom, and humans. All aspects of the created order testify to God's existence and character. In these chapters, Job's response to this point was worshipful silence as he recognized that he was very small indeed in comparison to our great God (Jb 40:4-5; 40:15–41:34). Job's worship is particularly significant when seen in contrast to his friends' response; they looked at the created order but allowed it to confirm their false worship.

Similarly, Psalm 19:1-4 tells us, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands. Day after day they pour out speech; night after night they communicate knowledge . . . Their message has gone out to the whole earth, and their words to the ends of the world." Stated differently, God's creation testifies clearly enough about God that it can be considered speech and knowledge.

The NT likewise articulates God's general revelation. In Acts 17, Paul preaches to a pagan Athenian audience on Mars Hill. In his sermon, he affirms at least six things that the Athenians could know about God by means of general revelation alone (vv. 22-31): he is the Creator and Lord of the universe (v. 24), the source of life and everything that is good (v. 25). He is entirely independent and self-sufficient (v. 25). He is the ruler of the nations (v. 26) and is intelligent (v. 26), close to them (v. 27), and greater than any other

possible object of worship (v. 29).

Similarly, in Rm 1:18-25, Paul argues that all humans have a basic knowledge of God. They know that he exists, that he is Creator, and that he is powerful and worthy of worship (vv. 18-21). For these reasons, humanity is without excuse (v. 20). Nevertheless, humans respond to general revelation by suppressing the truth they know (v. 18), experiencing the corruption of their hearts and minds (v. 21), exchanging truth for a lie (v. 25), and worshiping the creature rather than the Creator (v. 25). In Rm 2:14-16, Paul also makes clear that all people everywhere have an intuitive knowledge of God's moral law.

THE CONTENT OF GENERAL REVELATION

These and other biblical passages establish not only the fact of general revelation, but also its content. Concerning God, general revelation makes clear that he is One (Ac 17:26; Rm 1:20) and is the Creator (Ac 17:25), Sustainer (Ac 14:15-16; 17:24-28), and Ruler (Rm 1:26); that he is wise (Ps 104:24), great (Jb 40:15–41:34), powerful (Rm 1:20), intelligent (Rm 1:26), immanent and active (Ac 17:24-27), just and good (Ac 14:17; Rm 2:14-15). He is worthy of worship (Rm 1:25).

Concerning God's law, God has written certain basic moral principles on the human heart. Although the Ten Commandments were crafted for the nation of Israel, the moral principles behind those commandments (Ex 20:1-17) are revealed to all people everywhere through general revelation. We are to worship God rather than other gods or idols (vv. 3-6), and we should set aside time to rest and worship him (vv. 8-11). We are not to use God's name in a careless or inappropriate manner (v. 7). We should honor our parents (v. 12) and refrain from murdering (v. 13), committing adultery (v. 14), stealing (v. 15), bearing false witness (v. 16), and coveting (v. 17). These moral principles are a universal possession of all humanity. We might not see them with perfect clarity or admit that we know them, and we might become confused about them, but we do indeed know them.

THE PURPOSE AND LIMITS OF GENERAL REVELATION

General revelation and special revelation share a common purpose in pointing to the God whom we should worship and adore. Psalm 19 instructs that general and special revelation have the common purpose of evoking worship and obedience (v. 14). Romans 1:18-34 teaches that general revelation makes clear that God exists and ought to be worshiped.

Scripture is equally clear, however, that humanity is immersed with rebellious inclinations and for this reason it rejects general revelation. In spite of general revelation, people foolishly reject God (Ps 14:1). They suppress the truth about God, exchange it for a lie, and worship the creature rather than the Creator (Rm 1:18-32). Instead of allowing God's creation to evoke worship of God, humans take God's created gifts and make idols out of them—idols such as sex, money, power, success, and approval. How often we worship them instead of worshiping the Creator.

Because humans inevitably twist and distort God's general revelation, we need a special revelation from God to help us hear God and submit to him in worship and obedience. This special revelation, which now comes to us in the form of Christian Scripture, is necessary to point us to Christ—God's ultimate revelation of himself.

BRUCE RILEY ASHFORD

12 Who perceives his unintentional sins?
Cleanse me from my hidden faults. †
13 Moreover, keep your servant from willful sins; †
do not let them rule me. †

Then I will be blameless
and cleansed from blatant rebellion. †
14 May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you, †
LORD, my rock and my Redeemer. †

19:2 Or *Day to day pours out speech, and night to night communicates knowledge* **19:4** LXX, Sym, Syr, Vg; MT reads *line*
19:1 Gn 1:6 **19:1** Ps 50:6; Rm 1:19-20 **19:4** Rm 10:18 **19:4** Is 40:22 **19:6** Ec 1:5 **19:7** Ps 111:7 **19:7** Ps 93:5; 119:130 **19:8** Ps 119:14 **19:8** Ps 13:3 **19:9** Ps 111:10 **19:9** Ps 119:30 **19:10** Ps 119:72,127 **19:10** Ps 119:103 **19:11** Pr 29:18 **19:12** Ps 90:8 **19:13** Nm 15:30 **19:13** Gn 4:7 **19:13** Ps 51:7; Ezk 36:25 **19:14** Ps 104:34 **19:14** Ps 78:35

DELIVERANCE IN BATTLE

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

20 May the LORD answer you in a day of trouble; †
may the name of Jacob's God protect you. †
2 May he send you help from the sanctuary and sustain you from Zion. †
3 May he remember all your offerings and accept your burnt offering. †
Selah

4 May he give you what your heart desires †
and fulfill your whole purpose. †
5 Let us shout for joy at your victory †
and lift the banner in the name of our God. †
May the LORD fulfill all your requests. †

6 Now I know that the LORD gives victory to his anointed; †
he will answer him from his holy heaven with mighty victories
from his right hand. †
7 Some take pride in chariots, and others in horses, but we take pride
in the name of the LORD our God. †
8 They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand firm. †
9 LORD, give victory to the king! †

May he † answer us on the day that we call.

20:9 Or *Lord, save. May the king*
20:1 Ps 50:15; 77:2; 102:2 **20:1** Ps 46:7,11 **20:2** Ps 3:4; 110:2; 128:5 **20:3** Ps 119:108 **20:4** Ps 21:2; 145:19 **20:4** Ps 138:8 **20:5** Ps 21:1 **20:5** Is 13:2 **20:5** Ps 21:2; 1Pt 3:12 **20:6** Ps 18:50 **20:6** Ps 44:3; 98:1; 118:15 **20:7** Ps 33:17; Is 31:1 **20:8** Is 2:11,17; Mc 7:8 **20:9** Ps 18:50

THE KING'S VICTORY

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

21 LORD, the king finds joy in your strength.
How greatly he rejoices in your victory! †
2 You have given him his heart's desire †
and have not denied the request of his lips. †
Selah 3 For you meet him with rich blessings; you place a crown of pure gold on his head. †

4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him — length of days forever and ever. †
5 His glory is great through your victory; you confer majesty and splendor on him. †
6 You give him blessings forever; †
you cheer him with joy in your presence. †
7 For the king relies on the LORD; through the faithful love of the Most High he is not shaken. †

8 Your hand will capture all your enemies; your right hand will seize those who hate you. †
9 You will make them burn like a fiery furnace when you appear;
the LORD will engulf them in his wrath, and fire will devour them. †
10 You will wipe their progeny from the earth and their offspring from the human race. † †
11 Though they intend to harm † you and devise a wicked plan, they will not prevail. †

12 Instead, you will put them to flight when you ready your bowstrings to shoot at them. †

13 Be exalted, LORD, in your strength; we will sing and praise your might. †

21:10 Or *the descendants of Adam* **21:11** Lit *they stretch out harm against*
21:1 Ps 28:7-8; 59:16-17 **21:2** Ps 20:4; 145:19 **21:2** Ps 20:5; 1Pt 3:12 **21:3** 2Sm 12:30; 1Ch 20:2 **21:4** Ps 61:6; 91:16 **21:5** Ps 8:5; 96:6 **21:6** 1Ch 17:27 **21:6** Ps 16:11 **21:7** Ps 10:6; 16:8 **21:8** Ex 15:6; Is 10:10 **21:9** Ps 50:3; 97:3; Mal 4:1 **21:10** 1Kg 13:34; Ps 37:28; Is 14:20 **21:11** Ps 2:1-3; 7:15-16; 10:2 **21:12** Ps 7:12 **21:13** Ps 59:16; 81:1

FROM SUFFERING TO PRAISE

For the choir director: according to "The Deer of the Dawn." A psalm of David.

22 My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? †
Why are you so far from my deliverance †
and from my words of groaning? †
2 My God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, by night, yet I have no rest. †
3 But you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. †
4 Our fathers trusted in you; they trusted, and you rescued them. †
5 They cried to you and were set free; they trusted in you and were not disgraced. †

6 But I am a worm and not a man, †
scorned by mankind and despised by people. †
7 Everyone who sees me mocks me; they sneer † and shake their heads: †
8 "He relies on † the LORD; let him save him;
let the LORD † rescue him, since he takes pleasure in him." †

9 It was you who brought me out of the womb, making me secure at my mother's breast. †
10 I was given over to you at birth; †
you have been my God from my mother's womb. †

11 Don’t be far from me, because distress is near and there’s no one to help. †

12 Many bulls surround me; strong ones of Bashan encircle me. †
13 They open their mouths against me — lions, mauling and roaring. †
14 I am poured out like water, †
and all my bones are disjointed; †
my heart is like wax,
melting within me. †
15 My strength is dried up like baked clay; †
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. †
You put me into the dust of death. †
16 For dogs have surrounded me; †
a gang of evildoers has closed in on me; they pierced † my hands and my feet. †
17 I can count all my bones; people † look and stare at me. †
18 They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. †

19 But you, LORD, don’t be far away. †
My strength, come quickly to help me. †
20 Rescue my life from the sword, †
my only life † from the power of these dogs.
21 Save me from the lion’s mouth, †
from the horns of wild oxen.

You answered me! †
22 I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; I will praise you in the assembly. †
23 You who fear the LORD, praise him! †
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
All you descendants of Israel, revere him! †
24 For he has not despised or abhorred the torment of the oppressed. †

He did not hide his face from him †
but listened when he cried to him for help. †

25 I will give praise in the great assembly because of you; †
I will fulfill my vows
before those who fear you. † †
26 The humble will eat and be satisfied; †
those who seek the LORD will praise him.
May your hearts live forever! †

27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD.
All the families of the nations
will bow down before you, †
28 for kingship belongs to the LORD; he rules the nations. †
29 All who prosper on earth will eat and bow down; all those who go down to the dust
will kneel before him —
even the one who cannot preserve his life. †
30 Their descendants will serve him; the next generation will be told about the Lord. †
31 They will come and declare his righteousness; to a people yet to be born
they will declare what he has done. †

22:7 Lit *separate with the lip* **22:8** Or *Rely on* **22:8** Lit *let him* **22:10** Lit *was cast on you from the womb* **22:16** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *me; like a lion* **22:17** Lit *they* **22:20** Lit *my only one* **22:21** Or *oxen you rescued me* **22:25** Lit *him*
22:1 Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34 **22:1** Ps 10:1 **22:1** Ps 32:3; 38:8 **22:2** Ps 42:3; 88:1 **22:3** Ps 99:3 **22:4** Ps 107:6 **22:5** Ps 25:2; 31:1; 71:1; Is 49:23 **22:6** Jb 25:6 **22:6** Ps 109:25; Is 53:3 **22:7** Mt 27:39; Mk 15:29; Lk 23:35 **22:8** Mt 27:43 **22:9** Ps 71:6 **22:10** Is 46:3; 49:1; Gl 1:15 **22:11** 2Kg 14:26; Ps 71:12; Is 63:5 **22:12** Ps 68:30; Am 4:1 **22:13** Ps 10:9; 17:12 **22:14** Jb 30:16 **22:14** Jb 4:14; Ps 6:2; 32:3 **22:14** Nah 2:10 **22:15** Ps 38:10 **22:15** Lm 4:4 **22:15** Ps 104:29 **22:16** Ps 59:6,14 **22:16** Jn 20:25 **22:17** Lk 23:35 **22:18** Mt 27:35; Lk 23:34; Jn 19:24 **22:19** Ps 10:1 **22:19** Ps 70:5 **22:20** Jr 39:18 **22:21** Ps 35:17; 2Tm 4:17 **22:22** Ps 40:10; Heb 2:12 **22:23** Rv 19:5 **22:23** Ps 135:20 **22:24** Ps 69:33 **22:24** Ezk 39:29 **22:24** Ps 28:2 **22:25** Ps 35:18; 40:9-10 **22:25** Ps 61:8 **22:26** Ps 107:9 **22:26** Ps 40:16; 69:32 **22:27** Ps 2:8; 86:9 **22:28** 1Ch 16:31; 2Ch 20:6; Mal 1:14; Rv 15:3 **22:29** Is 45:23; Rm 14:11; Php 2:10 **22:30** Ps 102:18,28 **22:31** Ps 71:18; 78:6

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

A psalm of David.

23 The LORD is my shepherd; †
I have what I need. †
2 He lets me lie down in green pastures; †
he leads me beside quiet waters. †
3 He renews my life; he leads me along the right paths †
for his name's sake. †
4 Even when I go through the darkest valley, †
I fear no danger,
for you are with me; †
your rod and your staff — they comfort me. †

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; †
my cup overflows. †
6 Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, †
and I will dwell in † the house of the LORD as long as I live. † †

23:3 Or *me in paths of righteousness* **23:4** Or *the valley of the shadow of death* **23:6** LXX, Sym, Syr, Tg, Vg, Jer; MT reads *will return to* **23:6** Lit *Lord for length of days* ; traditionally *Lord forever*
23:1 Gn 48:15; Ps 78:52; Jr 31:10; Ezk 34:11-13; Jn 10:11 **23:1** Ps 34:9-10; Php 4:19 **23:2** Ps 65:11-13; Ezk 34:14 **23:2** Ps 36:8 **23:3** Ps 5:8; Pr 4:11 **23:4** Is 43:2 **23:4** Mc 7:14 **23:5** Ps 92:10 **23:5** Ps 16:5 **23:6** Ps 25:7; 109:21 **23:6** Ps 27:4-6

THE KING OF GLORY

A psalm of David.

24 The earth and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants,
belong to the LORD; †
2 for he laid its foundation on the seas and established it on the rivers. †

3 Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place? †
4 The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, †

who has not appealed to † what is false, †
and who has not sworn deceitfully.
5 He will receive blessing from the LORD, †
and righteousness † from the God of his salvation. †
6 Such is the generation of those who inquire of him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. † †

Selah

7 Lift up your heads, you gates!
Rise up, ancient doors!
Then the King of glory will come in. †
8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle. †
9 Lift up your heads, you gates!
Rise up, ancient doors!
Then the King of glory will come in.
10 Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD of Armies, he is the King of glory. †

Selah

24:4 Lit *not lifted up his soul to* **24:5** Or *vindication* **24:6** LXX; some Hb mss, Syr read *seek your face, God of Jacob* ; some Hb mss read *seek your face, Jacob*
24:1 Dt 10:14; Ps 89:11; 1Co 10:26 **24:2** Ps 104:5; Pr 8:29 **24:3** Ps 15:1 **24:4** Jb 22:30; Ps 73:1; Mt 5:8 **24:4** Ps 31:6; 119:37 **24:5** Ps 115:13 **24:5** Ps 65:5 **24:6** Ps 27:8 **24:7** Ps 118:19-20; Is 26:2 **24:8** Ex 15:3; Ps 76:3-6 **24:10** Is 24:23

DEPENDENCE ON THE LORD

Of David.

25 2 LORD, I appeal to you. † †
My God, I trust in you.
Do not let me be disgraced; †
do not let my enemies gloat over me. †
3 No one who waits for you will be disgraced; †
those who act treacherously without cause will be disgraced. †

4 Make your ways known to me, LORD; teach me your paths. †
5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, †
for you are the God of my salvation; †
I wait for you all day long. †
6 Remember, LORD, your compassion and your faithful love,
for they have existed from antiquity. † †
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth †
or my acts of rebellion; †
in keeping with your faithful love, remember me because of your goodness, LORD. †

8 The LORD is good and upright; †
therefore he shows sinners the way. †
9 He leads the humble in what is right †
and teaches them his way. †
10 All the LORD's ways show faithful love and truth to those who keep his covenant and decrees. †
11 LORD, for the sake of your name, forgive my iniquity, for it is immense. †

12 Who is this person who fears the LORD? †
He will show him the way he should choose. †
13 He will live a good life, and his descendants will inherit the land. † †
14 The secret counsel of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he reveals his covenant to them. †
15 My eyes are always on the LORD, for he will pull my feet out of the net. †

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

Psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy all have as their root stem the Greek word *psyché*, translated "soul" in English. *Psychology* (created by adding the Gk word *logos*, meaning "word" or "knowledge") refers to the "study of the soul." The words *psychiatry* (created by adding the Lat *iatreia*, meaning "healing") and *psychotherapy* (created by adding the Gk *therapeuō*, meaning "healing") both mean the "healing of the soul." Psychiatry, however, is practiced by medical doctors who specialize in the treatment of mental illness. Psychotherapy is practiced by doctoral-level trained psychologists who utilize cognitive, emotional, and relational techniques for the treatment of the broader category of psychological disorders. (In American culture, the word *counseling* is another category of "soul-healing." It is often practiced by ministers, as well as by Masters-level-trained professionals.) All three are widely considered modern disciplines. That is because they recently advanced greatly, beginning in the late 1800s and throughout the twentieth century, because of the dedicated application of natural science sensibilities and methods to the human sciences. Historians of these disciplines, however, know that their precursors can be found, in some form, as early as ancient times.

Philosophers in ancient Greece, such as Plato (429–347 BC) and Aristotle (382–322 BC), brilliantly analyzed the soul. A Roman physician named Galen (AD 129–200) attempted to describe the medical basis of mental illness. More importantly for Christians, the Scriptures are saturated with psychological and spiritual wisdom and provide a divine framework for the healing of the soul that is based on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, in particular, was mindful of psychological topics related to Christian salvation (Roberts, 1995).

In comparison to contemporary psychology, biblical teaching was written in everyday language for average readers; it is not written in scientific genre. Nevertheless, the Bible provides believers with divinely-inspired lenses through which they can rightly interpret the world, including human struggles. Thus, throughout the centuries many Christians wrote about Christian psychology and soul-healing with a pastoral, monastic, or philosophical agenda; they were more or less influenced by previous thinkers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Galen, as well as early church figures like Augustine, Maximus the Confessor, Bernard of Clairvaux, and especially Thomas Aquinas. Relevant voices from the Middle Ages include Martin Luther, Blaise Pascal, and Søren Kierkegaard. Countless others arose in the modern era. By 1850, a substantial range of Christian psychological and soul-healing literature existed.

Nevertheless, concurrent with the application of natural science methods to the human sciences was a secular revolution (Smith, 2003) that resulted in the replacement of a Christian worldview with a secular one. Naturalism became the common basis of intellectual discourse and scientific and therapeutic practice in the West. As a result, by 1950 all major universities, particularly in America, had reinterpreted the human sciences, understanding them to be intrinsically secular, natural sciences. As a result, modern psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy are versions of science devoid of biblical, theological, and metaphysical considerations.

Such differences are unsurprising in light of Augustine's Two-Cities Framework (sometimes called the "doctrine of the antithesis"). Near the collapse of the Roman Empire, Augustine defended Christianity by arguing that the human race is composed fundamentally of two communities: the City of Man, into which all humans are born, and the City of God, into which one has to be born again by placing faith in Christ (Jn 3:3). The City of Man, Augustine wrote, is composed of those who love self and despise God, whereas the City of God is composed of those who love God and despise self, only because they have been regenerated by God's grace in Christ (Ti 3:5). When modern psychology was in its infancy, Abraham Kuyper (1898) applied the Two-Cities Framework to the human sciences. He concluded that they will necessarily reflect the influences of the Two Cities, with one kind of psychology based on naturalism and the other kind based on spiritual regeneration, thus leading to two markedly different versions of the human sciences.

A Christian approach to the human sciences will differ from modern versions in these ways: 1. God is recognized as the Author, center, and end of human life, and his glory is the highest human motivation (Is 43:7; 1Co 10:31).

2. Humans are made in God's image (Gn 1:26-27; 9:6), so they can only be understood properly in

terms of their relation to God. They flourish best in communion with him.

3. Humans, however, are now sinful and alienated from their Creator (Gn 3; Rm 3:10-18). They are damaged creatures, both in body and soul, which can lead to psychological disorders.
4. Humans require union with Christ in order to attain some measure of psycho-spiritual healing on earth and complete healing in the age to come. Through their union with Christ, believers receive many spiritual blessings from God that have the potential to significantly improve daily life and the communities in which they reside. The most important blessing is the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit. These and other truths ought to have a profound impact on a Christian version of psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy.

At the same time, because of common grace—the provision of God given to all humans, irrespective of their relation to God (see Ps 104; Is 23:23-26; Mt 5:45; Ac 14:17)—there will be overlap in the modern and Christian versions of the human sciences. For example, both communities can agree that human experience and behavior is influenced by biological and social dynamics; human memory is composed of long-term stores and working memory; and empirical research is necessary to study most aspects of humans. Indeed, these communities agree about far more than they conflict over. But those areas in which they disagree are of enormous significance and exercise a profound influence on the understanding and interpretation of humans, especially with respect to the healing of the soul.

Moreover, common grace is responsible for culture and the development of good cultural institutions such as the mental health community. Unfortunately, that institution is currently dominated by those who assume naturalism; they thus reflect that worldview orientation. The doctrines of the antithesis and that of common grace are both necessary to understand psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy from a Christian standpoint.

Current areas of contention between these two versions of the human sciences include the respective role of evolution and God in the formation of the human species, the area of mental disorders—the role of human responsibility and sin in psychopathology, the use and overuse of medication to treat mental disorders, questions about whether certain conditions ought to be considered a disorder (e.g., homosexuality or ADHD)—and the contemporary prohibition against sharing one's faith in session, unless asked to do so by the client.

There are basically three approaches Christians currently take toward these three disciplines. Probably the most common approach is a relatively uncritical acceptance of them as they are currently constituted. Christians conduct themselves in these fields according to the rules of discourse and the practice of naturalism and secularism, while seeking to do so with Christian integrity and remaining faithful to Christian ethics.

Second, on the other side of the spectrum are those Christians who basically reject these disciplines because of their secular, naturalistic basis. They instead practice a model of counseling that is based only on the Bible, treating most mental problems as exclusively spiritual in nature and remaining resistant to most psychotropic medications. This group also typically rejects professional licensure.

Finally, some Christians seek a middle way, in which they practice some measure of critical engagement and participation. Beginning with a Christian understanding of humans, and appropriating the legitimate knowledge of secular human sciences, interpreted according to a Christian worldview, they also believe that Christianity offers divine resources in Christ for the healing of the soul. This latter approach seeks to redeem psychology, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, reordering them for the Christian community, university, and local church, while working within the secular rules of discourse and practice currently mandated within the public square.

ERIC L. JOHNSON

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am alone and afflicted. †

17 The distresses of my heart increase; † †
bring me out of my sufferings. †
18 Consider my affliction and trouble, †
and forgive all my sins. †
19 Consider my enemies; they are numerous, †
and they hate me violently. †
20 Guard me and rescue me; †
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you. †
21 May integrity and what is right watch over me,
for I wait for you. †

22 God, redeem Israel, from all its distresses. †

25:1 Or *To you, Lord, I lift up my soul* **25:6** Or *everlasting* **25:13** Or *earth* **25:17** Or *Relieve the distresses of my heart*
25:1 Ps 38:15; 86:4 **25:2** Ps 31:1; 71:1 **25:2** Ps 13:4; 41:11 **25:3** Is 49:23 **25:3** Pr 2:22; Is 21:2 **25:4** Ex 33:13; Ps 27:11; 86:11 **25:5** Jn 16:13 **25:5** Ex 15:2 **25:5** Ps 40:1 **25:6** Ps 98:3; 103:17 **25:7** Jb 13:26 **25:7** Ps 51:1 **25:7** Neh 13:22 **25:8** Ps 100:5; Nah 1:7 **25:8** Ps 32:8 **25:9** Ps 23:3 **25:9** Ex 18:20; Ps 86:11 **25:10** Ps 40:11; 103:17-18 **25:11** Jb 7:21; Ps 103:3; Jr 31:34 **25:12** Ps 31:19 **25:12** Ps 37:23 **25:13** Ps 37:11; 69:36 **25:14** Jn 7:17; 1Co 2:9 **25:15** Ps 31:4; 124:7 **25:16** Ps 70:5; 73:14 **25:17** Lm 1:20 **25:17** Jr 10:19 **25:18** Ps 31:7 **25:18** Rm 11:27; 1Jn 3:5 **25:19** Ps 3:1 **25:19** Ps 9:13 **25:20** Ps 17:8; 31:15 **25:20** Ps 86:2 **25:21** Ps 41:12 **25:22** Ps 34:22; 130:8

PRAYER FOR VINDICATION

Of David.

26 Vindicate me, LORD, because I have lived with integrity
and have trusted in the LORD without wavering. †
2 Test me, LORD, and try me; examine my heart and mind. †
3 For your faithful love guides me, †
and I live by your truth. †

4 I do not sit with the worthless or associate with hypocrites.
5 I hate a crowd of evildoers, and I do not sit with the wicked. †
6 I wash my hands in innocence †

and go around your altar, LORD, †
7 raising my voice in thanksgiving †
and telling about your wondrous works. †

8 LORD, I love the house where you dwell, the place where your glory resides. †
9 Do not destroy me along with sinners, or my life along with men of bloodshed †
10 in whose hands are evil schemes and whose right hands are filled with bribes. †

11 But I live with integrity; redeem me and be gracious to me. †
12 My foot stands on level ground; †
I will bless the LORD in the assemblies. †

26:3 Lit *love is in front of my eyes*
26:1 2Kg 20:3; Ps 7:8 **26:2** Ps 7:9; 17:3; 139:23 **26:3** Ps 40:10; 86:11 **26:4-5** Ps 1:1; Pr 4:14-15 **26:6** Ps 73:13 **26:6** Ps 43:4 **26:7** Jnh 2:9 **26:7** Ps 9:1 **26:8** Ps 27:4 **26:9** Ps 28:3 **26:10** Ex 23:8; Dt 16:19; Ps 15:5 **26:11** Jb 31:6; Ps 7:8 **26:12** Ps 27:11 **26:12** Ps 35:18; 40:9-10

MY STRONGHOLD

Of David.

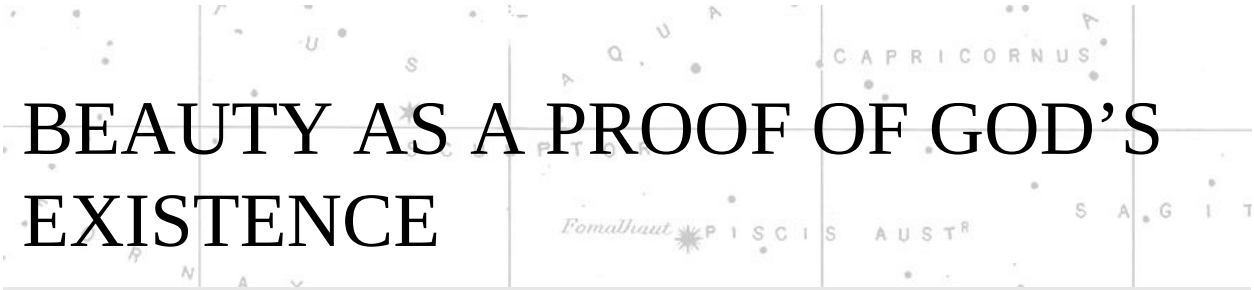
27 The LORD is my light and my salvation — whom should I fear? †
The LORD is the stronghold of my life — whom should I dread? †
2 When evildoers came against me to devour my flesh, †
my foes and my enemies stumbled and fell. †
3 Though an army deploys against me, my heart will not be afraid;
though a war breaks out against me,
I will still be confident. †

4 I have asked one thing from the LORD; it is what I desire:
to dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, †
gazing on the beauty of the LORD †
and seeking him in his temple. †

5 For he will conceal me in his shelter in the day of adversity;
he will hide me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock. †
6 Then my head will be high above my enemies around me; †
I will offer sacrifices in his tent with shouts of joy. †
I will sing and make music to the LORD. †

7 LORD, hear my voice when I call; be gracious to me and answer me. †
8 My heart says this about you: "Seek † his face."
LORD, I will seek your face. †
9 Do not hide your face from me; †
do not turn your servant away in anger. †
You have been my helper; †
do not leave me or abandon me,
God of my salvation.
10 Even if my father and mother abandon me, the LORD cares for me. †

11 Because of my adversaries, show me your way, LORD, and lead me on a level path. †
12 Do not give me over to the will of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing violence. †



BEAUTY AS A PROOF OF GOD'S EXISTENCE

Scripture makes clear that God is the archetype for beauty. Psalm 27 expresses the desire to dwell in the Lord's house in order to gaze upon his "beauty" (Ps 27:4); other verses recommend worshiping God "in the splendor of his holiness" (1Ch 16:29; 2Ch 20:21; Pss 29:2; 96:9). Richard Swinburne says, "If there is a God there is more reason to expect a basically beautiful world than a basically ugly one" (*The Existence of God*). Fyodor Dostoyevsky famously claimed in *The Idiot*, "Beauty will save the world."

Nevertheless, serious challenges can be raised which require thoughtful response if we are to defend the belief that God is the source of beauty. First, when asked to define "beauty," we often follow Plato, not Scripture. Plato taught that beauty is an unearthly harmony or proportion (*The Symposium*, 209e–212a).

This influenced Augustine, who felt that everything is beautiful insofar as it exists because of God: worms are beautiful for their purpose, even evil is beautiful when related to punishment (*Confessions*, VII, 18-19). Thomas Aquinas declared that beauty derives from the properties of God's Son. Such received beauty includes three conditions: perfection, proportion, and brightness (*Summa Theologica*, 1.39.8). Even Jonathan Edwards, when considering the beauty of God's attributes, sounds Platonic (*Works*, 17, 413).

Today the idea of beauty has become less Platonic and more subjective. Think of the relativistic dictum that says, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." This reduces beauty to a matter of personal taste, almost in the same way that some people love carrots while others do not.

A more sophisticated version of a subjective view of beauty is expressed by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804); he thought that human sensitivity to beauty was tied to morality. More recently some have said that defining beauty is a masked quest for power. Harvard professor Elaine Scarry answered this claim by noting the parallels between beauty and fairness (*On Beauty and Being Just*).

THE BIBLE ON BEAUTY

Contrary to the viewpoints above, the Bible does not define beauty in terms of an otherworldly sense of harmony or subjective taste. Looking at a few words that are translated as *beauty* in various English Bible versions, we find concepts related to glory, honor, and only rarely to loveliness. The Hebrew term *tiph'arah*, which can be translated as "beauty," refers to glory or honor more than to proportion or harmony (see Ps 96:6; Is 21:1,4-5; 44:13; 62:3). Aaron's robe, for instance, was bedecked in a "glory" suitable to his rank (Ex 28:2,40). The more common term for beauty is *yophiy*, which has a variety of meanings: these include the loveliness of a woman (Ps 45:11; Pr 6:25; 31:30) and the splendor of Zion (Ps 50:2; Lm 2:15; Ezek 16:25). The same goes for *hadar*, which means "splendor" (Ezk 16:14). Splendor, majesty, strength, and beauty characterize God's sanctuary ultimately because of his presence, but these notions are in contrast to dishonor, lack of dignity, and weakness—not to something we might call "ugly." When Isaiah tells us that the Suffering Servant had "no beauty that we should desire him" (Is 53:2, KJV), the term in view (*mareh*) means something like "an attractive face" or a "favorable countenance," rather than ugliness per se. So, when the Bible tells us that a certain sight, such as the trees in the garden of Eden, are "pleasing in appearance" (Gn 2:9), it means something like "desirable" rather than beautiful in the Greek sense. Often the terms for beauty are used about wrong desires, as in warnings against idolatry or seduction (Pr 6:25; Jms 1:11); therefore, they do not combine to give us a simple, comprehensive definition of beauty.

Another challenge comes from the confusion over a work of art and the beautiful. A particular painting, a piece of music, or a poem may possess beauty. If we listen to a Bach chorale or a Beethoven symphony we are right to exclaim, "How beautiful!" Yet many works of art are well-crafted but not beautiful. Who would call Goya's *The Third of May 1808*, "beautiful" or attribute beauty to Matthias Grünewald's painting, *The Small Crucifixion*? Such works are masterpieces, but not because they are beautiful. The Negro spiritual "He Never Said a Mumbalin' Word" is haunting and profoundly disturbing, but not beautiful in any conventional sense. Moreover, some artists and composers have tried to force some sort of beauty into subjects that do not warrant it. Think of cheap art or kitsch as examples.

BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS

Does the controversy over defining beauty mean we should abandon the concept of beauty or the belief that it points to God? No. A better way is to consider the broader notion of aesthetics in light of biblical revelation. Aesthetics includes beauty, but it is a more comprehensive term that also refers to the artistic dimension of life.

The first aspect of aesthetics is that it involves things we can create. A lovely pair of earrings, pretty chinaware, good music, portraiture, monuments, liturgies, and stage settings are all legitimate parts of the aesthetic dimension. Or it may be something more profound, more lasting, like a painting in a museum. Here, incidentally, we should be encouraged not to think of Christian art as only depicting religious subjects. Rembrandt's *Carcass of Beef* is as profoundly Christian as his *Road to Emmaus*. The arts may

instruct us, challenge us, help us to "see" what is less visible: the contours of a mountain, the sadness of a face, or less palpable things such as love, fear, or the holiness of God. Try to imagine a world without the arts and you will understand why the aesthetic dimension is such an integral part of creaturely existence. The arts give expression to the human condition. And unlike Plato's immaterial realm of ideals that is forever inaccessible to humans, the arts are tangible, part of the real world.

The second quality of aesthetics is that our craft must be good. Throughout Scripture we are enjoined to be skillful in what we do. This includes governing wisely (Dn 1:17), military ability (Jr 50:9), statuary (Is 41:7), fashion (Ex 39:24), and music-making (Ps 33:3). To engage in aesthetics with mediocrity or lack of training is a form of laziness or insult. Also, a work of art may be highly skilled and yet blasphemous. One could think of Salvador Dali's *Christ of St John of the Cross* a superb painting with a heretical Gnostic message.

The third quality of aesthetics is that there must be agreement between what is artistic and what is true. Scripture tells us we live in a world created by God as "very good" (Gn 1:31; the Hebrew word *towb* means "excellent," both in a skilled way and a moral way). In this world God called mankind to populate the earth, to cultivate, and to rule. This cultural mandate includes the aesthetic dimension (Gn 4:20-22). Our world, however, is now profoundly fallen—marred by sin, misery, and death. In such circumstances, even the aesthetic dimension of life has become corrupt. Well-crafted statues can be idols (Is 44:13). Music can be noise (Am 5:23). Poetry may be arrogant and vengeful (Gn 4:23-24). Here, too, is where the Bible tells us to see the difference between superficial charm or beauty and what is truly praiseworthy (Pr 31:30; see Php 4:8-9).

Yet God is now redeeming the world, bringing his people to himself through the atonement and resurrection of Christ. The arts may now bespeak God's grace. This is why the Lord gave explicit directions for the artwork in the tabernacle, specifically calling gifted craftsmen like Oholiab (Ex 36:1-2; 38:23). To be biblically faithful in aesthetics means to tell the story of creation, fall, and redemption in art as in every part of life. This does not limit us to creating so-called religious art, although that is perfectly legitimate. If an artist only articulates the glory of creation and ignores the fall into misery, however, then that art is dishonest. If the work only depicts evil, then it lacks the hope of the gospel.

BEAUTY AND THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

Does beauty prove the existence of God? Not without the qualifiers we have suggested: a rich understanding of the nature and limits of beauty as well as circumscribing the term *proof* so that it does not imply something as inescapable as a mathematical proof. Perhaps it is best simply to say, with the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the expanse proclaims the work of his hands" (Ps 19:1). The glory of God and his saving grace, rather than a Platonic or subjective notion of beauty, is central to our aesthetics.

WILLIAM EDGAR

13 I am certain that I will see the LORD's goodness in the land of the living. †

14 Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart be courageous. †

Wait for the LORD. †

27:8 The command is pl in Hb
27:1 Is 60:20; Mc 7:8 **27:1** Ps 28:8; 118:6 **27:2** Ps 14:4 **27:2** Ps 9:3 **27:3** Ps 3:6 **27:4** Ps 23:6; 26:8 **27:4** Ps 93:5 **27:4** Mal 3:1 **27:5** Ps 31:20; 91:1; Is 25:4 **27:6** Ps 3:3 **27:6** Ps 54:6; 116:17 **27:6** Eph 5:19 **27:7** Ps 4:3; 30:10 **27:8** Ps 24:6; 105:4 **27:9** Ps 69:17; 102:2; 143:7 **27:9** Ps 6:1 **27:9** Ps 40:17 **27:9-10** Ps 37:28; 94:14 **27:11** Ps 25:4; 26:12 **27:12** Ps 35:11; 41:2; Mt 26:59-60 **27:13** Ex 33:19; Ps 116:9; 142:5 **27:14** Jos 1:6

27:14 Ps 37:34; 130:5

MY STRENGTH

Of David.

28 LORD, I call to you; my rock, do not be deaf to me. †
If you remain silent to me,
I will be like those going down to the Pit. †
2 Listen to the sound of my pleading when I cry to you for help,
when I lift up my hands
toward your holy sanctuary. †

3 Do not drag me away with the wicked, with the evildoers,
who speak in friendly ways with their neighbors while malice is in their hearts. †
4 Repay them according to what they have done — according to the evil of their deeds.
Repay them according to the work of their hands; give them back what they deserve. †
5 Because they do not consider what the LORD has done or the work of his hands,
he will tear them down and not rebuild them. †

6 Blessed be the LORD, for he has heard the sound of my pleading. †
7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. †
Therefore my heart celebrates,
and I give thanks to him with my song. †

8 The LORD is the strength of his people; †
he is a stronghold of salvation for his anointed. †
9 Save your people, bless your possession, shepherd them, and carry them forever. †

28:8 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *strength for them*
28:1 Ps 83:1 **28:1** Ps 88:4; 143:7 **28:2** Ps 28:2; 134:2; 141:2; 1Tm 2:8 **28:3** Ps 26:9-10 **28:4** Jr 50:29; Rv 18:6; 22:12 **28:5** Jb 34:26-28; Is 5:12 **28:6** Ps 31:22 **28:7** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 5:12; 18:2; 119:114 **28:7** Ps 59:17; 69:30 **28:8** Ps 20:6; 27:1 **28:9** Ps 33:12; Is 40:11

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

A psalm of David.

29 Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings, †
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor
of his holiness. † †

3 The voice of the LORD is above the waters.
The God of glory thunders —
the LORD, above the vast water, †
4 the voice of the LORD in power, the voice of the LORD in splendor. †
5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD shatters the cedars
of Lebanon. †
6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, †
and Sirion, like a young wild ox. †
7 The voice of the LORD flashes flames of fire. †
8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness
of Kadesh. †
9 The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth † †
and strips the woodlands bare. †

In his temple all cry, “Glory! ”

10 The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned,
King forever. †
11 The LORD gives his people strength; †
the LORD blesses his people with peace. †

29:1 Or *you sons of gods*, or *you sons of mighty ones* **29:2** Or *in holy attire*, or *in holy appearance* **29:9** Or *the oaks shake*
29:1-2 1Ch 16:28-29; Ps 96:7-9 **29:3** Jb 37:4-5; Ps 18:13; 104:7 **29:4** Ps 68:33 **29:5** Ps 104:16 **29:6** Ps 114:4,6 **29:6** Dt 3:8-9 **29:7** Dt 4:12,33 **29:8** Nm 13:26 **29:9** Jb 39:1-3 **29:9** Is 24:1,3 **29:10** Ps 9:7; 10:17 **29:11** Ps 28:8; 68:35 **29:11** Php 4:7

JOY IN THE MORNING

A psalm; a dedication song for the house. Of David.

30 I will exalt you, LORD, because you have lifted me up †
and have not allowed my enemies
to triumph over me. †
2 LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you healed me. †
3 LORD, you brought me up from Sheol; †
you spared me from among those
going down † to the Pit. †

4 Sing to the LORD, you his faithful ones, and praise his holy name. †
5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor, a lifetime.
Weeping may stay overnight,
but there is joy in the morning. †

6 When I was secure, I said, "I will never be shaken." †
7 LORD, when you showed your favor, you made me stand
like a strong mountain; †
when you hid your face, I was terrified. †
8 LORD, I called to you; I sought favor from my Lord: †
9 "What gain is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your truth? †
10 LORD, listen and be gracious to me; LORD, be my helper." †

11 You turned my lament into dancing; you removed my sackcloth
and clothed me with gladness, †
12 so that I can sing to you and not be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you forever. †

30:3 Some Hb mss, LXX, Theod, Orig, Syr; other Hb mss, Aq, Sym, Tg, Jer read *from going down*
30:1 Ps 3:3 **30:1** Ps 25:2; 35:19 **30:2** Ps 88:13 **30:3** Ps 86:13 **30:3** Ps 28:1; 88:4; 143:7 **30:4** Ps 50:5; 149:1 **30:5** Ps 103:9; Is 54:7-8; 2Co 4:17 **30:6** Ps 10:6; 62:2,6 **30:7** Ps 20:8 **30:7** Ps 104:29 **30:8** Ps 119:58 **30:9** Ps 6:5; 88:10-12 **30:10** Ps 4:1; 27:7 **30:11** Ec 3:4; Is 61:10; Jr 31:13 **30:12** Ps 44:8; 108:1

A PLEA FOR PROTECTION

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

31 LORD, I seek refuge in you; let me never be disgraced. †
Save me by your righteousness.
2 Listen closely to me; rescue me quickly.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a mountain fortress to save me. †
3 For you are my rock and my fortress; †
you lead and guide me
for your name's sake. †
4 You will free me from the net that is secretly set for me,
for you are my refuge. †
5 Into your hand I entrust my spirit; †
you have redeemed me, † LORD, God of truth. †

6 I † hate those who are devoted to worthless idols, but I trust in the LORD. †
7 I will rejoice and be glad in your faithful love because you have seen my affliction.
You know the troubles of my soul †
8 and have not handed me over to the enemy. †
You have set my feet in a spacious place. †

9 Be gracious to me, LORD, because I am in distress; †
my eyes are worn out from frustration — my whole being † as well. †
10 Indeed, my life is consumed with grief and my years with groaning; †
my strength has failed
because of my iniquity, †
and my bones waste away. †
11 I am ridiculed by all my adversaries and even by my neighbors.
I am dreaded by my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street run from me. †

12 I am forgotten: gone from memory like a dead person —
like broken pottery. †
13 I have heard the gossip of many; terror is on every side. †
When they conspired against me,
they plotted to take my life. †

14 But I trust in you, LORD; I say, “You are my God.” †
15 The course of my life is in your power; †
rescue me from the power of my enemies
and from my persecutors. †
16 Make your face shine on your servant; †
save me by your faithful love. †
17 LORD, do not let me be disgraced when I call on you. †
Let the wicked be disgraced;
let them be quiet † † in Sheol. †
18 Let lying lips †
that arrogantly speak against the righteous in proud contempt be silenced. †

19 How great is your goodness that you have stored up for those who fear you
and accomplished in the sight of everyone †
for those who take refuge in you. †
20 You hide them in the protection of your presence; you conceal them
in a shelter
from human schemes,
from quarrelsome tongues. †
21 Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his faithful love to me in a
city under siege. †
22 In my alarm I said, “I am cut off from your sight.” †
But you heard the sound of my pleading
when I cried to you for help. †

23 Love the LORD, all his faithful ones. †

The LORD protects the loyal, but fully repays the arrogant. †
24 Be strong, and let your heart be courageous, all you who put your hope
in the LORD. †

31:5 Or *spirit. Redeem me* **31:6** One Hb ms, LXX, Syr, Vg, Jer read *You* **31:9** Lit *my soul and my belly* **31:10** LXX, Syr, Sym read *affliction* **31:17** LXX reads *brought down* **31:17** Or *them wail* **31:19** Or *of the descendants of Adam*
31:1 Ps 25:2 **31:2** Ps 71:1-2 **31:3** Ps 18:2; 71:3 **31:3** Ps 23:3; 25:11 **31:4** Ps 25:15; 46:1 **31:5** Lk 23:46 **31:5** Ps 25:5 **31:6** Ps 26:5; Jnh 2:8 **31:7** Ps 10:14 **31:8** Dt 32:30 **31:8** Jb 36:16 **31:9** Ps 69:17 **31:9** Ps 6:7; 63:1 **31:10** Ps 102:3 **31:10** Ps 32:3; 38:3 **31:11** Jb 19:13; Ps 38:11; 88:8,18 **31:12** Ps 88:5; Ec 9:5 **31:13** Jr 20:10 **31:13** Ps 41:7; Mt 27:1 **31:14** Ps 140:6 **31:15** Jb 14:5; 24:1 **31:15** Ps 59:1 **31:16** Nm 6:25 **31:16** Ps 6:4; 119:135 **31:17** Ps 25:2-3,20 **31:17** Ps 94:17; 115:17 **31:18** Ps 120:2 **31:18** 1Sm 2:3; Ps 94:4 **31:19** Ps 5:11; 23:5 **31:20** Ps 27:5; 32:7 **31:21** Ps 28:6 **31:22** Ps 88:5; Is 38:11-12 **31:22** Ps 66:19; 145:19 **31:23** Ps 30:4 **31:23** Ps 94:2 **31:24** Ps 27:14

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Of David. A *Maskil.*

32 How joyful is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered! †
2 How joyful is a person whom the LORD does not charge with iniquity †
and in whose spirit is no deceit! †

3 When I kept silent, my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long. †
4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me; †
my strength was drained †
as in the summer's heat. †
Selah 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my iniquity.

I said,
"I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin. †

Selah

6 Therefore let everyone who is faithful pray to you immediately. † †
When great floodwaters come,
they will not reach him. †

7 You are my hiding place; †
you protect me from trouble. †
You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance.

Selah

8 I will instruct you and show you the way to go; †
with my eye on you, I will give counsel. †
9 Do not be like a horse or mule, without understanding,
that must be controlled with bit and bridle or else it will not come near you. †

10 Many pains come to the wicked, †
but the one who trusts in the LORD will have faithful love surrounding him. †
11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones;
shout for joy,
all you upright in heart. †

32:4 Hb obscure **32:6** Lit *you at a time of finding*
32:1 Ps 85:2 **32:1-2** Rm 4:7-8 **32:2** Jn 1:47 **32:3** Ps 31:10; 38:8 **32:4** Jb 23:2; Ps 38:2 **32:4** Ps 22:15; 39:10 **32:5** Lv 26:40; Ps 38:18; Pr 28:13; 1Jn 1:9 **32:6** Is 55:6 **32:6** Ps 124:4-5; Is 43:2 **32:7** Ps 31:20; 91:1 **32:7** Ps 121:7 **32:8** Ps 25:8,12 **32:8** Ps 33:18; 73:24 **32:9** Pr 26:3; Jms 3:3 **32:10** Pr 13:21; Rm 2:9 **32:10** Ps 5:12 **32:11** Ps 64:10; 68:3; 97:12

PRAISE TO THE CREATOR

33 Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous ones; praise from the upright is beautiful. †

2 Praise the LORD with the lyre; make music to him with a ten-stringed harp. †
3 Sing a new song to him; †
play skillfully on the strings, with a joyful shout. †

4 For the word of the LORD is right, and all his work is trustworthy. †
5 He loves righteousness and justice; †
the earth is full of the LORD's unfailing love. †

6 The heavens were made by the word of the LORD, †

and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth. †
7 He gathers the water of the sea into a heap; †
he puts the depths into storehouses. †
8 Let the whole earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world
stand in awe of him. †
9 For he spoke, and it came into being; he commanded, and it came
into existence. †

10 The LORD frustrates the counsel of the nations; he thwarts the plans
of the peoples. †
11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the plans of his heart from generation
to generation. †
12 Happy is the nation whose God is the LORD — the people he has chosen to be
his own possession! †

13 The LORD looks down from heaven; he observes everyone. †
14 He gazes on all the inhabitants of the earth from his dwelling place. †
15 He forms the hearts of them all; he considers all their works. †
16 A king is not saved by a large army; a warrior will not be rescued
by great strength. †
17 The horse is a false hope for safety; it provides no escape by
its great power. †

18 But look, the LORD keeps his eye on those who fear him — those who depend
on his faithful love †
19 to rescue them from death and to keep them alive in famine. †

20 We wait for the LORD; †
he is our help and shield. †
21 For our hearts rejoice in him †
because we trust in his holy name. †

22 May your faithful love rest on us, LORD, for we put our hope in you. †

33:7 LXX, Tg, Syr, Vg, Jer read *sea as in a bottle*
33:1 Ps 32:11; 147:1; Php 4:4 **33:2** Ps 92:3; 144:9 **33:3** Ps 40:3; 96:1; Is 42:10 **33:3** Ps 150:4 **33:4** Ps 19:8 **33:5** Ps 11:7; 37:28 **33:5** Ps 119:64 **33:6** Heb 11:3; 2Pt 3:5 **33:6** Jb 26:13; Ps 104:30 **33:7** Ex 15:8; Jos 3:13; Ps 78:13 **33:8** Ps 67:7; 96:9 **33:9** Gn 1:3; Ps 147:15,18; 148:5 **33:10** Ps 2:1-3; Is 8:10; 19:3 **33:11** Ps 139:17; Pr 19:21; Is 55:8 **33:12** Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; Ps 144:15 **33:13** Jb 28:24; Ps 11:4; 14:2; 53:2 **33:14** Ps 102:19 **33:15** Jb 34:21 **33:16** Ps 44:6; 60:11 **33:17** Ps 20:7; 147:10; Hs 1:7 **33:18** Jb 36:7; Ps 34:15; 1Pt 3:12 **33:19** Jb 5:20; Ps 37:19; 56:13 **33:20** Ps 130:6; Is 8:17 **33:20** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 115:9-11 **33:21** Ps 13:5; 28:7; Jn 16:22 **33:21** Zph 3:12 **33:22** Ps 130:7; 147:11

THE LORD DELIVERS THE RIGHTEOUS

Concerning David, when he pretended to be insane in the presence of Abimelech, † who drove him out, and he departed.

34 I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise will always be on my lips. †
2 I will boast in the LORD; †
the humble will hear and be glad. †
3 Proclaim the LORD's greatness with me; †
let us exalt his name together. †

4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me and rescued me from all my fears. †
5 Those who look to him are † radiant with joy; †
their faces will never be ashamed. †
6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him from all his troubles. †
7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and rescues them. †

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good. †
How happy is the person who takes refuge in him! †
9 You who are his holy ones, fear the LORD, for those who fear him lack nothing. †
10 Young lions † lack food and go hungry, †
but those who seek the LORD will not lack any good thing. †

11 Come, children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. †
12 Who is someone who desires life, loving a long life to enjoy what is good? †
13 Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from deceitful speech. †
14 Turn away from evil and do what is good; †
seek peace and pursue it. †

15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry for help. †
16 The face of the LORD is set against those who do what is evil, †
to remove † all memory of them from the earth. †
17 The righteous † cry out, and the LORD hears, and rescues them from all their troubles. †
18 The LORD is near the brokenhearted; he saves those crushed in spirit. †

19 One who is righteous has many adversities, but the LORD rescues him from them all. †
20 He protects all his bones; not one of them is broken. †
21 Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be punished. †
22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants, and all who take refuge in him will not be punished. †

34:5 Some Hb mss, LXX, Aq, Syr, Jer read *Look to him and be* **34:10** LXX, Syr, Vg read *The rich* **34:16** Or *cut off* **34:17** Lit *They*
34:title 1Sm 21:10-15 **34:1** Ps 71:6; Eph 5:20 **34:2** Ps 44:8; Jr 9:24; 1Co 1:31 **34:2** Ps 69:32 **34:3** Lk 1:46 **34:3** Ps 69:30 **34:4** Ps 34:6,17,19 **34:5** Is 60:5 **34:5** Ps 25:3 **34:6** Ps 34:4 **34:7** Ps 91:11; Heb 1:14 **34:8** 1Pt 2:3 **34:8** Ps 2:12 **34:9** Ps 23:1 **34:10** Jb 4:10-11 **34:10** Ps 84:11 **34:11** Ps 66:16; 111:10 **34:12** Ec 3:13; 6:6 **34:13** Ps 39:1; 141:3; Pr 13:3; Jms 1:26 **34:14** Ps 37:27; Is 1:16-17 **34:14** Rm 14:19; Heb 12:14 **34:15** Jb 36:7; Ps 33:18; 1Pt 3:12 **34:12-16** 1Pt 3:10-12 **34:16** Am 9:4 **34:17** Ps 145:19 **34:18** Ps 51:17; 147:3; Is 61:1 **34:19** Ps 71:20; 2Tm 3:11-12 **34:20** Jn 19:33,36 **34:21** Ps 94:23; 140:11; Pr 24:16 **34:22** Ps 37:40; Rm 8:33-34

PRAYER FOR VICTORY

Of David.

35 Oppose my opponents, LORD; fight those who fight me. †
2 Take your shields — large and small — and come to my aid. †
3 Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers, and assure me: “I am your deliverance.” †

4 Let those who intend to take my life be disgraced and humiliated;
let those who plan to harm me
be turned back and ashamed. †
5 Let them be like chaff in the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away. †
6 Let their way be dark and slippery, with the angel of the LORD pursuing them. †
7 They hid their net for me without cause; they dug a pit for me without cause. †
8 Let ruin come on him unexpectedly, and let the net that he hid ensnare him; let him fall into it — to his ruin. †

9 Then I will rejoice in the LORD; I will delight in his deliverance. †
10 All my bones will say, “LORD, who is like you, †
rescuing the poor from one too strong for him, the poor or the needy from one who robs him? ” †

11 Malicious witnesses come forward; they question me about things I do not know. †
12 They repay me evil for good, making me desolate. †
13 Yet when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting,
and my prayer was genuine. † †
14 I went about mourning as if for my friend or brother; I was bowed down with grief,
like one mourning for a mother. †
15 But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee; they gathered against me.
Assailants I did not know

tore at me and did not stop. †
16 With godless mockery †
they gnashed their teeth at me. †

17 Lord, how long will you look on? †
Rescue me from their ravages;
rescue my precious life from the young lions. †
18 I will praise you in the great assembly; I will exalt you among many people. †
19 Do not let my deceitful enemies rejoice over me; do not let those who hate me without cause †
wink at me maliciously. †
20 For they do not speak in friendly ways, but contrive fraudulent schemes †
against those who live peacefully in the land. †
21 They open their mouths wide against me and say, “Aha, aha! We saw it! ” † †

22 You saw it, LORD; do not be silent.
Lord, do not be far from me. †
23 Wake up and rise to my defense, to my cause, my God and my Lord! †
24 Vindicate me, LORD my God, in keeping with your righteousness,
and do not let them rejoice over me. †
25 Do not let them say in their hearts, “Aha! Just what we wanted.”
Do not let them say,
“We have swallowed him up! ” †
26 Let those who rejoice at my misfortune be disgraced and humiliated;
let those who exalt themselves over me
be clothed with shame and reproach. †

27 Let those who want my vindication shout for joy and be glad;
let them continually say,
“The LORD be exalted.
He takes pleasure in his servant’s well-being.” †

28 And my tongue will proclaim your righteousness, your praise all day long. †

35:13 Lit *prayer returned to my chest* **35:16** Hb obscure **35:20** Lit *but devise fraudulent words* **35:21** Lit *Our eyes saw!*
35:1 Ex 14:25; Is 49:25 **35:2** Ps 5:12; 91:4 **35:3** Ps 13:5; 40:17 **35:4** Ps 40:14; 70:2; 129:5 **35:5** Jb 21:18; Ps 83:13; Is 29:5 **35:6** Ps 73:18; Jr 23:12 **35:7** Ps 140:5 **35:8** Jb 18:8; Ps 7:15 **35:9** Ps 9:14; 13:5 **35:10** Ex 15:11; Ps 86:8; Mc 7:18 **35:10** Ps 72:12; 82:4 **35:11** Ps 27:12; Pr 19:5,9 **35:12** Ps 38:20; 109:5; Jr 18:20 **35:13** Ps 69:10-11 **35:14** Ps 38:6 **35:15** Jb 30:1,8,12; Ob 12 **35:16** Jb 16:9; Ps 37:12; Lm 2:16 **35:17** Ps 13:1; Hab 1:13 **35:17** Ps 22:20-21 **35:18** Ps 22:22,25; 40:9-10; Heb 2:12 **35:19** Ps 38:19; Jn 15:25 **35:19** Ps 13:4; 30:1; 38:16 **35:20** Ps 55:21; Jr 9:8; Mc 6:12 **35:21** Jb 16:10; Ps 22:13; 40:15; 70:3 **35:22** Ps 10:1; 22:11; 28:1 **35:23** Ps 7:6; 44:23; 59:4 **35:24** Ps 26:1; 43:1 **35:25** Ps 124:3; Lm 2:16 **35:26** Jb 8:22; Ps 40:14; 109:29 **35:27** Ps 40:16; 70:4 **35:28** Ps 71:8,15,24

HUMAN WICKEDNESS AND GOD'S LOVE

For the choir director. Of David, the LORD's servant.

36 An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked person: Dread of God has no effect on him. † †
2 For with his flattering opinion of himself, he does not discover and hate his iniquity. †
3 The words from his mouth are malicious and deceptive; †
he has stopped acting wisely and doing good. †
4 Even on his bed he makes malicious plans. †
He sets himself on a path that is not good, and he does not reject evil. †

5 LORD, your faithful love reaches to heaven, your faithfulness to the clouds. †
6 Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your judgments like the deepest sea. †
LORD, you preserve people and animals. †
7 How priceless your faithful love is, God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings. †
8 They are filled from the abundance of your house.
You let them drink from your refreshing stream. †
9 For the wellspring of life is with you. †
By means of your light we see light. †

10 Spread your faithful love over those who know you, and your righteousness
over the upright in heart. †
11 Do not let the foot of the arrogant come near me or the hand of the wicked
drive me away. †
12 There! The evildoers have fallen.
They have been thrown down and cannot rise. †

36:1 Lit *There is no dread of God in front of his eyes*
36:1 Rm 3:18 **36:2** Dt 29:19; Ps 10:3; 49:18 **36:3** Ps 10:7 **36:3** Jr 4:22 **36:4** Pr 4:16 **36:4** Ps 10:7; Is 65:2 **36:5** Ps 57:10; 103:11; 108:4 **36:6** Ps 71:19 **36:6** Ps 104:14-15 **36:7** Ru 2:12; Ps 17:8; 57:1; 91:4 **36:8** Ps 46:4; 65:4; Jr 31:12-14 **36:9** Jn 4:10,14 **36:9** Jn 1:9; Ac 26:18 **36:10** Pr 11:6; Jr 22:16 **36:11** Ps 38:16; 119:122 **36:12** Ps 1:5; 140:10; Is 26:14

INSTRUCTION IN WISDOM

Of David.

37 Do not be agitated by evildoers; do not envy those who do wrong. †
2 For they wither quickly like grass and wilt like tender green plants. †

3 Trust in the LORD and do what is good; †
dwell in the land and live securely. † †
4 Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. †

5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act, †
6 making your righteousness shine like the dawn, your justice
like the noonday. †

7 Be silent before the LORD and wait expectantly for him; †
do not be agitated by one who prospers in his way, by the person who carries out
evil plans. †

8 Refrain from anger and give up your rage; do not be agitated — it can only
bring harm. †
9 For evildoers will be destroyed, but those who put their hope in the LORD will
inherit the land. †

10 A little while, and the wicked person will be no more; though you look
for him, he will not be there. †
11 But the humble will inherit the land †
and will enjoy abundant prosperity. †

12 The wicked person schemes against the righteous and gnashes his teeth
at him. †
13 The Lord laughs at him †
because he sees that his day is coming. †

14 The wicked have drawn the sword and strung the † bow to bring down
the poor and needy
and to slaughter those whose way is upright. †
15 Their swords will enter their own hearts, and their bows will be broken. †

16 The little that the righteous person has is better than the abundance
of many wicked people. †
17 For the arms of the wicked will be broken, †
but the LORD supports the righteous. †

18 The LORD watches over the blameless all their days, and their inheritance
will last forever. †
19 They will not be disgraced in times of adversity; they will be satisfied in days
of hunger. †

20 But the wicked will perish; the LORD's enemies, like the glory of the pastures,
will fade away — they will fade away like smoke. †

21 The wicked person borrows and does not repay, but the righteous one
is gracious and giving. †
22 Those who are blessed by the LORD will inherit the land, but those cursed
by him will be destroyed. †

23 A person’s steps are established by the LORD, and he takes pleasure in his way. †
24 Though he falls, he will not be overwhelmed, because the LORD supports him with his hand. †

25 I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous abandoned or his children begging for bread. †
26 He is always generous, always lending, and his children are a blessing. †

27 Turn away from evil, do what is good, and settle permanently. †
28 For the LORD loves justice and will not abandon his faithful ones. †
They are kept safe forever,
but the children of the wicked will be destroyed. †
29 The righteous will inherit the land and dwell in it permanently. †

30 The mouth of the righteous utters wisdom; his tongue speaks what is just. †
31 The instruction of his God is in his heart; his steps do not falter. †

32 The wicked one lies in wait for the righteous and intends to kill him; †
33 the LORD will not leave him in the power of the wicked one
or allow him to be condemned when he is judged. †

34 Wait for the LORD and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land.
You will watch when the wicked are destroyed. †

35 I have seen a wicked, violent person well-rooted, † like a flourishing native tree. †
36 Then I † passed by and noticed he was gone; I searched for him, but he could not be found. †

37 Watch the blameless and observe the upright, for the person of peace will have a future. † †

38 But transgressors will all be eliminated; the future of the wicked
will be destroyed. †

39 The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD, their refuge in a time
of distress. †
40 The LORD helps and delivers them; he will deliver them from the wicked
and will save them because they take refuge in him. †

37:3 Or *and cultivate faithfulness*, or *and befriend faithfulness* **37:14** Lit *their* **37:35** Hb obscure **37:36** LXX, Syr, Vg, Jer; MT reads *he* **37:37** Or *posterity*, also in v. 38
37:1 Ps 73:3; Pr 3:31; 23:17; 24:19 **37:2** Ps 92:7; 129:6; Jms 1:11 **37:3** Ps 62:8 **37:3** Pr 2:21 **37:4** Ps 21:2; 145:19; Is 58:14 **37:5** Ps 55:22; Pr 16:3; 1Pt 5:7 **37:6** Ps 97:11; Is 58:8,10 **37:7** Ps 40:1; Lm 3:26 **37:7** Jr 12:1 **37:8** Eph 4:31; Col 3:8 **37:9** Pr 2:21; Is 57:13; 60:21 **37:10** Jb 7:10; 24:24; Ps 37:35-36 **37:11** Mt 5:5 **37:11** Ps 72:7 **37:12** Ps 31:13,20; 35:16 **37:13** Ps 2:4; 59:8; Hab 1:10 **37:13** 1Sm 26:10 **37:14** Ps 11:2; Lm 2:4 **37:15** 1Sm 2:4; Ps 46:9 **37:16** Pr 15:16; 16:8 **37:17** Ps 10:15 **37:17** Ps 145:14 **37:18** Ps 1:6 **37:19** Jb 5:20; Ps 33:19 **37:20** Ps 68:2; Hs 13:3 **37:21** Ps 112:5,9 **37:22** Pr 3:33 **37:23** 1Sm 2:9; Ps 66:9 **37:24** Ps 145:14; Pr 24:16; Mc 7:8 **37:25** Is 41:17 **37:26** Dt 15:8; Ps 112:5,9; Mt 5:42 **37:27** Ps 34:14; 102:28 **37:28** Dt 31:6; Heb 13:5 **37:28** Ps 21:10; Pr 2:22 **37:29** Pr 2:21; Is 60:21 **37:30** Ps 49:3; 119:13; Pr 10:13 **37:31** Dt 6:6; Ps 40:8; 119:11 **37:32** Ps 10:8; 17:11 **37:33** Ps 34:22; 109:31; 2Pt 2:9 **37:34** Ps 27:14; 52:5-6; 91:8 **37:35** Jb 5:3; Jr 12:2 **37:36** Jb 20:5 **37:37** Is 57:1-2 **37:38** Ps 1:4-6; Pr 2:22 **37:39** Ps 3:8; 9:9; 62:1 **37:40** Ps 22:4; 34:22; 54:4

PRAYER OF A SUFFERING SINNER

A psalm of David for remembrance. †

38 LORD, do not punish me in your anger or discipline me in your wrath. †
2 For your arrows have sunk into me, and your hand has pressed down
on me. †

3 There is no soundness in my body because of your indignation;
there is no health † in my bones because of my sin. †
4 For my iniquities have flooded over my head; they are a burden too heavy
for me to bear. †
5 My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. †
6 I am bent over and brought very low; all day long I go around in mourning. †
7 For my insides are full of burning pain, and there is no soundness
in my body. †

8 I am faint and severely crushed; I groan because of the anguish of my heart. †

9 Lord, my every desire is in front of you; my sighing is not hidden from you. †
10 My heart races, my strength leaves me, and even the light of my eyes has faded. † †
11 My loved ones and friends stand back from my affliction, and my relatives stand at a distance. †
12 Those who intend to kill me set traps, and those who want to harm me threaten to destroy me; they plot treachery all day long. †

13 I am like a deaf person; I do not hear.
I am like a speechless person
who does not open his mouth. †
14 I am like a man who does not hear and has no arguments in his mouth. †
15 For I put my hope in you, LORD; you will answer me, my Lord, my God. †
16 For I said, "Don't let them rejoice over me — those who are arrogant toward me when I stumble." †
17 For I am about to fall, and my pain is constantly with me. †
18 So I confess my iniquity; I am anxious because of my sin. †
19 But my enemies are vigorous and powerful; †
many hate me for no reason. †
20 Those who repay evil for good attack me for pursuing good. †

21 LORD, do not abandon me; my God, do not be far from me. †
22 Hurry to help me, my Lord, my salvation. †

38:3 Hb shalom **38:10** Or *and the light of my eyes — even that is not with me* **38:19** Or *numerous*
38:title Ps 70 title **38:1** Ps 6:1 **38:2** Jb 6:4; Ps 32:4 **38:3** Jb 33:19; Ps 31:10; 102:10 **38:4** Ezr 9:6; Ps 40:12 **38:5** Is 1:6 **38:6** Ps 35:14 **38:7** Ps 38:3; Lm 1:13 **38:8** Jb 3:24; Ps 6:6; 32:3; Lm 2:11 **38:9** Ps 10:17 **38:10** Ps 6:7; 69:3; 88:9 **38:11** Jb 19:13-20; Ps 31:11; 88:18 **38:12** Ps 35:4,20; 54:3; 140:5 **38:13** Ps 39:2,9 **38:14** Jb 23:4 **38:15** Ps 17:6; 39:7 **38:16** Ps 13:4; 35:26 **38:17** Ps 13:2; 35:15 **38:18** Ps 32:5; 2Co 7:9-10 **38:19** Ps 18:17; 35:19 **38:20** Ps 35:12; 109:5; 3Jn 11 **38:21** Ps 22:19; 35:22 **38:22** Ps 40:13,17

THE FLEETING NATURE OF LIFE

For the choir director, for Jeduthun. A psalm of David.

39 I said, “I will guard my ways so that I may not sin with my tongue;
I will guard my mouth with a muzzle
as long as the wicked are in my presence.” †
2 I was speechless and quiet; I kept silent, even from speaking good, and my pain intensified. †
3 My heart grew hot within me; as I mused, a fire burned. †
I spoke with my tongue:
4 “LORD, make me aware of my end and the number of my days
so that I will know how short-lived I am. †
5 In fact, you have made my days just inches long, and my life span is as nothing to you.
Yes, every human being stands as only a vapor. †
Selah 6 Yes, a person goes about like a mere shadow.

Indeed, they rush around in vain,
gathering possessions
without knowing who will get them. †

7 “Now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My hope is in you. †
8 Rescue me from all my transgressions; do not make me the taunt of fools. †
9 I am speechless; I do not open my mouth because of what you have done. †
10 Remove your torment from me.
Because of the force of your hand I am finished. †
11 You discipline a person with punishment for iniquity, consuming like a moth what is precious to him; †
yes, every human being is only a vapor. †
Selah

12 “Hear my prayer, LORD, and listen to my cry for help;
do not be silent at my tears. †
For I am here with you as an alien,
a temporary resident like all my ancestors. †

13 Turn your angry gaze from me so that I may be cheered up
before I die and am gone.” †

39:1 Ps 34:13; Jms 3:5-12 **39:2** Jb 40:4; Ps 38:13 **39:3** Ps 32:4; Jr 20:9; Lk 24:32 **39:4** Ps 78:39; 90:12; 103:14 **39:5** Ps 62:9; 89:47; 144:4 **39:6** Ps 49:10; Ec 2:18-19; Lk 12:20; 1Co 7:31 **39:7** Ps 38:15 **39:8** Ps 44:13; 79:4; 119:22 **39:9** Ps 39:2 **39:10** Jb 9:34; 13:21; Ps 32:4 **39:11** Is 50:9 **39:11** Ps 39:5 **39:12** Ps 35:22 **39:12** 1Ch 29:15; Heb 11:13; 1Pt 2:11 **39:13** Jb 7:19; 10:20-21; Ps 102:24

THANKSGIVING AND A CRY FOR HELP

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

40 I waited patiently for the LORD, and he turned to me and heard my cry for help. †

2 He brought me up from a desolate † pit, out of the muddy clay, †
and set my feet on a rock,
making my steps secure. †

3 He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. †
Many will see and fear,
and they will trust in the LORD. †

4 How happy is anyone who has put his trust in the LORD and has not turned to the proud
or to those who run after lies! †

5 LORD my God, you have done many things — your wondrous works and your plans for us; none can compare with you.
If I were to report and speak of them,
they are more than can be told. †

6 You do not delight in sacrifice and offering; you open my ears to listen. †
You do not ask for a whole burnt offering or a sin offering. †

7 Then I said, “See, I have come; in the scroll it is written about me. †

8 I delight to do your will, my God, †
and your instruction is deep within me.” †

9 I proclaim righteousness in the great assembly; see, I do not keep
my mouth closed † — as you know, LORD. †
10 I did not hide your righteousness in my heart; I spoke about your faithfulness
and salvation; I did not conceal your constant love and truth
from the great assembly. †

11 LORD, you do not † withhold your compassion from me.
Your constant love and truth will always guard me. †
12 For troubles without number have surrounded me; my iniquities have
overtaken me; I am unable to see.
They are more than the hairs of my head, and my courage leaves me. †
13 LORD, be pleased to rescue me; hurry to help me, LORD. †

14 Let those who intend to take my life be disgraced and confounded.
Let those who wish me harm
be turned back and humiliated. †
15 Let those who say to me, "Aha, aha! "
be appalled because of their shame. †

16 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love
your salvation continually say, "The LORD is great! " †
17 I am oppressed and needy; may the Lord think of me.
You are my helper and my deliverer;
my God, do not delay. †

40:2 Or *watery* **40:6** Lit *you hollow out ears for me* **40:9** Lit *not restrain my lips* **40:11** Or *Lord, do not* **40:1** Ps 27:14; 34:15; 37:7 **40:2** Ps 69:2,14 **40:2** Ps 27:5; 37:23 **40:3** Ps 33:3 **40:3** Dt 13:11 **40:4** Jb 23:11; Ps 84:12 **40:5** Jb 5:9; Ps 71:15; 139:17-18 **40:6** 1Sm 15:22; Ps 51:16; Am 5:22 **40:7** Lk 24:44 **40:8** Ps 119:16,24; Jn 4:34 **40:6-8** Ps 119:11; Heb 10:5-9 **40:9** Ps 22:22,25 **40:10** Ac 20:20 **40:11** Ps 36:5; 57:3; 61:7 **40:12** Ps 38:4; 65:3 **40:13** Ps 70:1 **40:14** Ps 35:4,26; 63:9; 70:2 **40:15** Ps 35:21,25; 70:3 **40:16** Ps 35:27; 70:4 **40:17** Ps 86:1; 109:22

VICTORY IN SPITE OF BETRAYAL

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

41 Happy is one who is considerate of the poor; the LORD will save him
in a day of adversity. †
2 The LORD will keep him and preserve him; he will be blessed in the land. †
You will not give him over to the desire of his enemies. †
3 The LORD will sustain him on his sickbed; you will heal him on the bed
where he lies. †

ILLNESS AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

The presence of illness in the human body may be revealed through a myriad of expressions. Some of these expressions include physiological alterations, psychological imbalances, and/or the influence of demons. Regardless of the expression, there is an unfavorable impact on the individual that can have personal, interpersonal, and even societal effects. In understanding this phenomenon, one must begin by understanding illness of the human body from the context of a Christian worldview.

In considering a framework of human illness within the context of that worldview, there is a foundational understanding that God exists (Ps 19:1-4), that he created everything (Gn 1:1), and that he also holds all things together (Col 1:17). Because of this foundational premise of God and his love for humanity, he created man in his image (Gn 1:27). In the creation of man (meaning humans of both sexes), he created the perfect state of existence for humanity in the garden of Eden with the expectation that people would live without sin and be given complete health (Gn 2:8-25). Unfortunately, man fell through disobeying God in the one way he could and was driven out of the garden. It was through his choice to "become like" God, "knowing good and evil" that sin entered the world (Gn 3:22; Rm 5:12-14). That decision changed the status of health for man, leading him to experience illness.

As mentioned earlier, human illness is expressed in various ways. Examples of physiological alterations noted in the Bible include plagues God placed on Pharaoh and his household because of Sarai (Gn 12:17), plagues placed on Pharaoh and his people for not setting God's people free (Ex 7-12), a man that had been blind his whole life whom God was using so that he could display his works through him (Jn 9:1-3), the woman that was healed of her continuous bleeding of twelve years by touching the garment of Christ (Mk 5:25-34), and the many cases of leprosy that were healed by God (Mt 10:8; Lk 17:14).

Psychological imbalances are shown in the Bible through individuals such as King Saul. He had severe challenges with paranoia and depression because of his disobedience to God (1Sm 16:14-17). God took his power away, and Saul eventually took his own life (1Sm 31:4). Additional evidences include Elijah, who fell into despair because of his fear of man (1Kg 19) and Jonah, who experienced various episodes of emotional outburst when unwilling to follow God's calling (see the book of Jonah).

Just how the influence of demons or "unclean spirits" relates to this topic is also a matter addressed in Scripture. When Adam and Eve chose to obey the serpent instead of God in Genesis 3, man gave dominion of the earth to Satan as the god of this world or age. This is the rationale for the redemptive process in which God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to die for our sins. One day Christ will return to bring us

back to him (Rv 19). Thus, while our created image has been tarnished, God has not separated himself from us forever. Christ's reappearing will fully redeem us. In the interim, while Satan has limited dominion, the presence of demonic activity is real. Examples in the Bible include the casting out of demons from a man so that he could speak (Mt 9:32-33), from a blind man so he could see (Mt 12:22), and from a man engaged in demonic activity to such an extent that he was bound in chains and cut himself with stones while living among tombs (Mk 5:1-20). In another scene, Jesus freed a young demon-possessed boy from the spirit that threw him into convulsions (Lk 9:37-42).

Whether the expression of an illness is from physiological alterations, psychological imbalances, or the influence of demons, the Bible teaches us that illnesses and other problems grow out of the sinful nature of man (Mk 7:14-23). Nevertheless, Psalm 50:15 tells us to "Call on [God] in a day of trouble; [He] will rescue [us], and [we] will honor [him]." Similar requests of God are noted in Jeremiah 33:3; Psalm 34:17; and Psalm 56:9. Such a cry in the form of a distress call suggests that suffering from any type of illness should draw man into an enhanced relationship or intimacy with God. This is illustrated through the experiences of Job, who after many trials and tribulations finally states, "I had heard reports about you [God], but now my eyes have seen you" (Jb 42:5). Fortunately, illness of the human body has a unique way of focusing us on the Lord, our hope.

The transformational or refining process that God sends us through in bringing us closer to him, which Isaiah speaks of in Isaiah 48:10, also allows us to be more comforting. Within a Christian worldview, God has designed our hearts and minds to be ministered to by people who have suffered. God wants to bring understanding individuals into the life of a person facing an illness, but he also wants to use our illnesses to bring healing to others (2Co 1:3-5).

Finally, the presence of illness allows one to grow and mature in Christ (Jms 1:2-4) and conform to his image (Rm 8:28-29). This requires trust that through the trials and tribulations of illness, one is being made better, made more like Jesus. Such trust is rooted in the knowledge that a day will come when "pain will be no more" and the curse of sin will be lifted (Rv 21:4). "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1Co 15:57).

TIMOTHY L. SMITH

4 I said, "LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against you." †
5 My enemies speak maliciously about me: "When will he die
and be forgotten? " †
6 When one of them comes to visit, he speaks deceitfully; he stores up evil
in his heart;
he goes out and talks. †
7 All who hate me whisper together about me; they plan to harm me. †
8 "Something awful has overwhelmed him, †
and he won't rise again from where he lies! " †
9 Even my friend † in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread,
has raised his heel against me. †

10 But you, LORD, be gracious to me and raise me up; then I will repay them. †
11 By this I know that you delight in me: †
my enemy does not shout in triumph over me. †
12 You supported me because of my integrity †
and set me in your presence forever. †

13 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and amen. †

41:8 Lit *"A thing of worthlessness has been poured into him* **41:9** Lit *Even a man of my peace*
41:1 Ps 82:3-4; Pr 14:21 **41:2** Ps 37:22,28 **41:2** Ps 27:12 **41:3** Jr 17:14 **41:4** Ps 6:2; 51:4 **41:5** Ps 38:12 **41:6** Ps 12:2; 62:4; Pr 26:24-26 **41:7** Ps 56:5 **41:8** Ps 71:10-11 **41:9** Jb 19:19; Ps 55:12-13; Jn 13:18 **41:10** Ps 9:13 **41:11** Ps 37:23 **41:11** Ps 25:2 **41:12** Ps 37:17 **41:12** Ps 21:6 **41:13** Ps 72:18-19; 89:52

BOOK II (Psalms 42–72)

LONGING FOR GOD

For the choir director. A *Maskil* of the sons of Korah.

42 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God. †
2 I thirst for God, the living God.
When can I come and appear before God? †
3 My tears have been my food day and night, while all day long people say to me,
"Where is your God?" †
4 I remember this as I pour out my heart: †
how I walked with many,
leading the festive procession to the house of God, with joyful and thankful shouts. †

5 Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God. †
6 I † am deeply depressed; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. †

7 Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers
and your billows have swept over me. †
8 The LORD will send his faithful love by day; †
his song will be with me in the night — a prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God, my rock, †
"Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy's oppression? " †
10 My adversaries taunt me, as if crushing my bones,
while all day long they say to me,
"Where is your God? " †
11 Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God. †

42:5-6 Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *him, the salvation of his presence.* 6*My God, I*
42:1 Ps 84:2; 119:131 **42:2** Ps 63:1 **42:3** Ps 79:10; 115:2 **42:4** Ps 62:8 **42:4** Ps 55:14; 100:4 **42:5** Ps 38:6; 43:5; Mt 26:38 **42:6** Ps 61:2; Jnh 2:7 **42:7** Ps 69:1-2; Jnh 2:3 **42:8** Jb 35:10; Ps 77:6 **42:9** Ps 18:2; 31:3 **42:9** Ps 43:2 **42:10** Jl 2:17 **42:11** Ps 43:5; Mt 26:38

Psalm 43 †

43 Vindicate me, God, and champion my cause against an unfaithful nation;
rescue me from the deceitful and unjust person. †
2 For you are the God of my refuge.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about in sorrow
because of the enemy's oppression? †

3 Send your light and your truth; let them lead me. †
Let them bring me to your holy mountain, to your dwelling place. †
4 Then I will come to the altar of God, to God, my greatest joy. †
I will praise you with the lyre,
God, my God. †

5 Why, my soul, are you so dejected?
Why are you in such turmoil?
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise him, my Savior and my God. †

Ps 43 Many Hb mss connect Pss 42 and 43
43:1 Ps 5:6; 26:1; 35:24 **43:2** Ps 42:9; 88:14 **43:3** Ps 36:9 **43:3** Ps 2:6; 46:4; 84:1 **43:4** Ps 26:6 **43:4** Ps 33:2; 57:8 **43:5** Ps 42:5,11

ISRAEL'S COMPLAINT

For the choir director. A *Maskil* of the sons of Korah.

44 God, we have heard with our ears — our ancestors have told us —
the work you accomplished in their days, in days long ago: †
2 In order to plant them, you displaced the nations by your hand; in order to settle them,
you brought disaster on the peoples. †
3 For they did not take the land by their sword — their arm did not bring them victory —
but by your right hand, your arm,
and the light of your face, †
because you were favorable toward them. †

4 You are my King, my God, who ordains † victories for Jacob. †
5 Through you we drive back our foes; through your name we trample our enemies. †
6 For I do not trust in my bow, and my sword does not bring me victory. †
7 But you give us victory over our foes and let those who hate us be disgraced. †
8 We boast in God all day long; we will praise your name forever. †
Selah

9 But you have rejected and humiliated us; you do not march out with our armies. †
10 You make us retreat from the foe, and those who hate us
have taken plunder for themselves. †
11 You hand us over to be eaten like sheep and scatter us among the nations. †

12 You sell your people for nothing; you make no profit from selling them. †
13 You make us an object of reproach to our neighbors, a source of mockery and ridicule to those around us. †
14 You make us a joke among the nations, a laughingstock † among the peoples. †
15 My disgrace is before me all day long, and shame has covered my face, †
16 because of the taunts † of the scorner and reviler, because of the enemy and avenger. †

17 All this has happened to us, but we have not forgotten you
or betrayed your covenant. †
18 Our hearts have not turned back; our steps have not strayed from your path. †
19 But you have crushed us in a haunt of jackals and have covered us with deepest darkness. †
20 If we had forgotten the name of our God and spread out our hands to a foreign god, †
21 wouldn't God have found this out, since he knows the secrets of the heart? †
22 Because of you we are being put to death all day long; we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. †

23 Wake up, LORD! Why are you sleeping?
Get up! Don't reject us forever! †
24 Why do you hide and forget our affliction and oppression? †
25 For we have sunk down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. †
26 Rise up! Help us!
Redeem us because of your faithful love. †

44:4 LXX, Syr, Aq; MT reads *King, God; ordain* **44:14** Lit *shaking of the head* **44:16** Lit *voice*
44:1 Dt 32:7; Ps 78:3 **44:2** 2Sm 7:10; Ps 78:55; 80:8 **44:3** Nm 6:25 **44:3** Dt 7:7-8; Ps 77:15; Hs 1:7 **44:4** Ps 42:8; 74:12 **44:5** Ps 60:12; 108:13; Zch 10:5 **44:6** 1Sm 17:47; Ps 33:16 **44:7** Ps 35:4; 53:5 **44:8** Ps 30:12; 34:2 **44:9** Ps 60:1,10; 74:1; 108:11 **44:10** Lv 26:17; Dt 28:25; Jos 7:8,12 **44:11** Lv 26:33; Dt 4:27; 28:64; Ps 106:27 **44:12** Dt 32:30; Jdg 2:14; 3:8; Is 52:3-4 **44:13** Dt 28:37; Ps 79:4 **44:14** Jb 17:6; Ps 109:25; Jr 24:9 **44:15** 2Ch 32:21; Ps 69:7 **44:16** Ps 8:2; 74:10 **44:17** Ps 119:61,153 **44:18** Jb 23:11; Ps 37:31; 119:51,157 **44:19** Jb 30:29; Jr 9:11 **44:20** Dt 6:14; Jb 11:13 **44:21** Ps 139:1-2; Jr 17:10; Heb 4:13 **44:22** Is

53:7; Jr 12:3; Rm 8:36 **44:23** Ps 7:6; 35:23; 78:65 **44:24** Jb 13:24; Ps 88:14 **44:25** Ps 119:25 **44:26** Ps 25:22

A ROYAL WEDDING SONG

For the choir director: according to "The Lilies." † A *Maskil* of the sons of Korah. A love song.

45 My heart is moved by a noble theme as I recite my verses to the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer. †

2 You are the most handsome of men; †
grace flows from your lips. †
Therefore God has blessed you forever. †

3 Mighty warrior, strap your sword at your side.
In your majesty and splendor † — 4 in your splendor ride triumphantly in the cause of truth, humility, and justice.
May your right hand show your awe-inspiring acts. †
5 Your sharpened arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. †

6 Your throne, † God, is † forever and ever; the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. †
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; †
therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions.
8 Myrrh, aloes, and cassia perfume all your garments; from ivory palaces harps bring you joy. †
9 Kings' daughters are among your honored women; †
the queen, adorned with gold from Ophir, stands at your right hand. †

10 Listen, daughter, pay attention and consider: forget your people and your father's house, †
11 and the king will desire your beauty.
Bow down to him, for he is your lord. †

12 The daughter of Tyre, the wealthy people, will seek your favor with gifts. †

13 In her chamber, the royal daughter is all glorious, her clothing embroidered with gold. †

14 In colorful garments she is led to the king; after her, the virgins, her companions, are brought to you. †

15 They are led in with gladness and rejoicing; they enter the king's palace. †

16 Your sons will succeed your ancestors; you will make them princes throughout the land. †

17 I will cause your name to be remembered for all generations; therefore the peoples will praise you forever and ever. †

45:2 Or *of the descendants of Adam* **45:6** Or *Your divine throne is,* or *Your throne is God's*
45:title Pss 60; 69; 80 titles **45:1** Ezr 7:6 **45:2** Lk 4:22 **45:2** Ps 21:6 **45:3** Is 49:2; Rv 1:16; 19:15 **45:4** Ps 65:5; 98:1 **45:5** Dt 23:14; Ps 18:14 **45:6-7** Heb 1:8-9 **45:6** Ps 93:2 **45:7** Ps 33:5 **45:8** Sg 4:14; Jn 19:39 **45:9** Sg 6:8 **45:9** 1Kg 9:28; 10:11 **45:10** Ru 1:16-17 **45:11** Eph 5:33 **45:12** Ps 68:29; 72:10-11; Is 49:23 **45:13** Ex 39:2-3; Rv 19:7-8 **45:14** Ezk 16:18; 26:16 **45:15** Jr 22:4 **45:16** 1Pt 2:9; Rv 1:6; 5:10 **45:17** Mal 1:11

GOD OUR REFUGE

For the choir director. A song of the sons of Korah. According to *Alamoth*. †

46 God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found
in times of trouble. †

2 Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles
and the mountains topple
into the depths of the seas, †

3 though its water roars and foams and the mountains quake with its turmoil. †
Selah

4 There is a river — its streams delight the city of God,
the holy dwelling place of the Most High. †

5 God is within her; she will not be toppled.
God will help her when the morning dawns. †

6 Nations rage, kingdoms topple; the earth melts when he lifts his voice. †
7 The LORD of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. †
Selah

8 Come, see the works of the LORD, who brings devastation on the earth. †
9 He makes wars cease throughout the earth.
He shatters bows and cuts spears to pieces; he sets wagons ablaze. †
10 "Stop your fighting, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations,
exalted on the earth." †
11 The LORD of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. †
Selah

46:title 1Ch 15:20 **46:1** Ps 9:9; 62:7-8 **46:2** Ps 18:7; 82:5 **46:3** Ps 93:3-4; Jr 5:22 **46:4** Ps 43:3; Rv 22:1-2 **46:5** Is 12:6; Zch 2:10-11 **46:6** Ps 2:1; Jr 25:30 **46:7** Ps 9:9; Jl 3:16 **46:8** Ps 66:5 **46:9** Ps 76:3; Is 2:4; Mc 4:3 **46:10** Ps 100:3; Is 2:11,17 **46:11** Ps 9:9; Jl 3:16

GOD OUR KING

For the choir director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

47 Clap your hands, all you peoples; †
shout to God with a jubilant cry. †
2 For the LORD, the Most High, is awe-inspiring, a great King over
the whole earth. †
3 He subdues peoples under us and nations under our feet. †
4 He chooses for us our inheritance — the pride of Jacob, whom he loves. †
Selah

5 God ascends among shouts of joy, the LORD, with the sound of trumpets. †
6 Sing praise to God, sing praise; sing praise to our King, sing praise! †
7 Sing a song of wisdom, †
for God is King of the whole earth. †

8 God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne. †

9 The nobles of the peoples have assembled with the people of the God
of Abraham. †
For the leaders † of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted. †

47:7 Or *Sing a* maskil **47:9** Lit *shields*
47:1 Is 55:12 **47:1** Ps 95:1 **47:2** Dt 7:21; Neh 1:5; Mal 1:14 **47:3** Ps 2:8; 18:47 **47:4** Am 8:7; Nah 2:2 **47:5** 2Sm 6:15; Ps 68:18; 98:6 **47:6** Ps 68:4; 89:18 **47:7** Zch 14:9; 1Co 14:15 **47:8** 1Ch 16:31; Ps 22:28; 97:2 **47:9** Ps 102:22 **47:9** Ps 72:11; Is 49:7,23

ZION EXALTED

A song. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

48 The LORD is great and highly praised in the city of our God. †
His holy mountain, 2 rising splendidly, is the joy of the whole earth.
Mount Zion — the summit of Zaphon —
is the city of the great King. †
3 God is known as a stronghold in its citadels. †

4 Look! The kings assembled; they advanced together. †
5 They looked and froze with fear; they fled in terror. †
6 Trembling seized them there, agony like that of a woman in labor, †
7 as you wrecked the ships of Tarshish with the east wind. †

8 Just as we heard, so we have seen in the city of the LORD of Armies, in the city
of our God;
God will establish it forever. †
Selah

9 God, within your temple, we contemplate your faithful love. †
10 Like your name, God, so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; †
your right hand is filled with justice. †
11 Mount Zion is glad.
Judah's villages † rejoice because of your judgments. †

12 Go around Zion, encircle it; count its towers,

13 note its ramparts; tour its citadels so that you can tell a future generation: †
14 “This God, our God forever and ever — he will always lead us.” † †

48:11 Lit *daughters* **48:14** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *over death*
48:1 Ps 2:6; Mc 4:1; Zch 8:3 **48:2** Mt 5:35 **48:3** Ps 46:7; 50:2 **48:4** 2Sm 10:6-19 **48:5** Ex 15:15 **48:6** Is 13:8; Hs 13:13 **48:7** 1Kg 22:48; Jr 18:17; Ezk 27:26 **48:8** Ps 87:5; Is 2:2; Mc 4:1 **48:9** Ps 26:3; 40:10 **48:10** Ps 113:3; Mal 1:11 **48:10** Ps 45:4 **48:11** Ps 97:8 **48:12-13** Ps 78:5-7; 122:7 **48:14** Ps 23:3-4; Is 58:11

MISPLACED TRUST IN WEALTH

For the choir director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

49 Hear this, all you peoples; listen, all who inhabit the world, †
2 both low and high, rich and poor together. †
3 My mouth speaks wisdom; my heart’s meditation brings understanding. †
4 I turn my ear to a proverb; I explain my riddle with a lyre. †

5 Why should I fear in times of trouble?
The iniquity of my foes surrounds me. †
6 They trust in their wealth and boast of their abundant riches. †
7 Yet these cannot redeem a person †
or pay his ransom to God † — 8 since the price of redeeming him is too costly,
one should forever stop trying † † — 9 so that he may live forever and not see the Pit. †

10 For one can see that the wise die; the foolish and stupid also pass away. †
Then they leave their wealth to others. †
11 Their graves are their permanent homes, †
their dwellings from generation to generation, though they have named estates after themselves. †
12 But despite his assets, † mankind will not last; he is like the animals that perish. †

13 This is the way of those who are arrogant, and of their followers,
who approve of their words. † †

Selah 14 Like sheep they are headed for Sheol; Death will shepherd them.

The upright will rule over them in the morning, †
and their form will waste away in Sheol, †
far from their lofty abode. †
15 But God will redeem me from the power of Sheol,
for he will take me. †

Selah

16 Do not be afraid when a person gets rich, when the wealth †
of his house increases. †
17 For when he dies, he will take nothing at all; his wealth will not follow
him down. †
18 Though he blesses himself during his lifetime — and you are acclaimed
when you do well for yourself † — 19 he will go to the generation
of his fathers; they will never see the light. †
20 Mankind, with his assets but without understanding,
is like the animals that perish. †

49:7 Or *Certainly he cannot redeem himself,* or *Yet he cannot redeem a brother* **49:8** Or *costly, it will cease forever* **49:11** LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *Their inner thought is that their houses are eternal* **49:12** Or *honor* **49:13** Lit *and after them with their mouth they were pleased* **49:14** Hb obscure **49:16** Or *glory,* also in v. 17 **49:1** Ps 78:1; Mc 1:2 **49:2** Ps 62:9 **49:3** Ps 37:30 **49:4** Nm 12:8; Mt 13:35 **49:5** Ps 23:4; 27:1 **49:6** Jb 31:24; Ps 52:7; Pr 11:28 **49:7** Jb 36:18-19; Mt 25:8-9 **49:8** Mt 16:26 **49:9** Jb 33:28; Ps 16:10 **49:10** Ec 2:16 **49:10** Ps 39:6; Ec 2:18-19; Lk 12:20 **49:11** Ps 5:9; 10:6 **49:12** Ec 3:19 **49:13** Ps 31:23; Pr 16:18; 21:24 **49:14** Rv 2:26 **49:14** Jb 24:19; Ps 9:17 **49:15** Ps 16:10; 56:13; Hs 13:14 **49:16** Ps 37:7 **49:17** Jb 27:19; Ps 17:14; 1Tm 6:7 **49:18** Dt 29:19; Ps 10:3,6 **49:19** Gn 15:15; Jb 33:30; Ps 56:13 **49:20** Ec 3:19

GOD AS JUDGE

A psalm of Asaph. †

50 The Mighty One, God, † the LORD, speaks; he summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting. †
2 From Zion, the perfection of beauty, God appears in radiance. † †
3 Our God is coming; he will not be silent!

Devouring fire precedes him,
and a storm rages around him. †
4 On high, he summons heaven and earth in order to judge his people: †
5 "Gather my faithful ones to me, those who made a covenant with me by sacrifice." †
6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness, †
for God is the Judge. †

Selah

7 "Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel.
I am God, your God. †
8 I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or for your burnt offerings,
which are continually before me. †
9 I will not take a bull from your household or male goats from your pens, †
10 for every animal of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. †
12 If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and everything in it is mine. †
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? †
14 Sacrifice a thank offering to God, †
and pay your vows to the Most High. †
15 Call on me in a day of trouble; I will rescue you, and you will honor me." †

16 But God says to the wicked: "What right do you have to recite my statutes and to take my covenant on your lips? †
17 You hate instruction and fling my words behind you. †
18 When you see a thief, you make friends with him,
and you associate with adulterers. †
19 You unleash your mouth for evil and harness your tongue for deceit. †
20 You sit, maligning your brother, slandering your mother's son. †

21 You have done these things, and I kept silent; you thought I was just like you. †
But I will rebuke you
and lay out the case before you. † †

22 "Understand this, you who forget God, or I will tear you apart,
and there will be no one to rescue you. †
23 Whoever sacrifices a thank offering honors me, and whoever orders his conduct,
I will show him the salvation of God." †

50:1 Or *The God of gods* **50:2** Or *God shines forth* **50:21** Lit *lay it out before your eyes*
50:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **50:1** Jos 22:22; Ps 113:3 **50:2** Dt 33:2; Ps 48:2; Lm 2:15 **50:3** Ps 18:12-13; 97:3 **50:4** Dt 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Is 1:2 **50:5** Ex 24:4-8; 2Ch 6:11 **50:6** Ps 89:5; 97:6 **50:6** Ps 75:7; 96:13 **50:7** Dt 31:21; Ps 81:8 **50:8** 1Sm 15:22; Ps 40:6; 51:16 **50:9** Ps 69:31 **50:10-11** Ex 19:5; Ps 104:24 **50:12** Dt 10:14; Ps 24:1; 1Co 10:26 **50:13** Is 1:11 **50:14** Lv 7:12; Ps 107:22; 116:17 **50:14** Dt 23:21; Ps 76:11 **50:15** Ps 20:1; 59:16; 77:2 **50:16** Is 29:13 **50:17** Pr 5:12; 12:1 **50:18** Rm 1:32; 1Tm 5:22 **50:19** Ps 10:7; 36:3; 52:2 **50:20** Jb 19:18; Mt 10:21 **50:21** Is 42:14; 57:11 **50:21** Ps 90:8 **50:22** Jb 8:13; Ps 9:17 **50:23** Ps 85:13; 91:16; Gl 6:16

A PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

For the choir director. A psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him after he had gone to Bathsheba. †

POLYTHEISM IN BIBLICAL TIMES

Polytheism is the belief in or worship of many deities. Polytheism as a system reigned in the ancient world. One celebrated exception to polytheism was the revolution of Pharaoh Akhenaten in the fourteenth century; he elevated Aten (the sun disk) while outlawing the worship of other gods. Nevertheless, this was not a true expression of monotheism and also was short-lived.

WHY POLYTHEISM?

Why did the peoples of the nations almost universally, except for the Israelites, accept the idea of polytheism? First, the concept of many deities may be traceable to the original idea of monotheism (the existence of only one god). That all the deities ultimately had an origin in a primeval force or god suggests an original idea of monotheism. The deities themselves were born, so to speak. This concept may have had sociological as well as philosophical motives. The gods functioned as go-betweens, bridging the gap between the community and the Creator source. These intermediary deities provided a vital connection with

the original primeval material.

Second, and more importantly, polytheism resulted from a spiritually corrupt mind. The apostle Paul explained: “For though they [the nations] knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened” (Rm 1:21).

FEATURES OF POLYTHEISM

There were many features of polytheism held in common across the spectrum of ancient religions.

1. POLYTHEISM WAS CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH WHAT TODAY IS UNDERSTOOD AS THE “NATURAL WORLD.”

The material entities of the universe were filled with the power of the deities, that is, the supernatural. The ancients, however, did not differentiate between the natural world, which is governed by the cause and effect of natural forces, and the supernatural world, which is the sphere of the gods. Deities and “natural” beings (e.g., sun) and forces (e.g., wind) were interdependent. In the viewpoint of polytheism, for example, there was a link between the function of the sun and the existence of the sun deity. For the universe to provide a habitat for life and for the afterlife, the corresponding deities to each facet of nature must be functioning.

2. SINCE THE GODS WERE SUPREME IN POWER, HUMANS FEARED THEM AND SOUGHT WAYS TO ENGENDER FAVORABLE TREATMENT. RITUAL WORSHIP, ESPECIALLY INCANTATIONS AND SYMPATHETIC MAGIC, WERE ESSENTIAL PATTERNS OF WORSHIP.

Specialization accompanied ritual worship, giving rise to temples, priests, and formulaic rites of sacrifice. Hymns of praise and confessions of offense also characterized human efforts to manipulate the activities of the deities.

3. THE DEITIES WERE SEXUAL, MALE AND FEMALE DEITIES.

This facet reflected the human makeup of two genders and mirrored the human means of producing and sustaining life. Sexual relations between the deities were necessary for the world to continue its natural cycles of existence: life and death, rain and drought, and fecundity and infertility. Sexual union between deities was also a common explanation for the origin of lesser gods. The sexual character of pagan gods was mirrored in human worship by cultic prostitution and deviant sexual practices.

4. POLYTHEISM ASSUMED A COMMUNITY OF GODS THAT WAS HIERARCHICAL.

At the highest level were the cosmic deities who exercised universal rule and who determined the fate of the lesser gods and of humans. One deity ruled over the pantheon, such as the Greek god Zeus who was over the twelve gods of Olympus. Polytheism included intermediary deities who were connected with specific activities (e.g., storm gods) or environmental spheres (e.g., sea gods) or were patron deities (of the state). The idea of a pantheon, in fact, imitated the social institutions of family and state. Family religion consisted of worshiping local deities close to the common person as part of family and ancestral heritage (e.g., household gods, cp. teraphim, Gn 31:19). State religion, however, was at the national level and involved the patron deity of the royal house, such as Babylon’s chief deity, Marduk. State religion was typically syncretistic, but ultimately a single deity received foremost attention. Patron deities were therefore associated with specific people groups and territorial lands. The concept of a pantheon also permitted the addition of new deities when nations entered into treaty or a nation defeated a rival.

5. ALTHOUGH THE GODS WERE INEXTRICABLY TIED TO THE NATURAL ORDER, THEY ALSO IMPACTED THE DIRECTION OF HISTORY.

Nations attributed their victories to the national god. The Moabite Stone, for example, gives credit to the god Chemosh for Moab's victory over Israel's king Ahab (ninth century BC). Nevertheless, the nations primarily viewed history as a cyclical pattern. History did not have an ultimate goal; there was no overarching plan for the development of history.

6. THE PERSONALITIES OF THE GODS WERE ANTHROPOMORPHIC; THEY PARALLELED THE CHARACTER OF HUMANS.

The gods routinely exhibited the same range of activities and emotions, such as procreation, daily activities, love, and anger. Patron deities supported the welfare of the people if the people fulfilled their responsibilities to the gods, including veneration and cultic performance. Worship involved prayers of praise and of confession so as to achieve favor and produce a stable, predictable relationship between a god and an individual or society. Commonly, the gods behaved capriciously, keeping their adherents uncertain of their favor. Divine anger was appeased through cultic rites. Babylonian and Egyptian literature, for example, contemplated the source of evil and injustice but they offered no resolution to the problems. There was no certainty that moral equity would win out in the end. The gods were selfish by nature, creating humans solely to serve their own interests. Humans built cities to the glory of the gods and provided animal sacrifices to feed them.

7. ACCOMPANYING POLYTHEISM WERE MYTHS (STORIES) REGARDING THE GODS.

Myths were not essentially intended to entertain. Rather, the concept of myth explained present reality; it gave a timeless picture of human society's institutions. The pantheon had a ruling god, king of the gods, and this supreme deity enjoyed a stately palace or temple and the loyalty of the lesser deities. This ideological template justified the hierarchy and hegemony of the state.

8. POLYTHEISM UNIVERSALLY INVOLVED IMAGES (IDOLS) OF THE GODS THAT WERE MADE OF VARIOUS MATERIALS LIKE WOOD, CLAY, OR METAL.

Images were not the same as the gods; rather, they were inhabited by the gods. Images were alive in that sense, and they linked the human worshiper and the god (cp. Isaiah's parody on image-making, 44:9-20). The Jews were accused of being atheists because they did not have an image in their temple. Christians, too, were accused of atheism because they did not worship Roman gods and bow to the imperial cult (for the Christian view of idols, see 1Co 8:4; 10:19-21).

KENNETH A. MATHEWS

51 Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love;
according to your abundant compassion,
blot out my rebellion. †

2 Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. †
3 For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me. †
4 Against you — you alone — I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. †
So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge. †
5 Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me. †

6 Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within. †
7 Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. †
8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. †
9 Turn your face away † from my sins and blot out all my guilt. †

10 God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast † spirit within me. †
11 Do not banish me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. †
12 Restore the joy of your salvation to me, and sustain me by giving me a willing spirit. †
13 Then I will teach the rebellious your ways, and sinners will return to you. †

14 Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God — †
God of my salvation —
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. †
15 Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. †
16 You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; you are not pleased with a burnt offering. †
17 The sacrifice pleasing to God is † a broken spirit.
You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God. †

18 In your good pleasure, cause Zion to prosper; build the walls of Jerusalem. †
19 Then you will delight in righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings;

then bulls will be offered on your altar. †

51:9 Lit *Hide your face* **51:10** Or *right* **51:17** Lit *The sacrifices of God are*
51:title 2Sm 12:1 **51:1** Is 43:25; Ac 3:19 **51:2** Is 1:16; Jr 33:8; 1Jn 1:7,9 **51:3** Ps 32:5; Pr 28:13; Is 59:12 **51:4** Ps 41:4 **51:4** Rm 3:4 **51:5** Jb 15:14; Ps 58:3; Rm 5:12-13 **51:6** Jb 38:36; Pr 2:6; Ec 2:26 **51:7** Lv 14:4,49; Nm 19:18; Is 1:18 **51:8** Ps 35:10; Is 38:13 **51:9** Jr 16:17 **51:10** Ps 24:4; Mt 5:8; Jms 4:8 **51:11** 2Kg 13:23; Is 63:10-11; Jr 7:15 **51:12** Ps 13:5 **51:13** Ex 33:13; Ps 25:4; Jr 2:33 **51:14** Ps 26:9 **51:14** Ps 35:28; 71:15 **51:15** Ex 4:15; Ps 9:14 **51:16** 1Sm 15:22; Ps 40:6 **51:17** Ps 34:18 **51:18** Ps 69:35; 102:16; 147:2 **51:19** Ps 4:5; 66:13,15; Mal 3:3

GOD JUDGES THE PROUD

For the choir director. A *Maskil* of David. When Doeg the Edomite went and reported to Saul, telling him, "David went to Ahimelech's house." †

52 Why boast about evil, you hero! †
God's faithful love is constant. †
2 Like a sharpened razor, your tongue devises destruction,
working treachery. †
3 You love evil instead of good, lying instead of speaking truthfully. †
Selah 4 You love any words that destroy, you treacherous tongue! †

5 This is why God will bring you down forever.
He will take you, ripping you out of your tent; he will uproot you from the land of the living. †
Selah 6 The righteous will see and fear, and they will derisively say about that hero, † †

7 "Here is the man who would not make God his refuge,
but trusted in the abundance of his riches, taking refuge in his destructive behavior." †

8 But I am like a flourishing olive tree in the house of God; †
I trust in God's faithful love forever and ever. †
9 I will praise you forever for what you have done.

In the presence of your faithful people, I will put my hope in your name,
for it is good. †

52:6 Lit *about him*
52:title 1Sm 22:9 **52:1** Ps 94:4 **52:1** Ps 40:10-11; 138:2 **52:2** Ps 5:9; 50:19; 59:7 **52:3** Ps 58:3; Jr 9:4-5 **52:4** Ps 10:7; Pr 17:4 **52:5** Ps 27:13; Pr 2:22 **52:6** Jb 22:19-20; Ps 37:34 **52:7** Ps 10:6; 49:6; Pr 11:28 **52:8** Ps 1:3; 128:3; Jr 11:16 **52:8** Ps 143:8 **52:9** Ps 30:12; 54:6

A PORTRAIT OF SINNERS

For the choir director: on *Mahalath*. † A *Maskil* of David.

THE NEW ATHEISM

The New Atheism is now an established feature of the intellectual landscape of our age. Thinkers such as Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Sam Harris, and the late Christopher Hitchens are among the figures most regularly featured on the front tables of America's bookstores and on the front pages of our newspapers.

Atheism is not a new concept. Even the OT speaks of the one who tells himself in his heart, "There's no God" (Ps 14:1). Atheism however, became an organized and publicly recognized worldview in the wake of the Enlightenment, however. It has maintained a foothold in Western culture ever since.

Prior to the development of the theory of evolution, there was no way for an atheist to settle on any clear argument for why the cosmos exists or why life forms appeared. Charles Darwin changed all that. The development of Darwinian evolution offered atheism an invaluable intellectual tool—an alternate account of beginnings. Richard Dawkins, perhaps the world's best-known evolutionary scientist, argues that the explanation offered by a frustrated atheist before Darwin "would have left one feeling pretty unsatisfied."

Darwin's theory of natural selection and the larger dogma of evolution emerged in the nineteenth century as the first coherent alternative to the Bible's doctrine of creation. This revolution in human thinking is well-summarized by Dawkins, who conceded that an atheist prior to Darwin would have to offer an explanation of the cosmos and the existence of life that would look something like this: "All I know is that God isn't a good explanation, so we must wait and hope that somebody comes up with a better one."

In a single sentence, Dawkins gets to the heart of the matter: "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."

Nevertheless, atheists have typically represented only a small (if vocal) minority of Americans. Surveys estimate that atheists represent less than 3 percent of the population, although those "unaffiliated" with any religion is nearly 20 percent. As a worldview, atheism is over-represented among the intellectual elites, and atheists have largely—though not exclusively—talked to their own.

Until now. The New Atheists have emerged as potent public voices. They write best-selling books, appear on major college and university campuses, and extend their voices through institutional and cultural influence.

The New Atheism is not just a reassertion of atheism. It is a movement that represents a far greater public challenge to Christianity than that posed by the atheistic movements of previous times. Adherents see science as on their side, arguing that scientific knowledge in general, and evolutionary theory in particular, is our only true knowledge. They argue that belief in God is organized ignorance, that theistic beliefs lead to

violence, and that atheism is liberation. They are shocked and appalled that Americans refuse to follow the predictions of the secularization theorists, who had assured the elites that belief in God would be dissolved by the acids of modernity. They have added new (and important) arguments to the atheistic arsenal.

Dawkins, for example, not only believes that Darwinism made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist, but he also argues that religious belief is actually dangerous and devoid of credibility. Thus, he argues not only that Darwinism made it possible for an atheist to be intellectually fulfilled but that the theory of evolution undermines belief in God. In other words, Dawkins asserts that Darwinism makes it impossible to be an intellectually fulfilled Christian.

Daniel Dennett, another of the "Four Horsemen" of the New Atheism, has argued that Darwin's theory of evolution is a "universal acid" that will burn away all claims of the existence of God. His confidence in Darwinism is total. Dennett is honest enough to recognize that if evolutionary theory is true, it must eventually offer an account of *everything* related to the question of life. Thus, evolution will have to explain every aspect of life, from how a species appeared to why a mother loves her child.

As we might expect, the theory of evolution is used to explain that there must have been a time when belief in God was necessary in order for humans to have adequate confidence to reproduce. Clearly, Dennett believes that we should now have adequate confidence to do so without belief in God.

Sam Harris, also a scientist by training, pushes the argument even further than Dawkins and Dennett. Harris has argued that belief in God is such a danger to human civilization that religious liberty should be denied in order that science might reign supreme as the intellectual foundation of human society. The last of the "Four Horsemen," author Christopher Hitchens used his considerable wit to ridicule belief in God, which he, like Dawkins and Harris, considered downright dangerous to humanity.

The dogma of Darwinism is among the first principles of the worldview offered by the New Atheists. Darwin replaces the Bible as the great explainer of the existence of life in all of its forms. The New Atheists are not merely dependent upon science for their worldview; their worldview amounts to *scientism*—the belief that modern naturalistic science is the great unifying answer to the most basic questions of human life.

As Richard Dawkins has argued, they feel that disbelief in evolution should be considered intellectually disrespectable and as reprehensible as denial of the Holocaust. Thus, their strategy is to use the theory of evolution as a central weapon in today's context of intellectual combat.

The New Atheists write from positions of privilege, and they know how to package their ideas. Books by Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have spent weeks and months on the best-seller list published by *The New York Times*. They know that the most important audience is the young, and they are in a position to reach young people with their arguments.

The New Atheism has exploited an opening presented by significant and seismic changes in prevailing patterns of thought. We must acknowledge that most educated persons living in Western societies now inhabit a cultural space in which the conditions of belief have been radically changed. Whereas it was once impossible not to believe in God and later possible not to believe, for millions of people today, the default position is that it is impossible to believe.

In terms of our own Christian evangelistic and apologetic mandate, it is helpful to acknowledge that only a minority of those we seek to reach with the gospel truly and self-consciously identify with atheism in any form. Nevertheless, the rise of the New Atheism presents a seductive alternative for those inclined to identify more publicly and self-consciously with organized non-belief. The far greater challenge for most of us, then, is to communicate the gospel to persons whose minds are more indirectly shaped by these changed conditions of belief.

The church must respond to the challenge of the New Atheism with the full measure of conviction and not with mere curiosity. We must remember that the church has faced a constellation of theological challenges throughout its history. Then, as now, our task is to articulate, communicate, and defend the Christian faith with intellectual integrity and evangelistic urgency. We should not assume that this task will be easy, and we must also refuse to withdraw from public debate and private conversation in light of this challenge.

In the final analysis, the New Atheism presents the Christian church with a great moment of clarification.

The New Atheists do, in the end, understand what they are rejecting, as Paul's teaching in Romans 8:18-22 makes plain. Further, when Sam Harris defines true religion as that "where participants' avowed belief in a supernatural agent or agents whose approval is to be sought" is met, he understands what many mired in confusion do not. The only god who matters is a supernatural God—a personal God—who will judge. In the end, the existence of the supernatural, self-existent, and self-revealing God is the only starting point for Christian theology. God possesses all of the perfections revealed in Scripture, or there is no coherent theology presented in the Bible.

The New Atheists are certainly right about one very important thing—it's atheism or biblical theism. There is nothing in between.

R. ALBERT MOHLER JR.

53 The fool says in his heart, "There's no God."
They are corrupt, and they do vile deeds.
There is no one who does good. †

2 God looks down from heaven on the human race †
to see if there is one who is wise,
one who seeks God. †

3 All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt.
There is no one who does good,
not even one. †

4 Will evildoers never understand?
They consume my people as they consume bread; †
they do not call on God. †

5 Then they will be filled with dread — dread like no other † — because God will scatter
the bones of those who besiege you. †
You will put them to shame,
for God has rejected them. †

6 Oh, that Israel's deliverance would come from Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of his people, †
let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad. †

53:2 Or *the descendants of Adam* **53:6** Or *restores his captive people*
53:title Ps 88 title **53:1** Ps 10:4; 14:1 **53:2** Ps 33:13-15 **53:2-3** Rm 3:10-12 **53:4** Ps 27:2; Mc 3:3 **53:4** Is 64:7 **53:5** Lv 26:36 **53:5** Jr 8:1-2 **53:5** Ps 44:7 **53:6** Ps 14:7; Is 52:7-9; Jr 30:18-19

PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE

For the choir director: with stringed instruments. A *Maskil* of David. When the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding among us?" †

54 God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might! †
2 God, hear my prayer; listen to the words from my mouth. †
3 For strangers rise up against me, and violent men intend to kill me.
They do not let God guide them. † †

Selah

4 God is my helper; the Lord is the sustainer of my life. † †
5 He will repay my adversaries for their evil.
Because of your faithfulness, annihilate them. †

6 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you. †
I will praise your name, LORD, because it is good. †
7 For he has rescued me from every trouble, and my eye has looked down on my enemies. †

54:3 Lit *They do not set God in front of them* **54:4** Or *is with those who sustain my life*
54:title 1Sm 23:19; 26:1 **54:1** Ps 6:1; 7:8; 35:24; 43:1 **54:2** Ps 5:1; 17:6; 55:1 **54:3** Ps 86:14; 143:3; Is 25:5 **54:4** Ps 118:7; Is 41:10 **54:5** Ps 94:23; 143:12 **54:6** Nm 15:3; Ps 116:17 **54:6** Ps 52:9 **54:7** Ps 59:10; 92:11

BETRAYAL BY A FRIEND

For the choir director: with stringed instruments. A *Maskil* of David.

55 God, listen to my prayer and do not hide from my plea for help. †
2 Pay attention to me and answer me. †
I am restless and in turmoil with my complaint, †
3 because of the enemy's words, †
because of the pressure † of the wicked.
For they bring down disaster on me

and harass me in anger. †

4 My heart shudders within me; †
terrors of death sweep over me.
5 Fear and trembling grip me; horror has overwhelmed me. †
6 I said, “If only I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and find rest. †
7 How far away I would flee; I would stay in the wilderness. †
Selah 8 I would hurry to my shelter from the raging wind and the storm.” †

9 Lord, confuse † and confound their speech, † †
for I see violence and strife in the city; 10 day and night they make the rounds on its walls.
Crime and trouble are within it; †
11 destruction is inside it; oppression and deceit never leave its marketplace. †

12 Now it is not an enemy who insults me — otherwise I could bear it;
it is not a foe who rises up against me — otherwise I could hide from him.
13 But it is you, a man who is my peer, my companion and good friend! †
14 We used to have close fellowship; we walked with the crowd into the house of God. †

15 Let death take them by surprise; †
let them go down to Sheol alive,
because evil is in their homes and within them. †
16 But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. †
17 I complain and groan morning, noon, and night, †
and he hears my voice. †
18 Though many are against me, he will redeem me from my battle unharmed. †
19 God, the one enthroned from long ago, †
will hear and will humiliate them
Selah because they do not change

and do not fear God. †

20 My friend † acts violently against those at peace with him; †
he violates his covenant. †
21 His buttery words are smooth, but war is in his heart.
His words are softer than oil,
but they are drawn swords. †

22 Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; †
he will never allow the righteous to be shaken. †

23 God, you will bring them down to the Pit of destruction; †
men of bloodshed and treachery
will not live out half their days. †
But I will trust in you. †

55:3 Lit *voice* **55:3** Or *threat*, or *oppression* **55:9** Or *destroy* **55:9** Lit *and divide their tongue* **55:1** Lm 3:56 **55:1-2** Ps 4:1; 5:1-2; 54:2 **55:2** Ps 64:1; 142:2 **55:3** 2Sm 16:7-8; Ps 71:11 **55:4** Ps 38:8 **55:4-5** Ps 18:4-5; 116:3 **55:6** Jb 3:13 **55:7** Jr 9:2 **55:8** Is 4:6; 25:4 **55:9** Gn 10:25; 11:7 **55:9-10** Jr 6:7; Hab 1:3 **55:11** Ps 5:9; 10:7 **55:12-13** Jb 19:13,19; Ps 41:9; 88:18 **55:14** Ps 42:4 **55:15** Pr 6:15; Is 47:11; 1Th 5:3 **55:15** Nm 16:30,33 **55:16** Ps 119:46 **55:17** Ps 92:2 **55:17** Ps 64:1; 142:2 **55:18** Ps 56:2; 103:4 **55:19** Ps 93:2 **55:19** Dt 33:27 **55:20** Ps 55:13 **55:20** Ps 7:4 **55:20** Ps 89:34 **55:21** Ps 12:2; 28:3 **55:22** 1Pt 5:7 **55:22** Ps 37:24; 112:6 **55:23** Is 38:17; Ezk 28:8 **55:23** Ps 5:6 **55:23** Ps 56:3

A CALL FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

For the choir director: according to "A Silent Dove Far Away." A *Miktam* of David. When the Philistines seized him in Gath. †

56 Be gracious to me, God, for a man is trampling me; he fights and oppresses me all day long.
2 My adversaries trample me all day, for many arrogantly fight against me. † †

3 When I am afraid, I will trust in you. †
4 In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me? †

5 They twist my words all day long; all their thoughts against me are evil. †
6 They stir up strife, † they lurk; they watch my steps
while they wait to take my life. †
7 Will they escape in spite of such sin?
God, bring down the nations in wrath. †

8 You yourself have recorded my wanderings. †
Put my tears in your bottle.
Are they not in your book? †
9 Then my enemies will retreat on the day when I call. †
This I know: God is for me. †

10 In God, whose word I praise, in the LORD, whose word I praise, 11 in God I trust; I will not be afraid.
What can mere humans do to me? †

12 I am obligated by vows † to you, God; I will make my thank offerings to you. †
13 For you rescued me from death, even my feet from stumbling,
to walk before God in the light of life. †

56:2 Or *many fight against me, O exalted one,* or *many fight against me from the heights* **56:6** Or *They attack* **56:8** Or *misery* **56:12** Lit *On me the vows*
56:title 1Sm 21:10-11; 22:1 **56:1-2** Ps 35:1; 57:3 **56:3** Ps 112:7; Pr 29:25; Is 12:2 **56:4** Ps 27:1; 118:6; Heb 13:6 **56:5** Ps 41:7; 2Pt 3:16 **56:6** Ps 10:8-10; 59:3 **56:7** Ezk 17:15; Rm 2:3 **56:8** 2Kg 20:5; Ps 139:3; Mal 3:16 **56:9** Ps 9:3 **56:9** Ps 118:6; Rm 8:31 **56:10-11** Ps 112:7; Pr 29:25; Is 12:2 **56:12** Ps 50:14 **56:13** Jb 33:30; Ps 116:8-9

PRAISE FOR GOD'S PROTECTION

For the choir director: "Do Not Destroy." A *Miktam* of David. When he fled before Saul into the cave. †

57 Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me, for I take refuge in you.
I will seek refuge in the shadow of your wings until danger passes. †
2 I call to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. † †

3 He reaches down from heaven and saves me, challenging the one who tramples me. †

Selah God sends his faithful love and truth. †

4 I am surrounded by lions; I lie down among devouring lions — people whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. †

5 God, be exalted above the heavens; let your glory be over the whole earth. †

6 They prepared a net for my steps; I was despondent.
They dug a pit ahead of me,
but they fell into it! †

Selah

7 My heart is confident, God, my heart is confident.
I will sing; I will sing praises. †

8 Wake up, my soul!
Wake up, harp and lyre!
I will wake up the dawn. †

9 I will praise you, Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. †

10 For your faithful love is as high as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches the clouds. †

11 God, be exalted above the heavens; †
let your glory be over the whole earth. †

57:2 Or *who avenges me*
57:title 1Sm 22:1; 24:1-3 **57:1** Ru 2:12; Ps 17:8; 91:1,4 **57:2** Ps 138:8 **57:3** Ps 56:1-2 **57:3** Ps 25:10; 40:11 **57:4** Ps 58:6; 64:3; Pr 30:14 **57:5** Ps 108:5; 113:4 **57:6** Ps 9:15; 35:8; Pr 28:10 **57:7** Ps 59:17; 112:7 **57:8** Jdg 5:12; Ps 33:2; 81:2 **57:9** 2Sm 22:50; Ps 9:11; 18:49 **57:10** Ps 36:5; 103:11; Lm 3:22-23 **57:11** Ps 113:4 **57:7-11** Ps 108:1-5

A CRY AGAINST INJUSTICE

For the choir director: "Do Not Destroy." A *Miktam* of David.

58 Do you really speak righteously, you mighty ones? †
Do you judge people fairly? †

2 No, you practice injustice in your hearts; with your hands
you weigh out violence in the land. †

3 The wicked go astray from the womb; liars wander about from birth. †
4 They have venom like the venom of a snake, like the deaf cobra that stops up
its ears, †
5 that does not listen to the sound of the charmers who skillfully weave spells. †

6 God, knock the teeth out of their mouths; LORD, tear out
the young lions' fangs. †
7 May they vanish like water that flows by; may they aim
their blunted arrows. † †
8 Like a slug that moves along in slime, like a woman's miscarried child,
may they not see the sun. †

9 Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns — whether green or burning —
he will sweep them away. † †
10 The righteous one will rejoice when he sees the retribution; †
he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. †
11 Then people will say, "Yes, there is a reward for the righteous!
There is a God who judges on earth! " †

58:1 Or *Can you really speak righteousness in silence?* **58:7** Hb obscure **58:9** Or *thorns, he will sweep it away, whether raw or cooking*
58:1 Ps 82:2 **58:2** Ps 94:20; Is 10:1; Mal 3:15 **58:3** Ps 51:5; Is 48:8 **58:4** Dt 32:33; Ps 140:3 **58:5** Ec 10:11; Jr 8:17 **58:6** Jb 4:10; 29:17; Ps 3:7 **58:7** Jos 7:5; Ps 112:10; Ezk 21:7 **58:8** Jb 3:16; Ec 6:3 **58:9** Jb 27:21; Pr 10:25; Ec 7:6 **58:10** Jb 22:19 **58:10** Ps 68:23; Jr 11:20; 20:12 **58:11** Ps 9:8; 67:4; 75:7

GOD OUR STRONGHOLD

For the choir director: "Do Not Destroy." A *Miktam* of David. When Saul sent agents to watch the house and kill him. †

59 Rescue me from my enemies, my God; †
protect me from those who rise up against me. †

2 Rescue me from those who practice sin, and save me from men of bloodshed. †

3 Because look, LORD, they set an ambush for me. †
Powerful men attack me,
but not because of any sin or rebellion of mine. †
4 For no fault of mine, they run and take up a position.
Awake to help me, and take notice. †
5 LORD God of Armies, you are the God of Israel.
Rise up to punish all the nations;
do not show favor to any wicked traitors. †

Selah

6 They return at evening, snarling like dogs and prowling around the city. †
7 Look, they spew from their mouths — sharp words from † their lips. †
"For who," they say, "will hear? " †
8 But you laugh at them, LORD; you ridicule all the nations. †
9 I will keep watch for you, my † strength, because God is my stronghold. †
10 My faithful God † will come to meet me; God will let me look down on my adversaries. †

11 Do not kill them; otherwise, my people will forget.
By your power, make them homeless wanderers †
and bring them down,
Lord, our shield. †
12 For the sin of their mouths and the words of their lips, let them be caught in their pride.
They utter curses and lies. †
13 Consume them in rage; consume them until they are gone. †
Then people will know throughout † the earth that God rules over Jacob. †

Selah

14 And they return at evening, snarling like dogs and prowling around the city. †

15 They scavenge for food; they growl if they are not satisfied. †

16 But I will sing of your strength and will joyfully proclaim
your faithful love in the morning. †
For you have been a stronghold for me,
a refuge in my day of trouble. †
17 To you, my strength, I sing praises, because God is my stronghold — my faithful God. †

59:7 Lit *swords are on* **59:9** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg, Tg; other Hb mss read *his* **59:10** Alt Hb tradition reads *My God in his faithful love* **59:13** Lit *know to the ends of*
59:title 1Sm 19:11 **59:1** Ps 143:9 **59:1** 2Sm 22:18; Ps 18:17; 91:14 **59:2** Ps 5:6; 17:7 **59:3** Pr 1:11,18 **59:3** 1Sm 20:1; 24:11 **59:4** Ps 7:3-4; 69:4 **59:5** Jr 18:23 **59:6** Ps 22:16 **59:7** Ps 52:2; 57:4; 64:3 **59:7** Ps 73:11 **59:8** Ps 2:4; 37:13 **59:9** Ps 28:8; Jr 16:19 **59:10** Ps 54:7 **59:11** Hs 9:17 **59:11** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; 2Sm 22:3,31; Ps 3:3; 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 119:114 **59:12** Ps 10:7; Pr 12:13 **59:13** Ps 104:35 **59:13** Ps 83:18 **59:14** Ps 22:16 **59:15** Jb 15:23; Ps 109:10 **59:16** Ps 5:3; 88:13; 92:2 **59:16** Is 25:4; Nah 1:7 **59:17** Ps 28:8; Jr 16:19

PRAYER IN DIFFICULT TIMES

For the choir director: according to "The Lily of Testimony." † A *Miktam* of David for teaching. When he fought with Aram-naharaim and Aram-zobah, and Joab returned and struck Edom in Salt Valley, killing twelve thousand. †

60 God, you have rejected us; you have broken us down;
you have been angry. Restore us! † †
2 You have shaken the land and split it open.
Heal its fissures, for it shudders. †
3 You have made your people suffer hardship; you have given us wine to drink that made us stagger. †
4 You have given a signal flag to those who fear you, so that they can flee before the archers. † †
Selah 5 Save with your right hand, and answer me, so that those you love may be rescued. †

6 God has spoken in his sanctuary: †

“I will celebrate!
I will divide up Shechem. †
I will apportion the Valley of Succoth. †
7 Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, and Ephraim is my helmet; †
Judah is my scepter. †
8 Moab is my washbasin. †
I throw my sandal on Edom; †
I shout in triumph over Philistia.” †

9 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom? †
10 God, haven’t you rejected us?
God, you do not march out with our armies. †
11 Give us aid against the foe, for human help is worthless. †
12 With God we will perform valiantly; †
he will trample our foes. †

60:1 Or *Turn back to us* **60:4** Or *can rally before the archers*, or *can rally because of the truth* **60:6** Or *has promised by his holy nature*
60:title Pss 45; 69; 80 titles **60:title** 1Ch 18:3,12 **60:1** Ps 44:9,23; 79:5 **60:2** Ps 18:7 **60:3** Is 51:17-23; Jr 25:15-17 **60:4** Is 5:26; 11:12; 13:2 **60:5** Ps 17:7; 20:6; 138:7 **60:6** Gn 12:6; 33:18 **60:6** Gn 33:17 **60:7** Dt 33:17; Jos 13:31 **60:7** Gn 49:10 **60:8** 2Sm 8:2 **60:8** 2Sm 8:14 **60:8** 2Sm 8:1 **60:9** Jr 1:18 **60:10** Ps 44:9 **60:11** Ps 146:3 **60:12** Nm 24:18; Ps 44:5; 118:15-16 **60:5-12** Ps 108:6-13

SECURITY IN GOD

For the choir director: on stringed instruments. Of David.

61 God, hear my cry; pay attention to my prayer. †
2 I call to you from the ends of the earth when my heart is without strength. †
Lead me to a rock that is high above me, †
3 for you have been a refuge for me, a strong tower † in the face of the enemy.
4 I will dwell in your tent forever and take refuge under the shelter of your wings. †

Selah

5 God, you have heard my vows; †
you have given a heritage
to those who fear your name. †
6 Add days to the king's life; may his years span many generations. †
7 May he sit enthroned before God forever. †
Appoint faithful love and truth to guard him. †
8 Then I will continually sing of your name, †
fulfilling my vows day by day. †

61:1 Ps 17:1; 88:2; 142:6 **61:2** Ps 88:4 **61:2** Ps 27:5 **61:3** Pr 18:10 **61:4** Ru 2:12; Ps 17:8; 91:4 **61:5** Jb 22:27; Ps 56:12 **61:5** Mal 4:2 **61:6** Ps 21:4 **61:7** Ps 41:12 **61:7** Ps 40:11 **61:8** Ps 7:17; 9:2; 18:49 **61:8** Ps 65:1; 116:14,18

TRUST IN GOD ALONE

For the choir director: according to Jeduthun. † A psalm of David.

62 I am at rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. †
2 He alone is my rock and my salvation, †
my stronghold; I will never be shaken. †

3 How long will you threaten a man?
Will all of you attack †
as if he were a leaning wall
or a tottering fence? †
4 They only plan to bring him down from his high position.
They take pleasure in lying;
they bless with their mouths,
but they curse inwardly. †

Selah

5 Rest in God alone, my soul, for my hope comes from him. †

6 He alone is my rock and my salvation, †
my stronghold; I will not be shaken. †
7 My salvation and glory depend on God, my strong rock.
My refuge is in God. †
8 Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before him.
God is our refuge. †

Selah

9 Common people are only a vapor; important people, an illusion.
Together on a scale,
they weigh less than † a vapor. †
10 Place no trust in oppression, or false hope in robbery.
If wealth increases,
don't set your heart on it. †

11 God has spoken once; I have heard this twice:
strength belongs to God, †
12 and faithful love belongs to you, LORD.
For you repay each according to his works. †

62:3 Some Hb mss read *you be struck down* **62:9** Lit *they go up more than*
62:title Ps 39 title **62:1** Ps 33:20; 37:39 **62:1-2** Dt 32:15; 2Sm 22:47 **62:2** Ps 37:24; 55:22 **62:3** Is 30:13 **62:4** Ps 4:2; 55:21 **62:5** Ps 71:5 **62:6** Ps 89:26; 95:1 **62:6** Ps 16:8; 21:7 **62:7** Ps 18:2 **62:8** Ps 91:2; 118:8-9 **62:9** Ps 39:5-6,11; Is 40:17 **62:10** Jb 31:24-25; Mk 4:19; 1Tm 6:10,17-19 **62:11** Jb 40:5 **62:12** Mt 16:27; Rm 2:6; Rv 22:12

PRAISE GOD WHO SATISFIES

A psalm of David. When he was in the Wilderness of Judah. †

63 God, you are my God; I eagerly seek you.
I thirst for you;
my body faints for you
in a land that is dry, desolate, and without water. †
2 So I gaze on you in the sanctuary to see your strength and your glory. †

3 My lips will glorify you because your faithful love is better than life. †

4 So I will bless you as long as I live; at your name, I will lift up my hands. †
5 You satisfy me as with rich food; † †
my mouth will praise you with joyful lips. †

6 When I think of you as I lie on my bed, I meditate on you
during the night watches †
7 because you are my helper; †
I will rejoice in the shadow of your wings. †
8 I follow close to you; your right hand holds on to me. †

9 But those who intend to destroy my life will go into the depths of the earth. †
10 They will be given over to the power of the sword; †
they will become a meal for jackals.
11 But the king will rejoice in God; †
all who swear by him will boast,
for the mouths of liars will be shut. †

63:5 Lit *with fat and fatness*
63:title 2Sm 16:14; 17:2,29 **63:1** Ps 42:2; Is 26:9 **63:2** Jb 19:26-27; Ps 17:15; 27:4 **63:3** Ps 69:16 **63:4** Ps 28:2; 143:6; Lm 3:41 **63:5** Ps 36:8 **63:5** Ps 71:23 **63:6** Ps 77:6; 119:148 **63:7** Ps 27:9; 40:17 **63:7** Ps 17:8; 36:7; 57:1 **63:8** Ps 18:35 **63:9** Ps 55:15; Ezk 26:20; 31:14-18 **63:10** Jr 18:21; Ezk 35:5 **63:11** Ps 21:1 **63:11** Ps 107:42; Rm 3:19

PROTECTION FROM EVILDOERS

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

64 God, hear my voice when I am in anguish. †
Protect my life from the terror of the enemy. †
2 Hide me from the scheming of wicked people, †
from the mob of evildoers, †
3 who sharpen their tongues like swords and aim bitter words like arrows, †
4 shooting from concealed places at the blameless.
They shoot at him suddenly and are not afraid. †
5 They adopt † an evil plan; they talk about hiding traps and say,

“Who will see them?” † †

6 They devise crimes and say, “We have perfected a secret plan.” †
The inner man and the heart are mysterious.

7 But God will shoot them with arrows; suddenly, they will be wounded. †
8 They will be made to stumble; their own tongues work against them.
All who see them will shake their heads. †
9 Then everyone will fear and will tell about God’s work,
for they will understand what he has done. †

10 The righteous one rejoices in the LORD and takes refuge in him;
all those who are upright in heart
will offer praise. †

64:5 Or *They strengthen themselves with* **64:5** Or *it*
64:1 Ps 55:2 **64:1** Ps 140:1 **64:2** Ps 35:20; 37:12 **64:2** Ps 22:16; 26:5 **64:3** Ps 52:2; 57:4; Pr 25:18 **64:4** Ps 10:8; 11:2 **64:5** Ps 35:7; 140:5; 141:9 **64:6** Ps 21:11; 83:3 **64:7** Ps 7:13; 45:5; 144:6 **64:8** Jr 18:16; 48:27; Lm 2:15 **64:9** Ps 40:3 **64:10** Ps 32:11; 68:3; 97:11-12

GOD’S CARE FOR THE EARTH

For the choir director. A psalm of David. A song.

65 Praise is rightfully yours, †
God, in Zion;
vows to you will be fulfilled. †
2 All humanity will come to you, the one who hears prayer. †
3 Iniquities overwhelm me; only you can atone for our rebellions. †
4 How happy is the one you choose and bring near to live in your courts!
We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness
of your temple. † †

5 You answer us in righteousness, with awe-inspiring works,
God of our salvation,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the distant seas. †

6 You establish the mountains by your power; you are robed with strength. †
7 You silence the roar of the seas, the roar of their waves,
and the tumult of the nations. †
8 Those who live far away are awed by your signs; you make east and west
shout for joy. †

9 You visit the earth and water it abundantly, enriching it greatly.
God's stream is filled with water,
for you prepare the earth in this way,
providing people with grain. †
10 You soften it with showers and bless its growth, soaking its furrows
and leveling its ridges. †
11 You crown the year with your goodness; your carts overflow with plenty. † †
12 The wilderness pastures overflow, and the hills are robed with joy. †
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks and the valleys covered with grain. †
They shout in triumph; indeed, they sing. †

65:1 Or *Praise is silence to you,* or *Praise awaits you* **65:4** Or *house, your holy temple* **65:11** Lit *your paths drip with fat*
65:1 Ps 50:14; 116:18 **65:2** Ps 86:9; Is 2:2-4; 66:23 **65:3** Ps 38:14; 40:12; 79:9 **65:4** Ps 27:4; 84:4 **65:5** Dt 10:21; 2Sm 7:23; Ps 46:8 **65:6** Ps 93:1; Am 4:13 **65:7** Ps 107:29; Is 17:13; Mt 8:26 **65:8** Ps 2:8; 139:9; Is 24:16 **65:9** Ps 104:13; 147:8; Is 45:8 **65:10** Dt 3:22; Ps 72:6; 147:8 **65:11** Ps 104:28; 147:14 **65:12** Jb 38:26-27; Is 55:12; Jl 2:22 **65:13** Ps 72:16; 144:13; Is 30:23 **65:13** Is 44:23

PRAISE FOR GOD'S MIGHTY ACTS

For the choir director. A song. A psalm.

66 Let the whole earth shout joyfully to God! †
2 Sing about the glory of his name; make his praise glorious. †
3 Say to God, "How awe-inspiring are your works!
Your enemies will cringe before you
because of your great strength. †
4 The whole earth will worship you and sing praise to you.
They will sing praise to your name." †

Selah

5 Come and see the wonders of God; †
his acts for humanity † are awe-inspiring.
6 He turned the sea into dry land, and they crossed the river on foot. †
There we rejoiced in him. †
7 He rules forever by his might; he keeps his eye on the nations. †
The rebellious should not exalt themselves. †
Selah 8 Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard. †

9 He keeps us alive †
and does not allow our feet to slip. †

10 For you, God, tested us; you refined us as silver is refined. †
11 You lured us into a trap; you placed burdens on our backs. †
12 You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water,
but you brought us out to abundance. † †

13 I will enter your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows †
14 that my lips promised and my mouth spoke during my distress. †
15 I will offer you fattened sheep as burnt offerings, with the fragrant smoke of rams;
I will sacrifice bulls with goats. †

Selah

16 Come and listen, all who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me. †
17 I cried out to him with my mouth, and praise was on my tongue. †
18 If I had been aware of malice in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. †
19 However, God has listened; he has paid attention to the sound of my prayer. †
20 Blessed be God!
He has not turned away my prayer
or turned his faithful love from me. †

66:5 Or *for the descendants of Adam* **66:9** Lit *He sets our soul in life* **66:12** Or *a place of satisfaction*
66:1 Ps 98:4; 100:1 **66:1-2** 1Ch 16:29; Ps 48:10 **66:3** Ps 18:44; 47:2; 145:6 **66:4** Ps 72:11; Is 66:23; Zph

2:11 **66:5** Ps 46:8 **66:6** Ex 14:21; Ps 106:9 **66:6** Ex 15:1-21 **66:7** Ps 14:2; 33:13-14; Pr 15:3 **66:7** Ps 140:8 **66:8** Ps 98:4 **66:9** Ps 94:18; 121:3 **66:10** Jb 23:10; Ps 17:3; Is 48:10 **66:11** Lm 1:13; Ezk 12:13; 17:20 **66:12** Ps 18:19; Is 43:2 **66:13** Ps 22:25; 116:14; Ec 5:4 **66:14** Ps 18:6 **66:15** Nm 6:14; Ps 51:19 **66:16** Ps 9:1; 34:11; 71:15,24 **66:17** Ps 35:28 **66:18** Jb 36:21; Jn 9:31 **66:19** Ps 116:1-2 **66:20** Ps 22:24; 68:35

ALL WILL PRAISE GOD

For the choir director: with stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.

67 May God be gracious to us and bless us; may he make his face shine
upon us †
Selah 2 so that your way may be known on earth, your salvation
among all nations. †

3 Let the peoples praise you, God; let all the peoples praise you. †
4 Let the nations rejoice and shout for joy, for you judge the peoples
with fairness and lead the nations on earth. †
Selah 5 Let the peoples praise you, God, let all the peoples praise you. †

6 The earth has produced its harvest; God, our God, blesses us. †
7 God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth will fear him. †

67:1 Nm 6:25; Ps 4:6; 80:3,7,19 **67:2** Ps 98:2; Is 52:10; Ti 2:11 **67:3** Ps 45:17; 66:4; 117:1 **67:4** Ps 96:10,13; 100:1-2; Is 11:4 **67:5** Ps 45:17; 66:8; 117:1 **67:6** Lv 26:4; Ps 85:12; Ezk 34:27; Hs 2:22 **67:7** 1Kg 8:43; 2Ch 6:33; Ps 33:8

GOD'S MAJESTIC POWER

For the choir director. A psalm of David. A song.

68 God arises. His enemies scatter, and those who hate him flee
from his presence. †
2 As smoke is blown away, so you blow them away.
As wax melts before the fire,
so the wicked are destroyed before God. †
3 But the righteous are glad; they rejoice before God and celebrate with joy. †

4 Sing to God! Sing praises to his name.

Exalt him who rides on the clouds † — his name is the LORD † — and celebrate
before him. †
5 God in his holy dwelling is a father of the fatherless
and a champion of widows. †
6 God provides homes for those who are deserted.
He leads out the prisoners to prosperity, †
but the rebellious live in a scorched land. †

7 God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the desert,
Selah 8 the earth trembled and the skies poured rain before God, the God of Sinai, †

before God, the God of Israel. †
9 You, God, showered abundant rain; you revived your inheritance when it languished. †
10 Your people settled in it; God, you provided for the poor by your goodness. †

11 The Lord gave the command; a great company of women brought the good news: †
12 "The kings of the armies flee — they flee! "
She who stays at home divides the spoil. †
13 While † you lie among the sheep pens, †
the wings of a dove are covered with silver, and its feathers with glistening gold. †
14 When the Almighty scattered kings in the land, it snowed on Zalmon. † †

15 Mount Bashan is God's towering mountain; Mount Bashan is a mountain of many peaks. †
16 Why gaze with envy, you mountain peaks, at the mountain God desired for his abode?
The LORD will dwell there forever! †

17 God's chariots are tens of thousands, thousands and thousands; †
the Lord is among them in the sanctuary †
as he was at Sinai. †
18 You ascended to the heights, taking away captives; you received gifts
from † people, even from the rebellious,
so that the LORD God might dwell there. † †

19 Blessed be the Lord!
Day after day he bears our burdens;
God is our salvation. †
Selah 20 Our God is a God of salvation, and escape from death belongs
to the LORD my Lord. †

21 Surely God crushes the heads of his enemies, the hairy brow of one
who goes on in his guilty acts. †
22 The Lord said, "I will bring them back from Bashan; I will bring them back
from the depths of the sea †
23 so that your foot may wade † in blood and your dogs' tongues may have
their share from the enemies." †
24 People have seen your procession, God, the procession of my God,
my King, in the sanctuary. †
25 Singers lead the way, with musicians following;
among them are young women
playing tambourines. †
26 Bless God in the assemblies; bless the LORD from the fountain of Israel. †
27 There is Benjamin, the youngest, leading them, the rulers of Judah
in their assembly, †
the rulers of Zebulun, the rulers of Naphtali. †

28 Your God has decreed your strength.
Show your strength, God,
you who have acted on our behalf. †

29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem, kings will bring tribute to you. †
30 Rebuke the beast in the reeds, the herd of bulls with the calves
of the peoples. †
Trample underfoot those with bars of silver. †
Scatter the peoples who take pleasure in war. †
31 Ambassadors will come † from Egypt; Cush will stretch out its hands
to God. †

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; sing praise to the Lord, †
Selah 33 to him who rides in the ancient, highest heavens. †

Look, he thunders with his powerful voice! †
34 Ascribe power to God.
His majesty is over Israel,
his power is among the clouds. †
35 God, you are awe-inspiring in your sanctuaries.
The God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.
Blessed be God! †

68:4 Or *rides through the desert* **68:4** Hb *Yah* **68:6** Or *prisoners with joyous music* ; Hb uncertain **68:8** Or *God, this one of Sinai* **68:13** Or *If* **68:13** Or *the campfires,* or *the saddlebags* ; Hb obscure **68:14** Or *Black Mountain* **68:17** Or *in holiness,* also in v. 24 **68:18** Lit *among* **68:18** Or *even those rebelling against the Lord God's living there* ; Hb obscure **68:23** LXX, Syr read *dip* **68:27** Hb obscure **68:30** Or *peoples, trampling on those who take pleasure in silver,* or *peoples, trampling on the bars of silver,* or *peoples, who trample each other for bars of silver* **68:31** Or *They bring red cloth,* or *They bring bronze*
68:1 Nm 10:35; Ps 7:6; Ezk 30:26 **68:2** Ps 37:20; Hs 13:3 **68:3** Ps 32:11; 40:16; 64:10 **68:4** Dt 33:26; Ps 7:17; 66:4; Is 19:1 **68:5** Dt 24:17,19; Ps 146:9 **68:6** Ps 107:14; 113:9; 146:7 **68:7-8** Ex 19:16-18; Jdg 5:4-5 **68:9** Lv 26:4; Ezk 34:26 **68:10** Ps 74:19; 78:20; 107:9 **68:11** 1Sm 18:6-7 **68:12** Jos 10:16; Jdg 5:30 **68:13** Gn 49:14; Jdg 5:16 **68:14** Jos 10:10; Jdg 9:48 **68:15** Ps 36:6 **68:16** Ps 48:1-2; 132:13-14; Is 2:2-4 **68:17** Hab 3:8 **68:17** Dt 33:2 **68:18** Dt 21:10; Ps 7:7; Eph 4:8 **68:19** Ps 55:22; Is 46:3-4 **68:20** Dt 32:39; Ps 49:15; 56:13 **68:21** Ps 110:6; Hab 3:13 **68:22** Nm 21:33; Am 9:1-4 **68:23** 1Kg 21:19; 22:38; Jr 15:3 **68:24** Ps 42:4; Is 60:11 **68:25** Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34; 1Sm 18:6 **68:26** Ps 22:25; 26:12 **68:27** Jdg 5:14,18; 1Sm 9:21 **68:28** Ps 44:4; Is 26:12 **68:29** Ps 72:10; Is 18:7; Hg 2:7 **68:30** Ps 22:12 **68:30** Ps 18:42; 89:10 **68:31** Is 45:14; Zph 3:10 **68:32** Ps 67:4; 102:22 **68:33** Dt 33:26 **68:33** Ps 29:3-5; 46:6; Is 30:30 **68:34** Ps 29:1; 150:1 **68:35** Dt 10:21; Ps 29:11; Is 40:29

A PLEA FOR RESCUE

For the choir director: according to "The Lilies." † Of David.

69 2 Save me, God, for the water has risen to my neck. †
I have sunk in deep mud, and there is no footing; I have come into deep water,
and a flood sweeps over me. †
3 I am weary from my crying; my throat is parched.
My eyes fail, looking for my God. †
4 Those who hate me without cause are more numerous than the hairs of my head; my deceitful enemies, who would destroy me, are powerful. †
Though I did not steal, I must repay. †

5 God, you know my foolishness, and my guilty acts are not hidden from you. †
6 Do not let those who put their hope in you be disgraced because of me,
Lord GOD of Armies; do not let those who seek you
be humiliated because of me,
God of Israel. †
7 For I have endured insults because of you, and shame has covered my face. †
8 I have become a stranger to my brothers and a foreigner to my mother's sons †
9 because zeal for your house has consumed me, †
and the insults of those who insult you have fallen on me. †
10 I mourned and fasted, but it brought me insults. †
11 I wore sackcloth as my clothing, and I was a joke to them.
12 Those who sit at the city gate talk about me, and drunkards make up songs about me. †

13 But as for me, LORD, my prayer to you is for a time of favor.
In your abundant, faithful love, God,
answer me with your sure salvation. †
14 Rescue me from the miry mud; don't let me sink.
Let me be rescued from those who hate me and from the deep water. †
15 Don't let the floodwaters sweep over me or the deep swallow me up;
don't let the Pit close its mouth over me. †
16 Answer me, LORD, for your faithful love is good.

In keeping with your abundant compassion, turn to me. †
17 Don’t hide your face from your servant, for I am in distress.
Answer me quickly! †
18 Come near to me and redeem me; ransom me because of my enemies. †

19 You know the insults I endure — my shame and disgrace.
You are aware of all my adversaries. †
20 Insults have broken my heart, and I am in despair.
I waited for sympathy,
but there was none;
for comforters, but found no one. †
21 Instead, they gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst
they gave me vinegar to drink. †

22 Let their table set before them be a snare, and let it be a trap for their allies. †
23 Let their eyes grow too dim to see, and let their hips continually quake. †
24 Pour out your rage on them, and let your burning anger overtake them. †
25 Make their fortification desolate; may no one live in their tents. †
26 For they persecute the one you struck and talk about the pain of those you wounded. †
27 Charge them with crime on top of crime; do not let them share in your righteousness. †
28 Let them be erased from the book of life and not be recorded with the righteous. †

29 But as for me — poor and in pain — let your salvation protect me, God. †
30 I will praise God’s name with song and exalt him with thanksgiving. †
31 That will please the LORD more than an ox, more than a bull with horns and hooves. †
32 The humble will see it and rejoice.
You who seek God, take heart! †
33 For the LORD listens to the needy and does not despise

his own who are prisoners. †

34 Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them, †

35 for God will save Zion and build up † the cities of Judah.
They will live there and possess it. †

36 The descendants of his servants will inherit it, and those who love his name will live in it. †

69:35 Or *and rebuild*
69:title Pss 45; 60; 80 titles **69:1** Jb 22:11; Ps 32:6; Jnh 2:5 **69:2** Ps 40:2; 124:4; Jnh 2:3 **69:3** Ps 6:6; 38:10; 119:82,123 **69:4** Ps 38:19 **69:4** Lv 6:2-5; Ps 35:19; Jn 15:25 **69:5** Ps 38:5; 44:21 **69:6** Ps 25:2-3 **69:7** Ps 44:15; Is 50:6; Jr 51:51 **69:8** Jb 19:13-14; Ps 31:11; 38:11 **69:9** Jn 2:17 **69:9** Ps 89:50; Rm 15:3 **69:10** Ps 35:13; 109:24-25 **69:11-12** Jb 17:6; 30:9; Ps 44:14; Jr 24:9 **69:13** Ps 109:4; Is 49:8; 2Co 6:2 **69:14** Ps 144:7 **69:15** Nm 16:33; Ps 55:23 **69:16** Ps 25:16; 109:21 **69:17** Ps 27:9; 102:2 **69:18** Ps 119:134 **69:19** Jr 15:15 **69:20** Ps 142:4; Is 63:5 **69:21** Mt 27:34,48; Jn 19:29 **69:22** Ps 35:4-8; Rm 11:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **69:23** Is 6:10; Ezk 29:7; Dn 5:6 **69:24** Ps 79:6; Ezk 21:31; Zph 3:8 **69:25** Mt 23:38; Lk 13:35; Ac 1:20 **69:26** 2Ch 28:9; Is 53:4; Zch 1:15 **69:27** Neh 4:5; Ps 109:14 **69:28** Ex 32:32; Dn 12:1; Rv 3:5 **69:29** Ps 20:1; 70:5 **69:30** Ps 100:4; 107:22 **69:31** Ps 50:13-14; 51:16 **69:32** Ps 22:26; 34:2 **69:33** Ps 12:5; 68:6; 146:7 **69:34** Ps 96:11; Is 44:23; 49:13 **69:35** Ps 147:2; Is 44:26 **69:36** Ps 102:28; Is 65:9

A CALL FOR DELIVERANCE

For the choir director. Of David. To bring remembrance. †

70 God, hurry to rescue me.
LORD, hurry to help me! †

2 Let those who seek to kill me be disgraced and confounded;
let those who wish me harm
be turned back and humiliated.
3 Let those who say, “Aha, aha! ”
retreat because of their shame. †

4 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; let those who love your salvation
continually say, “God is great! ” †
5 I am oppressed and needy; hurry to me, God.
You are my help and my deliverer;

LORD, do not delay. †

70:title Ps 38 title **70:1** Ps 38:22 **70:2-3** Ps 35:25; 40:14-15 **70:4** Ps 35:27; 77:13 **70:5** Ps 40:17; 141:1

GOD'S HELP IN OLD AGE

71 LORD, I seek refuge in you; let me never be disgraced. †
2 In your justice, rescue and deliver me; listen closely to me and save me. †
3 Be a rock of refuge for me, where I can always go.
Give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and fortress. †
4 Deliver me, my God, from the power of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and oppressive. †
5 For you are my hope, Lord GOD, my confidence from my youth. †
6 I have leaned on you from birth; you took me from my mother's womb. †
My praise is always about you. †
7 I am like a miraculous sign to many, and you are my strong refuge. †
8 My mouth is full of praise and honor to you all day long. †

9 Don't discard me in my old age.
As my strength fails, do not abandon me. †
10 For my enemies talk about me, and those who spy on me plot together, †
11 saying, "God has abandoned him; chase him and catch him,
for there is no one to rescue him." †
12 God, do not be far from me; my God, hurry to help me. †
13 May my adversaries be disgraced and destroyed; may those who intend to harm me
be covered with disgrace and humiliation. †
14 But I will hope continually and will praise you more and more. †
15 My mouth will tell about your righteousness and your salvation all day long,
though I cannot sum them up. †
16 I come because of the mighty acts of the Lord GOD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. †

17 God, you have taught me from my youth, and I still proclaim your wondrous works. †

18 Even while I am old and gray, God, do not abandon me, †
while I proclaim your power
to another generation,
your strength to all who are to come. †

19 Your righteousness reaches the heights, God, you who have done great things;
God, who is like you? †

20 You caused me to experience many troubles and misfortunes, †
but you will revive me again. †
You will bring me up again,
even from the depths of the earth. †

21 You will increase my honor and comfort me once again. †

22 Therefore, I will praise you with a harp for your faithfulness, my God;
I will sing to you with a lyre,
Holy One of Israel. †

23 My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you
because you have redeemed me. †

24 Therefore, my tongue will proclaim your righteousness all day long,
for those who intend to harm me
will be disgraced and confounded. †

71:1 Ps 25:20 **71:2** Ps 17:6 **71:1-3** Ps 31:1-3 **71:4** Ps 140:1,4 **71:5** Ps 39:7; Jr 17:13 **71:6** Ps 22:9-10 **71:6** Ps 34:1 **71:7** Ps 61:3; 62:7; 91:2,9 **71:8** Ps 35:28; 63:5 **71:9** Ps 27:9; 71:18; Is 46:3-4 **71:10** Ps 31:13; 56:6; 83:3 **71:11** Ps 3:2 **71:12** Ps 22:19; 38:21-22; 40:13 **71:13** Ps 71:24 **71:14** Ps 84:4; 130:7; 147:11 **71:15** Ps 35:28; 40:5; 96:2 **71:16** Ps 51:14; 106:2 **71:17** Dt 4:5; 6:7 **71:18** Is 46:4 **71:18** Ps 22:30-31; 78:4,6 **71:19** Ex 15:11; Dt 3:24; Ps 86:8 **71:20** Ps 60:3 **71:20** Ps 85:6 **71:20** Hs 6:1-2 **71:21** Ps 86:17; Is 12:1; 49:13 **71:22** Ps 33:2; 81:2; 92:1-3 **71:23** Ps 34:22; 55:18 **71:24** Ps 35:28; 71:13

A PRAYER FOR THE KING

Of Solomon. †

72 God, give your justice to the king and your righteousness to the king's son. †

2 He will judge your people with righteousness and your afflicted ones with justice. †

3 May the mountains bring well-being † to the people and the hills, righteousness. †

4 May he vindicate the afflicted among the people, help the poor,
and crush the oppressor. †

5 May they fear you † while the sun endures and as long as the moon, throughout all generations. †

6 May the king be like rain that falls on the cut grass, like spring showers that water the earth. †

7 May the righteous † flourish in his days and well-being abound
until the moon is no more. †

8 May he rule from sea to sea and from the Euphrates
to the ends of the earth. †

9 May desert tribes kneel before him and his enemies lick the dust. †

10 May the kings of Tarshish and the coasts and islands bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts. †

11 Let all kings bow in homage to him, all nations serve him. †

12 For he will rescue the poor who cry out and the afflicted who have no helper. †

13 He will have pity on the poor and helpless and save the lives of the poor. †

14 He will redeem them from oppression and violence, for their lives are † precious † in his sight. †

15 May he live long!
May gold from Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be offered for him continually, and may he be blessed all day long. †

16 May there be plenty of grain in the land; may it wave on the tops of the mountains.

May its crops be like Lebanon.
May people flourish in the cities
like the grass of the field. †
17 May his name endure forever; as long as the sun shines,
may his fame increase.
May all nations be blessed by him
and call him blessed. †

18 Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does wonders. †
19 Blessed be his glorious name forever; the whole earth is filled with his glory. †
Amen and amen.
20 The prayers of David son of Jesse are concluded. †

72:3 Or *peace*, also in v. 7 **72:5** LXX reads *May he continue* **72:7** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Jer read *May righteousness* **72:14** Lit *their blood is* **72:14** Or *valuable*
72:title Ps 127 title **72:1** 1Kg 3:9; 1Ch 22:12-13; Ps 24:5 **72:2** Is 9:7; 11:2-5; 32:1 **72:3** Is 11:9; 52:7; 55:12 **72:4** Ps 109:31; Is 11:4 **72:5** Ps 89:36-37 **72:6** Dt 32:2; 2Sm 23:3-4; Hs 6:3 **72:7** Ps 37:11; Is 2:4; 60:21 **72:8** Gn 15:18; Ex 23:31; Zch 9:10 **72:9** Ps 22:29; Is 49:23; Mc 7:17 **72:10** 1Kg 10:22; 2Ch 9:21; Is 60:6 **72:11** Ps 86:9; 138:4; Is 49:23 **72:12** Jb 29:12-17 **72:13** Pr 19:17; 28:8 **72:14** Ps 69:18; 116:15 **72:15** Is 60:6 **72:16** Jb 5:25; Ps 104:16 **72:17** Gn 12:2-3; 22:18; Ps 89:36 **72:18** Jb 9:10; Ps 86:10; 136:4 **72:19** Nm 14:21; Is 6:3 **72:20** 2Sm 23:1

BOOK III (Psalms 73–89)

GOD'S WAYS VINDICATED

A psalm of Asaph. †

73 God is indeed good to Israel, to the pure in heart. †
2 But as for me, my feet almost slipped; my steps nearly went astray. †
3 For I envied the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked. †

4 They have an easy time until they die, †
and their bodies are well fed. † †
5 They are not in trouble like others; they are not afflicted like most people. †
6 Therefore, pride is their necklace, and violence covers them like a garment. †
7 Their eyes bulge out from fatness; the imaginations of their hearts run wild. †

8 They mock, and they speak maliciously; they arrogantly threaten oppression. †
9 They set their mouths against heaven, and their tongues strut across the earth. †
10 Therefore his people turn to them †
and drink in their overflowing words. † †
11 The wicked say, “How can God know?
Does the Most High know everything? ” †
12 Look at them — the wicked!
They are always at ease,
and they increase their wealth. †

13 Did I purify my heart and wash my hands in innocence for nothing? †
14 For I am afflicted all day long and punished every morning. †
15 If I had decided to say these things aloud, I would have betrayed your people. † †
16 When I tried to understand all this, it seemed hopeless † †
17 until I entered God’s sanctuary.
Then I understood their destiny. †
18 Indeed, you put them in slippery places; you make them fall into ruin. †
19 How suddenly they become a desolation!
They come to an end, swept away by terrors. †
20 Like one waking from a dream, Lord, when arising, you will despise their image. †

21 When I became embittered and my innermost being † was wounded, †
22 I was stupid and didn’t understand; I was an unthinking animal toward you. †
23 Yet I am always with you; you hold my right hand. †
24 You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me up in glory. † †
25 Who do I have in heaven but you?
And I desire nothing on earth but you. †

26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength † of my heart,
my portion forever. †
27 Those far from you will certainly perish; you destroy all who are
unfaithful to you. †
28 But as for me, God's presence is my good.
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, so I can tell about all you do. †

73:4 Lit *For there are no pangs to their death* **73:4** Lit *fat* **73:10** Lit *turn here* **73:10** Lit *and waters of fullness are drained by them* **73:15** Lit *betrayed the generation of your sons* **73:16** Lit *it was trouble in my eyes* **73:21** Lit *my kidneys* **73:24** Or *will receive me with honor* **73:26** Lit *rock*
73:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **73:1** Ps 24:4; 51:10; Mt 5:8 **73:2** Ps 17:5; 66:9; 94:18 **73:3** Ps 37:1; Pr 23:17; 24:1 **73:4** Jb 21:23-24 **73:5** Jb 21:4 **73:6** Ps 37:35; Pr 16:29; 21:24 **73:7** Jb 15:27; Jr 5:28 **73:8** Ps 17:10; 2Pt 2:18; Jd 16 **73:9** Rv 13:6 **73:10** Jb 15:16 **73:11** Jb 22:13; Ps 10:4,11; Is 29:15 **73:12** Ps 49:6; 52:7; Jr 49:31 **73:13** Ps 26:6; Mt 27:24 **73:14** Jb 33:19; Ps 38:6; 118:18 **73:15** Ps 44:17; 89:33 **73:16** Ec 8:17 **73:17** Jb 8:13; Ps 37:38 **73:18** Ps 35:6,8 **73:19** Nm 16:21; Jb 18:11; Is 47:11 **73:20** Ps 35:23; 59:5; 78:65 **73:21** Ps 109:22 **73:22** Jb 11:12; Ps 92:6 **73:23** Ps 63:8 **73:24** Ps 49:15; Is 58:11 **73:25** Ps 16:2; Php 3:8 **73:26** Ps 16:5; 38:10; 84:2 **73:27** 1Ch 5:25; Ps 37:20 **73:28** Ps 40:5; 118:17

PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

A *Maskil* of Asaph. †

74 Why have you rejected us forever, God?
Why does your anger burn
against the sheep of your pasture? †
2 Remember your congregation, which you purchased long ago
and redeemed as the tribe for your own possession. †
Remember Mount Zion where you dwell. †
3 Make your way † to the perpetual ruins, to all that the enemy has destroyed
in the sanctuary. †
4 Your adversaries roared in the meeting place where you met with us. †
They set up their emblems as signs. †
5 It was like men in a thicket of trees, wielding axes, †
6 then smashing all the carvings with hatchets and picks. †
7 They set your sanctuary on fire; they utterly † desecrated the dwelling place
of your name. †

8 They said in their hearts, “Let us oppress them relentlessly.”
They burned every place throughout the land where God met with us. † †
9 There are no signs for us to see.
There is no longer a prophet.
And none of us knows how long this will last. †
10 God, how long will the enemy mock?
Will the foe insult your name forever? †
11 Why do you hold back your hand?
Stretch out † your right hand and destroy them! †

12 God my King is from ancient times, performing saving acts on the earth. †
13 You divided the sea with your strength; you smashed the heads of the sea monsters in the water; †
14 you crushed the heads of Leviathan; you fed him to the creatures of the desert. †
15 You opened up springs and streams; †
you dried up ever-flowing rivers. †
16 The day is yours, also the night; you established the moon and the sun. †
17 You set all the boundaries of the earth; you made summer and winter. †

18 Remember this: the enemy has mocked the LORD, and a foolish people has insulted your name. †
19 Do not give to beasts the life of your dove; †
do not forget the lives of your poor people forever. †
20 Consider the covenant, †
for the dark places of the land are full of violence. †
21 Do not let the oppressed turn away in shame; let the poor and needy praise your name. †
22 Rise up, God, champion your cause! †
Remember the insults
that fools bring against you all day long. †

23 Do not forget the clamor of your adversaries, the tumult of your opponents
that goes up constantly. †

74:3 Lit *Lift up your steps* **74:4** Lit *in your meeting place* **74:7** Lit *they to the ground* **74:8** Lit *every meeting place of God in the land* **74:11** Lit *From your bosom* **74:19** One Hb ms, LXX, Syr read *life that praises you* **74:title** 1Ch 16:5,7 **74:1** Ex 32:11; Ps 60:1,10; 108:11 **74:2** Is 63:17; Jr 10:16; 51:19 **74:2** Is 8:18 **74:3** Ps 79:1; Is 61:4 **74:4** Nm 2:2; Lm 2:6-7 **74:5** Jr 46:22 **74:6** Lm 2:2 **74:7** 2Kg 25:9; Ps 79:1 **74:8** Ps 83:4 **74:9** 1Sm 3:1; Lm 2:9; Ezk 7:26 **74:10** Ps 79:12; 89:51 **74:11** Ps 59:13; Lm 2:3 **74:12** Ps 47:6-8; 95:3; Jr 10:10 **74:13** Ex 14:21; Is 51:9; Ezk 32:2 **74:14** Jb 41:1; Ps 104:26; Is 27:1 **74:15** Ps 104:10-11 **74:15** Is 42:15; 44:27 **74:16** Gn 1:14-18; Ps 104:19 **74:17** Gn 8:22; Jb 38:10-11; Pr 8:29; Jr 5:22 **74:18** Ps 14:1; 53:1; 89:51 **74:19** Ps 9:18; 68:10 **74:20** Dt 4:31; Ps 106:45 **74:20** Ezk 7:23 **74:21** Ps 9:9; 103:6; Is 41:7 **74:22** Ps 9:19; 82:8 **74:22** Ps 79:12 **74:23** Ps 65:7

GOD JUDGES THE WICKED

For the choir director: "Do Not Destroy." A psalm of Asaph. † A song.

75 We give thanks to you, God; we give thanks to you, for your name is near.
People tell about your wondrous works. †

2 "When I choose a time, I will judge fairly. †
3 When the earth and all its inhabitants shake, I am the one who steadies
its pillars. †

Selah 4 I say to the boastful, 'Do not boast,'

and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horn. †
5 Do not lift up your horn against heaven †
or speak arrogantly.' " †

6 Exaltation does not come from the east, the west, or the desert, 7 for God is
the Judge: He brings down one and exalts another. †
8 For there is a cup in the LORD's hand, full of wine blended with spices,
and he pours from it.
All the wicked of the earth will drink, draining it to the dregs. †

9 As for me, I will tell about him forever; I will sing praise to the God
of Jacob. †

10 “I will cut off all the horns of the wicked, †
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up.” †

75:5 Lit *horn to the height*
75:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **75:1** Dt 4:7; Ps 26:7; 145:18 **75:2** Ps 9:8; 96:10 **75:3** 1Sm 2:8; Ps 46:6; Is 24:19 **75:4** Pr 27:1; Jr 9:23 **75:5** 1Sm 2:3; Ps 94:4 **75:6-7** 1Sm 2:7-8; Ps 50:6; Lk 1:52-53 **75:8** Is 51:17,22; Jr 25:15-17 **75:9** Ps 9:2; 18:49; 81:1 **75:10** Jr 48:25 **75:10** Ps 89:17; 92:10; 148:14

GOD, THE POWERFUL JUDGE

For the choir director: with stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. † A song.

76 God is known in Judah; his name is great in Israel. †
2 His tent is in Salem, his dwelling place in Zion. †
3 There he shatters the bow’s flaming arrows, the shield, the sword,
and the weapons of war. †

Selah

4 You are resplendent and majestic coming down from the mountains of prey. †
5 The brave-hearted have been plundered; they have slipped
into their final sleep.
None of the warriors was able to lift a hand. †
6 At your rebuke, God of Jacob, both chariot and horse lay still. †

7 And you — you are to be feared. †
When you are angry,
who can stand before you? †
8 From heaven you pronounced judgment.
The earth feared and grew quiet †
9 when God rose up to judge and to save all the lowly of the earth. †
Selah 10 Even human wrath will praise you; you will clothe yourself
with the wrath that remains. † †

11 Make and keep your vows to the LORD your God; †

let all who are around him bring tribute to the awe-inspiring one. † †

12 He humbles the spirit of leaders; he is feared by the kings of the earth. †

76:7 Or *are awe-inspiring* **76:10** Hb obscure **76:11** Or *tribute with awe*
76:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **76:1** Jr 10:6; Mal 1:11 **76:2** Gn 14:18; Ps 9:11 **76:3** Ps 46:9; Is 2:4; Jr 49:35 **76:4** Is 14:25; Nah 2:13 **76:5** Jr 51:39 **76:6** Ex 13:1,21 **76:7** Ps 1:5; 130:3; Nah 1:6 **76:8** 2Ch 20:29-30; Ps 33:8; Hab 2:20 **76:9** Ps 9:7-8; Is 3:13-15 **76:10** Ex 9:16; Rm 9:17 **76:11** Ps 50:14 **76:11** Ps 68:29; Is 18:7 **76:12** Dn 4:37

CONFIDENCE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

For the choir director: according to Jeduthun. Of Asaph. † A psalm.

77 I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. †
2 I sought the Lord in my day of trouble.
My hands were continually lifted up
all night long;
I refused to be comforted. †
3 I think of God; I groan; I meditate; my spirit becomes weak. †

Selah

4 You have kept me from closing my eyes; I am troubled and cannot speak. †
5 I consider days of old, years long past. †
6 At night I remember my music; I meditate in my heart, and my spirit ponders. †

7 "Will the Lord reject forever and never again show favor? †
8 Has his faithful love ceased forever?
Is his promise at an end for all generations? †
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?" †

Selah

10 So I say, "I am grieved that the right hand of the Most High has changed." † †

11 I will remember the LORD's works; yes, I will remember
your ancient wonders. †
12 I will reflect on all you have done and meditate on your actions. †

13 God, your way is holy.
What god is great like God? †
14 You are the God who works wonders; you revealed your strength
among the peoples. †
15 With power you redeemed your people, the descendants of Jacob
and Joseph. †

Selah

16 The water saw you, God.
The water saw you; it trembled.
Even the depths shook. †
17 The clouds poured down water.
The storm clouds thundered;
your arrows flashed back and forth. †
18 The sound of your thunder was in the whirlwind; lightning lit up the world. †
The earth shook and quaked. †
19 Your way went through the sea and your path through the vast water,
but your footprints were unseen. †
20 You led your people like a flock †
by the hand of Moses and Aaron. †

77:10 Hb obscure
77:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **77:1** Ps 3:4; 142:1 **77:2** Gn 37:35; Jb 11:13; Jr 31:15 **77:3** Ps 42:5,11; 43:5; 55:17; 143:4 **77:4** Ps 39:9 **77:5** Dt 32:7; Ps 143:5 **77:6** Ps 4:4; 42:8 **77:7** Ps 44:9,23; 74:1; Lm 2:7; 3:31 **77:8** Ps 33:11; 85:5; 89:49 **77:9** Ps 25:6; 40:11; Is 49:15 **77:10** Ps 31:22; 73:14 **77:11** Ps 105:5; 143:5 **77:12** Ps 9:11; 90:16; 145:5 **77:13** Ex 15:11; Ps 71:19; 86:8 **77:14** Ps 72:18; 106:8 **77:15** Ex 6:6; Dt 9:29; Ps 74:2 **77:16** Ps 114:3; Hab 3:8,10 **77:17** Ps 18:14; Hab 3:11; Zch 9:14 **77:16-18** Ps 29:3,9; 97:4 **77:18** 2Sm 22:8; Ps 18:7; Is 13:13 **77:19** Is 43:16 **77:20** Ps 78:52; 80:1 **77:20** Ps 105:26; Is 63:11-13

LESSONS FROM ISRAEL'S PAST

A *Maskil* of Asaph. †

78 My people, hear my instruction; listen to the words from my mouth. †
2 I will declare wise sayings; I will speak mysteries from the past † —
3 things we have heard and known and that our fathers have passed down to us. †
4 We will not hide them from their children, but will tell a future generation
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, his might, and the wondrous works
he has performed. †
5 He established a testimony in Jacob and set up a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children †
6 so that a future generation — children yet to be born — might know.
They were to rise and tell their children †
7 so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God's works,
but keep his commands. †
8 Then they would not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not loyal
and whose spirit was not faithful to God. †

9 The Ephraimite archers turned back on the day of battle. †
10 They did not keep God's covenant and refused to live by his law. †
11 They forgot what he had done, the wondrous works he had shown them. †
12 He worked wonders in the sight of their fathers in the land of Egypt, the territory of Zoan. †
13 He split the sea and brought them across; the water stood firm like a wall. †
14 He led them with a cloud by day and with a fiery light throughout the night. †
15 He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink as abundant as the depths. †
16 He brought streams out of the stone and made water flow down like rivers. †

NATURALIST VIEWS OF HISTORY

Naturalism, the belief that only natural causes operate in the universe, has generated multiple views of history. Naturalism usually takes the form of materialism, which assumes that everything—even love and reason—can be explained in terms of material causes. Materialist naturalism, in contrast to a Christian worldview, fails to support a meaningful and defensible understanding of history.

The grand story of naturalism has a tragic unplanned hero: intelligent life. Unintelligent matter is alleged to have evolved into intelligent creatures, some of which discovered history itself. Evolutionary naturalism is tragic because cosmology, based on well-confirmed thermodynamic laws, indicates that the universe will "die" when the energy needed for life is consumed. Time's arrow thus points to death, and naturalism offers no escape.

Why, then, is the hopeless evolutionary story of naturalism popular? Because in this view there is no Lord of history to whom we are accountable. Ignorance of evidence for intelligent design also plays a role.

Consistent with modern cosmology, Psalm 102:25-26 teaches that the cosmos "will wear out like clothing." But unlike naturalism, which offers no salvation from thermodynamic death, the Bible reveals that God will bring history to an end when he judges evil and creates "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rv 21:1). This new universe will be free of disharmony, decay, and death—all to the glory of God. That—not materialist oblivion—is the goal (end) of history. A story of everything in which all persons are destroyed is meaningless. Yet such is the fate of naturalism.

The end of history anchors history's meaning (or lack thereof in the case of naturalism). An event sequence has meaning in relation to its goal: the "end" to which it is going. Events that move toward a goal are called "progress." The Bible reveals history as the surprising, progressive, drama of "all things" working "together for the good" of God's kingdom (Rm 8:28). Although individuals and nations experience both progress and regress (as in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*), God's sovereign plan always triumphs. Naturalism is incapable of properly grounding progress because it rejects God, whose unchanging attributes (love, justice, etc.) and freely chosen plan define the only objectively good goals toward which history can move. Without God, "stuff just happens" according to naturalism, which leaves history void of purpose.

History is the meaningfully related sequence of events in the lives of all persons. History is guided by the source of meaning and personhood: God himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus history is "his story," but because it includes us, it's also "our story." Jesus, the unique God-man, unifies it. God "purposed in Christ as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph 1:9-10).

History is both what happened and writings about what happened. Usually humans would not know what happened if it were not "written for a later generation" (Ps 102:18). Knowing biblical history is especially important: "For whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that we may have hope through endurance and through the encouragement from the Scriptures" (Rm 15:4). The Holy Spirit directed the biblical authors to make the past instructive and encouraging.

The instructive past includes the creation, fall, and God's progressive acts of judgment and salvation. History's turning point occurred when Jesus entered the world as God in the flesh, accepted the lethal penalty for human sin, and overcame sin and death through resurrection. The full and glorious resolution of the story is yet to come (Revelation 21–22).

Indeed, history invites remembering. God calls us to "remember what happened long ago" (Is 46:9). We should recall how idolatrous choices brought "captivity" (46:2), while faithfulness to God led to "salvation" (46:13). Although this concept is true of all nations and individuals, even God-fearing historians struggle to

discern the reasons for God's judgment and blessing in particular cases. This uncertainty, however, makes sense because God's ways are "higher" than ours (Is 55:9). In biblical narrative, the Holy Spirit ensured that the authors got the history right.

Biblical and naturalistic ideas of history are incompatible. The Bible depicts history as God's ongoing triumph over what's wrong with us—sin, which only Jesus's self-sacrifice can heal. Naturalism has spawned alternative views, each of which fails to offer plausible diagnoses of human evil. (Typically they blame biology or the environment.) Secular promises of salvation through genetic and environmental manipulation have all failed to deliver us from evil. Hitler, for example, ruthlessly applied Charles Darwin's idea that the most advanced humans had evolved a higher ethic of cooperation among themselves at the expense of lower "races." Although Darwin resisted racism personally, his ideas contributed to genocide in Nazi Germany (Richard Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler*).

Three thinkers constructed the most influential naturalistic views about history. Charles Darwin argued that unguided material processes created living species, religion, morality, and immorality. Karl Marx explained human history as the evolution of tools and labor systems, which produced a necessary succession of economies and ideologies. Sigmund Freud rejected some Marxist ideas, such as the proposal that abolishing private property would eliminate oppression, but he expanded Darwinism to explain history as driven by sexual instinct. Applications of the ideas of Darwin and Marx for the sake of "progress" proved disastrous: eugenics (forced sterilization in the USA, genocide in Nazi Germany) and communism. Naturalism has undermined human dignity and freedom (John West, *Darwin Day in America*). So naturalism, unlike Christianity, fails to support a meaningful understanding of history. Naturalists also lack a defensible history. To see why, first we will explore a deeper "freedom."

Naturalists, like theists, entertain various views about human freedom and historical necessity. Christians, however, have uniformly rejected the idea that human actions are the necessary outcome of an unguided evolutionary process. Although some naturalists wish to give a materialist account of human freedom, their own worldview proves inadequate for the task. Yet, our daily experiences tell us that we are free to make choices that go beyond what a merely material thing could do. Some materialists, such as Cornell University's William Provine, think that free will is an illusion. Provine trumpeted his non-freedom faith in a chilling scene of the documentary *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. Did he have to embrace this view and say so on film in 2008? He thinks so.

Provine's freedom-rejecting faith means that humans are irrational, which leaves his own materialistic view indefensible—an action equal to cutting off the tree limb on which he sits. Rationality requires the freedom to think about alternative explanations to decide which best fits the evidence. But if chemical brain events determine human thoughts, rationality is dead. Merely physical stimulus and survival-enhancing responses would rule the brain. Thus, naturalism fails to explain centuries of rational progress in science (J. P. Moreland, *The Recalcitrant Imago Dei*, 2009; Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies*, 2011).

Rationality in humans requires a nonmaterial rational soul. This is part of what the Bible means by saying that we are made in God's image. Although the mental and physical aspects of a human interact (it's difficult to think when you're tired), they aren't identical. This is a clue that God, not matter, created us. Indeed, Darwin never resolved his doubts about the ability of a haphazardly evolved brain to be rational. Despite advances in neurobiology, we are no closer to a naturalistic account of rationality today.

Rationality is a necessary component of any truth-finding endeavor, including historical inquiry. Given this, and the argument above, historical research can be reliable only if humans have souls (created in God's image, Plantinga argues). The Bible's own historical reliability, in turn, is supported by historical and archaeological research. Most importantly, numerous scholars have shown that it is much more reasonable to accept Jesus's resurrection than any naturalistic alternative (e.g., *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus*, Habermas and Licona). Christianity is the most historically testable religion, and it has an excellent track record of having passed such tests.

History, guided toward its God-glorifying purposes, is the meaningfully related sequence of events in the lives of all people. History, as a reliable discipline that discovers the past, is at home within a Christian worldview. Historical research, in turn, helps justify key Christian truth claims, especially Jesus's

miraculous resurrection. In contrast, evolutionary naturalism is incapable of supporting rationality and historical meaning. The failure of naturalism is itself part of God's triumphal story—history.

MICHAEL N. KEAS

17 But they continued to sin against him, rebelling in the desert
against the Most High. †
18 They deliberately † tested God, demanding the food they craved. †
19 They spoke against God, saying, "Is God able to provide food
in the wilderness?
20 Look! He struck the rock and water gushed out; torrents overflowed. †
But can he also provide bread
or furnish meat for his people? " †
21 Therefore, the LORD heard and became furious; then fire broke out
against Jacob,
and anger flared up against Israel †
22 because they did not believe God or rely on his salvation. †
23 He gave a command to the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven. †
24 He rained manna for them to eat; he gave them grain from heaven. †
25 People † ate the bread of angels. †
He sent them an abundant supply of food. †
26 He made the east wind blow in the skies and drove the south wind
by his might. †
27 He rained meat on them like dust, and winged birds like the sand of the seas.
28 He made them fall in the camp, all around the tents. †
29 The people ate and were completely satisfied, for he gave them
what they craved. †
30 Before they had turned from what they craved, while the food was still
in their mouths, 31 God's anger flared up against them, and he killed
some of their best men.
He struck down Israel's fit young men. †

32 Despite all this, they kept sinning and did not believe his wondrous works. †

33 He made their days end in futility, their years in sudden disaster. †
34 When he killed some of them, the rest began to seek him;
they repented and searched for God. †
35 They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God, their Redeemer. †
36 But they deceived him with their mouths, they lied to him with their tongues, †
37 their hearts were insincere toward him, and they were unfaithful to his covenant. †
38 Yet he was compassionate; he atoned for their iniquity
and did not destroy them.
He often turned his anger aside
and did not unleash † all his wrath. †
39 He remembered that they were only flesh, a wind that passes and does not return. †

40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness
and grieved him in the desert.
41 They constantly tested God †
and provoked the Holy One of Israel. †
42 They did not remember his power shown on the day he redeemed them from the foe, †
43 when he performed his miraculous signs in Egypt and his wonders in the territory of Zoan. †
44 He turned their rivers into blood, and they could not drink from their streams. †
45 He sent among them swarms of flies, †
which fed on them,
and frogs, which devastated them. †
46 He gave their crops to the caterpillar and the fruit of their labor to the locust. †

47 He killed their vines with hail and their sycamore fig trees with a flood.
48 He handed over their livestock to hail and their cattle to lightning bolts. †
49 He sent his burning anger against them: fury, indignation, and calamity — a band of deadly messengers. † †
50 He cleared a path for his anger.
He did not spare them from death
but delivered their lives to the plague. †
51 He struck all the firstborn † in Egypt, the first progeny of the tents of Ham. †
52 He led his people out like sheep and guided them like a flock in the wilderness. †
53 He led them safely, and they were not afraid; but the sea covered their enemies. †
54 He brought them to his holy territory, to the mountain his right hand acquired. †
55 He drove out nations before them. †
He apportioned their inheritance by lot and settled the tribes of Israel in their tents. †

56 But they rebelliously tested the Most High God, for they did not keep his decrees. †
57 They treacherously turned away like their fathers; they became warped like a faulty bow. †
58 They enraged him with their high places and provoked his jealousy with their carved images. †
59 God heard and became furious; he completely rejected Israel. †
60 He abandoned the tabernacle at Shiloh, the tent where he resided among mankind. †
61 He gave up his strength to captivity and his splendor to the hand of a foe. †
62 He surrendered his people to the sword because he was enraged with his heritage. †

63 Fire consumed his chosen young men, and his young women had no wedding songs. † †

64 His priests fell by the sword, and the widows could not lament. †

65 The Lord awoke as if from sleep, like a warrior from the effects of wine. †

66 He beat back his foes; he gave them lasting disgrace. †

67 He rejected the tent of Joseph and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim.

68 He chose instead the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which he loved. †

69 He built his sanctuary like the heights, like the earth that he established forever. †

70 He chose David his servant and took him from the sheep pens; †

71 he brought him from tending ewes to be shepherd over his people Jacob — over Israel, his inheritance. †

72 He shepherded them with a pure heart and guided them with his skillful hands. †

78:18 Lit *in their heart* **78:25** Lit *Man* **78:25** Lit *mighty ones* **78:38** Or *stir up* **78:49** Or *angels* **78:63** Lit *virgins were not praised*
78:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **78:1** Pr 5:7; 7:24; Is 55:3 **78:2** Ps 49:4; Pr 1:6; Mt 13:35 **78:3** Ps 44:1 **78:4** Dt 6:7; 11:19; Ps 145:4 **78:5** Ps 19:7; 81:5; 147:19 **78:6** Dt 11:19; Ps 22:31; 102:18 **78:7** Dt 6:12; Ps 103:2; Pr 3:1 **78:8** Dt 31:27; 2Kg 17:14; 2Ch 30:7 **78:9** Ps 44:10 **78:10** 1Kg 11:11; 2Kg 17:15; Jr 32:23 **78:11** Ps 106:13 **78:12** Ex 7–12; Ps 78:43 **78:13** Ex 14:21; 15:8; Ps 136:13 **78:14** Ex 13:21; Nm 14:14; Ps 105:39 **78:15** Ex 17:6; Nm 20:8-13; Is 48:21 **78:16** Ps 105:41; 114:8 **78:17** Dt 9:22; Is 63:10; Heb 3:16 **78:18** Ex 17:2,7; Ps 106:14; 1Co 10:5-10 **78:20** Nm 20:11 **78:19-20** Ex 16:3; Nm 11:4; 21:5 **78:21** Nm 11:1 **78:22** Dt 1:23; 9:23; Heb 3:18 **78:23** Gn 7:11; Mal 3:10 **78:24** Ex 16:4,31; Jn 6:31 **78:25** Ex 16:3 **78:26** Nm 11:31 **78:27-28** Ex 16:13; Ps 105:40 **78:29** Nm 11:4,34 **78:30-31** Nm 11:33-34; Jb 20:23 **78:32** Nm 14:16-17 **78:33** Nm 14:29,35 **78:34** Nm 21:7; Ps 63:1; Hs 5:15 **78:35** Is 44:6,8 **78:36** Is 29:13; 57:11; Ezk 33:31 **78:37** Ps 51:10; 78:8; Ac 8:21 **78:38** Nm 14:18-20; Dt 4:31; Is 12:1 **78:39** Dt 31:27; Ps 107:11 **78:41** Ps 95:8-9 **78:41** Dt 9:7-8,22; Ps 106:29; Zch 8:14 **78:42** Jdg 8:34; Ps 44:3; 106:10 **78:43** Ex 4:21; 7:3; Ps 105:27 **78:44** Ex 7:14-25; Ps 105:29 **78:45** Ex 8:17; Ps 105:31 **78:45** Ex 8:3-6; Ps 105:30 **78:46** Ex 10:14-15; Ps 105:34 **78:47-48** Ex 9:23-24; Ps 105:32 **78:49** Ex 12:13,23; 2Sm 24:16 **78:50** Ex 12:29-30 **78:51** Ex 13:15; Ps 105:36 **78:51** Ps 105:23,27 **78:52** Ex 15:22; Ps 77:20 **78:53** Ex 14; 15:19; Jos 24:7; Ps 106:11 **78:54** Ex 15:17; Ps 74:2 **78:55** Jos 11:16-23; Ps 44:2 **78:55** Jos 13:7; 23:4; Ps 135:12 **78:56** Jdg 2:11-13 **78:57** Ezk 20:27-28; Hs 7:16 **78:58** Jdg 2:12; 1Kg 3:2; Ezk 20:28 **78:59** Dt 32:19; Ps 106:40; Am 6:8 **78:60** Jr 7:12,14; 26:6 **78:61** 1Sm 4:17 **78:62** Jdg 20:21; 1Sm 4:10 **78:63** Jr 7:34; 16:9; Lm 2:21 **78:64** Jb 27:15; Ezk 24:23 **78:65** Ps 73:20; 121:4; Is 42:13 **78:66** 1Sm 5:6; Ps 40:14 **78:67-68** Ps 87:2 **78:69** 1Kg 6 **78:70** 1Sm 16:11-13 **78:71** Ps 28:9; Is 40:11 **78:72** 1Kg 9:4; Ps 101:2

FAITH AMID CONFUSION

A psalm of Asaph. †

79 God, the nations have invaded your inheritance, desecrated your holy temple,
and turned Jerusalem into ruins. †
2 They gave the corpses of your servants to the birds of the sky for food,
the flesh of your faithful ones
to the beasts of the earth. †
3 They poured out their blood like water all around Jerusalem,
and there was no one to bury them. †
4 We have become an object of reproach to our neighbors,
a source of mockery and ridicule
to those around us. †

5 How long, LORD? Will you be angry forever?
Will your jealousy keep burning like fire? †
6 Pour out your wrath on the nations that don't acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms that don't call on your name, †
7 for they have devoured Jacob and devastated his homeland. †
8 Do not hold past iniquities † against us; let your compassion come to us quickly, for we have become very weak. †

9 God of our salvation, help us † — for the glory of your name.
Rescue us and atone for our sins,
for your name's sake. †
10 Why should the nations ask, "Where is their God?" †
Before our eyes,
let vengeance for the shed blood of your servants be known among the nations. †
11 Let the groans of the prisoners reach you; according to your great power,
preserve those condemned to die. †

12 Pay back sevenfold to our neighbors †
the reproach they have hurled at you, Lord. †
13 Then we, your people, the sheep of your pasture, †

will thank you forever;
we will declare your praise
to generation after generation. †

79:8 Or *hold the sins of past generations*
79:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **79:1** Jr 26:18; Lm 1:10; Mc 3:12 **79:2** Dt 28:26; Jr 7:33; 16:4 **79:3** Jr 14:16; 16:4; 22:19 **79:4** Ps 44:13-14; 80:6; Dn 9:16 **79:5** Ps 74:10; 78:58; 80:4 **79:6** Ps 14:4; Jr 10:25 **79:7** Ps 53:4 **79:8** Ps 142:6; Is 64:9 **79:9** 1Ch 16:35; Ps 85:4 **79:9** Ps 25:11; 106:8; Jr 14:7 **79:10** Ps 42:3,10; 115:2 **79:10** Dt 32:43; Ps 94:1-2; Jr 46:10 **79:11** Ps 102:20 **79:12** Lv 26:21,28 **79:12** Ps 74:10,18,22 **79:13** Ps 74:1; 100:3 **79:13** Ps 89:1; Is 43:21

A PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

For the choir director: according to "The Lilies." † A testimony of Asaph. † A psalm.

80 Listen, Shepherd of Israel, who leads Joseph like a flock; †
you who sit enthroned between the cherubim, †
2 shine † on Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh. †
Rally your power and come to save us. †
3 Restore us, God; make your face shine on us, †
so that we may be saved. †

4 LORD God of Armies, how long will you be angry
with your people's prayers? †
5 You fed them the bread of tears and gave them a full measure †
of tears to drink. †
6 You put us at odds with our neighbors; our enemies mock us. †
7 Restore us, God of Armies; make your face shine on us, so that we may be saved. †

8 You dug up a vine from Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. †
9 You cleared a place for it; it took root and filled the land. †
10 The mountains were covered by its shade, and the mighty cedars † with its branches. †

11 It sent out sprouts toward the Sea †
and shoots toward the River. † †

12 Why have you broken down its walls so that all who pass by pick its fruit? †
13 Boars from the forest tear at it and creatures of the field feed on it. †
14 Return, God of Armies. †
Look down from heaven and see;
take care of this vine,
15 the root † your right hand planted, the son † that you made strong for yourself. †
16 It was cut down and burned; they † perish at the rebuke of your countenance. †
17 Let your hand be with the man at your right hand, with the son of man
you have made strong for yourself. †
18 Then we will not turn away from you; revive us, and we will call on your name. †
19 Restore us, LORD, God of Armies; †
make your face shine on us, so that we may be saved. †

80:5 Lit *a one-third measure* **80:10** Lit *the cedars of God* **80:11** = the Mediterranean **80:11** = the Euphrates **80:15** Hb obscure **80:15** Or *shoot* **80:16** Or *may they*
80:title Pss 45; 60; 69 titles **80:title** 1Ch 16:5,7 **80:1** Ezk 34:11,16,31 **80:1** Ps 99:1 **80:1** Dt 33:2; Ps 94:1 **80:2** Nm 2:17-24 **80:2** Ps 35:23; 106:47; 118:25 **80:3** Nm 6:25 **80:3** Ps 60:1; 85:4; Lm 5:21 **80:4** Ps 74:10; 79:5; 85:5 **80:5** Ps 102:9; Is 30:20; Hs 9:4 **80:6** Ps 44:13; 79:4 **80:7** Ps 60:1; Lm 5:21 **80:8** Jr 2:21; 32:41 **80:9** Am 9:15 **80:10** Ezk 17:22-24 **80:11** Ex 23:31; Dt 11:24; Ps 72:8 **80:12** Ps 89:40; Is 5:5 **80:13** Jr 5:6 **80:14** Ps 6:4; 90:13 **80:14-15** Is 63:15 **80:16** Ps 39:11; 76:6; Is 33:12 **80:17** Ps 89:21 **80:18** Ps 71:20; 85:6 **80:19** Ps 60:1; 85:4; Lm 5:21 **80:19** Mal 1:9

A CALL TO OBEDIENCE

For the choir director: on the *Gittith*. Of Asaph. †

81 Sing for joy to God our strength; shout in triumph to the God of Jacob. †
2 Lift up a song — play the tambourine, the melodious lyre, and the harp. †
3 Blow the horn on the day of our feasts †
during the new moon †

and during the full moon.

4 For this is a statute for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. †

5 He set it up as a decree for Joseph when he went throughout † the land of Egypt. †

I heard an unfamiliar language:

6 "I relieved his shoulder from the burden; his hands were freed from carrying the basket. †

7 You called out in distress, and I rescued you; I answered you from the thundercloud. †

I tested you at the Waters of Meribah. †

Selah 8 Listen, my people, and I will admonish you.

Israel, if you would only listen to me! †

9 There must not be a strange god among you; you must not bow down to a foreign god. †

10 I am the LORD your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. †

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. †

11 "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel did not obey me. †

12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts to follow their own plans. †

13 If only my people would listen to me and Israel would follow my ways, †

14 I would quickly subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes." †

15 Those who hate the LORD would cower to him; †

their doom would last forever. †

16 But he would feed Israel † with the best wheat.

"I would satisfy you with honey from the rock." †

81:3 Lit *feast* **81:5** Or *went out against* **81:16** Lit *him*
81:title 1Ch 16:5,7; Pss 8; 84 titles **81:1** Ps 59:16; 95:1-2; 98:4 **81:2** Ps 33:2; 71:22; 92:3 **81:3** Lv 23:24; Nm 10:10; 29:1 **81:4** 1Ch 16:17; Ps 105:10 **81:5** Ps 78:5; 122:4 **81:6** Is 9:4; 10:27 **81:7** Ex 14:24; 20:18-20 **81:7** Ex 17:1-7; Nm 20:2-13 **81:8** Ps 50:7 **81:9** Ex 20:3-5; 22:20; 34:14 **81:10** Ex 20:2; Dt 5:6 **81:10** Ps 78:25; 107:9 **81:11** Jr 7:24; 13:10 **81:12** Jb 8:4; Jr 11:8 **81:13** Dt 5:29; Is 48:18 **81:14** Ps 18:47; 47:3; Am 1:8 **81:15** Ps 18:44; 66:3 **81:15** Dt 32:35 **81:16** Nm 18:12; Dt 32:13-14; Ps 147:14

A PLEA FOR RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

A psalm of Asaph. †

82 God stands in the divine assembly; he pronounces judgment among the gods: † †

2 "How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked? †
Selah 3 Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute. †

4 Rescue the poor and needy; save them from the power of the wicked." †

5 They do not know or understand; they wander in darkness. †
All the foundations of the earth are shaken. †

6 I said, "You are gods; †
you are all sons of the Most High. †
7 However, you will die like humans and fall like any other ruler." †

8 Rise up, God, judge the earth, for all the nations belong to you. †

82:1 Or *the heavenly beings*, or *the earthly rulers* ; Hb elohim
82:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **82:1** Jb 21:22; Ps 7:8; 58:11 **82:2** Dt 1:17; Pr 18:5; Mal 2:9 **82:3** Dt 24:17; Is 11:4; Jr 22:16 **82:4** Jb 29:12; Pr 24:11 **82:5** Pr 2:13; Is 44:18 **82:5** Ps 11:3 **82:6** Jn 10:34 **82:6** Ps 82:1; Lk 6:35 **82:7** Ps 49:12 **82:8** Ps 58:11; 96:13

PRAYER AGAINST ENEMIES

A song. A psalm of Asaph. †

83 God, do not keep silent.
Do not be deaf, God; do not be quiet. †
2 See how your enemies make an uproar; those who hate you have acted arrogantly. † †
3 They devise clever schemes against your people; they conspire against your treasured ones. †

4 They say, “Come, let us wipe them out as a nation so that Israel’s name
will no longer be remembered.” †
5 For they have conspired with one mind; they form an alliance † against you †
— 6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites, †
Moab and the Hagrites, †
7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, †
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre. †
8 Even Assyria has joined them; they lend support † to the sons of Lot. † †
Selah

9 Deal with them as you did with Midian, †
as you did with Sisera
and Jabin at the Kishon River. †
10 They were destroyed at En-dor; they became manure for the ground. †
11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb, †
and all their tribal leaders like Zebah and Zalmunna, †
12 who said, “Let us seize God’s pastures for ourselves.” †

13 Make them like tumbleweed, my God, like straw before the wind. †
14 As fire burns a forest, as a flame blazes through mountains, †
15 so pursue them with your tempest and terrify them with your storm. †
16 Cover their faces with shame so that they will seek your name, LORD. †
17 Let them be put to shame and terrified forever; let them perish in disgrace. †
18 May they know that you alone — whose name is the LORD — are the Most
High over the whole earth. †

83:2 Lit *have lifted their head* **83:5** Lit *they cut a covenant* **83:8** Lit *they are an arm* **83:8** = Moab and Ammon
83:title 1Ch 16:5,7 **83:1** Ps 28:1; 39:12; Is 62:1 **83:2** Ps 2:1; Is 17:12 **83:3** Jb 5:12-13; Ps 37:12; 64:2 **83:4** Ps 41:5; Jr 11:19 **83:5** Ps 2:2 **83:6** Gn 25:12-16; Ps 137:7 **83:6** 1Ch 5:10; 2Ch 20:10 **83:7** Jos 13:5; 1Sm 15:2 **83:7** 1Sm 4:1; Ezk 27:3 **83:8** 2Kg 15:19 **83:9** Nm 31:7; Jdg 7:1-24 **83:9** Jdg 4:7; 5:21 **83:10** Jr 9:22; 16:4; 25:33 **83:11** Jdg 7:25; 8:3 **83:11** Jdg 8:5-21 **83:12** 2Ch 20:11 **83:13** Jb 21:18; Ps 1:4; Is 17:13 **83:14** Is 9:18; 10:16-19 **83:15** Jb 9:17; Ps 58:9 **83:16** Ps 35:26; 109:29; 132:18 **83:17** Ps 35:4; 70:2 **83:18** Ps 97:9

LONGING FOR GOD’S HOUSE

For the choir director: on the *Gittith*. † A psalm of the sons of Korah.

84 2 How lovely is your dwelling place, LORD of Armies. †
I long and yearn for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh cry out for † the living God. †

3 Even a sparrow finds a home, and a swallow, a nest for herself
where she places her young —
near your altars, LORD of Armies, my King and my God. †
4 How happy are those who reside in your house, who praise you continually. †
Selah

5 Happy are the people whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. †
6 As they pass through the Valley of Baca, †
they make it a source of springwater;
even the autumn rain will cover it with blessings. † †
7 They go from strength to strength; each appears before God in Zion. †

8 LORD God of Armies, hear my prayer; listen, God of Jacob. †
Selah 9 Consider our shield, † God; †
look on the face of your anointed one. †

10 Better a day in your courts than a thousand anywhere else.
I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God than live in the tents of wicked people. †
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield. †
The LORD grants favor and honor; he does not withhold the good
from those who live with integrity. †
12 Happy is the person who trusts in you, LORD of Armies! †

84:2 Or *flesh shout for joy to* **84:6** Or *Valley of Tears* **84:6** Or *pools* **84:9** = the king
84:title Pss 8; 81 titles **84:1** Ps 43:3; 132:5 **84:2** Ps 42:1-2; 63:1 **84:3** Ps 5:2; 43:4 **84:4** Ps 65:4 **84:5** Ps 119:2; 122:1 **84:6** Ezk 34:26; Jl 2:23 **84:7** Pr 4:18; Is 40:31 **84:8** Ps 39:12; 54:2; 86:6 **84:9** Ps 3:3; 115:9-11 **84:9** 1Sm 2:10; 2Ch 6:42; Ps 132:17 **84:10** Ps 27:4 **84:11** Ps 3:3; 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 119:114; Is 60:19-20; Rv 21:23 **84:11** Pr 2:7 **84:12** Ps 40:4

RESTORATION OF FAVOR

For the choir director. A psalm of the sons of Korah.

85 LORD, you showed favor to your land; †
you restored the fortunes of Jacob. † †
2 You forgave your people's guilt; you covered all their sin. †
Selah 3 You withdrew all your fury; you turned from your burning anger. †

4 Return to us, God of our salvation, and abandon your displeasure with us. †
5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger for all generations? †
6 Will you not revive us again so that your people may rejoice in you? †
7 Show us your faithful love, LORD, and give us your salvation. †

8 I will listen to what God will say; surely the LORD will declare peace to his people, his faithful ones,
and not let them go back to foolish ways. †
9 His salvation is very near those who fear him, so that glory may dwell in our land. †

10 Faithful love and truth will join together; righteousness and peace will embrace. †
11 Truth will spring up from the earth, and righteousness will look down from heaven. †
12 Also, the LORD will provide what is good, and our land will yield its crops. †
13 Righteousness will go before him to prepare the way for his steps. †

85:1 Or *restored Jacob from captivity*
85:1 Ps 106:4 **85:1** Dt 30:3; Ps 14:7; Jr 29:14 **85:2** 1Kg 8:34; Ps 32:1,5 **85:3** Ps 78:38; 106:23; Jnh 3:9 **85:4** Ps 27:9; 79:9; 80:3,7 **85:5** Ps 74:1; 79:5; 80:4 **85:6** Ps 71:20; 80:18; 149:2 **85:7** Ps 69:13; 119:41 **85:8** Hg

2:9; Zch 9:10 **85:9** Is 46:13; Zch 2:5; Jn 1:14 **85:10** Ps 72:3; 89:14 **85:11** Is 45:8 **85:12** Ps 65:12-13; 67:6; Ezk 34:27 **85:13** Ps 89:14; Is 40:3,10; 58:8

LAMENT AND PETITION

A prayer of David.

86 Listen, LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. †
2 Protect my life, for I am faithful. †
You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you. †
3 Be gracious to me, Lord, for I call to you all day long. †
4 Bring joy to your servant's life, because I appeal to you, Lord. †

5 For you, Lord, are kind and ready to forgive, †
abounding in faithful love to all who call on you. †
6 LORD, hear my prayer; listen to my plea for mercy. †
7 I call on you in the day of my distress, for you will answer me. †

8 Lord, there is no one like you among the gods, and there are no works like yours. †
9 All the nations you have made will come and bow down before you, Lord, and will honor your name. †
10 For you are great and perform wonders; you alone are God. †

11 Teach me your way, LORD, and I will live by your truth.
Give me an undivided mind to fear your name. †
12 I will praise you with all my heart, Lord my God, and will honor your name forever. †
13 For your faithful love for me is great, and you rescue my life from the depths of Sheol. †

14 God, arrogant people have attacked me; a gang of ruthless men intends to kill me.
They do not let you guide them. † †

15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger
and abounding in faithful love and truth. †
16 Turn to me and be gracious to me.
Give your strength to your servant;
save the son of your female servant. †
17 Show me a sign of your goodness; my enemies will see and be put to shame
because you, LORD, have helped and comforted me. †

86:14 Lit *They do not set you in front of them*
86:1 Ps 17:6; 31:2; 70:5 **86:2** 1Sm 2:9; Ps 37:28 **86:2** Ps 109:26 **86:3** Ps 25:5; 88:9 **86:4** Ps 25:1; 43:5 **86:5** Ps 130:4 **86:5** Ps 103:8; 145:8 **86:6** Ps 55:1-2 **86:7** Gn 35:3; Ps 17:6; 20:1 **86:8** Ex 15:11; Dt 3:24; Ps 89:6 **86:9** Ps 22:7; Is 66:24; Rv 15:4 **86:10** 2Kg 19:15; Ps 72:18; 83:18; Jr 10:6 **86:11** Ps 25:4-5; 26:3 **86:12** Ps 111:1 **86:13** Ps 30:3; Ezk 26:20 **86:14** Ps 54:3 **86:15** Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; Neh 9:17 **86:16** Ps 25:16; 68:35 **86:17** Ps 112:10; 132:18

ZION, THE CITY OF GOD

A psalm of the sons of Korah. A song.

87 The city he founded † is on the holy mountains. †
2 The LORD loves Zion's city gates more than all the dwellings of Jacob. †
3 Glorious things are said about you, city of God. †

Selah

4 "I will make a record of those who know me: Rahab, Babylon, Philistia, Tyre,
and Cush — each one was born there." †
5 And it will be said of Zion, "This one and that one were born in her."
The Most High himself will establish her. †
6 When he registers the peoples, the LORD will record, "This one
was born there." †

Selah 7 Singers and dancers † alike will say, †

"My whole source of joy is † in you." †

87:1 Lit *His foundation* **87:7** Or *musicians* **87:7** Or *As they dance they will sing* **87:7** Lit *"All my springs, are*
87:1 Ps 78:69; Is 28:16 **87:2** Ps 78:67-68 **87:3** Ps 48:8 **87:4** Is 19:23-25; 56:6-7; Zch 2:10-12 **87:5** Ps 48:8; Is 2:2 **87:6** Is 4:3; Ezk 13:9 **87:7** Ps 46:4; 68:25

A CRY OF DESPERATION

A song. A psalm of the sons of Korah. For the choir director: according to *Mahalath Leannoth.* A *Maskil* of Heman the Ezrahite. †

88 LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out before you day and night. †
2 May my prayer reach your presence; listen to my cry. †

3 For I have had enough troubles, and my life is near Sheol. †
4 I am counted among those going down to the Pit. †
I am like a man without strength, †
5 abandoned † among the dead.
I am like the slain lying in the grave, †
whom you no longer remember,
and who are cut off from your care. † †

6 You have put me in the lowest part of the Pit, in the darkest places, in the depths. †
7 Your wrath weighs heavily on me; †
you have overwhelmed me with all your waves. †
Selah 8 You have distanced my friends from me; you have made me repulsive to them. †

I am shut in and cannot go out.
9 My eyes are worn out from crying. †
LORD, I cry out to you all day long; †
I spread out my hands to you. †

10 Do you work wonders for the dead?
Do departed spirits rise up to praise you? †
Selah 11 Will your faithful love be declared in the grave, your faithfulness in Abaddon? †

12 Will your wonders be known in the darkness or your righteousness in the land
of oblivion? †

13 But I call to you for help, LORD; in the morning my prayer meets you. †

14 LORD, why do you reject me? †

Why do you hide your face from me? †

15 From my youth, I have been suffering and near death.

I suffer your horrors; I am desperate. †

16 Your wrath sweeps over me; your terrors destroy me. †

17 They surround me like water all day long; they close in on me
from every side. †

18 You have distanced loved one and neighbor from me; darkness is
my only friend. † †

88:5 Or *set free* **88:5** Or *hand* **88:18** Or *from me, my friends. Oh darkness!*
88:title 1Kg 4:31; 1Ch 2:6 **88:1** Ps 22:2; 86:3; Lk 18:7 **88:2** Ps 18:6; 31:2; 86:1 **88:3** Ps 16:10; 116:3 **88:4** Ps 28:1; 143:7 **88:4** Ps 61:2 **88:5** Ps 31:12 **88:5** Ps 31:22; Is 53:8 **88:6** Ps 69:15; 86:13; Ezk 26:20 **88:7** Ps 32:4; 39:10 **88:7** Ps 42:7 **88:8** Jb 19:13-22; Ps 31:11 **88:9** Ps 6:7; 31:9 **88:9** Ps 86:3 **88:9** Ps 143:6 **88:10** Ps 6:5; 30:9 **88:11** Jb 26:6; Pr 15:11; 27:20 **88:12** Ec 9:5 **88:13** Ps 5:3; 119:147 **88:14** Ps 43:2 **88:14** Jb 13:24; Ps 10:1; 13:1 **88:15** Jb 31:23 **88:16** Jb 6:4; 9:34 **88:17** Ps 22:12,16; 118:10-12 **88:18** Jb 19:13; Ps 31:11; 38:11

PERPLEXITY ABOUT GOD'S PROMISES

A *Maskil* of Ethan the Ezrahite. †

89 I will sing about the LORD's faithful love forever; †
I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations with my mouth. †

2 For I will declare, "Faithful love is built up forever;

you establish your faithfulness in the heavens." †

3 The LORD said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn
an oath to David my servant: 4 'I will establish your offspring forever and
build up your throne for all generations.' " †

Selah

5 LORD, the heavens praise your wonders † — your faithfulness also —
in the assembly of the holy ones. †
6 For who in the skies can compare with the LORD?
Who among the heavenly beings † is like the LORD? †
7 God is greatly feared in the council of the holy ones, more awe-inspiring than † all who surround him. †
8 LORD God of Armies, who is strong like you, LORD? †
Your faithfulness surrounds you.
9 You rule the raging sea; when its waves surge, you still them. †
10 You crushed Rahab like one who is slain; †
you scattered your enemies with your powerful arm. †
11 The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours.
The world and everything in it — you founded them. †
12 North and south — you created them. †
Tabor and Hermon shout for joy at your name. †
13 You have a mighty arm; your hand is powerful;
your right hand is lifted high. †
14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; †
faithful love and truth go before you. †
15 Happy are the people who know the joyful shout; †
LORD, they walk in the light from your face. †
16 They rejoice in your name all day long, and they are exalted by your righteousness. †
17 For you are their magnificent strength; †
by your favor our horn is exalted. †
18 Surely our shield † belongs to the LORD, our king to the Holy One of Israel. †

19 You once spoke in a vision to your faithful ones and said: “I have granted help to a warrior; I have exalted one chosen † from the people. †
20 I have found David my servant; I have anointed him with my sacred oil. †

21 My hand will always be with him, and my arm will strengthen him. †
22 The enemy will not oppress † him; the wicked will not afflict him. †
23 I will crush his foes before him and strike those who hate him. †
24 My faithfulness and love will be with him, and through my name
his horn will be exalted. †
25 I will extend his power to the sea and his right hand to the rivers. †
26 He will call to me, ‘You are my Father, †
my God, the rock of my salvation.’ †
27 I will also make him my firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth. †
28 I will always preserve my faithful love for him, and my covenant with him will endure. †
29 I will establish his line forever, his throne as long as heaven lasts. † †
30 If his sons abandon my instruction and do not live by my ordinances, †
31 if they dishonor my statutes and do not keep my commands, †
32 then I will call their rebellion to account with the rod,
their iniquity with blows. †
33 But I will not withdraw my faithful love from him
or betray my faithfulness. †
34 I will not violate my covenant or change what my lips have said. †
35 Once and for all I have sworn an oath by my holiness;
I will not lie to David. †
36 His offspring will continue forever, his throne like the sun before me, †
37 like the moon, established forever, a faithful witness in the sky.” †

Selah

38 But you have spurned and rejected him; you have become enraged with your anointed. †
39 You have repudiated the covenant with your servant; you have completely dishonored his crown. † †

40 You have broken down all his walls; you have reduced his fortified cities
to ruins. †
41 All who pass by plunder him; †
he has become an object of ridicule
to his neighbors. †
42 You have lifted high the right hand of his foes; you have made all
his enemies rejoice. †
43 You have also turned back his sharp sword and have not let him stand
in battle. †
44 You have made his splendor † cease and have overturned his throne. †
45 You have shortened the days of his youth; you have covered him
with shame. †

Selah

46 How long, LORD? Will you hide forever?
Will your anger keep burning like fire? †
47 Remember how short my life is.
Have you created everyone for nothing? †
48 What courageous person can live and never see death?
Who can save himself from the power of Sheol? †
Selah 49 Lord, where are the former acts of your faithful love that you swore
to David in your faithfulness? †

50 Remember, Lord, the ridicule against your servants — in my heart I carry
abuse from all the peoples — 51 how your enemies have ridiculed, LORD,
how they have ridiculed every step of your anointed. †

52 Blessed be the LORD forever.
Amen and amen. †

89:6 Or *the angels*, or *the sons of the mighty* **89:7** Or *ones, revered by* **89:18** = the king **89:19** Or *exalted a young man* **89:22** Or *not exact tribute from* **89:29** Lit *as days of heaven* **89:39** Lit *have dishonored his crown to the ground* **89:44** Hb obscure
89:title 1Kg 4:31; 1Ch 2:6 **89:1** Ps 101:1 **89:1** Ps 92:2; 119:90 **89:2** Ps 36:5 **89:3-4** 2Sm 7:8-16; 1Ch 17:7-

14; Jr 33:17-21 **89:5** Ps 19:1; 97:6 **89:5** Ps 149:1 **89:6** Ps 86:8; 113:5 **89:7** Ps 89:5; 96:4 **89:8** Ex 15:11; 2Sm 7:22 **89:9** Jb 38:11; Ps 104:9; Mt 8:23-27 **89:10** Is 30:7; 51:9-10 **89:10** Ps 68:1; 92:9 **89:11** 1Ch 29:11; Ps 24:1 **89:12** Jb 26:7 **89:12** Ps 133:3; Jr 46:18 **89:13** Ps 98:1; 118:16 **89:14** Ps 97:2 **89:14** Ps 85:13 **89:15** Ps 98:6 **89:15** Nm 6:25; Ps 56:13; 1Jn 1:7 **89:16** Ps 20:5; 105:3 **89:17** Ps 28:8 **89:17** Ps 148:14 **89:18** Ps 84:9 **89:19** 2Sm 17:10; 1Kg 11:34; Ps 78:70 **89:20** 1Sm 16:13; Ps 47:9; Ac 13:22 **89:21** Ps 18:35; 80:17 **89:22** 2Sm 7:10 **89:23** 2Sm 7:9; Ps 2:9 **89:24** Ps 21:7; 132:17 **89:25** Ps 72:8 **89:26** 2Sm 7:14; 1Ch 22:10 **89:26** 2Sm 22:47; Ps 18:2 **89:27** Ex 4:22; Jr 31:9; Col 1:15 **89:28** 2Ch 13:5; Ps 105:8 **89:29** Is 9:7; Jr 33:17 **89:30** 2Sm 7:14; 1Kg 2:4 **89:31** 1Sm 12:15 **89:32** Jb 9:34 **89:33** 2Sm 7:15 **89:34** Lv 26:44; Jdg 2:1 **89:35** Am 4:2 **89:36** Ps 72:5,17 **89:37** Jb 16:19; Lk 1:33 **89:38** 1Ch 28:9; Ps 44:9 **89:39** Ps 74:7; Lm 2:7; 5:16 **89:40** Ps 80:12; Lm 2:2,5 **89:41** Jr 30:16 **89:41** Ps 44:13; 79:4 **89:42** Ps 13:4; 80:6 **89:43** Ps 44:10 **89:44** Ezk 28:7 **89:45** Is 54:4; Ezk 7:18; Ob 10 **89:46** Ps 6:3; 13:1; 35:17; 79:5 **89:47** Ps 39:6-7; 90:5-6,9-10 **89:48** Ps 16:10; 22:29 **89:49** 2Sm 7:15; Jr 30:9; Ezk 34:23 **89:50-51** Ps 69:9; 74:10,18,22 **89:52** Ps 41:13; 72:19-20; 106:48

BOOK IV (Psalms 90–106)

ETERNAL GOD AND MORTAL MAN

A prayer of Moses, the man of God.

90 Lord, you have been our refuge †
in every generation. †
2 Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth
and the world, from eternity to eternity, you are God. †

3 You return mankind to the dust, saying, “Return, descendants of Adam.” †
4 For in your sight a thousand years are like yesterday that passes by,
like a few hours of the night. †
5 You end their lives; † they sleep. †
They are like grass that grows in the morning — 6 in the morning it sprouts
and grows; by evening it withers and dries up. †

7 For we are consumed by your anger; we are terrified by your wrath. †
8 You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light
of your presence. †
9 For all our days ebb away under your wrath; we end our years like a sigh. †
10 Our lives last † seventy years or, if we are strong, eighty years.
Even the best of them are † struggle and sorrow; indeed, they pass quickly
and we fly away. †

11 Who understands the power of your anger?
Your wrath matches the fear that is due you. †
12 Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom
in our hearts. † †

13 LORD — how long?
Turn and have compassion on your servants. †
14 Satisfy us in the morning with your faithful love so that we may shout
with joy and be glad all our days. †
15 Make us rejoice for as many days as you have humbled us, for as many years
as we have seen adversity. †
16 Let your work be seen by your servants, and your splendor
by their children. †
17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be on us; establish for us the work
of our hands — establish the work of our hands! †

90:1 Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *dwelling place* **90:5** Or *You overwhelm them* ; Hb obscure **90:10** Lit *The days of our years in them* **90:10** LXX, Tg, Syr, Vg read *Even their span is* ; Hb obscure **90:12** Or *develop a heart of wisdom*
90:1 Ps 71:3 **90:2** Jb 36:26; Ps 102:27; Pr 8:25 **90:3** Gn 3:19; Ec 12:7 **90:4** 2Pt 3:8 **90:5** Jb 14:12 **90:5-6** Jb 14:1-2; Ps 37:2; 103:15-16 **90:7** Ps 39:11 **90:8** Ps 19:12; Ec 12:14 **90:9** Ps 78:33 **90:10** Jb 20:8; Ps 78:39 **90:11** Ps 76:7 **90:12** Dt 32:29; Ps 39:4 **90:13** Dt 32:36; Ps 135:14 **90:14** Ps 36:8; 65:4; 103:5 **90:15** Ps 86:4; 92:4 **90:16** Ps 96:6; Is 35:2 **90:17** Ps 27:4; Is 26:12

THE PROTECTION OF THE MOST HIGH

91 The one who lives under the protection of the Most High dwells
in the shadow of the Almighty. †

2 I will say † concerning the LORD, who is my refuge and my fortress, my God
in whom I trust: †
3 He himself will rescue you from the bird trap, †
from the destructive plague.
4 He will cover you with his feathers; you will take refuge under his wings. †
His faithfulness will be a protective shield. †
5 You will not fear the terror of the night, the arrow that flies by day, †

6 the plague that stalks in darkness, or the pestilence that ravages at noon. †
7 Though a thousand fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand,
the pestilence will not reach you. †
8 You will only see it with your eyes and witness the punishment
of the wicked. †

9 Because you have made the LORD — my refuge, †
the Most High — your dwelling place, †
10 no harm will come to you; no plague will come near your tent. †
11 For he will give his angels orders concerning you, to protect you in all
your ways. †
12 They will support you with their hands so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone. †
13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the young lion
and the serpent. †

14 Because he has his heart set on me, I will deliver him;
I will protect him because he knows my name. †
15 When he calls out to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble.
I will rescue him and give him honor. †
16 I will satisfy him with a long life †
and show him my salvation. †

91:1-2 LXX, Syr, Jer read 2*Almighty, saying,* or 2*Almighty, he will say*
91:1 Ps 27:5; 32:7; 121:5 **91:2** Ps 18:2; 61:4; 62:7-8 **91:3** Ps 124:7; 141:9; Ec 9:12 **91:4** Ps 57:1; 63:7 **91:4** Ps 5:12 **91:5** Ps 58:7; 76:3 **91:5-6** Jb 5:19-23 **91:7** 2Ch 20:9 **91:8** Ps 37:34; 58:10 **91:9** Ps 18:2; 62:7-8 **91:9** Ps 121:5 **91:10** Pr 12:21 **91:11** Ps 34:7 **91:11-12** Mt 4:6; Lk 4:10-11 **91:13** Lk 10:19 **91:14** Ps 9:10; 37:40; 107:41 **91:15** 2Sm 22:20; Ps 18:19; 50:15 **91:16** Dt 4:40; Ps 21:4 **91:16** Ps 50:23

GOD'S LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

A psalm. A song for the Sabbath day.

92 It is good to give thanks to the LORD, to sing praise to your name,
Most High, †

2 to declare your faithful love in the morning and your faithfulness at night, †
3 with a ten-stringed harp †
and the music of a lyre. †

4 For you have made me rejoice, LORD, by what you have done;
I will shout for joy
because of the works of your hands. †
5 How magnificent are your works, LORD, how profound your thoughts! †
6 A stupid person does not know, a fool does not understand this: †
7 though the wicked sprout like grass and all evildoers flourish,
they will be eternally destroyed. †
8 But you, LORD, are exalted forever. †
9 For indeed, LORD, your enemies — indeed, your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered. †
10 You have lifted up my horn †
like that of a wild ox;
I have been anointed † with the finest oil. †
11 My eyes look at my enemies; when evildoers rise against me,
my ears hear them. †

12 The righteous thrive like a palm tree and grow like a cedar tree in Lebanon. †
13 Planted in the house of the LORD, they thrive in the courts of our God. †
14 They will still bear fruit in old age, healthy and green, †
15 to declare: "The LORD is just; he is my rock,
and there is no unrighteousness in him." †

92:3 Or *ten-stringed instrument and a harp* **92:10** Syr reads *you have anointed me*
92:1 Ps 135:3; 147:1 **92:2** Ps 59:16; 89:1; Lm 3:22-23 **92:3** Ps 33:2 **92:4** Ps 40:5; 143:5 **92:5** Ps 139:17; Is 55:8-9 **92:6** Ps 73:22 **92:7** Ps 90:5-6 **92:8** Ps 93:4 **92:9** Ps 37:20; 68:1 **92:10** Ps 89:17,24; 112:9 **92:10** Ps 45:7 **92:11** Ps 37:34; 54:7 **92:12** Ps 1:3; Is 61:3; Jr 17:8 **92:13** Is 60:21 **92:14** Is 37:31; 46:4 **92:15** Dt 32:4; Ps 18:2; 94:22

GOD'S ETERNAL REIGN

93 The LORD reigns! He is robed in majesty; the LORD is robed,
enveloped in strength.
The world is firmly established;
it cannot be shaken. †
2 Your throne has been established from the beginning; †
you are from eternity. †
3 The floods have lifted up, LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice;
the floods lift up their pounding waves. †
4 Greater than the roar of a huge torrent — the mighty breakers of the sea —
the LORD on high is majestic. †

5 LORD, your testimonies are completely reliable; †
holiness adorns your house
for all the days to come. †

93:2 Lit *from then*
93:1 1Ch 16:30-31; Ps 96:10; 97:1 **93:2** Ps 9:7; 90:2; 103:19 **93:3** Ps 96:11; 98:7-8 **93:4** Ps 65:7; 89:9; Ezk 43:2 **93:5** Ps 19:7 **93:5** Ps 29:2; 96:9

THE JUST JUDGE

94 LORD, God of vengeance — God of vengeance, shine! †
2 Rise up, Judge of the earth; repay the proud what they deserve. †
3 LORD, how long will the wicked — how long will the wicked celebrate? †

4 They pour out arrogant words; all the evildoers boast. †
5 LORD, they crush your people; they oppress your heritage. †
6 They kill the widow and the resident alien and murder the fatherless. †
7 They say, “The LORD doesn’t see it.
The God of Jacob doesn’t pay attention.” †

8 Pay attention, you stupid people!
Fools, when will you be wise? †
9 Can the one who shaped the ear not hear, the one who formed the eye not see?
†

10 The one who instructs nations, the one who teaches mankind knowledge —
does he not discipline? †
11 The LORD knows the thoughts of mankind; they are futile. †

12 LORD, how happy is anyone you discipline and teach from your law †
13 to give him relief from troubled times until a pit is dug for the wicked. †
14 The LORD will not leave his people or abandon his heritage, †
15 for the administration of justice will again be righteous, and all the upright
in heart will follow † it. †

16 Who stands up for me against the wicked?
Who takes a stand for me against evildoers? †
17 If the LORD had not been my helper, I would soon rest in the silence
of death. †
18 If I say, "My foot is slipping,"
your faithful love will support me, LORD. †
19 When I am filled with cares, your comfort brings me joy. †

20 Can a corrupt throne be your ally, a throne that makes evil laws? †
21 They band together against the life of the righteous and condemn the innocent
to death. †
22 But the LORD is my refuge; my God is the rock of my protection. †
23 He will pay them back for their sins and destroy them for their evil.
The LORD our God will destroy them. †

94:15 Or *heart will support* ; lit *heart after*
94:1 2Sm 22:48; Ps 18:47-48; Jr 46:10 **94:2** Ps 7:6; 28:4; 98:9 **94:3** Ps 74:10; Rv 6:10 **94:4** 1Sm 2:3; Ps 31:18 **94:5** Is 3:15 **94:6** Dt 27:19; Is 10:2 **94:7** Jb 22:13; Ps 10:11 **94:8** Ps 92:6 **94:9** Ex 4:11; Pr 20:12 **94:10** Jb 35:11; Is 28:26 **94:11** Ps 139:2; Is 66:18; 1Co 3:20 **94:12** Ps 25:5,9; 71:17; Is 48:17 **94:13** Ps 7:15; 9:15; Pr 26:27 **94:14** 1Sm 12:22; Rm 11:2 **94:15** Ps 36:10; 64:10; 97:11 **94:16** Ps 59:2 **94:17** Ps 124:1-2 **94:18** Ps 18:35; 66:9; 121:3 **94:19** Is 57:18; 66:13 **94:20** Ps 50:16; 58:2 **94:21** 2Kg 21:16; Ps 106:38; Jr 26:15 **94:22** 2Sm 22:3; Ps 46:1,7; 62:2,6 **94:23** Ps 73:27; 94:23; 101:5,8

WORSHIP AND WARNING

95 Come, let us shout joyfully to the LORD, shout triumphantly to the rock
of our salvation! †
2 Let us enter his presence with thanksgiving; let us shout triumphantly to him
in song. †

3 For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods. †
4 The depths of the earth are in his hand, and the mountain peaks are his. †
5 The sea is his; he made it.
His hands formed the dry land. †

6 Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD
our Maker. †
7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
the sheep under his care. † †

Today, if you hear his voice: †
8 Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah, as on that day at Massah
in the wilderness †
9 where your fathers tested me; they tried me, though they had seen what I did. †
10 For forty years I was disgusted with that generation; I said, "They are
a people whose hearts go astray; they do not know my ways." †
11 So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter my rest." †

95:7 Lit *sheep of his hand*
95:1 Jb 38:7; Ps 81:1; 98:4,6 **95:2** Ps 100:4; Jnh 2:9 **95:3** Dt 10:17; Ps 47:2; 96:4 **95:4** Ps 135:6 **95:5** Gn 1:9-10; Ps 146:6; Jnh 1:9 **95:6** Ps 96:9; 100:3; Is 17:7 **95:7** Ps 79:13 **95:7** Heb 3:7-11,15; 4:7 **95:8** Ex 17:7; Dt 6:16 **95:9** Nm 14:22; Ps 78:18 **95:10** Dt 9:7; Ac 13:18; Heb 3:10,17 **95:11** Nm 14:23,28-30; Dt 12:9

Psalm 96 †

KING OF THE EARTH

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE NATIONS

NATIONS

In American sports culture a team's fan base is often described as a "nation." Websites and apparel are designed for the "Yankees Nation," the "Aggie Nation," and so on. The use of the word *nation* in this respect refers to something larger than just the fans that attend games or live in proximity to their team's home stadium. These so-called nations consist of all people who share a common bond of fanatic interest in a team, regardless of any geographical or ethnic boundaries. While they exist in greatest number in the region surrounding the team's headquarters, members of the team's "nation" can exist globally and can join other members in enthusiastic support.

When considering a biblical view of the nations, an American sports understanding of the term proves helpful. Within the Bible the word *nation* is often used to describe political entities defined by geographic boundaries that have kings or rulers. For example, Deuteronomy 7:1 lists "the Hethites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites" as seven nations "more numerous and powerful" than Israel. Additionally, the term *nations* is often used as a collective that describes all groups of people outside of Israel; this large and diverse group is also known by the Latin term *Gentiles* (Ac 10:45). Taking the collective non-Israel use further, *nations* is also used to describe peoples identified by ethnic commonalities such as language or customs. In the covenant God makes with Abraham (Gn 18:18), he indicates "all the nations of the earth" will be blessed through the nation that will descend from Abraham. These people are also described as "families of the earth" (Gn 12:3, KJV) and "all the families of the nations" (Ps 22:27). These phrases reflect a corporate emphasis on non-Israelites in the Bible as opposed to a mere individual focus.

THE NATIONS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The nations were first created when God broke up a unified and proud human race, all descended from Adam and Eve and then from Noah's family, during their construction of the tower of Babel (Gn 11). Previously having one language, and thus possessing the ability to enforce their will on one another and perfect their rebellion against God, the people were dispersed throughout the earth due to the fact that God confused their tongues. It was at the time that he gave the people distinct languages so that they would be forced to separate from one another and gather together in new communities—each with its own language. Genesis 10 lists Noah's descendants, recognizing the dispersion recorded in the following chapter. It calls the ethnic groups "nations" (10:5).

The nations, both Jewish and Gentile, are central entities in God's plan to display his glory and the work of salvation and judgment. The nation of Israel is called to declare the glory of God among the nations (Ps 96:3), and the psalmist calls on God to "let the nations rejoice and shout for joy" at his work in the world (67:4). God is sovereign over all nations (103:19), and as a part of his covenant plan brought forth from Abraham, God gave Israel to be "a light for the nations" (Is 49:6). God judges all nations (49:24-27) and provides salvation for them (2:2-4).

THE GOSPEL FOR THE NATIONS

Into the nation of Israel God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, as Messiah to "suffer and rise from the dead the third day, [that] repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations" (Lk 24:46b-47). After his resurrection and before his ascension to heaven, the Messiah commanded his followers to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:19). This message of salvation first went forth from Jerusalem (Ac 1:8).

It is the commission of Christian churches to continue the task of taking the message of God's plan of salvation (Rm 10:14-15) to those nations who have not heard (15:21). Jesus Christ is the hope of all nations (15:12), and from the nations he will gather his people (Jn 10:16). This message will be proclaimed by his followers "to all nations" until the end of the world (Mt 24:14). At that time, the Messiah will return to the

earth and all nations will see God's glory (Is 52:10). They will submit to his rule and reign (Php 2:10-11). People from every nation will worship him (Rv 7:9).

Regardless of ethnicity and culture, there is ultimately no distinction between Jew or Gentile in Christ (Gl 3:28). In him, God has made Jew and Gentile "one new man" and "fellow citizens" together (Eph 2:15,19). As the body of Christ is comprised of believers from many nations (Rv 5:9), one's citizenship is permanently in heaven (Php 3:20). This should not discourage temporal patriotism or appropriate stewardship of civic service as earthly citizens of nations; rather, it should serve as a warning against an ethnocentrism that hinders the missionary task. It should show us the folly of racial or ethnic prejudice of any kind. To hold such biases is to position one's self squarely against the revealed will of God, who has created all people and all nations and has offered salvation to everyone.

The story of Jonah illustrates one problem caused when we prioritize one ethnic group over another. When God commanded the Israelite prophet to go to Assyrian Nineveh and "preach against it," Jonah instead boarded a ship and attempted to go to Tarshish (Jnh 1:2–3). So seriously did God take Jonah's disobedience that he sent "a great storm" to threaten the ship and its crew, and he relented only when Jonah was tossed overboard by the reluctant sailors (Jnh 1:4-15). What was Jonah's motive for shirking God's command? He explains it in a prayer: "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster" (Jnh 4:2). Likely because he despised the military might and strong arm tendencies of Assyria, Jonah preferred to see God's wrath fall on Nineveh rather than seeing God's mercy extend to its people. This manner of viewing the nations is self-centered and does not reflect awareness that God is Lord of all peoples and offers them mercy through faith-based repentance.

ALLEGIANCE TO KING JESUS

When one remembers that to God "the nations are like a drop in a bucket" (Is 40:15) and that he has the power both to make them great and to destroy them (Jb 12:23), it is clear that allegiance to any earthly nation should not supersede allegiance to the Ruler of nations (Ps 22:28). Allegiance to him is our primary and lasting citizenship. Through faith in Christ we are the nation of God, a kingdom drawn from all earthly nations and ethnicities (cp. Rv 7:9-10). It should be our great joy and high priority to reach both next door and overseas to spread the message of eternal hope in the Son whom God sent to pay our sin-debt on the cross and to defeat death in his resurrection.

JASON G. DUESING

96 Sing a new song to the LORD; let the whole earth sing to the LORD. †
2 Sing to the LORD, bless his name; proclaim his salvation from day to day. †
3 Declare his glory among the nations, his wondrous works among all peoples. †
4 For the LORD is great and is highly praised; he is feared above all gods. †
5 For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. †
6 Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. †

7 Ascribe to the LORD, you families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory
and strength. †
8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory of his name; †
bring an offering and enter his courts. †
9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; †
let the whole earth tremble before him. †

10 Say among the nations: "The LORD reigns. †
The world is firmly established; it cannot be shaken. †
He judges the peoples fairly." †
11 Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice; let the sea and all
that fills it resound. †
12 Let the fields and everything in them celebrate.
Then all the trees of the forest will shout for joy †
13 before the LORD, for he is coming — for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples
with his faithfulness. †

Ps 961Ch 16:23-33 **96:1** 1Ch 16:23; Ps 98:1; Is 42:10 **96:2** Is 25:9; 52:7 **96:3** 1Ch 16:9,24; Ps 145:12 **96:4** 1Ch 16:25; Ps 47:2; 95:3 **96:5** 1Ch 16:27; Jr 10:11 **96:6** Ps 104:1 **96:7** 1Ch 16:28-29; Ps 29:1 **96:8** Ps 79:9 **96:8** Ps 100:4 **96:8-9** Ps 29:2 **96:9** Ps 33:8; 114:7 **96:10** Ps 93:1; 97:1 **96:10** 1Ch 16:30 **96:10** Ps 9:8; 67:4; 98:9 **96:11** 1Ch 16:31-32; Ps 69:34; 98:7 **96:12** Is 35:1; 55:12-13 **96:13** Ps 98:9; Rv 19:11

THE MAJESTIC KING

97 The LORD reigns! Let the earth rejoice; let the many coasts and islands
be glad. †

2 Clouds and total darkness surround him; righteousness and justice are
the foundation of his throne. †
3 Fire goes before him and burns up his foes on every side. †
4 His lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. †
5 The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD — at the presence
of the Lord of the whole earth. †

6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness; †
all the peoples see his glory. †

7 All who serve carved images, those who boast in idols, will be put to shame. †
All the gods † must worship him. †

8 Zion hears and is glad, Judah's villages † rejoice because of your judgments, LORD. †
9 For you, LORD, are the Most High over the whole earth; you are exalted above all the gods. †

10 You who love the LORD, hate evil! †
He protects the lives of his faithful ones; †
he rescues them from the power of the wicked. †
11 Light dawns † † for the righteous, gladness for the upright in heart. †
12 Be glad in the LORD, you righteous ones, and give thanks to his holy name. † †

97:7 LXX, Syr read *All his angels* ; Heb 1:6 **97:8** Lit *daughters* **97:11** One Hb ms, LXX, some ancient versions read *rises to shine* ; Ps 112:4 **97:11** Lit *Light is sown* **97:12** Lit *to the memory of his holiness*
97:1 Ps 93:1; 96:10 **97:2** Dt 4:11; 5:20; Ps 18:11 **97:3** Ps 18:8; 50:3 **97:4** Ex 19:16; Ps 77:18 **97:5** Neh 1:5; Mc 1:4 **97:6** Ps 50:6 **97:6** Is 40:5; 66:18 **97:7** Is 44:9,11; Jr 10:14; 50:2 **97:7** Heb 1:6 **97:8** Ps 48:11; Zph 3:14 **97:9** 1Ch 16:25; Ps 95:3; 96:4 **97:10** Am 5:15 **97:10** Ps 145:20 **97:10** Ps 37:40 **97:11** Ps 112:4; Pr 4:18 **97:12** Ps 30:4; 32:11

PRAISE THE KING

A psalm.

98 Sing a new song to the LORD, †
for he has performed wonders;
his right hand and holy arm
have won him victory. †
2 The LORD has made his victory known; he has revealed his righteousness
in the sight of the nations. †

3 He has remembered his love and faithfulness to the house of Israel; all the ends of the earth
have seen our God's victory. †

4 Let the whole earth shout to the LORD; be jubilant, shout for joy, and sing. †
5 Sing to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and melodious song. †
6 With trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn shout triumphantly
in the presence of the LORD, our King. †

7 Let the sea and all that fills it, the world and those who live in it, resound. †
8 Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains shout together for joy †
9 before the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth.
He will judge the world righteously
and the peoples fairly. †

98:1 Ps 33:3 **98:1** Ex 15:6; Is 52:10 **98:2** Is 56:1; 62:2 **98:3** Ps 22:27; Is 52:10 **98:4** Ps 66:1; 100:1; Is 44:23 **98:5** Ps 51:3; Is 51:3 **98:6** Nm 10:10; 2Ch 15:14 **98:7** 1Ch 16:31-32; Ps 93:1; 97:1 **98:8** Ps 89:12; Is 55:12 **98:9** Ps 9:8; 67:4; 96:13

THE KING IS HOLY

99 The LORD reigns! Let the peoples tremble.
He is enthroned between the cherubim. †
Let the earth quake. †
2 The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted above all the peoples. †
3 Let them praise your great and awe-inspiring name. †
He is holy. †

4 The mighty King loves justice.
You have established fairness;
you have administered justice
and righteousness in Jacob. †
5 Exalt the LORD our God; bow in worship at his footstool. †
He is holy. †

6 Moses and Aaron were among his priests; †
Samuel also was among those calling on his name.
They called to the LORD and he answered them. †
7 He spoke to them in a pillar of cloud; †
they kept his decrees and the statutes he gave them.
8 LORD our God, you answered them.
You were a forgiving God to them, †
but an avenger of their sinful actions. †

9 Exalt the LORD our God; bow in worship at his holy mountain,
for the LORD our God is holy. †

99:1 Ex 25:22; 1Sm 4:4; Ezk 11:22 **99:1** Ps 33:8 **99:2** Ps 48:1; 113:4 **99:3** Ps 111:9 **99:3** Is 6:3 **99:4** Ps 33:5; 103:6; Jr 23:5 **99:5** Ps 132:7 **99:5** Is 6:3 **99:6** Ex 24:6-8; Lv 8:1-30 **99:6** 1Sm 12:18 **99:7** Nm 12:5; 14:14; Dt 31:15-18 **99:8** Ps 78:38 **99:8** Jr 46:28 **99:9** Ps 2:6; 48:1; Ezk 20:40

BE THANKFUL

A psalm of thanksgiving.

100 Let the whole earth shout triumphantly to God! †
2 Serve the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. †
3 Acknowledge that the LORD is God.
He made us, and we are his † † — his people, the sheep of his pasture. †
4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving †
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him and bless his name. †
5 For the LORD is good, and his faithful love endures forever; his faithfulness, through all generations.

100:3 Alt Hb tradition, some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *and not we ourselves*
100:1 Ps 66:1; 98:4 **100:1-2** Ps 95:1-2; 98:4-6 **100:3** Dt 32:6; Ps 95:6 **100:3** Ps 79:13; 95:7 **100:4-5** Ps 119:90; 136:1; Lm 3:22-23 **100:4** Ps 75:1; 116:17

A VOW OF INTEGRITY

A psalm of David.

101 I will sing of faithful love and justice; I will sing praise to you, LORD. †
2 I will pay attention to the way of integrity.
When will you come to me?
I will live with a heart of integrity in my house. †
3 I will not let anything worthless guide me. †
I hate the practice of transgression;
it will not cling to me. †
4 A devious heart will be far from me; I will not be involved with † evil. †

5 I will destroy anyone who secretly slanders his neighbor; †
I cannot tolerate anyone
with haughty eyes or an arrogant heart. †
6 My eyes favor the faithful of the land so that they may sit down with me.
The one who follows the way of integrity may serve me. †
7 No one who acts deceitfully will live in my palace;
the one who tells lies
will not be retained here to guide me. † †
8 Every morning I will destroy all the wicked of the land,
wiping out all evildoers from the LORD's city. †

101:3 Lit *I will not put a worthless thing in front of my eyes* **101:4** Lit *not know* **101:7** Lit *be established in front of my eyes*
101:1 Ps 89:1; 145:7 **101:2** 1Kg 9:4; Ps 119:1 **101:3** Dt 15:9; Ps 40:4 **101:4** Pr 3:32; 14:2 **101:5** Ps 50:20 **101:5** Ps 18:27; Is 5:15 **101:6** Ps 119:1; Pr 11:20 **101:7** Ps 31:18; 52:3; 63:11 **101:8** Ps 119:119; Jr 21:12

AFFLICTION IN LIGHT OF ETERNITY

A prayer of a suffering person who is weak and pours out his lament before the LORD. †

102 LORD, hear my prayer; let my cry for help come before you. †
2 Do not hide your face from me in my day of trouble.
Listen closely to me;
answer me quickly when I call. †

3 For my days vanish like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. †

4 My heart is suffering, withered like grass; †
I even forget to eat my food. †
5 Because of the sound of my groaning, my flesh sticks to my bones. †
6 I am like an eagle owl, like a little owl among the ruins. †
7 I stay awake; †
I am like a solitary bird on a roof.
8 My enemies taunt me all day long; they ridicule and use my name as a curse. †
9 I eat ashes like bread and mingle my drinks with tears †
10 because of your indignation and wrath; for you have picked me up and thrown me aside. †
11 My days are like a lengthening shadow, and I wither away like grass. †

12 But you, LORD, are enthroned forever; †
your fame endures to all generations. †
13 You will rise up and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to show favor to her — the appointed time has come. †
14 For your servants take delight in its stones and favor its dust. †

15 Then the nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth your glory, †
16 for the LORD will rebuild Zion; he will appear in his glory. †
17 He will pay attention to the prayer of the destitute and will not despise their prayer. †

18 This will be written for a later generation, and a people who have not yet been created will praise the LORD: †
19 He looked down from his holy heights — the LORD gazed out from heaven to earth † — 20 to hear a prisoner's groaning, to set free those condemned to die, † †
21 so that they might declare the name of the LORD in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem, †

22 when peoples and kingdoms are assembled to serve the LORD. †

23 He has broken my † strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days. †
24 I say: "My God, do not take me in the middle of my life! †
Your years continue through all generations. †
25 Long ago you established the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. †
26 They will perish, but you will endure; all of them will wear out like clothing.
You will change them like a garment,
and they will pass away. †
27 But you are the same, and your years will never end. †
28 Your servants' children will dwell securely, and their offspring will be established before you." †

102:20 Lit *free sons of death* **102:23** Some Hb mss, LXX read *his* **102:24** Lit *my days*
102:title Ps 142:2 **102:1** Ps 18:6; 39:12; 61:1 **102:2** Ps 27:9; 31:2; 69:17 **102:3** Jb 30:30; Ps 31:10; Lm 1:13 **102:4** Ps 37:2 **102:4** Ezr 10:6; Jb 33:20 **102:5** Jb 19:20; Lm 4:8 **102:6** Is 34:11; Zph 2:14 **102:7** Ps 77:4 **102:8** Ps 31:11; 69:19 **102:9** Ps 42:3; 80:5 **102:10** Jb 30:22 **102:11** Jb 8:9; Ps 109:23 **102:12** Ps 9:7; Lm 5:19 **102:12** Ps 135:13 **102:13** Is 60:10; Zch 1:12 **102:14** Neh 4:2; Lm 4:1 **102:15** Ps 138:4; Is 60:3 **102:16** Ps 147:2; Is 60:1-2 **102:17** Ps 22:24 **102:18** Dt 31:19; Ps 22:30-31; 78:6 **102:19** Ps 14:2; 33:13; 53:2 **102:20** Ps 79:11 **102:21** Ps 22:22 **102:22** Ps 22:27; 86:9; Zch 8:20-23 **102:23** Ps 39:5; 89:45 **102:24** Jb 36:26; Ps 90:2 **102:25** Neh 9:6; Ps 96:5; Heb 1:10-12 **102:26** Is 34:4; 51:6; Mt 24:35 **102:27** Mal 3:6; Jms 1:17 **102:28** Ps 69:36; 89:4; 112:2

THE FORGIVING GOD

Of David.

103 My soul, bless the LORD, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. †
2 My soul, bless the LORD, and do not forget all his benefits. †

3 He forgives all your iniquity; †
he heals all your diseases. †
4 He redeems your life from the Pit; †
he crowns you with faithful love and compassion. †
5 He satisfies you † with good things; †
your youth is renewed like the eagle. †

6 The LORD executes acts of righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. †
7 He revealed his ways to Moses, †
his deeds to the people of Israel. †
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love. †
9 He will not always accuse us or be angry forever. †
10 He has not dealt with us as our sins deserve or repaid us according to our iniquities. †

11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his faithful love
toward those who fear him. †
12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed
our transgressions from us. †
13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him. †
14 For he knows what we are made of, remembering that we are dust. †

15 As for man, his days are like grass — he blooms like a flower of the field; †
16 when the wind passes over it, it vanishes, and its place is no longer known. † †
17 But from eternity to eternity the LORD's faithful love is toward those who fear him, and his righteousness toward the grandchildren †
18 of those who keep his covenant, who remember to observe his precepts. †
19 The LORD has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. †

20 Bless the LORD, all his angels of great strength,
who do his word,
obedient to his command. †
21 Bless the LORD, all his armies, his servants who do his will. †
22 Bless the LORD, all his works in all the places where he rules. †
My soul, bless the LORD!

103:5 Lit *satisfies your ornament* ; Hb obscure **103:16** Lit *place no longer knows it*
103:1 Ps 30:4; 97:12; 104:1 **103:2** Dt 6:12; 8:11 **103:3** Is 43:25 **103:3** Jr 30:17 **103:4** Ps 49:15 **103:4** Ps 5:12 **103:5** Ps 107:9 **103:5** Is 40:31 **103:6** Ps 147:7 **103:7** Ex 33:13 **103:7** Ps 78:11; 99:7 **103:8** Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; Neh 9:17 **103:9** Is 57:16; Jr 3:12; Mc 7:19 **103:10** Ezr 9:13; Lm 3:22 **103:11** Ps 36:5; 57:10 **103:12** Is 43:25; Mc 7:19 **103:13** Mal 3:17 **103:14** Gn 3:19; Ps 78:39 **103:15** Jb 14:2; 1Pt 1:24 **103:15-16** Is 40:6-7 **103:17** Ex 20:6; Dt 5:10; Ps 25:6 **103:18** Dt 7:9; Ps 25:10 **103:19** Ps 11:4; 47:2 **103:20** Ps 29:1; 148:2 **103:21** 1Kg 22:19; Neh 9:6 **103:22** Ps 145:10

GOD THE CREATOR

104 My soul, bless the LORD!
LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with majesty
and splendor. †
2 He wraps himself in light as if it were a robe, spreading out the sky
like a canopy, †
3 laying the beams of his palace on the waters above, †
making the clouds his chariot, †
walking on the wings of the wind, †
4 and making the winds his messengers, †
flames of fire his servants. †

5 He established the earth on its foundations; it will never be shaken. †
6 You covered it with the deep as if it were a garment;
the water stood above the mountains. †
7 At your rebuke the water fled; at the sound of your thunder
they hurried away † — 8 mountains rose and valleys sank † — to the place
you established for them. †
9 You set a boundary they cannot cross; they will never cover the earth again. †

10 He causes the springs to gush into the valleys; they flow
between the mountains. †
11 They supply water for every wild beast; the wild donkeys quench
their thirst. †
12 The birds of the sky live beside the springs; they make their voices heard
among the foliage. †

13 He waters the mountains from his palace; the earth is satisfied by the fruit
of your labor. †

14 He causes grass to grow for the livestock and provides crops for man
to cultivate, producing food from the earth, †
15 wine that makes human hearts glad — making his face shine with oil —
and bread that sustains human hearts. †

16 The trees of the LORD flourish, †
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. †
17 There the birds make their nests; storks make their homes in the pine trees. †
18 The high mountains are for the wild goats; the cliffs are a refuge
for hyraxes. †

19 He made the moon to mark the † festivals; †
the sun knows when to set. †
20 You bring darkness, and it becomes night, when all the forest animals stir. †
21 The young lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. †
22 The sun rises; they go back and lie down in their dens. †
23 Man goes out to his work and to his labor until evening. †

24 How countless are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures. † †
25 Here is the sea, vast and wide, teeming with creatures beyond number —
living things both large and small. †
26 There the ships move about, and Leviathan, which you formed
to play there. †

27 All of them wait for you to give them their food at the right time. †
28 When you give it to them, they gather it;
when you open your hand,

they are satisfied with good things. †
29 When you hide your face, they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust. †
30 When you send your breath, †
they are created,
and you renew the surface of the ground. †

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works. †
32 He looks at the earth, and it trembles; he touches the mountains,
and they pour out smoke. †
33 I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God while I live. †
34 May my meditation be pleasing to him; I will rejoice in the LORD. †
35 May sinners vanish from the earth and wicked people be no more. †
My soul, bless the LORD!
Hallelujah!

104:4 Or *angels* **104:7-8** Or *away. They flowed over the mountains and went down valleys* **104:16** Lit *are satisfied* **104:19** Lit *moon for* **104:19** Or *the appointed times* **104:24** Lit *possessions* **104:30** Or *Spirit* **104:1** Ps 93:1; 103:22 **104:2** Jb 9:8; Is 40:22 **104:3** Am 9:6 **104:3** Is 19:1 **104:3** Ps 18:10 **104:4** Ps 148:8; Heb 1:7 **104:5** Jb 38:4; Ps 24:2; 93:1; 96:10 **104:6** Gn 7:19 **104:7** Ps 18:15; 106:9 **104:8** Ps 65:6; Am 4:13 **104:9** Jb 26:10; 38:10-11; Jr 5:22 **104:10** Ps 107:35; Is 41:18 **104:11** Jb 39:5 **104:12** Mt 8:20 **104:13** Jb 5:10; Ps 65:9 **104:14** Jb 28:5; Ps 147:8 **104:15** Gn 18:5; Ps 141:5 **104:16** Nm 24:6 **104:17** Lv 11:19 **104:18** Lv 11:5; Pr 30:26 **104:19** Gn 1:14; Ps 19:6; 74:16 **104:20** Is 45:17 **104:21** Jb 38:39 **104:22** Jb 37:8 **104:23** Gn 3:19 **104:24** Pr 3:19; Jr 10:12; 51:15 **104:25** Gn 1:21; Ps 69:34 **104:26** Jb 41:1; Ps 74:14; Is 27:1 **104:27** Ps 136:25; 145:15; 147:9 **104:28** Ps 145:16 **104:29** Jb 10:9; Ps 90:3 **104:30** Jb 33:4 **104:31** Ps 72:17 **104:32** Ex 19:18; Ps 144:5 **104:33** Ps 63:4; 146:2 **104:34** Ps 19:14 **104:35** Ps 37:10; 59:13

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

105 Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; proclaim his deeds among the peoples. †
2 Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell about all his wondrous works! †
3 Honor his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. †
4 Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his face always. †

5 Remember the wondrous works he has done, his wonders,
and the judgments he has pronounced, † †
6 you offspring of Abraham his servant, Jacob's descendants —
his chosen ones. †

7 He is the LORD our God; his judgments govern the whole earth. †
8 He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he ordained
for a thousand generations † — 9 the covenant he made with Abraham, swore †
to Isaac, †
10 and confirmed to Jacob as a decree and to Israel as a permanent covenant: †
11 "I will give the land of Canaan to you as your inherited portion." †

12 When they were few in number, very few indeed,
and resident aliens in Canaan, †
13 wandering from nation to nation and from one kingdom to another, †
14 he allowed no one to oppress them; he rebuked kings on their behalf: †
15 "Do not touch my anointed ones, †
or harm my prophets." †

16 He called down famine against the land and destroyed
the entire food supply. †
17 He had sent a man ahead of them — Joseph, who was sold as a slave. †
18 They hurt his feet with shackles; his neck was put in an iron collar. †
19 Until the time his prediction came true, the word of the LORD tested him. †
20 The king sent for him and released him; the ruler of peoples set him free. †
21 He made him master of his household, ruler over all his possessions † —
22 binding † his officials at will and instructing his elders. †

23 Then Israel went to Egypt; Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham. † †
24 The LORD † made his people very fruitful; he made them more numerous
than their foes, †

25 whose hearts he turned to hate his people and to deal deceptively with his servants. †
26 He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. †
27 They performed his miraculous signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. †
28 He sent darkness, and it became dark — for did they not defy his commands? †
29 He turned their water into blood and caused their fish to die. †
30 Their land was overrun with frogs, even in their royal chambers. †
31 He spoke, and insects came † — gnats throughout their country. †
32 He gave them hail for rain, and lightning throughout their land. †
33 He struck their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their territory. †
34 He spoke, and locusts came — young locusts without number.
35 They devoured all the vegetation in their land and consumed the produce of their land. †
36 He struck all the firstborn in their land, all their first progeny. †

37 Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold, and no one among his tribes stumbled. †
38 Egypt was glad when they left, for the dread of Israel † had fallen on them. †
39 He spread a cloud as a covering and gave a fire to light up the night. †
40 They asked, and he brought quail and satisfied them with bread from heaven. †
41 He opened a rock, and water gushed out; it flowed like a stream in the desert. †
42 For he remembered his holy promise to Abraham his servant. †
43 He brought his people out with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy. †
44 He gave them the lands of the nations, and they inherited
what other peoples had worked for. †

45 All this happened so that they might keep his statutes
and obey his instructions. †
Hallelujah!

105:5 Lit *judgments of his mouth* **105:9** Lit *and his oath* **105:22** LXX, Syr, Vg read *teaching* **105:23** = Egypt, also in v. 27 **105:24** Lit *He* **105:38** Lit *them*
105:1 Ps 9:11; Is 12:4 **105:2** Ps 96:3 **105:3** Ps 33:21 **105:4** Ps 27:8; 63:2 **105:5** Ps 77:11; 119:13 **105:6** Ps 135:4 **105:7** Is 26:9 **105:8** Dt 7:9; Ps 106:45; Lk 1:42 **105:9** Gn 12:7; 22:16-18 **105:10** Gn 28:13-15 **105:11** Gn 13:15; 15:18; Ps 78:55 **105:12** Gn 34:30; Dt 7:7 **105:13** Dt 26:5 **105:14** Gn 12:17; 20:3,7 **105:15** Gn 20:6-7; 26:11 **105:1-15** 1Ch 16:8-22 **105:16** Gn 41:54; Lv 26:26; Ezk 4:16 **105:17** Gn 37:28-36; 45:5; Ac 7:9 **105:18** Gn 39:20 **105:19** Gn 40:20-21 **105:20** Gn 41:14 **105:21** Gn 41:40-43 **105:22** Gn 41:44 **105:23** Gn 46:6; Ac 7:15; 13:17 **105:24** Ex 1:7,9; Dt 26:5 **105:25** Ex 1:8-14; Ac 7:19 **105:26** Ex 3:10; 4:12,14 **105:27** Ex 7:3; 11:9-10; Ps 78:43-51 **105:28** Ex 10:21-23; Ps 99:7 **105:29** Ex 7:20-21 **105:30** Ex 8:3,6 **105:31** Ex 8:21 **105:31** Ex 8:16-17 **105:32-33** Ex 9:23-25 **105:33** Ps 78:47 **105:34-35** Ex 10:12-15 **105:36** Ex 12:29; 13:15; Ps 78:51 **105:37** Ex 12:35-36 **105:38** Ex 12:33; 15:16 **105:39** Ex 13:21; Neh 9:12; Ps 78:14 **105:40** Ex 16:15; Ps 78:24 **105:41** Ex 17:6; Nm 20:11; Ps 78:15 **105:42** Ex 2:24 **105:43** Ex 15:1; Ps 106:12 **105:44** Jos 24:13; Ps 78:55 **105:45** Dt 4:1,40; Ps 78:7

ISRAEL'S UNFAITHFULNESS TO GOD

106 Hallelujah!
Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. †

2 Who can declare the LORD's mighty acts or proclaim all the praise due him? †
3 How happy are those who uphold justice, who practice righteousness at all times. †

4 Remember me, LORD, when you show favor to your people. †
Come to me with your salvation
5 so that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones,
rejoice in the joy of your nation,
and boast about your heritage. †

6 Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have done wrong and have acted wickedly. †
7 Our fathers in Egypt did not grasp the significance of your wondrous works or remember your many acts of faithful love; instead, they rebelled by the sea — the Red Sea. †
8 Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his power known. †

9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led them through the depths as through a desert. †
10 He saved them from the power of the adversary; he redeemed them from the power of the enemy. †
11 Water covered their foes; not one of them remained. †
12 Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. †

13 They soon forgot his works and would not wait for his counsel. †
14 They were seized with craving in the wilderness and tested God in the desert. †
15 He gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease among them. †

16 In the camp they were envious of Moses and of Aaron, the LORD's holy one. †
17 The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it covered the assembly of Abiram. †
18 Fire blazed throughout their assembly; flames consumed the wicked. †

19 At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped the cast metal image. †
20 They exchanged their glory † †
for the image of a grass-eating ox. †
21 They forgot God their Savior, who did great things in Egypt, †
22 wondrous works in the land of Ham, †
awe-inspiring acts at the Red Sea. †
23 So he said he would have destroyed them — if Moses his chosen one had not stood before him in the breach
to turn his wrath away from destroying them. †

24 They despised the pleasant land and did not believe his promise. †
25 They grumbled in their tents and did not listen to the LORD. †
26 So he raised his hand against them with an oath that he would make them fall in the desert †

27 and would disperse their descendants †
among the nations,
scattering them throughout the lands. †

28 They aligned themselves with Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods. † †
29 They angered the LORD with their deeds, and a plague broke out against them. †
30 But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was stopped. †
31 It was credited to him as righteousness throughout all generations to come. †

32 They angered the LORD at the Waters of Meribah, and Moses suffered † because of them; †
33 for they embittered his spirit, †
and he spoke rashly with his lips. †

34 They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them †
35 but mingled with the nations and adopted their ways. †
36 They served their idols, which became a snare to them. †
37 They sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons. †
38 They shed innocent blood — the blood of their sons and daughters
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan; so the land became polluted with blood. †
39 They defiled themselves by their actions and prostituted themselves by their deeds. †

40 Therefore the LORD's anger burned against his people, and he abhorred his own inheritance. †
41 He handed them over to the nations; those who hated them ruled over them. †
42 Their enemies oppressed them, and they were subdued under their power. †
43 He rescued them many times, but they continued to rebel deliberately and were beaten down by their iniquity. †

44 When he heard their cry, he took note of their distress, †
45 remembered his covenant with them, and relented according to the abundance of his faithful love. †
46 He caused them to be pitied before all their captors. †

47 Save us, LORD our God, and gather us from the nations,
so that we may give thanks to your holy name and rejoice in your praise. †

48 Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. †
Let all the people say, "Amen! "
Hallelujah! †

106:20 Alt Hb tradition reads *his glory*, or *my glory* **106:20** = God **106:22** = Egypt **106:27** Syr; MT reads *would make their descendants fall* **106:28** Lit *sacrifices for dead ones* **106:32** Lit *and it was evil for Moses* **106:33** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Jer; other Hb mss read *they rebelled against his Spirit*
106:1 1Ch 16:34,41; Ps 100:5 **106:2** Ps 145:4,12; 150:2 **106:3** Ps 15:2 **106:4** Ps 119:132 **106:5** Dt 32:9; Ps 105:6,43 **106:6** Lv 26:40; Jr 3:25; 14:20 **106:7** Ex 14:10-12; Ps 78:17 **106:8** Ex 9:16; Ezk 20:9 **106:9** Ps 18:15; 104:7; Is 63:11-13 **106:10** Ex 14:30; Ps 107:2 **106:11** Ex 14:27-28; 15:5; Ps 78:53 **106:12** Ex 14:31; 15:1-21; Ps 105:43 **106:13** Ex 15:24; Ps 78:11; 107:11 **106:14** Nm 11:4; Ps 78:18 **106:15** Nm 11:31; Ps 78:29 **106:16** Nm 16:1-3 **106:17** Nm 16:31-32; Dt 11:6 **106:18** Nm 16:35 **106:19** Ex 32:4; Dt 9:8; Ac 7:41 **106:20** Jr 2:11; Rm 1:23 **106:21** Dt 10:21; Ps 78:11 **106:22** Ps 105:27 **106:23** Ex 32:10; Dt 9:14; Ezk 20:8 **106:24** Nm 14:31; Dt 9:23; Heb 3:19 **106:25** Nm 14:2; Dt 1:27 **106:26** Nm 14:28-35; Ezk 20:15; Heb 3:11 **106:27** Lv 26:33; Dt 4:27; Ps 44:11 **106:28** Nm 25:3; Dt 4:3; Hs 9:10 **106:29** Nm 25:4 **106:30** Nm 25:7-8 **106:31** Gn 15:6; Nm 25:10-13 **106:32** Nm 20:2-13; Ps 81:7 **106:33** Ps 78:40; Is 63:10 **106:34** Dt 7:2,16; Jdg 1:21,27-36 **106:35** Jdg 3:5-6 **106:36** Dt 7:16; Jdg 2:12 **106:37** Lv 17:7; Dt 32:17 **106:38** Nm 35:33; Is 24:5 **106:39** Lv 18:24; Ezk 20:18,30-31 **106:40** Dt 32:19; Ps 78:59 **106:41** Jdg 2:14; Neh 9:27 **106:42** Jdg 4:3; 10:12 **106:43** Jdg 2:16-18; Ps 81:12 **106:44** Jdg 3:3; 6:7; 10:10 **106:45** Lv 26:42; Ps 105:8 **106:46** 1Kg 8:50; 2Ch 30:9; Ezr 9:9 **106:47** Ps 107:3; 147:2 **106:48** Ps 41:13; 72:18; 89:52 **106:47-48** 1Ch 16:35-36

BOOK V (Psalms 107–150)

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE

107 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. †
2 Let the redeemed of the LORD proclaim that he has redeemed them from the power of the foe †
3 and has gathered them from the lands — from the east and the west,
from the north and the south. †

4 Some † wandered in the desolate wilderness, finding no way to a city where they could live. †
5 They were hungry and thirsty; their spirits failed † within them. †
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; he rescued them from their distress. †
7 He led them by the right path to go to a city where they could live. †
8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all humanity. †
9 For he has satisfied the thirsty and filled the hungry with good things. †

10 Others sat in darkness and gloom † — prisoners in cruel chains † —
11 because they rebelled against God's commands and despised the counsel of the Most High. †
12 He broke their spirits † with hard labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. †
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; he saved them from their distress. †
14 He brought them out of darkness and gloom and broke their chains apart. †
15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all humanity. †
16 For he has broken down the bronze gates and cut through the iron bars. †

17 Fools suffered affliction because of their rebellious ways and their iniquities. †
18 They loathed all food and came near the gates of death. †
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; he saved them from their distress. †
20 He sent his word and healed them; he rescued them from the Pit. †
21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all humanity. †

22 Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and announce his works with shouts of joy. †

23 Others went to sea in ships, conducting trade on the vast water. †
24 They saw the LORD's works, his wondrous works in the deep. †
25 He spoke and raised a stormy wind that stirred up the waves of the sea. † †
26 Rising up to the sky, sinking down to the depths, their courage † melting away in anguish, †
27 they reeled and staggered like a drunkard, and all their skill was useless. †
28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. †
29 He stilled the storm to a whisper, and the waves of the sea † were hushed. †
30 They rejoiced when the waves † grew quiet.
Then he guided them to the harbor they longed for. †
31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his faithful love
and his wondrous works for all humanity. †
32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders. †

33 He turns rivers into desert, springs into thirsty ground, †
34 and fruitful land into salty wasteland, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants. †
35 He turns a desert into a pool, dry land into springs. †
36 He causes the hungry to settle there, and they establish a city where they can live. †
37 They sow fields and plant vineyards that yield a fruitful harvest. †
38 He blesses them, and they multiply greatly; †
he does not let their livestock decrease. †

39 When they are diminished and are humbled by cruel oppression and sorrow, †
40 he pours contempt on nobles †

and makes them wander in a trackless wasteland. †
41 But he lifts the needy out of their suffering †
and makes their families multiply like flocks. †
42 The upright see it and rejoice, †
and all injustice shuts its mouth. †

43 Let whoever is wise pay attention to these things and consider the LORD's acts
of faithful love. †

107:4 Lit *They*, also in vv. 10,23 **107:5** Lit *their soul fainted* **107:10** Or *the shadow of death*, also in v. 14 **107:12** Lit *hearts* **107:25** Lit *of it* **107:26** Lit *souls* **107:29** Lit *of them* **107:30** Lit *when they* **107:1** 1Ch 16:34; Ps 100:5; 106:1 **107:2** Ps 78:42; 106:10 **107:3** Is 11:12; 43:5; Ezk 20:34 **107:4** Nm 14:33; 32:13 **107:5** Ps 77:3 **107:6** Ps 106:44 **107:7** Jr 31:9 **107:8** Ps 75:1 **107:9** Ps 22:26; 34:10; Lk 1:53 **107:10** Ps 102:20; Is 42:7; Lk 1:79 **107:11** 2Ch 36:16; Ps 78:40; 106:7 **107:12** Ex 6:9; Dt 26:6; Is 14:3 **107:13** Ex 2:23-25 **107:14** Jr 2:20 **107:15** Ps 75:1 **107:16** Is 45:1-2 **107:17** Jr 30:14-15 **107:18** Jb 33:20 **107:19** Nm 21:7-9 **107:20** Jb 33:28,30; Ps 30:3 **107:21** Ps 75:1 **107:22** Ps 9:11; 105:43; 116:17 **107:23** Is 42:10 **107:24** Is 33:21 **107:25** Ps 93:3-4; Ezk 26:19 **107:26** Ps 22:14; 119:28 **107:27** Jb 12:25; Is 29:9 **107:28** Jnh 1:14; Mk 4:39 **107:29** Ps 89:9; Mt 8:26; Lk 8:24 **107:30** Ex 15:13; Ps 78:72 **107:31** Ps 75:1 **107:32** Ps 22:22,25 **107:33** Is 42:15; 50:2 **107:34** Gn 19:24-28; Dt 29:23 **107:35** Is 35:6-7; 41:18 **107:36** Ps 60:9; 146:7 **107:37** Is 65:21; Am 9:14 **107:38** Gn 12:2; Ex 1:7 **107:38** Dt 7:14 **107:39** Ps 44:25 **107:40** Jb 12:21 **107:40** Jb 12:24 **107:41** 1Sm 2:8; Ps 113:7-8 **107:41** Jb 21:11 **107:42** Jb 22:19; Ps 64:10 **107:42** Jb 5:16 **107:43** Ps 64:9; Hs 14:9

A PLEA FOR VICTORY

A song. A psalm of David.

108 My heart is confident, God; I will sing; I will sing praises
with the whole of my being. † †
2 Wake up, harp and lyre!
I will wake up the dawn. †
3 I will praise you, LORD, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you
among the nations. †
4 For your faithful love is higher than the heavens, and your faithfulness reaches
to the clouds. †
5 God, be exalted above the heavens, †
and let your glory be over the whole earth. †

6 Save with your right hand and answer me so that those you love
may be rescued. †

7 God has spoken in his sanctuary: †
"I will celebrate!
I will divide up Shechem. †
I will apportion the Valley of Succoth. †
8 Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine, and Ephraim is my helmet; †
Judah is my scepter. †
9 Moab is my washbasin; †
I throw my sandal on Edom. †
I shout in triumph over Philistia." †

10 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom? †
11 God, haven't you rejected us?
God, you do not march out with our armies. †
12 Give us aid against the foe, for human help is worthless. †
13 With God we will perform valiantly; †
he will trample our foes. †

108:1 Lit *praises, even my glory* **108:7** Or *has promised by his holy nature*
108:1 Ps 59:17; 112:7 **108:2** Jdg 5:12; Ps 33:2; 81:2 **108:3** 2Sm 22:50; Ps 9:11; 18:49 **108:4** Ps 36:5; 103:11; Lm 3:22-23 **108:5** Ps 113:4 **108:1-5** Ps 57:7-11 **108:6** Ps 17:7; 20:6; 138:7 **108:7** Gn 12:6; 33:18 **108:7** Gn 33:17 **108:8** Dt 33:17; Jos 13:31 **108:8** Gn 49:10 **108:9** 2Sm 8:2 **108:9** 2Sm 8:14 **108:9** 2Sm 8:1 **108:10** Jr 1:18 **108:11** Ps 44:9 **108:12** Ps 146:3 **108:13** Nm 24:18; Ps 44:5; 118:15-16 **108:6-13** Ps 60:5-12

PRAYER AGAINST AN ENEMY

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

109 God of my praise, do not be silent. †

2 For wicked and deceitful mouths open against me; they speak against
me with lying tongues. †
3 They surround me with hateful words and attack me without cause. †

4 In return for my love they accuse me, but I continue to pray. † †
5 They repay me evil for good, and hatred for my love. †

6 Set a wicked person over him; let an accuser † stand at his right hand. †
7 When he is judged, let him be found guilty, and let his prayer be counted as sin. †
8 Let his days be few; let another take over his position. †
9 Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. †
10 Let his children wander as beggars, searching for food far † from their demolished homes. †
11 Let a creditor seize all he has; let strangers plunder what he has worked for. †
12 Let no one show him kindness, and let no one be gracious to his fatherless children. †
13 Let the line of his descendants be cut off; let their name be blotted out in the next generation. †
14 Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD, †
and do not let his mother's sin be blotted out. †
15 Let their sins † always remain before the LORD, and let him remove † all memory of them from the earth. †

16 For he did not think to show kindness, but pursued the suffering, needy, and brokenhearted in order to put them to death. †
17 He loved cursing — let it fall on him; he took no delight in blessing — let it be far from him. †
18 He wore cursing like his coat — let it enter his body like water
and go into his bones like oil. †
19 Let it be like a robe he wraps around himself, like a belt he always wears. †
20 Let this be the LORD's payment to my accusers, to those who speak evil against me. †

21 But you, LORD, my Lord, deal kindly with me for your name's sake; †

because your faithful love is good, rescue me. †
22 For I am suffering and needy; †
my heart is wounded within me. †
23 I fade away like a lengthening shadow; †
I am shaken off like a locust.
24 My knees are weak from fasting, and my body is emaciated. † †
25 I have become an object of ridicule to my accusers; †
when they see me, they shake their heads in scorn. †

26 Help me, LORD my God; save me according to your faithful love †
27 so they may know that this is your hand and that you, LORD, have done it. †
28 Though they curse, you will bless.
When they rise up, they will be put to shame, but your servant will rejoice. †
29 My accusers will be clothed with disgrace; they will wear their shame like a cloak. †
30 I will fervently thank the LORD with my mouth; I will praise him in the presence of many. †
31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy to save him from those who would condemn him. †

109:4 Lit *but I, prayer* **109:6** Or *adversary* **109:10** LXX reads *beggars, driven far* **109:15** Lit *Let them* **109:15** Or *cut off* **109:24** Lit *denied from fat* **109:25** Lit *to them*
109:1 Ps 28:1; 83:1 **109:2** Ps 10:7; 52:4; 120:2 **109:3** Ps 35:7; 69:4; Jn 15:25 **109:4** Ps 69:13 **109:5** Ps 35:12; 38:20 **109:6** Zch 3:1 **109:7** Ps 1:5; Pr 28:9 **109:8** Ps 55:23; Ac 1:20 **109:9** Ex 22:24 **109:10** Jb 30:5-8; Ps 59:15 **109:11** Dt 28:43-44; Lm 5:2 **109:12** Jb 5:4 **109:13** Jb 18:17,19; Ps 9:5; Pr 10:7 **109:14** Ex 20:5; Nm 14:18 **109:14** Neh 4:5; Jr 18:23 **109:15** Ps 34:16; 90:8; Jr 16:17 **109:16** Ps 34:18; 94:6 **109:17** Pr 14:14; Ezk 35:6; Mt 7:2 **109:18** Nm 5:22 **109:19** Ps 73:26 **109:20** Ps 54:5; 94:23; Is 3:11 **109:21** Ps 79:9; 106:8 **109:21** Ps 69:16 **109:22** Ps 40:17; 86:1 **109:22** Ps 143:4 **109:23** Ps 102:11 **109:24** Jb 16:8; Ps 35:13 **109:25** Ps 22:6-7; 69:19 **109:26** Ps 119:86 **109:27** Jb 37:7 **109:28** 2Sm 16:11-12; Is 65:14 **109:29** Jb 8:22; Ps 35:26; 132:18 **109:30** Ps 22:22,25; 35:18; 111:1 **109:31** Ps 16:8; 110:5; 121:5

THE PRIESTLY KING

A psalm of David.

110 This is the declaration of the LORD to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand

until I make your enemies your footstool.” †
2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion.
Rule † over your surrounding † enemies. †
3 Your people will volunteer on your day of battle. † †
In holy splendor, from the womb of the dawn, the dew
of your youth belongs to you. † †
4 The LORD has sworn an oath and will not take it back: “You are a priest forever
according to the pattern of Melchizedek.” †

5 The Lord is at your right hand; he will crush kings on the day of his anger. †
6 He will judge the nations, heaping up corpses; †
he will crush leaders over the entire world. †
7 He will drink from the brook by the road; †
therefore, he will lift up his head. †

110:2 One Hb ms, LXX, Tg read *You will rule* **110:2** Lit *Rule in the midst of your* **110:3** Lit *power* **110:3** Hb obscure
110:1 Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42-43; Ac 2:34-35; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13 **110:2** Ps 45:6; Ezk 19:14 **110:3** Jdg 5:2 **110:3** 1Ch 16:29; Ps 96:9 **110:4** Gn 14:18; Heb 5:6,10; 7:17,21 **110:5** Ps 16:8; 68:14 **110:6** Is 66:24; Rv 19:17-18 **110:6** Ps 68:21 **110:7** Jdg 7:5-6 **110:7** Ps 27:6

PRAISE FOR THE LORD’S WORKS

111 Hallelujah! †
I will praise the LORD with all my heart in the assembly of the upright
and in the congregation. †

2 The LORD’s works are great, studied by all who delight in them. †
3 All that he does is splendid and majestic; †
his righteousness endures forever. †
4 He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered. †
The LORD is gracious and compassionate. †
5 He has provided food for those who fear him; †
he remembers his covenant forever. †

6 He has shown his people the power of his works by giving them
the inheritance of the nations. †
7 The works of his hands are truth and justice; all his instructions
are trustworthy. †
8 They are established forever and ever, enacted in truth and in uprightness. †
9 He has sent redemption to his people. †
He has ordained his covenant forever.
His name is holy and awe-inspiring. †

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; †
all who follow his instructions † have good insight. †
His praise endures forever. †

111:1 The lines of this poem form an acrostic. **111:10** Lit *follow them*
111:1 Ps 35:18; 149:1 **111:2** Ps 92:5; 143:5 **111:3** Ps 145:5 **111:3** Ps 112:3,9; 119:142 **111:4** Ps 78:4 **111:4** Ps 103:8; 145:8 **111:5** Mt 6:31-33 **111:5** Ps 105:8 **111:6** Dt 4:38; 32:8; Ps 78:55 **111:7** Ps 19:7; 93:5 **111:8** Ps 119:160; Is 40:8; Mt 5:18 **111:9** Lk 1:68 **111:9** Ps 99:3; Lk 1:49 **111:10** Pr 1:7; 9:10 **111:10** Ps 119:98 **111:10** Ps 44:8; 145:2

THE TRAITS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

112 Hallelujah! †
Happy is the person who fears the LORD, taking great delight
in his commands. †

2 His descendants will be powerful in the land; the generation of the upright
will be blessed. †
3 Wealth and riches are in his house, †
and his righteousness endures forever. †
4 Light shines in the darkness for the upright. †
He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous. †
5 Good will come to the one who lends generously and conducts
his business fairly. †
6 He will never be shaken. †

The righteous one will be remembered forever. †
7 He will not fear bad news; his heart is confident, trusting in the LORD. †
8 His heart is assured; he will not fear. †
In the end he will look in triumph on his foes. †
9 He distributes freely to the poor; his righteousness endures forever. †
His horn will be exalted in honor. †

10 The wicked one will see it and be angry; he will gnash his teeth in despair. †
The desire of the wicked leads to ruin. †

112:1 The lines of this poem form an acrostic.
112:1 Ps 1:2; 119:16; 128:1 **112:2** Ps 102:28 **112:3** Pr 3:16; 8:18 **112:3** Ps 111:3 **112:4** Ps 97:11 **112:4** Ex 34:6; Neh 9:17; Ps 116:5 **112:5** Ps 15:5; 37:26 **112:6** Ps 55:22 **112:6** Pr 10:7 **112:7** Ps 56:4; 57:7; Pr 1:33 **112:8** Ps 27:1; 56:11 **112:8** Ps 54:7; 59:10 **112:9** 2Co 9:9 **112:9** Ps 75:10; 89:17 **112:10** Jb 16:9; Ps 35:16 **112:10** Pr 10:28; 11:7

PRAISE TO THE MERCIFUL GOD

113 Hallelujah!
Give praise, servants of the LORD; praise the name of the LORD. †
2 Let the name of the LORD be blessed both now and forever. †
3 From the rising of the sun to its setting, let the name of the LORD be praised. †

4 The LORD is exalted above all the nations, †
his glory above the heavens. †
5 Who is like the LORD our God — the one enthroned on high, †
6 who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? †
7 He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the trash heap †
8 in order to seat them with nobles — with the nobles of his people. †
9 He gives the childless woman a household, making her the joyful mother of children. †
Hallelujah!

113:1 Ps 34:22; 69:36; 135:1 **113:2** Ps 115:18; 145:21 **113:3** Mal 1:11 **113:4** Ps 99:2 **113:4** Ps 57:5,11; 148:13 **113:5** Ex 15:11; Ps 89:6 **113:6** Ps 11:4; 138:6 **113:7** 1Sm 2:8; Ps 107:41 **113:8** Jb 36:7 **113:9** 1Sm 2:5; Ps 68:6

GOD'S DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL

114 When Israel came out of Egypt — the house of Jacob from a people
who spoke a foreign language † —
2 Judah became his sanctuary, Israel,
his dominion. †

3 The sea looked and fled; †
the Jordan turned back. †
4 The mountains skipped like rams, the hills, like lambs. †
5 Why was it, sea, that you fled?
Jordan, that you turned back? †
6 Mountains, that you skipped like rams?
Hills, like lambs? †

7 Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God
of Jacob, †
8 who turned the rock into a pool, the flint into a spring. †

114:1 Ex 13:3; Ps 81:5 **114:2** Ex 15:17; Ps 78:68-69 **114:3** Ex 14:21; Ps 77:16 **114:3** Jos 3:13-16 **114:4** Ex 19:18; Ps 29:6 **114:5** Hab 3:8 **114:6** Hab 3:10 **114:7** Ps 96:9 **114:8** Ex 17:6; Nm 20:11; Dt 8:15

GLORY TO GOD ALONE

115 Not to us, LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory
because of your faithful love, because of your truth. †
2 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God? " †
3 Our God is in heaven and does whatever he pleases. †

4 Their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. †
5 They have mouths but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see.
6 They have ears but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. †
7 They have hands but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk. †
They cannot make a sound with their throats. †
8 Those who make them are † just like them, as are all who trust in them. †

9 Israel, † trust in the LORD! †
He is their help and shield. †
10 House of Aaron, trust in the LORD! †
He is their help and shield. †
11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD! †
He is their help and shield.
12 The LORD remembers us and will bless us.
He will bless the house of Israel;
he will bless the house of Aaron; †
13 he will bless those who fear the LORD — small and great alike. †

14 May the LORD add to your numbers, both yours and your children's. †
15 May you be blessed by the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. †
16 The heavens are the LORD's, †
but the earth he has given to the human race. †
17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD, nor any of those descending into the silence of death. †
18 But we will bless the LORD, both now and forever. †
Hallelujah!

115:8 Or *May those who make them become* **115:9** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *House of Israel* **115:16** Lit *the Lord's heavens*
115:1 Ezk 36:22; Dn 9:18-19 **115:2** Ps 42:3,10; 79:10 **115:3** Ps 135:6; Dn 4:35 **115:4** 2Kg 19:18; Is 37:19 **115:5-6** Is 46:7 **115:7** Jr 10:5 **115:7** Hab 2:18 **115:4-8** Ps 135:15-18 **115:9** Ps 118:2 **115:9** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 5:12; 18:2; 28:7; 33:20; 119:114 **115:10** Ps 118:3; 135:19 **115:10-11** Ps 33:20 **115:11** Ps 22:23; 118:4 **115:12** Ps 98:3 **115:13** Rv 11:18; 19:5 **115:14** Dt 1:11 **115:15** Ps 121:2; 124:8; 134:3 **115:16** Ps 89:11 **115:17** Ps 6:5; 31:17; 88:10-12 **115:18** Ps 113:2; Dn 2:20

THANKS TO GOD FOR DELIVERANCE

116 I love the LORD because he has heard my appeal for mercy. †
2 Because he has turned his ear to me, I will call out to him as long as I live. †

3 The ropes of death were wrapped around me, and the torments of Sheol overcame me;

I encountered trouble and sorrow. †

4 Then I called on the name of the LORD: "LORD, save me! " †

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is compassionate. †

6 The LORD guards the inexperienced; I was helpless, and he saved me. †

7 Return to your rest, my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. †

8 For you, LORD, rescued me from death, my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling. †

9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. †

10 I believed, even when I said, "I am severely oppressed." †

11 In my alarm I said, "Everyone is a liar." †

12 How can I repay the LORD for all the good he has done for me? †

13 I will take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. †

14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. †

15 The death of his faithful ones is valuable in the LORD's sight. †

16 LORD, I am indeed your servant; I am your servant, the son of your female servant.
You have loosened my bonds. †

17 I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD. †

18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, †

19 in the courts of the LORD's house — within you, Jerusalem. †
Hallelujah!

116:1 Ps 18:1; 66:19 **116:2** Ps 17:6; 40:1 **116:3** Ps 18:4-5 **116:4** Ps 18:6; 118:5 **116:5** Ex 34:6; Neh 9:17; Ps 112:4 **116:6** Ps 19:7; 79:8; 142:6 **116:7** Ps 13:6; Jr 6:16 **116:8** Ps 49:15; 56:13 **116:9** Ps 27:13 **116:10** 2Co 4:13 **116:11** Ps 31:22; 62:9; Rm 3:4 **116:12** 2Ch 32:25; 1Th 3:9 **116:13** Ps 16:5; 105:1 **116:14** Ps 22:25; 50:14 **116:15** Ps 72:14 **116:16** Jb 12:18; Ps 86:16; 107:14 **116:17** Lv 7:12; Ps 50:14 **116:18** Ps 22:25; 50:14 **116:19** Ps 96:8; 102:21

UNIVERSAL CALL TO PRAISE

117 Praise the LORD, all nations!
Glorify him, all peoples! †

2 For his faithful love to us is great; the LORD's faithfulness endures forever. †
Hallelujah!

117:1 Rm 15:11 **117:2** Ps 100:5; 103:11; 146:6

THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY

118 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. †

2 Let Israel say, "His faithful love endures forever." †

3 Let the house of Aaron say, "His faithful love endures forever." †

4 Let those who fear the LORD say, "His faithful love endures forever." †

5 I called to the LORD in distress; †
the LORD answered me and put me in a spacious place. † †
6 The LORD is for me; I will not be afraid.
What can a mere mortal do to me? †
7 The LORD is my helper, Therefore, I will look in triumph on those who hate me. †

8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in humanity. †

9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in nobles. †

10 All the nations surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I destroyed them. †
11 They surrounded me, yes, they surrounded me; in the name of the LORD I destroyed them. †
12 They surrounded me like bees; †
they were extinguished like a fire among thorns; in the name of the LORD I destroyed them. †
13 They † pushed me hard to make me fall, but the LORD helped me. †
14 The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. †

15 There are shouts of joy and victory in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand performs valiantly! †
16 The LORD's right hand is raised.
The LORD's right hand performs valiantly! " †
17 I will not die, but I will live and proclaim what the LORD has done. †
18 The LORD disciplined me severely but did not give me over to death. †

19 Open the gates of righteousness for me; I will enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD. †
20 This is the LORD's gate; the righteous will enter through it. †
21 I will give thanks to you because you have answered me
and have become my salvation. †
22 The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. †
23 This came from the LORD; it is wondrous in our sight. †
24 This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. †

25 LORD, save us!
LORD, please grant us success! †
26 He who comes in the name of the LORD is blessed. †
From the house of the LORD we bless you. †
27 The LORD is God and has given us light.
Bind the festival sacrifice with cords
to the horns of the altar. †
28 You are my God, and I will give you thanks.
You are my God; I will exalt you. †
29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his faithful love endures forever. †

118:5 Or *answered me with freedom* **118:13** Lit *You*
118:1 2Ch 5:13; Ezr 3:11; Ps 100:5 **118:2** Ps 115:9 **118:3** Ps 115:10; 135:19 **118:4** Ps 22:23; 115:11 **118:5** Ps 18:6; 120:1 **118:5** Ps 18:19 **118:6** Ps 56:4,11; Heb 13:6 **118:7** Ps 54:4,7; 59:10 **118:8** Ps 40:4; 108:12; Jr 17:5 **118:9** Ps 146:3 **118:10** Ps 3:6; 88:17 **118:11** Ps 18:40 **118:12** Dt 1:44 **118:12** Ps 58:9; Nah 1:10 **118:13** Ps 140:4 **118:14** Ex 15:2; Ps 27:1; Is 12:2 **118:15** Ex 15:6; Lk 1:51 **118:16** Ps 89:13 **118:17** Ps 73:28; Hab 1:12 **118:18** Ps 86:13; Jr 30:11; 2Co 6:9 **118:19** Is 26:2 **118:20** Ps 24:3-6; Rv 22:14 **118:21** Ps 116:1 **118:22** Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11; 1Pt 2:4,7 **118:23** Mt 21:42; Mk 12:11 **118:24** Ps 31:7 **118:25** Neh 2:20;

Ps 122:6-7 **118:25-26** Mt 21:9; Mk 11:9-10; Lk 13:35; Jn 12:13 **118:26** Ps 129:8 **118:27** Ex 27:2; Ps 18:28; 1Pt 2:9 **118:28** Is 25:1 **118:29** 2Ch 5:13; Ezr 3:11; Ps 100:5

DELIGHT IN GOD'S WORD

א *Aleph*

119 How † happy are those whose way is blameless, †
who walk according to the LORD's instruction! †

2 Happy are those who keep his decrees †
and seek him with all their heart. †

3 They do nothing wrong; †
they walk in his ways.

4 You have commanded that your precepts †
be diligently kept.

5 If only my ways were committed to keeping your statutes! †

6 Then I would not be ashamed †
when I think about all your commands.

7 I will praise you with an upright heart †
when I learn your righteous judgments.

8 I will keep your statutes; never abandon me. †

ב *Beth*

9 How can a young man keep his way pure?
By keeping your † word. †

10 I have sought you with all my heart; †
don't let me wander from your commands. †

11 I have treasured your word in my heart †
so that I may not sin against you.

12 LORD, may you be blessed; teach me your statutes. †

13 With my lips I proclaim all the judgments from your mouth. †

14 I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees †
as much as in all riches.

15 I will meditate on your precepts †
and think about your ways. †
16 I will delight in your statutes; †
I will not forget your word.

ג *Gimel*

17 Deal generously with your servant †
so that I might live;
then I will keep your word.
18 Open my eyes so that I may contemplate wondrous things
from your instruction.
19 I am a resident alien on earth; †
do not hide your commands from me.
20 I am continually overcome with longing for your judgments. †
21 You rebuke the arrogant, the ones under a curse, †
who wander from your commands. †
22 Take insult and contempt away from me, †
for I have kept your decrees.
23 Though princes sit together speaking against me, †
your servant will think about your statutes; †
24 your decrees are my delight and my counselors. †

ד *Daleth*

SPECIAL REVELATION IN SCRIPTURE

General revelation and special revelation are the two ways God has chosen to reveal himself to humanity. These terms have been used to delineate the extent and purpose of revelation. General revelation refers to the general truths that can be known about God through nature. Theologians use the

term *special revelation* in reference to the belief in God's intentional intervention to make his mind and will available that would not be available through general revelation alone. The distinction between natural and special revelation has little to do with the source or origin of the revelation since both come from God. Instead, the distinction has to do with the means and goals of revelation.

Special revelation is addressed to humanity with a view to their redemption and ongoing relationship with God. And it is only by special revelation that one can learn how to live a godly life and thereby glorify him. "His divine power has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness" (2Pt 1:3). The purpose of special revelation is the redemption of sinners and the magnification of God's glory through both his gracious act of salvation of believers and the just condemnation of those who reject him.

This level of knowledge is not universally available. Rather, it is given by God supernaturally to those who are born again by the Spirit of God (Jn 3:3). Paul says, "What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived—God has prepared these things for those who love him. Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God" (1Co 2:9-10).

Hebrews 1:1-3 provides a succinct outline of God's special revelation: "Long ago God spoke to the fathers by the prophets at different times and in different ways. In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. . . . The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word."

God's special revelation came over the course of time and therefore can be rightfully described as "progressive revelation." Each of these revelations brought a better understanding of God to people. Each biblical writer added to the treasure of knowledge about our Creator. While revelation moved from that which was partial to that which is final, it was never from the imperfect to the perfect. At every point along the way, however, all that had been revealed was fully and equally inspired.

Throughout history, God has used different means to reveal his mind and message to mankind:

1. *Special Manifestation.* The Bible records God appearing many times in physical form (Gn 3:8; 18:1; Ex 3:1-4; 34:5-7). Such an appearance is known as a "theophany." When an angel takes a physical form, it is an "angelophany." Some scholars agree that the "angel of the LORD" a figure prominent in the Hebrew Scriptures, was the Lord Jesus in his preincarnate state (e.g., Gn 16:7-13; 22:15-18; 31:11-13; Jdg 6:11-23). To this may be added the testimony of Paul, who affirmed the actual presence of Christ as a sustaining companion of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai (1Co 10:4).
2. *Direct Communication.* Sometimes God spoke to people directly (Gn 2:16), through divinely revealed dreams (Gn 28:12; Nm 12:6; 1Kg 3:5; Dn 2), visions (Gn 15:1; Is 1:1; Ezk 8:3-4; Dn 7; Hab 1:1; Zch 1-6; 2Co 12:1-7), or divine announcements out of heaven (1Sm 3; Mt 3:17; 17:5; Jn 12:28).
3. *Miraculous Demonstration.* God is also able to interrupt and supersede the natural laws of nature to make his will or power known, as in the case of the use of the Urim and Thummim (Nm 27:21) or miracles, whether done directly by God—like sending hailstones and making the sun remain still in the sky (Jos 10:11-15)—or accomplished through a prophet like Elijah and Elisha (1Kg 17–18; 2Kg 2:9-14) or through the apostles (Ac 3:1-11).
4. *Personal Incarnation.* The ultimate form of special revelation is the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus affirmed, "All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him" (Mt 11:27). The special revelation in Jesus came through his words (Jn 7:16-17), his person (14:7), and his works (5:17-19).
5. *Divine Inspiration.* Scripture is the written revelation of God and is the principle way by which God currently reveals himself to humans. As a result, it is the means by which all claims to truth should be evaluated.

The word *inspiration* also calls attention to the process by which the Holy Spirit superintended the production of Scripture. The term refers to that process by which an omnipotent God so guided the human authors of Scripture in the recording of his revelation so that the end product was the Word of God, exactly as God wanted to communicate it in the words of the original manuscripts.

Most evangelical Christians affirm both the infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible because God is its ultimate Author. Since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, and because God is incapable of inspiring falsehood, his Word is altogether trustworthy. Psalm 119:160 states, "The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever." If an omnipotent God could take an imperfect person like Mary and incarnate a perfect living Word, Jesus, the Son of God, then that same omnipotent God can take a human author and produce a perfect written Word of God, the Bible, through the process of divine inspiration.

The best passages in the Bible about the Bible are found in 2 Peter 1:20-21 and 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The process of inspiration can be seen in the former: "Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." The product of inspiration is best stated in the latter passage, 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Together these passages declare the divine origin of the Bible and its use for the adequate equipping for every work of service God desires or requires.

As the writer to the Hebrews points out, God's intention is to have all revelation find its ultimate fulfillment in his Son as seen in the complementary contrast and comparison between all previous revelation and that of Jesus Christ. In the incarnation we received the fullest expression of his Word. Jesus was and is the Word made flesh. (Jn 1:1,14); he spoke the words the Father taught him (12:49; 14:10), and he summed up his teaching ministry this way: "I have given them your word" (17:14).

MARK L. BAILEY

25 My life is down in the dust; †
give me life † through your word.
26 I told you about my life, and you answered me;
teach me your statutes. †
27 Help me understand the meaning of your precepts
so that I can meditate on your wonders. †
28 I am weary † from grief; strengthen me through your word. †
29 Keep me from the way of deceit and graciously give me your instruction.
30 I have chosen the way of truth; I have set your ordinances before me. †
31 I cling to your decrees; LORD, do not put me to shame. †
32 I pursue the way of your commands, for you broaden my understanding. † †

ה *He*

33 Teach me, LORD, the meaning † of your statutes, and I will always keep them. † †

34 Help me understand your instruction, †
and I will obey it
and follow it with all my heart. †
35 Help me stay on the path of your commands, †
for I take pleasure in it. †
36 Turn my heart to your decrees †
and not to dishonest profit. †
37 Turn my eyes from looking at what is worthless; †
give me life in your ways. † †
38 Confirm what you said to your servant, †
for it produces reverence for you.
39 Turn away the disgrace I dread; †
indeed, your judgments are good.
40 How I long for your precepts! †
Give me life through your righteousness.

ו *Waw*

41 Let your faithful love come to me, LORD, †
your salvation, as you promised. †
42 Then I can answer the one who taunts me, †
for I trust in your word.
43 Never take the word of truth from my mouth, for I hope in your judgments. †
44 I will always obey your instruction, forever and ever. †
45 I will walk freely in an open place †
because I study your precepts. †
46 I will speak of your decrees before kings and not be ashamed. †
47 I delight in your commands, which I love. †
48 I will lift up my hands † to your commands, which I love,
and will meditate on your statutes. †

ז *Zayin*

49 Remember your word to your servant; you have given me hope through it.
50 This is my comfort in my affliction: †
Your promise has given me life.
51 The arrogant constantly ridicule me, but I do not turn away from your instruction. †
52 LORD, I remember your judgments from long ago and find comfort.
53 Rage seizes me † because of the wicked who reject your instruction. †
54 Your statutes are the theme of my song during my earthly life. †
55 LORD, I remember your name † in the night, †
and I obey your instruction.
56 This is my practice: I obey your precepts. †

ח *Cheth*

57 The LORD is my portion; † †
I have promised to keep your words.
58 I have sought your favor † with all my heart; be gracious to me † according to your promise.
59 I thought about my ways †
and turned my steps back to your decrees.
60 I hurried, not hesitating to keep your commands.
61 Though the ropes of the wicked †
were wrapped around me,
I did not forget your instruction. †
62 I rise at midnight to thank you †
for your righteous judgments. †
63 I am a friend to all who fear you, †
to those who keep your precepts.
64 LORD, the earth is filled with your faithful love; †
teach me your statutes. †

ט *Teth*

65 LORD, you have treated your servant well, just as you promised.

66 Teach me good judgment and discernment, †
for I rely on your commands.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, †
but now I keep your word.

68 You are good, † and you do what is good; †
teach me your statutes.

69 The arrogant have smeared me with lies, †
but I obey your precepts with all my heart. †

70 Their hearts are hard and insensitive, †
but I delight in your instruction. †

71 It was good for me to be afflicted †
so that I could learn your statutes.

72 Instruction from your lips † is better for me than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

י *Yod*

73 Your hands made me and formed me; †
give me understanding
so that I can learn your commands. †

74 Those who fear you will see me and rejoice, †
for I put my hope in your word. †

75 I know, LORD, that your judgments are just and that you have afflicted me fairly. †

76 May your faithful love comfort me as you promised your servant.

77 May your compassion come to me †
so that I may live,
for your instruction is my delight. †

78 Let the arrogant be put to shame †

for slandering me with lies;
I will meditate on your precepts.
79 Let those who fear you, those who know your decrees, turn to me.
80 May my heart be blameless regarding your statutes †
so that I will not be put to shame.

כ *Kaph*

81 I long for your salvation; †
I put my hope in your word. †
82 My eyes grow weary looking for what you have promised; †
I ask, “When will you comfort me? ”
83 Though I have become like a wineskin dried by smoke, I do not forget your statutes.
84 How many days must your servant wait?
When will you execute judgment on my persecutors? †
85 The arrogant have dug pits for me; †
they violate your instruction.
86 All your commands are true; people persecute me with lies — help me! †
87 They almost ended my life on earth, but I did not abandon your precepts.
88 Give me life in accordance with your faithful love, and I will obey the decree you have spoken.

ל *Lamed*

89 LORD, your word is forever; †
it is firmly fixed in heaven.
90 Your faithfulness is for all generations; †
you established the earth, and it stands firm. †
91 Your judgments stand firm today, †
for all things are your servants. †
92 If your instruction had not been my delight, I would have died in my affliction. †

93 I will never forget your precepts, for you have given me life through them. †
94 I am yours; save me, †
for I have studied your precepts. †
95 The wicked hope to destroy me, †
but I contemplate your decrees.
96 I have seen a limit to all perfection, but your command is without limit.

מ *Mem*

97 How I love your instruction! †
It is my meditation all day long. †
98 Your commands make me wiser than my enemies, †
for they are always with me.
99 I have more insight than all my teachers because your decrees are my meditation. †
100 I understand more than the elders †
because I obey your precepts. †
101 I have kept my feet from every evil path †
to follow your word.
102 I have not turned from your judgments, †
for you yourself have instructed me.
103 How sweet your word is † to my taste — sweeter than honey in my mouth.
104 I gain understanding from your precepts; †
therefore I hate every false way. †

נ *Nun*

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

Biblical Christianity has always affirmed that Scripture is authoritative because it is God's Word written, the product of God's mighty action through the Word, Jesus, and by the Holy Spirit whereby human

authors freely wrote exactly what God intended to be written and without error. Why has the church affirmed this view? What is meant by the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture?

Christians have affirmed biblical authority because of Scripture's self-testimony. As one evaluates a worldview, it is crucial to begin with the specific claims of that worldview. Thus, if we are to evaluate Christianity we must begin with Scripture's self-attestation. We do not confer upon the Bible an authority alien to it. Rather, we let Scripture speak for itself. In doing this, we discover that it makes the staggering claim that it is God's Word written and is thus completely authoritative, sufficient, and reliable.

For example, 2 Timothy 3:16 describes OT Scripture as being "inspired by God" (an allusion to creation, where the sovereign Lord speaks the universe into being) and thus fully authoritative. So, in relation to his Word, the sovereign-personal triune God of the universe has spoken again and given us his Word through the agency of human authors (2Pt 1:20-21). And it is precisely because he stands behind his Word as Creator and Lord—the God who knows and plans all things (Eph 1:11), who cannot lie or change his mind (Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:29; Heb 6:18)—that we have an authoritative Scripture.

Scripture's view of itself is not found in merely one or two texts; it is found throughout the entire canon. From the opening pages of the OT, we are presented with the eternal triune God who speaks with all authority (Gn 1:1–2:3). As he enters into covenant relationship with Israel, he gives them his Word, which is to believed and obeyed (Dt 5:22,32; 29:9; 30:15-16; Jos 1:7-8). As redemptive-history unfolds, the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God continues to disclose himself through the prophets. This ultimately reaches fulfillment in Christ (Heb 1:1-2).

In Christ—God the Son incarnate—God's final word is spoken (Jn 1:1-3,14-18). Our Lord Jesus not only fulfills the OT, but he also views it as God's Word—the standard by which we are to live and evaluate everything, alongside his own spoken words (e.g., Mt 4:4; 5:17-19; Jn 14:6; 10:35; cp. 2Tm 3:15-16). In this way, our Lord authenticates the OT as God's Word, and he prepares us for the writing of the NT through his apostles by the agency of the Holy Spirit (see Jn 16:5-15; Eph 2:20). This is why, as the NT Scripture is being written, NT authors already view their own writings as authoritative, parallel to OT Scripture (1Th 1:5; 2:13). Specifically one thinks of 1 Timothy 5:18 (which quotes from Dt 25:4 and Lk 10:7) and 2 Peter 3:16 (which refers to Paul's writings); these view NT writings as "Scripture."

In all these ways, Scripture views itself as supremely authoritative precisely because it is God's Word. What Scripture says, God says; what God says, Scripture says. To disbelieve or disobey any point of Scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God. The only proper response to God's Word is to trust and obey (Is 66:2).

It is crucial to affirm biblical authority because without it we would have no basis to affirm that the God of the Bible has spoken definitively and objectively. Without an authoritative and inerrant Scripture, we could hypothesize about God and the world, but none of our hypotheses would be properly grounded. Without biblical authority we have no foundation on which to justify our beliefs since any statement of Scripture may be false. But if this is so, then one would need an independent criterion to justify which statements of Scripture are to be judged true or false. This only compounds the problem. Not only would Scripture not be able to be used as a sufficient ground of justification, but also one must ask what exactly are the independent criteria by which we judge Scripture true or false? Would it be human reason? Religious experience? The problem with all of these so-called solutions to grounding our beliefs is that they require their own independent justification. So, in the end, without a fully authoritative Bible as the foundation for grounding our theological beliefs, we have lost the ability to do theology and know truth in a universal, objective way.

Today we face an authority crisis in every direction. Whether in issues of morality, philosophy, or religion, we live in a pluralistic age that has no grounds for saying that something is right while something else is wrong, or that something is true while something else is false. We have witnessed a massive loss of confidence in the concept of truth in the academy, on the street, and even in the pew. We have lost any sense that "God has spoken" authoritatively and definitively. Nevertheless, Scripture says the opposite. The God who is has spoken, and as such, there are universal, objective grounds for morality, human thought, and theology, rooted in Scripture as God's authoritative written Word.

105 Your word is a lamp for my feet †
and a light on my path.
106 I have solemnly sworn †
to keep your righteous judgments.
107 I am severely afflicted; LORD, give me life according to your word. †
108 LORD, please accept my freewill offerings of praise, †
and teach me your judgments. †
109 My life is constantly in danger, †
yet I do not forget your instruction. †
110 The wicked have set a trap for me, †
but I have not wandered from your precepts. †
111 I have your decrees as a heritage forever; indeed, they are the joy of my heart. †
112 I am resolved to obey your statutes to the very end. † †

ס *Samek*

113 I hate those who are double-minded, †
but I love your instruction. †
114 You are my shelter and my shield; †
I put my hope in your word. †
115 Depart from me, † you evil ones, so that I may obey my God's commands. †
116 Sustain me as you promised, † and I will live; do not let me be ashamed of my hope. †
117 Sustain me so that I can be safe †
and always be concerned about your statutes. †
118 You reject all who stray from your statutes, †
for their deceit is a lie.

119 You remove all the wicked on earth as if they were † dross from metal; †
therefore, I love your decrees. †
120 I tremble † in awe of you; †
I fear your judgments.

ע *Ayin*

121 I have done what is just and right; †
do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Guarantee your servant's well-being; †
do not let the arrogant oppress me.
123 My eyes grow weary † looking for your salvation and for your righteous promise.
124 Deal with your servant based on your faithful love; †
teach me your statutes.
125 I am your servant; † give me understanding †
so that I may know your decrees.
126 It is time for the LORD to act, †
for they have violated your instruction.
127 Since I love your commands †
more than gold, even the purest gold,
128 I carefully follow all your precepts †
and hate every false way. †

פ *Pe*

129 Your decrees are wondrous; †
therefore I obey them. †
130 The revelation of your words † brings light and gives understanding to the inexperienced. †
131 I open my mouth and pant †
because I long for your commands.
132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, †

as is your practice toward those who love your name.
133 Make my steps steady through your promise; †
don't let any sin dominate me. †
134 Redeem me from human oppression, †
and I will keep your precepts.
135 Make your face shine on your servant, †
and teach me your statutes. †
136 My eyes pour out streams of tears †
because people do not follow your instruction.

צ *Tsade*

137 You are righteous, LORD, †
and your judgments are just.
138 The decrees you issue are righteous and altogether trustworthy. †
139 My anger overwhelms me because my foes forget your words. †
140 Your word is completely pure, †
and your servant loves it. †
141 I am insignificant and despised, †
but I do not forget your precepts. †
142 Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and your instruction is true. †
143 Trouble and distress have overtaken me, but your commands are my delight. †
144 Your decrees are righteous forever. †
Give me understanding, and I will live.

ק *Qoph*

145 I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD.
I will obey your statutes. †
146 I call to you; save me, and I will keep your decrees. †

147 I rise before dawn and cry out for help; †
I put my hope in your word.
148 I am awake through each watch of the night to meditate on your promise. †
149 In keeping with your faithful love, hear my voice.
LORD, give me life in keeping with your justice. †
150 Those who pursue evil plans † † come near; they are far from your instruction.
151 You are near, LORD, †
and all your commands are true. †
152 Long ago I learned from your decrees that you have established them forever. †

ר *Resh*

153 Consider my affliction and rescue me, †
for I have not forgotten your instruction. †
154 Champion my cause and redeem me; †
give me life as you promised.
155 Salvation is far from the wicked because they do not study your statutes. †
156 Your compassions are many, LORD; †
give me life according to your judgments.
157 My persecutors and foes are many. †
I have not turned from your decrees. †
158 I have seen the disloyal † and feel disgust †
because they do not keep your word.
159 Consider how I love your precepts; LORD, give me life according to your faithful love. †
160 The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever. †

שׂ *Sin* / שׁ *Shin*

161 Princes have persecuted me without cause, but my heart fears only your word. †

162 I rejoice over your promise †
like one who finds vast treasure.

163 I hate and abhor falsehood, †
but I love your instruction. †

164 I praise you seven times a day for your righteous judgments. †

165 Abundant peace belongs to those †
who love your instruction;
nothing makes them stumble. †

166 LORD, I hope for your salvation †
and carry out your commands.

167 I obey your decrees and love them greatly. †

168 I obey your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before you. †

ת *Taw*

169 Let my cry reach you, LORD; †
give me understanding according to your word. †

170 Let my plea reach you; †
rescue me according to your promise. †

171 My lips pour out praise, †
for you teach me your statutes. †

172 My tongue sings about your promise, †
for all your commands are righteous. †

173 May your hand be ready to help me, †
for I have chosen your precepts. †

174 I long for your salvation, LORD, and your instruction is my delight. †

175 Let me live, and I will praise you; †
may your judgments help me.

176 I wander like a lost sheep; †

seek your servant, †

for I do not forget your commands. †

119:1 The stanzas of this poem form an acrostic. **119:9** Or *keeping it according to your* **119:28** Or *I weep* **119:32** Lit *you enlarge my heart* **119:33** Lit *way* **119:33** Or *will keep it as my reward* **119:37** Some Hb mss, Tg read *word* **119:54** Lit *song in the house of my sojourning* **119:57** Lit *You are my portion, Lord* **119:109** Lit *in my hand* **119:112** Or *statutes; the reward is eternal* **119:119** Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX, Aq, Sym, Jer read *All the wicked of the earth you count as* **119:120** Lit *My flesh shudders* **119:150** Some Hb mss, LXX, Sym, Jer read *who maliciously persecute me*
119:1 Ps 101:6; Pr 11:20 **119:1** Ps 128:1; Mc 4:2 **119:2** Ps 25:10; 119:10,22,168 **119:2** Dt 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3; 30:2 **119:3** 1Jn 3:9; 5:18 **119:4** Dt 4:13; Neh 9:13; Ps 19:8 **119:5** Dt 12:1; 2Ch 7:17; Pr 4:26 **119:6** Jb 22:26; Ps 119:80 **119:7** Ps 119:62,106 **119:8** Ps 38:21; 71:9,18 **119:9** 2Sm 22:31; Ps 12:6; 19:9-10; 119:140; Pr 20:11; 30:5; Php 4:8 **119:10** Ps 119:2 **119:10** Ps 119:21,118 **119:11** Ps 37:31; 40:8; Lk 2:19,51 **119:12** Ps 119:26,64,108,124,135,171 **119:13** Ps 40:9; 119:72 **119:14** Ps 119:111,162; Pr 3:13-15; 8:10-11,18-19 **119:15** Ps 1:2; 119:23,48,78,97,148 **119:15** Ps 25:4; 27:11; Is 58:2 **119:16** Ps 1:2; 119:24,47, 70,77,92,143,174 **119:17** Ps 13:6; 119:144 **119:19** 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; 119:54; Heb 11:13 **119:20** Ps 42:1-2; 63:1; 84:2; 119:40,131 **119:21** Dt 27:26 **119:21** Ps 119:10,118 **119:22** Ps 39:8; 119:39 **119:23** Ps 119:161 **119:23** Ps 119:15,27-28 **119:24** Ps 119:16; Rm 7:22 **119:25** Ps 44:25 **119:25** Ps 119:37,40,88,93, 107,149,154,156,159 **119:26** Ps 25:4; 86:11; 119:12,26,64,68,124,135,171 **119:27** Ps 105:2; 119:15,73,125; 145:5 **119:28** 1Pt 5:10 **119:30** Ps 16:8 **119:31** Ps 119:116 **119:32** 1Kg 4:29; 2Co 6:11,13 **119:33** Ps 119:112; Mt 10:22; Heb 3:6; Rv 2:26 **119:34** Ps 119:125,144,169 **119:34** 1Ch 22:12; Ps 119:2,69 **119:35** Ps 25:4; Is 40:14 **119:35** Ps 119:16 **119:36** 1Kg 8:58 **119:36** Ezk 33:31; Mk 7:21,22; Lk 12:15; Heb 13:5 **119:37** Is 33:15 **119:37** Ps 119:25 **119:38** 2Sm 7:25 **119:39** Ps 119:22 **119:40** Ps 119:20 **119:41** Ps 119:77 **119:41** Ps 119:58,76,116,170 **119:42** Ps 102:8; Pr 27:11 **119:43** Ps 119:49,74,81,114,147 **119:44** Ps 119:33 **119:45** Pr 4:12 **119:45** Ps 119:94,155 **119:46** Mt 10:18; Ac 26:1,2 **119:47** Ps 119:16,97,127,159 **119:48** Ps 63:4 **119:48** Ps 119:15 **119:50** Rm 15:4 **119:51** Jb 23:11; Ps 44:18 **119:53** Ezr 9:3; Neh 13:25; Ps 119:158 **119:53** Ps 89:30 **119:55** Ps 63:6 **119:55** Ps 42:8; 92:2; Is 26:9; Ac 16:25 **119:56** Ps 119:22,69,100 **119:57** Ps 16:5; Lm 3:24 **119:58** 1Kg 13:6 **119:58** Ps 41:4; 56:1; 57:1 **119:59** Lk 15:17 **119:61** Jb 36:8; Ps 140:5 **119:61** Ps 119:83,141,153,176 **119:62** Ps 119:55 **119:62** Ps 119:7 **119:63** Ps 101:6 **119:64** Ps 33:5 **119:64** Ps 119:12 **119:66** Php 1:9-10 **119:67** Ps 119:71,75; Jr 31:18-19; Heb 12:5-11 **119:68** Ps 100:5; 106:1; 107:1 **119:68** Ps 125:4 **119:69** Jb 13:4; Ps 109:2 **119:69** Ps 119:56 **119:70** Ps 17:10 **119:70** Ps 119:16 **119:71** Ps 119:67,75 **119:72** Ps 19:10; 119:127; Pr 8:10,11,19 **119:73** Jb 10:8; 31:15; Ps 100:3; 139:15-16 **119:73** Ps 119:34 **119:74** Ps 34:2; 107:42 **119:74** Ps 119:43 **119:75** Ps 119:138; Heb 12:10 **119:77** Ps 119:41 **119:77** Ps 119:16 **119:78** Jr 50:32 **119:80** Ps 119:1 **119:81** Ps 84:2 **119:81** Ps 119:43 **119:82** Ps 69:3; 119:123; Is 38:14 **119:84** Rv 6:10 **119:85** Ps 35:7; 57:6; Jr 18:22 **119:86** Ps 35:19; 109:26; 119:78 **119:89** Ps 89:2; 119:160; Is 40:8; Mt 24:35; 1Pt 1:25 **119:90** Ps 89:1-2 **119:90** Ps 148:6; Ec 1:4 **119:91** Jr 31:35 **119:91** Ps 104:2-4 **119:92** Ps 119:16,50 **119:93** Ps 119:16,25 **119:94** Ps 119:146 **119:94** Ps 119:45 **119:95** Ps 40:14 **119:97** Ps 119:47,127,163,165 **119:97** Ps 1:2; 119:15 **119:98** Dt 4:6; Ps 119:130 **119:99** Ps 119:15 **119:100** Jb 32:7-9 **119:100** Ps 119:56 **119:101** Pr 1:15 **119:102** Dt 17:20; Jos 23:6; 1Kg 15:5 **119:103** Ps 19:10; Pr 8:11; 24:13-14 **119:104** Ps 119:130 **119:104** Ps 119:128 **119:105** Pr 6:23 **119:106** Neh 10:29 **119:107** Ps 119:25,50 **119:108** Hs 14:2; Heb 13:15 **119:108** Ps 119:12 **119:109** Ps 119:16 **119:110** Ps 140:5; 141:9 **119:110** Ps 119:10 **119:111** Ps 119:14,162 **119:112** Ps 119:33,36 **119:113** 1Kg 18:21; Jms 1:8; 4:8 **119:113** Ps 119:47 **119:114** Gn 15:1; Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 28:7; 115:9-11; 144:2; Pr 2:7 **119:114** Ps 119:74 **119:115** Ps 6:8; 139:19; Mt 4:10 **119:115** Ps 119:22 **119:116** Ps 54:4 **119:116** Ps 25:20; 31:1; Rm 9:33; Php 1:20 **119:117** Pr 29:25 **119:117** Ps 119:15 **119:118** Ps 119:10,21 **119:119** Is 1:25; Ezk 22:18-19 **119:119** Ps 119:47 **119:120** Jb 4:14; Hab 3:16 **119:121** Jb 29:14 **119:122** Ps 119:134 **119:123** Ps 119:82 **119:124** Ps 51:1; 109:26; 119:88,149,159 **119:125** Ps 116:16 **119:125** Ps 119:27 **119:126** Jr 18:23 **119:127** Ps 19:10; 119:47 **119:128** Ps 19:8 **119:128** Ps 119:104 **119:129** Ps 119:18 **119:129** Ps 119:22

119:130 Pr 6:23 **119:130** Ps 19:7 **119:131** Ps 42:1 **119:132** Ps 25:16 **119:133** Ps 17:5 **119:133** Ps 19:13; Rm 6:12 **119:134** Ps 142:6; Lk 1:74 **119:135** Nm 6:25; Ps 31:16; 80:3,7,19 **119:135** Ps 119:12 **119:136** Jr 9:1; 14:17; Lm 3:48 **119:137** Neh 9:33; Ps 129:4; 145:17; Lm 1:18 **119:138** Ps 19:7-9; 119:86,90,144,172 **119:139** Ps 69:9; Jn 2:17 **119:140** Ps 12:6; 19:9 **119:140** Ps 119:47 **119:141** Ps 22:6 **119:141** Ps 119:61 **119:142** Ps 119:151,160 **119:143** Ps 119:24 **119:144** Ps 19:9 **119:145** Ps 119:10,55 **119:146** Ps 3:7 **119:147** Ps 5:3 **119:148** Ps 119:15 **119:149** Ps 119:25,124 **119:150** Pr 6:17,18; 12:20; 14:22; 24:8 **119:151** Ps 34:18; 145:18; Is 50:8 **119:151** Ps 119:142 **119:152** Ps 119:89; Lk 21:33 **119:153** Ps 119:50; Lm 5:1 **119:153** Ps 119:16; Hs 4:6 **119:154** 1Sm 24:15; Ps 35:1; Mc 7:9 **119:155** Ps 119:45,94 **119:156** 2Sm 24:14 **119:157** Ps 7:1 **119:157** Ps 119:51 **119:158** Pr 14:14 **119:158** Ps 139:21 **119:159** Ps 119:25,47 **119:160** Ps 119:89,142,152 **119:161** Ps 119:23,120 **119:162** Ps 119:14,111 **119:163** Ps 119:104,128; Pr 13:5 **119:163** Ps 119:47 **119:164** Ps 119:7,160 **119:165** Pr 3:1-2; Is 26:3; 32:17 **119:165** Pr 3:23; Is 63:13 **119:166** Gn 49:18; Ps 119:81,174 **119:167** Ps 119:47,129 **119:168** Ps 139:3; Pr 5:21 **119:169** Ps 18:6; 102:1; 140:6 **119:169** Ps 119:144 **119:170** Ps 28:2; 130:2; 143:1 **119:170** Ps 22:20; 59:1 **119:171** Ps 51:15; 63:3 **119:171** Ps 119:12 **119:172** Ps 51:14 **119:172** Ps 119:138 **119:173** Ps 37:24; 73:23 **119:173** Jos 24:22 **119:174** Ps 119:16,24,166 **119:175** Ps 119:25 **119:176** Is 53:6; Jr 50:6 **119:176** Mt 18:12; Lk 15:4 **119:176** Ps 119:16

A CRY FOR TRUTH AND PEACE

A song of ascents.

120 In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. †
2 “LORD, rescue me from lying lips and a deceitful tongue.” †

3 What will he give you, and what will he do to you,
you deceitful tongue? †
4 A warrior’s sharp arrows with burning charcoal! † †

5 What misery that I have stayed in Meshech, † †
that I have lived among the tents of Kedar! † †
6 I have dwelt too long with those who hate peace. †
7 I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war. †

120:4 Lit *with coals of the broom bush* **120:5** = a people far to the north of Palestine **120:5** = a nomadic people of the desert to the southeast
120:1 Ps 18:6; Jnh 2:2 **120:2** Pr 12:22 **120:3** Zph 3:13 **120:4** Pr 25:18,22 **120:5** Ezk 27:13 **120:5** Sg 1:5; Ezk 27:21 **120:6** Ps 35:20 **120:7** Ps 109:4

THE LORD OUR PROTECTOR

A song of ascents.

121 I lift my eyes toward the mountains.
Where will my help come from? †

2 My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. †

3 He will not allow your foot to slip; your Protector will not slumber. †
4 Indeed, the Protector of Israel does not slumber or sleep. †

5 The LORD protects you; the LORD is a shelter right by your side. † †
6 The sun will not strike you by day or the moon by night. †

7 The LORD will protect you from all harm; he will protect your life. †
8 The LORD will protect your coming and going both now and forever. †

121:5 Lit *is your shelter at your right hand*
121:1 Ps 87:1; 123:1 **121:2** Ps 115:15; 124:8 **121:3** Ps 41:2; 66:9; 127:1 **121:4** Dt 33:29 **121:5** Ps 16:8; 91:1,4 **121:6** Is 49:10; Rv 7:16 **121:7** Ps 41:2; 91:10-12 **121:8** Dt 28:6

A PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM

A song of ascents. Of David.

122 I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." †
2 Our feet were standing within your gates, Jerusalem † —

3 Jerusalem, built as a city should be, solidly united, †
4 where the tribes, the LORD's tribes, go up to give thanks to the name of the LORD. †
(This is an ordinance for Israel. †) 5 There, thrones for judgment are placed, thrones of the house of David. †

6 Pray for the well-being † of Jerusalem: "May those who love you be secure; †
7 may there be peace within your walls, security within your fortresses." †
8 Because of my brothers and friends, I will say, "May peace be in you." † †
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God, I will pursue your prosperity. †

122:6 Or *peace* **122:8** = Jerusalem
122:1 Is 2:3; Mc 4:2; Zch 8:21 **122:2** Ps 9:14; Jr 7:2 **122:3** Neh 4:6; Ps 147:2 **122:4** Is 2:3; Mc 4:2 **122:4** 1Ch 22:13 **122:5** Dt 17:8; 2Ch 19:8 **122:6** Ps 51:18; Jr 29:7 **122:7** Ps 48:3 **122:8** 1Sm 25:6; Ps 85:8 **122:9**

Neh 2:10; Est 10:3

LOOKING FOR GOD'S FAVOR

A song of ascents.

123 1 I lift my eyes to you, the one enthroned in heaven. †
2 Like a servant's eyes on his master's hand, like a servant girl's eyes
on her mistress's hand, so our eyes are on the LORD our God until he shows
us favor. †

3 Show us favor, LORD, show us favor, for we've had more than enough
contempt. †
4 We've had more than enough scorn from the arrogant
and contempt from the proud. †

123:1 Ps 2:4; 121:1; 141:8 **123:2** Ps 25:15 **123:3** Neh 4:4; Ps 4:1; 119:22 **123:4** Is 32:9,11; Am 6:1

THE LORD IS ON OUR SIDE

A song of ascents. Of David.

124 1 If the LORD had not been on our side — let Israel say —
2 If the LORD had not been on our side †
when people attacked us, †
3 then they would have swallowed us alive in their burning anger against us. †
4 Then the water would have engulfed us; the torrent would have swept over us;
5 the raging water would have swept over us. †

6 Blessed be the LORD, who has not let us be ripped apart by their teeth. †
7 We have escaped like a bird from the hunter's net; the net is torn,
and we have escaped. †
8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. †

124:1-2 Ps 94:17 **124:2** Ps 129:1 **124:3** Ps 35:25; 56:1; Pr 1:12 **124:4-5** Jb 22:11; Ps 32:6; 69:2 **124:6** Ps 27:2; Pr 30:14 **124:7** Ps 91:3 **124:8** Ps 115:15; 121:2

ISRAEL'S STABILITY

A song of ascents.

125 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion.
It cannot be shaken; it remains forever. †
2 The mountains surround Jerusalem and the LORD surrounds his people, both now and forever. †

3 The scepter of the wicked will not remain over the land allotted to the righteous, so that the righteous will not apply their hands to injustice. †
4 Do what is good, LORD, to the good, to those whose hearts are upright. †
5 But as for those who turn aside to crooked ways, the LORD will banish them with the evildoers. †

Peace be with Israel. †

125:1 Ps 46:5 **125:2** Zch 2:5 **125:3** Ps 89:22; Is 14:5 **125:4** Ps 7:10; 119:68 **125:5** Ps 92:7,9; 94:4 **125:4-5** Ps 128:5-6

ZION'S RESTORATION

A song of ascents.

126 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, †
we were like those who dream. †
2 Our mouths were filled with laughter then, †
and our tongues with shouts of joy. †
Then they said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them." †
3 The LORD had done great things for us; we were joyful. †

4 Restore our fortunes, † LORD, like watercourses in the Negev. †
5 Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. †
6 Though one goes along weeping, carrying the bag of seed,
he will surely come back with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves. †

126:1 Or *Lord returned those of Zion who had been captives* **126:4** Or *Return our captives*
126:1 Ps 85:1; Jr 29:14 **126:2** Jb 8:21 **126:2** Ps 51:14 **126:2** Ps 71:19 **126:3** Is 25:9 **126:4** Is 35:6; 43:19 **126:5** Jr 31:9 **126:6** Is 35:10; 51:11

THE BLESSING OF THE LORD

A song of ascents. Of Solomon.

127 Unless the LORD builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain; †
unless the LORD watches over a city, the watchman stays alert in vain. †
2 In vain you get up early and stay up late, working hard to have enough food —
yes, he gives sleep to the one he loves. † †

3 Sons are indeed a heritage from the LORD, offspring, a reward. †
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one's youth. †
5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. †
They will never be put to shame
when they speak with their enemies at the city gate. †

127:2 Or *yes, he gives such things to his loved ones while they sleep*
127:1 Ps 78:69 **127:1** Ps 121:4 **127:2** Ps 3:5; 4:8; Pr 3:24 **127:3** Dt 7:13; Ps 113:9 **127:4** Ps 120:4 **127:5** Ps 128:2-3 **127:5** Jl 2:26-27

BLESSINGS FOR THOSE WHO FEAR GOD

A song of ascents.

128 How happy is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! †
2 You will surely eat what your hands have worked for. †
You will be happy,
and it will go well for you. †
3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house,
your children, like young olive trees
around your table. †
4 In this very way the man who fears the LORD will be blessed. †

5 May the LORD bless you from Zion, so that you will see the prosperity
of Jerusalem all the days of your life †
6 and will see your children's children!

Peace be with Israel. †

128:1 Ps 112:1; 119:1,3 **128:2** Is 3:10 **128:2** Ec 8:12 **128:3** Ps 52:8; Ezk 19:10 **128:4** Ps 115:13 **128:5** Ps 20:2; 134:3; 135:21 **128:6** Ps 125:5; Pr 17:6

PROTECTION OF THE OPPRESSED

A song of ascents.

129 Since my youth they have often attacked me — let Israel say —
2 Since my youth they have often attacked me, but they have not prevailed against me. †

3 Plowmen plowed over my back; they made their furrows long. †

4 The LORD is righteous; he has cut the ropes of the wicked. †

5 Let all who hate Zion be driven back in disgrace. †

6 Let them be like grass on the rooftops, which withers before it grows up † †

7 and can't even fill the hands of the reaper or the arms of the one who binds sheaves. †

8 Then none who pass by will say, "May the LORD's blessing be on you.
We bless you in the name of the LORD." †

129:6 Or *it can be pulled out*
129:1-2 Jr 1:19; 20:11 **129:3** Mc 3:12 **129:4** Ps 2:3 **129:5** Ps 35:4; 70:3; 71:13 **129:6** 2Kg 19:26; Is 37:27 **129:7** Ps 79:12 **129:8** Ru 2:4; Ps 118:26

AWAITING REDEMPTION

A song of ascents.

130 Out of the depths I call to you, LORD! †
2 Lord, listen to my voice; let your ears be attentive
to my cry for help. †

3 LORD, if you kept an account of iniquities, Lord, who could stand? †

4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that you may be revered. †

5 I wait for the LORD; I wait and put my hope in his word. †

6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning — more than watchmen for the morning. †

7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD. †
For there is faithful love with the LORD, and with him is redemption
in abundance. †
8 And he will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. †

130:1 Ps 69:2; Lm 3:55 **130:2** 2Ch 6:40; Ps 28:6; 140:6 **130:3** Ps 76:7; Mal 3:2; Rv 6:17 **130:4** 1Kg 8:39-40; Ps 86:5; Jr 33:8-9 **130:5** Ps 33:20; 119:74,81 **130:6** Ps 63:6; 119:147 **130:7** Ps 131:3 **130:7** Ps 111:9 **130:8** Lk 1:68; Ti 2:14

A CHILDLIKE SPIRIT

A song of ascents. Of David.

131 LORD, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. †
I do not get involved with things
too great or too wondrous for me. †
2 Instead, I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child
with its mother;
my soul is like a weaned child. †

3 Israel, put your hope in the LORD, both now and forever. †

131:1 Ps 101:5; Rm 12:16 **131:1** Jb 42:3; Ps 139:6 **131:2** Mt 18:3; 1Co 14:20 **131:3** Ps 130:7

DAVID AND ZION CHOSEN

A song of ascents.

132 LORD, remember David and all the hardships he endured, †
2 and how he swore an oath to the LORD, making a vow
to the Mighty One of Jacob: †
3 "I will not enter my house or get into my bed,
4 I will not allow my eyes to sleep or my eyelids to slumber †
5 until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob." †

6 We heard of the ark in Ephrathah; † †
we found it in the fields of Jaar. † †
7 Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool. †

8 Rise up, LORD, come to your resting place, you and your powerful ark. †
9 May your priests be clothed with righteousness, and may your faithful people
shout for joy. †
10 For the sake of your servant David, do not reject your anointed one. † †

11 The LORD swore an oath to David, a promise he will not abandon:
"I will set one of your offspring †
on your throne. †
12 If your sons keep my covenant and my decrees that I will teach them,
their sons will also sit on your throne forever." †

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his home: †
14 "This is my resting place forever; I will make my home here
because I have desired it. †
15 I will abundantly bless its food; I will satisfy its needy with bread. †
16 I will clothe its priests with salvation, and its faithful people will shout
for joy. †
17 There I will make a horn grow for David; †
I have prepared a lamp for my anointed one. †
18 I will clothe his enemies with shame, †
but the crown he wears † will be glorious." †

132:6 = Bethlehem **132:6** = Kiriath-jearim **132:10** = the king **132:11** Lit *set the fruit of your belly* **132:18** Lit *but on him his crown*
132:1 2Sm 16:12 **132:2** Gn 49:24; Is 49:26; 60:16 **132:3-4** Pr 6:4 **132:5** 1Ch 22:7; Ac 7:46 **132:6** Gn 35:19; Ru 4:11; 1Sm 17:12; Mc 5:2 **132:6** 1Sm 7:1 **132:7** 1Ch 28:2; Ps 99:5 **132:8** 2Ch 6:41; Ps 68:1; 78:61 **132:9** Jb 29:14; Ps 149:5 **132:10** 2Ch 6:42 **132:11** 2Sm 7:12-16; Ps 89:3; Ac 2:30 **132:12** 1Kg 8:25; Lk 1:32 **132:13** Ps 68:16; 78:68 **132:14** Mt 23:21 **132:15** Ps 107:9; 147:14 **132:16** 2Ch 6:41 **132:17** 2Sm 23:5; Lk 1:69 **132:17** 1Kg 11:36 **132:18** Jb 8:22 **132:18** Ps 21:3

LIVING IN HARMONY

A song of ascents. Of David.

133 2 How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! †
It is like fine oil on the head, running down on the beard,

running down Aaron's beard
onto his robes. †
3 It is like the dew of Hermon †
falling on the mountains of Zion. †
For there the LORD has appointed the blessing — life forevermore. †

133:3 The tallest mountain in the region, noted for its abundant precipitation
133:1 Gn 13:8; Heb 13:1 **133:2** Ex 30:25,30; Lv 8:12 **133:3** Ps 48:1-2; Mc 5:7 **133:3** Ps 21:4

CALL TO EVENING WORSHIP

A song of ascents.

134 Now bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD who stand
in the LORD's house at night! †
2 Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the LORD! †

3 May the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth,
bless you from Zion. †

134:1 1Ch 9:23-27; Ps 135:1-2 **134:2** Ps 28:2; 63:2; 1Tm 2:8 **134:3** Ps 115:15; 128:5

THE LORD IS GREAT

135 Hallelujah!
Praise the name of the LORD.
Give praise, you servants of the LORD †
2 who stand in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God. †
3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name,
for it is delightful. †
4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his treasured possession. †

5 For I know that the LORD is great; our Lord is greater than all gods. †
6 The LORD does whatever he pleases in heaven and on earth,
in the seas and all the depths. †
7 He causes the clouds to rise from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain

and brings the wind from his storehouses. †

8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, both people and animals. †
9 He sent signs and wonders against you, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his officials. †
10 He struck down many nations and slaughtered mighty kings: †
11 Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan,
and all the kings of Canaan. †
12 He gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel. †

13 LORD, your name endures forever, your reputation, LORD, through all generations. †
14 For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. †

15 The idols of the nations are of silver and gold, made by human hands. †
16 They have mouths but cannot speak, †
eyes, but cannot see.
17 They have ears but cannot hear; indeed, there is no breath in their mouths. †
18 Those who make them are just like them, as are all who trust in them. †

19 House of Israel, bless the LORD! †
House of Aaron, bless the LORD! †
20 House of Levi, bless the LORD!
You who revere the LORD, bless the LORD! †
21 Blessed be the LORD from Zion; †
he dwells in Jerusalem. †
Hallelujah!

135:1 Ps 113:1; 134:1 **135:2** Ps 92:13; 116:19 **135:3** Ps 100:5; 147:1 **135:4** Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6-7; 10:15 **135:5** Ps 95:3; 97:9 **135:6** Ps 115:3; Is 45:7; Lm 3:37-38; Dn 4:35 **135:7** Jb 28:25-26; Jr 10:13; 51:16 **135:8** Ex 12:12; Ps 78:51; 105:36 **135:9** Dt 6:22; Ps 78:43 **135:10** Ps 44:2; 136:17-22 **135:11** Nm 21:21-35 **135:12** Dt 29:8; Ps 78:55 **135:13** Ex 3:15; Ps 102:12 **135:14** Dt 32:36; Ps 90:13; 106:46 **135:15** 2Kg 19:18; Is 37:19 **135:16** Hab 2:18 **135:16-17** Is 46:7 **135:15-18** Ps 115:4-11 **135:19** Ps 115:9; 118:2 **135:19** Ps 115:10; 118:3 **135:20** Ps 22:23; 115:11; 118:4 **135:21** Ps 128:5 **135:21** Ps 132:13-14

GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

GOD'S LOVE IS ETERNAL

136 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good. †
His faithful love endures forever.
2 Give thanks to the God of gods.
His faithful love endures forever.
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords. †
His faithful love endures forever.
4 He alone does great wonders. †
His faithful love endures forever.
5 He made the heavens skillfully. †
His faithful love endures forever.
6 He spread the land on the waters. †
His faithful love endures forever.
7 He made the great lights: †
His faithful love endures forever.
8 the sun to rule by day, *His faithful love endures forever.*
9 the moon and stars to rule by night. †
His faithful love endures forever.
10 He struck the firstborn of the Egyptians †
His faithful love endures forever.
11 and brought Israel out from among them *His faithful love endures forever.*
12 with a strong hand and outstretched arm. †
His faithful love endures forever.
13 He divided the Red Sea †
His faithful love endures forever.
14 and led Israel through, †
His faithful love endures forever.
15 but hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea. †
His faithful love endures forever.
16 He led his people in the wilderness. †
His faithful love endures forever.
17 He struck down great kings *His faithful love endures forever.*

18 and slaughtered famous kings — *His faithful love endures forever*.
19 Sihon king of the Amorites *His faithful love endures forever*.
20 and Og king of Bashan — *His faithful love endures forever*.
21 and gave their land as an inheritance, *His faithful love endures forever*.
22 an inheritance to Israel his servant. †
His faithful love endures forever.
23 He remembered us in our humiliation †
His faithful love endures forever.
24 and rescued us from our foes. †
His faithful love endures forever.
25 He gives food to every creature. †
His faithful love endures forever.
26 Give thanks to the God of heaven! †
His faithful love endures forever.

136:1 Ps 106:1; 107:1; 118:1 **136:2-3** Dt 10:17 **136:4** Jb 9:10; Ps 72:18 **136:5** Pr 3:19; Jr 10:12; 51:15 **136:6** Ps 24:2 **136:7** Ps 74:16 **136:8-9** Gn 1:16 **136:10** Ex 12:29; Ps 78:51; 135:8 **136:12** Ex 6:1; Dt 4:34 **136:13** Ex 14:21; Ps 66:6; 78:13 **136:14** Ex 14:21-22; Ps 106:9 **136:15** Ex 14:27; Ps 78:53; 106:11 **136:16** Dt 8:15; Ps 78:52 **136:17-22** Nm 21:21-35; Ps 135:10-12 **136:23** Ps 106:45 **136:24** Ps 107:2 **136:25** Ps 104:27; 145:15 **136:26** Neh 1:5

LAMENT OF THE EXILES

137 By the rivers of Babylon — there we sat down and wept
when we remembered Zion. †
2 There we hung up our lyres on the poplar trees, †
3 for our captors there asked us for songs, and our tormentors, for rejoicing:
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion." †

4 How can we sing the LORD's song on foreign soil? †
5 If I forget you, Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. †
6 May my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you,
if I do not exalt Jerusalem as my greatest joy! †

7 Remember, LORD, what the Edomites said that day † at Jerusalem:
"Destroy it! Destroy it

down to its foundations! ” †

8 Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is the one who pays you back
what you have done to us. †

9 Happy is he who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rocks. †

137:7 The day Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 BC
137:1 Ezk 1:1,3 **137:2** Jb 30:31; Ezk 26:13 **137:3** Ps 80:6 **137:4** Neh 12:46 **137:5** Is 65:11 **137:6** Jb 29:10; Ps 22:15; Ezk 3:26 **137:7** Is 34:5-6; Ezk 35:2; Ob 10-14 **137:8** Jr 50:1-46; 51:1-64 **137:9** 2Kg 8:12; Is 13:16; Nah 3:10

A THANKFUL HEART

Of David.

138 I will give you thanks with all my heart; †
I will sing your praise before the heavenly beings. † †

2 I will bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name
for your constant love and truth.
You have exalted your name
and your promise above everything else. † †

3 On the day I called, you answered me; you increased strength within me. † †

4 All the kings on earth will give you thanks, LORD, when they hear what you have promised. † †

5 They will sing of the LORD’s ways, for the LORD’s glory is great. †

6 Though the LORD is exalted, he takes note of the humble;
but he knows the haughty from a distance. †

7 If I walk into the thick of danger, you will preserve my life
from the anger of my enemies. †
You will extend your hand;
your right hand will save me. †

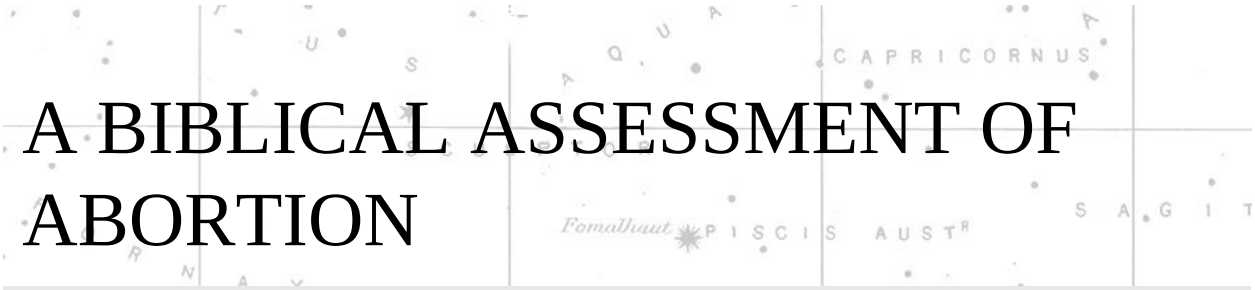
8 The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me. †
LORD, your faithful love endures forever; do not abandon the work of your hands. †

138:1 Or *before the gods*, or *before judges*, or *before kings* ; Hb elohim **138:2** Or *You have exalted your promise above all your name* **138:3** Hb obscure **138:4** Lit *hear the words of your mouth*
138:1 Ps 111:1 **138:1** Ps 82:1,6-7; 95:3; 96:5 **138:2** 1Kg 8:29; Ps 5:7; 28:2 **138:3** Ps 28:7; 46:1 **138:4** Ps 72:11; 102:15 **138:5** Ps 21:5; 145:7 **138:6** Ps 113:4-7; Pr 3:34; Jms 4:6 **138:7** Ps 23:4 **138:7** Ps 20:6; 60:5 **138:8** Ps 57:2; Php 1:6 **138:8** Jb 10:3; Ps 100:3

THE ALL-KNOWING, EVER-PRESENT GOD

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

139 LORD, you have searched me and known me. †
2 You know when I sit down and when I stand up; you understand
my thoughts from far away. †
3 You observe my travels and my rest; you are aware of all my ways. †
4 Before a word is on my tongue, you know all about it, LORD. †
5 You have encircled me; you have placed your hand on me. †
6 This wondrous knowledge is beyond me.
It is lofty; I am unable to reach it. †



A BIBLICAL ASSESSMENT OF ABORTION

Abortion has been one of the most controversial issues in American culture over the last fifty years. What guidance does the Bible give us about the topic? Although it might seem surprising that an ancient document would address such a contemporary problem, the Bible in fact offers a number of clear teachings that address abortion from several perspectives.

WHO CREATES LIFE?

Life comes from God. God created humans in his image; therefore, persons are treasured above all creation (Gn 1:26-27; 9:6). God is involved directly and personally in our creation. "The LORD is God," Ps 100:3 teaches. "He made us, and we are his—his people, the sheep of his pasture." Psalm 139:13-14 declares, "It was you [God] who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made." Elsewhere the Creator is described as literally breathing into humans the breath of life: "Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being" (Gn 2:7). "The Spirit of God has made me," Job affirms, "and the breath of the Almighty gives me life" (Jb 33:4). Because God the Life-giver has granted life (Jb 10:12), who are we to be life-takers?

IS HUMAN LIFE SACRED?

IS HUMAN LIFE SACRED?

The Bible stands strongly for the protection of human life and cries out against the taking of it. Scripture affirms the sanctity of life in numerous places, including Gn 2:7; Pss 127:3; 139:13-16a; and Jr 1:4-5. Human life began when God shaped Adam in his own image and breathed into him. “He created them [meaning humankind] male and female” (Gn 1:27). Being made in the image of God, in fact, gives human life its sacredness. The image of God is present when a new life starts in the womb.

The Bible places a strict prohibition against taking human life. The sixth commandment prohibits murder (Ex 20:13). Likewise, after the great flood, God reaffirmed the sacredness of human life and instituted the death penalty for those who take it; this was done to underscore the value of human life (Gn 9:5-6). To take a life at any point following conception is to kill one whom God has made in his own image (Gn 1:27; 9:6).

The OT law identifies punishments for actions that cause even an accidental miscarriage or premature birth (Ex 21:22-25). One particular law concerns two men whose fighting leads to a woman being hit accidentally, causing her child to be born early. Whether miscarriage or premature delivery is in view, the inadvertent action is considered a sin to be punished by law. If even an accidental injury were fatal for either the mother or the child, the perpetrator could be liable and executed; this is a harsher penalty than any other form of involuntary manslaughter receives in the OT law. The concern for the health of the mother in Exodus 21 may provide an allowance for the life of the mother to be taken into consideration in exceptional cases in which both the mother and child’s lives are at risk.

IS THE UNBORN CHILD A PERSON?

The Bible is clear that life and personhood begin before birth. Unborn infants are shaped by God, known personally by him, and reflect the image of God. Moreover, God has a plan for their lives. Many Scriptures affirm that even as unborn children, we humans are shaped by God. Job 31:15 asks, “Did not the one who made me in the womb also make them? Did not the same God form us both in the womb?” In Psalm 22:9, the psalmist says, “[God,] you . . . brought me out of the womb, making me secure at my mother’s breast.” And Ps 139:14-16 declares, “Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well. My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret. . . . Your eyes saw me when I was formless.”

Several biblical words are used to describe the mother’s womb as the location of the unborn child, supporting the affirmation that life begins in the uterus. Two roughly synonymous Hebrew words are translated “womb” in the OT: *rachem* (Gn 20:18; 49:25; Nm 12:12; Jr 20:17-18; Jb 10:18; 20:18; 38:8; Is 46:3; Hs 9:14) and *beten* (Jb 3:10; 31:18; Ps 22:9; 71:6; 139:13; Is 49:1; Jr 1:5). The NT also uses two broadly synonymous Greek words—*koilia* (Lk 1:15,41,44) and *metra* (Lk 1:15; 2:23)—to describe the womb as the baby’s location before birth. Elizabeth’s experience of feeling John kick when Mary was visiting her made it evident that the baby was alive and even socially interactive in the womb (Lk 1:15,41,44).

The language of Psalm 139 provides a rich resource for a biblical view of unborn children. The Hebrew word *golem*, used only in verse 16 in the Bible, is sometimes translated as “formless” or “unformed substance” (NASB); nevertheless, it can accurately be translated as “embryo” or “fetus.” The Bible thus affirms that a developing child within the mother’s womb is a human who has essentially the same potential as would a born child at any other stage of development.

The author of Psalm 139 refers to himself as an unborn child multiple times, utilizing the personal pronouns “me” and “I.” Scripture thus clearly affirms that unborn children have personhood even in utero. Personhood does not change in any fundamental way between conception and birth. Personal identity has an unbroken continuity from the joining of sperm and egg through senior adulthood. The soul that is in the womb originated by the gift of God. It is that same soul that exists outside the womb after birth.

Psalm 139 also speaks of God having an intimate knowledge of the unborn child. Note also the psalmist’s recognition that God has a plan for his life. “All my days,” he says, “were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began” (Ps 139:16). Remarkably, Luke even describes John the Baptist as having the Holy Spirit within him while still in his mother’s womb (Lk 1:15b). The affirmation that God has a calling in mind for individual lives, even when those lives are in embryonic or fetal stage, is taught in

other Scriptures as well. In Isaiah 49:1, the prophet says, "The LORD called me before I was born. He named me while I was in my mother's womb." In Jeremiah 1:5, God told Jeremiah, "I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born. I appointed you a prophet to the nations." The apostle Paul shares a similar revelation about his own beginnings in Galatians 1:15-17: "When God, who from my mother's womb set me apart and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me, so that I could preach him among the Gentiles . . . I went." The NT makes no clear distinction between the personhood of born or unborn children.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, the Bible regards unborn infants as fully human individuals who, even in their earliest stages of development, have the potential to achieve that which persons in adulthood might. Though life is a constant process of adjustments, the full person and unique soul formed in the womb remain the same person and soul throughout life. Unborn children have the God-given right to life and should be accorded all the rights normally granted to humans. Christians do well to stand for and protect the lives of the unborn.

STEVE W. LEMKE

7 Where can I go to escape your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence? †
8 If I go up to heaven, you are there; †
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. †
9 If I live at the eastern horizon or settle at the western limits, †
10 even there your hand will lead me; your right hand will hold on to me. †
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me, and the light around me will be night" † — 12 even the darkness is not dark to you.
The night shines like the day;
darkness and light are alike to you. †

13 For it was you who created my inward parts; †
you knit me together in my mother's womb. †
14 I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. † †
Your works are wondrous,
and I know this very well. †
15 My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret,
when I was formed in the depths of the earth. †
16 Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began. †

17 God, how precious † your thoughts are to me; how vast their sum is!
18 If I counted them, they would outnumber the grains of sand; †
when I wake up, † I am still with you. †

19 God, if only you would kill the wicked — you bloodthirsty men, stay away
from me † — 20 who invoke you deceitfully.
Your enemies swear by you falsely. †
21 LORD, don't I hate those who hate you, and detest those who rebel
against you?
22 I hate them with extreme hatred; I consider them my enemies. †

23 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. †
24 See if there is any offensive † way in me; lead me in the everlasting way. †

139:9 Lit *I take up the wings of the dawn; I dwell at the end of the sea* **139:13** Lit *my kidneys* **139:14** DSS, some LXX mss, Syr, Jer read *because you are remarkable and wonderful* **139:14** Hb obscure **139:17** Or *difficult* **139:18** Some Hb mss read *I come to an end* **139:24** Or *idolatrous*
139:1 Ps 17:3; 44:21; Jr 12:3 **139:2** 2Kg 19:27; Is 66:18; Mt 9:4 **139:3** Jb 14:16; 31:4 **139:4** Heb 4:13 **139:5** Jb 9:33; Ps 125:2 **139:6** Jb 42:3; Rm 11:33 **139:7** Jr 23:24 **139:8** Am 9:2-4 **139:8** Jb 26:6; Is 14:11 **139:9-10** Ps 23:2-3 **139:11** Jb 22:13-14 **139:12** Jb 34:22; Dn 2:22 **139:13** Jb 10:11; Ps 119:73 **139:14** Ps 40:5 **139:15** Jb 10:8-10; Ps 63:9; Ec 11:5 **139:16** Jb 14:5 **139:17-18** Ps 40:5; 92:5 **139:18** Ps 3:5 **139:19** Ps 5:6; 6:8; Is 11:4 **139:20** Ex 20:7; Jd 15 **139:21-22** Ps 26:5; 31:16 **139:23** Jb 31:6; Ps 26:2 **139:24** Ps 16:11

PRAYER FOR RESCUE

For the choir director. A psalm of David.

140 Rescue me, LORD, from evil men.
Keep me safe from violent men †
2 who plan evil in their hearts.
They stir up wars all day long. †
3 They make their tongues as sharp as a snake's bite;
viper's venom is under their lips. †

Selah

4 Protect me, LORD, from the power of the wicked. †
Keep me safe from violent men

who plan to make me stumble. † †
5 The proud hide a trap with ropes for me; they spread a net along the path
and set snares for me. †

Selah

6 I say to the LORD, "You are my God."
Listen, LORD, to my cry for help. †
7 LORD, my Lord, my strong Savior, you shield my head on the day of battle. †
8 LORD, do not grant the desires of the wicked; do not let them achieve their goals.
Otherwise, they will become proud. †

Selah

9 When those who surround me rise up, †
may the trouble their lips cause overwhelm them. †
10 Let hot coals fall on them.
Let them be thrown into the fire,
into the abyss, never again to rise. †
11 Do not let a slanderer stay in the land.
Let evil relentlessly † hunt down a violent man. †

12 I † know that the LORD upholds the just cause of the poor,
justice for the needy. †
13 Surely the righteous will praise your name; the upright will live in your presence. †

140:4 Lit *to trip up my steps* **140:9** Lit *Head of those who surround me* **140:11** Hb obscure **140:12** Alt Hb tradition reads *You*
140:1 Ps 18:48; 71:4 **140:2** Ps 36:4; 56:6; Pr 6:14 **140:3** Ps 58:4; Rm 3:13; Jms 3:8 **140:4** Ps 71:4 **140:4** Ps 36:11 **140:5** Ps 35:7; 141:9; 142:3 **140:6** Ps 31:14; 130:2 **140:7** Ps 28:8; 118:14 **140:8** Ps 10:2-3 **140:9** Ps 7:16; Pr 18:7 **140:10** Ps 11:6; 36:12 **140:11** Ps 34:21 **140:12** 1Kg 8:45,49; Ps 9:4; 82:3 **140:13** Ps 11:7; 64:10

PROTECTION FROM SIN AND SINNERS

A psalm of David.

141 LORD, I call on you; hurry to help me.
Listen to my voice when I call on you. †
2 May my prayer be set before you as incense, †
the raising of my hands as the evening offering. †

3 LORD, set up a guard for my mouth; keep watch at the door of my lips. †
4 Do not let my heart turn to any evil thing or perform wicked acts
with men who commit sin.
Do not let me feast on their delicacies. †
5 Let the righteous one strike me — it is an act of faithful love;
let him rebuke me —
it is oil for my head;
let me † not refuse it. †
Even now my prayer is against
the evil acts of the wicked. † †
6 When their rulers † will be thrown off the sides of a cliff,
the people † will listen to my words, for they are pleasing. †

7 As when one plows and breaks up the soil, turning up rocks,
so our † bones have been scattered at the mouth of Sheol. †

8 But my eyes look to you, LORD, my Lord.
I seek refuge in you; do not let me die. † †
9 Protect me from the trap they have set for me, and from the snares of evildoers. †
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I pass by safely. †

141:5 Lit *my head* **141:5** Lit *of them* **141:6** Or *judges* **141:6** Lit *cliff, and they* **141:7** DSS reads *my* ; some LXX mss, Syr read *their* **141:8** Or *not pour out my life*
141:1 Ps 22:19; 38:22; 70:5 **141:2** Ex 30:8 **141:2** Lk 1:10; Rv 5:8; 8:3-4 **141:3** Ps 34:13; 39:1; Pr 13:3; Mc 7:5 **141:4** Ps 119:36; Pr 23:6; Is 32:6 **141:5** Ec 7:5; Gl 6:1 **141:5** Ps 109:4 **141:6** 2Ch 25:12 **141:7** Ps 53:5; 88:3-5 **141:8** Ps 7:1; 57:1; 144:2 **141:9** Ps 38:12; 140:5 **141:10** Ps 7:15; 35:8; 57:6

A CRY OF DISTRESS

A *Maskil* of David. When he was in the cave. † A prayer.

142 I cry aloud to the LORD; †
I plead aloud to the LORD for mercy. †
2 I pour out my complaint before him; I reveal my trouble to him. †
3 Although my spirit is weak within me, you know my way. †

Along this path I travel
they have hidden a trap for me. †
4 Look to the right and see: †
no one stands up for me;
there is no refuge for me;
no one cares about me. †

5 I cry to you, LORD; I say, "You are my shelter,
my portion in the land of the living." †
6 Listen to my cry, for I am very weak. †
Rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me. †
7 Free me from prison so that I can praise your name.
The righteous will gather around me
because you deal generously with me. †

142:4 DSS, LXX, Syr, Vg, Tg read *I look to the right and I see*
142:title 1Sm 22:1; 24:3 **142:1** Ps 3:4; 77:1 **142:1** Ps 30:8 **142:2** Ps 77:2; 102 title **142:3** Ps 77:3; 143:4 **142:3** Ps 140:5 **142:4** Ps 69:20; Jr 25:35 **142:5** Ps 16:5; 27:13 **142:6** Ps 79:8; 116:6 **142:6** Ps 18:17 **142:7** Ps 13:6; 143:11

A CRY FOR HELP

A psalm of David.

143 LORD, hear my prayer.
In your faithfulness listen to my plea, and in your righteousness answer me. †
2 Do not bring your servant into judgment, †
for no one alive is righteous in your sight. †

3 For the enemy has pursued me, crushing me to the ground,
making me live in darkness
like those long dead. †
4 My spirit is weak within me; my heart is overcome with dismay. †

5 I remember the days of old; I meditate on all you have done;
I reflect on the work of your hands. †
6 I spread out my hands to you; I am like parched land before you. †
Selah

7 Answer me quickly, LORD; my spirit fails. †
Don't hide your face from me,
or I will be like those
going down to the Pit. †
8 Let me experience your faithful love in the morning,
for I trust in you. †
Reveal to me the way I should go
because I appeal to you. †
9 Rescue me from my enemies, LORD; I come to you for protection. † †
10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. †
May your gracious Spirit
lead me on level ground. †

11 For your name's sake, LORD, let me live.
In your righteousness deliver me from trouble, †
12 and in your faithful love destroy my enemies.
Wipe out all those who attack me,
for I am your servant. †

143:9 One Hb ms, LXX; some Hb mss read *I cover myself to you*
143:1 Ps 71:2; 140:6 **143:2** Jb 14:3 **143:2** Jb 15:14; Ps 130:3; Rm 3:23 **143:3** Ps 88:3-6; Lm 3:6 **143:4** Ps 77:3; 142:3 **143:5** Ps 77:5,10-12 **143:6** Jb 11:13; Ps 42:2; 63:1 **143:7** Ps 69:17; 102:2 **143:7** Ps 28:1; 88:4 **143:8** Ps 90:14 **143:8** Ps 25:1,4 **143:9** Ps 31:15; 59:1; 142:6 **143:10** Ps 25:4-5; 31:14; 63:1; 86:2; 119:12 **143:10** Ps 23:3 **143:11** Ps 25:11; 71:20 **143:12** Ps 54:5; 116:16

A KING'S PRAYER

Of David.

144 Blessed be the LORD, my rock †
who trains my hands for battle
and my fingers for warfare. †
2 He is my faithful love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer.
He is my shield, † and I take refuge in him; †
he subdues my people † under me. †

3 LORD, what is a human that you care for him, a son of man † that you think of him? †
4 A human is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow. †

5 LORD, part your heavens and come down. †
Touch the mountains, and they will smoke. †
6 Flash your lightning and scatter the foe; †
shoot your arrows and rout them. †
7 Reach down † from on high; †
rescue me from deep water, and set me free from the grasp of foreigners †
8 whose mouths speak lies, whose right hands are deceptive. †

9 God, I will sing a new song to you; I will play on a ten-stringed harp for you † — 10 the one who gives victory to kings, who frees his servant David
from the deadly sword. †
11 Set me free and rescue me from foreigners †
whose mouths speak lies,
whose right hands are deceptive. †

12 Then our sons will be like plants nurtured in their youth,
our daughters, like corner pillars
that are carved in the palace style. †

13 Our storehouses will be full, supplying all kinds of produce; †
our flocks will increase by thousands
and tens of thousands in our open fields. †
14 Our cattle will be well fed. †
There will be no breach in the walls,
no going into captivity, †
and no cry of lament in our public squares. †
15 Happy are the people with such blessings.
Happy are the people whose God is the LORD. †

144:2 Some Hb mss, DSS, Aq, Syr, Tg, Jer read *subdues peoples* ; 2Sm 22:48; Ps 18:47 **144:3** Or *a mere mortal* **144:6** Lit *scatter them* **144:7** Lit *down your hands* **144:14** Or *will bear heavy loads*, or *will be pregnant* **144:14** Or *be no plague, no miscarriage*
144:1 1Sm 2:2; Ps 18:2; 19:14; 92:15; 95:1; Is 26:4 **144:1** Ps 18:34 **144:2** Dt 33:29; Ps 3:3; 28:7; 115:9-11; Pr 2:7 **144:2** 2Sm 22:3; Ps 18:2; 71:1-3; 91:4; 144:2; Pr 30:5 **144:2** Ps 18:39,47 **144:3** Jb 7:17; Ps 8:4; Heb 2:6 **144:4** Ps 102:11; 109:23 **144:5** 2Sm 22:10; Ps 18:9-10 **144:5** Ps 104:32 **144:6** Ps 18:14; Hab 3:11; Zch 9:14 **144:7** Ps 18:16 **144:7** Ps 69:14 **144:8** Ps 12:2; 41:6; 106:26 **144:9** Ps 33:2-3; 40:3 **144:10** Ps 18:50 **144:11** Ps 69:14 **144:11** Ps 12:2; 41:6; 106:26 **144:12** Ps 92:12-14; 128:3 **144:13** Ps 107:37-38 **144:13** Pr 3:9-10 **144:14** Is 24:11; Jr 14:2 **144:15** Ps 33:12

PRAISING GOD'S GREATNESS

A hymn of David.

145 I † exalt you, my God the King, and bless your name forever and ever. †
2 I will bless you every day; I will praise your name forever and ever. †

3 The LORD is great and is highly praised; †
his greatness is unsearchable. †
4 One generation will declare your works to the next and will proclaim your mighty acts. †
5 I † will speak of your splendor and glorious majesty and † your wondrous works. †
6 They will proclaim the power of your awe-inspiring acts, and I will declare your greatness. † †
7 They will give a testimony of your great goodness and will joyfully sing of your righteousness. †

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great
in faithful love. †
9 The LORD is good to everyone; †
his compassion rests on all he has made. †
10 All you have made will thank you, LORD; the † faithful will bless you. †
11 They will speak of the glory of your kingdom and will declare your might, †
12 informing all people of your mighty acts and of the glorious splendor
of your † kingdom. †
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your rule is for all generations. †
The LORD is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his actions. † †

14 The LORD helps all who fall; he raises up all who are oppressed. † †
15 All eyes look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. †
16 You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. †

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all his acts. †
18 The LORD is near all who call out to him, all who call out to him
with integrity. †
19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cry for help
and saves them. †
20 The LORD guards all those who love him, but he destroys all the wicked. †
21 My mouth will declare the LORD's praise; let every living thing
bless his holy name forever and ever. †

145:1 The lines of this poem form an acrostic. **145:5** LXX, Syr read *They* **145:5** LXX, Syr read *and they will tell of* **145:6** Alt Hb tradition, Jer read *great deeds* **145:10** Lit *your* **145:12** LXX, Syr, Jer; MT reads *his* **145:13** One Hb ms, DSS, LXX, Syr; some Hb mss omit *The Lord is faithful in all his words and gracious in all his actions.* **145:14** Lit *bowed down*
145:1 Ps 30:1; 34:1; 99:5,9 **145:2** Ps 146:2 **145:3** Ps 48:1; 147:5 **145:3** Jb 5:9; 9:10; Is 40:28 **145:4** Ps 22:30-31 **145:5** Ps 119:27 **145:6** Dt 10:21; Ps 106:2 **145:7** Is 63:7 **145:8** Ex 34:6; Ps 86:5,15; 103:8 **145:9** Ac 14:17 **145:9** Ps 100:5 **145:10** Ps 19:1; 103:22 **145:11** Jr 14:21 **145:12** Ps 105:1; 145:5 **145:13** Ps 10:16; 2Pt 1:11 **145:13** Ps 103:8 **145:14** Ps 37:24; 146:8 **145:15** Ps 104:27; 136:25 **145:16** Ps 104:28 **145:17** Ps 116:5 **145:18** Dt 4:7; Ps 34:18; Jn 4:23-24 **145:19** Ps 10:17; 21:2; 37:4 **145:20** Ps 31:23; 97:10 **145:21** Ps 65:2; 150:6

THE GOD OF COMPASSION

146 Hallelujah!
My soul, praise the LORD. †
2 I will praise the LORD all my life; I will sing to my God as long as I live. †

3 Do not trust in nobles, in a son of man, † who cannot save. †
4 When his breath † leaves him, he returns to the ground;
on that day his plans die. †

5 Happy is the one whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, †
6 the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea and everything in them. †
He remains faithful forever, †
7 executing justice for the exploited and giving food to the hungry. †
The LORD frees prisoners. †
8 The LORD opens the eyes of the blind. †
The LORD raises up those who are oppressed. † †
The LORD loves the righteous. †
9 The LORD protects resident aliens and helps the fatherless and the widow, †
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked. †

10 The LORD reigns forever; Zion, your God reigns for all generations. †
Hallelujah!

146:3 Or *a mere mortal* **146:4** Or *spirit* **146:8** Lit *bowed down*
146:1 Ps 103:1 **146:2** Ps 63:4; 104:33 **146:3** Ps 60:11; 108:12; 118:8-9 **146:4** Gn 2:7; 3:19 **146:5** Ps 144:15; Jr 17:7 **146:6** Ps 115:15; Ac 14:15 **146:6** Ps 117:2 **146:7** Ps 103:6; 107:9 **146:7** Is 61:1 **146:8** Mt 9:27-30; Jn 9:7 **146:8** Ps 145:15 **146:8** Ps 11:7 **146:9** Ex 22:22-23; Dt 10:18 **146:9** Ps 147:6 **146:10** Ex 15:18; Ps 10:16

GOD RESTORES JERUSALEM

147 Hallelujah!
How good it is to sing to our God,
for praise is pleasant and lovely. †

2 The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem; †
he gathers Israel's exiled people. †
3 He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. †
4 He counts the number of the stars; he gives names to all of them. †
5 Our Lord is great, vast in power; his understanding is infinite. † †
6 The LORD helps the oppressed but brings the wicked to the ground. †

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; play the lyre to our God, †
8 who covers the sky with clouds, prepares rain for the earth,
and causes grass to grow on the hills. †
9 He provides the animals with their food, and the young ravens, what they cry for. †

10 He is not impressed by the strength of a horse; he does not value the power of a warrior. † †
11 The LORD values those who fear him, those who put their hope in his faithful love. †

EVOLUTION AND INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Until two centuries years ago, evolution played a negligible role in the Christian worldview. Christians overwhelmingly believed that God created the world and specially designed the different kinds of organisms that populate it. The diversity of life was therefore not seen as the result of a long evolutionary history, in which organisms gradually transformed into others that looked nothing like their beginnings. Any change in organisms from the original creation would have been minor. Insofar as there was any evolution, it would have been microevolution (changes within a species), not macroevolution (changes from one species to another).

Fast-forward to the present, and we find Christians having little choice but to square evolution with their worldview. For some, evolution is a proven fact incompatible with Christianity, causing them to reject the faith. For others, "theistic evolutionists," evolution is a proven fact but compatible with Christianity. For still others, evolution is incompatible with Christianity but so unsupported by evidence that it poses no direct challenge to Christian faith. Nevertheless, even those who think evolution is unconvincing must

confront those who think it is well supported.

THE TWO PILLARS OF EVOLUTION

To see why evolution is such a sticky issue for the Christian worldview, we need to be clear what the term *evolution* means. Evolution, as taught in biology textbooks, rests on two pillars. The first is a claim about natural history, according to which all living forms trace their lineage back to a common universal ancestor. This pillar of evolution is called common descent. By itself, common descent is compatible with theism in that God might, via an evolutionary process, bring all organisms into existence. Where common descent runs into trouble is with a biblical theism that takes Genesis seriously and sees God as creating the basic kinds of organisms from nothing.

The much more controversial pillar of evolution is the mechanism by which organisms are supposed to have arisen. To say that organisms have evolved raises an immediate question: how? In our experience, like begets like, so to say that organisms are able to change radically needs an explanation. Charles Darwin offered such an explanation, and it remains the explanation evolutionary theorists offer to this day. That explanation is natural selection, a process taking place over long periods of time. This is the second pillar of evolution.

Here is how natural selection works. When organisms reproduce, they don't form exact copies of themselves. If they did, there could be no evolution since offspring would be replicas of their parents. Organisms, when they reproduce, vary. Some variants are better adapted to their environments than others. Those that are well adapted will be selected for; those that are not will be selected against. That's a nice way of saying that some will get to live and reproduce, and others will be killed off within a given ecosystem. Evolutionists believe that over time natural selection is the invisible hand that shapes all life.

The point that Christians need to realize about natural selection is that at no place does this mechanism require the help of an intelligent agent. Quite the contrary. Evolutionist Francisco Ayala is on record as saying that Darwin's greatest achievement was to show how the apparent design of organisms could be achieved without actual design. Darwin himself, in commenting on his theory in a letter to Charles Lyle, stated, "I would give nothing for the theory of natural selection if it requires miraculous additions at any one stage of descent." Darwin's theory doesn't so much claim that God had nothing to do with life; instead, it suggests life doesn't need anything from God.

THEISTIC EVOLUTION VERSUS INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Theistic evolution takes these two pillars of evolution and baptizes them in a sense, saying that this is how God formed life. In this view, God rather than directly guiding the evolutionary process, sets up the conditions under which evolution can take place. This has a certain appeal, especially if one is convinced that evolution as outlined by Darwin has indeed occurred. But why should one think that it has? Theistic evolution attempts to make a place for evolution within a Christian worldview. But the only reason for doing so is if evolution deserves such a place. In fact, the evidence for macroevolution is weak.

How can one see that the evidence for evolution is tenuous? The work of intelligent design theorists has been pivotal in critiquing evolution. Intelligent design (ID) casts the debate over evolution not as a science-versus-religion controversy but as a science-versus-science controversy. Theistic evolutionists, for instance, regard evolution as overwhelmingly supported scientifically and then try to reconcile their faith with that supposed fact. ID, by contrast, simply tries to assess the scientific evidence for evolution and design. If, as ID theorists argue, evolution fails, then there is no point trying to reconcile evolution and Christianity.

What, then, is ID and what makes it such an effective tool against evolution? Intelligent design is, by definition, the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the product of intelligence. Many special sciences fall under ID, including archaeology (Is that an arrowhead or a random chunk of rock?) and the search for extraterrestrial intelligence (Is that radio signal from outer space a message or mere noise?). Where ID becomes especially interesting is when the intelligence in view could not be the product of evolution. That happens with life because any intelligence responsible for life would be prior to life and

thus not a product of evolution.

This point is crucial. Even though evolution is thought to produce intelligent beings like us, intelligence itself does nothing to guide the evolutionary process. Natural selection, for instance, acts automatically, weeding out those organisms ill suited for an environment while keeping those that are better suited. Yet if life gives clear evidence of design, then any process by which we got here must itself be intelligently guided.

It follows that evolution and intelligent design contradict each other. It is logically possible that God could substantively guide the evolutionary process and thereby introduce design, but such a theory of "intelligent evolution" is not what evolutionists, whether atheistic or theistic, mean by evolution. The beauty of evolution is that a purely naturalistic evolutionary mechanism (natural selection) is supposed to procure all the benefits of design without actual design.

Intelligent design, by contrast, shows that evolution is unable to make good on this promise. How can we see this? ID, in looking for patterns in nature best explained by intelligence, finds that biology does indeed exhibit such patterns, in everything from the fossil record (see Stephen Meyer's *Darwin's Dilemma*) to molecular biology (see Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box*). Take molecular biology. The DNA inside every one of your cells is known to stretch out to six feet in length, yet it is packed inside a volume much smaller than a pin head. DNA represents the most efficient and reliable method of data storage we know. Yet this method of data storage is presupposed by all of life.

Information storage and processing is not the only thing going on inside cells. There are transportation and distribution systems, signal transduction circuitries, waste removal services, and even nanoengineered motors. Our best metaphor for understanding the cell is as an automated city in which everything, down to the smallest detail, is precisely tuned and coordinated. We need to be engineers to understand what's going on inside the cell, and when we do, we find a level of engineering that far exceeds anything human engineers have attained or show any signs of attaining. But ID doesn't just stop with marveling at the intricacies of the cell. It also investigates how such systems might have originated and what obstacles their origin faces in the absence of intelligence.

The Bible teaches that God by wisdom created the world (Pr 3:19) and that this wisdom is clearly evident throughout creation (Rm 1:20). Evolution, by contrast, teaches that if God had anything to do with life, then he was a master of stealth and gave no evidence of it. If it were well supported, evolution would therefore pose a significant challenge to the Christian worldview. But, especially in light of intelligent design, there is good reason to think evolution is ill supported and therefore not a threat to the Christian understanding of creation. In particular, attempts to reconcile Christianity and evolution are well-intentioned, but ultimately not needed.

WILLIAM A. DEMBSKI

12 Exalt the LORD, Jerusalem; praise your God, Zion! †
13 For he strengthens the bars of your city gates and blesses your children within you. †
14 He endows your territory with prosperity; † †
he satisfies you with the finest wheat. †
15 He sends his command throughout the earth; his word runs swiftly. †
16 He spreads snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes; †

17 he throws his hailstones like crumbs.
Who can withstand his cold? †
18 He sends his word and melts them; he unleashes his winds, †
and the water flows. †

19 He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and judgments to Israel. †
20 He has not done this for every nation; they do not know his judgments. †
Hallelujah!

147:5 Lit *understanding has no number* **147:10** Lit *the legs of the man* **147:14** Or *peace* **147:18** Or *breath* **147:1** Ps 33:1; 135:3 **147:2** Ps 51:18; 102:16 **147:2** Dt 30:3; Ezk 39:28 **147:3** Ps 34:18; Is 61:1 **147:4** Gn 15:5; Is 40:26 **147:5** Ps 48:1; Is 40:28 **147:6** Ps 146:8-9 **147:7** Ps 33:2; 95:1-2 **147:8** Jb 5:10; 38:27; Ps 104:14 **147:9** Jb 38:41; Ps 104:27-28 **147:10** Ps 33:17 **147:11** Ps 33:18; 149:4 **147:12** Ps 99:5,9 **147:13** Neh 7:3 **147:14** Is 54:13 **147:14** Dt 32:14; Ps 81:16 **147:15** Ps 104:4 **147:16** Jb 37:6; 38:29 **147:17** Jb 37:9-10 **147:18** Ps 33:9; 107:20 **147:19** Dt 33:2-4; Mal 4:4 **147:20** Dt 4:7,32-34

CREATION'S PRAISE OF THE LORD

148 Hallelujah!
Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights. †
2 Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly armies. †
3 Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. †
4 Praise him, highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens. †
5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded,
and they were created. †
6 He set them in position forever and ever; he gave an order that will never
pass away. †

7 Praise the LORD from the earth, all sea monsters and ocean depths, †
8 lightning † and hail, snow and cloud, stormy wind that executes
his command, †
9 mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, †
10 wild animals and all cattle, creatures that crawl and flying birds, †
11 kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all judges of the earth, †
12 young men as well as young women, old and young together. †

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted.
His majesty covers heaven and earth. †
14 He has raised up a horn for his people, resulting in praise to all
his faithful ones, to the Israelites, the people close to him. †
Hallelujah!

148:8 Or *fire*
148:1 Ps 69:34; Mt 21:9 **148:2** Ps 103:20-21 **148:3** 1Co 15:41 **148:4** Gn 1:7; Dt 10:14; 1Kg 8:27 **148:5** Ps 33:6,9 **148:6** Jr 31:35-36; 33:20,25 **148:7** Gn 1:2,21; Ps 74:13 **148:8** Ps 18:12; 103:20; 147:16 **148:9** Is 44:23; 49:13; 55:12 **148:10** Is 43:20; Hs 2:18 **148:11** Ps 102:15 **148:11-12** Rv 7:9 **148:13** Ps 8:1; 113:4; Is 12:4 **148:14** Dt 10:21; Jr 17:14; Eph 2:17

PRAISE FOR GOD'S TRIUMPH

149 Hallelujah!
Sing to the LORD a new song, †
his praise in the assembly of the faithful. †
2 Let Israel celebrate its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King. †
3 Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him
with tambourine and lyre. †
4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people; †
he adorns the humble with salvation. †
5 Let the faithful celebrate in triumphal glory; let them shout for joy
on their beds. †

6 Let the exaltation of God be in their mouths †
and a double-edged sword in their hands, †
7 inflicting vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples, †
8 binding their kings with chains and their dignitaries with iron shackles, †
9 carrying out the judgment decreed against them.
This honor is for all his faithful people. †
Hallelujah!

149:6 Lit *throat*
149:1 Ps 33:3 **149:1** Ps 35:18; 89:5 **149:2** Ps 95:6; Zch 9:9 **149:3** Ps 30:11; 81:2 **149:4** Ps 147:11; Rm 8:8; 1Co 1:21 **149:4** Ps 35:27; Is 61:3 **149:5** Jb 35:10; Ps 132:16 **149:6** Ps 66:17; Heb 4:12 **149:7** Ezk 25:16-17;

Mc 5:15 **149:8** Jb 36:8 **149:9** Ps 148:14; Ezk 28:26

PRAISE THE LORD

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF MUSIC

Scripture provides a holistic way to think about music. It does this directly, through the well-over-three-hundred references to music within its pages, and indirectly, through teaching about creation, pleasure, and worship. One in six chapters of the Bible mentions vocal or instrumental music. The great majority of these verses (80 percent, in fact) describe it in positive terms, as something made or heard faithfully. Especially frequent are references to music in worship, but the Bible also affirms a variety of other uses, presumably requiring a variety of styles: for example, in courtship and marriage (Song of Songs), teaching (Dt 31:19), mourning (2Ch 35:25), warfare (2Ch 20:21), therapy (1Sm 16:23), pilgrimage (Is 30:29), and pure pleasure (2 Sam 19:35).

The attention Scripture gives to music is impressive, as is its prominence in today's society. From restaurant loudspeakers to movie soundtracks, it's everywhere. Obviously, whoever wants to love both God and neighbor in this world will want to learn from the Bible how to think about music.

NEGATIVE USES OF MUSIC

To begin, not everything the Bible says about music is positive. Through Isaiah, God warns against self-indulgence: "Woe to those who rise early in the morning in pursuit of beer, who linger into the evening, inflamed by wine. At their feasts they have lyre, harp, tambourine, flute, and wine. They do not perceive the LORD's actions, and they do not see the work of his hands. Therefore my people will go into exile because they lack knowledge" (Is 5:11-13; see also Ec 7:5 and Am 6:5).

Music can be what twentieth-century American pastor A. W. Tozer called "a device for wasting time, a refuge from the disturbing voice of conscience, a scheme to divert attention from moral accountability." When music is used idly, as a substitute for the knowledge of God, no solid joy can be its result, because "who can enjoy life apart from him?" (Ec 2:25). But the point is not really about music, but about the misuse of a good gift from God. As all his gifts can be misused, and therefore corrupted, the same can be said of music.

GODLY ENJOYMENT OF MUSIC

On the other hand, there is such a thing as godly recreation (Gn 24:63; Ps 8:3; 1Tm 4:3-4; 6:17). Moreover, God "provides us with songs in the night" (Jb 35:10). David, the man after God's heart, played the lyre and sang; the king found joy in harps from ivory palaces (Ps 45:8). The Bible teaches that all things were made for God's glory, and we find joy in them insofar as we enjoy God through them. He is glorified when we delight in his good gifts. And when we use our leisure well, it leaves our souls refreshed and ready for the next day's labors of service and worship. But what makes music in particular delightful?

The first chapter of Genesis tells us that God charged the human race to rule the earthly order for his glory. When a musician arranges tones and rhythms to show their interrelatedness, their potential for harmony, and their potential as materials for design, the musician is showing us the glory of a Creator so wise that he could endow sounds with such properties. So good that he enabled us to perceive such sounds meaningfully. We delight to behold such wisdom and goodness. It is similar when we study the sky and discover there a kind of "speech" that proclaims the Lord's righteousness, as mentioned in Psalm 97:6.

Such discovery brings pleasure to people of all ages and cultures, from children singing on the playground to a scholar pondering a fugue—only, apart from Christ, neither child nor scholar can enjoy the ultimate Artist who created music and our ability to perceive it.

MUSIC AS A GIFT

While music ultimately points to God's goodness, it is also a gift to all humanity. Like food, water, and sunshine, music blesses all people whether they acknowledge its source or not. It is part of God's common grace to his creatures and offers a way for us to express and identify with the human condition. All facets of human experience may be expressed through music—not only love and joy, but sadness and conflict. It gives voice to feelings and experiences that words fail to express. This is a gift for our enjoyment and comfort.

But to fully appreciate the gift of music, we will recognize its source. Music can comfort us by "speaking" clearly about God's goodness. This explains how the Bible can use music as an effective metaphor for God's goodness. He himself sings (Zph 3:17; Heb 2:12). Believers call him their "song" (Ex 15:2; Ps 118:14; Is 12:2). Angels mark the beginning and end of history with music-making (Jb 38:7; Rv 5:8-9). And nature, too, sings when the Lord makes his salvation known (Ps 98:7-9; Is 44:23; 55:12). The Bible sometimes treats music as a synonym for joy (Pr 29:6; Is 35:2; 51:3). "Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises" (Jms 5:13).

MUSIC AS PRAISE

John Newton, the poet behind "Amazing Grace," wrote a hymn that begins and ends thus: How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believer's ear!

> It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds, and drives away his fear. . . .
>
> Weak is the effort of my heart, and cold my warmest thought; but when I see thee as thou art, I'll praise thee as I ought.
>
> Till then I would thy love proclaim with every fleeting breath; and may the music of thy name refresh my soul in death.

In these verses, Newton likens the contemplation of Christ's lordship and gospel to the act of appreciating music. The pleasures of both are derived from God's character. The divine counsel for our salvation is so harmonious, with every part of it perfectly integrated with all the rest, that the name of our Savior summarizes the greatest symphony of all: the covenant of grace, the threefold office of Christ (as Prophet, Priest, and King), his active and passive obedience, his exaltation, and our union with him.

John Newton will not be alone when he praises God as he ought. A large number of the Bible's references to music are actually exhortations for believers to sing. In the temple worship of the OT, skilled Levitical singers sang with instrumental accompaniment (1Ch 9:33; 25:1-31; 2Ch 5:12-14), but everyone else responded congregationally with short refrains (1Ch 16:36; Ezr 3:10-13). In NT worship all the saints teach and admonish one another and give thanks to God the Father in song, as the message about the Messiah dwells in them richly and as the Spirit fills them (Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16). This can only mean that God intends church music to function primarily as a means by which congregants communicate to each other and to him—and that what they communicate is God's Word, "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17). Their songs will be saturated with the message, wording, and aesthetic values of Scripture. Jesus himself sang congregationally during his earthly ministry (Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26), and the ultimate aim of his saving work is pictured as congregational singing (Rm 15:9; Rv 14:2-3).

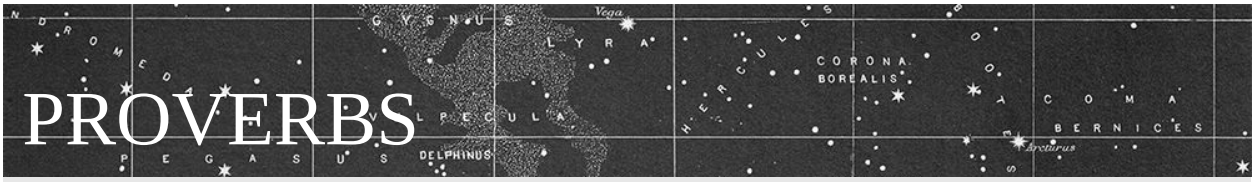
PAUL MUNSON

150 Hallelujah!
Praise God in his sanctuary.
Praise him in his mighty expanse. †
2 Praise him for his powerful acts; †
praise him for his abundant greatness. †

3 Praise him with trumpet blast; †
praise him with harp and lyre. †
4 Praise him with tambourine and dance; †
praise him with strings and flute. †
5 Praise him with resounding cymbals; praise him with clashing cymbals. †

6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD. †
Hallelujah!

150:1 Gn 1:6; Ps 11:4; 19:1 **150:2** Ps 145:12 **150:2** Dt 3:24 **150:3** Ps 98:6 **150:3** Ps 33:2 **150:4** Ps 149:3 **150:4** Jb 21:12; Ps 45:8 **150:5** 2Sm 6:5; 1Ch 13:8 **150:6** Ps 145:21



PROVERBS

INTRODUCTION

What is a proverb? A secular proverb seeks to state a general (not absolute) truth, such as "a fool and his money are soon parted." It is typically pithy, that is, it is brief but rich in meaning: "No pain, no gain." A proverb is practical; it gives advice that is useful in the real world: "A stitch in time saves nine." It should be applied; the reader should consider what changes he should make in his own life in light of the proverb: "Charity begins at home." A proverb is derived from astute observations about how life usually works; the creator of a proverb shows himself very knowledgeable and perceptive, able to see what is generally true and to draw conclusions from it: "The pen is mightier than the sword."

In addition to all this, the proverbs in the book of Proverbs are also divinely inspired. Since they come from God, we know they are true and we can be certain they are beneficial: "The one who understands a matter finds success, and the one who trusts in the LORD will be happy" (16:20). Biblical proverbs not only offer practical advice for this life but also guide the reader to eternal life: "For the prudent the path of life leads upward, so that he may avoid going down to Sheol" (15:24).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Solomon is credited with the proverbs in chapters 1–29 of the book of Proverbs (1:1; 10:1). There is biblical evidence that Solomon was wise and a collector of wise sayings (1Kg 3:5-14; 4:29-34; 5:7,12; 10:2-3,23-24; 11:41). Chapters 1–24 may have been written down during his reign, 970–931 BC. The proverbs in chapters 25–29 were Solomon's proverbs collected by King Hezekiah, who reigned 716–687 BC (25:1). The last two chapters are credited to Agur and Lemuel (30:1; 31:1), about whom nothing else is known. An editor was inspired to collect the proverbs of Solomon, Agur, and Lemuel into the book we now have.

BACKGROUND: The reign of Solomon represented the peak of prosperity for the nation of Israel. The period saw the greatest extent of the territory, and there was peace and international trade (1Kg 4:20-25; 10:21-29). It is likely Solomon knew about the ancient tradition of wisdom in Egypt (1Kg 3:1), but through inspiration and God's gift he composed even better sayings (1Kg 3:12; 10:6-7,23). Solomon addressed his teaching to his son or sons, but these inspired wise sayings are applicable to all people. The book of Proverbs, like the rest of the Bible, contains stories, teaching, and examples. People should make appropriate application of these truths to their own situations (1Co 10:11).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The Law and the Prophets teach how to live in spiritual community. Wisdom teaches how to live practically and courteously with one another. The book of Job addresses one main idea: the sovereignty of God with regard to suffering. Ecclesiastes contemplates the meaning of this ephemeral life. Solomon's Song demonstrates romantic love. Proverbs covers the rest of wisdom's topics, from how to conduct business astutely yet fairly, to how to live happily within marriage.

STRUCTURE

The book of Proverbs is in the wisdom genre. Wisdom books consist of the intelligent author's observations on the world and the people in it. However, without an inspired godly perspective, the world would be depressing and hopeless, as parts of Job and Ecclesiastes show. Ultimately, biblical wisdom is informed by

and founded on faith in God.

The process of observation, contemplation, and inspiration can be seen in Proverbs 24:30-34. After observing the deteriorated condition of "the field of a slacker" and "the vineyard of a man lacking sense," Solomon contemplated what he was seeing and was inspired: "I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction" (v. 32). He either composed a new proverb or applied a familiar proverb to the situation: "a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, and your poverty will come like a robber, and your need, like a bandit" (v v. 33-34).

Proverbs is written as Hebrew poetry. Hebrew poetry is terse and concise; it uses a lot of imagery, and generally the second line complements or contrasts the thought of the first. Contemplating how the second line relates to the first is a profitable way to meditate on a proverb.

In chapters 1–9 Solomon used imagery and sustained arguments to teach about the value of wisdom and the seduction of evil. In 22:17–24:34 there are "sayings" made up of several verses each, and in chapters 30–31 there are more sayings, including numerical sayings and an alphabetic acrostic in praise of a capable wife. In the rest of the book, each proverb is generally one verse. Some scholars argue that these individual proverbs are carefully arranged in groups and each should be interpreted in the context of its group. Other scholars view the collection as unsystematic and argue that the immediate context seldom has any bearing on interpretation.

In either case, it is important to interpret any single proverb in the context of the book of Proverbs and the Bible as a whole. For example, while 21:14 may seem to encourage bribery, the rest of the book of Proverbs is clearly against it (15:27)—as is the rest of Scripture (Ex 23:8; Ec 7:7).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

In Proverbs, God is the One who has set up the world so that those who live by his principles will find blessing and success. The highest virtue is "the fear of the LORD" (1:7).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Proverbs shows that humans may live by a right way or a wrong way, a wise way or a foolish way. The right way is not the easy way, but those who live by it find great reward. All of life's relationships may be governed by the wise teachings of this book.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Proverbs assumes God's covenant but does not teach about it directly. This surely serves to demonstrate that the wisdom coming from the people of God is superior to and results in greater blessing than the wisdom coming from others—even without explicitly referring to the mighty acts of God on behalf of his people.

PROVERBS TIMELINE

3000–2200 BC

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

The Instruction of Prince Hardjedef, Egyptian Old Kingdom **2686–2160**

The Instructions Addressed to Kagemni, Egyptian **2600**

The Instruction of Ptah–Hotep, Egypt's Old Kingdom **2575–2134**

Collections of proverbs found among the royal archives at Ebla **2450–2250**

2200–1700 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

The Royal Instruction of Khety to Merikare, Egyptian **2160**

The Instruction of a Man for His Son, Egyptian Middle Kingdom **2040–1640**

The Instruction of King Amenemhet I for His Son Sesostris I, Egyptian **1925**

Instructions of Shuruppak, Sumerian Proverb Collection **1900–1700**

1700–1200 BC

DAVID 1050?–970

The Phoenicians develop a 22-letter alphabet that consisted of consonants only. It was read from right to left and became an important step in the development of the modern Western alphabet. This was the world's first purely phonetic alphabet. It was based on sounds and not symbolic representations of objects. **1600**

The Counsels of Wisdom, Akkadian **1500–1200**

Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**

1200–900 BC

SOLOMON 990?–931

The Instruction of Amenemope, Egypt **1186–1069**

Saul anointed king **1050**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

Solomon becomes king. **970**

Proverbs **970**

THE PURPOSE OF PROVERBS

1 The proverbs of Solomon † son of David, king of Israel: 2 For learning
wisdom and discipline; for understanding insightful sayings;
3 for receiving prudent instruction in righteousness, justice, and integrity; †
4 for teaching shrewdness to the inexperienced, † †
knowledge and discretion † to a young man — 5 let a wise person listen
and increase learning, †

and let a discerning person obtain guidance — 6 for understanding a proverb
or a parable, †
the words of the wise, and their riddles. †

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; †
fools despise wisdom and discipline. †

AVOID THE PATH OF THE VIOLENT

8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, and don't reject
your mother's teaching, †
9 for they will be a garland † of favor on your head and pendants †
around your neck. †
10 My son, if sinners entice you, †
don't be persuaded. †
11 If they say — "Come with us!
Let's set an ambush † and kill someone. †
Let's attack some innocent person † just for fun! †
12 Let's swallow them alive, † like Sheol, whole, like those who go down
to the Pit. †
13 We'll find all kinds of valuable property and fill our houses with plunder. †
14 Throw in your lot with us, and we'll all share the loot" † — 15 my son, don't
travel that road with them †
or set foot on their path, †
16 because their feet run toward evil and they hurry to shed blood. †
17 It is useless to spread a net where any bird can see it,
18 but they set an ambush to kill themselves; †
they attack their own lives.
19 Such are the paths of all who make profit dishonestly; †
it takes the lives of those who receive it. †

WISDOM'S PLEA

20 Wisdom calls out in the street; she makes her voice heard
in the public squares. †
21 She cries out above † the commotion; she speaks at the entrance
of the city gates: 22 "How long, inexperienced ones, will you
love ignorance?
How long will you mockers † enjoy mocking and you fools hate knowledge? †
23 If you respond to my warning, † †
then I will pour out my spirit on you †
and teach you my words.
24 Since I called out and you refused, †
extended my hand and no one paid attention, †
25 since you neglected all my counsel †
and did not accept my correction,
26 I, in turn, will laugh at your calamity. †
I will mock when terror strikes you,
27 when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes
like a whirlwind, when trouble and stress overcome you.
28 Then they will call me, but I won't answer; they will search for me, but won't
find me. †
29 Because they hated knowledge, didn't choose to fear the LORD, †
30 were not interested in my counsel, and rejected all my correction, †
31 they will eat the fruit of their way †
and be glutted with their own schemes. †
32 For the apostasy of the inexperienced will kill them, †
and the complacency of fools will destroy them.
33 But whoever listens to me will live securely and be undisturbed by the dread
of danger." †

1:4 Or *simple*, or *gullible* **1:6** Or *an enigma* **1:9** Lit *chains* **1:11** Lit *Let's ambush for blood* **1:11** Lit *person for no reason* **1:14** Lit *us; one bag will be for all of us* **1:18** Lit *they ambush for their blood* **1:19** Lit *takes the life of its masters* **1:21** Lit *at the head of* **1:23** Lit *you turn back to my reprimand*
1:1 1Kg 4:32; Pr 10:1; 25:1; Ec 12:9 **1:3** Pr 2:9 **1:4** Pr 8:5 **1:4** Pr 2:11; 3:21 **1:5** Pr 9:9; 16:21,23 **1:6** Nm 12:8; Jdg 14:12; Ps 49:4; Hab 2:6 **1:7** Jb 28:28; Ps 111:10; Pr 9:10; 15:33 **1:7** Eph 5:17 **1:8** Pr 6:20; 31:1 **1:9** Pr 4:9 **1:9** Gn 41:42; Pr 6:21; Dn 5:29 **1:10** Pr 16:29 **1:10** Ps 141:4 **1:11** Pr 12:6; Jr 5:26 **1:11** Ps 10:8

1:12 Ps 124:3 **1:12** Ps 28:1 **1:13** Pr 24:4 **1:15** Ps 1:1; Pr 4:14 **1:15** Ps 119:101; Pr 16:19 **1:16** Pr 6:17-18; Is 59:7; Rm 3:15 **1:19** Pr 15:27; Ezk 22:27; Hab 2:6-12 **1:20** Pr 8:1-3; 9:3 **1:22** Ps 1:1 **1:22** Jb 21:14; Pr 1:29; 5:12 **1:23** Pr 3:11; 15:5,31-32 **1:23** Jl 2:28 **1:24** Is 65:12; 66:4; Jr 7:13; Zch 7:11 **1:24** Is 65:2; Rm 10:21 **1:25** Ps 107:11; Lk 7:30 **1:26** Ps 2:4 **1:28** 1Sm 8:18 **1:29** Pr 1:7 **1:30** Pr 5:12; 15:5 **1:31** Jr 6:19 **1:31** Pr 14:14; 28:19 **1:32** Jr 2:19 **1:33** Ps 112:7-8; Pr 3:24-26

1:1 The opening verse of the book of Proverbs attributes its contents to **Solomon**, who famously asked God for wisdom and was known for his understanding (1Kg 3:5-14; 4:32; 10:4-9,23-24). Though Solomon is the source of the majority of the book (see also 10:1), Proverbs was edited at a later time (see 25:1) and includes **wisdom** from at least two other men (30:1; 31:1; see also 22:17; 24:23).

1:2-6 The purpose of the book of Proverbs is to impart **wisdom**, **discipline**, prudence, **knowledge**, and **discretion** to the **inexperienced** and to the **young man** (vv. 2-4). See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512*. Those who are already **wise** and **discerning** can also benefit from the wisdom taught in this book (v. 5). The most basic meaning of "wisdom" is "skill": doing something well. Carpenters are wise when they skillfully make things from wood; ants are wise when they store up enough food (30:25). Wisdom, then, is living well and flourishing because one makes decisions according to the way that God created the world and the way that things are because of his presence and design.

1:7 This theme verse of Proverbs grounds all of its practical wisdom in the **fear of the LORD.** The basis of true **wisdom** is being properly oriented toward God and submitting to his authority. He is the One who gives wisdom (2:6; see the note on 3:5-7), so those who desire it must humble themselves before him (3:34; 15:33; 22:4). Accordingly, this phrase and variations of it are found repeatedly in Proverbs (e.g., 1:29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26-27; 15:16), as well as in other parts of Scripture (e.g., Gn 22:12; Jb 1:1; 28:28; Pss 34:11; 111:10; Is 11:2-3; Rm 3:18; Ac 9:31).

1:8-10 Proverbs 1–9 consist of an extended exhortation to pursue wisdom instead of folly. Following the implicit call to pursue "the fear of the LORD" in v. 7, the reader is instructed to **listen** to parental instruction (6:20). The enticements and company of sinners are to be avoided.

1:20-21 Wisdom is personified as a woman calling out in the streets to passersby, imploring people to listen (see also 3:13-18; 4:6-9; 8:1-3; 9:3).

1:26-28 The personification of wisdom as a woman continues (see previous note). She will **laugh at** and **mock** the calamity of those who ignore her, and she will refuse to **answer** them when they call from their distress, which could have been avoided.

WISDOM'S WORTH

2 My son, if you accept my words †
and store up my commands within you,
2 listening closely † to wisdom and directing your heart to understanding;
3 furthermore, if you call out to insight and lift your voice to understanding,
4 if you seek it like silver and search for it like hidden treasure, †
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD and discover the knowledge of God.

6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge
and understanding. †
7 He stores up success † for the upright; He is a shield for those who live
with integrity †
8 so that he may guard the paths of justice and protect the way
of his faithful followers. †
9 Then you will understand righteousness, justice, and integrity —
every good path.
10 For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will delight you.
11 Discretion will watch over you, and understanding will guard you. †
12 It will rescue you from the way of evil — from anyone who says
perverse things,
13 from those who abandon the right paths to walk in ways of darkness, †
14 from those who enjoy doing evil †
and celebrate perversion,
15 whose paths are crooked, †
and whose ways are devious. †
16 It will rescue you from a forbidden woman, †
from a wayward woman with her flattering talk, †
17 who abandons the companion of her youth †
and forgets the covenant of her God;
18 for her house sinks down to death and her ways to the land
of the departed spirits. †
19 None return who go to her; none reach the paths of life. †
20 So follow the way of the good, †
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright will inhabit the land, and those of integrity will remain in it; †
22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land, †
and the treacherous ripped out of it. †

2:2 Lit *you, stretching out your ear* **2:7** Or *resourcefulness*
2:1 Pr 4:10 **2:4** Jb 3:21; Mt 13:44 **2:6** Jb 32:8 **2:7** Ps 84:11; Pr 10:9; 20:7; 28:18; 30:5 **2:8** 1Sm 2:9; Ps 66:9

2:11 Pr 4:6; 6:22 **2:11-13** Ps 82:5; Pr 15:19; 16:17; Jn 3:19,20 **2:14** Pr 10:23 **2:15** Ps 125:5; Pr 21:8 **2:15** Pr 3:32; 14:2 **2:16** Pr 9:13-18 **2:16** Pr 5:3,20; 6:24; 7:5,21; 23:27 **2:17** Mal 2:14-15 **2:18** Pr 7:27; 9:18; 21:16 **2:16-19** Ps 16:11; Pr 5:6; 7:5,21-27; 23:27-28; Ec 7:26 **2:20** Heb 6:12 **2:21** Pr 10:30; Mt 5:5-6 **2:22** Ps 37:38 **2:22** Dt 28:63; Ps 52:5

2:1 Wisdom is commonly presented as a father teaching his **son** (1:8,10,15; 3:1,11,21; 4:10,20; 5:1,20; 6:1,3,20; 7:1; see also Ec 12:12). In view of the intended general readership of Proverbs (see 1:2-6), readers are thus invited to listen in on this conversation, which corresponds to Moses's command to fathers to teach Scripture to their children in Deuteronomy 6:1-9,20-25.

2:3-5 Whereas on the one hand wisdom does call out to the general populace (1:20-33), wisdom will not be found unless it is valued highly and sought out diligently from God (see the notes on 1:7; 3:13-18; 8:17; Jb 28).

2:11-15 Wisdom protects a person from choosing foolish ways and from going along with evildoers.

2:16-19 One of the evildoers that wisdom rescues a person from is the adulteress, the **forbidden woman.** She is singled out again in 5:3-14,20 and 6:24-7:27.

2:21-22 The theme of the righteous dwelling in **the land** and the wicked being **cut off** from it is also found in Psalms 37 (see the notes on vv. 22,37-38; Pr 10:25).

TRUST THE LORD

3 My son, don't forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commands; †
2 for they will bring you many days, a full life, † † and well-being. †
3 Never let loyalty and faithfulness leave you.
Tie them around your neck;
write them on the tablet of your heart. †
4 Then you will find favor and high regard with God and people. †

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, †
and do not rely on your own understanding; †
6 in all your ways know him, and he will make your paths straight. †
7 Don't be wise in your own eyes; †
fear the LORD and turn away from evil. †
8 This will be healing for your body † †
and strengthening for your bones. †
9 Honor the LORD with your possessions and with the first produce of your entire harvest; †

10 then your barns will be completely filled, and your vats will overflow with new wine. †
11 Do not despise the LORD's instruction, my son, and do not loathe his discipline; †
12 for the LORD disciplines the one he loves, just as a father disciplines the son in whom he delights. †

WISDOM BRINGS HAPPINESS

13 Happy is a man who finds wisdom †
and who acquires understanding,
14 for she is more profitable than silver, and her revenue is better than gold. †
15 She is more precious than jewels; †
nothing you desire can equal her. †
16 Long life † is in her right hand; in her left, riches and honor. †
17 Her ways are pleasant, †
and all her paths, peaceful.
18 She is a tree of life † to those who embrace her, and those who hold on to her are happy.

19 The LORD founded the earth by wisdom †
and established the heavens by understanding.
20 By his knowledge the watery depths broke open, †
and the clouds dripped with dew. †

21 Maintain sound wisdom and discretion.
My son, don't lose sight of them. †
22 They will be life for you † †
and adornment † for your neck.
23 Then you will go safely on your way; your foot will not stumble. †
24 When you lie † down, you will not be afraid; †
you will lie down, and your sleep will be pleasant.

25 Don’t fear sudden danger or the ruin of the wicked when it comes, †
26 for the LORD will be your confidence †
and will keep your foot from a snare. †

TREAT OTHERS FAIRLY

27 When it is in your power, †
don’t withhold good † from the one to whom it belongs.
28 Don’t say to your neighbor, “Go away! Come back later.
I’ll give it tomorrow” — when it is there with you. †
29 Don’t plan any harm against your neighbor, †
for he trusts you and lives near you.
30 Don’t accuse anyone without cause, †
when he has done you no harm.
31 Don’t envy a violent man †
or choose any of his ways;
32 for the devious are detestable to the LORD, but he is a friend † to the upright. †
33 The LORD’s curse is on the household of the wicked, †
but he blesses the home of the righteous; 34 He mocks those who mock, but gives grace to the humble. †
35 The wise will inherit honor, but he holds up fools to dishonor. †

3:2 Lit *days, years of life* **3:8** Lit *navel* **3:16** Lit *Length of days* **3:22** Or *be your throat* **3:22** Or *grace* **3:24** LXX reads *sit* **3:26** Or *be at your side* **3:27** Lit *in the power of your hands* **3:32** Or *confidential counsel* **3:35** Or *but haughty fools dishonor*, or *but fools exalt dishonor*
3:1 Dt 30:16 **3:2** Ps 91:16; Pr 3:16; 4:10; 9:11; 10:27 **3:1-2** Pr 4:1-4; 6:20-23; 7:1-3 **3:3** Pr 1:9; 6:21; 7:3; 2Co 3:3 **3:4** Dt 4:6; 1Sm 2:26; Lk 2:52; Rm 14:18 **3:5** Ps 37:3,5 **3:5** Jr 9:23 **3:6** Pr 11:5 **3:7** Pr 26:5,12; 28:11,26; Rm 12:16 **3:7** Jb 1:1; 28:28; Ps 37:27; Pr 16:6 **3:8** Pr 4:22 **3:8** Jb 21:24 **3:9** Ex 23:19; Lv 23:9-14; Dt 26:2 **3:10** Dt 28:8; Mal 3:10 **3:11** Pr 5:11-13; 15:5,31-33 **3:12** Dt 8:5; Jb 5:17-18; Pr 13:24; Heb 12:5-7 **3:13** Pr 8:32,34 **3:14** Jb 28:15-19; Pr 8:10,19; 16:16; 22:1 **3:15** Jb 28:18 **3:15** Pr 8:11; 20:15 **3:16** Pr 8:18; 21:21; 22:4 **3:17** Mt 11:19 **3:18** Gn 2:9; Pr 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Rv 2:7 **3:19** Ps 104:24; Pr 8:27 **3:20** Gn 7:11 **3:20** Dt 33:28; Jb 36:28 **3:21** Pr 4:21 **3:22** Pr 4:22 **3:23** Ps 91:12; Pr 4:12 **3:24** Jb 11:19; Ps 3:5; Pr 6:22 **3:25** Jb 5:21; Ps 91:5; 1Pt 3:14 **3:26** 1Sm 2:9 **3:27** Gl 6:10 **3:28** Lv 19:13; Dt 24:15 **3:29** Pr 6:14; 14:22 **3:30** Pr 24:28; Rm 12:18 **3:31** Ps 37:1; Pr 23:17; 24:1,19 **3:32** Ps 25:14; Pr 11:20; 12:22; 15:8-9 **3:33** Zch 5:3-4; Mal 2:2 **3:34** Jms 4:6; 1Pt 5:5

3:3 Wisdom is to be internalized in the **heart** (see also 2:2,10; 4:21; 16:23). Its inscription **on the tablet of**

the **heart** is also mentioned in 7:3 and resonates with new covenant themes found in Jeremiah 31:33 (see also Dt 6:6). Along these lines, the guarding of one's "heart" is urged in 4:23 (see note).

3:5-7 Wisdom for humans does not lead to self-sufficiency but instead recognizes the limitations of human understanding. True wisdom is oriented toward God's presence and the design of his creation. God is acknowledged and trusted as the only One who possesses complete wisdom (v. 6; see the note on 1:7; 16:20; 22:19). See also "Do My Beliefs Fit a Christian Worldview?" *p. 1461*.

3:11-12 One of the ways in which "the LORD gives wisdom" (2:6) is through correction and **discipline**, which are not to be despised by his children (see Heb 12:4-13).

3:13-18 As in 2:4, wisdom is declared to be more precious than wealth (vv. 14-15; 8:10-11,19). Whereas foolishness leads to destruction and death (1:26-27,31-32; 2:18-19,22), wisdom brings **long life**, **honor**, and peace (v. 16; 2:21). Her comparison to **a tree of life** (v. 18) recalls the tree of life in the garden of Eden (Gn 2:9). Following their foolish act, Adam and Eve were barred from eating of this tree lest they "live forever" (Gn 3:22-24). Wisdom is thus presented as the way to attain such life (see 18:27).

3:32-35 The reason for the preceding commands to deal uprightly with others (vv. 27-31) is God's character and his just recompense to the wicked and the righteous.

A FATHER'S EXAMPLE

4 Listen, sons, to a father's discipline, †
and pay attention so that you may gain understanding, 2 for I am giving you
good instruction. †
Don't abandon my teaching.
3 When I was a son with my father, tender and precious to my mother,
4 he taught me and said: "Your heart must hold on to my words.
Keep my commands and live. †
5 Get wisdom, get understanding; †
don't forget or turn away from the words from my mouth.
6 Don't abandon wisdom, and she will watch over you; love her, † and she will
guard you.
7 Wisdom is supreme — so get wisdom.
And whatever else you get, get understanding. †
8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you; if you embrace her, she will honor you. †
9 She will place a garland of favor on your head; she will give you a crown
of beauty." †

TWO WAYS OF LIFE

10 Listen, my son. Accept my words, †
and you will live many years. †
11 I am teaching you the way of wisdom; I am guiding you on straight paths. †
12 When you walk, your steps will not be hindered; †
when you run, you will not stumble. †
13 Hold on to instruction; don't let go. †
Guard it, for it is your life.
14 Keep off the path of the wicked; †
don't proceed on the way of evil ones.
15 Avoid it; don't travel on it.
Turn away from it, and pass it by.
16 For they can't sleep unless they have done what is evil;
they are robbed of sleep
unless they make someone stumble. †
17 They eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.
18 The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, †
shining brighter and brighter until midday.
19 But the way of the wicked is like the darkest gloom; †
they don't know what makes them stumble. †

THE STRAIGHT PATH

20 My son, pay attention to my words; listen closely to my sayings. †
21 Don't lose sight of them; †
keep them within your heart.
22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to one's whole body.
23 Guard your heart above all else, †
for it is the source of life. †
24 Don't let your mouth speak dishonestly, †
and don't let your lips talk deviously.
25 Let your eyes look forward; fix your gaze † straight ahead. †
26 Carefully consider the path † for your feet, †

and all your ways will be established.

27 Don't turn to the right or to the left; †
keep your feet away from evil.

4:23 Or *heart with all diligence* **4:25** Lit *eyelids* **4:26** Or *Clear a path*
4:1 Ps 34:11; Pr 1:8 **4:2** Jb 11:4 **4:4** Pr 3:1-2; 6:20-23; 7:1-2 **4:5** Pr 16:16 **4:6** 2Th 2:10 **4:7** Pr 16:16 **4:8** 1Sm 2:30 **4:9** Pr 1:9; 16:31 **4:10** Pr 2:1 **4:10** Pr 3:2 **4:11** 1Sm 12:23 **4:12** Jb 18:7; Ps 18:36 **4:12** Pr 3:23 **4:13** Pr 3:18 **4:14** Ps 1:1; Pr 1:15 **4:16** Ps 36:4; Mc 2:1 **4:18** 2Sm 23:4 **4:19** Is 59:9-10; Jr 23:12; Jn 12:35 **4:19** Pr 24:16; Jn 11:10 **4:20** Pr 5:1 **4:21** Pr 3:21 **4:23** Mt 15:19; Mk 7:18-23 **4:24** Pr 6:12 **4:25** Heb 12:2 **4:26** Pr 5:6,21; Heb 12:13 **4:27** Dt 5:32-33; 28:13-14; Jos 1:7; 23:6; 1Kg 15:5

4:6-9 Wisdom is personified as a woman again (see 1:20-33; 3:13-18). **She** is to be loved, cherished, and embraced, so that she in turn will **watch**, **guard**, **exalt**, and **honor.**

4:14-19 This warning against **the path of the wicked** and commendation of **the path of the righteous** strongly resembles Psalm 1 (see v. 6).

4:23 The importance of the **heart** (and hence its need for protection) is echoed repeatedly in Proverbs (e.g., 6:25; 7:3,25; 12:25; 13:12; 14:10,13; 15:13,15).

4:27 The instruction not to **turn to the right or to the left** refers back to "the way of wisdom" in v. 11. Similar language is used elsewhere of obedience to Scripture (see Dt 17:20; 28:14; Jos 1:7) and of situational guidance from priests (Dt 17:11) or from God (Is 30:21).

AVOID SEDUCTION

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom; listen closely †
to my understanding †
2 so that you may maintain discretion and your lips safeguard knowledge. †
3 Though the lips of the forbidden woman drip honey and her words are †
smoother than oil, 4 in the end she's as bitter as wormwood †
and as sharp as a double-edged sword. †
5 Her feet go down to death; her steps head straight for Sheol. †
6 She doesn't consider the path of life; she doesn't know that her ways
are unstable.

7 So now, sons, listen to me, and don't turn away from the words
from my mouth. †
8 Keep your way far from her.
Don't go near the door of her house. †

9 Otherwise, you will give up your vitality to others and your years
to someone cruel;
10 strangers will drain your resources, and your hard-earned pay will end up
in a foreigner's house.
11 At the end of your life, you will lament when your physical body
has been consumed, 12 and you will say, "How I hated discipline, and how
my heart despised correction. †
13 I didn't obey my teachers or listen closely † to my instructors.
14 I am on the verge of complete ruin before the entire community."

ENJOY MARRIAGE

15 Drink water from your own cistern, water flowing from your own well. †
16 Should your springs flow in the streets, streams in the public squares? †
17 They should be for you alone and not for you to share with strangers.
18 Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. †
19 A loving deer, a graceful doe † — let her breasts always satisfy you; †
be lost in her love forever.
20 Why, my son, would you lose yourself with a forbidden woman
or embrace a wayward woman? †
21 For a man's ways are before the LORD's eyes, †
and he considers all his paths. †
22 A wicked man's iniquities will trap him; †
he will become tangled in the ropes of his own sin. †
23 He will die because there is no discipline, †
and be lost because of his great stupidity.

5:1 Lit *wisdom; stretch out your ear* **5:3** Lit *her palate is* **5:13** Lit *or turn my ear* **5:19** Or *graceful mountain goat*
5:1 Pr 4:20; 22:17 **5:2** Mal 2:7 **5:4** Pr 5:8-11; 6:32-33; Ec 7:26 **5:4** Ps 55:21; 57:4 **5:5** Pr 7:27; 9:18 **5:7** Pr 7:24 **5:8** Pr 2:18; 7:8; 9:14 **5:12** Ps 107:11; Pr 1:7,28-31; 12:1; 13:18 **5:15** Sg 4:12,15 **5:16** Pr 7:12 **5:18** Ec 9:9; Mal 2:14 **5:19** Sg 4:5 **5:20** Pr 2:16 **5:21** Jb 14:16; Ps 119:168; Hs 7:2; Heb 4:13 **5:21** Pr 4:25-26 **5:22** Nm 32:23; Ps 7:15-16 **5:22** Pr 11:6 **5:23** Jb 4:21

5:3-14 The "son" being addressed (v. 1) is again warned against the **forbidden woman** (see 2:16-19; 7:6-

27). She is a smooth talker (v. 3; 6:24), but going to her will result in bitterness and **death** (vv. 4-5). The speaker's **sons** are to stay far away from her (vv. 7-8) so that they might steer clear of utter ruin (vv. 9-14).

5:15-20 Instead of going after an adulteress, the "son" (see v. 1) is instructed to enjoy sexual relations with his own **wife** (v. 18; see also 2:17; Mal 2:14-15; see "Purpose and Parameters of Sexual Relations," *p. 1397*). The personification of wisdom as a woman is also related to this through the earlier exhortation to "embrace her" (see the note on 4:6-9) rather than losing himself with a stranger (v. 20).

FINANCIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

6 My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor †
or entered into an agreement with † a stranger, †
2 you have been snared by the words of your mouth trapped by the words from your mouth.
3 Do this, then, my son, and free yourself, for you have put yourself in your neighbor's power: Go, humble yourself, and plead with your neighbor.
4 Don't give sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids. †
5 Escape like a gazelle from a hunter, †
like a bird from a hunter's trap. † †

LAZINESS

6 Go to the ant, † you slacker! †
Observe its ways and become wise.
7 Without leader, administrator, or ruler, 8 it prepares its provisions in summer;
it gathers its food during harvest. †
9 How long will you stay in bed, you slacker?
When will you get up from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest,
11 and your poverty will come like a robber, your need, like a bandit. †

THE MALICIOUS MAN

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF

RECREATION

In the church, activities like play, sport, leisure, and recreation have often been dismissed as meaningless, worldly, and contrary to sober Christian living. On the other hand, Christians can be pulled into the idolatry of recreation as an end in itself. Many live for the weekend when we should be living for eternity. A biblical understanding of recreation is that it is given by God for his glory and our good; such an understanding will enable play to be a conduit of glorifying God.

To understand recreation in the Bible, we also need to appreciate related concepts such as laughter, Sabbath, feasts, festivals, childlikeness, dancing, leaping, leisure, sport, and music. These occur most often when God's presence, grace, and glory are most evident to his covenant people.

DEFINING RECREATION

Recreation is a non-compulsory, non-utilitarian activity, often filled with creative spontaneity, which gives perspective, diversion, and rest from the necessary work of daily life. In light of God's sovereignty and faithful love, recreation should demonstrate and encourage God-centered hope, delight, gratitude, and celebration. In light of the fallen and cursed state of the world, recreation gives us a glimpse of the Sabbath rest Christ brings. Gospel-grounded recreation reminds us that God is always working, and because of that, his children can rest.

In order to bring the restorative benefits of recreation, the practical results of it must necessarily fade to an almost subconscious level, lest the restfulness of recreation be lost. Living with faith and hope leads to the kind of joyful discipleship that should instinctively lead to play, naps, games, and walks on the beach. But understanding the theological motive of recreation will increase the joy and freedom of it.

Among the thorns and thistles east of Eden, recreation provides needed perspective, diversion, and rest. Like the arts, recreation can afford "counter-environments" (to use a term from Marshall McLuhan) that provide freedom from dwelling on the daily difficulties of life in a fallen world. Recreation should not serve to anesthetize the Christian to life's burdens, preventing him from engaging them wholeheartedly; rather, it should provide a needed hopeful Sabbath from their relentless presence. As all other areas of our lives, recreation should fall under the sanctifying effects of the Holy Spirit's work.

For a Christian, recreation should never have a trivializing impact on life. Recreation should not be synonymous with wasting time; it should give testimony to the goodness of God. Without serious hard work preceding it, recreation loses its real power to be an interlude into the routine of making ends meet. If recreation serves as merely a diversion rather than giving hopeful perspective, it can actually prevent serious transformative engagement with a world badly in need of redemption. Those who most recognize the difficulty of life in a fallen world are able to rest, play, and laugh best. These moments of emancipation can remind the faithful of the ultimate liberation coming when Jesus makes all things new (Rv 21:5).

CREATION

Recreation has its origin in the Creator himself. The overwhelming artistic variety we see in creation indicates that there is not only an intelligent Designer behind it but also a creative, playful, extravagant Artist. The sheer variety of tastes, colors, sounds, textures, and shapes in creation indicate anything but pure utilitarian motivation by its Creator. God is both skillful Architect and creative Artist. God does nothing based on his own need (Ac 17:24-25; Ps 50:9-12), so creation, like recreation, is meaningful but not necessary. In creating and sustaining everything, and in accomplishing redemption, God's pleasure and glory are his primary motives (Is 43:7; Mt 10:26; Lk 11:21; Eph 1:5,9,11-12). Creation is a source of pleasure and delight for those who delight in the Creator and in the work of his hands.

SABBATH

When creation was exactly as God intended, he rested (Gn 2:2-3). His rest was a demonstration of the goodness and completeness of his work. As a reminder of this, Sabbath-keeping became a central command for God's people (Ex 20:11). Keeping the Sabbath required God's people to disengage from providing for themselves and to remember the ultimate source of their daily bread. The Creator and Sustainer built a mandatory rest into each week so his people would put their efforts for survival into perspective. Rest in God's sufficiency and power attacks an anthropocentric view of life and demands we surrender any vestige of self-sufficiency (cp. Is 41:13-14; Mt 6:25-33; Jms 4:13-17). As Fred Sanders says in his essay, "A Play Ethic: Play Studies in Psychology and Theology,"

> Productive work is an intoxicating thing. The temptation to base one's identity and esteem on what one produces is all but irresistible . . . The command to rest and remember God is a challenge to human productivity. It arrests and relativizes even the most demanding and consuming work, for anything which can be interrupted is not ultimate in importance. Self-important people cannot tolerate this undercutting of their significance.

Sabbath-keeping attacks any hint of human-centeredness or self-sufficiency. Lack of recreation, rest, and play can be a sign of profound hubris.

None of this is intended to undercut human effort, attentiveness, passion, diligence, or responsibility. Nevertheless, human activity must always be subservient to the overarching plan and power of God. While best-selling self-help books tell us that the universe will rearrange itself to give us whatever we want if we exercise the power of positive thinking, God condemns this blasphemous lie and frees us from the impossible role of playing God. He calls us to the freedom and Sabbath rest that lead to childlike dependence, trust, and recreation.

THE HOPE OF THE GOSPEL

The saving work of Christ leads to rest and recreation, for it injects freedom and healing to our broken world. In Christ we see that the human predicament is fixable. The Christian worldview recognizes the relentless difficulty of life in our dysfunctional world, but also embraces the truth that it is being redeemed by the One who created it (Rm 8:18-39). By Christ's life, death, and resurrection, we have hope in the midst of our brokenness. When it is an end in itself, recreation can become a frivolous idol that keeps us from dealing with the human predicament. When grounded in the hope of the gospel, however, recreation can become one of life's greatest and most encouraging pleasures.

RECREATION AND THE COMING KINGDOM

The most stirring images of recreation in the Bible occur in attempts to express the joy and freedom experienced in the coming kingdom of God. The most vivid of these images is Zechariah 8:5: "The streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in them" (cp. Is 11:8-9; Jr 30:18-19; 31:4,13-14). Fearless childlike play, no longer inhibited by the effects of sin and the curse, is a key metaphor for Christ's kingdom.

HEAVEN: THE RECREATION OF ETERNITY

Christian recreation is the response of those who know God as their Father and trust that he has overcome the world and loves to abundantly share the spoils of this victory with his children. God's saving power leads to great joy among God's people (Ps 126:2). This joy is possible even when life is brutal. Luke 6:21 gets at this idea: "Blessed are you who are now hungry, because you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh." Empty stomachs and tears are neither the whole story nor its end. God will bring ultimate healing one day.

CONCLUSION

Recreation, like everything else, should be done for the glory of God (1Co 10:31; Col 3:17). When we recreate as hopeful, forgiven children of the King of kings, it glorifies God and gives a glimpse of the final

rest. Failure to appreciate recreation in the Christian life could easily turn piety into sanctimony, reverence into rigidity, and sanctification into stuffiness. We must take God, but never ourselves, seriously.

God invites us to approach him as his free, forgiven, secure children. We are to approach our holy God with healthy fear and hearts broken by our broken world. But God's people are also called to rejoice, sing, dance, play, and laugh because we know that the Owner of all things is working out his perfect plan. It's a masterful narrative that ends with a wedding banquet, perfect resolution, and rest. This sure hope in God's sovereign power and loving-kindness enables us to rest and play with reckless abandon, even before the great wedding banquet begins.

K. ERIK THOENNES

12 A worthless person, † a wicked man goes around speaking dishonestly, †
13 winking † his eyes, signaling with his feet, and gesturing with his fingers.
14 He always plots evil † with perversity in his heart; he stirs up trouble. †
15 Therefore calamity will strike him suddenly; he will be shattered instantly, beyond recovery. †

WHAT THE LORD HATES

16 The LORD hates six things; in fact, seven are detestable to him:
17 arrogant eyes, † a lying tongue, †
hands that shed innocent blood, †
18 a heart that plots wicked schemes, †
feet eager to run to evil, †
19 a lying witness who gives false testimony, †
and one who stirs up trouble among brothers. †

WARNING AGAINST ADULTERY

20 My son, keep your father's command, and don't reject your mother's teaching. †
21 Always bind them to your heart; tie them around your neck. †
22 When you walk here and there, they will guide you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; when you wake up, they will talk to you.
23 For a command is a lamp, teaching is a light, †
and corrective discipline is the way to life. †

24 They will protect you from an evil woman, †
from the flattering † tongue of a wayward woman. †
25 Don't lust in your heart for her beauty †
or let her captivate you with her eyelashes. †
26 For a prostitute's fee is only a loaf of bread, †
but the wife of another man † goes after a precious life. †
27 Can a man embrace fire and his clothes not be burned?
28 Can a man walk on burning coals without scorching his feet?
29 So it is with the one who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished. †
30 People don't despise the thief if he steals to satisfy himself when he is hungry. †
31 Still, if caught, he must pay seven times as much; †
he must give up all the wealth in his house.
32 The one who commits adultery † lacks sense; whoever does so destroys himself. †
33 He will get a beating † and dishonor, and his disgrace will never be removed.
34 For jealousy enrages a husband, †
and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
35 He will not be appeased by anything or be persuaded by lavish bribes.

6:1 Or *friend* **6:1** Lit *or slapped hands for* **6:5** Lit *hand* **6:5** Lit *hand* **6:24** LXX reads *from a married woman* **6:24** Lit *smooth* **6:26** Or *On account of a prostitute, one is left with only a loaf of bread* **6:26** Lit *but a wife of a man* **6:32** Lit *commits adultery with a woman* **6:33** Or *plague*
6:1 Pr 11:15; 17:18; 20:16; 22:26; 27:13 **6:4** Ps 132:4 **6:5** Ps 91:3; 124:7 **6:6** Pr 30:24-25 **6:6** Pr 10:26; 13:4; 20:4; 26:16 **6:8** Pr 10:5; 30:25 **6:10-11** Pr 20:13; 24:33-34; 26:14; Ec 4:5 **6:12** 1Sm 25:25; Pr 16:27; 19:28 **6:12** Pr 4:24 **6:13** Ps 35:19; Pr 10:10; 16:30 **6:14** Pr 3:29; Mc 2:1 **6:14** Pr 6:19; 16:27-28; 28:25 **6:15** 2Ch 36:16; Pr 24:22; 29:1; Is 30:13-14; Jr 19:11 **6:17** Ps 18:27; Pr 21:4; 30:13 **6:17** Ps 31:18; 120:2; Pr 12:22; 17:7 **6:17** Dt 19:10; Pr 1:16; Is 1:15; 59:7 **6:18** Gn 6:5 **6:18** Pr 1:16 **6:19** Ex 20:16; Ps 27:12; Pr 12:17; 14:5,25 **6:19** Pr 6:14; 16:27-28; 28:25 **6:20** Pr 1:8; 31:1 **6:21** Pr 1:9; 3:3; 7:3 **6:23** Ps 119:105 **6:23** Pr 3:1-2; 4:4; 7:2; 19:16 **6:24** Pr 7:5 **6:25** Mt 5:28 **6:25** Sg 4:9 **6:26** Pr 2:18-19; 7:21-23,27; 23:27-28; Ezk 13:18 **6:29** Pr 16:5 **6:30** Jr 49:9; Ob 5 **6:31** Ex 22:1-4; Ps 79:12 **6:32** Pr 7:22-23 **6:34** Pr 27:4; Sg 8:6

6:1-19 Before returning to warnings against the adulteress, the speaker addresses his **son** concerning cautiousness in making agreements and promises to others (vv. 1-5), laziness (vv. 6-11), wicked schemers (vv. 12-15), and several things that God **hates** (vv. 16-19).

6:20 Heeding parental instruction is again commended to the **son** (see the notes on 1:8-10; 2:1; "Christian

Perspectives on Children's Education," *p. 225*).

6:22-23 The comparison of this wise instruction to a **lamp** and a **light** for a path parallels the description of Scripture found in Psalms 119:105 (see also the notes on 3:3; 4:27).

6:24 The adulteress is again characterized as a smooth talker (see 5:3; 7:5,14-21; 22:14).

6:27-35 Adultery is not only a sin (Ex 20:14), but it is foolishness (v. 32; 5:23). Negative consequences for it are as certain as they are for a man who would **embrace fire** or **walk on burning coals** (vv. 27-28; see also 5:9-14; 7:22-27). Such consequences include **disgrace** and the rage of the offended husband (vv. 33-35).

7 My son, obey my words, and treasure my commands. †
2 Keep my commands and live, †
and guard my instructions
as you would the pupil of your eye. †
3 Tie them to your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart. †
4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," †
and call understanding your relative.
5 She will keep you from a forbidden woman, a wayward woman with her flattering talk. †

A STORY OF SEDUCTION

6 At the window of my house I looked through my lattice. †
7 I saw among the inexperienced, †
I noticed among the youths,
a young man lacking sense.
8 Crossing the street near her corner, he strolled down the road to her house
9 at twilight, in the evening, in the dark of the night. †
10 A woman came to meet him dressed like a prostitute, †
having a hidden agenda. †
11 She is loud and defiant; †
her feet do not stay at home. †
12 Now in the street, now in the squares, †
she lurks at every corner. †

13 She grabs him and kisses him; she brazenly says † to him, 14 “I’ve made
fellowship offerings; today I’ve fulfilled my vows. †
15 So I came out to meet you, to search for you, and I’ve found you.
16 I’ve spread coverings on my bed † — richly colored linen from Egypt. †
17 I’ve perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. †
18 Come, let’s drink deeply of lovemaking until morning. †
Let’s feast on each other’s love!
19 My husband isn’t home; he went on a long journey.
20 He took a bag of silver with him and will come home at the time
of the full moon.”
21 She seduces him with her persistent pleading; she lures
with her flattering † talk.
22 He follows her impulsively like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer bounding toward a trap †
23 until an arrow pierces its † liver, †
like a bird darting into a snare † — he doesn’t know it will cost him his life.

24 Now, sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words from my mouth.
25 Don’t let your heart turn aside to her ways; don’t stray onto her paths. †
26 For she has brought many down to death; her victims are countless. †
27 Her house is the road to Sheol, descending to the chambers of death. †

7:7 Or *simple*, or *gullible*, or *naive* **7:10** Or *prostitute with a guarded heart* **7:13** Lit *she makes her face strong and says* **7:21** Lit *smooth* **7:22** Text emended; MT reads *like a shackle to the discipline of a fool* ; Hb obscure **7:23** Or *his* **7:26** Or *and powerful men are all her victims*
7:1 Pr 2:1 **7:2** Pr 3:1-2; 4:4; 6:23; 19:16 **7:2** Dt 32:10; Ps 17:8; Zch 2:8 **7:3** Dt 11:18; Pr 3:3; 6:21 **7:4** Sg 4:9 **7:5** Pr 5:3,20; 6:24; 7:21 **7:6** Jdg 5:28; Sg 2:9 **7:9** Jb 24:15 **7:10** Gn 38:14-15 **7:11** Pr 9:13 **7:11** 1Tm 5:13 **7:12** Pr 5:16; 9:14 **7:12** Pr 23:28 **7:14** Lv 7:11-18; Dt 23:18; Ps 56:12 **7:16** Pr 31:22 **7:16** Ezk 27:7 **7:17** Ex 30:23; Ps 45:8 **7:18** Sg 5:1 **7:21-23** Pr 2:16-19; 5:3-6; 23:27-28 **7:23** Ec 9:12 **7:25** Pr 5:8 **7:27** Pr 2:18; 5:5; 9:18; 1Co 6:9; Rv 22:15

7:6-9 The vivid scene that begins to unfold here depicts the process of temptation and enticement by an adulteress. The **young man lacking sense** (v. 7) who walks by her house **in the evening** (vv. 8-9) serves as a negative example (see vv. 24-27).

7:10 As in 6:25, the adulteress uses her attractive appearance to seduce. Her **hidden agenda** is dangerous because she is not forthcoming about her motives or intentions.

7:14-20 The adulteress’ mention of **fellowship offerings** may hint that she has food at home, since

worshipers kept a portion of the offering. She entices the young man by appealing to his senses: sight (v. 16), smell (v. 17). and then, metaphorically, taste (v. 18). She also attempts to make him feel special, as though she had come to **meet** and **search** (v. 15) specifically for him—a brazen lie (see v. 12).

7:24-27 Because the adulteress has **brought many down to death** (v. 26; 2:18-19), the speaker's **sons** are again warned to stay away from her (vv. 24-25; 5:8).

WISDOM'S APPEAL

8 Doesn't wisdom † call out?
Doesn't understanding make her voice heard?
2 At the heights overlooking the road, at the crossroads, she takes her stand.
3 Beside the gates † leading into the city, at the main entrance, she cries out:
4 "People, I call out to you; my cry is to the children of Adam.
5 Learn to be shrewd, you who are inexperienced; develop common sense, you who are foolish.
6 Listen, for I speak of noble things, and what my lips say is right.
7 For my mouth tells the truth, †
and wickedness is detestable to my lips.
8 All the words from my mouth are righteous; none of them are deceptive or perverse. †
9 All of them are clear to the perceptive, †
and right to those who discover knowledge.
10 Accept my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold. †
11 For wisdom is better than jewels, †
and nothing desirable can equal it. †
12 I, wisdom, share a home with shrewdness and have knowledge and discretion. †
13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil. †
I hate arrogant pride, evil conduct,
and perverse speech.
14 I possess good advice and sound wisdom; †
I have understanding and strength. †
15 It is by me that kings reign †

and rulers enact just law;
16 by me, princes lead, as do nobles and all righteous judges. †
17 I love those who love me, †
and those who search for me find me. †
18 With me are riches and honor, †
lasting wealth and righteousness. †
19 My fruit is better than solid gold, and my harvest than pure silver. †
20 I walk in the ways of righteousness, along the paths of justice,
21 giving wealth as an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries.

22 "The LORD acquired † me at the beginning of his creation, †
before his works of long ago. †
23 I was formed † before ancient times, from the beginning, before the earth began. †
24 I was born when there were no watery depths †
and no springs filled with water.
25 Before the mountains were established, prior to the hills, † I was given birth
— 26 before he made the land, the fields, or the first soil on earth.
27 I was there when he established the heavens, †
when he laid out the horizon on the surface of the ocean, †
28 when he placed the skies above, when the fountains of the ocean gushed out,
29 when he set a limit for the sea so that the waters would not violate his command, †
when he laid out the foundations of the earth. †
30 I was a skilled craftsman † beside him. †
I was his † delight every day, always rejoicing before him.
31 I was rejoicing in his inhabited world, †
delighting in the children of Adam. †

32 "And now, sons, listen to me; those who keep my ways are happy. †

33 Listen to instruction and be wise; †
don't ignore it.
34 Anyone who listens to me is happy, †
watching at my doors every day,
waiting by the posts of my doorway.
35 For the one who finds me finds life †
and obtains favor from the LORD, †
36 but the one who misses me † harms himself; †
all who hate me love death." †

8:14 Or *resourcefulness* **8:16** Some Hb mss, LXX read *nobles who judge the earth* **8:22** Or *possessed*, or *made* **8:22** Lit *way* **8:23** Or *consecrated* **8:30** Or *a confidant*, or *a child*, or *was constantly* **8:30** LXX; MT omits *his* **8:36** Or *who sins against me*
8:1-3 Pr 1:20-21; 9:3,13-15 **8:3** Jb 29:7 **8:7** Ps 37:30 **8:8** Dt 32:5; Pr 2:15; Php 2:15 **8:9** Pr 14:6 **8:10** Pr 3:14-15; 8:19; 16:16 **8:11** Jb 28:12-19 **8:11** Pr 3:15; 20:15 **8:12** Pr 1:4 **8:13** Pr 16:6 **8:14** Ec 7:19 **8:15** 2Ch 1:10; Dn 2:21; Rm 13:1 **8:17** 1Sm 2:30; Jn 14:21 **8:17** Pr 1:28; 2:4-5; Jms 1:5 **8:18** Pr 3:16 **8:18** Ps 112:3; Mt 6:33 **8:19** Jb 28:15; Pr 3:14; 8:10; 16:16 **8:22** Gn 1:1; Jb 28:26-28; Ps 104:24 **8:23** Jn 1:1-3; 17:5 **8:24** Gn 1:2; Pr 3:20 **8:25** Ps 90:2 **8:27** Pr 3:19 **8:27** Jb 26:10 **8:29** Jb 38:8-11; Ps 104:9 **8:29** Jb 38:4-5; Ps 104:5 **8:30** Jb 28:20-27; 38–39; Pr 3:19-20; Jr 10:12; 51:15; Zch 13:7; Jn 1:2-3 **8:31** Jb 38:4-7 **8:31** Heb 2:6-8 **8:32** Ps 119:1-2; 128:1; Lk 11:28 **8:33** Pr 4:1 **8:34** Pr 3:13 **8:35** Pr 4:4,22; 7:2; 9:11; 12:28; Jn 17:3 **8:35** Pr 3:4; 12:2; 13:13; 18:22 **8:36** Pr 15:32 **8:36** Pr 11:19; 21:6

8:1-10 Rather than listening to the enticements of an adulteress (2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 7:5,14-21) or of sinners generally (1:10-16; 2:12), readers are urged to listen to **wisdom**, which is again personified as a woman (1:20-33; 3:13-18; 4:6-9; 9:1-9). She offers her help to all **the children of Adam** (v. 4), and with her assistance even the **inexperienced** and **foolish** can acquire understanding (v. 5). Similarly, the wise fatherly instruction of the speaker has been repeatedly commended (1:8; 2:1; 3:1; 4:1,10,20; 5:1,7; 6:20; 7:1,24).

8:13-16 One important aspect of "the fear of the LORD" (and wisdom; see 1:7) **is to hate evil.** This is reflected in verses 7 (see also 16:6; Jb 1:1,8; 2:3; Ps 34:11-14). In connection with this, wisdom and **just** government are closely related (vv. 15-16).

8:17 Wisdom is not acquired easily or by accident but must be loved and sought (see also 2:3-5; 3:18).

8:22-31 The Lord's **creation** of the universe with his wisdom (v. 30) had been affirmed in 3:19-20, and personified wisdom also asserts her authority related to her presence during creation. Wisdom is not a passing fad but has existed **from the beginning** (v. 23). The Lord acted with wisdom and so should the reader. See "Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview," *p. 846*.

WISDOM VERSUS FOOLISHNESS

9 Wisdom has built her house; †
she has carved out her seven pillars.

2 She has prepared her meat; † she has mixed her wine; †
she has also set her table. †
3 She has sent out her female servants; †
she calls out from the highest points of the city: †
4 “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here! ”
To the one who lacks sense, † she says, 5 “Come, eat my bread, †
and drink the wine I have mixed.
6 Leave inexperience behind, and you will live; pursue the way of understanding.
7 The one who corrects a mocker will bring abuse on himself;
the one who rebukes the wicked will get hurt. †
8 Don’t rebuke a mocker, or he will hate you; †
rebuke the wise, and he will love you. †
9 Instruct the wise, and he will be wiser still; teach the righteous, and he will learn more. †

10 “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, †
and the knowledge of the Holy One † is understanding.
11 For by me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.
12 If you are wise, you are wise for your own benefit; †
if you mock, you alone will bear the consequences.”

13 Folly is a rowdy woman; †
she is gullible and knows nothing. †
14 She sits by the doorway of her house, on a seat at the highest point of the city,
15 calling to those who pass by, who go straight ahead on their paths: †
16 “Whoever is inexperienced, enter here! ”
To the one who lacks sense, she says,
17 “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten secretly is tasty! ” †
18 But he doesn’t know that the departed spirits are there, †
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol. †

9:7 Lit *man: his blemish*
9:1 Pr 14:1; Eph 2:20-22; 1Pt 2:5 **9:2** Mt 22:4 **9:2** Sg 8:2 **9:2** Lk 14:17 **9:3** Ps 68:11; Mt 22:3 **9:3** Pr 8:2-3; 9:14-15; Mt 10:27 **9:4** Pr 6:32 **9:5** Is 55:1; Jn 6:27,51 **9:8** Pr 15:12; Mt 7:6 **9:8** Ps 141:5 **9:9** Pr 1:5; 16:21,23 **9:10** Jb 28:28; Ps 111:10; Pr 1:7; 15:33 **9:10** Pr 30:3; Hs 11:12; Rv 16:5 **9:12** Jb 22:2 **9:13** Pr 7:11 **9:13** Pr 5:6 **9:14-15** Pr 7:11-12; 9:3-4 **9:17** Pr 20:17 **9:18** Pr 2:18; 21:16 **9:18** Pr 5:5; 7:27

9:1-9 Wisdom again is personified as a woman who calls to the general populace to learn from her (see 1:20-33), which is depicted as going to **her house** and partaking of her feast (vv. 1-6).

9:10 As the first section of Proverbs is about to end (Pr 1–9), a slight variation of the theme verse of Proverbs (see the note on 1:7) is strategically repeated: **the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.** The way of wisdom is the way to life and blessing (vv. 11-12; see 3:16-18; 4:22; 8:18-21,34-35).

9:13-18 Like wisdom (vv. 1-6), **Folly**—also personified as a woman—calls out to those passing by, especially the **inexperienced** and **the one who lacks sense** (vv. 4,16), to come to **her house** to dine. Although she promises pleasure, her meal is one partaken in foolishness and sin (v. 17). Those who go to her go to their deaths (v. 18).

A COLLECTION OF SOLOMON'S PROVERBS

10 Solomon's proverbs: †

A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son, heartache to his mother. †

2 Ill-gotten gains do not profit anyone, but righteousness rescues from death. †

3 The LORD will not let the righteous go hungry, †
but he denies the wicked what they crave. †

4 Idle hands make one poor, but diligent hands bring riches. †

5 The son who gathers during summer is prudent; the son who sleeps during harvest is disgraceful. †

6 Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. †

7 The remembrance of the righteous is a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot. †

8 A wise heart accepts commands, †

but foolish lips will be destroyed.

9 The one who lives with integrity lives securely, †
but whoever perverts his ways will be found out. †

10 A sly wink of the eye † causes grief, and foolish lips will be destroyed.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, †
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence. †

12 Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers all offenses. †

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning, but a rod is for the back of the one who lacks sense. †

14 The wise store up knowledge, but the mouth of the fool hastens destruction. †

15 The wealth of the rich is his fortified city; †
the poverty of the poor is their destruction.

16 The reward of the righteous is life; the wages of the wicked is punishment. †

17 The one who follows instruction is on the path to life, but the one who rejects correction goes astray. †

18 The one who conceals hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool. †

19 When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is prudent. †

20 The tongue of the righteous is pure silver; the heart of the wicked is of little value. †

21 The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of sense. †

22 The LORD's blessing enriches, †
and he adds no painful effort to it. † †

23 As shameful conduct is pleasure for a fool, †
so wisdom is for a person of understanding.

24 What the wicked dreads will come to him, †
but what the righteous desire will be given to them. †

25 When the whirlwind passes, the wicked are no more, †
but the righteous are secure forever. †

26 Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, †
so the slacker is to the one who sends him on an errand.

27 The fear of the LORD prolongs life, † †
but the years of the wicked are cut short. †

28 The hope of the righteous is joy, †
but the expectation of the wicked will perish. †

29 The way of the LORD is a stronghold for the honorable, but destruction awaits the malicious. †

30 The righteous will never be shaken, but the wicked will not remain on the earth. †

31 The mouth of the righteous produces wisdom, †
but a perverse tongue will be cut out. †

32 The lips of the righteous know what is appropriate, †
but the mouth of the wicked, only what is perverse. †

10:22 Or *and painful effort adds nothing to it* **10:27** Lit *Lord adds to days*
10:1 Pr 1:1 **10:1** Pr 15:20; 17:25; 23:24-25; 29:3,15 **10:2** Pr 11:4,18; 12:28; 21:6; Ezk 7:19; Lk 12:19-20
10:3 Ps 37:25; Mt 6:33 **10:3** Ps 112:10 **10:4** Pr 12:24,27; 13:4,11; 19:15; 21:5 **10:5** Pr 6:6-11; 30:25 **10:6**

Pr 10:11 **10:7** Ps 9:5-6; 112:6 **10:8** Mt 7:24 **10:9** Ps 23:4; Pr 2:7; 3:23; 19:1; 20:7; 28:6,18; Is 33:15-16 **10:9** Pr 26:26; Mt 10:26; 1Tm 5:25 **10:10** Ps 35:19; Pr 6:13; 16:30 **10:11** Ps 37:30; Pr 13:14; 14:27; 16:22 **10:11** Pr 10:6 **10:12** Pr 17:9; Jms 5:20; 1Pt 4:8 **10:13** Pr 19:29; 26:3 **10:14** Pr 10:8; 12:13; 13:3; 18:7 **10:15** Ps 52:7; Pr 18:11 **10:16** Pr 11:19 **10:17** Pr 5:12-13,22-23; 6:23; 13:13-14 **10:18** Pr 11:13 **10:19** Pr 17:27-28; Jms 1:19; 3:2 **10:20** Pr 8:19; 10:32 **10:21** Hs 4:6 **10:22** Gn 24:35; 26:12; Dt 8:18; Jms 1:17 **10:22** Mt 6:31-32 **10:23** Pr 2:14; 15:21 **10:24** Pr 1:26-27; Is 66:4; Heb 10:27 **10:24** Ps 37:4; 145:19; Pr 11:23; Mt 5:6; 1Jn 5:14-15 **10:25** Jb 21:18; Is 29:5-7 **10:25** Ps 15:5; Pr 10:30; 12:3,7; Mt 7:24-27 **10:26** Pr 26:6 **10:27** Pr 3:2 **10:27** Jb 15:32-33; Pr 14:26-27; 15:16; 19:23 **10:28** Pr 11:23; 23:18; Jr 29:11 **10:28** Jb 8:13; 14:9; Pr 11:7; Ezk 37:11 **10:29** Pr 13:6; 21:15 **10:30** Ps 21:7; 37:29; 125:1; Pr 2:21-22; 12:3 **10:31** Ps 37:30 **10:31** Ps 37:38; 120:2-4 **10:32** Ec 10:12 **10:32** Pr 2:12; 10:20; 15:28

10:1 While Proverbs 1–9 contains extended discourses about the nature of wisdom and the need to pursue it, Proverbs 10–29 continues with individual aphorisms or wise statements. These pithy sayings cover a range of topics and are given in the context of the preceding chapters, especially their emphasis on the fear of God (see the notes on 1:7; 9:10). The section begins with a collection of **Solomon's proverbs** (see also 22:17; 24:23; 25:1). Just as the previous section had begun with a reference to parents (1:8-9), so it is here. This verse describes parents' **joy** over a **wise son** and **heartache** over a **foolish** one (see also the note on 17:21).

10:4-5 These two proverbs commend diligence and planning, while warning against idleness and laziness (see also 6:6-11).

10:18-21 These four consecutive proverbs concern speech. They warn against **lying**, **slander**, and giving free rein to the tongue (vv. 18-19) while also expressing the potential positive effects of righteous speech (vv. 20-21). A common theme in Wisdom literature is that it is not only important to do the right thing, but to do the right thing at the right time. Thus, speech or silence may be the best action depending on the circumstances.

10:25 Like verses 9,17,27, this proverb promises a hopeful future for **the righteous**, who are described as being **secure forever** (see also v. 30; note on 2:21-22).

11 Dishonest scales are detestable to the LORD, †
but an accurate weight is his delight. †

2 When arrogance comes, disgrace follows, but with humility comes wisdom. †

3 The integrity of the upright guides them, †
but the perversity of the treacherous destroys them. †

4 Wealth is not profitable on a day of wrath, but righteousness rescues from death. †

5 The righteousness of the blameless clears his path, but the wicked person will fall because of his wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright rescues them, but the treacherous are trapped
by their own desires. †

7 When the wicked person dies, his expectation comes to nothing,
and hope placed in wealth † † vanishes. †

8 The righteous one is rescued from trouble; in his place, the wicked one
goes in. †

9 With his mouth the ungodly destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge
the righteous are rescued.

10 When the righteous thrive, a city rejoices; †
when the wicked die, there is joyful shouting.

11 A city is built up by the blessing of the upright, †
but it is torn down by the mouth of the wicked. †

12 Whoever shows contempt for his neighbor lacks sense, but a person
with understanding keeps silent. †

13 A gossip goes around revealing a secret, but a trustworthy person keeps
a confidence. †

14 Without guidance, a people will fall, but with many counselors
there is deliverance. †

15 If someone puts up security for a stranger, he will suffer for it, †
but the one who hates such agreements is protected.

16 A gracious woman gains honor, but violent † people gain only riches.

17 A kind man benefits himself, †
but a cruel person brings ruin on himself. †

18 The wicked person earns an empty wage, but the one
who sows righteousness, a true reward. †

19 Genuine righteousness leads to life, †
but pursuing evil leads to death. †

20 Those with twisted minds are detestable to the LORD, but those with blameless
conduct are his delight. †

21 Be assured † that a wicked person will not go unpunished, †
but the offspring of the righteous will escape.

22 A beautiful woman who rejects good sense is like a gold ring
in a pig's snout. †

23 The desire of the righteous turns out well, †
but the hope of the wicked leads to wrath. †

24 One person gives freely, yet gains more; †
another withholds what is right,
only to become poor. †

25 A generous person will be enriched, †
and the one who gives a drink of water
will receive water. †

26 People will curse † anyone who hoards grain, but a blessing will come
to the one who sells it. †

27 The one who searches for what is good † seeks favor, but if someone looks
for trouble, it will come to him. †

28 Anyone trusting in his riches will fall, †
but the righteous will flourish like foliage. †

29 The one who brings ruin on his household †
will inherit the wind, †
and a fool will be a slave
to someone whose heart is wise.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, †
and a wise person captivates people.

31 If the righteous will be repaid on earth, how much more the wicked and sinful. †

11:7 LXX reads *hope of the ungodly* **11:7** Or *strength* **11:16** Or *ruthless* **11:21** Lit *Hand to hand*
11:1 Dt 25:13-16; Pr 20:10,23; Mc 6:10-11 **11:1** Lv 19:36; Pr 16:11; Ezk 45:10 **11:2** Pr 15:33; 18:12; 22:4; 29:23 **11:3** Pr 13:6 **11:3** Pr 11:17-19; 19:3 **11:4** Gn 7:1; Pr 10:2; 11:28; 12:28; Zph 1:18 **11:6** Ps 7:15-16; Pr 5:22; Ec 10:8 **11:7** Jb 8:13; Pr 10:28; 24:14 **11:8** Pr 21:18 **11:10** Pr 28:12 **11:11** Pr 14:34 **11:11** Pr 14:1; 29:4 **11:12** Pr 14:21 **11:13** Lv 19:16; Pr 10:18; 20:19; 1Tm 5:13 **11:14** Pr 15:22; 20:18; 24:6 **11:15** Pr 6:1-2; 17:18; 22:26 **11:17** Mt 5:7; 25:34-36 **11:17** Pr 11:3 **11:18** Pr 10:2-3; Hs 10:12; Gl 6:8-9; Jms 3:18 **11:19** Pr 10:16-17; 19:23 **11:19** Rm 6:23; Jms 1:15 **11:20** 1Ch 29:17; Ps 119:1; Pr 3:32; 12:22; 13:6; 15:8-9,26 **11:21** Pr 16:5 **11:22** Gn 24:47 **11:23** Ps 37:4-5; Pr 10:24; Jr 29:11 **11:23** Pr 10:28; 11:7; Rm 2:8-9 **11:24** Ps 112:9; Pr 11:25; 21:26 **11:24** Pr 13:7; 22:16; 28:27 **11:25** Pr 3:9-10; 2Co 9:6-11 **11:25** Mt 5:7; 10:42 **11:26** Pr 24:24 **11:26** Gn 42:6 **11:27** Php 4:8 **11:27** Est 7:10; Ps 7:15-16 **11:28** Ps 49:6 **11:28** Ps 1:3; 92:12; Pr 11:4; 14:11; Jr 17:8 **11:29** Pr 15:27 **11:29** Ec 5:16 **11:30** Pr 3:18 **11:31** Dt 32:25; Pr 13:21; 1Pt 4:18

11:1 Such **scales** and **weight[s]** relate to business dealings (see Hs 12:7; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11). God's desire for honesty in this area of life can also be found elsewhere in Proverbs (16:11; 20:10,23) and in the OT (Lv 19:36; Dt 25:13-16; Ezk 45:10).

11:4 Although **wealth** does provide a measure of security (10:15), only **righteousness** can deliver **from death** (see also vv. 6,8,9; 11:28).

11:5-6 The Hebrew phrase translated **clears his path** is similar to the one in 3:6b. Thus, the idea seems to be that the **righteousness of the blameless** directs him (see v. 3), just as God does in 3:5-6.

11:15 Such entanglements had been likewise warned against in 6:1-5.

11:22 This vivid proverb warns the reader against being infatuated with a woman's **beautiful** outward appearance when she lacks godly character. Just as the value of **gold** is wasted if placed in the snout of an unclean pig, beauty (a desirable attribute) is wasted if not accompanied by good sense and wise action.

11:24-26 These three proverbs encourage generosity and sharing. Ironically, the one who gives **gains more**, is himself **enriched**, and receives **blessing.**

11:31 Like verse 21, this proverb implicitly assumes that God will execute justice, which is affirmed explicitly in 12:2; 16:4; 22:22-23; 23:10-11; 24:12.

12 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but one who hates correction is stupid. †

2 One who is good obtains favor from the LORD, †
but he condemns a person who schemes. †

3 No one can be made secure by wickedness, but the root of the righteous is immovable. †

4 A wife of noble character † is her husband's crown, †
but a wife who causes shame
is like rottenness in his bones. †

5 The thoughts of the righteous are just, but guidance from the wicked is deceitful.

6 The words of the wicked are a deadly ambush, †
but the speech of the upright rescues them. †

7 The wicked are overthrown and perish, †
but the house of the righteous will stand. †

8 A man is praised for his insight, but a twisted mind is despised.

9 Better to be disregarded, yet have a servant, than to act important but have no food. †

10 The righteous cares about his animal's health, †
but even the merciful acts of the wicked are cruel.

11 The one who works his land will have plenty of food, †
but whoever chases fantasies lacks sense. †

12 The wicked desire what evil people have caught, †
but the root of the righteous is productive.

13 By rebellious speech an evil person is trapped, †
but a righteous person escapes from trouble. †

14 A person will be satisfied with good by the fruit of his mouth, †
and the work of a person's hands will reward him. †

15 A fool's way is right in his own eyes, †
but whoever listens to counsel is wise.

16 A fool's displeasure is known at once, but whoever ignores an insult is sensible. †

17 Whoever speaks the truth declares what is right, but a false witness speaks deceit. †

18 There is one who speaks rashly, like a piercing sword; †
but the tongue of the wise brings healing. †

19 Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue, only a moment. †

20 Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil, but those who promote peace have joy. †

21 No disaster overcomes the righteous, †
but the wicked are full of misery.

22 Lying lips are detestable to the LORD, †
but faithful people are his delight. †

23 A shrewd person conceals knowledge, but a foolish heart publicizes stupidity. †

24 The diligent hand will rule, but laziness will lead to forced labor. †

25 Anxiety in a person's heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up. †

26 A righteous person is careful in dealing with his neighbor, †
but the ways of the wicked lead them astray. †

27 A lazy hunter doesn’t roast his game, †
but to a diligent person, his wealth is precious. †

28 There is life in the path of righteousness, and in its path there is no death. † †

12:4 Or *A wife of quality*, or *A wife of good character* **12:12** Or *desire a stronghold of evil* **12:26** Or *person guides his neighbor* **12:28** Or *righteousness, but the crooked way leads to death*
12:1 Pr 3:11; 5:11-13; 15:5,31-32 **12:2** Pr 8:35 **12:2** Pr 14:17; 24:8 **12:3** Ps 16:8; 21:7; Pr 10:30 **12:4** Pr 18:22; 19:14; 31:10 **12:4** Pr 14:30 **12:6** Pr 1:11 **12:6** Pr 14:2 **12:7** Jb 34:25 **12:7** Ps 103:17-18; Pr 10:25; Mt 7:24-27 **12:9** Pr 11:24; 13:7; Rm 12:3 **12:10** Dt 25:4; Pr 27:23; Jnh 4:11 **12:11** Pr 24:27 **12:11** Pr 28:19 **12:13** Pr 10:14; 13:3; 18:7 **12:13** Pr 21:23; 29:6 **12:14** Pr 13:2; 18:20 **12:14** Pr 1:31; 28:19; Is 3:10 **12:15** Pr 16:2; 21:2 **12:16** Pr 11:13; 12:23; 17:9; 29:11 **12:17** Pr 6:19; 14:5,25 **12:18** Ps 57:4 **12:18** Pr 4:22; 15:4 **12:19** Ps 52:4-5; Pr 19:9 **12:20** Pr 14:22 **12:21** Ps 91:10; 1Pt 3:13 **12:22** Rv 22:15 **12:22** Pr 3:32; 11:20; 15:8-9,26 **12:23** Pr 11:13; 12:16; 13:16; 15:2 **12:24** Pr 10:4; 13:4; 19:15 **12:25** Ps 94:19; Pr 15:13; 16:24; Mt 6:25-34 **12:26** Pr 14:22 **12:27** Pr 19:15,24; 26:15 **12:27** Pr 10:4; 13:4 **12:28** Pr 10:2; 13:14; 14:27

12:4 This proverb, like others (e.g., 19:14; 31:10-31), commends marrying well. The Hebrew phrase translated **a wife of noble character** is the same as in 31:10 (see also Ru 2:4). She is wise (31:26,30) and sharply contrasts with both the adulteress (see the note on 2:16-19) and the woman Folly (see the note on 9:13-18).

12:9 This proverb illustrates the foolishness of pretentiousness and the emptiness of public opinion. There are a number of “better than” proverbs in the book. The idea is that it is better to suffer something undesirable, as long as it accompanies something desirable, than to avoid the undesirable thing at the risk of losing the desirable thing as well. In this proverb, having some means is so important that it is worth suffering some dishonor. These proverbs are often used to teach the value of virtues, and to teach that virtues should be prioritized above wealth, which is comparably insignificant (see 15:16,17; 16:8,19; 17:1,12; 19:1,22; 21:19).

12:10 The kindness of a **righteous** man extends even to **his animal** (see Jnh 4:11; “Animal Rights,” *p. 21*).

12:15 This proverb warns the reader against excessive trust in one’s own judgment, which is characteristic of a fool (see also 14:12; 16:25; 21:2). The doing of what **is right in [one’s] own eyes** had likewise characterized Israelites during the chaotic period of the judges (see Jdg 17:6; 21:25). Vastly superior and more important is doing right in God’s eyes (e.g., Ex 15:26; Dt 6:18); hence, heeding good **counsel** is correspondingly commended here (see the note on 13:1).

12:18 This proverb instructs the reader regarding the power of the tongue, whether for harm or for **healing** (see Jms 3:1-12).

12:25 The **heart** is “the source of life” (4:23), so naturally anxiety **weighs it down** (see also 13:12; 15:13).

13 A wise son responds to his father’s discipline, but a mocker doesn’t listen to rebuke.

2 From the fruit of his mouth, a person will enjoy good things, †
but treacherous people have an appetite for violence. †

3 The one who guards his mouth protects his life; †
the one who opens his lips invites his own ruin. †

4 The slacker craves, yet has nothing, but the diligent is fully satisfied. †

5 The righteous hate lying, but the wicked bring disgust and shame.

6 Righteousness guards people of integrity, †
but wickedness undermines the sinner. †

7 One person pretends to be rich but has nothing; †
another pretends to be poor but has abundant wealth. †

8 Riches are a ransom for a person's life, †
but a poor person hears no threat.

9 The light of the righteous shines brightly, †
but the lamp of the wicked is put out. †

10 Arrogance leads to nothing but strife, †
but wisdom is gained by those who take advice.

11 Wealth obtained by fraud will dwindle, †
but whoever earns it through labor † will multiply it. †

12 Hope delayed makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life. †

13 The one who has contempt for instruction will pay the penalty, †
but the one who respects a command will be rewarded. †

14 A wise person's instruction is a fountain of life, †
turning people away from the snares of death. †

15 Good sense wins favor, †
but the way of the treacherous never changes. †

16 Every sensible person acts knowledgeably, but a fool displays his stupidity. †

17 A wicked envoy falls into trouble, but a trustworthy courier brings healing. †

18 Poverty and disgrace come to those who ignore discipline,
but the one who accepts correction will be honored. †

19 Desire fulfilled is sweet to the taste, but to turn from evil is detestable to fools. †

20 The one who walks with the wise will become wise, but a companion of fools will suffer harm.

21 Disaster pursues sinners, but good rewards the righteous. †

22 A good man leaves an inheritance to his † grandchildren, but the sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. †

23 The uncultivated field of the poor yields abundant food, but without justice, it is swept away.

24 The one who will not use the rod hates his son, †
but the one who loves him disciplines him diligently. †

25 A righteous person eats until he is satisfied, but the stomach of the wicked is empty. †

13:6 Lit *guards integrity of way* **13:11** Lit *whoever gathers upon his hand* **13:15** LXX, Syr, Tg read *treacherous will perish* **13:22** Or *inheritance: his*
13:2 Pr 12:14 **13:2** Pr 1:10-12,31; 18:20-21; Is 32:6-8 **13:3** Pr 18:21; 21:23; Jms 3:2 **13:3** Pr 10:14; 12:13; 18:7 **13:4** Pr 10:4; 12:24,27; 19:15 **13:6** Pr 10:29; 11:3 **13:7** Pr 11:24; Lk 12:20-21; 1Tm 6:17-19; Rv 3:17-18 **13:7** Lk 12:33; 2Co 6:10; Jms 2:5 **13:8** Jb 2:4; Pr 10:15 **13:9** Pr 4:18 **13:9** Jb 18:5-6; Pr 20:20; 24:20 **13:10** Pr 17:19 **13:11** Pr 10:2; 20:21; 23:5 **13:11** Pr 10:4; 21:5-6 **13:12** Pr 11:30; 15:4 **13:13** Nm 15:31; 2Ch 36:16 **13:13** Pr 3:1-2; 4:4; 6:23 **13:14** Pr 10:11; 14:27 **13:14** Ps 18:5; 116:3 **13:15** Pr 3:4 **13:16** Pr 12:23; 15:2; Ec 10:3 **13:17** Pr 25:13 **13:18** Pr 5:12-14; 12:1; 15:31-33 **13:19** Pr 16:22; 29:27 **13:21** Ps 32:10; Pr 11:31; 13:13 **13:22** Jb 27:13-17; Pr 28:8; Ec 2:26 **13:24** Pr 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15,17 **13:24** Dt 8:5; Pr 3:12; Heb 12:5-7 **13:25** Pr 10:3

13:1 A key distinction between the wise and the foolish is whether they **listen to** correction (see also vv.

10,13,18; note on 12:15). An important part of wisdom is a willingness to learn and be corrected for even greater understanding.

13:7 Related to 12:10, this proverb explains that appearances of riches and poverty may not be what they seem.

13:8 This proverb perceptively observes that wealth can bring with it some risk to a person's well-being.

13:20 Companions influence a person's character development. The implication of this proverb is that those who would be wise should seek wise companions. Along these lines, the reader is also warned against associating with the "hot-tempered" (22:24-25), or with "those who drink too much" or "gorge themselves" (23:20-21).

13:22 One characteristic of a **good man** is the sharing of blessings with **grandchildren** (see also 12:10).

13:23 Such injustice is not being commended, but merely observed (see 14:20).

13:24 Although unpleasant in the moment, disciplining one's children is an act of love. Neglecting to do so harms them in the long run (see 19:18).

14 Every wise woman builds her house, †
but a foolish one tears it down with her own hands. †

2 Whoever lives with integrity fears the LORD, †
but the one who is devious in his ways despises him. †

3 The proud speech of a fool brings a rod of discipline, †
but the lips of the wise protect them. †

4 Where there are no oxen, the feeding trough is empty, †
but an abundant harvest comes through the strength of an ox.

5 An honest witness does not deceive, but a dishonest witness utters lies. †

6 A mocker seeks wisdom and doesn't find it, but knowledge comes easily to the perceptive.

7 Stay away from a foolish person; you will gain no knowledge from his speech. †

8 The sensible person's wisdom is to consider his way, but the stupidity of fools deceives them.

9 Fools mock at making reparation, †
but there is goodwill among the upright.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness, and no outsider shares in its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. †

12 There is a way that seems right to a person, †
but its end is the way to death. †

13 Even in laughter a heart may be sad, and joy may end in grief. †

14 The disloyal one will get what his conduct deserves, and a good one, what his deeds deserve. †

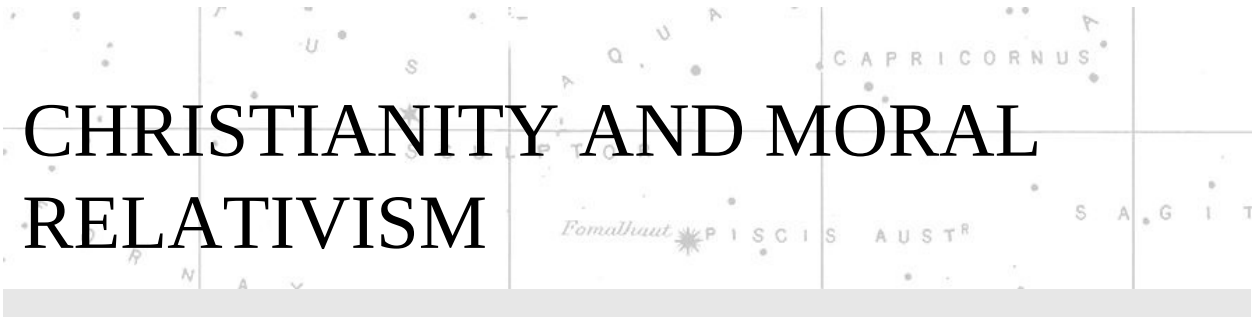
15 The inexperienced one believes anything, †
but the sensible one watches † his steps.

16 A wise person is cautious and turns from evil, †
but a fool is easily angered and is careless. †

17 A quick-tempered person acts foolishly, and one who schemes is hated. †

18 The inexperienced inherit foolishness, but the sensible are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil bow before those who are good, and the wicked, at the gates of the righteous.



CHRISTIANITY AND MORAL RELATIVISM

The notion that some actions can be objectively "good" while other things are objectively "evil" seems almost laughable these days. I asked a class of fifty freshman college students—90 percent of whom came from "strong evangelical homes and churches"—how they would define "morally good." How would they discern good from evil? One student's answer, that "it depends on what you like," became the basis for a conversation that lasted the class period. None of those students—not one—disagreed deeply with the first student's statement. They argued that Christians (they themselves) should follow the Bible's guidelines; but, they had concluded that this very criterion just proved the first student's point that truth and goodness are relative to what one believes or feels is right.

That the common rationalistic argument of many apologists ("God" is necessary for any conversation about absolute good or evil) has failed to give a unified understanding of morality goes without mention. Disparate convictions and arguments, even among evangelicals, reveal such only too clearly. The best evidence for this may be the simple observation that when the Bible does not speak directly to an issue (and often even when it does), the default behavior of those who claim to follow its teaching is to mirror their surrounding communities. Propositional statements about right and wrong, then, fail to convince—regardless of claims to the opposite.

To this generation of postmoderns (and many moderns of earlier generations) there seems to be something inherently unsatisfactory in the claim that since relativists are caught in their own argument ("everything is relative" is nullified by itself being an absolute statement), there must be an absolute morality that is defined by a necessary higher being—God. So, is there another way to consider this? Would a narrative, rather than a propositional approach, offer a more useful avenue? It appears so.

A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO MORALITY

A narrative approach to the question of morality yields a natural way to contemporize the content of "God's morality" to issues, settings, and dilemmas of contemporary cultures that are now more mixed and diverse than ever. It enables a Christian testimony in settings that are otherwise hostile to traditional Christian language. A narrative approach to morality allows Christians to engage conversations on the subject as truth seekers, rather than as truth dispensers.

For example, few Westerners outside the church frame the question of morality as an issue of sin. Starvation of multitudes, oppression of the poor and the powerless, enslavement and tyranny that denies basic human freedoms, injustices related to ethnicity, gender, and age, physical handicaps, and war provide the focus and frame the language of most moral questioning and conversation today. Even on the narrower level of "home and neighborhood," questions about violence and gun control, bullying and kindness, sex and immorality, divorce and family life are rarely considered—even by Christians—in a framework shaped by the language of sin and righteousness.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

Does this mean that Christians no longer can or should speak with moral certitude? Not at all. Jesus is still "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). As we learn from Jesus's declaration of purpose in Luke 4:18, and from the beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-9, the stage for a discussion of Christian morality must be firmly anchored in language about imitation of Christ. The very nature of Christian morality is discipleship—not theoretical propositional statements. Put differently, Christ followers recognize that judgment is coming to those passing by the needy "on the other side" (Lk 10:31-33). As the parable of the Good Samaritan reveals, Christian morality is not merely a truth to be claimed; it is a life to be lived.

Paul's approach to morality follows a similar pattern and is closely tied to his personal testimony. His own story becomes his strongest argument for the truthfulness of his message and convictions—revealed in a life other believers will do well to imitate (1Co 4:11-16; 11:1). Presenting morality claims in a narrative setting does not make them private; rather, it reveals that moral questions are interrelated and cannot be separated from a grand narrative. Attempting to tackle one moral question as though it did not relate to other moral questions will ultimately prove self-defeating.

Major movements in church history reveal the same pattern. The German reformer, Martin Luther, began what became the greatest reformation in the history of the church with this intensely personal statement: “Here I stand, I can do no other.” Like Paul, his point was not to give a private statement—attempting to explain a moral conviction that was exclusive to him and maybe a few others who felt the same way. Rather, Luther recognized the truth of the Bible’s grand narrative and concluded that his opponents had not.

The statements of Paul and Luther are powerful because they were not mere relative statements designed to express personal convictions that were true for them but might not be for others. They did not aim to give a modern plea for the supremacy of the individual’s conscience. Rather, their words were intended to show that morality is inseparably connected to God’s interaction with his creation. They offered an invitation to consider God’s story (the biblical narrative) as the story that holds the greatest truth value, makes the most sense of reality, and delivers the grandest rationale for the whole human situation.

CHRISTIANITY’S STORY AND MORAL RELATIVISM TODAY

To our generation—a generation who considers its own individual stories and situations the most significant guide for morality—the NT language of imitation of Christ is an invitation to reconsider our story and to read it anew in light of the gospel story. It’s an invitation to consider the biblical narrative for the evaluation of any question related to human life and morality. Moreover, it’s an invitation to consider it the only story that gives a sufficient and comprehensive answer to the human situation.

Because God’s story remains relentlessly relational, a narrative approach to morality offers the best critique of moral relativism. God’s history with humanity reveals the benefits of Christ’s work for the whole human situation. It views all questions through one narrative that is grounded in the story of creation and purpose, fall and redemption. And, as this narrative unfolds, it reveals the rising of a new horizon on which to evaluate yet unknown moral questions. Jesus’s message that the kingdom of God is here already, though not fully gives fresh light that helps us see the road forward. It offers secure footing and enables us to tackle new questions guided by the old truth.

For Christians who are concerned that the story is not sufficiently powerful as a guide for moral questions, Paul’s farewell to the Ephesian elders (whose setting was as pluralistic as the most urban of modern cities) serves as a helpful reminder (Ac 20:32). Rather than arguing propositionally, Paul reminded his hearers how God’s story had already given moral guidance to their situation (Ac 20:35). Then, full of confidence, he simply committed them “to God and to the word of his grace” (Ac 20:32).

A narrative approach to questions of morality requires keen awareness of God’s grand story. It will prove an effective tool in combating moral relativism, which mostly seems to pick and choose from whatever appears to be the most convenient contemporary narrative.

CONCLUSION

Some argue that people’s judgment is relative to something they hold to be true. Others argue that moral decision is anchored in what counts as evidence in various situations and for various people. There are, in other words, differing arguments for moral relativism. Engaging such a conversation from a propositional perspective proves inherently difficult.

Approaching issues of morality from a narrative perspective, however, opens fresh conversation and drives it to a pursuit of the best story—the best foundation and guide for moral decision making. It reveals the insufficiency of other smaller stories, and it empowers the church to be fruitful stewards of God’s story. The church community is commissioned to translate his story into ways of living that connects with, and transforms, the communities in which it is located. Doing so enables us to counter moral relativism because the story of Scripture is the truth about life.

PREBEN VANG

20 A poor person is hated even by his neighbor, †
but there are many who love the rich. †

21 The one who despises his neighbor sins, †
but whoever shows kindness to the poor will be happy. †

22 Don’t those who plan evil go astray? †
But those who plan good find loyalty and faithfulness. †

23 There is profit in all hard work, but endless talk † leads only to poverty. †

24 The crown of the wise is their wealth, but the foolishness of fools produces foolishness.

25 A truthful witness rescues lives, but one who utters lies is deceitful. †

26 In the fear of the LORD one has strong confidence and his children have a refuge. †

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, turning people away from the snares of death. †

28 A large population is a king’s splendor, but a shortage of people is a ruler’s devastation.

29 A patient person shows great understanding, †
but a quick-tempered one promotes foolishness.

30 A tranquil heart is life to the body, †
but jealousy is rottenness to the bones. †

31 The one who oppresses the poor person insults his Maker, †
but one who is kind to the needy honors him. †

32 The wicked one is thrown down by his own sin, †

but the righteous one has a refuge in his death. †

33 Wisdom resides in the heart of the discerning; †
she is known † even among fools.

34 Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people. †

35 A king favors a prudent servant, †
but his anger falls on a disgraceful one.

14:3 Some emend to *In the mouth of a fool is a rod for his back* **14:4** Or *clean* **14:9** Or *at guilt offerings* **14:15** Lit *the prudent understand* **14:16** Or *and falls* **14:23** Lit *but word of lips* **14:33** LXX reads *unknown* **14:1** Ru 4:11; Pr 9:1; 24:3; 31:10-27 **14:1** Pr 11:11; 29:4 **14:2** Pr 19:1; 28:6 **14:2** Pr 2:15 **14:3** Pr 12:6 **14:5** Ex 20:16; 23:1; Pr 6:19; 12:17; 14:25 **14:7** Pr 20:15 **14:11** Pr 10:25; 11:28; 12:7; Mt 7:24-27 **14:12** Pr 12:15; 16:25 **14:12** Pr 5:4; Rm 6:21 **14:13** Ec 2:1-2; Lk 6:25 **14:14** Pr 1:31; 12:14; 18:20; 28:19 **14:15** Eph 4:14; Jms 1:5-8 **14:16** Jb 28:28; Ps 34:14; Pr 3:7; 22:3 **14:17** Pr 12:2; 24:8 **14:20** Pr 19:7 **14:20** Pr 19:4 **14:21** Pr 11:12 **14:21** Ps 41:1 **14:22** Pr 6:14-15; 12:26 **14:22** Pr 12:20 **14:23** Pr 21:5 **14:25** Pr 6:19; 12:17; 14:5 **14:26** Pr 29:25 **14:27** Pr 13:14; 16:22; 19:23 **14:29** Pr 16:32; 19:11; Ec 7:9; Jms 1:19 **14:30** Pr 3:8; 4:22; 16:24 **14:30** Pr 12:4; 27:4; Jms 3:16 **14:31** Pr 17:5; 21:13; Mt 25:40; 1Jn 3:17 **14:31** Pr 3:9; 14:21; 19:17; 22:2 **14:32** Ps 17:15; 73:24; Pr 24:16; 2Co 1:9; 5:8; 2Tm 4:18 **14:32** Pr 10:25 **14:33** Pr 15:14; 18:15; Ec 7:9 **14:34** Pr 11:11 **14:35** Pr 22:29; Mt 24:45-47; 25:21

14:4 The importance of **oxen** for **an abundant harvest** suggests the responsible use of appropriate means to increase productivity and efficiency.

14:15 The simple and naïve person **believes anything** instead of carefully considering the issues of life (see also v. 16).

14:20 Such conduct is not being encouraged, but simply observed (see 13:23; 17:8).

14:26-27 These consecutive verses referencing **the fear of the LORD** serve as a reminder in the midst of this lengthy series of proverbs of their basis in a right relationship with God (see 1:7; 9:10). Specifically highlighted here are the positive influence of godly parents on their **children** and deliverance from **death** that comes with such "fear" (see the note on 3:13-18).

14:29 Like verse 17, this verse warns against being **quick-tempered.**

14:34 Whereas most proverbs focus on the individual, this one illustrates the importance of **righteousness** for an entire **nation** and the corresponding need for **any people** to avoid **sin** (see also 20:28; 29:4).

15 A gentle answer turns away anger, †
but a harsh word stirs up wrath. †

2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge attractive, but the mouth of fools
blurts out foolishness. †

3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, observing the wicked and the good. †

4 The tongue that heals is a tree of life, †
but a devious tongue † breaks the spirit.

5 A fool despises his father's discipline, but a person who accepts correction is sensible. †

6 The house of the righteous has great wealth, but trouble accompanies the income of the wicked.

7 The lips of the wise broadcast knowledge, but not so the heart of fools.

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable to the LORD, †
but the prayer of the upright is his delight. †

9 The LORD detests the way of the wicked, but he loves the one who pursues righteousness. †

10 Discipline is harsh for the one who leaves the path; the one who hates correction will die.

11 Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the LORD — †
how much more, human hearts. †

12 A mocker doesn't love one who corrects him; †
he will not consult the wise.

13 A joyful heart makes a face cheerful, but a sad heart produces a broken spirit. †

14 A discerning mind seeks knowledge, †
but the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness. †

15 All the days of the oppressed are miserable, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast.

16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure with turmoil. †

17 Better a meal of vegetables where there is love than a fattened ox †
with hatred. †

18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, †
but one slow to anger † calms strife.

19 A slacker's way is like a thorny hedge, but the path of the upright is
a highway. †

20 A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish man despises his mother. †

21 Foolishness brings joy to one without sense, but a person with understanding
walks a straight path. †

22 Plans fail when there is no counsel, but with many advisers they succeed. †

23 A person takes joy in giving an answer; †
and a timely word — how good that is! †

24 For the prudent the path of life leads upward, so that he may avoid
going down to Sheol.

25 The LORD tears apart the house of the proud, but he protects
the widow's territory. †

26 The LORD detests the plans of the one who is evil, but pleasant words
are pure. †

27 The one who profits dishonestly † troubles his household, but the one
who hates bribes will live. †

28 The mind of the righteous person thinks before answering, †
but the mouth of the wicked blurts out evil things. †

29 The LORD is far from the wicked, †
but he hears the prayer of the righteous. †

30 Bright eyes cheer the heart; good news strengthens † the bones. †

31 One who † listens to life-giving rebukes †
will be at home among the wise.

32 Anyone who ignores discipline despises himself, †
but whoever listens to correction acquires good sense. † †

33 The fear of the LORD is what wisdom teaches, and humility comes before honor. †

15:4 Lit *but crookedness in it* **15:23** Lit *in an answer of his mouth* **15:30** Lit *makes fat* **15:31** Lit *An ear that* **15:32** Lit *acquires a heart*
15:1 Jdg 8:1-3; Pr 25:15; Ec 10:4 **15:1** 1Sm 25:10-13; 1Kg 12:13-16 **15:2** Pr 12:23; 13:16; 15:28 **15:3** 2Ch 16:9; Jb 31:4; Zch 4:10; Heb 4:13 **15:4** Pr 11:30; 13:12 **15:5** Pr 3:11; 12:1; 15:31-33 **15:8** Pr 21:27; 28:9; Ec 5:1; Is 1:11; Jr 6:20; Mc 6:7 **15:8** Pr 15:29 **15:9** Pr 3:32; 11:20; 12:22; 1Tm 6:11 **15:11** Jb 26:6; Ps 139:8 **15:11** 1Sm 16:7; 2Ch 6:30; Ps 44:21; Ac 1:24 **15:12** Pr 9:8; Am 5:10 **15:13** Pr 12:25; 14:30; 15:30; 17:22; 18:14 **15:14** Pr 14:33; 18:15 **15:14** Mt 12:34 **15:16** Ps 37:16; Pr 16:8; Ec 4:6; 1Tm 6:6 **15:17** Mt 22:4; Lk 15:23 **15:17** Pr 16:19; 17:1 **15:18** Pr 16:28; 26:21; 29:22 **15:18** Pr 14:29 **15:19** Pr 16:17,31; 22:5-6 **15:20** Pr 10:1; 23:24-25; 29:3,15 **15:21** Pr 4:11,25; 10:23; Eph 5:15 **15:22** Pr 8:14-16; 11:14; 24:6 **15:23** Pr 25:11; Is 50:4 **15:25** Ps 68:5; 146:9 **15:26** Pr 11:20; 15:8-9; 16:24 **15:27** Pr 1:19; Jr 17:11 **15:27** Ex 23:8; Dt 16:19; Ps 15:5; Pr 17:23; 28:16 **15:28** Pr 18:13; 1Pt 3:15 **15:28** Pr 15:2 **15:29** Ps 18:41; Pr 28:9 **15:29** Ps 145:18-19; Pr 15:8 **15:30** Pr 14:30; 15:13; 17:22 **15:31** Pr 3:11 **15:32** Pr 12:1 **15:32** Pr 3:11; 5:12-14 **15:33** Pr 18:12; 22:4; 29:23

15:1 This proverb is especially relevant when one has been offended or is in the midst of a heated discussion or argument.

15:8 The Lord's displeasure with the **sacrifice of the wicked** echoes other passages in the OT (e.g., 1Sm 15:22; Is 1:11-14; Jr 7:21-23).

15:11 Like verse 3, this proverb describes God's complete knowledge of **human hearts.**

15:13-15 These three proverbs are linked through the repetition of the Hebrew word *lev*, translated **heart.** Verses 13,15 in particular illustrate the power of the heart as it relates to joy or misery (see also the note on 4:23; 14:10,13).

15:19 The vivid imagery of **a thorny hedge** suggests the obstacles imagined by the lazy are actually excuses and rationalizations (see 22:13).

15:29 Like verse 8, this proverb emphasizes God's attention to **the prayer of the righteous.**

15:33 The two lines in this proverb link the **fear of the LORD** with **humility** (see also v. 19).

16 The reflections of the heart belong to mankind, but the answer
of the tongue is from the LORD. †

2 All a person's ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs motives. † †

3 Commit your activities to the LORD, and your plans will be established. †

4 The LORD has prepared everything for his purpose — even the wicked
for the day of disaster. †

5 Everyone with a proud heart is detestable to the LORD; †
be assured, † he will not go unpunished. †

6 Iniquity is atoned for by loyalty and faithfulness, †
and one turns from evil by the fear of the LORD. †

7 When a person's ways please the LORD, he makes even his enemies to be
at peace with him. †

8 Better a little with righteousness than great income with injustice. †

9 A person's heart plans his way, but the LORD determines his steps. †

10 God's verdict is on the lips of a king; † †
his mouth should not give an unfair judgment. †

11 Honest balances and scales are the LORD's; all the weights in the bag are
his concern. †

12 Wicked behavior is detestable to kings, †
since a throne is established through righteousness. †

13 Righteous lips are a king's delight, and he loves one who speaks honestly.

14 A king's fury is a messenger of death, but a wise person appeases it. †

15 When a king’s face lights up, there is life; his favor is like a cloud with spring rain.

16 Get wisdom — how much better it is than gold!
And get understanding —
it is preferable to silver. †

17 The highway of the upright † avoids evil; the one who guards his way protects his life. †

18 Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall. †

19 Better to be lowly of spirit with the humble † †
than to divide plunder with the proud. †

20 The one who understands a matter finds success, †
and the one who trusts in the LORD will be happy. †

21 Anyone with a wise heart is called discerning, and pleasant speech † increases learning. †

22 Insight is a fountain of life † for its possessor, but the discipline of fools is folly.

23 The heart of a wise person instructs his mouth; it adds learning to his speech. † †

24 Pleasant words are a honeycomb: †
sweet to the taste † and health to the body. † †

25 There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death. †

26 A worker’s appetite works for him because his hunger † urges him on.

27 A worthless person digs up evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire. †

28 A contrary person spreads conflict, and a gossip separates close friends. †

29 A violent person lures his neighbor, †
leading him on a path that is not good. †

30 The one who narrows his eyes is planning deceptions; the one who compresses his lips brings about evil. †

31 Gray hair is a glorious crown; †
it is found in the ways of righteousness. †

32 Patience is better than power, and controlling one's emotions, † than capturing a city. †

33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. †

16:2 Lit *spirits* **16:5** Lit *hand to hand* **16:10** Or *A divination is on the lips of a king* **16:19** Alt Hb tradition reads *afflicted* **16:21** Lit *and sweetness of lips* **16:23** Lit *learning upon his lips* **16:24** Lit *throat* **16:24** Lit *bones* **16:26** Lit *mouth* **16:32** Lit *and ruling over one's spirit*
16:1 Pr 16:9; 19:21 **16:2** 1Sm 16:7; Pr 17:3; 19:21; 21:2 **16:3** Ps 37:4-5 **16:4** Ex 9:16; Rm 9:21-22 **16:5** 2Ch 32:25; Pr 6:16-17; 8:13 **16:5** Ps 101:5; Pr 11:21; 16:18 **16:6** Dn 4:27; Lk 11:41 **16:6** Jb 28:28; Pr 3:7; 14:16 **16:7** 2Ch 17:10 **16:8** Ps 37:16; Pr 15:16-17; 16:19; 28:6 **16:9** Ps 37:23; Pr 16:1; 19:21; 20:24; Jr 10:23 **16:10** 2Sm 14:17,20; 1Kg 3:28 **16:10** 2Sm 23:2-3; Pr 18:14-15 **16:11** Lv 19:36; Pr 11:1; Ezk 45:10; Mc 6:11 **16:12** Pr 31:3-5 **16:12** Ps 101; Pr 25:5 **16:14** Ec 10:4 **16:16** Pr 3:14; 8:10,19; 22:1 **16:17** Is 35:8 **16:17** Pr 2:11-13; 15:19 **16:18** Pr 11:2; 16:5; 18:12; 29:23; Dn 4:37; Ob 3-4 **16:19** Pr 29:23; Is 57:15 **16:19** Ex 15:9; Ps 37:16; Pr 1:13-14; 15:16-17; 16:8 **16:20** Pr 19:8 **16:20** Ps 2:12; 34:8; 40:4; 84:12; 146:5; Jr 17:7 **16:21** Pr 1:5; 9:9; 16:23 **16:22** Pr 10:11; 13:14; 14:27 **16:23** Ps 37:30; Pr 1:5; 9:9; Mt 12:34 **16:24** Ps 19:10; Pr 15:26 **16:24** Pr 4:22; 15:30; 25:13 **16:25** Pr 14:12; 24:20 **16:27** Pr 6:12; 19:28; 26:23; Jms 3:6 **16:28** Pr 6:14,19; 17:9; 26:20-21; 28:25 **16:29** Pr 1:10 **16:29** 1Sm 12:23; Ps 36:4; Pr 28:10 **16:30** Ps 35:19; Pr 6:12-14; 10:10 **16:31** Lv 19:32; Pr 4:9; 20:29 **16:31** Pr 3:1-2 **16:32** Pr 25:15,28; 29:11 **16:33** Pr 16:1; 19:21; 21:31

16:2 The Lord **weighs motives** and understands human hearts even better than humans do (see Jr 17:9; 1Co 4:4).

16:3 This counsel echoes 3:5-6 and Ps 37:5-6.

16:8 Like 15:16-17, this "better than" proverb reminds the reader that material wealth is not the highest good (see also 17:1; 19:1). See the note on 12:9.

16:9 Though not discouraging the making of plans, this proverb expresses God's sovereignty over them (see also v. 1; 19:21).

16:11 Regarding such **balances** and **scales**, see the note on 11:1.

16:18 This well-known proverb warns the reader against **pride.** Typically accompanied by complacency,

carelessness, and overconfidence, pride naturally **comes before destruction** (see also 18:12).

16:25 Like 14:12, this proverb warns that a person can be both confident and dreadfully mistaken at the same time.

16:31 Gray hair signifies old age and the wisdom gained from years of life experience (see also 20:29).

16:33 Even something apparently random, such as casting a **lot** to make a decision, is under the sovereign control of God.

17 Better a dry crust with peace than a house full of feasting with strife. †

2 A prudent servant will rule over a disgraceful son and share
an inheritance among brothers.

3 A crucible for silver, and a smelter for gold, †
and the LORD is the tester of hearts. †

4 A wicked person listens to malicious talk; †
a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue.

5 The one who mocks the poor insults his Maker, †
and one who rejoices over calamity
will not go unpunished. †

6 Grandchildren are the crown of the elderly, and the pride of children is
their fathers.

7 Eloquent words are not appropriate on a fool's lips; how much worse are lies
for a ruler.

8 A bribe † seems like a magic stone to its owner; wherever he turns,
he succeeds. †

9 Whoever conceals an offense promotes love, †
but whoever gossips about it separates friends. †

10 A rebuke cuts into a perceptive person more than a hundred lashes into a fool.

11 An evil person desires only rebellion; a cruel messenger † † will be sent against him.

12 Better for a person to meet a bear robbed of her cubs †
than a fool in his foolishness.

13 If anyone returns evil for good, †
evil will never depart from his house. †

14 To start a conflict is to release a flood; stop the dispute before it breaks out. †

15 Acquitting the guilty and condemning the just † — both are detestable to the LORD.

16 Why does a fool have money in his hand with no intention of buying wisdom? †

17 A friend loves at all times, †
and a brother is born for a difficult time.

18 One without sense enters an agreement †
and puts up security for his friend. †

19 One who loves to offend loves strife; †
one who builds a high threshold invites injury.

20 One with a twisted mind will not succeed, and one with deceitful speech will fall into ruin. †

21 A man fathers a fool to his own sorrow; the father of a fool has no joy. †

22 A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones. †

23 A wicked person secretly takes a bribe †
to subvert the course of justice. †

24 Wisdom is the focus of the perceptive, but a fool's eyes † roam to the ends of the earth.

25 A foolish son is grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him. †

26 It is certainly not good to fine an innocent person or to beat a noble for his honesty. † †

27 The one who has knowledge restrains his words, †
and one who keeps a cool head †
is a person of understanding.

28 Even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent — discerning, when he seals his lips. †

17:4 Lit *to lips of iniquity* **17:11** Or *a merciless angel* **17:18** Lit *sense slaps hands* **17:26** Or *noble unfairly* **17:27** Lit *spirit*
17:1 Pr 15:17; 21:9,19; 25:24 **17:3** Pr 27:21 **17:3** 1Ch 29:17; Ps 26:2; Pr 16:2; 21:2; Is 48:10; Jr 17:10; Mal 3:3 **17:5** Pr 14:31; 21:13 **17:5** Jb 31:29; Pr 24:17; Lm 1:21-22; Ezk 25:6-7; 35:15; Ob 12 **17:8** Ex 23:8; Is 1:23; Am 5:12 **17:8** Pr 18:16; 19:6; 21:14 **17:9** Pr 10:12; Jms 5:20; 1Pt 4:8 **17:9** Lv 19:16; Pr 11:13; 16:28 **17:11**Ps 78:49 **17:12** 2Sm 17:8; Hs 13:8 **17:13** Ps 35:12; 109:5 **17:13** 2Sm 12:10 **17:14** Pr 20:3; 25:8 **17:15** Ex 23:7; Pr 17:26; 18:5; 24:23-24; Is 5:23 **17:16** Pr 4:5,7; 18:15; 23:23 **17:17** Ru 1:16; Pr 18:24; 27:10 **17:18** Pr 6:1-5; 11:15; 22:26 **17:19** Pr 29:22 **17:20** Jr 23:36 **17:21** Pr 10:1; 17:25; 19:13; 23:24-25 **17:22** Ps 22:15; Pr 14:30; 15:13; 18:14 **17:23** Pr 17:8 **17:23** Dt 16:19; Ps 15:5; Pr 18:5; Mc 3:11; 7:3 **17:24** Ec 2:14 **17:25** Pr 10:1; 17:21; 19:13 **17:26** Pr 17:15; 18:5; 24:23-24 **17:27** Pr 10:19; Jms 1:19; 3:2 **17:28** Jb 13:5; Pr 10:19

17:5 Like 14:31, mistreatment of the poor is not only forbidden but **insults his Maker**, who has made both the "rich and poor" (22:2). Other proverbs encourage "kindness" to the poor (14:21; 19:17; 28:8,27).

17:8 Like some other proverbs (e.g., 13:23; 14:20), this statement observes something about life without evaluating it ethically. **A bribe** can accomplish much, but bribery is not recommended as it is usually associated with corruption (see v. 23).

17:9 Allowing the **offense** of another person to go unmentioned can be a wise act that **promotes** harmony and **love** (see also 10:12; 19:11). This proverb, however, should not be used to justify cover-ups, deception, or silence in the face of evil (e.g., 31:8-9; Is 1:17).

17:15 Such injustices are **detestable to the LORD** (see also v. 26; 18:5).

17:17 The preciousness of such a **friend** or **brother** stems from his faithfulness, especially during hard times.

17:18 Regarding such agreements, see 6:1-5 and 11:15.

17:21 The theme of parental grief over a foolish child is revisited (see v. 25; note on 10:1; 15:20).

17:24 One characteristic of the fool is his disinterest in wisdom and preoccupation instead with things far

out of his reach.

17:27-28 Both proverbs concern restraint of the tongue. It is so important that **even a fool is considered wise when he keeps silent** (see also notes on 10:18-21; 12:18).

18 One who isolates himself pursues selfish desires; he rebels against
all sound wisdom.

2 A fool does not delight in understanding, but only wants to show off
his opinions. † †

3 When a wicked person comes, contempt also comes, and along with dishonor,
derision.

4 The words of a person's mouth are deep waters, †
a flowing river, a fountain of wisdom. †

5 It is not good to show partiality to the guilty, †
denying an innocent person justice. †

6 A fool's lips lead to strife, and his mouth provokes a beating. †

7 A fool's mouth is his devastation, and his lips are a trap for his life. †

8 A gossip's words are like choice food that goes down
to one's innermost being. † †

9 The one who is lazy in his work is brother to a vandal. † †

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; †
the righteous run to it and are protected. † †

11 The wealth of the rich is his fortified city; in his imagination it is
like a high wall. †

12 Before his downfall a person's heart is proud, †
but humility comes before honor. †

13 The one who gives an answer before he listens — this is foolishness
and disgrace for him. †

14 A person's spirit can endure sickness, but who can survive a broken spirit? †

15 The mind of the discerning acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise
seeks it. †

16 A person's gift opens doors † for him and brings him before the great. †

17 The first to state his case seems right until another comes and cross-
examines him. †

18 Casting the lot † ends quarrels and separates powerful opponents.

19 An offended brother is harder to reach †
than a fortified city,
and quarrels are like the bars of a fortress.

20 From the fruit of a person's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is filled
with the product of his lips. †

21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat
its fruit. †

22 A man who finds a wife finds a good thing †
and obtains favor from the LORD. †

23 The poor person pleads, †
but the rich one answers roughly. †

24 One with many friends may be harmed, †
but there is a friend who stays closer than a brother. †

18:2 Lit *to uncover his heart* **18:4** Or *waters; a fountain of wisdom is a flowing river* **18:8** Lit *to the chambers of the belly* **18:9** Lit *master of destruction* **18:10** Lit *raised high* **18:16** Lit *gift makes room* **18:19**

LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *is stronger* **18:24** Some LXX mss, Syr, Tg, Vg read *friends must be friendly*
18:2 Pr 12:23; 13:16; Ec 10:3 **18:4** Pr 20:5 **18:5** Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17; 24:17; Ps 15:5; 82:2; Pr 24:23-24; 28:21 **18:5** Pr 17:15 **18:6** Pr 19:29 **18:7** Ps 64:8; 140:9; Pr 10:14; 12:13; 13:3; Ec 10:12 **18:8** Pr 26:22 **18:9** Pr 28:24 **18:10** Ps 18:2; 61:3; 91:2; 144:2 **18:10** Pr 29:25 **18:11** Pr 10:15 **18:12** Pr 16:18 **18:12** Pr 11:2; 15:33; 29:23 **18:13** Pr 15:28 **18:14** Pr 15:13; 17:22 **18:15** Pr 14:33; 15:14 **18:16** Gn 32:20; 1Sm 25:27; Pr 17:8; 19:6; 21:14 **18:17** 1Kg 3:16-28 **18:18** Pr 16:33 **18:20** Pr 1:31; 12:14; 14:14 **18:21** Pr 13:2; Mt 12:37; 15:11,18-20; Jms 3:8 **18:22** Pr 12:4; 19:14; 31:10-31 **18:22** Pr 8:35 **18:23** Pr 19:7 **18:23** Jms 2:6 **18:24** Pr 17:17; 27:10; Jn 15:13

18:6-7 In both proverbs, the **fool's** speech gets him into trouble.

18:10-11 Whereas **the righteous** finds protection in the **name of the LORD**, **the rich** consider their **wealth** to be a **fortified city.**

18:17 This proverb encourages gathering information from different sources before forming an opinion on a case.

18:22 This proverb describes marriage to a presumably good wife as an example of **favor from the LORD** (see also 19:14).

19 Better a poor person who lives with integrity †
than someone who has deceitful lips and is a fool.

2 Even zeal is not good without knowledge, †
and the one who acts hastily † sins. †

3 A person's own foolishness leads him astray, yet his heart rages against the LORD. †

4 Wealth attracts many friends, †
but a poor person is separated from his friend.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished, †
and one who utters lies will not escape. †

6 Many seek a ruler's favor, †
and everyone is a friend of one who gives gifts. †

7 All the brothers of a poor person hate him; †
how much more do his friends
keep their distance from him!
He may pursue them with words, †

but they are not there. †

8 The one who acquires good sense † loves himself; one who safeguards
understanding finds success. †

9 A false witness will not go unpunished, and one who utters lies perishes. †

10 Luxury is not appropriate for a fool — †
how much less for a slave to rule over princes! †

11 A person's insight gives him patience, †
and his virtue is to overlook an offense. †

12 A king's rage is like the roaring of a lion, †
but his favor is like dew on the grass. †

13 A foolish son is his father's ruin, †
and a wife's nagging is an endless dripping. †

14 A house and wealth are inherited from fathers, †
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

15 Laziness induces deep sleep, and a lazy person will go hungry. †

16 The one who keeps commands preserves himself; †
one who disregards † his ways will die. †

17 Kindness to the poor is a loan to the LORD, †
and he will give a reward to the lender. † †

18 Discipline your son while there is hope; don't set your heart on being
the cause of his death. † †

19 A person with intense anger bears the penalty; if you rescue him, you'll have
to do it again. †

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction so that you may be wise
later in life. † †

21 Many plans are in a person's heart, but the LORD's decree will prevail. †

22 What is desirable in a person is his fidelity; better to be a poor person
than a liar. †

23 The fear of the LORD leads to life; one will sleep at night † without danger. †

24 The slacker buries his hand in the bowl; he doesn't even bring it back
to his mouth! †

25 Strike a mocker, and the inexperienced learn a lesson; †
rebuke the discerning, and he gains knowledge. †

26 The one who plunders his father and evicts his mother is a disgraceful
and shameful son.

27 If you stop listening to correction, my son, you will stray from the words
of knowledge.

28 A worthless witness mocks justice, and a wicked mouth swallows iniquity. †

29 Judgments are prepared for mockers, and beatings for the backs of fools. †

19:2 Lit *who is hasty with feet* **19:7** Hb uncertain **19:8** Lit *acquires a heart* **19:16** Or *despises*, or *treats lightly* **19:17** Lit *to him* **19:18** Lit *don't lift up your soul to his death* **19:20** Lit *in your end* **19:23** Lit *will spend the night satisfied*

19:1 Ps 26:11; 37:16; Pr 10:9; 14:2; 20:7; 28:6 **19:2** Rm 10:2 **19:2** Pr 21:5; 28:20; 29:20 **19:3** Is 8:21 **19:4** Pr 14:20; 19:6 **19:5** Dt 19:16-19; Pr 19:9; 21:28 **19:5** Pr 6:19 **19:6** Pr 29:26 **19:6** Pr 14:20; 17:8; 19:4 **19:7** Ps 38:11 **19:7** Pr 18:23 **19:8** Pr 16:20 **19:9** Pr 19:5; 21:28 **19:10** Pr 17:7; 26:1 **19:10** Pr 30:22; Ec 10:6-7 **19:11** Pr 14:29 **19:11** Pr 11:13; 17:9 **19:12** Pr 16:14 **19:12** Ps 133:3; Pr 20:2; 28:15; Hs 14:5; Mc 5:7 **19:13** Pr 10:1; 17:25; 28:7 **19:13** Pr 21:9,19; 27:15 **19:14** 2Co 12:14 **19:15** Pr 6:9-11; 10:4; 13:4; 21:25 **19:16** Lk 10:28 **19:16** Pr 3:1-2; 4:4; 13:13 **19:17** Dt 15:7-10; Pr 14:31; 28:27; Ec 11:1-2; Mt 10:42; 25:40; 2Co 9:6-8; Heb 6:10 **19:17** Lk 6:38 **19:18** Pr 13:24; 23:13-14; 29:17 **19:19** Pr 22:24-25; 29:22 **19:20** Pr 12:1; 15:5,31-

32 **19:21** Ps 33:10-11; Pr 16:1,9,33; 21:31; Is 14:26-27 **19:22** Pr 19:1; 28:6 **19:23** Pr 14:26-27 **19:24** Pr 12:27; 20:4; 26:14-15 **19:25** Pr 21:11 **19:25** Pr 9:8 **19:28** Jb 15:16; 34:7 **19:29** Pr 10:13; 18:6; 26:3

19:3 Although a man's troubles may be his own fault, he sometimes still blames God.

19:4 This proverb describes the reality that those seeking friendship are often influenced by self-interest (see also vv. 6-7).

19:8 Several proverbs in this context revisit the truth that wisdom is not only valuable for its own sake but also benefits the one who has it (see also vv. 16,23).

19:12 The **rage** of an authority figure is to be feared (see also 20:2).

19:13-14 Whereas **a prudent wife is from the LORD** (see also 18:22), the quarreling of a wife is as wearisome as **an endless dripping** (21:9,19; 27:15).

19:18 Like 13:24, this proverb commands and encourages the discipline of one's children, lest parents through neglect become unwittingly complicit to their destruction (see also 22:6,15).

19:21 Although wise planning is a good thing, it is God's purposes that **will prevail** (see 16:9; 21:30).

19:27 It is not enough to heed **correction** once or for a set period of time; it must be continued (see v. 25; 1:5; 9:9).

20 Wine is a mocker, † beer is a brawler; whoever goes astray †
because of them is not wise.

2 A king's terrible wrath is like the roaring of a lion; anyone who provokes him
endangers himself. †

3 Honor belongs to the person who ends a dispute, †
but any fool can get himself into a quarrel. †

4 The slacker does not plow during planting season; †
at harvest time he looks, † and there is nothing. †

5 Counsel in a person's heart is deep water; †
but a person of understanding draws it out.

6 Many a person proclaims his own loyalty, but who can find
a trustworthy person? †

7 A righteous person acts with integrity; †
his children who come after him will be happy. †

8 A king sitting on a throne to judge separates out all evil with his eyes. †

9 Who can say, “I have kept my heart pure; I am cleansed from my sin”? †

10 Differing weights and varying measures † — both are detestable to the LORD. †

11 Even a young man is known by his actions — by whether his behavior is pure and upright. †

12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye — the LORD made them both. †

13 Don’t love sleep, or you will become poor; open your eyes, and you’ll have enough to eat. †

14 “It’s worthless, it’s worthless! ” the buyer says, but after he is on his way, he gloats.

15 There is gold and a multitude of jewels, but knowledgeable lips are a rare treasure. †

16 Take his garment, for he has put up security for a stranger; get collateral if it is for foreigners. †

17 Food gained by fraud is sweet to a person, †
but afterward his mouth is full of gravel.

18 Finalize plans with counsel, †
and wage war with sound guidance. †

19 The one who reveals secrets is a constant gossip; †
avoid someone with a big mouth. †

20 Whoever curses his father or mother — †
his lamp will go out in deep darkness. †

21 An inheritance gained prematurely will not be blessed ultimately. †

22 Don't say, "I will avenge this evil! " †
Wait on the LORD, † and he will rescue you. †

23 Differing weights † are detestable to the LORD, †
and dishonest scales † are unfair.

24 Even a courageous person's steps are determined by the LORD, †
so how can anyone understand his own way?

25 It is a trap for anyone to dedicate something rashly and later to reconsider his vows. †

26 A wise king separates out the wicked †
and drives the threshing wheel † over them.

27 The LORD's lamp sheds light on a person's life, †
searching the innermost parts. † †

28 Loyalty and faithfulness guard a king; through loyalty he maintains his throne.

29 The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is gray hair. †

30 Lashes and wounds purge away evil, †
and beatings cleanse the innermost parts. †

20:1 Or *whoever staggers* **20:4** Lit *plow in winter* **20:4** Lit *inquires* **20:10** Lit *Stone and stone, measure and measure* **20:23** Lit *A stone and a stone* **20:27** Lit *breath* **20:27** Lit *the chambers of the belly* **20:30** Lit *beatings the chambers of the belly*
20:1 Gn 9:21; Pr 23:29-30; Is 28:7; Hs 4:11 **20:2** Nm 16:38; Est 4:11; Pr 8:36; 19:12; 28:15; Hab 2:10 **20:3** Pr 17:14 **20:3** Pr 15:18; 18:6; 22:10 **20:4** Pr 24:27,30-34 **20:5** Pr 18:4 **20:6** Ps 53:2-3; Pr 28:20; Ec 7:28; Lk 18:8 **20:7** Pr 2:7,20-21; 10:9; 13:6 **20:7** Ps 37:26; 112:2 **20:8** Pr 20:26; 25:5; Mt 25:32 **20:9** 1Kg 8:46; Jb 15:15-16; Ps 14:2-3; Ec 7:20; Rm 3:9-12; 1Jn 1:8 **20:10** Dt 25:14-15; Pr 11:1; 20:23; Mc 6:10-11 **20:11** Pr 21:8; Mt 7:16 **20:12** Ex 4:11; Ps 94:9; Pr 22:2; 29:13 **20:13** Pr 6:10-11; 19:15; 24:33-34 **20:15** Pr 3:15; 8:11 **20:16** Dt 24:12-13; Pr 6:1-5; 11:15; 27:13 **20:17** Pr 9:17 **20:18** Pr 11:14; 15:22 **20:18** Pr 24:6; Lk 14:31

20:19 Lv 19:16; Pr 11:13 **20:19** Pr 13:3 **20:20** Ex 21:17; Pr 24:20; 30:11 **20:20** Jb 18:5 **20:21** Pr 21:5; 23:5; 28:22; Lk 15:11-13 **20:22** Pr 24:29; Mt 5:39; Rm 12:17,19; 1Th 5:15; 1Pt 3:9 **20:22** Ps 27:14 **20:22** Ps 37:7-9 **20:23** Pr 20:10; Mc 6:11 **20:23** Pr 11:1 **20:24** Pr 16:9,33; 19:21 **20:25** Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Ec 5:4-6 **20:26** Pr 20:8 **20:26** Is 28:27 **20:27** Ps 139:23; Pr 20:30; 1Co 2:11 **20:29** Lv 19:32; Pr 16:31 **20:30** Is 53:5

20:1 This proverb urges caution with respect to alcoholic drinks and directly warns against drunkenness (see also 31:4-7).

20:5 A person's deepest thoughts and feelings are seldom easily sorted, but an understanding person can sometimes draw them out of another.

20:6 There are far fewer **trustworthy** men than those who claim to be so.

20:9 Like other passages of Scripture (e.g., 1Kg 8:46; Ps 14:1-3), this rhetorical question implies that all humans are sinners and are in need of cleansing.

20:11 A wise and godly person can be recognized by **actions.** Claims to have such character are not necessarily true (see v. 6).

20:17 The short-lived pleasures **gained by fraud** will give way to distress.

20:18 Like other proverbs (11:14; 15:22), this one commends the seeking of counsel, especially for major decisions.

20:24 Since God is sovereign over each person's life and his plans will prevail (16:9; 19:21; 21:30), it is impossible for a person to fully understand **his own way.**

20:28 This proverb affirms the importance of **loyalty** and **faithfulness** to the stability of a king's rule and to government (see also 14:34).

20:30 Such productive corporal punishment is more likely when applied to children (13:24; 19:18; 22:15) than to fools (27:22).

PERSONAL FINANCES

The Bible has much to say about money. The topic of money or wealth is addressed well over seventy times in the NT alone. How can a Christian living in the twenty-first century think rightly about finances using principles that were outlined in the first century or earlier? Think about all of the decisions you have made this year that were influenced by how much money you have or lack. Perhaps you chose between coffee at home versus coffee at Starbucks? Maybe you decided between tithing at church or paying off your credit card? It could be that there were days when you just wondered how to buy your next meal. The following offers a quick overview of how the Bible addresses saving money, going into debt, and giving.

TO SAVE OR NOT TO SAVE?

In Matthew 6:26-29, Jesus says, "Consider the birds of the sky: They don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his lifespan by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don't labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned

like one of these." Earlier in the same chapter, Jesus says, "Don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Mt 6:19-20).

These verses seem to discourage a Christian from saving money, but there are also several verses in the Bible that encourage saving. Proverbs 21:20, for instance, says, "Precious treasure and oil are in the dwelling of a wise person, but a fool consumes them." The wisdom of this advice has been proven many times over, such as when the stock market and other investments lose value quickly. During recessions, many people are laid off from jobs they planned to work until retirement. The Bible advocates saving in times of plenty to prepare for times like these.

So what is a Christian to do? Save as much as possible for tomorrow, or give everything away today and trust in the Lord for future provision? Looking at the verses cited above alone, it might seem that we are given contradictory advice. But, in fact, the Bible advocates balance. It is wise to save money each paycheck for unexpected future expenses. It is wise to contribute to a retirement account each month, knowing there may be a day when we are physically incapable of earning a wage. But it is also important not to hoard all of the money or talents God has given us. When we are saving, we must remember that ultimately God is the provider. Remembering that God provided the money makes it easier to give it back to him through tithing or providing for someone else in need. So, save your money for a rainy day, but don't be afraid to spend it if it rains—or to give it away if you see someone else struggling in a downpour.

SHOULD A CHRISTIAN EVER HAVE FINANCIAL DEBT?

According to 2013 statistics from the Federal Reserve, the average American household has about $15,000 in credit card debt, $150,000 in mortgage debt, and $32,000 in outstanding student loans. Many Americans rely on debt to continue their current lifestyle. But debt is a burden that allows past decisions to control our current spending decisions. It can prevent one's ability to be generous. Substantial debt can even hamper your ability to respond to God's call for your vocation. Nevertheless, while the Bible discourages Christians from going into debt, it does not categorically prohibit it (Rm 13:8).

Going into debt to purchase an item is often a poor use of one's resources. Borrowing money to buy something actually makes that purchase more expensive since you have to pay for the full cost of the item and make interest payments until the debt is paid in full. For example, if you financed a $20,000 car over five years with a 10 percent interest rate, it actually costs you $5,500 more than it would have if you'd paid cash. Avoiding debt is one way to do more with the resources God has entrusted to you.

Nevertheless, in the twenty-first-century econ-omy there are situations in which one might have to use debt to purchase a home, pay for education, or pay for a health emergency. It's important to recognize that you can have debt and still be a good steward—so long as you are only borrowing for a need that is manageable to repay. Throughout the Bible, Christians are encouraged to be generous, and we will be more likely to practice generosity if we have avoided entangling ourselves in debt.

HOW SHOULD A CHRISTIAN THINK ABOUT GIVING AND TITHING?

In the NT, the overwhelming expectation with respect to money is generosity. Acts 20:35 admonishes, "In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" So how should a Christian practice tithing and generosity today?

Tithing was strictly required in OT times. All the people of Israel were required to give to the temple 10 percent of everything they earned or grew. There were actually several tithes required that would have made the total giving much higher than the traditional "tithe" of 10 percent (Nm 18; Dt 14). In contrast, the NT does not specify an exact amount or percentage that a Christian should give away, but many scholars believe the minimum practice of the OT sets the baseline. We are told to give generously as we are able in keeping with how we prosper (1Co 16:2). While there may not be an exact formula used to tell us how to

give, the admonishments to generosity are compelling. In Luke 6:30, Jesus tells us, “Give to everyone who asks you, and from someone who takes your things, don’t ask for them back.” In Luke 3:11 he says, “The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same.”

In conclusion, God calls us to be good stewards of the financial assets he blesses us with so that we can seek his wisdom and give generously from what he has given. A Christian can practice that by avoiding debt, saving regularly, and living below his means so he always has something to give. In the end, it is the heart that matters most to God. Second Corinthians 9:7 point to this: “Each person should do as he has decided in his heart—not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver.”

TIMOTHY D. DOCKERY

21 A king’s heart is like channeled water in the LORD’s hand: He directs it wherever he chooses. †

2 All a person’s ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs hearts. †

3 Doing what is righteous and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice. †

4 The lamp that guides the wicked — haughty eyes and an arrogant heart † — is sin.

5 The plans of the diligent certainly lead to profit, but anyone who is reckless certainly becomes poor. †

6 Making a fortune through a lying tongue is a vanishing mist, † a pursuit of death. † † †

7 The violence of the wicked sweeps them away because they refuse to act justly.

8 A guilty one’s conduct is crooked, †
but the behavior of the innocent is upright. †

9 Better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house with a nagging wife. †

10 A wicked person desires evil; he has no consideration † for his neighbor. †

11 When a mocker is punished, the inexperienced become wiser;
when one teaches a wise man,
he acquires knowledge. †

12 The Righteous One † considers the house of the wicked; he brings the wicked to ruin.

13 The one who shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will himself also call out and not be answered. †

14 A secret gift soothes anger, and a covert bribe, fierce rage. †

15 Justice executed is a joy to the righteous but a terror to those who practice iniquity. †

16 The person who strays from the way of prudence will come to rest in the assembly of the departed spirits. †

17 The one who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will not get rich. †

18 The wicked are a ransom for the righteous, and the treacherous, for † the upright. †

19 Better to live in a wilderness than with a nagging and hot-tempered wife. †

20 Precious treasure and oil are in the dwelling of a wise person, but a fool consumes them. † †

21 The one who pursues righteousness and faithful love will find life, righteousness, and honor. †

22 A wise person went up against a city of warriors and brought down its secure fortress. †

23 The one who guards his mouth and tongue keeps himself out of trouble. †

24 The arrogant and proud person, named “Mocker,”
acts with excessive arrogance. †

25 A slacker’s craving will kill him because his hands refuse to work. †
26 He is filled with craving † all day long, but the righteous give and don’t hold back. †

27 The sacrifice of a wicked person is detestable — how much more so
when he brings it with ulterior motives! †

28 A lying witness will perish, †
but the one who listens will speak successfully.

29 A wicked person puts on a bold face, †
but the upright one considers his way.

30 No wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel will prevail against the LORD. †

31 A horse is prepared for the day of battle, †
but victory comes from the LORD. †

21:6 Or *a breath blown away* **21:6** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg read *a snare of death* **21:6** Lit *is vanity, ones seeking death* **21:10** Or *favor* **21:12** Or *righteous one* **21:18** Or *in place of* **21:20** Lit *it* **21:26** Lit *He craves a craving*
21:1 Ezr 6:22 **21:2** Pr 12:15; 16:2; 17:3; 24:12; Lk 16:15 **21:3** 1Sm 15:22; Pr 15:8; Hs 6:6; Mc 6:7-8; Mt 9:13 **21:4** Ps 101:5; Pr 6:16-17; 30:13 **21:5** Pr 10:4; 14:23; 21:20; 28:22 **21:6** Pr 8:36; 13:11; 20:21 **21:8** Pr 2:15 **21:8** Pr 20:11 **21:9** Pr 15:16-17; 17:1; 21:19; 25:24 **21:10** Pr 14:21 **21:11** Pr 19:25 **21:13** Pr 14:31; 17:5; Mt 18:30-34; Jms 2:13; 1Jn 3:17 **21:14** Pr 17:8; 18:16; 19:6 **21:15** Pr 10:29; Rm 13:13 **21:16** Ps 49:14; Pr 2:18; 9:18 **21:17** Ec 2:1-3,10-11 **21:18** Pr 11:8; Is 43:3 **21:19** Pr 21:9 **21:20** Jb 20:15,18; Ps 112:3; Pr 10:4; 28:20; Mt 25:1-13 **21:21** Pr 3:16; 8:18; 15:9; Mt 5:6; 6:33 **21:22** 2Sm 5:6-9; Pr 14:26; 24:5; Ec 7:19; 9:14-18 **21:23** Pr 12:13; 13:3; Jms 3:2 **21:24** Ps 1:1; Pr 1:22; 21:11 **21:25** Pr 10:4; 12:24; 13:4; 19:15,24 **21:26** Ps 37:26; Pr 11:24-25 **21:27** Pr 15:8; 28:9; Is 66:3 **21:28** Pr 19:5,9 **21:29** Pr 7:13 **21:30** Is 8:9-10; 1Co 3:19-20 **21:31** Ps 20:7; 33:17; 108:10-13; Is 31:1 **21:31** Jr 3:23; 1Co 15:57

21:1 God’s sovereignty over every person extends even to the most powerful ones, such as the king (see 19:21; 20:24).

21:3 This proverb parallels 1 Samuel 15:22-23 (see note).

21:9 The theme of the **nagging wife** reappears (see 19:13), and the misery of living with her is vividly described (see also v. 19).

21:16 In other words, those who turn from wisdom will die (see 2:18-19).

21:21 The thought here is similar to Romans 2:7 (see also Pr 22:4).

21:27 In the spirit of verse 3, this proverb forcefully declares the worthlessness of the **sacrifice of a wicked person** (see also the note on Ps 51:16-17).

21:30-31 These proverbs reaffirm God's sovereignty over all human plans and preparation.

22 A good name is to be chosen over great wealth; favor is better than silver
and gold. †

2 Rich and poor have this in common: †
the LORD makes them all. †

3 A sensible person sees danger and takes cover, but the inexperienced
keep going and are punished. †

4 Humility, the fear of the LORD, results in wealth, honor, and life. †

5 There are thorns and snares on the way of the crooked; †
the one who guards himself stays far from them.

6 Start a youth out on his way; †
even when he grows old he will not depart from it.

7 The rich rule over the poor, †
and the borrower is a slave to the lender. †

8 The one who sows injustice will reap disaster, †
and the rod of his fury will be destroyed.

9 A generous person † will be blessed, †
for he shares his food with the poor. †

10 Drive out a mocker, † and conflict goes too; then quarreling and dishonor
will cease. †

11 The one who loves a pure heart and gracious lips — the king is his friend. †

12 The LORD's eyes keep watch over knowledge, but he overthrows the words of the treacherous.

13 The slacker says, "There's a lion outside!
I'll be killed in the public square! " †

14 The mouth of the forbidden woman is a deep pit; a man cursed by the LORD will fall into it. †

15 Foolishness is bound to the heart of a youth; a rod of discipline will separate it from him. †

16 Oppressing the poor to enrich oneself, and giving to the rich — both lead only to poverty. †

WORDS OF THE WISE

17 Listen closely, † pay attention to the words of the wise, †
and apply your mind to my knowledge.
18 For it is pleasing if you keep them within you and if they are † constantly on your lips.
19 I have instructed you today — even you — so that your confidence may be in the LORD.
20 Haven't I written for you thirty sayings †
about counsel and knowledge,
21 in order to teach you true and reliable words, so that you may give a dependable report † †
to those who sent you? †

22 Don't rob a poor person because he is poor, and don't crush the oppressed † at the city gate, †
23 for the LORD will champion their cause †
and will plunder those who plunder them.

24 Don't make friends with an angry person, †

and don't be a companion of a hot-tempered one, †
25 or you will learn his ways †
and entangle yourself in a snare.

26 Don't be one of those who enter agreements, †
who put up security for loans. †
27 If you have nothing with which to pay, even your bed will be taken from under you. †

28 Don't move an ancient boundary marker that your fathers set up. †

29 Do you see a person skilled in his work?
He will stand in the presence of kings.
He will not stand in the presence of the unknown. †

22:2 Lit *poor meet* **22:9** Lit *Good of eye* **22:17** Lit *Stretch out your ear* **22:18** Or *you; let them be*, or *you, so that they are* **22:20** Text emended; one Hb tradition reads *you previously* ; alt Hb tradition reads *you excellent things* ; LXX, Syr, Vg read *you three times* **22:21** Lit *give dependable words* **22:24** Lit *with a master of anger* **22:26** Lit *Don't be among hand slappers*
22:1 Pr 10:7; 8:10; Ec 7:1 **22:2** Jb 31:13,15; Pr 29:13 **22:3** Pr 14:16; 27:12; Is 26:20 **22:4** Pr 15:33; 21:21; 29:23 **22:5** Pr 7:23; 15:19 **22:6** Eph 6:4 **22:7** Pr 18:23; Jms 2:6 **22:7** Dt 28:12-13 **22:8** Jb 4:8; Hs 10:13-14 **22:9** Pr 19:17; 2Co 9:6 **22:9** Lk 14:13-14 **22:10** Gn 21:9-10 **22:10** Pr 26:20 **22:11** Pr 16:13 **22:13** Pr 26:13 **22:14** Pr 2:16-19; 7:5,21,27; 23:27-28; Ec 7:26 **22:15** Pr 13:24; 23:13-14; 29:15 **22:16** Pr 11:24; 22:7; 28:27 **22:17** Pr 5:1 **22:21** Lk 1:3-4 **22:21** Pr 10:26; 25:13 **22:22** Ex 23:6; Jb 31:16; Zch 7:10; Mal 3:5 **22:22** Ru 4:11; Pr 24:7; Zch 8:16 **22:23** 1Sm 25:39; Ps 12:5; 35:10; 68:5; 140:12; Pr 23:10-11; Is 3:13-15 **22:24** Pr 15:18; 19:19 **22:25** 1Co 15:33 **22:26** Pr 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18 **22:27** Ex 22:26; Pr 20:16 **22:28** Dt 19:14; 27:17; Jb 24:2; Pr 23:10; Hs 5:10 **22:29** Gn 41:46; 1Kg 10:8; Pr 14:35

22:1 A **good** reputation and **favor** before others have value greater than wealth.

22:2 This proverb serves as an important reminder that every human has been created equal in the image of God (see the note on Gn 1:26-31).

22:6 There is tremendous importance in teaching **youth**, since they are still in their formative years (see also 19:18). Wise instruction carries influence even to their old age.

22:10 A toxic group environment is sometimes the result of one individual.

22:13 This should be understood as an excuse made by **the slacker** to justify his laziness (see 15:19).

22:14 This proverb recalls the repeated warnings against **the forbidden woman** and her speech earlier in the book (see the notes on 5:3-14; 6:24).

22:15 Parental **discipline** can help rid a child of his innate tendency to **foolishness** and sin (see 19:18; 20:30).

22:17-19 Like Proverbs 30–31, these **words of the wise** may not be Solomonic in origin (see the note on

1:1; 30:1; 31:1). Proverbs 22:17–24:34 depart from the terse, aphoristic style of the preceding chapters and appear to be a distinct section within Proverbs (see also 24:23). This section begins with a call to heed these wise sayings with the purpose of putting **confidence** in God (22:17-19; 23:12).

23 When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what † is
before you, 2 and put a knife to your throat if you have a big † appetite;
3 don't desire his choice food, †
for that food is deceptive.

4 Don't wear yourself out to get rich; †
because you know better, stop!
5 As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears, †
for it makes wings for itself
and flies like an eagle to the sky.

6 Don't eat a stingy person's bread, † †
and don't desire his choice food, †
7 for it's like someone calculating inwardly. † †
"Eat and drink," he says to you,
but his heart is not with you. †
8 You will vomit the little you've eaten and waste your pleasant words.

9 Don't speak to † a fool, for he will despise the insight of your words. †

10 Don't move an ancient boundary marker, †
and don't encroach on the fields of the fatherless, 11 for their Redeemer
is strong, †
and he will champion their cause against you. †

12 Apply yourself to discipline and listen to words of knowledge.

13 Don't withhold discipline from a youth; if you punish him with a rod,
he will not die. †
14 Punish him with a rod, and you will rescue his life from Sheol. †

15 My son, if your heart is wise, my heart will indeed rejoice. †
16 My innermost being will celebrate when your lips say what is right. †

17 Don’t let your heart envy sinners; †
instead, always fear the LORD. †
18 For then you will have a future, and your hope will not be dashed. †

19 Listen, my son, and be wise; keep your mind on the right course.
20 Don’t associate with those who drink too much wine †
or with those who gorge themselves on meat. †
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will become poor, and grogginess will clothe them in rags. †

22 Listen to your father who gave you life, and don’t despise your mother when † she is old. †
23 Buy — and do not sell — truth, wisdom, instruction, and understanding. †
24 The father of a righteous son will rejoice greatly, and one who fathers a wise son will delight in him. †
25 Let your father and mother have joy, †
and let her who gave birth to you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.
27 For a prostitute is a deep pit, †
and a wayward woman is a narrow well;
28 indeed, she sets an ambush like a robber †
and increases the number of unfaithful people.

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has conflicts? Who has complaints?
Who has wounds for no reason? †
Who has red eyes?
30 Those who linger over wine; those who go looking for mixed wine. †
31 Don’t gaze at wine because it is red, †

because it gleams in the cup
and goes down smoothly. †
32 In the end it bites like a snake and stings like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange things, and you will say absurd things. † †
34 You'll be like someone sleeping out at sea or lying down on the top of a ship's mast.
35 "They struck me, but † I feel no pain!
They beat me, but I didn't know it! †
When will I wake up?
I'll look for another drink." †

23:1 Or *who* **23:2** Lit *you are the master of an* **23:6** Lit *eat bread of an evil eye* **23:7** LXX reads *it is like someone swallowing a hair in the throat* **23:9** Lit *in the ears of* **23:22** Or *because* **23:33** Or *will speak perversities*, or *inverted things* **23:35** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *me," you will say, "but*
23:3 Gn 27:4; Pr 23:6; Dn 1:8 **23:4** Pr 15:27; 28:20; Mt 6:19; 1Tm 6:9-10; Heb 13:5 **23:5** Pr 27:24 **23:6** Dt 15:9; Pr 28:22; Mt 6:23 **23:6** Pr 23:3 **23:7** Mt 6:21; Lk 12:34 **23:7** Pr 26:24-25 **23:9** Mt 7:6 **23:10** Pr 22:28 **23:11** Jr 50:34 **23:11** Pr 22:22-23 **23:13** Pr 13:24; 19:18; 22:15 **23:14** 1Co 5:5 **23:15** Pr 10:1; 15:20; 23:24-25; 29:3 **23:16** Pr 8:6 **23:17** Ps 37:1; Pr 24:1,19 **23:17** Pr 28:14 **23:18** Ps 9:18; Pr 10:28; 24:14; Jr 29:11 **23:20** Pr 20:1; 23:29-30; Is 5:22; Mt 24:49; Lk 21:34; Rm 13:13; Eph 5:18 **23:20** Pr 28:7 **23:21** Pr 6:10-11 **23:22** Pr 1:8; 15:20; Eph 6:1 **23:23** Pr 4:5,7; 16:16; 18:15; Mt 13:44 **23:24** Pr 10:1; 23:15; 29:3 **23:25** Pr 27:11 **23:27** Pr 22:14 **23:28** Pr 6:26; 7:12,22-23; Ec 7:26 **23:29** Pr 23:35 **23:30** Is 5:11,22 **23:31** Eph 5:18 **23:31** Sg 7:9 **23:33** Is 28:7 **23:35** Pr 23:29; Jr 5:3 **23:35** Is 56:12

23:1-3 The sumptuous meal described seems to have ulterior motives (v. 3), which is why self-control is especially important in such a situation (see vv. 6-8).

23:4-5 Since wealth is fleeting, one's life should not be consumed with getting **rich.**

23:10-11 Like 22:28, this is a warning against moving an established **boundary marker** for personal gain (Dt 19:14; 27:17). The Lord will see and judge such acts.

23:15-28 The addressing of **my son** (vv. 15,19,26), the command not to **envy sinners** but to **fear the LORD** (v. 17), the exhortation to obey parental **instruction** (vv. 22-25), and the warning against the **prostitute** (vv. 26-28) recall themes from Proverbs 1–9 (see the notes on 1:7,8-10; 2:1,16-19).

23:33-35 These verses vividly describe the loss of normal faculties due to drunkenness, which is to be avoided (vv. 20-21,31-32).

24 Don't envy the evil †
or desire to be with them, †
2 for their hearts plan violence, and their words stir up trouble. †

3 A house is built by wisdom, †

and it is established by understanding;
4 by knowledge the rooms are filled with every precious and beautiful treasure.

5 A wise warrior is better than a strong one, †
and a man of knowledge than one of strength; † †
6 for you should wage war with sound guidance — victory comes with many counselors. †

7 Wisdom is inaccessible to † a fool; †
he does not open his mouth at the city gate. †

8 The one who plots evil †
will be called a schemer.
9 A foolish scheme is sin, and a mocker is detestable to people.

10 If you do nothing in a difficult time, your strength is limited.
11 Rescue those being taken off to death, and save those stumbling toward slaughter. †
12 If you say, “But we didn’t know about this,”
won’t he who weighs hearts † consider it?
Won’t he who protects your life † know?
Won’t he repay a person according to his work? †

13 Eat honey, † my son, for it is good, and the honeycomb is sweet to your palate; †
14 realize that wisdom is the same for you. †
If you find it, you will have a future,
and your hope will never fade. †

15 Don’t set an ambush, you wicked one, at the camp of the righteous man; †
don’t destroy his dwelling.
16 Though a righteous person falls seven times, he will get up, †
but the wicked will stumble into ruin. †

17 Don’t gloat when your enemy falls, and don’t let your heart rejoice
when he stumbles, †
18 or the LORD will see, be displeased, and turn his wrath away from him.

19 Don’t be agitated by evildoers, and don’t envy the wicked. †
20 For the evil have no future; †
the lamp of the wicked will be put out. †

21 My son, fear the LORD, as well as the king, †
and don’t associate with rebels, †
22 for destruction will come suddenly from them; who knows what distress
these two can bring?

23 These sayings also belong to the wise: †

It is not good to show partiality in judgment. †
24 Whoever says to the guilty, “You are innocent” † — peoples will curse
him, † and nations will denounce him; 25 but it will go well with those
who convict the guilty, and a generous blessing will come to them.

26 He who gives an honest answer gives a kiss on the lips.

27 Complete your outdoor work, and prepare your field; †
afterward, build your house.

28 Don’t testify against your neighbor without cause. †
Don’t deceive with your lips.
29 Don’t say, “I’ll do to him what he did to me; I’ll repay the man for what
he has done.” †

30 I went by the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of one lacking sense.
31 Thistles had come up everywhere, weeds covered the ground, †
and the stone wall was ruined.
32 I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction:

33 a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest,
34 and your poverty will come like a robber, and your need, like a bandit. †

24:5 LXX, Syr; MT reads *one is in strength* **24:5** LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *knowledge exerts strength* **24:7** Lit *is too high for* **24:21** Or *those given to change*
24:1 Ps 37:1; Pr 23:17; 24:19 **24:1** Ps 1:1; Pr 1:15 **24:2** Ps 10:7 **24:3** Pr 14:1 **24:5** Pr 21:22 **24:6** Pr 11:14; 15:22; 20:18 **24:7** Pr 14:6; 17:16,24 **24:7** Jb 5:4; Ps 127:5 **24:8** Rm 1:30 **24:11** Ps 82:4; Is 58:6-7 **24:12** 1Sm 16:7; Ps 44:21; Pr 21:2 **24:12** Ps 121:3-8 **24:12** Jb 34:11; Ps 62:12 **24:13** Pr 25:16 **24:13** Sg 5:1 **24:14** Ps 19:10; 119:103 **24:14** Pr 10:28; 23:18; Jr 29:11 **24:15** Pr 10:9-10 **24:16** Jb 5:19; Ps 37:24 **24:16** Pr 14:32; 29:16 **24:17** Ps 35:15,19; Pr 17:5; Ob 12; Mc 7:8 **24:19** Ps 37:1; Pr 23:17; 24:1 **24:20** Ps 37:38; Pr 14:11; 16:25 **24:20** Jb 18:5; 21:17; Pr 13:9; 20:20 **24:21** Mt 22:21; Rm 13:1-7; 1Pt 2:13-14,17 **24:23** Pr 1:6; 22:17 **24:23** Dt 1:17; 16:19; Pr 18:5; 28:21 **24:24** Pr 17:15 **24:24** Pr 11:26 **24:27** Pr 20:4 **24:28** Ex 20:16; Pr 25:18 **24:29** Dt 32:35; Pr 20:22; Mt 5:39; Rm 12:17,19 **24:31** Gn 3:18; Pr 20:4 **24:34** Pr 6:10-11; 20:13

24:7 The **fool** cannot understand **wisdom**, perhaps because his mind is so badly warped (see 28:5).

24:14 Wisdom holds promise for a blessed **future** and **hope** (see the note on 3:13-18). These two Hebrew words are also used together in 23:18 (see also Jr 29:11; 31:17).

24:16 Presumably because he is upheld by God, the **righteous man** will **get up** again even though he may fall **seven times.**

24:19-20 For a third time in this context (v. 1; 23:17), readers are instructed not to **envy the wicked.** Unlike the wise (see the note on v. 14), they have **no future** (see Ps 1:4-5; 37:1,9,38).

24:21-22 Respect for divine and human government is urged here, along the general lines of Romans 13.

24:23 The **sayings** had begun in 22:17 and continue from here to the end of the chapter (see 25:1).

24:27 This saying may concern prioritizing what is necessary over what is merely desirable.

HEZEKIAH'S COLLECTION

25 These too are proverbs of Solomon, †
which the men of King Hezekiah † of Judah, copied.

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter †
and the glory of kings to investigate a matter.
3 As the heavens are high and the earth is deep, so the hearts of kings cannot be investigated.

4 Remove impurities from silver, †
and material will be produced † for a silversmith. † †
5 Remove the wicked from the king's presence, †
and his throne will be established in righteousness. †

6 Don’t boast about yourself before the king, and don’t stand in the place
of the great; 7 for it is better for him to say to you, “Come up here! ”
than to demote you in plain view of a noble. † †

8 Don’t take a matter to court hastily. †
Otherwise, what will you do afterward
if your opponent † humiliates you?
9 Make your case with your opponent without revealing another’s secret; †
10 otherwise, the one who hears will disgrace you, and you’ll never
live it down. †

11 A word spoken at the right time is like gold apples in silver settings. †
12 A wise correction to a receptive ear †
is like a gold ring or an ornament of gold.

13 To those who send him, a trustworthy envoy is like the coolness of snow
on a harvest day; he refreshes the life of his masters. †

14 The one who boasts about a gift that does not exist is like clouds and wind
without rain. †
15 A ruler can be persuaded through patience, and a gentle tongue can break
a bone. †
16 If you find honey, † eat only what you need; otherwise, you’ll get sick
from it and vomit. †
17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor’s house; otherwise, he’ll get sick of you
and hate you.

18 A person giving false testimony against his neighbor †
is like a club, a sword, or a sharp arrow. †
19 Trusting an unreliable person in a difficult time is like a rotten tooth
or a faltering foot. †

20 Singing songs to a troubled heart is like taking off clothing on a cold day or
like pouring vinegar on soda. † †

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him
water to drink; †

22 for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you. †

23 The north wind produces rain, and a backbiting tongue, angry looks.

24 Better to live on the corner of a roof than to share a house
with a nagging wife. †

25 Good news from a distant land is like cold water to a parched throat. † †

26 A righteous person who yields to the wicked †
is like a muddied spring or a polluted well. †

27 It is not good to eat too much honey †
or to seek glory after glory. † †

28 A person who does not control his temper †
is like a city whose wall is broken down. †

25:4 Lit *will come out* ; Ex 32:24 **25:4** Or *and a vessel will be produced by a silversmith* **25:7** Lit *you before a noble whom your eyes see* **25:8** Or *neighbor*, also in v. 9 **25:10** Lit *and your evil report will not turn back* **25:20** Lit *natron*, or *sodium carbonate* **25:25** Or *a weary person* **25:27** Lit *seek their glory, glory*
25:1 Pr 1:1 **25:1** 2Kg 18–20 **25:2** Dt 29:29; Rm 11:33 **25:4** Ezk 22:18; Mal 3:2-3 **25:4** 2Tm 2:21 **25:5** Pr 20:8,26 **25:5** Pr 16:12 **25:7** Lk 14:7-11 **25:8** Pr 17:14; Mt 5:25; 1Co 6:7 **25:9** Pr 17:9; Mt 18:15 **25:11** Pr 8:10; 15:23; 16:16 **25:12** Pr 15:31 **25:13** Pr 13:17; 16:24; 25:25 **25:14** Jd 12 **25:15** Pr 15:1; 16:14,32; Ec 10:4 **25:16** Jdg 14:8; 1Sm 14:25 **25:16** Pr 25:27 **25:18** Ex 20:16; Pr 24:28 **25:18** Ps 57:4; Pr 12:18 **25:19** 2Kg 18:21 **25:20** Rm 12:15 **25:21** Ex 23:4-5; 2Kg 6:22; 2Ch 28:15; Mt 5:44; Rm 12:20 **25:22** Mt 6:4 **25:24** Pr 15:17; 17:1; 21:9,19 **25:25** Pr 15:30 **25:26** Dt 13:6-8; Gl 2:4-5 **25:26** Ezk 32:2; 34:18-19 **25:27** Pr 25:16 **25:27** Pr 27:2 **25:28** Pr 16:32; 29:11 **25:28** Neh 1:3

25:1 Following the words of the wise (22:17–24:34), the book returns to the **proverbs of Solomon** (see 10:1). **Hezekiah** was a descendant of Solomon who ruled Judah several generations later (see Mt 1:7-10).

25:6-7 The instruction not to exalt oneself so as to avoid humiliation and leave room for being recognized is similar to Jesus's teaching in Luke 14:7-11.

25:16-17 Both proverbs urge restraint because too much of some things can be a bad thing (see v. 27).

25:20 Insensitivity makes the sorrowful feel even worse.

25:21-22 Rather than avenging oneself, this proverb commands showing kindness to enemies (see 20:22; 24:17-18). God will act justly (Rm 12:19-20).

25:26 Giving in **to the wicked** ruins a **righteous person** so that rather than being a pure spring, he

becomes like a **polluted well** (see 1Th 5:22).

25:28 Such a defenseless city depicts a short-tempered man's vulnerability to agitation and trouble.

26 Like snow in summer and rain at harvest, †
honor is inappropriate for a fool. †
2 Like a flitting sparrow or a fluttering swallow, †
an undeserved curse goes nowhere. †
3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, †
and a rod for the backs of fools. †
4 Don't answer a fool according to his foolishness †
or you'll be like him yourself.
5 Answer a fool according to his foolishness †
or he'll become wise in his own eyes. †
6 The one who sends a message by a fool's hand †
cuts off his own feet and drinks violence. †
7 A proverb in the mouth of a fool is like lame legs that hang limp.
8 Giving honor to a fool is like binding a stone in a sling.
9 A proverb in the mouth of a fool is like a stick with thorns,
brandished by † the hand of a drunkard.
10 The one who hires a fool or who hires those passing by is like an archer who wounds everyone.
11 As a dog returns to its vomit, so also a fool repeats his foolishness. †
12 Do you see a person who is wise in his own eyes? †
There is more hope for a fool than for him. †

13 The slacker says, "There's a lion in the road — a lion in the public square! " †
14 A door turns on its hinges, and a slacker, on his bed. †
15 The slacker buries his hand in the bowl; he is too weary to bring it to his mouth! †
16 In his own eyes, a slacker is wiser †
than seven who can answer sensibly.

17 A person who is passing by and meddles in a quarrel that's not his is like one who grabs a dog by the ears.
18 Like a madman who throws flaming darts and deadly arrows, †
19 so is the person who deceives his neighbor and says, "I was only joking! "

20 Without wood, fire goes out; without a gossip, conflict dies down. †
21 As charcoal for embers and wood for fire, so is a quarrelsome person for kindling strife. †
22 A gossip's words are like choice food that goes down to one's innermost being. † †

23 Smooth † lips with an evil heart are like glaze on an earthen vessel. †
24 A hateful person disguises himself with his speech and harbors deceit within.
25 When he speaks graciously, don't believe him, for there are seven detestable things in his heart. †
26 Though his hatred is concealed by deception, his evil will be revealed in the assembly.
27 The one who digs a pit will fall into it, and whoever rolls a stone — it will come back on him. †
28 A lying tongue hates those it crushes, and a flattering mouth causes ruin.

26:9 Lit *thorn that goes up into* **26:22** Lit *to the chambers of the belly* **26:23** LXX; MT reads *Burning* **26:1** 1Sm 12:17 **26:1** Pr 17:7; 19:10 **26:2** Pr 27:8 **26:2** Nm 23:8; Dt 23:5; 2Sm 16:12 **26:3** Ps 32:9 **26:3** Pr 10:13; 19:29 **26:4** Pr 23:9; 29:9; Mt 7:6; Lk 23:9 **26:5** Mt 16:1-4; 21:24-27 **26:5** Pr 26:12; 28:11; Rm 12:16 **26:6** Pr 10:26; 25:13 **26:6** Pr 13:2 **26:11** 2Pt 2:22 **26:12** Pr 3:7; 26:5; Rm 12:16 **26:12** Pr 29:20 **26:13** Pr 22:13 **26:14** Pr 6:9-10; 19:15 **26:15** Pr 12:27; 19:24 **26:16** Pr 26:5,12; 28:11 **26:18** Is 50:11 **26:20** Pr 16:28; 22:10 **26:21** Pr 15:18 **26:22** Pr 18:8 **26:23** Mt 23:27; Lk 11:39 **26:25** Ps 28:3 **26:27** Est 7:10; Jb 4:8; Pr 28:10; Dn 6:24; Mt 26:52

26:4-5 This pair of proverbs suggests that sometimes it is wise not to **answer a fool** at all while at other times it is wise to confront **his foolishness.** We see again that wisdom not only helps one know what to do but—and sometimes more importantly—know when to do it.

26:11 Characteristic of **a fool** is his inability to learn (see 27:22), presumably even from his own mistakes.

26:16 Despite his obvious flaws, a **slacker** is wise **in his own eyes** (see v. 12).

26:17 Meddling in another's **quarrel** incites further trouble.

26:20-22 Hearing **gossip** may bring a degree of pleasure (v. 22; 18:8), but it brings **conflict** (v. 20) and broken relationships (16:28).

26:23-28 These verses warn against a smooth talker who sounds good but has evil motives. His hatred and

his lying go together (vv. 24-26,28).

27 Don’t boast about tomorrow, for you don’t know what a day might bring. †

2 Let another praise you, and not your own mouth — a stranger, and not your own lips. †

3 A stone is heavy and sand, a burden, but aggravation from a fool outweighs them both.

4 Fury is cruel, and anger a flood, but who can withstand jealousy? †

5 Better an open reprimand than concealed love. †

6 The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, †
but the kisses of an enemy are excessive. †

7 A person who is full tramples on a honeycomb, †
but to a hungry person, any bitter thing is sweet.

8 Anyone wandering from his home is like a bird wandering from its nest. †

9 Oil † and incense bring joy to the heart, and the sweetness of a friend is better than self-counsel. †

10 Don’t abandon your friend or your father’s friend, †
and don’t go to your brother’s house
in your time of calamity;
better a neighbor nearby than a brother far away. †

11 Be wise, my son, and bring my heart joy, †
so that I can answer anyone who taunts me. †

12 A sensible person sees danger and takes cover; the inexperienced keep going and are punished. †

13 Take his garment, for he has put up security for a stranger; get collateral
if it is for foreigners. † †

14 If one blesses his neighbor with a loud voice early in the morning,
it will be counted as a curse to him.

15 An endless dripping on a rainy day and a nagging wife are alike; †
16 the one who controls her controls the wind and grasps oil with his right hand.

17 Iron sharpens iron, and one person sharpens another. †

18 Whoever tends a fig tree † will eat its fruit, †
and whoever looks after his master will be honored.

19 As water reflects the face, so the heart reflects the person.

20 Sheol and Abaddon † are never satisfied, †
and people's eyes are never satisfied. †

21 A crucible refines silver, a smelter refines gold, and a person
refines his praise. †

22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with grain, you will
not separate his foolishness from him. †

23 Know well the condition of your flock, †
and pay attention to your herds,
24 for wealth is not forever; †
not even a crown lasts for all time.
25 When hay is removed and new growth appears and the grain from the hills
is gathered in, 26 lambs will provide your clothing, and goats, the price
of a field;
27 there will be enough goat's milk for your food — food for your household
and nourishment for your female servants. †

27:9 LXX reads *heart, but the soul is torn up by affliction* **27:13** Lit *a foreign woman* **27:17** Lit *and a man*

sharpens his friend's face
27:1 Lk 12:19-20; Jms 4:13-14 **27:2** Pr 25:27; 2Co 10:12,18; 12:11 **27:4** Pr 6:34 **27:5** Pr 28:23 **27:6** Ps 141:5 **27:6** Lk 22:48 **27:7** Pr 25:16 **27:8** Pr 26:2 **27:9** Ps 23:5 **27:10** 2Sm 10:2 **27:10** Pr 17:17 **27:11** Pr 10:1; 23:24-25; 29:3 **27:11** Ps 119:42; 127:5 **27:12** Pr 22:3 **27:13** Pr 6:1-5; 11:15; 20:16 **27:15** Pr 19:13 **27:18** Am 7:14 **27:18** Sg 8:12; 1Co 3:8; 9:7; 2Tm 2:6 **27:20** Jb 26:6; Pr 15:11 **27:20** Pr 30:15-16; Hab 2:5 **27:20** Ec 1:8; 4:8 **27:21** Pr 16:2; 17:3 **27:22** Pr 23:35; 26:11; Jr 5:3 **27:23** Ezk 34:12; Jn 10:3,14; Ac 20:28 **27:24** Lk 16:9 **27:27** Pr 31:15

27:1 The uncertainty about **tomorrow** should prevent one from boasting about the future, as echoed by James 4:13-16.

27:2 Although it is tempting to boast (especially when not being recognized), this proverb urges restraint.

27:6 Examples of this concept include a wise rebuke that may be unpleasant at first, or flattery from a person with ulterior motives.

27:8 This difficult proverb has been taken variously. Some believe it simply illustrates departure from a homeland; others see it as describing neglect of responsibility.

27:14 This proverb is a vivid reminder that even good things need to be shared in appropriate ways at the proper time.

27:16 In other words, a nagging wife can't be controlled (see also note on 21:9).

27:17 This well-known proverb speaks to the mutual benefits of godly fellowship (see also Heb 3:13; 10:24).

27:20 The insatiable appetite of death and the grave (see 30:15-16) is likened to that of the **eyes** of men, especially those driven by greed (Ec 1:8; 4:8).

27:21 Being praised by others indeed tests a person's character. For example, will this person become proud, or be controlled by the desire to be praised?

27:22 This humorous proverb speaks again to the fool's refusal to turn from **foolishness** (see 17:10; 26:11).

28 The wicked flee when no one is pursuing them, †
but the righteous are as bold as a lion. †

2 When a land is in rebellion, it has many rulers, †
but with a discerning and knowledgeable person, it endures.

3 A destitute leader † who oppresses the poor is like a driving rain that leaves
no food. †

4 Those who reject the law praise the wicked, †
but those who keep the law pit themselves against them. †

5 The evil do not understand justice, †

but those who seek the LORD understand everything. †

6 Better the poor person who lives with integrity †
than the rich one who distorts right and wrong. † †

7 A discerning son keeps the law, but a companion of gluttons humiliates his father. †

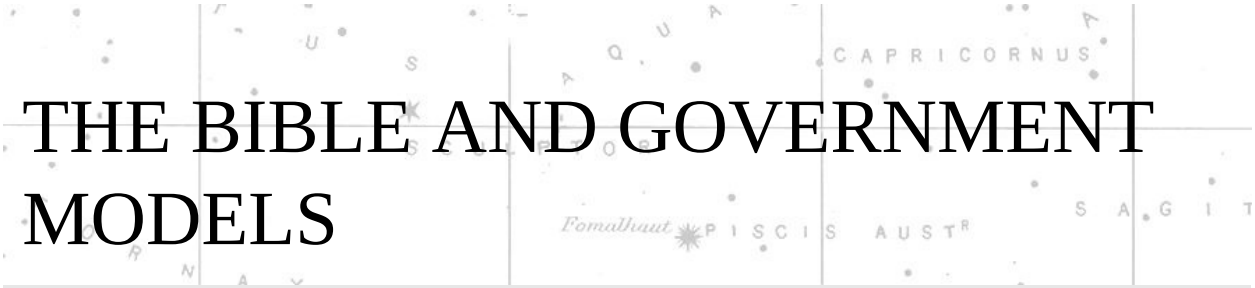
8 Whoever increases his wealth through excessive interest †
collects it for one who is kind to the poor. †

9 Anyone who turns his ear away from hearing the law — even his prayer is detestable. †

10 The one who leads the upright into an evil way will fall into his own pit, †
but the blameless will inherit what is good. †

11 A rich person is wise in his own eyes, but a poor one who has discernment sees through him.

12 When the righteous triumph, there is great rejoicing, †
but when the wicked come to power,
people hide. †



THE BIBLE AND GOVERNMENT MODELS

As with so many topics, a Christian understanding and evaluation of government begins with the book of Genesis. What is the purpose of government? What needs do governments meet and how should they serve? Once we understand the biblical foundation for government, we will be able to assess any particular form of it.

The creation account reveals four foundational truths for any Christian understanding of politics and government. First, everything comes from the hand of Creator God, and this includes any sort of authority.

The words “in the beginning God” are not only the words that open the Scriptures; they should ground all Christian thinking (Gn 1:1). This is particularly true for political thinking, as few vocations are as susceptible to the temptations of pride and idolatry as governance.

Second, men and women are created in God’s image (Gn 1:27). God declares all of his creation to be good, but only humans bear the image of God and thus enjoy a particularly special relationship with him. This relationship between God and humankind sets us apart from the rest of creation with regard to our dignity and our responsibilities.

Third, the first problem described in Scripture is not that Adam and Eve disobeyed God, but that it is not good for man to be alone (Gn 2:18). This tells us that God created humans not only to be in proper relationship with him, but also with one another. We are created to walk with our Creator and with each other, and we see this truth reflected in the greatest commandment and the second greatest, which is like it (Mt 22:37-40).

Fourth, beginning with Adam and Eve’s disobedience, humans have rebelled against God (Gn 3). The doctrine of the fall describes how our originally good nature, authored by God, has become corrupted by sin and selfish desires in such a way that our relationships are damaged beyond our power to repair (Rm 7:23; 3:23). We see our vertical relationship with God damaged in Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the garden, and we see other tragic consequences of their rebellion in the horizontal fracturing of human brotherhood in Cain’s slaying of Abel.

These four foundational truths describe the fundamental groundwork for human relations and politics. We are made by God and in his image; thus, we humans are sacred. We are called to live together in harmony, yet our rebellion makes relating to God and getting along well and consistently with each other impossible in our own power. God’s solution to our brokenness is found in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and through his resurrection from the dead, as prophesied in Genesis and attested to in the Gospels (Gn 3:15; Jn 3:16). We wait, along with all of creation, for the culmination of this work when the risen Messiah will return in glory (Rm 8:19-23).

GOVERNMENT’S TEMPORARY ROLE

Since this plan of salvation is God’s ultimate solution, human government plays but a temporal role in restraining evil and promoting the good in the meantime. It exists between the sin of the first Adam and the return of the second Adam, Jesus Christ (Rm 5:12-21; 13:1-6). While Christians differ as to the proper role of government, most agree that the Scriptures portray government as a God-ordained institution, citing Jesus’s Matthew 22:15-22 distinction between what belongs to Caesar (coins bearing Caesar’s image) and what belongs to God (humans bearing God’s image), and Paul’s affirmation that governing authorities are instituted by God for our good (Rm 13:1-7). This idea is echoed by Peter in 1 Peter 2:13. Paul reveals a central purpose of government in his letter to Timothy, urging “that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, for kings and all those who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1Tm 2:1-2). We pray for political authorities so that we may lead peaceful lives.

We are now in a position to apply the four foundational truths to our thinking about governmental models and politics generally.

First, if God really is first and foremost, as the opening line of Genesis attests, then any government that attempts to usurp God’s place runs afoul of its purpose. Christians should be wary of any governing philosophy that denies God or sets itself up in his rightful place. We should pray for the governing authorities so that we may have peace, but if there is no peace and we are forced to choose, “we must obey God rather than people” (Ac 5:29).

Second, since people are made in God’s image, each individual has intrinsic value. Governments are meant to protect people and promote their good. Governments exist for the sake of humans. They should not act as if citizens are expendable.

Third, as sure as God declared of Adam’s lone state that “it is not good” (Gn 2:18), God has created

humans to live together—not to exist as loners. We see this in God's plan for marriage and family as well as in his design of the church, his bride. We pray to "*our* Father in heaven," asking him to "give *us* today *our* daily bread" (Mt 6:9,11, emphasis added). One purpose of governments, then, is to protect society so that humans can flourish through their interactions in families, marriages, churches, clubs, and charities. Whether in principle or practice, a governing philosophy that unduly interferes with the various social spheres is a cause for concern.

Fourth, perhaps no Christian doctrine is more obvious to common-sense observation than the doctrine of the fall. Humans are selfish creatures, and we are often motivated to do the right thing more by the prospect of punishment than we are by what is intrinsically right. It follows that governments are to restrain human wickedness. Moreover, given that God's ultimate solution for human sin is Jesus's work on the cross, any political philosophy that denies the fall or purports to solve human evil once and for all is bound to fail. It's also likely to leave a trail of misery and suffering in its wake.

CHRISTIANITY AND GOVERNMENT MODELS

Given these benchmark principles from Scripture, how should Christians evaluate the various government models on offer? In the last one hundred and fifty years or so, we have seen the rise and fall of several political approaches. These include communism, socialism, monarchy, constitutional democracy, fascism, and Islamic fundamentalism.

The first place we look for guidance on these issues is Scripture, yet here we encounter a difficulty, for, unlike the OT, the NT does not address the particulars of a governmental system. There we learn a great deal about how to relate to political authority, and we can know that God authorizes governments, but we do not find anything there that could serve as a political blueprint. Nevertheless, God in his wisdom has given us political ends to aim for, such as peace and justice, while leaving much of the means up to us (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 79).

This does not mean that we cannot make informed judgments about governing models. Communism, for example, denies God's existence and original sin even as it purports to create a version of heaven on earth. Fascism elevates the state to a position of ultimate importance in society, usurping God's rightful place and subjecting the importance of individuals made in God's image to the needs of an all-important government. A fundamentalist Islamic regime rules out Christianity altogether, and in practice has not treated people as intrinsically valuable. These approaches clearly violate the biblical principles articulated.

Assessing other models of government proves more complex. Strictly speaking, socialism is not a governing philosophy; rather, it advocates a collective economic arrangement for any given government. Monarchy has clear biblical roots, but is also accompanied by significant dangers—as seen both in Western history and in the biblical record. Constitutional democracy is consistent with a biblical approach to politics, though as a political system its manifestation of the will of the people will only be as just and good as the people who give it its power. Representative democracy depends on the people, and people are fallen.

Recognizing biblical principles as they apply to politics and government does not offer all the conclusions we might want with regard to current political systems and controversies, but it is a start. God's Word gives us the means to evaluate the political world and governments large and small.

MICAH J. WATSON

13 The one who conceals his sins will not prosper, †
but whoever confesses and renounces them will find mercy. †

14 Happy is the one who is always reverent, †

but one who hardens his heart falls into trouble. †

15 A wicked ruler over a helpless people †
is like a roaring lion or a charging bear. †

16 A leader who lacks understanding is very oppressive,
but one who hates dishonest profit
prolongs his life. †

17 Someone burdened by bloodguilt †
will be a fugitive until death. †
Let no one help him. †

18 The one who lives with integrity will be helped, but one who distorts right and wrong †
will suddenly fall. †

19 The one who works his land will have plenty of food, †
but whoever chases fantasies
will have his fill of poverty. †

20 A faithful person will have many blessings, †
but one in a hurry to get rich †
will not go unpunished.

21 It is not good to show partiality † — yet even a courageous person may sin for a piece of bread. †

22 A greedy one † is in a hurry for wealth; he doesn't know that poverty will come to him. †

23 One who rebukes a person will later find more favor †
than one who flatters † with his tongue. †

24 The one who robs his father or mother †
and says, “That’s no sin,” †
is a companion to a person who destroys. †

25 A greedy person stirs up conflict, †
but whoever trusts in the LORD will prosper. †

26 The one who trusts in himself † is a fool, but one who walks in wisdom
will be safe. †

27 The one who gives to the poor will not be in need,
but one who turns his eyes away †
will receive many curses. †

28 When the wicked come to power, people hide,
but when they are destroyed,
the righteous flourish. †

28:3 LXX reads *A wicked man* **28:6** Lit *who twists two ways* **28:12** Lit *glory* **28:17** Lit *the blood of a person* **28:18** Lit *who is twisted regarding two ways* **28:22** Lit *A man with an evil eye* **28:23** Lit *is smooth* **28:26** Lit *his heart* **28:27** Lit *who shuts his eyes*
28:1 Lv 26:17; Ps 53:5 **28:1** Eph 6:19-20 **28:2** 1Kg 16:8-28; 2Kg 15:8-15 **28:3** Ex 9:25 **28:4** Rm 1:32 **28:4** 1Kg 18:18; Neh 13:11,15; Mt 3:7; 14:4; Eph 5:11 **28:5** Ps 92:6 **28:5** Ps 119:100; Jn 7:17; 1Co 2:15; Jms 1:5; 1Jn 2:20,27 **28:6** Pr 19:1; 20:7 **28:6** Pr 16:8,19; 19:22; Is 5:20 **28:7** Dt 21:20; Pr 17:25; 23:20; 29:3 **28:8** Ex 22:25; Lv 25:36 **28:8** Jb 27:17; Pr 13:22; Ec 2:26; Ezk 18:13,17 **28:9** Ps 109:7; Pr 15:8,29; 21:27 **28:10** Ps 7:15; Pr 16:29; 26:27; Mt 18:6 **28:10** Mt 5:6 **28:12** Pr 11:10; 28:28; 29:2; Ec 10:5-6 **28:13** Jb 31:33; Ps 32:3 **28:13** Ps 32:5; Jms 5:16; 1Jn 1:9 **28:14** 2Ch 19:7; Pr 23:17 **28:14** Ps 95:8 **28:15** Ex 1:14; Pr 29:2; Mt 2:16 **28:15** Pr 19:12; 1Pt 5:8 **28:16** 1Kg 12:1-19; Ps 15:5; Pr 15:27 **28:17** Gn 4:14; 9:6; Ex 21:14 **28:17** Nm 35:31 **28:18** Pr 2:7; 10:9; 20:7 **28:19** Pr 24:27 **28:19** Pr 1:31; 12:11,14; 14:14 **28:20** Pr 10:6; Mt 25:21 **28:20** Pr 20:21; 28:22; 1Tm 6:9 **28:21** Pr 18:5; 24:23 **28:21** Ezk 13:19 **28:22** Pr 13:11; 20:21; 21:5; 22:16 **28:23** Pr 27:5-6 **28:23** Pr 26:28; 29:5 **28:24** Pr 19:6 **28:24** Pr 30:20; Mk 7:11 **28:24** Pr 18:9 **28:25** Pr 15:18 **28:25** Ps 37:3-5; Pr 3:5-6; Jr 17:7-8 **28:26** Pr 3:5-7 **28:27** Pr 11:24; 19:17; 22:16 **28:28** Pr 28:12; 29:2

28:5 Their own wickedness prevents **the evil** from understanding **justice**, whereas **those who seek the LORD understand** not only justice but **everything** (see 1:7).

28:8 The taking of **excessive interest** from poor Israelites is repeatedly forbidden in the Pentateuch (Ex 22:25; Lv 25:36-37; Dt 23:19-20). For other proverbs that concern the treatment of the **poor**, see the note on 17:5.

28:9 The context is unique in Proverbs in that it mentions **the law** (or, “instruction”) several times in a short space (Hb *torah*; see vv. 4,7). Scripture is in view in the present verse (see also 15:8), as is the case in verse 4 and perhaps also verse 7. Along with 29:18 and 30:5-6, these verses contribute to an emphasis on

Scripture toward the end of the book of Proverbs. Although *torah* is translated “teaching” earlier (see 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20,23; 7:2), this Hebrew word frames the book and is used in close association with wisdom throughout (see also 31:26; Dt 4:6).

28:13 Forgiveness is promised for those who confess and repent of sin but not for those who hide or deny it (see 1Jn 1:8-10).

28:25-26 These two proverbs contrast the foolishness of trusting in oneself with the wisdom of trusting in God.

29 One who becomes stiff-necked, after many reprimands
will be shattered instantly —
beyond recovery. †

2 When the righteous flourish, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, people groan. †

3 A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father, †
but one who consorts with prostitutes destroys his wealth. †

4 By justice a king brings stability to a land, †
but a person who demands “contributions” †
demolishes it. †

5 A person who flatters † his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. †

6 An evil person is caught by sin, †
but the righteous one sings and rejoices. †

7 The righteous person knows the rights † of the poor, †
but the wicked one does not understand these concerns.

8 Mockers inflame a city, †
but the wise turn away anger.

9 If a wise person goes to court with a fool, there will be ranting and raving but no resolution. † †

10 Bloodthirsty men hate an honest person, †
but the upright care about him. †

11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, † †
but a wise person holds it in check. †

12 If a ruler listens to lies, †
all his officials will be wicked.

13 The poor and the oppressor have this in common: †
the LORD gives light to the eyes of both. †

14 A king who judges the poor with fairness — his throne will be established forever. †

15 A rod of correction imparts wisdom, †
but a youth left to himself †
is a disgrace to his mother. †

16 When the wicked increase, rebellion increases, but the righteous will see their downfall. †

17 Discipline your child, † and it will bring you peace of mind and give you delight.

18 Without revelation † † people run wild, †
but one who follows divine instruction will be happy. †

19 A servant cannot be disciplined by words; though he understands, he doesn't respond. †

20 Do you see someone who speaks too soon? †
There is more hope for a fool than for him. †

21 A servant pampered from his youth will become arrogant † later on.

22 An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered one †
increases rebellion. †

23 A person's pride will humble him, †
but a humble spirit will gain honor. †

24 To be a thief's partner is to hate oneself; he hears the curse but
will not testify. †

25 The fear of mankind is a snare, †
but the one who trusts in the LORD is protected. † †

26 Many desire a ruler's favor, †
but a person receives justice from the LORD. †

27 An unjust person is detestable to the righteous, and one whose way is upright
is detestable to the wicked. †

29:4 The Hb word for *contributions* usually refers to offerings in worship. **29:5** Lit *is smooth on* **29:7** Lit *justice* **29:9** Lit *rest* **29:10** Or *person, and seek the life of the upright* **29:11** Lit *spirit* **29:13** Lit *oppressor meet* **29:15** Lit *youth sent away* **29:18** Lit *vision* **29:21** Hb obscure **29:22** Lit *a master of rage* **29:25** Lit *raised high*
29:1 Pr 1:24-31; 6:14-15 **29:2** Ex 2:23; Est 8:15; Pr 11:10; 28:12,28 **29:3** Pr 10:1; 15:20; 23:24-25; 27:11; 28:7 **29:3** Pr 5:9-10; 6:26; Lk 15:13,30 **29:4** 2Ch 9:8; Pr 29:14 **29:4** Pr 17:23 **29:5** Pr 26:28; 27:6; 28:23 **29:6** Pr 12:13; 18:7; Ec 9:12 **29:6** Ex 15:1 **29:7** Jb 29:16; Ps 41:1 **29:8** Pr 11:11; 26:21; 29:22 **29:9** Pr 26:4 **29:10** Gn 4:5-8; 1Jn 3:12 **29:11** Pr 12:16 **29:11** Pr 16:32; 25:28 **29:12** 1Kg 22:8,21-23 **29:13** Pr 22:2 **29:14** Ps 72:4; Pr 16:12; 25:5; Is 11:4 **29:15** Pr 13:24; 22:15 **29:15** Pr 10:1; 17:25 **29:16** Ps 37:34,36; 58:10; 91:8; 92:11 **29:17** Pr 13:24 **29:18** 1Sm 3:1; Ps 74:9; Am 8:11-12 **29:18** Ex 32:25 **29:18** Ps 119:2; Pr 8:32; Jn 13:17; Jms 1:25 **29:19** Mt 18:17 **29:20** Lv 5:4; Jdg 11:30-31,34; Pr 10:19; 17:27; 19:2; 20:25 **29:20** Pr 26:12 **29:22** Pr 15:18; 26:21; 28:25 **29:23** 2Sm 22:28; Mt 23:12; Jms 4:6 **29:23** Pr 11:2; 15:33; 18:12; 22:4 **29:24** Lv 5:1 **29:25** Gn 12:12; 20:2; 1Sm 13:11; Lk 12:4; Jn 12:42-43 **29:25** Pr 14:27; 18:10 **29:26** Pr 16:15; 19:6 **29:26** Is 49:4; 1Co 4:4-5 **29:27** Pr 29:10; Mt 10:22; Jn 15:18; 1Jn 3:13

29:1 Although the stubborn may get away with their ways for a time, they are always at risk of catastrophe.

29:4 Like vv. 12,14, this proverb revisits the theme of rewards for just government and negative consequences for corruption (see also 14:34; 20:28). See "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*.

29:10 The **honest person** is hated by the violent because he may expose their evil.

29:15-22 There appears to be discernible patterning in the arrangement of these proverbs. Vv. 15,17 concern the familiar theme of disciplining one's children (see 13:24; 19:18), whereas verses 19,21 relate to the instruction of one's servant. Verses 16,18 deal with circumstances that lead to the increase of wickedness, and verses 20,22 speak against impulsiveness in speech and in temper. The Hebrew word translated **revelation** in verse 18 typically refers to a prophetic vision (e.g., Is 1:1; 2:1; Hab 2:2). Correspondingly, it is natural to take the Hebrew word translated **instruction** (*torah*) as referring to Scripture (see the note on 28:9).

29:25 The **fear of mankind** is rightly juxtaposed with trust in God (see also Is 8:12-13). Ultimately, these two are mutually exclusive.

29:26 Above every human ruler, no matter how powerful, is God himself, who grants **justice**.

THE WORDS OF AGUR

30 The words of Agur son of Jakeh. The pronouncement. † †

The man's oration to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal: †

2 I am more stupid than any other person, †
and I lack a human's ability to understand. †
3 I have not gained wisdom, and I have no knowledge of the Holy One. †
4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down? †
Who has gathered the wind in his hands?
Who has bound up the waters in a cloak? †
Who has established all the ends of the earth? †
What is his name,
and what is the name of his son —
if you know? †
5 Every word of God is pure; † †
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. †
6 Don't add to his words, †
or he will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar. †

7 Two things I ask of you; don't deny them to me before I die:
8 Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me.
Give me neither poverty nor wealth;
feed me with the food I need. †

9 Otherwise, I might have too much †
and deny you, † saying, “Who is the LORD? ” †
or I might have nothing and steal, †
profaning † the name of my God. †

10 Don’t slander a servant to his master or he will curse you, † and you will become guilty.

11 There is a generation that curses its father and does not bless its mother. †
12 There is a generation that is pure in its own eyes, †
yet is not washed from its filth.
13 There is a generation — how haughty its eyes and pretentious its looks. †
14 There is a generation whose teeth are swords, †
whose fangs are knives, †
devouring the oppressed from the land †
and the needy from among mankind.

15 The leech has two daughters: “Give, Give! ”
Three things † are never satisfied; four never say, “Enough! ”:
16 Sheol; † a childless womb; †
earth, which is never satisfied with water; and fire, which never says, “Enough! ”

17 As for the eye that ridicules a father †
and despises obedience to a mother,
may ravens of the valley pluck it out
and young vultures eat it. †

18 Three things are too wondrous for me; four I can’t understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship at sea,
and the way of a man with a young woman.

20 This is the way of an adulteress: she eats and wipes her mouth
and says, “I’ve done nothing wrong.” †

21 The earth trembles under three things; it cannot bear up under four:
22 a servant when he becomes king, †
a fool when he is stuffed with food,
23 an unloved woman when she marries, †
and a servant girl when she ousts her queen.

24 Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise:
25 ants are not a strong people, yet they store up their food in the summer; †
26 hyraxes are not a mighty people, yet they make their homes in the cliffs; †
27 locusts have no king, yet all of them march in ranks; †
28 a lizard † can be caught in your hands, yet it lives in kings' palaces.

29 Three things are stately in their stride; four are stately in their walk:
30 a lion, which is mightiest among beasts and doesn't retreat before anything;
31 a strutting rooster; † a goat; and a king at the head of his army. †

32 If you have been foolish by exalting yourself or if you've been scheming,
put your hand over your mouth. †
33 For the churning of milk produces butter, and twisting a nose draws blood,
and stirring up anger produces strife. †

30:1 Or *son of Jakeh from Massa* ; Pr 31:1 **30:1** Hb uncertain. Sometimes read with different word division as *oration: I am weary, God, I am weary, God, and I am exhausted*, or *oration: I am not God, I am not God, that I should prevail.* LXX reads *My son, fear my words and when you have received them repent. The man says these things to the believers in God, and I pause.* **30:2** Lit *I am more stupid than a man* **30:5** Lit *refined* **30:9** Lit *grabbing* **30:13** Lit *and its eyelids lifted up* **30:28** Or *spider* **30:31** Or *a greyhound* **30:31** LXX reads *king addressing his people*
30:1 Nm 24:3; Pr 31:1; Nah 1:1; Hab 1:1; Zch 9:1; Mal 1:1 **30:2** 1Kg 3:7 **30:3** Pr 9:10 **30:4** Jn 3:13; Eph 4:9-10 **30:4** Jb 26:8; 38:9 **30:4** Jb 38:4-5; Ps 93:1; 119:90; Is 45:18 **30:4** Mt 11:27; Rv 19:12-13 **30:5** Ps 12:6; 18:30 **30:5** Ps 3:3 **30:6** Dt 4:2; 12:32; Rv 22:18 **30:6** Dt 18:22 **30:8** Jb 23:12; Mt 6:11; Php 4:11-12 **30:9** Dt 6:10-12; 8:11-14 **30:9** Jos 24:27; Jb 31:28 **30:9** Ex 5:2 **30:9** Ex 20:5; Eph 4:28 **30:9** Lv 19:11-12 **30:10** Ec 7:21 **30:11** Ex 21:17; Pr 20:20 **30:12** Pr 16:2; Lk 18:11 **30:14** Ps 57:4 **30:14** Jb 29:17 **30:14** Ps 14:4 **30:15** Pr 6:16; 30:18,21,29 **30:16** Pr 27:20; Hab 2:5 **30:16** Gn 30:1 **30:17** Gn 9:22 **30:17** Dt 28:26 **30:20** Pr 28:24; 1Jn 1:8 **30:22** Pr 19:10; Ec 10:7 **30:23** Gn 29:30-31; Dt 21:15 **30:25** Pr 6:6-8 **30:26** Lv 11:5; Ps 104:18 **30:27** Jl 2:7-8 **30:32** Jb 21:5; Mc 7:16 **30:33** Pr 10:12; 29:22

30:1 Little is known about **Agur** besides his **pronouncement**, which implies direct divine revelation and is unique in Proverbs. The Hebrew phrase translated **the man's oration** is found elsewhere only in Numbers 24:3,15 and 2 Samuel 23:1 (see following note).

30:4-6 Following his confession of ignorance (vv. 2-3), Agur attributed wisdom to God and his word. The question of going **up to heaven** and coming **down** in verse 4 is similar to Deuteronomy 30:12. Of particular interest is the mention of **his son** (v. 4; Ps 2:7,12), who also possesses divine wisdom (Is 11:1-4; 1Co 1:24; Col 2:3). The declarations in verses 5-6 reinforce the highlighting of Scripture in the preceding context (see the note on 28:9; 29:18) and parallel Psalm 18:30 and Deuteronomy 4:2. The combination of wisdom, Scripture, and a son in this passage toward the end of Proverbs echoes the introduction to the Psalter (see the notes on Pss 1–2).

30:18 The use of such numerical style here and in verses 15,21,29 also appears in 6:16 and in Amos 1:6–2:8. The corresponding lists associate apparently disparate things based on a common theme.

THE WORDS OF LEMUEL

31 The words of King Lemuel, a pronouncement † † that his mother taught him:

2 What should I say, my son?
What, son of my womb? †
What, son of my vows?
3 Don't spend your energy † on women or your efforts on those who destroy kings. †
4 It is not for kings, Lemuel, it is not for kings † to drink wine †
or for rulers to desire beer.
5 Otherwise, he will drink, forget what is decreed, †
and pervert justice for all the oppressed. † †
6 Give beer to one who is dying and wine to one whose life is bitter. †
7 Let him drink so that he can forget his poverty and remember his trouble no more. †
8 Speak up † for those who have no voice, † †
for the justice of all who are dispossessed. †
9 Speak up, judge righteously, †
and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy. †

IN PRAISE OF A WIFE OF NOBLE CHARACTER

CAREER AND HOME LIFE

CAREER AND HOME LIFE

All adult Christians must prioritize the various competitors for their time, focus, and attention. Most Christian adults will have a career that is the profession or means through which they earn a salary to provide for their families. Also, most Christian adults have a home, which is here defined as the family members with whom they have immediate relationships. Biblically speaking, husbands and wives have clearly defined responsibilities to each other. And if they are parents, they have responsibilities to their children, too. So how does the Christian prioritize the demands of home with the responsibilities of career?

The starting point for answering this question rightly is found in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.” How we conduct ourselves in our home life and in our professions must align with this admonition. Living for God’s glory is our first priority.

This “right priorities” approach to life is further clarified by other scriptural admonitions. For example, Paul teaches that the husband has an obligation to love his wife just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her; the wife must respect her husband (Eph 5:25,33). He also cautions husbands and wives not to deprive one another sexually, except when in agreement to devote themselves to prayer for a time (1Co 7:5). When these admonitions from Paul are coupled with Peter’s admonition that husbands are to dwell with their wives according to understanding (1Pt 3:7), it is clear that fulfilling biblical obligations to one’s spouse is a key element of living in devotion and obedience to God.

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy, he lists the qualifications for ministers (1Tm 3:1-7) and deacons (3:8-13). In both passages Paul makes clear that a requirement for serving in either role is that a man have his household in order. This means that God considers being a good Christian husband and father so important that if a man fails to fulfill his responsibilities to his wife or children, he is disqualified from serving as God’s shepherd to the flock. Paul also emphasizes in Ephesians 6 that the husband and wife are to rear their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Regardless of one’s responsibilities outside of the home, Christian parents must lovingly fulfill theier biblical responsibilities to family. The only higher responsibility for the Christian is to love the Lord wholeheartedly (Mk 12:30).

A common question with which modern Christians must wrestle relates to gender roles and the workplace. It should be understood that this is a question particular to the modern era since, prior to the Industrial Revolution, all family members contributed to the daily survival of the family. The husband, wife, and children each had specific tasks to perform to provide food, clothes, and shelter for one another. Wives were major contributors to the financial stability of the home in preindustrial times, both through their efforts as homemakers and contributors to the family business of agriculture. Families didn’t purchase clothes; wives made them. Families didn’t purchase meals; wives prepared them.

The wife of Proverbs 31 worked from early morning (v. 15) until late at night (v. 18). She bought land in which to plant food for her family (v. 16), and she made and sold linens (v. 24) in order to contribute to their financial support. She was tireless in her efforts to take care of them. And as a result, her husband and children honored her (v. 28). She enriched their lives.

It is only since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in the West that the idea of “work” has been separated from the almost universal business of the family farm. En masse, husbands began to go to work in a place other than their fields and wives continued with their tasks as homemakers. Over time the idea that the husbands worked and the wives stayed at home developed, slowly devaluing the vital contributions each partner makes to the ongoing health and well-being of the family.

Should the wife or mother be employed outside the home? Families can find themselves in so many different situations in today’s society that the question proves difficult to answer. Employment opportunities, earning power, the age and number of children in the household, and the presence or absence of free childcare through other family members all factor into this equation. It would, in fact, be impossible to formulate a one-size-fits-all answer. In short, it is no longer necessary for family members to plant, harvest, and preserve food for the family to be able to eat—though provision remains an issue. We now

generally acquire these basic necessities by purchasing them with salaries provided by our work.

The question of whether or not the wife or mother should work outside of the home presupposes that the husband is present, working, and able to meet the family's true needs through his own earning power. A widow with young children or a wife or mother whose husband has abandoned or divorced her, or is incapable of working because of some incapacity, rarely has a choice about seeking employment outside the home. Single moms and dads, in fact, represent a growing percentage of our population, and many need the compassionate help of our churches.

While the husband is the biblical head of the home (Eph 5:23), each couple will need to prayerfully consider the gifting, abilities, and talents God has given to the wife with respect to employment or career opportunities. The first priority of both partners is devotion and obedience to God. After that, balancing career and home is a matter of understanding priorities and keeping them in order. First and foremost, we are to "do everything for the glory of God" (1Co 10:31). The way this first priority is to be worked out with respect to family and work will differ from one household to the next, but will always require consistent, daily evaluation of how our time, energy, and resources are used.

REBEKAH R. LAND

10 Who can find a wife of noble character? † †
She is far more precious than jewels. †
11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will not lack anything good.
12 She rewards him with good, not evil, all the days of her life.
13 She selects wool and flax and works with willing hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from far away. †
15 She rises while it is still night †
and provides food for her household
and portions † for her female servants. †
16 She evaluates a field and buys it; she plants a vineyard with her earnings. † †
17 She draws on her strength †
and reveals that her arms are strong. †
18 She sees that her profits are good, and her lamp never goes out at night. †
19 She extends her hands to the spinning staff, and her hands hold the spindle. †
20 Her hands reach † out to the poor, and she extends her hands to the needy. †
21 She is not afraid for her household when it snows, for all in her household
are doubly clothed. †
22 She makes her own bed coverings; †
her clothing is fine linen † and purple. †

23 Her husband is known at the city gates, where he sits among the elders of the land. †
24 She makes and sells linen garments; she delivers belts † to the merchants.
25 Strength † and honor are her clothing, †
and she can laugh at the time to come. †
26 Her mouth speaks wisdom, and loving instruction † is on her tongue.
27 She watches over the activities of her household †
and is never idle. †
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also praises her:
29 "Many women † have done noble deeds, but you surpass them all! " †
30 Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, †
but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised.
31 Give her the reward of her labor, †
and let her works praise her at the city gates.

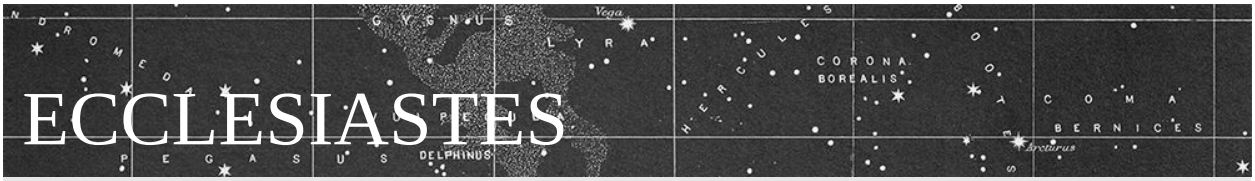
31:1 Or *of Lemuel, king of Massa,* or *of King Lemuel, a burden* **31:5** Lit *sons of affliction* **31:8** Lit *Open your mouth,* also in v. 9 **31:8** Lit *who are mute* **31:8** Lit *all the sons of passing away* **31:10** Or *a wife of quality,* or *a capable wife* **31:10** Vv. 10-31 form an acrostic. **31:15** Or *tasks* **31:16** Or *vineyard by her own labors* **31:17** Lit *She wraps strength around her like a belt* **31:20** Lit *Her hand reaches* **31:21** LXX, Vg; MT reads *are dressed in scarlet* **31:24** Or *sashes* **31:26** Or *and the teaching of kindness* **31:27** Lit *and does not eat the bread of idleness* **31:29** Lit *daughters* **31:31** Lit *the fruit of her hands*
31:1 Pr 30:1 **31:2** Is 49:15 **31:3** Pr 5:9 **31:3** Dt 17:17; 1Kg 11:1; Neh 13:26 **31:4** 1Kg 16:9; 20:16; Ec 10:17 **31:4** Pr 20:1 **31:5** Hs 4:11 **31:5** Ps 72:1-2; Is 28:7 **31:6** Jb 3:20 **31:7** Ps 104:15 **31:8** Jb 29:12-17 **31:9** Lv 19:15; Dt 1:16 **31:9** Is 1:17; Jr 22:16 **31:10** Ru 3:11; Pr 12:4; 18:22; 19:14 **31:14** 1Kg 10:22 **31:15** Pr 20:13 **31:15** Pr 27:27; Lk 12:42 **31:16** Mt 21:33 **31:17** Pr 31:25 **31:18** Mt 25:8 **31:19** Pr 31:13 **31:20** Dt 15:11; Pr 22:9; 31:9; Rm 12:13; Eph 4:28 **31:22** Pr 7:16 **31:22** Gn 41:42; Rv 19:8,14 **31:22** Jdg 8:26; Lk 16:19 **31:23** Ru 4:1-2; Pr 24:7; 31:31 **31:25** Pr 31:17 **31:25** 1Tm 2:9-10 **31:25** Pr 31:21 **31:27** Pr 31:15 **31:29** Pr 12:4; 31:10; Sg 6:8-9 **31:30** 1Pt 3:3-4

31:1-4 As was the case for Agur, little is known about **King Lemuel** besides his **pronouncement** (see 30:1). The importance of a **mother's** instruction has been repeatedly mentioned in Proverbs (1:8; 6:20; 30:17). She advised her **son** to avoid indulging his physical appetites for **women** and for alcohol (vv. 2-4) and instead to focus on **justice** for **the needy** (vv. 8-9).

31:10 Reminiscent of acrostic psalms in the Psalter (e.g., Pss 25, 34, 111–112), Proverbs concludes with an acrostic of its own (see footnote J). The subject matter is the preciousness and characteristics of **a wife of noble character.** This is a fitting conclusion given the personification of wisdom and folly as women (see the notes on 1:20-21; 9:13-18), along with the many instructions regarding adultery and marrying well (see the notes on 2:16-19; 12:4; 19:13-14). Industrious, skillful, kind, and well-prepared (vv. 13-22), the woman here is an embodiment of wisdom and thus brings great blessing to her husband (vv. 12,23).

31:26-31 She **fears the LORD** (v. 30) and has the wisdom to instruct others (v. 26). Beloved by both her

children and her husband (vv. 28-29), she is to be rewarded for her work and to be honored before all (v. 31).



ECCLESIASTES

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is never shy about confronting painful truths or hard questions. The book of Ecclesiastes faces the issue of how we can find meaning in life in light of the seemingly futile nature of everything. It will not allow the reader to retreat into superficial answers. It does not answer this problem by comforting us with hollow slogans. To the contrary, its motto is "Everything Is Futile." But by forcing us to face the futility of human existence, it guides us to a life free of empty purpose and deceitful vindication.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: According to 1:1 and 1:12, the author was David's son and a king over Israel from Jerusalem. Also, 12:9 speaks of the author as a writer of proverbs, so Solomon appears to be the author. Many scholars believe that Ecclesiastes was written too late in Israel's history for this to be true, and they want to date the book at least five hundred years after Solomon's time (later than 450 BC). However, strong evidence attests that the book does come from the age of Solomon. For instance, it displays a great knowledge of literature from early Mesopotamia and Egypt.

One example is that the book shows an awareness of the "Harper Songs," poetry from Egypt that is much older than the age of Solomon. Ecclesiastes 9:7-9 is similar to that poetry, and it also resembles a portion of the famous *Epic of Gilgamesh* from Mesopotamia. It makes sense that Solomon, who had close contacts with Egypt and whose empire stretched up to the Euphrates River, would know and reflect on such texts. It is doubtful that an anonymous Jew writing five hundred or more years later, when Egyptian and Mesopotamian glory was finished and when Judah was a backwater nation, would have had access to these texts or could have understood them. By contrast, Ecclesiastes shows no similarities to the Greek philosophy that flourished in the fifth century BC and later. All of these conditions point to the traditional view that Solomon authored this book.

BACKGROUND: Ecclesiastes is Wisdom literature, meaning that it is in the part of the Bible especially concerned with helping readers cope with the practical and philosophical issues of life. It has roots in the Wisdom literature of Egypt and Babylon. Books like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are the biblical answer to the search for truth. Proverbs is basic wisdom, giving the reader fundamental principles to live by. Ecclesiastes, by contrast, is for a more mature reader. It engages the question of whether death nullifies all purpose and meaning in life.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Ecclesiastes must be read with care because some of its verses, if read in isolation, seem to contradict other biblical teachings. It seems to deny the afterlife (3:18-22), to warn us against being too righteous (7:16), and to recommend a life of pleasure (10:19). But the real purpose of Ecclesiastes is to force us to take our mortality seriously and thus to consider carefully how we should live. Ecclesiastes knocks away all the façades by which we disguise the fact that life is short and we deny that all our accomplishments will pass away. In this sense, Ecclesiastes anticipates the NT teaching that only God's grace, and not excessive zeal, saves us.

STRUCTURE

Ecclesiastes does not have the kind of structure we usually look for in a book of the Bible. At first glance it

seems to move to and fro among various topics in a way that seems almost incoherent. It has no simple hierarchical outline, and it often jumps rapidly from one topic to the next. But a closer look reveals a structure that alternates between two perspectives: that of human existence apart from God and that of existence lived before God. If Ecclesiastes were music, it would be seen as antiphonal. The resolution of the tensions that permeate Ecclesiastes is found in the affirmation that the most important thing in life is to "fear God and keep his commands" (12:13).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

In Ecclesiastes God is referred to simply as "God" (Elohim) or "Creator." He is not called "the Lord" or "Lord" (Yahweh). This emphasizes God in relationship to all humanity—their Creator and the One to whom they are ultimately accountable—as opposed to God in relationship to Israel as the covenant people.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Ecclesiastes has an optimistic view of human capacity apart from God. Materialists, sensualists, and scholars alike can reach worthwhile goals that bring temporary satisfaction and the appearance of meaning. Yet the book is pessimistic about the ability of persons to understand their true purpose unaided by divine revelation. Left to themselves, humans never reach right answers to the question, why am I here?

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation in Ecclesiastes is spoken of in terms of proper fear (reverence, awe, respect) of God (see 3:14; 5:7; 8:12; 12:13). Ultimately, only those who "fear God and keep his commands" (12:13) give evidence of experiencing salvation, which like existence itself comes from the Creator. The meaning of human life is displayed when redeemed people magnify the glory of God by joyfully fearing and obeying him.

ECCLESIASTES TIMELINE

4000–2000 BC

Light wooden plows, Mesopotamia **4000**

Copper smelting, Mesopotamia **4000**

Irrigation developed, Mesopotamia **3500**

Epic of Gilgamesh **2700–1400**

The Instruction of Ptah–Hotep, Egypt's Old Kingdom **2575–2134**

Chinese Literature, First of Seven Periods **2000–600**

2000–1800 BC

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

The Man Who Was Tired of Life, Egyptian **1990–1800**

The Complaints of Khakheperre–Sonb, Egyptian **1900**

Egyptians develop an alphabet of twenty-four signs.

Egyptians use the flooding of the Nile to their agricultural advantage by building systems of irrigation.

1800–1500 BC

The Admonitions of Ipuwer, Egypt **1600–1400**

The Satirical Letter of Hori, Egypt **1570–1070**

Declarations of Innocence from the Egyptian Book of the Dead **1530–1500**

1500–1200 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

Heavy import and export trade, Egypt **1500–1000**

Words of Ahiqar, Egypt **1500–500**

Events in Joshua **1406–1380?**

Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**

Epic of Gilgamesh is recorded. **1200**

1200–800 BC

The Harper's Song for Inherkhway, Egyptian **1160**

The Babylonian Theodicy, Mesopotamian **1100**

David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**

Solomon becomes king. **970**

Proverbs **970**

Song of Songs **970?**

Ecclesiastes **935?**

EVERYTHING IS FUTILE

1 The words of the Teacher, † † son of David, king in Jerusalem. †

2 "Absolute futility," says the Teacher.
"Absolute futility. Everything is futile." †

3 What does a person gain for all his efforts that he labors at under the sun? †

4 A generation goes and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. †

5 The sun rises and the sun sets; panting, it returns to the place †
where it rises.

6 Gusting to the south, turning to the north,

turning, turning, goes the wind, †
and the wind returns in its cycles.
7 All the streams flow to the sea, yet the sea is never full;
to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again.
8 All things † are wearisome, more than anyone can say.
The eye is not satisfied by seeing †
or the ear filled with hearing.
9 What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done;
there is nothing new under the sun.
10 Can one say about anything, “Look, this is new”?
It has already existed in the ages before us.
11 There is no remembrance of those who † came before; †
and of those who will come after
there will also be no remembrance
by those who follow them.

THE LIMITATIONS OF WISDOM

12 I, the Teacher, † have been † king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 I applied my mind to examine † and explore through wisdom all that is done under heaven. †
God has given people † this miserable task to keep them occupied. † 14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun and have found everything to be futile, a pursuit of the wind. † †

15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; †
what is lacking cannot be counted.

16 I said to myself, “See, I have amassed wisdom far beyond all those who were over Jerusalem before me, † and my mind has thoroughly grasped † wisdom and knowledge.” 17 I applied my mind to know wisdom and knowledge, †
madness and folly; † I learned that this too is a pursuit of the wind. †

18 For with much wisdom is much sorrow; †
as knowledge increases, grief increases.

1:1 Or *of Qoheleth*, or *of the Leader of the Assembly* **1:8** Or *words* **1:11** Or *of the things that* **1:12** Or *Teacher, was* **1:13** Or *given the descendants of Adam* **1:14** Or *a feeding on wind*, or *an affliction of spirit* ; also in v. 17 **1:16** Or *discerned*
1:1 Ec 1:12; 7:27; 12:8-10 **1:1** 1Kg 2:12; Pr 1:1 **1:2** Ps 39:5-6; 62:9; 144:4; Ec 12:8; Rm 8:20 **1:3** Ec 2:11,22; 3:9; 5:16 **1:4** Ps 104:5; 119:90; 1Jn 2:17 **1:5** Ps 19:6 **1:6** Ec 11:5; Jn 3:8 **1:8** Pr 27:20; Ec 4:8 **1:11** Dt 9:14; Ec 2:16; 9:5 **1:12** Ec 1:1; 7:27; 12:8-10 **1:13** Ec 1:17 **1:13** 1Kg 4:29-34; Ec 3:10-11; 7:25; 8:17 **1:13** Gn 3:19; Ec 2:23,26; 3:10; 4:8 **1:14** Pr 27:16; Ec 2:11,17; 4:4; 6:9 **1:15** Ec 7:13 **1:16** 1Kg 3:12; 4:30; 10:23; Ec 2:9 **1:17** Ec 1:13 **1:17** Ec 2:12; 7:25 **1:17** Ec 2:11,17; 4:4,6,16; 6:9 **1:18** Ec 2:23; 12:12

1:1 This person is generally understood to be Solomon because of his interest in wisdom and proverbs (see vv. 12-13; 12:9-10).

1:2-3 The meaning of this important opening statement depends largely upon the meaning of the Hebrew word (*hevel*) translated **futility** or **futile.** This key word appears frequently in this book (e.g., 2:1,15,19,21,23) where it is often paired with "a pursuit of the wind" (v. 14; 2:11,17,26; 4:4,16; 6:9). As in Psalm 144:44 where it is translated "breath," *hevel* describes the futility and emptiness of life resulting especially from its brevity and transience (see 6:12; 9:9 [see footnote D]; 11:10 [Hb]). All of this is a consequence of death, which itself is a consequence of sin (see the notes on 3:9-10,19-20; 7:13,20,27-29). Such an existence is repeatedly described as being **under the sun** (vv. 3,9,14; 2:11,17-20). In spite of these grim realities, there is hope because of the grace of God (see the note on 2:24-26).

1:4-9 To support his preceding statements concerning the futility of life, the speaker cites examples of endless repetition (vv. 4-6) and lack of fulfillment and dissatisfaction (vv. 7-8; 5:10; 6:7). These patterns continue indefinitely so that **there is nothing new under the sun** (v. 9; 3:15).

1:15 See the note on 7:13.

1:16-18 Given the many commendations of wisdom in Scripture (see the note on Pr 1:7), his disappointment with **wisdom** should be seen in the context of his own frustration (v. 18) and the inevitability of death for the wise (see 2:12-16). As such, the wisdom in view here seems disconnected from God himself, more worldly and focused on the intellect (see 2:1-3), and thus distinct from wisdom as commonly understood in Scripture.

THE EMPTINESS OF PLEASURE

2 I said to myself, "Go ahead, I will test you with pleasure; † enjoy what is good." But it turned out to be futile. 2 I said about laughter, † "It is madness," and about pleasure, "What does this accomplish?" 3 I explored with my mind the pull of wine † on my body — my mind still guiding me with wisdom — and how to grasp folly, † until I could see what is good for people to do under heaven † during the few days of their lives. †

THE EMPTINESS OF POSSESSIONS

4 I increased my achievements. I built houses † and planted vineyards † for myself. 5 I made gardens † and parks for myself and planted every kind of fruit tree in them. 6 I constructed reservoirs for myself from which to irrigate a grove

of flourishing trees. † 7 I acquired male and female servants and had slaves who were born in my house. † I also owned livestock — large herds and flocks — more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. †

POSTMODERNISM

As Jesus stood before Pilate and claimed to be the true witness of God for salvation, Pilate's response was this question: "What is truth?" (Jn 18:38). That question summarizes the condition called postmodernism.

WHAT IS POSTMODERNISM?

Postmodernism is a term used to describe a host of suspicions about what has been taken for granted in ethics, religion, science, technology, and many other fields of study. Postmodernism questions the nature of what is real, the human ability to know truth, the ability of language to convey right meaning beyond just what the reader or hearer understands, the limits of science, the existence of human consciousness, and especially the promise of the ever-increasing progress of freedom, prosperity, justice, and truth.

As a cultural condition, the contours of postmodernism reach beyond philosophy proper and have broad influence in other academic disciplines like literature, art, architecture, and theology, as well as the general cultural consciousness. This, in fact, is perhaps its most influential aspect. Postmodernism is often expressed by slogans such as, "That is true for you, but not for me," "So many people disagree, so truth is relative," and "No culture's values are better than another's."

POSTMODERNISM VERSUS THE ENLIGHTENMENT

The force of postmodernism is its suspicion and doubt of the so-called certainties of the modern period (roughly the intellectual ideas and the climate they have created since 1750). The Enlightenment philosophers, whose ideas gave birth to the modern period, believed that truth and certainty were attainable by using human reason alone rather than also accepting outside authorities such as Scripture or the received teachings of the Catholic Church. These philosophers described knowledge as a quest for certainty. Accordingly, any claim to knowledge that could not connect to the foundations of logic, or that could not possibly be doubted, or that was not immediately evident to the senses was considered at best opinion, and at worst pseudo-knowledge.

This narrow definition of what could be known encouraged hostility toward faith and exalted science and technology as a path to a better future for humanity. However, after the employment of science and technology to kill millions of people as a result of the totalizing worldviews of Marxism and Nazism, questions about modernity's claims of progress came to the forefront in philosophy. Specifically, postmodern thinkers questioned the concept of truth within the modern worldview that had produced these totalizing worldviews. They demonstrated that the condition for knowledge advocated by modern thinkers could not account for itself, let alone a host of things we do and can, in fact, know. Thus, for them, truth was overthrown.

THE POSTMODERN CRITIQUE OF CERTAINTY

Postmodern thinkers encourage suspicion and doubt about absolute truth claims. Jean François Lyotard

states, “All that has been received, if only yesterday, must be suspected” (1984) because those, for example, who appeal to “science” and “reason” to prove that their worldview is correct are also committed to presuppositions or prior commitments that cannot arise from science or reason. He writes, “The recourse to narrative is inevitable, at least to the extent that the language game of science desires its statements to be true but does not have the resources to legitimate their truth on its own” (Lyotard, 1984). In other words, science is founded on ideas that are not the result of science but rather come before it, making science possible.

In their rejection of the narrow certainty of modernism, some postmodern thinkers pressed the suspicion of knowledge claims to the point that they doubted any claims to knowledge, assuming them to be potential power grabs or just the perspective of a particular person from a particular cultural and historical context. There is no universal truth, they assert, no universally accessible human rationality for all people at all times. The result of that critique is a pervasive doubt in our culture regarding universal or total claims to knowledge. In particular, postmodernists critique autonomous reason, universal truth claims, access to one’s own inner consciousness, and all attempts to tell a universal history.

CHRISTIANITY AND POSTMODERNISM

Biblical Christianity affirms some of the concerns raised by the postmodernists, such as the importance of story in human existence, or their critiques of modernity (as in the case of the unfounded exaltation of science above other ways of knowing truth). But Christianity rejects the fundamental story of postmodernism because it results in a profound skepticism toward truth, meaning, and morality.

The biblical story reveals God’s existence, his creative will, and his active presence in the world as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Gn 1–2; Jn 1:1-18; Ac 2:1-13). The active will and creative presence of God is graciously and lovingly demonstrated in the accounts of Jesus’s incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. For example, Jesus says of himself, “If you continue in my word, you really are my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (Jn 8:31-32). To fully understand what Jesus means requires an engagement with the entire biblical story: creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. The Scriptures claim to tell the story of humanity from beginning to ultimate redemption.

Paul, reflecting on the results of Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection for his ministry, masterfully summarizes the significance of God at work in Jesus Christ: “In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us . . . He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2Co 5:19,21). In this passage lies the universal truth that the biblical story tells. God has graciously revealed the truth: the world in which we live is under the curse of sin because of humanity’s choice to disobey God. Still, God has lovingly and graciously chosen to redeem those who put their faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord, whom God raised from the dead (Rm 10:9).

Within the Christian worldview, then, is a rejection of many of the suspicions of postmodernism. For example, that God is the Creator implies that things in this world have real existence. That humanity can know itself as well as the created world by which they are surrounded implies that knowledge is possible. That humans are accountable for their actions implies that there exists at least a handful of moral universals true for all people at all time.

JUSTIN CARSWELL

8 I also amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. † I gathered male and female singers for myself, † and many concubines, the delights of men. † † 9 So I became great and surpassed all who

were before me in Jerusalem; † my wisdom also remained with me. 10 All that my eyes desired, I did not deny them. † I did not refuse myself any pleasure, for I took pleasure in all my struggles. This was my reward for all my struggles. † 11 When I considered all that I had accomplished † and what I had labored to achieve, I found everything to be futile and a pursuit of the wind. † † There was nothing to be gained under the sun. †

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF WISDOM

12 Then I turned to consider wisdom, † madness, and folly, for what will the king's successor † be like? He † will do what has already been done. † 13 And I realized that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly, like the advantage of light over darkness. †

14 The wise person has eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. †

Yet I also knew that one fate comes to them both. † 15 So I said to myself, "What happens to the fool will also happen to me. Why then have I been overly wise?" † And I said to myself that this is also futile. 16 For, just like the fool, there is no lasting remembrance of the wise, † since in the days to come both will be forgotten. How is it that the wise person dies just like the fool? 17 Therefore, I hated life because the work that was done under the sun was distressing to me. For everything is futile and a pursuit of the wind.

THE EMPTINESS OF WORK

18 I hated all my work that I labored at under the sun † because I must leave it to the one who comes after me. † 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? † Yet he will take over all my work that I labored at skillfully under the sun. This too is futile. 20 So I began to give myself over † to despair concerning all my work that I had labored at under the sun. 21 When there is a person whose work was done with wisdom, knowledge, and skill, † and he must give his portion to a person who has not worked for it, this too is futile and a great wrong. 22 For what does a person get with all his work and all his efforts † that

he labors at under the sun? 23 For all his days are filled with grief, and his occupation is sorrowful; † even at night, his mind does not rest. † This too is futile.

24 There is nothing better for a person than to eat, drink, and enjoy † † his work. † I have seen that even this is from God's hand, † 25 because who can eat and who can enjoy life † apart from him? † 26 For to the person who is pleasing in his sight, he gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy; † but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and accumulating in order to give to the one who is pleasing in God's sight. † This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind. †

2:3 Two Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *the sun* **2:8** LXX, Theod, Syr read *and male cupbearers and female cupbearers* ; Aq, Tg, Vg read *a cup and cups* ; Hb obscure **2:8** Or *many treasures that people delight in* **2:11** Lit *all my works that my hands had done* **2:11** Or *a feeding on wind*, or *an affliction of spirit* ; also in vv. 17,26 **2:12** Lit *the man who comes after the king* **2:12** Some Hb mss read *They* **2:20** Lit *And I turned to cause my heart* **2:24** Syr, Tg; MT reads *There is no good in a person who eats and drinks and enjoys* **2:24** Lit *and his soul sees good* **2:25** LXX, Theod, Syr read *can drink* **2:25** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *me*
2:1 Ec 7:4; 8:15; Lk 12:19 **2:2** Pr 14:13; Ec 7:3,6 **2:3** Ps 104:15; Ec 10:19 **2:3** Ec 7:25 **2:3** Ec 2:24; 3:12,13; 5:18; 8:15 **2:4** 1Kg 7:1-12 **2:4** Sg 8:11 **2:5** Sg 4:16 **2:6** Neh 2:14; 3:15-16 **2:7** Gn 14:14; 15:3 **2:7** 1Kg 4:23 **2:8** 1Kg 9:28; 10:10,14,21 **2:8** 2Sm 19:35 **2:9** 1Ch 29:25; Ec 1:16 **2:10** Ec 6:2 **2:10** Ec 3:22; 5:18; 9:9 **2:11** Ec 1:14; 2:22-23 **2:11** Ec 1:3; 3:9; 5:16 **2:12** Ec 1:17 **2:12** Ec 1:9-10; 3:15 **2:13** Ec 7:11-12,19; 9:18; 10:10 **2:14** Pr 2:10-13; 1Jn 2:11 **2:14** Ps 49:10; Ec 3:19; 6:6; 7:2; 9:2-3 **2:15** Ec 6:8,11; 7:16 **2:16** Dt 32:26; 2Sm 18:18; Ec 1:11; 9:5 **2:18** Ec 1:3; 2:11 **2:18** Ps 39:6; 49:10; Pr 13:22 **2:19** Ezk 18:9-10 **2:21** Ec 4:4 **2:22** Ec 1:3; 2:11 **2:23** Jb 5:7; 14:1 **2:23** Ps 127:2 **2:24** Ec 2:3; 3:12-13,22; 5:18; 6:12; 8:15; 9:7; Is 56:12; Lk 12:19; 1Co 15:32; 1Tm 6:17 **2:24** Ec 3:13 **2:26** Jb 32:8; Pr 2:6 **2:26** Jb 27:16-17; Pr 13:22; 28:8 **2:26** Ec 1:14

2:11 As was the case with "wisdom" (see previous note) and pleasure (2:1-3), the speaker found building projects, possessions, wealth, and greatness (vv. 4-10) to be unsatisfying (see the note on 1:2-3).

2:13-16 Although "wisdom" (see the note on 1:16-18) is better than folly, the speaker pointed out that **one fate comes** to people no matter the path they choose (v. 14; 3:19; 9:2-3), namely death (v. 16; 3:2). As is the case generally (see 1:11), both **the wise** and **the fool** will be forgotten.

2:18-23 The problem again is death (see previous note). The certainty of his own death and the possibility of his successor ruining his **work** frustrated him and led him to despair (vv. 19-21; 9:18; note on 11:6).

2:24-26 This is the first hopeful passage in Ecclesiastes and as such serves as an important contrast and qualification to the more numerous pessimistic passages (see also 3:12-13,22; 5:18-20; 8:15; 9:7-9). Despite the uncertainty of the future (see previous note), it is possible by God's grace for a person to **enjoy his work** (v. 24). Without God, this will not happen (v. 25), and life will indeed be as dissatisfying and frustrating as described in the preceding passages. God, however, **gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy** to those who are **pleasing in** [his] **sight** (v. 26).

THE MYSTERY OF TIME

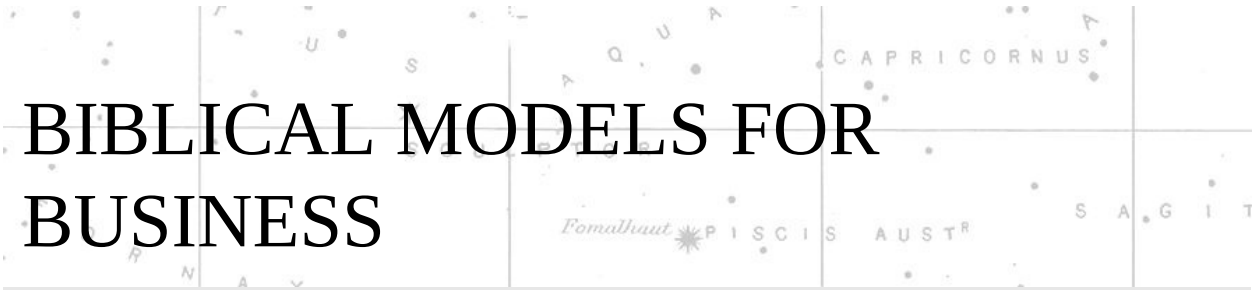
3 There is an occasion for everything, and a time for every activity
under heaven: †
2 a time to give birth and a time to die; †
a time to plant and a time to uproot; †
3 a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to tear down and a time to build; 4 a
time to weep and a time to laugh; †
a time to mourn and a time to dance; †
5 a time to throw stones and a time to gather stones; †
a time to embrace and a time to avoid embracing; †
6 a time to search and a time to count as lost; a time to keep and a time
to throw away; 7 a time to tear and a time to sew; a time to be silent
and a time to speak; †
8 a time to love and a time to hate; a time for war and a time for peace. †

9 What does the worker gain from his struggles? † 10 I have seen the task that God has given the children of Adam to keep them occupied. † 11 He has made everything appropriate † in its time. † He has also put eternity in their hearts, † but no one can discover the work God has done from beginning to end. † 12 I know that there is nothing better for them than to rejoice and enjoy the † good life. 13 It is also the gift of God whenever anyone eats, drinks, and enjoys all his efforts. † 14 I know that everything God does will last forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. † God works so that people will be in awe of him. † 15 Whatever is, has already been, † and whatever will be, already is. However, God seeks justice for the persecuted. †

THE MYSTERY OF INJUSTICE AND DEATH

16 I also observed under the sun: there is wickedness at the place of judgment and there is wickedness at the place of righteousness. † 17 I said to myself, "God will judge the righteous and the wicked, † since there is a time for every

activity and every work.” † 18 I said to myself, “This happens so that God may test the children of Adam and they may see for themselves that they are like animals.” † 19 For the fate of the children of Adam and the fate of animals is the same. † As one dies, so dies the other; they all have the same breath. People have no advantage over animals since everything is futile. 20 All are going to the same place; all come from dust, and all return to dust. † 21 Who knows if the spirits of the children of Adam go upward and the spirits of animals go downward to the earth?



BIBLICAL MODELS FOR BUSINESS

If you are a follower of Christ and work as a business professional, how does your Christian worldview influence your day-to-day life at work? The business world is founded on relationships—relationships between sales people and customers, between employees and employers, and between peers up and down the organizational chart within a company. Most business professionals interact with dozens of people every day.

As a follower of Christ, a business professional should view every relationship as an opportunity to glorify God. Isaiah says that God created us for his glory: “Bring my sons from far away, and my daughters from the ends of the earth—everyone who bears my name and is created for my glory. I have formed them; indeed, I have made them” (Is 43:6-7).

Since God created us so that we could glorify him, we should view our roles as business persons as opportunities to execute that calling. As 1Co 10:31 says, “Whether [we] eat or drink, or whatever [we] do, [we should] do everything for the glory of God.” Being created in the image of God means we should reflect God’s character. In other words, we should exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in our business relationships. Galatians 5:22-23 lists them: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

But practically speaking, what does this look like in the business world? At least three implications guide us. First, a biblical worldview motivates us to work with excellence, giving our best effort. As Paul says in Colossians 3:23-24, “Whatever you do, do from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ.”

Second, we should strive to be the best possible employees. Though the job might be difficult and the boss unfair, our response to such issues should not be one of whining and complaining or loafing. We represent our Lord; we are “ambassadors for Christ” (2Co 5:20). And ultimately, our performance should be for an audience of One. We aim to please God above all. The first part of Colossians 3:23 says, “whatever you do.” It doesn’t say, “in certain things that you do” or “in a few things you do.” It says that in whatever work you do, you are working for the Lord and serving him. Therefore, whether our work is full-time or part-time, salaried or hourly, involves management or non-management, we are to work with enthusiasm and

with our whole hearts.

In all our work we are to do labor “for the Lord and not for people” (Col 3:23). That adds value to what we do to earn a living. Our sense of accountability also increases because of this mindset because it reminds us that God sees everything, and we will be accountable to him for what we did and how we did it. If we view our work from a biblical worldview, we will excel in our efforts and attitudes, thus setting an example for others to follow, bringing more value to our companies and gaining larger platforms from which to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Third, a biblical worldview motivates us to be servant leaders having the same servant attitude as Christ. In Jn 13:15-16 Jesus says, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done for you. Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him.”

Jesus constantly taught his disciples to have a servant mindset. He did not have a problem with a person trying to excel or better himself, but he reminded them that no matter their position in life, they needed to be servants. Jesus gave us a poignant example of servanthood when he washed the disciples’ feet—a task which was usually the responsibility of a lowly servant. After that he provided the greatest act of service by voluntarily going to the cross to die for the sins of mankind.

As Christians we are to have the attitude of servants, remaining willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. When there is a crisis in the business, and the proverbial “ox is in the ditch,” we must be willing to do anything needed—whether or not it is part of our job description—to get things back on track. We ought to look for ways to serve others regularly. By doing so, we will not only be a help to others but will also add value to the organization.

When a person adopts a servant attitude, he becomes a team player. This is the opposite of one who lives with a silo-builder or turf-protector mentality, only concerning himself with his own area and how everything affects him. Being a team player, who is willing to sacrifice and serve others, will bring a spirit of unity to the team and will increase the potential for success.

Those in a position of leadership are to embrace servant leadership even as Jesus embraced it as he led his disciples. Employees are not there to serve their Christian bosses and managers; rather, such leaders are to serve alongside their workers. Leaders who care and have a humble, servant’s spirit, in fact, will find new opportunities to share about the One who motivates them to serve in such a manner.

Fourth, a biblical worldview leads us to be people of integrity. Proverbs 10:9 tells us, “The one who lives with integrity lives securely, but whoever perverts his ways will be found out.” Similarly, Pr 28:6 says, “Better the poor person who lives with integrity than the rich one who distorts right and wrong.”

Integrity is acting with a personal commitment to honesty, openness, and fairness. It is not merely holding a moral or principled idea or position, but doing it. There is no cramming for a test of character. An exam always comes as a pop quiz, so believers must determine the qualities that will shape their behavior and live them out.

As Christians embracing a biblical worldview, we will be honest in all our dealings. We must not make promises we cannot keep. We ought not misrepresent our products or our companies. We must not lie on our expense reports or fudge sales numbers. Instead, we must routinely practice the Golden Rule: we must treat others as we would want to be treated (Mt 7:12).

Integrity is essential to good leadership. And while a charismatic personality will draw people to a person, only integrity will keep them there. The more followers that see and hear their leader being consistent in action and word, the greater their own work consistency and loyalty will grow.

What we do will flow from who we are. The outer person will reflect the inner. Who we are on the inside is who we will be on the outside. Adopting a biblical worldview will lead us to live with integrity, granting us opportunities to make a kingdom impact on everyone we encounter throughout our careers.

DARIN W. WHITE
DANNY WOOD

22 I have seen that there is nothing better than for a person to enjoy his activities † because that is his reward. For who can enable him to see what will happen after he dies? † †

3:2 Lit *uproot what is planted* **3:11** Or *beautiful* **3:11** Or *has put a sense of past and future into their minds,* or *has placed ignorance in their hearts* **3:12** Lit *his* **3:15** Lit *God seeks what is pursued* **3:22** Lit *after him* **3:1** Ec 3:17; 8:6 **3:2** Jb 14:5; Heb 9:27 **3:4** Rm 12:15 **3:4** Ex 15:20 **3:5** 2Kg 3:19,25; Is 5:2 **3:5** 1Co 7:5 **3:7** Am 5:13; 1Co 14:26-32 **3:8** Mt 5:9; 10:34 **3:9** Ec 1:3 **3:10** Ec 1:13; 2:26 **3:11** Gn 1:31 **3:11** Jb 5:9; Ec 7:23; 8:17; Rm 11:33 **3:13** Ec 2:24; 5:19 **3:14** Rv 22:18-19 **3:14** Ex 7:5; Ezk 36:23 **3:15** Ec 1:9; 6:10 **3:16** Ec 4:1; 5:8; 8:9 **3:17** Ec 11:9; Mt 16:27; Rm 2:6-10; 2Th 1:6-9 **3:17** Ec 3:1 **3:18** Ps 49:12,20; 73:22 **3:19** Ec 9:12 **3:20** Gn 3:19; Ec 12:7 **3:22** Ec 2:24 **3:22** Ec 2:18; 6:12; 8:7; 10:14

3:9-10 The Hebrew word (*'inyan*) translated **task** is also associated with wearisome, endless labor in 2:23,26; 4:8; 8:16. It is something **God has given** to people, and 1:13 describes this task as "miserable." Since fulfilling work preceded the fall (see Gn 2:15), this seems to be alluding to God's judgment of sin through death (see the note on 1:2-3; Gn 3:17-19).

3:11 Even in the midst of changing times (vv. 1-8), God is sovereignly working through them for his own wise purposes, which include final judgment (vv. 16-17; 8:12-13; 12:13-14). Human frustration with death, transience, and being forgotten (1:11; 2:16; 9:6,15) relates to the fact that God has **put eternity in** [our] **hearts.** See Responses to Transhumanism," *p. 615*; "The Existence of God," *p. 849*.

3:12-13 Like 2:24-26 (see note), the possibility of joy in this life by the grace of God is highlighted. The phrase **enjoy the good life** could be translated "do good while they live."

3:14 In contrast with human works (2:18-21), God's works are eternal, which engenders respect for him (5:7; 7:18; 8:12; 12:13).

3:19-20 Both animals and humans are subject to the same **fate**, death (see the note on 2:13-16). The statement **all come from dust, and all return to dust** alludes to Genesis 2:7 "the Lord God formed the man out of the dust" and 3:19 "you are dust, and you will return to dust". This last statement was part of the judgment on the sin of Adam and Eve (Gn 3:6,11,17).

4 Again, I observed all the acts of oppression being done under the sun. † Look at the tears of those who are oppressed; they have no one to comfort them. Power is with those who oppress them; they have no one to comfort them. 2 So I commended the dead, † who have already died, more than the living, who are still alive. 3 But better than either of them is the one who has not yet existed, † who has not seen the evil activity that is done under the sun.

THE LONELINESS OF WEALTH

4 I saw that all labor and all skillful work is due to one person's jealousy of another. † This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind. † †

5 The fool folds his arms †

and consumes his own flesh. †
6 Better one handful with rest than two handfuls with effort and a pursuit
of the wind. †

7 Again, I saw futility under the sun: 8 There is a person without a companion, † without even a son or brother, and though there is no end to all his struggles, his eyes are still not content with riches. † "Who am I struggling for," he asks, "and depriving myself of good things?" This too is futile and a miserable task.
9 Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.
10 For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up. 11 Also, if two lie down together, they can keep warm; but how can one person alone keep warm? † 12 And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.
13 Better is a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer pays attention to warnings. † 14 For he came from prison to be king, † even though he was born poor in his kingdom. 15 I saw all the living, who move about under the sun, follow † a second youth who succeeds him. 16 There is no limit to all the people who were before them, yet those who come later will not rejoice in him. This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind. †
4:4 Or *a feeding on wind,* or *an affliction of spirit* ; also in vv. 6,16 **4:8** Lit *person, but there is not a second,* **4:15** Lit *with*
4:1 Jb 35:9; Ec 3:16; 5:8 **4:2** Jb 3:11-26 **4:3** Ec 6:3; Lk 23:29 **4:4** 1Sm 18:9; Ec 2:21; Ac 13:45; 2Co 12:20 **4:4** Ec 1:14 **4:5** Pr 6:10; 24:33 **4:5** Is 9:20 **4:6** Pr 15:16-17 **4:8** Pr 27:20; Ec 1:8; 5:10 **4:11** 1Kg 1:1-4 **4:13** Ec 9:15 **4:14** Gn 41:14,41-43 **4:16** Ec 1:14

4:1 As in 3:16, the speaker was disturbed by injustice and oppression in his world (see also 5:8).

CAUTION IN GOD'S PRESENCE

5 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Better to approach in obedience than to offer the sacrifice as fools do, † for they ignorantly do wrong. 2 Do not be hasty to speak, and do not be impulsive to make a speech before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. † 3 Just as dreams accompany much labor, so also a fool's voice comes

with many words. † 4 When you make a vow to God, † don't delay fulfilling it,
because he does not delight in fools. Fulfill what you vow. 5 Better that you do
not vow than that you vow and not fulfill it. † 6 Do not let your mouth bring
guilt on you, † and do not say in the presence of the messenger that it was a
mistake. † Why should God be angry with your words and destroy the work of
your hands? 7 For many dreams bring futility, so do many words. † Therefore,
fear God.

THE REALITIES OF WEALTH

8 If you see oppression of the poor † and perversion of justice and righteousness
in the province, don't be astonished at the situation, † because one official
protects another official, and higher officials protect them. 9 The profit from the
land is taken by all; the king is served by the field. † †

10 The one who loves silver is never satisfied with silver, and whoever loves
wealth is never satisfied with income. This too is futile. 11 When good things
increase, the ones who consume them multiply; what, then, is the profit to the
owner, except to gaze at them with his eyes? 12 The sleep of the worker is sweet,
whether he eats little or much, but the abundance of the rich permits him no
sleep.

13 There is a sickening tragedy I have seen under the sun: wealth kept by its
owner to his harm. † 14 That wealth was lost in a bad venture, so when he
fathered a son, he was empty-handed. 15 As he came from his mother's womb,
so he will go again, naked as he came; † he will take nothing for his efforts that
he can carry in his hands. 16 This too is a sickening tragedy: exactly as he
comes, so he will go. What does the one gain † who struggles for the wind? †
17 What is more, he eats in darkness all his days, † with much frustration,
sickness, and anger.

18 Here is what I have seen to be good: † It is appropriate to eat, drink, and
experience good in all the labor one does under the sun during the few days of
his life God has given him, because that is his reward. † 19 Furthermore,
everyone to whom God has given riches and wealth, † he has also allowed him
to enjoy them, take his reward, and rejoice in his labor. † This is a gift of

God, † 20 for he does not often consider the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with the joy of his heart.

5:9 Hb obscure

5:1 1Sm 15:22; Mt 5:23-24 **5:2** Pr 10:19; Mt 6:7 **5:3** Jb 11:2 **5:4** Nm 30:2; Dt 6:13; 23:21-22; Pr 20:25 **5:5** Pr 20:25; Mt 5:33-37; Ac 5:4; Jms 5:12 **5:6** Jdg 11:30-31,34 **5:6** Nm 15:25 **5:7** Ec 6:11 **5:8** Ec 4:1 **5:8** 1Pt 4:12 **5:9** Pr 27:23-27 **5:13** Ec 6:1-2 **5:15** Jb 1:21 **5:16** Ec 1:3 **5:16** Pr 11:29 **5:17** Ps 127:2 **5:18** Ec 2:24 **5:18** Ec 2:10 **5:19** 2Ch 1:12 **5:19** Ec 6:2 **5:19** Ec 3:13

5:1-7 Sustained attention is given here regarding worship (v. 1). In keeping with the instruction to **fear God** (v. 7; notes on 3:14; 12:13-14), the speaker urged careful consideration for what one says and vows before him (vv. 2-6).

5:10-11 Wealth's inability to satisfy was also highlighted in 2:8-11 (see also 1:8; 6:7).

5:15 Wealth can be quickly lost and cannot be retained after death. The words, "as he went out from the womb of his mother, naked he will return, to go as he came" (lit), have much in common with Job 1:21: "Naked I went out from the womb of my mother, and naked I will return there" (lit).

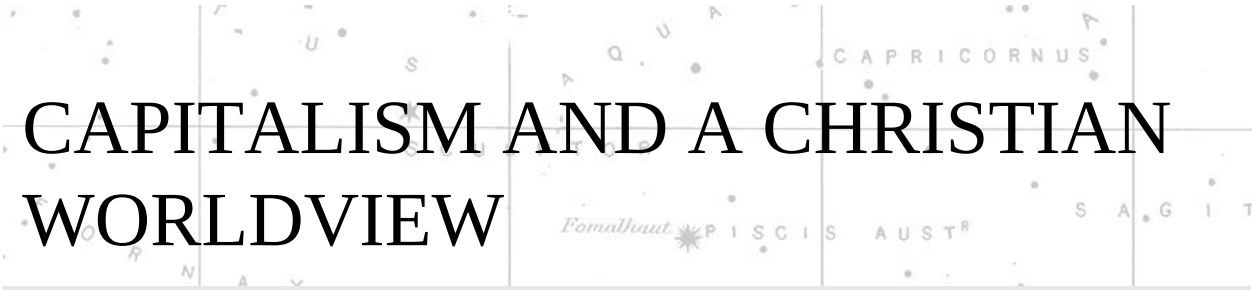
5:18-20 In stark contrast with the dismal life and end of the godless (vv. 13-16), the speaker reminds the reader of the possibility of **good** (v. 18; 2:24-26; 3:12-13) and that not all has to be a "sickening tragedy" (v. 16). By the grace of God (v. 19), those that please him (2:26) can instead be **occupied with . . . joy** (v. 20), instead of with "much frustration, sickness, and anger" (v. 17).

6 Here is a tragedy I have observed under the sun, † and it weighs heavily on humanity: † 2 God gives a person riches, wealth, and honor † so that he lacks nothing of all he desires for himself, † but God does not allow him to enjoy them. Instead, a stranger will enjoy them. This is futile and a sickening tragedy. 3 A man may father a hundred children and live many years. No matter how long he lives, † if he is not satisfied by good things and does not even have a proper burial, † I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. †
4 For he comes in futility and he goes in darkness, and his name is shrouded in darkness. 5 Though a stillborn child does not see the sun and is not conscious, it has more rest than he. 6 And if a person lives a thousand years twice, but does not experience happiness, do not both go to the same place?

7 All of a person's labor is for his stomach, † †
yet the appetite is never satisfied.

8 What advantage then does the wise person have over the fool? † What advantage is there for the poor person who knows how to conduct himself before

others? [9] Better what the eyes see than wandering desire. † This too is futile and a pursuit of the wind. † †



CAPITALISM AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Capitalism is a term that may seem to go right along with *freedom*, *apple pie*, and *soccer mom*. Many, if not most, Western Christians would certainly agree. But should they?

The global financial crisis of the early twenty-first century caused many to lose trust in free-market capitalism. For example, in his book, *A Failure of Capitalism*, Richard Posner, who once vigorously defended free-market capitalism, expressed serious misgivings about it.

How then should we, who believe that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills, that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions, that we are not our own, that we are not strict owners, but mere stewards of talents, wealth, and grace, who will give to God an account of our stewardship—how should we think about capitalism?

DEFINING CAPITALISM

There are several different concepts of capitalism out there. We should first make sure which concept we are taking about. Then we should weigh how the biblical notions of property, stewardship, and identity come into play. Let us begin at the beginning.

Humans have basic needs and desire things they may or may not need. They take actions that they believe will meet such needs and desires. Sometimes these actions succeed; sometimes they do not. Needs, desires, rational action—these notions are often taken to be the axioms of economics. Economics is a social science that studies the issues that are involved whenever a group of people have to decide what gets produced and who gets how much of it.

In 1776 Adam Smith shaped the world economy and consciousness of his day and even our own by claiming that when individuals pursue their own interests, men and women are together led as if by an "invisible hand" to achieve the common good. Smith's idea is that the rational and voluntary actions of individuals combine in some yet undisclosed way to answer the two questions about what gets produced and who gets what.

His claim also raises the deeper question of who owns the property and productive capacities to begin with. Under pure capitalism, all property and wealth are privately owned. Individuals decide for themselves what gets produced, how to go about it, and what to do with the profits. Under pure socialism, by contrast, everything is collectively owned and representatives of that collective decide what gets produced and who gets what.

But neither pure capitalism nor pure socialism exists in any nation. The approach of every modern nation lies somewhere on the continuum as a combination of private and collectively-owned property. The United States is closer to the pure capitalism pole; China is closer to the pure socialism pole. Granting that at least some property and important economic decisions must be made by the state to provide for our roads, parks, and national defense, the crucial core of the concept of capitalism is that it is a mixed, private-property economy. This must be refined further.

CAPITALISM AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

CAPITALISM AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

While some people treat capitalism as categorically undesirable, what they have in mind is really something else—no matter how closely related it might seem. Capitalism in this other sense has become a word for misuse of private-property. It is a pejorative synonym for exploitation, greed, or oppression. This runs contrary to Scripture, which endorses private property in the form of individual stewardship of all the gifts of God, including one's talents and spiritual gifts. Since fallen people have these stewardship responsibilities, misuse and abuse is bound to occur and have collective effects. Therefore, a private-property economy must be viewed initially as a qualified good.

A private-property economy is a powerful social arrangement which, through the division of labor and specialization, has produced the highest standard of living in human history. To this extent, Adam Smith was right. Of course, not everyone on the globe benefits equally, nor do they exert effort and discipline equally. There are obvious disparities on both counts.

Furthermore, some people confuse the profit motive with greed, but this is a mistake. All laborers deserve their wages—including those entrepreneurs who labor to provide a product people need or legitimately desire. Our concerns are not to focus on bad stewardship, nor how to think about the disparities of wealth, nor with greed nor profit. Our concern must be limited to understanding the role of morality in the optimal operation of a mixed, private-property economy and to what extent it is rooted in Scripture and yet may be applied by those who reject Scripture as God's Word.

THREE CONCEPTS OF CAPITALISM

Three concepts of capitalism as a private-property economy compete for attention in our world.

There is naive capitalism, which holds that markets are "morally-free zones" of social interaction —"spheres of sanctity" that remain separate from the intrusion of others. The idea is that morality has no role in achieving the common good. Many judges, public policy makers, economists, teachers of economics, and ordinary people take Smith's "invisible hand" to mean that morality has no place in economic interaction as long as everyone follows the co-ordination conventions of a price mechanism. This concept is widespread but mistaken, not only from a biblical perspective of property and stewardship, but also in practice and in theory (W. Schultz, *The Moral Conditions of Economic Efficiency*).

Then there is rational egoist capitalism. This is a version that works only in theory by assuming that adverse effects of unethical behavior are absent. It obviously leaves no room for a biblically grounded view of the moral conditions underlying the achievement of the common good. Christians should repudiate the attitudes and practices of rational egoist capitalism, recovering a clear sense of the biblical view of property and the responsibilities and motives of a truly Christian stewardship.

Finally, there is what could be called responsible capitalism. This view holds that morality is essential to an efficient, private-property economy. Morality is effective only when people hold themselves and each other responsible. Only the latter view of capitalism is worthy of Christian acceptance—and, even then, our acceptance must be qualified. We must bring a biblical view of property and a biblical view of the motive and ends of stewardship to our economic theorizing and use of wealth. Responsible capitalism will work among any group of people advocating diverse moral or religious beliefs, providing they desire a democratic, private-property economy that consistently yields efficient outcomes of market interaction. Therefore, we all should repudiate naive capitalism and rational egoist capitalism in favor of responsible capitalism for all nations.

CAPITALISM TODAY

The turn away from theological ethics in seventeenth-and eighteenth-century British moral theory was more significant than many have appreciated. Adam Smith's deistic views effectively excluded a biblical view of property (Peter Minowitz, *Profits, Priests and Princes: Adam Smith's Emancipation of Economics from Politics and Religion*, chap. 7). Nevertheless, when agents share a biblical understanding of property and are motivated by such property stewardship, they too will possess the required internal incentive to comply

with the rights that ensure economically efficient outcomes of market interaction.

While such a moral capitalism requires that agents be free to produce and purchase what they desire, providing benchmark procedures for aiding the poor, Christians are further constrained. We who belong to Jesus were bought with a price. In reality, we own nothing. What we possess and what we do for a living and how these affect our sense of identity is founded in these truths.

Our calling as Christ's followers is not to a life of self-indulgent consumerism. We are stewards of whatever talents, gifts, grace, and wealth God in his sovereign mercy has entrusted to us. Let us recommit to living our economic lives for the sake of the gospel, the kingdom, and his glory. Only then can we ensure our long-term prosperity and happiness.

WALTER J. SCHULTZ

10 Whatever exists was given its name long ago, † †
and it is known what mankind is. But he is not able to contend with the one stronger than he. † 11 For when there are many words, they increase futility. †
What is the advantage for mankind? 12 For who knows what is good for anyone in life, in the few days of his futile life that he spends like a shadow? †
Who can tell anyone what will happen after him under the sun?

6:1 Or *it is common among men* **6:3** Lit *how many years* **6:7** Lit *mouth* **6:9** Or *a feeding on wind*, or *an affliction of spirit* **6:10** Lit *name already*

6:1 Ec 5:13 **6:2** 1Kg 3:13 **6:2** Ps 17:14; 73:7 **6:3** Is 14:20; Jr 8:2; 22:19 **6:3** Jb 3:16; Ec 4:3 **6:7** Pr 16:26 **6:8** Ec 2:15 **6:9** Ec 11:9 **6:9** Ec 1:14 **6:10** Gn 2:19; Ec 1:9-10; 3:15 **6:10** Jb 9:32; Is 45:9 **6:11** Pr 10:19; Mt 6:7 **6:12** Ec 3:22

6:10 This may be an allusion to God's naming of various things in Genesis 1:5,8,10, which shows his sovereignty. Likewise, the human race cannot **contend** with his subjection of them to death and futility because of their sin (see following note).

WISE SAYINGS

7 A good name is better than fine perfume, †
and the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth. †
2 It is better to go to a house of mourning than to go to a house of feasting,
since that is the end of all mankind, and the living should take it to heart. †
3 Grief is better than laughter, for when a face is sad, a heart may be glad. †
4 The heart of the wise is in a house of mourning, but the heart of fools is
in a house of pleasure.
5 It is better to listen to rebuke from a wise person than to listen to the song
of fools, †

6 for like the crackling of burning thorns under the pot, †
so is the laughter of the fool.
This too is futile.

7 Surely, the practice of extortion turns a wise person into a fool, †
and a bribe corrupts the mind. †

8 The end of a matter is better than its beginning; a patient spirit is better than a proud spirit. †

9 Don't let your spirit rush to be angry, for anger abides in the heart of fools. †

10 Don't say, "Why were the former days better than these? " †
since it is not wise of you to ask this.

11 Wisdom is as good as an inheritance and an advantage to those who see the sun, 12 because wisdom is protection as silver is protection; but the advantage of knowledge
is that wisdom preserves the life of its owner. †

13 Consider the work of God, †
for who can straighten out
what he has made crooked? †

14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, † but in the day of adversity, consider: God has made the one as well as the other, † so that no one can discover anything that will come after him.

AVOIDING EXTREMES

15 In my futile life † I have seen everything: † someone righteous perishes in spite of his righteousness, † and someone wicked lives long in spite of his evil. † 16 Don't be excessively righteous, and don't be overly wise. † Why should you destroy yourself? 17 Don't be excessively wicked, and don't be foolish. Why should you die before your time? † 18 It is good that you grasp the one and do not let the other slip from your hand. For the one who fears God will end up with both of them.

19 Wisdom makes the wise person stronger than ten rulers of a city. †

20 There is certainly no one righteous on the earth who does good
and never sins. †

21 Don't pay attention † to everything people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you, † 22 for in your heart you know that many times you yourself have cursed others.

WHAT THE TEACHER FOUND

23 I have tested all this by wisdom. I resolved, "I will be wise," but it was beyond me. 24 What exists is beyond reach and very deep. † Who can discover it? 25 I turned my thoughts to know, explore, and examine wisdom † and an explanation for things, and to know that wickedness is stupidity and folly is madness. 26 And I find more bitter than death † the woman who is a trap: † her heart a net and her hands chains. The one who pleases God will escape her, but the sinner will be captured by her. 27 "Look," says the Teacher, "I have discovered this by adding one thing to another to find out the explanation, 28 which my soul continually searches for but does not find: I found one person in a thousand, but none of those was a woman. † 29 Only see this: I have discovered that God made people upright, † but they pursued many schemes."

7:15 Lit *days* **7:21** Lit *Don't give your heart*

7:1 Pr 22:1; Ezk 36:21 **7:1** Ec 4:2 **7:2** Ps 90:12 **7:3** Pr 14:13 **7:5** Pr 13:1 **7:6** Ps 58:9; 118:12 **7:7** Ec 4:1 **7:7** Dt 16:19; Pr 17:8 **7:8** Pr 14:29 **7:9** Pr 14:17; Jms 1:19 **7:10** Jdg 6:13 **7:12** Pr 3:18 **7:13** Ec 3:11 **7:13** Ec 1:15 **7:14** Ec 3:22 **7:14** Lm 3:38 **7:15** Ec 6:12; 9:9 **7:15** Ec 8:14 **7:15** Ec 8:12-13 **7:16** Ec 2:15; Rm 12:3 **7:17** Jb 22:16; Ps 55:23; Pr 10:27 **7:19** Ec 9:13-18 **7:20** 1Kg 8:46; Rm 3:23 **7:21** Pr 30:10 **7:24** Rm 11:33 **7:25** Ec 1:15,17 **7:26** Pr 5:4 **7:26** Pr 6:25 **7:28** 1Kg 11:3 **7:29** Gn 1:27

7:13 This verse clarifies 1:15, which had said "what is crooked cannot be straightened." Now the reader knows with certainty that it is God who **has made crooked**, referring to his subjection of the world to futility and death (see the note on 1:2-3). This state of affairs cannot be altered by anyone except God (see previous note).

7:14 As explained at further length in 3:1-11, God's works include both the good days and the bad, and such works humans cannot fully understand (see 7:24; 8:17).

7:20 Although Ecclesiastes focuses on futility and death, this verse relates these to the universal sinfulness of the human race (see following note). As such, humans are not innocent sufferers but subjects of the just punishment of God (see Gn 3; Ps 90).

7:27-29 Building on the universal sinfulness of the human race as asserted in verse 20 (see also 1Kg 8:46; Ps 14:1-3), the speaker testified that his own experience also supported this (v. 28). Furthermore, this sinfulness is not the fault of God, who **made people upright.**

WISDOM, AUTHORITIES, AND INEQUITIES

WISDOM, AUTHORITIES, AND INEQUITIES

8 Who is like the wise person, and who knows the interpretation of a matter? A person's wisdom brightens his face, and the sternness of his face is changed. †

2 Keep † the king's command because of your oath made before God. † 3 Do not be in a hurry; leave his presence, † and don't persist in a bad cause, since he will do whatever he wants. 4 For the king's word is authoritative, and who can say to him, "What are you doing?" † 5 The one who keeps a command will not experience anything harmful, † and a wise heart knows the right time and procedure. 6 For every activity there is a right time and procedure, † even though a person's troubles are heavy on him. 7 Yet no one knows what will happen † because who can tell him what will happen? 8 No one has authority over the wind † to restrain it, † and there is no authority over the day of death; † no one is discharged during battle, and wickedness will not allow those who practice it to escape. 9 All this I have seen, applying my mind to all the work that is done under the sun, at a time when one person has authority over another to his harm.

10 In such circumstances, I saw the wicked buried. They came and went from the holy place, † and they were praised † in the city where they did those things. This too is futile. 11 Because the sentence against an evil act is not carried out quickly, † the heart of people is filled with the desire to commit evil. 12 Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and prolongs his life, † I also know that it will go well with God-fearing people, † for they are reverent before him. 13 However, it will not go well with the wicked, † and they will not lengthen their days like a shadow, † for they are not reverent before God.

14 There is a futility that is done on the earth: there are righteous people who get what the actions of the wicked deserve, † and there are wicked people who get what the actions of the righteous deserve. † I say that this too is futile. 15 So I commended enjoyment because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, † for this will accompany him in his labor during the days of his life that God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my mind to know wisdom † and to observe the activity that
is done on the earth (even though one's eyes do not close in sleep day or night),
17 I observed all the work of God and concluded that a person is unable to
discover the work that is done under the sun. Even though a person labors hard
to explore it, he cannot find it; † even if a wise person claims to know it, he is
unable to discover it.

8:2 Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg, Tg, Syr; other Hb mss read *I, keep* **8:8** Or *life-breath* **8:10** Some Hb mss, LXX, Aq, Theod, Sym; other Hb mss read *forgotten*

8:1 Dt 28:50 **8:2** Ex 22:11; 2Sm 21:7; Ezk 17:18 **8:3** Ec 10:4 **8:4** Jb 9:12; Dn 4:35 **8:5** Rm 13:3 **8:6** Ec 3:1,17 **8:7** Ec 3:22; 6:12; 9:12; 10:14 **8:8** Ps 148:8; Pr 30:4; Mk 4:39 **8:8** Jn 10:18; 2Tm 1:10 **8:10** Ec 9:5 **8:11** Rm 2:4; 2Pt 3:9 **8:12** Ec 7:15 **8:12** Dt 12:25; Ps 37:11; Pr 1:33; Is 3:10 **8:13** Is 3:11 **8:13** Jb 14:2; Ec 6:12 **8:14** Ec 7:15 **8:14** Jb 21:7; Ps 73:3; Jr 12:1 **8:15** Ec 2:24 **8:16** Ec 1:13-14 **8:17** Ec 3:11; 7:25-29; 11:5

8:10-13 Injustice in the world has been repeatedly mentioned in Ecclesiastes (3:16; 4:1; 5:8; 7:15). The speaker here also expressed his confidence in God's reward of those who fear him and his righteous judgment of those who do not (3:17; 12:13-14). See "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*.

8:15 See the note on 2:24-26.

8:16-17 The speaker confessed that despite his own effort to do so, humans cannot fully understand **the work of God** (3:11; 7:14,24).

ENJOY LIFE DESPITE DEATH

9 Indeed, I took all this to heart and explained it all: The righteous, the
wise, and their works are in God's hands. † People don't know whether
to expect love or hate. Everything lies ahead of them. 2 Everything is the
same for everyone: † There is one fate for the righteous and the wicked, †
for the good and the bad, † for the clean and the unclean, for the one who sacrifices
and the one who does not sacrifice. As it is for the good, so also it is for the
sinner; as it is for the one who takes an oath, so also for the one who fears an
oath. 3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun: there is one fate for
everyone. In addition, the hearts of people are full of evil, and madness is in their
hearts while they live; † after that they go to the dead. 4 But there is hope for
whoever is joined † with all the living, since a live dog is better than a dead lion.
5 For the living know that they will die, but the dead don't know anything.
There is no longer a reward for them because the memory of them is
forgotten. † 6 Their love, their hate, and their envy have already disappeared,
and there is no longer a portion for them in all that is done under the sun.

7 Go, eat your bread with pleasure, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart,
for God has already accepted your works. † 8 Let your clothes be white all the
time, and never let oil be lacking on your head. † 9 Enjoy life with the wife you
love all the days of your fleeting † life, † which has been given to you under the
sun, all your fleeting days. For that is your portion in life and in your struggle †
under the sun. 10 Whatever your hands find to do, do with all your strength, †
because there is no work, planning, knowledge, or wisdom † in Sheol where
you are going.

THE LIMITATIONS OF WISDOM

11 Again I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, † or the battle to
the strong, † or bread to the wise, or riches to the discerning, or favor to the
skillful; rather, time and chance happen to all of them. 12 For certainly no one
knows his time: † like fish caught in a cruel net or like birds caught in a trap, †
so people are trapped in an evil time † as it suddenly falls on them. †
13 I have observed that this also is wisdom under the sun, and it is significant to
me: 14 There was a small city with few men in it. A great king came against it,
surrounded it, and built large siege works against it. 15 Now a poor wise man
was found in the city, † and he delivered the city by his wisdom. † Yet no one
remembered that poor man. 16 And I said, "Wisdom is better than strength, †
but the wisdom of the poor man is despised, and his words are not heeded."

17 The calm words of the wise are heeded more than the shouts of a ruler
over fools.
18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but one sinner can destroy
much good. †

9:2 LXX, Aq, Syr, Vg; MT omits *and the bad* **9:4** Alt Hb tradition reads *chosen* **9:9** Or *futile*
9:1 Dt 33:3 **9:2** Jb 9:22 **9:2** Ec 2:14 **9:3** Ec 1:17 **9:5** Ec 2:16 **9:7** Ec 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 8:15 **9:8** Ps 23:5 **9:9** Ec 6:12; 7:15 **9:9** Ec 2:10 **9:10** Rm 12:11; Col 3:23 **9:10** Ec 9:5 **9:11** Am 2:14-15 **9:11** 2Ch 20:15 **9:12** Ec 8:7 **9:12** Pr 7:23 **9:12** Pr 29:6 **9:12** Lk 21:34-35 **9:15** Ec 4:13 **9:15** 2Sm 20:22 **9:16** Ec 7:19 **9:18** Jos 7:1

9:2-3 This common **fate** is death (see the notes on 2:13-16; 3:19-20).

9:7-10 This passage should be linked to related preceding ones (2:24-26; 3:12-13,22; 5:18-20; 8:15). The uniqueness of this passage is that not only is enjoyment of life by God's grace described and commended;

it is commanded (see also 11:9), and this because **God has already accepted** [our] **works** (v. 7). Such divine acceptance (presumably of the God-fearer) is thus the grounds for both joy and hard work, not the other way around. This strikingly corresponds to NT passages such as Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:58; and others.

9:11-12 The observation that **time and chance happen to all** recognizes that just rewards are not always given in this life (see the note on 8:10-13), a theme frequently dealt with in Job (see the note on Jb 4:6-8).

THE BURDEN OF FOLLY

10 Dead flies make a perfumer's oil ferment and stink; †
so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor.

2 A wise person's heart goes to the † right, but a fool's heart to the left.

3 Even when the fool walks along the road, his heart lacks sense, and he shows everyone he is a fool. †

4 If the ruler's anger rises against you, don't leave your post, †
for calmness puts great offenses to rest. †

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun, an error proceeding from the presence of the ruler:

6 The fool is appointed to great heights, †
but the rich remain in lowly positions.

7 I have seen slaves on horses, †
but princes walking on the ground like slaves. †

8 The one who digs a pit may fall into it, †
and the one who breaks through a wall may be bitten by a snake. †

9 The one who quarries stones may be hurt by them; the one who splits logs may be endangered by them.

10 If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen its edge, then one must exert more strength;
however, the advantage of wisdom is that it brings success.

11 If the snake bites before it is charmed, †
then there is no advantage for the charmer. †

12 The words from the mouth of a wise person are gracious, †

but the lips of a fool consume him. †
13 The beginning of the words from his mouth is folly, but the end
of his speaking is evil madness; 14 yet the fool multiplies words.
No one knows what will happen,
and who can tell anyone what will happen after him? †
15 The struggles of fools weary them, for they don't know how to go to the city.
16 Woe to you, land, when your king is a youth †
and your princes feast in the morning.
17 Blessed are you, land, when your king is a son of nobles and your princes
feast at the proper time — for strength and not for drunkenness. †
18 Because of laziness the roof caves in, and because of negligent hands
the house leaks.
19 A feast is prepared for laughter, and wine makes life happy, †
and money † is the answer for everything. †
20 Do not curse the king even in your thoughts, †
and do not curse a rich person even in your bedroom, †
for a bird of the sky may carry the message, and a winged creature may report
the matter.

10:2 Lit *his* **10:11** Lit *master of the tongue* **10:19** Lit *silver*
10:1 Ex 30:25 **10:3** Pr 13:16; 18:2 **10:4** Ec 8:3 **10:4** 1Sm 25:24-33; Pr 25:15 **10:6** Est 3:1; Pr 28:12; 29:2 **10:7** Pr 19:10 **10:7** Est 6:8-10 **10:8** Ps 7:15 **10:8** Am 5:19 **10:11** Jr 8:17 **10:12** Pr 10:32; 22:11; Lk 4:22 **10:12** Pr 18:7 **10:14** Ec 8:7,17 **10:16** Pr 30:21-22; Is 3:4,12 **10:17** Pr 31:4; Is 5:11 **10:19** Ps 104:15 **10:19** Ec 7:12 **10:20** Ex 22:28 **10:20** 2Kg 6:12; Lk 12:3

10:16-17 Like verses 5-7, these concern qualified leadership in society. Inexperienced, indulgent leaders will bring trouble; those with character will bring blessing.

10:20 If it was possible for even a secret thought or word to spread in ancient Israel, how much more so in today's online world of social media?

INVEST IN LIFE

11 Send your bread on the surface of the water, †
for after many days you may find it.
2 Give a portion to seven or even to eight, †
for you don't know what disaster may happen on earth.

3 If the clouds are full, they will pour out rain on the earth; whether a tree falls
to the south or the north, the place where the tree falls, there it will lie.
4 One who watches the wind will not sow, and the one who looks at the clouds
will not reap.
5 Just as you don't know the path of the wind, or how bones develop
in † the womb of a pregnant woman, so also you don't know the work
of God who makes everything. †
6 In the morning sow your seed, and at evening do not let your hand rest,
because you don't know which will succeed, whether one or the other,
or if both of them will be equally good.
7 Light is sweet, and it is pleasing for the eyes to see the sun. †
8 Indeed, if someone lives many years, let him rejoice in them all,
and let him remember the days of darkness, † since they will be many.
All that comes is futile.
9 Rejoice, young person, while you are young, and let your heart be glad
in the days of your youth.
And walk in the ways of your heart
and in the desire of your eyes; †
but know that for all of these things God will bring you to judgment.
10 Remove sorrow from your heart, and put away pain from your flesh, †
because youth and the prime of life are fleeting.

11:5 Or *know how the life-breath comes to the bones in*
11:1 Dt 15:10; Pr 19:17; Mt 10:42; Gl 6:9-10; Heb 6:10 **11:2** Ps 112:9; Mt 5:42; Lk 6:30; 1Tm 6:18-19
11:5 Jb 10:10-11; Ps 139:14-16; Is 55:9; Jn 3:6-8; Rm 11:33 **11:7** Ec 6:5; 7:11 **11:8** Ec 12:1 **11:9** Ec 2:24; 3:12-13,22; 5:18; 8:15; 9:7-9 **11:10** 2Co 7:1; 2Tm 2:22

11:1 The sending of **bread on the surface of the water** is difficult and has been interpreted variously, including almsgiving, trade by sea, or the apparently senseless act of actually putting bread in water.

11:5 The speaker returns to the theme of human inability to fully understand **the work of God** (3:11; 7:14,24; 8:17).

11:6 The present context highlights the limitations of human knowledge and uncertainty of the future (vv. 2,5; 10:14). In contrast with the despairing view of work in 2:18-23 (see note), the speaker here instead encourages diligence (see also 9:10; 10:18).

11:9–12:1 This time it is the **young person** who is directly instructed to **rejoice** and **be glad** (v. 9; see the note on 9:7-10). The reminder that **God will bring . . . to judgment** indicates that mere hedonism is not in view here. Rather, the youth enjoying himself is simultaneously to **remember** [his] **Creator** (12:1).

THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE

THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE

12 So remember your Creator in the days of your youth:
Before the days of adversity come,
and the years approach when you will say, †
"I have no delight in them";
2 before the sun and the light are darkened, †
and the moon and the stars,
and the clouds return after † the rain; 3 on the day when the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop,
the women who grind grain cease because they are few, and the ones who watch through the windows see dimly, †
4 the doors at the street are shut while the sound of the mill fades; †
when one rises at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song grow faint.
5 Also, they are afraid of heights and dangers on the road; the almond tree blossoms,
the grasshopper loses its spring, †
and the caper berry has no effect;
for the mere mortal is headed to his eternal home, †
and mourners will walk around in the street; †
6 before the silver cord is snapped, †
and the gold bowl is broken, †
and the jar is shattered at the spring, and the wheel is broken into the well; 7 and the dust returns to the earth as it once was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. †

8 "Absolute futility," says the Teacher. "Everything is futile." †

THE TEACHER'S OBJECTIVES AND CONCLUSION

9 In addition to the Teacher being a wise man, he constantly taught the people knowledge; he weighed, explored, and arranged many proverbs. † 10 The Teacher sought to find delightful sayings and write words of truth accurately.
11 The sayings of the wise are like cattle prods, † and those from masters of

collections are like firmly embedded nails. † The sayings are given by one Shepherd. †

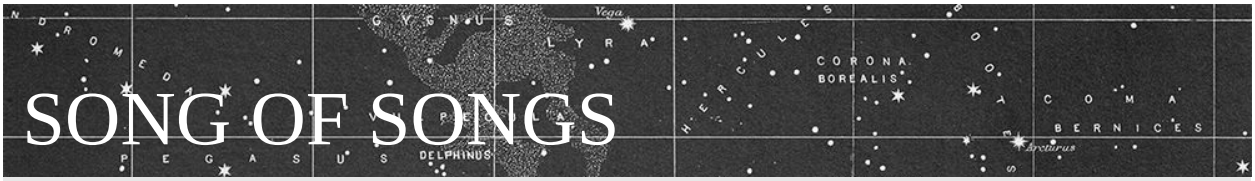
12 But beyond these, my son, be warned: there is no end to the making of many books, † and much study wearies the body. † 13 When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: fear God † and keep his commands, because this is for all † humanity. † 14 For God will bring every act to judgment, † including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.

12:2 Or *with* **12:5** Or *grasshopper is weighed down*, or *grasshopper drags itself along* **12:6** Alt Hb tradition reads *removed* **12:11** Or *by a shepherd* **12:13** Or *is the whole duty of*

12:1 Ec 11:8 **12:2** Is 5:30; Ezk 32:7-8 **12:3** Gn 27:1; 48:10; 1Sm 3:2 **12:4** Jr 25:10; Rv 18:22 **12:5** Jb 17:13; 30:23 **12:5** Jr 9:17 **12:6** Zch 4:2-3 **12:7** Gn 2:7; 3:19; Ec 3:21 **12:8** Ec 1:2 **12:9** 1Kg 4:32; Pr 1:1 **12:11** Pr 1:6; 22:17 **12:11** Ezr 9:8; Is 22:23 **12:12** 1Kg 4:32-33; Jn 21:25 **12:12** Ec 1:18 **12:13** Pr 1:7; Ec 3:14; 5:7; 7:18; 8:12-13 **12:13** Ps 97:5; Ac 4:12; Rm 10:12 **12:14** Ec 3:17; 11:9; Rv 20:12

12:7-8 Aging and death having been vividly described (vv. 1-6), and here the speaker again alludes to **dust** as in Genesis 2–3 (see the note on 3:19-20). Verse 8 is nearly identical to 1:2, which together frame the book (see following note).

12:13-14 Despite the numerous complaints over the futility of life because of death, despair is not the final word in Ecclesiastes. As mentioned above, God will make things right when he **bring**[s] **every act into judgment** (3:16-17; 11:9). Humans thus should not ultimately succumb to disillusionment, frustration, or anger but should **fear God** and live in right relationship with him (3:14; 5:7). In this there is joy even in this life (see notes on 2:24-26; 9:7-10) as well as the promise of eternal reward (8:12). See “Chief Purpose of Humanity,” *p. 1464*.



SONG OF SONGS

INTRODUCTION

The Song of Songs celebrates the love of Solomon and his bride, who is called Shulamith or the Shulammite (6:13). The excitement of courtship, the beauty of the wedding night, the sexuality of the first night and subsequent nights, as well as tender friendship—all of these elements make this book a celebration of romance and marital sensuality as God intended them.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The Song claims authorship by Solomon in its title, "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's." The church has long accepted this at face value, but modern critics raise objections to Solomon as author.

First, critics claim that the title did not originate with the Song but was added later by someone who wanted to attribute the work to the famous Solomon. However, no evidence supports this claim. Moreover, the structure of the book suggests that the title is integral to the book's composition and is thus original. Like other biblical writers, the writer often structured content with attention to certain numbers—three, seven, and ten being some of the most common. Within the Song, for example, the author designed seven sections (see below), a sevenfold praise (4:1-5), twice a tenfold praise (5:10-16; 7:1-5), and a tenfold occurrence of the abstract word for love (2:4-5,7; 3:5; 5:8; 7:6; 8:4,6-7). Apart from the title (1:1), he wove Solomon's name into six other places (1:5; 3:7,9,11; 8:11-12): two in the last section, three in the central, and one in the first. With the inclusion of "Solomon" in the title, the name appears a perfect seven times and is symmetrically balanced within the Song: twice in the first section balanced by twice in the last one, with three in the central. The title is thus as cleverly integrated with the lyrics as possible. It not only conforms to their melodic alliteration and meter, but it completes the sevenfold occurrence of "Solomon" and in a manner that artistically balances it throughout the Song. In fact, the tenfold occurrence of "love" joins the sevenfold appearance of "Solomon" to show the Song's subject and author. Hardly a later addition, the title seems to have been original, constituting its first verse.

Another common objection to Solomon's authorship is the king's well-known possession of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (1Kg 11:3). How could a man who lived like that write a song about devotion to one woman? It appears he could do so only because grace touched his heart. In this respect he foreshadowed other biblical writers who, except for God's grace and calling, were the least qualified to write Scripture. For example, Paul, the great apostle, wrote most eloquently of grace and his unworthiness (e.g., 1Tm 1:12-16). Solomon was a man immersed in power and pleasure, but God opened his eyes to true love. Solomon also authored the book of Proverbs. Just as he did not always follow the precepts he recorded there, so too he evidently composed a great love song despite his failure to live in accordance with its ideals.

BACKGROUND: A compelling historical reason to date the Song as coming from the time of Solomon is its nearest literary parallel—the Egyptian love songs. No one doubts their origin prior to or contemporaneous with the time of Solomon, and the Egyptian love songs are indisputably the Song's closest literary parallels.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

A beautiful love song inspires us like grace, creating within us a desire for its beauty. Like such an enchanting love song, Solomon's Song inspires a pursuit of the love it portrays. This romantic delight is not a modern fairytale or fantasy from the past, but reflects God's desire to form within us a pure and devoted

love. We discover that there is a bliss in married love that is reflective of the greater love believers experience as the bride of Christ. As this book's imagery informs us of romantic love, it also helps us anticipate the full consummation of our relationship with Christ when he returns for his bride.

STRUCTURE

The Song of Songs is a poem whose components form a chiastic structure. A chiasm takes the form: A

B

C

B´

A´

where A and A´ mirror each other and where the central element, C, conveys the main point of the poem. The outline below shows the structure of the Song of Songs. The author intended to emphasize the central elements of the structure, the day and night of the wedding (section IV). When God inspired Solomon to write this song, he gave divine approval to romantic love.

The Hebrew text makes a distinction between the various speakers through a change in gender and number. The CSB text has added subheadings to clarify when the speakers change.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is not directly named in this book. None of his usual names are found, such as God, Lord, the Lord, or the Almighty. God is affirmed indirectly as the Creator who conceived of romantic love between husband and wife, as in the account of the first man and woman coming together as one flesh (Gn 2:18-25).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Song of Songs celebrates the glory of wedded bliss possible for human beings, despite the many obstacles to true love. The climax of the book shows how strong and wonderful romantic love is: "A huge torrent cannot extinguish love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If a man were to give all his wealth for love, it would be utterly scorned" (8:7).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The book does not teach directly about redemption. If the love of a husband for his wife can be as rich and satisfying as the book describes, how much greater is the love of God for his beloved people (see Rv 21:9).

SONG OF SONGS TIMELINE

3000–2000 BC

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

ABRAHAM 2166–1991

Stonehenge construction, phase I **2900**
Stonehenge construction, phase II **2900–2400**
Epic of Gilgamesh oral tradition developed from **2700** to **1400**
First libraries in Egypt **2500–2000**
Stonehenge construction, phase III **2400–1600**

2000–1800 BC

MOSES 1526–1406

The Love Poem of a Persistent Woman, Old Babylonian **2017–1794**
Dumuzi-Inanna Love Songs, Sumerian **2000**
An Old Akkadian Love Charm **2000**
Love Lyrics of Rim–Sin, Akkadian **1822–1763**

1800–1100 BC

Message of Lundingirra to His Mother, Old Babylonian **1800–1600**
Love Lyrics of Nanay and Muati, Old Babylonian **1711–1684**
Heavy import and export trade, Egypt **1500–1000**
Events in Joshua **1406–1380?**
Events in Judges **1380?–1060?**
Egyptian Love Poetry **1305–1150**

1100–900 BC

Love Lyrics of Nabu and Tasmetu, Neo-Assyrian **1180–609**
The Harper's Song for Inherkhway, Egyptian **1160**
David becomes king over all Israel. **1003**
Solomon becomes king. **970**
Proverbs **970**
Song of Songs **970?**
Ecclesiastes **935?**

1 The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. †

Woman

2 Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!
For your caresses † are more delightful than wine. †
3 The fragrance of your perfume is intoxicating; †
your name is perfume poured out. †
No wonder young women † adore you.

4 Take me with you † — let's hurry.
Oh, that the king would bring † me to his chambers.

Young Women

We will rejoice and be glad in you; we will celebrate your caresses more than wine.

Woman

It is only right that they adore you.

5 Daughters of Jerusalem, †
I am dark like the tents of Kedar, †
yet lovely † like the curtains of Solomon.
6 Do not stare at me because I am dark, for the sun has gazed on me.
My mother's sons were angry with me; †
they made me take care of the vineyards. †
I have not taken care of my own vineyard.

7 Tell me, you whom I love: †
Where do you pasture your sheep? †
Where do you let them rest at noon? †
Why should I be like one who veils herself †
beside the flocks of your companions? †

Man †

8 If you do not know, most beautiful of women, †
follow † the tracks of the flock, and pasture your young goats
near the shepherds' tents.

9 I compare you, my darling, †
to a † mare among Pharaoh's chariots. †

10 Your cheeks are beautiful with jewelry, †
your neck with its necklace.
11 We will make gold jewelry for you, accented with silver.

Woman

12 While the king is on his couch, †
my perfume † releases its fragrance. †
13 The one I love is a sachet of myrrh to me, †
spending the night between my breasts.
14 The one I love is a cluster of henna blossoms to me, †
in the vineyards of En-gedi. †

Man

15 How beautiful you are, my darling.
How very beautiful!
Your eyes are doves. †

Woman

16 How handsome you are, my love. †
How delightful!
Our bed is verdant;
17 the beams of our house are cedars, and our rafters are cypresses. †

1:2 Or *acts of love* **1:3** Or *wonder virgins* **1:4** Or *The king has brought* **1:7** Or *who wanders* **1:8** Some understand the young women to be the speakers in this verse. **1:8** Lit *go out for yourself into* **1:9** Lit *my* **1:12** Or *is at his table* **1:12** Lit *nard* **1:17** Or *firs*, or *pines*
1:1 1Kg 4:32 **1:2** Sg 4:10 **1:3** Jn 12:3 **1:3** Ec 7:1 **1:4** Hs 11:4 **1:5** Sg 2:7; 3:5,10; 5:8,16; 8:4 **1:5** Ps 120:5; Is 60:7 **1:5** Sg 2:14; 4:3; 6:4 **1:6** Ps 69:8 **1:6** Sg 8:11 **1:7** Sg 3:1-4 **1:7** Sg 2:16; 6:3 **1:7** Is 13:20; Jr 33:12 **1:7** Sg 8:13 **1:8** Sg 5:9; 6:1 **1:9** Sg 1:15 **1:9** 2Ch 1:16-17 **1:10** Sg 5:13 **1:12** Sg 4:14; Mk 14:3; Jn 12:3 **1:13** Ps 45:8; Jn 19:39 **1:14** Sg 4:13 **1:14** 1Sm 23:29 **1:15** Sg 4:1 **1:16** Sg 2:3

1:1 Song of Songs concerns romance, marriage (3:11), and sexual union. Interpreters have naturally sought to understand this book's relationship to the biblical canon. To begin with, Proverbs 5:18-19 and Ecclesiastes 9:9 commend enjoying life with one's spouse. A broader parallel is the frequent description of the relationship between God and Israel as "marriage" (e.g., Is 62:4-5; Ezk 16; Hs 1–3; Rv 21:2). Along these lines, the bride in the Song is likened to "the tower of David" (4:4) and to "Jerusalem" (6:4). Another connection is to the pursuit of wisdom, which is frequently associated with marriage in Proverbs (see the

notes on Pr 1:20-21; 4:6-9; 8:1-10; 9:1-9). Edenic imagery is used in Proverbs 3:13-18 and seems latent in the many passages in Song of Songs concerning gardens, vineyards, trees, fruit, flowers, and wine (see also Is 5:1-7). The Hebrew text translated **is Solomon's** might indicate authorship, but it also might indicate a kind of dedication or association that one could translate "to Solomon" or "with reference to Solomon." Interestingly, at the end of the book (8:11-12), Solomon seems to be placed in a negative light. Perhaps this is to contrast the ideal of sex and marriage found in the book with Solomon's having many wives and concubines, which eventually led to the downfall of Israel.

1:2-4 Her lover's **kisses** are more pleasurable **than wine** (see also v. 4; 2:4; 5:1; 7:9; 8:2). This sentiment generally parallels Psalm 63:3 **(your faithful love is better than life).** The scent of his **perfume** (lit "oils") also brings great pleasure (v. 3; 4:10).

1:15-16 Following the man's praise of her beauty (v. 15), she responds in kind (v. 16; see also Is 33:17). She had expressed some insecurity in verses 5-6 and had also been praised for her beauty in verses 8-10.

2 I am a wildflower † of Sharon, a lily † of the valleys. †

Man

2 Like a lily among thorns, so is my darling among the young women.

Woman

3 Like an apricot † tree among the trees of the forest, so is my love among the young men.
I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste.
4 He brought me to the banquet hall, † †
and he looked on me with love. † †
5 Sustain me with raisins; refresh me with apricots, †
for I am lovesick. †
6 May his left hand be under my head, and his right arm embrace me. †
7 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and the wild does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time. † †

8 Listen! My love is approaching.
Look! Here he comes,
leaping over the mountains, †
bounding over the hills.
9 My love is like a gazelle or a young stag. †
See, he is standing behind our wall, gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.

10 My love calls to me:

Man

Arise, † my darling.
Come away, my beautiful one.
11 For now the winter is past; the rain has ended and gone away.
12 The blossoms appear in the countryside.
The time of singing † has come, and the turtledove's cooing is heard in our land. †
13 The fig tree ripens its figs; †
the blossoming vines give off their fragrance. †
Arise, my darling.
Come away, my beautiful one.

14 My dove, † in the clefts of the rock, †
in the crevices of the cliff, let me see your face, †
let me hear your voice; †
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely. †

Woman †

15 Catch the foxes for us † — the little foxes that ruin the vineyards — for our vineyards are in bloom. †

Woman

16 My love is mine and I am his; †
he feeds among the lilies.
17 Until the day breaks †
and the shadows flee,
turn around, my love, and be like a gazelle or a young stag † on the divided mountains. † †

2:1 Traditionally *rose* **2:1** Or *lotus* **2:3** Or *apple* **2:4** Lit *the house of wine* **2:4** Or *and his banner over me is love* **2:5** Or *apples* **2:7** Lit *until it pleases* **2:12** Or *pruning* **2:14** Or *form* **2:15** The speaker could be the woman, the man, or both. **2:17** Lit *breathes* **2:17** Or *the Bether mountains,* or *the mountains of spices* ; Hb obscure
2:1 Sg 5:13; 7:2; Hs 14:5 **2:4** Sg 1:4 **2:4** Ps 20:5 **2:5** Sg 5:8 **2:6** Sg 8:3 **2:7** Sg 3:5; 5:8; 8:4 **2:8** Is 52:7 **2:9** Sg 2:17; 8:14 **2:10** Sg 2:13 **2:12** Jr 8:7 **2:13** Mt 24:32 **2:13** Sg 7:12 **2:14** Sg 5:2; 6:9 **2:14** Jr 48:28 **2:14** Sg 8:13 **2:14** Sg 1:5 **2:15** Ezk 13:4 **2:15** Sg 2:13 **2:16** Sg 6:3; 7:10; 8:6 **2:17** Sg 2:9 **2:17** Sg 4:5-6; 8:14

2:2-3 The loving exchange continues as each person expresses the uniqueness of the other.

2:5 Having associated her enjoyment of his love with "wine" in 1:2-4 , she compares it to eating sweet fruit.

2:7 As in 1:5, the woman again addressed the "daughters of Jerusalem" (lit). As elsewhere, she urges them not to rush romantic love (see also 3:5; 8:4). This wise warning is in a similar spirit to Proverbs 4:23: **"**Guard your heart above all else." Her mention of **gazelles and wild does of the field** (see also 3:5) appears to be a figurative reference to romantic love and its pleasures (vv. 9,17; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14).

2:15 The imperative verb **catch** is plural and as such seems to be a request for help from others in protecting their **vineyards**, which in turn relates to their intimate relationship (vv. 10-13; 7:11-13). Along these lines, the woman refers to her body twice as her "vineyard" (1:6; 8:12).

3 In my bed at night †
I sought the one I love; †
I sought him, but did not find him. † †

2 I will arise now and go about the city, through the streets and the plazas. †
I will seek the one I love.
I sought him, but did not find him.

3 The guards who go about the city found me. †
I asked them, "Have you seen the one I love? "

4 I had just passed them when I found the one I love.
I held on to him and would not let him go until I brought him to my mother's house † — to the chamber of the one who conceived me.

5 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you by the gazelles and the wild does of the field, do not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time. † †

Narrator

6 Who is this † coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke,
scented with myrrh and frankincense †
from every fragrant powder of the merchant?

7 Look! Solomon's bed surrounded by sixty warriors
from the mighty men of Israel.
8 All of them are skilled with swords and trained in warfare.
Each has his sword at his side †
to guard against the terror of the night. †

9 King Solomon made a carriage for himself with wood from Lebanon.
10 He made its posts of silver, its back † of gold, and its seat of purple.
Its interior is inlaid with love †
by the young women of Jerusalem. †
11 Go out, young women of Zion, †
and gaze at King Solomon,
wearing the crown his mother placed on him on the day of his wedding † — the day of his heart's rejoicing.

3:1 Or *bed night after night* **3:1** LXX adds *I called him, but he did not answer me* **3:5** Lit *until it pleases* **3:10** Or *base,* or *canopy* **3:10** Or *leather*
3:1 Sg 1:7 **3:1** Sg 5:6 **3:2** Jr 5:1 **3:3** Sg 5:7 **3:4** Sg 8:2 **3:5** Sg 2:7; 5:8; 8:4 **3:6** Sg 6:10; 8:5 **3:6** Sg 4:6,14
3:8 Ps 45:3 **3:8** Ps 91:5 **3:10** Sg 1:5 **3:11** Is 3:16-17; 4:4 **3:11** Is 62:5

3:3 For more on these **guards**, see the note on 5:2-7.

3:4 The woman's longing for her beloved "at night" (v. 1) is vividly portrayed (see also 5:2-7). As elsewhere, the importance of their mothers is highlighted (see also v. 11; 1:6; 6:9; 8:1,2,5).

3:6-11 This entourage is on its way to **Solomon's** wedding (vv. 7-11). Its journey **from the wilderness** (v. 6) parallels the woman's similar ascent in 8:5. Such a starting point contrasts with frequent reference to lush gardens and vineyards (see the notes on 1:1; 2:15). The Hebrew phrase translated **columns of smoke** is found once elsewhere in Joel 2:30, in the context of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and of the day of the Lord.

Man

4 How beautiful you are, my darling.
How very beautiful!
Behind your veil,
your eyes are doves. †
Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down Mount Gilead. †
2 Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn sheep coming up from washing,
each one bearing twins,

and none has lost its young. † †

3 Your lips are like a scarlet cord, †
and your mouth † is lovely.
Behind your veil,
your brow † is like a slice of pomegranate. †

4 Your neck is like the tower of David, †
constructed in layers.
A thousand shields are hung on it — all of them shields of warriors.

5 Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, † that feed among the lilies.

6 Until the day breaks †
and the shadows flee, †
I will make my way to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. †

7 You are absolutely beautiful, † my darling; there is no imperfection in you.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, † † my bride; †
come with me from Lebanon!
Descend from the peak of Amana, from the summit of Senir and Hermon, †
from the dens of the lions,
from the mountains of the leopards.

9 You have captured my heart, † my sister, † my bride.
You have captured my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.

10 How delightful your caresses are, my sister, my bride.
Your caresses are much better than wine, †
and the fragrance of your perfume than any balsam.

11 Your lips drip sweetness like the honeycomb, my bride. †
Honey and milk † are under your tongue.
The fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12 My sister, my bride, you are a locked garden — a locked garden † and a sealed spring. †

13 Your branches are a paradise † of pomegranates with choicest fruits; †
henna with nard,
14 nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, †
with all the trees of frankincense, †
myrrh and aloes, †
with all the best spices.
15 You are a garden spring, a well of flowing water †
streaming from Lebanon.

Woman

16 Awaken, † north wind; come, south wind.
Blow on my garden,
and spread the fragrance of its spices.
Let my love come to his garden and eat its choicest fruits. †

4:2 Lit *and no one bereaved among them* **4:3** Or *speech* **4:3** Or *temple*, or *cheek*, or *lips* **4:6** Lit *breathes* **4:8** In Hb, the word for *Lebanon* is similar to "frankincense" in Sg 4:6,14,15. **4:12** Some Hb mss read *locked fountain* **4:13** Or *park*, or *orchard*
4:1 Sg 1:15; 5:12 **4:1** Sg 6:5 **4:2** Sg 6:6 **4:3** Jos 2:18 **4:3** Sg 6:7 **4:4** Sg 7:4 **4:5** Sg 7:3 **4:6** Sg 2:17 **4:6** Sg 3:6; 4:14 **4:7** Sg 1:15; Eph 5:27 **4:8** 1Kg 4:33 **4:8** Is 62:5 **4:8** Dt 3:9; 1Ch 5:23 **4:9** Sg 6:5; 7:5 **4:9** Sg 5:1-2 **4:10** Sg 1:2,4 **4:11** Pr 5:3 **4:11** Ex 3:8,17; Nm 14:8; 16:13-14 **4:12** 1Kg 21:8; Est 8:10; Jb 9:7 **4:13** Sg 7:13 **4:14** Ex 30:23 **4:14** Sg 4:6 **4:14** Sg 3:6; Jn 19:39 **4:15** Gn 26:19; Lv 14:5; Jr 2:13 **4:16** Sg 2:7; 3:5; 8:4 **4:16** Sg 7:13

4:1-7 The perfect beauty of the bride (vv. 1,7) parallels that of the new Jerusalem (Pss 48:2; 50:2; Is 52:1; Eph 5:27; Rv 19:7-8; 21:2). **Myrrh** was known for its fragrance (Pr 7:17; Est 2:12) and is associated with pleasure in Song of Songs (see 5:1,5,13).

4:10 The man's enjoyment of both his bride's **caresses** and **fragrance** echoes her words in 1:2-3.

4:11 The pairing of **honey and milk** is frequently found in reverse order with reference to the abundance of the promised land (e.g., Ex 3:8,17; Nm 14:8; Dt 6:3).

4:13-14 Some of the items listed here were also used in the sacred anointing oil (Ex 30:23-24) or are mentioned in Psalm 45, a messianic psalm (see vv. 6-8).

4:16 The Hebrew verb translated **blow** is the same one as is in verses 6 and 2:17, where it has been translated **breaks** (see footnotes; Gn 3:8)

Man

5 I have come to my garden — my sister, my bride.
I gather † my myrrh with my spices.

I eat my honeycomb with my honey.
I drink my wine with my milk.

Narrator

Eat, friends!
Drink, be intoxicated with caresses! † †

Woman

2 I was sleeping, but my heart was awake.
A sound! My love was knocking! †

Man

Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one.
For my head is drenched with dew, my hair with droplets of the night.

Woman

3 I have taken off my clothing. †
How can I put it back on?
I have washed my feet.
How can I get them dirty?
4 My love thrust his hand through the opening, and my feelings were stirred for him.
5 I rose to open for my love.
My hands dripped with myrrh, †
my fingers with flowing myrrh on the handles of the bolt.
6 I opened to my love, but my love had turned and gone away.
My heart sank † because he had left. †
I sought him, but did not find him. †
I called him, but he did not answer.
7 The guards who go about the city found me. †
They beat and wounded me;
they took my cloak † from me — the guardians of the walls. †

8 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you, †
if you find my love,
tell him that I am lovesick. †

Young Women

9 What makes the one you love better than another, most beautiful of women? †
What makes him better than another, that you would give us this charge?

Woman

10 My love is fit and strong, † †
notable among ten thousand. †
11 His head is purest gold.
His hair is wavy † †
and black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves †
beside flowing streams,
washed in milk
and set like jewels. †
13 His cheeks † are like beds of spice, mounds of † perfume.
His lips are lilies,
dripping with flowing myrrh. †
14 His arms † are rods of gold set † with beryl. †
His body † is an ivory panel covered with lapis lazuli. †
15 His legs are alabaster pillars set on pedestals of pure gold.
His presence is like Lebanon, †
as majestic as the cedars. †
16 His mouth is sweetness.
He is absolutely desirable. †
This is my love, and this is my friend, young women of Jerusalem.

5:1 Lit *pluck* **5:1** Or *Drink your fill, lovers* **5:6** Lit *My soul went out* **5:6** Or *spoken* **5:7** Or *veil,* or *shawl* **5:10** Or *is radiant and ruddy* **5:11** Or *is like palm leaves* ; Hb obscure **5:12** Lit *milk sitting in fullness* **5:13**

LXX, Vg read *spice, yielding* **5:14** Lit *hands* **5:14** Lit *filled* ; Sg 5:2,12 **5:14** Lit *abdomen*
5:1 Pr 5:19 **5:2** Sg 2:8 **5:3** Lk 11:7 **5:5** Sg 5:13 **5:6** Sg 3:1-2 **5:7** Sg 3:3 **5:7** Sg 8:9-10 **5:8** Sg 2:7; 3:5; 8:4 **5:8** Sg 2:5 **5:9** Sg 1:8; 6:1 **5:10** 1Sm 16:12 **5:10** Ps 45:2 **5:11** Sg 5:2 **5:12** Sg 1:15; 4:1 **5:13** Sg 1:10 **5:13** Sg 5:5 **5:14** Ex 28:20; 39:13; Ezk 1:16 **5:14** Ex 24:10 **5:15** Sg 7:4-5 **5:15** 1Kg 4:33 **5:16** Sg 4:7

5:1 As previously (3:6; 4:6), **myrrh** is associated with pleasure (vv. 1,5-6). The drinking of both **wine** and **milk** is also found in Genesis 49:12.

5:2-7 By the time the woman's feelings had been **stirred** (v. 4), he was gone, and she could not find him despite her search (vv. 6-7). The identity of **the guards who go about the city** (see also 3:3) is uncertain; some scholars opt to understand them figuratively.

5:10-16 The woman's detailed praise of her man's physical features corresponds to his praise of her in 4:1-7. The Hebrew word translated **strong** typically describes something red (see 2Kg 3:22; Is 63:2).

Young Women

6 Where has your love gone, most beautiful of women?
Which way has he † turned?
We will seek him with you.

Woman

2 My love has gone down to his garden, †
to beds of spice, †
to feed in the gardens †
and gather lilies. †
3 I am my love's and my love is mine; †
he feeds among the lilies.

Man

4 You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling, lovely as Jerusalem,
awe-inspiring as an army with banners. †
5 Turn your eyes away from me, for they captivate me. †
Your hair is like a flock of goats streaming down from Gilead. †
6 Your teeth are like a flock of ewes coming up from washing,
each one having a twin,
and not one missing. † †
7 Behind your veil, †

your brow † is like a slice of pomegranate.
8 There are sixty queens and eighty concubines †
and young women † without number.
9 But my dove, † my virtuous one, is unique; †
she is the favorite of her mother, perfect to the one who gave her birth.
Women see her and declare her fortunate; †
queens and concubines also, and they sing her praises:

10 Who is this † who shines like the dawn, as beautiful as the moon,
bright as the sun,
awe-inspiring as an army with banners? †

Woman

11 I came down to the walnut grove to see the blossoms of the valley, to see if the vines were budding †
and the pomegranates blooming.
12 I didn't know what was happening to me.
I felt like I was
in a chariot with a nobleman. †

Young Women

13 Come back, come back, Shulammite! †
Come back, come back, that we may look at you!

Man

How you gaze at the Shulammite, as you look at the dance † of the two camps!
† †

6:1 Lit *your love* **6:6** Lit *and no one bereaved among them* **6:7** Or *temple*, or *cheek*, or *lips* **6:8** Or *and virgins* ; Sg 1:3 **6:12** Hb obscure **6:13** Or *the perfect one*, or *the peaceable one* **6:13** Or *dance of Mahanaim* **6:2** Sg 4:16; 5:1 **6:2** Sg 5:13 **6:2** Sg 1:7 **6:2** Sg 2:1 **6:3** Sg 2:16; 7:10; 8:6 **6:4** Nm 2:2-3; Sg 6:10 **6:5** Sg 4:9 **6:5** Sg 4:1 **6:6** Sg 4:2 **6:7** Sg 4:3 **6:8** 1Kg 11:3 **6:9** Sg 2:14; 5:2 **6:9** Pr 31:29 **6:9** Gn 30:13 **6:10** Sg 3:6; 8:5 **6:10** Sg 6:4 **6:11** Sg 7:12 **6:13** Jdg 21:21 **6:13** Gn 32:2; 2Sm 17:24

6:3 The exclusivity and mutual self-giving of their relationship is powerfully expressed here, as in 2:16.

Both passages also mention that **he feeds among the lilies.**

6:4 This time he compares her beauty to that of a city (see the notes on 1:1; 5:2-7).

6:9 The praise of the woman by others parallels that of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:28.

7 How beautiful are your sandaled feet, princess! † †
The curves of your thighs are like jewelry, the handiwork of a master.
2 Your navel is a rounded bowl; it never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is a mound of wheat surrounded by lilies.
3 Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. †
4 Your neck is like a tower of ivory, †
your eyes like pools in Heshbon by Bath-rabbim's gate.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon looking toward Damascus.
5 Your head crowns you † like Mount Carmel, the hair of your head like purple cloth — a king could be held captive † in your tresses.
6 How beautiful you are and how pleasant, †
my love, with such delights!
7 Your stature is like a palm tree; your breasts are clusters of fruit.
8 I said, "I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its fruit." †
May your breasts be like clusters of grapes, and the fragrance of your breath like apricots. †
9 Your mouth † is like fine wine † —

Woman

flowing smoothly for my love, gliding past my lips and teeth! †
10 I am my love's, and his desire † is for me. †

11 Come, my love, let's go to the field;
let's spend the night among the henna blossoms. †
12 Let's go early to the vineyards; let's see if the vine has budded, if the blossom has opened,
if the pomegranates are in bloom. †
There I will give you my caresses.

13 The mandrakes † give off a fragrance, and at our doors is every delicacy,
both new and old.
I have treasured them up for you, my love.

7:1 Lit *daughter of a nobleman*, or *prince* **7:5** Lit *head upon you is* **7:9** Lit *palate* **7:9** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *past lips of sleepers* **7:11** Or *the villages*
7:1 Ps 45:13 **7:3** Sg 4:5 **7:4** Sg 4:4 **7:5** Sg 4:9 **7:6** Sg 1:15-16 **7:8** Pr 5:19 **7:8** Sg 2:3 **7:9** Sg 5:16 **7:10** Gn 3:16; 4:7 **7:10** Sg 2:16; 6:3; 8:6 **7:12** Sg 6:11 **7:13** Gn 30:14-16

7:1-9 Yet another passage details the woman's physical beauty (see 4:1-7; 6:4-7).

7:11-13 Her call to go **to the field . . . to the vineyards** parallels his similar call in 2:10-13. **Mandrakes** (v. 13) were used for fertility in Genesis 30:14-16.

8 If only I could treat you like my brother, †
one who nursed at my mother's breasts, I would find you in public
and kiss you, and no one would scorn me.
2 I would lead you, I would take you, to the house of my mother †
who taught me. †
I would give you spiced wine to drink from the juice of my pomegranate.
3 May his left hand be under my head, and his right arm embrace me. †
4 Young women of Jerusalem, I charge you, do not stir up or awaken love until
the appropriate time. †
Young Women

5 Who is this † coming up from the wilderness, leaning on the one she loves?

Woman

I awakened you under the apricot tree. †
There your mother conceived you; there she conceived and gave you birth.
6 Set me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm. †
For love is as strong as death; †
jealousy is as unrelenting as Sheol.
Love's flames are fiery flames † — an almighty flame! †
7 A huge torrent cannot extinguish love; rivers cannot sweep it away.
If a man were to give all his wealth † for love, †
it would be utterly scorned.

Brothers

8 Our sister is young; she has no breasts. †
What will we do for our sister on the day she is spoken for?
9 If she is a wall, we will build a silver barricade on her.
If she is a door,
we will enclose her with cedar planks. †

Woman

10 I am † a wall and my breasts like towers.
So in his eyes I have become
like one who finds † peace. †

11 Solomon owned a vineyard in Baal-hamon. †
He leased the vineyard to tenants. †
Each was to bring for his fruit one thousand pieces of silver. †
12 I have my own vineyard. † †
The one thousand are for you, Solomon, but two hundred for those who take care of its fruits.

Man

13 You † who dwell in the gardens, companions † are listening for your voice; let me hear you! †

Woman

14 Run away with me, † my love, and be like a gazelle
or a young stag
on the mountains of spices. †

8:1 Lit *Would that you were like a brother to me* **8:2** LXX adds *and into the chamber of the one who bore me* **8:6** Or *the blaze of the Lord* **8:7** Lit *all the wealth of his house* **8:10** Or *was* **8:10** Or *brings* **8:10** In Hb, the word for *peace* sounds similar to Solomon and Shulammite. **8:12** Lit *My vineyard, which is mine, is before me* ; Sg 1:6 **8:13** In Hb, the word for *You* is feminine. **8:14** Lit *Flee*
8:2 Sg 3:4 **8:3** Sg 2:6 **8:4** Sg 2:7; 3:5 **8:5** Sg 3:6; 6:10 **8:5** Sg 2:3 **8:6** Sg 2:16; 6:3; 7:10 **8:6** Rm 8:38-39; 1Co 13:8 **8:6** Dt 32:21-22; Pr 6:34; 27:4 **8:7** Pr 6:35 **8:8** Ezk 16:7 **8:9** 1Kg 6:15 **8:11** Ec 2:4 **8:11** Mt 21:33

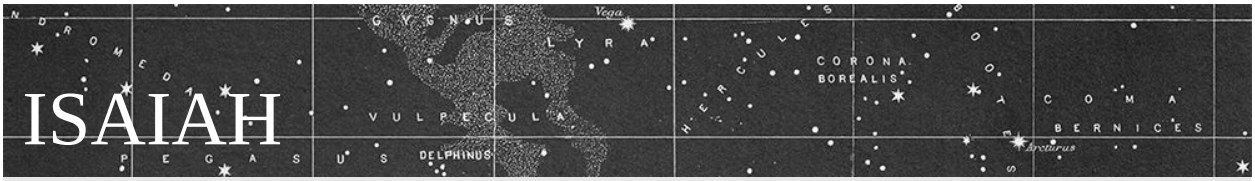
8:11 Is 7:23 **8:12** Sg 1:6 **8:13** Sg 1:7 **8:13** Sg 2:14 **8:14** Sg 2:17

8:4 A similar charge had been given twice earlier (see the note on 2:7).

8:6-7 This classic passage explains that **love is as strong as death** and cannot be extinguished even by **a huge torrent** of water.

8:11-12 As in 1:6, the woman's words play on the word **vineyard.** Hers is her own body (see the note on 2:15). These verses seem to be a repudiation of Solomon. The number **one thousand** may be an allusion to his many wives and concubines, who caused great ruin. In contrast, the Song praises fidelity and monogamy in God's ideal of a marriage relationship.

8:14 His comparison again to **a gazelle or a young stag** recalls 2:9,17.



ISAIAH

INTRODUCTION

Isaiah was an eighth-century BC prophet. His book is the first of the Prophets in the English canon and the first of the Latter Prophets in the Hebrew canon. Isaiah is powerful in its poetic imagination, intriguing in its prophetic vision, and complex in its structure. One can never read or study the book without gaining new insights into the nature of God and our relationship with him. The authors of the NT read the book of Isaiah in light of the coming of Christ and realized that this prophet anticipated Messiah's coming with remarkable clarity. For this reason they quoted Isaiah more than any other OT book.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The book presents itself as the writing of one man, Isaiah son of Amoz. The superscription to the book dates his prophetic activity as spanning the reigns of four kings of Judah: Uzziah (783–742 BC, Isaiah's call is dated to this king's last year, 6:1); Jotham (742–735 BC); Ahaz (735–716 BC); and Hezekiah (716–686 BC). On Uzziah (Azariah) see 2Kg 15:1-7; 2Ch 26:1-23. On Jotham see Kg 15:32-38; 2Ch 27:1-9. On Ahaz see 2Kg 16:1-20; 2Ch 28:1-27. On Hezekiah see 2Kg 18:1–20:21; 2Ch 29:1–32:33. Not much is known about Isaiah apart from his prophecy.

Isaiah's authorship of the whole book has been vehemently contested in the modern period. Many scholars have argued that the historical Isaiah could not have written chapters 40–66. For those who believe that God knows the future and can reveal it to his servants, it is not problematic that God through Isaiah predicted the rise of Babylon, its victory against Judah, the exile, and the return.

BACKGROUND: Isaiah 6:1 records that Isaiah received his prophetic call in the last year of Uzziah's reign over Judah (ca 742 BC). Uzziah's reign was a particularly prosperous time in the history of Judah, but storm clouds were on the horizon. Assyria was on the rise again in the person of Tiglath-pileser III (745–727 BC). The Assyrian king threatened to engulf Syria and the northern kingdom of Israel. After the death of Tiglath-pileser, his successors, Shalmaneser and Sargon, defeated the northern kingdom in 722 BC and deported its citizens. This event brought Judah even more under the shadow of that great empire. Isaiah 37:38 suggests that the prophet lived until the death of Sennacherib in 681 BC.

Isaiah's vision extended beyond the eighth century, through the rest of the OT period and beyond. The NT authors cited Isaiah as finding fulfillment in the great events surrounding Jesus Christ, the Messiah and suffering servant.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

It might be argued that without Isaiah, the NT could not have been written. There as nowhere else in the OT the message is declared and the stage is set for the Davidic King to bring about a new exodus and establish God's kingdom on earth by means of the sin-bearing Servant.

STRUCTURE

The book of Isaiah is a combination of both prose and poetry. The prose is found primarily in chapters 36–39, a section that forms a bridge between the two sections of the book. Isaiah's poetry is rich and varied. He wrote hymns, wisdom poetry, and even poetry that resembles a love song (5:1-7). The richness is seen in Isaiah's vocabulary. He used over 2,200 different Hebrews words, far more variety than found in any other OT book.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God expects his people to fulfill his requirements. He is outraged by sin and will judge it. Yet he is also the God of help and hope. Isaiah's portrait of God is thus one of tension that includes both judgment and comfort. The book is famous for its detailed prophecies about Christ, especially his birth (7:14; 9:6-7) and his death (chap. 53). The Spirit will empower both the Servant and the servants of the Lord (11:2; 32:15; 42:1; 44:3; 61:1).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Aside from its general teachings that humans are fallen sinners whom God must redeem, the book provides personal glimpses into the lives of two persons whom God used. Isaiah shows that God may call and use someone who is well educated. The section on Hezekiah (chaps. 36–39) shows a ruler who valued trust in God more than military or economic success.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In Isaiah salvation is based on God's forgiveness of sins (1:18; 6:5-6). The passage on the Suffering Servant (52:13–53:12) is the most detailed biblical prophecy about Jesus's death as a substitute, and the NT writers quoted it often. Ultimately, however, salvation includes the restoration of Zion (chap. 62) as well as the nations (chap. 60). The goal is for the nations to "proclaim the praises of the LORD" (60:6). This will be brought to completion in the eternal state (65:17; cp. Rv 21:1).

ISAIAH TIMELINE

750–725 BC

Death of King Uzziah of Judah **740**

Isaiah's call to be a prophet **740**

Tiglath-pileser III's invasions of Israel **734–732**

Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus form a mutual defense alliance against Assyria and invite Ahaz of Judah to join them. **734**

Ahaz refuses Isaiah's counsel and seeks protection from Assyria by paying tribute to them, creating a heavy financial burden on Judah for years to come. **734**

Alliance between Syria and Israel collapses with the fall of Damascus **(732)** and the fall of Samaria. **722**

725–700 BC

Hezekiah of Judah initiates reforms and shows resistance to Assyria. **715–701**

Hezekiah prepares for war against Assyria, strengthens Jerusalem's defenses, and receives Merodach-baladan's envoys from Babylon. **705–701**

Sennacherib of Assyria defeats the Phoenicians, Philistines, and Egyptians; destroys most cities in Judah; and besieges Jerusalem. **701**

God delivers Jerusalem from the Assyrian forces. **701**

700–600 BC

Manasseh succeeds his father Hezekiah as king of Judah. **687**

Ashurbanipal **(668–631)** rules over a declining Assyrian Empire that experiences revolts in **642**, contributed to the assassination of Amon of Judah **(641)** and the rise of his son Josiah **(641–609)**.

Josiah killed by the Egyptians at Megiddo **609**

Babylonians defeat Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at Carchemish. **605**

600–500 BC

Babylonians attack Jerusalem and take citizens of Judah into exile. **605, 597, 586**

Cyrus captures Babylon without resistance. **539**

Cyrus issues a decree allowing the Jews to return to Judah. **538**

Work begins on rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. **536–537**

Renewed work on the temple **520–518**

New temple dedicated **515**

1 The vision † concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah † son of
Amoz saw during the reigns † † of Kings Uzziah, † Jotham, † Ahaz, †
and Hezekiah † of Judah. †

JUDAH ON TRIAL

2 Listen, heavens, and pay attention, earth, †
for the LORD has spoken: “I have raised children † and brought them up, but
they have rebelled against me. †
3 The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s feeding trough, but Israel
does not know;
my people do not understand.” †

4 Oh sinful nation, people weighed down with iniquity, †
brood of evildoers, †
depraved children!
They have abandoned † the LORD; they have despised † the Holy One
of Israel; †

they have turned their backs on him.

5 Why do you want more beatings?
Why do you keep on rebelling?
The whole head is hurt,
and the whole heart is sick.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, †
no spot is uninjured † — wounds, welts, and festering sores
not cleansed, bandaged,
or soothed with oil.

7 Your land is desolate, your cities burned down; †
foreigners devour your fields
right in front of you —
a desolation, like a place demolished by foreigners.
8 Daughter Zion † is abandoned like a shelter in a vineyard,
like a shack in a cucumber field,
like a besieged city.
9 If the LORD of Armies †
had not left us a few survivors, †
we would be like Sodom,
we would resemble Gomorrah. †

10 Hear the word of the LORD, †
you rulers of Sodom!
Listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah! †
11 "What are all your sacrifices to me? "
asks the LORD.
"I have had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of well-fed cattle;
I have no desire for the blood of bulls,
lambs, or male goats. †
12 When you come to appear before me, who requires this from you — this trampling of my courts?

13 Stop bringing useless offerings. †
Your incense is detestable to me.
New Moons and Sabbaths, †
and the calling of solemn assemblies † — I cannot stand iniquity † with a festival.
14 I hate your New Moons and prescribed festivals.
They have become a burden to me;
I am tired of putting up with them.
15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, †
I will refuse to look at you;
even if you offer countless prayers,
I will not listen. †
Your hands are covered with blood. †

PURIFICATION OF JERUSALEM

16 "Wash yourselves. Cleanse yourselves. †
Remove your evil deeds from my sight.
Stop doing evil. †
17 Learn to do what is good.
Pursue justice. †
Correct the oppressor. †
Defend the rights of the fatherless.
Plead the widow's cause.

18 "Come, let us settle this," †
says the LORD.
"Though your sins are scarlet,
they will be as white as snow; †
though they are crimson red,
they will be like wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land. †
20 But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." †

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. †

21 The faithful town — what an adulteress † she has become!
She was once full of justice.
Righteousness once dwelt in her,
but now, murderers!
22 Your silver has become dross to be discarded, your beer † is diluted with water.
23 Your rulers are rebels, friends of thieves. †
They all love graft
and chase after bribes. †
They do not defend the rights of the fatherless, and the widow's case never comes before them. †

24 Therefore the Lord GOD of Armies, the Mighty One of Israel, declares:
"Ah, I will get even with my foes;
I will take revenge against my enemies. †
25 I will turn my hand against you †
and will burn away your dross completely; †
I will remove all your impurities. †
26 I will restore your judges † to what they were at first, †
and your advisers to what they were at the start. †
Afterward you will be called the Righteous City, †
a Faithful Town."

27 Zion will be redeemed by justice, those who repent, by righteousness. †
28 At the same time both rebels and sinners will be broken, and those who abandon the LORD will perish.
29 Indeed, they † will be ashamed of the sacred trees you desired, †
and you will be embarrassed because of the garden shrines you have chosen. †
30 For you will become like an oak whose leaves are withered,
and like a garden without water. †

31 The strong one will become tinder, and his work a spark;
both will burn together, †
with no one to extinguish the flames. †

1:1 Lit *saw in the days* **1:1** ca 792–686 BC **1:2** Or *sons*, also in v. 4 **1:17** Or *Aid the oppressed* **1:21** Or *prostitute* **1:22** Or *wine* **1:25** Lit *dross as with lye* **1:26** Lit *judges as at the first* **1:26** Lit *advisers as at the beginning* **1:29** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, Tg read *you*
1:1 Pr 29:18; Dn 8:1; Ob 1; Nah 1:1; Hab 2:2-3 **1:1** Is 2:1; 13:1 **1:1** 2Ch 26:3-5 **1:1** 2Kg 15:32-38 **1:1** 2Kg 16:1-4 **1:1** 2Kg 18:1-8 **1:1** Hs 1:1; Mc 1:1 **1:2** Dt 4:26; 32:1; Is 30:1; Mc 1:2 **1:2** Is 30:1 **1:3** Jr 8:7 **1:4** Is 13:11 **1:4** Is 14:20; Mt 3:7 **1:4** Dt 4:31 **1:4** Nm 14:11; Dt 31:20; Pr 5:12; Is 5:24 **1:4** Is 5:19,24; 10:20; 12:6; 29:19; 30:11-15 **1:6** Jb 2:7 **1:6** Ps 38:3 **1:7** Lv 26:33; Dt 28:51-52; Is 6:11-12; Jr 44:6 **1:8** Is 10:32; 37:22; Zch 2:10; 9:9 **1:9** 1Sm 17:45 **1:9** Is 10:21-22 **1:9** Gn 19:24-25; Is 3:9; 13:19; Rm 9:29 **1:10** Is 28:14 **1:10** Is 3:9; Ezk 16:46-49,55; Rv 11:8 **1:11** 1Sm 15:22; Jr 6:20; Hs 6:6; Am 5:21-24; Mt 23:23; Mk 12:33 **1:13** Mal 1:10 **1:13** Nm 28:11; 1Ch 23:31 **1:13** Ex 12:16; Lv 23:36 **1:13** Is 13:11 **1:15** 1Kg 8:22 **1:15** Is 59:2; Jr 7:16; Ezk 8:18; Am 5:23; Hab 1:2; Zch 7:13 **1:15** Pr 1:28; Is 59:1-3; Mc 3:4 **1:16** Ps 26:6; Is 4:4; 52:11 **1:16** Jr 25:5 **1:17** Dt 16:20; 1Kg 3:11; Ps 89:14; Is 10:2; 11:4; Am 5:15; Zch 7:9 **1:18** Is 41:1,21; 43:26; Mc 6:2 **1:18** Ps 51:7; Is 43:25; 44:22; Rv 7:14 **1:19-20** Dt 30:15-20 **1:20** Jr 12:12 **1:20** Is 24:3; 40:5; 58:14; Mc 4:4 **1:23** Hs 5:10 **1:23** Ex 23:8; Mc 7:2-6 **1:23** Ex 22:22; Dt 24:17; Is 10:2; Jr 5:28; Ezk 22:7; Zch 7:10 **1:24** Is 35:4; 59:18; Jr 46:10 **1:25** Ps 81:14; Is 5:25; Am 1:8 **1:25** Ezk 22:20; Mal 3:3 **1:26** Is 60:17; Mt 19:28 **1:26** Is 33:5; 60:14; 62:1-2; Zch 8:3 **1:27** Rm 3:26 **1:29** Is 2:8; 57:5; Hs 4:13 **1:29** Is 65:3; 66:17 **1:30** Ps 1:3; Is 64:6 **1:31** Is 5:24; 9:19; 26:11; 33:11-14 **1:31** Is 66:24; Mt 3:12; Mk 9:43

1:1 The book of Isaiah is a **vision** that has been recorded and edited, along with historical narrative, as words on a scroll (see 29:11; Hab 2:2). Despite frequent changes of topic from judgment to hope and back again, this book carries a unified message of God's wrath against sinners and his ultimate salvation of Zion and the nations through the Messiah. This Son of David will rule forever (9:6-7) but will also suffer death related to his bearing of sins (53:3-12).

1:2-3 Despite having been **raised** like **children** by God, Israel did not know their Father and had become more foolish than farm animals who at least know to whom they belong (see also the notes on 5:13-16; 6:8-10).

1:4 Israel's status as a **sinful nation** was a tragic reversal of the "holy nation" that they were intended to be (Ex 19:6). The weight of **iniquity** is also mentioned in 24:20.

1:5-6 The Lord's discipline (**beatings**) had not taught Israel anything (see 9:13), and the nation was likened to a thoroughly wounded and sick body who has no hope of healing.

1:7-9 The consequences of their sin would be destruction and exile. There would, however, be **a few survivors** (10:22).

1:10-15 The addressing of Israel as **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** (see also 3:9) powerfully associates them with these notoriously sinful cities that experienced severe divine judgment (Gn 19; Jdg 19). Among their sins was their superficial worship (vv. 11-14; 29:13; see the note on Gn 4:2-5). Although the people of Israel were faithful with many **sacrifices**, **burnt offerings**, **incense**, **Sabbaths**, and **festivals** (vv. 11-14), these were only external actions. Their true heart was revealed by the fact that they were violent and their **hands** [were] **covered with blood** (v. 15).

1:16-18 Their violence (v. 15) included injustice and exploitation of the needy (v. 17). God called these things **evil** and saw Israel as needing cleansing from such defilement (v. 16). On a more encouraging note,

such forgiveness was not only possible but actually would be enacted by God himself (v. 18; 4:3-4; 6:7; 43:25; 44:22; 53:5-6,11; see the notes on Dt 10:12-16; 30:1-6).

1:21-26 The so-called **faithful town** is Jerusalem. She should have been true but instead had become **an adulteress** (v. 21; see footnote B). The removal of her **dross** through smelting (vv. 22,25) indicates that God's judgment would ultimately have a purifying effect on the nation. Through this intense purification process, which would include the fall of the kingdom and exile (note **judges** and **advisers** instead of kings), the city would become **Righteous** and **Faithful** (v. 26).

1:27-28 Within Jerusalem was Mount **Zion**, on which the temple stood (2:3; 4:5; Pss 2:6; 20:2). If Jerusalem was the most important city in the country, Zion was the heartbeat of this city. The redemption of Zion and **those who repent** (59:20) continues the promise of salvation in verse 26b and serves as a resolution to the sacrilege in verses 11-15. This redemption, however, will not come easily but **by justice** (see also vv. 25-26,31); **rebels and sinners** should be warned (v. 28; see also v. 2; 24:20; 66:24).

1:29 Such **trees** related to some of their idolatrous practices (see 57:5).

THE CITY OF PEACE

2 The vision that Isaiah † son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2 In † the last days †
the mountain of the LORD's house † will be established at the top of the mountains
and will be raised above the hills.
All nations will stream to it, †
3 and many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. †
He will teach us about his ways
so that we may walk in his paths."
For instruction will go out of Zion
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He will settle disputes among the nations and provide arbitration for many peoples.
They will beat their swords into plows
and their spears into pruning knives. †
Nation will not take up the sword against nation, and they will never again train for war. †

THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 House of Jacob, come and let us walk in the LORD's light. †
6 For you have abandoned † your people, the house of Jacob,
because they are full of divination from the East and of fortune-tellers †
like the Philistines. †
They are in league † with foreigners.
7 Their † † land is full of silver and gold, and there is no limit to their treasures;
their land is full of horses,
and there is no limit to their chariots. †
8 Their land is full of idols; †
they worship the work of their hands,
what their fingers have made. †
9 So humanity is brought low, and each person is humbled.
Do not forgive them! †
10 Go into the rocks †
and hide in the dust
from the terror of the LORD †
and from his majestic splendor. †
11 The pride of mankind † will be humbled, †
and human loftiness will be brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted on that day.

12 For a day belonging to the LORD of Armies is coming against all that is proud
and lofty, †
against all that is lifted up — it will be humbled — 13 against all the cedars
of Lebanon, †
lofty and lifted up,
against all the oaks of Bashan, †
14 against all the high mountains, †
against all the lofty hills,
15 against every high tower, †
against every fortified wall,

16 against every ship of Tarshish, †
and against every splendid sea vessel.
17 The pride of mankind will be brought low, and human loftiness will be humbled;
the LORD alone will be exalted on that day. †
18 The idols will vanish completely.

19 People will go into caves in the rocks †
and holes in the ground,
away from the terror of the LORD and from his majestic splendor,
when he rises to terrify the earth. †
20 On that day people will throw their silver and gold idols, †
which they made to worship,
to the moles and the bats.
21 They will go into the caves of the rocks and the crevices in the cliffs,
away from the terror of the LORD and from his majestic splendor, †
when he rises to terrify the earth.
22 Put no more trust in a mere human, who has only the breath in his nostrils. †
What is he really worth?

2:6 Or *They teem*, or *They partner* ; Hb obscure **2:7** Lit *Its* **2:7** = the house of Jacob **2:11** Lit *Mankind's proud eyes*
2:1 2Kg 19:2; 20:1; 2Ch 26:22; 32:20; Is 1:1; 13:1 **2:2-4** Mc 4:1-4; Rm 2:20 **2:2** Nm 24:14; Dt 4:30; Ezk 38:16; Hs 3:5 **2:2** 2Ch 33:15; Is 27:13; 66:20 **2:2** Ps 22:27; Is 56:7; Zch 14:10 **2:3** Is 29:23; 45:23; 60:13; 66:18 **2:4** Is 11:6-9; 32:17-18; Jl 3:10 **2:4** Ps 72:3,7; Is 9:7; Hs 2:18; Zch 9:10 **2:5** Ps 27:1; 43:3 **2:6** Dt 31:17; Ps 94:14; Is 1:4 **2:6** Lv 19:26; Dt 18:10-14; 2Kg 21:6; 2Ch 33:6; Jr 27:9; Mc 5:12 **2:6** Jdg 14:3; 1Sm 6:2; 2Kg 1:2-6 **2:7** Dt 17:17 **2:8** Is 10:10-11; 19:1-3; 31:7; Jr 2:28 **2:8** Is 41:21-29; 44:9-17 **2:9** Ex 34:7 **2:10** Rv 6:15 **2:10** 1Sm 11:7; 2Ch 14:14; 17:10; 19:7; Is 2:19,21 **2:10** 2Th 1:9 **2:11** Ps 18:27; Is 2:17; Mc 2:3; 2Co 10:5 **2:12** Mal 4:1 **2:13** Ps 29:5; Is 14:8; Hs 14:5 **2:13** Ezk 27:6; Zch 11:2 **2:14** Is 40:4 **2:15** Is 25:12; Zph 1:16 **2:16** 1Kg 10:22; Is 23:1,14; 60:9 **2:17** Mt 25:13 **2:19** Is 2:10 **2:19** Ps 18:7; Is 13:13; 24:1,19-20; Hg 2:6-7; Heb 12:26 **2:20** Is 30:22; 31:7 **2:21** Is 2:10 **2:22** Ps 39:11; 144:4; 146:3; Jr 17:5; Jms 4:14

2:2-4 This passage describes **Zion** when it is restored (see previous note). Such will take place **in the last days**, which is the time period in which the Messiah comes (see the notes on Gn 1:1; 49:1,8-12). This **mountain** will be exalted above all others (Dn 2:34-35,44-45) and will be sought out by **all nations** and **many peoples** because they seek God's direct instruction (see "A Biblical View of the Nations," *p. 688*). Some of these other mountains had been sites used for idolatry (57:7; 65:7), and all of these heights would be laid low (40:4). God will judge between them, and the people will live in peace forever (v. 4; 9:6-7; 11:3-9).

2:6-8 Israel's idolatry had been hinted at in 1:29 and is described in further detail here (see also v. 20).

2:9-17 The emphasis is on the humbling of human pride and the exaltation of God alone **on that day** (vv. 11-12,17). Such exaltation necessitates the abasements of everything that is tall, powerful, or valued (vv. 12-16). The humiliation of **high mountains** and **lofty hills** corresponds with the exaltation of Mount Zion in verse 2 (see 40:4). Regarding the **ship**[s] **of Tarshish** (v. 16), see the note on 23:1.

2:18-22 That day of judgment will reveal the uselessness of **idols** and will elicit **terror** of God's **majestic splendor** (vv. 19,21). Both idols and **people** are nothing compared to him (vv. 18,22).

JUDAH'S LEADERS JUDGED

3 Note this: The Lord GOD of Armies is about to remove from Jerusalem
and from Judah every kind of security:
the entire supply of bread and water,
2 heroes and warriors, †
judges and prophets,
fortune-tellers and elders,
3 commanders of fifty and dignitaries, counselors, cunning magicians, †
and necromancers. †
4 "I will make youths their leaders, †
and unstable rulers † will govern them."
5 The people will oppress one another, †
man against man, neighbor against neighbor; the young will act arrogantly
toward the old, and the worthless toward the honorable.
6 A man will even seize his brother in his father's house, saying:
"You have a cloak — you be our leader!
This heap of rubble will be under your control."
7 On that day he will cry out, saying: "I'm not a healer.
I don't even have food or clothing in my house.
Don't make me the leader of the people! "
8 For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen
because they have spoken and acted against the LORD, †
defying his glorious presence. †
9 The look on their faces testifies against them, and like Sodom, † they flaunt
their sin; they do not conceal it.
Woe to them,

for they have brought disaster on themselves. †
10 Tell the righteous that it will go well for them, for they will eat the fruit of their labor.
11 Woe to the wicked — it will go badly for them, for what they have done will be done to them.
12 Youths oppress my people, †
and women rule over them.
My people, your leaders mislead you;
they confuse the direction of your paths. †

13 The LORD rises to argue the case and stands to judge the people. †
14 The LORD brings this charge against the elders and leaders of his people: †
"You have devastated the vineyard.
The plunder from the poor is in your houses. †
15 Why do you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor? "
This is the declaration
of the Lord GOD of Armies.

JERUSALEM'S WOMEN JUDGED

16 The LORD also says:

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, †
walking with heads held high
and seductive eyes,
prancing along,
jingling their ankle bracelets,
17 the Lord will put scabs on the heads of the daughters of Zion,
and the LORD will shave their foreheads bare.

18 On that day † the Lord will strip their finery: ankle bracelets, headbands, crescents, † 19 pendants, bracelets, veils, 20 headdresses, ankle jewelry, sashes, perfume bottles, amulets, † 21 signet rings, nose rings, † 22 festive robes, capes, cloaks, purses, 23 garments, linen clothes, turbans, and shawls.

24 Instead of perfume there will be a stench; instead of a belt, a rope;
instead of beautifully styled hair, † baldness; †
instead of fine clothes, sackcloth; †
instead of beauty, branding. †
25 Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle.
26 Then her gates † will lament and mourn; deserted, she will sit on the ground. †

3:3 Or *skilled craftsmen* **3:3** Or *mediums* **3:4** Or *mischief-makers* **3:24** DSS read *shame*
3:2 2Kg 24:14; Ezk 17:13-14 **3:4** Ec 10:16 **3:5** Mc 7:3-6 **3:8** Ps 73:9-11 **3:8** Nm 14:22-23; Is 43:7; 48:11; 59:19 **3:9** Is 1:9-10; 13:19 **3:9** Rm 6:23 **3:12** Is 3:4 **3:12** Is 28:14-22 **3:13** Ps 7:6; Hs 4:1 **3:14** Mc 3:1-3 **3:14** Ezk 18:10-18; 33:15 **3:16** Is 32:9-15; 1Pt 3:3-4 **3:18** Is 27:12 **3:18** Jdg 8:21,26 **3:20** Ezk 24:17 **3:21** Gn 24:47; Ezk 16:12 **3:24** 1Pt 3:3 **3:24** Is 15:2; 22:12; Ezk 27:31; Am 8:10; Mc 1:16 **3:24** Gn 37:34; Is 15:3; Jr 48:36-38; Lm 2:10 **3:26** Jr 14:2; Lm 1:4 **3:26** Jb 2:13; Is 47:1; Lm 2:10

3:1 The cutting off of supplies of food and water recalls 1:19-20 (see also v. 10; 37:12).

3:2-7 The downfall of the kingship in Judah was predicted in 1:26, and the ensuing crisis of leadership is described here (see also v. 12). The patently unfit will be pressured to lead, and even he will confess that he is **not a healer** of the people and cannot take care of his own basic needs (vv. 6-7; see 1:6).

3:8-9 For a third time (see 1:9-10), God's people are likened to **Sodom**, this time because of their brazen sin. Such evil was all the more heinous because of its defiance of God's **glorious presence** in the people's midst (2:9-22).

3:13-15 Similar to 1:17,23, the **elders and leaders** were confronted for oppressing the **poor.**

3:16-23 These proud **daughters of Zion** (v. 16) decked out in **finery** will be brought low **on that day** (v. 18), in accordance with what had been decreed in 2:11-12,17. As in 2:7, their pride was related to their wealth.

3:25–4:1 The removal of the outward beauty of the arrogant "daughters of Zion" (v. 16) is linked to the judgment and destruction of the nation as a whole (vv. 25-26). Part of the **disgrace** of these women will be the scarcity of men for them to marry (4:1).

4 On that day seven women will seize one man, † saying, "We will eat our own bread
and provide our own clothing.
Just let us bear your name.
Take away our disgrace." †

ZION'S FUTURE GLORY

2 On that day the Branch † of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, † and the fruit of the land † will be the pride and glory † of Israel's survivors. †

3 Whoever remains in Zion and whoever is left in Jerusalem † will be called holy † — all in Jerusalem written in the book of life † † — 4 when the Lord has washed away the filth † of the daughters of Zion and cleansed the bloodguilt † from the heart of Jerusalem by a spirit of judgment † and a spirit of burning. † 5 Then the LORD will create † a cloud of smoke by day † and a glowing flame of fire by night over the entire site of Mount Zion and over its assemblies. For there will be a canopy over all the glory, † 6 and there will be a shelter for shade from heat by day, and a refuge and shelter from storm and rain. †

4:2 Or *plant* **4:3** Lit *Jerusalem recorded for life* **4:5** Or *For glory will be a canopy over all*
4:1 Is 3:25 **4:1** Gn 19:31-32; 30:23; Neh 1:3; Is 54:4; Lk 1:25 **4:2** 2Sm 23:4-5; Ps 132:17; Jr 23:5; 33:15; Zch 3:8; 6:12 **4:2** Ps 72:16; Is 27:6 **4:2** Is 3:18 **4:2** Gn 45:7; Jdg 21:17; 2Kg 19:30-31; Is 10:20; 37:31-32; Jl 2:32; Ob 17 **4:3** Is 28:5; Rm 11:4-5 **4:3** Is 52:1; 62:12 **4:3** Ex 32:32; Ps 69:28; 87:6; 139:16; Is 49:16; Ezk 13:9; Mal 3:16; Lk 10:20; Ac 13:48 **4:4** 2Ch 4:6; Ezk 40:38; Zch 13:1 **4:4** Is 1:15; 3:13-15 **4:4** Is 28:6 **4:4** Is 1:31; 9:19; 33:14; Mal 3:2; Mt 3:11; Lk 3:17 **4:5** Gn 1:1; Is 40:26,28; 41:20; 43:1,7,15; 45:7-8; 65:17-18 **4:5** Ex 13:21-22; 14:20; 40:34; Nm 9:15-23 **4:6** Ps 27:5; Is 25:4; 32:1-2

4:2-6 Whereas the superficial, fleeting beauty of the **daughters of Zion** will be stripped away **on that day** (3:16–4:1), the Messiah **will be beautiful and glorious** (4:2; see 2:11,17). The Hebrew word *tsemach* (**Branch**) is also used as a messianic title in Jeremiah 23:5; Zechariah 3:8; and 6:12. **Israel's survivors**, who will be **holy** (v. 3), are the same people as "those who repent" in 1:27 and "the righteous" in 3:10 (see also 7:3; 10:20-22). In answer to several problems raised in Isaiah 1, God himself will wash away their **filth** and **bloodguilt** through **judgment** and **a spirit of burning** (v. 4; see 1:15-16,18,25,27,31). The location, as before (see 1:27; 2:2-4), is **Zion** (vv. 3-5), and the use of the Hebrew verb *bara'* (**create**) with reference to **cloud** and **fire** both recalls the pillar of cloud and of fire of long ago (see the note on Ex 13:21-22) and looks forward to God's **creating** the new heavens and the new earth (65:17-18). Based on 25:4-5, the **refuge** in verse 6 is God himself.

SONG OF THE VINEYARD

5 I will sing about the one I love, a song about my loved one's vineyard: †
The one I love had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.

2 He broke up the soil, cleared it of stones, and planted it with the finest vines. †
He built a tower in the middle of it
and even dug out a winepress there.
He expected † it to yield good grapes, but it yielded worthless grapes. †

3 So now, residents of Jerusalem and men of Judah,

please judge between me
and my vineyard.

4 What more could I have done for my vineyard than I did? †
Why, when I expected a yield of good grapes, did it yield worthless grapes?
5 Now I will tell you what I am about to do to my vineyard:

I will remove its hedge, †
and it will be consumed;

I will tear down its wall, †
and it will be trampled.

6 I will make it a wasteland. †
It will not be pruned or weeded;

thorns and briers will grow up. †
I will also give orders to the clouds
that rain should not fall on it.

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of Armies is the house of Israel, †

and the men † of Judah, the plant he delighted in.
He expected justice
but saw injustice;
he expected righteousness,
but heard cries of despair.

JUDAH'S SINS DENOUNCED

8 Woe to those who add house to house †
and join field to field
until there is no more room
and you alone are left in the land.

9 I heard the LORD of Armies say:

Indeed, many houses † will become desolate, grand and lovely ones without inhabitants.

10 For a ten-acre † vineyard will yield only six gallons of wine, †

and ten bushels † of seed will yield only one bushel of grain. †

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning in pursuit of beer, †
who linger into the evening,
inflamed by wine.
12 At their feasts they have lyre, harp, tambourine, flute, and wine.
They do not perceive the LORD's actions, †
and they do not see the work of his hands. †

13 Therefore my people will go into exile because they lack knowledge; †
her † dignitaries are starving, and her masses are parched with thirst.
14 Therefore Sheol enlarges its throat and opens wide its enormous jaws, †
and down go Zion's dignitaries, her masses, her crowds, and those who celebrate in her!
15 Humanity is brought low, each person is humbled, and haughty eyes are humbled. †
16 But the LORD of Armies is exalted by his justice, †
and the holy God † shows that he is holy through his righteousness. †
17 Lambs will graze as if in † their own pastures, †
and resident aliens † will eat among the ruins of the rich.

18 Woe to those who drag iniquity with cords of deceit †
and pull sin along with cart ropes,
19 to those who say: "Let him hurry up and do his work quickly so that we can see it!
Let the plan † of the Holy One of Israel † take place so that we can know it! "
20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, †
who substitute darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who substitute bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.
21 Woe to those who consider themselves wise and judge themselves clever. † †
22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, who are champions at pouring beer, †

23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe †
and deprive the innocent of justice.

24 Therefore, as a tongue of fire consumes straw and as dry grass shrivels in the flame,
so their roots will become like something rotten and their blossoms will blow away like dust, for they have rejected †
the instruction of the LORD of Armies, and they have despised
the word of the Holy One of Israel. †
25 Therefore the LORD's anger burned † against his people.
He raised his hand against them and struck them; the mountains quaked, †
and their corpses were like garbage in the streets.
In all this, his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike. †

26 He raises a signal flag for the distant nations †
and whistles † for them from the ends of the earth.
Look — how quickly and swiftly they come!
27 None of them grows weary or stumbles; †
no one slumbers or sleeps.
No belt is loose
and no sandal strap broken.
28 Their arrows are sharpened, and all their bows strung.
Their horses' hooves are like flint;
their chariot wheels are like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring is like a lion's; †
they roar like young lions; †
they growl and seize their prey
and carry it off,
and no one can rescue it.
30 On that day they will roar over it, like the roaring of the sea.
When one looks at the land,
there will be darkness and distress;
light will be obscured by clouds. †

5:7 Lit *man* **5:10** Lit *ten-yoke* **5:10** Lit *one bath* **5:10** Lit *one homer* **5:10** Lit *yield an ephah* **5:13** Lit *its* **5:17** Syr reads *graze in* **5:17** LXX reads *sheep* **5:21** Lit *and clever before their face* **5:30** Lit *its clouds*
5:1 Ps 80:8; Jr 12:10; Mt 21:33; Lk 20:9 **5:2** Jr 2:21 **5:2** Is 40:31 **5:2** Mt 21:19; Mk 11:13; Lk 13:6 **5:4** Mc 6:3-4; Mt 23:37 **5:5** Ps 89:40; Jr 5:10 **5:5** Ps 80:12 **5:6** 2Ch 36:19-21; Is 7:19-25; 24:1,3; 27:2-6; Jr 25:11 **5:6** Gn 3:18; Is 7:23-25; 9:18; 10:17; 27:4; 32:13 **5:7** Ps 80:8-11 **5:8** Jr 22:13-17; Mc 2:2; Hab 2:9-12 **5:9** Am 3:10,15 **5:11** Lv 10:9; Nm 6:3; Dt 29:6; Jdg 13:4; Is 5:22; 24:9; 28:7; 56:12 **5:12** Dt 32:4; Jb 34:27; 36:24; Ps 28:5; 44:1; 64:9-10 **5:12** Ex 32:16; 34:10; Ps 8:3,6; 19:1; 92:4-5; Is 10:12; 29:23 **5:13** Is 1:3; 27:11; Hs 4:6; Lk 11:52; 19:42; 1Tm 1:13 **5:14** Pr 30:16; Hab 2:5 **5:15** Is 2:9,11,17; 10:33 **5:16** Is 33:5,10 **5:16** Is 6:3 **5:16** Is 8:13; 29:23; 1Pt 3:15 **5:17** Mc 2:12 **5:18** Pr 5:22; Is 59:4-8; Jr 23:10-14 **5:19** Jb 38:2; 42:3; Ps 33:11; 106:13; 107:11; Pr 19:21; Is 14:26; 19:17; 46:10-11 **5:19** Is 1:4 **5:20** Pr 17:15; Am 5:7; Mal 2:17 **5:21** Pr 3:7; Rm 12:16; 1Co 3:18 **5:22** Is 5:11 **5:23** Ex 23:8; Pr 17:15; Is 1:23; 33:15 **5:24** Is 8:6; 30:9,12; Am 2:4; Ac 13:41 **5:24** Is 5:19; Jr 51:5 **5:25** Nm 11:10,33; 32:10-13; Dt 6:15; Jos 7:1; 23:16; 2Kg 13:3; Ps 106:40 **5:25** Am 1:1; Zch 14:5 **5:25** Is 9:12,17,21; 10:4; 14:27 **5:26** Is 10:5; 11:10,12; 13:2; 18:3 **5:26** Is 7:18; Zch 10:8 **5:27** 1Jn 2:10 **5:29** Jdg 14:5; Hs 13:8; Jl 1:6; Nah 2:12-13 **5:29** Rv 9:17

5:1-7 In this **song,** Israel is the **vineyard** allowed to become **a wasteland** because it did not bear fruit despite being given every opportunity to do so (see also 26:17-18; 27:2-6).

5:11-12 In addition to indulging in luxury and accumulating property excessively (v. 8; 2:7; 3:16-23), many were also drinking too much alcohol (see also v. 22; 24:6-11; 28:1,7). Their intoxication and revelry prevented them from understanding God's work (see also Eph 5:17-18).

5:13-16 As in 1:2-3, the people's sin is characterized as foolishness in verse 13 (**they lack knowledge**; Hs 4:6). In their **exile**, many will die (v. 14; see 1:9; 3:25-4:1). These two sobering realities will serve to humble man and exalt God (vv. 15-16), as first declared in 2:9,11,17. His exaltation and holiness is significantly linked here to **his justice** and **righteousness** (v. 16).

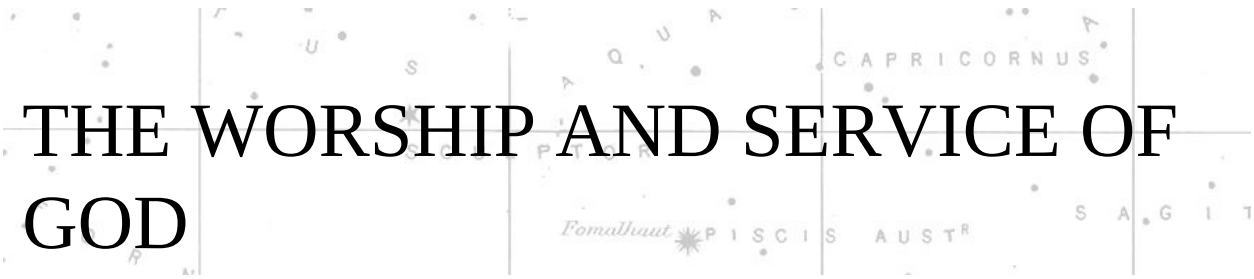
5:19 In light of the immediate context and verses 12-13, the expressed desire to **see** and **know** God's **work** and **plan** was probably insincere and manipulative.

5:24 The Lord's purging of evil is again compared to **fire** (e.g., 1:7,25; 4:4; 6:6). As in some passages (1:31; 5:5; 6:13), the burning of agriculture is likewise in view here. Furthermore, the **rotten roots** of the wicked are in contrast to the "root of Jesse" which is a messianic reference (11:1,10). As implied in 1:4,10, they had **rejected the instruction of the LORD of Armies** (see also 24:5; 30:9).

5:25 Despite striking **his people** and causing the **mountains** to shake, God was still justly angry. The repetition of the last sentence of this verse in Isaiah 9–10 serves to emphasize his seemingly unrelenting wrath all the more (see 9:12,17,21; 10:4; notes on 10:24-26; 12:1-2).

ISAIAH'S CALL AND MISSION

6 In the year that King Uzziah † died, I saw the Lord † seated on a high and lofty † throne, † and the hem of his robe filled the temple.



THE WORSHIP AND SERVICE OF GOD

Worship, though primary in the life of the church, is often elusive and misunderstood, even among Christians. Worship is ascribing worth to God with our voices, our minds, and our hearts. It is the act of bringing glory to God—which, of course, may be and should be applied to all of life. More specifically, though, the word refers to the act and activity of praising and glorifying God when Christians assemble in a local congregation.

If, as Christians, we are truly concerned with ascribing to God the supreme worth that he alone is worthy to receive, we must be cautious about allowing our worship to be shaped by our own felt needs rather than by Scripture and a healthy appreciation for our Christian heritage. Believers must recognize that worship is the active response to God the Father through the Son. Praise, prayer, preaching, the celebration of ordinances, confession, and giving are all Christ-centered, scripturally informed actions. The focus of the church's worship on the exalted Christ gives a Spirit-enabled depth and content to a gathering. Fitting and acceptable worship, in fact, can only be offered by and through the enabling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Christians need to be hesitant to acknowledge one form of worship to be inherently better than another, but they should always seek to ground authentic worship in the teachings of Scripture. Perhaps, taking Acts 2 as a guide, Christians should expect variety in their worship. In that passage, some emphasize formal celebration in the temple and others prioritize informal gatherings in homes.

Genuine worship must include the proclamation of the whole counsel of God's Word (Ac 20:27) and the primacy of textually-grounded preaching. The gospel message forms the center and shape of worship. With that recognition, worship services need to seek to touch lives while creating worship experiences that simultaneously exalt God and edify his people. Anything less fails to be faithful to the NT teaching and the early church's pattern.

When genuine worship takes place, the entire body of Christ is enhanced and built up; moreover, the mission, service, and outreach of local churches are strengthened. The people of God who have worshiped him and who have been mutually strengthened are prepared to enter the world to touch lives, meet needs, counsel hurts, speak to injustices, and both bear witness to and proclaim the saving message of the gospel. Exalting God and serving others are hardly in conflict, especially for Christians who seek to understand and live out the Christian faith in a coherent manner. As a matter of fact, authentic service is built on genuine worship (see Is 6:1-8; Mt 28:16-20) and is focused on the church, the culture, and the world.

CHURCH

The church was inaugurated at Pentecost (Ac 2) as God's new society (Eph 2:15). It was founded on the finished work of Christ (Jn 19:30) and the baptizing work of the Spirit (1Co 12:13). The church was a mystery (Eph 3:9-11), was prophesied about by Christ (Mt 16:18), and was revealed at the Spirit's coming at Pentecost. The church was built on the foundation of Christ's apostles, with Christ Jesus himself serving as its cornerstone (Eph 2:20-21).

The true church is more than a human organization; it is a visible and tangible expression of the people who are related to Christ. As far as is possible, all Christians should involve and invest themselves in the visible, organized church of Jesus Christ. God gifts his people in the church in order to prepare them for works of service so that they will be strengthened and prepared for faithful living and ministry. The Spirit of God uses gifted leaders in the church to help bring maturity to other Christ-followers. They, in turn, will be able to proclaim Christ, admonishing and teaching others with great wisdom and engaging the culture and serving the world through both word and deed (Eph 4:11-13; Col 1:28).

CULTURE

Many people today reject the church and the Christian faith, not because they perceive it to be false, but because they believe it is superficial or trivial. People are looking for an authentic and integrated way of seeing life that brings coherence to all of life's experiences—some of which are confusing. In many ways, our post-Christian Western culture in general—and American culture in particular—resembles the pre-

Christian Athens of Paul's day (see Ac 17), particularly in its focus on the new, the novel, and the world of change as emphasized by the Epicureans. Our culture is similarly enthralled by novelty.

Truth and values in our culture seem to be of minimal concern or consequence. In the address by the apostle Paul in Acts 17, we find a model for how to lovingly and effectively combat such thinking. We learn how to engage culture in meaningful and relevant ways, as well as how to communicate and live this truth in an effective manner in the midst of an incredibly superficial world. The cultural trends that shape much of our society are similarly influenced by the rise of neopaganism and various and diverse forms of spirituality. Thus Paul is an insightful guide who enables thoughtful Christ-followers to respond to this changing post-Christian world.

THE WORLD

Christians live in a world where English is the new common language in most discussions of globalization. The Spanish language, however, is the most frequently spoken tongue used by Christians around the world. We live in a context that points to the movement of the Christian base toward the Global South. Christ-followers in the West, therefore, must be willing to defer to non-Western opinions and ideas whenever our most basic Christian convictions are not at stake. Western wealth and isolation have at times kept us from understanding the real issues of the Majority World and those in the unevangelized belt. Similarly, we must recognize the importance that social justice plays in helping us understand and carry out the mission of God. We need to engage in the serious work that seeks to connect theology, education, justice, and missions together as partners rather than competitors.

Many Christians, particularly younger believers, comprehend the importance of providing homes for the homeless and food for the hungry. They understand that they are to work for justice while simultaneously taking the good news of the gospel to new areas of the world. We must recognize that we now live in a globally-connected context, with new faces representing the various contexts and cultures of our larger global family. We must recognize that what brings Christ-followers together is not our homogeneous characteristics, but our deep love for Jesus Christ. Our lives are to become an offering of thanks to Jesus. This is best expressed through compassion to the least of these in our world.

Christians should assume a posture of humility, listening to and learning from one another. The current climate of fear that characterizes the world around us will likely create a strong challenge, keeping many people from participating in new opportunities. A love for Jesus Christ and a desire to understand others will help to counter this fear, launching exciting global opportunities for the days ahead. We should think not only about international opportunities, but intercultural ones as well. The major cities across the United States now look as if the world has moved into these places.

Poverty, homelessness, drug abuse, and violence surround us. Our cities are multiethnic and intercultural. Christians, therefore, must grapple with our own insulation. We have the privilege of locally living out the global implications of our faith, joining with others to forge relevant ties for global service. We thus seek to know and exalt God, to think seriously and coherently about all aspects of life in order to serve others and to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Let us not shy away from this task. Let us ask the Lord to raise up and develop a new generation of thoughtful, committed, convictional, and courageous Christ-followers who will go forth in wisdom, humility, and confidence to serve the church, engage the culture, and disciple the nations for the glory of the triune God.

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2 Seraphim † were standing above him; they each had six wings: † with two they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they

flew. † 3 And one called to another:

Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Armies; his glory † fills the whole earth. †

4 The foundations of the doorways shook † at the sound of their voices, and the temple was filled with smoke.
5 Then I said:

Woe is me † for I am ruined †
because I am a man of unclean lips
and live among a people of unclean lips, †
and because my eyes have seen the King,
the LORD of Armies.

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, and in his hand was a glowing coal that he had taken from the altar † with tongs. 7 He touched my mouth † with it and said:

Now that this has touched your lips,
your iniquity is removed
and your sin is atoned for. †

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord asking:

Who should I send?
Who will go for us?

I said:

Here I am. Send me.

9 And he replied:

Go! Say to these people:
Keep listening, but do not understand; †
keep looking, but do not perceive.
10 Make the minds † of these people dull; deafen their ears and blind their eyes;

otherwise they might see with their eyes
and hear with their ears,
understand with their minds,
turn back, and be healed. †

11 Then I said, “Until when, Lord? ” † And he replied:

Until cities lie in ruins without inhabitants, †
houses are without people,
the land is ruined and desolate,
12 and the LORD drives the people far away, leaving great emptiness in the land.
13 Though a tenth will remain in the land, it will be burned again.
Like the terebinth or the oak
that leaves a stump when felled,
the holy seed † is the stump. †

6:2 = heavenly beings **6:5** Or *I must be silent* **6:10** Lit *heart*
6:1 2Kg 15:1-7; Is 1:1; 14:28 **6:1** Gn 32:30; Ex 3:1-6; 24:9-10; Jos 5:13-15; 1Kg 22:19; Is 31:3; Jn 1:18; 4:24; 12:41 **6:1** Is 52:13; 57:15 **6:1** Ps 9:7; 11:4; 45:6; Is 66:1; Jr 3:17; Ezk 1:26; 10:1; 43:7 **6:2** Rv 4:8 **6:2** Ezk 1:14 **6:3** Ex 16:10; 24:16-17; 40:34-35; 1Kg 8:11; Is 35:2; 40:5; 60:1; Ezk 1:28; Lk 9:32 **6:3** Nm 14:21; Ps 72:19 **6:4** Ex 19:8; Hab 3:3-10; Rv 15:8 **6:5** Ex 33:20; Jdg 13:22; Is 59:3; Jr 9:3-8; Lk 5:8 **6:5** Ex 6:12,30 **6:6** Lv 6:12-13; 17:11 **6:7** Jr 1:9; Dn 10:16 **6:7** Ex 21:30; 30:12-16 **6:9-10** Mt 13:14-15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40; Ac 28:26-27 **6:10** Zch 7:11-12; 1Th 2:16 **6:11** Ps 79:5; 89:46 **6:11** Is 1:7; 27:10 **6:13** Is 41:8; 43:5; 45:25; 53:10; 59:21; 65:9,23; 66:22 **6:13** Is 11:1

6:1-3 The death of **King Uzziah** (called Azariah in 2Kg 15:1-7; see also 2Ch 26) exemplifies the weakness and inadequacy of man (2:22), especially in comparison to God. Whereas man is mortal and thus brought low (5:14-15), God is the eternal King, “sitting on a throne, high and lifted up” (lit v. 1; 2:9-17). The presence and proclamation of **seraphim** (“burning ones”) further emphasize his majesty, in particular his holiness (5:16). See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531*.

6:5 Isaiah’s despairing response to his vision of the enthroned and holy Lord arose from an acute awareness that he was **a man of unclean lips** living among a people characterized by the same (see also 29:13; 59:3). Though he was privileged in one sense to **have seen the King**, he was also in deep trouble because the unclean and sinful cannot bear the presence of the Holy One (see also 35:8).

6:6-7 Isaiah’s genuine humility and confession (see previous note) led directly to the removal of his guilt and **sin** (1:27; 3:10; 57:15). Such provision came not from Isaiah, but was directly from God (see the note on 4:2-6). As before, this cleansing involved fire (see the note on 5:24). Whereas this fire would destroy the unrepentant wicked (1:30-31), it purified the penitent Isaiah.

6:8-10 Following his confession and forgiveness, Isaiah was commissioned as a prophet. For the immediate future (see vv. 11-13), his message would be one of judgment. Unlike Isaiah who had “seen” (v. 5; 1:1; 2:1), the stubborn and rebellious people would not **understand**, **perceive**, **see**, or **hear** (1:3; Dt 29:4). Isaiah’s ministry would in fact have a temporary hardening effect, which would result in judgment.

Afterward, they would experience the salvation of God (see the notes on 1:5-6; 3:2-7; 53:4-6). Isaiah thus functions as a kind of paradigm for Israel. Just as he was unclean, saw his sin, was cleansed, and then was sent on a mission, the people of Israel would recognize their sin, be purified in judgment, and afterward fulfill their mission of bringing God's truth and grace to the nations.

6:11-13 The people's spiritual dullness (vv. 9-10) would continue into the period of their exile (vv. 11-12; 1:7-8). Despite fierce judgment, **a stump** would auspiciously remain (v. 13; see 1:9; 4:2-3; 11:1).

THE MESSAGE TO AHAZ

7 This took place during the reign of Ahaz, son of Jotham, son of Uzziah king of Judah: † Aram's King Rezin and Israel's King Pekah son of Remaliah went to fight against Jerusalem, † but they were not able to conquer it.

2 When it became known to the house of David † that Aram had occupied Ephraim, † the heart of Ahaz † and the hearts of his people trembled like trees of a forest shaking in the wind.

3 The LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out with your son Shear-jashub † † to meet Ahaz at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, † by the road to the Launderer's Field. 4 Say to him: Calm down and be quiet. Don't be afraid or cowardly † because of these two smoldering sticks, the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram, and the son of Remaliah. 5 For Aram, along with Ephraim and the son of Remaliah, has plotted harm against you. They say, 6 'Let us go up against Judah, terrorize it, and conquer it for ourselves. Then we can install Tabeel's son as king in it.' "

7 This is what the Lord GOD says:

It will not happen; it will not occur. †

8 The † chief city of Aram is Damascus, the chief of Damascus is Rezin
(within sixty-five years
Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people), 9 the chief city of Ephraim is Samaria, and the chief of Samaria is the son of Remaliah.
If you do not stand firm in your faith,
then you will not stand at all.

THE IMMANUEL PROPHECY

10 Then the LORD spoke again to Ahaz: 11 “Ask for a sign † from the LORD your God — it can be as deep as Sheol or as high as heaven.”
12 But Ahaz replied, “I will not ask. I will not test the LORD.”
13 Isaiah † said, “Listen, house of David! Is it not enough for you to try the patience of men? Will you also try the patience of my God? † 14 Therefore, the Lord himself will give you † a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, † have a son, and name him Immanuel. † † 15 By the time he learns to reject what is bad and choose what is good, † he will be eating curds † and honey. † 16 For before the boy knows to reject what is bad and choose what is good, the land of the two kings you dread will be abandoned. 17 The LORD will bring on you, your people, and your father’s house such a time as has never been since Ephraim separated from Judah: † He will bring the king of Assyria.” †

18 On that day †
the LORD will whistle † to flies at the farthest streams of the Nile
and to bees in the land of Assyria.
19 All of them will come and settle in the steep ravines, in the clefts of the rocks, †
in all the thornbushes, and in all the water holes.

20 On that day the Lord will use a razor † hired from beyond the Euphrates River — the king of Assyria † — to shave the hair on your heads, the hair on your legs, and even your beards.

21 On that day a man will raise a young cow and two sheep, 22 and from the abundant milk they give he will eat curds,
for every survivor in the land will eat curds and honey. †

23 And on that day every place where there were a thousand vines, worth a thousand pieces of silver,
will become thorns and briers. †
24 A man will go there with bow and arrows because the whole land will be thorns and briers.

25 You will not go to all the hills that were once tilled with a hoe,
for fear of the thorns and briers.
Those hills will be places for oxen to graze and for sheep to trample.

7:2 Lit *Aram has rested upon Ephraim, his heart* **7:3** = A Remnant Will Return **7:8** Lit *For the* **7:14** In Hb, the word *you* is pl **7:14** Or *virgin is pregnant, will* **7:14** = God With Us **7:15** Or *sour milk*
7:1 Is 1:1 **7:1** 2Kg 15:25,37; 16:5 **7:2** Is 7:13; 9:7; 16:5; 22:9,22; 29:1; 37:35; 38:5; 55:3 **7:2** Is 8:12; 9:9 **7:3** Is 8:3,18 **7:3** 2Kg 18:17; Is 36:2 **7:4** Gn 15:1; Ex 14:13; 20:20; Nm 14:9; Dt 20:3; 31:6; Jos 10:8,25; Is 10:24; 35:4; 41:14 **7:7** Is 8:10 **7:11** 2Kg 19:29; Is 37:30; 38:7-8; 55:13 **7:13** Mt 3:3; 12:17 **7:13** Is 1:14; 43:24; Jr 15:6; 20:9; Mal 2:17 **7:14** Is 8:8,10; Mt 1:23; Lk 1:31 **7:15** Dt 1:39 **7:15** Ex 3:8; 2Sm 17:29; Is 7:22; 8:15 **7:17** 1Kg 12:16 **7:17** 2Ch 28:20; Is 8:7-8; 10:5-6 **7:18** Is 27:12 **7:18** Is 5:25 **7:19** Is 2:19; Jr 16:16 **7:20** 2Kg 18:13-16; Is 24:1; Ezk 5:1-4 **7:20** Is 8:7; 11:15; Jr 2:18 **7:22** Is 8:15 **7:23** Is 5:6

7:3-9 Because **Ahaz** and the people of **Judah** were terrified of **Aram** and Israel to the point that they were "like trees of a forest shaking in the wind" (vv. 1-2; 1:30-31; 2:13; 6:13; 10:18-19), God sent **Isaiah** and his **son** (see the note on 10:20-22) to assure the troubled Davidic king. The Lord's supremacy over human kings is also evident through his reference to **Rezin** and Pekah, **the son of Remaliah** as **smoldering sticks** (v. 4; 6:5). He declared that their plot to conquer **Judah** and **Jerusalem** (vv. 1,6; 1:1; 2:1) would fail and both Aram and Israel would fall (vv. 7-9,16).

7:10-13 Despite God's assurances and offer of **a sign**, **Ahaz** stubbornly and pretentiously refused to trust in God (29:13). His wearying of God (v. 13) echoes 1:14 and brought judgment on the **house of David** and his people whom he represented and led (see vv. 2,17). This Davidic king's spiritual dullness accords with 6:9-10.

7:14-17 The Lord nevertheless declared that **a sign** relating to **the virgin** would be given. Although verses 16-17 could be taken to imply that **Immanuel** would be born in the immediate future (see also the note on 8:3-4), his diet of **curds and honey** in verse 15 matches that of those who survive the destruction of the land in verse 22 and thus suggests instead that he will be born after the exile (vv. 20-25; 30:20; Mt 1:22-23). This is consistent with the timeframe of the messianic era set forth in the Pentateuch through its strategic usage of the phrase, "in the last days" (see the notes on Gn 1:1; 49:8-12; Nm 24:14-19; Dt 4:25-31; 31:26-29). Also significant is the mention of Immanuel again in 8:8-10 (see note) and the names given to the Messiah in 9:6-7 (see note).

THE COMING ASSYRIAN INVASION

8 Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large piece of parchment † and write on it with an ordinary pen: † † Maher-shalal-hash-baz. † 2 I have appointed † trustworthy witnesses — the priest Uriah and Zechariah son of Jeberechiah." †
3 I was then intimate with the prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. The LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, 4 for before the boy knows how to call 'Father,' or 'Mother,' † the wealth of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria will be carried off to the king of Assyria." †

5 The LORD spoke to me again:

6 Because these people rejected the slowly flowing water of Shiloah
and rejoiced with † Rezin and the son of Remaliah, †
7 the Lord will certainly bring against them the mighty rushing water
of the Euphrates River — the king of Assyria and all his glory.
It will overflow its channels
and spill over all its banks.
8 It will pour into Judah, flood over it, and sweep through,
reaching up to the neck; †
and its flooded banks †
will fill your entire land, Immanuel! †

9 Band together, † peoples, and be broken; pay attention, all you distant lands;
prepare for war, and be broken;
prepare for war, and be broken.
10 Devise a plan; it will fail. †
Make a prediction; it will not happen.
For God is with us. † †

THE LORD OF ARMIES, THE ONLY REFUGE

11 For this is what the LORD said to me with great power, to keep † me from going the way of this people: †

12 Do not call everything a conspiracy these people say is a conspiracy. †
Do not fear what they fear; †
do not be terrified.
13 You are to regard only the LORD of Armies as holy. †
Only he should be feared; †
only he should be held in awe.
14 He will be a sanctuary; †
but for the two houses of Israel,
he will be a stone † to stumble over and a rock to trip over, †

and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 Many will stumble over these; †
they will fall and be broken;
they will be snared and captured.

16 Bind up the testimony. †
Seal up the instruction † among my disciples.
17 I will wait for the LORD, †
who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. †
I will wait for him.

18 Here I am with the children the LORD has given me † to be signs and wonders in Israel from the LORD of Armies who dwells on Mount Zion. 19 When they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the spiritists who chirp and mutter," † shouldn't a people inquire of their God? † Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living? † 20 Go to God's instruction and testimony! † If they do not speak according to this word, there will be no dawn for them.
21 They will wander through the land, dejected and hungry. When they are famished, they will become enraged, and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. 22 They will look toward the earth † and see only distress, darkness, and the gloom of affliction, and they will be driven into thick darkness.
8:1 Hb obscure **8:1** Lit *with the pen of a man* **8:1** = Speeding to the Plunder, Hurrying to the Spoil **8:2** Vg; MT, one DSS ms read *I will appoint* ; one DSS ms, LXX, Syr, Tg read *Appoint* **8:6** Or *and rejoiced over* **8:8** Lit *its outspread wings* **8:9** Or *Raise the war cry*, or *Be shattered* **8:10** Hb *Immanuel* **8:11** DSS; MT reads *instruct* **8:19** Or *gods*
8:1 Is 30:8; Hab 2:2 **8:2** 2Kg 16:10-11,15-16 **8:4** Is 7:16 **8:4** Is 7:8-9 **8:6** Is 7:1 **8:8** Is 30:28 **8:8** Is 7:14; 8:10 **8:10** Is 14:27 **8:10** Is 8:8 **8:11** Ezk 2:8 **8:12** Is 7:2; 30:1 **8:12** 1Pt 3:14 **8:13** Nm 20:12 **8:13** 1Pt 3:15 **8:14** Is 4:6; 25:4; Ezk 11:16 **8:14** Ps 91:12; Is 26:4 **8:14** Lk 2:34; Rm 9:33; 1Pt 2:8 **8:15** Is 28:13; 59:10; Lk 20:18; Rm 9:32 **8:16** Is 8:1-2; 29:11-12 **8:16** Dn 12:4 **8:17** Ps 27:14; 33:20; 37:34; 130:5-6; Is 25:9; 30:18; Lm 3:26; Hab 2:3; 1Co 1:7; Php 3:20 **8:17** Dt 31:17; Is 1:15; 45:15; 54:8 **8:18** Heb 2:13 **8:19** Lv 20:6; 2Kg 21:6; 23:24; Is 19:3; 29:4; 47:12-13 **8:19** 1Sm 28:8-11 **8:20** Is 1:10; Lk 16:29 **8:22** Is 5:30; 59:9; Jr 13:16; Am 5:18,20; Zph 1:14-15

8:3-4 Although the circumstances following the birth of this **son** seem to resemble those of Immanuel (v. 4; 7:16), two different boys are in view. Isaiah's wife **(the prophetess)** could not have been a virgin as mentioned in 7:14, since she had already given birth to **Shear-jashub** (7:3). Neither would there be involvement from any man, Isaiah or otherwise, in the conception of Immanuel, who would be given by God himself. The naming of Isaiah's second son relates to the impending destruction of Aram and Israel (v. 4), whom Ahaz so dreaded (7:1-9).

8:8-10 Assyria would be even worse than Aram and Israel (vv. 6-7; 7:16-25). Evidently, the land of **Judah** belongs to **Immanuel** (v. 8; see 14:2), lending further support to his being the Messiah. He not only provides assurance from the powerful Assyrians and from the desolation of the land (see the note on 7:14-17) but more broadly from **peoples** and **distant lands** (v. 9). Their "counsel" against Israel "will not stand" (lit v. 10; see 7:7) because **God is with** his people (i.e., "Immanuel"; see footnote A). The futility of the nations fighting against Israel and God who is with them is likewise described in Psalm 46:5-11.

8:14 The **stone to stumble over** is linked to the "precious cornerstone" of 28:16 and in 1 Peter 2:6-8 (see also Ps 118:22; 1Co 1:23-24). Romans 9:32-33 likewise takes this verse as a messianic prophecy.

8:16-20 The **hiding** of God's **face** and waiting for him relates to the period of time prior to his restoration of Israel (**the house of Jacob**), especially the exile (v. 17; see 6:9-13; 45:15). Nevertheless, the faithful and the Scriptures continued to serve as a testimony to Israel (vv. 16,18,20; 7:3,14; 8:3; 20:3; 45:19).

BIRTH OF THE PRINCE OF PEACE

9 Nevertheless, the gloom of the distressed land will not be like that of the former times when he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali. † But in the future he will bring honor to the way of the sea, to the land east of the Jordan, and to Galilee of the nations.

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; †
a light has dawned
on those living in the land of darkness. †
3 You have enlarged the nation and increased its joy. † †
The people have rejoiced before you
as they rejoice at harvest time
and as they rejoice when dividing spoils. †
4 For you have shattered their oppressive yoke †
and the rod on their shoulders,
the staff of their oppressor,
just as you did on the day of Midian. †
5 For every trampling boot of battle and the bloodied garments of war
will be burned as fuel for the fire.
6 For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, †
and the government will be on his shoulders. †
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, † Mighty God, †
Eternal Father, † Prince of Peace. †

7 The dominion will be vast, and its prosperity will never end. †
He will reign on the throne of David
and over his kingdom,
to establish and sustain it
with justice and righteousness from now on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this. †

THE HAND RAISED AGAINST ISRAEL

8 The Lord sent a message against Jacob; it came against Israel.
9 All the people — Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria † — will know it.
They will say with pride and arrogance:
10 "The bricks have fallen, but we will rebuild with cut stones;
the sycamores have been cut down,
but we will replace them with cedars."
11 The LORD has raised up Rezin's adversaries against him and stirred up his enemies.
12 Aram from the east and Philistia from the west have consumed Israel with open mouths.
In all this, his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike. †

13 The people did not turn to him who struck them; they did not seek the LORD of Armies.
14 So the LORD cut off Israel's head and tail, †
palm branch and reed in a single day.
15 The head is the elder, the honored one; †
the tail is the prophet, the one teaching lies. †
16 The leaders of the people mislead them, and those they mislead are swallowed up. †
17 Therefore the Lord does not rejoice over † Israel's young men and has no compassion
on its fatherless and widows,
for everyone is a godless evildoer, †
and every mouth speaks folly.

In all this, his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike.

18 For wickedness burns like a fire †
that consumes thorns and briers
and kindles the forest thickets
so that they go up in a column of smoke.
19 The land is scorched by the wrath of the LORD of Armies, and the people are
like fuel for the fire. †

No one has compassion on his brother. †

20 They carve meat on the right, but they are still hungry; †
they have eaten on the left,
but they are still not satisfied.

Each one eats the flesh of his own arm. †

21 Manasseh is with Ephraim, and Ephraim with Manasseh;

together, both are against Judah. †

In all this, his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike. †

9:3 Alt Hb tradition reads *have not increased joy* **9:16** Or *are confused* **9:17** DSS read *not spare*
9:1 Mt 4:15 **9:2** Mt 4:16; Eph 5:8 **9:2** Lk 1:79 **9:3** Is 26:15 **9:3** 1Sm 30:16 **9:4** Is 10:27; 14:25 **9:4** Jdg 7:25; Is 10:26 **9:6** Is 7:14; 11:1-2; 53:2; Lk 2:11; Jn 3:16 **9:6** Is 22:22; Mt 28:18; 1Co 15:25 **9:6** Is 28:29 **9:6** Dt 10:17; Neh 9:32; Is 10:21 **9:6** Is 63:16; 64:8 **9:6** Is 26:3,12; 54:10; 66:12 **9:7** Ps 89:4; Dn 2:44; Lk 1:32-33 **9:7** Is 37:32; 59:17 **9:9** Ac 1:8 **9:12** Is 5:25 **9:14** Is 19:15 **9:15** Is 3:2-3 **9:15** Is 28:15; 59:3-4; Jr 23:14,32; Mt 24:24 **9:17** Is 1:4; 10:6; 14:20; 31:2; 32:6 **9:18** Ps 83:14; Is 1:7; Nah 1:10; Mal 4:1 **9:19** Is 1:31; 24:6 **9:19** Mc 7:2,6 **9:20** Is 8:21-22 **9:20** Dt 28:53-57; Is 49:26 **9:21** 2Ch 28:6,8; Is 11:13 **9:21** Is 5:25

9:1-2 The mention of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali** foretells the inclusion of the northern kingdom in the future salvation. They had not only separated from Judah and the house of David but had opposed them (see 7:8,16-17; 8:4,14). Although rank godlessness would bring **darkness** (v. 2; 5:30; 8:19-22), **great light**, joy, and deliverance from enemies would come later (9:1-5).

9:6-7 As in 7:14, salvation centers on the birth of **a son.** The name **Mighty God** recalls the name Immanuel ("God with us"; see also 8:8-10) and implies that this child is divine. The success and wonder of his counsel contrasts with the failed plans of godless men in 7:5,7 and 8:10. Use of the Hebrew word *shalom*, or **peace**, twice in verses 6-7 (see Hb) echoes the end of "war" in 2:1-4. Rule **on the throne of David** eternally (v. 7) clearly indicates that the child in view is the Messiah. The **justice** and **righteousness** characteristic of his reign also characterizes God himself (5:16) and should have characterized Israel (5:7).

9:8-12 The destruction of Israel and Aram had also been the subject of 7:1-16. Ephraim's optimism is actually **pride and arrogance** (vv. 9-10). The Lord's unsatisfied anger, signified by his **raised hand** (v. 12) picks up the theme of 5:25.

9:13 Despite God's just discipline of his people, they **did not turn to him** (see also 1:5; 10:20-22).

9:14-17 The Lord's cutting off of Israel's **leaders** parallels that of Judah in 3:1-3. In both cases, the

wickedness and pride of the people are the cause (vv. 9,17; 3:5,8-9).

9:21 The Israelites are self-destructing (see 7:17; 11:13). The repetition of **his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike** (vv. 12,17,21; 5:25; 10:4) powerfully expresses the extent and seriousness of God's just wrath against sin (see also 10:24-26; 12:1).

10 2 Woe † to those enacting crooked statutes and writing oppressive laws
to keep the poor from getting a fair trial and to deprive the needy
among my people of justice, †
so that widows can be their spoil
and they can plunder the fatherless. †
3 What will you do on the day of punishment when devastation comes
from far away?
Who will you run to for help?
Where will you leave your wealth?
4 There will be nothing to do except crouch among the prisoners
or fall among the slain.
In all this, his anger has not turned away, and his hand is still raised to strike. †

ASSYRIA, THE INSTRUMENT OF WRATH

5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger — the staff in their hands is my wrath.
6 I will send him against a godless nation; I will command him to go
against a people destined for my rage,
to take spoils, to plunder, †
and to trample them down like clay † in the streets.
7 But this is not what he intends; this is not what he plans.
It is his intent to destroy
and to cut off many nations.
8 For he says, "Aren't all my commanders kings?
9 Isn't Calno like Carchemish?
Isn't Hamath like Arpad?
Isn't Samaria † like Damascus? †
10 As my hand seized the idolatrous kingdoms, whose idols exceeded
those of Jerusalem and Samaria, 11 and as I did to Samaria and its worthless
images will I not also do to Jerusalem and its idols? " †

JUDGMENT ON ASSYRIA

12 But when the Lord finishes all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem,
he will say, "I † will punish the king of Assyria for his arrogant acts and the
proud look in his eyes." † 13 For he said:

I have done this by my own strength
and wisdom, for I am clever.
I abolished the borders of nations
and plundered their treasures; †
like a mighty warrior, I subjugated the inhabitants. † †
14 My hand has reached out, as if into a nest, to seize the wealth of the nations.
Like one gathering abandoned eggs,
I gathered the whole earth.
No wing fluttered;
no beak opened or chirped.

15 Does an ax exalt itself above the one who chops with it?
Does a saw magnify itself
above the one who saws with it?
It would be like a rod waving the one who lifts † it!
It would be like a staff lifting the one who isn't wood!
16 Therefore the Lord GOD of Armies will inflict an emaciating disease
on the well-fed of Assyria,
and he will kindle a burning fire
under its glory.
17 Israel's Light will become a fire, and its Holy One, a flame. †
In one day it will burn and consume Assyria's thorns and thistles. †
18 He will completely destroy the glory of its forests and orchards
as a sickness consumes a person.
19 The remaining trees of its forest will be so few in number
that a child could count them.

THE REMNANT WILL RETURN

20 On that day the remnant of Israel and the survivors of the house of Jacob will
no longer depend on the one who struck them, but they will faithfully depend on

the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. †

21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God.
22 Israel, even if your people were as numerous as the sand of the sea,
only a remnant of them will return. †
Destruction has been decreed;
justice overflows.
23 For throughout the land the Lord GOD of Armies is carrying out a destruction
that was decreed.

24 Therefore, the Lord GOD of Armies says this: "My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear Assyria, though they strike you with a rod and raise their staff over you as the Egyptians did. 25 In just a little while my wrath will be spent and my anger will turn to their destruction." 26 And the LORD of Armies will brandish a whip against him as he did when he struck Midian at the rock of Oreb; † and he will raise his staff over the sea as he did in Egypt.

GOD WILL JUDGE ASSYRIA

27 On that day his burden will fall from your shoulders, and his yoke
from your neck.
The yoke will be broken because your neck will be too large. † †
28 Assyria has come to Aiath and has gone through Migron,
storing their equipment at Michmash.
29 They crossed over at the ford, saying, "We will spend the night at Geba."
The people of Ramah are trembling;
those at Gibeah of Saul have fled.
30 Cry aloud, daughter of Gallim!
Listen, Laishah!
Anathoth is miserable.
31 Madmenah has fled.
The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge.
32 Today the Assyrians will stand at Nob, shaking their fists at the mountain
of Daughter Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.
33 Look, the Lord GOD of Armies will chop off the branches
with terrifying power, and the tall trees will be cut down,

the high trees felled.
34 He is clearing the thickets of the forest with an ax, and Lebanon
with its majesty will fall.

10:9 Cities conquered by Assyria **10:12** LXX reads *Jerusalem, he* **10:13** Or *I brought down their kings* **10:15** Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *wave he who lifts* **10:27** Lit *because of fatness* ; Hb obscure
10:1 Is 5:8; 28:1; 29:1,15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1; 45:9 **10:2** Ps 35:10; Pr 22:22; Ec 5:8; Is 61:8; Jr 21:12; Ezk 18:12; 22:29 **10:2** Ex 22:22; Dt 24:17; 27:19; Ps 68:5; 94:6; Is 1:17,23; Jr 22:3; Ezk 22:7; Zch 7:10; Mal 3:5 **10:4** Is 5:25; 9:12,17,21 **10:6** 2Kg 21:14; Jr 49:32; Ezk 7:21; 26:12; 29:19 **10:6** 2Sm 22:43; Ps 18:42; Ezk 26:11; Mc 7:10 **10:9** Ac 1:8 **10:11** 2Kg 21:11; 23:24; 2Ch 15:8; 24:18 **10:12** Jr 50:31 **10:13** Jr 15:13; 17:3; 20:5 **10:13** 2Sm 22:48 **10:17** Is 4:5; 5:24; 47:14 **10:17** Gn 3:18; Is 5:6; 7:23-25; 9:18; 27:4; Hs 10:8 **10:20** Is 1:4 **10:22** 2Kg 19:30,31; Ezr 9:8,15; Is 11:11,16; 28:5; 37:31,32; 46:3; Jr 23:3; 31:7; Rm 9:27-28 **10:26** Jdg 7:25 **10:27** Gn 27:40; Dt 28:48; Jr 28:10; 30:8; Lm 1:14

10:1-4 As in 1:17,23 and 3:13-15, this passage concerns injustice and oppression of **the poor** and **needy** (see also 5:7). Those guilty of **enacting crooked statutes** (v. 1) will not escape their just due (vv. 3-4).

10:5-12 Although **Assyria** was God's chosen instrument of judgment against his people (vv. 5-6; 7:17; 8:7), the pagan nation was motivated by greed and pride, implicitly boasting against God himself (vv. 7-12). The words in verses 8-11 fittingly resemble the taunts of Sennacherib in 36:18-20 and 37:11-13. Nevertheless, this mighty nation would also be brought low by God (v. 12; see 2:11-17). In a paradox of God's sovereignty and human responsibility, God would use Assyria's brutality as an instrument of judgment against Israel, but then punish Assyria for that same brutality.

10:15-19 Reaffirming the status of Assyria as a mere instrument of divine judgment (v. 5; see also 45:1-6), God likened their boasts (vv. 8-11,13-14) to an **ax** honoring itself more than the one who wields it (v. 15). Unlike Assyria, God would fully back up his words with action (vv. 16-17,32-34; 37:36-38). The description of this judgment as **fire burning** the **glory** of **forests** draws significantly on themes introduced already (see 1:30-31; 2:11-17; 4:2,5; 5:24; 6:1-6,13).

10:20-22 The phrase **on that day** links the following with other passages describing climactic divine acts (e.g., 2:11,17; 4:2). Whereas 9:13 said that the people did not "return" to God (lit), in the future a **remnant** would indeed **depend on** him and **return . . . to the Mighty God** (vv. 20-22; see 17:7-8). This divine title is the same one used of the Messiah in 9:6, and the phrase a **remnant will return** is identical to the meaning of the name of Isaiah's son in 7:3. This "remnant" theme had also appeared in 1:9; 4:2-3; 6:13; 8:16-18 (see also 1:27; 3:10).

10:24-26 Both God and his people **dwell in Zion** (v. 24; 8:18). The Lord's seemingly relentless **wrath** will eventually end (v. 25; see the notes on 5:25; 9:21; 12:1-2), and he will strike **Assyria** as he struck **Midian** long ago (v. 26; 9:4; Jdg 7:25). This future deliverance is twice likened to the exodus from Egypt (vv. 24,26; 11:16).

10:27 Along with the reference to Midian in verse 26, the breaking of an enemy **yoke** provides a possible connection to 9:4.

REIGN OF THE DAVIDIC KING

11 Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, †
and a branch † from his roots will bear fruit.

2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him † — a Spirit of wisdom
and understanding,
a Spirit of counsel and strength,
a Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.
3 His delight will be in the fear of the LORD.
He will not judge
by what he sees with his eyes, †
he will not execute justice
by what he hears with his ears,
4 but he will judge the poor righteously †
and execute justice for the oppressed of the land.
He will strike the land
with a scepter † from his mouth, †
and he will kill the wicked †
with a command † from his lips. †
5 Righteousness will be a belt around his hips; †
faithfulness will be a belt around his waist. †
6 The wolf will dwell with the lamb, †
and the leopard will lie down with the goat.
The calf, the young lion, and the fattened calf will be together, and a child
will lead them.
7 The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like cattle.
8 An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his hand
into a snake's den.
9 They will not harm or destroy each other on my entire holy mountain,
for the land will be as full
of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is filled with water. †

ISRAEL REGATHERED

10 On that day the root of Jesse †
will stand as a banner for the peoples. †

The nations will look to him for guidance, †
and his resting place will be glorious. †

11 On that day † the Lord will extend his hand a second time to recover the remnant of his people who survive — from Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the coasts and islands of the west. †

12 He will lift up a banner for the nations and gather the dispersed of Israel; †
he will collect the scattered of Judah
from the four corners of the earth. †
13 Ephraim's envy will cease; †
Judah's harassing will end.
Ephraim will no longer be envious of Judah, and Judah will not harass Ephraim.
14 But they will swoop down on the Philistine flank to the west.
Together they will plunder the people of the east. †
They will extend their power over Edom and Moab, and the Ammonites will be their subjects. †
15 The LORD will divide † † the Gulf of Suez. †
He will wave his hand over the Euphrates
with his mighty wind †
and will split it into seven streams,
letting people walk through on foot.
16 There will be a highway for the remnant of his people who will survive from Assyria, †
as there was for Israel
when they came up from the land of Egypt. †

11:4 Lit *the rod* **11:4** Lit *with the breath* **11:15** Text emended; MT reads *destroy* **11:15** Or *dry up* **11:15** Lit *the Sea of Egypt*
11:1 Is 9:7; 11:10; Ac 13:23 **11:1** Is 14:19; 60:21; Jr 23:5; 33:15; Dn 11:7; Zch 3:8; 6:12 **11:2** Is 42:1; 48:16; 61:1; Mt 3:16; Jn 1:32 **11:3** Jn 2:25; 7:24 **11:4** Ps 72:2,13-14; Is 3:14 **11:4** Ps 2:9; Is 49:2; Mal 4:6; Rv 1:16; 19:15 **11:4** Gn 18:25; Ps 139:19; Ezk 3:18-19; 18:20-24; 33:8-15 **11:4** Jb 4:9; Is 30:28,33; 2Th 2:8 **11:5** Eph 6:14 **11:5** Eph 6:14 **11:6** Is 65:25; Jr 5:6; Hs 2:18; 13:6-9 **11:9** Ps 98:2-3; Is 45:6; 52:10; 66:18-23; Hab 2:14 **11:10** Is 11:1 **11:10** Is 49:22; 62:10; Jn 3:14-15; 12:32 **11:10** Rm 15:12; Rv 5:5 **11:10** Is 14:3; 28:12; 32:17-18 **11:11** Is 27:12 **11:11** Is 10:20-22; 37:4,31-32; 46:3 **11:12** Is 56:8; Zph 3:10; Zch 10:6 **11:12** Rv 7:1; 20:8 **11:13** Is 9:21; Jr 3:18; Ezk 37:16-17,22; Hs 1:11 **11:14** Jr 49:28 **11:14** Ps 60:8; 83:6

11:15 Is 7:20; 8:7; Rv 16:12 **11:16** Is 19:23; 35:8; 40:3; 62:10 **11:16** Ex 14:26-29

11:1-4 This prophecy depicts the coming of the Messiah as the sprouting of **the stump of Jesse**, the remainder of the Davidic family tree which had presumably been cut down. As such, it picks up on similar language used for the Messiah in 4:2 and the use of a "stump" related to the remnant after the destruction and exile in 6:13 (see also the notes on 10:20-22). Unlike Israel (5:2,4), this Davidic ruler will **bear** good **fruit** (v. 1; 4:2; 37:31). The resting of the **Spirit** on him (v. 2) links to 42:1. His righteous judgment (vv. 3-4) echoes 2:2-4 while contrasting with the injustice of the Israelites (see 5:7; note on 10:1-4).

11:6-9 The Messiah's rule will be characterized by unprecedented peace that surpasses even that of the garden of Eden, where harmony was disrupted by sin (see 9:6-7). Not only will nations cease from war (2:4), but humans and animals will live together harmoniously. The center of the kingdom will be his **holy mountain** (i.e., Zion; see 1:27; 2:2; 4:2-6), and the **knowledge of the LORD** will fill the earth (v. 9; 6:3). See also "A Biblical View of Recreation," *p. 737*.

11:10 This **root of Jesse** is the Messiah (see v. 1), whom all nations will seek (see 2:2-3). His exaltation as **a banner** broadly corresponds with the eschatological elevation of Zion in 2:2 (see also 52:13; Rm 15:12). His **resting place will be glorious** and was described in greater detail in 4:2,5-6. Its splendor far surpasses Solomon's temple or anything else man can build (66:1). For more on the phrase **on that day**, see the note on 10:20-22.

11:11-16 The Lord's gathering of his people to their land **a second time** is a reference to the return from exile; (the first time would have been the exodus from Egypt (v. 11; see v. 16; 10:24,26). This second exodus will bring the **remnant** back from all over the world (vv. 11-12; 14:1-2; 48:20-22; Ps 147:2). They will rally to **a banner**, the Messiah (cp. v. 10). **Israel** and **Judah** will be reunited (v. 13; see 7:17; 9:21), have victory over their enemies (v. 14), and miraculously cross bodies of water as their ancestors crossed the Red Sea (vv. 15-16). The bodies mentioned generally parallel the boundaries of the land promised to Abram (Gn 15:18).

A SONG OF PRAISE

12 On that day you will say: "I will give thanks to you, LORD, although you were angry with me.
Your anger has turned away,
and you have comforted me. †
2 Indeed, God is my salvation; I will trust him and not be afraid,
for the LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my song.
He has become my salvation." †
3 You will joyfully draw water †
from the springs of salvation,
4 and on that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD; proclaim his name!
Make his works known among the peoples. †
Declare that his name is exalted.
5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things. †

Let this be known throughout the earth.

6 Cry out and sing, citizen of Zion, for the Holy One of Israel † is among you in his greatness.”

12:1 Is 40:1 **12:2** Ex 15:2; Ps 118:14 **12:3** Jn 4:10; 7:37-38 **12:4** 1Ch 16:8; Ps 105:1; 145:4 **12:5** Ex 15:1; Ps 98:1; Is 24:14; 42:10-11; 44:23 **12:6** Is 1:4

12:1-2 On that day is used yet again eschatologically toward the end of Isaiah 1–12 (vv. 1,4; 10:20,27; 11:10-11), declaring God’s turning from anger to compassion (see the notes on 5:25; 9:21; 10:24-26). His **salvation** is celebrated in like manner to the exodus (v. 2; Ex 15:2), further emphasizing the “second exodus” theme (see the notes on 10:24-26; 11:11-16; 48:20-22).

12:4-6 The exaltation, glory, and greatness of God correspond with 2:11-17 and 6:1-4.

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST BABYLON

13 A pronouncement † concerning Babylon † that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

2 Lift up a banner on a barren mountain. †
Call out to them.
Signal with your hand, and they will go
through the gates of the nobles.
3 I have commanded my consecrated ones; yes, I have called my warriors,
who celebrate my triumph,
to execute my wrath. †
4 Listen, a commotion on the mountains, like that of a mighty people!
Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms,
like nations being gathered together!
The LORD of Armies is mobilizing an army for war.
5 They are coming from a distant land, from the farthest horizon — the LORD and the weapons of his wrath — to destroy the whole country. †

6 Wail! For the day of the LORD is near. †
It will come as destruction from the Almighty. †
7 Therefore everyone’s hands will become weak, and every man will lose heart. †
8 They will be horrified; pain and agony will seize them;

they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. †
They will look at each other,
their faces flushed with fear.
9 Look, the day † of the LORD is coming — cruel, with rage and burning anger —
to make the earth a desolation
and to destroy its sinners. †
10 Indeed, the stars of the sky and its constellations †
will not give their light.
The sun will be dark when it rises,
and the moon will not shine. †
11 I will punish the world for its evil, †
and wicked people for their iniquities.
I will put an end to the pride of the arrogant †
and humiliate the insolence of tyrants.
12 I will make a human more scarce than fine gold, and mankind more rare than the gold of Ophir. †
13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will shake from its foundations †
at the wrath of the LORD of Armies, on the day of his burning anger.
14 Like wandering gazelles and like sheep without a shepherd, †
each one will turn to his own people,
each one will flee to his own land.
15 Whoever is found will be stabbed, and whoever is caught will die by the sword.
16 Their children will be dashed to pieces before their eyes; †
their houses will be looted,
and their wives raped.
17 Look! I am stirring up the Medes against them, †
who cannot be bought off with † silver and who have no desire for gold.
18 Their bows will cut young men to pieces.
They will have no compassion on offspring; they will not look with pity on children.

19 And Babylon, the jewel of the kingdoms, the glory of the pride of the Chaldeans,
will be like Sodom and Gomorrah
when God overthrew them. †
20 It will never be inhabited or lived in from generation to generation; †
a nomad will not pitch his tent there,
and shepherds will not let their flocks rest there.
21 But desert creatures will lie down there, and owls will fill the houses.
Ostriches will dwell there,
and wild goats will leap about. †
22 Hyenas will howl in the fortresses, and jackals, in the luxurious palaces.
Babylon's time is almost up;
her days are almost over.

13:5 Or *earth* **13:7** Lit *every man's heart will melt* **13:10** Or *Orions* **13:17** Lit *who have no regard for* **13:1** Is 14:28; 15:1; 17:1; 19:1; 21:1,11,13; 22:1; 23:1; 30:6 **13:1** Is 13:19; 14:4; 47:1-15; Jr 24:1; 50:1–51:64; Mt 1:11; Rv 14:8 **13:2** Is 5:26; Jr 50:2 **13:3** Ps 78:21,50; Ezk 5:15; 20:8 **13:6** Is 2:12; 10:3; 13:9; 34:2,8; 61:2; Ezk 30:3; Am 5:18; Zph 1:7 **13:6** Is 10:25; 14:23; Jl 1:15 **13:8** Is 26:17; Jr 4:31; Jn 16:21 **13:9** Mt 25:13 **13:9** Dt 32:43 **13:10** Is 34:4; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24-25; Lk 21:26; Rv 8:12 **13:11** Jr 23:2; 36:31; 44:29 **13:11** Is 2:11; 23:9; Dn 5:22-23 **13:12** 1Kg 9:28; Jb 28:16; Ps 45:9 **13:13** Ps 18:7; Is 2:19; 24:1,19-20; Hg 2:6 **13:14** 1Kg 22:17; Mt 9:36; Mk 6:34; 1Pt 2:25 **13:16** Ps 137:8-9; Is 13:18; 14:21; Hs 10:14; Nah 3:10 **13:17** Jr 51:11; Dn 5:28 **13:19** Gn 19:24; Jr 14:18; 50:40; Am 4:11 **13:20** Is 14:23; 34:10-15; Jr 51:37-43 **13:21** Is 34:11-15; Zph 2:14; Rv 18:2

13:1 Isaiah 13–27 concern God's judgment and rule of the nations. Thus, these chapters further support the theme of his supremacy over all, which was so frequently sounded in Isaiah 1–12. The first such nation to be mentioned is **Babylon**, which had been godless since its beginning (Gn 11:1-9) and would defeat and exile Judah (39:6-7). Having already been mentioned indirectly in 11:11 (for the connection to "Shinar," see Gn 10:10; 11:2; 14:1,9), Babylon is also the subject of 21:9; 47:1; 48:20.

13:3-6 The combination of divine **wrath**, **nations**, **kingdoms**, **war**, and **the day of the LORD** suggest an eschatological battle (see vv. 10-13; Ps 46:6; Jl 2:1-6). The statement that the Lord will **destroy the whole country** may also be translated "the whole earth" (v. 5; 14:26).

13:10-13 The darkening of heavenly bodies and the shaking of heaven and earth (24:18-20) parallel other prophetic passages (e.g., Jl 2:10,30-31; Hg 2:21-22). The reason for this fearsome judgment is man's **evil** (v. 11; see 2:11-17).

13:17-18 Like Assyria (10:16-19,32-34), Babylon also would fall, though to **the Medes** (Dn 5:28-31).

13:19 Babylon's **pride** had characterized them from their inception (Gn 11:4). Unlike Israel (1:9), they would be utterly destroyed **like Sodom and Gomorrah** (see also 14:22).

ISRAEL'S RETURN

14 For the LORD will have compassion † on Jacob and will choose Israel
again. † He will settle them on their own land. † The resident alien will
join them and be united with the house of Jacob. † 2 The nations will escort
Israel and bring it to its homeland. Then the house of Israel will possess them as
male and female slaves in the LORD's land. † They will make captives of their
captors and will rule over their oppressors.

DOWNFALL OF THE KING OF BABYLON

3 When the LORD gives you rest from your pain, † torment, and the hard labor †
you were forced to do, 4 you will sing this song of contempt about the king of
Babylon † and say:

How the oppressor has quieted down,
and how the raging † has become quiet!
5 The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers.
6 It struck the peoples in anger with unceasing blows.
It subdued the nations in rage
with relentless persecution.
7 The whole earth is calm and at rest; people shout with a ringing cry.
8 Even the cypresses and the cedars of Lebanon rejoice over you: †
"Since you have been laid low,
no lumberjack has come against us."

9 Sheol below is eager to greet your coming, stirring up the spirits
of the departed for you — all the rulers † of the earth — making all the kings
of the nations
rise from their thrones.
10 They all respond to you, saying, "You too have become as weak as we are;
you have become like us!
11 Your splendor has been brought down to Sheol, along with the music
of your harps.
Maggots are spread out under you,
and worms cover you."

12 Shining morning star, † †
how you have fallen from the heavens! †
You destroyer of nations,
you have been cut down to the ground.
13 You said to yourself, “I will ascend to the heavens; †
I will set up my throne
above the stars of God. †
I will sit on the mount of the gods’ assembly, in the remotest parts of the North. † †
14 I will ascend above the highest clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”
15 But you will be brought down to Sheol into the deepest regions of the Pit. †

16 Those who see you will stare at you; they will look closely at you:
“Is this the man who caused the earth to tremble, who shook the kingdoms,
17 who turned the world into a wilderness, †
who destroyed its cities
and would not release the prisoners to return home? ”
18 All the kings of the nations lie in splendor, each in his own tomb.
19 But you are thrown out without a grave, like a worthless branch,
covered by those slain with the sword
and dumped into a rocky pit like a trampled corpse.
20 You will not join them in burial, because you destroyed your land
and slaughtered your own people.
The offspring of evildoers
will never be mentioned again. †
21 Prepare a place of slaughter for his sons, because of the iniquity † of their fathers.
They will never rise up to possess a land or fill the surface of the earth with cities.

22 “I will rise up against them” — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — “and I will cut off from Babylon her reputation, remnant, offspring, and

posterity” — this is the LORD’s declaration. 23 “I will make her a swampland and
a region for herons, † and I will sweep her away with the broom of destruction.”
This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

ASSYRIA WILL BE DESTROYED

24 The LORD of Armies has sworn:

As I have purposed, so it will be;
as I have planned it, so it will happen. †
25 I will break Assyria † in my land; I will tread him down on my mountain.
Then his yoke will be taken from them,
and his burden will be removed from their shoulders.
26 This is the plan † prepared for the whole earth,
and this is the hand stretched out
against all the nations.
27 The LORD of Armies himself has planned it; therefore, who can stand
in its way?
It is his hand that is outstretched,
so who can turn it back?

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST PHILISTIA

28 In the year that King Ahaz died, † this pronouncement came: †

29 Don’t rejoice, all of you in Philistia, because the rod of the one
who struck you † is broken.
For a viper will come from the root † of a snake, and from its egg comes
a flying serpent. †
30 Then the firstborn † of the poor will be well fed, and the impoverished
will lie down in safety, but I will kill your root with hunger,
and your remnant will be slain.
31 Wail, you gates! † Cry out, city!
Tremble with fear, † all Philistia!
For a cloud of dust is coming from the north, †
and there is no one missing from the invader’s ranks.

32 What answer will be given to the messengers from that nation?

The LORD has founded Zion, †
and his oppressed people find refuge in her.

14:4 DSS; Hb uncertain **14:9** Lit *rams* **14:12** Or *Day Star, son of the dawn* **14:13** Or *of Zaphon* **14:23** Or *hedgehogs* ; Hb obscure **14:29** Or *stock*
14:1 1Kg 3:26 **14:1** Dt 7:7; Ps 102:13; Zch 1:17 **14:1** Dt 12:10; 2Sm 7:1 **14:1** Dt 14:21,29; Zch 8:22-23; Eph 2:12-14 **14:2** Is 9:7; 45:14-25; 49:22-26; 60:9; 61:5; 66:19-24 **14:3** Gn 3:16; Is 14:3; Jr 44:19 **14:3** Ex 1:14 **14:4** Mc 2:4; Hab 2:6 **14:8** Ps 104:16; Is 55:12; Ezk 31:16 **14:12** 2Pt 1:19; Rv 2:28; 22:16 **14:12** Is 34:4; Lk 10:18; Rv 8:10; 9:1 **14:13** Jr 51:53; Ezk 28:2; Am 9:2 **14:13** Dn 5:22-23; 8:10; 2Th 2:4 **14:13** Ps 48:2 **14:15** Ps 28:1; Is 38:18; Ezk 28:8; Mt 11:23; Lk 10:15 **14:17** Jl 1:19-20; 2:3,22; 3:19 **14:20** Jb 18:16,19; Ps 21:10; 37:28; Is 1:4; 31:2 **14:21** Is 13:11 **14:24** Pr 16:4; Is 46:11; Jr 23:20; 30:24; 51:29; Zch 1:6; Eph 1:11; Rv 17:17 **14:25** Is 8:7; 10:5-15,27 **14:26** Is 5:19 **14:28** 2Kg 16:20; 2Ch 28:27; Is 6:1 **14:28** Is 13:1 **14:29** 1Sm 17:50; 18:25-30; 19:8; 23:1-5; 2Sm 5:17-25; 8:1 **14:29** Ex 4:2-3; 7:10-12; Is 30:6 **14:30** Ex 4:22 **14:31** Is 3:26; 24:12; 45:2 **14:31** Jos 2:9,24 **14:31** Is 41:25; Jr 1:13-14; 4:6; 6:1; 47:2; 50:3,9,41 **14:32** Ps 87:1,5; 102:16; Is 28:16; 44:28; 54:11

14:1-2 In sharp contrast with his devastation of Babylon, God will have **compassion on Jacob** (aka Israel; 30:18; 49:10). At other times, God had not shown them such favor (see 9:17; 27:11). Their resettlement in **their own land** relates to being regathered from exile (see 11:11-16). The traveling of the **nations** with Israel to **the LORD's land** recalls 2:2-3, and Israel's rule over their enemies parallels other passages (e.g., 17:12-14; 45:14; 49:22-23; Nm 24:17-19).

14:3 The prediction of **rest** from **pain**, **torment**, and **hard labor** parallels 9:4 and 10:27.

14:4-15 The pride, bloodthirst, and downfall of **the king of Babylon** parallels that of Assyria in 10:5-19,24-27. He who had felled lofty trees (v. 8) would himself be felled along with other human kings (vv. 9-11; see 10:33-34). Babylon's arrogance went so far as to intend to **ascend to the heavens** (v. 13; see the note on 13:1), just as their predecessors, the builders of the tower of Babel, had attempted (Gn 11:4). To desire the status of the **Most High** (v. 14) is the essence of sin itself (Gn 3:5).

14:19 The Hebrew word for **branch** (*netser*) is the same one used in 11:1. Whereas the king of Babylon is a **worthless branch** thrown away with corpses, the Messiah "will bear fruit" (11:1) and will be "glorious" (4:2).

14:22 Whereas Israel would be left a **remnant** (10:20-22; 11:11,16), **Babylon** would not (see also the note on 13:19; 14:30).

14:24-27 God's unstoppable plan to destroy Assyria and break its **yoke** (vv. 24-25) recalls earlier passages (7:7; 8:10; 9:4-7; 10:12-19,24-27,33-34). What he does to Assyria is a picture of what he will do to **the whole earth** and to **all the nations** (v. 26). Such an emphasis in Isaiah 13–27 balances the emphasis in Isaiah 1–12 on God's judgment of Israel.

14:28 The previous time **Ahaz** was mentioned, he was stubbornly resisting God (7:10-13). As a mere human king, his reign ended in death (see 6:1; 9:6-7).

14:32 While Philistia's "root" and "remnant" would be killed (v. 30; see the notes on v. 22; 13:19), Israel would endure because **the LORD has founded Zion** (see 28:16; 54:11).

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST MOAB

15 A pronouncement concerning Moab: †

Ar in Moab is devastated, †
destroyed in a night.
Kir in Moab is devastated,
destroyed in a night.
2 Dibon went up to its temple to weep at its high places.
Moab wails on Nebo and at † Medeba.
Every head is shaved;
every beard is chopped short.
3 In its streets they wear sackcloth; on its rooftops and in its public squares everyone wails, falling down and weeping.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh cry out; their voices are heard as far away as Jahaz. †
Therefore the soldiers of Moab cry out,
and they tremble. †
5 My heart cries out over Moab, whose fugitives flee as far as Zoar, †
to Eglath-shelishiyah;
they go up the Ascent of Luhith weeping;
they raise a cry of destruction
on the road to Horonaim.
6 The Waters of Nimrim † are desolate; the grass is withered, the foliage is gone, and the vegetation has vanished.
7 So they carry their wealth and belongings over the Wadi of the Willows. †
8 For their cry echoes throughout the territory of Moab.
Their wailing reaches Eglaim;
their wailing reaches Beer-elim.
9 The Waters of Dibon † are full of blood, †
but I will bring on Dibon † even more than this — a lion for those who escape from Moab,
and for the survivors in the land. †

15:2 Or *wails over Nebo and over* **15:4** Lit *out, he trembles within himself* **15:9** DSS, some LXX mss, Vg; MT reads *Dimon* **15:9** DSS, some LXX mss, Vg; MT reads *Dimon*
15:1-7 Gn 19:31-37; Is 11:14; 25:10; Jr 48:1-38; Ezk 25:8-11; Am 2:1-3; Zph 2:8-9 **15:1** Nm 21:28 **15:4** Nm 21:28; 32:3; Jr 48:34 **15:5** Gn 19:21-22 **15:6** Nm 32:3,36; Jos 13:27 **15:7** Is 30:6; Jr 48:36 **15:9** 2Kg

3:22-23 **15:9** 2Sm 23:20; 1Ch 11:22

15:5 Although it is God who brings severe judgment against **Moab**, his **heart** also **cries out** over them, just as they cry out from their anguish (vv. 4-5). His grief is expressed again in 16:9.

15:9 Even **those who escape** the initial wave of judgment would face a **lion** (see also 10:20-22; 14:22,30). In the end, Moab would have few survivors (16:14; see 10:19).

16 Send lambs to the ruler of the land, †
from Sela in the desert †
to the mountain of Daughter Zion.
2 Like a bird fleeing, forced from the nest,
the daughters of Moab
will be at the fords of the Arnon.

3 Give us counsel and make a decision.
Shelter us at noonday
with shade that is as dark as night.
Hide the refugees; †
do not betray the one who flees.
4 Let my refugees stay with you; be a refuge for Moab † from the aggressor.

When the oppressor has gone,
destruction has ended,
and marauders have vanished from the land, 5 a throne will be established in love, †
and one will sit on it faithfully †
in the tent of David,
judging and pursuing what is right,
quick to execute justice.

6 We have heard of Moab's pride † — how very proud he is —
his haughtiness, his pride, his arrogance, and his empty boasting.
7 Therefore let Moab wail; let every one of them wail for Moab.
You who are completely devastated, mourn
for the raisin cakes † of Kir-hareseth. †

8 For Heshbon's terraced vineyards and the grapevines of Sibmah
have withered.
The rulers of the nations
have trampled its choice vines
that reached as far as Jazer †
and spread to the desert.
Their shoots spread out
and reached the sea. †
9 So I join with Jazer to weep for the vines of Sibmah;
I drench Heshbon and Elealeh with my tears.
Triumphant shouts have fallen silent †
over your summer fruit and your harvest.
10 Joy and rejoicing † have been removed from the orchard; no one is singing
or shouting for joy in the vineyards. †
No one tramples grapes † in the winepresses.
I have put an end to the shouting.
11 Therefore I moan like the sound of a lyre for Moab, †
as does my innermost being for Kir-heres.
12 When Moab appears and tires himself out on the high place †
and comes to his sanctuary to pray,
it will do him no good. †

13 This is the message that the LORD previously announced about Moab. 14 And now the LORD says, "In three years, as a hired worker counts years, † Moab's splendor will become an object of contempt, in spite of a very large population. And those who are left will be few and weak."

16:4 Or *you; Moab — be a refuge for him* **16:5** Or *continually* **16:9** Or *Battle cries have fallen* **16:10** Lit *wine*

16:1 2Kg 3:4 **16:1** 2Kg 14:7; Is 42:11 **16:3** 1Kg 18:4 **16:5** Is 9:6-7; 32:1; 55:4; Dn 7:14; Mc 4:7; Lk 1:33 **16:6** Jr 48:29; Am 2:1; Ob 3-4; Zph 2:8,10 **16:7** 2Sm 6:19; 1Ch 16:3; Sg 2:5; Hs 3:1 **16:7** 2Kg 3:25; Jr 48:31 **16:8** Nm 21:32; Jos 13:25 **16:8** Jr 48:32 **16:10** Is 24:8; Jr 48:33 **16:10** Jdg 9:27; Is 24:7; Am 5:11,17 **16:11** Is 15:5; 63:15; Jr 48:36; Hs 11:8; Php 2:1 **16:12** 1Kg 18:29 **16:12** Is 15:2 **16:14** Jb 7:1; 14:6; Is 21:16

16:1-5 The Moabites would be in severe distress and would seek protection for their refugees from **the ruler of the land** in **Zion**" (vv. 1-4; 8:8; 14:2). His **throne** will be established in **the tent of David** (see Am 9:11) and characterized by justice and righteousness (v. 5; 9:7; 11:4-5). Thus, the salvation and refuge of the Moabites would also be in the Messiah (see 4:2-6; 14:32).

16:6 Like Israel, Assyria, and Babylon (3:8-9,16; 10:7-15; 14:13-14), a key part of Moab's guilt was their **pride.** All who live arrogantly set themselves up for humiliation and judgment by the exalted Lord (2:9-17).

16:12-14 Moab's idols will prove useless (v. 12; 2:18), and their **splendor** despised (lit v. 14). The people's only hope of salvation is in the Messiah (v. 5), whose glory alone will endure (4:2; 11:10).

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST DAMASCUS

17 A pronouncement † concerning Damascus: †

Look, Damascus is no longer a city.
It has become a ruined heap.
2 The cities of Aroer are abandoned; they will be places for flocks.
They will lie down without fear.
3 The fortress disappears from Ephraim, †
and a kingdom from Damascus.
The remnant of Aram will be
like the splendor of the Israelites.

This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ISRAEL

4 On that day the splendor of Jacob will fade,
and his healthy body † will become emaciated. †
5 It will be as if a reaper had gathered standing grain — his arm harvesting the heads of grain —
and as if one had gleaned heads of grain
in the Valley of Rephaim. †
6 Only gleanings will be left in Israel, †
as if an olive tree had been beaten —
two or three olives at the very top of the tree, four or five on its fruitful branches.
This is the declaration of the LORD, the God of Israel.

7 On that day people will look to their Maker and will turn their eyes to the Holy One of Israel. † 8 They will not look to the altars † they made with their hands or to the Asherahs and shrines † † they made with their fingers.

9 On that day their strong cities will be like the abandoned woods
and mountaintops that were abandoned because of the Israelites; there will
be desolation.
10 For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and you have failed
to remember
the rock of your strength; †
therefore you will plant beautiful plants and set out cuttings from exotic vines.
11 On the day that you plant, you will help them to grow,
and in the morning
you will help your seed to sprout,
but the harvest will vanish
on the day of disease and incurable pain.

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS

12 Ah! The roar of many peoples — they roar like the roaring of the seas.
The raging of the nations —
they rage like the rumble of rushing water. †
13 The nations rage like the rumble of a huge torrent. †
He rebukes them, and they flee far away, †
driven before the wind like chaff on the hills †
and like tumbleweeds before a gale.
14 In the evening — sudden terror!
Before morning — it is gone!
This is the fate of those who plunder us
and the lot of those who ravage us.

17:4 Lit *and the fat of his flesh* **17:8** Or *incense altars*
17:1 Is 13:1 **17:1** Gn 14:15; 15:2; 2Kg 16:9; Jr 49:23; Am 1:3-5; Zch 9:1; Ac 9:2 **17:3** Is 7:8,16; 8:4 **17:4** Is 10:16 **17:5** 2Sm 5:18,22 **17:6** Dt 4:27; Is 24:13; 27:12; Ob 5; Rm 11:19 **17:7** Is 1:4 **17:8** 2Ch 34:7; Is 27:9 **17:8** Ex 34:13; Dt 7:5; Mc 5:14 **17:10** Dt 6:12; 8:11,14,19; 32:18; Jdg 3:7; 1Sm 12:9; Ps 106:21; Is 8:14; 26:4; 51:13; Jr 3:21; 13:25; Ezk 22:12; 23:35; Hs 2:13 **17:12** Ps 93:1-5; Is 8:9-10; Lk 21:25 **17:13** Is 33:3 **17:13** Ps 9:5; Is 41:11 **17:13** Jb 21:18; Ps 1:4; 83:13; Is 29:5; 41:15-16

17:1-6 Damascus was the capital of Aram and had been mentioned earlier in connection with the northern kingdom of Israel in Isaiah 7. As God had declared earlier (7:7-9,16; 8:4), Aram and Israel would fall. The mention of a **remnant of Aram** parallels the frequent reference to an Israelite “remnant” (see the note on 10:20-22).

17:7-8 Related to the judgment that will take place **on that day** (vv. 4,9), “mankind” (lit) will no longer

look to idols but **to their Maker** (2:2-4,18; 16:12). Such a change of heart parallels what is described specifically for Israel in 10:20.

17:12-14 Like 14:26-27, this passage directly speaks of the nations in general and reminds the reader of God's sovereignty over all people. The association of enemy nations with raging seas is also found elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Pss 18:16-17; 46:3,6; Dn 7:1-3). Their comparison to **chaff** which is **driven before the wind** echoes Psalm 1:4.

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO CUSH

18 Woe to the land of buzzing insect wings †
beyond the rivers of Cush, †
2 which sends envoys by sea, in reed vessels over the water.

Go, swift messengers,
to a nation tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and near,
a powerful nation with a strange language, †
whose land is divided by rivers.
3 All you inhabitants of the world and you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains, look!
When a trumpet sounds, listen!

4 For the LORD said to me:

I will quietly look out from my place,
like shimmering heat in sunshine,
like a rain cloud in harvest heat.
5 For before the harvest, when the blossoming is over and the blossom becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with a pruning knife, and tear away and remove the branches.
6 They will all be left for the birds of prey on the hills and for the wild animals of the land.
The birds of prey will spend the summer feeding on them, and all the wild animals the winter.

7 At that time a gift will be brought to the LORD of Armies from † a people tall and smooth-skinned, † a people feared far and near, a powerful nation with a

strange language, whose land is divided by rivers — to Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of Armies.

18:1 Or *of sailing ships* **18:2** Hb obscure **18:7** DSS, LXX, Vg; MT omits *from*
18:1 2Kg 19:9; Is 20:3-5; Ezk 30:4-5,9; Zph 2:12; 3:10 **18:7** Ps 68:31; Is 45:14; Zph 3:10; Ac 8:27-38

18:1-3 The proclamation against **Cush** begins in the same way as 17:12-14. Like the previous passage, the judgment of this powerful, seafaring nation also concerns **the world** (v. 3; see following note).

18:7 The Lord's judgment of Cush will result in their bringing a **gift** to him in **Zion** (see v. 1; Pss 68:29; 76:11). As foretold in 2:2-4, the nations will turn to God (see also 14:32; 16:1-5; 17:7-8).

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST EGYPT

19 A pronouncement † concerning Egypt: †

Look, the LORD rides on a swift cloud †
and is coming to Egypt.
Egypt's idols will tremble before him, †
and Egypt will lose heart. † †
2 I will provoke Egyptians against Egyptians; each will fight against his brother †
and each against his friend,
city against city, kingdom against kingdom. †
3 Egypt's spirit will be disturbed within it, and I will frustrate its plans.
Then they will inquire of idols, ghosts,
and spiritists. †
4 I will hand over Egypt to harsh masters, †
and a strong king will rule it.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD of Armies.

5 The water of the sea will dry up, and the river will be parched and dry.
6 The channels will stink; they will dwindle, and Egypt's canals will be parched.
Reed and rush will wilt.
7 The reeds by the Nile, by the mouth of the river, and all the cultivated areas of the Nile
will wither, blow away, and vanish.
8 Then the fishermen will mourn.

All those who cast hooks into the Nile will lament, and those who spread nets
on the water will give up.
9 Those who work with flax will be dismayed; †
those combing it and weaving linen will turn pale. †
10 Egypt's weavers † will be dejected; all her wage earners will be demoralized.

11 The princes of Zoan are complete fools; †
Pharaoh's wisest advisers give stupid advice!
How can you say to Pharaoh,
"I am one † of the wise, a student of eastern † kings"?
12 Where then are your wise men?
Let them tell you and reveal
what the LORD of Armies has planned against Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan have been fools; the princes of Memphis are deceived. †
Her tribal chieftains have led Egypt astray.
14 The LORD has mixed within her a spirit of confusion.
The leaders have made Egypt stagger in all she does, as a drunkard staggers
in his vomit.
15 No head or tail, palm or reed, †
will be able to do anything for Egypt.

EGYPT WILL KNOW THE LORD

16 On that day Egypt will be like women and will tremble with fear because of the threatening hand of the LORD of Armies when he raises it against them. 17 The land of Judah will terrify Egypt; whenever Judah is mentioned, Egypt will tremble because of what the LORD of Armies has planned † against it.
18 On that day five cities in the land of Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear loyalty to the LORD of Armies. One of the cities will be called the City of the Sun. † †
19 On that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the center of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the LORD near her border. † 20 It will be a sign and witness to the LORD of Armies in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and leader, and he will

rescue them. † 21 The LORD will make himself known to Egypt, and Egypt will
know the LORD on that day. They will offer sacrifices and offerings; † they will
make vows to the LORD and fulfill them. 22 The LORD will strike Egypt, striking
and healing. Then they will turn to the LORD and he will be receptive to their
prayers and heal them.
23 On that day there will be a highway † from Egypt to Assyria. Assyria will go
to Egypt, Egypt to Assyria, and Egypt will worship with Assyria.
24 On that day Israel will form a triple alliance with Egypt and Assyria — a
blessing within the land. 25 The LORD of Armies will bless them, saying, "Egypt
my people, Assyria my handiwork, † and Israel my inheritance are blessed." †

19:1 Lit *Egypt's heart will melt within it* **19:9** DSS, Tg; MT reads *weavers of white cloth* **19:10** Or *foundations* **19:11** Lit *a son* **19:11** Lit *a son of ancient* **19:18** Some Hb mss, DSS, Sym, Tg, Vg, Arabic; other Hb mss read *of Destruction* ; LXX reads *of Righteousness* **19:18** = the ancient Egyptian city Heliopolis

19:1 Is 13:1 **19:1** Jr 46:13-26; Ezk 29:1–31:2; 31:18–32:32; Jl 3:19 **19:1** Ps 18:9-10; 104:3; Mt 26:64; Rv 1:7 **19:1** Ex 12:12; Jr 43:12; 44:8 **19:1** Jos 2:11; Is 13:7 **19:2** Mk 13:12 **19:2** Jdg 7:22; 1Sm 14:20; 2Ch 20:23; Mt 10:21,36; Mk 13:8; Lk 21:10 **19:3** 1Ch 10:13; Is 8:19; Dn 2:2 **19:4** Is 20:4; Jr 46:26; Ezk 29:19 **19:9** Pr 7:16; Ezk 27:7 **19:11** Nm 13:22; Ps 78:12,43; Is 30:4 **19:13** Jr 2:16; 46:14,19; Ezk 30:13 **19:15** Is 9:14-16 **19:17** Is 5:19 **19:19** Gn 28:18; Ex 24:4; Jos 22:10,26-27 **19:20** Jdg 3:9,15; 6:7; 10:10 **19:21** Is 56:7; 60:7; Zch 14:16-18 **19:23** Is 11:16; 35:8; 49:11; 62:10 **19:25** Ps 100:3; Is 29:23; 45:11; 60:21; 64:8; Eph 2:10 **19:25** Dt 9:26,29; 32:9; Ps 28:9; Is 47:6; 63:17

19:1-2 The Lord will judge **Egypt** and their **idols** (2:17-22; Ex 12:12). Their self-destruction mirrors that of other enemies of God and his people (Jdg 7:22; 2Ch 20:23; Zch 14:13).

19:4 The exact identity of the **harsh masters** and **strong king** is unclear.

19:5-7 Part of the judgment against Egypt would be the drying up of its waterways (see 11:15).

19:12 Whereas the "counsel" and wisdom of Egypt will fail (lit v. 3; vv. 11-15), God's "counsel" against them will prevail (lit vv. 12,17). The certain success of his plans had been mentioned in previous passages (9:6; 14:24,26).

19:16-22 In place of its own wisdom and idols, **Egypt** would instead **tremble with fear** from God (v. 16), **swear loyalty** to him (v. 18), and worship him out of genuine knowledge of him (vv. 19,21; Ex 7:5; 14:18). For his part, God would hear their cry and deliver them (vv. 20,22). In the process of his **striking and healing** them, the Egyptians would **turn to the LORD** (v. 22), much like the Israelites (5:25; 9:12; 10:20-22; 30:26).

19:23-25 This remarkable passage describes not only the conversion of Israel's ancient enemy, **Egypt**, but also their present one, **Assyria** (see 11:16; 52:4). As is already clear from passages such as 2:2-4 and 18:7 (see also 6:3; 16:1-5; 40:5; 49:6), the salvation of God extends beyond **Israel** to all nations. The word **highway** recalls 11:16.

NO HELP FROM CUSH OR EGYPT

20 In the year that the chief commander, † sent by King Sargon of Assyria, came to Ashdod † and attacked and captured it — 2 during that time the LORD had spoken through Isaiah † son of Amoz, saying, “Go, take off your sackcloth † and remove the sandals from your feet,” and he did that, going stripped and barefoot † — 3 the LORD said, “As my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot three years as a sign and omen against Egypt and Cush, † 4 so the king of Assyria will lead the captives of Egypt † and the exiles of Cush, young and old alike, stripped and barefoot, with bared buttocks — to Egypt’s shame. 5 Those who made Cush their hope and Egypt their boast will be dismayed and ashamed. † 6 And the inhabitants of this coastland will say on that day, ‘Look, this is what has happened to those we relied on and fled to for help to rescue us from the king of Assyria! Now, how will we escape? ’ ”

20:2 Lit *off the sackcloth from your waist*

20:1 2Kg 18:17 **20:1** 1Sm 5:1 **20:2** Mt 3:3; 12:17 **20:2** 1Sm 19:24; Mc 1:8 **20:3** Is 8:18 **20:4** Is 19:4 **20:5** 2Kg 18:21; Is 30:3-5; 31:1; Ezk 29:6-7

20:3-4 Egypt and Cush were in close proximity geographically and are addressed in succession in Isaiah 19–20. Such worldly powers would prove weak and unreliable (see 7:7-9; 8:5-7; 31:1-3).

A JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

21 A pronouncement † concerning the desert by the sea: †

Like storms that pass over the Negev,
it comes from the desert, from the land of terror.
2 A troubling vision is declared to me: “The treacherous one acts treacherously, †
and the destroyer destroys.
Advance, Elam! Lay siege, you Medes!
I will put an end to all the groaning.”

3 Therefore I am † filled with anguish.
Pain grips me, like the pain of a woman in labor. †
I am too perplexed to hear,
too dismayed to see.
4 My heart staggers; horror terrifies me.

He has turned my last glimmer of hope †
into sheer terror. †
5 Prepare a table, † and spread out a carpet!
Eat and drink!
Rise up, you princes, and oil the shields!

6 For the Lord has said to me, “Go, post a lookout;
let him report what he sees.
7 When he sees riders — pairs of horsemen,
riders on donkeys,
riders on camels —
he must pay close attention.”
8 Then the lookout † reported, “Lord, I stand on the watchtower all day, †
and I stay at my post all night.
9 Look, riders come — horsemen in pairs.”
And he answered, saying,
“Babylon has fallen, † has fallen.
All the images of her gods
have been shattered on the ground.” †

10 My people who have been crushed on the threshing floor, †
I have declared to you
what I have heard from the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel.

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST DUMAH

11 A pronouncement † concerning Dumah: † †

One calls to me from Seir, †
“Watchman, what is left of the night?
Watchman, what is left of the night? ”
12 The watchman said, “Morning has come, and also night.
If you want to ask, ask!
Come back again.”

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST ARABIA

13 A pronouncement concerning Arabia: †

In the desert † brush you will camp for the night,
you caravans of Dedanites. †
14 Bring water for the thirsty.
The inhabitants of the land of Tema †
meet † the refugees with food.
15 For they have fled from swords, from the drawn sword,
from the bow that is strung,
and from the stress of battle.

16 For the Lord said this to me: "Within one year, † as a hired worker counts years, all the glory of Kedar † will be gone. 17 The remaining Kedarite archers will be few in number." For the LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.

21:3 Lit *my waist is*, or *my insides are* **21:4** Lit *my twilight* **21:8** DSS, Syr; MT reads *Then a lion* **21:11** Some Hb mss, LXX read *Edom* **21:13** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *desert at evening* **21:14** LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg read *meet* as a command

21:1 Is 13:1 **21:1** Is 13:20-22; 14:23; 21:9; Jr 51:41-44 **21:2** Is 24:16; 33:1 **21:3** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 16:11; 26:17-18; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **21:4** Dt 28:67 **21:5** Jr 51:39,57; Dn 5:1-4 **21:8** Hab 2:1 **21:9** 2Sm 1:19; Is 3:8; 14:12; Jr 51:8; Ezk 32:22; Rv 14:8; 18:2 **21:9** Is 46:1; Jr 50:2; 51:44 **21:10** Jr 51:33; Mc 4:13 **21:11** Is 21:1 **21:11** Gn 25:14 **21:11** Dt 2:8; Ezk 35:2 **21:13** Jr 25:23-24; 49:28 **21:13** Gn 10:7; Jr 25:23; 49:8; Ezk 27:15 **21:14** Gn 25:15; Jb 6:19 **21:16** Is 16:14 **21:16** Ps 120:5; Sg 1:5; Is 42:11; 60:7; Jr 2:10; Ezk 27:21

21:1-9 The identity of the **desert by the sea** (v. 1) is hinted at by its being attacked by **Medes** (v. 2; 13:17) and is made plain in verse 9. **Babylon** had already been the focus of 13:1–14:23, but this time the prophet himself is deeply disturbed by his **vision** (vv. 2-4,10). This is in keeping with the darker overall character of Isaiah 21–23 compared to Isaiah 13–20 (see 14:1-2,32; 16:1-5; 17:7-8; 18:7; 19:16-25). No hope had been expressed for Babylon in the earlier passage anyway (see 13:19-20; 14:22-23), and she and her idols will fall (v. 9; Rv 14:8).

21:11 Like 21:1 and 22:1, the subject of this oracle is also enigmatic. **Dumah** was one of the sons of Ishmael, as were "Kedar" and "Tema" (vv. 14,16; Gn 25:14-15; 1Ch 1:30). This suggests a close relation between this oracle and the following one. **Seir** is in Edom (Gn 32:3).

21:14-17 The mention of **refugees** (v. 14) recalls the distresses of Moab in 16:2-3. Like that of other peoples (10:18-19; 16:14), **the glory of Kedar** will come to an end (v. 16) and the "remnant" of their archers will be few (lit v. 17; see the notes on 10:20-22; 14:22,32).

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST JERUSALEM

22 A pronouncement † concerning the Valley of Vision: †

What's the matter with you?
Why have all of you gone up to the rooftops? †
2 The noisy city, the jubilant town, †
is filled with celebration.
Your dead did not die by the sword;
they were not killed in battle.
3 All your rulers have fled together, captured without a bow.
All your fugitives were captured together; they had fled far away.
4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me! Let me weep bitterly! †
Do not try to comfort me
about the destruction of my dear † people."
5 For the Lord GOD of Armies had a day of tumult, trampling, and confusion †
in the Valley of Vision —
people shouting † and crying to the mountains; 6 Elam took up a quiver with
chariots and horsemen, †
and Kir † uncovered the shield.
7 Your best valleys were full of chariots, and horsemen were positioned
at the city gates.
8 He removed the defenses of Judah.

On that day you looked to the weapons in the House of the Forest. † 9 You saw that there were many breaches in the walls of the city of David. † You collected water from the lower pool. † 10 You counted the houses of Jerusalem so that you could tear them down to fortify the wall. 11 You made a reservoir between the walls † for the water of the ancient pool, † but you did not look to the one who made it, or consider the one who created it long ago.

12 On that day the Lord GOD of Armies called for weeping, † for wailing,
for shaven heads, and for the wearing of sackcloth.
13 But look: joy and gladness, butchering of cattle, slaughtering of sheep and
goats, eating of meat, and drinking of wine — "Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die! " †
14 The LORD of Armies has directly revealed to me: †

“This iniquity will not be wiped out for you people as long as you live.” † †
The Lord GOD of Armies has spoken.

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST SHEBNA

15 The Lord GOD of Armies said: “Go to Shebna, † that steward who is in
charge of the palace, and say to him: 16 What are you doing here? Who
authorized you to carve out a tomb for yourself here, carving your tomb on the
height and cutting a resting place for yourself out of rock? † 17 Look, you
strong man! The LORD is about to shake you violently. He will take hold of you,
18 wind you up into a ball, and sling you into a wide land. † There you will die,
and there your glorious chariots will be — a disgrace to the house of your lord.
19 I will remove you from your office; you will be ousted from your position.
20 “On that day I will call for my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. † 21 I will
clothe him with your robe and tie your sash around him. I will hand your
authority over to him, and he will be like a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
and to the house of Judah. † 22 I will place the key † of the house of David on
his shoulder; what he opens, no one can close; what he closes, no one can
open. † 23 I will drive him, like a peg, into a firm place. He will be a throne of
honor for his father’s family. 24 They will hang on him all the glory of his
father’s family: the descendants and the offshoots — all the small vessels, from
bowls to every kind of jar. 25 On that day” — the declaration of the LORD of
Armies — “the peg that was driven into a firm place will give way, be cut off,
and fall, and the load on it will be destroyed.” Indeed, the LORD has spoken.

22:4 Lit *of the daughter of my* **22:5** Or *Vision — a tearing down of a wall*, or *Vision — Kir raged* ; Hb obscure **22:6** Lit *chariots of man* **22:14** Lit *for you until you die* **22:17-18** Hb obscure
22:1 Is 13:1 **22:1** Ps 125:2; Jr 21:13; Jl 3:12,14 **22:1** Is 15:3 **22:2** Is 23:7; 32:13 **22:4** Is 15:3; 33:7; Jr 9:1; Zch 12:10 **22:5** Is 10:6; 37:3; 63:3 **22:6** 2Kg 16:9; Am 1:5; 9:7 **22:8** 1Kg 7:2; 10:17 **22:9** Lk 2:4 **22:9** 2Kg 20:20; Neh 3:16 **22:11** 2Kg 25:4; Jr 39:4 **22:11** 2Kg 20:20; 2Ch 32:3-4 **22:12** Is 32:11; Jl 1:13; 2:17 **22:13** Is 56:12; 1Co 15:32 **22:14** Is 5:9 **22:14** 1Sm 3:14; Ezk 24:13 **22:15** 2Kg 18:18,26,37; Is 36:3,11,22; 37:2 **22:16** 2Sm 18:18; 2Ch 16:14; Mt 27:60 **22:20** 2Kg 18:18; Is 36:3,22; 37:2 **22:21** Gn 45:8; Jb 29:16 **22:22** Mt 16:19; Rv 3:7 **22:22** Jb 12:14

22:1 The reader is met with another enigmatic geographical title, **the Valley of Vision** (see 21:1,11). As was the case in 21:1-9 (see note), its identity is gradually unveiled – first as a **“city”** (v. 2) and then clearly as Jerusalem (vv. 8-10). A similar Hebrew word for “vision” was used in 21:2.

22:2-3 Like Moab and Arabia (16:2-4; 21:14), Jerusalem would also have its **fugitives** (v. 3), who were trying to escape the siege (vv. 6-11).

22:4 The prophet was distraught over the certain destruction of his people. He had also been in anguish

over the vision concerning Babylon (21:2-4).

22:6 Elam would also be involved in the downfall of Babylon (21:2).

22:8-14 On that day, Jerusalem **looked to** their own weaponry, water supplies, and fortifications (vv. 8-10) instead of **the one who created** (v. 11; 5:12; 17:7-8; 31:1). Compounded by brazen revelry instead of appropriate mourning and humility (vv. 12-13), their sin would never be atoned for "until [they] die" (lit v. 14). Direction revelation from the **LORD of Armies** in verse 14 parallels 21:10.

22:15-19 The judgment on **Shebna** (see 36:3,22; 37:2), at one point the **steward of the palace**, relates to the preceding judgment decreed against Jerusalem (vv. 1-14). His hewing of a **tomb on the height** was foolish (v. 16) because God would cast him into another land, where he would die far from it (vv. 17-18).

22:20-25 Shebna's successor, **Eliakim**, would enjoy great authority and power (vv. 20-24) before his fall. The Lord calling him **my servant** (v. 20), his **authority** related to **Jerusalem**, **Judah**, and **David** (vv. 21-23), his bearing of a heavy weight (v. 24), and even his being **cut off** (v. 25) echo passages about the Messiah (4:2-3; 9:6-7; 42:1; 53:8), who in contrast would successfully bear a heavy weight (53:4,11-12).

A PRONOUNCEMENT AGAINST TYRE

23 A pronouncement † concerning Tyre: †

Wail, ships of Tarshish, †
for your haven has been destroyed.
Word has reached them from the land of Cyprus. † †
2 Mourn, inhabitants of the coastland, you merchants of Sidon; †
your agents have crossed the sea †
3 over deep water.
Tyre's revenue was the grain from Shihor — the harvest of the Nile.
She was the merchant among the nations. †
4 Be ashamed, Sidon, the stronghold of the sea, for the sea has spoken:
"I have not been in labor or given birth.
I have not raised young men
or brought up young women."
5 When the news reaches Egypt, they will be in anguish over the news about Tyre. †
6 Cross over to Tarshish; wail, inhabitants of the coastland!
7 Is this your jubilant city, whose origin was in ancient times,
whose feet have taken her
to reside far away?
8 Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns,

whose traders are princes,
whose merchants are the honored ones of the earth?
9 The LORD of Armies planned it, to desecrate all its glorious beauty,
to disgrace all the honored ones of the earth.
10 Overflow † your land like the Nile, daughter of Tarshish; there is no longer anything to restrain you. †
11 He stretched out his hand over the sea; †
he made kingdoms tremble.
The LORD has commanded that the Canaanite fortresses be destroyed.
12 He said, "You will not celebrate anymore,
ravished young woman, daughter of Sidon.
Get up and cross over to Cyprus † — even there you will have no rest! "
13 Look at the land of the Chaldeans — a people who no longer exist.
Assyria destined it for desert creatures.
They set up their siege towers
and stripped its palaces.
They made it a ruin.
14 Wail, ships of Tarshish, because your fortress is destroyed!

15 On that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years — the life span of one king. At the end of seventy years, what the song says about the prostitute will happen to Tyre:

16 Pick up your lyre, stroll through the city,
you forgotten prostitute.
Play skillfully,
sing many a song
so that you will be remembered.

17 And at the end of the seventy years, † the LORD will restore Tyre † and she will go back into business, prostituting herself with all the kingdoms of the world throughout the earth. 18 But her profits and wages will be dedicated to the LORD. They will not be stored or saved, for her profit will go to those who live in the LORD's presence, to provide them with ample food and sacred clothing.
23:1 Hb *Kittim* **23:2** DSS; MT reads *Sidon, whom the seafarers have filled* **23:10** DSS, LXX read *Work*
23:10 Or *longer any harbor*

23:1 Is 13:1 **23:1** Jos 19:29; 1Kg 5:1; Jr 25:22; 47:4; Ezk 26:1–27:36; Jl 3:4-8; Am 1:9; Zch 9:2-4 **23:1** Gn 10:4; 1Kg 10:22 **23:1** Jr 2:10; Ezk 27:6; Ac 11:19 **23:2** Gn 10:15; Jos 19:28; Jr 25:22; 27:3; Ezk 27:8; 32:30; Jl 3:4; Zch 9:2 **23:3** Ezk 27:3-23 **23:5** Ac 21:7 **23:11** Ex 14:21; Is 14:26 **23:12** Is 23:1; Jr 2:10; Ezk 27:6; Ac 4:36; 11:19-20; 13:4; 15:39; 21:3,16; 27:4 **23:17** Jr 25:11,22 **23:17** Ac 21:7

23:1 Ships of Tarshish had been specifically named in 2:16 along with other proud and lofty things to be brought low by God (see also 60:9; 66:19). Tarshish and **Cyprus** (or, Kittim) share a common lineage (Gn 10:4; 1Ch 1:7). Numbers 24:24 predicted judgment on the latter long ago.

23:3-4 Tyre and **Sidon** were significant port cities that were important for seafaring trade (see also Ezk 27–28). As such, their influence reached the **nations**, including Egypt, Tarshish, and Cyprus (vv. 1,5-6,12).

23:8-9 The rhetorical question in verse 8 (lit "Who counseled this . . .?") paves the way for another affirmation of God's "counsel" (v. 9; see the notes on 9:6-7; 14:24-27; 19:12), which includes bringing down all **the honored ones of the earth** (see 2:11-17; 4:2).

23:17-18 Tyre's seventy-year period of humiliation is likened to "the life span of one king" (v. 15), after which she **will go back into business.** Her **wages**, however, **will be dedicated to the LORD** (see 18:7; 60:9).

THE EARTH JUDGED

24 Look, the LORD is stripping the earth bare and making it desolate.
He will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants: 2 people and priest alike,
servant and master,
female servant and mistress,
buyer and seller,
lender and borrower,
creditor and debtor.
3 The earth will be stripped completely bare and will be totally plundered,
for the LORD has spoken this message. †

4 The earth mourns and withers; the world wastes away and withers;
the exalted people of the earth waste away.
5 The earth is polluted by its inhabitants, †
for they have transgressed teachings,
overstepped decrees,
and broken the permanent covenant. †
6 Therefore a curse has consumed the earth, †
and its inhabitants have become guilty;
the earth's inhabitants have been burned, and only a few survive.
7 The new wine mourns; †

the vine withers.
All the carousers now groan.
8 The joyful tambourines † have ceased.
The noise of the jubilant has stopped.
The joyful lyre has ceased.
9 They no longer sing and drink wine; beer is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of chaos is shattered; †
every house is closed to entry. †
11 In the streets they cry † for wine.
All joy grows dark;
earth's rejoicing goes into exile.
12 Only desolation remains in the city; its gate has collapsed in ruins.
13 For this is how it will be on earth among the nations:
like a harvested olive tree,
like a gleaning after a grape harvest. †

14 They raise their voices, they sing out; they proclaim in the west
the majesty of the LORD.
15 Therefore, in the east honor the LORD!
In the coasts and islands of the west
honor the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.
16 From the ends of the earth we hear songs: The Splendor of the Righteous One. †

But I said, "I waste away! I waste away! †
Woe is me."
The treacherous act treacherously;
the treacherous deal very treacherously. †

17 Panic, pit, and trap await you †
who dwell on the earth. †
18 Whoever flees at the sound of panic will fall into a pit,
and whoever escapes from the pit
will be caught in a trap.

For the windows on high are opened, †
and the foundations of the earth are shaken. †
19 The earth is completely devastated; the earth is split open;
the earth is violently shaken.
20 The earth staggers like a drunkard †
and sways like a hut.
Earth's rebellion weighs it down,
and it falls, never to rise again.

21 On that day † the LORD will punish the army of the heights in the heights
and the kings of the ground on the ground.
22 They will be gathered together like prisoners in a pit. †
They will be confined to a dungeon; †
after many days they will be punished.
23 The moon will be put to shame and the sun disgraced,
because the LORD of Armies will reign as king on Mount Zion in Jerusalem,
and he will display his glory
in the presence of his elders. †

24:11 Lit *streets she cries* **24:16** Hb obscure
24:3 Is 1:20; 6:11 **24:5** Gn 3:17; 6:5,11-12; Nm 35:33; Is 9:17; 10:6 **24:5** Gn 9:16; 17:7; Ex 31:16; Lv 24:8; 2Sm 23:5; Ps 105:10; Is 55:3; 61:8; Jr 32:40; Ezk 16:60 **24:6** Jos 23:15; Is 34:5; 43:28; Zch 5:3-4 **24:7** Is 16:10; Jl 1:10,12 **24:8** Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34; 1Sm 18:6; Is 30:32; Jr 31:4 **24:10** Is 34:11 **24:10** Is 23:1 **24:13** Is 17:6 **24:16** Ex 9:27; Pr 21:12; Ac 3:14; 7:52; 22:14 **24:16** Is 21:2; 33:1; Jr 3:20; 5:11 **24:17** Am 5:19 **24:17-18** Jr 48:43-44 **24:18** Gn 7:11 **24:18** Ps 18:7; 46:2; Is 2:19,21; 13:13 **24:20** Is 19:14 **24:21** Is 27:12 **24:22** Rv 20:1-3 **24:22** Rv 20:2 **24:23** Is 2:2-4; 1Co 15:54

24:1-4 The sequential declarations of God's judgment against various nations in Isaiah 13–23 naturally leads into Isaiah 24–27 and its concern with **the earth** generally (e.g., vv. 1,3-6,11,13,17-20). In keeping with the preceding chapters, God will judge the whole earth, including its **exalted** ones (v. 4; 2:11-17).

24:5-6 The people of **the earth** are all **guilty** and under a **curse** because of their wrongdoings, including breaking **the permanent covenant** (see 55:3; 61:8). Their having **been burned** recalls God's judgment by fire (see 1:25,30-31; 2:11-17; 4:4; 5:24; 6:6,13; 7:4; 9:5,19; 10:17-19).

24:10 The use of the Hebrew word *tohu* (**shattered**) to characterize the desolation of a city associates it with the state of the world in Genesis 1:2.

24:14-16 In contrast with the bleak picture of judgment preceding and following, people from all over the world instead are depicted as worshiping God with songs.

24:18-20 The shaking of the earth during eschatological judgment was also mentioned in 13:13 (see also Jl 2:10; Hg 2:7,21-22). Like Zion in 1:8, the reeling earth is compared in verse 20 to an unstable **hut** (Hb *melunah*). The weight of **rebellion** is so great that it causes the earth to fall, **never to rise again** (v. 20).

24:21-23 Such judgment encompasses not only earthly power but also heavenly ones (**the army of the heights**). The broader theme of imprisonment and subsequent punishment **after many days** (v. 22) resembles Revelation 20:1-10. The flip side of this gloom is the glorious reign of God **on Mount Zion** (v. 23; 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 6:3; 11:1-10; 14:32; 16:5; 18:7), where he will outshine the sun and moon (see Rv 22:5).

SALVATION AND JUDGMENT ON THAT DAY

25 LORD, you are my God; †
I will exalt you. I will praise your name, for you have accomplished wonders,
plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.
2 For you have turned the city into a pile of rocks, †
a fortified city, into ruins;
the fortress of barbarians † is no longer a city; it will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore, a strong people will honor you.
The cities of violent nations will fear you.
4 For you have been a stronghold for the poor person, a stronghold for the needy † in his distress, a refuge from storms and a shade from heat. †
When the breath of the violent
is like a storm against a wall,
5 like heat in a dry land, you will subdue the uproar of barbarians.
As the shade of a cloud cools the heat of the day, so he will silence the song of the violent.

6 On this mountain, † †
the LORD of Armies will prepare for all the peoples a feast of choice meat, †
a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat, † fine vintage wine.
7 On this mountain he will destroy the burial shroud,
the shroud over all the peoples,
the sheet covering all the nations; †
8 he will destroy death forever. †
The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from every face †
and remove his people's disgrace †
from the whole earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

9 On that day it will be said, “Look, this is our God;
we have waited for him, and he has saved us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him.
Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.” †
10 For the LORD’s power will rest on this mountain.

But Moab † will be trampled in his place †
as straw is trampled in a dung pile.
11 He will spread out his arms in the middle of it, as a swimmer spreads out his arms to swim.
His pride will be brought low,
along with the trickery of his hands. †
12 The high-walled fortress will be brought down, thrown to the ground, to the dust. †

25:6 = Mount Zion **25:6** Lit *wine, fat full of marrow* **25:10** Or *trampled under him*
25:1 Ex 15:2; Ps 118:28; Is 7:13; 44:17 **25:2** Is 17:1; 26:5 **25:2** Col 3:11 **25:4** Mt 11:29 **25:4** Is 4:6; 32:2 **25:6** Is 2:2-4 **25:6** Is 24:23; Rv 19:9 **25:7** 2Co 3:15-16; Eph 4:18 **25:8** Hs 13:14; 1Co 15:54; Rv 21:4 **25:8** Is 30:19; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19; Rv 7:17; 21:4 **25:8** Ps 89:50-51; Is 51:7; 54:4; Mt 5:11; 1Pt 4:14 **25:9** Is 35:1-2,10; 66:10 **25:10** Nm 24:17; Is 15:1 **25:11** Is 2:10-12,15-17; 16:6,14 **25:10-12** Is 26:5-6

25:1-5 Thanksgiving to God from an individual, first-person perspective recalls 12:1-6. Both passages also reference the nations’ worship of him (v. 3; 12:4-5). Here the emphasis is on his judgment of the wicked (v. 2) and protection of the **poor** and **needy** (v. 4).

25:6-12 The repetition of **on this mountain** (vv. 6,7,10) focuses the reader’s attention on Mount Zion (2:2-4; 4:5-6; 11:9; 14:32; 18:7; 24:23). There God will **prepare for all the peoples a feast** (v. 6; 55:1-2), **destroy death forever**, and **wipe away** every tear (vv. 7-8; Rv 21:4). In keeping with the emphasis of Isaiah 24–27, the nations are again the focus (see the notes on 24:1-4,14-16; 25:1-5). Though his people must wait, God will prove true to his promises of salvation (v. 9). **Moab** is cited as a contrasting example of the proud who will be humiliated and punished (vv. 10-12; see 16:6).

THE SONG OF JUDAH

26 On that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:
We have a strong city.
Salvation is established as walls and ramparts. †
2 Open the gates so a righteous nation can come in — one that remains faithful.
3 You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, †
for it is trusting in you.

4 Trust in the LORD forever, because in the LORD, the LORD himself, is an everlasting rock! †

5 For he has humbled those who live in lofty places — an inaccessible city. †
He brings it down; he brings it down to the ground; he throws it to the dust.
6 Feet trample it, the feet of the humble,
the steps of the poor.

GOD'S PEOPLE VINDICATED

7 The path of the righteous is level; †
you clear a straight path for the righteous.
8 Yes, LORD, we wait for you in the path of your judgments.
Our desire is for your name and renown. †

9 I long for you in the night; †
yes, my spirit within me diligently seeks you, for when your judgments are in the land,
the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.
10 But if the wicked man is shown favor, he does not learn righteousness.
In a righteous land he acts unjustly
and does not see the majesty of the LORD.

11 LORD, your hand is lifted up to take action, but they do not see it.
Let them see your zeal for your people
and be put to shame.
Let fire consume your adversaries.
12 LORD, you will establish peace for us, for you have also done all our work for us.

13 LORD our God, lords other than you have owned † us, but we remember your name alone. †

14 The dead do not live; departed spirits do not rise up.
Indeed, you have punished and destroyed them; you have wiped out all memory of them. †

15 You have added to the nation, LORD. †
You have added to the nation; you are honored.

You have expanded all the borders of the land. †
16 LORD, they went to you in their distress; †
they poured out whispered prayers
because your discipline fell on them. †
17 As a pregnant woman about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pains, †
so we were before you, LORD.
18 We became pregnant, we writhed in pain; we gave birth to wind.
We have won no victories on earth,
and the earth's inhabitants have not fallen.

19 Your dead will live; their bodies † will rise. †
Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust!
For you will be covered with the morning dew, †
and the earth will bring out the departed spirits.

20 Go, my people, enter your rooms and close your doors behind you.
Hide for a little while until the wrath has passed. †
21 For look, the LORD is coming from his place †
to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity. †
The earth will reveal the blood shed on it and will no longer conceal her slain.

26:13 Or *married* **26:16** Hb obscure **26:19** Lit *live; my body they* **26:19** Lit *For your dew is a dew of lights* **26:1** Is 60:18 **26:3** Is 26:12; 27:5; 57:19; 66:12 **26:4** Ps 73:26; Is 17:10; 30:29; 44:8 **26:5-6** Is 25:10-12 **26:7** Ps 27:11 **26:8** Ex 3:15 **26:9** Ps 77:2; 84:2; 119:20,81 **26:13** Jn 10:25 **26:14** Jb 18:17; Ps 9:6 **26:15** Is 9:3 **26:15** Is 33:17; 54:2-3 **26:16** Is 37:3; Hs 5:15 **26:17** Is 13:8 **26:19** Is 25:8; Ezk 37:1-14; Dn 12:2; Hs 13:14; Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22; Jn 8:51 **26:20** Is 10:5,25; 13:5; 34:2; 66:14 **26:21** Mc 1:3 **26:21** Is 13:11

26:1-2 The singing of **this song** in **Judah** (v. 1) parallels the music heard from the ends of the earth in 24:16 and recalls the song of salvation in Exodus 15. The individual's thanksgiving has become that of God's people as a whole (see also 25:9). The **strong city** here contrasts with the destroyed cities of 24:10-13 and 25:2 (see also 24:6,17). No ordinary city has **salvation** as its **walls and ramparts** (v. 1; 60:18). The nation that may enter is a **righteous nation** (v. 2; 35:8), certainly not the "sinful nation" with which this book began (1:4). Moreover, this nation may be taken to include not only humble Israelites but also the saved from every nation (19:25; 66:8; 1Pt 2:9).

26:3-4 The call to trust in God is based on the certainty of his plans and future salvation. Those who do so will enjoy **peace** (see v. 12; 9:6-7).

26:5-6 As in 25:10-12, the humiliation of the proud and the downfall of strongholds contrast with the salvation of those who humbly trust in God.

26:8-9 In contrast with verses 1-6, the perspective here is of waiting and longing for [God's] **judgments**

(see vv. 10-11; 62:6-7).

26:10-11 One of the marks of the **wicked man** is spiritual blindness. He sees neither the **majesty** nor the **hand** of God (see 5:12; 6:9-10).

26:17-18 Israel was supposed to be a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation" (Ex 19:6), whose obedience to God would bring him glory before the world (49:3; Dt 4:6). Their failure to bring such blessing (1:4; 5:2,4,7; 42:18-22) made them like **a pregnant woman** who **gave birth to wind** (33:11).

26:19 In contrast with **the dead** in verse 14, God's **dead will live.** Such resurrection accords with the destruction of death foretold in 25:7-8. Psalm 133:3 also associates **dew** (Hb *tal*) with eternal life.

LEVIATHAN SLAIN

27 On that day the LORD with his relentless, large, strong sword will bring judgment on Leviathan, † the fleeing serpent — Leviathan, the twisting serpent. He will slay the monster that is in the sea. †

THE LORD'S VINEYARD

2 On that day sing about a desirable vineyard: †

3 I am the LORD, who watches over it to water it regularly.
So that no one disturbs it,
I watch over it night and day.

4 I am not angry.

If only there were thorns and briers † for me to battle, I would trample them
and burn them to the ground.

5 Or let it take hold of my strength; let it make peace with me — make peace with me.

6 In days to come, Jacob will take root. †

Israel will blossom and bloom †
and fill the whole world with fruit.

7 Did the LORD strike Israel as he struck the one who struck Israel? †
Was Israel killed like those killed by the LORD?

8 You disputed with Israel by banishing and driving her away. †
He removed her with his severe storm
on the day of the east wind.

9 Therefore Jacob's iniquity † will be atoned for in this way, and the result of the removal of his sin will be this: †

when he makes all the altar stones
like crushed bits of chalk,
no Asherah poles or incense altars will remain standing.
10 For the fortified city will be desolate, pastures deserted and abandoned like a wilderness.
Calves will graze there,
and there they will spread out and strip its branches.
11 When its branches dry out, they will be broken off.
Women will come and make fires with them, for they are not a people with understanding. †
Therefore their Maker † will not have compassion on them, and their Creator will not be gracious to them.

12 On that day †
the LORD will thresh grain from the Euphrates River as far as the Wadi of Egypt, †
and you Israelites will be gathered one by one.
13 On that day a great trumpet † will be blown, and those lost in the land of Assyria will come, as well as those dispersed in the land of Egypt; and they will worship the LORD at Jerusalem on the holy mountain.

27:8 Hb obscure
27:1 Jb 3:8; 41:1,34; Ps 74:14; 104:26 **27:1** Is 51:9 **27:2** Ps 80:8; Is 5:7; Jr 2:21 **27:4** 2Sm 23:6; Is 10:17 **27:6** Is 37:31 **27:6** Is 35:1-2; Hs 14:5-6 **27:7** Is 10:12,17; 30:31-33; 31:8-9; 37:36-38 **27:9** Is 13:11 **27:9** Rm 11:27 **27:11** Ps 32:9; 49:20; Jr 4:22 **27:11** Jb 4:17; Ps 95:6; Pr 14:31; Is 17:7; 29:16; 44:2; 45:9,11; 51:13; 54:5; Hs 8:14 **27:12** Is 3:18; 7:18,20; 11:11; 24:21; Zch 12:8 **27:12** Gn 15:18 **27:13** Lv 25:9; 1Ch 15:24; Mt 24:31; 1Th 4:16; Rv 11:15

27:1 The eschatological thrust of Isaiah 24–27 (see notes) continues with the predicted defeat of **Leviathan.** Its identity as a **serpent** recalls the infamous creature of Genesis 3:1. In line with the foretold judgment of evil spiritual powers in 24:21-23 (see note), the defeat of Satan is likely in view here, as in Genesis 3:15. For connections between Satan, Leviathan, and sea monsters, see the notes on Jb 3:8; 26:12-13; 41:1-11.

27:2-6 The vineyard metaphor had been used of rebellious Israel in 5:1-7. In contrast, God's **vineyard** in the future would no longer be subject to his judgment or being overrun by **thorns and briers** (vv. 2-4). Rather, his people **will take root** and bear much **fruit** (see 11:1; 37:31).

27:9-11 The purification process would involve destruction of the land and exile (vv. 9-10; 1:25-26). Israel's core problem is again described as foolishness, for they are **not a people with understanding** (v. 11; see 1:3; 6:9-10).

27:12-13 As in 11:15-16, the future salvation and regathering of God's people is expressed using the terms

river, **Egypt**, and **Assyria** (see also 19:5,23-25).

WOE TO SAMARIA

28 Woe to the majestic crown of Ephraim's drunkards, †
and to the fading flower of its beautiful splendor, which is on the summit above the rich valley.
Woe to those overcome with wine.
2 Look, the Lord has a strong and mighty one † — like a devastating hail storm,
like a storm with strong flooding water.
He will bring it across the land with his hand.
3 The majestic crown of Ephraim's drunkards will be trampled underfoot.
4 The fading flower of his beautiful splendor, which is on the summit above the rich valley, will be like a ripe fig before the summer harvest. †
Whoever sees it will swallow it
while it is still in his hand.
5 On that day the LORD of Armies will become a crown of beauty and a diadem of splendor †
to the remnant of his people,
6 a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment, †
and strength
to those who repel attacks at the city gate.

7 Even these stagger because of wine and stumble under the influence of beer:
priest and prophet stagger because of beer, they are confused by wine. †
They stumble because of beer,
they are muddled in their visions,
they stumble in their judgments.
8 Indeed, all their tables are covered with vomit; there is no place without a stench.
9 Who is he trying to teach?
Who is he trying to instruct?
Infants † just weaned from milk?
Babies † removed from the breast?
10 "Law after law, law after law, line after line, line after line,

a little here, a little there." †
11 For he will speak to this people with stammering speech
and in a foreign language. †
12 He had said to them: "This is the place of rest;
let the weary rest; †
this is the place of repose."
But they would not listen.

13 The word of the LORD will come to them: "Law after law, law after law,
line after line, line after line,
a little here, a little there,"
so they go stumbling backward,
to be broken, trapped, and captured. †

A DEAL WITH DEATH

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, † you scoffers †
who rule this people in Jerusalem.
15 For you said, "We have made a covenant with Death, and we have an agreement with Sheol;
when the overwhelming catastrophe † passes through, †
it will not touch us,
because we have made falsehood our refuge and have hidden behind treachery."
16 Therefore the Lord GOD said: "Look, I have laid a stone † in Zion, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; †
the one who believes will be unshakable. † †
17 And I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the mason's level." †
Hail will sweep away the false refuge,
and water will flood your hiding place.
18 Your covenant with Death will be dissolved, and your agreement with Sheol will not last.
When the overwhelming catastrophe passes through, you will be trampled.

19 Every time it passes through, it will carry you away;
it will pass through every morning —
every day and every night.
Only terror † will cause you to understand the message. †
20 Indeed, the bed is too short to stretch out on, and its cover too small to wrap up in.
21 For the LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim. †
He will rise in wrath, as at the Valley of Gibeon, †
to do his work, his unexpected work,
and to perform his task, his unfamiliar task.
22 So now, do not scoff, or your shackles will become stronger.
Indeed, I have heard from the Lord GOD of Armies a decree of destruction for the whole land. †

GOD'S WONDERFUL ADVICE

23 Listen and hear my voice.
Pay attention and hear what I say.
24 Does the plowman plow every day to plant seed?
Does he continuously break up and cultivate the soil?
25 When he has leveled its surface, does he not then scatter black cumin and sow cumin?
He plants wheat in rows and barley in plots, with spelt as their border.
26 His God teaches him order; he instructs him.
27 Certainly black cumin is not threshed with a threshing board,
and a cart wheel is not rolled over the cumin.
But black cumin is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod.
28 Bread grain is crushed, but is not threshed endlessly.
Though the wheel of the farmer's cart rumbles, his horses do not crush it.
29 This also comes from the LORD of Armies.
He gives wondrous advice;
he gives great wisdom. †

28:9 Lit *Those* **28:9** Lit *Those* **28:10** Hb obscure, also in v. 13 **28:15** Or *whip* ; Hb obscure, also in v. 18 **28:16** Lit *will not hurry* **28:19** Or *The understanding of the message will cause sheer terror*
28:1 Is 28:7; Hs 7:5 **28:2** Is 8:7; 40:10 **28:4** Hs 9:10; Mc 7:1; Nah 3:12 **28:5** Is 62:3 **28:6** 1Kg 3:28; Is 11:2;

32:1,15-16; Jn 5:30 **28:7** Is 5:11,22; 9:15; 22:13; 56:12; Hs 4:11 **28:11-12** Is 5:26-29; 33:19; 1Co 14:21 **28:12** Is 11:10; 30:15; 32:17-18; Jr 6:16; Mt 11:28-29 **28:13** Is 8:15; Mt 21:44 **28:14** Is 1:10; 39:5,8; 66:5 **28:14** Is 29:20 **28:15** Is 8:7-8 **28:16** Is 8:14; 26:4 **28:16** Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11; 1Co 3:11; Eph 2:20 **28:16** Rm 9:33; 1Pt 2:6 **28:17** 2Kg 21:13; Is 5:16; 30:18; 61:8; Am 7:7-9 **28:19** 2Ch 29:8; Jr 15:4; 24:9; 29:18 **28:21** 2Sm 5:20; 1Ch 14:11 **28:21** Jos 10:10,12; 2Sm 5:25; 1Ch 14:16 **28:22** Is 10:22-23; Rm 9:27-28 **28:29** Is 9:6; Jr 32:19

28:1-7 In Isaiah 28–35, the focus shifts back to Israel, as it had been in Isaiah 1–12. Israel's pride and beauty is again contrasted with God's superior majesty and glory (vv. 1-5; see 3:16-4:2). The metaphor of **flooding water** (v. 2) had been used of Assyria in 8:7-8. Also mentioned again are Israel's love of alcohol (vv. 1,7; 5:11,22; 22:13) and God's justice (v. 6; 4:4).

28:9-13 It is natural to take this challenge in verse 9 as spoken by the drunken leaders in verses 7-8. Fittingly, their complaint about the prophetic message in verses 10 would be turned against them through the unintelligible **speech** of **foreign** enemies (vv. 11,13; 33:19). The four verbs at the end of verses 13 (i.e., stumble, break, trap, and capture) are repeated from 8:15, the context of which also concerns Israel's wide-scale rebellion against God (8:11-12).

28:14-19 Although they took **refuge** in a **falsehood**, the rulers in Jerusalem thought that they could escape death (vv. 14-15). They had rejected God's word (v. 12), and God would ensure that justice be served (vv. 17-19; see v. 2). The wise trust in the **precious cornerstone** God laid **in Zion** (v. 16; see the note on 30:15-18). According to 1 Peter 2:6-8, this "stone" is the Messiah and is identical to the "stone" of stumbling in 8:14 (see also Ps 118:22). Verses 9-13 (see note) have even more connections to Isaiah 8.

WOE TO JERUSALEM

29 Woe to Ariel, † Ariel, the city where David camped! †
Continue year after year;
let the festivals recur.
2 I will oppress Ariel, and there will be mourning and crying,
and she will be to me like an Ariel.
3 I will camp in a circle around you; I will besiege you with earth ramps,
and I will set up my siege towers against you.
4 You will be brought down; you will speak from the ground,
and your words will come from low in the dust.
Your voice will be like that of a spirit from the ground; †
your speech will whisper from the dust.

5 Your many foes † will be like fine dust, †
and many of the ruthless, like blowing chaff.
Then suddenly, in an instant, †
6 you will be punished by the LORD of Armies with thunder, earthquake,
and loud noise, storm, tempest, and a flame of consuming fire. †

7 All the many nations †
going out to battle against Ariel —
all the attackers, the siege works against her, and those who oppress her — will
then be like a dream, a vision in the night. †
8 It will be like a hungry one who dreams he is eating, then wakes and is
still hungry;
and like a thirsty one who dreams he is drinking, then wakes and is still thirsty,
longing for water.
So it will be for all the many nations
who go to battle against Mount Zion.

9 Stop and be astonished; blind yourselves and be blind!
They are drunk, † but not with wine; they stagger, † but not with beer. †
10 For the LORD has poured out on you an overwhelming urge to † sleep; †
he has shut your eyes (the prophets)
and covered your heads (the seers). †

11 For you the entire vision will be like the words of a sealed document. † If it is given to one who can read and he is asked to read it, † he will say, “I can’t read it, because it is sealed.” 12 And if the document is given to one who cannot read and he is asked to read it, † he will say, “I can’t read.”
13 The Lord said:

These people approach me with their speeches †
to honor me with lip-service † — yet their hearts are far from me,
and human rules direct their worship of me. †
14 Therefore, I will again confound these people with wonder after wonder. †
The wisdom of their wise will vanish, †
and the perception of their perceptive will be hidden.

15 Woe to those who go to great lengths to hide their plans from the LORD. †
They do their works in the dark,
and say, “Who sees us? Who knows us? ” †

16 You have turned things around, as if the potter were the same as the clay.
How can what is made say about its maker, “He didn’t make me”? †
How can what is formed
say about the one who formed it,
“He doesn’t understand what he’s doing”?

17 Isn’t it true that in just a little while Lebanon will become an orchard,
and the orchard will seem like a forest? †
18 On that day the deaf will hear †
the words of a document,
and out of a deep darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.
19 The humble will have joy after joy in the LORD, and the poor people will rejoice †
in the Holy One of Israel. †
20 For the ruthless one will vanish, the scorner will disappear, †
and all those who lie in wait with evil intent will be killed — 21 those who, with their speech, accuse a person of wrongdoing,
who set a trap for the one mediating at the city gate and without cause deprive the righteous of justice. †

22 Therefore, the LORD who redeemed Abraham † says this about the house of Jacob:

Jacob will no longer be ashamed,
and his face will no longer be pale.
23 For when he sees his children, the work of my hands within his nation,
they will honor my name,
they will honor the Holy One of Jacob †
and stand in awe of the God of Israel. †
24 Those who are confused will gain understanding, and those who grumble will accept instruction.

29:1 Or *Altar Hearth*, or *Lion of God* ; Hb obscure, also in v. 2 **29:5** Lit *foreigners* **29:9** LXX, Tg, Vg read *Be drunk* **29:9** Tg, Vg read *wine; stagger* **29:10** Lit *you a spirit of* **29:11** Lit *If one gives it to one who*

knows the document, saying, "Read this, please" **29:12** Lit *who does not know the document, saying, "Read this, please"* **29:13** Lit *their mouth and honor me with its lips* **29:13** Lit *their fearing of me is a taught command of men*
29:1 2Sm 5:9 **29:4** Is 8:19 **29:5** Is 17:13; 41:15-16 **29:5** Is 17:14; 30:13; 47:11; 1Th 5:3 **29:6** Ex 9:23; 19:16,19; 20:18; 1Sm 2:10; 12:18; Jb 40:9; Ps 77:18; Zch 14:5; Rv 4:5; 11:13 **29:7** Mc 4:11-12; Zch 12:9 **29:7** Jb 20:8; Ps 73:20; Is 17:14 **29:9** Lk 1:15 **29:10** Ps 69:23; Is 6:9-10; Mc 3:6 **29:10** Rm 11:8 **29:11** Is 8:16; Dn 12:4,9; Mt 13:11; Rv 5:1 **29:13** Ezk 33:31; Mt 15:8-9; Mk 7:6-7 **29:14** Is 6:9-10; 28:21; 65:7; Hab 1:5 **29:14** Is 44:25; Jr 8:9; 49:7; 1Co 1:19 **29:15** Ps 10:11,13; Is 28:15; 30:1 **29:15** Jb 22:13; Is 57:12; Ezk 8:12 **29:16** Rm 9:20 **29:17** Ps 84:6; 107:33,35; Is 32:15 **29:18** Is 35:5; 42:18-19; 43:8; Mt 11:5; Mk 7:37 **29:19** Ps 69:32; Is 49:13 **29:19** Is 1:4 **29:20** Is 28:14 **29:21** Is 32:7; Am 5:10,12 **29:22** Is 41:8; 51:2; 63:16 **29:23** 2Sm 23:1; Ps 24:6; 76:6; 114:7; Is 2:3 **29:23** Is 5:16; 8:13

29:1-4 This **city where David camped** is Jerusalem (v. 1), which will be brought low by God (v. 4; 2:9-17; 27:9-11).

29:5-8 The deliverance of Israel from enemy nations parallels 8:9-10. Whereas God delivers in the present passage (v. 6), in 8:10 it is Immanuel.

29:9-12 Israel's spiritual blindness involved both its own willful choice and divine judgment (vv. 9-10; see the note on Ex 7:3-5). The result was that God's word to them was ineffective, like a document that could not be read either because it was **sealed** or given to an illiterate person to **read** (vv. 11-12). The strong suggestion is that they would not be able to understand their own Scriptures (see Jn 5:45-47).

29:13-14 One of Israel's problems was empty religion (see 1:11-15; 58:2-5), which **honor** [God] **with lip-service (**6:5) while the people's **hearts** remained insincere. Having abandoned God's word (vv. 11-12), they instead adhered to **human rules.** Their so-called **wisdom** would perish (see 5:21), and God would multiply **wonder after wonder** (28:29; 55:8-9).

29:17-24 Despite the situation described in verses 9-16, Israel will be restored **in just a little while** (v. 17). In contrast with the dismal situation just described, **the deaf will hear the words of a document** (v. 18; see vv. 11-12), **out of a deep darkness** blind eyes **will see** (v. 18; see vv. 9,15), and **those who are confused will gain understanding** (v. 24; see vv. 14-16).

CONDEMNATION OF THE EGYPTIAN ALLIANCE

30 Woe to the rebellious children! †
This is the LORD's declaration.

They carry out a plan, † but not mine; they make an alliance,
but against my will,
piling sin on top of sin.

2 Without asking my advice they set out to go down to Egypt †
in order to seek shelter under Pharaoh's protection and take refuge
in Egypt's shadow. †

3 But Pharaoh's protection will become your shame, and refuge
in Egypt's shadow your humiliation. †

4 For though his † princes are at Zoan †
and his messengers reach as far as Hanes, 5 everyone will be ashamed because of a people who can't help.
They are of no benefit, they are no help; they are good for nothing but shame and disgrace. †

6 A pronouncement † concerning the animals of the Negev: †

Through a land of trouble and distress,
of lioness and lion,
of viper and flying serpent, †
they carry their wealth on the backs of donkeys and their treasures on the humps of camels, to a people who will not help them.
7 Egypt's help is completely worthless; therefore, I call her:
Rahab Who Just Sits. †

8 Go now, write it on a tablet in their presence and inscribe it on a scroll;
it will be for the future,
forever and ever.
9 They are a rebellious people, deceptive children, †
children who do not want to listen to the LORD's instruction.
10 They say to the seers, "Do not see,"
and to the prophets,
"Do not prophesy the truth to us.
Tell us flattering things. †
Prophesy illusions.
11 Get out of the way!
Leave the pathway.
Rid us of the Holy One of Israel." †
12 Therefore the Holy One of Israel says: "Because you have rejected this message
and have trusted in oppression and deceit, and have depended on them,
13 this iniquity † of yours will be like a crumbling gap,
a bulge in a high wall
whose collapse will come in an instant — suddenly!

14 Its collapse will be like the shattering of a potter's jar, † crushed to pieces, so
that not even a fragment of pottery
will be found among its shattered remains — no fragment large enough
to take fire from a hearth or scoop water from a cistern."
15 For the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, has said: "You will be delivered
by returning and resting; your strength will lie in quiet confidence.
But you are not willing."
16 You say, "No!
We will escape on horses" —
therefore you will escape! —
and, "We will ride on fast horses" —
but those who pursue you will be faster. †
17 One thousand will flee at the threat of one, †
at the threat of five you will flee,
until you remain
like a solitary pole on a mountaintop
or a banner on a hill.

THE LORD'S MERCY TO ISRAEL

18 Therefore the LORD is waiting to show you mercy, and is rising up
to show you compassion, †
for the LORD is a just God.
All who wait patiently for him are happy.

19 For people will live on Zion in Jerusalem. You will never weep again; he will show favor to you at the sound of your outcry; as soon as he hears, he will answer you. 20 The Lord will give you meager bread and water during oppression, † but your Teacher † will not hide any longer. Your eyes will see your Teacher, 21 and whenever you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear this command behind you: "This is the way. Walk in it." † 22 Then you will defile your silver-plated idols and your gold-plated images. You will throw them away like menstrual cloths, and call them filth.
23 Then he will send rain for your seed that you have sown in the ground, and the food, the produce of the ground, will be rich and plentiful. On that day your

cattle will graze in open pastures. † 24 The oxen and donkeys that work the ground will eat salted fodder scattered with winnowing shovel † and fork.
25 Streams flowing with water will be on every high mountain and every raised hill on the day of great slaughter when the towers fall. 26 The moonlight will be as bright as the sunlight, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter † — like the light of seven days — on the day † that the LORD bandages his people's injuries and heals the wounds he inflicted. †

ANNIHILATION OF THE ASSYRIANS

27 Look there! The LORD † is coming from far away, his anger burning and heavy with smoke. †
His lips are full of fury,
and his tongue is like a consuming fire.
28 His breath is like an overflowing torrent †
that rises to the neck. †
He comes to sift the nations in a sieve of destruction and to put a bridle on the jaws of the peoples to lead them astray. †
29 Your singing will be like that on the night of a holy festival,
and your heart will rejoice
like one who walks to the music of a flute, going up to the mountain of the LORD, to the Rock of Israel. †
30 And the LORD will make the splendor of his voice heard and reveal his arm † striking in angry wrath and a flame of consuming fire,
in driving rain, a torrent, and hailstones.
31 Assyria will be shattered by the voice of the LORD.
He will strike with a rod.
32 And every stroke of the appointed † staff that the LORD brings down on him will be to the sound of tambourines and lyres; he will fight against him with brandished weapons.
33 Indeed! Topheth has been ready †
for the king for a long time.
Its funeral pyre is deep and wide,

with plenty of fire and wood.
The breath of the LORD, † like a torrent of burning sulfur, kindles it.

30:4 Or *Judah's* **30:6** Or *Southland* **30:20** Or *teachers* **30:27** Or *Look, the name of the Lord* **30:27** Hb obscure **30:32** Some Hb mss read *punishing*
30:1 Dt 21:18-21; Is 1:2,23; 30:9; 65:2 **30:1** Is 29:15 **30:2** Is 31:1; Jr 43:7 **30:2** Is 36:9 **30:3** Is 20:5-6; 36:6; Jr 42:18,22 **30:4** Is 19:11 **30:5** Jr 2:36 **30:6** Is 13:1 **30:6** Dt 8:15 **30:7** Ps 87:4; 89:10; Is 51:9; Ezk 29:3,7 **30:9** Is 30:1 **30:10** 1Kg 22:8,13; Jr 6:14; 23:17,26; Ezk 13:8-16; Rm 16:18; 2Tm 4:3-4 **30:11** Is 1:4; 41:14-20; 43:14; 45:11; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9,14 **30:13** Is 13:11 **30:14** Ps 2:9; Jr 19:10-11 **30:16** Is 31:1,3 **30:17** Lv 26:36; Dt 28:25; 32:30; Jos 23:10; Pr 28:1 **30:18** 2Pt 3:9 **30:20** 1Kg 22:27; Ps 80:5 **30:21** Is 35:8-9 **30:23** Ps 144:13; Is 32:20; Hs 4:16 **30:24** Mt 3:12 **30:26** Is 24:23; 60:19-20; Rv 21:23; 22:5 **30:26** Mt 25:13 **30:26** Is 33:24; Jr 33:6; Hs 6:1-2 **30:28** Is 11:4; 30:33; 2Th 2:8 **30:28** Is 8:8 **30:28** 2Kg 19:28; Is 37:29 **30:29** Is 8:14; 26:4 **30:30** Ex 6:6; Dt 4:34; Jb 40:9; Is 53:1; Jr 32:17; Ezk 20:33 **30:33** 2Kg 23:10; Jr 7:31; 19:6 **30:33** Is 40:7

30:1-3 Much like the opening lines of the book (1:2,5), here the Israelites are called **rebellious children**. The particular sin in view is reliance on **Egypt** (20:5). Such an idea did not originate from God and would prove futile (see the notes on 19:16-22; 31:1-3). The thought here parallels 28:15-17, which confronts Israel's leaders for taking refuge in lies.

30:9-11 Israel's characterizations as **a rebellious people** and **deceptive children** again echo the opening verses of Isaiah (1:2-4; see previous note). Their unwillingness **to listen to the LORD's instruction** (v. 9; v. 15; 1:19-20; 5:24) is reflected in their rejection of prophetic truth and of God himself (vv. 10-11; 1:4; 2Tm 4:3-4).

30:15-18 Confidence in God is again contrasted with reliance on human means. The former manifests itself in quietness and patient waiting (vv. 15,18), and the latter in fear and hasty flight (vv. 16-17; Dt 32:30). This same theme is found in other passages in Isaiah (7:4-9; 28:16; 52:12).

30:19-22 Those "who wait patiently" for God will be blessed (v. 18; 40:31)—precisely because he will deliver them. A **people** will dwell **on Zion**, and they will **weep** no more (v. 19; 25:8; 28:16). In contrast with 1:15 and 8:17, God will hear their prayers and no longer hide himself. Instead of being blind and deaf (6:9), their **eyes will see** their **teacher** and their **ears will hear** his voice (vv. 20-21; 2:3). **Idols** will be thrown away like filthy garbage (v. 22; 2:20).

30:26 This day of restoration is described as one of "healing," in keeping with this theme (1:5-6; 3:7; 6:10). Although God had struck his people severely (5:25; 9:12; 27:7), he would bind them up.

30:27-33 The Lord's fierce judgment of the wicked in most of this passage contrasts sharply with the joyful songs of his people (see vv. 29,32; 24:14-16a; 2Ch 20:21-23; see "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*). His **lips**, **tongue** (v. 27), and **breath** (v. 33) bring forth his wrath, similar to 11:4. Fire, flood, and storm (vv. 27-28,30,33) have appeared in other passages expressing the wrath of God (e.g., 4:4-6; 25:4-5; 28:2). The representative destruction of mighty **Assyria** (v. 31) is coupled with the judgment of nations (v. 28) as in 14:24-27 (see note).

THE LORD, THE ONLY HELP

31 Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help †
and who depend on horses!
They trust in the abundance of chariots

and in the large number of horsemen. †
They do not look † to the Holy One of Israel and they do not seek the LORD.
2 But he also is wise and brings disaster. †
He does not go back on what he says; †
he will rise up against the house of the wicked and against the allies of evildoers.
3 Egyptians are men, not God; their horses are flesh, not spirit.
When the LORD raises his hand to strike, the helper will stumble
and the one who is helped will fall;
both will perish together.

4 For this is what the LORD said to me:

As a lion or young lion growls over its prey †
when a band of shepherds is called out against it, and is not terrified by their shouting
or subdued by their noise,
so the LORD of Armies will come down to fight on Mount Zion
and on its hill. †

5 Like hovering birds, so the LORD of Armies will protect Jerusalem † — by protecting it, he will rescue it,
by sparing it, he will deliver it.

6 Return to the one the Israelites have greatly rebelled against. † 7 For on that day, every one of you will reject the silver and gold idols that your own hands have sinfully made. †

8 Then Assyria will fall, but not by human sword;
a sword will devour him,
but not one made by man. †
He will flee from the sword;
his young men will be put to forced labor. †
9 His rock † will pass away because of fear, †
and his officers will be afraid because of the signal flag. †

This is the LORD's declaration — whose fire is in Zion and whose furnace is in Jerusalem. †

31:9 Perhaps the Assyrian king

31:1 Is 30:2,7; 36:6 **31:1** Dt 17:16; Ps 20:7; 33:17; Is 2:7; 30:16; 36:9 **31:1** Is 9:13; 17:7-8; Dn 9:13; Am 5:4-8 **31:2** Is 45:7 **31:2** Nm 23:19; Is 22:14; Jr 44:29 **31:4** Nm 24:9; Hs 11:10; Am 3:8 **31:4** Is 42:13; Zch 12:8 **31:5** Dt 32:11; Ps 91:4 **31:6** Is 1:5; 59:13 **31:7** Is 2:20; 30:22 **31:8** Is 37:7,36-38 **31:8** Gn 49:15; Is 14:2 **31:9** Dt 32:31,37 **31:9** Is 5:26; 13:2; Jr 4:6,21; 51:12,27 **31:9** Lv 10:2; Is 10:17; 30:33

31:1-3 Judah's reliance on **Egypt** was futile (see the note on 30:1-3) because the Egyptians and their military were nothing compared to the **Holy One of Israel** (v. 1), who alone is God (v. 3). These were just **men** and **flesh, not spirit** (v. 3; li 30:1). Because Judah did not **look to** God (v. 1; 9:13; 17:7), the nation would **fall** and **perish** (v. 3; 8:15; 28:13).

31:4-9 The Lord will defend **Zion** and **Jerusalem** (vv. 4-5; 29:8) from **Assyria**, and it will be evident that he himself destroyed their forces (v. 8; see previous note). This word is fulfilled in 37:33-36. Though the Israelites would be delivered in this instance, they too must turn to God from idols lest they be judged **on that day** (vv. 6-7; 2:5,20-21).

THE RIGHTEOUS KINGDOM ANNOUNCED

32 Indeed, a king will reign righteously, and rulers will rule justly. †
2 Each will be like a shelter from the wind, a refuge from the rain, †
like flowing streams † in a dry land and the shade of a massive rock
in an arid land.
3 Then the eyes of those who see will not be closed, and the ears of those
who hear will listen. †
4 The reckless mind will gain knowledge, and the stammering tongue †
will speak clearly and fluently.
5 A fool will no longer be called a noble, †
nor a scoundrel said to be important.
6 For a fool speaks foolishness and his mind plots iniquity.
He lives in a godless way
and speaks falsely about the LORD.
He leaves the hungry empty
and deprives the thirsty of drink. †
7 The scoundrel's weapons are destructive; he hatches plots to destroy the needy
with lies, even when the poor person says what is right.
8 But a noble person plans noble things; he stands up for noble causes.

9 Stand up, you complacent women; †
listen to me.
Pay attention to what I say,
you overconfident daughters.
10 In a little more than a year you overconfident ones will shudder,
for the grapes will fail
and the harvest will not come.
11 Shudder, you complacent ones; tremble, you overconfident ones!
Strip yourselves bare †
and put sackcloth around your waists.
12 Beat your breasts in mourning †
for the delightful fields and the fruitful vines, †
13 for the ground of my people growing thorns and briers, †
indeed, for every joyous house in the jubilant city.
14 For the palace will be deserted, the busy city abandoned.
The hill and the watchtower will become
barren places forever,
the joy of wild donkeys,
and a pasture for flocks,
15 until the Spirit † from on high is poured out on us. †
Then the desert will become an orchard,
and the orchard will seem like a forest. †
16 Then justice will inhabit the wilderness, and righteousness will dwell in the orchard.
17 The result of righteousness will be peace; †
the effect of righteousness
will be quiet confidence forever.
18 Then my people will dwell in a peaceful place, in safe and secure dwellings.
19 But hail will level the forest, † †
and the city will sink into the depths. †
20 You will be happy as you sow seed beside abundant water, †
and as you let oxen and donkeys range freely. †

32:15 Or *a wind* **32:19** Hb obscure
32:1 Ps 72:1-4; Is 9:6-7; 11:4-5; Jr 23:5; Zch 9:9; 14:9 **32:2** Is 4:6; 25:4 **32:2** Is 30:25 **32:3** Is 29:18 **32:4** Is 33:19 **32:5** Ps 107:40; 118:9; 146:3 **32:6** Is 3:15; 10:2 **32:9** Is 47:8; Am 6:1; Zph 2:15 **32:11** Is 47:2-3 **32:12** Nah 2:7 **32:12** Mk 14:25 **32:13** Is 5:6; 7:23-25; 9:18; 27:4 **32:15** Is 11:2; 44:3; 59:21; Ezk 39:29; Jl 2:28 **32:15** Is 29:17; 35:1-2 **32:17** Ps 72:2-3; 85:8; 119:165; Is 2:4; Rm 14:17; Jms 3:18 **32:19** Is 28:2,17; 30:30 **32:19** Is 24:10,12; 26:5; 27:10; 29:4 **32:20** Nm 24:7; Ec 11:1; Is 30:23-24 **32:20** Is 30:24

32:1-2 This **king** who **will reign righteously** is the Messiah (9:7; 53:11). The pairing of judgment on Assyria (31:8-9) with messianic hope is also found in 10:24–11:5 (see also 8:7–9:7). The metaphor of **shelter** from the elements appeared in earlier messianic passages (see the notes on 4:2-6; 25:1-5).

32:3-5 The righteous rule of this king (vv. 1-2) will result in recovery of sight, hearing, and good sense (vv. 3-4). The restoration of **eyes**, **ears**, and the **heart** resolves the problem so poignantly expressed in 6:9-10 (see also 29:9-12,18). The ability of the **tongue** to **speak clearly** may be an allusion to 28:7-13. The Messiah's rule will also result in justice (v. 5; 11:4).

32:9-14 The confrontation of **complacent women** and **overconfident daughters** (vv. 9,11) echoes 3:16–4:1. Judgment and exile would humble them and their people.

32:15-17 The restoration of the land (see vv. 10-14) is directly related to the outpouring of **the Spirit from on high** (44:3). Such restoration will not only involve physical realities but will also include **justice**, **righteousness**, **peace**, and **quiet confidence** (9:7; 30:15).

32:19 The destruction of **the forest** by **hail** suggests God's judgment of the wicked (10:18-19,34; 28:2,17; 30:30). The downfall of the godless **city** had been foretold in 24:10-12; 25:2-3.

32:20 This blessed depiction of a well-watered land that is good for planting and for livestock parallels the lengthier and more clearly eschatological description in 30:23-26.

THE LORD RISES UP

33 Woe, you destroyer never destroyed, you traitor never betrayed!
When you have finished destroying,
you will be destroyed.
When you have finished betraying,
they will betray you. †

2 LORD, be gracious to us! We wait for you. †
Be our strength every morning
and our salvation in time of trouble. †
3 The peoples flee at the thunderous noise; †
the nations scatter when you rise in your majesty.
4 Your spoil will be gathered as locusts are gathered; people will swarm over it like an infestation of locusts.
5 The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.

6 There will be times of security for you — a storehouse of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge.

The fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure. †

7 Listen! Their warriors cry loudly in the streets; the messengers of peace weep bitterly. †

8 The highways are deserted; travel has ceased.

An agreement has been broken, †

cities † despised, and human life disregarded.

9 The land mourns and withers; †
Lebanon is ashamed and wilted.
Sharon is like a desert;
Bashan and Carmel shake off their leaves.

10 "Now I will rise up," † says the LORD.
"Now I will lift myself up.
Now I will be exalted.

11 You will conceive chaff; †
you will give birth to stubble.
Your breath is fire that will consume you.

12 The peoples will be burned to ashes, like thorns cut down and burned in a fire.

13 You who are far off, hear what I have done; you who are near, † know my strength."

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; trembling seizes the ungodly:

"Who among us can dwell with a consuming fire? †
Who among us can dwell with ever-burning flames? "

15 The one who lives righteously and speaks rightly, †
who refuses profit from extortion,
whose hand never takes a bribe,
who stops his ears from listening to murderous plots and shuts his eyes against evil schemes † — 16 he will dwell on the heights; his refuge will be the rocky fortresses,
his food provided, his water assured.

17 Your eyes will see the King in his beauty; †
you will see a vast land. †
18 Your mind will meditate on the past terror: “Where is the accountant? †
Where is the tribute collector? †
Where is the one who spied out our defenses? ” †
19 You will no longer see the barbarians, a people whose speech is difficult to comprehend — who stammer in a language that is not understood. †
20 Look at Zion, the city of our festival times.
Your eyes will see Jerusalem,
a peaceful pasture, † a tent that does not wander; its tent pegs will not be pulled up
nor will any of its cords be loosened. †
21 For the majestic one, our LORD, will be there, †
a place of rivers and broad streams
where ships that are rowed will not go,
and majestic vessels will not pass. †
22 For the LORD is our Judge, the LORD is our Lawgiver, †
the LORD is our King.
He will save us. †
23 Your ropes are slack; they cannot hold the base of the mast
or spread out the flag.
Then abundant spoil will be divided,
the lame will plunder it,
24 and none there will say, “I am sick.”
The people who dwell there
will be forgiven † their iniquity. †

33:8 DSS read *witnesses* **33:18** Lit *counter* **33:18** Lit *weigher* **33:18** Lit *who counts towers*
33:1 2Kg 18:14-36; Is 17:14; 21:2 **33:2** Is 25:9; 26:8 **33:2** Ex 15:2; Ps 28:8; Is 12:2; 17:10; 51:5 **33:3** Is 17:13; 21:15 **33:6** Is 11:2-3; Ac 9:31 **33:7** 2Kg 18:18,37; Is 36:3,22 **33:8** 2Kg 18:14-17; Is 24:5 **33:9** Is 3:26; 24:4; 29:2 **33:10** Ps 12:5; Is 2:19,21 **33:11** Ps 7:14; Is 26:18; 59:4; Jms 1:15 **33:13** Is 18:2; Eph 2:17 **33:14** Is 30:27,30; 66:15; Heb 12:29 **33:15** Ps 15:2; 24:4; Is 58:6-11 **33:15** Ps 119:37 **33:17** Is 6:5; 24:23; 33:21-22; Zch 9:9 **33:17** Is 54:2-3 **33:19** Dt 28:49-50; Is 28:11; Jr 5:15 **33:20** Ps 46:5; 125:1-2; Is 32:18 **33:20** Is 54:2 **33:21** Rm 8:31 **33:21** Is 41:18; 43:19-20; 48:18; 66:12 **33:22** Is 1:10; 51:4,7; Jms 4:12 **33:22** 2Sm 22:3; 23:5; 2Kg 19:19,34; Is 25:9; 35:4; 38:20 **33:24** Is 40:2; 44:22; Jr 50:20; Mc 7:18-19; 1Jn 1:7-9

33:24 Is 13:11

33:2-6 This prayer is voiced by God's people who **wait** for his **salvation** (v. 2; 25:9). He will judge the nations (vv. 3-4) and be exalted (see 2:11,17). The filling of **Zion with justice and righteousness** (v. 5) recalls several significant earlier passages concerning the restoration of Zion (1:21; 32:16), the Messiah's righteous rule (9:7; 32:1), and the glory of God filling the earth (6:3; 11:9; 27:6).

33:10 God's exaltation coincides with the distress of the land (vv. 7-9) and the clear failure of his people (v. 11; 26:18).

33:13 God's works pertain to everyone, whether they are **far off** or **near** (see 34:1; 57:19; 66:19).

33:14-16 Despite numerous promises of the salvation of **Zion**, **the sinners** there still have good reason to be afraid (v. 14; 1:28; 48:22) because they cannot live in the presence of the Holy One (see 6:5). **Fire** has repeatedly been used of divine judgment (see the notes on 5:24; 24:5-6; 30:33) and of God himself (10:17; see Dt 4:24; 9:3). Along with the requirement of holiness in verses 15-16, this passage parallels Pss 15:1-5 and 24:1-5. It is also complemented by verse 24 and 6:1-7, which offer the hope of atonement to the humble.

33:17 The **King** is identical with the one in 32:1-2 (see note). The mention of his **beauty** echoes 4:2. Those whose **eyes will see** are the godly (vv. 15-16), whose spiritual senses have been restored (32:3).

33:19-24 When redemption is realized, foreign enemies will be nowhere to be found (v. 19; 28:11). Instead, **Zion** will be secure and at peace (v. 20). It will be **a place of rivers** (v. 21), though not for majestic vessels (see 2:16; 23:1). The **lame** will take possession of **abundant spoil** (v. 23; see v. 4; 35:6; 53:12). Those who live there will no longer be subject to sickness and will be forgiven of their sins (v. 24; 25:8; 53:5)

THE JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

34 You nations, come here and listen; you peoples, pay attention! †
Let the earth and all that fills it hear, the world and all that comes from it. †
2 The LORD is angry with all the nations, furious with all their armies. †
He will set them apart for destruction, †
giving them over to slaughter.
3 Their slain will be thrown out, and the stench of their corpses will rise; †
the mountains will flow † with their blood. †
4 All † the stars in the sky † will dissolve.
The sky will roll up like a scroll, †
and its stars will all wither
as leaves wither on the vine,
and foliage on the fig tree. †

THE JUDGMENT OF EDOM

5 When my sword has drunk its fill † † in the heavens, it will then come down
on Edom †
and on the people I have set apart for destruction.
6 The LORD's sword is covered with blood.
It drips with fat,
with the blood of lambs and goats,
with the fat of the kidneys of rams. †
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah, †
a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7 The wild oxen will be struck † down with them, and young bulls
with the mighty bulls.
Their land will be soaked with † blood, and their soil will be saturated with fat.

8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance, †
a time of paying back Edom
for its hostility against Zion.
9 Edom's streams will be turned into pitch, her soil into sulfur; †
her land will become burning pitch.
10 It will never go out — day or night.
Its smoke will go up forever. †
It will be desolate, from generation to generation; no one will pass
through it forever and ever. †
11 Eagle owls † and herons † will possess it, and long-eared owls and ravens
will dwell there. †
The LORD will stretch out a measuring line and a plumb line over her
for her destruction and chaos. †
12 No nobles will be left to proclaim a king, and all her princes will come
to nothing.
13 Her palaces will be overgrown with thorns; her fortified cities, with thistles
and briers. †
She will become a dwelling for jackals,
an abode † for ostriches. †

14 The desert creatures will meet hyenas, and one wild goat will call to another.
Indeed, the night birds will stay there
and will find a resting place.
15 Sand partridges † will make their nests there; they will lay and hatch their eggs
and will gather their broods under their shadows.
Indeed, the birds of prey will gather there, each with its mate. †
16 Search and read the scroll of the LORD: †
Not one of them will be missing,
none will be lacking its mate,
because he has ordered it by my † mouth, and he will gather them by his Spirit.
17 He has cast the lot for them; his hand allotted their portion with a measuring line.
They will possess it forever; †
they will dwell in it from generation to generation.

34:3 Or *melt*, or *dissolve* **34:4** DSS read *And the valleys will be split, and all* **34:5** DSS read *sword will appear* **34:7** Or *will go* **34:7** Or *will drink its fill of* **34:11** Or *Pelicans* **34:11** Or *hedgehogs* **34:13** DSS, LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *jackals, grass* **34:15** Or *Arrow snakes*, or *Owls* **34:16** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, DSS, Syr, Tg read *his*
34:1 Ps 49:1; Is 1:2; 41:1; 43:9; 45:20 **34:1** Ps 24:1; Is 6:3; 42:5 **34:2** Is 13:5; Jr 10:10; 50:13 **34:2** Jos 6:21; 1Sm 15:3; Is 11:5; 24:1,6; 43:28 **34:3** Is 14:21; 18:6; Ezk 39:17; Jl 2:10; Am 4:10; Rv 19:17-19 **34:3** Ps 46:2-3 **34:4** 2Kg 17:16; 21:3,5; 23:4-5 **34:4** Rv 6:12-14 **34:4** Ps 102:25-27; Is 13:10; 51:6; Ezk 32:7-8; Jl 3:15; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24-25; 2Pt 3:10,12 **34:5** Dt 32:41-43; Jr 46:10; Ezk 21:3-5 **34:5** Nm 20:14-21; Is 63:1; Jr 49:7-8,20; Ezk 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Jl 3:19; Am 1:11-12; Ob 1-14; Mal 1:4 **34:6** Is 25:6; 30:32; Jr 46:10; 51:40; Ezk 39:17; Zph 1:7-9 **34:6** Gn 36:33; Is 63:1; Jr 49:13,22 **34:8** Is 13:6; 35:4; 47:3; 61:2; 63:4 **34:9** Gn 19:24; Dt 29:23; Ps 11:6; Is 30:33; Ezk 38:22 **34:10** Is 1:31; 66:24; Rv 14:11; 19:3 **34:10** Is 13:20-22; Ezk 29:11; Mal 1:3-4 **34:11** Is 13:21-22; 14:23; Zph 2:14 **34:11** 2Kg 21:13; Is 24:10; Lm 2:8 **34:13** Is 32:13 **34:13** Ps 44:19; Is 13:22; Jr 9:11; 10:22; Mal 1:3 **34:15** Dt 14:13 **34:16** Ps 40:7; 139:16; Is 8:16; 30:8; Dn 7:10; Mal 3:16; Rv 20:12 **34:17** Nm 24:18

34:1-4 In even clearer fashion than in 33:13, the whole world is being summoned to learn of God's coming wrath on **all the nations** (vv. 1-2). Not only will the mountains be soaked with the blood of the **slain** but the heavens will pass away (vv. 3-4; 24:21).

34:5 Edom had been mentioned in 11:14 and alluded to in 21:11. In view of verses 1-4, the judgment of Edom seems to represent the judgment of the whole world (see also 63:1-6; Ob 15-16). Furthermore, the Hebrew word for Edom (*'edom*) sounds like and shares the same consonants with the Hebrew word for mankind (*'adam*), suggesting intentional wordplay. The judgment of mankind has been repeatedly declared already (e.g., 2:9,11,17; 13:12). In keeping with its history (e.g., Gn 25:23; Nm 20:14-21; Am 1:11; Ob 10-11), Edom's enmity toward Zion is especially highlighted in this context (see following note).

34:8-10 The phrase **day of vengeance** (v. 8) appears in 61:2 and 63:4, both times in the context of

eschatological judgment and salvation. The severe judgment of Edom using **sulfur** (v. 9) and the eternal ascent of **its smoke** (v. 10; see Rv 14:11; 19:3) echo the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 19:24,28).

34:11-15 The permanent desolation of Edom (v. 10) is further illustrated through the desert animals that will dwell there. Babylon's desolation had been likewise characterized in 13:19-22. Both places are also likened to Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 9-10; 13:19) and are closely related to the judgment of the whole world (vv. 1-4; 13:5,10-13). The Hebrew word *tohu* in verse 11 (translated **chaos**) is uncommon and also appeared in 24:10 where it relates to the judgment of the whole earth (see the notes on 24:1-4,5-6). It is first used in Genesis 1:2 to describe the desolation of the world while God was creating. Therefore, its use in the present passage speaks to the undoing of creation and order.

34:16 The **Spirit** will be involved in this work of judgment (see 4:4; 11:4; 30:28).

THE RANSOMED RETURN TO ZION

35 The wilderness and the dry land will be glad; the desert will rejoice
and blossom like a wildflower. † †
2 It will blossom abundantly and will also rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon. †
They will see the glory of the LORD, †
the splendor of our God. †
3 Strengthen the weak hands, steady the shaking knees! †
4 Say to the cowardly: "Be strong; do not fear!
Here is your God; vengeance is coming. †
God's retribution is coming; he will save you." †
5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears
of the deaf unstopped. †
6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, †
and the tongue of the mute will sing for joy, †
for water will gush in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert; †
7 the parched ground will become a pool, and the thirsty land springs. †
In the haunt of jackals, † in their lairs, there will be grass, reeds, and papyrus.
8 A road will be there and a way; †
it will be called the Holy Way. †
The unclean will not travel on it, †

but it will be for the one who walks the path. †
Fools will not wander on it.
9 There will be no lion there, and no vicious beast will go up on it;
they will not be found there.
But the redeemed will walk on it,
10 and the redeemed of the LORD will return †
and come to Zion with singing,
crowned with unending joy.
Joy and gladness will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee. †

35:1 Or *meadow saffron* ; traditionally *rose*
35:1 Ps 65:12; Is 6:11; 7:21-25; 27:10; 32:15; 41:18-19; 51:3; 55:12-13 **35:2** Sg 2:1; 5:15; 7:5; Is 33:9 **35:2** Ex 16:7,10; Lv 9:6,23; Nm 29:6; Is 40:5; Ezk 1:28; 3:23 **35:2** Ps 45:3-4; 96:6; 104:1; 145:5,12; Is 2:10,19,21; 53:2; 63:1; Ezk 16:14 **35:3** Heb 12:12 **35:4** Is 1:24; 34:8; 47:3; 59:17; 61:2; 63:4 **35:4** Is 33:22 **35:5** Is 29:18; 32:3-4; 42:7,16,18; 50:4; Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22; Jn 9:6-7 **35:6** Zph 3:19; Mt 11:5; 15:30-31; 21:14; Ac 3:1-8; 8:7; 14:8-10 **35:6** Ex 4:11; Mk 7:32; 9:25 **35:6** Is 41:18; 43:19; Jn 7:38-39 **35:7** Is 49:10 **35:7** Is 13:22; 34:13 **35:8** Is 40:3; 42:16; 43:16,19; 49:11; 51:10; 57:14; 62:10 **35:8** Is 4:3; 52:1; Mt 7:13-14; 1Pt 1:15-16 **35:8** Is 52:1; Rv 21:27 **35:8** Ps 139:24; Is 2:3; 8:11; 30:21; 42:24; 48:17; 58:13 **35:10** Is 51:11 **35:10** Is 65:19; Rm 9:2; Rv 21:4

35:1-7 The extended description of salvation in Isaiah 35 provides a fitting conclusion to Isaiah 28–35 (see the note on 28:1-7) and contrasts with the focus on judgment in Isaiah 34. Fruitfulness and joy in a barren land (vv. 1-2,7) recall 30:23-26 and 32:15-20. Most importantly, people **will see the glory of the LORD** (v. 2; 6:3,5; 40:5; 66:18). The Hebrew phrase translated **cowardly** in verse 4 is similar to the one translated "reckless mind" in 32:4. That earlier verse also mentioned a "stammering tongue," which seems to parallel **the tongue of the mute** in verse 6. The healing of the blind and deaf picks up on a familiar theme (v. 5; 6:9-10; 29:18; 32:3-4), and the triumph of **the lame** (v. 6) had been predicted in 33:23.

35:8-10 The "way of holiness" (lit v. 8) is not for **the unclean** (see 6:5; 52:11) but for **the redeemed** (vv. 9-10). Their holiness befits the holiness of God, his mountain, and restored Jerusalem (6:3; 11:9; 52:1; 62:12). Other passages describing eternal salvation also used language of a **road** or a **way** (v. 8; 11:16; 19:23; 30:21; 40:3). The permanent fullness of **joy** and utter absence of **sorrow** (v. 10) echoes 25:8.

SENNACHERIB'S INVASION

36 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, † King Sennacherib of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 2 Then the king of Assyria sent his royal spokesman, along with a massive army, from Lachish † to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. The Assyrian stood near the conduit of the upper pool, by the road to the Launderer's Field. † 3 Eliakim son

of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, † and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came out to him.
4 The royal spokesman said to them, “Tell Hezekiah:
The great king, the king of Assyria, says this: What are you relying on? †
5 You † think mere words are strategy and strength for war. Who are you now relying on that you have rebelled against me? † 6 Look, you are relying on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff † that will pierce the hand of anyone who grabs it and leans on it. This is how Pharaoh king of Egypt is to all who rely on him. † 7 Suppose you say to me, ‘We rely on the LORD our God.’ Isn’t he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You are to worship at this altar’? †
8 “Now make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I’ll give you two thousand horses if you’re able to supply riders for them! 9 How then can you drive back a single officer among the least of my master’s servants? How can you rely on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? † 10 Have I attacked this land to destroy it without the LORD’s approval? The LORD said to me, ‘Attack this land and destroy it.’ ”
11 Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the royal spokesman, “Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, † since we understand it. Don’t speak to us in Hebrew † within earshot of the people who are on the wall.”
12 But the royal spokesman replied, “Has my master sent me to speak these words to your master and to you, and not to the men who are sitting on the wall, who are destined with you to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine? ”
13 Then the royal spokesman stood and called out loudly in Hebrew:
Listen to the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! 14 This is what the king says: “Don’t let Hezekiah deceive you, † for he cannot rescue you. 15 Don’t let Hezekiah persuade you to rely on the LORD, saying, ‘The LORD will certainly rescue us! This city will not be handed over to the king of Assyria.’ ”
16 Don’t listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: “Make peace † with me and surrender to me. Then every one of you may eat from his own vine and his own fig tree † and drink water from his own cistern 17 until I

come and take you away to a land like your own land — a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18 Beware that Hezekiah does not mislead you by saying, 'The LORD will rescue us.' † Has any one of the gods of the nations † rescued his land from the power of the king of Assyria? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? † Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my power? † 20 Who among all the gods of these lands ever rescued his land from my power? So will the LORD rescue Jerusalem from my power?"
21 But they kept silent; they didn't say anything, for the king's command was, "Don't answer him." † 22 Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the court historian, came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn and reported to him the words of the royal spokesman.

36:4 Lit *What is this trust that you trust* **36:5** Many Hb mss, DSS, 2Kg 18:20; MT reads *I* **36:11** Lit *Judahite*, also in v. 13 **36:16** Lit *a blessing*
36:1-22 2Kg 18:13,17-37; 2Ch 32:1-16,18 **36:2** Jos 15:20,39 **36:2** Is 7:3 **36:3** Is 22:15,20-21 **36:5** 2Kg 18:7 **36:6** Ezk 29:6-7 **36:6** Is 30:3-7 **36:7** Dt 12:2-5; 2Kg 18:4-5 **36:9** Is 20:5; 30:2-5,7; 31:3 **36:11** Ezr 4:7; Dn 2:4 **36:14** Is 37:10 **36:16** 1Kg 4:25; Mc 4:4; Zch 3:10 **36:18** Is 37:10 **36:18** 1Ch 5:25; Is 37:12 **36:19** Is 10:9-11; 37:11-13; Jr 49:23 **36:19** 2Kg 17:6 **36:21** Pr 26:4

36:1-3 Isaiah 36–39 is the longest narrative section in Isaiah and has important parallels to the book's second longest narrative section, Isaiah 6–8. In particular, both passages concern the attack of a foreign army on Jerusalem and its Davidic king (see 7:1-2). Both times there was an important meeting at **the upper pool, by the road to the Launderer's Field** (v. 2; 7:3). Such pools were important sources of water but were not supposed to replace confidence in God (22:9-11).

36:4-10 The attack of mighty **Assyria** had been repeatedly foretold (7:17-20; 8:4-8; 20:6). The accusation of reliance **on Egypt** (v. 6) was not without basis, since Israel had been guilty of this at times (30:1-5; 31:1-3).

36:18-20 The Assyrians had already defeated other **nations** and their **gods**, and they concluded that **Jerusalem** and **the LORD**, its God, were no different (see also 37:11-13). Such a taunt had been similarly described in 10:8-11.

HEZEKIAH SEEKS ISAIAH'S COUNSEL

37 When King Hezekiah heard their report, † he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, † and went to the LORD's temple. 2 He sent Eliakim, who was in charge of the palace, Shebna the court secretary, and the leading priests, who were wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 3 They said to him, "This is what Hezekiah says: 'Today is a day of distress, rebuke, and

disgrace. † It is as if children have come to the point of birth, and there is no strength to deliver them. † 4 Perhaps the LORD your God will hear all the words of the royal spokesman, whom his master the king of Assyria sent to mock the living God, † and will rebuke him for the words that the LORD your God has heard. Therefore offer a prayer for the surviving remnant.' " †

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, 6 who said to them, "Tell your master, 'The LORD says this: Don't be afraid † because of the words you have heard, with which the king of Assyria's attendants have blasphemed me. †
7 I am about to put a spirit † in him and he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, where I will cause him to fall by the sword.' " †

SENNACHERIB'S LETTER

8 When the royal spokesman heard that the king of Assyria had pulled out of Lachish, † he left and found him fighting against Libnah. † 9 The king had heard concerning King Tirhakah of Cush, † "He has set out to fight against you." So when he heard this, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Say this to King Hezekiah of Judah: 'Don't let your God, on whom you rely, deceive you † by promising that Jerusalem won't be handed over to the king of Assyria.
11 Look, you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries: they completely destroyed them. Will you be rescued? 12 Did the gods of the nations † that my predecessors destroyed rescue them — Gozan, † Haran, † Rezeph, and the Edenites in Telassar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, the king of the city of † Sepharvaim, Hena, or Ivvah? ' "

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER

14 Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers' hands, read it, then went up to the LORD's temple and spread it out before the LORD. † 15 Then Hezekiah prayed † to the LORD:

16 LORD of Armies, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, † you are God † — you alone † — of all the kingdoms of the earth. † You made the heavens and the earth. † 17 Listen closely, LORD, and hear; † open your eyes,

LORD, and see. † Hear all the words that Sennacherib has sent to mock the living God. † 18 LORD, it is true that the kings of Assyria have devastated all these countries and their lands. 19 They have thrown their gods into the fire, for they were not gods † but made from wood and stone † by human hands. † So they have destroyed them. 20 Now, LORD our God, save us from his power so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are God † † — you alone. †

GOD'S ANSWER THROUGH ISAIAH

21 Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "The LORD, the God of Israel, says, 'Because you prayed to me about King Sennacherib of Assyria, 22 this is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

Virgin Daughter Zion †
despises you and scorns you;
Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head †
behind your back.
23 Who is it you have mocked † and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes in pride? †
Against the Holy One of Israel! †
24 You have mocked the LORD through † your servants.
You have said, "With my many chariots †
I have gone up to the heights of the mountains, to the far recesses of Lebanon.
I cut down its tallest cedars,
its choice cypress trees.
I came to its distant heights,
its densest forest.
25 I dug wells and drank water in foreign lands. †
I dried up all the streams of Egypt
with the soles of my feet." †

26 Have you not heard? †

I designed it long ago;
I planned it in days gone by. †
I have now brought it to pass,
and you have crushed fortified cities †
into piles of rubble.
27 Their inhabitants have become powerless, dismayed, and ashamed.
They are plants of the field,
tender grass,
grass on the rooftops,
blasted by the east wind. †

28 But I know your sitting down, your going out and your coming in, †
and your raging against me.
29 Because your raging against me and your arrogance have reached my ears, †
I will put my hook in your nose †
and my bit in your mouth; †
I will make you go back
the way you came.

30 " 'This will be the sign for you: † This year you will eat what grows on its own, and in the second year what grows from that. But in the third year sow and reap, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 31 The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root † downward and bear fruit upward. 32 For a remnant † will go out from Jerusalem, and survivors from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of Armies will accomplish this.' †
33 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria:

He will not enter this city,
shoot an arrow here,
come before it with a shield,
or build up a siege ramp against it.
34 He will go back the way he came,
and he will not enter this city.

This is the LORD's declaration.

35 I will defend this city and rescue it for my sake †
and for the sake of my servant David." †

DEFEAT AND DEATH OF SENNACHERIB

36 Then † the angel of the LORD † went out and struck down one hundred eighty-five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next morning — there were all the dead bodies! 37 So King Sennacherib of Assyria broke camp and left. He returned home and lived in Nineveh. †
38 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword and escaped to the land of Ararat. † Then his son Esar-haddon † became king in his place.

37:13 Or *king of Lair*, **37:20** *are God* supplied for clarity; see v. 16 **37:24** Lit *by the hand of* **37:25** DSS, 2Kg 19:24; MT omits *in foreign lands* **37:27** DSS; MT reads *rooftops, field before standing grain*
37:1-35 2Kg 19:1-34 **37:1** Gn 37:34; 2Sm 3:31; 1Kg 21:27; Is 3:24 **37:3** Is 22:5; 26:16; 33:2; Nah 1:7; Hab 3:16 **37:3** Is 26:17-18; 66:9; Hs 13:13 **37:4** Dt 5:26; 1Sm 17:26,36; Jr 10:10 **37:4** Is 1:9; 46:3 **37:6** Is 7:4; 35:4 **37:6** Ps 44:7,13-16; Is 52:5; Rm 2:24 **37:7** Nm 5:14; Is 19:14; Hs 4:12; Zch 13:2; 2Tm 1:7 **37:7** Is 37:36-38 **37:8** Jos 10:31-32 **37:8** Nm 33:20; Jos 10:29 **37:9** Is 18:1; 20:5 **37:10** Is 36:14-15 **37:12** Is 36:18 **37:12** 2Kg 17:6; 18:11 **37:12** Gn 11:31; 12:1-4; Ac 7:2 **37:14** Dt 22:17; 1Kg 8:22; Ezk 2:10 **37:15** 2Ch 32:20 **37:16** Ex 25:22; Nm 7:89; 1Sm 4:4; 2Sm 6:2; Ps 80:1; 99:1 **37:16** Dt 10:17; 2Sm 7:28; Ps 86:10; 90:2; 136:2-3 **37:16** 1Kg 8:39; Neh 9:6; Ps 4:8; 83:18; 86:10; Rv 15:4 **37:16** 2Ch 36:20; Ps 68:32; Rv 11:15 **37:16** Ex 20:11; Neh 9:6; Ps 146:6; Ac 4:24 **37:17** 2Ch 6:40; Ps 17:6; Dn 9:18 **37:17** Is 42:5; 45:12; Jr 10:12 **37:17** Is 37:4 **37:19** Dt 32:17; 2Ch 13:9; Jr 2:11; 5:7; 16:20; Hs 8:6; Ac 19:26; Gl 4:8 **37:19** Dt 4:28; 28:36,64; 29:17; Ezk 20:32 **37:19** Is 2:8,20; 17:8; 31:7; 41:24,29; 44:9-20; 46:6 **37:20** Jos 4:24; 1Kg 8:60; 20:13; Is 45:3,6 **37:20** Is 37:16 **37:22** Lm 2:13; Is 1:8; 3:16-17; 4:4; 52:2; 62:11 **37:22** Jb 16:4; Ps 22:7; 109:25; Jr 18:16; Lm 2:15 **37:23** Ps 74:10,18; Is 37:4; Gl 6:7 **37:23** Is 2:11; 5:15,21 **37:23** Gn 12:3; Ex 23:22 **37:24** Ex 14:26-28; 15:4,19; Dt 20:1; Jos 11:4-9; 2Ch 16:8; Ps 68:17 **37:25** Dt 11:10; 1Kg 20:10 **37:26** Is 40:21,28 **37:26** Is 5:19; 10:5-6; 14:24-26; 22:11; 46:11; Jr 18:11; Ac 2:23; 4:27-28; 1Pt 2:8 **37:26** Is 34:13 **37:28** Ps 139:1 **37:29** Is 10:12 **37:29** Ezk 19:9; 29:4; 38:4 **37:29** Is 30:28 **37:30** Ex 3:12; 1Sm 2:34; 1Kg 13:3; Is 7:14; 38:7; Jr 44:29; Lk 2:12 **37:31** Is 27:6 **37:32** Ezr 9:14; Is 10:20-22 **37:32** 2Kg 19:31; Is 9:7; 59:17; Jl 2:18; Zch 1:14 **37:35** Is 43:25; 48:9,11 **37:35** 1Kg 11:13,32-38; 2Kg 20:6; Ezk 34:23 **37:36-38** 2Kg 19:35-37; 2Ch 32:21 **37:36** Gn 16:7-11; Ex 3:2; Nm 22:22-35; Jdg 6:11-12; 2Sm 24:16; Ps 34:7 **37:37** Gn 10:11; Jnh 1:2; 3:3; 4:11; Zph 2:13 **37:38** Gn 8:4; Jr 51:27 **37:38** Ezr 4:2

37:1-4 The challenge from Assyria provoked a challenge of faith (36:7,15,18). Unlike Ahaz earlier (7:2,9-13), **Hezekiah** humbled himself and sought God's help. As with Ahaz (7:3), **the prophet Isaiah** again played a prominent role (v. 2). The invader not only wanted to conquer Jerusalem but also wanted to assert dominance over God himself (v. 4; 36:18-20).

37:5-7 Isaiah assured the king's messengers that God had heard Assyria's blasphemy and would defeat this mighty enemy (see vv. 10-13; 36:18-20).

37:8-13 As God had said (v. 7), **the king of Assyria** turned back after hearing a report (vv. 8-9; 36:2)—but not before taunting **Hezekiah** and **God** again (vv. 10-13; 36:18-20).

37:14-20 Whereas earlier **Hezekiah** had asked Isaiah to pray (v. 4), this time the king himself **prayed** (v. 15). He acknowledged the previous victories of Assyria over other lands and their gods (vv. 18-19; see the note on 36:18-20) but nevertheless appealed to God to act for the sake of his own name and thus demonstrate to the world that he is indeed God (vv. 17,20).

37:21-23 Hezekiah's prayer in verses 15-20 had been heard (v. 21). God indeed had been offended by Assyria's blasphemy (vv. 22-23; see v. 17).

37:26-29 Assyria's success, unbeknownst to them, was part of God's plan from **long ago** (v. 26; 10:5-6), as was their destruction (v. 29; 14:24-25).

37:30-32 The Lord announced through Isaiah that he would give Hezekiah a **sign**, which will consist of the nation's ability to **sow and reap** on the land **in the third year** (v. 30). At that time, they will know that they have survived the Assyrian threat and will remember Isaiah's prediction (vv. 31-32). This passage links the significant themes of **remnant** (v. 4; 10:20-22; 11:11,16), taking root and bearing fruit (11:1), Zion, and **the zeal of the LORD** (9:7).

37:35 The Lord's deep concern for his own honor has already been highlighted (vv. 17,20,23), but here he also cites his commitment to his **servant David**. God thus remembered his covenant with David (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16).

37:36-38 The dramatic defeat of the Assyrians by the hand of God (v. 36) had been repeatedly predicted (10:16-19,24-26; 14:25; 31:8). Sennacherib's murder while **in the temple of his god Nisroch** is ironic given his earlier boasts (36:18-20; 37:10-13).

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

38 In those days Hezekiah became terminally ill. † The prophet Isaiah son
of Amoz came and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Set your
house in order, † for you are about to die; you will not recover.' " †
2 Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD. 3 He said,
"Please, LORD, remember how I have walked before you faithfully and
wholeheartedly, † and have done what pleases you." † † And Hezekiah wept
bitterly.
4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'This is
what the LORD God of your ancestor David says: I have heard your prayer; I have
seen your tears. Look, I am going to add fifteen years to your life. † † 6 And I
will rescue you and this city from the grasp of the king of Assyria; I will defend
this city. † 7 This is the sign to you † from the LORD that he will do what †
he has promised: † 8 I am going to make the sun's shadow that goes down on the
stairway of Ahaz go back by ten steps.' " † So the sun's shadow † went back
the ten steps it had descended.
9 A poem by King Hezekiah of Judah after he had been sick and had recovered
from his illness:

10 I said: In the prime † of my life †
I must go to the gates of Sheol; †
I am deprived of the rest of my years.
11 I said: I will never see the LORD, the LORD in the land of the living; †
I will not look on humanity any longer
with the inhabitants of what is passing away. †
12 My dwelling is plucked up and removed from me like a shepherd's tent. †
I have rolled up my life like a weaver; †
he cuts me off from the loom. †
By nightfall † you make an end of me. †
13 I thought until the morning: He will break all my bones like a lion.
By nightfall you make an end of me.
14 I chirp like a swallow or a crane; I moan like a dove. †
My eyes grow weak looking upward.
Lord, I am oppressed; support me. †

15 What can I say?
He has spoken to me,
and he himself has done it.
I walk along slowly all my years †
because of the bitterness of my soul. †
16 Lord, by such things people live, †
and in every one of them my spirit finds life; you have restored me to health †
and let me live. †
17 Indeed, it was for my own well-being that I had such intense bitterness; †
but your love has delivered me
from the Pit of destruction, †
for you have thrown all my sins behind your back. †
18 For Sheol cannot thank you; Death cannot praise you. †
Those who go down to the Pit
cannot hope for your faithfulness.

19 The living, only the living can thank you, as I do today;
a father will make your faithfulness known to children. †
20 The LORD is ready to save me; we will play stringed instruments
all the days of our lives
at the house of the LORD. †

21 Now Isaiah † had said, “Let them take a lump of pressed figs and apply it to his infected skin, so that he may recover.” 22 And Hezekiah had asked, “What is the sign that I will go up to the LORD’s temple? ”

38:1 Lit *live* **38:3** Lit *what is good in your eyes* **38:5** Lit *days*, also in v. 10 **38:7** Lit *this thing* **38:7** Lit *said* **38:8** Lit *And the sun* **38:10** Lit *quiet* **38:11** Some Hb mss, Tg read *of the world* **38:12** Lit *From day until night*, also in v. 13

38:1-8 2Kg 20:1-6,9-11; 2Ch 32:24 **38:1** 2Sm 17:23 **38:3** Gn 17:1; 1Kg 2:4; 3:6; 8:23; 2Kg 18:5-6; Ps 26:3 **38:3** Dt 6:18 **38:5** 2Kg 18:2,13 **38:6** Is 31:5; 37:35 **38:7** Is 37:30 **38:8** Jos 10:12-14 **38:10** Ps 102:24 **38:10** Ps 107:18 **38:11** Ps 27:13; 116:9 **38:12** 2Co 5:1,4; 2Pt 1:13-14 **38:12** Jb 7:6; Heb 1:12 **38:12** Jb 6:9 **38:12** Jb 4:20; Ps 73:14 **38:14** Is 59:11; Ezk 7:16; Nah 2:7 **38:14** Jb 17:3; Ps 119:122 **38:15** 1Kg 21:27 **38:15** 1Sm 1:10; Ezk 27:31; Jb 3:20; 7:11; 10:1 **38:16** Ps 119:71,75 **38:16** Ps 39:13 **38:16** Ps 119:25 **38:17** Heb 12:11 **38:17** Jb 33:18,30; Ps 103:4; 106:23; Ezk 20:17; Jnh 2:6 **38:17** Is 43:25; Jr 31:34; Mc 7:19 **38:18** Ps 6:5; 30:9; 88:10-12; 115:17 **38:19** Dt 6:7; 11:19; Ps 78:5-7 **38:20** Ps 23:6; 116:17-19 **38:21-22** 2Kg 20:7-8

38:1-8 Whereas the difficulty in Isaiah 36–37 directly concerned the kingdom of Judah, this grave illness threatened Hezekiah’s life (v. 1). As before, the king responded with prayer, which was heard by God (vv. 2-5; 37:14-35). Again, salvation was accompanied by a **sign** (vv. 7-8,22; 37:30-32). Hezekiah’s healing is linked to his forefather David (v. 4) and to the deliverance of Jerusalem from Assyria (v. 6; 37:35), which bind even more closely these two acts of salvation.

38:9-11 God not only delivered Hezekiah from an arrogant foreign enemy (37:21-38) but also saved him from imminent death.

38:17 Hezekiah’s healing is linked here also to God’s forgiveness of **all** [his] **sins.** Healing and forgiveness are also paired in 33:24, where they relate to eschatological salvation.

38:18-20 The purpose of deliverance from death is not merely to prolong a person’s life but to enable continued **praise** and thanksgiving (vv. 18-19) **at the house of the LORD** (vv. 20,22; see the note on Ps 84:4). Hezekiah had gone to the temple to seek God in response to the Assyrian attack (37:1,14), and the nations will also seek him there in the last days (2:2).

HEZEKIAH’S FOLLY

39 At that time † Merodach-baladan son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah since he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. 2 Hezekiah was pleased with the letters, and he showed the envoys his treasure house — the silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil

— and all his armory, and everything that was found in his treasuries. † There was nothing in his palace and in all his realm that Hezekiah did not show them. †
3 Then the prophet Isaiah came to King Hezekiah and asked him, “What did these men say, and where did they come to you from? ”
Hezekiah replied, “They came to me from a distant country, from Babylon.”
4 Isaiah asked, “What have they seen in your palace? ”
Hezekiah answered, “They have seen everything in my palace. There isn’t anything in my treasuries that I didn’t show them.”
5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of Armies: †
6 ‘Look, the days are coming when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until today will be carried off to Babylon; nothing will be left,’ says the LORD. † 7 ‘Some of your descendants — who come from you, whom you father — will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ ”
8 Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good,” for he thought: There will be peace and security during my lifetime. †
39:1-8 2Kg 20:12-19; 2Ch 32:31 **39:2** 2Kg 18:15-16 **39:2** 2Ch 32:25 **39:5** Is 28:14; Zch 7:4; 8:1,18 **39:6** 2Kg 24:13; 25:13-15; Jr 20:5 **39:8** 2Ch 32:26

39:1-4 Babylon had not yet gained the power they would later wield, but Hezekiah’s carelessness and vanity led to a proclamation of God’s future judgment by Isaiah.

39:6-7 Though Judah would not fall to Assyria, they would fall to Babylon (see 14:3-4; 21:6-10; 48:20). The making of royal sons into **eunuchs** would not only be humiliating but also threaten the continuance of the kingly line. On the other hand, eunuchs often had positions of great responsibility within an administration. God had already promised that the Messiah would come from David’s line (2Sm 7:12; 1Ch 17:11). Language related to offspring had been used recently in 37:3 and in the messianic prophecies of 7:14 and 9:6.

39:8 The temporary **peace** experienced by Hezekiah contrasts with the eternal peace established by the Messiah (9:7).

GOD’S PEOPLE COMFORTED

40 “Comfort, comfort my people,” †
says your God.
2 “Speak tenderly to † Jerusalem, and announce to her
that her time of forced labor is over,
her iniquity † has been pardoned, †

and she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins." †

3 A voice of one crying out:

Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness; †
make a straight highway for our God in the desert. †
4 Every valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and hill will be leveled; the uneven ground will become smooth
and the rough places, a plain. †
5 And the glory of the LORD will appear, †
and all humanity † together will see it, †
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken. †

6 A voice was saying, "Cry out! "
Another said, † "What should I cry out? "
"All humanity is grass, †
and all its goodness is like the flower of the field. †
7 The grass withers, the flowers fade when the breath † of the LORD blows on them; †
indeed, the people are grass.
8 The grass withers, the flowers fade, †
but the word of our God remains forever." †

9 Zion, herald of good news, go up on a high mountain. †
Jerusalem, herald of good news, †
raise your voice loudly.
Raise it, do not be afraid!
Say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God! " †
10 See, the Lord GOD comes with strength, and his power establishes his rule. †
His wages are with him, †
and his reward accompanies him.

11 He protects his flock like a shepherd; †
he gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them in the fold of his garment.
He gently leads those that are nursing.

ULTIMATE ORIGINS AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

A question about ultimate origins is really a question about ultimate reality. Reality appears to have two components: that which is physical and that which is spiritual. These two elements have been described as the distinction between the material and the immaterial, or the natural and the supernatural. Does this duality reflect the way things have always been? Or did one aspect bring about the other? Or is this dualistic quality an illusion, while reality is actually singular?

Three competing worldviews—dualism, monism, and theism—provide three different answers, and in so doing offer conflicting responses to the question of ultimate origins. Against dualism and monism, the Bible unambiguously affirms theism: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gn 1:1).

DUALISM

Dualism understands the physical and the spiritual realms to be coeternal realities that are constantly in opposition to one another. Dualism views the material world as inferior to the immaterial realm, portraying the material world as intrinsically evil. The classical Greek philosophers and many Eastern religions espouse some version of dualism, as did several heretical groups like the Gnostics and the Manichaeans during the early days of the church. Dualism excludes any notion that God is almighty. In dualism there can be no ultimate victory over evil. The conflict between good and evil is an everlasting battle that will continue throughout eternity.

MONISM

Monism holds that there is only one reality—either physical or spiritual—and that the other apparent aspect is simply an illusion. But monists disagree about which feature is real and which feature is illusory. Immaterialist monism (such as Hinduism) contends that the spiritual realm is the only true reality. Enlightenment comes when one realizes that the material world is an artifice. Such immaterialist monistic thinking can be found primarily in the Eastern religions, with relatively few adherents in the West (the Christian Science sect is a notable exception).

Monism in Western culture has been predominantly materialistic, and this version of monism entails atheism. Atheists contend that the material world is the sum of reality. Such materialistic monism often is called naturalism (or more specifically, philosophical naturalism). One famous atheist, Carl Sagan, began his discussion of the universe by declaring, “The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” He was not making an empirical observation; he was proclaiming his adherence to materialistic monism.

But the Big Bang cosmology (which most atheists accept) presents a special dilemma for materialistic monism. How can the physical universe be the ultimate reality, since it is admittedly finite in size and duration? Why should it be held in such high esteem? In addition, when materialistic monists deny the

reality of anything immaterial, they find themselves repudiating the essential features of what it means to be a human: the existence of mind, free will, and ultimately personhood. In short, materialists end up denying their own existence.

THEISM

Theism contends that reality is greater than the observable cosmos. God transcends the universe, and he is its Creator. Biblical theism holds to the following features: 1. CREATION OUT OF NOTHING
The Bible teaches *creatio ex nihilo*—"creation out of nothing." The apostle Paul declares that God "calls things into existence that do not exist" (Rm 4:17) while the author of Hebrews rejects any notion that the world was created out of preexisting materials (Heb 11:3).

2. GOD ALONE IS ETERNAL.

Creation began in time; space and time are elements of creation. Whether or not time existed before the creation of the universe is a matter of ongoing discussion among Christian scholars, but the majority position has been that time is an element of creation that came into being at the initial moment of creation. Only God is self-sufficient and eternal; therefore, only God is worthy of worship. All other worship is idolatry because everything else has had a beginning and has existed only for a finite period.

3. GOD IS DISTINCT FROM CREATION.

Since God alone is eternal and called the universe into existence out of nothing, then there is a fundamental difference between the Creator and that which he created. God and the world are not on a continuum, nor is the world an extension of the essence of God. Prior to creation, God was the sum total of reality. To allow that which is not God to exist was in itself an act of condescension.

4. GOD CREATED WITH FREEDOM.

God did not create out of any necessity or out of any sense of lack. From all eternity God has been and continues to be a perfect fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creation added nothing to God. He has always and perfectly possessed all excellences. If God had chosen never to create, it would not have detracted from his glory. This means that nothing internal or external necessitated creation. Not only could God have refrained from creating, he also could have created a world very different from this one.

5. GOD CREATED A WORLD THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER.

God is both great and good. Correspondingly, he has created a world that is consistent with his great nature and his good character; so, creation is also both great and good. It displays his glory, power, and majesty. The cosmos also displays the goodness of God. The universe is a good universe because a good God created it. This means that there is nothing intrinsically evil about creation. The creation account repeatedly reports that God looked on what he had made and "saw that [it] was good" (Gn 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). Even in light of the effects of the fall, the Bible still describes the material creation as "good" (Nm 14:7; 1Tm 4:4-5). The universe displays God's goodness and wisdom (Pr 3:19-20; 8:22-36).

6. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER CREATION.

The all-inclusive nature of creation entails God's control and rule over all of it. Genesis opens with "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1). He intends the expression "heavens and the earth" to communicate that he created *everything*, from A to Z. In other ancient Near Eastern accounts of origins, certain entities were presented as adversaries and competitors to the creator deity. Moses presents all such elements—the deep and darkness, the celestial bodies, the fearsome beasts—as subjects created by and obedient to God.

7. GOD CONTINUES TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH CREATION.

God is not an apathetic, absentee landlord. The Bible teaches that at every level God constantly involves himself with creation. God is simultaneously transcendently above and immanently within creation. By transcendence we mean that God is distinct from and greater than creation. Yet, at the same time, the Bible affirms God's immanence within it. This means he is omnipresent, and he is thoroughly and meticulously involved in every aspect of the universe (Ac 17:25-28).

In sum, theism holds that God, without opposition or equal, called the universe into existence out of nothing for his own good purposes. In contrast to dualism or monism, theism presents a hopeful, optimistic view of the cosmos. Though evil is in the world, it is not an eternal feature interwoven into the essence of nature. God has redeemed the world through his Son, Jesus Christ, and he is accomplishing his purposes according to his eternal plan (Eph 1:11).

KENNETH D. KEATHLEY

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand or marked off
the heavens with the span of his hand? †
Who has gathered the dust of the earth in a measure or weighed the mountains
on a balance
and the hills on the scales?
13 Who has directed † the Spirit of the LORD, or who gave him counsel? †
14 Who did he consult?
Who gave him understanding †
and taught him the paths of justice?
Who taught him knowledge
and showed him the way of understanding?
15 Look, the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are considered as a speck
of dust on the scales; he lifts up the islands like fine dust.
16 Lebanon's cedars are not enough for fuel, or its animals enough
for a burnt offering. †
17 All the nations are as nothing before him; they are considered by him
as empty nothingness. †

18 With whom will you compare God?
What likeness will you set up for comparison with him? †
19 An idol? — something that a smelter casts and a metalworker plates with gold
and makes silver chains for? †

20 A poor person contributes wood for a pedestal that will not rot. †
He looks for a skilled craftsman
to set up an idol that will not fall over. †

21 Do you not know? †
Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you
from the beginning?
Have you not considered
the foundations of the earth? †
22 God is enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. †
He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth †
and spreads them out like a tent to live in. †
23 He reduces princes to nothing †
and makes judges of the earth like a wasteland.
24 They are barely planted, barely sown, their stem hardly takes root in the ground when he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind carries them away like stubble. †

25 "To whom will you compare me, †
or who is my equal? " asks the Holy One.
26 Look up † and see!
Who created † these?
He brings out the stars by number;
he calls all of them by name. †
Because of his great power and strength,
not one of them is missing.

27 Jacob, why do you say, and, Israel, why do you assert:
"My way is hidden from the LORD, and my claim is ignored by my God"? †
28 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?

The LORD is the everlasting God, †
the Creator of the whole earth.
He never becomes faint or weary;
there is no limit to his understanding. †
29 He gives strength to the faint and strengthens the powerless.
30 Youths may become faint and weary, and young men stumble and fall,
31 but those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; †
they will soar on wings like eagles; †
they will run and not become weary,
they will walk and not faint.

40:2 Lit *Speak to the heart of* **40:5** Lit *flesh* **40:6** DSS, LXX, Vg read *I said* **40:7** Or *wind*, or *Spirit* **40:7** Lit *it* **40:13** Or *measured*, or *comprehended* **40:20** Or *who is too poor for such an offering*, or *who chooses mulberry wood as a votive gift* ; Hb obscure **40:26** Lit *Lift up your eyes on high*
40:1 Is 12:1; 49:13; 51:3,12; 52:9; 61:2; 66:13; Jr 31:10-14; Zph 3:14-17; 2Co 1:4 **40:2** Is 13:11 **40:2** Lv 26:41,43; Is 27:9 **40:2** Ex 22:7-8; Jr 16:18; Zch 9:12; Rv 18:6 **40:3** Mal 3:1; 4:5-6 **40:3** Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4; Jn 1:23 **40:4-5** Lk 3:5-6 **40:5** Is 35:2 **40:5** Is 52:10; Jl 2:28 **40:5** Is 1:20; 34:16; 58:14 **40:6-8** 1Pt 1:24-25 **40:6** Jb 14:2; Ps 102:11; 103:15 **40:8** Jms 1:11 **40:8** Is 55:11; 59:21; Mk 13:31; Lk 21:33 **40:9** Is 52:7 **40:9** Is 61:1 **40:9** Is 25:9; 35:2 **40:10** Is 59:16-18 **40:10** Is 62:11; Rv 22:12 **40:11** Jr 31:10; Ezk 34:12-14,23,31; Mc 5:4; Jn 10:11,14-16 **40:12** Is 48:13; Heb 1:10-12 **40:13** Rm 11:34; 1Co 2:16 **40:14** Jb 21:22; Col 2:3 **40:16** Ps 50:9-11; Mc 6:6-7; Heb 10:5-9 **40:17** Is 29:7 **40:18** Ex 8:10; 15:11; 1Sm 2:2; Is 40:25; 46:5; Mc 7:18; Ac 17:29 **40:19** Is 2:20; 30:22; 41:7; 44:10 **40:20** 1Sm 5:3; Is 44:9-15; 46:6-7; Jr 10:3-5 **40:21** Ps 19:1; 50:6; Is 37:26; Ac 14:17; Rm 1:19-20 **40:21** Is 48:13; 51:13 **40:22** Nm 13:33 **40:22** Jb 9:8; Is 37:16; 42:5; 44:24 **40:22** Jb 36:29; Ps 18:11; 19:4; 104:2 **40:23** Jb 12:21; Ps 107:40; Is 34:12 **40:24** Ps 1:4; Is 41:2,16; 64:6; Ezk 17:10,24; Nah 1:4 **40:25** Is 46:5; Ac 17:29 **40:26** Is 42:5; 48:12-13 **40:26** Ps 147:4-5 **40:27** Is 7:13; 49:4,14 **40:28** Gn 21:33; Ps 90:2 **40:28** Ps 147:5; Rm 11:33 **40:31** Jb 17:9; Ps 103:5; 2Co 4:8-10,16; 12:9 **40:31** Ex 19:4; Dt 32:11; Lk 18:1; 2Co 4:1,16; Gl 6:9; Heb 12:3

40:1-2 Isaiah 40 marks a major juncture in the book of Isaiah. Although Isaiah 1–39 certainly sounds strong notes of salvation and restoration, Isaiah 40–66 brings out these themes even more. The poetic style characterizing most of the book is also taken up again. **Comfort** for **Jerusalem** and atonement for its sin had also been predicted in 12:1; 27:9; 33:24.

40:3-5 Whereas elsewhere the saved were described as traveling on a “way” (see the note on 35:8-10), here it is God himself who does so (vv. 3,9-11; 2:3). He is pictured as coming across **the wilderness** to establish his rule and bring his reward (v. 10). NT authors connect the voice crying out in the wilderness here with John the Baptist (Mt 3:3; Mk 1:2-3; Lk 3:4-6; Jn 1:23). Elevation of **every valley** seems to relate to the lifting up of the humble (57:15; 61:1) and the bringing down of mountains to the humiliation of the proud (2:14) and idols (57:7; 65:7). Whereas Isaiah alone had seen God’s glory in 6:5, in the future **all humanity together will see it** (v. 5). The exaltation of God and his word also fits with the abasement of mankind in verses 6-8,15-17 (see 2:22).

40:18-20 The exaltation of God is contrasted not only with the pride of man but also with idols (see v. 25; 2:20-21). Contrary to the arrogant boasting of Assyria (36:18-20; 37:12), he is not like these man-made gods but is the Creator and sustainer of the heavens and the earth (vv. 12,22,26,28).

40:27-31 This beloved passage begins with a complaint from Israel regarding God's apparent disregard of its cause (v. 27; 49:14). The people are reminded of his eternality, power, sovereignty, wisdom, and especially his salvation of those **who trust in** him (vv. 28-31). These attributes had also been highlighted in verses 10-14,22-23.

THE LORD VERSUS THE NATIONS' GODS

41 "Be silent before me, coasts and islands! †
And let peoples renew their strength.
Let them approach; let them testify;
let's come together for the trial.
2 Who has stirred up someone from the east? †
In righteousness he calls him to serve. † † †
The LORD hands nations over to him, †
and he subdues kings.
He makes them like dust with his sword,
like wind-driven stubble with his bow.
3 He pursues them, going on safely, hardly touching the path with his feet.
4 Who has performed and done this, calling the generations from the beginning?
I am the LORD, the first and with the last † — I am he." †

5 The coasts and islands see and are afraid, the whole earth trembles. †
They approach and arrive.
6 Each one helps the other, and says to another, "Take courage! "
7 The craftsman encourages the metalworker; †
the one who flattens with the hammer
encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good."
He fastens it with nails so that it will not fall over. †

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

In the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist—in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless—I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality—namely my idea of justice—was full of sense" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*). This quote helps us to see that there are two basic ways of

seeking to establish God's existence, (1) to assume God's existence and argue from that presupposition or (2) to make a case for God's existence and argue to that belief on the basis of evidence. Regardless of approach, belief in the existence of God has tremendous Christian worldview implications.

Lewis seems to embody methods of both assuming and arguing for God's existence. So does the Bible. Both are legitimate in a Christian worldview.

ASSUMING GOD'S EXISTENCE

We begin with the first of the two methods: assuming God does exist. Indeed, this is exactly what the Bible does: "In the beginning God . . . " (Gn 1:1). There is no argument for God's existence; rather, God is assumed to be there and then he is declared to be the Creator of heaven and earth in the creation account (Gn 1:1–2:25). His existence is assumed in the entire biblical narrative of creation, the fall, and redemption.

Further supporting the assumption of God's existence is the fact that he left an abiding sense of himself in all human hearts—the *sensus divinitatis* (cp. Ec 3:11). We are inescapably religious by nature. We all have the seed of religion (*semen religionis*) implanted within us, though idolatry corrupts it. The existence of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the One Being and three persons—makes sense of things. The lenses of Scripture add clarity and proper focus. That's why many believe we must assume God's existence in the first place. God's existence is the primary assumption or presupposition.

That's the assumption Lewis made at first, until he realized he had divinized himself in assuming or presupposing his own sense of justice as the basis by which to evaluate the rationality of the whole universe. Nevertheless, eventually he learned he needed a better explanation for justice than simply himself and his own thoughts. Hence, he later argued for God as the best explanation for all things, justice included. Many, before and after Lewis, have argued similarly in presenting evidence for God's existence.

ARGUING FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

Thus we have a second method of establishing the existence of God. Rather than emphatically assuming that he is there, we make a case for God on the basis of existing things: God himself is the only adequate cause to explain the effects we find in the world. The evidence insists that God exists.

There is a biblical basis for this approach. In Hebrews 3:4, we read: "Now every house is built by someone, but the one who built everything is God." If houses must have builders, then so must everything else—including the world itself, its design, and its beauty, as well as the morality that is found in the world and in us.

This is why some have preferred to argue for God's existence on the basis of cause and effect with cosmological arguments: effects have causes (so modern science agrees), and God is the only adequate cause to explain the effect that is the entire universe. After all, "every house is built by someone, but the one who built everything is God" (Heb 3:4).

This form of reasoning leads some to prefer teleological arguments for establishing God's existence: design presupposes a designer; great design calls for a great designer, and since there is great design in this world (like male and female sexuality, eyesight, hearing, taste, DNA, the human brain, etc.), there must be a great designer behind it, and this must be God. God exists as the intelligent Designer of all things.

Still others, along these lines, have favored aesthetic arguments for God's existence: beauty exists and God is its ultimate source, whether that beauty is of natural or human origin. Consider the Rocky Mountains or Big Sur. J. S. Bach and the Beatles have produced some beautiful music. And not only are such things beautiful, but humans share the ability to perceive them as such.

For C. S. Lewis, morality, or the inherent sense of right and wrong, was the clue to the meaning of the universe. Morality (including justice) was certainly not rooted in Lewis himself (or any other human), but rather in the Trinitarian God. Often called the moral argument for God's existence, the idea is that the moral notions and motions within us (conscience) show that God—not herd instinct, not social convention, not accidental natural law, nor our fanciful imaginations—must be their ultimate source. God is the cause, and morality is the effect. This is the law of human nature. As Romans 2:15 says, God's moral law is inscribed

on the hearts of all, even in the hearts of those who do not know God personally.

Or it could even be that we don't need to argue for God's existence on the basis of things we find in ourselves or in the world in a cause and effect manner. Perhaps the very idea of God who is an absolutely perfect being lacking nothing, including existence, must exist—necessarily. This is an example of an ontological argument for God's existence.

GOD'S EXISTENCE AND HUMANITY

God's existence, whether assumed or argued, is most consequential for thought and action in a Christian worldview. Ultimate reality is to be found in the one God who exists eternally as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is the Creator, Judge, and Redeemer of the world.

Additionally, the world is not just nature, but creation since God the Creator made it. His glory is revealed in everything (Is 6:3). Furthermore, we humans are God's image and likeness. As a result, we possess value, dignity, and worth. All of our human powers to think, know, experience, make, imagine, choose, and love come from him. Also, God gave us an original commission to exercise dominion over the earth as its stewards, with corresponding environmental responsibilities. We are to work the earth and make something of it, and we are to watch over it carefully (Gn 2:15).

It is even possible for us to rebel against God. Yet if we do, we have to use the very faculties he has given us, like reason, to try to thwart him. Of course, we cannot. Despite our futile attempts at rebellion, God in his kindness and grace has redeemed all things in Jesus Christ. Ultimately, he will complete that salvation at his second coming, though we experience it now. He has made all things new, including his followers. He has established the church as the body of Christ in the world. In our personal lives, we have holes in our souls that only God can fill, and he will do it if we trust and believe in Jesus. As Augustine (AD 354–430) said in his spiritual autobiography *Confessions*, "Our hearts are restless [God,] until they rest in you."

CONCLUSION

Since God exists, knowledge is also possible, and comes in the form of gracious revelation—both natural, through nature and for all—and special, made known in the inspired words of Scripture. We, too, have the ability to comprehend this knowledge and God's truth about all things.

Morality, ethics, and beauty are objectively rooted in God's character and nature. God's existence is the "rock bottom, irreducible Fact on which all other facts depend" as Lewis argued in *Mere Christianity* (p. 184).

DAVID K. NAUGLE

8 But you, Israel, my servant, †
Jacob, whom I have chosen, †
descendant of Abraham, my friend † — 9 I brought † you from the ends
of the earth and called you from its farthest corners.
I said to you: You are my servant;
I have chosen you; I haven't rejected you. †
10 Do not fear, for I am with you; †
do not be afraid, for I am your God. †
I will strengthen you; I will help you;

I will hold on to you with my righteous right hand. †

11 Be sure that all who are enraged against you will be ashamed and disgraced; †
those who contend with you
will become as nothing and will perish.
12 You will look for those who contend with you, but you will not find them.
Those who war against you
will become absolutely nothing.
13 For I am the LORD your God, †
who holds your right hand,
who says to you, 'Do not fear,
I will help you.
14 Do not fear, you worm Jacob, †
you men † of Israel.
I will help you' —
this is the LORD's declaration.
Your Redeemer † is the Holy One of Israel. †
15 See, I will make you into a sharp threshing board, new, with many teeth.
You will thresh mountains and pulverize them and make hills into chaff. †
16 You will winnow them †
and a wind will carry them away,
a whirlwind will scatter them.
But you will rejoice in the LORD; you will boast in the Holy One of Israel.

17 The poor and the needy seek water, but there is none; their tongues are parched with thirst.
I will answer them. †
I am the LORD, the God of Israel. I will not abandon them.
18 I will open rivers on the barren heights, †
and springs in the middle of the plains.
I will turn the desert into a pool
and dry land into springs. †
19 I will plant cedars, acacias, myrtles, and olive trees in the wilderness. †
I will put juniper trees,

elms, and cypress trees together in the desert, [20] so that all may see and know,
consider and understand,
that the hand of the LORD has done this, †
the Holy One of Israel has created † it.

[21] "Submit your case," says the LORD.
"Present your arguments," says Jacob's King.
[22] "Let them come and tell us what will happen. †
Tell us the past events,
so that we may reflect on them
and know the outcome,
or tell us the future.
[23] Tell us the coming events, †
then we will know that you are gods.
Indeed, do something good or bad,
then we will be in awe † when we see it.
[24] Look, you are nothing †
and your work is worthless.
Anyone who chooses you is detestable.

[25] "I have stirred up one from the north, † and he has come, one from the east †
who invokes my † name. †
He will march over rulers as if they were mud, like a potter who treads the clay.
[26] Who told about this from the beginning, so that we might know,
and from times past,
so that we might say, 'He is right'?
No one announced it,
no one told it,
no one heard your words.
[27] I was the first to say to Zion, †
'Look! Here they are! '
And I gave Jerusalem a herald with good news. †
[28] When I look, there is no one; there is no counselor among them;
when I ask them, they have nothing to say. †

29 Look, all of them are a delusion; †
their works are nonexistent;
their images are wind and emptiness.

41:2 Or *Righteousness calls him to serve* **41:2** Lit *to his foot* **41:9** Or *seized* **41:14** LXX reads *small number* ; DSS read *dead ones* **41:23** DSS read *we may hear* **41:25** DSS read *his* **41:27** Lit *First to Zion* **41:29** DSS, Syr read *are nothing*
41:1 Is 11:11; Hab 2:20; Zch 2:13 **41:2** Is 41:25; 45:1-3; 46:11; Rv 16:12 **41:2** Is 42:6 **41:2** 2Ch 36:23; Ezr 1:2 **41:4** Is 43:10; 44:6; Rv 1:8,17; 22:13 **41:4** Is 43:13; 46:4; 48:12 **41:5** Ps 67:7 **41:7** Is 40:19 **41:7** Is 40:20; 46:7 **41:8** Is 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2,21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3; 54:17; Ezk 28:25; 37:25; Lk 1:54 **41:8** Is 42:1; 43:10,20; 44:1-2; 45:4; 49:7; 65:9,15,22 **41:8** 2Ch 20:7; Jms 2:23 **41:9** Is 43:5-7 **41:10** Gn 26:24; 28:15; Is 43:5; Jr 1:19; 15:20; 42:11 **41:10** Ezk 34:31 **41:10** Ex 15:6,12; Ps 18:35; 48:10; 63:8; 138:7; 139:10 **41:11** Is 45:24 **41:13** Is 43:3 **41:14** Jb 25:6; Ps 22:6 **41:14** Is 43:14; 44:6,24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7,26; 54:5,8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16 **41:14** Is 1:4 **41:15** Mc 4:13; Hab 3:12 **41:16** Jr 51:2 **41:17** Is 43:20; 44:3; 49:10; 55:1 **41:18** Is 30:25 **41:18** Ps 107:35; Is 35:6-7; 43:19 **41:19** Is 35:1; 55:13; 60:13 **41:20** Jb 12:9; Is 66:14 **41:20** Is 4:5 **41:22** Is 44:7-8; 45:21; 46:10 **41:23** Is 42:9; 45:3; Jn 13:19 **41:24** Ps 115:8; Is 44:9; 1Co 8:4 **41:25** Jr 50:3 **41:25** Is 41:2; 46:11 **41:25** Ezr 1:2-4 **41:27** Is 40:9; 44:28; 52:7; Nah 1:15 **41:28** Is 46:7

41:1-4 The focus shifts from Israel to the whole world, as represented by the **islands** and **peoples** (v. 1). The purpose of verses 2-4 is to declare that this mighty conqueror, probably Cyrus the ruler of the Medes and the Persians (45:1), has come according to the sovereign plan of God.

41:6-7 Despite their fear of impending judgment, the nations would continue to cling to their idols (v. 7). The uselessness of these false gods is again illustrated through their need to be fastened in place so as not to **fall over** (see 40:20).

41:8-10 Whereas "the whole earth trembles" (v. 5), Israel need not fear because God has chosen them and is with them. His bringing them **from the ends of the earth** alludes to regathering from exile (v. 9; 11:11-12). They are called God's **servant** (vv. 8-9), as in some other passages (e.g., 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2). This same designation can be used to refer specifically to the individual who will come to redeem Israel and all the peoples of the earth (the Messiah) (e.g., 42:1; 49:5; 52:13; 53:11).

41:18-20 The description of restoration in terms of abundant water and plant life parallels previous passages (30:23-26; 32:20; 33:21). These are also linked to the outpouring of the Spirit in 32:15 and 44:3.

41:25-29 The Lord again defends his supremacy over other gods by appealing to his foreknowledge and sovereignty over a coming conqueror (vv. 2,25-26). This event is also linked to the restoration of **Zion** (v. 27; 40:9).

THE SERVANT'S MISSION

42 "This † is my servant; † I strengthen him, this is my chosen one; †
I delight in him. †
I have put my Spirit on him; †
he will bring justice † to the nations. †
2 He will not cry out or shout or make his voice heard in the streets.

3 He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick; he
will faithfully bring justice.
4 He will not grow weak or be discouraged until he has established justice
on earth.
The coasts and islands will wait for his instruction." †

RELIGIOUS NATURALISM

Religious naturalism is an approach to life and reality that maintains a spiritual approach to life without affirming the normal aspects of the supernatural found in traditional Christian theism. In this worldview, the concept of "God" is emptied of its traditional meaning. Jesus Christ is thought to be nothing more than a popularizer of Hebrew spirituality.

Like other forms of naturalism, religious naturalism holds that the phenomena of the world can be reduced to material substances and physical processes. That is, despite the spiritual flavoring of this worldview, it says that all reality is physical—which is why its proponents seek scientific, as opposed to supernatural, explanations of events in the world.

Religious naturalism is "religious" or "spiritual" in nature not because it affirms traditional understandings of supernatural beings or supernatural realms, but because it continues to focus on religious experiences. One "encounters the divine" inasmuch as one finds meaning and significance in a personal encounter with the world itself.

For the religious naturalist, reality may be purely physical in nature, but this does not mean that it lacks value, dignity, or importance. This religious perspective places an incredibly high emphasis on reality as a unified whole. Where traditional Christian theism sees a sharp distinction between Creator and creation as two fundamentally different kinds of things, religious naturalism rejects this distinction in favor of a view that emphasizes the oneness of all things. On this account, there is no ontological difference between spiritual and physical things. Both belong to the same category and to the same realm. Thus, religious naturalism offers a unified explanation of the world and all things in it.

RELIGIOUS NATURALISTS AND GOD

While some religious naturalists still hold to a concept of "God," most do not. On this view, a transcendent "God" as a supernatural being distinct from nature is not required for explaining the world or for finding value within it. This does not necessarily amount to a denial of God's existence on their part, but merely a revision of the concept.

Like pantheists, religious naturalists see God and the universe (or some part of the universe) as one and the same thing. Thus, humans can find all the value, beauty, and significance needed for maintaining a religious approach to life. When people recognize, experience, or appreciate the oneness of reality, they participate in religious activity and transcend themselves to grasp a reality larger and greater than their own individual lives.

Religious naturalism also maintains a belief in the sacred. "The sacred" is not something that is spiritually separate from the physical world. Rather, whatever is considered most important to human life, or of greatest value within life, is thought to be sacred.

Unlike nonreligious versions of naturalism, religious naturalism believes that a religious response to life is

required by human experience in this world. They note that the irreligious outlook on life is at odds with our feelings, sense of meaning, and experience of beauty. These aspects of life mandate a spiritual dimension of life that naturalism itself cannot satisfy.

THE ROOTS OF RELIGIOUS NATURALISM

Religious naturalism has roots in a wide variety of philosophical and theological movements throughout history. Specifically, it is connected to (1) ancient pagan belief systems that emphasized similar religious and scientific dispositions; (2) Protestant emphases on religious experience and language; (3) seventeenth-century philosopher Baruch Spinoza and his pantheistic account of the universe; (4) Enlightenment attempts to recast Christian concepts of morality without positing the Christian God; (5) modern preferences for purely scientific explanations of reality; and (6) contemporary advocates of religious naturalism like Jerome Stone, George Santayana, and Ursula Goodenough, who now promote this perspective.

Religious naturalism has many important aspects in common with each of these, but there are also some critical differences. In particular, it is different from (1) ancient pagan thought in that it possesses a better understanding of the physical world and proposes a more sophisticated view of the aesthetic aspects of life; (2) it rejects the ontological content—God and the supernatural realm—of Protestant Christianity; (3) in opposition to Spinoza, religious naturalism affirms a man-centered view of the universe; and (4) it rejects the Enlightenment and contemporary hostility toward the religious.

CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS NATURALISM

Christians will likely agree with several features of religious naturalism. They will, for example, probably agree that our experience in this world demands a religious response. According to nonreligious naturalism, there is nothing but nature and no need for a religious response to it. Nonreligious naturalism denies that there is any meaning or purpose in the universe or to human life. All appearances to the contrary are just that, appearances. But the religious naturalists push back against this, claiming that the universe and human life are in fact filled with meaning, purpose, beauty, and significance. Any approach that denies these realities is simply deficient.

Christians will also likely agree with religious naturalists in their support of traditional ethical principles and affirmation of morality. Like traditional Christian theism, religious naturalism believes that some things are actually wrong and others are actually right. The two perspectives may differ over what those things might be, but both perspectives claim that it is possible and necessary to do ethics and that religion plays a part in this.

Some Christians, though not all, may also agree with religious naturalism's pursuit of scientific explanations for things in the world. Many Christians argue that nature and revelation both come from God and are consistent with each other. But there are disagreements over which discipline—science or theology—has authority over the other.

Of course, Christians also have some sharp disagreement with religious naturalism. First, Christians argue that religious naturalism has a major problem when it comes to the question of origins—where did the universe and all that is in it come from? This universe is finite (despite how big it is) and contingent, which means it is limited and depends on something else for its existence. Without a Creator that is distinct from the creation—as affirmed by Christian theism—it is difficult to see how the universe could come into existence. In Christian theism, God is a necessary being that exists before and beyond the universe with power and wisdom. This, according to Christian theism, is how the universe came into being.

Second, while Christians will agree with religious naturalism's affirmation of meaning and purpose in life, Christians will argue that their affirmation is bankrupt. Simply put, religious naturalism affirms religious ideas without having the kind of ontology that makes these ideas possible in the first place. Religious naturalism, despite its attempt to be religious is still naturalism and empties the concept of God—if the idea of God is retained at all. The question is not whether religious naturalism affirms meaning and purpose, but whether or not it makes any sense to affirm this without the God of Christian theism.

Third, Christians will argue that the ethical affirmations of religious naturalism are empty. This resembles the concern that religious naturalism's claim to meaning and purpose is empty, but potentially worse and of more significance. Religious naturalists attempt to ground morality in the universe itself, but these efforts are hard-pressed to do so.

Fourth, and finally, Christians obviously object to the idea that Jesus Christ was merely a popularizer of Hebrew spirituality. Given the historical evidence in support of the resurrection and the testimony of Scripture itself, Christianity contends that Christ is the Son of God and Lord over all things.

JAMES K. DEW

5 This is what God, the LORD, says — who created the heavens and stretched
them out, †
who spread out the earth and what comes from it, †
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk on it † — 6 "I am the LORD. I have called you for
a righteous purpose, † †
and I will hold you by your hand. †
I will watch over you, and I will appoint you to be a covenant for the people †
and a light to the nations, †
7 in order to open blind eyes, †
to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, †
and those sitting in darkness from the prison house.
8 I am the LORD. That is my name, and I will not give my glory to another †
or my praise to idols.
9 The past events have indeed happened.
Now I declare new events; †
I announce them to you before they occur."

A SONG OF PRAISE

10 Sing a new song to the LORD; †
sing his praise from the ends of the earth, you who go down to the sea with all
that fills it, †
you coasts and islands with your † inhabitants.

11 Let the desert and its cities shout, the settlements where Kedar dwells
cry aloud. †

Let the inhabitants of Sela sing for joy; †
let them cry out from the mountaintops.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD and declare his praise in the coasts
and islands.

13 The LORD advances like a warrior; he stirs up his zeal like a soldier. †
He shouts, he roars aloud,
he prevails over his enemies.

14 "I have kept silent from ages past; I have been quiet and restrained myself. †

But now, I will groan like a woman in labor, †
gasping breathlessly.
15 I will lay waste mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation.
I will turn rivers into islands

and dry up marshes. †

16 I will lead the blind by a way they did not know; †
I will guide them on paths they have not known.

I will turn darkness to light in front of them †

and rough places into level ground. †
This is what I will do for them,

and I will not abandon them. †

17 They will be turned back and utterly ashamed — those who trust in an idol
and say to a cast image,

'You are our gods! ' †

ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS AND DEAFNESS

18 "Listen, you deaf!

Look, you blind, so that you may see. †

19 Who is blind but my servant, †
or deaf like my messenger I am sending?

Who is blind like my dedicated one, †

or blind like the servant of the LORD?

20 Though seeing many things, † you pay no attention.
Though his ears are open, he does not listen." †

21 Because of his righteousness, the LORD was pleased to magnify his instruction
and make it glorious.

22 But this is a people plundered and looted, all of them trapped in holes
or imprisoned in dungeons.
They have become plunder †
with no one to rescue them
and loot, with no one saying, "Give it back! "

23 Who among you will hear this?
Let him listen and obey in the future.

24 Who gave Jacob to the robber, †
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD?
Have we not sinned against him?
They were not willing to walk in his ways, and they would not listen
to his instruction.

25 So he poured out his furious anger and the power of war on Jacob.
It surrounded him with fire, but he did not know it; it burned him, but he didn't
take it to heart. †

42:1 DSS read *his justice* **42:6** Or *you by my righteousness* ; lit *you in righteousness* **42:10** Lit *their* **42:19** Hb obscure **42:20** Alt Hb tradition reads *You see many things;* **42:24** Lit *to loot*
42:1-4 Mt 12:18-21 **42:1** Is 49:3-7; 50:10 **42:1** Is 41:8-9; Lk 9:35; 23:35; 1Pt 2:4,6 **42:1** Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; 2Pt 1:17 **42:1** Nm 11:16-17; 1Sm 16:13; Ps 33:6; 139:7; Is 11:2; 40:7; 59:21; Lk 4:18-21 **42:1** Is 2:4; 51:4-5 **42:4** Is 11:11; 24:15; 42:10,12; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9; 66:19 **42:5** Ps 104:2; Is 40:22 **42:5** Ps 136:6; Is 34:1 **42:5** Jb 12:10; 33:4; Is 57:16; Dn 5:23; Ac 17:25 **42:6** Is 5:7,16; 9:7; 11:4-5; 32:1; 41:2; 45:8,13; 51:5-8; 56:1; 60:21; Jr 23:5-6 **42:6** Is 41:10,13 **42:6** Is 49:8 **42:6** Is 49:6 **42:7** Ac 26:17-18 **42:7** Is 35:5; 49:9; 61:1; Heb 2:14-15 **42:8** Ex 20:3-5; Is 48:11 **42:9** Is 43:19; 48:3,6; Rv 21:4 **42:10** Ps 33:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9 **42:10** Ps 96:11; 98:7 **42:11** Is 21:16; 60:7 **42:11** Is 16:1 **42:13** Is 9:7; 26:11; 37:32; 59:17 **42:14** Ps 50:21; Is 57:11; 62:1; 64:12; 65:6 **42:14** Is 13:8 **42:15** Is 44:27; 50:2; Nah 1:4-6 **42:16** Is 29:18; 30:21; 32:3; Jr 31:8-9; Lk 1:78-79 **42:16** Eph 5:8 **42:16** Is 40:4; Lk 3:5 **42:16** Jos 1:5; Ps 94:14; Is 41:17; Heb 13:5 **42:17** Ps 97:7; Is 1:29; 44:9,11; 45:16 **42:18** Is 35:5 **42:19** Is 41:8-9; 43:10; 44:1-2,21; 45:4; 48:20; 49:3; 54:17; Ezk 28:25; 37:25; Lk 1:54 **42:20** Rm 2:21-23 **42:22** Dt 1:39; Jr 2:14; Ezk 34:8; 36:4 **42:25** Is 29:13; 47:7; 57:1; Jr 12:11; Hs 7:9

42:1-4 This is the first of four so-called Servant Songs (42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13–53:12) that describe a unique individual who will come to accomplish God's redemptive plan and suffer vicariously to

redeem God's people. Although Israel was just recently called God's "servant" (41:8-9), they were blind and ineffective (42:19-20). Thus, God will bring a new servant out of Israel who will accomplish what they could not. In contrast with useless idols (41:29), God's **servant** enjoys the pleasure of God, is filled with his Spirit, and will bring justice to the world. He is also gentle and meek (vv. 2-3). The descriptors in the present passage are connected with Jesus in Matthew 12:17-21.

42:6-7 In keeping with the messianic prophecy of verses 1-4 (see note), this individual will also be **a covenant for the people and a light to the nations.** These two phrases also appear in 49:6,8 with reference to the Messiah. His giving sight to the blind and freedom to the captives relate to the future salvation he will accomplish (29:18; 35:5; 49:9; 61:1). His foretold arrival will bring glory to God (vv. 8-9; 40:9; 41:27).

42:10-13 The preceding focus on the "servant" who brings justice to the nations (vv. 1-4) and "glory" to God (v. 8) in an era of "new things" (lit v. 9) is naturally followed by this call to the world to **sing a new song** (v. 10) and to **give glory** to God (v. 12). The work of the gentle servant (vv. 2-3) thus relates to the triumphant victory in battle described in verse 13.

42:16-17 After a period of judgment (v. 15), God will **lead the blind** in a new direction, toward **light** and on **level ground.** These metaphors are used in other passages for future salvation (9:2; 30:21; 40:4; 42:6). The Lord's mighty redemptive acts again differentiate him from useless idols (v. 8; 30:22; 41:29). The phrase **they did not know** may parallel similar phrases in 52:15 and 64:4.

42:18-22 The **blind** and **deaf servant** here is Israel (see 41:8-9; 43:8), which has already been repeatedly characterized as lacking spiritual sense (6:9-10; 26:10-11; 29:9,18). As such, the nation proved utterly ineffective in achieving God's purposes (26:18). In contrast, the messianic servant of verses 1-4 is empowered by the Spirit and brings justice to the nations. Significantly, he also comes to "open blind eyes" and to free captives (v. 7). Israel's sins would lead to imprisonment (v. 22). The ministry of the perfect servant to the failed servant is even more clearly mentioned in 49:5.

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

43 Now this is what the LORD says — the one who created you, Jacob,
and the one who formed you, Israel † — "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; †
I have called you by your name; you are mine. †
2 I will be with you †
when you pass through the waters, †
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not overwhelm you.
You will not be scorched
when you walk through the fire, †
and the flame will not burn you.
3 For I am the LORD your God, †
the Holy One of Israel, and your Savior. †

I have given Egypt as a ransom for you,
Cush and Seba in your place.
4 Because you are precious in my sight †
and honored, and I love you, †
I will give people in exchange for you
and nations instead of your life.
5 Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your descendants from the east, †
and gather you from the west. †
6 I will say to the north, ‘Give them up! ’
and to the south, ‘Do not hold them back! ’
Bring my sons from far away, †
and my daughters from the ends of the earth † — 7 everyone who bears my name and is created for my glory.
I have formed them; indeed, I have made them.”

8 Bring out a people who are blind, yet have eyes, †
and are deaf, yet have ears.
9 All the nations are gathered together, and the peoples are assembled. †
Who among them can declare this, †
and tell us the former things?
Let them present their witnesses
to vindicate themselves,
so that people may hear and say, “It is true.”
10 “You are my witnesses” † — this is the LORD’s declaration — “and my servant whom I have chosen, †
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he. †
No god was formed before me,
and there will be none after me. †
11 I — I am the LORD.
Besides me, there is no Savior. †
12 I alone declared, saved, and proclaimed — and not some foreign god † among you.

So you are my witnesses” —
this is the LORD’s declaration — “and † I am God. †
13 Also, from today on I am he alone, and none can rescue from my power. †
I act, and who can reverse it? ” †

GOD’S DELIVERANCE OF REBELLIOUS ISRAEL

14 This is what the LORD, your Redeemer, † the Holy One of Israel † says:

Because of you, I will send an army † to Babylon and bring all of them as fugitives, †
even the Chaldeans † in the ships in which they rejoice. †
15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.

16 This is what the LORD says — who makes a way in the sea,
and a path through raging water, †
17 who brings out the chariot and horse, †
the army and the mighty one together
(they lie down, they do not rise again;
they are extinguished, put out like a wick †) — 18 “Do not remember the past events, pay no attention to things of old. †
19 Look, I am about to do something new; †
even now it is coming. Do you not see it?
Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness, †
rivers † in the desert.
20 Wild animals — jackals and ostriches — will honor me,
because I provide water in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, †
to give drink to my chosen people.
21 The people I formed for myself will declare my praise. †

22 “But, Jacob, you have not called on me, because, Israel, you have become weary of me. †

23 You have not brought me your sheep for burnt offerings or honored me
with your sacrifices. †
I have not burdened you with offerings
or wearied you with incense. †
24 You have not bought me aromatic cane with silver, or satisfied me
with the fat of your sacrifices.
But you have burdened me with your sins;
you have wearied me † with your iniquities. †

25 "I — I sweep away your transgressions †
for my own sake †
and remember your sins no more. †
26 Remind me. Let's argue the case together. †
Recount the facts, so that you may be vindicated.
27 Your first father sinned, †
and your mediators have rebelled against me. †
28 So I defiled the officers of the sanctuary, and set Jacob apart for destruction †
and Israel for scorn.

43:12 Lit *not a foreigner* **43:12** Or *that* **43:14** *an army* supplied for clarity **43:14** Or *will break down all their bars* **43:14** Hb obscure **43:19** DSS read *paths* **43:23** I.e., with demands for offerings and incense **43:1** Is 43:7,15,21; 44:2,21,24 **43:1** Is 44:22-23; 48:20 **43:1** Gn 32:28; Is 45:3-4 **43:2** Dt 31:6,8,23; Jos 1:5; 3:7; Jr 1:8; 30:11; 46:28 **43:2** Ps 66:12; Is 8:7-8 **43:2** Is 29:6; 30:27-29; Dn 3:25,27 **43:3** Ex 20:2; Is 41:13 **43:3** Is 19:20; 43:11; 45:15,21; 49:26; 60:16; 63:8 **43:4** 2Kg 1:13-14; Ps 36:7; 72:14; Pr 3:15; Is 28:16 **43:4** Is 63:9 **43:5** Is 41:8; 61:9 **43:5** Is 49:12 **43:6** 2Co 6:18 **43:6** Is 45:22 **43:8** Is 6:9; 42:19; Ezk 12:2 **43:9** Is 34:1; 41:1 **43:9** Is 41:22-23,26 **43:10** Is 44:8; Ac 1:8 **43:10** Is 41:8 **43:10** Is 41:4 **43:10** Is 44:6,8; 45:5-6 **43:11** Is 43:3; 45:21; Hs 13:4 **43:12** Ps 46:10; 50:7; Is 45:22; 46:9 **43:13** Dt 32:39; Jn 10:28-29 **43:13** Jb 9:12; Is 14:27 **43:14** Jb 19:25; Ps 19:14; 78:35; Pr 23:11; Is 41:14; Jr 50:34 **43:14** Is 1:4 **43:14** Is 23:13 **43:16** Ex 14:21-22; Ps 77:19; Is 11:15; 44:27; 50:2; 51:10; 63:11-12 **43:17** Ex 15:19 **43:17** Ps 118:12; Is 1:31 **43:18** Is 65:17; Jr 23:7 **43:19** Is 42:9; 48:6; 2Co 5:17 **43:19** Ex 17:6; Nm 20:11; Dt 8:15; Ps 78:16; Is 35:1,6; 41:18-19; 49:10; 51:3 **43:20** Is 41:17-18; 48:21 **43:21** Ps 102:18; Is 42:12; Lk 1:74-75; 1Pt 2:9 **43:22** Mc 6:3; Mal 1:13; 3:14 **43:23** Zch 7:5-6; Mal 1:6-8 **43:24** Ps 95:10; Is 1:14; 7:13; Ezk 6:9; Mal 2:17 **43:24** Is 13:11 **43:25** Is 44:22; 55:7; Jr 50:20; Heb 2:17 **43:25** Is 37:35; 48:9,11; Ezk 36:22 **43:25** Is 38:17; Jr 31:34; Mk 2:7 **43:26** Is 1:18; 41:1; 50:8 **43:27** Is 51:2; Ezk 16:3 **43:27** Is 9:15; 28:7; 29:10; Jr 5:31 **43:28** Is 24:6; 34:5; Jr 24:9; Dn 9:11; Zch 8:13

43:1-7 Despite Israel's blindness, sin, and captivity (42:18-25), God promised to redeem them and bring them back from exile (vv. 3-7). He said twice here that he **created** and **formed** Israel (vv. 1,7), and he will be glorified in its salvation (see v. 21; 44:23; 49:3). The giving of **Egypt as a ransom** (v. 3) and the release of Israelites from all over the earth (vv. 5-6) echoes the exodus (see the note on 11:11-16).

43:8-13 The focus on Israel as God's **chosen** but **blind** servant continues (vv. 8,10; 41:8-9; 42:18-20). His foreknowledge and his salvation will lead them to understand and bear witness that he alone is God (vv. 10-13; 41:25-29). Even the nations will confess that this is so (v. 9).

43:14-20 The Lord will redeem Israel from captivity in **Babylon** (v. 14) just as he redeemed them from Egypt (vv. 16-17). Their future salvation, however, will far exceed the former (vv. 18-19; 65:17). It will be **new** (v. 19; 41:15; 42:9-10), just as **a way in the wilderness** corresponds to but transcends **a way in the sea** (vv. 16,19). Previous passages similarly predicted that the desert would be the locus of salvation (32:16; 35:6; 40:3; 41:18-19).

43:22-26 Israel's future salvation was certain (vv. 14-21) but at the moment they failed to call upon God and had **become weary** of him (v. 22; 40:27). To make matters worse, they had also **wearied** God with their sins (v. 24; 1:13-14). Nevertheless, God will **sweep away** their **transgressions** (lit v. 25; 44:22). Forgiveness had also been coupled with courtroom language in 1:18, and the wiping away of sin here resolves the problem of its stain mentioned in that earlier verse.

SPIRITUAL BLESSING

44 "And now listen, Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen. †
2 This is the word of the LORD your Maker, the one who formed you
from the womb: He will help you.
Do not fear, Jacob my servant,
Jeshurun † whom I have chosen. †
3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit † on your descendants and my blessing
on your offspring.
4 They will sprout among † the grass like poplars by flowing streams.
5 This one will say, 'I am the LORD's'; another will use the name of Jacob;
still another will write on his hand, 'The LORD's,'
and take on the name of Israel."

NO GOD OTHER THAN THE LORD

6 This is what the LORD, the King of Israel and its Redeemer, † the LORD of Armies, says:

I am the first and I am the last. †
There is no God but me. †
7 Who, like me, can announce the future?
Let him say so and make a case before me, †
since I have established an ancient people.

Let these gods declare † the coming things, and what will take place.
8 Do not be startled or afraid.
Have I not told you and declared it long ago?
You are my witnesses! †
Is there any God but me? †
There is no other Rock; † I do not know any.

9 All who make idols are nothing, and what they treasure benefits no one.
Their witnesses do not see or know anything, so they will be put to shame. †
10 Who makes a god or casts a metal image that benefits no one? †
11 Look, all its worshipers will be put to shame, and the craftsmen are humans.
They all will assemble and stand;
they all will be startled and put to shame.

12 The ironworker labors over the coals, shapes the idol with hammers,
and works it with his strong arm.
Also he grows hungry and his strength fails; he doesn't drink water and is faint.
13 The woodworker stretches out a measuring line, he outlines it with a stylus;
he shapes it with chisels
and outlines it with a compass.
He makes it according to a human form, †
like a beautiful person,
to dwell in a temple.
14 He cuts down † cedars for his use, or he takes a cypress or an oak.
He lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest.
He plants a laurel, and the rain makes it grow.
15 A person can use it for fuel.
He takes some of it and warms himself;
also he kindles a fire and bakes bread;
he even makes it into a god and worships it; he makes an idol from it and bows down to it.
16 He burns half of it in a fire, and he roasts meat on that half.
He eats the roast and is satisfied.
He warms himself and says, "Ah!

I am warm, I see the blaze.”
17 He makes a god or his idol with the rest of it.
He bows down to it and worships;
he prays to it, † “Save me, for you are my god.”
18 Such people † do not comprehend and cannot understand,
for he has shut their eyes † so they cannot see, and their minds so they cannot understand.
19 No one comes to his senses; †
no one has the perception or insight to say, “I burned half of it in the fire,
I also baked bread on its coals,
I roasted meat and ate.
Should I make something detestable † with the rest of it?
Should I bow down to a block of wood? ”
20 He feeds on † ashes.
His deceived mind has led him astray,
and he cannot rescue himself,
or say, “Isn’t there a lie in my right hand? ” †

21 Remember these things, Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant;
I formed you, you are my servant;
Israel, you will never be forgotten by me. † †
22 I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, †
and your sins like a mist.
Return to me, †
for I have redeemed you. †
23 Rejoice, heavens, † for the LORD has acted; shout, depths of the earth.
Break out into singing, mountains,
forest, and every tree in it.
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and glorifies himself through Israel. †

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL THROUGH CYRUS

24 This is what the LORD, your Redeemer † who formed you from the womb, †
says:

I am the LORD, who made everything; who stretched out the heavens
by myself; †
who alone spread out the earth;
25 who destroys the omens of the false prophets and makes fools of diviners;
who confounds the wise
and makes their knowledge foolishness; †
26 who confirms the message of his servant and fulfills the counsel
of his messengers; who says to Jerusalem, "She will be inhabited,"
and to the cities of Judah, "They will be rebuilt,"
and I will restore her ruins;
27 who says to the depths of the sea, "Be dry,"
and I will dry up your rivers;
28 who says to Cyrus, † "My shepherd, he will fulfill all my pleasure" †
and says to Jerusalem, "She will be rebuilt," †
and of the temple, "Its foundation will be laid."

44:2 = Upright One **44:4** Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX read *as among* **44:7** Lit *declare them* — **44:14** Lit *To cut down for himself* **44:18** Lit *They* **44:18** Or *for their eyes are shut* **44:19** Lit *No one returns to his heart* **44:20** Or *He shepherds* **44:21** DSS, LXX, Tg read *Israel, do not forget me*
44:1 Is 41:8-9; 42:1; 43:10,20; 45:4; 49:7; 65:9,15,22 **44:2** Dt 32:15; 33:5,26 **44:3** Is 32:15; Jl 2:28 **44:6** Is 41:14; 43:14 **44:6** Is 41:4; 43:10; 48:12; Rv 1:8,17; 22:13 **44:6** Is 43:11; 44:8; 45:5-6 **44:7** Is 41:22,26 **44:8** Is 43:10 **44:8** Dt 4:35,39; 1Sm 2:2; Is 45:5; Jl 2:27 **44:8** Is 17:10; 26:4; 30:29 **44:9** Ps 97:7; Is 42:17; 44:11; 45:16 **44:10** Is 41:29; Jr 10:5; Hab 2:18; Ac 19:26 **44:13** Ps 115:5-7 **44:17** 1Kg 18:26,28; Is 45:20 **44:19** Dt 27:15; 1Kg 11:5,7; 2Kg 23:13-14 **44:20** Is 57:11; 59:3-4,13; Rm 1:25 **44:21** Is 49:15 **44:22** Ps 51:1,9; Is 43:25; Ac 3:19 **44:22** Is 31:6; 55:7 **44:22** Is 43:1; 48:20; 1Co 6:20; 1Pt 1:18-19 **44:23** Ps 69:34; 96:11-12; Is 42:10; 49:13 **44:23** Is 49:3; 61:3 **44:24** Is 41:14; 43:14 **44:24** Is 44:2 **44:24** Is 40:22; 42:5; 45:12,18; 51:13 **44:25** 2Sm 15:31; Jb 5:12-14; Ps 33:10; Is 29:14; Jr 51:57; 1Co 1:20,27 **44:28** Is 45:1 **44:28** Eph 1:9 **44:28** 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1; Is 14:32; 45:13; 54:11

44:1-5 The Lord's chosen servant Israel is again exhorted not to fear because its **Maker** will help (vv. 1-2; 43:1-7). His prediction of future salvation relates the pouring out of **water on the thirsty land** to that of his **Spirit on . . . descendants** (v. 3). This connection sheds further light on the meaning of passages that describe the restoration of the land primarily in terms of the former (e.g., 35:6-7; 41:18; 43:19-20). Accordingly, Israel's **offspring** are likened to **poplars by flowing streams** (v. 4; 41:19; 61:3). Such a connection between water and the Spirit is also implied in 32:15.

44:6-8 God again cited his foreknowledge as evidence that he alone is God. The people of Israel were **witnesses** to this truth (see 41:25-29; 43:10-13).

44:9 It was not only Israel who was blind and foolish (6:9-10) but also idolaters generally. This suggests that the servant's ministry of opening "blind eyes" in 42:6-7 also includes Gentiles. That earlier passage likewise contrasted God with idols (42:8,16-17).

44:12-17 The preceding context has repeatedly contrasted God with idols (e.g., 37:18-20; 40:18-20; 41:7,29; 42:8; 43:10-13), and this passage expands on the vast inferiority of the latter. Whereas the

almighty and wise God created the universe and sustains it (40:28; 42:5), idols are made by frail men who tire (v. 12), who themselves were created by God. The wood and metal used (vv. 12-14) has been created by him too. Although man may use half of a block of wood for fire, he nevertheless worships the half that has been made into an idol, praying to it for salvation (vv. 15-17).

44:18-20 Idolaters are thus foolish and blind (see previous note). Idols will not satisfy, cannot save, and are a lie. Their comparison to **ashes** may relate to the burning wood of verses 15,16,19.

44:21-23 God's servant Israel is to remember the preceding warning against idolatry. Man may "form" idols (lit vv. 9,10,12), but God **formed** Israel (vv. 21,24). Furthermore, he sweeps away their **transgressions** and **sins** (43:25) and redeems them (vv. 22-23; 35:9; 48:20).

44:26-28 Part of God's plan to restore Israel included the rebuilding of **Jerusalem** and the **temple**, which was promoted by the Persian king **Cyrus** to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy (see 2Ch 36:22-23; Ezr 1:1-4). The fall of Babylon to the Medes had been predicted in 13:17 and 21:2. See "A Biblical View of History," *p. 525*.

45 The LORD says this to Cyrus, his anointed, †
whose right hand I have grasped †
to subdue nations before him
and disarm † kings, †
to open doors before him,
and even city gates will not be shut:
2 "I will go before you and level the uneven places; † †
I will shatter the bronze doors
and cut the iron bars in two. †
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches from secret places, †
so that you may know that I am the LORD.
I am the God of Israel, who calls you by your name. †
4 I call you by your name, for the sake of my servant Jacob †
and Israel my chosen one.
I give a name to you,
though you do not know me.
5 I am the LORD, and there is no other; †
there is no God but me. †
I will strengthen † you, though you do not know me,
6 so that all may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that there is no one but me. †
I am the LORD, and there is no other.

7 I form light and create darkness, †
I make success and create disaster; †
I am the LORD, who does all these things.

8 “Heavens, sprinkle from above, and let the skies shower righteousness. †
Let the earth open up
so that salvation will sprout
and righteousness will spring up with it. †
I, the LORD, have created it.

9 “Woe to the one who argues with his Maker — one clay pot among many. †
Does clay say to the one forming it,
‘What are you making? ’ †
Or does your work say,
‘He has no hands’? †
10 Woe to the one who says to his father, ‘What are you fathering? ’
or to his mother, †
‘What are you giving birth to? ’ ”
11 This is what the LORD, the Holy One of Israel † and its Maker, says: “Ask me
what is to happen to † my sons, †
and instruct me about the work of my hands. †
12 I made the earth, and created humans on it.
It was my hands that stretched out the heavens, †
and I commanded everything in them.
13 I have stirred him up in righteousness, †
and will level all roads for him.
He will rebuild my city, †
and set my exiles free, †
not for a price or a bribe,”
says the LORD of Armies.

GOD ALONE IS THE SAVIOR

14 This is what the LORD says:

“The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush and the Sabeans,
men of stature, †
will come over to you †
and will be yours;
they will follow you,
they will come over in chains
and bow down to you.
They will confess † to you, ‘God is indeed with you, † and there is no other;
there is no other God.’ ”

15 Yes, you are a God who hides, †
God of Israel, Savior. †
16 All of them are put to shame, even humiliated; †
the makers of idols go in humiliation together.
17 Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation;
you will not be put to shame or humiliated for all eternity. †

18 For this is what the LORD says — the Creator of the heavens,
the God who formed the earth and made it, the one who established it
(he did not create it to be a wasteland,
but formed it to be inhabited) † — he says, “I am the LORD, and there is
no other.
19 I have not spoken in secret, †
somewhere in a land of darkness.
I did not say to the descendants of Jacob: Seek me in a wasteland. †
I am the LORD, who speaks righteously, †
who declares what is right.

20 “Come, gather together, and approach, you fugitives of the nations.
Those who carry their wooden idols
and pray to a god who cannot save †
have no knowledge. †
21 Speak up and present your case † † — yes, let them consult each other.

Who predicted this long ago?
Who announced it from ancient times?
Was it not I, the LORD?
There is no other God but me,
a righteous God and Savior; †
there is no one except me. †
22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth.
For I am God,
and there is no other.
23 By myself I have sworn; †
truth has gone from my mouth, †
a word that will not be revoked:
Every knee will bow † to me, every tongue will swear allegiance.
24 It will be said about me, 'Righteousness and strength are found only in the LORD.' "
All who are enraged against him
will come to him and be put to shame. †
25 All the descendants of Israel will be justified and find glory through the LORD.

45:1 Lit *unloosen the waist of* **45:2** DSS, LXX read *the mountains* **45:5** Lit *gird* **45:9** Lit *a clay pot with clay pots of the ground* **45:9** Or *making? Your work has no hands.* **45:10** Lit *to a woman* **45:11** Or *me the coming things about* **45:14** Lit *pray* **45:21** Lit *and approach*
45:1 Is 44:28 **45:1** Ps 73:23; Is 41:13; 42:6 **45:1** Jb 12:21; Is 45:5 **45:2** Is 40:4 **45:2** Ps 107:16 **45:3** Jr 41:8; 50:37 **45:3** Ex 33:12,17; Is 43:1; 49:1 **45:4** Is 41:8; 42:19 **45:5** Is 45:6,14,18,21; 46:9 **45:5** Is 44:6,8 **45:6** Ps 102:15; Is 37:20; Mal 1:11 **45:7** Ps 104:20; 105:28 **45:7** Gn 50:20; 1Sm 16:14; 1Kg 21:21; 22:8; 2Kg 6:33; Jb 2:10; Ps 78:49; Is 13:11; 31:2; 47:11; Jr 1:14; Lm 3:38; Am 3:6 **45:8** Hs 10:12 **45:8** Ps 85:11; Is 61:11 **45:9** Is 29:16; 64:8; Jr 18:6; Rm 9:20-21 **45:11** Is 1:4 **45:11** Jr 31:9 **45:11** Is 19:25; 29:23; 60:21; 64:8 **45:12** Ps 104:2; Is 42:5; 44:24 **45:13** Is 41:2 **45:13** 2Ch 36:22-23; Is 44:28 **45:13** Is 52:3 **45:14** Is 18:1; 43:3 **45:14** Is 14:1-2; 49:23; 54:3 **45:14** 1Co 14:25 **45:15** Ps 44:24; Is 1:15; 8:17; 57:17 **45:15** Is 43:3 **45:16** Is 42:17; 44:9 **45:17** Is 49:23; 50:7; 54:4 **45:18** Gn 1:26; Ps 115:16 **45:19** Is 48:16 **45:19** 2Ch 15:2; Ps 78:34; Jr 29:13-14 **45:19** Ps 19:8; Is 45:23; 63:1 **45:20** Is 44:17; 46:1,7; Jr 10:5 **45:20** Is 44:18-19; 48:5-7 **45:21** Is 41:21-23; 43:9 **45:21** Is 43:3,11 **45:21** Dt 4:35; 6:4; Mk 12:32 **45:23** Gn 22:16; Is 62:8; Heb 6:13 **45:23** Is 55:11 **45:23** Rm 14:11; Php 2:10 **45:24** Is 41:11

45:1-4 Cyrus was God's **anointed** (sometimes translated "messiah"; v. 1), but he was not the Messiah who would sit on David's throne forever and also be anointed (9:6-7; 61:1). Unlike Cyrus (v. 4), the Messiah will know God and have his Spirit (11:2-3). Nevertheless, Cyrus had a preparatory role to play in God's salvation plan (see previous note), and his coming would provide further evidence of God's supremacy (vv. 5-7).

45:8 The association of **salvation** with rain and fruitfulness is also found in 55:10-11 and 61:11. Based on 32:15 and 44:3, this salvation in turn is closely linked to the outpouring of the Spirit.

45:9-12 Given the context, God was likely defending his sovereignty and wisdom, especially related to Cyrus (vv. 9-10; 45:1,13). He did so by comparing his authority to that of a potter over **clay** and repeatedly referring to his role as **Maker** (vv. 7-8,12,18).

45:13 This builder and liberator is probably Cyrus (see 44:28).

45:14-17 Though significant, Cyrus would not be the agent of ultimate salvation, which is the focus here. Israel and God will be exalted by the nations (vv. 14-16; 11:10; 18:7; 43:3), and **Israel will be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation** (v. 17; 9:7; 35:10). In the meantime, God and his ways often go unnoticed (v. 15; 8:17; 53:1).

45:19 Despite widespread ignorance of him (see previous note), God has spoken openly through his Word and is found by those who seek him (see 48:16).

45:22-23 After again contrasting himself with impotent and ignorant idols (vv. 20-21; 41:26; 43:9-13; 44:7), God calls **all the ends of the earth** to turn to him and be saved by him, the only sovereign of the earth.

45:25 The righteousness of the redeemed will be found in God, not in themselves (6:5; 53:11; 54:17) or their empty arguments (43:26). As such, their boasting will also be in him (see 41:16; Jr 9:23-24; 1Co 1:30-31).

THERE IS NO ONE LIKE GOD

46 Bel crouches; Nebo cowers. †
Idols depicting them are consigned to beasts and cattle.
The images you carry are loaded,
as a burden for the weary animal.
2 The gods cower; they crouch together; they are not able to rescue the burden,
but they themselves go into captivity. †

3 "Listen to me, house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel,
who have been sustained from the womb,
carried along since birth.
4 I will be the same until your old age, †
and I will bear you up when you turn gray.
I have made you, and I will carry you;
I will bear and rescue you.

5 "Who will you compare me or make me equal to?
Who will you measure me with,
so that we should be like each other? †
6 Those who pour out their bags of gold and weigh out silver on scales — they hire a goldsmith and he makes it into a god.

Then they kneel and bow down to it. †
7 They lift it to their shoulder and bear it along; †
they set it in its place, and there it stands; it does not budge from its place. †
They cry out to it but it doesn't answer; it saves no one from his trouble.

8 "Remember this and be brave; †
take it to heart, you transgressors!
9 Remember what happened long ago, †
for I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and no one is like me.
10 I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done,
saying: my plan will take place,
and I will do all my will. †
11 I call a bird of prey † from the east, †
a man for my purpose from a far country.
Yes, I have spoken; so I will also bring it about. †
I have planned it; I will also do it.
12 Listen to me, you hardhearted, far removed from justice:
13 I am bringing my justice near; †
it is not far away,
and my salvation will not delay.
I will put salvation in Zion,
my splendor in Israel.

46:8 Hb obscure **46:11** = Cyrus
46:1 Jr 50:2-4; 51:44 **46:2** Jdg 18:17-18,24; 2Sm 5:21; Jr 43:12-13; 48:7; Hs 10:5-6 **46:4** Ps 71:18 **46:5** Is 40:18,25 **46:6** Is 40:19; 41:7; 44:12-17; Jr 10:4 **46:7** Is 45:20; 46:1; Jr 10:5 **46:7** Is 40:20; 41:7 **46:9** Dt 32:7; Is 42:9; 65:17 **46:10** Ps 33:11; Pr 19:21; Is 5:19; 14:24; 25:1; 40:8; Ac 5:39 **46:11** Is 44:28–45:1 **46:11** Nm 23:19; Is 14:24; 37:26 **46:13** Is 51:5; 61:11; Rm 3:21

46:1-4 Whereas the gods of Babylon must be carried (vv. 1-2; Jr 50:2), God carries his people **from the womb** to their **old age** and will also deliver them (vv. 3-4).

46:5-7 In view of the preceding context (vv. 1-4), there is no other god that can compare to God (v. 5). Idols are made out of metal by metalworkers, who then have to carry them and fix them in place (vv. 6-7). Whereas they cannot hear prayer or save, God will bring righteousness and salvation to Zion, in accordance with his plan (vv. 10-13; 14:24; 25:1; 28:29).

46:11 This man **from the east** may be another reference to Cyrus (see 44:28; 45:13).

THE FALL OF BABYLON

47 “Go down and sit in the dust, †
Virgin Daughter Babylon. †
Sit on the ground without a throne,
Daughter Chaldea!
For you will no longer be called pampered and spoiled.
2 Take millstones and grind flour; †
remove your veil,
strip off your skirt, bare your thigh,
wade through the streams.
3 Your nakedness will be uncovered, and your disgrace will be exposed. †
I will take vengeance;
I will spare no one.” †
4 The Holy One of Israel is our Redeemer; †
The LORD of Armies is his name.

5 “Daughter Chaldea, sit in silence † and go into darkness.
For you will no longer be called mistress of kingdoms.
6 I was angry with my people; I profaned my possession,
and I handed them over to you.
You showed them no mercy;
you made your yoke very heavy on the elderly.
7 You said, ‘I will be the queen forever.’
You did not take these things to heart
or think about their outcome.

8 “So now hear this, lover of luxury, who sits securely, †
who says to herself,
‘I am, and there is no one else.
I will never be a widow
or know the loss of children.’ †
9 These two things will happen to you suddenly, in one day:
loss of children and widowhood.
They will happen to you in their entirety, in spite of your many sorceries †

and the potency of your spells.

10 You were secure in your wickedness; you said, ‘No one sees me.’ †
Your wisdom and knowledge
led you astray.
You said to yourself,
‘I am, and there is no one else.’
11 But disaster will happen to you; you will not know how to avert it.
And it will fall on you,
but you will be unable to ward it off. †
Devastation will happen to you suddenly
and unexpectedly. †
12 So take your stand with your spells and your many sorceries,
which you have wearied yourself with from your youth.
Perhaps you will be able to succeed;
perhaps you will inspire terror!
13 You are worn out with your many consultations.
So let the astrologers stand and save you — those who observe the stars, †
those who predict monthly
what will happen to you.
14 Look, they are like stubble; †
fire burns them. †
They cannot rescue themselves
from the power † of the flame.
This is not a coal for warming themselves, or a fire to sit beside!
15 This is what they are to you — those who have wearied you
and have traded with you from your youth — each wanders on his own way;
no one can save you.

47:3 Hb obscure **47:11** Or *to atone for it* **47:14** Lit *hand*
47:1 Is 3:26; Jr 48:18 **47:1** Ps 137:8; Jr 50:42; 51:33; Zch 2:7 **47:2** Ex 11:5; Jb 31:10; Mt 24:41 **47:3** Jr 13:26; Lm 1:8; Ezk 16:37; Nah 3:5 **47:4** Is 41:14; 43:14 **47:5** Is 23:2; Jr 8:14; Lm 2:10; 3:2,28 **47:8** Zph 2:15 **47:8** Rv 18:7 **47:9** Is 47:13; Nah 3:4; Rv 18:23 **47:10** Ps 139:3,11 **47:11** Is 13:6; Jr 51:8,43; Lk 17:27; 1Th 5:3 **47:13** Is 8:19; 44:25; 47:9; Dn 2:2,10 **47:14** Is 5:24; Nah 1:10; Mal 4:1 **47:14** Is 10:17; Jr 51:30-32,58

47:1-4 The fall of **Babylon** had been alluded to in 44:28–45:4 through the rise of Cyrus the Persian and in 46:1-2 though the captivity of its idols. Here the kingdom is personified as a woman dethroned and

humiliated. Such divine **vengeance** (v. 3) is coupled with the redemption of Israel (v. 4; 48:20). God's people are delivered when God's enemies are defeated.

47:5-9 Babylon had been "called pampered and spoiled" (v. 1), as well as **mistress of kingdoms** (v. 5). She thought she would be **queen forever** (v. 7), without equal (vv. 8,10). But in this attitude she was challenging God, who alone is incomparable (40:17; 43:11; 44:6; 45:21-22; 46:9). He had given Israel into Babylon's hands (v. 6) , but judgment would come to them as well (v. 9). Her **loss of children and widowhood** contrasts sharply with the eternal blessedness of Zion (54:1-5; 62:4-5).

47:12-15 Babylon was guilty not only for her pride and self-indulgence (vv. 1,5,7-8) but also for her **sorceries** and **spells** (vv. 9,12). Such "wisdom and knowledge" as what she trusted in (v. 10) was misleading, useless, and wearisome. Those supposedly skilled in these dark practices apparently also benefited financially from them (v. 15).

ISRAEL MUST LEAVE BABYLON

48 "Listen to this, house of Jacob — those who are called by the name Israel
and have descended from † Judah, †
who swear by the name of the LORD †
and declare the God of Israel,
but not in truth or righteousness.
2 For they are named after the Holy City, and lean on the God of Israel; †
his name is the LORD of Armies.
3 I declared the past events long ago; they came out of my mouth;
I proclaimed them.
Suddenly I acted, and they occurred.
4 Because I know that you are stubborn, and your neck is iron †
and your forehead bronze, †
5 therefore I declared to you long ago.
I announced it to you before it occurred, so you could not claim, 'My idol
caused them; my carved image and cast idol control them.' †
6 You have heard it. Observe it all.
Will you not acknowledge it?
From now on I will announce new things to you, hidden things that
you have not known. †
7 They have been created now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them
before today,
so you could not claim, 'I already knew them! '

8 You have never heard; you have never known; for a long time your ears
have not been open.
For I knew that you were very treacherous, and were known as a rebel
from birth. †
9 I will delay my anger for the sake of my name, and I will restrain myself
for your benefit and for my praise, so that you will not be destroyed.
10 Look, I have refined you, † but not as silver; I have tested † you
in the furnace of affliction.
11 I will act for my own sake, indeed, my own, †
for how can I † be defiled?
I will not give my glory to another. †

12 "Listen to me, Jacob, and Israel, the one called by me:
I am he; I am the first,
I am also the last. †
13 My own hand founded the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; †
when I summoned them,
they stood up together.
14 All of you, assemble and listen!
Who among the idols † has declared these things?
The LORD loves him; †
he will accomplish his will against Babylon, †
and his arm will be against the Chaldeans.
15 I — I have spoken; yes, I have called him; †
I have brought him,
and he will succeed in his mission. †
16 Approach me and listen to this.
From the beginning I have not spoken in secret; †
from the time anything existed, I was there."
And now the Lord GOD has sent me and his Spirit. †

17 This is what the LORD, your Redeemer, † the Holy One of Israel † says:

I am the LORD your God, who teaches you for your benefit,
who leads you in the way you should go.
18 If only you had paid attention to my commands.
Then your peace would have been like a river, †
and your righteousness like the waves of the sea. †
19 Your descendants would have been as countless as the sand, †
and the offspring of your body like its grains; their name would not be cut off
or eliminated from my presence.

20 Leave Babylon, flee from the Chaldeans!
Declare with a shout of joy,
proclaim this,
let it go out to the end of the earth;
announce,
"The LORD has redeemed his servant † Jacob! "
21 They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow from the rock for them; †
he split the rock, and water gushed out.
22 "There is no peace for the wicked," says the LORD. †

48:1 Lit *have come from the waters of* **48:4** Lit *is an iron sinew* **48:10** DSS; MT reads *chosen* **48:11** DSS, Syr; MT reads *it* **48:14** Lit *among them* **48:14** = Cyrus
48:1 Nm 24:7; Dt 33:28; Ps 68:26 **48:1** Dt 6:13; Is 45:23; 65:16 **48:2** Is 10:20; Jr 7:4; 21:2; Mc 3:11; Rm 2:17 **48:4** Ex 32:9; Dt 31:27; Ezk 2:4; 3:7-9 **48:5** Jr 44:15-18 **48:6** Is 42:9; 43:19 **48:8** Dt 9:7,24; Ps 58:3; Is 46:8 **48:10** Dt 4:20; 1Kg 8:51; Jr 11:4; Ezk 22:18-22; 1Pt 1:7 **48:11** Is 43:25; Ezk 20:9 **48:11** Is 42:8 **48:12** Is 41:4; 43:10-13; 46:4; Rv 1:17 **48:13** Ps 102:25; Is 42:5; 45:12,18; Heb 1:10-12 **48:14** Is 13:4-5,17-19; 46:10-11 **48:15** Is 41:2; 45:1-2 **48:15** Is 53:10 **48:16** Is 45:19 **48:16** Nm 27:18; Ps 51:11; Is 61:1; 63:7,10; Zch 2:9,11 **48:17** Is 41:14; 43:14 **48:17** Is 1:4 **48:18** Is 32:16-18; 66:12 **48:18** Dt 5:29; 32:29; Ps 81:13-16; Am 5:24 **48:19** Gn 22:17; Is 10:22; 44:3-4; 54:3; Hs 1:10 **48:20** Is 41:8-9; 42:19; 43:10; 44:1-2,21; 45:4; 49:3; 54:17; Lk 1:54 **48:21** Ex 17:6; Ps 78:15-16 **48:22** Is 57:21

48:1-7 In contrast with the empty predictions of sorcerers (47:12-13) and the impotence of idols (v. 5), God's accurate foreknowledge is evidence to Israel that he alone is God (vv. 3-6; 41:25-29; 44:6-8; 45:20-21). Idols did not even know **the past events long ago** (lit "the former things", v. 3; 41:22; 43:9), much less the **new things** to be **created** for Israel's eternal salvation (vv. 6-7; 42:9-10). This glorious future will far surpass anything in the past (43:18-19; 65:16-17).

48:9-11 Despite Israel's superficial religion (vv. 1-2; 1:21,26), stubborn rebellion (v. 4), idolatry (v. 5), and spiritual deafness (v. 8), God would still spare them **for the sake of** [his] **name**. He would indeed refine them (v. 10; 1:22,25) but would also save for himself (v. 11). At stake are God's **praise** and **glory**.

48:16 As in 45:19, God declared that he has **not spoken in secret.** The words **and now** seem to mark a

transition in thought. In 43:1; 44:1; and 49:5, it brings in a switch of focus from judgment to salvation. Here it intensifies the focus on salvation through the first-person testimony, **the LORD GOD has sent me and his Spirit.** In view of its resonance with 42:1 and 61:1, this statement is most naturally understood to be the words of the Messiah.

48:17 The Lord's instruction and guidance were also cited in 30:20-21; 42:16; and 43:19

48:20-22 Though Israel could have experienced "peace . . . like a river" if they had listened to God earlier (v. 18), they would be given another opportunity—conditioned upon separation from wicked **Babylon** (47:3-10). Just as the Messiah's coming is linked to the fall of Babylon (48:14-16), so is Israel's future redemption, which is a "second exodus" (v. 21; see the notes on 11:11-16; 43:1-7; 52:11-12). As such, Babylon's representation of rebellious humanity in general is also likely in view here (see the notes on Is 13–14; Jr 51:7).

THE SERVANT BRINGS SALVATION

49 Coasts and islands, † listen to me; distant peoples, pay attention.
The LORD called † me before I was born.
He named me while I was in my mother's womb. †
2 He made my words like a sharp sword; †
he hid me in the shadow of his hand. †
He made me like a sharpened arrow;
he hid me in his quiver.
3 He said to me, "You are my servant, †
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."
4 But I myself said: I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and futility; yet my vindication is with the LORD, and my reward is with my God.
5 And now, says the LORD, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him
so that Israel might be gathered to him;
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD, and my God is my strength— 6 he says, "It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob
and restoring the protected ones of Israel.
I will also make you a light for the nations, †
to be my salvation to the ends of the earth." †
7 This is what the LORD, the Redeemer † of Israel, his Holy One, says to one who is despised,

to one abhorred by people, † †
to a servant of rulers:
“Kings will see, princes will stand up,
and they † will all bow down because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel † — and he has chosen you.” †

8 This is what the LORD says:

I will answer you in a time of favor,
and I will help you in the day of salvation. †
I will keep you, and I will appoint you
to be a covenant for the people, †
to restore the land,
to make them possess the desolate inheritances, 9 saying to the prisoners: Come out, †
and to those who are in darkness: Show yourselves.
They will feed along the pathways,
and their pastures will be on all the barren heights. †
10 They will not hunger or thirst, the scorching heat or sun will not strike them; for their compassionate one will guide them, and lead them to springs. †
11 I will make all my mountains into a road, and my highways will be raised up. †
12 See, these will come from far away, from the north and from the west, † †
and from the land of Sinim. † †

13 Shout for joy, you heavens! †
Earth, rejoice!
Mountains break into joyful shouts!
For the LORD has comforted his people, †
and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. †

ZION REMEMBERED

14 Zion says, “The LORD has abandoned me; the Lord has forgotten me! ”

15 “Can a woman forget her nursing child, or lack compassion for the child
of her womb?
Even if these forget,
yet I will not forget you.
16 Look, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; †
your walls are continually before me.
17 Your builders † hurry; those who destroy and devastate you will leave you.
18 Look up, and look around.
They all gather together; they come to you. †
As I live” —
this is the LORD’s declaration — “you will wear all your children † as jewelry,
and put them on as a bride does.
19 For your waste and desolate places and your land marked by ruins — will
now be indeed too small for the inhabitants, †
and those who swallowed you up will be far away.
20 Yet as you listen, the children that you have been deprived of will say,
‘This place is too small for me;
make room for me so that I may settle.’ †
21 Then you will say within yourself, ‘Who fathered these for me?
I was deprived of my children and unable to conceive, exiled and wandering —
but who brought them up?
See, I was left by myself —
but these, where did they come from? ’ ” †

22 This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my banner to the peoples. †
They will bring your sons in their arms,
and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders. †
23 Kings will be your guardians and their queens † your nursing mothers. †
They will bow down to you
with their faces to the ground
and lick the dust at your feet. †

Then you will know that I am the LORD; †
those who put their hope in me
will not be put to shame. †

24 Can the prey be taken from a mighty man, or the captives of a tyrant †
be delivered?
25 For this is what the LORD says: "Even the captives of a mighty man
will be taken, and the prey of a tyrant will be delivered; I will contend
with the one who contends with you, and I will save your children.
26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh, †
and they will be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine.
Then all people will know
that I, the LORD, am your Savior, †
and your Redeemer, † the Mighty One of Jacob." †

49:1 Or *Islands* **49:7** Or *by the nation* **49:7** Lit *princes and they* **49:12** Lit *sea* **49:12** DSS read *of the Syenites* **49:12** Perhaps modern Aswan in southern Egypt **49:17** DSS, Aq, Theod, Vg; MT, Syr, Sym read *sons* **49:18** Lit *all of them* **49:21** Lit *where are they* **49:23** Lit *princesses* **49:24** DSS, Syr, Vg; MT reads *a righteous man*
49:1 Is 44:2,24; 46:3; Jr 1:5 **49:1** Lk 1:15 **49:2** Is 11:4; Heb 4:12; Rv 1:16; 2:12,16 **49:2** Is 51:16 **49:3** Is 41:8-9; 42:1; 49:5-7; 50:10; 52:13; 53:11; Ezk 34:23-24; Zch 3:8; Ac 3:13 **49:6** Is 42:6; 51:4; Lk 2:32; Ac 13:47; 26:23 **49:6** Ac 13:47 **49:7** Is 41:14; 43:14 **49:7** Ps 22:6-8; 69:7-9; Is 53:3 **49:7** Is 1:4 **49:7** Is 41:8-9; 42:1; 43:10,20; 44:1-2; 45:4; 65:9,15,22 **49:8** Ps 69:13; 2Co 6:2 **49:8** Is 42:6 **49:9** Is 42:7; 61:1; Lk 4:18 **49:9** Is 41:18 **49:10** Ps 23:2; Is 40:11; Jn 4:10; Rv 7:16-17 **49:11** Is 40:4 **49:12** Is 43:5-6 **49:13** Is 44:23 **49:13** Is 40:1 **49:13** Is 54:7-10; Mt 11:29 **49:16** Sg 8:6; Hg 2:23 **49:18** Is 60:4 **49:19** Is 54:1-2; Zch 10:10 **49:20** Is 54:1-3 **49:22** Is 11:10-12; 18:3; 62:10 **49:22** Is 14:2; 43:6; 60:4 **49:23** Is 60:3,10-11 **49:23** Is 14:1-2 **49:23** Is 41:20; 43:10; 60:16 **49:23** Ps 25:3; Is 45:17; Jl 2:27 **49:26** Is 9:20 **49:26** Is 43:3 **49:26** Is 41:14 **49:26** Gn 49:24; Ps 132:2,5; Is 60:16

49:3-5 This is the second so-called Servant Song (49:1-6) that speaks of a future, messianic, individual who will fulfill God's salvific purposes (see the note on 42:1-4). In the present passage, Israel is called God's **servant** (v. 3), but so is another individual who restores Israel (v. 5). These two distinct uses of the word were introduced in the preceding context (see the note on 42:1-4) and are clearly shown here. Although distinct, these two servants are also related because the Messiah would come from Israel (see the note on Nm 24:14-19).

49:6-7 The **servant** (Messiah) would not only restore Israel but also be a **light for the nations** (v. 6), just as 42:6 had said (see "God's Purposes in a Christian's Participation in Missions," *p. 1191*). Though "honored" by God (v. 5), this one would also be **despised** and "abhorred by a nation" (lit v. 7), which seems to refer to Israel (53:3; 65:1-2). Nevertheless, he will be respected by **kings** and **princes** (52:15).

49:8-9 Again the messianic servant is said to be **a covenant for the people** and a liberator of captives (see 42:6-7). He will also cause the people to possess **inheritances** that had become **desolate** because of exile.

As such, he both brings fulfillment to the promises of the Abrahamic covenant (see the note on Gn 15:17-21) and inaugurates another covenant (55:3; 59:21; 61:8).

49:10-13 The redeemed from all over the world will be led by God in peace (vv. 10-12; 40:1-4; 41:18), bringing **joy** to all creation (v. 13; 44:23; Ps 98:8).

49:14-16 Zion's complaint in verse 14 recalls 40:27 (see also 45:9-10; 49:4). The Lord's response is that he would never forget her and is ever aware of her condition.

49:17-21 Although Zion would be destroyed and bereaved of her **children** through exile, they would return to her in such great number that there would not be enough space for them.

49:22-23 Zion's exaltation among the nations will show that he is **the LORD** (v. 23) and bring him glory (43:21; 44:23; 49:3). This salvation will make clear "that those who wait on me will not be put to shame" (lit), just as 40:31 had declared.

49:25-26 The Lord's deliverance of Zion will lead not only to Israel acknowledging that he is God (v. 23) but also **all people** recognizing the same (v. 26; 40:5; 66:23). See "A Biblical View of the Nations," *p. 688*.

50 This is what the LORD says:

Where is your mother's divorce certificate that I used to send her away? †
Or to which of my creditors did I sell you? †
Look, you were sold for your iniquities, †
and your mother was sent away
because of your transgressions.
2 Why was no one there when I came?
Why was there no one to answer when I called?
Is my arm too weak to redeem? †
Or do I have no power to rescue?
Look, I dry up the sea by my rebuke; †
I turn the rivers into a wilderness;
their fish rot because of lack of water
and die of thirst.
3 I dress the heavens in black and make sackcloth their clothing. †

THE OBEDIENT SERVANT

4 The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are instructed †
to know how to sustain the weary with a word.
He awakens me each morning;
he awakens my ear to listen like those being instructed. †
5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious;

I did not turn back. †
6 I gave my back to those who beat me, and my cheeks to those who tore out my beard.
I did not hide my face from scorn and spitting. †
7 The Lord GOD will help me; therefore I have not been humiliated;
therefore I have set my face like flint, †
and I know I will not be put to shame.
8 The one who vindicates me is near; †
who will contend with me?
Let us confront each other. †
Who has a case against me? †
Let him come near me!
9 In truth, the Lord GOD will help me; who will condemn me? †
Indeed, all of them will wear out like a garment; a moth will devour them. †
10 Who among you fears the LORD and listens to his servant? †
Who among you walks in darkness,
and has no light?
Let him trust in the name of the LORD; let him lean on his God.
11 Look, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with † torches; walk in the light of your fire
and of the torches you have lit!
This is what you'll get from my hand:
you will lie down in a place of torment.

50:8 Lit *us stand* **50:8** Lit *Who is lord of my judgment* **50:11** Syr reads *who set ablaze*
50:1 Dt 24:1-3; Jr 3:8 **50:1** Dt 32:30; 2Kg 4:1; Neh 5:5 **50:1** Is 13:11 **50:2** Gn 18:14; Nm 11:23; Is 59:1 **50:2** Ex 14:21; Is 43:16; 44:27 **50:3** Rv 6:12 **50:4** Is 8:16; 54:13 **50:4** Jn 4:34 **50:5** Jn 8:29; 14:31; 15:10; Php 2:8; Heb 5:8 **50:6** Mt 26:67; 27:26; Mk 14:65; 15:19; Lk 22:63; Jn 19:1-5 **50:7** Ezk 3:8-9 **50:8** Is 45:25 **50:9** Rm 8:33-34 **50:9** Jb 13:28; Is 51:8; Hs 5:12 **50:10** Is 42:1; 49:3-7; 52:13; 53:11; Ezk 34:23-24; Zch 3:8; Ac 3:13

50:1 The Lord is speaking to Zion's children about how both they and their **mother** suffered for their own **iniquities** and **transgressions** (see 42:24; 43:25; 44:22).

50:4-7 The third Servant Song is 50:4-9 (see the note on 42:1-4). In contrast with rebellious Israel (v. 1), the individual speaking has a listening ear and humbly obeys God, even to the point of enduring physical harm and scorn. He is the messianic Servant, whose gentleness recalls 42:2-3 and whose suffering foreshadows 53:3-8. Israel and their Messiah had also been juxtaposed in 42:1-7,18-22 and 49:3-5. His faithful endurance of insult (vv. 6-7) echoes 49:7.

50:8-9 Despite experiencing physical injury and shame, the servant remains confident that God will help him (vv. 7,9). Whereas his enemies will perish, the Messiah will be **vindicated** or "declared righteous" (lit v. 8) rather than condemned (v. 9). The legal language used suggests that his sufferings relate to accusations of wrongdoing. God's vindication of him will demonstrate his innocence (see 5:23; 53:7-12).

50:10-11 It is made clear here that the individual speaking in verses 4-9 was the messianic servant, who had also been the subject of 42:1-7 and 49:5-9. Those who fear God will also obey the voice of his servant. Moses, himself was also a "servant of the LORD" (Dt 34:5); long ago he had predicted the arrival of a prophet like himself who must be obeyed (Dt 18:15,19). The one who does fear God and obey his servant is urged to **lean on his God** even when in darkness, in contrast with those who kindle their own fire and walk in its light to their own demise.

SALVATION FOR ZION

51 Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness, you who seek the LORD: Look
to the rock from which you were cut, and to the quarry from which
you were dug.
2 Look to Abraham your father, and to Sarah who gave birth to you.
When I called him, he was only one;
I blessed him and made him many. †
3 For the LORD will comfort Zion; †
he will comfort all her waste places,
and he will make her wilderness like Eden, †
and her desert like the garden of the LORD. †
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and melodious song.

4 Pay attention to me, my people, and listen to me, my nation;
for instruction will come from me,
and my justice for a light to the nations. †
I will bring it about quickly.
5 My righteousness is near, †
my salvation appears,
and my arms will bring justice to the nations. †
The coasts and islands will put their hope in me, and they will look
to my strength. †
6 Look up to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,

the earth will wear out like a garment,
and its inhabitants will die like gnats. † †
But my salvation will last forever, †
and my righteousness will never be shattered.

7 Listen to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my instruction: †
do not fear disgrace by men,
and do not be shattered by their taunts.
8 For moths will devour them like a garment, †
and worms will eat them like wool. †
But my righteousness will last forever,
and my salvation for all generations.

9 Wake up, wake up!
Arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength.
Wake up as in days past,
as in generations long ago.
Wasn't it you who hacked Rahab to pieces, †
who pierced the sea monster? †
10 Wasn't it you who dried up the sea, †
the waters of the great deep,
who made the sea-bed into a road
for the redeemed to pass over? †
11 And the redeemed of the LORD will return †
and come to Zion with singing,
crowned with unending joy.
Joy and gladness will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee.

12 I — I am the one who comforts you.
Who are you that you should fear humans who die, †
or a son of man who is given up like grass? †
13 But you have forgotten the LORD, your Maker, who stretched out the heavens

and laid the foundations of the earth. †
You are in constant dread all day long
because of the fury of the oppressor,
who has set himself to destroy.
But where is the fury of the oppressor? †

14 The prisoner † is soon to be set free; he will not die and go to the Pit,
and his food will not be lacking.

15 For I am the LORD your God who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar † —
his name is the LORD of Armies.

16 I have put my words in your mouth, †
and covered you in the shadow of my hand, †
in order to plant † the heavens, to found the earth,
and to say to Zion, "You are my people."

17 Wake yourself, wake yourself up!
Stand up, Jerusalem,
you who have drunk the cup of his fury †
from the LORD's hand; you who have drunk the goblet to the dregs — the cup
that causes people to stagger.

18 There is no one to guide her among all the children she has raised;
there is no one to take hold of her hand
among all the offspring she has brought up.

19 These two things have happened to you: †
devastation and destruction,
famine and sword.
Who will grieve for you?
How can I † comfort you?

20 Your children have fainted; they lie at the head of every street
like an antelope in a net.
They are full of the LORD's fury, the rebuke of your God.

21 So listen to this, suffering and drunken one — but not with wine. †

22 This is what your Lord says — the LORD, even your God, who defends
his people † — "Look, I have removed from your hand

the cup that causes staggering;
that goblet, the cup of my fury.
You will never drink it again.
23 I will put it into the hands of your tormentors, who said to you: †
Lie down, so we can walk over you.
You made your back like the ground,
and like a street for those who walk on it.

51:5 Lit *arm* **51:6** Or *die in like manner* **51:14** Hb obscure **51:16** Syr reads *to stretch out* **51:19** DSS, LXX, Syr, Vg read *you? Who can*
51:2 Gn 12:1; 15:5; Dt 1:10; Is 29:22; 41:8; 63:16; Ezk 33:24 **51:3** Is 40:1 **51:3** Gn 2:8; Jl 2:3 **51:3** Gn 13:10 **51:4** Is 42:6; 49:6 **51:5** Is 46:13; 54:17 **51:5** Is 40:10 **51:6** Ps 102:25-26; Is 34:4; Mt 24:35; Heb 1:10-12; 2Pt 3:10 **51:6** Is 45:17; 2Tm 2:10; Heb 5:9 **51:7** Ps 37:31 **51:8** Is 50:9 **51:8** Is 14:11 **51:9** Jb 26:12; Ps 89:10; Is 30:7 **51:9** Ps 74:13; Is 27:1 **51:10** Is 11:15-16; 50:2; 63:11-12 **51:10** Ex 15:13 **51:11** Is 35:10 **51:12** Ps 118:6; Is 2:22 **51:12** Is 40:6-7; Jms 1:10-11; 1Pt 1:24 **51:13** Is 44:24; 45:12; Am 9:6; Zch 12:1 **51:13** Is 49:26 **51:15** Ps 107:25; Jr 31:35 **51:16** Is 59:21 **51:16** Ex 33:22; Is 49:2 **51:17** Jb 21:20; Is 63:6; Jr 25:15; Mt 20:22; 26:39; Jn 18:1; Rv 14:10 **51:19** Is 47:9 **51:21** Is 29:9 **51:22** Is 3:12-13; 49:25; Jr 50:34 **51:23** Is 49:26; Jr 25:15-17,26,28; Zch 12:2

51:1-2 The reminder to the faithful to consider **Abraham** and **Sarah** suggests that God's future salvation of bereaved Zion also would start small, with just **one** (see 49:14–50:3; 53:10).

51:3 The theme of God's **comfort** of **Zion** appears again (12:1; 40:1; 49:13). This time it is described as a sort of restored garden of **Eden.** Joy and music also characterize eternal salvation in 24:14; 26:1; and 35:10 (see "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727*).

51:4 The Lord's **people** and **nation** could refer to the faithful generally, not just to those among the Israelites. On the one hand, these do have Abraham as their father (v. 2); on the other, they are described generally as those who fear God and obey his servant (50:10), pursue righteousness (51:1), and have his instruction in their hearts (51:7). The latter characteristics fit righteous Gentiles (see also the notes on 19:25; 26:1-2). The themes of **instruction** going out, **justice**, and **a light** for the peoples echo 2:2-4 and 42:1-7.

51:7-8 Just as the messianic servant would be persecuted (49:7; 50:6-7), so would his followers who listen to his voice (50:10; 66:5). These "who pursue righteousness" in verse 1 are now called those who **know righteousness.** The Lord's "righteousness is near" and his "salvation will last forever" (vv. 5-6,8), unlike their revilers. The persecutors will be devoured like a garment eaten by insects (v. 8), just as will be the case for the Messiah's enemies and the present universe itself (see the note on 50:8-9; 51:6). Using language of the new covenant (Jr 31:33), the faithful are also described here as "a people who have [God's] law in their heart" (lit v. 7).

51:9-11 In addition to being paired with "righteousness" (vv. 5-6,8), salvation is effected by God's **arm** of power (v. 9; see 51:5). The same agent which defeated the **sea monster** and dried up the Red Sea (see notes on Jb 26:12-13; Ps 74:12-17) is called upon again for another mighty act of redemption. For more on the "second exodus" theme, see the notes on 10:24-26; 11:11-16; 12:1-2; and 48:20-22. Other passages that similarly mention God's "arm" as a means of salvation include 40:10-11; 52:10; 53:1; and 59:16. For a second time in this context (see the note on v. 3), great **joy** is linked with eternal salvation (v. 11).

51:12-16 In the spirit of verses 4-8, God again exhorts the faithful not to fear man who dies and withers **like grass** (v. 12) but to remember God, their **Maker** (v. 13). The fleeting nature of enemies and of the

present universe was likewise highlighted in verses 6-8; 50:9. Their power to oppress and destroy—though real—is dwarfed by God's (vv. 13,15). His **people** are to speak the **words** put in their **mouth** (v. 16; 59:21).

51:18 The inability of any of Zion's **children** to help her accords with passages such as 26:17-18; 39:7; 49:21; and 54:1. In contrast, the "virgin" in 7:14 gives birth to the Savior, "Immanuel." Their salvation would come from God alone (59:16; 63:5).

52 "Wake up, wake up; put on your strength, Zion!
Put on your beautiful garments, †
Jerusalem, the Holy City! †
For the uncircumcised and the unclean
will no longer enter you. †
2 Stand up, shake the dust off yourself!
Take your seat, Jerusalem.
Remove the bonds † from your neck, captive Daughter Zion."
3 For this is what the LORD says: "You were sold for nothing,
and you will be redeemed without silver." †
4 For this is what the Lord GOD says: "At first my people went down to Egypt
to reside there, †
then Assyria oppressed them without cause. †
5 So now what have I here" — this is the LORD's declaration — "that my people
are taken away for nothing?
Its rulers wail" —
this is the LORD's declaration — "and my name is continually blasphemed
all day long. †
6 Therefore my people will know my name; †
therefore they will know on that day
that I am he who says:
Here I am."

7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald,
who proclaims peace,
who brings news of good things, †
who proclaims salvation,

who says to Zion, “Your God reigns! ” †

8 The voices of your watchmen † — they lift up their voices,
shouting for joy together;
for every eye will see
when the LORD returns to Zion.

9 Be joyful, rejoice together, you ruins of Jerusalem! †

For the LORD has comforted his people; †
he has redeemed Jerusalem.

10 The LORD has displayed his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; †
all the ends of the earth will see

the salvation of our God. †

11 Leave, leave, go out from there! †
Do not touch anything unclean;

go out from her, purify yourselves, †
you who carry the vessels of the LORD.

12 For you will not leave in a hurry, †
and you will not have to take flight;

because the LORD is going before you, †

and the God of Israel is your rear guard. †

THE SERVANT’S SUFFERING AND EXALTATION

13 See, my servant † † will be successful; †

he will be raised and lifted up and greatly exalted. †

14 Just as many were appalled at you † — his appearance was so disfigured
that he did not look like a man,
and his form did not resemble a human being — 15 so he will sprinkle
many nations. † †
Kings will shut their mouths because of him, for they will see
what had not been told them, and they will understand
what they had not heard. †

52:2 Alt Hb tradition reads *The bonds are removed* **52:4** Or *them at last*, or *them for nothing* **52:13** Tg adds

the Messiah **52:13** Or *will act wisely* **52:14** Some Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *him* **52:15** LXX reads *so many nations will marvel at him*
52:1 Is 61:3 **52:1** Neh 11:1; Is 48:2 **52:1** Is 35:8; Rv 21:27 **52:3** Is 45:13; 1Pt 1:18 **52:4** Gn 46:6 **52:5** Ezk 36:20; Rm 2:24 **52:6** Is 49:23 **52:7** Nah 1:15; Rm 10:15 **52:7** Ps 93:1; Is 24:23 **52:8** Is 62:6 **52:9** Is 44:26; 51:3; 61:4 **52:9** Is 40:1 **52:10** Ps 98:1-3; Is 51:9; 66:18-19 **52:10** Is 40:5; Lk 3:6 **52:11** Is 48:20; Jr 50:8; Ezk 20:34,41; Zch 2:6,7; 2Co 6:17 **52:11** 2Co 6:17; 2Tm 2:19 **52:12** Ex 12:11,33; Dt 16:3 **52:12** Ex 23:23; Dt 1:30; 31:8; Is 45:2 **52:12** Jos 6:9,13; Is 58:8 **52:13** Is 42:1; 49:3-7; 50:10; 53:11; Ezk 34:23-24; Zch 3:8; Ac 3:13 **52:13** Php 2:9-11 **52:15** Nm 19:18-21; Ezk 36:25 **52:15** Rm 15:21; Eph 3:5

52:1-2 The removal of the cup of God's wrath from Zion (51:21-23) leads to this call to her to arise in beauty, holiness, and freedom (see 40:1-2), which logically follows and echoes the similar call to the power of God (51:9-11).

52:3-6 Zion's being **sold** because of their sins was mentioned in 50:1, and her redemption **without silver** agrees with 43:3-4 (see also 55:1-2). The result was dishonor to God's **name**, but he determined to vindicate it (vv. 5-6; 48:9-11).

52:7-10 The imagery is that of a **herald** bringing good **news** of this redemption to Zion (v. 7). God will reign, and the whole earth will **see** both **his holy arm** (i.e. "power") and his **salvation** (v. 10; see the notes on 40:3-5; 49:25-26; 51:9-11).

52:11-12 The corresponding responsibility of God's people is to **leave** and **go out from there.** A similar command to leave Babylon had been given in 48:20-22 (see note). Just as "second exodus" themes were apparent there, so is the case here. Unlike the Passover, however, the future departure would not happen **in a hurry** (see the note on 30:15-18; Ex 12:11). Both passages also precede significant passages regarding the messianic servant (49:5-10; 52:13–53:12). Avoidance of anything **unclean** is in keeping with the character of redeemed Zion (v. 1; 35:8) and stands in contrast with wicked, unclean Babylon (47:3-10; 48:22; Rv 18:2). The problem of uncleanness is not only external but also internal, for everyone is unclean (6:5; 64:6).

52:13 The fourth and final of the so-called Servant Songs is 52:13–53:12 (see the note on 42:1-4). The Messiah's wisdom is likewise described in Jeremiah 32:5, and his exaltation implies that he is divine (2:11,17; 6:1).

52:14 The servant's **disfigured** appearance picks up the theme of physical injury in 50:6. Throughout this passage, there is a contrast between the appearance of the servant (which is unimpressive) and what he will actually accomplish (which is the salvation of the world).

52:15 The servant will **sprinkle many nations**, as a priest would an Israelite for consecration, atonement, or purification (Ex 29:21; Lv 4:6; 14:7). The **kings will shut their mouths**, probably because they are shocked at the unimpressive outward appearance of the servant. They do not understand that he is God's ultimate deliverer and more than qualified to accomplish his task.

53 Who has believed what we have heard? †
And to whom has the arm of the LORD † been revealed? †
2 He grew up before him like a young plant †
and like a root out of dry ground.
He didn't have an impressive form
or majesty that we should look at him,

no appearance that we should desire him. †
3 He was despised and rejected by men, †
a man of suffering who knew what sickness was. †
He was like someone people turned away from; †
he was despised, and we didn't value him.

4 Yet he himself bore our sicknesses, and he carried our pains; †
but we in turn regarded him stricken,
struck down by God, † and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced because of our rebellion, †
crushed because of our iniquities; †
punishment † for our peace was on him, and we are healed by his wounds. †
6 We all went astray like sheep; †
we all have turned to our own way;
and the LORD has punished him for † the iniquity † of us all. †

7 He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
and like a sheep silent before her shearers, he did not open his mouth. †
8 He was taken away because of oppression and judgment; and who considered his fate? †
For he was cut off from the land of the living; he was struck because of my people's rebellion.
9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked, but he was with a rich man at his death, †
because he had done no violence
and had not spoken deceitfully. †

10 Yet the LORD was pleased † to crush him severely. † †
When † you make him a guilt offering, †
he will see his seed, he will prolong his days, and by his hand, the LORD's pleasure will be accomplished. †

11 After his anguish, he will see light † and be satisfied.
By his knowledge,
my righteous † servant † will justify many, †
and he will carry their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will give him † the many as a portion, and he will receive †
the mighty as spoil, because he willingly submitted to death, †
and was counted among the rebels; †
yet he bore the sin of many †
and interceded for the rebels. †

53:1 Or *believed our report* **53:3** Lit *And like a hiding of faces from him* **53:6** Or *has placed on him* ; lit *with* **53:8** Or *and as for his generation, who considered him?* **53:10** Or *him; he made him sick.* **53:10** Or *If* **53:11** DSS, LXX; MT omits *light* **53:12** Or *him with* **53:12** Or *receive with*
53:1 Is 30:30; 40:10; 48:14; 51:9; 52:10; Lk 1:51; Ac 13:17 **53:1** Jn 12:38; Rm 10:16 **53:2** Is 11:1 **53:2** Is 52:14 **53:3** Ps 22:6; Is 49:7; Lk 18:31-33 **53:3** Mk 8:31; Jn 1:10-11; Heb 4:15 **53:4** Mt 8:17; 1Pt 2:21 **53:4** Ps 69:26 **53:5** Is 53:8; Rm 4:25; 1Co 15:3; Heb 9:28 **53:5** Is 1:4 **53:5** Jr 2:30; Zph 3:2; Heb 5:8 **53:5-6** 1Pt 2:24-25 **53:6** Mt 18:12 **53:6** Is 13:11 **53:6** 2Co 5:21; Col 2:14 **53:7** Jr 11:19; Mt 26:63; 27:12-14; Lk 23:9; Jn 19:9; Ac 8:32-33; 1Pt 2:23 **53:9** Mt 27:57-60 **53:9** Heb 4:15; 1Pt 2:22; 1Jn 3:5 **53:10** Is 44:28; 55:11 **53:10** Dt 29:22; Is 17:11 **53:10** Lv 5:1-19 **53:10** Is 46:10 **53:11** 1Jn 2:1 **53:11** Is 42:1 **53:11** Ac 13:39; Rm 5:18-19 **53:12** Mt 26:42; Jn 10:14-18; Php 2:6-8 **53:12** Lk 22:37 **53:12** Heb 9:28 **53:12** Lk 23:34; Rm 8:34; Heb 7:25

53:1 Although God's **arm** would work salvation and be seen by the whole world (51:5; 52:10), it would go unnoticed for a time by most. Isaiah has been promising that God would reveal his holy arm (i.e., his great power) and accomplish his salvation. There is a contrast between the outward appearance of the servant on the one hand and his true nature and power on the other (see vv. 2-12).

53:2-3 Botanical language was also used to refer to the Messiah in 11:1,10. His being **despised** (v. 3) was also mentioned in 49:7.

53:4-6 The messianic servant is **pierced** and **crushed** for **our rebellion** and **our iniquities** (v. 5). This explains how the promised forgiveness of 43:25 and 44:22 is secured. Likewise, the glorious **peace** of the redeemed promised elsewhere (e.g., 9:6-7; 32:17-18; 52:7) is gained at great cost to the servant, who endured **punishment** for others. Our sins could not have been simply dismissed without justice being served (see 1:27; 5:16,23). The healing of **our sicknesses** would seem to relate to both spiritual and physical maladies (see the note on 6:8-10; 25:8; 33:24; Mt 8:17; 1Pt 2:24). The servant's bearing of such a heavy weight cannot be underestimated. The weight of sin that sinks the world into permanent ruin (24:20) was borne with endurance and effectiveness by him (vv. 11-12).

53:7-9 The servant would be struck not only by God but also by man (vv. 4,7-8; 50:6). Although his suffering satisfied God's justice in forgiving sin (see previous note), the direct human agents involved were guilty of **oppression** (vv. 7-8). His sufferings thus not only included physical harm and death (vv. 5,9,12) but also patient endurance of gross injustice and reproach (see the note on 50:8-9). Unlike the "servant" Israel who suffered for its own sins (42:24; 50:1), this servant would suffer as an innocent man (v. 9).

53:10 Along with the recent appearance of the "second exodus" theme (see the note on 52:11-12) and of

the comparison of the servant to a "lamb" (v. 7), his role as a **guilt offering** shows not only the atoning effect of his substitutionary death but even suggests that he is the ultimate Passover lamb (1Co 5:7).

53:11 Though the servant was unjustly condemned to death (vv. 7-9; 50:8-9), he would **justify many** through it (see the note on 45:25). God is thus exalted through both justice and mercy simultaneously (5:16; 30:18; Rm 3:26).

53:12 The faithful messianic servant will receive a reward for his obedient suffering. Whereas sinful Israel had been plundered by enemies (42:22), he would receive **spoil**, symbolizing his victory and the accomplishment of his task. Although unrepentant **rebels** will be punished (1:28, 66:24), those who repent will be saved (see 1:27).

FUTURE GLORY FOR ISRAEL

54 "Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout,
you who have not been in labor! †
For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children
of the married woman," †
says the LORD.

2 "Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; †
do not hold back;
lengthen your ropes,
and drive your pegs deep.

3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left, †
and your descendants will dispossess nations and inhabit the desolate cities.

4 "Do not be afraid, for you will not be put to shame; †
don't be humiliated, for you will not be disgraced.
For you will forget the shame of your youth, and you will no longer remember
the disgrace of your widowhood. †

5 Indeed, your husband is your Maker † — his name is the LORD of Armies —
and the Holy One of Israel † is your Redeemer; †
he is called the God of the whole earth.

6 For the LORD has called you, like a wife deserted and wounded in spirit, †
a wife of one's youth † when she is rejected,"
says your God.

7 "I deserted you for a brief moment, †
but I will take you back with abundant compassion.

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face † from you for a moment, but I will have compassion on you
with everlasting love," †
says the LORD your Redeemer.
9 "For this is like the days † of Noah to me: when I swore that the water of Noah
would never flood the earth again, †
so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you or rebuke you. †
10 Though the mountains move and the hills shake,
my love will not be removed from you
and my covenant of peace † will not be shaken,"
says your compassionate LORD.

11 "Poor Jerusalem, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I will set your stones in black mortar, †
and lay your foundations in lapis lazuli. †
12 I will make your fortifications † out of rubies, your gates out of sparkling stones,
and all your walls out of precious stones.
13 Then all your children will be taught by the LORD, †
their prosperity will be great,
14 and you will be established on a foundation of righteousness.
You will be far from oppression,
you will certainly not be afraid;
you will be far from terror,
it will certainly not come near you.
15 If anyone attacks you, it is not from me;
whoever attacks you
will fall before you.
16 Look, I have created the craftsman who blows on the charcoal fire
and produces a weapon suitable for its task; and I have created the destroyer to cause havoc.

17 No weapon formed against you will succeed, and you will refute
any accusation †
raised against you in court.
This is the heritage of the LORD's servants, †
and their vindication is from me." †

This is the LORD's declaration.

54:9 DSS, Cairo Geniza; MT, LXX read *waters* **54:11** Lit *in antimony* **54:12** Lit *suns* ; perhaps *shields* ; Ps 84:11 **54:17** Lit *refute every tongue*
54:1 Gl 4:27 **54:1** 1Sm 2:5; Is 62:4 **54:2** Is 49:19-20 **54:3** Gn 28:14; Is 43:5-6; 60:3 **54:4** Is 45:17 **54:4** Is 4:1; 25:8; 51:7 **54:5** Jr 3:14; Hs 2:19 **54:5** Is 1:4 **54:5** Is 41:14; 43:14 **54:6** Is 49:14-21; 50:1-2; 62:4 **54:6** Mal 2:14 **54:7** Is 26:20 **54:8** Dt 31:17-18; Is 8:17 **54:8** Ps 100:5; Jr 31:3; 33:11 **54:9** Gn 9:11 **54:9** Ezk 39:29 **54:10** Nm 25:12; Ezk 34:25; Mal 2:5 **54:11** Rv 21:19 **54:13** Jn 6:45 **54:17** Is 41:8-9; Lk 1:54 **54:17** Is 45:24; 46:13

54:1-3 The barren and **desolate** woman is Zion personified (vv. 1,11; 26:17-18; 49:19). Her numerous **children** are the result of the servant's labor (53:10) and not her own (49:21). Their sheer number requires the expansion of her tent (v. 2; 49:20). The inhabiting of **desolate cities** echoes the "desolate inheritances" in 49:8, and the possession of **nations** recalls Genesis 22:17-18 and Psalms 2:8.

54:4-8 God had been angry with his "wife" Zion for a time (vv. 4,6-8; 50:1), but he would turn back to her with **abundant compassion** and **everlasting love** (vv. 7-8).

54:9-10 Just as he made a covenant with **Noah,** promising not to flood the earth again (Gn 9:9-11), so God makes a **covenant of peace** not to be angry with Zion again.

54:11-14 Jerusalem thus restored will be glorious and secure (see 65:17-18; Rv 21:19-21). Her children will all be **taught by the LORD** (v. 13).

54:17 The Lord's **servants** are those whose **vindication** he has provided. This idea has been emphasized in several recent passages (see the notes on 45:25; 51:7-8; 53:11). The messianic "servant" has produced offspring (vv. 1,13; 53:10), who themselves are servants of God.

COME TO THE LORD

LOGIC AND THE MIND OF GOD

Logic is a field of study—a subdiscipline of philosophy—that explores principles of proper thought. *Logic* can also denote those principles or "laws" themselves.

Classically, these three laws of logic include identity ("every thing is the same as itself"); noncontradiction ("contradictory statements cannot both be true at the same time and in the same sense"); and excluded middle ("either a statement is true, or its negation is true").

These principles underlie all coherent language. Language is composed partly of statements. Statements are meaningful, descriptive claims about the world, like "A Boeing 787 is a two-engine jet." This statement

describes something about the world. (Language also includes utterances like questions that do not describe the world.) LOGIC AND STATEMENTS

Meaningful statements assume logic. “John is very tall” communicates that John actually has great height for a human. The word *John* must refer reliably to the person, John (law of identity). If “John is very tall” is true, then “John is not tall at all” must be false (law of noncontradiction). If both “John is tall” and “John is not tall at all” are true, meaningful communication breaks down. So the laws of logic undergird the very possibility of meaningful statements. Meaningful statements follow the laws of logic. They are logically coherent.

When a statement is logically coherent, that means it is the kind of statement that can possibly be true. An incoherent statement (one that breaks the laws of logic) contradicts itself. “Figure A is a square circle” is contradictory. It is not meaningful, and it cannot be true.

A coherent statement is possibly true; it still could actually be false. The statement, “My car weighs 4,900 pounds,” is the kind of statement that could possibly be true. It is coherent. But I checked the *VW Owner’s Manual*, and my car actually weighs 3,900 pounds. So “My car weighs 4,900 pounds” is logical. It is possibly true. But factually, it is false.

LOGIC AND ARGUMENTS

Not only does logic undergird the meaningfulness of individual statements, but it also guides the validity of groups of statements. This brings in the concept of an argument. “Argument” in this sense denotes several statements set in relationship to each other, such that several statements (premises) provide some sort of reason for believing another statement (the conclusion). An argument is not a heated verbal debate. It is any line of thinking intended to align statements of evidence or reason in support of some conclusion. For example, “Kevin Love is a power forward in the NBA. All forwards in the NBA are at least 6 feet 8 inches. So Kevin is more than 6 feet 6 inches tall.” The first two statements are properly arranged to provide reason to believe the last statement.

Arguments infer conclusions from premises, and inference can proceed properly or improperly. When evidence or reason is aligned properly, the argument is logically valid. When it is aligned improperly, the argument is invalid. Given this, the word *logic* denotes a set of principles that helps guide any inference of conclusions from premises. Logic indicates whether, how, or to what degree a set of premises actually does provide some rationale for a conclusion.

An argument is sound when it meets two criteria: (1) it is logical or valid (it infers properly), and (2) its premises are true. A sound argument produces a true and well-supported conclusion. This means that being logical is a necessary feature of a sound argument, but it is not sufficient. When an argument is both logical and starts with true premises (which makes the argument sound), its conclusion is true.

LOGIC AND THE MIND OF GOD

How does logic relate to God? This is a question with many tentacles. Some argue that logical objects, like mathematical objects, actually exist just as an apple exists. And this poses the question of how these logical objects relate to God’s being and creation. Historically, some who follow this more platonic line of thinking have argued that logical objects or numbers exist independently of God. For Christians, this cannot be, for God is the ultimate reality. Everything exists because of God. Logic cannot be more ultimate than him.

Those who follow a more postmodern path, on the other hand, say logic is a human invention. Logic, they assert, is embedded in specific cultures and languages, and logical patterns simply emerged with human communication. Humans do tend to think logically, but the logics of different cultures simply do not connect in any deep way. Every culture has its own logic, and each logic works in its setting. Each group can use its logic to achieve its goals and live its values. But no ultimate reason transcends all these groups. There simply is no ultimate truth standing above the values and beliefs embedded in particular cultures.

This postmodern sensibility often supposes that claims about transcendent logic or ultimate truth are really illicit claims for power. When a particular person argues that his thinking, language, or reason points to

"truth," he is acting politically. And if that person represents a privileged class, this power move is unjust. It is immoral—some even say violent—to make ultimate truth claims.

But there is a fly in the ointment: it appears that these sentiments assume what they deny. It is worth asking someone, if he denies any transcultural logic, just what sort of claim he is making. Is he not making a claim that transcends his culture? Is he not saying something true about logic generally?

It is also worth pressing a person who discards ultimate truth on the ground that a truth claim is unjust and immoral. Is he not saying it is ultimately true that injustice is not good? Is he not implying that there is an ultimate truth about injustice when he disapproves of another's assertion, saying that ultimate claims to truth are really immoral, political power moves?

Some Christians agree, surprisingly, that logic is a human invention. They say logic cannot touch God, paraphrasing Isaiah 55:8: "God's ways are not our ways." This way of thinking acknowledges that God is supreme and therefore not limited by human rationality. If a logical principle seems to limit God, the right response is to abandon human logic in order to maintain the ultimate freedom of God.

But this line of thinking also trips over itself. It creates the challenge of how to say anything meaningful about God. If God transcends logic, and logic embeds every human statement, is anything humanly knowable about God? If not, how can we understand a statement like "God is love" (1Jn 4:8)?

Historically, certain forms of theology have tended in this direction. The *via negativa* ("the negative way") arose because certain theologians believed that positive statements entangle the believer in human logic. So, theology should say only what God is not. God is eternal. That is, God is not temporal, not bounded by time. No one can say how God relates to time positively, but only negatively that God is not limited by time.

Certainly, humans cannot know God perfectly. And it is helpful to say what God is not. But the *via negativa* goes too far. The Bible is filled with positive statements, such as "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1). How do we understand that? Admittedly, philosophers struggle to describe a theory of how to ascribe positive statements to God. But it seems clear that biblical believers do speak positively of God, even if there remain theoretical questions about how that works.

A more satisfying view connecting logic and God is available. Logic is not higher than God, and logic does not limit God. Logic is not just a human invention and therefore irrelevant to ultimate truth. Instead, logic truly guides human thinking because logic truly reflects God's mind. On this view, human thinking depends on the structure of divine thinking. Of course, human thinking never fully captures divine thinking; "we see only a reflection" (1Co 13:12). But when humans think appropriately, properly following logical principles and correctly using inference, they mimic the structure of God's thinking. They "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2Co 10:5).

God's mind grounds logic, just as God's character grounds morality. God is truth, just as God is good. Thus, God can neither think nor do the illogical. But that is not because human logic limits God. God can neither think nor do the illogical because logic reflects the structure of God's thinking. God cannot contradict himself. So logical principles find their source in God's mind.

SUMMARY

In sum, logic is a set of principles that guide human thought. It grounds the meaningfulness of individual statements. It evaluates the validity of arguments. The principles of logic are, as it were, embedded in God's mind. When humans think well, they think God's thoughts after him. God so created humans, in his image, that they seek what is true. Logic is one tool for this task.

DAVID CLARK

55 "Come, everyone who is thirsty, †
come to the water;

and you without silver,
come, buy, and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without silver and without cost!
2 Why do you spend silver on what is not food, and your wages on what does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and you will enjoy the choicest of foods. †
3 Pay attention and come to me; listen, so that you will live.
I will make a permanent covenant with you †
on the basis of the faithful kindnesses of David. † †
4 Since I have made him a witness to the peoples, †
a leader and commander for the peoples, †
5 so you will summon a nation you do not know, †
and nations who do not know you will run to you. †
For the LORD your God, even the Holy One of Israel, †
has glorified you.” †

6 Seek the LORD while he may be found; call to him while he is near. †
7 Let the wicked one abandon his way and the sinful one his thoughts; †
let him return to the LORD, so he may have compassion on him,
and to our God, for he will freely forgive. †

8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways.”
This is the LORD’s declaration.
9 “For as heaven is higher than earth, †
so my ways are higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.
10 For just as rain and snow fall from heaven and do not return there
without saturating the earth
and making it germinate and sprout,
and providing seed to sow
and food to eat, †

11 so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty,
but it will accomplish what I please
and will prosper in what I send it to do.” †

12 You will indeed go out with joy and be peacefully guided;
the mountains and the hills will break into singing before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. †
13 Instead of the thornbush, a cypress will come up, and instead of the brier, a myrtle will come up; †
this will stand as a monument for the LORD, †
an everlasting sign that will not be destroyed.

55:2 Lit *enjoy fatness* **55:3** Or *with you, the faithful acts of kindness shown to David*
55:1 Ps 42:1-2; 63:1; 143:6; Is 41:17; 44:3; Jn 4:14; 7:37; Rv 21:6 **55:3** Gn 9:16; 17:7; 2Sm 23:5; Is 24:5; 59:21; 61:8 **55:3** Ac 13:34 **55:4** Ps 18:43 **55:4** Ezk 34:24; 37:24-25; Dn 9:25; Mc 5:2 **55:5** Is 45:14,22-24; 49:6 **55:5** Zch 8:22 **55:5** Is 1:4 **55:5** Is 60:9 **55:6** Ps 32:6; Am 5:4 **55:7** Ps 33:10; Is 32:7; 59:7; 65:2 **55:7** Is 1:18; 43:25; 44:22 **55:9** Ps 103:11 **55:10** 2Co 9:10 **55:11** Is 45:23; 46:10; 53:10 **55:12** Ps 98:8; Is 44:23 **55:13** Is 35:1-2; 41:19; 60:13 **55:13** Is 63:12-14; Jr 33:9

55:1-2 The food and drink offered here is an invitation to the redemptive work of the servant described in the previous chapters. It is contrasted with that which *is* bought with money and **does not satisfy** (see 66:11). The implication is that verse 1 speaks of spiritual food and drink for the spiritually thirsty (see 48:21; Jn 4:13-14; 6:48-58). The related instruction to **eat what is good** recalls 1:19 and suggests that this earlier text likewise has to do with spiritual food (see also 25:6).

55:3-4 The quenching of thirst and satisfaction with choice food is conditioned upon listening to God and coming to him. Those who do so will partake in the blessings of God’s **permanent covenant** with David. This covenant is identical to the “covenant of peace” in 54:10. Fittingly, the Messiah, who is the fulfillment of this covenant and brings these blessings, twice was predicted to be “a covenant for the people” (42:6; 49:8; Mc 5:5). He is a **witness**, **leader**, and **commander for the peoples** (42:1-4; 51:4-5; Hs 3:5).

55:5 Foreigners running to Zion parallels 2:2-4; 11:10; and 45:14.

55:6-9 This call to prayer and repentance continues the call to partake and to listen in verses 1-3. Both relate to receiving the blessings of the Davidic covenant through the Messiah. There remains opportunity for the **wicked** to receive forgiveness if he will **abandon his way** and his **thoughts** (v. 7; 53:11-12), which are vastly inferior to God’s (vv. 8-9).

55:10-13 The outpouring of the Spirit had been implicitly compared to rainfall in 32:15 and 44:3, resulting in dry ground becoming fruitful (see 44:4; 45:8). Themes of precipitation, plant life, and salvation are also found in this passage. The **rain**, of course, is also an illustration of God’s **word** (v. 11), which does his will and accomplishes what it was sent to do (Jn 1:1; 8:29; see “Biblical Formation” on *p. 1504*). The prediction that the redeemed will **go out** (v. 12) echoes commands to do so in 48:20; 49:9; and 52:11.

A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL

56 This is what the LORD says:

Preserve justice and do what is right, †
for my salvation is coming soon,
and my righteousness will be revealed. †
2 Happy is the person who does this, the son of man who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil. †

3 No foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD should say,
"The LORD will exclude me from his people," †
and the eunuch should not say,
"Look, I am a dried-up tree." †
4 For the LORD says this: "For the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
and choose what pleases me,
and hold firmly to my covenant,
5 I will give them, in my house and within my walls, a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters.
I will give each of them an everlasting name that will never be cut off. †
6 As for the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to become his servants — all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold firmly to my covenant —
7 I will bring them to my holy mountain †
and let them rejoice in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be acceptable on my altar, †
for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations." †
8 This is the declaration of the Lord GOD, who gathers the dispersed of Israel:
"I will gather to them still others
besides those already gathered." †

UNRIGHTEOUS LEADERS CONDEMNED

9 All you animals of the field and forest, come and eat!

10 Israel's † watchmen are blind, all of them, they know nothing;
all of them are mute dogs,
they cannot bark;
they dream, lie down,
and love to sleep.
11 These dogs have fierce appetites; they never have enough.
And they are shepherds
who have no discernment;
all of them turn to their own way,
every last one for his own profit. †
12 "Come, let me get some wine, let's guzzle some beer;
and tomorrow will be like today,
only far better! " †

56:10 Or *His*, or *Its*
56:1 Gn 18:19; Ps 106:3; Pr 21:3 **56:1** Ps 98:2; Is 46:13; 51:5; Rm 1:17; 3:21 **56:2** Is 58:13 **56:3** Is 14:1; 56:6 **56:3** Dt 23:1 **56:5** Is 55:13; Rv 2:17 **56:7** Is 2:2-3 **56:7** Mal 1:11 **56:7** Jr 7:11; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46 **56:8** Is 11:12; 60:3-11; 66:18-21; Jn 10:16 **56:11** Jr 10:21; 23:1; 50:6; Ezk 34:2 **56:12** Lk 12:19; 1Co 15:32

56:1-2 The imminence of God's **salvation** and **righteousness** echoes 51:5 (see also 52:10). All who do justice will be blessed, not only those of Israelite descent (see vv. 3-7). Rather than rehearsing the command to "not do any work" (Ex 20:10; 31:14-15), the Sabbath instead is mentioned alongside of doing good and not **doing any evil** (1:16-17; Mt 12:12; Mk 3:4). This is because it is a sign of the covenant, and thus marks those who have truly committed themselves to God. The Pentateuch referred to the Sabbath as a sign forever to be kept as a "permanent covenant" (Ex 31:16-17). Though the Sabbath is indeed related to the **covenant** at Sinai (vv. 4, 6; Jr 31:32), appearances of this word in the surrounding context all refer to the new covenant (42:6; 49:8; 54:10; 55:3; 59:21; 61:8). Accordingly, those who receive God's favor are "a people in whose heart is [his] instruction" (see the note on 51:7-8).

56:3-7 The inclusion of faithful Gentiles among God's people is explicit (see v. 2) through the examples of the **foreigner** and **eunuch** (v. 3). They are among **his servants** (v. 6), a group first mentioned in 54:17. These will have a place in [God's] **house** and **walls**, along with **an everlasting name that will never be cut off** (v. 5). A "name" and "everlasting sign" had just been mentioned similarly in 55:13. These adjacent texts are further linked through the theme of the joy of God's people (v. 7; 55:12). **The Sabbath** is highlighted again (vv. 4,6).

56:9-12 The call to **animals** to **come and eat** (v. 9) contrasts with the call in 55:1-2. Unlike those who partake of the aforementioned meal, Israel's leaders are not satisfied (v. 11). Their blindness, foolishness, self-will, and love of alcohol recall earlier passages (6:9-10; 28:7; 29:9; 53:6).

57 The righteous person perishes, and no one takes it to heart;
the faithful are taken away,
with no one realizing

that the righteous person is taken away
because of † evil.
2 He will enter into peace — they will rest on their beds † — everyone who lives uprightly.

PAGAN RELIGION DENOUNCED

3 But come here, you witch's sons,
offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute! †
4 Who are you mocking?
Who are you opening your mouth
and sticking out your tongue at?
Isn't it you, you rebellious children, †
you offspring of liars,
5 who burn with lust among the oaks, under every green tree, †
who slaughter children in the wadis
below the clefts of the rocks? †
6 Your portion is among the smooth stones of the wadi; indeed, they are your lot.
You have even poured out a drink offering to them; you have offered a grain offering;
should I be satisfied with these?
7 You have placed your bed on a high and lofty mountain; †
you also went up there to offer sacrifice.
8 You have set up your memorial behind the door and doorpost.
For away from me, you stripped,
went up, and made your bed wide, †
and you have made a bargain † for yourself with them.
You have loved their bed;
you have gazed on their genitals. † †
9 You went to the king with oil and multiplied your perfumes;
you sent your envoys far away †
and sent them down even to Sheol.

10 You became weary on your many journeys, but you did not say,
"It's hopeless! " †

You found a renewal of your strength; †
therefore you did not grow weak.

11 Who was it you dreaded and feared, so that you lied and didn't remember me
or take it to heart?

I have kept silent for a long time, haven't I? † †
So you do not fear me.

12 I will announce your righteousness, and your works — they will not
profit you.

13 When you cry out, let your collection of idols rescue you!
The wind will carry all of them off,
a breath will take them away.
But whoever takes refuge in me

will inherit the land †

and possess my holy mountain. †

HEALING AND PEACE

14 He said, "Build it up, build it up, prepare the way, remove every obstacle
from my people's way." †

15 For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy, †
says this: "I live in a high and holy place,

and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit, †
to revive the spirit of the lowly

and revive the heart of the oppressed. †

16 For I will not accuse you forever, and I will not always be angry; †
for then the spirit would grow weak before me, even the breath,
which I have made.

17 Because of his sinful greed I was angry, †
so I struck him; I was angry and hid;
but he went on turning back to the desires of his heart.

18 I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort

to him and his mourners, †
19 creating words of praise." † †
The LORD says, "Peace, peace to the one who is far or near, †
and I will heal him.
20 But the wicked are like the storm-tossed sea, †
for it cannot be still,
and its water churns up mire and muck.
21 There is no peace for the wicked,"
says my God. †

57:1 Or *taken away from the presence of* **57:2** Either their deathbeds or their graves **57:3** Lit *and she acted as a prostitute* **57:8** Lit *you cut* **57:8** Lit *hand* **57:8** In Hb, the word "hand" is probably a euphemism for *genitals*. **57:10** Lit *found life of your hand* **57:11** LXX reads *And I, when I see you, I pass by* **57:19** Lit *creating fruit of the lips*
57:4 Is 30:1,9 **57:5** 2Kg 16:4; Jr 2:20; 3:13 **57:5** 2Kg 23:10; Ps 106:37-38; Jr 7:31; Ezk 16:20-21 **57:7** Jr 3:6; Ezk 16:16 **57:8** Ezk 23:17-18 **57:9** Ezk 16:26-29 **57:10** Jr 2:25; 18:12 **57:11** Ps 50:21; Is 42:14 **57:13** Ps 37:3,9; Is 25:4 **57:13** Is 65:9 **57:14** Is 62:10; Jr 18:15 **57:15** Lk 1:49 **57:15** Ps 34:18; 51:17; Is 66:2 **57:15** Ps 147:3; Is 61:1-3 **57:16** Gn 6:3; Ps 103:9; Jr 3:12 **57:17** Is 2:7; 56:11; Jr 6:13 **57:18** Is 61:1-3 **57:19** Is 6:7; 51:16; 59:21; Heb 13:15 **57:19** Ac 2:39; Eph 2:17 **57:20** Ps 107:29 **57:21** Is 48:22; 59:8

57:3-4 Jerusalem had been called an "adulteress" in 1:21 and her children rebellious in 1:2.

57:5-7 The sin in view here is idolatry, often committed **among the oaks** and **under every green tree** (1:29). Another common location for Israel's idolatry was **a high and lofty mountain** (65:7; Dt 12:2; 1Kg 14:23). Their wicked practices even included the slaughtering of **children** (v. 5).

57:8 In contrast with the righteous who peacefully rest on their "beds" (v. 2), promiscuous Zion united herself with idols in her **bed.**

57:12 Israel's own **righteousness** would not **profit** them. In contrast, God's servants have righteousness from him (54:17).

57:13 The theme of **refuge** in God reappears (see 4:6; 25:4; 28:15-17). As in Psalm 37 (see the note on v. 22), the Abrahamic promise to **inherit the land** seems to be fulfilled eschatologically (see 60:21; 61:7; 65:9). The Lord's **holy mountain** had been mentioned in 11:9; 27:13; and 56:7.

57:14-18 The word **way** is repeated several times and ties this passage together. The preparation of this way for God's people relates to their travel to Zion (11:16; 35:8-10; 62:10). This way is not one's own (vv. 17-18; 53:6; 56:11) but God's (vv. 8-9; 40:3; 55:8-9). He dwells **exalted** in holiness and yet also with the **lowly** (v. 15).

57:19-21 Peace for those **far or near** describes salvation for the humble across the world (vv. 15,19). They will be "healed" of their waywardness (vv. 18-19; 53:6). The unrepentant **wicked**, however, have no share in such **peace** (vv. 20-21; 48:22).

TRUE FASTING

58 “Cry out loudly, † don’t hold back!
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Tell my people their transgression
and the house of Jacob their sins.
2 They seek me day after day and delight to know my ways,
like a nation that does what is right
and does not abandon the justice of their God.
They ask me for righteous judgments;
they delight in the nearness of God.” †
3 “Why have we fasted, but you have not seen? †
We have denied ourselves, but you haven’t noticed! ” †
“Look, you do as you please on the day of your fast, and oppress all your workers. †
4 You fast with contention and strife to strike viciously with your fist.
You cannot fast as you do today,
hoping to make your voice heard on high.
5 Will the fast I choose be like this: A day for a person to deny himself,
to bow his head like a reed,
and to spread out sackcloth and ashes? †
Will you call this a fast
and a day acceptable to the LORD?
6 Isn’t this the fast I choose: To break the chains of wickedness, †
to untie the ropes of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free,
and to tear off every yoke? †
7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, †
to bring the poor and homeless into your house, to clothe the naked when you see him, †
and not to ignore your own flesh and blood? † †
8 Then your light will appear like the dawn, and your recovery will come quickly. †
Your righteousness will go before you, †

and the LORD's glory will be your rear guard. †

9 At that time, when you call, the LORD will answer; †
when you cry out, he will say, 'Here I am.'
If you get rid of the yoke among you,
the finger-pointing and malicious speaking, †
10 and if you offer yourself † to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted one,
then your light will shine in the darkness, †
and your night will be like noonday.
11 The LORD will always lead you, satisfy you in a parched land,
and strengthen your bones.
You will be like a watered garden †
and like a spring whose water never runs dry. †
12 Some of you will rebuild the ancient ruins; †
you will restore the foundations laid long ago; †
you will be called the repairer of broken walls, the restorer of streets where people live.

13 "If you keep from desecrating † the Sabbath, †
from doing whatever you want on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight,
and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, †
seeking your own pleasure, or talking business; † †
14 then you will delight in the LORD, †
and I will make you ride over the heights of the land, †
and let you enjoy the heritage of your father Jacob."
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. †

58:1 Lit *with throat* **58:3** These are Israel's words to God. **58:7** Lit *not hide yourself from your flesh* **58:10** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *offer your bread* **58:13** Lit *keep your foot from* **58:13** Or *idly* **58:13** Lit *or speak a word*

58:2 Ps 119:151; Is 29:13; 57:3; Jms 4:8 **58:3** Mal 3:14; Lk 18:12 **58:3** Is 22:12-13; Zch 7:5-6 **58:5** Est 4:3; Dn 9:3 **58:6** Jb 36:8; Ps 107:10; Ec 7:26 **58:6** Neh 5:10-12; Is 58:9; Jr 34:8 **58:7** Jb 31:19-20; Is 58:10; Ezk 18:7,16 **58:7** Mt 25:35-36; Lk 3:11 **58:7** Dt 22:1-4; Lk 10:31-32 **58:8** Is 30:26; 33:24; Jr 30:17; 33:6 **58:8** Ps 85:13; Is 62:1 **58:8** Ex 14:19; Is 52:12 **58:9** Ps 50:15; Is 55:6; 65:24 **58:9** Pr 6:13 **58:10** Jb 11:17; Ps 37:6; Is 42:16; 58:8 **58:11** Sg 4:15; Is 27:3; Jr 31:12 **58:11** Jn 4:14; 7:38 **58:12** Ezr 6:14; Neh 4:6; Is 49:8;

61:4; Ezk 36:10 **58:12** 1Kg 6:37; Ezr 3:10-12 **58:13** Ex 31:16-17; 35:2-3; Is 56:2-6; Jr 17:21-27 **58:13** Is 55:8 **58:14** Jb 22:26; Ps 37:4 **58:14** Dt 32:13; 33:29; Is 33:16; Hab 3:19 **58:14** Is 1:20; 40:5

58:1-4 Despite their fasting and interest in some spiritual things (vv. 1-2), God did not regard his people's fasting because they were simultaneously seeking their own pleasure and harming their fellow man (vv. 3-4; 1:11-17). In contrast, outsiders who seek God's pleasure will have a place in his house (vv. 4-5).

58:5-7 As is the case with sacrifices and the Sabbath (1:11-17; 56:1-7), fasting by itself does not guarantee God's blessing but must be combined with justice and mercy (vv. 6-7).

58:8-10 A description of abundant blessings that could have been experienced by Israel is also found in 48:18-19. The Lord would have heard their prayers instead of hiding from them (v. 9; 1:15; 8:17; 54:8; 57:17). Because of God's mercy, these blessings had not been permanently forfeited (52:12; 56:7; 60:1-3).

58:13 The mention of **the Sabbath** again explicitly connects this chapter to 56:1-7, as suggested by their similar themes (see the note on vv. 5-7). To be avoided are one's own **ways** and **pleasure** (v. 3; 56:4; 57:17-18).

58:14 The Hebrew verb translated **delight in** is also found in 55:2 and 66:12. All three passages also have to do with eating and partaking of God's rich blessings.

SIN AND REDEMPTION

59 Indeed, the LORD's arm is not too weak to save, †
and his ear is not too deaf to hear.
2 But your iniquities † are separating you from your God,
and your sins have hidden his face from you †
so that he does not listen. †
3 For your hands are defiled with blood and your fingers, with iniquity;
your lips have spoken lies,
and your tongues mutter injustice.
4 No one makes claims justly; no one pleads honestly.
They trust in empty and worthless words;
they conceive trouble and give birth to iniquity. †
5 They hatch viper's eggs and weave spider's webs.
Whoever eats their eggs will die;
crack one open, and a viper is hatched.
6 Their webs cannot become clothing, and they cannot cover themselves with their works.
Their works are sinful works,
and violent acts are in their hands.
7 Their feet run after evil, †

and they rush to shed innocent blood. †
Their thoughts are sinful thoughts; †
ruin and wretchedness are in their paths.
8 They have not known the path of peace, †
and there is no justice in their ways.
They have made their roads crooked;
no one who walks on them will know peace. †

9 Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us.
We hope for light, but there is darkness; for brightness, but we live in the night.
10 We grope along a wall like the blind; we grope like those without eyes. †
We stumble at noon as though it were twilight; we are like the dead among those who are healthy.
11 We all growl like bears and moan like doves. †
We hope for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us.
12 For our transgressions have multiplied before you, †
and our sins testify against us. †
For our transgressions are with us,
and we know our iniquities: †
13 transgression and deception against the LORD, turning away from following our God,
speaking oppression and revolt,
conceiving and uttering lying words from the heart.
14 Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far off.
For truth has stumbled in the public square, and honesty cannot enter.
15 Truth is missing, and whoever turns from evil is plundered.

The LORD saw that there was no justice, and he was offended.
16 He saw that there was no man — he was amazed that there was no one interceding; †
so his own arm brought salvation,
and his own righteousness supported him.

17 He put on righteousness as body armor, and a helmet of salvation
on his head; †
he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and he wrapped himself in zeal
as in a cloak. †
18 So he will repay according to their deeds: †
fury to his enemies,
retribution to his foes,
and he will repay the coasts and islands.
19 They will fear the name of the LORD in the west and his glory in the east; † †
for he will come like a rushing stream †
driven by the wind of the LORD.
20 "The Redeemer † will come to Zion, and to those in Jacob who turn
from transgression." †
This is the LORD's declaration.

21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them," † says the LORD: "My Spirit who is on you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, † will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of your children's children, from now on and forever," says the LORD.

59:19 Lit *sunrise*

59:1 Nm 11:23; Is 50:2; Jr 32:17 **59:2** Is 13:11 **59:2** Dt 31:17-18; 32:20; Is 50:6; Ezk 39:29; Mc 3:4 **59:2** Dt 3:26; 23:5; Jb 35:13; Is 1:15 **59:4** Jb 15:35; Ps 7:14; Is 33:11 **59:7-8** Rm 3:15-17 **59:7** Pr 1:16; 6:17 **59:7** Mk 7:21-22 **59:8** Lk 1:79 **59:8** Is 57:20-21 **59:10** Dt 28:29; Jb 5:14 **59:11** Is 38:14; Ezk 7:16 **59:12** Ezr 9:6 **59:12** Is 3:9; Jr 14:7; Hs 5:5 **59:12** Is 13:11 **59:16** Is 41:28; 63:5; Ezk 22:30 **59:17** Eph 6:14,17; 1Th 5:8 **59:17** Is 9:7; 37:32; Zch 1:14 **59:18** Jr 25:14; Rv 22:12 **59:19** Ps 113:3 **59:19** Is 30:28; 66:12 **59:20** Is 41:14; 43:14 **59:20-21** Ezk 18:30-31; Rm 11:26-27 **59:21** Jr 31:31-34 **59:21** Is 51:16

59:1-3 God was not **weak** or **deaf** but had turned from Israel and their prayers because of their **sins.** This passage is similar to 1:15-17, which also describes God's disregard of their prayer because of their blood-stained hands and injustice.

59:7-8 As above (55:6-9; 57:18; 58:13), the wicked are characterized by their **thoughts** and **paths**, which are not those of **peace** (see the note on 57:19-21).

59:9-15a The result of Israel's sin (vv. 2-8,12-13) was the absence of **justice**, **righteousness**, **salvation**, and **truth** (vv. 9,11,14-15). Instead of enjoying the **light** that would have followed obedience (see 58:8-10; 60:1-3), they found themselves engulfed by **darkness** and blindness (vv. 9-10). Their disappointment (vv. 9,11) aptly corresponds with God's disappointment with their lack of justice and righteousness (5:2,7). Whereas God confronted his people with their sin in **vv.** 2-8, here they are confessing it (vv. 12-13; 53:6; 64:6).

59:15b-20 The preceding confession of sin and helplessness spoke for "all" (v. 11), so God took action by

bringing **salvation** and **righteousness** himself (vv. 16-17; Eph 6:13-17). This includes not only forgiveness for those who humbly repent (v. 20; 1:27) but also **vengeance** upon his enemies (vv. 17-18) so that the whole world fears God (v. 19). Verse 20 is cited in Romans 11:26.

59:21 The salvation accomplished in the preceding verses relates to a **covenant**, the new covenant. Unlike the old covenant (Nm 11:29), the Spirit will be on all of God's people (see 32:15; 44:3). Also characteristic of them is God's words in their **mouth forever** (see 51:16; Dt 30:14; Jr 1:9).

THE LORD'S GLORY IN ZION

60 Arise, shine, for your light has come, †
and the glory of the LORD shines over you. † †
2 For look, darkness will cover the earth, and total darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will shine over you, and his glory will appear over you.
3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to your shining brightness. †
4 Raise your eyes and look around: they all gather and come to you;
your sons will come from far away,
and your daughters on the hips of nannies. †
5 Then you will see and be radiant, †
and your heart will tremble and rejoice, †
because the riches of the sea will become yours and the wealth of the nations will come to you. †
6 Caravans of camels will cover your land † — young camels of Midian and Ephah —
all of them will come from Sheba. †
They will carry gold and frankincense †
and proclaim the praises of the LORD.
7 All the flocks of Kedar will be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth will serve you †
and go up on my altar as an acceptable sacrifice. †
I will glorify my beautiful house. †

8 Who are these who fly like a cloud, like doves to their shelters? †
9 Yes, the coasts and islands will wait for me †
with the ships of Tarshish in the lead, †

to bring your children from far away, †
their silver and gold with them,
for the honor of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, †
who has glorified you. †
10 Foreigners will rebuild your walls, †
and their kings will serve you. †
Although I struck you in my wrath,
yet I will show mercy to you with my favor. †
11 Your city gates will always be open; they will never be shut day or night
so that the wealth of the nations
may be brought into you, †
with their kings being led in procession.
12 For the nation and the kingdom that will not serve you will perish;
those nations will be annihilated. †
13 The glory of Lebanon will come to you † — its pine, elm,
and cypress together † — to beautify the place of my sanctuary,
and I will glorify my dwelling place. †
14 The sons of your oppressors will come and bow down to you; †
all who reviled you
will fall facedown at your feet. †
They will call you the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel. †
15 Instead of your being deserted and hated, with no one passing through, †
I will make you an object of eternal pride, †
a joy from age to age.
16 You will nurse on the milk of nations, and nurse at the breast of kings; †
you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior †
and Redeemer, † the Mighty One of Jacob. †

17 I will bring gold instead of bronze; I will bring silver instead of iron,
bronze instead of wood,
and iron instead of stones.

I will appoint peace as your government
and righteousness as your overseers.
18 Violence will never again be heard of in your land; †
devastation and destruction
will be gone from your borders.
You will call your walls Salvation †
and your city gates Praise.
19 The sun will no longer be your light by day, and the brightness of the moon
will not shine on you.
The LORD will be your everlasting light, †
and your God will be your splendor.
20 Your sun will no longer set, and your moon will not fade;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and the days of your sorrow
will be over. †
21 All your people will be righteous; †
they will possess the land forever; †
they are the branch I planted,
the work of my † hands, so that I may be glorified. †
22 The least will become a thousand, the smallest a mighty nation.
I am the LORD; I will accomplish it quickly in its time.

60:1 = Jerusalem **60:5** Lit *expand* **60:6** Lit *cover you* **60:13** Lit *glorify the place of my feet* **60:21** LXX, DSS read *his*
60:1 Is 9:2; 26:19; 30:26; 51:17; 52:2; Eph 5:14 **60:1** Is 40:5; 58:8; Mal 4:2 **60:3** Is 42:6; 49:6; Rv 21:24 **60:4** Is 49:18-22 **60:5** Ps 34:5 **60:5** Is 61:6 **60:6** Gn 25:3; Ps 72:10 **60:6** Mt 2:11 **60:7** Gn 25:13 **60:7** Is 19:19; 56:7 **60:7** Is 60:13; Hg 2:7,9 **60:8** Hs 11:11 **60:9** Is 51:5 **60:9** Ps 48:7; Is 2:16 **60:9** Is 14:2; 43:6; 49:22 **60:9** Is 1:4; 60:14 **60:9** Is 55:5 **60:10** Is 14:1-2; 61:5; Zch 6:15 **60:10** Is 49:7,23; Rv 21:24 **60:10** Hab 3:2 **60:11** Rv 21:25-26 **60:12** Zch 14:17-19 **60:13** Is 35:2 **60:13** Is 41:19 **60:14** Is 14:1-2; Zch 8:23 **60:14** Is 49:23; Rv 3:9 **60:14** Is 1:26 **60:15** Is 34:10 **60:15** Is 65:18 **60:16** Is 49:23; 66:11-12 **60:16** Is 43:3; 49:26 **60:16** Is 41:14; 43:14 **60:16** Gn 49:24; Ps 132:2,5; Is 49:26 **60:18** Is 11:9 **60:18** Is 26:1 **60:19** Zch 14:6-7; Rv 21:23; 22:5 **60:20** Is 35:10; 65:19; Rv 21:4 **60:21** Is 52:1 **60:21** Ps 37:9; Ezk 37:25 **60:21** Is 61:3

60:1-3 The redemption of Zion (59:20) leads naturally to the call that she **shine, for** [her] **light has come** (v. 1). Like the rest of **the earth** (v. 2), she too had been in **darkness** (59:9-10). Her original potential, however, is realized (58:8-10) through the Messiah (9:2,6-7). The coming of the **nations** and **kings** continues threads found in 2:2-4; 49:7; and 52:15.

60:6 The bringing of **gold** and **frankincense** on **camels** from **Sheba** echoes and presumably surpasses that brought to Solomon (1Kg 10:1-2,10).

60:7 Kedar and **Nebaioth** were two sons of Ishmael, suggesting the subjection of Ishmael to Zion (see

21:16-17; Gn 17:18-21). Kedar's salvation also was foretold in 42:11.

60:9 The nations will not only bring treasures to Zion (vv. 5-7,11; Hg 2:7) but also her **children** (vv. 4,9; 49:18-21). The **ships of Tarshish** were mighty, profitable vessels for trade but would be brought into the service of Zion (see 2:16; 23:1; 33:21). The **islands** likewise **wait for** God in 42:4 and 51:5.

60:12 The triumph of Israel over their enemies had also been predicted in 54:15-17.

60:13 Like the "ships of Tarshish" (v. 9; 2:16), **Lebanon** had once competed for glory with God, only to be humiliated (2:13; 10:34; 33:9). Ultimately, both will serve to bring glory to him (see 29:17; 35:2).

60:14-15 The recognition of Zion as **the City of the LORD** (1:26) is a far cry from her earlier status as a "prostitute" (lit 1:21). Her shame and desolation would likewise be replaced by glory and **joy** (44:23; 65:18).

60:17-18 Peace, **salvation**, and **praise** will characterize redeemed Zion, and her gates "will always be open" (v. 11).

60:19-20 As explained in verses 1-2, Zion's **light** derives from God and his glory. She thus no longer needs the light of the **sun** or **moon**, which have been surpassed by this **everlasting light** (Gn 1:16), this "great light" (9:2; Nm 24:17) and "light to the nations" (42:6; 49:6).

60:21 Although "all" have gone astray (53:6; 64:6), the forgiven and healed people of Zion (see 53:10-12; 57:18-19) all **will be righteous** (see 26:2; 54:13). Their possession of the land is also the subject of 54:3; 57:13; and 65:9.

MESSIAH'S JUBILEE

61 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me, †
because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. †
He has sent me to heal † the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives
and freedom to the prisoners; †
2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, †
and the day of our God's vengeance; †
to comfort † all who mourn, 3 to provide for those who mourn in Zion; to give
them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, festive oil instead of mourning, †
and splendid clothes instead of despair. †
And they will be called righteous trees,
planted by the LORD to glorify him. †

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins; †
they will restore the former devastations; they will renew the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

5 Strangers will stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners will be your plowmen
and vinedressers. †
6 But you will be called the LORD's priests; †
they will speak of you as ministers of our God; you will eat the wealth
of the nations,
and you will boast in their riches.
7 In place of your shame, you will have a double portion; †
in place of disgrace, they will rejoice over their share.
So they will possess double in their land, †
and eternal joy will be theirs.

8 For I the LORD love justice; †
I hate robbery and injustice; †
I will faithfully reward my people
and make a permanent covenant † with them.
9 Their descendants will be known among the nations, and their posterity
among the peoples.
All who see them will recognize
that they are a people the LORD has blessed.

10 I rejoice greatly in the LORD, I exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation and wrapped me in a robe
of righteousness, †
as a groom wears a turban
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. †
11 For as the earth produces its growth, and as a garden enables what is sown
to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring
up before all the nations. †

61:1 Lit *bind up* **61:3** Lit *a dim spirit* **61:8** Some Hb mss, DSS, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *robbery with a burnt offering*
61:1-2 Is 11:2; 42:1; 48:16; Lk 4:18-19 **61:1** Lk 7:22 **61:1** Is 42:7; 49:9 **61:2** Is 49:8 **61:2** Is 2:12; 13:6; 34:2,8 **61:2** Is 40:1 **61:3** Ps 45:7; Heb 1:9 **61:3** Is 60:21; Jr 17:7-8 **61:4** Is 49:8; 58:12; Ezk 36:33; Am 9:14 **61:5** Is 14:2; 60:10 **61:6** Ex 19:6; Is 66:21; 1Pt 2:5,9 **61:7** Is 54:4 **61:7** Is 40:2; Zch 9:12 **61:8** Ps 11:7; Is 59:15 **61:8** Is 24:5; 55:3 **61:10** Is 49:18; 52:1; 59:17 **61:10** Rv 21:2 **61:11** Is 45:23-24; 60:18,21

61:1-3 The extended description of redeemed Zion in Isaiah 60 is fittingly preceded and followed by a

prophecy of the Messiah (see 59:15-21), through whom her salvation is accomplished (v. 3). His empowerment by **the Spirit of the LORD GOD** (v. 1) recalls messianic prophecies in 11:2 and 42:1. His task of bringing **freedom** recalls still other messianic prophecies (42:7; 49:8). The **good news** centers on him (see 40:9; 41:27; 52:7). Whereas this means **vengeance** upon his enemies (v. 2; 34:8; 35:4; 59:17-18; 63:4), it means **comfort** for **all who mourn** as they long for Zion's salvation (60:20; 66:10). Their planting by God as **righteous trees** (v. 3) continues the thought of 60:21. It also sharply contrasts with Israel's previous idolatry among trees (1:29; 57:5).

61:6 Whereas Israel had been a kingdom with priests, God's people would truly become a kingdom of **priests** (Ex 19:6; 1Pt 2:9).

61:7-8 Just as they would be an "eternal pride" (60:15), enjoy the "everlasting light," and "possess the land forever" (60:19-21), so will God's people have **eternal joy** and be secure in a **permanent covenant.**

ZION'S RESTORATION

62 I will not keep silent because of Zion, and I will not keep still
because of Jerusalem, †
until her righteousness shines like a bright light †
and her salvation, like a flaming torch.
2 Nations will see your righteousness †
and all kings, your glory.
You will be given a new name
that the LORD's mouth will announce. †
3 You will be a glorious crown in the LORD's hand, and a royal diadem
in the palm of your God's hand. †
4 You will no longer be called Deserted, †
and your land will not be called Desolate; instead, you will be called My Delight
Is in Her, †
and your land Married; † †
for the LORD delights in you, and your land will be married.
5 For as a young man marries a young woman, so your sons will marry you;
and as a groom rejoices over his bride,
so your God will rejoice over you. †

6 Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen on your walls; †
they will never be silent, day or night.
There is no rest for you,
who remind the LORD.

7 Do not give him rest until he establishes and makes Jerusalem
the praise of the earth. †

8 The LORD has sworn with his right hand and his strong arm:
I will no longer give your grain
to your enemies for food, †
and foreigners will not drink the new wine for which you have labored.
9 For those who gather grain will eat it and praise the LORD, and those who harvest the grapes will drink the wine in my holy courts.

10 Go out, go out through the city gates; prepare a way for the people!
Build it up, build up the highway; †
clear away the stones!
Raise a banner for the peoples. †
11 Look, the LORD has proclaimed to the ends of the earth,
"Say to Daughter Zion: †
Look, your salvation is coming,
his wages are with him, †
and his reward accompanies him."
12 And they will be called † the Holy People, †
the LORD's Redeemed; and you will be called Cared For,
A City Not Deserted.

62:4 Or *Hephzibah* **62:4** Or *Beulah* **62:12** Lit *will call them*
62:1 Ps 83:1; Is 64:12; 65:6 **62:1** Is 1:26; 58:8; 61:11 **62:2** Is 60:3 **62:2** Is 60:14; Rv 2:17; 3:12 **62:3** Is 28:5; Zch 9:16; 1Th 2:19 **62:4** Is 54:6-7; 60:15,18 **62:4** Hs 2:19-20 **62:5** Is 65:19 **62:6** Is 52:8; Jr 6:17; Ezk 3:17; 33:7 **62:7** Is 60:18; Jr 33:9; Zph 3:19-20 **62:8** Lv 26:16; Dt 28:31,33; Jdg 6:3-6; Is 1:7; Jr 5:17 **62:10** Is 11:16; 19:23; 35:8; 49:11; 57:14 **62:10** Is 11:10,12; 49:22 **62:11** Zch 9:9; Mt 21:5 **62:11** Is 40:10; Rv 22:12 **62:12** Dt 7:6; Is 4:3; 1Pt 2:9

62:1-7 The perspective shifts to one of persistent, fervent prayer for the salvation **of Zion** (vv. 1,6-7). The many divine promises regarding Zion (e.g., 60:1-3) do not exclude prayer but rather encourage it, especially since the speaker longs for her **glory** (v. 2). This glory includes her marriage to God (vv. 4-5; see "A Biblical View of Marriage," *p. 1449*).

62:8-9 In the past, the temple's **holy courts** had been defiled (1:12), but they would become holy and a place of joyful worship (see 56:7).

62:10-12 The instructions to **prepare a way** and **build up the highway** echo 57:14. The **gates** are probably those of Zion (26:2; 54:12; 60:11,18), and the **banner for the peoples** recalls 11:10,12 and 49:22.

The coming of **salvation** to Zion (v. 11) is similarly described in 40:10. The status of the redeemed as **the Holy People** (v. 12) accords with 35:8-10 and 60:21, and Zion's favored status is repeated again (see v. 4).

THE LORD'S DAY OF VENGEANCE

63 Who is this coming from Edom †
in crimson-stained garments from Bozrah — this one who is splendid in his apparel,
striding in his formidable † might?

It is I, proclaiming vindication, †
powerful to save.

2 Why are your clothes red, and your garments like one who treads a winepress? †

3 I trampled the winepress alone, and no one from the nations was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and ground them underfoot in my fury;
their blood spattered my garments,
and all my clothes were stained.
4 For I planned the day of vengeance, †
and the year of my redemption † came.
5 I looked, but there was no one to help, †
and I was amazed that no one assisted;
so my arm accomplished victory for me,
and my wrath assisted me.
6 I crushed nations in my anger; I made them drunk with my wrath †
and poured out their blood on the ground. †

REMEMBRANCE OF GRACE

7 I will make known the LORD's faithful love and the LORD's praiseworthy acts, because of all the LORD has done for us — even the many good things
he has done for the house of Israel,

which he did for them based on his compassion and the abundance of his faithful love.

8 He said, “They are indeed my people, children who will not be disloyal,”
and he became their Savior.

9 In all their suffering, he suffered, † †
and the angel of his presence saved them.
He redeemed them

because of his love and compassion; †
he lifted them up and carried them

all the days of the past. †

10 But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit. †
So he became their enemy
and fought against them.

11 Then he † remembered the days of the past, the days of Moses and his people.

Where is he who brought them out of the sea with the shepherds † of his flock?
Where is he who put his Holy Spirit among the flock?

12 He made his glorious strength available at the right hand of Moses,

divided the water before them †
to make an eternal name for himself,

13 and led them through the depths like a horse in the wilderness,
so that they did not stumble.

14 Like cattle that go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them † rest.
You led your people this way
to make a glorious name for yourself.

ISRAEL’S PRAYER

15 Look down from heaven and see †
from your lofty home — holy and beautiful.
Where is your zeal and your might?

Your yearning † and your compassion are withheld from me.

16 Yet you are our Father, even though Abraham does not know us

and Israel doesn't recognize us.

You, LORD, are our Father; your name is Our Redeemer †
from Ancient Times.
17 Why, LORD, do you make us stray from your ways?
You harden our hearts so we do not fear † you. †
Return, because of your servants,
the tribes of your heritage.
18 Your holy people had a possession †
for a little while,
but our enemies have trampled down
your sanctuary. †
19 We have become like those you never ruled, like those who did not bear your name. †

63:1 Syr, Vg read *apparel, striding forward in* **63:1** Or *righteousness* **63:4** Or *blood retribution* **63:9** Alt Hb tradition reads *did not suffer* **63:11** Or *they* **63:11** LXX, Tg, Syr read *shepherd* **63:14** Lit *him* **63:15** Lit *The agitation of your inward parts* **63:17** Lit *our heart from fearing* **63:18** Or *Your people possessed your holy place*
63:1 Ps 137:7; Is 34:5-6; Ezk 25:12-14; 35:1-15; Ob 1-14; Mal 1:2-5 **63:2** Rv 19:13-15 **63:4** Is 34:8; 61:2; Jr 46:10 **63:5** Is 59:16 **63:6** Is 29:9; 51:17; Jr 51:39 **63:6** Rv 14:20 **63:9** Jdg 10:16 **63:9** Dt 7:7-8 **63:9** Dt 1:31; 32:10-12; Is 46:3 **63:10** Ps 51:11; 78:40; 106:33; Is 48:16; Ac 7:51; Eph 4:30 **63:12** Ex 14:21; Ps 74:13 **63:15** Dt 26:15; Ps 80:14 **63:16** Is 41:14; 43:14 **63:17** Is 6:10 **63:18** Ps 74:3-7; Is 64:11 **63:19** Dt 28:10; Is 43:7; 65:1

63:1 The **coming** of salvation in 62:11 is picked up here with God **coming from Edom**, **powerful to save.** The Hebrew word for *Edom* sounds like the one for "mankind" and represents the human race (vv. 3-6; see the note on 34:5). It also sounds like the Hebrew word for "red" in verse 2.

63:3-6 God's clothes are red with the blood of **the nations** (v. 6), whom he has **trampled** in judgment (v. 3). As in 59:16, he did this alone (vv. 3,5).

63:7 The fierce judgment of the nations is contrasted with the salvation of God's people.

63:10-14 What is highlighted about Israel's past sin is that they **grieved his Holy Spirit** (v. 10), who had been among them as evidence of his grace (v. 11) to guide them (v. 14).

63:15 As in 62:1, the perspective shifts to one of fervent prayer for God's salvation in fulfillment of his promise. His **zeal** and **might** are closely tied to this (v. 5; 9:7; 37:32; 52:10).

63:16 Even if the nation were disowned by their forefathers because of their sins, God remains their **Father** and **Redeemer** (see 59:20; 60:16; 64:8).

63:17 The prayer that God turn and transform the hearts of his people relates to similar prayers in the OT (e.g., Ps 80:14; Lm 5:21).

64 If only you would tear the heavens open and come down, †
so that mountains would quake at your presence † — 2 just as fire kindles brushwood, and fire boils water — to make your name known to your enemies,
so that nations will tremble at your presence!
3 When you did awesome works †
that we did not expect,
you came down, †
and the mountains quaked at your presence.
4 From ancient times no one has heard, no one has listened to,
no eye has seen any God except you
who acts on behalf of the one who waits for him. †
5 You welcome the one who joyfully does what is right; they remember you in your ways.
But we have sinned, and you were angry.
How can we be saved if we remain in our sins? †
6 All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a polluted † garment; †
all of us wither like a leaf, †
and our iniquities † carry us away like the wind.
7 No one calls on your name, striving to take hold of you.
For you have hidden your face from us †
and made us melt because of † † our iniquity.

8 Yet LORD, you are our Father; †
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we all are the work of your hands. †
9 LORD, do not be terribly angry or remember our iniquity forever. †
Please look — all of us are your people!
10 Your holy cities have become a wilderness; Zion has become a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation. †
11 Our holy and beautiful † temple, where our fathers praised you,

has been burned down,
and all that was dear to us lies in ruins. †
12 LORD, after all this, will you restrain yourself?
Will you keep silent and afflict us severely? †

64:5 Lit *angry; in them continually and we will be saved* ; Hb obscure **64:6** Lit *menstrual* **64:7** LXX, Syr, Vg, Tg read *and delivered us into the hand of* **64:7** Lit *melt by the hand of* **64:11** Or *glorious* ; Is 60:7 **64:1** Ex 19:18; Ps 18:9; 144:5 **64:1** Jdg 5:5; Ps 68:8; Nah 1:5 **64:3** Dt 10:21; 2Sm 7:23; Ps 65:5 **64:3** Mc 1:3-4; Hab 3:13 **64:4** 1Co 2:9 **64:6** Is 61:10; Php 3:7-9 **64:6** Ps 90:5-6; Is 1:30 **64:6** Is 13:11 **64:7** Is 54:8 **64:8** Is 63:16 **64:8** Is 29:16; 45:9; Rm 9:20-21 **64:9** Is 43:25; 57:17; Mc 7:18 **64:10** Is 62:4 **64:11** 2Kg 25:9; Ps 74:5-7; Is 63:18; Mt 23:38 **64:12** Is 42:14

64:1-3 The answer to the preceding prayer would be the powerful descent of God from the heavens, such that the **mountains** and **nations** would quake.

64:4 God will surely come through for **the one who waits for him** (see 25:9).

64:5-12 As in 59:9-15a (see note), Israel confessed their sins, which had affected **all** of them (vv. 5-7). They had no righteousness of their own (v. 6; 45:25) and prayed for God not to **remember** [their] **iniquity forever** (v. 9) and to look with favor on their land (vv. 10-12).

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

65 "I was sought by those who did not ask; I was found by those who did not seek me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
to a nation that did not call on † my name. †
2 I spread out my hands all day long to a rebellious people †
who walk in the path that is not good,
following their own thoughts.
3 These people continually anger me to my face,
sacrificing in gardens, †
burning incense on bricks,
4 sitting among the graves, spending nights in secret places,
eating the meat of pigs, †
and putting polluted broth in their bowls. †
5 They say, 'Keep to yourself, don't come near me, for I am too holy for you! '
These practices are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that burns all day long.
6 Look, it is written in front of me: I will not keep silent, † but I will repay; †

I will repay them fully †
7 for your iniquities and the iniquities †
of your † fathers together,"
says the LORD.
"Because they burned incense on the mountains and reproached me
on the hills, †
I will reward them fully †
for their former deeds."

8 The LORD says this:

"As the new wine is found in a bunch of grapes, and one says, 'Don't destroy it,
for there's some good † in it,'
so I will act because of my servants
and not destroy them all.
9 I will produce descendants from Jacob, †
and heirs to my mountains from Judah;
my chosen † ones will possess it, and my servants will dwell there. †
10 Sharon will be a pasture for flocks, †
and the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down, †
for my people who have sought me. †
11 But you who abandon the LORD, who forget my holy mountain,
who prepare a table for Fortune
and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny, †
12 I will destine you for the sword, and all of you will kneel down
to be slaughtered, because I called and you did not answer,
I spoke and you did not hear;
you did what was evil in my sight
and chose what I did not delight in." †

13 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

"My servants will eat,
but you will be hungry;

my servants will drink,
but you will be thirsty;
my servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.
14 My servants will shout for joy from a glad heart, but you will cry out from an anguished heart, and you will lament out of a broken spirit.
15 You will leave your name behind as a curse for my chosen ones, †
and the Lord GOD will kill you; but he will give his servants another name. †
16 Whoever asks for a blessing in the land will ask for a blessing by the God of truth, †
and whoever swears in the land
will swear by the God of truth.
For the former troubles will be forgotten and hidden from my sight.

A NEW CREATION

17 "For I will create a new heaven and a new earth; †
the past events will not be remembered or come to mind.
18 Then be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;
for I will create Jerusalem to be a joy
and its people to be a delight.
19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad in my people.
The sound of weeping and crying
will no longer be heard in her. †
20 In her, a nursing infant will no longer live only a few days, †
or an old man not live out his days.
Indeed, the one who dies at a hundred years old will be mourned as a young man, †
and the one who misses a hundred years
will be considered cursed. †
21 People will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. †
22 They will not build and others live in them; they will not plant and others eat.
For my people's lives will be

like the lifetime of a tree. †
My chosen ones will fully enjoy
the work of their hands.
23 They will not labor without success †
or bear children destined for disaster,
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD along with their descendants. †
24 Even before they call, I will answer; †
while they are still speaking, I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, †
and the lion will eat straw like cattle, †
but the serpent's food will be dust! †
They will not do what is evil or destroy
on my entire holy mountain," †
says the LORD.

65:1 Or *that was not called by* **65:3-4** These vv. describe pagan worship. **65:6** Lit *repay into their lap* **65:7** LXX, Syr read *for their iniquities and the iniquities of their* **65:7** Lit *reward into their lap* **65:8** Or *there's a blessing* **65:11** Pagan gods **65:20** Lit *her, no longer infant of days* **65:20** Lit *the youth of a hundred years will die* **65:25** Lit *as one*
65:1 Is 63:19; Hs 1:10; Rm 10:20; Jms 2:7 **65:2** Rm 10:21 **65:3** Is 1:29; 66:17 **65:4** Lv 11:7; Is 66:3,17 **65:6** Ps 50:3,21; Is 42:14; 64:12 **65:6** Jr 16:18 **65:7** Is 13:11 **65:7** Ezk 20:27-28; Hs 9:10; Zch 8:14; Mal 3:7 **65:9** Jr 31:36-37 **65:9** Is 41:8 **65:9** Is 49:8; 60:21; Am 9:11-15 **65:10** Is 33:9; 35:2 **65:10** Jos 7:26; Hs 2:15 **65:10** Is 51:1 **65:12** 2Ch 36:15-16; Pr 1:24; Is 41:28; 50:2; 66:4; Jr 7:13 **65:15** Jr 24:9; 25:18; Zch 8:13 **65:15** Is 62:2 **65:16** Ps 31:5; 2Co 1:20; Rv 3:7,14 **65:17** Is 66:22; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1 **65:19** Is 25:8; 30:19; 35:10; 51:11; Rv 7:17; 21:4 **65:20** Ec 8:12-13; Is 3:11; 22:14 **65:21** Jos 24:13; Is 37:30; Jr 29:5,28; Ezk 28:26; Zph 1:13 **65:22** Ps 92:12-14 **65:23** Dt 28:3-12; Is 55:2 **65:23** Is 61:9 **65:24** Ps 91:15; Is 55:6; 58:9; Dn 9:20-23; 10:12 **65:25** Is 11:6-9 **65:25** Gn 3:14; Mc 7:17 **65:25** Is 11:9; 27:13; 56:7

65:1-5 God's response is that he has been found by the Gentiles (v. 1), rather than the Israelites, who, despite being given ample opportunity, continued in rebellion, idolatry, uncleanness, and pride (vv. 2-5; Rm 10:20-21). God also says **here I am** (v. 1) in 52:6 and 58:9.

65:8-12 The judgment described in verses 6-7 would not result in Israel's utter destruction (v. 8). He would hold back because of his faithful **servants** (vv. 8-9; 54:17; 56:6; 63:17), who will dwell in the land as those **who have sought me** (v. 10; see v. 1). Whereas **the Valley of Achor** had been a place of judgment and shame (Jos 7:24-26), it would become pasturage for cattle (v. 10; Hs 2:15). In contrast, those who forsake God and **forget** [his] **holy mountain** will be slaughtered (vv. 11-12). Their lack of response recalls verse 2.

65:13-16 The focus continues on the contrast between the rebels and God's **servants.** Just as the former forsook God and the latter sought him (vv. 10-11), the former would be cursed and the latter blessed.

65:17-18 The end of "the former troubles" (v. 16) relates to **a new heaven and a new earth** (66:22). Just as "God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1), so he will **create** a new universe, centered on a new

Jerusalem (Rv 21:2). The fullness of **joy** and absence of sorrow within her (vv. 18-20) connect to previous passages of hope (e.g., 25:8; 35:10) that are thus fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth.

65:22 Characteristic of Jerusalem in the new heavens and new earth is the long life of its inhabitants (vv. 20,22). Rather than withering like leaves (64:6), their longevity will like that of a **tree.**

65:23 Unlike before (49:4; 62:8), Israel will not toil in vain.

65:24 Whereas their prayers had not been heard because of their sins (1:15), in the future God will be eager to **hear** and to **answer** (see 56:7; 58:9).

65:25 Peace among animals on God's **holy mountain** had also been prophesied in 11:6-9, where it was linked to the messianic kingdom (11:1-5). The humiliation of the "serpent" relates to the defeat of Satan (see the note on 27:1).

FINAL JUDGMENT AND JOYOUS RESTORATION

66 This is what the LORD says:

Heaven † is my throne, †
and earth is my footstool. †
Where could you possibly build a house for me?
And where would my resting place be? †
2 My hand made all these things, and so they all came into being.
This is the LORD's declaration.
I will look favorably on this kind of person: one who is humble, †
submissive † in spirit, †
and trembles at my word.
3 One person slaughters an ox, another kills a person; one person sacrifices a lamb, another breaks a dog's neck; one person offers a grain offering, another offers pig's blood; one person offers incense, another praises an idol — all these have chosen their ways
and delight in their abhorrent practices. †
4 So I will choose their punishment, and I will bring on them what they dread
because I called and no one answered;
I spoke and they did not listen;
they did what was evil in my sight
and chose what I did not delight in. †

5 You who tremble at his word, †
hear the word of the LORD: †

“Your brothers who hate and exclude you
for my name’s sake have said, †
‘Let the LORD be glorified so that we can see your joy! ’
But they will be put to shame.” †

6 A sound of uproar from the city!
A voice from the temple —
the voice of the LORD, paying back his enemies what they deserve! †

7 Before Zion was in labor, she gave birth; before she was in pain, she delivered
a boy.
8 Who has heard of such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Can a land be born in one day
or a nation be delivered in an instant?
Yet as soon as Zion was in labor,
she gave birth to her sons.
9 “Will I bring a baby to the point of birth and not deliver it? ”
says the LORD; “or will I who deliver, close the womb? ”
says your God.
10 Be glad for Jerusalem and rejoice over her, all who love her. †
Rejoice greatly with her,
all who mourn over her —
11 so that you may nurse and be satisfied from her comforting breast
and drink deeply and delight yourselves
from her glorious breasts.

12 For this is what the LORD says:

I will make peace flow to her like a river, †
and the wealth † of nations like a flood; †
you will nurse and be carried on her hip †
and bounced on her lap.
13 As a mother comforts her son, so I will comfort you, †
and you will be comforted in Jerusalem.

14 You will see, you will rejoice, and you † will flourish like grass; †
then the LORD's power will be revealed to his servants, but he will show
his wrath against his enemies.
15 Look, the LORD will come with fire † — his chariots are
like the whirlwind † — to execute his anger with fury
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For the LORD will execute judgment on all people † with his fiery sword, and
many will be slain by the LORD.

17 "Those who dedicate and purify themselves to enter the groves † following
their leader, † eating meat from pigs, vermin, † and rats, will perish together."
This is the LORD's declaration.
18 "Knowing † their works and their thoughts, I have come to gather all nations
and languages; † they will come and see my glory. 19 I will establish a sign
among them, and I will send survivors from them to the nations — to Tarshish,
Put, † Lud (who are archers), Tubal, Javan, † and the coasts and islands far
away — who have not heard about me or seen my glory. And they will proclaim
my glory among the nations. † 20 They will bring all your brothers from all the
nations as a gift to the LORD on horses and chariots, in litters, and on mules and
camels, to my holy mountain Jerusalem," † says the LORD, "just as the Israelites
bring an offering in a clean vessel to the house of the LORD. 21 I will also take
some of them as priests and Levites," † says the LORD.

22 "For just as the new heavens and the new earth, †
which I will make,
will remain before me" —
this is the LORD's declaration — "so your offspring and your name will remain.
23 All mankind will come to worship me from one New Moon to another
and from one Sabbath to another,"
says the LORD.

24 "As they leave, they will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled
against me; † for their worm † will never die, their fire will never go out, † and

they will be a horror to all mankind.” †

66:2 Lit *broken* **66:12** Or *glory* **66:14** Lit *your bones* **66:17** Hb obscure **66:17** Lit *abhorrent things* **66:18** LXX, Syr; MT omits *Knowing* **66:19** LXX; MT reads *Pul*

66:1-2 Ac 7:49-50 **66:1** Ps 11:4; Mt 5:34-35; 23:22 **66:1** 1Ch 28:2; Ps 99:5 **66:1** 2Sm 7:5; 1Kg 8:27; Jr 23:24 **66:2** Ps 86:1; Pr 16:19; Mt 11:29 **66:2** Ps 34:18; Mt 5:3; 1Tm 2:11 **66:3** Am 5:21-25 **66:4** 2Kg 21:2,6; Is 59:7; 65:12; Jr 7:30 **66:5** Ezr 9:4; 10:3 **66:5** Is 28:14 **66:5** Mt 5:10-12; 10:22; Jn 9:34; 15:18-20 **66:5** Is 26:11; 44:9; 65:13 **66:6** Is 59:18; 65:6; Jl 3:7 **66:10** Ps 122:6; 137:6; Is 65:18 **66:12** Ps 72:3,7; Is 48:18 **66:12** Is 61:6 **66:12** Is 60:4-5 **66:13** Ps 86:17; Is 40:1; 49:13; 51:13; 52:9; 2Co 1:3-4 **66:14** Ps 72:16; Pr 11:28; Is 58:11 **66:15** Is 33:14; Mal 3:1-2; 2Th 1:7-8; 2Pt 3:7 **66:15** Ps 68:17; Is 5:28; Hab 3:8 **66:16** Gn 6:12; Jr 12:12; 25:31; Ezk 20:48; 21:4-5 **66:17** Is 65:3-5 **66:18** Is 45:22-25; Jr 3:17 **66:19** Gn 10:2,5; 1Kg 10:22; Jr 46:9; Ezk 27:10,13 **66:19** 1Ch 16:24; Ps 96:3 **66:20** Ps 2:6; Is 56:7; Ezk 20:40; Jl 3:17 **66:21** Ex 19:6; Is 61:6; 1Pt 2:5,9; Rv 1:6 **66:22** Is 65:17; Heb 12:26-27; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1 **66:24** Is 1:2; 5:25; 34:3 **66:24** Jb 7:5; Is 14:11 **66:24** Mk 9:48 **66:24** Dn 12:2

66:1-2 The rhetorical questions in verse 1 relate especially to Solomon’s temple. Despite its magnificence, it was insufficient for God, whose throne is heaven itself and who made the universe. The implication is that God’s “holy mountain” (65:25) would not include such a man-made **house.** In contrast, favorable things are said of a “tent,” which is related to the Messiah (16:5) and to redeemed Jerusalem (33:20; 54:2). The focus here is on the kind of person whom God regards, namely, the **humble** (v. 2; 57:15).

66:3-4 As in 65:2-5, these worshipers chose their own **ways** and did not respond to God.

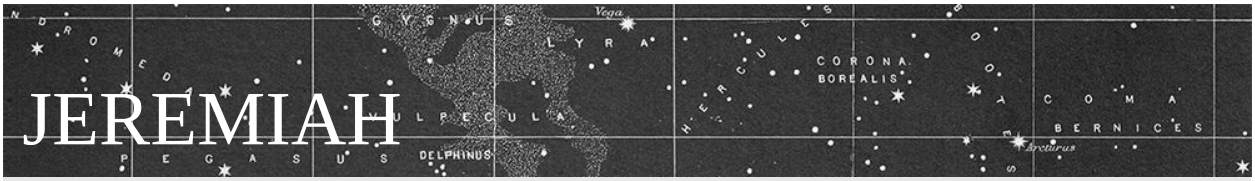
66:5-9 As in 51:7, the faithful, who **tremble at** God’s word (see v. 2), endure persecution, including hatred, exclusion, and reproach. They are encouraged through God’s certain vengeance on **his enemies** (v. 6) and his salvation of **Zion** (vv. 7-9). This salvation is depicted as Zion giving birth to **a boy**, which stands for the birth of a **land** and a **nation** all of a sudden (v. 8). The unusual nature of this birth highlights its supernatural character (see 49:21; 54:1).

66:12 Such **peace** was the hope of 48:18.

66:14-16 As in 65:8-16, humanity consists of two groups: God’s **servants** and **his enemies.** Whereas the former will receive favor, the latter will meet a fiery end.

66:17 Eating pork was also used in 65:4 to represent uncleanness, and offering pig’s blood was similarly mentioned in verse 3.

66:18-24 The climactic conclusion to the book of Isaiah includes **all nations and languages** seeing God’s **glory** (v. 18; 40:5), along with the sending of some of them to **proclaim** [his] **glory among the nations** who have not heard of it (v. 19). The result will be the bringing of Israel’s **brothers** from these places to God as an “offering,” akin to a temple offering (v. 20). The selection of some of them **as priests** connects to 61:6. After mentioning **the new heavens and the new earth** again (v. 22; 65:17), the book concludes with one group of people worshiping God forever and the other suffering a fiery judgment just as long (vv. 23-24).



JEREMIAH

INTRODUCTION

The book and prophet Jeremiah hold at least two great distinctions among all the OT prophets: (1) this is the longest Prophetic Book in the Bible (1,364 verses), and (2) Jeremiah's life is more fully described than any of the other fifteen writing prophets. Into the tumultuous times of the last half of the seventh century and the first quarter of the sixth century BC, came this prophet bearing a word from God for the stubborn people of Judah. The book's contents span roughly from 640 to 580 BC.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Jeremiah was a priest from the town of Anathoth (1:1). At the Lord's command, he neither married nor had children because of the impending judgment that would come upon the next generation. His ministry as a prophet began in 626 BC and ended after 586 BC. He was a contemporary of Habakkuk and possibly Obadiah.

BACKGROUND: The book of Jeremiah discusses the last days of Judah. King Hezekiah reigned for forty-two years (729–686 BC) and began to reverse Judah's spiritual bankruptcy. But when Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, came to the throne, idolatrous and superstitious cultic practices and rites came back like a flood. Manasseh's son Amon ruled for only two years (642–640 BC). He also reinstated idol worship as the official religion of Judah (2Ch 33:22-23).

Amon's eight-year-old son, Josiah, succeeded him on the throne. This lad walked in the ways of the former King David. When he was eighteen years old (622 BC), he called for long-delayed repairs to be made to the temple. During this work, a copy of the law of Moses was found. On the basis of hearing this word, the young king and all his people renewed the covenant with the Lord. However, this reformation failed to overcome the effects of the wickedness Manasseh and Amon had instituted.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The best known passage in Jeremiah is the new covenant text in 31:31-34. Not only is it the largest OT text quoted in the NT (Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17), but arguably better than any other passage it links God's ancient promises to Eve (Gn 3:15), Abraham (Gn 12:1-3), and David (2Sm 7:16-19) with NT assurances that God in Christ grants believers new hearts, salvation, and fellowship with him.

STRUCTURE

One date rings throughout the entire book of Jeremiah: "the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah." That year, 605 BC, brought major change to the political situation of the Near East. Both Egypt and Assyria were defeated at the battle of Carchemish (46:2-12; 2Kg 24:7; 2Ch 35:20). Nebuchadnezzar ascended the throne of Babylon. In that same year God instructed Jeremiah to put his prophecies into writing as a final test of King Jehoiakim's responsiveness to the word of God.

This significant dateline, "the fourth year of Jehoiakim," was placed at 25:1; 36:1; and 45:1, thereby dividing the prophet's book into three main sections: the prophet's faithfulness in carrying out God's commission (chaps. 2–24), the fierce opposition to his ministry (chaps. 25–35), and the collapse of Judah (chaps. 36–45).

The book of Jeremiah includes poetic sections (especially in chaps. 2–25) and prose accounts as well. Critical scholars generally say that the poetry is Jeremiah's and the prose is either the work of his friends or

a person who is labeled a Deuteronomic writer (so designated because the prose sections are said to reflect the book of Deuteronomy). But we may ask, Could not Jeremiah have written in both poetic and prose form? There is no reason to suppose he was incapable of writing in both forms.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Jeremiah's understanding of God explicitly included such attributes as his omnipresence (he is everywhere) and his omnipotence (he is all powerful). The classic text is 23:24: "'Can a person hide in secret places where I cannot see him?'—the LORD's declaration. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?'—the LORD's declaration." Neither Christ nor the Spirit is explicitly present in the book. Jesus, however, liked to quote Jeremiah and taught that his crucifixion established the "new covenant" that Jeremiah had predicted (31:31-34).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The book manifests both the wickedness and the greatness possible in human beings. King Jehoiakim's destruction of the scroll and King Zedekiah's mistreatment of Jeremiah (chaps. 36–38) show the great evil that political leaders can fall into. On the other hand, more is known about the godly Jeremiah than any other writing prophet.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Individuals in Jeremiah's own time, at least early in his ministry, could still turn from sin and avoid destruction (7:5-7; 18:7-8). Later on he announced that doom was inevitable. The overall perspective of the book is that redemption will happen only after judgment (29:10-14). The passage on the new covenant (31:31-34), the longest text quoted in the NT (Heb 8:8-12), looked forward to what Christ would accomplish by his coming and death, as the argument of Hebrews makes clear.

JEREMIAH TIMELINE

650–625 BC

Under Ashurbanipal, Assyrians capture and destroy Babylon. **649**

Birth of Jeremiah **640?**

Ashurbanipal **(668–629)** rules over a declining Assyrian Empire that experienced revolts **(642)** and contributed to the assassination of Amon of Judah **(641)** and the rise of Amon's son Josiah **(641–609)**.

Initial reforms of Josiah **631**

Jeremiah is called to be a prophet; he warns of an invasion from the north. **626**

625–605 BC

Second phase of Josiah's reforms when the book of the law is found in the temple **622**

Under Nabopolassar **(626–605)**, Asshur and Nineveh fall, marking the end of the Assyrian Empire. **612**

Babylonians and Medes take Harran from what remained of Assyrian forces. **610**

Jeremiah's temple sermon **609**

Josiah killed by the Egyptians at Megiddo **609**

Josiah's son, Jehoahaz II, succeeds him and is deposed; he's replaced by his brother, Jehoiakim. **609**

605–600 BC

Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem and leads citizens of Judah into exile. **605, 597, 586, 582**

Jehoiakim makes a decision to turn from his alliance with Egypt and submit to Nebuchadnezzar. **604**

Jehoiakim ignores Jeremiah's warning and turns back to Egypt for support after Egypt defeats Babylon at Migdol. **601**

A reinforced Babylonian army approaches Judah; Jehoiakim dies. **598**

600–575 BC

Jehoiachin succeeds his father, Jehoiakim, and reigns three months and ten days. **597**

Jehoiachin and Judah's queen mother are brought to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. **597**

Zedekiah succeeds Jehoiachin; reigns **597–586**

Ezekiel is exiled in Babylon. **597**

1 The words of Jeremiah, † the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests living in
Anathoth † in the territory of Benjamin. 2 The word of the LORD came
to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah † son of Amon, king
of Judah. 3 It also came throughout the days of Jehoiakim † son of Josiah, king
of Judah, until the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah † son of Josiah,
king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

THE CALL OF JEREMIAH

4 The word of the LORD came to me:

5 I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart
before you were born. †
I appointed you a prophet to the nations. †

6 But I protested, "Oh no, Lord GOD! Look, I don't know how to speak † since I
am only a youth." †

7 Then the LORD said to me:

Do not say, “I am only a youth,” †
for you will go to everyone I send you to
and speak whatever I tell you. †
8 Do not be afraid of anyone, †
for I will be with you to rescue you. †
This is the LORD’s declaration.

9 Then the LORD reached out his hand, touched my mouth, † and told me:

I have now filled your mouth with my words. †
10 See, I have appointed you today over nations and kingdoms
to uproot and tear down,
to destroy and demolish, †
to build and plant. †

TWO VISIONS

11 Then the word of the LORD came to me, asking, “What do you see, Jeremiah? ” †
I replied, “I see a branch of an almond tree.”
12 The LORD said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I watch over † my word to accomplish it.” † 13 Again the word of the LORD came to me asking, “What do you see? ”
And I replied, “I see a boiling pot, † its lip tilted from the north to the south.”
14 Then the LORD said to me, “Disaster will be poured out † from the north † on all who live in the land. 15 Indeed, I am about to summon all the clans and kingdoms of the north.” †
This is the LORD’s declaration.

They will come, and each king will set up his throne at the entrance
to Jerusalem’s gates.
They will attack all her surrounding walls and all the other cities of Judah.

16 “I will pronounce my judgments against them for all the evil they did when
they abandoned me to burn incense to other gods and to worship the works of
their own hands. †
17 “Now, get ready. Stand up and tell them everything that I command you. Do
not be intimidated by them † or I will cause you to cower before them.
18 Today, I am the one who has made you a fortified city, † an iron pillar, and
bronze walls † against the whole land — against the kings of Judah, its officials,
its priests, and the population. 19 They will fight against you but never prevail
over you, † since I am with you to rescue you.” †
This is the LORD’s declaration.

1:12 In Hb, the word for *almond tree* sounds like the word for *watch over* **1:14** LXX reads *will boil*
1:1 2Ch 35:25; 36:12; Ezr 1:1; Dn 9:2; Mt 2:17; 16:14; 27:9 **1:1** Jos 21:18; 1Kg 2:26; Jr 32:7 **1:2** 2Kg 21:24; 22:1; Jr 25:3; 36:2; Zph 1:1 **1:3** 2Kg 23:34; 24:2; 1Ch 3:15; Jr 22:18; 25:1; 35:1 **1:3** 2Kg 24:17-20; 1Ch 3:16; Jr 21:1; 27:1; 39:2 **1:5** 1Sm 1:22; Ps 22:9-10; 139:13-16; Is 44:2; 49:1-6; Lk 1:15; Gl 1:15 **1:5** Jr 25:15-26 **1:6** Ex 4:10; 1Co 2:1-5 **1:6** 1Kg 3:7 **1:7** 1Tm 4:12 **1:7** Dt 18:18; Jr 1:17; Ezk 2:7 **1:8** Ezk 2:6 **1:8** Gn 26:3; 31:3; Ex 3:12; Is 43:2; Jr 15:20 **1:9** Is 6:7 **1:9** Is 51:16 **1:10** 2Co 10:4-5 **1:10** Jr 12:14-17; 18:7,9; 19:7; 24:6; 31:28; Col 2:6-7 **1:11** Jr 24:3; Am 8:2; Zch 4:2 **1:12** Jr 31:28; Php 1:6 **1:13** Ezk 24:3 **1:14** Jr 4:6,20; 6:1; 15:12; 47:2; 50:3,9,41; 51:48 **1:15** Jr 25:9 **1:16** Ex 20:3; Is 37:19; 44:15; Ac 7:41 **1:17** Ezk 2:6-7; 1Th 2:2 **1:18-19** Jr 15:20 **1:18** Jr 6:27; Ezk 3:8-9 **1:19** Ps 129:2 **1:19** Jr 1:6

1:1-3 Jeremiah was born into a family of priests: his father **Hilkiah** was **one of the priests living in Anathoth**. The location indicates that he should not be identified with the high priest in Jerusalem who had the same name (see 2Kg 22:4). According to the chronology given in verses 2-3, Jeremiah’s ministry probably lasted from about 628 BC (the **thirteenth year** of King Josiah) until 586 BC (the captivity of Jerusalem). Therefore, two significant events bracket Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry. At its beginning, the power of the mighty Assyrian Empire was declining. For a time, **Judah** was relatively independent and had the opportunity to concentrate on religious reforms during the reign of King Josiah. The second event came near the end of Jeremiah’s ministry: the Babylonian Empire, now the reigning superpower in the world, conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and took many people into **exile.** Jeremiah lived through these events and saw the fulfillment of his prophecies.

1:5 God had planned for Jeremiah to be **a prophet to the nations** even before his conception (see “A Biblical Assessment of Abortion,” *p. 718*). Although there is no evidence that he traveled to other nations to preach, his messages of judgment and hope certainly concern them (e.g., 3:17; 4:2; 16:19).

1:6-8 Like Moses (Ex 4:10), Jeremiah objected to the Lord’s calling because of his inability to **speak** well (v. 6). God did not dispute the reality that he was a **youth**, but he did not want him to focus on his sense of inadequacy. Instead, God called Jeremiah to obedience and assured him of his presence and help (vv. 7-8).

1:9-10 The touching of Jeremiah’s **mouth** signified God putting his words in his mouth. Thus, the words Jeremiah would speak (v. 7) would not be his own. His ministry **to uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish** describe his messages of the Lord’s judgment, whereas his ministry **to build and plant** have to do with messages of hope and salvation. (This language appears again in 12:14-17; 24:6; and 31:28).

1:11-12 The Hebrew word for **almond** sounds like the Hebrew word for “watching” (v. 12), creating a play on words that highlights God’s fulfillment of his word.

1:15 Judgment would come from **the north** (vv. 13-15) in the form of foreign nations overtaking the land and setting up their thrones (see 3:17).

1:17-19 The opposition that Jeremiah would face was already hinted at in v. 8, and it is made explicit here. The people will **fight against** Jeremiah, as one fights against a **fortified city.** Nevertheless, God will strengthen and deliver him.

ISRAEL ACCUSED OF APOSTASY

2 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Go and announce directly to Jerusalem that this is what the LORD says:

I remember the loyalty of your youth, †
your love as a bride —
how you followed me in the wilderness,
in a land not sown.

3 Israel was holy to the LORD, †
the firstfruits of his harvest. †
All who ate of it found themselves guilty; †
disaster came on them."
This is the LORD's declaration.

4 Hear the word of the LORD, house of Jacob and all families of the house of Israel.
5 This is what the LORD says:

What fault did your fathers find in me †
that they went so far from me,
followed worthless idols, †
and became worthless themselves? †
6 They stopped asking, "Where is the LORD †
who brought us from the land of Egypt,
who led us through the wilderness, †
through a land of deserts and ravines,
through a land of drought and darkness, †
a land no one traveled through
and where no one lived? "

7 I brought you to a fertile land †
to eat its fruit and bounty,
but after you entered, you defiled my land; †
you made my inheritance † detestable.
8 The priests quit asking, “Where is the LORD?”
The experts in the law no longer knew me, †
and the rulers † rebelled against me.
The prophets prophesied by † Baal †
and followed useless idols. †

9 Therefore, I will bring a case against you again.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
I will bring a case against your children’s children. †
10 Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus † † and take a look.
Send someone to Kedar † and consider carefully; see if there has ever been anything like this: 11 Has a nation ever exchanged its gods? †
(But they were not gods! †) Yet my people have exchanged their † Glory for useless idols. †
12 Be appalled at this, heavens; †
be shocked and utterly desolated!
This is the LORD’s declaration.

13 For my people have committed a double evil: They have abandoned me, †
the fountain of living water, †
and dug cisterns for themselves —
cracked cisterns that cannot hold water. †

CONSEQUENCES OF APOSTASY

14 Is Israel a slave?
Was he born into slavery? †
Why else has he become a prey?

15 The young lions have roared at him; †
they have roared loudly.
They have laid waste his land. †
His cities are in ruins, without inhabitants.
16 The men of Memphis and Tahpanhes †
have also broken your skull.
17 Have you not brought this on yourself †
by abandoning the LORD your God while he was leading you along the way?
18 Now what will you gain by traveling along the way to Egypt †
to drink the water of the Nile? †
What will you gain
by traveling along the way to Assyria †
to drink the water of the Euphrates? †
19 Your own evil will discipline you; †
your own apostasies will reprimand you.
Recognize † how evil and bitter † it is for you to abandon the LORD your God
and to have no fear of me.
This is the declaration
of the Lord GOD of Armies.

20 For long ago I † broke your yoke; †
I † tore off your chains.
You insisted, “I will not serve! ”
On every high hill
and under every green tree †
you lay down like a prostitute. †

21 I planted you, a choice vine †
from the very best seed.
How then could you turn into
a degenerate, foreign vine? †

22 Even if you wash with lye and use a great amount of bleach, † †

the stain of your iniquity is still in front of me. †
This is the Lord GOD's declaration.

23 How can you protest, "I am not defiled; I have not followed the Baals"? †
Look at your behavior in the valley;
acknowledge what you have done. †
You are a swift young camel
twisting and turning on her way,
24 a wild donkey † at home † in the wilderness.
She sniffs the wind in the heat of her desire.
Who can control her passion?
All who look for her will not become weary; they will find her in her mating season. †
25 Keep your feet from going bare and your throat from thirst.
But you say, "It's hopeless; †
I love strangers, †
and I will continue to follow them."

26 Like the shame of a thief when he is caught, so the house of Israel has been put to shame. †
They, their kings, their officials,
their priests, and their prophets †
27 say to a tree, "You are my father,"
and to a stone, "You gave birth to me."
For they have turned their back to me
and not their face, †
yet in their time of disaster † they beg, "Rise up and save us! "
28 But where are your gods you made for yourself?
Let them rise up and save you †
in your time of disaster if they can,
for your gods are as numerous as your cities, Judah.

JUDGMENT DESERVED

29 Why do you bring a case against me? †

All of you have rebelled against me.
This is the LORD's declaration.
30 I have struck down your children in vain; they would not accept discipline. †
Your own sword has devoured your prophets †
like a ravaging lion.
31 Evil generation, pay attention to the word of the LORD!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel
or a land of dense darkness? †
Why do my people claim,
"We will go where we want; †
we will no longer come to you"?
32 Can a young woman forget her jewelry †
or a bride her wedding sash?
Yet my people have forgotten me †
for countless days.
33 How skillfully you pursue love; you also teach evil women your ways.
34 Moreover, your skirts are stained with the blood of the innocent poor. †
You did not catch them breaking and entering. †
But in spite of all these things
35 you claim, "I am innocent. †
His anger is sure to turn away from me."
But I will certainly judge you
because you have said, "I have not sinned." †
36 How unstable you are, †
constantly changing your ways!
You will be put to shame by Egypt †
just as you were put to shame by Assyria.
37 Moreover, you will be led out from here with your hands on your head †
since the LORD has rejected those you trust; †
you will not succeed even with their help. †

2:6 Or *shadow of death* **2:8** = in the name of **2:10** Lit *to the islands of Kittim* **2:11** Alt Hb tradition reads *my* **2:14** Lit *born of a house* **2:18** Lit *of Shihor* **2:19** Lit *Know and see* **2:20** LXX reads *you* **2:20** LXX reads

you **2:22** Lit *cleansing agent* **2:24** Lit *donkey taught* **2:24** Lit *her month* **2:31** Or *"We have taken control*, or *"We can roam* **2:37** Lit *with them*

2:2 Ezk 16:8,60; Hs 2:15; Rv 2:4 **2:3** Dt 7:6 **2:3** Jms 1:18 **2:3** Gn 12:3; Ps 105:14-15; Is 41:11 **2:5** Is 5:4; Mc 6:3 **2:5** 2Kg 17:15; Jr 2:25; Hs 2:5 **2:5** Ps 115:8; Hs 9:10; Rm 1:21 **2:6** Jdg 6:13; Jb 35:10 **2:6** Dt 8:15; 32:10 **2:7** Ex 3:8; Dt 8:7-10; Jr 4:26 **2:7** Nm 35:33; Ezk 36:17 **2:7** Jr 16:18 **2:8** Hs 4:6; Mal 2:7; Lk 11:52 **2:8** Jr 23:1-4; Ezk 34 **2:8** Jr 2:23; 9:14 **2:8** Hab 2:8 **2:9** Ex 20:5; Is 3:13; Mc 6:1-8 **2:10** Gn 10:4; Nm 24:24; Is 23:1,12; Am 6:2; Ac 13:4 **2:10** Ps 120:5 **2:11** Mc 4:5 **2:11** Jr 16:20; Gl 4:8 **2:11** Ps 106:20; Hs 4:7; Rm 1:23; 1Pt 1:18 **2:12** Dt 32:1; Is 1:2; Mc 6:1 **2:13** Jdg 10:13 **2:13** Ps 36:9; Jr 17:13; Jn 4:10 **2:13** Is 55:2; Gl 1:6-7 **2:15** Is 5:29 **2:15** Is 1:7 **2:16** Jr 44:1; 46:14,19; Ezk 30:13,16,18 **2:17** Jr 4:18 **2:18** Is 30:1-2; 31:1 **2:18** Hs 7:11 **2:18** Is 8:7 **2:19** Is 3:9; Hs 5:5 **2:19** Jr 4:18 **2:20** Lv 26:13; Is 10:27; Nah 1:13 **2:20** Dt 12:2; 1Kg 14:23; 2Kg 17:10; Is 57:5; Jr 3:6; Ezk 6:13; Hs 4:13 **2:20** Ezk 16:28; Hs 2:5 **2:21** Gn 49:11; Ps 80:8; Is 5:2 **2:21** Is 5:4 **2:22** Ps 51:2,7; Mal 3:2; Eph 5:26 **2:22** Ps 90:8 **2:23** Jr 2:8; 9:14 **2:23** Gn 3:13; 1Sm 15:13; Pr 28:13; Jr 3:13; 1Jn 1:8 **2:24** Jb 39:5; Hs 8:9 **2:25** Jr 18:12 **2:25** Dt 32:16; Jr 3:13 **2:26** Jr 2:36; 6:15; 8:9,12; Rm 6:21 **2:26** Ezr 9:7 **2:27** 2Ch 29:6; Jr 18:17; 32:33; Ezk 8:16 **2:27** Jdg 10:9-10; Is 26:16 **2:28** Dt 32:37-38; Jdg 10:14; Is 45:20 **2:29** Jr 2:9 **2:30** Pr 3:11; Is 1:5; 9:13; Jr 5:3; 17:23; 32:33; Am 4:10 **2:30** Mt 23:34 **2:31** Jr 50:12; Hs 2:3 **2:32** Is 61:10 **2:32** Ps 106:21; Jr 13:25; 18:15; Ezk 22:12; 23:35; Hs 8:14 **2:34** 2Kg 21:16; 24:4; Ps 106:38; Jr 19:4; 22:3,17 **2:34** Ex 22:2 **2:35** Jb 33:9 **2:35** Pr 28:13; 1Jn 1:8,10 **2:36** Jms 1:8 **2:36** Is 30:3 **2:37** 2Sm 13:19 **2:37** 1Sm 15:23,26; 2Kg 17:20; Jr 7:29

2:5 Israel's "loyalty" and "love as a bride" in the desert was short-lived (v. 2; 3:25; Ex 14:31–15:21; Hs 2:15), as they quickly turned away from the Lord (Ex 32:1; Lv 17:7). The effect of turning to **worthless idols** is to become like these objects of worship.

2:6-8 Despite God's deliverance of Israel from **Egypt** and guidance **through the wilderness** to **a fertile land**, they **defiled** [God's] **land** (vv. 6-7). Sadly, they were led down this wicked path by their **priests**, **experts in the law**, **rulers**, and **prophets** (v. 8; 23:11), who, rather than setting a godly example, showed little concern for or knowledge of God and turned to idols.

2:10-13 Israel had thus committed the **double evil** of abandoning the Lord and instead going after **useless idols**, which were like **cracked cisterns that cannot hold water** (vv. 11,13; Rm 1:23,25-26). The **coasts of Cyprus** and **Kedar** (v. 10; Nm 24:24; Ps 120:5) are examples of distant lands, in which such appalling sin could not be found (v. 12).

2:14-18 The **young lions** (v. 15) are a metaphor for the enemies of Israel. The northern kingdom of Israel had already been **laid waste** by Assyria (vv. 14-15,18). **Memphis** and **Tahpanhes** were cities in Egypt (v. 16; 44:1; 46:14). Neither of these foreign powers would be of any help (v. 18; 2:36; Is 30:1-3; Hs 7:11). Later, some from Judah would flee to Egypt to their own demise (Jr 42–44).

2:19 The people's sin of abandoning God is cited again (see vv. 13,17,27; 1:16).

2:20 Rather than being a faithful bride, Israel had become **a prostitute** through her idolatry (see the notes on vv. 5,19; 3:6-10; 2Kg 17:7; Ezk 16:15-19). The mention of **every high hill** and **green tree** refers to Canaanite fertility rituals and sexual acts in the worship of their gods. Israel's participation in these things makes the image of a prostitute doubly appropriate: both because of the sexual nature of the idolatry and her abandonment of her covenant relationship with God.

2:21 God's frustration with what should have been a good vine is reminiscent of Isaiah 5:1-7.

2:22 The **stain** of Judah's sin could not be removed with soap (see 4:14; Is 1:18), and the suggestion is that the people cannot solve this problem (see 13:23; 17:1).

2:23-28 Judah's prostitution after other gods is shamefully equated to a female **camel** or **donkey** in **heat** that is easily found by multiple mates (vv. 23-25; see v. 20; 3:1). Judah and her leaders would be put to shame for worshiping a multitude of **gods** of wood and **stone** (vv. 26-28; see v. 8; 3:9).

2:29 As will be further developed in 5:1-6 (see note), the whole nation **(All of you)** had **rebelled against** God.

2:30 The ineffectiveness of even severe discipline indicates how foolish the Israelites were (see 4:22; Is 1:2-6).

2:32-35 Judah had done the unthinkable of having **forgotten** God her provider (v. 32; see v. 11) as she disgracefully pursued idols (v. 33; see the note on vv. 23-28). Furthermore, she was guilty of violence against **the innocent poor** (a violation of God's covenant stipulations), despite her complacency and claims to the contrary (vv. 34-35).

2:37 Jeremiah prophesies that Judah **will be led out** in exile. The statement **with your hands on your head** refers to a sign of humiliation (see 2Sm 13:19).

WAGES OF APOSTASY

3 If † a man divorces his wife and she leaves him to marry another,
can he ever return to her? †
Wouldn't such a land † become totally defiled?
But you!
You have prostituted yourself with many partners † — can you return to me? †
This is the LORD's declaration.
2 Look to the barren heights † and see.
Where have you not been immoral?
You sat waiting for them beside the highways †
like a nomad in the desert.
You have defiled the land
with your prostitution and wickedness. †
3 This is why the showers haven't come † — why there has been no spring rain.
You have the brazen look † of a prostitute †
and refuse to be ashamed. †
4 Haven't you recently called to me, "My Father. †
You were my friend in my youth. †
5 Will he bear a grudge forever? †
Will he be endlessly infuriated? "
This is what you have said,
but you have done the evil things
you are capable of.

UNFAITHFUL ISRAEL, TREACHEROUS JUDAH

6 In the days of King Josiah the LORD asked me, “Have you seen what unfaithful
Israel has done? She has ascended every high hill and gone under every green
tree to prostitute herself there. † 7 I thought, ‘After she has done all these
things, she will return to me.’ † But she didn’t return, and her treacherous sister
Judah † saw it. 8 I † observed that it was because unfaithful Israel had
committed adultery that I had sent her away and had given her a certificate of
divorce. † Nevertheless, her treacherous sister Judah was not afraid but also
went and prostituted herself. † 9 Indifferent to † her prostitution, she defiled the
land and committed adultery with stones † and trees. † 10 Yet in spite of all
this, her treacherous sister Judah didn’t return to me with all her heart † — only
in pretense.”
This is the LORD’s declaration.
11 The LORD announced to me, “Unfaithful Israel has shown herself more
righteous than treacherous Judah. † 12 Go, proclaim these words to the north,
and say,

‘Return, unfaithful Israel. †
This is the LORD’s declaration.
I will not look on you with anger, †
for I am unfailing in my love. †
This is the LORD’s declaration.
I will not be angry forever. †
13 Only acknowledge your guilt † — you have rebelled against the LORD
your God. †
You have scattered your favors to strangers under every green tree †
and have not obeyed me.
This is the LORD’s declaration.

14 “ ‘Return, you faithless children † — this is the LORD’s declaration — for I
am your master, † † and I will take you, † one from a city and two from a
family, and I will bring you to Zion. 15 I will give you shepherds who are loyal

to me, † † and they will shepherd you with knowledge and skill. 16 When you multiply and increase in the land, † in those days — this is the LORD's declaration — no one will say again, "The ark of the LORD's covenant." † It will never come to mind, and no one will remember or miss it. Another one will not be made. † 17 At that time Jerusalem will be called The LORD's Throne, † and all the nations will be gathered to it, † to the name of the LORD in Jerusalem. † They will cease to follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. 18 In those days the house of Judah will join with the house of Israel, † and they will come together from the land of the north to the land I have given your ancestors to inherit.' " †

TRUE REPENTANCE

19 I thought, "How I long to make you my sons and give you a desirable land,
the most beautiful inheritance † of all the nations."
I thought, "You will call me 'My Father'
and never turn away from me."
20 However, as a woman may betray her lover, †
so you have betrayed † me, house of Israel.
This is the LORD's declaration.

21 A sound is heard on the barren heights: the children of Israel weeping and begging for mercy, for they have perverted their way;
they have forgotten the LORD their God. †
22 Return, you faithless children.
I will heal your unfaithfulness. †
"Here we are, coming to you,
for you are the LORD our God.
23 Surely, falsehood comes from the hills, commotion from the mountains, †
but the salvation of Israel
is only in the LORD our God. †
24 From the time of our youth the shameful one † has consumed what our fathers have worked for — their flocks and their herds,

their sons and their daughters.

25 Let us lie down in our shame; let our disgrace cover us. †

We have sinned against the LORD our God, †
both we and our fathers,

from the time of our youth even to this day. †
We have not obeyed the LORD our God."

3:1 One Hb ms, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *Saying: If* **3:1** LXX reads *woman* **3:3** Lit *have a prostitute's forehead* **3:8** One Hb ms, Syr read *She* **3:9** Lit *From the lightness of* **3:12** Lit *not cause my face to fall on you* **3:14** Or *husband* **3:15** Lit *shepherds according to my heart* **3:16** Or *It will no longer be done* **3:20** Lit *friend* **3:24** = Baal

3:1 Dt 24:1-4 **3:1** Ezk 16:26,28 **3:1** Hs 2:7 **3:2** Dt 12:2; Ezk 16:52 **3:2** Gn 38:14; Pr 7:10-12; Ezk 16:25 **3:2** Nm 14:33 **3:3** Zch 14:7 **3:3** Ezk 3:7-8 **3:3** Jr 6:15; 8:12 **3:4** Ex 4:22; Is 1:2; 64:8; Hs 11:1; Gl 4:6 **3:4** Ps 71:17; Hs 2:15 **3:5** Lv 19:18; Ps 103:9; Is 57:16; Nah 1:2 **3:6** Jr 2:20 **3:7** Hs 14:1 **3:7** Ezk 16:46 **3:8** Dt 24:1-4; Is 50:1; Hs 2:2 **3:8** Ezk 23:11 **3:9** Is 57:6 **3:9** Dt 28:36; Jr 2:27; Ezk 20:32; Hab 2:19; Rv 9:20 **3:10** Hs 7:14 **3:11** Ezk 16:51-52; 23:11 **3:12** Pr 28:13 **3:12** Ps 86:5; 145:17 **3:12** Ps 103:9; Is 57:16; Mc 7:18 **3:13** Lv 26:40; 1Jn 1:9 **3:13** 2Kg 18:20; Is 36:5; Jr 2:29 **3:13** Dt 12:2; 2Kg 16:4; 2Ch 28:4; Is 57:5; Jr 2:20; 3:6,13; Ezk 20:47 **3:14** Hs 14:1 **3:14** Hs 2:16-17 **3:14** Hs 2:19-20 **3:15** 1Sm 13:14; Jr 23:4; Ezk 34:23; Ac 20:28; Eph 4:11 **3:16** Gn 1:28; Ex 1:12 **3:16** Ex 37:1-9; Dt 31:24-29; 1Kg 8:6 **3:17** Ezk 43:7; Rv 22:1,3 **3:17** Is 2:2-4; 43:9; 56:6-7; 66:18; Jr 16:19 **3:17** Dt 12:5 **3:18** Is 11:12-13; Jr 50:4-5; Ezk 37:15-22; Hs 11:1 **3:18** Am 9:15 **3:19** Dt 32:8-9; Ps 16:6; Lm 2:15; Ezk 20:6,15 **3:20** Ex 21:8-9; Is 48:8; Hs 1:2; 5:7; 6:7 **3:21** Is 17:10 **3:22** Is 57:18; Hs 5:15–6:3; 14:1-3 **3:23** Ps 121:1-2 **3:23** Ps 3:8; Jr 17:5-8 **3:25** Jb 8:22; Ezr 9:6 **3:25** Is 64:5; Jr 8:14; 14:7,20; Lm 3:42; 5:16; Dn 9:5 **3:25** Ezr 9:7; Ezk 2:3

3:1-3 The outrage of Judah's sin is expressed with another metaphor (see 2:5,11,23-25,32), that of divorce and remarriage. Jeremiah is referring here to the law in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 that if **a man divorces his wife** and she marries someone else, her first husband can never take her back. Therefore, the answer to the rhetorical question in 3:1 is, "No, you cannot **return to me**." Her **prostitution** had been **brazen** (vv. 2-3), making judgment unavoidable.

3:6-10 Israel and Judah are portrayed as wicked sisters. Although both prostituted themselves to other gods, **treacherous . . . Judah** saw the judgment that came upon **unfaithful Israel** and still did not repent (v. 7). Judah did not **return to** [God] **with all her heart** but **only in pretense** (v. 10; 4:1-2; 29:13). Thus, although the kingdom of Judah lasted longer than Israel, she had greater guilt (v. 11).

3:11-13 Because the northern kingdom of Israel had been (relatively) **more righteous** than Judah (v. 11), Jeremiah was to offer her the opportunity to **return** (v. 12). God would be gracious if the people acknowledged their sin (v. 13).

3:14-18 Another invitation goes out for the Lord's wayward **children** to **return** to him (vv. 12,14,22). Though only a few would return **to Zion** at first (v. 14; Is 10:22), they would **multiply and increase** (v. 16). At that time, their shepherds would lead them **with knowledge and skill**, unlike previously (2:8; 10:21; 23:1-4). There would also be a fundamental change in their worship of the Lord. This is indicated through the irrelevance of the **ark**, which had been so important to the tabernacle and Solomon's temple (v. 16). The focus instead will be on **Jerusalem** as "**The LORD's Throne**," to which **the nations**, with hearts transformed, will gather to worship (v. 17; 16:19). In previous times, the thrones of foreigners had been set up in this city and throughout the land (1:15), but Israel and Judah would be reunited and come home to take possession of this territory (v. 18).

3:19 Israel should have called God **'My Father'** (see Is 63:16; 64:8) but instead called out to idols in this way (2:27).

3:22-25 Israel's **unfaithfulness** was something only God could **heal** (v. 22; Is 6:10; Hs 6:1). The people's confession includes a renunciation of idols (often worshiped on the **hills** and **mountains**; see 2:20; 3:6) and recognition of a lengthy pattern of sin against the Lord (see v. 13).

BLESSING OR CURSE

4 If you return, † Israel — this is the LORD's declaration — you will return
to me, †
if you remove your abhorrent idols †
from my presence
and do not waver,
2 then you can swear, "As the LORD lives," †
in truth, † in justice, and in righteousness, †
then the nations will be blessed † by him †
and will pride themselves in him. †

3 For this is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

Break up the unplowed ground; †
do not sow among the thorns. †
4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD; remove the foreskin of your hearts, †
men of Judah and residents of Jerusalem.
Otherwise, my wrath will break out like fire and burn with no one
to extinguish it †
because of your evil deeds.

JUDGMENT FROM THE NORTH

5 Declare in Judah, proclaim in Jerusalem, and say:

Blow the ram's horn throughout the land. †
Cry out loudly and say:
Assemble yourselves,
and let's flee to the fortified cities.

6 Lift up a signal flag toward Zion. †
Run for cover! Don't stand still!
For I am bringing disaster from the north — a crushing blow. †
7 A lion has gone up from his thicket; †
a destroyer of nations has set out.
He has left his lair
to make your land a waste.
Your cities will be reduced to uninhabited ruins. †
8 Because of this, put on sackcloth; mourn and wail, †
for the LORD's burning anger †
has not turned away from us.

9 "On that day" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the king and the officials will lose their courage. The priests will tremble in fear, and the prophets will be scared speechless."
10 I said, "Oh no, Lord GOD, you have certainly deceived † this people and Jerusalem, by announcing, 'You will have peace,' † while a sword is at † our throats."
11 "At that time it will be said to this people and to Jerusalem, 'A searing wind † blows from the barren heights in the wilderness on the way to my dear † people. It comes not to winnow or to sift; 12 a wind too strong for this comes at my call. † Now I will also pronounce judgments against them.' " †

13 Look, he advances like clouds; †
his chariots are like a storm. †
His horses are swifter than eagles. †
Woe to us, for we are ruined! †
14 Wash the evil from your heart, † Jerusalem, so that you will be delivered.
How long will you harbor
malicious thoughts? †
15 For a voice announces from Dan, proclaiming malice from Mount Ephraim.
16 Warn the nations: Look!

Proclaim to Jerusalem:
Those who besiege are coming
from a distant land; †
they raise their voices
against the cities of Judah.
17 They have her surrounded †
like those who guard a field,
because she has rebelled against me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.
18 Your way and your actions have brought this on you. †
This is your punishment. It is very bitter, because it has reached your heart!

JEREMIAH'S LAMENT

19 My anguish, my anguish! † I writhe in agony!
Oh, the pain in † my heart! †
My heart pounds;
I cannot be silent.
For you, my soul,
have heard the sound of the ram's horn —
the shout of battle.
20 Disaster after disaster † is reported because the whole land is destroyed.
Suddenly my tents are destroyed,
my tent curtains, in a moment.
21 How long must I see the signal flag and hear the sound of the ram's horn?

22 "For my people are fools; they do not know me.
They are foolish children,
without understanding. †
They are skilled in doing what is evil,
but they do not know how to do what is good." †

23 I looked at the earth, and it was formless and empty. †
I looked to the heavens,
and their light was gone. †

24 I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; †
all the hills shook.
25 I looked, and there was no human being, †
and all the birds of the sky had fled. †
26 I looked, and the fertile field † was a wilderness. †
All its cities were torn down
because of the LORD and his burning anger. †

27 For this is what the LORD says:

The whole land will be a desolation, †
but I will not finish it off. †
28 Because of this, the earth will mourn; †
the skies above will grow dark. †
I have spoken; I have planned,
and I will not relent or turn back from it. †

29 Every city flees †
at the sound of the horseman and the archer.
They enter the thickets
and climb among the rocks. †
Every city is abandoned;
no inhabitant is left.
30 And you, devastated one, what are you doing †
that you dress yourself in scarlet,
that you adorn yourself with gold jewelry, that you enhance your eyes with makeup? †
You beautify yourself for nothing.
Your lovers reject you; †
they intend to take your life. †
31 I hear a cry like a woman in labor, †
a cry of anguish like one bearing her first child.
The cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath, stretching out her hands: †

“Woe is me, for my life is weary
because of the murderers! ”

4:1 Or *Repent* **4:2** Or *will bless themselves* **4:10** Lit *sword touches* **4:11** Lit *to the daughter of my* **4:12** Lit *comes for me* **4:19** Lit *My inner parts, my inner parts* **4:19** Lit *the walls of*
4:1 Zch 1:3 **4:1** Jr 7:30; 16:18; 32:34 **4:2** Dt 6:13; 10:20; Jr 5:2 **4:2** Is 65:16 **4:2** Hs 2:19 **4:2** Gn 26:3-4 **4:2** Gn 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 1Co 1:31 **4:3** Hs 10:12 **4:3** Mt 13:7 **4:4** Gn 17:14; Dt 10:16; Jr 9:25; Rm 2:28-29 **4:4** Is 1:31; Jr 21:12; Am 5:6; Mal 4:1 **4:5** Jr 6:1; Hs 5:8; Jl 2:1; 1Th 4:16-17 **4:6** Is 62:10 **4:6** Is 14:31; 41:25; Jr 1:13; 4:20; 6:1; 15:12; 47:2; 50:3,9,41; 51:48; Ezk 26:7 **4:7** Ps 10:9; 17:12; Is 5:29; Jr 2:15; 5:6; 25:38; 49:19; 50:17,44 **4:7** Is 1:7; 6:11 **4:8** Jl 1:13 **4:8** Nm 25:4; Ps 78:49 **4:10** 1Kg 22:22; Ezk 14:9; 2Th 2:11 **4:10** Jr 6:14; 23:17 **4:11** Ezk 17:10 **4:12** Jr 1:16; Ezk 5:8 **4:13** Rv 1:7 **4:13** Is 5:28; 66:15 **4:13** 2Sm 1:23; Jb 9:26; Lm 4:19 **4:13** Lm 5:16 **4:14** Ps 51:2,7; Is 1:16; Jr 2:22; Ti 3:5; Jms 4:8 **4:14** Ps 119:113 **4:16** Is 39:3 **4:17** 2Kg 25:1-4 **4:17** Is 1:20 **4:18** Ps 107:17; Pr 1:31; Jr 7:3,5; 17:10; 18:11; 23:22; 25:5; 26:3,13; 32:19; Hs 4:9; 12:2; Zch 1:4,6 **4:19** Is 16:11; Hab 3:16; Rm 9:1-2 **4:20** Ezk 7:26 **4:22** Ps 82:5; Is 1:3 **4:22** Rm 16:19 **4:23** Gn 1:2; Jb 26:7; Is 45:18 **4:23** Is 5:30; 13:10 **4:24** Jdg 5:5; Ps 46:1-3 **4:25** Gn 2:5 **4:25** Zph 1:3 **4:26** Jr 2:7 **4:26** Ps 107:34 **4:26** Ps 76:7 **4:27** Is 6:11 **4:27** Neh 9:31; Jr 5:10,18; Rm 11:1-7 **4:28** Jr 8:13; 14:2; Hs 4:3 **4:28** Ps 105:28; Is 13:10; 50:3; Ezk 30:18 **4:28** Nm 23:19; Is 46:11; 48:15; Ezk 37:14 **4:29** 2Kg 25:4 **4:29** Is 2:19-21 **4:30** Is 10:3 **4:30** 2Kg 9:30 **4:30** Jr 30:14; Lm 1:19 **4:30** Ezk 23:9-10,22 **4:31** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **4:31** Is 1:15

4:1-2 The preceding confession (3:22-25) is not accepted at face value. God insists that Israel return **to** [him], rid themselves of idols, and speak his name in truth (5:2), perhaps because superficial repentance had been a problem before (3:10). The phrase **the nations will be blessed by him** is similar to what is said of the Messiah in Psalm 72:17 (see note).

4:4 The command to Judah to **circumcise** their own **hearts** (a metaphor) parallels Deuteronomy 10:16, but it is doubtful whether they could do it (see 9:26; 13:23; 17:1; the note on Is 1:16-18). What is certain is that they did not because God would pour out his wrath on Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 5-18; 52:1-30). Later, he himself would circumcise their hearts (Dt 30:6; Jr 31:33). An uncircumcised heart is closely related to the metaphor of soil unsuitable for growing crops (v. 3; Hs 10:12; Mt 13:3-9) and to an uncircumcised ear (see the note on 6:10; Ac 7:51).

4:5-9 The judgment threatened against **Judah** and **Jerusalem** in v. 4 is here proclaimed. As expected, **disaster** comes **from the north** (v. 6; 1:14-15; 3:12,18), bringing destruction to the land (v. 7) and dismay to its corrupt leaders (v. 9; 2:8). The intensity of God’s **burning anger** (v. 8) had been mentioned in v. 4 (see the note on Is 5:25).

4:10 These assurances of **peace** were not in fact from the Lord, as 6:14 explains.

4:14 What had to be washed was not anything outward but the **heart** and **thoughts** of Jerusalem’s inhabitants (see v. 4; 2:22).

4:16 The armies from the north that destroy **nations** (vv. 6-7) are further described as **coming from a distant land** (see 6:22).

4:19-21 Jeremiah was **in agony** over the judgment against Judah (see Is 21:2-4; 22:4). He would also weep and grieve over them (9:1; 13:17).

4:22 The foolishness of the people consisted of their lack of knowledge of God and their wickedness (see 5:21; Pr 9:10; 16:6; Is 1:2-4).

4:23-26 Jeremiah speaks again in the first-person of the coming destruction of Judah (see vv. 19-21). As a result of God’s anger, the land is deserted and its cities ruined (see vv. 27,29; Gn 1:2; Is 24:10). Darkness

and mountains shaking suggest an even broader, cosmic event (vv. 23-24,28; Is 13:10; Jl 2:2,10,31; Hg 2:6,21).

4:27 Although judgment would be severe, God would not bring a complete end (see 5:18; Is 1:9).

4:30-31 Having already been likened to a promiscuous woman (2:20-25; 3:1-3,13), God's people continued in their stubbornness and stupidity to the bitter end (see v. 22). Judah's seductions would be useless, and she would instead suffer pain as intense as that of childbirth.

THE DEPRAVITY OF JERUSALEM

5 Roam † through the streets of Jerusalem.
Investigate; †
search in her squares.
If you find one person, †
any who acts justly,
who pursues faithfulness,
then I will forgive her. †
2 When they say, "As the LORD lives," †
they are swearing falsely. †
3 LORD, don't your eyes look for faithfulness? †
You have struck them, but they felt no pain. †
You finished them off,
but they refused to accept discipline. †
They made their faces harder than rock, †
and they refused to return. †

4 Then I thought:

They are just the poor;
they have been foolish.
For they don't understand the way of the LORD, †
the justice of their God. †
5 I will go to the powerful and speak to them.
Surely they know the way of the LORD, the justice of their God. †
However, these also had broken the yoke

and torn off the chains. †

6 Therefore, a lion from the forest will strike them down. †
A wolf from arid plains will ravage them.
A leopard † stalks their cities.
Anyone who leaves them will be torn to pieces because their rebellious acts are many, †
their unfaithful deeds numerous. †

7 Why should I forgive you?
Your children have abandoned me
and sworn by those who are not gods. †
I satisfied their needs, yet they committed adultery; †
they gashed themselves † at the † prostitute's house.
8 They are well-fed, † eager † stallions, †
each neighing † after someone else's wife. †
9 Should I not punish them for these things? †
This is the LORD's declaration.
Should I not avenge myself †
on such a nation as this?

10 Go up among her vineyard terraces and destroy them, †
but do not finish them off. †
Prune away her shoots,
for they do not belong to the LORD. †
11 They, the house of Israel and the house of Judah, have dealt very treacherously with me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.
12 They have contradicted the LORD and insisted, "It won't happen. † †
Harm won't come to us;
we won't see sword or famine."
13 The prophets become only wind, for the LORD's word is not in them.
This will in fact happen to them.

COMING JUDGMENT

14 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD of Armies says:

Because you have spoken this word,
I am going to make my words
become fire in your mouth. †
These people are the wood,
and the fire will consume them. †
15 I am about to bring a nation from far away against you, †
house of Israel.
This is the LORD's declaration.
It is an established nation,
an ancient nation,
a nation whose language you do not know
and whose speech you do not understand. †
16 Their quiver is like an open grave; †
they are all warriors.
17 They will consume your harvest and your food. †
They will consume your sons and your daughters.
They will consume your flocks and your herds.
They will consume your vines and your fig trees.
With the sword they will destroy
your fortified cities † in which you trust.

18 "But even in those days" — this is the LORD's declaration — "I will not finish you off. † 19 When people ask, 'For what offense has the LORD our God done all these things to us? ' You will respond to them, 'Just as you abandoned me † and served foreign gods in your land, so will you serve strangers in a land that is not yours.' †
20 "Declare this in the house of Jacob; proclaim it in Judah, saying:

21 Hear this, you foolish and senseless † people. †
They have eyes, but they don't see.
They have ears, but they don't hear. †

22 Do you not fear me?
This is the LORD's declaration.
Do you not tremble before me,
the one who set the sand as the boundary of the sea, an enduring barrier that it cannot cross? †
The waves surge, but they cannot prevail.
They roar but cannot pass over it.
23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts. †
They have turned aside and have gone away.
24 They have not said to themselves, 'Let's fear the LORD our God, †
who gives the seasonal rains, both autumn and spring, †
who guarantees to us the fixed weeks of the harvest.'
25 Your guilty acts have diverted these things from you.
Your sins have withheld my bounty from you, †
26 for wicked men live among my people.
They watch like hunters † lying in wait. † †
They set a trap; †
they catch men.
27 Like a cage full of birds, so their houses are full of deceit. †
Therefore they have grown powerful and rich.
28 They have become fat † and sleek.
They have also excelled in evil matters.
They have not taken up cases,
such as the case of the fatherless, so they might prosper, and they have not defended the rights of the needy. †
29 Should I not punish them for these things?
This is the LORD's declaration.
Should I not avenge myself †
on such a nation as this?

30 An appalling, horrible thing has taken place in the land. †
31 The prophets prophesy falsely, †
and the priests rule by their own authority.

My people love it like this.

But what will you do at the end of it? †

5:1 Lit *See and know* **5:7** Or *adultery and trooped to the*, or *adultery and lodged at the* ; Hb obscure **5:8** Lit *well-equipped* ; Hb obscure **5:8** Lit *early-rising* ; Hb obscure **5:12** Lit *"He does not exist* **5:21** Lit *without heart* **5:26** Lit *hunters of birds* **5:26** Hb obscure
5:1 2Ch 16:9 **5:1** Ps 14:1-3; Ezk 22:30; Rm 3:10 **5:1** Gn 18:26-32 **5:2** Jr 4:2 **5:2** Lv 19:12; Is 48:1; Jr 7:9 **5:3** 2Ch 16:9; Ps 51:6 **5:3** Pr 23:35 **5:3** Pr 27:22 **5:3** Ezk 3:7-9 **5:3** Hs 11:5 **5:4** Gn 18:19; 2Kg 17:26; 21:22; Ps 95:10; Jr 8:7; Hs 4:6 **5:4** Mc 3:1 **5:5** Ps 103:7 **5:5** Ps 2:3; Jr 2:20 **5:6** 2Kg 17:26; Jr 4:7; 25:38 **5:6** Hs 13:7; Rv 13:2 **5:6** Is 59:12 **5:6** Jr 3:6,8,11-12,22; 14:7; 30:15; Am 5:12 **5:7** Dt 32:21; Jos 23:7; Gl 4:8 **5:7** Hs 4:10 **5:7** 1Kg 18:24 **5:8** Ezk 23:20 **5:8** Jr 13:27 **5:8** Ex 20:14; Ezk 22:11 **5:9** Jr 5:29; 8:10; 9:9 **5:9** Dt 32:35; Heb 10:30 **5:10** 2Kg 24:2 **5:10** Jr 4:27 **5:10** Hs 1:9 **5:11** Is 21:2; 24:16; 48:8; Hs 6:7 **5:12** Is 28:15; Jr 23:17 **5:14** Hs 6:5; Rv 11:5 **5:14** Zch 12:6 **5:15** Is 10:3; 13:5; 30:27; Jr 4:16 **5:15** Dt 28:49; Is 28:11; 33:19; 1Co 14:21 **5:16** Ps 5:9; Rm 3:13 **5:17** Lv 26:16; Dt 28:31,33,51 **5:17** Hs 8:14 **5:18** 2Ch 12:12; Jr 4:27; 5:10; 30:11; Ezk 11:13; 20:17; Rm 11:1-5 **5:19** Dt 28:20; 29:24-25; 31:16; Jdg 2:12; 1Sm 8:8; 1Kg 9:8-9; Is 1:4,28; Jr 1:16; 2:13,17,19; 16:11; 17:13 **5:19** Dt 4:27-28; 28:47-48 **5:21** Dt 32:6 **5:21** Ps 115:5-6; 135:16-17; Is 6:9; 42:20; Ezk 12:2; Mt 13:14; Mk 8:18 **5:22** Jb 26:10; 38:10-11; Ps 104:9; Pr 8:29 **5:23** Dt 21:18,20; Ps 78:8; Is 1:5; Heb 3:12 **5:24** Pr 9:10; Hs 6:1 **5:24** Dt 11:14; Jl 2:23; Mt 5:45 **5:25** Is 59:2 **5:26** Pr 1:11 **5:26** Ps 10:9 **5:27** Ps 10:7; 50:19; Is 3:14; 5:18; 30:12; Jr 8:5; Zph 1:9; Ac 13:10; Rm 1:29 **5:28** Dt 32:15 **5:28** Dt 24:14; Jb 29:16; 30:25; 31:19; Ps 82:3-4; 140:12; Pr 14:31; 31:9; Is 1:23; Zch 7:10; Ac 4:34 **5:29** Jr 5:9; 8:19; Heb 10:30 **5:30** Hs 6:10 **5:31** Jr 6:13; 8:10; 14:14; 20:6; 23:14,25-26,32; 27:10,14-16; 28:15; 29:9,21,31; Lm 2:14; Zch 13:3 **5:31** Dt 32:29; Is 10:3

5:1-6 Jerusalem was so wicked that not a single righteous person could be found in her (see the note on 2:29; 6:1-8,13-15; 8:1-3).

5:8 The metaphor of a prostitute has already been applied to Judah (2:20-28); now the people are equated to **eager stallions** who are **neighing after** wives that are not their own. Stallions, like donkeys (2:24), cannot control their sexual drive; they mate with any horse they find. In the same way, God's people had abandoned his covenant in spiritual adultery and were unfaithful with other gods (5:7).

5:12-13 Aided by false **prophets**, the people were complacent and were convinced that trouble would not come to them (see vv. 2,31; 4:10; 6:13-14; 7:4).

5:14 Whereas false prophets were speaking lies and "wind" (vv. 12-13), God would put his words in Jeremiah's mouth, and these words would be like **fire** (20:9).

5:15 Again the destroying nation that will come is said to be from **far away** (4:16; 6:22). They are also **an ancient nation** that speaks a foreign **language** (see the note on Is 28:9-13).

5:18-19 Despite the thorough destruction to come (Jl 1:4), God would not utterly destroy his people (v. 18; 4:27), though they would indeed be exiled to **a land that is not** [theirs].

5:21-22 Israel's sin is characterized here as foolishness, as in 4:22. The description of their spiritually senseless hearts, eyes, and ears echoes Isaiah 6:9-10. Despite God's mighty power as shown through his oversight of creation, they had not feared him (vv. 22,24; 2:19; 32:40).

5:23 Israel's sin is rooted in their **stubborn and rebellious hearts.**

5:25-29 Under the Sinai covenant, rain and abundant harvest was tied to Israel's keeping of the law (vv. 24-25; 3:3; Dt 11:13-15). The Israelites had forfeited these blessings not through minor legal infractions but through deception, exploitation, greed, and injustice (vv. 26-28; 2:34; Is 1:17).

5:31 Sadly, not only was the leadership corrupt (see v. 13; 2:8) but [God's] **people love**[d] **it** that way.

Nevertheless, this would result in a bitter **end.** This situation parallels those who have an “itch to hear” lies in 2Tm 4:3.

THREATENED SIEGE OF JERUSALEM

6 “Run for cover †
out of Jerusalem, Benjaminites.
Sound the ram’s horn † in Tekoa; †
raise a smoke signal † over Beth-haccherem, †
for disaster threatens from the north, †
even a crushing blow.
2 Though she is beautiful and delicate, I will destroy † Daughter Zion.
3 Shepherds and their flocks will come against her; they will pitch their tents all around her. †
Each will pasture his own portion.
4 Set them apart for war † against her; rise up, let’s attack at noon.
Woe to us, for the day is passing;
the evening shadows grow long.
5 Rise up, let’s attack by night.
Let us destroy her fortresses.”

6 For this is what the LORD of Armies says:

Cut down the trees; †
raise a siege ramp against Jerusalem.
This city must be punished.
There is nothing but oppression within her. †
7 As a well gushes out its water, so she pours out her evil. †
Violence and destruction † resound in her.
Sickness and wounds keep coming to my attention.
8 Be warned, Jerusalem, or I will turn away from you; †
I will make you a desolation,
a land without inhabitants. †

WRATH ON ISRAEL

9 This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Glean the remnant of Israel †
as thoroughly as a vine.
Pass your hand once more like a grape gatherer over the branches.

10 Who can I speak to and give such a warning †
that they will listen?
Look, their ear is uncircumcised, † †
so they cannot pay attention.
See, the word of the LORD has become contemptible to them — they find no pleasure in it. †
11 But I am full of the LORD's wrath; I am tired of holding it back. †
Pour it out on the children in the street, †
on the gathering of young men as well.
For both husband and wife will be captured, the old with the very old. †
12 Their houses will be turned over to others, †
their fields and wives as well,
for I will stretch out my hand †
against the inhabitants of the land.
This is the LORD's declaration.

13 For from the least to the greatest of them, †
everyone is making profit dishonestly. †
From prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely. †
14 They have treated my people's brokenness superficially, claiming, "Peace, peace," †
when there is no peace.
15 Were they ashamed when they acted so detestably?
They weren't at all ashamed.
They can no longer feel humiliation. †
Therefore, they will fall among the fallen.

When I punish them, they will collapse, †
says the LORD.

DISASTER BECAUSE OF DISOBEDIENCE

16 This is what the LORD says:

Stand by the roadways and look.
Ask about the ancient paths, †
"Which is the way to what is good? "
Then take it
and find rest for yourselves. †
But they protested, "We won't! "
17 I appointed watchmen over you †
and said, "Listen for the sound of the ram's horn."
But they protested, "We won't listen! "

18 Therefore listen, you nations and you witnesses,
learn what the charge is against them.
19 Listen, earth!
I am about to bring disaster on these people, the fruit of their own plotting, †
for they have paid no attention to my words.
They have rejected my instruction. †
20 What use to me is frankincense from Sheba †
or sweet cane † from a distant land?
Your burnt offerings are not acceptable;
your sacrifices do not please me. †
21 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am going to place stumbling blocks
before these people; fathers and sons together will stumble over them; †
friends and neighbors will also perish.

A CRUEL NATION FROM THE NORTH

22 This is what the LORD says:

Look, † an army is coming from a northern land; †

a great nation will be stirred up
from the remote regions of the earth. †
23 They grasp bow and javelin.
They are cruel and show no mercy. †
Their voice roars like the sea, †
and they ride on horses,
lined up like men in battle formation
against you, Daughter Zion.

24 We have heard about it, and our hands have become weak.
Distress has seized us —
pain, like a woman in labor. †
25 Don't go out to the fields; don't walk on the road.
For the enemy has a sword;
terror is on every side. †

26 My dear † people, dress yourselves in sackcloth and roll in the dust. †
Mourn as you would for an only son, †
a bitter lament,
for suddenly the destroyer † will come on us. †

JEREMIAH APPOINTED AS AN EXAMINER

27 I have appointed you to be an assayer among my people — a refiner † — so
you may know and assay their way of life. †
28 All are stubborn rebels spreading slander. †
They are bronze and iron;
all of them are corrupt. †
29 The bellows blow, blasting the lead with fire.
The refining is completely in vain;
the evil ones are not separated out.
30 They are called rejected silver, for the LORD has rejected them. †

6:1 = House of the Vineyard **6:2** Or *silence* **6:7** Or *well keeps its water fresh, so she keeps her evil fresh* **6:10** Or *and bear witness* **6:10** They are unresponsive to God. **6:11** Lit *with fullness of days* **6:26** Lit

Daughter of my **6:27** Text emended; MT reads *fortress*
6:1 Ex 9:19; Is 10:31; Jr 4:6 **6:1** Jr 4:5; 51:27; Am 3:6 **6:1** 2Sm 14:2; 2Ch 11:6; 20:20 **6:1** Jdg 20:38,40; Neh 3:14 **6:1** Jr 1:13; 4:6,20; 6:22; 15:12; 47:2; 50:3,9,41; 51:48 **6:3** Jr 4:17 **6:4** Jr 51:27; Mc 3:5 **6:6** Dt 20:19-20 **6:6** Is 30:12; 59:9-15; Jr 22:17; Ezk 22:7,12,29; Am 3:9; Hab 1:3 **6:7** Jr 20:8; Am 3:10; Hab 1:3 **6:8** Ezk 23:18; Hs 9:12 **6:8** Jr 9:11; 25:9; 29:18; 34:22; Ezk 30:12 **6:9** Is 10:20; Jr 31:7; Ezk 9:8; 11:13; Mc 2:12; Zph 3:13 **6:10** Lv 26:41; Jr 9:26; Ezk 44:7,9 **6:10** 1Sm 15:23; Jr 8:9 **6:11** Jr 20:9; Hs 5:10 **6:11** Jr 9:21 **6:12** Jr 8:10-12 **6:12** Ex 3:20; Jr 15:6; Ezk 6:14; 14:13; 25:7; Zph 1:4 **6:13** Est 1:20; Jr 8:10; 31:34; 42:1,8; 44:12 **6:13** Pr 1:19; 15:27; Hab 2:9 **6:13** Jr 5:31; 8:10; 14:14; 20:6; 23:14,25-26,32; 27:10,14-16; 28:15; 29:9,21,31; Lm 2:14; Zch 13:3 **6:14** 1Ch 12:18; Is 57:19 **6:15** Jr 3:3; 8:12 **6:13-15** Jr 8:10-12 **6:16** Is 59:8; Jr 18:15; Jb 24:13; Pr 8:20; 12:28 **6:16** Mt 11:29 **6:17** Is 21:11; 58:1; Hs 9:8 **6:19** Pr 1:31 **6:19** Is 5:24; Jr 23:17 **6:20** 1Kg 10:1; Is 60:6 **6:20** Ex 30:23; Is 43:24; Ezk 27:19 **6:20** Ps 40:6; Is 1:11; 43:23; 66:3; Hs 9:4; Am 5:21; Mc 6:6; Mal 1:10 **6:21** Is 8:15; Jr 31:9; Ezk 7:19 **6:22-24** Jr 50:41-43 **6:22-24** Jr 50:41-43 **6:22** Jr 25:32; 31:8 **6:23** Is 13:18; Jr 50:42; Hab 1:6-17 **6:23** Is 5:30; 17:12 **6:24** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **6:25** Ps 31:13; Jr 20:3,10; 49:29 **6:26** Jr 25:34; Ezk 27:30; Mc 1:10 **6:26** Am 8:10 **6:26** Ex 12:23; Is 21:2; 54:16; Jr 48:8,15,18,32; 1Co 10:10; Heb 11:28 **6:26** Is 47:11; Jr 4:20; 15:8 **6:27** 1Ch 29:17; Ps 7:9; Pr 17:3 **6:28** Lv 19:16; Pr 11:13; 20:19; Is 1:23 **6:28** 2Ch 27:2; Is 1:4 **6:30** 1Sm 15:23,26; Jr 2:37; 7:29

6:1-8 Again the prophet proclaims that armies **from the north** will desolate the land (see 1:15; 4:6). The complete corruption of **Jerusalem** (v. 6) repeats the ideas of 2:29 and 5:1-6. The mention of her **sickness and wounds** (v. 7) echoes Isaiah 1:5-6.

6:9 Deuteronomy 24:18-22 states that at harvest, landowners were not allowed to go back over their fields or the vines a second time in order to ensure that they took in every last part of the crop. Rather, they were to leave something for the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow. But here in Jeremiah 6:9, God commands the Babylonians to **glean** Israel **thoroughly** and to go over the vine **once more.** The metaphor —a reversal of the gleaning law—highlights the complete devastation that God intends for his people at the hands of the Babylonians.

6:10 Not only are the people's hearts **uncircumcised** but so are their ears (see the notes on 4:4; 5:21-22). The result is that **they cannot pay attention** (see Jos 24:19) and have no desire for **the word of the LORD** (see v. 19).

6:11 In contrast to 4:19-21 (see note), Jeremiah here prays for the execution of the Lord's judgment.

6:13-15 The dishonesty of **everyone** emphasizes again the complete corruption of the people (see vv. 6,28; 2:29; 5:1,4-5; 8:6; 9:2; 23:14) and contrasts with their future full restoration under the new covenant (31:34). The spreading of lies in God's name had been cited in 5:2,13,31, and the glossing over of sin and judgment in 2:35; 5:12. Most of this passage is repeated in 8:10-12.

6:16-17 The people's rejection of **ancient paths** and "the way of the good" (lit v. 16) most likely refers to their rejection of the Lord's "words" and "instruction" (v. 19). In so doing, they had also chosen "disaster" (v. 19) instead of **rest** (v. 16; Is 30:15-17).

6:20 Rejection of God's word (see previous note) makes **sacrifices** and **offerings** meaningless (see the notes on 1Sm 15:22-23; Pss 50:14-15; 51:16-17).

6:21 Part of the Lord's judgment against this stubborn, rebellious people would be **stumbling blocks** to their destruction (see Is 8:14-15; 28:13; Rm 9:32-33; 1Pt 2:8).

6:22 The **northern land** is linked to **the remote regions of the earth**, as suggested by other passages (see 4:6,16).

6:24 The comparison of Zion's anguish to that of **a woman in labor** also appears in 4:31 and 13:21.

6:26 Sackcloth, ashes, and dust were common symbols of mourning. To **roll in the dust** is probably an

unusual action that demonstrates extreme grief or repentance (see Ezk 27:30).

6:27-30 Jeremiah's ministry is metaphorically described as a refining fire that would test the people and rid them of impurities and dross. His work, however, would fail as the **refining is completely in vain** (see Is 1:22,25), leading to rejection by God.

FALSE TRUST IN THE TEMPLE

7 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 "Stand in the gate of the house of the LORD † and there call out this word: 'Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who enter through these gates to worship the LORD.

3 " 'This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Correct your ways and your actions, † and I will allow you to live in this place. 4 Do not trust deceitful words, chanting, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD." 5 Instead, if you really correct your ways and your actions, if you act justly toward one another, † † 6 if you no longer oppress the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow † and no longer shed innocent blood in this place or follow other gods, bringing harm on yourselves, 7 I will allow you to live in this place, the land I gave to your ancestors † long ago and forever. 8 But look, you keep trusting in deceitful words that cannot help.

9 " 'Do you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and follow other gods that you have not known? † 10 Then do you come and stand before me in this house † that bears my name and say, "We are rescued, so we can continue doing all these detestable acts"? 11 Has this house, which bears my name, become a den of robbers † in your view? Yes, I too have seen it. †

This is the LORD's declaration.

SHILOH AS A WARNING

12 " 'But return to my place that was at Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first. † See what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel. 13 Now, because you have done all these things — this is the LORD's declaration — and because I have spoken to you time and time again † but you wouldn't listen, † and I have called to you, but you wouldn't answer, † 14 what I did to Shiloh I

will do to the house that bears my name † — the house in which you trust — the place that I gave you and your ancestors. 15 I will banish you from my presence, just as I banished all of your brothers, all the descendants of Ephraim.' †

DO NOT PRAY FOR JUDAH

16 "As for you, do not pray for these people. † Do not offer a cry or a prayer on their behalf, and do not beg me, † for I will not listen to you. † 17 Don't you see how they behave in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 The sons gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead dough to make cakes for the queen of heaven, † † and they pour out drink offerings to other gods so that they provoke me to anger. 19 But are they really provoking me?" † This is the LORD's declaration. "Isn't it they themselves being provoked to disgrace?"

20 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "Look, my anger — my burning wrath — is about to be poured out on this place, † on people and animals, on the tree of the field, and on the produce of the land. My wrath will burn and not be quenched." †

OBEDIENCE OVER SACRIFICE

21 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices, and eat the meat yourselves, † 22 for when I brought your ancestors out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them † or command them concerning burnt offering and sacrifice. 23 However, I did give them this command: 'Obey me, and then I will be your God, and you will be my people. Follow every way I command you so that it may go well with you.' † 24 Yet they didn't listen or pay attention † but followed their own advice and their own stubborn, evil heart. They went backward and not forward. † 25 Since the day your ancestors came out of the land of Egypt until today, I have sent all my servants the prophets † to you time and time again. † † 26 However, my people wouldn't listen to me or pay attention but became obstinate; † † they did more evil than their ancestors. †

A LAMENT FOR DISOBEDIENT JUDAH

27 “When you speak all these things to them, they will not listen to you. When
you call to them, they will not answer you. 28 Therefore, declare to them, ‘This
is the nation that would not listen to the LORD their God and would not accept
discipline. Truth † has perished — it has disappeared from their mouths. 29 Cut
off the hair of your sacred vow † † and throw it away. Raise up a dirge on the
barren heights, † for the LORD has rejected and abandoned the generation under
his wrath.’ †
30 “For the Judeans have done what is evil in my sight.” This is the LORD’s
declaration. “They have set up their abhorrent things † in the house that bears
my name in order to defile it. † 31 They have built the high places of
Topheth † † in Ben Hinnom Valley † † in order to burn their sons and
daughters in the fire, † a thing I did not command; I never entertained the
thought. †
32 “Therefore, look, the days are coming” † — the LORD’s declaration — “when
this place will no longer be called Topheth and Ben Hinnom Valley, but the
Valley of Slaughter. † Topheth will become a cemetery, † because there will be
no other burial place. 33 The corpses of these people will become food for the
birds of the sky and for the wild animals of the land, with no one to scare them
away. † 34 I will remove from the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem
the sound of joy and gladness and the voices of the groom and the bride, †ˇ for
the land will become a desolate waste. †

7:5 Lit *justly between a man and his neighbor* **7:13** Lit *you rising early and speaking* **7:18** = a pagan goddess **7:25** Lit *you, each day rising early and sending* **7:26** Lit *but stiffened their neck* **7:28** Or *Faithfulness* **7:29** Lit *off your consecration* **7:31** Lit *of the fireplace* **7:31** A valley south of Jerusalem **7:31** Lit *command, and it did not arise on my heart* **7:32** Lit *They will bury in Topheth*

7:2 Jr 26:2 **7:3** Jr 4:18; 18:11; 26:13 **7:5** Jr 22:3 **7:6** Dt 19:10,13; 21:8-9; 2Kg 21:16; 24:4; Jr 22:3,17; 26:15; Mt 27:4 **7:7** Gn 12:7; Jos 1:2; Jr 30:3 **7:9** Ex 20:3-17; Lv 19:11-12; Dt 5:7-21; Ezk 18:5-9,14-18; 22:6-12; Hs 4:2 **7:10** Jr 32:34 **7:11** Is 56:7; Mt 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46 **7:11** Ps 33:13-15; Ezk 8:12; Am 9:1-4 **7:12** Dt 12:11; 14:23; 16:6,11 **7:13** Jr 7:25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4 **7:13** Pr 1:24; Is 65:12 **7:14** Dt 12:5; 1Kg 9:7; Mk 13:2 **7:15** Dt 29:28; 2Kg 17 **7:16** Jr 11:14; 14:11-12; 15:1 **7:16** Gn 23:8; Ru 1:16; Jr 27:18 **7:16** Ex 32:11-13,20-34; Jr 14:11; 15:1 **7:18** Jr 44:17-19,25 **7:19** Jb 35:6 **7:20** Jr 42:18; Lm 4:11 **7:20** Nah 1:6 **7:21** Dt 12:4-28; Ps 50:13; Hs 8:13 **7:22** Hs 6:6 **7:23** Dt 5:33 **7:24** Ps 81:11 **7:24** Jr 15:6 **7:25** 2Kg 9:7; 17:13; Jr 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezk 38:17; Zch 1:6 **7:25** 2Ch 36:15-16; Jr 25:4 **7:26** Ex 32:9; Dt 9:6,13; 2Kg 17:14; Jr 17:23; 19:15 **7:26** 1Kg 16:25; 2Kg 21:11 **7:29** Nm 6:1-8 **7:29** Jr 3:2,21 **7:29** Is 2:6 **7:30** Jr 4:1; 16:18; 32:34 **7:30** 2Kg 23:24 **7:31** 2Kg 23:10; Jr 19:6,11-14 **7:31** Jos 15:8; Jr 19:5; 32:35 **7:31** Lv 18:21; Dt 12:31; 2Kg 17:17,31; 2Ch 28:3; Jr 19:5; Ezk 16:21; 20:31; 23:25,37,47

7:32 Jr 16:14; 19:6; 23:5; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47,52 **7:32** Jr 19:6 **7:33** Dt 28:26; Ps 79:2; Jr 16:4; 19:7; 34:20; Ezk 29:5 **7:34** Jr 16:9; 25:10; 33:11 **7:34** Lv 26:31,33; Is 64:11; Jr 25:9,11,18; 27:17; 44:2,6,22

7:1-2 The narrative section that begins here illustrates Judah's sin specifically and concretely. This section is sometimes referred to as Jeremiah's "Temple Sermon." Jeremiah would deliver this message at the temple gate, a bustling place with heavy foot-traffic that would ensure his high visibility and a large audience.

7:3-11 These worshipers were guilty of trusting in **the temple** itself as a sign of divine favor (vv. 10,14) even though they were living in a pattern of idolatry and injustice. God has a special concern for the poor and the vulnerable in society (v. 6), and failing to treat these people well is a violation of God's character and covenant. In light of these abuses and other sins, Judah's trust in **deceitful words** was ill-founded (vv. 4,8; 5:17). Previous passages have emphasized Israel's mixture of lies with their spirituality (3:10; 5:2,31; 6:13).

7:12-15 God cited the destruction of **Shiloh** as evidence that the mere presence of the ark and other holy articles was no guarantee of his continued blessing. The stationing of the tabernacle at Shiloh is attested elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Jos 18:1; Jdg 18:31), and its destruction is referred to Jeremiah 26:6,9; Psalm 78:60.

7:16 God's determination to punish and exile Judah (vv. 15,20) is based on their grievous, flagrant sin (vv. 17-18). Here we are invited to listen to a private conversation between God and his prophet in which Jeremiah is instructed not to **pray** for the people or to **beg** God to withhold judgment.

7:18 One sin in particular is highlighted: the people are making **cakes for the queen of heaven.** The cakes were baked over a fire in clay molds in the shape of a pagan goddess, which they worshiped alongside the Lord.

7:21-23 Just as God spoke against falsely trusting in the temple itself (see the notes on vv. 3-1, 12-15), so he removed any confidence that might be put in the sacrifices. The whole **burnt offerings** were intended to be burnt entirely, leaving nothing left to eat. But here God has so completely rejected their manipulative and empty sacrifices that he encourages them, somewhat sarcastically, to **eat the meat.** Alluding to what he said in Exodus 19:5-6 regarding the institution of the sacrificial system (Lv 1–7), God prioritized listening to his voice and obeying him (vv. 22-23; 6:16-17; 9:13; 11:4,7).

7:24-26 Contrary to God's command (v. 23), Israel had not listened to his voice (vv. 24-28). Although they believed in God at the Red Sea (Ex 14:31), they quickly regressed (v. 24; the note on 2:5; Ex 15:22–17:7; Is 1:4). Israel was not only disobedient but stubbornly so (vv. 24,26). Such hardheartedness is repeatedly highlighted (2:25; 3:3; 5:3,23; 6:10; 9:14; 17:1).

7:29 The command to **cut off the hair** refers to the Nazirite vow of special consecration. God says their vow is so meaningless they might as well throw their long hair away. The Lord's rejection of this generation had also been declared in 6:30.

7:30-31 God was disgusted with the idolatry within the temple itself (see v. 10) and the unthinkable sacrifice of children (see the notes on Lv 18:6-26; and 20:1-8).

DEATH OVER LIFE

8 "At that time" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of her officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the residents of Jerusalem will be brought out of their graves. † 2 They will be exposed † to the sun, the moon,

and all the stars in the sky, † which they have loved, served, followed, consulted, and worshiped. Their bones will not be collected and buried but will become like manure on the soil's surface. † 3 Death will be chosen over life †
by all the survivors of this evil family, those who remain wherever I have banished them." † This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.
4 "You are to say to them: This is what the LORD says:

Do people fall and not get up again? †
If they turn away, do they not return?
5 Why have these people turned away?
Why is Jerusalem always turning away?
They take hold of deceit; †
they refuse to return. †
6 I have paid careful attention.
They do not speak what is right.
No one regrets his evil,
asking, 'What have I done? '
Everyone has stayed his course
like a horse rushing into battle. †
7 Even storks in the sky know their seasons.
Turtledoves, swallows, and cranes †
are aware of their migration,
but my people do not know
the requirements of the LORD. †

PUNISHMENT FOR JUDAH'S LEADERS

8 "How can you claim, 'We are wise; the law of the LORD is with us'?
In fact, the lying pen of scribes †
has produced falsehood.
9 The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and snared.
They have rejected the word of the LORD, †
so what wisdom do they really have?

10 Therefore, I will give † their wives to other men, their fields
to new occupants,

for from the least to the greatest, †
everyone is making profit dishonestly.
From prophet to priest,
everyone deals falsely.

11 They have treated the brokenness of my dear † people superficially,
claiming, ‘Peace, peace,’
when there is no peace.

12 Were they ashamed when they acted so detestably?
They weren’t at all ashamed.
They can no longer feel humiliation.
Therefore, they will fall among the fallen.
When I punish them, they will collapse,” †
says the LORD.

13 I will gather them and bring them to an end. † †
This is the LORD’s declaration.
There will be no grapes on the vine,
no figs on the fig tree,
and even the leaf will wither.
Whatever I have given them will be lost to them.

GOD’S PEOPLE UNREPENTANT

14 Why are we just sitting here?
Gather together; let us enter the fortified cities and perish there, †
for the LORD our God has destroyed † us.
He has given us poisoned water to drink, †
because we have sinned against the LORD. †

15 We hoped for peace, but there was nothing good; for a time of healing,
but there was only terror. †

16 From Dan, the snorting of horses is heard.

At the sound of the neighing of mighty steeds, †
the whole land quakes.
They come to devour the land and everything in it, the city and all its residents.
17 Indeed, I am about to send snakes among you, poisonous vipers † that cannot
be charmed. †
They will bite you.
This is the LORD's declaration.

LAMENT OVER JUDAH

18 My joy has flown away; grief has settled on me.
My heart is sick. †
19 Listen — the cry of my dear people from a faraway land,
"Is the LORD no longer in Zion, †
her King not within her? "
Why have they angered me
with their carved images,
with their worthless foreign idols? †
20 Harvest has passed, summer has ended, but we have not been saved.
21 I am broken by the brokenness of my dear people. †
I mourn; horror has taken hold of me.
22 Is there no balm in Gilead? †
Is there no physician there?
So why has the healing of my dear people
not come about?

8:7 Hb obscure **8:11** Lit *of the daughter of my*, also in vv. 19,21,22 **8:13** Lit *Gathering I will end them* **8:14** Or *there be silenced* **8:14** Or *silenced*
8:1 2Kg 9:37; 23:16; Am 2:1 **8:2** 2Sm 21:12-14; Ps 53:5; Ezk 6:5 **8:2** Dt 4:19; 2Kg 17:16; 21:3; 23:4-5; Ezk 8:16 **8:2** Ps 83:10; Jr 9:22; 16:4; 25:33 **8:3** Dt 30:11-20; Jb 3:21-22; 7:15-16; Rv 9:6 **8:3** Jr 23:3,8; 29:14,18; 32:37; Dn 9:7 **8:4** Is 24:20; Jr 25:27; Am 5:2 **8:5** Jr 14:14; 23:26; Zph 3:13 **8:5** Jr 5:3; Hs 11:5 **8:6** Jb 39:19-25 **8:7** 2Kg 17:26; Ps 95:10; Is 1:3; Jr 4:22; 5:4 **8:8** Jb 19:24; Ps 45:1; Jr 17:1 **8:9** 1Sm 15:23,26 **8:10-12** Jr 6:13-15 **8:10** Est 1:20; Jr 6:13; 31:34; 42:1,8; 44:12 **8:12** Jr 10:15; 49:8; 51:18 **8:13** Zph 1:2 **8:14** 2Kg 7:3-4; Jr 9:15; 21:8-9 **8:14** Is 64:5; Jr 3:25; 14:7,20; Lm 3:42; 5:16; Dn 9:5 **8:15** Jr 14:19; 33:9 **8:16** Jdg 5:22; Jr 47:3; 50:11 **8:17** Nm 21:6-9; Dt 32:24 **8:17** Ps 58:4-5; Ec 10:11 **8:18** Lm 5:17 **8:19** Ps 99:2; 102:21; Jr 14:9; Jl 3:17,21; Mc 3:11 **8:19** Dt 32:21; Jr 2:5 **8:21** Jr 6:14; 8:11 **8:22** Gn 37:25; Jr 46:11

8:1-3 Judah's horrific acts would bring corresponding horrific judgment (7:30-34). Fittingly, their **bones**

would be exposed before the heavenly host that they had worshiped. The exposure of corpses, rather than their proper burial, suggests shame and rejection. The wicked leaders in particular would be humiliated (v. 1; see 2:8,26-27; 4:9).

8:8-9 Judah's claim to wisdom was baseless since they had **rejected the word of the LORD** (1Sm 15:22-23). Access to Scripture made little difference since their **scribes** were handling it falsely (v. 8). In reality, they had little interest in it (6:10,19; 18:18), and their so-called **wise** people would be put to shame (v. 9; 9:23).

8:10-12 The leaders were diminishing the seriousness of the people's sin, including idolatry and social injustice, both of which are violations of the covenant. They claimed: **'Peace, peace'** and assumed that everything would eventually right itself. Yet this prevented the people of God from experiencing his mercy, since they first had to acknowledge that they were in need of it. The handing over of **wives** and **fields** to others as punishment, as well as descriptions of the complete corruption of the society, the glossing over of serious spiritual problems, and the utter lack of shame were likewise the subjects of 6:12-15.

8:13 The absence of **grapes** and **figs** as a picture of destruction parallels Habakkuk 3:17.

8:14-15 These **fortified cities** had been mentioned also in 4:5 but would prove useless against the Babylonian armies that were sent by God (5:17). The false promises of **peace** would be shown to be empty.

8:18–9:2 As in 4:19-21, Jeremiah grieved over the sin and judgment of Judah (vv. 18,21). There was no **healing** (v. 22) for her snakebites (v. 17), and the prophet wept at length for the people (9:1).

9 If my head were a flowing spring, my eyes a fountain of tears,
I would weep day and night †
over the slain of my dear † people.

2 If only I had a traveler's lodging place in the wilderness, †
I would abandon my people
and depart from them,
for they are all adulterers, †
a solemn assembly of treacherous people. †

3 They bent their tongues like their bows; lies and not faithfulness prevail in the land, for they proceed from one evil to another, and they do not take me into account. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

IMMINENT RUIN AND EXILE

4 Everyone has to be on guard against his friend.
Don't trust any brother,
for every brother will certainly deceive, †

and every friend spread slander. †

5 Each one betrays his friend; †
no one tells the truth.
They have taught their tongues to speak lies; they wear themselves out doing wrong.

6 You live in a world of deception. † †

In their deception they refuse to know me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

7 Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies says:

I am about to refine them and test them, †
for what else can I do
because of my dear † people? †

8 Their tongues are deadly arrows — they speak deception. †
With his mouth
one speaks peaceably with his friend,
but inwardly he sets up an ambush.
9 Should I not punish them for these things?
This is the LORD's declaration.

Should I not avenge myself †
on such a nation as this?

10 I will raise weeping and a lament over the mountains,
a dirge over the wilderness grazing land,
for they have been so scorched
that no one passes through.
The sound of cattle is no longer heard.

From the birds of the sky to the animals, †
everything has fled — they have gone away.

11 I will make Jerusalem a heap of rubble, †

a jackals' den. †
I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, an uninhabited place.

12 Who is the person wise enough to understand this? † Who has the LORD
spoken to, that he may explain it? Why is the land destroyed and scorched like a
wilderness, so no one can pass through?
13 The LORD said, “It is because they abandoned my instruction, † which I set
before them, and did not obey my voice or walk according to it. 14 Instead, they
followed the stubbornness of their hearts † and followed the Baals as their
fathers taught them.” † 15 Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies, the God
of Israel, says: “I am about to feed this people wormwood † and give them
poisonous water to drink. † 16 I will scatter them among the nations † that they
and their fathers have not known. I will send a sword after them until I have
finished them off.”

MOURNING OVER JUDAH

17 This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Consider, and summon the women who mourn; †
send for the skillful women.
18 Let them come quickly to raise a lament over us so that our eyes
may overflow with tears,
our eyelids be soaked with weeping.
19 For a sound of lamentation is heard from Zion: How devastated we are.
We are greatly ashamed, †
for we have abandoned the land;
our dwellings have been torn down.

20 Now hear the word of the LORD, you women.
Pay attention to † the words from his mouth.
Teach your daughters a lament
and one another a dirge,
21 for Death † has climbed through our windows; it has entered our fortresses,
cutting off children from the streets,
young men from the squares.

22 “Speak as follows: ‘This is what the LORD declares: Human corpses will fall like manure on the surface of the field, † like newly cut grain † after the reaper with no one to gather it.

BOAST IN THE LORD

23 “ ‘This is what the LORD says:

The wise person should not boast in his wisdom; the strong should not boast in his strength; the wealthy should not boast in his wealth.
24 But the one who boasts should boast in this: that he understands and knows me † — that I am the LORD, showing faithful love, justice, and righteousness on the earth,
for I delight in these things.
This is the LORD’s declaration.

25 “ ‘Look, the days are coming — this is the LORD’s declaration — when I will punish all the circumcised yet uncircumcised: † 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the Ammonites, Moab, and all the inhabitants of the desert who clip the hair on their temples. † All these nations are uncircumcised, and the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart.’ ” †

9:1 Lit *slain among the daughter of my* **9:6** LXX reads *Oppression on oppression, deceit on deceit* **9:7** Lit *of the daughter of my* **9:7** LXX, Tg read *because of their evils* **9:20** Lit *Your ears must receive* **9:26** Or *who live in distant places*
9:1 Ps 42:3; Jr 13:17; Lm 2:11; Lk 19:41 **9:2** 1Kg 19:9-10 **9:2** Jr 23:10; Hs 7:4; Mal 3:5 **9:2** Is 24:16; 33:1; Jr 12:1 **9:3** Jr 4:22 **9:4** Gn 27:36 **9:4** Jr 6:28 **9:5** Gn 31:7 **9:6** Gn 27:35-36; 34:13 **9:6** Rm 1:17 **9:7** Is 1:25; Jr 6:27 **9:8** Ps 28:3 **9:9** Jr 5:9,29 **9:10** Jr 4:25; 12:4 **9:11** 2Kg 19:25; Is 25:2 **9:11** Jr 10:22; 49:33; 51:37 **9:12** Ps 107:43; Ec 8:1; Hs 14:9 **9:13** 2Ch 12:1 **9:14** Dt 29:19; Ps 81:12 **9:14** Jr 2:8,23 **9:15** Dt 29:18; Jr 23:15; Lm 3:19 **9:15** Jr 8:14; 23:15 **9:16** Lv 26:33; Dt 4:27; 28:64 **9:17** Ec 12:5; Am 5:16 **9:19** Jr 2:26; 6:15; 8:12 **9:21** Jb 18:13; 28:22; Ps 49:14 **9:22** 2Kg 9:30,32,37 **9:22** Am 2:13; Mc 4:12; Zch 12:6 **9:24** Ps 34:2; 64:10; 105:3; 1Co 1:31; 2Co 10:17 **9:25** Jr 4:4; Rm 2:28-29 **9:26** Lv 19:27; Jr 25:23; 49:32; Ezk 44:7,9

9:3-6 Judah did not know the Lord and instead had become saturated with lies, even to the point the neither **brother** nor **friend** could be trusted (vv. 4-5). For more on these deceptions, see 5:27 and the note on 7:3-11.

9:8-11 Lies were being told to the harm of others. The **tongues** of deceivers were compared to “bows” in v. 3 and to **deadly arrows** in v. 8. God was compelled to **avenge** himself **on such a nation as this** (v. 9) in the form of destruction and desolation (vv. 10-11; 4:25).

9:12-16 Only the truly **wise** comprehend the reason behind the destruction of the land and the exile (vv. 12,15-16; Hs 14:9), which is that the people rejected God’s **instruction** and did not listen to his **voice** (v. 13; see the notes on 7:24-26; 8:8-9). Such wisdom had been revealed in Scripture (e.g., Dt 4:25-28). The

Hebrew word translated **stubbornness** in v. 14 appears seven other times in Jeremiah (3:17; 7:24; 11:8; 13:10; 16:12; 18:12; 23:17).

9:17-22 The emphasis on intense grief and weeping continues (vv. 1,10; 8:18,21) through the summoning of **women who** were apparently professional mourners (v. 17; Mt 9:23). In addition to their own mourning, they were to stir up others to mourn. They were also to teach their daughters to do the same because **Death** would devastate the land (v. 21).

9:23-24 Continuing the preceding themes of wisdom and the knowledge of God (vv. 3,6,12,17; 10:7-9,12), the people are called to abandon their own wisdom, strength, and wealth and to **boast** only in the Lord (v. 24; Is 45:25; 1Co 1:31). Previous passages have variously described their misplaced confidence in such things (see 5:17,27-28; 8:8) and their rejection of knowledge of God (vv. 3,6; 4:22).

9:25-26 Closely related to the knowledge of God (see previous note) is the circumcision of the **heart** (v. 26; 31:33-34). The latter was highlighted in 4:4, as well as in the Pentateuch written long before (Dt 30:6). Circumcision of the flesh, though significant (see Gn 17:1-14), was never sufficient (see Rm 2:25-29). The phrase **days are coming** (v. 25) was likewise used of climactic judgment in 7:32 but is also used of climactic salvation in other passages (e.g. 16:14; 23:5; 31:31).

FALSE GODS CONTRASTED WITH THE CREATOR

10 Hear the word that the LORD has spoken to † you, house of Israel.
2 This is what the LORD says:

Do not learn the way of the nations †
or be terrified by signs in the heavens,
although the nations are terrified by them, 3 for the customs of the peoples
are worthless.
Someone cuts down a tree from the forest;
it is worked by the hands of a craftsman with a chisel.
4 He decorates it with silver and gold. †
It is fastened with hammer and nails, †
so it won't totter.
5 Like scarecrows in a cucumber patch, their idols cannot speak. †
They must be carried † because they cannot walk.
Do not fear them for they can do no harm † — and they cannot do any good. †

6 LORD, there is no one like you. †
You are great;
your name is great in power. †
7 Who should not fear you, King of the nations? †

It is what you deserve.
For among all the wise people of the nations and among all their kingdoms,
there is no one like you.
8 They are both stupid and foolish, instructed by worthless idols
made of wood!
9 Beaten silver is brought from Tarshish †
and gold from Uphaz. † †
The work of a craftsman
and of a goldsmith's hands
is clothed in blue and purple,
all the work of skilled artisans.
10 But the LORD is the true God; †
he is the living God † and eternal King. †
The earth quakes at his wrath, †
and the nations cannot endure his rage.

11 You are to say this to them: "The gods that did not make the heavens † and the earth will perish from the earth † and from under these heavens." †

12 He made the earth by his power, established the world † by his wisdom, †
and spread out the heavens by his understanding. †
13 When he thunders, †
the waters in the heavens are in turmoil, †
and he causes the clouds to rise
from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain
and brings the wind from his storehouses. †

14 Everyone is stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith is put to shame
by his carved image, †
for his cast images are a lie; †
there is no breath in them. †

15 They are worthless, a work to be mocked.
At the time of their punishment
they will be destroyed. †
16 Jacob's Portion † is not like these because he is the one who formed all things. †
Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; †
the LORD of Armies is his name. †

EXILE AFTER THE SIEGE

17 Gather up your belongings † from the ground, †
you who live under siege.

18 For this is what the LORD says:

Look, I am flinging away †
the land's residents at this time
and bringing them such distress
that they will feel it.

JEREMIAH GRIEVES

19 Woe to me because of my brokenness — I am severely wounded! †
I exclaimed, "This is my intense suffering, but I must bear it."
20 My tent is destroyed; †
all my tent cords are snapped.
My sons have departed from me and are no more.
I have no one to pitch my tent again
or to hang up my curtains.
21 For the shepherds are stupid: They don't seek the LORD. †
Therefore they have not prospered,
and their whole flock is scattered.
22 Listen! A noise — it is coming — a great commotion † from the land to the north.
The cities of Judah will be made desolate, a jackals' den. †

23 I know, LORD, that a person's way of life is not his own; no one who walks
determines his own steps. †
24 Discipline me, LORD, but with justice — not in your anger, †
or you will reduce me to nothing.
25 Pour out your wrath on the nations that don't recognize you
and on the families
that don't call on your name,
for they have consumed Jacob;
they have consumed him and finished him off and made his homeland
desolate. †

10:1 Or *against* **10:9** Or *Ophir* **10:11** This is the only Aramaic v. in Jr. **10:13** Lit *At his giving of the voice* **10:16** = the Lord **10:17** Lit *bundle*
10:2 Jr 2:23,36 **10:4** Is 40:19 **10:4** Is 41:7 **10:5** Ps 115:5; 1Co 12:2 **10:5** Ps 115:7; Is 46:7 **10:5** Is 41:23-24 **10:3-5** Is 44:9-20 **10:6** Ex 15:11; 2Sm 7:22; 1Kg 8:23 **10:6** Ps 76:1; 86:10; Mal 1:11 **10:7** Ps 22:28; 47:7-8; Jr 8:19 **10:9** Ezk 27:12,25; 38:13 **10:9** Dn 10:5 **10:10** 2Ch 15:3 **10:10** Dt 5:26; 1Sm 17:26,36; 2Kg 19:4,16 **10:10** Ex 15:18; Ps 10:16; 29:10 **10:10** 2Sm 22:8; Ps 18:7; Is 13:13 **10:11** Ps 96:5 **10:11** Is 2:18 **10:12** Jb 38:4; Ps 93:1; 96:10 **10:12** Pr 3:19-20; 8:22-29 **10:12** Jb 9:8; Ps 104:2; Is 45:12 **10:13** Jr 5:22; 31:35 **10:13** Jb 38:25-30,34-38; Ps 135:7 **10:14** Is 40:18-31; 46:1-7 **10:14** Is 41:29 **10:14** Hab 2:19 **10:15** Jr 8:12; 51:18 **10:16** Gn 2:7-8,19; Ps 94:9; 95:5 **10:16** Dt 4:20; 32:8-9; Ps 74:2 **10:12-16** Jr 51:15-19 **10:17** Ezk 12:3 **10:18** 1Sm 25:29 **10:19** Jr 14:17; 30:12; Nah 3:19 **10:20** Jr 4:20 **10:21** 2Ch 16:12; Is 9:13; 31:1 **10:22** Jr 4:29; 6:22-23 **10:22** Jr 9:11 **10:23** Ps 37:23; Pr 3:5-6; 16:9 **10:24** Ps 6:1; 38:1 **10:25** Ps 79:6-7

10:7 Although **the nations** are afraid of heavenly omens and worship useless idols (vv. 2-5,8-9; Is 44:9-20), they ought to **fear** the Lord, the true **King of the nations** (see 3:17). His wisdom surpasses the wisdom of the nations and of Israel (see 8:8; 9:23-24), all of whom are foolish (vv. 8,14; 4:22; 5:21).

10:11-13 The sharp contrast between God and idols continues. Whereas idols **did not make** the universe and will perish (v. 11), God did make the heavens and earth by his **power**, **wisdom**, and **understanding** (v. 12).

10:14-15 Emphasizing the wisdom theme yet again (see the notes on vv. 7,11-13; 9:23-24), v. 14 describes the human predicament in terms of foolishness: **everyone is stupid and ignorant.** Both Israelites and Gentiles were idolaters (vv. 2-5; 11:12-13) and as such were fools (v. 8; 4:22; 5:21). Correspondingly, idols are **a lie**, have **no breath in them**, are **worthless**, and deserve mockery (see 2:5; 3:23; 8:19; 51:17-18). As such **they will be destroyed** (v. 11).

10:19-20 The speaker here, who grieves over exile and departure from his homeland (see also vv. 17-18), seems to be the personified nation itself, whose **tent is destroyed** and whose **sons have departed** (Is 54:1-3). Perhaps Jeremiah was also closely identifying with them here and in vv. 23-25.

10:21-22 The shepherds (leaders) are called out again for their role in this foolishness (see previous note; 2:8), which is rooted in a failure to **seek the LORD.** Consequently, they bring harm both to themselves and to the **whole flock** (see 23:1-2), since God will bring destruction from **the north** (1:15; 4:6; 6:1,22).

REMINDER OF THE COVENANT

11 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Listen to the
words of this covenant † and tell them to the men of Judah and the
residents of Jerusalem. 3 Tell them, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: “Let a curse be on the man who does not obey the words of this
covenant, † 4 which I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of
the land of Egypt, † out of the iron furnace.” † I declared, “Obey me, and do
everything that I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your
God,” † 5 in order to establish the oath I swore to your ancestors, † to give
them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is today.’ ”
I answered, “Amen, LORD.” †
6 The LORD said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in
the streets of Jerusalem: ‘Obey the words of this covenant and carry them out.’
7 For I strongly warned your ancestors when I brought them out of the land of
Egypt until today, warning them time and time again, † † ‘Obey me.’ 8 Yet
they would not obey or pay attention; each one followed the stubbornness of his
evil heart. † So I brought on them all the curses of this covenant, because they
had not done what I commanded them to do.”
9 The LORD said to me, “A conspiracy has been discovered among the men of
Judah † and the residents of Jerusalem. 10 They have returned to the iniquities
of their fathers † who refused to obey my words and have followed other gods
to worship them. † The house of Israel and the house of Judah broke my
covenant I made with their ancestors.
11 “Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to bring on them disaster
that they cannot escape. † They will cry out to me, but I will not hear them.
12 Then the cities of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem will go and cry out to
the gods they have been burning incense to, but they certainly will not save them
in their time of disaster. † 13 Your gods are indeed as numerous as your cities,
Judah, † and the altars you have set up to Shame † † — altars to burn incense
to Baal — as numerous as the streets of Jerusalem.
14 “As for you, do not pray for these people. Do not raise up a cry or a prayer on
their behalf, † for I will not be listening when they call out to me at the time of
their disaster.

15 What right does my beloved have to be in my house, †
having carried out so many evil schemes?
Can holy meat † † prevent your disaster †
so you can celebrate?
16 The LORD named you a flourishing olive tree, †
beautiful with well-formed fruit.
He has set fire to it,
and its branches are consumed † †
with the sound of a mighty tumult. †

17 "The LORD of Armies who planted you † has decreed disaster against you, because of the disaster † the house of Israel and the house of Judah brought on themselves when they angered me by burning incense to Baal."

18 The LORD informed me, so I knew.
Then you helped me to see their deeds,
19 for I was like a docile † lamb led to slaughter. †
I didn't know that they had devised plots against me: "Let's destroy the tree with its fruit; †
let's cut him off from the land of the living †
so that his name will no longer be remembered."
20 But, LORD of Armies, who judges righteously, who tests † heart † and mind, †
let me see your vengeance on them,
for I have presented my case to you. †

21 Therefore, here is what the LORD says concerning the people of Anathoth † who intend to take your life. They warn, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, † or you will certainly die at our hand." 22 Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies says: "I am about to punish them. The young men will die by the sword; their sons and daughters will die by famine. † 23 They will have no remnant, for I will bring disaster on the people of Anathoth † in the year of their punishment."

11:7 Lit *today, rising early and warning* **11:13** = Baal **11:15** = sacrificial meat **11:15** LXX; MT reads *meat pass from you* **11:16** Vg; MT reads *broken* **11:17** Or *evil* **11:19** Or *pet* **11:19** Lit *bread* **11:20** Lit *kidneys* **11:2** Dt 29:9 **11:3** Dt 27:26; Gl 3:10 **11:4** Dt 29:25; Jr 7:22; 34:13 **11:4** Dt 4:20; 1Kg 8:51 **11:4** Dt 29:13; Jr 24:7; 30:22 **11:5** Gn 26:3; Dt 7:8 **11:5** Dt 27:15-16 **11:7** 2Ch 36:15; Jr 7:13,25; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4 **11:8** Jr 3:17; 7:24; 16:12 **11:9** Ezk 22:25; Hs 6:9 **11:10** Lv 26:39-40; Neh 9:2; Is 65:7 **11:10** Dt 28:14; Jr 13:10; 35:15 **11:11** Jr 39:4-7; Am 9:1-4 **11:12** Dt 32:35-37 **11:13** Jr 2:28 **11:13** Jr 3:24; Hs 9:10 **11:14** Jr 7:16; 14:11 **11:15** Jr 7:1-15 **11:15** Hg 2:12 **11:16** Ps 52:8; 128:3; Hs 14:6 **11:16** Ezk 31:12 **11:16** Ezk 1:24 **11:17** Is 5:2,7; Jr 2:21 **11:19** Ps 44:11,22; Is 53:7; Jr 12:3 **11:19** Ps 27:13; Is 53:8; Ezk 26:20 **11:20** Jr 9:7; 12:3 **11:20** Ps 7:9; 17:3; 26:2 **11:20** Jr 20:12 **11:21** Jr 1:1; 32:7-9 **11:21** Am 7:13 **11:21-22** Am 7:16-17 **11:23** Jr 23:12

11:4 God uses another metaphor of refining (see 6:27-30), this time of Israel's experience as slaves in Egypt. Just as **iron** is refined in a **furnace** and becomes more pure and more able to function as intended, God had created a people for himself in Egypt.

11:6-8 Because of Israel's ongoing, stubborn disobedience, they were in violation of the **covenant** and under a "curse" (vv. 2-3,6).

11:9-10 The sins of the people had also been linked to **conspiracy** in Isaiah 8:12. The breaking of this covenant by **the house of Israel and the house of Judah** anticipates a reversal when they observe the new covenant in 31:31-34.

11:11-14 With regard to impending divine judgment, the nation had reached a point of no return. Jeremiah states that their altars to **Baal** are **as numerous as the streets of Jerusalem** (v. 13). This is probably hyperbole for effect, but it reflects how much idol worship had pervaded the society. As a result, the people's prayers would be useless (v. 11; 14:11-12), and even Jeremiah's prayers could not save them (v. 14; 7:16; 15:1).

11:16 The metaphor of Judah as **a flourishing olive tree** is similar to the image of Israel as God's vineyard in Isaiah 5:5. In both agricultural images, God destroys Israel because she was not what he had hoped.

11:18-23 God warned Jeremiah that his ministry would face stiff opposition from Judah (1:18-19; 15:20). The people had abandoned God wholesale (see the notes on 5:1-6; 6:13-15), and now the people from Jeremiah's hometown of **Anathoth** (vv. 21,23; 1:1) secretly plot against his life.

JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

12 You will be righteous, LORD, †
even if I bring a case against you.
Yet, I wish to contend with you: †
Why does the way of the wicked prosper? †
Why do all the treacherous live at ease?
2 You planted them, † and they have taken root.
They have grown and produced fruit.
You are ever on their lips, †
but far from their conscience. † †

3 As for you, LORD, you know me; you see me. †
You test whether my heart is with you. †
Drag the wicked away like sheep to slaughter †
and set them apart for the day of killing.
4 How long will the land mourn †
and the grass of every field wither?
Because of the evil of its residents,
animals and birds have been swept away, †
for the people have said,
"He cannot see what our end will be." † †

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

5 If you have raced with runners and they have worn you out,
how can you compete with horses?
If you stumble † in a peaceful land, what will you do in the thickets of the Jordan? †
6 Even your brothers — your own father's family — even they were treacherous to you; †
even they have cried out loudly after you. †
Do not have confidence in them,
though they speak well of you.

7 I have abandoned my house; †
I have deserted my inheritance.
I have handed the love of my life
over to her enemies.
8 My inheritance has behaved toward me like a lion in the forest.
She has roared against me.
Therefore, I hate her. †
9 Is my inheritance like a hyena † to me?
Are birds of prey circling her?
Go, gather all the wild animals; †

bring them to devour her.
10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard; they have trampled my plot
of land. †
They have turned my desirable plot
into a desolate wasteland.
11 They have made it a desolation.
It mourns, desolate, before me.
All the land is desolate,
but no one takes it to heart. †
12 Over all the barren heights in the wilderness the destroyers have come,
for the LORD has a sword that devours from one end of the earth to the other.
No one has peace. †
13 They have sown wheat but harvested thorns. †
They have exhausted themselves but have no profit. †
Be put to shame by your harvests
because of the LORD's burning anger. †

14 This is what the LORD says: "Concerning all my evil neighbors who attack the inheritance that I bequeathed to my people, Israel, I am about to uproot them † from their land, and I will uproot the house of Judah from them. 15 After I have uprooted them, I will once again have compassion † on them and return each one to his inheritance and to his land. 16 If they will diligently learn the ways of my people † — to swear by my name, 'As the LORD lives,' just as they taught my people to swear by Baal — they will be built up among my people. 17 However, if they will not obey, then I will uproot and destroy that nation." †
This is the LORD's declaration.

12:2 Lit *are near in their mouth* **12:2** Lit *kidneys* **12:4** LXX reads *see our ways* **12:5** Or *you are secure* **12:9** Hb obscure

12:1 Ezr 9:15; Neh 9:8,33; Ps 119:137 **12:1** Jb 9:14-15; 13:13-28; 23:2-17 **12:1** Ps 73 **12:2** Ps 1:3; Jr 17:7-8 **12:2** Ps 28:3; Is 29:13 **12:3** Ps 139; Jr 1:5 **12:3** Ps 7:9; Jr 11:20 **12:3** Jr 11:19 **12:4** Is 24:4-7; Jr 4:28; 23:10 **12:4** Zph 1:3 **12:4** Dt 32:20; Jb 22:13; Jr 29:11 **12:5** Jr 50:44 **12:6** Jn 1:11 **12:6** Jr 11:19 **12:7** Ezk 8:1–11:25 **12:8** Hs 9:15; Am 6:8 **12:9** Is 56:9; Jr 7:33 **12:10** Is 63:18 **12:11** Is 42:25 **12:12** 2Ch 15:5; Is 48:22; Ezk 13:16 **12:13** Lv 26:16; Dt 28:38; Hs 8:7; Mc 6:15; Hg 1:6 **12:13** Is 55:2 **12:13** Jr 4:26; 25:37-38 **12:14** Jr 1:10; 18:7-8 **12:15** Jr 30:18; 31:20; 33:26; 42:12 **12:16** Is 2:2-4; Mc 4:1-5 **12:17** Is 60:12

12:1-4 The plot against Jeremiah's life led to his lament that **the wicked prosper** and to his prayer that God would rise up and punish them. Jeremiah's distress was especially related to their rejection of God

even though he had **planted them** (v. 2). That God was near to their mouths but far from their hearts provides yet another example of their hypocrisy (3:10; 5:2; 6:14; 7:4) and echoes Isaiah 29:13. The statement, **"He cannot see what our end will be"** is a defiant contradiction of Deuteronomy 32:20, which states that God will hide his face from them and "will see what will become of them."

12:5-8 God's words in v. 5 challenge Jeremiah with the reality that the difficulty he currently faced was small compared to those coming in the future. The prophet had been painfully betrayed by his relatives (v. 6) from his hometown (11:21-23), but God also experienced great sorrow because of his people's betrayal (vv. 7-8; 2:2-13).

12:10 These **shepherds** were leaders in Judah who should have cared for the people (see 2:8; 10:21; 23:1).

12:14-17 Uprooting refers to judgment in the form of exile, which would be followed by restoration (vv. 14-15). Enemy nations would be saved if they turned to God from Baal and other idols (v. 16; 3:17; 10:7). The verbs **uproot**, **destroy**, and "build" (vv. 16-17) also appear in 1:10; 18:7-9; and 31:28. Whether a person truthfully **swear**[s] **. . . 'As the LORD lives'** is an important litmus test in the book of Jeremiah (4:2; 5:2; 7:9; see Is 65:16).

LINEN UNDERWEAR

13 This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy yourself a linen undergarment † and put it on. † But do not put it in water." 2 So I bought underwear as the LORD instructed me and put it on.
3 Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: 4 "Take the underwear that you bought and are wearing, † and go at once to the Euphrates † and hide it in a rocky crevice." † 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.
6 A long time later the LORD said to me, "Go at once to the Euphrates and get the underwear that I commanded you to hide there." 7 So I went to the Euphrates and dug up the underwear and got it from the place where I had hidden it, but it was ruined — of no use at all.
8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9 "This is what the LORD says: Just like this I will ruin the great pride of both Judah and Jerusalem. † 10 These evil people, who refuse to listen to me, who follow the stubbornness of their own hearts, † and who have followed other gods to serve and bow in worship — they will be like this underwear, of no use at all. 11 Just as underwear clings to one's waist, so I fastened the whole house of Israel and of Judah to me" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "so that they might be my people for my fame, praise, and glory, † but they would not obey.

THE WINE JARS

12 “Say this to them: ‘This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every jar
should be filled with wine.’ Then they will respond to you, ‘Don’t we know that
every jar should be filled with wine? ’ 13 And you will say to them, ‘This is what
the LORD says: I am about to fill all who live in this land — the kings who reign
for David on his throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the residents of
Jerusalem — with drunkenness. 14 I will smash them against each other, fathers
and sons alike — this is the LORD’s declaration. I will allow no mercy, pity, or
compassion to keep me from destroying them.’ ” †

THE LORD’S WARNING

15 Listen and pay attention. Do not be proud, for the LORD has spoken.
16 Give glory to the LORD your God †
before he brings darkness,
before your feet stumble
on the mountains at dusk.
You wait for light,
but he brings darkest gloom †
and makes total darkness.
17 But if you will not listen, my innermost being will weep in secret
because of your pride.
My eyes will overflow with tears,
for the LORD’s flock † has been taken captive.

18 Say to the king and the queen mother: †
Take a humble seat,
for your glorious crowns
have fallen from your heads.
19 The cities of the Negev are under siege; no one can help them.
All of Judah has been taken into exile,
taken completely into exile.
20 Look up and see those coming from the north. †
Where is the flock entrusted to you,
the sheep that were your pride?

THE DESTINY OF JERUSALEM

21 What will you say when he appoints close friends as leaders over you,
ones you yourself trained?
Won't labor pains seize you, †
as they do a woman in labor?
22 And when you ask yourself, "Why have these things happened to me?"
it is because of your great guilt †
that your skirts have been stripped off, †
your body exposed. †
23 Can the Cushite change his skin, or a leopard his spots?
If so, you might be able to do what is good, †
you who are instructed in evil.
24 I will scatter you † like drifting chaff †
before the desert wind.
25 This is your lot, what I have decreed for you — this is the LORD's declaration
— because you have forgotten me †
and trusted in lies. †
26 I will pull your skirts up over your face so that your shame might be seen. †
27 Your adulteries and your lustful neighing, †
your depraved prostitution
on the hills, in the fields —
I have seen your abhorrent acts.
Woe to you, Jerusalem!
You are unclean —
for how long yet? †

13:1 Lit *around your waist* **13:4** Lit *wearing around your waist* **13:4-7** Perhaps a place near Anathoth with the same spelling as the river **13:16** Or *brings a shadow of death* **13:22** Lit *your heels have suffered violence* **13:24** Lit *them*

13:1 Ex 39:27-29; Lv 16:4; Ezk 44:17-18 **13:4** Jr 51:63 **13:9** Lv 26:19 **13:10** Jr 16:12 **13:11** Dt 4:3-4; 10:20 **13:11** Dt 26:19; Ezk 16:8-14 **13:14** Lm 2:2,17,21; 3:43 **13:16** Jos 7:19; 1Sm 6:5; Ps 29:1-2 **13:17** Ps 80:1; 95:7; Jr 23:1-4 **13:18** 2Kg 24:12; Jr 22:26 **13:20** Jr 1:13-15; 4:6; 10:22 **13:21** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **13:22** Jr 5:6; 30:15 **13:22** Ezk 16:37-39; Hs 2:3,10; Nah 3:5 **13:23** Ec 5:1; Jr 4:22; Hs 5:4 **13:24** Jb 13:25; Ps 83:13; Is 40:24 **13:25** Ps 106:21; Jr 2:32; 18:15; Ezk 22:12; 23:35; Hs 8:14 **13:25** Jr 3:23 **13:26** Is 47:2-3; Jr 49:10; Nah 3:5 **13:27** Jr 2:23-24; 5:8 **13:27** Hs 8:5

13:1-7 This is the first of several times in which Jeremiah was not only to speak a prophetic message but

also to dramatize it through his actions (see 18:1-4; 19:1,10; 24:1-3). The impact of these messages was heightened through these sign acts, sometimes at a personal cost to Jeremiah (see 16:1-9; 27:2; 32:6-15). His life was thus an embodiment of the messages he spoke. In this instance, idol worship would lead to the people's "ruin," like that of **ruined** underwear (vv. 7-10).

13:11 The significance of the "linen undergarment" (v. 1) was to show the closeness of relationship between God and his people. The reference to **the whole house of Israel and of Judah** is another reminder of God's commitment toward all Israel, despite the northern kingdom having already fallen about a century before. Many other passages in Jeremiah likewise mention both Israel and Judah (e.g., 3:18; 5:11; 11:10,17; 12:14; 31:27,31; 33:14; 36:2).

13:23 The obvious answer to the rhetorical question is "no." This makes clear that not only was Jerusalem wicked but was unable to change (see the notes on 4:4; 17:1). Their being **instructed in evil** contrasts with their future knowledge of God in Jeremiah 31:34 and Isaiah 54:13.

13:25-27 Coupled with their having **forgotten** God, Jerusalem had **trusted in lies** (7:4,8,14; 9:4; 10:14; 17:5). The image of pulling **skirts up over** the face (v. 26) refers to exposing the nation's nakedness so that she is shamed and can be ravaged by the enemy. The metaphor is violent and troubling, but appropriate for two reasons. First, it is payment-in-kind for her **adulteries** (idolatry), which were shameful, **abhorrent**, and defiling (see the notes on 2:5,20; 3:6-10; 7:3-11; see also Ezk 16:37-42). Second, the metaphor vividly describes the coming destruction and exile of Judah at the hands of the Babylonians.

THE DROUGHT

14 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought: †

2 Judah mourns; her city gates languish. †
Her people are on the ground in mourning;
Jerusalem's cry rises up. †
3 Their nobles send their servants † for water.
They go to the cisterns;
they find no water;
their containers return empty.
They are ashamed and humiliated;
they cover their heads. †
4 The ground is cracked since no rain has fallen on the land.
The farmers are ashamed; †
they cover their heads.
5 Even the doe in the field gives birth and abandons her fawn
since there is no grass.
6 Wild donkeys stand on the barren heights †

panting for air like jackals.
Their eyes fail
because there are no green plants.

7 Though our iniquities testify against us, LORD, act for your name's sake.
Indeed, our rebellions † are many; we have sinned against you. †
8 Hope of Israel, †
its Savior in time of distress,
why are you like a resident alien in the land, like a traveler stopping only for the night?
9 Why are you like a helpless man, like a warrior unable to save? †
Yet you are among us, LORD, †
and we bear your name.
Don't leave us!

10 This is what the LORD says concerning these people:

Truly they love to wander; †
they never rest their feet.
So the LORD does not accept them.
Now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins. †

FALSE PROPHETS TO BE PUNISHED

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of these people. †
12 If they fast, I will not hear their cry of despair. If they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. Rather, I will finish them off by sword, famine, and plague." †
13 And I replied, "Oh no, Lord GOD! The prophets are telling them, 'You won't see sword or suffer famine. I will certainly give you lasting peace in this place.' " †
14 But the LORD said to me, "These prophets are prophesying a lie in my name. I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are

prophesying to you a false vision, worthless divination, the deceit † of their own minds. †
15 "Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name, though I did not send them, and who say, 'There will never be sword or famine in this land.' By sword and famine these prophets will meet their end. 16 The people they are prophesying to will be thrown into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword. There will be no one to bury them † — they, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. I will pour out their own evil on them."

JEREMIAH'S REQUEST

17 You are to speak this word to them: Let my eyes overflow with tears;
day and night may they not stop, †
for the virgin daughter of my people
has been destroyed by a crushing blow, †
an extremely severe wound. †
18 If I go out to the field, look — those slain by the sword!
If I enter the city,
look — those ill † from famine!
For both prophet and priest
travel to a land they do not know.

19 Have you completely rejected Judah?
Do you detest † Zion?
Why do you strike us
with no hope of healing for us?
We hoped for peace,
but there was nothing good;
for a time of healing,
but there was only terror. †
20 We acknowledge our wickedness, LORD, the iniquity of our fathers; †
indeed, we have sinned against you.
21 For your name's sake, don't despise us.

Don’t disdain your glorious throne. †
Remember your covenant † with us; do not break it.
22 Can any of the worthless idols of the nations † bring rain?
Or can the skies alone give showers?
Are you not the LORD our God?
We therefore put our hope in you, †
for you have done all these things.

14:3 Lit *little ones*
14:1 Jr 17:8 **14:2** Is 3:26 **14:2** 1Sm 5:12 **14:3** Est 6:12; 7:8 **14:4** Jl 1:11 **14:6** Jr 2:24 **14:7** Jr 2:19; 3:6,22; 5:6 **14:7** Is 64:5; Jr 3:25; 8:14; 14:20; Lm 3:42; 5:16; Dn 9:5,11 **14:8** Jr 17:13; 50:7 **14:9** Is 59:1 **14:9** Ex 29:45 **14:10** Jr 5:31; Am 8:12 **14:10** Hs 8:13 **14:11** Jr 7:16; 11:14; 15:1 **14:12** Jr 5:12 **14:13** Jr 4:10; 6:13-14; 8:10-12 **14:14** Ps 119:118; Jr 8:5; 23:26 **14:14** Jr 5:31; 20:6; 23:25-26,32; 27:10,14-16; 29:9,21,31 **14:16** Jr 7:33; 9:22 **14:17** Jr 9:1,10; 13:17 **14:17** Jr 4:6; 6:1 **14:17** Jr 10:19; 30:12 **14:18** Dt 29:22 **14:19** Lv 26:11,30,43-44 **14:19** Jr 8:15; 33:9 **14:20** Jr 3:25; 11:10; 16:12-13 **14:21** Dt 32:19; Jr 15:6; 17:12 **14:21** Lv 26:44; Jdg 2:1; Is 33:8 **14:22** Jr 8:19; 10:8,15; 16:19 **14:22** Is 8:17; 25:9

14:1-7 Serious **drought** conditions led to futile searches **for water** by man and beast. As suggested in v. 7 and made clear in other passages (3:3; 5:24-25), this particular drought was a consequence of Israel’s sin. God is sovereign over **rain** (10:13), and his covenant with Israel at Sinai had specifically mentioned drought as a possible punishment for unfaithfulness (see the note on 5:25-29; Dt 11:1-32).

14:10 Despite the people’s desperate and pious-sounding cry for help (vv. 7-9), God knew their tendency **to wander** and would not hear their prayer (see 11:14). Jeremiah was not to pray for them either because it would make no difference (vv. 11-12; see 7:16).

14:13-16 Even though influential false **prophets** gave the people false hope and discouraged true repentance (v. 13; 5:31; 6:14), this did not excuse the people from guilt (v. 16). These fakes would be shown for what they were (vv. 14-15).

14:17-19 Jeremiah’s sorrow over Judah (v. 17) recalls 8:18–9:2 (see note). Both passages also cite the destruction (Hb *shever*) of **the virgin daughter of my people** (8:21; 14:17) and state there is no **healing** for her wound (8:22; 14:19; see Is 1:6; 3:7).

14:22 The inability of **idols** to bring rain refers to the serious drought Judah was enduring (see the note on vv. 1-7; 10:11-13). Contrary to a naturalistic worldview, **the skies alone** do not **give showers** either. Rather, they are gifts from the hands of God, the Creator and sustainer of the universe (5:24; 1Kg 17:1; 18:1; Jb 28:26).

THE LORD’S NEGATIVE RESPONSE

15 Then the LORD said to me: “Even if † Moses and † Samuel should † stand before me, † my compassions would not reach out to these people. Send them from my presence, and let them go. † 2 If they ask you, ‘Where will we go? ’ tell them: This is what the LORD says:

Those destined for death, † to death; those destined for the sword, to the sword.
Those destined for famine, to famine;
those destined for captivity, to captivity.

3 "I will ordain four kinds † of judgment for them" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, † and the birds of the sky and the wild animals of the land † to devour and destroy. 4 I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth because of Manasseh † son of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

5 Who will have pity on you, Jerusalem? †
Who will show sympathy toward you? †
Who will turn aside
to ask about your well-being?
6 You have left me." †
This is the LORD's declaration.
"You have turned your back,
so I have stretched out my hand against you and destroyed you.
I am tired † of showing compassion.
7 I scattered them with a winnowing fork at the city gates of the land.
I made them childless; I destroyed my people.
They would not turn from their ways. †
8 I made their widows more numerous than the sand of the seas. †
I brought a destroyer at noon
against the mother of young men.
I suddenly released on her
agitation and terrors.
9 The mother of seven grew faint; †
she breathed her last breath.
Her sun set while it was still day;
she was ashamed and humiliated.
The rest of them I will give over to the sword in the presence of their enemies."
This is the LORD's declaration.

JEREMIAH'S COMPLAINT

10 Woe is me, my mother, that you gave birth to me, †
a man who incites dispute and conflict
in all the land.
I did not lend or borrow,
yet everyone curses me. †

THE LORD'S RESPONSE

11 The LORD said:

Haven't I set you loose for your good?
Haven't I punished you
in a time of trouble,
in a time of distress with the enemy? †
12 Can anyone smash iron, iron from the north, or bronze?
13 I will give up your wealth and your treasures as plunder,
without cost, † for all your sins in all your borders.
14 Then I will make you serve your enemies †
in a land you do not know,
for my anger will kindle a fire
that will burn against you. †

JEREMIAH'S PRAYER FOR VENGEANCE

15 You know, † LORD; remember me and take note of me. †
Avenge me against my persecutors. †
In your patience, † don't take me away.
Know that I suffer disgrace for your honor. †
16 Your words were found, and I ate them. †
Your words became a delight to me
and the joy of my heart,
for I bear your name, †
LORD God of Armies.
17 I never sat with the band of revelers, and I did not celebrate with them.

Because your hand was on me, I sat alone, †
for you filled me with indignation.

18 Why has my pain become unending, my wound incurable, †
refusing to be healed?
You truly have become like a mirage to me — water that is not reliable.

JEREMIAH TOLD TO REPENT

19 Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

If you return, I will take you back;
you will stand in my presence.
And if you speak noble words,
rather than worthless ones,
you will be my spokesman. †
It is they who must return to you;
you must not return to them.
20 Then I will make you a fortified wall of bronze to this people.
They will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to save you and rescue you. †
This is the LORD's declaration.
21 I will rescue you from the power of evil people and redeem you
from the grasp of the ruthless.

15:3 Lit *families* **15:11** Hb obscure **15:14** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg; other Hb mss read *you pass through* **15:15** Lit *In the slowness of your anger*
15:1 Ps 99:6; Ezk 14:14 **15:1** Ex 32:11-14; Ps 106:23 **15:1** 1Sm 7:9; 12:23 **15:1** Jr 15:19; 35:19 **15:1** Ex 6:1; 8:2; 9:2; 10:27; Jr 50:33 **15:2** Jr 14:12; 43:11; Ezk 5:12; Zch 11:9 **15:3** Jr 22:19; 49:20–50:45 **15:3** Is 18:6; Jr 7:33; 19:7 **15:4** 2Kg 21:1-18; 2Ch 33:1-20 **15:5** Lm 1:1-2; Am 5:2 **15:5** Is 51:19; Nah 3:7 **15:6** Dt 32:15 **15:6** Is 1:14; 7:13; Jr 6:11; 20:9 **15:7** Jdg 2:19; 2Kg 17:13; 2Ch 7:14; Neh 9:35; Jr 18:11; 25:5; 35:15 **15:8** Gn 22:17; 32:12; 41:49 **15:9** Ru 4:15; 1Sm 2:5; Jb 42:13 **15:10** Jb 3:1-10 **15:10** Is 53:3 **15:13** Ps 44:12; Is 52:3 **15:13-14** Dt 32:22; Jr 17:3-4; Ezk 32:9 **15:15** Jr 12:3 **15:15** Jdg 16:28; Neh 5:19; 13:14,22,31; Ps 106:4; Lk 23:42 **15:15** Jr 11:20 **15:15** Ps 69:7-9 **15:16** Ezk 3:3 **15:16** Jr 14:9 **15:17** 2Kg 3:15; Ps 102:7; Is 8:11; Lm 3:28 **15:18** Jr 19:8; 30:12,14,17 **15:19** Ex 4:16 **15:20** Jr 1:8,19; 30:11; 42:11

15:1 As in 14:10-12, the Lord's decision to punish Judah was irrevocable and would not be altered even by the intercession of **Moses** or **Samuel** (see Ex 32:11-14; 1Sm 7:5-9; 12:23).

15:4 The sins of **Manasseh** were particularly heinous and included not only idolatry but also witchcraft and the shedding of much innocent blood (see 2Kg 21:1-9,16). The prophets and the author of 2 Kings

single out these abominations as particular causes leading to God's destruction of Judah and Jerusalem (2Kg 21:11-15; 23:26; 24:3).

15:10 Jeremiah's complaint and subsequent conversation with God recalls 11:18–12:6. The **dispute**, **conflict**, and cursing related not to anything Jeremiah had done wrong but to the people's rejection of his message.

15:11 Despite Jeremiah's troubles, God would protect him when disaster fell on Judah (see 45:3-5).

15:16 Eating God's **words** suggests Jeremiah's acceptance of them and nourishment through them (Pr 9:1-6; Ezk 2:8–3:3; Jn 4:34). Delight in Scripture is characteristic of the righteous (Ps 1:1).

15:19-21 Most of Jeremiah's lament (vv. 10,15-17) contained nothing objectionable, but at the very end he referred to God as **water that is not reliable** (v. 18; 32:25). Nevertheless, God remains the fountain of living water (2:13; 17:13) even in the midst of Jeremiah's distress. The prophet had spoken **worthless** words. He was weak, but God pledged to strengthen him to be like a bronze **wall** (v. 20; 1:18).

NO MARRIAGE FOR JEREMIAH

16 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Do not marry or have sons or
daughters in this place. 3 For this is what the LORD says concerning sons
and daughters born in this place as well as concerning the mothers who bear
them and the fathers who father them in this land: 4 They will die from deadly
diseases. They will not be mourned or buried but will be like manure on the
soil's surface. † They will be finished off by sword and famine. Their corpses
will become food for the birds of the sky and for the wild animals of the land. †
5 "For this is what the LORD says: Don't enter a house where a mourning feast is
taking place. † Don't go to lament or sympathize with them, for I have removed
my peace from these people as well as my faithful love and compassion." This is
the LORD's declaration. † 6 "Both great and small will die in this land without
burial. No lament will be made for them, nor will anyone cut himself or † shave
his head for them. † 7 Food won't be provided for the mourner † to comfort
him because of the dead. A consoling drink won't be given him for the loss of
his father or mother. 8 Do not enter the house where feasting is taking place to
sit with them to eat and drink. 9 For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of
Israel, says: I am about to eliminate from this place, before your very eyes and in
your time, the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of the groom and the bride. †

ABANDONING THE LORD AND HIS LAW

10 "When you tell these people all these things, they will say to you, 'Why has
the LORD declared all this terrible disaster against us? † What is our iniquity?

What is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' [11] Then you will answer them, 'Because your fathers abandoned me † — this is the LORD's declaration — and followed other gods, served them, and bowed in worship to them. † Indeed, they abandoned me and did not keep my instruction. [12] You did more evil than your fathers. † Look, each one of you was following the stubbornness of his evil heart, not obeying me. [13] So I will hurl you from this land into a land that you and your fathers are not familiar with. † There you will worship other gods † both day and night, for I will not grant you grace.' † [14] "However, look, the days are coming" † — the LORD's declaration — "when it will no longer be said, 'As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites from the land of Egypt,' † [15] but rather, 'As the LORD lives who brought the Israelites from the land of the north † and from all the other lands where he had banished them.' For I will return them to their land that I gave to their ancestors. †

PUNISHMENT OF EXILE

[16] "I am about to send for many fishermen" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "and they will fish for them. Then I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and out of the clefts of the rocks, [17] for my gaze takes in all their ways. † They are not concealed from me, and their iniquity is not hidden from my sight. [18] I will first repay them double for their iniquity † and sin because they have polluted my land. They have filled my inheritance with the carcasses of their abhorrent and detestable idols."

[19] LORD, my strength and my stronghold, my refuge in a time of distress, †
the nations will come to you
from the ends of the earth, and they will say, "Our fathers inherited only lies,
worthless idols † of no benefit at all."
[20] Can one make gods for himself?
But they are not gods. †
[21] "Therefore, I am about to inform them, and this time I will make them know my power and my might;
then they will know that my name is the LORD." †

16:5 Lit *house of mourning* **16:6** This custom demonstrated pagan mourning rituals. **16:13** Or *compassion* **16:4** Jr 8:2; 9:22; 25:33 **16:4** Dt 28:26; Is 18:6; Jr 7:33 **16:5** Ps 25:6; 40:11; 69:16 **16:6** Dt 14:1 **16:7** Dt 26:14; Ezk 24:17; Hs 9:4 **16:9** Jr 7:34; 25:10; 33:11 **16:10** Jr 5:19 **16:11** Dt 29:25; Jr 1:16; 2:13,17,19; 5:19; 17:13; 22:9 **16:11** Dt 29:26 **16:12** Jr 7:26 **16:13** Jr 15:14; 17:4; 22:26 **16:13** Dt 4:28; 28:36,64 **16:14** Jr 7:32; 19:6; 23:5; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47,52 **16:14-15** Jr 23:7-8 **16:15** Jr 3:18 **16:15** Jr 23:8 **16:16** Am 4:2; Hab 1:14-15 **16:17** 2Ch 16:9; Jb 34:21; Ps 90:8; Pr 5:21; Jr 32:19 **16:18** Jr 17:18 **16:19** Ps 37:39; Nah 1:7 **16:19** Jr 8:19; 10:8,15; 14:22 **16:20** Gn 1:26; Jr 2:11 **16:21** Jr 33:2

16:2-4 Like Ezekiel and Hosea (see Ezk 24:16-18; Hs 1:2), Jeremiah's prophetic calling required sacrifices concerning even the closest of human relationships (v. 2). His singleness related to a message of judgment against the children and parents of the land (vv. 3-4).

16:5-8 Jeremiah's loneliness for the sake of his prophetic ministry was intense. Not only did he rightly separate himself from evildoers (15:17; Ps 1:1) and was forbidden from marriage and parenthood (16:2), but he was not to mourn over the many of his beloved countrymen who would die (vv. 4-8; 9:1). This would signify the reality that God had removed his **peace from these people** (v. 5; 6:14; 8:11).

16:14-15 The disasters of death and exile (vv. 4,13) would not be the final word, for the Lord will bring about a salvation for Israel that surpasses even the exodus from Egypt. Such a new and greater work is also referred to in 3:14-18; 23:5-8; and 31:27-34. These passages use similar language and connect this glorious return from exile to the salvation of the nations, the coming of the Messiah, and the new covenant.

16:19-20 Israel's glorious return from exile (vv. 14-15) was foretold in connection with the salvation of the nations, just as it was in 3:17-18. Like Israel (2:11), they too had been guilty of worshiping false gods.

THE PERSISTENT SIN OF JUDAH

17 The sin of Judah is inscribed with an iron stylus. †
With a diamond point
it is engraved on the tablet of their hearts †
and on the horns of their † altars, 2 while their children remember their altars
and their Asherah poles, by the green trees on the high hills † — 3 my
mountains in the countryside.
I will give up your wealth
and all your treasures as plunder †
because of the sin of your high places †
in all your borders. †
4 You will, on your own, relinquish your inheritance that I gave you.
I will make you serve your enemies
in a land you do not know, †
for you have set my anger on fire; †
it will burn forever.

CURSE AND BLESSING

5 This is what the LORD says:

Cursed is the person who trusts in mankind. †
He makes human flesh his strength, †
and his heart turns from the LORD.
6 He will be like a juniper in the Arabah; †
he cannot see when good comes
but dwells in the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land where no one lives. †
7 The person who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence indeed is the LORD, is blessed. †
8 He will be like a tree planted by water: †
it sends its roots out toward a stream,
it doesn't fear when heat comes,
and its foliage remains green.
It will not worry in a year of drought
or cease producing fruit.

THE DECEITFUL HEART

9 The heart is more deceitful than anything else, †
and incurable — who can understand it? †
10 I, the LORD, examine the mind, I test the heart † †
to give to each according to his way,
according to what his actions deserve. †
11 He who makes a fortune unjustly is like a partridge that hatches eggs it didn't lay.
In the middle of his life
his riches will abandon him,
so in the end he will be a fool. †

12 A glorious throne †
on high † from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary. †

13 LORD, the hope of Israel, †
all who abandon you
will be put to shame.
All who turn away from me
will be written in the dirt,
for they have abandoned
the LORD, the fountain of living water. †

JEREMIAH'S PLEA

14 Heal me, LORD, and I will be healed; save me, and I will be saved,
for you are my praise. †
15 Hear how they keep challenging me, †
"Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it come! "
16 But I have not run away from being your shepherd, and I have not longed for
the fatal day. †
You know my words were spoken in your presence.
17 Don't become a terror to me.
You are my refuge † in the day of disaster.
18 Let my persecutors be put to shame, †
but don't let me be put to shame.
Let them be terrified, but don't let me be terrified.
Bring on them the day of disaster; †
shatter them with total † destruction.

OBSERVING THE SABBATH

19 This is what the LORD said to me, "Go and stand at the People's Gate, through which the kings of Judah enter and leave, as well as at all the gates of Jerusalem.
20 Announce to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, kings of Judah, all Judah, and all the residents of Jerusalem who enter through these gates. 21 This is what the LORD says: Watch yourselves; do not pick up a load and bring it in through Jerusalem's gates on the Sabbath day. † 22 Do not carry a load out of your houses on the Sabbath day or do any work, † but keep the Sabbath day holy, just

as I commanded your ancestors. † 23 They wouldn't listen or pay attention but
became obstinate, † not listening or accepting discipline.
24 " 'However, if you listen to me — this is the LORD's declaration — and do not
bring loads through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but keep the
Sabbath day holy and do no work on it, 25 kings and princes will enter through
the gates of this city. They will sit on the throne of David; † they will ride in
chariots and on horses † with their officials, the men of Judah, and the residents
of Jerusalem. This city will be inhabited forever. 26 Then people will come from
the cities of Judah and from the area around Jerusalem, from the land of
Benjamin and from the Judean foothills, from the hill country and from the
Negev † bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and
frankincense, and thank offerings to the house of the LORD. 27 But if you do not
listen to me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying a load while entering
the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, I will set fire to its gates, † and it will
consume the citadels † of Jerusalem † and not be extinguished.' " †

17:1 Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *your* **17:3** Lit *plunder, your high places because of sin* **17:10** Lit *kidneys* **17:18** Lit *double*

17:1 Jb 19:24 **17:1** Pr 3:3; 7:3; Jr 31:33-34 **17:2** Dt 16:21; 1Kg 14:23; 2Kg 17:10 **17:3** Ps 44:10; Is 10:6; 42:22-24; Jr 20:5; 49:31-32; Ezk 7:21; 26:12; 29:19; 36:4; Am 3:11; Zph 1:13 **17:3** Jr 15:13 **17:4** Jr 16:13; 22:28; Ezk 32:9 **17:4** Dt 32:22; Jr 15:14 **17:5** Ps 146:3 **17:5** 2Ch 32:8 **17:6** Jr 48:6 **17:6** Gn 19:24-26; Ps 107:34 **17:7** Ps 40:4 **17:8** Ps 1:3; Ezk 17:5-8 **17:9** Gn 6:5 **17:9** Jr 15:18; Mc 1:9 **17:10** Dt 8:2; Ps 17:3; 26:2 **17:10** Jr 4:18; 7:3,5; 18:11; 23:22; 25:5; 26:3,13; 32:19; Rm 2:6 **17:11** Lk 12:20 **17:12** Is 6:1-3; Jr 14:21; Ezk 1:26-28 **17:12** Ps 102:19; Jr 25:30 **17:12** Ps 68:33-35; Is 60:13 **17:13** Jr 14:8; 50:7 **17:13** Jr 2:13 **17:14** Ps 22:25; 71:6; 109:1 **17:15** Is 5:19; 2Pt 3:4 **17:16** Am 5:18 **17:17** Ps 46:1; 61:3; 62:7-8 **17:18** Ps 35:4 **17:18** Ps 35:8 **17:21** Neh 13:15-21; Jn 5:9-12 **17:22** Ex 20:8-10; Dt 5:12-14; Is 56:2-6 **17:22** Ezk 20:12 **17:23** Jr 7:26 **17:25** Jr 22:2,30; 29:16; 36:30 **17:25** Jr 22:4 **17:26** Jr 32:44; 33:13 **17:27** Lm 4:11 **17:27** Jr 49:27; Am 1:14 **17:27** 2Kg 25:9 **17:27** Jr 7:20

17:1 The sin of Judah (idolatry in particular; see vv. 2-3) was so ingrained that it was as though it were **engraved on the tablet of their hearts** (13:23). **An iron stylus** was used to engrave stone or metal: here it is part of a metaphor for the hardness and stubbornness of their hearts (see 16:12; see the notes on 7:24-26; 9:12-16). This would only be resolved under the "new covenant" when God would "write" his law "on their hearts" (31:31-34; see the note on Pr 3:3).

17:5-8 The contrast between the **person who trusts in mankind** (v. 5) and the **person who trusts in the LORD** (v. 7) resembles the contrast between the righteous and the wicked in Psalm 1. Whereas the former person is like a **juniper** in the desert that will fail to flourish, the latter person is **like a tree planted by water** that continually bears fruit. Earlier passages likewise warned against misplaced confidence in fortified cities (5:17), lies (7:4,8; 13:25), the temple (7:14), and one's fellow man (9:4).

17:9-11 Although no one **can understand it** (v. 9), God fully understands **the heart** and justly gives to each person what he deserves (vv. 10-11; 20:12). Whereas Jeremiah had lamented his seemingly endless

suffering by calling it a “wound incurable” (15:18), it is the deceitful human heart that is truly **incurable** (v. 9), apart from the redemptive work of God (31:33; 32:40).

17:13 Ancient peoples often collected and stored rainwater in cisterns, which were stagnant and could leak. By contrast, God is compared to a **fountain of living water**—an unending source of bountiful life that can satisfy the greatest thirst.

17:14-18 Compared to 15:18, in this passage Jeremiah has greater faith in God’s power to save him (vv. 14,17). He again honestly expresses his distress (vv. 15,18; 15:15) and cites his faithfulness to God (v. 16; 15:16-17).

17:27 Unwillingness to keep **the Sabbath** (v. 23) was a sign of breaking God’s covenant and provided yet another example of Judah refusing to listen to him (see 7:23-28; 11:3-8). Rather than experiencing the blessings of obedience (vv. 24-26) they would instead receive a fiery judgment.

PARABLE OF THE POTTER

18 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Go down at
once to the potter’s house; † there I will reveal my words to you.” 3 So
I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was, working away at the
wheel. † 4 But the jar that he was making from the clay became flawed in the
potter’s hand, so he made it into another jar, as it seemed right for him to do. †
5 The word of the LORD came to me: 6 “House of Israel, can I not treat you as
this potter treats his clay? ” — this is the LORD’s declaration. “Just like clay in the
potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, house of Israel. † 7 At one moment I
might announce concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will uproot, tear down,
and destroy it. † 8 However, if that nation about which I have made the
announcement turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the disaster I had
planned to do to it. † 9 At another time I might announce concerning a nation or
a kingdom that I will build and plant it. † 10 However, if it does what is evil in
my sight by not listening to me, I will relent concerning the good I had said I
would do to it. † 11 So now, say to the men of Judah and to the residents of
Jerusalem, ‘This is what the LORD says: Look, I am about to bring harm to you
and make plans against you. Turn now, each from your evil way, and correct
your ways and your deeds.’ † 12 But they will say, ‘It’s hopeless. † We will
continue to follow our plans, and each of us will continue to act according to the
stubbornness of his evil heart.’ ”

DELUDED ISRAEL

13 Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

Ask among the nations,
who has heard things like these?
Virgin Israel has done a most horrible thing. †
14 Does the snow of Lebanon ever leave the highland crags?
Or does cold water flowing from a distance ever fail?
15 Yet my people have forgotten me. †
They burn incense to worthless idols
that make them stumble in their ways †
on the ancient roads, †
and make them walk on new paths, not the highway.
16 They have made their land a horror, †
a perpetual object of scorn; † †
all who pass by it will be appalled †
and shake their heads. †
17 I will scatter them before the enemy like the east wind. †
I will show them † my back and not my face †
on the day of their calamity.

PLOT AGAINST JEREMIAH

18 Then certain ones said, "Come, let's make plans against Jeremiah, † for instruction will never be lost from the priest, † or counsel from the wise, or a word from the prophet. † Come, let's denounce him † and pay no attention to all his words."

19 Pay attention to me, LORD.
Hear what my opponents are saying! †
20 Should good be repaid with evil?
Yet they have dug a pit for me. †
Remember how I stood before you
to speak good on their behalf,
to turn your anger from them.
21 Therefore, hand their children over to famine, †

and give them over to the power of the sword.
Let their wives become childless and widowed, their husbands slain
by deadly disease, †
their young men struck down by the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses when you suddenly bring raiders
against them, for they have dug a pit to capture me
and have hidden snares for my feet. †
23 But you, LORD, know all their deadly plots against me.
Do not wipe out their iniquity; †
do not blot out their sin before you.
Let them be forced to stumble before you;
deal with them in the time of your anger.

18:3 Lit *pair of stones* **18:16** Lit *hissing* **18:17** LXX, Lat, Syr, Tg; MT reads *will look at them* **18:18** Lit *let's strike him with the tongue* **18:21** Lit *by death*
18:2 Is 29:16; Jr 19:1-2 **18:4** Rm 9:21 **18:6** Gn 2:7-8; Is 43:1; 64:8 **18:7** Jr 1:10; 24:6; 31:28 **18:8** 2Sm 24:1; Jr 42:10; Jnh 3:10 **18:9** Jr 1:10 **18:10** Ezk 18:25-29; 33:12-13 **18:11** Jr 4:18; 7:3; 35:15 **18:12** Is 57:12; Jr 2:25 **18:13** Jr 5:30; Hs 6:10 **18:15** Jr 2:32; 3:21; 13:25; Ezk 22:12; 23:35; Hs 8:14 **18:15** Ezk 14:3,4,7; 44:12; Rv 2:14 **18:15** Jr 6:16 **18:16** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **18:16** Lm 2:15 **18:16** Jr 19:8; 49:17 **18:16** Jb 2:11; 42:11; Ps 22:7; 69:20; Is 51:19; Jr 15:5; 48:27; Nah 3:7 **18:17** Ex 10:13; 14:21; Jb 27:21; 38:24; Ps 48:7; Is 27:8; Jr 13:24 **18:17** 2Ch 29:6; Jr 2:27; 32:33; Ezk 8:16 **18:18** Jr 11:19 **18:18** Jr 2:8,26; 5:31; 6:13; 8:10; 13:13; 23:11,33; Ezk 7:26; Mc 3:11; Zph 3:4 **18:18** Jr 5:13 **18:19** Ps 55:2-3; 142:6 **18:20** Ps 35:7; 57:6 **18:21** Ps 109:9-20 **18:22** Ps 140:5; 142:3 **18:23** Neh 4:5

18:1-12 Revelation of God's complete message required that Jeremiah first go **to the potter's house** (v. 2; Ezk 2:1-2). In what has become a well-known metaphor, God compared his relationship to Israel to that of a **potter** and **clay** (vv. 3-6). The point is that God is sovereign over them and that when either an evil nation repents or a favored nation turns to wickedness, he **will relent** concerning what he had planned to do to each (vv. 7-10). This is like a clay vessel becoming marred and then being made into something else according to the will of the potter (v. 4). The Hebrew word for **flawed** is also used of the "ruined" loincloth in 13:7, which was also a metaphor for corrupt Israel (6:28). Despite being given the opportunity to repent (vv. 7-8,11), they refused (v. 12).

18:13-15 As in 2:10-13, the extent to which Israel turned away from God to idols is without precedent and an outrage. The **ancient roads** (v. 15) seem to be a reference to the Pentateuch, which had been written long ago (see 6:16,19).

THE CLAY JAR

19 This is what the LORD says: "Go, buy a potter's clay † jar. Take † some of the elders of the people and some of the leading priests † 2 and go out to Ben Hinnom Valley † near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate. Proclaim

there the words I speak to you. 3 Say, ‘Hear the word of the LORD, kings of
Judah and residents of Jerusalem. † This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of
Israel, says: I am going to bring such disaster on this place that everyone who
hears about it will shudder † † 4 because they have abandoned me † and made
this a foreign place. They have burned incense in it to other gods that they, their
fathers, and the kings of Judah have never known. They have filled this place
with the blood of the innocent. † 5 They have built high places to Baal on which
to burn their children in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, something I have
never commanded or mentioned; I never entertained the thought. † †
6 “ ‘Therefore, look, the days are coming † — this is the LORD’s declaration —
when this place will no longer be called Topheth and Ben Hinnom Valley, but
Slaughter Valley. † 7 I will spoil the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place.
I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, by the hand of those
who intend to take their life. I will provide their corpses as food for the birds of
the sky and for the wild animals of the land. † 8 I will make this city desolate,
an object of scorn. Everyone who passes by it will be appalled and scoff because
of all its wounds. † 9 I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their
daughters, and they will eat each other’s flesh in the distressing siege inflicted on
them by their enemies who intend to take their life.’ †
10 “Then you are to shatter the jar in the presence of the people going with you,
11 and you are to proclaim to them, ‘This is what the LORD of Armies says: I will
shatter these people and this city, like one shatters a potter’s jar that can never
again be mended. They will bury the dead in Topheth because there is no other
place for burials. † 12 That is what I will do to this place — this is the
declaration of the LORD — and to its residents, making this city like Topheth.
13 The houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will become
impure like that place Topheth — all the houses on whose rooftops they have
burned incense to all the stars in the sky † and poured out drink offerings to
other gods.’ ”
14 Jeremiah returned from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy,
stood in the courtyard of the LORD’s temple, † and proclaimed to all the people,
15 “This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘I am about to

bring on this city — and on all its cities — every disaster that I spoke against it, for they have become obstinate, not obeying my words.' " †

19:1 Syr, Tg; MT omits *Take* **19:3** Lit *about it, his ears will tingle* ; Hb obscure **19:5** Lit *mentioned, and it did not arise on my heart*

19:1 Jr 18:2 **19:1** 2Kg 19:2 **19:2** 2Kg 23:10; 2Ch 28:3; Jr 7:31-32 **19:3** Jr 17:20 **19:3** 1Sm 3:11; 2Kg 21:12 **19:4** Dt 28:20; 31:16; 1Sm 8:8; 1Kg 11:33; 2Kg 22:17; 2Ch 34:25; Jr 1:16; 5:7 **19:4** Dt 19:10; 27:25; 2Kg 21:6,16; 24:4; Is 59:7; Jr 2:34 **19:5** Jr 7:31; 32:35 **19:6** Jr 7:32; 16:14; 23:5; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47,52 **19:6** Jr 25:34 **19:7** Dt 28:26; Ps 79:2; Jr 7:33; 15:3; 16:4 **19:8** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 49:17; 50:13; Mc 1:9; 6:16; Nah 3:19; Zph 2:15 **19:9** Dt 28:53-57; Lm 4:10; Ezk 5:10 **19:11** Jr 7:32 **19:13** Dt 4:19; 2Kg 17:16; 23:4-5; Zph 1:5 **19:14** 2Ch 20:5; Jr 26:2 **19:15** Jr 7:26

19:1 Once again, Jeremiah was given a prophetic message that was dramatized using pottery (see 18:1-12). This time, he was to shatter a jar as a vivid object lesson (see 19:10-12).

19:3 The **disaster** would be so severe that everyone who hears of it will **shudder.** Second Kings 21:12 uses the same language to describe this same judgment in the context of Manasseh's evil reign. This evil king was recently mentioned in Jeremiah 15:4 (see note).

19:8 The horrified response of passersby of Jerusalem is also mentioned in 1Kg 9:8.

19:9 The eating of one's own **sons** and **daughters** had been foretold as a particularly gruesome part of divine judgment in Deuteronomy 28:53. It describes total desperation in the face of siege and starvation (see 2Kg 6:26-29; Lm 2:20; 4:10).

19:10-12 The shattering of **the jar** (see 19:1) was a sobering depiction of the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem. There would be so many corpses that there would be nowhere to bury them (vv. 6-7,11; 7:31-32).

JEREMIAH BEATEN BY PASHHUR

20 Pashhur the priest, † the son of Immer † and chief official in the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. 2 So Pashhur had the prophet Jeremiah beaten and put him in the stocks † at the Upper Benjamin Gate † in the LORD's temple. 3 The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD does not call you Pashhur, but Terror Is on Every Side, † 4 for this is what the LORD says, 'I am about to make you a terror to both yourself and those you love. † They will fall by the sword of their enemies before your very eyes. † I will hand Judah over to the king of Babylon, and he will deport them to Babylon and put them to the sword. 5 I will give away all the wealth † of this city, all its products † and valuables. Indeed, I will hand all the treasures of the kings of Judah over to their enemies. They will plunder them, seize them, and carry them off to Babylon. † 6 As for you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, you will go into captivity.

You will go to Babylon. † There you will die, and there you will be buried, you and all your friends to whom you prophesied lies.' " †

JEREMIAH COMPELLED TO PREACH

7 You deceived † me, LORD, and I was deceived.
You seized me and prevailed.
I am a laughingstock all the time; †
everyone ridicules me.
8 For whenever I speak, I cry out, I proclaim, "Violence and destruction! " †
so the word of the LORD has become my constant disgrace and derision.
9 I say, "I won't mention him or speak any longer in his name." †
But his message becomes a fire burning in my heart, †
shut up in my bones.
I become tired of holding it in, †
and I cannot prevail.
10 For I have heard the gossip of many people, "Terror is on every side! †
Report him; let's report him! "
Everyone I trusted † watches for my fall. †
"Perhaps he will be deceived
so that we might prevail against him
and take our vengeance on him."
11 But the LORD is with me like a violent warrior. †
Therefore, my persecutors will stumble and not prevail.
Since they have not succeeded, they will be utterly shamed, an everlasting humiliation that will never be forgotten. †
12 LORD of Armies, testing the righteous and seeing the heart † and mind, let me see your vengeance on them,
for I have presented my case to you. †
13 Sing to the LORD!
Praise the LORD, for he rescues the life of the needy
from evil people.

JEREMIAH'S LAMENT

14 May the day I was born be cursed. †
May the day my mother bore me
never be blessed.
15 May the man be cursed who brought the news to my father, saying, “A male
child is born to you,”
bringing him great joy.
16 Let that man be like the cities the LORD demolished without compassion. †
Let him hear an outcry in the morning †
and a war cry at noontime
17 because he didn’t kill me in the womb †
so that my mother might have been my grave, her womb eternally pregnant.
18 Why did I come out of the womb to see only struggle and sorrow, †
to end my life in shame?

20:3 = *Magor-missabib* **20:10** Lit *Every man of my peace* **20:12** Lit *kidneys*
20:1 1Ch 9:12; Jr 21:1; 38:1 **20:1** 1Ch 24:14; Ezr 2:37-38 **20:2** Jb 13:27; Jr 29:26; Ac 16:24 **20:2** Jr 37:13; 38:7; Zch 14:10 **20:4** Jr 6:25; 20:10; 46:5 **20:4** 2Sm 12:11; Is 1:7; Jr 16:9; 29:21; 39:16; 51:24 **20:5** Pr 15:6 **20:5** Dt 28:33; Ezk 23:29 **20:5** 2Kg 20:17; 21:14; Lm 2:7 **20:6** Jr 34:3; Mc 4:10 **20:6** Jr 5:31; 14:13-14; 23:25-26,32; 27:10,14-16; 29:9,21,31 **20:7** 1Kg 20:20-22; 2Ch 18:20; Jr 15:18 **20:7** Gn 38:23; Jb 12:4; Ps 44:14; Jr 48:26-27,39; Lm 2:15-17; 3:14 **20:8** Jr 6:7 **20:9** Ex 5:23; Dt 18:20; Ac 5:40 **20:9** Jb 32:18-20; Ps 39:3 **20:9** Jr 6:11; Am 3:8; 1Co 9:16 **20:10** Jr 6:25; 20:3; 46:5 **20:10** Ps 35:15; 41:9; 56:6 **20:11** Ex 15:3 **20:11** Mc 3:7 **20:12** Jr 11:20 **20:14** Jb 3:3 **20:16** Gn 19:25 **20:16** Jr 18:22 **20:17** Jb 3:10-11 **20:18** Jb 3:20; Lm 3:1

20:1-2 Jeremiah’s preaching against the religious establishment (see 2:8; 7:1-4; 8:8) resulted in their persecution of him. Earlier passages had referenced plots against him (11:18-21; 18:18-20), and here he was **beaten** and imprisoned at the command of **Pashhur the priest**, the temple official.

20:3-6 Having repeatedly prayed for God to avenge him against his enemies (11:20; 15:15; 17:18; 18:23), Jeremiah was given an oracle against Pashhur. There is a play on the Hebrew word *magor* (v. 3), which means **terror** (v. 4). This passage contains the first time in the book that **Babylon** is identified as the instrument of God’s wrath. Despite Pashhur’s opposition to the predicted judgment, divine wrath would still fall on the nation, and he and those close to him would not be spared (see 18:21-22).

20:7 Jeremiah’s humiliation led to his blaming God for having **deceived** him and forced him into prophetic ministry (see 1:5-10). God, however, had also promised his presence and protection (1:8,18-19), which was no small thing during this time of judgment on Judah (see the note on 15:11). Moreover, to be God’s spokesman was a great privilege (15:19).

20:8-9 Despite the fact that proclaiming **the word of the LORD** brought ridicule, Jeremiah was also unable to hold back his message. It was like a **fire burning** within him (see 23:9).

20:14-18 In his great discouragement and the persecution mounted against him, Jeremiah once again expresses his wish that he had never been born—this time in a more extended fashion (see 15:10; cp. Jb 3).

ZEDEKIAH’S REQUEST DENIED

21 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Zedekiah sent Pashhur † son of Malchijah and the priest Zephaniah †
son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah, asking, 2 "Inquire of the LORD on our behalf, since
King Nebuchadnezzar † † of Babylon is making war against us. Perhaps the
LORD will perform for us something like all his past wondrous works so that
Nebuchadnezzar will withdraw from us."
3 But Jeremiah answered, "This is what you are to say to Zedekiah: 4 'This is
what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am about to repel the weapons of war in
your hands, † those you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the
Chaldeans † who are besieging you outside the wall, and I will bring them into
the center of this city. † 5 I myself will fight against you † with an outstretched
hand and a strong arm, † with anger, rage, and intense wrath. 6 I will strike the
residents of this city, both people and animals. They will die in a severe plague.
7 Afterward — this is the LORD's declaration — King Zedekiah of Judah, his
officers, and the people — those in this city who survive the plague, the sword,
and the famine — I will hand over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, † to
their enemies, yes, to those who intend to take their lives. He will put them to the
sword; he won't spare them or show pity or compassion.' †

A WARNING FOR THE PEOPLE

8 "But tell this people, 'This is what the LORD says: Look, I am setting before
you the way of life and the way of death. † 9 Whoever stays in this city will die
by the sword, famine, and plague, but whoever goes out and surrenders to the
Chaldeans who are besieging you will live and will retain his life like the spoils
of war. † 10 For I have set my face against this city to bring disaster and not
good † — this is the LORD's declaration. It will be handed over to the king of
Babylon, who will burn it.' †
11 "And to the house of the king of Judah say this: 'Hear the word of the LORD!
12 House of David, this is what the LORD says:

Administer justice every morning,
and rescue the victim of robbery
from his oppressor, †

or my anger will flare up like fire
and burn unquenchably
because of your evil deeds.

13 Beware! I am against you, †
you who sit above the valley,
you atop the rocky plateau —
this is the LORD's declaration — you who say, "Who can come down against us?
†
Who can enter our hiding places? "

14 I will punish you according to what you have done † — this is the LORD's declaration.

I will kindle a fire in your forest †
that will consume everything around it.' " †

21:2 Lit *Nebuchadrezzar* **21:4** = Babylonians
21:1 1Ch 9:12; Neh 11:12; Jr 38:1 **21:1** Jr 29:24-29; 37:3; 52:24-27 **21:2** 2Kg 24:11; 25:22; 2Ch 36:6-13 **21:4** Jr 32:5; 37:8-10 **21:4** Is 13:4 **21:5** 1Sm 4:1–5:12; Lm 2:5 **21:5** Dt 5:15; 26:8; 1Kg 8:42; Ps 136:12 **21:7** Jr 37:17; 39:5-9; 52:9 **21:7** 2Ch 36:17 **21:8** Dt 30:15-19; Pr 12:28; Jr 8:3 **21:9** Jr 38:2; 39:18; 45:5 **21:10** Jr 31:28; 39:16; 44:11,27; Am 9:4 **21:10** Jr 34:2,22; 37:8; 38:18 **21:12** Dt 28:29; Ec 4:1; Jr 22:3 **21:13** Ezk 13:8 **21:13** Jr 49:4 **21:14** Is 3:10 **21:14** Ezk 20:47 **21:14** Jr 50:32

21:1-2 This **Pashhur son of Malchijah** is not the same person as "Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer" in 20:1. This is the first time in the book that **King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon** is mentioned by name (v. 2). Nebuchadnezzar had come to attack Jerusalem because King Zedekiah was rebelling against him, refusing to pay tribute, and trusting an Egyptian pharaoh for help.

21:3-7 Zedekiah's request for prayer was wishful thinking (v. 2). He would not listen to God's word (e.g., 32:3) and yet was hoping for a miracle from him. The response to this presumptuousness was that not only would there be no miracle, but God himself would fight against Zedekiah (vv. 4-6). His **outstretched hand** and **strong arm** (v. 5) recall his mighty hand and outstretched arm used to perform wonderful works to save Israel from Egypt (e.g., Dt 4:34; 5:15; 7:19). Now these are turned against them in judgment.

21:8-10 In another allusion to the Pentateuch (see previous note), Jerusalem was presented with a choice between **life** and **death.** Whereas the choice in Deuteronomy 30:15-20 had to do with obeying God's commands generally, the choice here has to do with the specific instruction to surrender to the **besieging** Babylonians. Those who stay in the city and try to fight against the Babylonians **(the Chaldeans)** will die, but those who go out and surrender to them will live (21:9).

21:11-14 Jeremiah is to focus attention on the **king of Judah**, who represents the **House of David** (22:1-2). The king was commanded to do **justice** and righteousness (v. 12; 22:3), but his failure subjected the nation to the judgment of the Lord (vv. 13-14; 22:5-9).

JUDGMENT AGAINST SINFUL KINGS

22 This is what the LORD says: “Go down to the palace of the king of
Judah and announce this word there. 2 You are to say, ‘Hear the word
of the LORD, king of Judah, you who sit on the throne of David † —
you, your officers, and your people who enter these gates. 3 This is what the
LORD says: Administer justice and righteousness. † Rescue the victim of robbery
from his oppressor. † Don’t exploit or brutalize the resident alien, the fatherless,
or the widow. † Don’t shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you
conscientiously carry out this word, then kings sitting on David’s throne will
enter through the gates of this palace † riding on chariots and horses — they,
their officers, and their people. 5 But if you do not obey these words, then I
swear by myself † — this is the LORD’s declaration — that this house will
become a ruin.’ ” †
6 For this is what the LORD says concerning the house of the king of Judah:

“You are like Gilead † to me, or the summit of Lebanon,
but I will certainly turn you into a wilderness, uninhabited cities.
7 I will set apart destroyers † against you, each with his weapons.
They will cut down the choicest of your cedars and throw them into the fire.

8 “Many nations will pass by this city and ask one another, ‘Why did the LORD
do such a thing to this great city? ’ 9 They will answer, ‘Because they abandoned
the covenant † of the LORD their God and bowed in worship to other gods and
served them.’ ” †

A MESSAGE CONCERNING SHALLUM

10 Do not weep for the dead; do not mourn for him.
Weep bitterly for the one who has gone away, for he will never return again
and see his native land. †

11 For this is what the LORD says concerning Shallum † son of Josiah, king of
Judah, who became king in place of his father Josiah, and who has left this

place: “He will never return here again, 12 but he will die in the place where they deported him, never seeing this land again.”

A MESSAGE CONCERNING JEHOIAKIM

13 Woe for the one who builds his palace through unrighteousness, †
his upstairs rooms through injustice,
who makes his neighbor serve without pay
and will not give him his wages, †
14 who says, “I will build myself a massive palace, with spacious upstairs rooms.”
He will cut windows † in it, and it will be paneled with cedar †
and painted bright red.
15 Are you a king because you excel in cedar?
Didn’t your father eat and drink
and administer justice and righteousness? †
Then it went well with him.
16 He took up the case of the poor and needy; †
then it went well.
Is this not what it means to know me?
This is the LORD’s declaration.
17 But you have eyes and a heart for nothing except your own dishonest profit,
shedding innocent blood
and committing extortion and oppression. †

18 Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning Jehoiakim † son of Josiah, king of Judah:

They will not mourn for him, saying,
“Woe, my brother! ” or “Woe, my sister! ”
They will not mourn for him, saying,
“Woe, lord! Woe, his majesty! ”
19 He will be buried like a donkey, †
dragged off and thrown
outside Jerusalem’s gates.
20 Go up to Lebanon and cry out; raise your voice in Bashan;

cry out from Abarim, †
for all your lovers † have been crushed. †
21 I spoke to you when you were secure.
You said, “I will not listen.”
This has been your way since youth; †
indeed, you have never listened to me.
22 The wind will take charge of † all your shepherds, and your lovers will go into captivity.
Then you will be ashamed and humiliated †
because of all your evil.
23 You residents of Lebanon, nestled among the cedars,
how you will groan † when pains come on you, agony like a woman in labor. †

A MESSAGE CONCERNING CONIAH

24 “As I live” — this is the LORD’s declaration — “though you, Coniah † † son of Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, were a signet ring † on my right hand, I would tear you from it. 25 In fact, I will hand you over to those you dread, † who intend to take your life, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Chaldeans. 26 I will hurl you and the mother who gave birth † to you into another land, † where neither of you were born, and there you will both die. 27 They will never return to the land they long to return to.”

28 Is this man Coniah a despised, shattered pot, †
a jar no one wants?
Why are he and his descendants hurled out
and cast into a land they have not known?
29 Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD!

30 This is what the LORD says:

Record this man as childless, †
a man who will not be successful in his lifetime.
None of his descendants will succeed
in sitting on the throne of David †

or ruling again in Judah.

22:14 Lit *my windows* **22:20** Or *friends*, or *allies*, also in v. 22 **22:22** Lit *will shepherd* **22:23** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *will be pitied* **22:24** = Jehoiachin
22:2 2Sm 3:10; 1Kg 2:12,24,45; Is 9:7; Jr 17:25; 22:30; 29:16; 36:30 **22:3** 2Sm 8:15; 1Kg 10:9; 2Ch 9:8; Is 33:5; 59:14; Jr 9:24; 23:5; 33:15; Am 5:7,24 **22:3** Dt 28:29; Ps 35:10; Ec 4:1; Jr 21:12 **22:3** Dt 14:29; 24:17,19-21; 27:19; Ps 146:9; Jr 7:6; Ezk 22:7 **22:4** Jr 17:25 **22:5** Gn 22:16; 1Sm 3:14; Ps 89:3,35; Is 45:23; 54:9; Jr 44:26; 49:13 **22:5** Jr 17:27 **22:6** Sg 4:1; Jr 8:22; 46:11; 50:19; Mc 7:14; Zch 10:10 **22:7** Ex 12:23; 2Sm 24:16; Is 54:16 **22:8-9** Dt 29:24-25; 1Kg 19:10,14 **22:9** Dt 30:17 **22:10** 2Sm 12:22-23 **22:11** 2Kg 23:32-35; 1Ch 3:15 **22:13** Mc 3:10 **22:13** Lv 19:13; Jms 5:4 **22:14** 1Kg 6:9,15,18; 7:3,7 **22:15** Jr 22:3 **22:16** Dt 24:14 **22:17** Is 30:12; 59:9-15; Jr 6:6; Ezk 22:7,12,29; Mc 3:11; Hab 1:3 **22:18** 2Kg 23:34–24:6; 2Ch 36:4-8 **22:19** Jr 36:30 **22:20** Nm 27:12; Dt 32:49 **22:20** Jr 3:1 **22:21** Jr 3:25 **22:22** Is 41:11 **22:23** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **22:24** 2Kg 24:6-17; Jr 37:1; 52:31 **22:24** Gn 38:18; 1Kg 21:8; Hg 2:23 **22:25** Jr 34:20-21 **22:26** 2Kg 24:15 **22:26** 2Kg 24:8 **22:28** Ps 31:12; Jr 48:38; Hs 8:8 **22:30** 1Ch 3:17; Mt 1:12 **22:30** Jr 36:30

22:1-5 God instructs Jeremiah to **go down to the palace** and announce his word to **the king of Judah** who sits on David's throne. He begins by describing the **justice and righteousness** that the king was supposed to foster in his realm by showing particular concern for those who were vulnerable. If the king does not do these things that are so important to God, then God swears that **this house will become a ruin** (v. 5).

22:10-12 The focus on the Davidic kings ruling Judah continues with the addressing of individual kings, beginning with **Shallum son of Josiah** (v. 11). Also known as Jehoahaz (2Kg 23:30-34), he had been exiled to Egypt and would never return.

22:13-19 The next Davidic king to reign and be addressed here was **Jehoiakim**, Shallum's brother (v. 18; 2Kg 23:34–24:6). Jehoiakim built up his house through **unrighteousness** and **injustice** (v. 13), contrary to his father Josiah's example (vv. 15-16) and God's instruction (v. 3). He was guilty of **shedding innocent blood and committing extortion** (v. 17) and so would be dishonored when he died (vv. 18-19).

22:24-28 The third Davidic king addressed in this chapter is Jehoiakim's son **Coniah**, also known as Jehoiachin (2Kg 24:6-16). He would be handed over **to Nebuchadnezzar** and die as an exile in Babylon (vv. 25-27), in a fate much like that of his predecessor Shallum (vv. 11-12). Like his father Jehoiakim (vv. 18-19), Coniah would also be dishonored and unwanted (v. 28; 19:10-11). A **signet ring** functioned as a royal seal and was normally precious to its owner (v. 24; Hg 2:23).

22:29 The threefold repetition of **earth** parallels the similar repetition of the "temple of the LORD" in 7:4 (see Is 6:3).

22:30 The centuries-long rule of the Davidic dynasty shortly would come to an end. Although Jehoiachin did have sons (1Ch 3:17-18), none of them would be king. His successor, Zedekiah, was his uncle and would be the last king of Judah (2Kg 24:17). He too would be given into the hands of the Babylonians (21:7). The endurance of the Davidic **throne** had depended on obedience to God (vv. 2-4; 17:24-25), and the last four kings of Judah, as described in these last two chapters, provide ample reason for the end of this dynasty (see 15:4).

THE LORD AND HIS SHEEP

23 "Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" † This is the LORD's declaration. 2 "Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the shepherds who tend my people: You

have scattered my flock, † banished them, and have not attended to them. † I
am about to attend to you because of your evil acts" — this is the LORD's
declaration. 3 "I will gather the remnant of my flock from all the lands where I
have banished them, † and I will return them to their grazing land. They will
become fruitful and numerous. † 4 I will raise up shepherds over them who will
tend them. † They will no longer be afraid or discouraged, nor will any be
missing." † This is the LORD's declaration.

THE RIGHTEOUS BRANCH OF DAVID

5 "Look, the days are coming" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "when I
will raise up a Righteous Branch for David. †
He will reign wisely as king
and administer justice and righteousness in the land. †
6 In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. †
This is the name he will be called:
The LORD Is Our Righteousness. † †

7 "Look, the days are coming" † — the LORD's declaration — "when it will no
longer be said, 'As the LORD lives † who brought the Israelites from the land of
Egypt,' 8 but, 'As the LORD lives, who brought and led the descendants of the
house of Israel from the land of the north and from all the other countries where
I † had banished them.' They will dwell once more in their own land." †

FALSE PROPHETS CONDEMNED

9 Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me, †
and all my bones tremble.
I have become like a drunkard,
like a man overcome by wine,
because of the LORD, because of his holy words.
10 For the land is full of adulterers; †
the land mourns † because of the curse, †

and the grazing lands in the wilderness have dried up.
Their way of life † has become evil, and their power is not rightly used
11 because both prophet and priest are ungodly, †
even in my house † I have found their evil.
This is the LORD's declaration.
12 Therefore, their way will seem like slippery paths in the gloom. †
They will be driven away and fall down there, for I will bring disaster on them,
the year of their punishment. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

13 Among the prophets of Samaria I saw something disgusting:
They prophesied by Baal
and led my people Israel astray. †
14 Among the prophets of Jerusalem also I saw a horrible thing: †
They commit adultery and walk in lies.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
and none turns his back on evil.
They are all like Sodom † to me; Jerusalem's residents are like Gomorrah.

15 Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies says concerning the prophets:

I am about to feed them wormwood †
and give them poisoned water to drink, †
for from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness † has spread throughout the land.

16 This is what the LORD of Armies says: "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They are deluding you. They speak visions from their own minds, † not from the LORD's mouth. † 17 They keep on saying to those who despise me, † 'The LORD has spoken: You will have peace.' † They have said to everyone who follows the stubbornness of his heart, 'No harm will come to you.' "

18 For who has stood in the council † of the LORD to see and hear his word?

Who has paid attention to his word and obeyed?
19 Look, a storm from the LORD! †
Wrath has gone out,
a whirling storm.
It will whirl about the heads of the wicked.
20 The LORD's anger will not turn away †
until he has completely fulfilled the purposes of his heart.
In time to come you will understand it clearly. †

21 I did not send out these prophets, †
yet they ran. †
I did not speak to them,
yet they prophesied.
22 If they had really stood in my council, they would have enabled my people
to hear my words and would have turned them from their evil ways and their
evil deeds. †

23 "Am I a God who is only near" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "and not a God who is far away? 24 Can a person hide in secret places where I cannot see him? " † — the LORD's declaration. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? " † — the LORD's declaration.
25 "I have heard what the prophets who prophesy a lie in my name have said: 'I had a dream! I had a dream! ' † 26 How long will this continue in the minds of the prophets prophesying lies, prophets of the deceit of their own minds? 27 Through their dreams that they tell one another, they plan to cause my people to forget my name as their fathers forgot my name through Baal worship. †
28 The prophet who has only a dream should recount the dream, but the one who has my word should speak my word truthfully, for what is straw compared to grain? " — this is the LORD's declaration. 29 "Is not my word like fire" — this is the LORD's declaration — "and like a hammer that pulverizes rock? 30 Therefore, take note! I am against the prophets" † — the LORD's declaration — "who steal my words from each other. 31 I am against the prophets" — the LORD's declaration — "who use their own tongues to make a declaration. 32 I am against

those who prophesy false dreams” † — the LORD’s declaration — “telling them and leading my people astray with their reckless lies. It was not I who sent or commanded them, and they are of no benefit at all † to these people” — this is the LORD’s declaration.

THE BURDEN OF THE LORD

33 “Now when these people or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden † of the LORD? ’ you will respond to them, ‘What is the burden? I will throw you away! This is the LORD’s declaration.’ 34 As for the prophet, priest, or people who say, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ I will punish that man and his household. 35 This is what each man is to say to his friend and to his brother: ‘What has the LORD answered? ’ or ‘What has the LORD spoken? ’ 36 But no longer refer to † the burden of the LORD, for each man’s word becomes his burden and you pervert the words of the living God, the LORD of Armies, our God. 37 Say to the prophet, ‘What has the LORD answered you? ’ or ‘What has the LORD spoken? ’ 38 But if you say, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ then this is what the LORD says: Because you have said, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ and I specifically told you not to say, ‘The burden of the LORD,’ 39 I will surely forget you. † I will throw you away from my presence — both you and the city that I gave you and your fathers. 40 I will bring on you everlasting disgrace and humiliation † that will never be forgotten.”

23:6 = *Yahweh-zidkenu* **23:8** LXX reads *he* **23:10** Lit *Their manner of running* **23:15** Or *pollution* **23:33** The Hb word for *burden* (Ex 23:5; 2Sm 15:33) can also mean “oracle” (Is 13:1; Nah 1:10). **23:36** Or *longer remember* **23:39** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *surely lift you up*

23:1 Ps 100:3; Ezk 34:2,31; Zch 11:5-7,15-17 **23:2** Jr 10:21; 50:6; Ezk 34:5,12,31 **23:2** Ps 8:4; Is 23:16; Ezk 34:3 **23:3** Ezk 34:12-13 **23:3** Gn 1:26-28; 9:1-7; 35:11 **23:4** Ezk 34:23; Mc 5:2-6 **23:4** Ezk 34:25; Mc 7:14 **23:5** Jr 7:32; 9:25; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5,7; 30:3; 31:27,31; 33:14-16; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47,52 **23:5** 1Kg 12:16; Is 4:2; 55:3-4; Jr 30:9; 33:15; Ezk 34:23; 37:24-25; Hs 3:5; Zch 3:8; 6:12 **23:5** 1Ch 18:14; Ps 99:4; Is 9:7; 11:1-9; 33:5; Jr 9:24; 22:15; 33:15 **23:6** Dt 33:12,28; Ps 16:9; Pr 1:33; Jr 33:16 **23:6** Ps 4:1; Jr 33:16; 1Co 1:30 **23:7** Jr 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47,52 **23:7** Jdg 8:19; 1Sm 14:39,45; 2Sm 4:9; 1Kg 1:29; 2:24; Jr 4:1-2; 5:2; 16:14-15; 38:16; Hs 4:15 **23:8** Jr 16:15 **23:9** Hab 3:16 **23:10** Jr 9:2; Hs 7:4; Mal 3:5 **23:10** Jr 12:4; Am 1:2; Rm 8:22 **23:10** Dt 11:29; 27:13; Gl 3:13 **23:11** Jr 6:13; 14:18; Zph 3:4 **23:11** 1Ch 17:14; 28:6; Is 56:5,7; Jr 11:15; 12:7; Ezk 23:39; Hs 9:15; Hab 1:9; Zch 1:16; Mal 3:10 **23:12** Ps 35:6; 73:18 **23:12** Jr 11:23; 48:44 **23:13** Pr 12:26; Is 3:12; Jr 50:6; Mc 3:5 **23:14** Jr 5:30; Hs 6:10 **23:14** Gn 13:10-13; 18:16–19:28; Is 1:10-17 **23:15** Am 5:7; 6:12 **23:15** Jr 8:14; 9:15 **23:16** Jr 14:14; Lm 2:9; Ezk 7:26; 12:24; 13:16; Mc 3:6 **23:16** Is 1:20; 40:5; 58:14; 62:2; Jr 9:12; Mc 4:4 **23:17** Is 5:24 **23:17** Jr 4:10 **23:18** Jb 15:8; Ps 25:14; 89:7 **23:19** Ps 83:15; Is 29:6; Zch 9:14 **23:20** Gn 27:45; Is 5:25; 9:12,17,21; 10:4; Jr 2:35 **23:19-20** Jr 30:23-24 **23:21** Jr 14:14 **23:21** Jos 7:22; 2Sm 18:21; Ps 147:15 **23:22** Jr 4:18 **23:23** Ps 139:1-10; Am 9:2-3 **23:24** Gn 3:8; 4:14; Jb 34:22 **23:24** Ps 139:7-12; Am 9:2-4 **23:25** Jr 5:31; 14:14; 20:6;

23:32; 27:10,14-16; 29:9,21,31 **23:27** Jdg 3:7; 8:33-34 **23:30** Dt 18:20; Jr 14:14-15; Ezk 13:8 **23:32** Dt 18:20 **23:32** Is 30:5-6; Jr 2:8,11 **23:40** Ps 78:66; Jr 20:11

23:1-4 The **shepherds** (leaders) of the people had not cared for them and would be punished as a result (2:8; 10:21). Jeremiah was the exception to the rule (17:16). In view of the preceding and following context, these words of judgment would seem to apply especially to the kings of Judah. Nevertheless, just as in 3:14-16, God promised to regather his people and give them good **shepherds** so that they would **become fruitful and numerous** (v. 3; 31:10; Dt 30:3-5).

23:5-6 The emphasis on the fall of the house of David and the exile of Judah in the preceding passages provides the foundation for a significant messianic prophecy. God's promise to David of an everlasting kingdom still stood (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16) and would be fulfilled by a **Righteous Branch.** This expression probably refers to the legitimate heir of a king. In keeping with God's requirements and in contrast with some Davidic kings (21:12; 22:3,13), he will **administer justice and righteousness** (Is 9:7). Under his wise reign, both **Judah** and **Israel will dwell securely** in the land (v. 6) after having returned from exile (v. 3).

23:7-8 The glory of the future redemption described in vv. 3-6 will exceed that of God's delivery of his people from Egypt (see the note on 16:14-15). Whereas that first deliverance led to Israel dwelling in the land temporarily, God will regather them to live in **the land** permanently under the Messiah's rule (see Ps 147:2; Jn 10:16).

23:9-15 Following the genuine prophecies of salvation *after* severe judgment (vv. 3-8), the focus turns to false **prophets** who had corrupted Israel and Judah.

23:16-20 The false prophets' denial of impending judgment through assurances of **peace** (v. 17; 4:10; 6:14; 8:11) filled the people with false hope. This conflicted with Jeremiah's message, which spoke of salvation after judgment and therefore made him worthless in the eyes of the people. Yet, the false prophets spoke **from their own minds**, not from God (vv. 16,21). Nevertheless, God's word of judgment would be vindicated, and his people would **understand it clearly** (vv. 18-20). The Hebrew phrase translated **in time to come** is the same phrase translated "in the last days" in Isaiah 2:2 (see the notes on Gn 49:1,8-12; Is 2:2-4).

23:21-22 The problem with the false **prophets** is that they had not truly been sent by God and had never even stood in his **council** (vv. 18,22). They had not received a word from him and so could not declare it to the people.

23:25-29 The false **prophets** claimed to have revelation in **dreams**, but God states that these are **lies** (v. 26). Their words were empty, but his word has power **like fire** and **like a hammer** (v. 29; see "Biblical Formation" on *p. 1504*). The prophets were attempting to convince the people of Judah to oppose Nebuchadnezzar, but God's will was that they submit to the Babylonians and surrender.

THE GOOD AND THE BAD FIGS

24 After King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had deported Jeconiah † son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, the officials of Judah, and the craftsmen and metalsmiths † from Jerusalem and had brought them to Babylon, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs † placed in front of the temple of the LORD. 2 One basket contained very good figs, like early figs, † but the other basket

contained very bad figs, so bad they were inedible. 3 The LORD said to me,
“What do you see, Jeremiah? ”
I said, “Figs! The good figs are very good, but the bad figs are extremely bad, so
bad they are inedible.”
4 The word of the LORD came to me: 5 “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: Like these good figs, so I regard as good the exiles from Judah I sent away
from this place to the land of the Chaldeans. 6 I will keep my eyes on them for
their good † and will return them to this land. I will build them up and not
demolish them; I will plant them and not uproot them. † 7 I will give them a
heart to know me, † that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be
their God because they will return to me with all their heart. †
8 “But as for the bad figs, so bad they are inedible, † this is what the LORD says:
In this way I will deal with King Zedekiah of Judah, his officials, and the
remnant of Jerusalem — those remaining in this land or living in the land of
Egypt. † 9 I will make them an object of horror † and a disaster to all the
kingdoms of the earth, an example for disgrace, scorn, ridicule, † and cursing,
wherever I have banished them. † 10 I will send the sword, famine, and
plague † against them until they have perished from the land I gave to them and
their ancestors.”

24:1 = Jehoiachin

24:1 2Kg 24:14,16; Jr 29:2 **24:1** Am 8:1 **24:2** Is 28:4; Hs 9:10; Mc 7:1 **24:6** Am 9:4 **24:6** Jr 1:10 **24:7** Dt 30:6; Jr 31:33; 32:40 **24:7** 2Ch 6:38; Jr 29:13 **24:8** Jr 29:17 **24:8** Jr 44:1 **24:9** 2Ch 29:8; Jr 15:4; 29:18 **24:9** Dt 28:37; 1Kg 9:7; 2Ch 7:20 **24:9** Jr 24:9; 42:18; 44:8,12; 49:13 **24:10** Jr 14:12; 21:9; 29:17-18

24:1-3 As predicted in 22:24-27, **Jeconiah** (also known as Coniah or Jehoiachin) was taken by **Nebuchadnezzar** and exiled **to Babylon** (v. 1; 2Kg 24:11-16). The difference between the two baskets of figs is unmistakable: as the **good figs are very good**, **the bad figs are extremely bad.**

24:4-7 The basket of **good figs** stood for King Jeconiah and those already exiled in 597 BC (vv. 1,5; 2Kg 25:27-30; Dn 1:1-4). Ultimately, God will gather them, **build them up**, and **plant them** (v. 6; 1:10; 31:28). His giving them **a heart to know** [him] (v. 7) solves the problem posed in Deuteronomy 29:4 and Isaiah 6:9-10. Unlike in 3:10, they will **return to** [God] **with all their heart** (see 4:1; Dt 30:1-2).

24:8-10 King Zedekiah and those remaining in the land were **bad figs** and had no such hope. Neither would fleeing to Egypt provide escape from destruction and disgrace (see Jr 44).

THE SEVENTY-YEAR EXILE

25 This is the word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of
Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim † son of Josiah, king of Judah

(which was the first year of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon). 2 The prophet
Jeremiah spoke concerning all the people of Judah and all the residents of
Jerusalem as follows: 3 "From the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, † king
of Judah, until this very day — twenty-three years — the word of the LORD has
come to me, and I have spoken to you time and time again, † † but you have
not obeyed. 4 The LORD sent all his servants the prophets to you time and time
again, † but you have not obeyed or even paid attention. † † 5 He announced,
'Turn, each of you, from your evil way of life and from your evil deeds. † Live
in the land the LORD gave to you and your ancestors long ago and forever. †
6 Do not follow other gods to serve them and to bow in worship to them, † and
do not anger me by the work of your hands. † Then I will do you no harm.
7 " 'But you have not obeyed me' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'with the
result that you have angered me by the work of your hands and brought disaster
on yourselves.'
8 "Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies says: 'Because you have not
obeyed my words, 9 I am going to send for all the families of the north' † —
this is the LORD's declaration — 'and send for my servant † Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon, and I will bring them against this land, against its residents, and
against all these surrounding nations, and I will completely destroy them and
make them an example of horror † and scorn, and ruins forever. † 10 I will
eliminate the sound of joy and gladness from them — the voice of the groom and
the bride, † the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. 11 This whole
land will become a desolate ruin, and these nations will serve the king of
Babylon for seventy years. † 12 When the seventy years are completed, I will
punish the king of Babylon and that nation' — this is the LORD's declaration —
'the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity, and I will make it a ruin forever. †
13 I will bring on that land all my words I have spoken against it, all that is
written in this book that Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations. 14 For
many nations and great kings will enslave them, and I will repay them according
to their deeds and the work of their hands.' " †

THE CUP OF GOD'S WRATH

15 This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: “Take this cup of the wine of wrath from my hand and make all the nations to whom I am sending you drink from it. † 16 They will drink, stagger, † and go out of their minds because of the sword I am sending among them.” †
17 So I took the cup from the LORD’s hand and made all the nations to whom the LORD sent me drink from it.

18 Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah, its kings and its officials, to make them a desolate ruin, an example for scorn and cursing — as it is today;
19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, his officers, his leaders, all his people,
20 and all the mixed peoples;
all the kings of the land of Uz;
all the kings of the land of the Philistines — Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod;
21 Edom, Moab, and the Ammonites;
22 all the kings of Tyre,
all the kings of Sidon,
and the kings of the coasts and islands;
23 Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all those who clip the hair on their temples; † †
24 all the kings of Arabia,
and all the kings of the mixed peoples who have settled in the desert;
25 all the kings of Zimri,
all the kings of Elam,
and all the kings of Media;
26 all the kings of the north, both near and far from one another;
that is, all the kingdoms of the world throughout the earth.

Finally, the king of Sheshach † † will drink after them.

27 "Then you are to say to them, 'This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of
Israel, says: Drink, † get drunk, and vomit. Fall down and never get up again, as
a result of the sword I am sending among you.' 28 If † they refuse to accept the
cup from your hand and drink, you are to say to them, 'This is what the LORD of
Armies says: You must drink! 29 For I am already bringing disaster † on the
city that bears my name, † so how could you possibly go unpunished? You will
not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the
earth. This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.' †

JUDGMENT ON THE WHOLE WORLD

30 "As for you, you are to prophesy all these things to them, and say to them:

The LORD roars from on high; he makes his voice heard
from his holy dwelling. †
He roars loudly over his grazing land;
he calls out with a shout, like those who tread grapes, against all the inhabitants
of the earth.
31 The tumult reaches to the ends of the earth because the LORD brings a case
against † the nations.
He enters into judgment with all people. †
As for the wicked, he hands them over to the sword — this is
the LORD's declaration.

32 "This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Pay attention! Disaster spreads
from nation to nation.
A huge storm is stirred up
from the ends of the earth." †

33 Those slain by the LORD † on that day will be scattered from one end of the
earth to the other. They will not be mourned, † gathered, or buried. They will be

like manure on the soil's surface.

34 Wail, you shepherds, and cry out.
Roll in the dust, † you leaders of the flock.
Because the days of your slaughter have come, †
you will fall and become shattered like a precious vase.
35 Flight will be impossible for the shepherds, and escape, for the leaders of the flock.
36 Hear the sound of the shepherds' cry, the wail of the leaders of the flock,
for the LORD is destroying their pasture.
37 Peaceful grazing land will become lifeless because of the LORD's burning anger. †
38 He has left his den like a lion, for their land has become a desolation
because of the sword † of the oppressor, †
because of his burning anger.

25:3 Lit *you; rising early and speaking* **25:4** Lit *to you, rising early and sending* **25:4** Lit *even inclined your ear to hear* **25:16** Or *vomit* **25:23** Or *who live in distant places* **25:26** = Babylon **25:28** Or *When* **25:38** Some Hb mss, LXX, Tg; other Hb mss read *burning*
25:1 2Kg 23:34–24:6; 2Ch 36:4-8; Jr 36:1 **25:3** Jr 1:2 **25:3** 2Ch 36:15; Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14,15; 44:4 **25:4** Jr 7:25-26 **25:5** 2Kg 17:13; Jr 4:18; 18:11; 35:15; Zch 1:4; Ac 3:26 **25:5** Jr 35:15; 40:9; Ezk 36:28; 37:25 **25:6** Dt 8:19; Jr 13:10 **25:6** Dt 31:29; 1Kg 16:7; Jr 44:8 **25:9** Jr 1:13; 16:16; 43:10 **25:9** Is 45:1 **25:9** Jr 4:7; 18:16; 19:8 **25:9** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 19:8; 25:18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 49:17; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **25:10** Jr 7:34; 16:9; 33:11 **25:11** 2Ch 36:21; Is 23:15; Jr 29:10; Dn 9:2; Zch 1:12; 7:5 **25:12** Is 13:19 **25:14** Ps 28:4; Pr 24:12,29; Jr 50:29; Lm 3:64 **25:15** Jb 21:20; Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; 63:6; Jr 49:12; Rv 14:8,10; 18:3 **25:16** Jr 9:16; 24:10; 29:17; 49:37 **25:23** Lv 19:27; Jr 9:26; 49:32 **25:26** Jr 51:41 **25:27** Jr 25:16; Hab 2:16 **25:29** 2Sm 12:11; 1Kg 14:10; 21:21; 2Kg 22:16; 2Ch 34:24; Is 13:11; 31:2; Jr 4:6; 6:19; 11:23; 21:10; 23:12; 44:11; 45:5 **25:29** Dn 9:18 **25:28-29** Jr 49:12-13 **25:30** Dt 26:15; 2Ch 30:27; Jb 37:4; Ps 76:2; Hs 11:10; Jl 3:16; Am 1:2; 3:8 **25:31** Jb 11:5; Jr 2:9; Hs 4:1; 12:3; Mc 6:2 **25:31** Is 66:16 **25:32** Jr 23:19; 30:23 **25:33** Is 66:16 **25:33** Jr 16:4 **25:34** Jb 2:8,12; Jr 6:26; Ezk 27:30 **25:34** Jr 7:32; 19:6 **25:37** Nm 32:14; 2Ch 28:11; Zph 2:2 **25:38** Jr 46:16

25:1 This chapter is out of order chronologically relative to the previous one (see 24:1). Nevertheless, it relates to the "good figs" (24:4-7) through its specification of an extended waiting period ("seventy years" in vv. 11-12; see 27:16; 28:3) and the punishment of Israel's enemies (25:11-14).

25:3 Jeremiah had been preaching for **twenty-three years,** but the people had not listened. He would faithfully continue for many more years (see 32:1).

25:8-9 Judah's stubborn disobedience would lead to judgment at the hands of **all the families of the north** (v. 8; 1:15; see the note on 3:11-13). Not only Judah but **all these surrounding nations** would be punished (v. 9). God calls King **Nebuchadnezzar** of the Babylonians his **servant** not because Nebuchadnezzar willingly serves and worships the God of Israel, but because he is fulfilling God's will and purposes in history (cp. Is 44:28–45:1 where God calls Cyrus his "shepherd" and his "anointed").

25:12 Jeremiah prophesies that when **the seventy years** are completed, God **will punish the king of Babylon** for his guilt. Thus, in God's mysterious providence, he uses Nebuchadnezzar to accomplish his purposes even though Nebuchadnezzar is doing what is evil and must be punished (cp. Is 10:5,12). The seventy years might refer to the time between the destruction of Jerusalem (587 BC) and the rededication of the temple (515 BC). Alternatively, it may refer to the time of Babylon's dominance: from the fall of Nineveh (612 BC) to Cyrus's defeat of Babylon (539 BC).

25:15-17 The preceding judgment evidently concerned not only Judah and some other nations (vv. 9,11) but all the nations (v. 13). This worldwide scope continues with the figurative passing of the **cup of the wine of wrath** to **all the nations** to which Jeremiah was sent (vv. 15,17). These include "all the kingdoms of the world throughout the earth" (v. 26), with Sheshach (Babylon, v. 27; 51:41) as the last to drink from God's wrath.

25:27-29 Drinking from the cup of divine wrath results in falling down and never rising again. This is likewise described as God's sending **a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth.**

25:30-32 The phrase **all the inhabitants of the earth** appears again related to the Lord's judgment of the world (v. 30), as it does elsewhere in Jeremiah (1:14; 13:13). The imagery of God treading **grapes** is used similarly in Isaiah 63:1-6. Even **the ends of the earth** (vv. 31-32) are subject to his entering **into judgment with all people** (v. 31). The **storm** is also a metaphor for judgment in 23:19.

25:33 There will be so many dead that corpses will lie **like manure** on the ground. The judgment of Judah was similarly described (8:2; 9:22; 16:4; 19:7), thus providing another link between its judgment and that of the world (vv. 9-14,17-26).

JEREMIAH'S SPEECH IN THE TEMPLE

26 At the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim † son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: 2 "This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's temple and speak all the words I have commanded you to speak to all Judah's cities that are coming to worship there. Do not hold back a word. † 3 Perhaps they will listen and turn — each from his evil way of life — so that I might relent † concerning the disaster that I plan to do to them because of the evil of their deeds. 4 You are to say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me by living according to my instruction that I set before you † 5 and by listening to the words of my servants the prophets † — whom I have been sending to you time and time again, † † though you did not listen — 6 I will make this temple like Shiloh. † I will make this city an example for cursing for all the nations of the earth.' "

JEREMIAH SEIZED

7 The priests, the prophets, and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the temple of the LORD. 8 When he finished the address the LORD had commanded him to deliver to all the people, immediately the priests, the

prophets, and all the people took hold of him, yelling, “You must surely die!
9 How dare you prophesy in the name of the LORD, ‘This temple will become
like Shiloh and this city will become an uninhabited ruin’! ” Then all the people
crowded around Jeremiah at the LORD’s temple.
10 When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went from the
king’s palace to the LORD’s temple and sat at the entrance of the New Gate of the
LORD’s temple. † † 11 Then the priests and prophets said to the officials and all
the people, “This man deserves the death sentence because he has prophesied
against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.” †

JEREMIAH’S DEFENSE

12 Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people, “The LORD sent me
to prophesy all the words that you have heard against this temple and city. 13 So
now, correct your ways and deeds, † and obey the LORD your God so that he
might relent concerning the disaster he had pronounced against you. 14 As for
me, here I am in your hands; do to me what you think is good and right. 15 But
know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood †
on yourselves, on this city, and on its residents, for it is certain the LORD has sent me
to speak all these things directly to you.”

JEREMIAH RELEASED

16 Then the officials and all the people told the priests and prophets, “This man
doesn’t deserve the death sentence, for he has spoken to us in the name of the
LORD our God! ”
17 Some of the elders of the land stood up † and said to all the assembled
people, 18 “Micah the Moreshite † prophesied in the days of King Hezekiah of
Judah † and said to all the people of Judah, ‘This is what the LORD of Armies
says:

Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become ruins,
and the temple’s mountain will be a high thicket.’ †

19 Did King Hezekiah of Judah and all the people of Judah put him to death?
Did not the king fear the LORD and plead for the LORD’s favor, † † and did not

the LORD relent concerning the disaster he had pronounced against them? † We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves! ”

THE PROPHET URIAH

20 Another man was also prophesying in the name of the LORD — Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath-jearim. † He prophesied against this city and against this land in words like all those of Jeremiah. 21 King Jehoiakim, all his warriors, and all the officials heard his words, and the king tried to put him to death. When Uriah heard, he fled in fear and went to Egypt. 22 But King Jehoiakim sent men to Egypt: Elnathan son of Achbor † and certain other men with him went to Egypt. 23 They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who executed him with the sword and threw his corpse into the burial place of the common people. †

24 But Ahikam † son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

26:5 Lit *you, rising early and sending* **26:10** Many Hb mss, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *the New Gate of the Lord* **26:19** Or *and appease the Lord* **26:23** Lit *the sons of the people*

26:1 2Kg 23:34–24:6; 2Ch 36:4-8 **26:2** Dt 4:2; Ec 3:14 **26:3** Ex 32:12,14; Am 7:3,6; Jnh 3:9-10 **26:4** Lv 26:14 **26:5** Jr 25:3-4 **26:5** Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4 **26:6** Jos 18:1,8-10; 21:2; 1Sm 1:3 **26:10** Jr 36:10; Ezk 46:1,3 **26:11** Jr 38:4 **26:13** Jr 4:18; 7:3-5; 18:11 **26:15** Dt 19:10,13; 21:8-9; 2Kg 21:16; 24:4; Jr 7:6; 22:3,17; Mt 27:4 **26:17** Ac 5:34 **26:18** Mc 1:1,14 **26:18** 2Kg 16:20; 18:4–21:3; Is 36:1–39:8 **26:18** Mc 3:12 **26:19** 2Ch 32:26 **26:19** Ex 32:14; 2Sm 24:16 **26:20** Jos 9:17; 1Sm 6:21; 7:2 **26:22** Jr 36:12 **26:24** 2Kg 22:12,14; Jr 39:14; 40:5–43:6

26:1-6 This message that Jeremiah preached in the temple **courtyard** is reminiscent of Jeremiah 7. Both sermons called for repentance (v. 3; 7:3-11) accompanied by the threat of the temple becoming **like Shiloh** if the people did not listen (vv. 4-6; 7:12-14). Despite their pattern of disobedience (v. 5), God still gave them a chance to repent and avert disaster (v. 3; 18:7-8).

26:7-11 Jeremiah’s message of judgment against the temple and Jerusalem resulted in serious opposition from the **priests, prophets, and all the people** (vv. 7-8), who initially wanted to put him to death (vv. 8,11).

26:12-15 Despite the threat to his life, Jeremiah did not deny or soften the message God had given him to preach. He had been specifically instructed not to “hold back a word” (26:2; see Dt 4:2). Jeremiah reaffirmed that what he had spoken was from God (v. 12) and reiterated the call for repentance (v. 13), while warning them against killing him (vv. 14-15).

26:16-17 The change of heart of **the officials**, **all the people**, and **some . . . elders** is ironic because it raises the question as to why they did not listen to Jeremiah in the first place.

26:18-19 Micah the Moreshite is the prophet whose book bears his name (Mc 1:1). He had ministered several generations before under **Hezekiah**, and his quoted words parallel Micah 3:12.

26:24 In view of Uriah’s execution by the current king (vv. 1,20-23), the sparing of Jeremiah’s life was all the more extraordinary (vv. 16-19,24).

THE YOKE OF BABYLON

27 At the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah † son of Josiah, king of Judah, † this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: † 2 This is what the LORD said to me: “Make chains and yoke bars † for yourself and put them on your neck. † 3 Send word to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon † through messengers who are coming to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem. 4 Command them to go to their masters, saying, ‘This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Tell this to your masters: 5 “By my great strength and outstretched arm, † I made the earth, † and the people, and animals on the face of the earth. I give it to anyone I please. † † 6 So now I have placed all these lands under the authority of my servant † Nebuchadnezzar, † king of Babylon. I have even given him the wild animals to serve him. 7 All nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until the time for his own land comes, and then many nations and great kings will enslave him. †

8 “ ‘ “As for the nation or kingdom that does not serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and does not place its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish by sword, famine, and plague — this is the LORD’s declaration — until through him I have destroyed it. 9 So you should not listen to your prophets, diviners, † dreamers, fortune-tellers, † or sorcerers † who say to you, ‘Don’t serve the king of Babylon! ’ 10 They are prophesying a lie † to you so that you will be removed from your land. I will banish you, and you will perish. 11 But as for the nation that will put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will leave it in its own land, and that nation will cultivate † it and reside in it. This is the LORD’s declaration.” ’ ”

WARNING TO ZEDEKIAH

12 I spoke to King Zedekiah of Judah † in the same way: “Put your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, serve him and his people, and live! 13 Why should you and your people die † by the sword, famine, and plague as the LORD has threatened against any nation that does not serve the king of Babylon? 14 Do

not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you, ‘Don’t serve the king of Babylon,’ for they are prophesying a lie to you. † 15 ‘I have not sent them’ — this is the LORD’s declaration — ‘and they are prophesying falsely in my name; therefore, I will banish you, and you will perish — you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.’ ”
16 Then I spoke to the priests and all these people, saying, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Do not listen to the words of your prophets. They are prophesying to you, claiming, “Look, very soon now the articles of the LORD’s temple will be brought back from Babylon.” † They are prophesying a lie to you. 17 Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon and live! Why should this city become a ruin? † 18 If they are indeed prophets and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them intercede with the LORD of Armies not to let the articles that remain in the LORD’s temple, in the palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem go to Babylon.’ 19 For this is what the LORD of Armies says about the pillars, the basin, † the water carts, † and the rest of the articles that still remain in this city, 20 those King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did not take when he deported Jeconiah † son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon along with all the nobles of Judah † and Jerusalem. 21 Yes, this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says about the articles that remain in the temple of the LORD, in the palace of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: 22 ‘They will be taken to Babylon and will remain there until I attend to them again.’ † This is the LORD’s declaration. ‘Then I will bring them up and restore them to this place.’ ” †

27:1 Some Hb mss, Syr, Arabic; other Hb mss, DSS read *Jehoiakim* **27:1** LXX omits this v. **27:5** Lit *to whomever is upright in my eyes* **27:11** Lit *work* **27:19** Lit *sea* **27:20** = Jehoiachin
27:1 2Kg 24:17; Jr 1:3; 21:1 **27:2** Jr 28:10-13 **27:2** Jr 2:20; 5:5; 30:8 **27:3** Jr 25:21-22 **27:5** Dt 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 1Kg 8:42; Ps 136:12; Jr 32:17,21; Ezk 20:33-34 **27:5** Is 45:12 **27:5** Ps 115:15-16; Dn 4:17 **27:6** Is 44:28; Jr 25:9 **27:6** 2Kg 24:11; 25:22; 2Ch 36:6-13 **27:7** Jr 25:12 **27:9** Dt 18:10,14; Jr 14:14; 29:8 **27:9** Lv 19:26; Dt 18:10,14; 2Ch 33:6 **27:9** Ex 7:11; Dt 18:10; 2Ch 33:6 **27:10** Jr 5:31; 14:14; 20:6; 23:25-26,32; 27:14-16; 29:9,21,31 **27:12** Jr 28:1; 38:17 **27:13** Ezk 18:31 **27:14** Jr 14:14 **27:16** 2Kg 24:13; 2Ch 36:7,10; Jr 28:3 **27:17** Jr 7:34 **27:19** 2Kg 25:13,16; Jr 52:17,20 **27:20** Neh 6:17; 13:17; Jr 39:6 **27:22** Jr 29:10; 32:5 **27:22** Ezr 1:7-11; 5:13-15; 7:19

27:1-7 This prophecy was given during Zedekiah’s reign (vv. 1,3,12; see 26:1), but the subject matter is continuous with the preceding chapters given during Jehoiakim’s rule. As in 25:8-29, **Nebuchadnezzar** and the Babylonians come not only to punish Judah but also neighboring nations (vv. 3,6). On Nebuchadnezzar as God’s **servant** (v. 6), see the note on 25:8-9. **All nations will serve** Babylon for three generations before judgment comes on that country (v. 7; 25:11-14).

27:8-15 Jeremiah's message of judgment was again accompanied by an object lesson (18:1-6; 19:1-2,10; 24:1-3; 25:15-17), this time a **yoke** (vv. 2,8,11,12). The point was that Judah and their neighbors were to submit to Babylon and serve them (vv. 8-12,17; 21:8-10). The alternative was **sword, famine, and plague** (vv. 8,13), despite what the false prophets said (vv. 9-10,14-15).

27:16 The Babylonians had previously looted the temple and taken its **articles** (objects and furnishings) into exile along with Jeconiah and others. The false prophets claimed that Judah should not serve the king of Babylon (vv. 9,14) because these articles would be returned **very soon** (see vv. 19-20; 25:11-12; the note on 28:2-4). But this was a lie.

27:18-22 Not only were the false **prophets** wrong about the temple articles being returned soon (v. 16; 25:11-12) but the remaining articles would **be taken** as well.

HANANIAH'S FALSE PROPHECY

28 In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah, † in the fifth month of the fourth year, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur from Gibeon † said to me in the temple of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people, 2 "This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. † 3 Within two years I will restore to this place all the articles of the LORD's temple † that King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon took from here and transported to Babylon. 4 And I will restore to this place Jeconiah † son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah † who went to Babylon' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' "

JEREMIAH'S RESPONSE TO HANANIAH

5 The prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the temple of the LORD. 6 The prophet Jeremiah said, "Amen! † May the LORD do that. May the LORD make the words you have prophesied come true and may he restore the articles of the LORD's temple and all the exiles from Babylon to this place! 7 Only listen to this message I am speaking in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. 8 The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, disaster, † and plague against many lands and great kingdoms. 9 As for the prophet who prophesies peace — only when the word of the prophet comes true will the prophet be recognized as one the LORD has truly sent." †

HANANIAH BREAKS JEREMIAH'S YOKE

10 The prophet Hananiah then took the yoke bar from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it.† 11 In the presence of all the people Hananiah proclaimed, “This is what the LORD says: ‘In this way, within two years I will break the yoke of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon from the neck of all the nations.’ ” The prophet Jeremiah then went on his way.

THE LORD’S WORD AGAINST HANANIAH

12 After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke bar from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “Go say to Hananiah, ‘This is what the LORD says: You broke a wooden yoke bar, but in its place you will make an iron yoke bar. 14 For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I have put an iron yoke on the neck of all these nations that they might serve King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon,† and they will serve him.† I have even put the wild animals under him.’ ”†
15 The prophet Jeremiah said to the prophet Hananiah, “Listen, Hananiah! The LORD did not send you, but you have led these people to trust in a lie.†
16 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: ‘I am about to send you off the face of the earth. You will die this year because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.’ ”† 17 And the prophet Hananiah died that year in the seventh month.

28:4 = Jehoiachin **28:8** Some Hb mss, Vg read *famine*
28:1 Jr 27:12 **28:1** Jos 9:3 **28:2** Jr 27:12 **28:3** Jr 27:16 **28:4** 2Kg 24:10-17 **28:6** 1Kg 1:36 **28:9** Dt 18:20-22 **28:10** Jr 27:2 **28:14** Dt 28:48 **28:14** Jr 25:11 **28:14** Jr 27:6 **28:15** Jr 29:31; Ezk 13:22 **28:16** Dt 13:5; Is 59:13; Jr 29:32

28:2-4 Jeremiah had worn a yoke in 27:2 to symbolize the yoke of Babylon that had to be borne by Judah (27:8-11). Here the false prophet Hananiah (v. 1) declared in God’s name that this yoke had been **broken** (vv. 2,4) and that both the captured temple articles and the exiles would return home **within two years** (vv. 3-4; 2Kg 24:11-13). This message attempted to support the false hopes given in 27:16 but was contrary to Jeremiah’s true prophetic word in 25:11-12 (see Hs 3:4). Time would prove Hananiah a liar (v. 9).

28:12-17 Hananiah brazenly broke the wooden **yoke bar** from Jeremiah’s neck (v. 10) to add dramatic effect to his own message (vv. 2-4,11). Thus, God said that it would be replaced with one of **iron** (vv. 13-14), symbolizing a much harsher servitude. Moreover, the false prophet would **die** [that] **year** as an act of judgment against him (vv. 16-17) and as evidence of Jeremiah’s truthfulness (v. 9).

JEREMIAH’S LETTER TO THE EXILES

29 This is the text of the letter† that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining exiled elders, the priests, the prophets, and all the people Nebuchadnezzar† had deported from Jerusalem to Babylon.

2 This was after King Jeconiah, † † the queen mother, the court officials, the officials of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the metalsmiths had left Jerusalem. 3 He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, † whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. The letter stated:
4 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the exiles I deported from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5 "Build houses and live in them. † Plant gardens and eat their produce. 6 Find wives for yourselves, and have sons and daughters. Find wives for your sons and give your daughters to men in marriage so that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there; do not decrease. †
7 Pursue the well-being † of the city I have deported you to. Pray to the LORD on its behalf, † for when it thrives, you will thrive."
8 For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Don't let your prophets who are among you † and your diviners deceive you, † and don't listen to the dreams you elicit from them, 9 for they are prophesying falsely to you in my name. I have not sent them." † This is the LORD's declaration.
10 For this is what the LORD says: "When seventy years for Babylon are complete, † I will attend to you and will confirm my promise concerning you to restore you to this place. 11 For I know the plans I have for you" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12 You will call to me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. † 13 You will seek me † and find me when you search for me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you" — this is the LORD's declaration — "and I will restore your fortunes † † and gather you from all the nations and places where I banished you" — this is the LORD's declaration. "I will restore you to the place from which I deported you." †
15 You have said, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon! " 16 But this is what the LORD says concerning the king sitting on David's throne † and concerning all the people living in this city — that is, concerning your brothers who did not go with you into exile. 17 This is what the LORD of Armies says: "I am about to send sword, famine, and plague against them, † and I will make

them like rotten figs that are inedible because they are so bad. 18 I will pursue them with sword, famine, and plague. I will make them a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth — a curse and a desolation, an object of scorn and a disgrace among all the nations † where I have banished them. † 19 I will do this because they have not listened to my words" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the words that I sent to them with my servants the prophets time and time again. † † And you too have not listened." This is the LORD's declaration.
20 Hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon. † 21 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and concerning Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, the ones prophesying a lie to you in my name: † "I am about to hand them over to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and he will kill them before your very eyes. 22 Based on what happens to them, all the exiles of Judah who are in Babylon will create a curse † that says, 'May the LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire!' † 23 because they have committed an outrage † in Israel by committing adultery with their neighbors' wives and have spoken in my name a lie, which I did not command them. I am he who knows, and I am a witness." This is the LORD's declaration.
24 To Shemaiah the Nehelamite you are to say, 25 "This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: You † in your own name have sent out letters to all the people of Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah † son of Maaseiah, and to all the priests, saying, 26 'The LORD has appointed you priest in place of the priest Jehoiada to be the chief officer † in the temple of the LORD, responsible for every madman † who acts like a prophet. You must confine him in the stocks † and an iron collar. 27 So now, why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who has been acting like a prophet among you? † 28 For he has sent word to us in Babylon, claiming, "The exile will be long. Build houses and settle down. Plant gardens and eat their produce." ' " †
29 The priest Zephaniah read this letter in the hearing of the prophet Jeremiah.

A MESSAGE ABOUT SHEMAIAH

30 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 31 "Send a message to all the exiles, saying, 'This is what the LORD says concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite.

Because Shemaiah prophesied to you, though I did not send him, and made you trust a lie, † 32 this is what the LORD says: I am about to punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. There will not be even one of his descendants living among these people, † nor will any ever see the good that I will bring to my people — this is the LORD's declaration — for he has preached rebellion against the LORD.' " †

29:2 = Jehoiachin **29:7** Or *peace* **29:14** Or *will end your captivity* **29:19** Lit *prophets, rising up early and sending* **29:25** Lit *Because you*

29:1 2Sm 11:14-15; 1Kg 21:8-11 **29:1** 2Kg 24:11; 25:22; 2Ch 36:6-13 **29:2** Jr 24:1; 27:20; 28:4 **29:3** 1Ch 6:13 **29:5** Jr 29:28 **29:6** Gn 17:5-6; 35:10-11 **29:7** Ezr 6:10; 1Tm 2:1-2 **29:8** Jr 27:9 **29:8** Jr 27:15 **29:9** Jr 5:31; 14:14; 20:6; 23:25-26,32; 27:10,14-16; 29:21,31 **29:10** Jr 25:12; Dn 9:2 **29:11** Ps 33:10; Jr 26:3; 36:3 **29:12** Dt 30:1-10; Jr 3:12 **29:13** Dt 4:29; 1Ch 28:9; 2Ch 15:2 **29:14** Jb 42:10; Jr 32:44; 49:39; Ezk 16:53; 39:25; Hs 6:11; Zph 2:7 **29:14** Dt 30:3; Jr 30:3 **29:16** Jr 17:25; 22:2,30; 36:30 **29:17** Jr 14:12; 21:9; 24:10 **29:18** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 49:17; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **29:18** Dt 30:1; Jr 8:3; 16:15 **29:19** Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 32:33; 35:14-15; 44:4 **29:20** Jr 24:5 **29:21** Jr 14:14; 29:9 **29:22** Is 65:15 **29:22** Dn 3:6 **29:23** Gn 34:7; Dt 22:21; Jos 7:15 **29:25** Jr 21:1; 37:3; 52:24-27 **29:26** 2Ch 31:13; Jr 20:1 **29:26** 2Kg 9:11; Hs 9:7 **29:26** 2Ch 16:10; Jr 20:2 **29:27** Jr 1:1 **29:28** Jr 29:5 **29:31** Jr 27:10,14-16; 28:15; 29:9,21,23 **29:32** Jr 17:6 **29:32** Jr 28:16

29:1-2 Jeremiah writes a **letter** and sends it, via a messenger, to those who were previously exiled to Babylon in 597 BC. **Jeconiah** and those exiled with him have been mentioned several times in the preceding context (27:20; 28:4,6; 2Kg 24:11-15). They are among the "good figs" (24:1-7).

29:4-10 Contrary to the lies of false prophets who predicted an imminent return (vv. 8-9,21; 27:16; 28:3-4,11), the truth was that there would be an extended waiting period of **seventy years** prior to restoration (v. 10; see the note on 25:12). As a result, the exiles should settle down and **build houses**, **plant gardens**, marry, and have children (vv. 5-6)—the latter instructions in contrast with 16:2-4. They were even to seek the **well-being** of their new city of residence and pray for it (v. 7; see "How Should Christians Relate to Government?" *p. 1213*). This perspective on life in exile is instructive for believers today who are also exiles in a country not their own (1Pt 1:1). Although seemingly a reversal of Genesis 12:3, Israel seeking the welfare of Gentiles' cities and themselves being blessed accords with loving unity between Jews and Gentiles who trust in Christ and passages such as Genesis 14:18-20 and Romans 11:11-14.

29:11 While it is true that from an eternal perspective God has good plans for believers (Ps 84:11; Rm 8:28), this oft-cited verse should be understood first with respect to its addressees: exiles who would have to wait an extended time for God to restore them (vv. 1-2,10). Despite their foreign environment, God's plans were for their **well-being.** Strikingly, this experience of blessing did not have to wait until they returned to the land (23:6; 33:6-9) but could be experienced in exile alongside their Gentile neighbors (v. 7). False prophets had repeatedly given false hope for such peace (6:14; 8:11; 30:5).

29:12-14 Answered prayer, wholehearted seeking of God, and regathering from exile will characterize Israel's glorious restoration (see Dt 4:29; 30:1-5; Is 65:24).

29:16-17 The king is Zedekiah (vv. 3,16) who, along with those remaining in the land, were like **rotten figs** (v. 17; 24:8-10).

29:27-28 The length of **the exile** was a major controversy (27:16; 28:2-4,11), and Shemaiah called for action against Jeremiah because of his insistence that it would be **long** (v. 28; see v. 10; 25:11-12).

29:31-32 Like Hananiah (28:15-17), **Shemaiah** was not sent by God and caused the people to **trust a lie**

(see the note on 17:5-8). He and his family would be similarly punished.

RESTORATION FROM CAPTIVITY

30 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD. 2 "This is what
the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Write on a scroll all the words that I
have spoken to you, † 3 for look, the days are coming" — this is the
LORD's declaration — "when I will restore the fortunes † of my people Israel
and Judah," † says the LORD. "I will restore them to the land I gave to their
ancestors and they will possess it."
4 These are the words the LORD spoke to Israel and Judah. 5 This is what the
LORD says:

We have heard a cry of terror,
of dread — there is no peace.
6 Ask and see whether a male can give birth.
Why then do I see every man
with his hands on his stomach like a woman in labor and every face turned pale?
†
7 How awful that day will be! †
There will be no other like it! †
It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be saved out of it.

8 On that day — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — I will break his
yoke from your neck †
and tear off your chains, †
and strangers will never again enslave him. †
9 They will serve the LORD their God and David their king,
whom I will raise up for them. †

10 As for you, my servant Jacob, †
do not be afraid —
this is the LORD's declaration — and do not be discouraged, Israel,

for without fail I will save you out of a distant place, your descendants,
from the land of their captivity!
Jacob will return and have calm and quiet
with no one to frighten him. †

11 For I will be with you — this is the LORD's declaration — to save you! †
I will bring destruction on all the nations where I have scattered you;
however, I will not bring destruction on you.
I will discipline you justly,
and I will by no means leave you unpunished. †

HEALING ZION'S WOUNDS

12 For this is what the LORD says:

Your injury is incurable;
your wound most severe. †
13 You have no defender for your case. †
There is no remedy for your sores,
and no healing for you. †
14 All your lovers have forgotten you; †
they no longer look for you,
for I have struck you as an enemy would,
with the discipline † of someone cruel, †
because of your enormous guilt
and your innumerable sins.
15 Why do you cry out about your injury?
Your pain has no cure!
I have done these things to you
because of your enormous guilt
and your innumerable sins. †
16 Nevertheless, all who devoured you will be devoured, †
and all your adversaries — all of them — will go off into exile.
Those who plunder you will be plundered,
and all who raid you will be raided. †
17 But I will bring you health †

and will heal you of your wounds —
this is the LORD's declaration — for they call you Outcast,
Zion whom no one cares about.

RESTORATION OF THE LAND

18 This is what the LORD says:

I will certainly restore the fortunes † of Jacob's tents †
and show compassion † on his dwellings.
Every city will be rebuilt on its mound;
every citadel will stand on its proper site.
19 Thanksgiving will come out of them, a sound of rejoicing.
I will multiply them, and they will not decrease; †
I will honor them, and they will not be insignificant.
20 His children will be as in past days; his congregation will be established in my presence.
I will punish all his oppressors. †
21 Jacob's leader will be one of them; his ruler will issue from him.
I will invite him to me, and he will approach me, †
for who would otherwise risk his life to approach me?
This is the LORD's declaration.
22 You will be my people, and I will be your God. †

THE WRATH OF GOD

23 Look, a storm from the LORD! †
Wrath has gone out,
a churning storm.
It will whirl about the heads of the wicked.
24 The LORD's burning anger will not turn back until he has completely fulfilled the purposes of his heart.
In time to come you will understand it. †

30:3 Or *will end the captivity* **30:13** Or *No one pleads that your sores should be healed. There is no remedy for you.* **30:18** Or *certainly end the captivity*
30:2 Ex 17:14; 34:1,27; Nm 5:23; Dt 17:18; 27:3; 31:19; Is 30:8; Jr 36:2,28; Ezk 43:11; Hs 8:12; Hab 2:2;

1Co 14:37; Rv 1:11; 10:4; 14:13; 19:9; 21:5 **30:3** Jr 33:7,11; Ezk 37:15-23; 39:25; Jl 3:1; Am 9:14 **30:6** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **30:7** Jl 2:11; Zph 1:14 **30:7** Dn 12:1 **30:8** Gn 27:40; Jr 2:20; 28:4,11; Ezk 34:27; Nah 1:13 **30:8** Jr 27:2 **30:8** Ezk 34:27 **30:9** Is 55:3-5; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hs 3:5; Lk 1:69; Ac 13:23,34 **30:10** Is 41:8; 44:2; 45:4; 48:20; Jr 46:27; Ezk 28:25; 37:25 **30:10** Lv 26:6; Jr 46:27; Ezk 34:28; 39:26; Mc 4:4; Zph 3:13 **30:11** 2Kg 19:34; Is 37:35; Jr 15:20 **30:10-11** Ex 34:7; Jr 46:27-28 **30:12** Jr 10:19; 15:18; 17:9 **30:13** Hs 5:13 **30:14** Jr 4:30; Lm 1:19 **30:14** Jr 2:30; 5:3; 7:28 **30:14** Is 13:9 **30:15** Jr 5:6; Am 5:12 **30:16** Jr 10:25 **30:16** Ezk 39:10; Hab 2:8 **30:17** Is 58:8; Jr 8:22; 33:6 **30:18** Jr 30:3 **30:18** Jr 12:15; 31:20; 33:26; 42:12 **30:19** Jr 29:6 **30:20** Jdg 10:12; Is 19:20-25 **30:21** Nm 16:5 **30:22** Jr 11:4; 24:7; 31:33 **30:23** Ps 83:15; Is 29:6; Zch 9:14 **30:23-24** Jr 23:19-20

30:1-3 Jeremiah 30–31 focuses more extensively on the future (or eschatological) salvation of Israel than other sections of the book. Its message was to be written **on a scroll**, thus explicitly emphasizing that it is for others to read. What is written in Jeremiah is thus not only judgment (25:13; 36:2,28) but also salvation (1:10). This hopeful section begins the repetition of God's promise to **restore the fortunes** of his people and bring them back **to the land** (23:3; 29:14).

30:4 The phrasing of this verse resembles Exodus 19:6; 35:1; and Deuteronomy 1:1.

30:5-9 The terrible **day** of judgment is compared to birth pains (vv. 6-7; see Mt 24:8; 1Th 5:3), but Jacob **will be saved out of it** (v. 7; 23:6). The foreign **yoke** will be broken once and for all (27:2,8-12; 28:2-14; Is 9:4; 10:27; 14:25). Rather than serving foreigners, Israel will **serve the LORD their God** and **David their king** (v. 9). Hosea 3:5 similarly predicts that Israel will seek God and David in the last days. Both passages use the name "David" to refer to the Messiah (see Ezk 37:24-25), whom God will **raise up** in fulfillment of the covenant with his forefather (23:5; Dt 18:18; Ezk 34:23; Am 9:11).

30:17 Despite their incurable yet deserved wound (vv. 12-15; 14:17-19; Is 1:5-6), God would **heal** them (see 33:6). Names like **Outcast** are used of **Zion** in Isaiah 62:4.

30:18 God again declares that he will **restore the fortunes** of Jacob (see v. 3), this time in terms of their **tents** and **dwellings** (see Nm 24:5; Is 54:2).

30:21 The Hebrew text translated **his ruler will issue from him** resembles messianic passages elsewhere (see Nm 24:17-19; Mc 5:2), and this person is naturally equated with the Righteous Branch in 23:5. His special access to God recalls the ministry of Moses (Ex 20:21; 24:2).

30:23-24 These verses are almost identical to 23:19-20 (see the note on 23:16-20).

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE

31 "At that time" — this is the LORD's declaration — "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, † and they will be my people."

2 This is what the LORD says:

The people who survived the sword
found favor in the wilderness. †
When Israel went to find rest, †
3 the LORD appeared to him † from far away.
I have loved you with an everlasting love; †

therefore, I have continued to extend faithful love to you. †

4 Again I will build you so that you will be rebuilt, Virgin Israel. †

You will take up your tambourines again †
and go out in joyful dancing.

5 You will plant vineyards again †
on the mountains of Samaria;

the planters will plant and will enjoy the fruit. †

6 For there will be a day when watchmen will call out in the hill country of Ephraim,

"Come, let's go up to Zion, †
to the LORD our God! "

GOD'S PEOPLE BROUGHT HOME

7 For this is what the LORD says:

Sing with joy for Jacob;
shout for the foremost of the nations!
Proclaim, praise, and say,

"LORD, save your people, †

the remnant of Israel! " †

8 Watch! I am going to bring them from the northern land.

I will gather them from remote regions of the earth † — the blind and the lame will be with them, †
along with those who are pregnant and those about to give birth.

They will return here as a great assembly! †

9 They will come weeping, but I will bring them back with consolation. † †

I will lead them to wadis filled with water, by a smooth way where they will not stumble, †
for I am Israel's Father,

and Ephraim is my firstborn. †

10 Nations, hear the word of the LORD, and tell it among the far off coasts and islands! †

Say, “The one who scattered Israel will gather him. †
He will watch over him as a shepherd guards his flock, 11 for the LORD has ransomed Jacob and redeemed him from the power of one stronger than he.” †
12 They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; †
they will be radiant with joy †
because of the LORD’s goodness, because of the grain, the new wine, the fresh oil, †
and because of the young of the flocks and herds.
Their life will be like an irrigated garden, and they will no longer grow weak from hunger.
13 Then the young women will rejoice with dancing, while young and old men rejoice together.
I will turn their mourning into joy, †
give them consolation,
and bring happiness out of grief.
14 I will refresh the priests with an abundance, † †
and my people will be satisfied with my goodness.
This is the LORD’s declaration.

LAMENT TURNED TO JOY

15 This is what the LORD says:

A voice was heard in Ramah, †
a lament with bitter weeping —
Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted for her children
because they are no more. †

16 This is what the LORD says:

Keep your voice from weeping
and your eyes from tears,
for the reward for your work will come —

this is the LORD's declaration — and your children will return from the enemy's land.

17 There is hope for your future † — this is the LORD's declaration — and your children will return to their own territory.

18 I have surely heard Ephraim moaning, "You disciplined me,
and I have been disciplined like an untrained calf. †
Take me back, so that I can return,
for you, LORD, are my God. †

19 After my return, I felt regret; After I was instructed, I struck my thigh in grief. †
I was ashamed and humiliated †
because I bore the disgrace of my youth."

20 Isn't Ephraim a precious son to me, a delightful child? †
Whenever I speak against him,
I certainly still think about him.
Therefore, my inner being yearns for him;
I will truly have compassion on him. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

21 Set up road markers † for yourself; establish signposts!
Keep the highway in mind,
the way you have traveled.
Return, Virgin Israel!
Return to these cities of yours.

22 How long will you turn here and there, faithless daughter? †
For the LORD creates something new in the land † — a female † will shelter † a man.

23 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: "When I restore their fortunes, † they will once again speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities: 'May the LORD bless you, righteous settlement, † holy mountain.' †

24 Judah and all its cities will live in it together — also farmers and those who

move † with the flocks — 25 for I satisfy the thirsty person and feed all those who are weak." †
26 At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been most pleasant to me.
27 "Look, the days are coming" — this is the LORD's declaration — "when I will sow the house of Israel † and the house of Judah with the seed of people and the seed of animals. 28 Just as I watched over them to uproot and to tear them down, to demolish and to destroy, and to cause disaster, † so will I watch over them to build and to plant them" † — this is the LORD's declaration. 29 "In those days, it will never again be said,

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge.' †

30 Rather, each will die for his own iniquity. † Anyone who eats sour grapes — his own teeth will be set on edge.

THE NEW COVENANT

31 "Look, the days are coming" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "when I will make a new covenant † with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. 32 This one will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt — my covenant that they broke even though I am their master" † † — the LORD's declaration. 33 "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days" — the LORD's declaration. "I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' † for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them" † — this is the LORD's declaration. "For I will forgive their iniquity † and never again remember their sin.
35 "This is what the LORD says:

The one who gives the sun for light by day, the fixed order of moon and stars for light by night, who stirs up the sea and makes its waves roar † — the

LORD of Armies is his name: 36 If this fixed order departs from before me —
this is the LORD's declaration — only then will Israel's descendants cease
to be a nation before me forever. †

37 "This is what the LORD says:

Only if the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below explored, will I reject all of
Israel's descendants
because of all they have done —
this is the LORD's declaration.

38 "Look, the days are coming" — the LORD's declaration — "when the city †
from the Tower of Hananel † to the Corner Gate † will be rebuilt for the LORD.
39 A measuring line will once again stretch out straight to the hill of Gareb †
and then turn toward Goah. 40 The whole valley — the corpses, the ashes, and
all the fields as far as the Kidron Valley † to the corner of the Horse Gate † to
the east — will be holy to the LORD. It will never be uprooted or demolished
again."

31:3 LXX; MT reads *me* **31:9** LXX; MT reads *supplications* **31:14** Lit *fatness* **31:22** Or *new on earth* **31:22** Or *woman* **31:22** Or *female surrounds*, or *female courts* ; Hb obscure **31:23** Or *I end their captivity* **31:24** Tg, Vg, Aq, Sym; MT reads *and they will move* **31:32** Or *husband* **31:38** = Jerusalem

31:1 Jr 30:22 **31:2** Ex 33:12-17 **31:2** Jos 23:1; 2Sm 7:11; 1Kg 8:56; 1Ch 23:25 **31:3** Is 54:8 **31:3** Ps 36:10; 109:12 **31:4** Jr 18:13; 31:21; Am 5:2 **31:4** Ex 15:20; Jdg 11:34; 1Sm 18:6 **31:5** Am 5:11 **31:5** Lv 19:23,25; Dt 20:6; 28:30 **31:6** Is 2:3 **31:7** Ps 28:9; Hab 3:13; Zch 8:7 **31:7** Is 10:20; Jr 6:9; Ezk 11:13; Mc 2:12; Zph 3:13 **31:8** Neh 1:9; Is 43:6; Jr 32:37; Ezk 34:13; 37:21; 39:27; Zch 10:8,10 **31:8** Lv 21:18; Mt 11:5; Lk 14:13 **31:8** Ezk 38:15 **31:9** Jb 15:11 **31:9** Pr 4:12; Is 63:13; Ezk 36:15 **31:9** Ex 4:22-23; Dt 32:19; Is 63:16; 64:8; Hs 11:1; Mal 2:10; Jn 8:41 **31:10** Is 40:15; Jr 25:22; 47:4 **31:10** Dt 30:3; Is 11:12; Ezk 11:17; 20:34,41; 28:25; Mc 4:6; Zph 3:19 **31:11** Is 41:14; 43:1; 44:23; 48:20; 60:16 **31:12** Ps 71:23; 92:4; Is 49:13; Zch 2:10 **31:12** Ps 34:5; Is 60:5 **31:12** Nm 18:12; Dt 7:13; Hg 1:11 **31:13** Ps 105:43; Is 35:10; 51:3,11; Lm 5:15 **31:14** Dt 31:20; Ps 36:8; Is 30:23 **31:15** Jos 18:25; Jdg 4:5; 1Sm 1:19; 19:18; Jr 40:1 **31:15** Mt 2:18 **31:17** Jr 5:31; 23:20; 29:11 **31:18** Hs 4:16; 10:11 **31:18** Ps 40:5; Jr 3:22 **31:19** Ezk 21:12 **31:19** Ps 35:4; Ezr 9:6; Is 41:11; Jr 8:12; 14:3; 22:22; Ezk 36:32 **31:20** Is 5:7; Hs 11:1 **31:20** Jr 12:15; 30:18; 33:26; 42:12; Hs 11:4,8-9 **31:21** 2Kg 23:17; Ezk 39:15 **31:22** Jr 3:14,22; 49:4 **31:23** Jb 8:6; Jr 50:7 **31:23** Ps 2:6; 3:4; 48:1; 99:9 **31:25** Ps 107:9; Is 55:1; Jn 4:14; 6:35; 7:35; Rv 21:6; 22:17 **31:27** Ezk 36:9,11; Hs 2:23 **31:28** Jr 21:10; 39:16; 44:27; Am 9:4 **31:28** Jr 1:10; 18:7-10; 44:27 **31:29** Ezk 18:2 **31:30** Dt 24:6; Ezk 18:20 **31:31-34** Heb 8:8-12; 10:16-17 **31:31** Ezk 37:26; Hs 2:18; Lk 22:20; 1Co 11:25; 2Co 3:6; Heb 9:15; 12:24 **31:32** Is 54:4; 62:4; Mal 2:11 **31:34** Jdg 2:10; 1Sm 3:7; Hs 2:20 **31:34** Est 1:20; Jr 6:13; 8:10; 42:1,8; 44:12 **31:34** Nm 14:19; Ps 103:3; Jr 36:3 **31:35** Ps 46:3; Is 51:15; Jr 5:22 **31:36** Jr 33:18; 35:19 **31:38** Neh 3:1; 12:39 **31:38** 2Kg 14:13; 2Ch 26:9; Zch 14:10 **31:39** Zch 2:1 **31:40** 2Kg 23:4 **31:40** Neh 3:28

31:1 The harmonious relationship between God and his people is repeatedly mentioned as a crucial aspect of future salvation (see 24:7; 30:22; 31:33). God had always desired this (7:23; 11:4), but Israel's ongoing disobedience had made it impossible (13:11).

31:2-3 God's love for Israel is an **everlasting love** (Rm 8:38-39). Even their punishment and exile **far away** could not change that (see 30:10). **Wilderness** is used similarly in Isaiah 35:6; 43:19-20; and Hosea 2:3.

31:4-5 The verbs **build** and **plant** deliberately repeat the restorative actions predicted in 1:9-10 (see note).

31:6 The call to **go up to Zion** parallels Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2.

31:7-11 As in 23:3, God will bring back the **remnant of Israel** from exile. Jeremiah uses the phrase **from remote regions of the earth** (v. 8; see Is 41:9) to describe Babylon as well as the furthest distances known at the time (3:12-14). This group will **return** like **a great assembly** (v. 8; Ps 22:25; Is 10:21) and **will not stumble** (v. 9), as they had before (6:15; 8:12). This redemption and display of power will be of worldwide significance (vv. 10-11).

31:12 The coming **on the heights of Zion** and being **radiant with joy because of the LORD's goodness** echoes Isaiah 2:2 and Hosea 3:5 (see the note on v. 6).

31:15-17 The homecoming of all Israel will be full of joy (vv. 7,13), so Israel can be comforted over the loss of her children to exile (vv. 15-17). Matthew 2:16-18 relates **Rachel weeping for her children** (v. 15) to Herod's slaughter of the innocents after the birth of Jesus. The Hebrew words translated **hope** and **future** also appear in 29:11 in connection with the return from exile.

31:18-20 Ephraim's prayer, **Take me back, so that I can return**, is essentially the same as that of Lamentations 5:21a. Despite his wanderings, he remains **a precious son** to God (v. 20), Israel's Father (v. 9).

31:22 The creation of **something new in the land** draws on new creation themes (see Ps 51:10; Is 65:17-18). The difficult phrase, **a female will shelter a man**, has been interpreted variously, with some interpreters equating the woman with Israel, who will then seek God, her husband.

31:27 God's promise to **sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah** refers to repopulating the people after the devastation of conquest and exile at the hands of the Babylonians.

31:28 The language used here draws on 1:10-12.

31:29-30 A dramatic, permanent change is once again depicted through something that **will never again be said** (3:16; 16:14; 23:7). Rather than children suffering for the sins of their fathers (e.g., children born in exile), individuals will suffer for their own sins (v. 30). This focus on individual responsibility is foundational for the new covenant (31:35-37), which deals with internal transformation rather than adherence to a set of external standards.

31:31-34 This is the most important passage in the OT directly predicting a **new covenant** and is the only one that uses that expression (v. 31; Lk 22:20; 2Co 3:6). God's covenant with Israel at Sinai had been broken repeatedly since its inception (v. 32; 7:25-26; Ex 32:1-4), but this covenant would be kept so that God and his people would be in relationship forever (v. 33; 7:23; 11:4). Unlike before (17:1), his instruction will be internalized **on their hearts**, not merely written on stone tablets (Ex 24:12; 31:18). In God's previous covenant with Israel at Sinai, some members of the covenant were true believers while others only obeyed the stipulations outwardly yet had untransformed hearts. In the new covenant, however, **they will all know** God and will no longer need to **teach** each other (v. 34; 24:7). This means that all members of the new covenant are true believers fully reconciled to God, a complete reversal of the previous situation (see the notes on 5:1-6; 6:13-15). Their sins will also be permanently put away and God will **never again remember** them (see 33:8; Mc 7:19).

31:35-37 God's "everlasting love" for Israel was already declared in v. 3 and is demonstrated through the "new covenant" (v. 31). These verses powerfully reaffirm his faithfulness to them (see Rm 11:29).

JEREMIAH'S LAND PURCHASE

32 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year
of King Zedekiah † of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of
Nebuchadnezzar. † 2 At that time, the army of the king of Babylon was
besieging Jerusalem, † and the prophet Jeremiah was imprisoned in the guard's
courtyard † in the palace of the king of Judah. 3 King Zedekiah of Judah had
imprisoned him, saying, "Why are you prophesying as you do? You say, 'This is
what the LORD says: Look, I am about to hand this city over to Babylon's king,
and he will capture it. 4 King Zedekiah of Judah will not escape from the
Chaldeans; indeed, he will certainly be handed over to Babylon's king. They will
speak face to face † and meet eye to eye. † 5 He will take Zedekiah to Babylon,
where he will stay until I attend to him — this is the LORD's declaration. For you
will fight the Chaldeans, but you will not succeed.' " †
6 Jeremiah replied, "The word of the LORD came to me: 7 Watch! Hanamel, the
son of your uncle Shallum, is coming to you to say, 'Buy my field in Anathoth †
for yourself, for you own the right of redemption † to buy it.'
8 "Then, as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to the guard's
courtyard and urged me, 'Please buy my field in Anathoth in the land of
Benjamin, for you own the right of inheritance and redemption. Buy it for
yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9 So I bought the
field in Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel, and I weighed out the silver to
him † — seventeen shekels † of silver. 10 I recorded it on a scroll, † sealed it,
called in witnesses, and weighed out the silver on the scales. 11 I took the
purchase agreement — the sealed copy with its terms and conditions and the
open copy — 12 and gave the purchase agreement to Baruch † son of Neriah,
son of Mahseiah. I did this in the sight of my cousin † Hanamel, the witnesses
who had signed the purchase agreement, and all the Judeans sitting in the
guard's courtyard.
13 "I charged Baruch in their sight, 14 'This is what the LORD of Armies, the God
of Israel, says: Take these scrolls — this purchase agreement with the sealed

copy and this open copy — and put them in an earthen storage jar so they will last a long time. 15 For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields, and vineyards will again be bought in this land.’ †
16 “After I had given the purchase agreement to Baruch, son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD: † 17 Oh, Lord GOD! You yourself made the heavens and earth † by your great power † and with your outstretched arm. Nothing is too difficult for you! † 18 You show faithful love to thousands but lay the fathers’ iniquity on their sons’ laps after them, † great and mighty God † whose name is the LORD of Armies, 19 the one great in counsel and powerful in action. Your eyes are on all the ways of the children of men † in order to reward each person according to his ways and as the result of his actions. † 20 You performed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt † and still do today, both in Israel and among all mankind. You made a name † for yourself, as is the case today. 21 You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror. † 22 You gave them this land you swore to give to their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey. † 23 They entered and possessed it, but they did not obey you or live according to your instructions. † They failed to perform all you commanded them to do, † and so you have brought all this disaster on them. 24 Look! Siege ramps † have come against the city to capture it, and the city, as a result of the sword, famine, and plague, has been handed over to the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you have spoken has happened. Look, you can see it! 25 Yet you, Lord GOD, have said to me, ‘Purchase the field and call in witnesses’ — even though the city has been handed over to the Chaldeans! ”
26 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 27 “Look, I am the LORD, the God over every creature. † Is anything too difficult for me? † 28 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the Chaldeans, † to Babylon’s king Nebuchadnezzar, and he will capture it. 29 The Chaldeans who are fighting against this city will come and set this city on fire. They will burn it, including the houses where incense has been burned to Baal on their rooftops and where drink offerings have been poured out to other gods to anger me. †

30 From their youth, the Israelites and Judeans have done nothing but what is
evil in my sight! They have done nothing but anger me by the work of their
hands” † —this is the LORD’s declaration— 31 “for this city has caused my
wrath and fury from the day it was built until now. I will therefore remove it
from my presence † 32 because of all the evil the Israelites and Judeans have
done to anger me—they, their kings, † their officials, their priests, and their
prophets, the men of Judah, and the residents of Jerusalem. 33 They have turned
their backs to me and not their faces. † Though I taught them time and time
again, † † they do not listen and receive discipline. 34 They have placed their
abhorrent things † in the house that bears my name and have defiled it. 35 They
have built the high places of Baal in Ben Hinnom Valley to sacrifice their sons
and daughters in the fire † to Molech † —something I had not commanded
them. I had never entertained the thought † that they do this detestable act
causing Judah to sin!
36 “Now therefore, this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to this city
about which you said, ‘It has been handed over to Babylon’s king through
sword, famine, and plague’: 37 I will certainly gather them from all the lands
where I have banished them in my anger, rage and intense wrath, and I will
return them to this place and make them live in safety. † 38 They will be my
people, and I will be their God. † 39 I will give them integrity of heart †
action † so that they will fear me always, for their good and for the good of their
descendants after them.
40 “I will make a permanent covenant with them: † I will never turn away from
doing good to them, and I will put fear of me in their hearts so they will never
again turn away from me. † 41 I will take delight in them to do what is good for
them, and with all my heart and mind I will faithfully plant them in this land. †
42 “For this is what the LORD says: Just as I have brought all this terrible disaster
on these people, † so am I about to bring on them all the good I am promising
them. 43 Fields will be bought in this land about which you are saying, †
desolation † without people or animals; it has been handed over to the
Chaldeans! ’ 44 Fields will be purchased, the transaction written on a scroll and

sealed, † and witnesses will be called on in the land of Benjamin, † in the areas surrounding Jerusalem, and in Judah's cities — the cities of the hill country, the cities of the Judean foothills, and the cities of the Negev — because I will restore their fortunes." †

This is the LORD's declaration.

32:4 Lit *His mouth will speak with his mouth* **32:9** About seven ounces **32:12** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *uncle* **32:19** Or *Adam* **32:33** Lit *them, rising up early and teaching* **32:35** Lit *to make their sons and daughters pass through the fire* **32:35** Lit *them, and it did not arise on my heart* **32:39** Lit *give them one heart and one way* **32:44** Or *will end their captivity*

32:1 2Kg 24:17-20; 2Ch 36:10-12; Jr 27:1-11 **32:1** Jr 29:1 **32:2** Jr 39:1 **32:2** Neh 3:25; Jr 33:1; 37:21; 38:6; 39:14 **32:4** Jr 34:3 **32:3-5** Jr 21:3-7; 27:22; 34:2-3; 37:11-14 **32:7** 1Kg 2:26; Jr 1:1; 11:21,23 **32:7** Lv 25:24-52; Ru 4:1-7 **32:9** Gn 23:16; Zch 11:12 **32:10** Jr 32:44 **32:12** Jr 36:4-32; 43:3,6; 45:1-2 **32:15** Jr 32:43 **32:16** Jr 42:4 **32:17** 2Kg 19:15; 2Ch 2:12; Is 37:16 **32:17** Dt 4:37; Neh 1:10; Jr 27:5 **32:17** Gn 18:14; Ex 3:20; 15:11; 34:10; Dt 17:8; Ps 40:5; 78:4; Jr 32:27; Zch 8:6; Mt 17:20; 19:26 **32:18** Ex 20:5-6; 34:7; Nm 14:18; Dt 5:9-10; 7:9 **32:18** Neh 9:32 **32:19** Jr 4:18; 17:10 **32:20** Ex 1–15; Dt 6:22; Neh 9:10 **32:20** Is 63:12,14; Dn 9:15 **32:21** Ex 7:3; Dt 4:34; 6:22; 26:8; 34:11; Ps 78:43; 135:9 **32:22** Ex 3:8,17; Lv 20:24; Nm 13:27; Dt 26:9 **32:23** Nm 14:22; Dt 28:45,62; Jos 5:6; Jdg 6:10; 2Kg 18:12; Ps 78:10; 81:11; Is 42:24; Jr 9:13; 32:23; 44:10 **32:23** Jr 11:8 **32:24** 2Kg 25:1; Jr 6:6; Ezk 4:2 **32:27** Nm 16:22; 27:16 **32:27** Gn 18:4 **32:28** Jr 32:3 **32:29** Jr 11:17; 44:3,8 **32:30** Jr 25:7 **32:31** 2Kg 23:27; 24:3 **32:32** Jr 2:26 **32:33** 2Ch 29:6; Jr 2:27; 18:17; Ezk 8:16 **32:33** Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 35:14,15; 44:4 **32:34** Jr 4:1; 7:30; Ezk 5:11 **32:35** Lv 18:21; 20:2-5; Dt 18:10; 2Kg 23:10; Jr 7:31; 19:4 **32:37** Dt 12:10; Is 11:12; Jr 23:3; 29:14; 30:10; 31:8-14; Ezk 11:17; 28:26; 34:25,28; 36:24 **32:38** Jr 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; Ezk 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23 **32:39** Ezk 11:19 **32:40** Gn 17:7,13,19; Is 55:3; 61:8; Jr 50:5; Ezk 16:60; 37:26 **32:40** Dt 19:20; Is 2:4; 60:18; Jr 3:16; 30:8; 31:34; Ezk 29:16; Jl 2:26-27; Am 9:15; Mc 4:3; Nah 1:15; Zph 3:11; Heb 8:11; 10:17 **32:41** Jr 24:6 **32:42** Jr 31:28 **32:43** Jr 32:15 **32:43** Jr 33:10 **32:44** Jr 32:10 **32:44** Jr 17:26

32:1-5 Nebuchadnezzar's siege of **Jerusalem** had begun, and the city would not hold out much longer (vv. 1-2; 52:4-6,12). **King Zedekiah . . . imprisoned** Jeremiah for declaring that Jerusalem would be defeated (vv. 3-5). The preceding context includes God saying that he would fight against Zedekiah personally (21:3-7) and that therefore he should to surrender to the Babylonians (21:8-10) and serve them (27:1-15).

32:6-12 Although the nation was about to fall, God nevertheless instructed Jeremiah to purchase a **field** in his hometown from a relative (vv. 6-7; 1:1). His **right of redemption** had to do with being closely related to **Hanamel** (v. 8; Lv 25:25; Ru 4:3). Though this was a terrible time to buy property (see 32:25), Jeremiah's obedience is evident not only in his purchase of the field (v. 9) but also in his adherence to standard procedures for such a transaction (vv. 10-12).

32:13-15 The purpose of Jeremiah's actions was to testify that after **a long time** (v. 14; 29:28) such transactions would again be commonplace (v. 15). In other words, Israel would be brought back home from exile and take possession of their land again (see 31:23-24).

32:25 In contrast with the rest of his prayer (vv. 16-24), this concluding remark shows, despite his obedience, Jeremiah's struggle with the Lord's command to buy the field (see the note on 15:19-21).

32:27 Previously, Jeremiah confessed God's power by saying, "Nothing is too difficult for you" (v. 17). Here God essentially quotes Jeremiah's words back to him: Isaiah **anything too difficult for me?**

32:28-38 God shortly would indeed give Judah into the hands of the Babylonians because of their many sins (vv. 28-35), but the day would come when he would gather them from various lands to **be** [his] **people** (vv. 36-38). Jeremiah had focused on the former as it related to the land purchase (vv. 16-25) and

momentarily forgot the promises of restoration he had proclaimed many times previously (e.g., 24:5-7; 29:10-14). Living **in safety** (v. 37) is associated with the messianic reign (23:6).

32:39-40 Likely related to the promise to "give them a heart to know" him in 24:7, God promises to **give them integrity of heart** so that **they will fear** [him]. When directed toward God, the word "fear" in the OT often refers to a faith commitment. Likewise, like the promise of a "new covenant" in which he would write his law on their hearts (31:31-33; Dt 6:6), God promises **a permanent covenant** in which he **will put fear of** [himself] **in their hearts** (v. 40). The result is that they will **never again turn away**.

32:42-44 Jeremiah's purchase of the field was thus a testimony to **all the good** that God would do for Israel. This consists of their restoration to the land (vv. 43-44) along with the other blessings of the new covenant (vv. 37-41).

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

33 While he was still confined in the guard's courtyard, † the word of the
LORD came to Jeremiah a second time: 2 "The LORD who made the
earth, † the LORD who forms it to establish it, † the LORD is his name, † says
this: 3 Call to me and I will answer you † and tell you great and
incomprehensible things you do not know. † 4 For this is what the LORD, the
God of Israel, says concerning the houses of this city and the palaces of Judah's
kings, the ones torn down for defense against the assault ramps and the sword: †
5 The people coming to fight the Chaldeans will fill the houses with the corpses
of their own men that I strike down in my wrath and rage. I have hidden my
face † from this city because of all their evil. 6 Yet I will certainly bring
health † and healing to it and will indeed heal them. I will let them experience
the abundance † of true peace. † 7 I will restore the fortunes † of Judah and of
Israel and will rebuild them as in former times. † 8 I will purify them from all
the iniquity they have committed against me, † and I will forgive all the
iniquities they have committed against me, rebelling against me. 9 This city will
bear on my behalf a name of joy, praise, and glory † before all the nations of the
earth, who will hear of all the prosperity I will give them. They will tremble with
awe because of all the good and all the peace † I will bring about for them.
10 "This is what the LORD says: In this place, which you say is a ruin, † without
people or animals — that is, in Judah's cities and Jerusalem's streets that are a
desolation without people, without inhabitants, and without animals — there will

be heard again [11] a sound of joy and gladness, the voice of the groom and the bride, † and the voice of those saying,

Give thanks to the LORD of Armies, for the LORD is good; his faithful love endures forever

as they bring thank offerings to the temple of the LORD. For I will restore the fortunes of the land as in former times, says the LORD.

[12] "This is what the LORD of Armies says: In this desolate place — without people or animals — and in all its cities there will once more be a grazing land where shepherds may rest flocks. † [13] The flocks will again pass under the hands of the one who counts them † in the cities of the hill country, † the cities of the Judean foothills, the cities of the Negev, the land of Benjamin — the areas around Jerusalem and in Judah's cities, says the LORD.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID

[14] "Look, the days are coming" — this is the LORD's declaration — "when I will fulfill the good promise
that I have spoken
concerning the house of Israel
and the house of Judah. †

[15] In those days and at that time I will cause a Righteous Branch †
to sprout up for David,
and he will administer justice
and righteousness in the land.

[16] In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely, †
and this is what she will be named:
The LORD Is Our Righteousness. †

[17] "For this is what the LORD says: David will never fail to have a man sitting on the throne of the house of Israel. † [18] The Levitical priests will never fail to have a man always before me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to make sacrifices." †

[19] The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: [20] "This is what the LORD says: If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night so that

day and night cease to come at their regular time, † 21 then also my covenant
with my servant David † may be broken. If that could happen, then he would
not have a son reigning on his throne and the Levitical priests would not be my
ministers. † 22 Even as the stars of heaven cannot be counted, and the sand of
the sea cannot be measured, † so too I will make innumerable the descendants
of my servant David and the Levites who minister to me."
23 The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 24 "Have you not noticed what these
people have said? They say, 'The LORD has rejected the two families he had
chosen.' † My people are treated with contempt and no longer regarded as a
nation among them. 25 This is what the LORD says: If I do not keep my covenant
with the day and with the night, and if I fail to establish the fixed order of heaven
and earth, † 26 then I might also reject the descendants of Jacob and of my
servant David. That is, I would not take rulers from his descendants to rule over
the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But in fact, I will restore their
fortunes † and have compassion on them." †

33:2 LXX; MT reads *made it* **33:6** Or *fragrance* ; Hb obscure **33:7** Or *will end the captivity*, also in v. 11 **33:16** = *Yahweh-zidkenu* **33:26** Or *I will end their captivity*

33:1 Jr 32:2 **33:2** Gn 2:18-19 **33:2** Ex 6:3 **33:3** Ps 91:15; Jr 29:12 **33:3** Is 48:6 **33:4** Jr 32:24 **33:5** Dt 31:17; 32:20; Is 54:8 **33:6** Is 58:8; Jr 8:22; 30:17 **33:6** 2Kg 20:19; Est 9:30; Is 39:8 **33:7** Is 1:26 **33:8** Ps 51:2; Ezk 36:25; Heb 9:11-14 **33:9** Dt 26:19; Jr 13:11; Zph 3:19-20 **33:9** Jr 8:15; 14:19 **33:10** Jr 32:43 **33:11** Jr 7:34; 16:9; 25:10 **33:12** Is 65:10; Ezk 34:12-15 **33:13** Lv 27:32 **33:13** Jr 17:26 **33:14** Jos 21:45; Jr 23:5-6 **33:15** Is 4:2; Zch 3:8 **33:16** Dt 33:12 **33:17** 1Kg 2:4; 8:25; 9:5 **33:18** Jr 31:36; 35:19 **33:20** Gn 8:22; Is 54:9-10; Jr 31:35-37 **33:21** 2Sm 7:11-16; 2Ch 21:7; Ps 89:3 **33:21** Is 61:6; Ezk 45:4-5; Jl 1:9,13 **33:22** Gn 22:17 **33:24** Dt 7:6; 14:2 **33:25** Ps 74:16-17 **33:26** Jr 12:15; 30:18; 31:20; 33:7; 42:12

33:1 Zedekiah had imprisoned him here (32:2-3).

33:4-5 Houses built next to the wall were the most vulnerable in a time of siege and were usually owned by poorer inhabitants. They were **torn down** as the city readied its defense and were used as temporary structures by soldiers. It was customary to bury the dead outside the city walls, but because the enemy army had surrounded Jerusalem, they had no choice but to **fill the houses with the corpses of their own men.**

33:9 As in the previous chapter, God gave a message of hope in the midst of Jerusalem's imminent fall to the besieging Babylonians. Remarkably, this same city that had grievously incited God's holy wrath (v. 5; 32:28-35) would be cleansed and made glorious **before all the nations of the earth** (see 31:10).

33:11 The phrase **restore the fortunes** continues to appear frequently in these chapters (vv. 7,26; 29:14; 30:3,18; 31:23; 32:44).

33:14-26 God pledged to **fulfill** his promises to both **Israel** and **Judah** (v. 14; see the note on 13:11; 31:35-37). These promises are tied to the coming of the Messiah, or **Righteous Branch** (v. 15; see vv. 24-26; the note on 23:5-6), which in turn relates to God's **covenant** with **David** (vv. 17,20-22). The naming of

Jerusalem as **The LORD Is Our Righteousness** (v. 16) associates the new status of Jerusalem with the identity and work of the Messiah (23:6).

JEREMIAH'S WORD TO KING ZEDEKIAH

34 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, † his whole army, all the kingdoms of the lands under his control, † and all other peoples were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding cities: 2 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Go, speak to King Zedekiah of Judah, and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to hand this city over to the king of Babylon, † and he will burn it. 3 As for you, you will not escape † from him but are certain to be captured and handed over to him. You will meet the king of Babylon eye to eye and speak face to face; † † you will go to Babylon.

4 " 'Yet hear the LORD's word, King Zedekiah of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; 5 you will die peacefully. There will be a burning ceremony for you just like the burning ceremonies for your ancestors, the kings of old who came before you. † "Oh, master! " will be the lament for you, for I have spoken this word. This is the LORD's declaration.' " 6 So the prophet Jeremiah related all these words to King Zedekiah of Judah in Jerusalem 7 while the king of Babylon's army was attacking Jerusalem and all of Judah's remaining cities — that is, Lachish and Azekah, † for they were the only ones left of Judah's fortified cities.

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR SLAVES

8 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah made a covenant with all the people who were in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom † to them. 9 As a result, each was to let his male and female Hebrew slaves go free, and no one was to enslave his fellow Judean. † 10 All the officials and people who entered into covenant to let their male and female slaves go free — in order not to enslave them any longer — obeyed and let them go free. 11 Afterward, however, they changed their minds and took back their male and female slaves they had let go free and forced them to become slaves again.

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 13 “This is what
the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant † with your ancestors when
I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery, saying,
14 ‘At the end of seven years, each of you must let his fellow Hebrew who sold
himself † to you go. He may serve you six years, but then you must let him go
free from your service.’ † But your ancestors did not obey me or pay any
attention. 15 Today you repented and did what pleased me, each of you
proclaiming freedom for his neighbor. You made a covenant before me †
at the
house that bears my name. † 16 But you have changed your minds †
and
profaned my name. † Each has taken back his male and female slaves who had
been let go free to go wherever they wanted, and you have again forced them to
be your slaves.
17 “Therefore, this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me by
proclaiming freedom, each for his fellow Hebrew and for his neighbor. †
I
hereby proclaim freedom for you † — this is the LORD’s declaration — to the
sword, to plague, and to famine! I will make you a horror to all the earth’s
kingdoms. † 18 As for those who disobeyed my covenant, †
not keeping the
terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat them like the calf they
cut in two in order to pass between its pieces. † 19 The officials of Judah and
Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests, and all the people of the land who
passed between the pieces of the calf — 20 all these I will hand over to their
enemies, to those who intend to take their life. Their corpses will become food
for the birds of the sky and for the wild animals of the land. † 21 I will hand
King Zedekiah of Judah and his officials over to their enemies, to those who
intend to take their lives, to the king of Babylon’s army that is withdrawing. 22 I
am about to give the command — this is the LORD’s declaration — and I will
bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, capture it, and burn it. †
I
will make Judah’s cities a desolation, without inhabitant.” †

34:3 Lit *and his mouth will speak to your mouth* **34:14** Or *who was sold*

34:1 2Kg 25:1; Jr 39:1; 52:4 **34:1** Jr 1:15 **34:2** Jr 32:3,28 **34:3** Jr 32:4; 38:18,23; Ezk 17:18; 1Th 5:3 **34:3** Jr 32:4 **34:5** 2Ch 16:14; 21:19 **34:7** Jos 10:3-35 **34:8** Lv 25:10; Is 61:1; Ezk 46:17 **34:9** Lv 25:39 **34:13** Jr 31:32 **34:14** Ex 21:2-6; Dt 15:12-17 **34:15** 2Kg 23:3 **34:15** Jr 7:10-11 **34:16** Jr 34:11 **34:16** Lv 19:12; 22:32; Pr 30:9; Ezk 20:9,14,22; 36:20-23; 39:7; Am 2:7; Mal 1:11-12 **34:17** Is 9:19; Jr 31:34; Zch 7:9-10; Mal 2:10 **34:17** Mt 7:2 **34:17** 2Ch 29:8; Jr 15:4; 24:9; 29:18 **34:18** Jos 7:11; 2Kg 18:12 **34:18** Gn 15:10,17-

18 **34:20** Dt 28:26; Is 18:6; Jr 7:33 **34:22** Jr 21:10; 34:2; 37:8; 38:18 **34:22** Jr 4:7; 9:11; 33:10; 44:22; 46:19; 48:9; 51:37

34:1-3 For other predictions of doom for Zedekiah and Jerusalem, see 21:3-10; 24:8-10; and 27:12-22.

34:12-16 Jeremiah confronted the people for retracting their **covenant** to free their slaves (vv. 8-11). Exodus 21:2-6 states that such emancipation was supposed to take place every seven years, but this command had been disregarded (v. 14). To make matters worse, the recent covenant had been made at the temple (v. 15) so that its violation **profaned** [God's] **name** (v. 16).

34:17-22 The people's withholding of **freedom** from their slaves resulted in God giving them another kind of **freedom**: a "freedom" to die by the **sword**, **plague**, and **famine** (v. 17). Their violation of the covenant was a serious matter, and they would be held accountable (vv. 18-20). Although the Babylonian army was withdrawing (v. 21), they would return to destroy the city (v. 22).

THE RECHABITES' EXAMPLE

35 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim † son of Josiah, king of Judah: 2 "Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, † and bring them to one of the chambers † of the temple of the LORD to offer them a drink of wine."

3 So I took Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons — the entire house of the Rechabites — 4 and I brought them into the temple of the LORD to a chamber occupied by the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah, a man of God, † who had a chamber near the officials' chamber, which was above the chamber of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. 5 I set jars filled with wine and some cups before the sons of the house of the Rechabites and said to them, "Drink wine! "

6 But they replied, "We do not drink wine, for Jonadab, † son of our ancestor Rechab, commanded: 'You and your descendants must never drink wine. 7 You must not build a house or sow seed or plant a vineyard. Those things are not for you. Rather, you must live in tents your whole life, so you may live a long time on the soil where you stay as a resident alien.' † 8 We have obeyed Jonadab, son of our ancestor Rechab, in all he commanded us. So we haven't drunk wine our whole life — we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters. 9 We also have not built houses to live in and do not have vineyard, field, or seed. 10 But we have lived in tents and have obeyed and done everything our ancestor Jonadab commanded us. 11 However, when King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon marched into the land, † we said, 'Come, let's go into Jerusalem to get away from the Chaldean and Aramean armies.' So we have been living in Jerusalem."

12 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13 “This is what the LORD of
Armies, the God of Israel, says: Go, say to the men of Judah and the residents of
Jerusalem, ‘Will you not accept discipline † by listening to my words? — this is
the LORD’s declaration. 14 The words of Jonadab, son of Rechab, have been
carried out. He commanded his descendants not to drink wine, and they have not
drunk to this day because they have obeyed their ancestor’s command. But I
have spoken to you time and time again, † † and you have not obeyed me!
15 Time and time again † I have sent you all my servants the prophets,
proclaiming, “Turn, each one from his evil way, † and correct your actions. Stop
following other gods to serve them. † Live in the land that I gave you and your
ancestors.” But you did not pay attention or obey me. † 16 Yes, the sons of
Jonadab son of Rechab carried out their ancestor’s command he gave them, but
these people have not obeyed me. 17 Therefore, this is what the LORD, the God
of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I will certainly bring on Judah and on all the
residents of Jerusalem all the disaster I have pronounced against them because I
have spoken to them, but they have not obeyed, and I have called to them, but
they did not answer.’ ”
18 But to the house of the Rechabites Jeremiah said, “This is what the LORD of
Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘Because you have obeyed the command of your
ancestor Jonadab and have kept all his commands and have done everything he
commanded you, 19 this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:
Jonadab son of Rechab will never fail to have a man to stand before me
always.’ ” †

35:14 Lit *you, rising up early and speaking* **35:15** Lit *Rising up early and sending*
35:1 2Kg 23:34–24:19; 2Ch 36:4-8 **35:2** 1Ch 2:55 **35:2** 1Kg 6:5,8; 1Ch 9:26,33 **35:4** Dt 33:1 **35:6** 2Kg 10:15,23 **35:7** Ex 20:12; Eph 6:2-3 **35:11** 2Kg 24:1-2 **35:13** Jr 31:18; 32:33 **35:14** Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 44:4 **35:15** Jr 18:11 **35:15** Jr 7:6 **35:15** Jr 34:14 **35:19** Jr 31:36; 33:18

35:12-17 The Rechabites abstained from alcohol and lived in tents simply because their ancestor **Jonadab** had instructed them to do so (vv. 6-10,14,16). They provide a stark contrast to **Judah**, who did not listen to God who had repeatedly spoken to them through the prophets (vv. 13,15,17).

35:18-19 The Rechabites were honored by God because of their obedience.

JEREMIAH DICTATES A SCROLL

36 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, † king of Judah, this
word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “Take a scroll, † and write on

it all the words I have spoken to you concerning Israel, Judah, and all the nations from the time I first spoke to you during Josiah's reign until today. 3 Perhaps when the house of Judah hears about all the disaster I am planning to bring on them, each one of them will turn from his evil way. Then I will forgive their iniquity † and their sin."

4 So Jeremiah summoned Baruch † son of Neriah. At Jeremiah's dictation, † Baruch wrote on a scroll all the words the LORD had spoken to Jeremiah. 5 Then Jeremiah commanded Baruch, "I am restricted; † I cannot enter the temple of the LORD, 6 so you must go and read from the scroll — which you wrote at my dictation † — the words of the LORD in the hearing of the people at the temple of the LORD on a day of fasting. Read his words in the hearing of all the Judeans who are coming from their cities. 7 Perhaps their petition will come before the LORD, † and each one will turn from his evil way, for the anger and fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people are intense." 8 So Baruch son of Neriah did everything the prophet Jeremiah had commanded him. At the LORD's temple he read the LORD's words from the scroll.

BARUCH READS THE SCROLL

9 In the fifth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, † all the people of Jerusalem and all those coming in from Judah's cities into Jerusalem proclaimed a fast before the LORD. † 10 Then at the LORD's temple, in the chamber of Gemariah son of Shaphan the scribe, † in the upper courtyard at the opening of the New Gate † of the LORD's temple, in the hearing of all the people, Baruch read Jeremiah's words from the scroll.

11 When Micaiah son of Gemariah, son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, 12 he went down to the scribe's chamber in the king's palace. All the officials were sitting there — Elishama the scribe, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Achbor, † Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. 13 Micaiah reported to them all the words he had heard when Baruch read from the scroll in the hearing of the people. 14 Then all the officials sent word to Baruch through Jehudi son of Nethaniah, son of Shelemiah, son of Cushi, saying, "Bring the scroll that you read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch son of Neriah took the

scroll and went to them. 15 They said to him, “Sit down and read it in our hearing.” So Baruch read it in their hearing.
16 When they had heard all the words, they turned to each other in fear and said to Baruch, “We must surely tell the king all these things.” 17 Then they asked Baruch, “Tell us, how did you write all these words? At his dictation? ” †
18 Baruch said to them, “At his dictation. He recited all these words to me while I was writing on the scroll in ink.”

JEHOIAKIM BURNS THE SCROLL

19 The officials said to Baruch, “You and Jeremiah must hide and tell no one where you are.” 20 Then, after depositing the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, the officials came to the king at the courtyard and reported everything in the hearing of the king. 21 The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and he took it from the chamber of Elishama the scribe. Jehudi then read it in the hearing of the king and all the officials who were standing by the king. 22 Since it was the ninth month, the king was sitting in his winter quarters † with a fire burning in front of him. 23 As soon as Jehudi would read three or four columns, Jehoiakim would cut the scroll † with a scribe’s knife and throw the columns into the fire in the hearth until the entire scroll was consumed by the fire in the hearth. 24 As they heard all these words, the king and all of his servants did not become terrified † or tear their clothes. 25 Even though Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah had urged the king not to burn the scroll, he did not listen to them. 26 Then the king commanded Jerahmeel the king’s son, Seraiah son of Azriel, and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to seize the scribe Baruch and the prophet Jeremiah, but the LORD hid them.

JEREMIAH DICTATES ANOTHER SCROLL

27 After the king had burned the scroll and the words Baruch had written at Jeremiah’s dictation, † the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 28 “Take another scroll, and once again write on it the original words that were on the original scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah burned. † 29 You are to proclaim concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah, ‘This is what the LORD says: You have burned the scroll, asking, “Why have you written on it that † the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land and cause it to be without

people or animals?” † 30 Therefore, this is what the LORD says concerning King Jehoiakim of Judah: He will have no one to sit on David’s throne, † and his corpse will be thrown out to be exposed to the heat of day and the frost of night. † 31 I will punish him, his descendants, and his officers for their iniquity. I will bring on them, on the residents of Jerusalem, and on the people of Judah all the disaster, which I warned them about but they did not listen.’ ”
32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch son of Neriah, the scribe, and he wrote on it at Jeremiah’s dictation † all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim, † Judah’s king, had burned in the fire. And many other words like them were added.

36:4 Lit *From Jeremiah’s mouth* **36:6** Lit *wrote from my mouth* **36:17** Lit *From his mouth*, also in v. 18 **36:23** Lit *columns, he would tear it* **36:27** Lit *written from Jeremiah’s mouth* **36:32** Lit *it from Jeremiah’s mouth*

36:1 Jr 25:1; 45:1; 46:2 **36:2** Ps 40:7; Jr 30:2; 36:17,28; Ezk 2:9 **36:3** 2Ch 7:14; Jr 31:34; 33:8; 36:31; Mk 4:12; Ac 26:18 **36:4** Jr 32:12-16; 43:3,6; 45:1-2 **36:5** Jr 32:2; 33:1 **36:7** 1Kg 8:28,45,49; Ps 119:170 **36:9** Jr 36:22 **36:9** 2Ch 20:3 **36:10** 2Kg 22:3-14; 2Ch 34:8-20; Jr 29:3 **36:10** Jr 26:10 **36:12** Jr 26:22 **36:22** Am 3:15 **36:24** Jr 36:16 **36:28** Ex 34:1 **36:29** Jr 26:9 **36:29** Ps 135:8; Jr 7:20; 21:6; 32:43; 33:10,12; 50:3; 51:62 **36:30** Jr 17:25; 22:2,30; 29:16 **36:30** Gn 31:40; Dt 21:23; 1Kg 13:22-30; 2Kg 9:37; Is 14:19; Jr 26:23 **36:32** Jr 36:4,18

36:2 God’s messages to Jeremiah were not only for Judah and Israel but also for **all the nations** (see 25:13). This is consistent with Jeremiah’s call to be a “prophet to the nations” (1:5).

36:5 Jeremiah was not imprisoned at this point, since he was able to hide (v. 19). Nevertheless, he was probably facing opposition akin to that expressed in 29:26-27.

36:7 For a second time in this passage, God expressed the wish that the people hear his word and repent (vv. 3,7; 26:3).

36:11-20 Baruch’s obedient reading of the scroll at the temple (vv. 8-10) drew the attention of **Micaiah** and the other **officials.** After hearing its contents for themselves (vv. 14-15,29), they knew that the message would be deeply unpopular with the king. Learning that the author was Jeremiah (vv. 17-19), they instructed **Baruch** and the prophet to **hide** (v. 19) and took the scroll (v. 20).

36:21-25 Jehoiakim’s utter disregard for God’s word was shown through his burning of the scroll, piece by piece (vv. 22-23). This was a way of symbolically rejecting the covenant God had made with his people. Unlike his father Josiah (2Kg 22:11), he did not **tear** his garments when he heard Scripture (v. 24).

36:28-32 God commanded that the original scroll be replaced (v. 28). He insisted the messages of judgment recorded on that scroll were still valid (vv. 29-31; 28:12-14). Jehoiakim could burn the scroll, but he could not undo the consequences God had determined. His punishment was that **no one** (that is, his own descendants) would **sit on David’s throne** (v. 30). This is similar to what was said of his son Coniah in 22:30. Furthermore, **his corpse will be thrown out to be exposed** (v. 30). The lack of a proper burial brought extreme shame in the ancient world.

JERUSALEM’S LAST DAYS

37 Zedekiah son of Josiah † reigned as king in the land of Judah † in
place of Coniah † † son of Jehoiakim, for King Nebuchadnezzar of
Babylon made him king. 2 He and his officers and the people of the land did not
obey the words of the LORD † that he spoke through the prophet Jeremiah.
3 Nevertheless, King Zedekiah sent Jehucal † son of Shelemiah and
Zephaniah † son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, requesting,
"Please pray to the LORD our God for us! " 4 Jeremiah was going about his daily
tasks † among the people, for he had not yet been put into the prison. †
5 Pharaoh's army had left Egypt, † and when the Chaldeans, who were
besieging Jerusalem, heard the report, they withdrew from Jerusalem.
6 The word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah: 7 "This is what the LORD,
the God of Israel, says: This is what you will say to Judah's king, † who is
sending you to inquire of me: 'Watch: Pharaoh's army, which has come out to
help you, † is going to return to its own land of Egypt. 8 The Chaldeans will
then return and fight against this city. They will capture it and burn it. † 9 This
is what the LORD says: Don't deceive yourselves by saying, "The Chaldeans will
leave us for good," for they will not leave. 10 Indeed, if you were to strike down
the entire Chaldean army that is fighting with you, † and there remained among
them only the badly wounded † men, each in his tent, they would get up and
burn this city.' "

JEREMIAH'S IMPRISONMENT

11 When the Chaldean army withdrew from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's
army, 12 Jeremiah started to leave Jerusalem to go to the land of Benjamin to
claim his portion there † among the people. 13 But when he was at the
Benjamin Gate, † an officer of the guard was there, whose name was Irijah son
of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah, and he apprehended the prophet Jeremiah,
saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans."
14 "That's a lie," Jeremiah replied. "I am not defecting to the Chaldeans! " Irijah
would not listen to him but apprehended Jeremiah and took him to the officials.
15 The officials were angry at Jeremiah and beat him and placed him in jail in

the house of Jonathan † the scribe, for it had been made into a prison. 16 So Jeremiah went into a cell in the dungeon † and stayed there many days.

JEREMIAH SUMMONED BY ZEDEKIAH

17 King Zedekiah later sent for him and received him, and in his house privately asked him, "Is there a word from the LORD? " †
"There is," Jeremiah responded. He continued, "You will be handed over to the king of Babylon." † 18 Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "How have I sinned against you or your servants or these people that you have put me in prison? 19 Where are your prophets who prophesied to you, claiming, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you and this land'? † 20 So now please listen, my lord the king. May my petition come before you. † Don't send me back to the house of Jonathan the scribe, or I will die there."
21 So King Zedekiah gave orders, and Jeremiah was placed in the guard's courtyard. † He was given a loaf of bread each day from the bakers' street until all the bread was gone from the city. So Jeremiah remained in the guard's courtyard.

37:1 = Jehoiachin **37:4** Lit *was coming in and going out* **37:10** Lit *the pierced*
37:1 2Kg 24:17; 2Ch 36:10 **37:1** Ezk 17:12-21 **37:1** Jr 22:24 **37:2** 2Ch 36:12-16 **37:3** Jr 38:1 **37:3** 2Kg 25:18-21; Jr 21:1; 29:24-29 **37:4** Jr 32:2-3 **37:5** Ezk 17:15 **37:7** Jr 21:1-2 **37:7** Lm 4:17 **37:8** Jr 21:10; 34:2,22; 38:18 **37:10** Jr 21:4-5 **37:12** Jr 32:1-15 **37:13** Jr 38:7; Zch 14:10 **37:15** Jr 38:26 **37:16** Gn 40:15; Is 24:22; Zch 9:11 **37:17** Jr 38:14-16 **37:17** Jr 21:7 **37:19** Jr 28:1-17 **37:20** Jr 38:26 **37:21** Jr 32:2

37:3 Zedekiah's futile request for Jeremiah's prayers parallels 21:2. The prophet had been instructed not to pray for the people (7:16; 11:14; 14:11).

37:6-10 The aid of the Egyptians and the momentary departure of the Babylonians should not give Jerusalem any hope (see Ezk 17:12-17). The Babylonians will return and **burn** Jerusalem.

37:12 Jeremiah's hometown was in the land of **Benjamin** (1:1). His intention to go there may have been related to a purchase of land (32:6-15).

37:13-16 Jeremiah's actions were misinterpreted so that he was eventually beaten and imprisoned. The prophet had urged surrender to the Babylonians in 21:8-10, but he was certainly not deserting to them here.

37:17 Zedekiah's ostensible interest in seeking God continued (see v. 3) but was unmasked by Jeremiah. He boldly spoke the word of God despite his having been beaten and imprisoned (vv. 15-16,20).

37:18-20 As in 26:15, Jeremiah pleaded for his own life, which apparently was threatened by this imprisonment. He reminded the king of his innocence (v. 18) and of the demonstrable failure of the false prophets (v. 19; 28:9).

37:21 The **guard's courtyard** had been mentioned in 32:2,8,12; and 33:1.

JEREMIAH THROWN INTO A CISTERN

38 Now Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jucal † son
of Shelemiah, † and Pashhur son of Malchijah heard the words
Jeremiah was speaking to all the people: 2 "This is what the LORD says:
'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine, and plague, †
but whoever surrenders to the Chaldeans will live. † He will retain his
life like the spoils of war and will live.' † 3 This is what the LORD says:
'This city will most certainly be handed over to the king of Babylon's
army, † and he will capture it.' "
4 The officials then said to the king, "This man ought to die, because he is
weakening the morale † of the warriors who remain in this city and of all the
people by speaking to them in this way. This man is not pursuing the welfare of
this people, but their harm." †
5 King Zedekiah said, "Here he is; he's in your hands since the king can't do
anything against you." 6 So they took Jeremiah and dropped him into the cistern
of Malchiah the king's son, which was in the guard's courtyard, lowering
Jeremiah with ropes. There was no water in the cistern, only mud, and Jeremiah
sank in the mud. †
7 But Ebed-melech, a Cushite court official in the king's palace, heard Jeremiah
had been put into the cistern. While the king was sitting at the Benjamin Gate, †
8 Ebed-melech went from the king's palace and spoke to the king: 9 "My lord
the king, these men have been evil in all they have done to the prophet Jeremiah.
They have dropped him into the cistern where he will die from hunger, because
there is no more bread in the city." †
10 So the king commanded Ebed-melech, the Cushite, "Take from here thirty
men under your authority † and pull the prophet Jeremiah up from the cistern
before he dies."
11 So Ebed-melech took the men under his authority † and went to the king's
palace to a place below the storehouse. † From there he took old rags and worn-
out clothes and lowered them by ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. 12 Ebed-
melech the Cushite called down to Jeremiah, "Place these old rags and clothes
between your armpits and the ropes." Jeremiah did this. 13 They pulled him up

with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern, but he remained in the guard's courtyard.

ZEDEKIAH'S FINAL MEETING WITH JEREMIAH

14 King Zedekiah sent for the prophet Jeremiah and received him at the third entrance of the LORD's temple. The king said to Jeremiah, "I am going to ask you something; don't hide anything from me."
15 Jeremiah replied to Zedekiah, "If I tell you, you will kill me, won't you? Besides, if I give you advice, you won't listen to me anyway."
16 King Zedekiah swore to Jeremiah in private, † "As the LORD lives, who has given us this life, † I will not kill you or hand you over to these men who intend to take your life."
17 Jeremiah therefore said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD, the God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'If indeed you surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, † then you will live, this city will not be burned, and you and your household will survive. 18 But if you do not surrender to the officials of the king of Babylon, then this city will be handed over to the Chaldeans. † They will burn it, and you yourself will not escape from them.' "
19 But King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am worried about the Judeans who have defected to the Chaldeans. They may hand me over to the Judeans to abuse me." †
20 "They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the LORD in what I am telling you, so it may go well for you and you can live. 21 But if you refuse to surrender, this is the verdict † that the LORD has shown me: 22 'All the women † who remain in the palace of Judah's king will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon and will say to you, †

"Your trusted friends † misled † you and overcame you.
Your feet sank into the mire,
and they deserted you."

23 All your wives and children will be brought out to the Chaldeans. † You yourself will not escape from them, for you will be seized by the king of Babylon and this city will burn.' "

24 Then Zedekiah warned Jeremiah, “Don’t let anyone know about this conversation † or you will die. 25 The officials may hear that I have spoken with you † and come and demand of you, ‘Tell us what you said to the king; don’t hide anything from us and we won’t kill you. Also, what did the king say to you? ’ 26 If they do, tell them, ‘I was bringing before the king my petition that he not return me to the house of Jonathan to die there.’ ” † 27 All the officials did come to Jeremiah, and they questioned him. He reported the exact words to them the king had commanded, and they quit speaking with him because the conversation † had not been overheard. 28 Jeremiah remained in the guard’s courtyard until the day Jerusalem was captured, and he was there when it happened. †

38:1 = Jehucal in Jr 37:3 **38:4** Lit *hands* **38:10** Lit *men in your hand* **38:11** Lit *men in his hand* **38:11** Or *treasury* **38:21** Or *promise* ; lit *word* **38:22** Or *wives* **38:22** *to you* supplied for clarity **38:22** Lit *“The men of your peace* **38:22** Or *incited* **38:24** Lit *about these words* **38:27** Lit *word* **38:28** Or *captured. This is what happened when Jerusalem was captured:*

38:1 Jr 37:3 **38:2** Jr 14:12; 21:9; 24:10; 27:8; 29:17-18; 32:24,36; 38:2; 42:17,22; 44:13; Ezk 6:11; 12:16 **38:2** Jr 21:9; 38:17-21 **38:2** Jr 21:9; 39:18; 45:5 **38:3** Jr 32:3-5 **38:4** Jr 29:11 **38:6** Gn 37:20-24 **38:7** Jr 20:2; Ezk 48:32; Zch 14:10 **38:9** Jr 37:21 **38:16** Jr 37:17 **38:16** Is 57:16 **38:17** 2Kg 24:12; Jr 27:12; 38:2; 39:3 **38:18** Jr 22:25; 32:24-25,28,43; 43:3 **38:19** Jdg 19:25; 1Sm 31:4 **38:23** Jr 39:6; 41:10 **38:25** Jr 38:4-6 **38:26** Jr 37:20

38:2-4 Jeremiah had urged surrender in 21:9 and predicted the fall of Jerusalem to Babylon in 21:10; 32:3; and 37:8. The officials’ objection to his words, and their desire to execute the prophet, was based not on whether the message was true but on the fact that he was **weakening the morale of the warriors.** They also grossly mischaracterized Jeremiah as seeking **harm** for the people.

38:7-13 Ebed-melech successfully appealed to Zedekiah on behalf of Jeremiah, who had been put in a **cistern** without food or water (vv. 6-10). A Gentile thus saved the prophet’s life (vv. 11-13) and would be rewarded (39:15-18). The Hebrew word translated **court official** in v. 7 is sometimes translated “eunuch” (e.g., Is 39:7). Isaiah 56:3-7 promises blessing upon foreigners and eunuchs who fear God, and Acts 8:26-39 likewise recounts the salvation of an Ethiopian eunuch.

38:17-18 Yet again, Jeremiah urged Zedekiah to **surrender** to the Babylonians (see v. 2; 21:9).

38:19-23 Zedekiah’s concern (v. 19) was answered by Jeremiah. Nevertheless, the king still did not listen, as the following chapter demonstrates (39:1-8).

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM TO BABYLON

39 In the ninth year of King Zedekiah of Judah, in the tenth month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem with his entire army and laid siege to it. † 2 In the fourth month of Zedekiah’s eleventh year, on the ninth day of the month, the city was broken into. † 3 All

the officials of the king of Babylon entered and sat at the Middle Gate: Nergal-sharezer, Samgar, Nebusarsechim † the chief of staff, Nergal-sharezer the chief soothsayer, and all the rest of the officials of Babylon's king. †
4 When King Zedekiah of Judah and all the fighting men saw them, they fled. They left the city at night by way of the king's garden † through the city gate between the two walls. They left along the route to the Arabah. † 5 However, the Chaldean army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They arrested him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon's king, at Riblah in the land of Hamath. The king passed sentence on him there. †
6 At Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, and he also slaughtered all Judah's nobles. 7 Then he blinded Zedekiah and put him in bronze chains to take him to Babylon. † 8 The Chaldeans next burned down the king's palace and the people's houses and tore down the walls of Jerusalem. † 9 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, † deported the rest of the people to Babylon — those who had remained in the city and those deserters who had defected to him along with the rest of the people who remained. 10 However, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, left in the land of Judah some of the poor people who owned nothing, and he gave them vineyards and fields at that time. †

JEREMIAH FREED BY NEBUCHADNEZZAR

11 Speaking through Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon gave orders concerning Jeremiah: 12 "Take him and look after him. Don't do him any harm, but do for him whatever he says." 13 Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards, Nebushazban the chief of staff, Nergal-sharezer the chief soothsayer, and all the captains of Babylon's king 14 had Jeremiah brought from the guard's courtyard † and turned him over to Gedaliah † son of Ahikam, † son of Shaphan, to take him home. So he settled among his own people.
15 Now the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah when he was confined in the guard's courtyard: † 16 "Go tell Ebed-melech the Cushite, † 'This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I am about to fulfill my words for disaster and not for good against this city. They will take place before your eyes on that day. 17 But I will rescue you on that day — this is the LORD's declaration

— and you will not be handed over to the men you dread. 18 Indeed, I will certainly deliver you so that you do not fall by the sword. Because you have trusted in me, you will retain your life like the spoils of war. † This is the LORD's declaration.' "

39:3 LXX; MT reads *Samgar-nebu, Sarsechim*
39:1-7 2Kg 25:1-7; Jr 52:4-11; Ezk 24:1-2 **39:2** Lm 4:10 **39:3** 2Kg 25:8 **39:4** Neh 3:15 **39:4** Dt 2:8; 2Sm 4:7 **39:5** Jr 32:4-5; 34:3 **39:7** Ezk 12:8-13 **39:8** 2Kg 25:9 **39:9** 2Kg 25:8-20; Jr 52:12-30; Dn 2:14 **39:8-10** 2Kg 25:9-12; Jr 52:13-16 **39:14** Jr 38:28; 40:1-6 **39:14** Jr 40:5,7 **39:14** 2Kg 22:12 **39:15** Jr 33:1 **39:16** Jr 38:1-13 **39:18** Jr 21:9; 38:2; 45:5

39:1-2 The Babylonians had left previously, but returned to besiege Jerusalem—just as Jeremiah had said (37:5-9). This time, they broke through the city's defenses.

39:3 The seating of Babylonian **officials . . . at the Middle Gate** of Jerusalem echoes 1:15 and contrasts with 3:17; and 17:25. This action was a claim to victory and signaled to the Judeans that the Babylonians were now in command.

39:4-8 Despite repeated instruction to surrender to the Babylonians (21:9; 38:2,17-18), Zedekiah resisted them to the end. His futile flight ended in his capture, blinding, and imprisonment (vv. 4-7). Additionally, his **sons** and **nobles** were slaughtered, his house burned, and Jerusalem's walls torn down (v. 8). Jeremiah's prophecies—not those of the false prophets—were thus proven true (21:10; 32:3-5; 37:8).

39:11-14 In contrast with the trouble that came on Zedekiah and many others (vv. 6-9), Jeremiah was protected by Nebuchadnezzar and freed from **the guard's courtyard** (see the note on 37:21). God was faithful to his promises to deliver Jeremiah (1:8,19; 15:20-21).

39:15-18 A second contrast to those punished in vv. 6-9 is **Ebed-melech the Cushite** eunuch who had saved Jeremiah's life by pulling him out of the cistern (see the note on 38:7-13). Because he **trusted** in God, his life was spared (v. 18; 17:7).

JEREMIAH STAYS IN JUDAH

40 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards, released him at Ramah. † When he found him, he was bound in chains with all the exiles of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon. 2 The captain of the guards took Jeremiah and said to him, "The LORD your God decreed this disaster on this place, † 3 and the LORD has fulfilled it. He has done just what he decreed. Because you people have sinned against the LORD † and have not obeyed him, this thing has happened. 4 Now pay attention: Today I am setting you free from the chains that were on your hands. † If it pleases you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will take care of you. But if it seems wrong to you to come with me to Babylon, go no farther. † Look — the whole land is in front of you. † Wherever it seems good and right for you to go, go there." 5 When Jeremiah had not yet

turned to go, Nebuzaradan said to him, † "Return † to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the cities of Judah, and stay with him among the people or go wherever it seems right for you to go." So the captain of the guards gave him a ration † and a gift † and released him. 6 Jeremiah therefore went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah, † and he stayed with him among the people who remained in the land.

GEDALIAH ADVISES PEACE

7 All the commanders of the armies that were in the countryside — they and their men — heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam over the land. He had been put in charge of the men, women, and children from among the poorest of the land, who had not been deported to Babylon. 8 So they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah. The commanders included Ishmael † son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jezaniah son of the Maacathite — they and their men.

9 Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, swore an oath to them and their men, assuring them, "Don't be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well for you. † 10 As for me, I am going to live in Mizpah to represent you † before the Chaldeans † who come to us. As for you, gather wine, summer fruit, and oil, place them in your storage jars, and live in the cities you have captured."

11 When all the Judeans in Moab † and among the Ammonites and in † Edom and in all the other lands † also heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, over them, 12 they all returned from all the places where they had been banished † and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and harvested a great amount of wine and summer fruit.

13 Meanwhile, Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies in the countryside came to Gedaliah at Mizpah 14 and warned him, "Don't you realize that Baalis, king of the Ammonites, has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah † to kill you? " But Gedaliah son of Ahikam would not believe them. 15 Then Johanan son of Kareah suggested to Gedaliah in private at Mizpah, "Let me go

kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah. No one will know it. Why should he kill you and allow all of Judah that has gathered around you to scatter and the remnant of Judah to perish?” †

16 But Gedaliah son of Ahikam responded to Johanan son of Kareah, “Don’t do that! What you’re saying about Ishmael is a lie.”

40:4 Lit *Babylon, stop* **40:5** *Nebuzaradan said to him* supplied for clarity **40:5** LXX reads *“But if not, run, return* ; Hb obscure **40:10** Lit *to stand*

40:1 1Kg 15:17-22; 2Ch 16:1-6 **40:2** Dt 29:24-28 **40:3** Dn 9:10-12 **40:4** Jr 39:12 **40:4** Gn 20:15 **40:5** 2Kg 25:30; Jr 52:34 **40:5** 2Sm 11:8 **40:6** Jdg 20:1-3; 1Sm 7:5-16; Jr 41:1-16 **40:8** Jr 41:1,9 **40:7-9** 2Kg 25:22-24 **40:10** Dt 1:38 **40:11** Nm 22:1 **40:11** 1Sm 11:1; 12:12 **40:11** Gn 36:8 **40:12** Jr 23:3,8; 29:14; 32:37 **40:14** Jr 41:10 **40:15** Jr 42:2

40:1-6 This passage gives further detail about the release of Jeremiah just mentioned (39:11-14). Ironically, the foreign **captain of the guards** recognized God’s fulfillment of his word related to the disobedience of Judah (vv. 2-3). Jeremiah was given permission to stay among the people or **go wherever** he wanted to go (v. 5). This freedom of movement was probably granted because Jeremiah had urged Judah to submit to the Babylonians. Jeremiah understood that Babylon was fulfilling God’s purposes and was acting as his instrument.

40:9-12 Gedaliah had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to serve as governor of Judah and to oversee the few who had not been exiled (v. 5; 39:10). He encouraged them to **serve the Chaldeans** (the Babylonians, v. 9; 27:6-17; 28:14) and to **gather wine, summer fruit, and oil** (v. 10). The miniature return to the land (vv. 11-12,15), though promising, would be short-lived (41:10-18).

GEDALIAH ASSASSINATED BY ISHMAEL

41 In the seventh month, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, son of Elishama, of the royal family and one of the king’s chief officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. They ate a meal together there in Mizpah, 2 but then Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, with the sword; he killed the one the king of Babylon had appointed in the land. †
3 Ishmael also struck down all the Judeans who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Chaldean soldiers who were there. †

4 On the day after he had killed Gedaliah, when no one knew yet, 5 eighty men came from Shechem, Shiloh, † and Samaria † who had shaved their beards, † torn their clothes, and gashed themselves, and † who were carrying grain and incense offerings to bring to the temple of the LORD. † 6 Ishmael son of Nethaniah came out of Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he came. When he encountered them, he said, “Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam!” 7 But when

they came into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men with him slaughtered them and threw them into † a cistern.
8 However, there were ten men among them who said to Ishmael, “Don’t kill us, for we have hidden treasure in the field — wheat, barley, oil, and honey! ” So he stopped and did not kill them along with their companions. 9 Now the cistern where Ishmael had thrown all the corpses of the men he had struck down was a large one † that King Asa had made in the encounter with King Baasha of Israel. † Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain.
10 Then Ishmael took captive all the rest of the people of Mizpah including the daughters of the king — all those who remained in Mizpah over whom Nebuzaradan, captain of the guards, had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set off to cross over to the Ammonites. †

THE CAPTIVES RESCUED BY JOHANAN

11 When Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies † with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael son of Nethaniah had done, 12 they took all their men and went to fight with Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They found him by the great pool in Gibeon. † 13 When all the people held by Ishmael saw Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the army with him, they rejoiced. 14 All the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned around and rejoined Johanan son of Kareah. 15 But Ishmael son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites. 16 Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies with him then took from Mizpah all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam — men, soldiers, women, children, and court officials whom he brought back from Gibeon. 17 They left, stopping in Geruth Chimham, † which is near Bethlehem, in order to make their way into Egypt, 18 away from the Chaldeans. For they feared them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land. †

41:7 Syr; MT reads *slaughtered them in* **41:9** LXX; MT reads *down by the hand of Gedaliah*
41:2 Jr 52:30 **41:1-3** 2Kg 25:25 **41:5** Jos 18:1 **41:5** 1Kg 16:24 **41:5** Dt 14:1 **41:5** Lv 19:27-28; 21:5 **41:5** 2Kg 25:9 **41:9** 1Kg 15:16-22 **41:10** Jr 40:14 **41:11** Jr 40:7-8,13-16 **41:12** 2Sm 2:13 **41:17** 2Sm 19:37-38 **41:18** 2Kg 25:26; Jr 40:5

41:1-3 Gedaliah disregarded Johanan's warning that **Ishmael** wanted to kill him (40:13-16), and it cost Gedaliah his life. Ishmael even killed **all the Judeans who were with Gedaliah** and **Chaldean** (Babylonian) **soldiers.**

41:4-7 The arrival of these **eighty** worshipers created a problem for Ishmael (vv. 4-5), who needed to keep his killings secret so that he could escape (v. 10). His **weeping** (v. 6) provided a temporary cover-up so that he could kill most of the men before they reported him (vv. 7-8).

41:10 Ishmael reportedly had been sent by the king of Ammon (40:14) and **set off** with his captives **to cross over to the Ammonites.**

41:13-18 Johanan was the one who had warned Gedaliah about Ishmael earlier (40:13-15), and he rescued the people from the wicked Ishmael (vv. 13-16). Rather than returning home, however, they made their way **into Egypt** because they feared the Babylonians (vv. 17-18). Such a move was both a rejection of God's recent command to "serve" the king of Babylon (27:6-17; 28:14; see 40:9) and of the age-old prohibition against returning to Egypt (Dt 17:16; 28:68).

THE PEOPLE SEEK JEREMIAH'S COUNSEL

42 Then all the commanders of the armies, along with Johanan son of Kareah, † Jezaniah son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest, † approached 2 the prophet Jeremiah and said, "May our petition come before you; † pray to the LORD your God on our behalf, † on behalf of this entire remnant (for few of us remain out of the many, † as you can see with your own eyes), 3 that the LORD your God may tell us the way we should go and the thing we should do."

4 So the prophet Jeremiah said to them, "I have heard. I will now pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and I will tell you every word that the LORD answers you; I won't withhold a word from you." †

5 And they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we don't act according to every word the LORD your God sends you to tell us. † 6 Whether it is pleasant or unpleasant, we will obey the LORD our God to whom we are sending you so that it may go well with us. † We will certainly obey the LORD our God! "

JEREMIAH'S ADVICE TO STAY

7 At the end of ten days, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, 8 and he summoned Johanan son of Kareah, all the commanders of the armies who were with him, and all the people from the least to the greatest.

9 He said to them, "This is what the LORD says, the God of Israel to whom you sent me to bring your petition before him: 10 'If you will indeed stay in this land,

then I will rebuild and not demolish you, † and I will plant and not uproot you, because I relent concerning the disaster that I have brought on you. † 11 Don't be afraid of the king of Babylon † whom you now fear; don't be afraid of him' — this is the LORD's declaration — 'because I am with you to save you † and rescue you from him. 12 I will grant you compassion, † and he † will have compassion on you and allow you to return to your own soil.'

13 "But if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' † in order to disobey the LORD your God, 14 and if you say, 'No, instead we'll go to the land of Egypt † where we will not see war or hear the sound of the ram's horn † or hunger for food, and we'll live there,' 15 then hear the word of the LORD, remnant of Judah! This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, † says: 'If you are firmly resolved to go to Egypt † and stay there for a while, 16 then the sword † you fear will overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine you are worried about will follow on your heels † there to Egypt, and you will die there. 17 All who resolve to go to Egypt to stay there for a while will die by the sword, famine, and plague. They will have no survivor or fugitive from the disaster I will bring on them.'

18 "For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Just as my anger and fury were poured out on Jerusalem's residents, † so will my fury pour out on you if you go to Egypt. You will become an example for cursing, scorn, † execration, and disgrace, and you will never see this place again.' 19 The LORD has spoken concerning you, remnant of Judah: 'Don't go to Egypt.' Know for certain that I have warned you today! † 20 You have gone astray at the cost of your lives † because you are the ones who sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray to the LORD our God on our behalf, and as for all that the LORD our God says, tell it to us, and we'll act accordingly.' 21 For I have told you today, but you have not obeyed the LORD your God in everything he has sent me to tell you. 22 Now therefore, know for certain that by the sword, famine, and plague you will die in the place where you desired to go to stay for a while."

42:12 LXX reads *I* **42:16** Lit *will cling after you* **42:20** Or *You have led your own selves astray*

42:1 Jr 40:13; 41:11 **42:1** Est 1:20; Jr 6:13; 8:10; 31:34; 42:8; 44:12 **42:2** Jr 36:7 **42:2** 1Sm 7:8; 12:19; Is 37:4; Jr 42:20 **42:2** Lv 26:22 **42:4** 1Sm 3:17-18 **42:5** Gn 31:50; Jdg 11:10 **42:6** Jr 7:23 **42:10** Jr 24:6 **42:10** Ex 32:12,14; 2Sm 24:16; Jr 18:8; 26:3,13; Jl 2:13; Jnh 3:10; 4:2 **42:11** Jr 41:18 **42:11** Rm 8:31 **42:12** Neh

1:11; Jr 12:15; 30:18; 31:20; 33:26 **42:13** Jr 44:16-17 **42:14** Jr 41:17 **42:14** Jr 4:19,21 **42:15** Is 21:10; Jr 7:3,21; 9:15; 16:9; 19:3,15; 27:4,21; 28:2,14; 29:4,8,21,25 **42:15** Dt 17:16; Jr 44:12-14 **42:16** Ezk 11:8 **42:18** Jr 7:20 **42:18** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 44:12,22; 49:17; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **42:19** Ezk 2:5

42:1-6 As the subsequent narrative shows (43:1-7), the request for prayer and promise of obedience to God was not genuine. Earlier, Zedekiah also had requested prayer while simultaneously rebelling against God (21:2-7; 37:3-10). While at Mount Sinai, Israel too had repeatedly pledged obedience, but to no avail (Ex 19:8; 24:3,7).

42:7-17 After **ten days** (vv. 7-8), God revealed his word to Jeremiah. Consistent with what had been said earlier (27:6-17; 28:14; 40:9), the people were to **stay in this land** and submit to **the king of Babylon**, despite possible repercussions related to Gedaliah's assassination (vv. 10-12). God never confesses sin—he has none—but he does change his mind on occasion to show mercy to his people. Here he says that he will **relent concerning the disaster** that he has brought (cp. 18:5-10). The language used to express God's blessing and protection in vv. 10-11 recalls 1:8,10. In contrast, fleeing to Egypt would not prove effective, and the same **sword, famine, and plague** that had already ruined Judah would follow them into **Egypt** (vv. 13-17; 27:13; 38:2).

JEREMIAH'S COUNSEL REJECTED

43 When Jeremiah had finished speaking to all the people all the words of
the LORD their God — all these words the LORD their God had sent him
to give them — 2 then Azariah † son of Hoshaiah, † Johanan son of
Kareah, and all the other arrogant men responded to Jeremiah, "You are
speaking a lie! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to
Egypt to stay there for a while! ' 3 Rather, Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you
against us to hand us over to the Chaldeans to put us to death or to deport us to
Babylon! "
4 So Johanan son of Kareah, all the commanders of the armies, and all the
people failed to obey the LORD's command to stay in the land of Judah.
5 Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the commanders of the armies led away
the whole remnant of Judah, † those who had returned to stay in the land of
Judah from all the nations where they had been banished. 6 They led away the
men, women, children, king's daughters, and everyone whom Nebuzaradan,
captain of the guards, had allowed to remain with Gedaliah son of Ahikam son
of Shaphan. † They also led the prophet Jeremiah and Baruch son of Neriah
away. 7 They went to the land of Egypt because they did not obey the LORD.
They went as far as Tahpanhes. †

GOD'S SIGN TO THE PEOPLE IN EGYPT

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah at Tahpanhes: 9 “Pick up some
large stones and set them in the mortar of the brick pavement that is at the
opening of Pharaoh’s palace at Tahpanhes. Do this in the sight of the Judean
men 10 and tell them, ‘This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:
I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will place his
throne on these stones that I have embedded, and he will pitch his pavilion over
them. 11 He will come and strike down the land of Egypt † — those destined for
death, to death; those destined for captivity, to captivity; and those destined for
the sword, † to the sword. 12 I † will kindle a fire in the temples of Egypt’s
gods, † and he will burn them and take them captive. He will clean the land of
Egypt as a shepherd picks lice off † his clothes, † and he will leave there
unscathed. 13 He will smash the sacred pillars of the sun temple † † in the land
of Egypt and burn the temples of the Egyptian gods.’ ”

43:2 = Jezaniah **43:12** LXX, Syr, Vg read *He* **43:12** Or *will wrap himself in the land of Egypt as a shepherd wraps himself in* **43:13** Or *Beth-shemesh* **43:13** = of Heliopolis

43:2 Jr 42:1 **43:5** Jr 40:11-12 **43:6** Jr 39:10; 40:7 **43:7-8** Jr 2:16; 44:1; 46:14 **43:11** Jr 44:13; 46:13-26
43:11 Jr 15:2 **43:12** Ex 12:12; Is 19:1; Jr 46:25; Ezk 30:13 **43:12** Ps 104:2; Is 49:18

43:1-7 Despite taking an oath to obey God (42:5-6), Johanan and the people rejected the prophetic message commanding them not to **go to Egypt** (42:19), even going so far as to accuse Jeremiah of lying and conspiring with Baruch (vv. 2-3). Instead of remaining in the land and serving the king of Babylon (42:10-11), they disobeyed and went to Egypt (v. 7). Previous passages have pointed out the uselessness of seeking help from Egypt (2:16-18; 24:8; 37:7-8). Furthermore, God had commanded Israel long ago never to return there (Dt 17:16; 28:68), for it was the land from which he had freed them from slavery.

43:8-13 Jeremiah had been taken along with the others to Egypt (vv. 5-6), and God gave him a message **at Tahpanhes** (vv. 7-8; 2:16). Jeremiah again uses a symbolic act to make his message clear (v. 9; see the note on 13:1-7). The **large stones** would symbolically represent the foundation of Nebuchadnezzar’s throne, which he would set up when he arrived and struck Egypt (vv. 10-13). As Jeremiah had said before, taking refuge there would be useless (42:13-17).

GOD’S JUDGMENT AGAINST HIS PEOPLE IN EGYPT

44 This is the word that came to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in the land of Egypt — at Migdol, † Tahpanhes, † Memphis, † and in the land of Pathros: † 2 “This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:
You have seen all the disaster I brought against Jerusalem and all Judah’s cities.
Look, they are a ruin today without an inhabitant in them † 3 because of the evil
they committed to anger me, † by going and burning incense to serve other gods
that they, you, and your fathers did not know. † 4 So I sent you all my servants

the prophets time and time again,† † saying, ‘Don’t commit this detestable action that I hate.’ 5 But they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their evil or stop burning incense to other gods. 6 So my fierce wrath poured out and burned in Judah’s cities and Jerusalem’s streets † so that they became the desolate ruin they are today.

7 “So now, this is what the LORD, the God of Armies, the God of Israel, says: Why are you doing such terrible harm to yourselves? You are cutting off man and woman, infant and nursing baby † from Judah, leaving yourselves without a remnant. † 8 You are angering me by the work of your hands. You are burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to stay for a while. As a result, you will be cut off and become an example for cursing and insult among all the nations of earth. † 9 Have you forgotten the evils of your fathers, the evils of Judah’s kings, the evils of their wives, your own evils, and the evils of your wives that were committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not become humble to this day, and they have not feared or followed my instruction or my statutes that I set before you and your ancestors.

11 “Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I am about to set my face against you to bring disaster,† to cut off all Judah. †

12 And I will take away the remnant of Judah, † those who have set their face to go to the land of Egypt to stay there. All of them will meet their end in the land of Egypt. They will fall by the sword; they will meet their end by famine. From the least to the greatest, † they will die by the sword and by famine. Then they will become an example for cursing, scorn, † execration, and disgrace. † 13 I will punish those living in the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem by sword, famine, and plague. 14 Then the remnant of Judah — those going to live for a while there in the land of Egypt — will have no fugitive or survivor to return to the land of Judah where they are longing † to return to stay, † for they will not return except for a few fugitives.”

THE PEOPLE’S STUBBORN RESPONSE

15 However, all the men who knew that their wives were burning incense to other gods, all the women standing by — a great assembly — and all the people

who were living in the land of Egypt at Pathros answered Jeremiah, 16 “As for the word you spoke to us in the name of the LORD, we are not going to listen to you! 17 Instead, we will do everything we promised: † we will burn incense to the queen of heaven † and offer drink offerings to her just as we, our fathers, our kings, and our officials did in Judah’s cities † and in Jerusalem’s streets. Then we had enough food, we were well off, and we saw no disaster, 18 but from the time we ceased to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to offer her drink offerings, we have lacked everything, and through sword and famine we have met our end.” †

19 And the women said, † “When we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it apart from our husbands’ knowledge † that we made sacrificial cakes in her image and poured out drink offerings to her? ”

20 But Jeremiah responded to all the people — the men, women, and all the people who were answering him: 21 “As for the incense you burned in Judah’s cities † and in Jerusalem’s streets — you, your fathers, your kings, your officials, and the people of the land — did the LORD not remember them? He brought this to mind. 22 The LORD can no longer bear your evil deeds and the detestable acts you have committed, † so your land has become a waste, a desolation, and an example for cursing, without inhabitant, as you see today. 23 Because you burned incense and sinned against the LORD and didn’t obey the LORD † and didn’t follow his instruction, his statutes, and his testimonies, this disaster has come to you, as you see today.”

24 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including all the women, “Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who are in the land of Egypt. † 25 This is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: ‘As for you and your wives, you women have spoken with your mouths, and you men fulfilled it by your deeds, saying, “We will keep our vows that we have made to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink offerings for her.” Go ahead, confirm your vows! Keep your vows! ’

26 “Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you Judeans who live in the land of Egypt: ‘I have sworn by my great name, † says the LORD, that my name will never again be invoked by anyone of Judah in all the land of Egypt, † saying,

“As the Lord God lives.” 27 I am watching over them for disaster and not for
good, † and everyone from Judah who is in the land of Egypt will meet his end
by sword or famine until they are finished off. 28 Those who escape the sword
will return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah only few in number, †
and the whole remnant of Judah, the ones going to the land of Egypt to stay there
for a while, will know whose word stands, mine or theirs! 29 This will be a sign
to you’ — this is the Lord’s declaration — ‘that I will punish you in this place,
so you may know that my words of disaster concerning you will certainly come
to pass. † 30 This is what the Lord says: I am about to hand over Pharaoh
Hophra, † Egypt’s king, to his enemies, to those who intend to take his life, just
as I handed over Judah’s King Zedekiah † to Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar,
who was his enemy, the one who intended to take his life.’ ”

44:4 Lit *prophets, rising up early and sending* **44:14** Lit *lifting up their soul* **44:17** Lit *do every word that came from our mouth* **44:17** = Ashtoreth, or Astarte **44:19** LXX, Syr; MT omits *And the women said* **44:1** Ex 14:2; Nm 33:7; Jr 46:14; Ezk 29:10 **44:1** Jr 2:16; 43:7-9; 46:14 **44:1** Is 19:13; Jr 2:16; 46:14,19; Ezk 30:13,16; Hs 9:6 **44:1** Is 11:11; Ezk 29:14; 30:14 **44:2** Jos 8:26; Is 5:9; 6:11; Jr 2:15; 4:29; 6:8; 33:10; 34:22; 44:22; 48:9; 51:37; Zph 3:6 **44:3** Jr 7:19 **44:3** 2Kg 22:17; 2Ch 28:25; 34:25; Jr 1:16; 7:9; 19:4,13; 32:29 **44:4** Jr 7:13,25; 11:7; 25:3; 26:5; 29:19; 32:33; 35:14,15 **44:6** Jr 7:34 **44:7** 1Sm 15:3; 22:19 **44:7** Jr 11:23; 40:15; 44:15; Ezr 9:14 **44:8** Jr 24:9; 42:18; 44:12; 49:13 **44:11** Jr 21:10 **44:11** 1Sm 20:15; Ps 109:13; Is 10:7; Jr 9:21; 47:4; 51:62; Ob 14 **44:12** Jr 42:15-18 **44:12** Est 1:20; Jr 6:13; 8:10; 31:34; 42:1; 42:8 **44:12** Jr 18:16 **44:12** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:22; 49:17; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **44:14** Jr 22:26-27 **44:17** Jr 7:18 **44:18** Jr 14:15; 16:4 **44:19** Nm 30:6-7 **44:21** Ezk 8:10-11 **44:22** Is 1:14; 7:13; 43:24; Jr 15:6; Mal 2:17 **44:23** Jr 40:3 **44:24** Jr 43:7 **44:26** Gn 22:16; 1Sm 3:14; Ps 89:3,35; Is 45:23; 54:9; Jr 22:5; 49:13 **44:26** Ezk 20:39 **44:27** Jr 21:10; 31:28; 39:16; Am 9:4 **44:28** Is 27:12-13 **44:29** Pr 19:21 **44:30** Ezk 29:3; 30:21 **44:30** Jr 39:5-7

44:1-8 Jeremiah received another message **for all the Jews** who had fled to Egypt (see previous note). As in 42:18, God’s recent judgment of Jerusalem (vv. 2-6,13) served as a warning of impending judgment for their idolatry in Egypt (v. 8).

44:12 As declared in 42:13-17 and 43:8-13, all those who had fled to Egypt would be destroyed, **from the least to the greatest.** This phrase had been used recently in 42:1,8 as well as in 6:13 related to the total corruption of Judah. In contrast, the same phrase is used to describe the universal knowledge of God under the new covenant (31:34).

44:15-19 Further detail is given here about the **burning incense to other gods** mentioned in v. 8. Evidently, it was primarily the women who were doing this, though with the full knowledge of their husbands (vv. 15,19). The idol being worshiped was the **queen of heaven** (vv. 17-19; 7:18), which several commentators believe refers to the Assyrian goddess Ishtar, known in Palestine as Asherah. Those who had fled to Egypt foolishly believed that their recent calamity had nothing to do with God’s judgment but rather with failing to worship her appropriately (vv. 17-18).

44:26-28 After reasserting that the recent disaster was from God (vv. 20-23) and pointing out that the people had confessed to idolatry with their own mouths (vv. 24-25), Jeremiah pronounced God’s stern judgment against them. Among this group, God’s **name** would never again be **invoked** (v. 26; 4:2; 12:16),

and God would watch **over them for disaster and not for good** (v. 27; 21:10), unlike what he said about the "good figs" (24:6; 29:11). He would ensure that his **word** would be fulfilled (v. 28; 1:11-12).

44:30 The handing over of **Pharaoh Hophra** to Nebuchadnezzar would be a "sign" (v. 29) that God's message of judgment would soon be fulfilled.

THE LORD'S MESSAGE TO BARUCH

45 This is the word that the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Baruch son of Neriah † when he wrote these words on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation † † in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah: †
2 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: 3 'You have said, "Woe is me, because the LORD has added misery to my pain! I am worn out with † groaning and have found no rest." ' †
4 "This is what you are to say to him: 'This is what the LORD says: "What I have built I am about to demolish, and what I have planted I am about to uproot † — the whole land! 5 But as for you, do you pursue great things for yourself? Stop pursuing! For I am about to bring disaster on everyone" — this is the LORD's declaration — "but I will grant you your life like the spoils of war † wherever you go." ' "

Prophecies Against the Nations

45:1 Lit *scroll from Jeremiah's mouth* **45:3** Lit *I labored in my*
45:1 Jr 32:12 **45:1** Jr 36:4,18 **45:1** Jr 36:1 **45:3** Ps 6:6 **45:4** Jr 24:6 **45:5** Jr 21:9; 38:2; 39:18

45:1-5 Baruch expressed his weariness over serving as Jeremiah's scribe (vv. 1-3), perhaps related to his having to rewrite a scroll after Jehoiakim had burned the original (Jr 36). Although this passage seems out of place in its context, the preservation of Baruch's **life** amidst widespread destruction repeats an important theme that God would preserve those who were obedient, even in the midst of judgment (21:9; 38:2; 39:18). Despite his weariness, this blessing was not to be taken for granted (vv. 4-5; 15:11).

46 This is the word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah about the nations: †

PROPHECIES AGAINST EGYPT

2 About Egypt and the army of Pharaoh Neco, Egypt's king, † which was defeated at Carchemish † on the Euphrates River by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in the fourth year of Judah's King Jehoiakim son of Josiah: †

3 Deploy small shields † and large; approach for battle!

4 Harness the horses; mount the steeds; †
take your positions with helmets on!
Polish the lances;
put on armor! †
5 Why have I seen this?
They are terrified,
they are retreating,
their warriors are crushed,
they flee headlong,
they never look back,
terror is on every side! †
This is the LORD's declaration.
6 The swift cannot flee, and the warrior cannot escape! †
In the north by the bank of the Euphrates River, they stumble and fall. †

7 Who is this, rising like the Nile, †
with waters that churn like rivers?
8 Egypt rises like the Nile, †
and its waters churn like rivers.
He boasts, "I will go up, I will cover the earth; I will destroy cities with their residents."
9 Rise up, you cavalry!
Race furiously, you chariots!
Let the warriors march out —
Cush and Put, †
who are able to handle shields,
and the men of Lud, †
who are able to handle and string the bow. †
10 That day belongs to the Lord, the GOD of Armies, a day of vengeance to avenge himself
against his adversaries.
The sword will devour and be satisfied;
it will drink its fill of their blood,

because it will be a sacrifice † to the Lord, the God of Armies, in the northern land by the Euphrates River. †

11 Go up to Gilead and get balm, †
Virgin Daughter Egypt!
You have multiplied remedies in vain;
there is no healing for you.
12 The nations have heard of your dishonor, †
and your cries fill the earth,
because warrior stumbles against warrior
and together both of them have fallen.

13 This is the word the Lord spoke to the prophet Jeremiah about the coming of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to defeat the land of Egypt: †

14 Announce it in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol! †
Proclaim it in Memphis and in Tahpanhes!
Say, “Take positions! Prepare yourself,
for the sword devours all around you.” †
15 Why have your strong ones been swept away?
Each has not stood,
for the Lord has thrust him down.
16 He continues to stumble. †
Indeed, each falls over the other.
They say, “Get up! Let’s return to our people and to our native land,
away from the oppressor’s sword.” †
17 There they will cry out, “Pharaoh king of Egypt was all noise;
he let the opportune moment pass.”

18 As I live — this is the King’s declaration;
the Lord of Armies is his name — †
the king of Babylon † will come like Tabor among the mountains and like Carmel by the sea.
19 Get your bags ready for exile, inhabitant of Daughter Egypt! †

For Memphis will become a desolation,
uninhabited ruins.

20 Egypt is a beautiful young cow, †
but a horsefly from the north is coming against her. † †
21 Even her mercenaries among her are like stall-fed calves.
They too will turn back;
together they will flee;
they will not take their stand,
for the day of their calamity is coming on them, the time of their punishment. †
22 Egypt will hiss like a slithering snake, †
for the enemy will come with an army;
with axes they will come against her
like those who cut trees. †
23 They will cut down her forest — this is the LORD's declaration — though it is dense,
for they are more numerous than locusts;
they cannot be counted. †
24 Daughter Egypt will be put to shame, handed over to a northern people. †

25 The LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says, "I am about to punish Amon, god of Thebes, † along with Pharaoh, Egypt, her gods, and her kings — Pharaoh and those trusting in him. 26 I will hand them over to those who intend to take their lives † — to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his officers. But after this, † Egypt † will be inhabited again as in ancient times."
This is the LORD's declaration.

REASSURANCE FOR ISRAEL

27 But you, my servant Jacob, do not be afraid, †
and do not be discouraged, Israel,
for without fail I will save you from far away, and your descendants from the land of their captivity!
Jacob will return and have calm and quiet
with no one to frighten him.

28 And you, my servant Jacob, do not be afraid — this is the LORD's declaration
— for I will be with you. †
I will bring destruction on all the nations where I have banished you,
but I will not bring destruction on you.
I will discipline you with justice,
and I will by no means leave you unpunished. †

46:4 Or *mount up, riders* **46:18** Lit *He* **46:20** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *is coming, coming* **46:22** Lit *Her sound is like a snake as it goes* **46:26** Lit *it*
46:1 Jr 25:15-38 **46:2** 2Kg 23:29 **46:2** 2Ch 35:20 **46:2** Jr 45:1 **46:3** Jr 49:14; Ob 1 **46:4** Jb 41:13; Jr 51:3 **46:5** Jr 6:25; 20:3-4,10; 49:29 **46:6** Am 2:14 **46:6** Dn 11:19 **46:7** Jr 47:2 **46:8** Am 8:8 **46:9** Gn 10:6; Ezk 30:5 **46:9** Gn 10:13; 1Ch 1:11 **46:9** Is 66:19 **46:10** Is 34:5-8; Ezk 39:17-20; Zph 1:7 **46:10** Zph 1:7 **46:11** Gn 37:25; Jr 8:22; 51:8 **46:12** Jr 13:26; Hs 4:7; Nah 3:5 **46:13** Jr 43:8-13 **46:14** Jr 2:16; 43:7-9; 44:1 **46:14** Jr 46:10 **46:16** Lv 26:36-37 **46:16** Jr 50:16 **46:18** Jr 48:15; 51:57 **46:19** Jr 48:18 **46:20** Hs 10:11 **46:20** Jr 1:13-14 **46:21** Jr 50:27,31 **46:22** Ps 74:5 **46:23** Jdg 6:5; 7:12 **46:24** Jr 1:15 **46:25** Ezk 30:14-16 **46:26** Jr 44:30; Ezk 32:11 **46:26** Ezk 29:8-14 **46:27** Is 41:8; 44:2; 45:4 **46:28** Jr 1:8,19; 30:11; 42:11 **46:27-28** Jr 30:10-11

46:1 Jeremiah was commissioned as a "prophet to the nations" (1:5; see 25:13; 36:2). Whereas his messages previously in the book deal with the nations at significant points (see 3:17; 4:2; 9:25-26; 16:19), the following chapters focus on them in extended fashion. In this respect, Jeremiah 46–51 resembles Isaiah 13–23. Oracles against foreign nations are a distinct literary genre within the OT Prophets and are found in all of the prophetic books except Hosea. These oracles are normally not actually proclaimed to the nations; rather, the primary audience is the people of Israel and Judah. Perhaps a modern analogue would be an open letter to someone, which is mainly intended for everyone else. As King of the nations (10:7), God certainly has the authority and power to judge them (see 25:15-26).

46:2 Pharaoh Neco had killed Josiah and also had taken his successor Jehoahaz captive to Egypt (2Kg 23:29-33). He then installed Jehoiakim as king but required taxes from him (2Kg 23:34-35). Historians date his defeat **at Carchemish** to 605 BC.

46:5-8 Despite the nation's pride (vv. 7-8), **Egypt** was defeated decisively (vv. 5-6). This fall to Babylon had been foretold (25:8-11,15-29; 27:1-8).

46:10 The defeat of Egypt was not merely a significant event of world history but was an act of God's judgment linked to his **day of vengeance** (see Is 34:8; 61:2; 63:4). As before (see the note on 3:11-13), this judgment is associated with the north (vv. 6,10,20,24). The reference to a **sword** having its fill of **blood** for **a sacrifice** echoes Isaiah 34:5-6, which strengthens the eschatological overtones already present.

46:14 These Egyptian cities had also been mentioned in 44:1.

46:17-18 Whereas the **king of Egypt** would be humbled, the true **King's declaration** would come to pass (see the note on v. 1).

46:20 Consistent with other passages in Jeremiah (see the notes on v. 10 judgment comes on Egypt **from the north.**

46:22-23 Likening the judgment of Egypt to cutting down a forest echoes Isaiah 10:15-19 (see note), and comparing the number of foreign soldiers to innumerable **locusts** echoes Joel 1:4 and 2:25.

46:25-26 God's judgment was against both Egypt and **her gods** (43:13), as it was in the exodus (Ex 12:12). The gods of the nations were frequent competitors with the Lord for the attention and trust of his people. It

was for the good of his people that God continually reminded them that these gods were false hopes. The mention of **those trusting** in Pharaoh relates to the foolishness of trusting man (17:5-6) and of relying on Egypt (37:7; 42:13-19; 43:9-13; 44:12-14). Nevertheless, hope remained because **after this, Egypt will be inhabited again** (v. 26; Is 19:19-25). A similar promise of resettlement was also given to Israel (23:6).

46:27-28 This encouragement to **Israel** that God will bring them back from exile is almost identical to 30:10-11. It also has some terminology common to Isaiah 41:8-10 and 44:2.

PROPHECIES AGAINST THE PHILISTINES

47 This is the word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah about the Philistines † before Pharaoh defeated Gaza. † 2 This is what the LORD says:

Look, water is rising from the north †
and becoming an overflowing wadi.
It will overflow the land and everything in it, †
the cities and their inhabitants.
The people will cry out,
and every inhabitant of the land will wail.
3 At the sound of the stomping hooves of his stallions, †
the rumbling of his chariots,
and the clatter of their wheels, †
fathers will not turn back for their sons.
They will be utterly helpless †
4 on account of the day that is coming to destroy all the Philistines,
to cut off from Tyre and Sidon
every remaining ally. †
Indeed, the LORD is about to destroy the Philistines, the remnant of the coastland of Caphtor. † †
5 Baldness † is coming to Gaza; Ashkelon will become silent. †
Remnant of their valley,
how long will you gash yourself?

6 Oh, sword of the LORD! †
How long will you be restless?
Go back to your sheath;
be still; be silent!

7 How can it † rest when the LORD has given it a command? †
He has assigned it †
against Ashkelon and the shore of the sea.

47:3 Lit *Because of weakened hands* **47:4** Probably Crete **47:7** LXX, Vg; MT reads *you*
47:1 Jr 25:20 **47:1** Am 1:6-7; Zph 2:4 **47:2** Jr 1:13; 4:6,20; 6:1; 50:3,9,41; 51:48 **47:2** Is 8:7-8 **47:3** Jdg 5:22; Jr 8:16; 50:11 **47:3** Nah 3:2-3 **47:4** Jr 25:22; Jl 3:4; Am 1:8-10 **47:4** Gn 10:14; Am 9:7 **47:5** Jr 48:37 **47:5** Jdg 1:18; Jr 25:20 **47:6** Ezk 21:3-5 **47:7** Ezk 14:17 **47:7** Mc 6:9

47:2 Judgment is once again said to come **from the north** (see the note on 46:10). Overwhelming judgment had also been compared to a flood in Isaiah 8:7-8. This suggests an eschatological situation, along with the phrases **the land and everything in it**, **the cities and their inhabitants.**

47:4 This dreadful **day** parallels the day prophesied against Egypt in 46:21.

47:6 As in 46:10,16, the agent of destruction is the divine **sword.** Jeremiah prayed that its fury against the Philistines would cease. The prophet thus cared about both Gentiles and his own people Israel (see the note on 8:18–9:2).

PROPHECIES AGAINST MOAB

48 About Moab, † this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:

Woe to Nebo, † because it is about to be destroyed; Kiriathaim will be
put to shame; † it will be taken captive.
The fortress will be put to shame and dismayed!
2 There is no longer praise for Moab; they plan harm against her in Heshbon: †
Come, let's cut her off from nationhood.
Also, Madmen, you will be silenced;
the sword will follow † you.
3 A voice cries out from Horonaim, †
"devastation and a crushing blow! " †
4 Moab will be shattered; her little ones will cry out.
5 For on the Ascent to Luhith they will be weeping continually, †
and on the descent to Horonaim
will be heard cries of distress over the destruction: †
6 Flee! Save your lives! †
Be like a juniper bush † † in the wilderness.

7 Because you trust in your works and treasures, you will be captured also.
Chemosh † will go into exile with his priests and officials. †
8 The destroyer † will move against every town; not one town will escape.
The valley will perish,
and the plain will be annihilated, †
as the LORD has said.
9 Make Moab a salt marsh, † †
for she will run away; †
her towns will become a desolation,
without inhabitant. †

10 The one who does the LORD's business deceitfully † is cursed, †
and the one who withholds
his sword from bloodshed is cursed.

11 Moab has been left quiet since his youth, settled like wine on its dregs. †
He hasn't been poured from one container to another or gone into exile.
So his taste has remained the same,
and his aroma hasn't changed.
12 Therefore look, the days are coming † — this is the LORD's declaration — when I will send pourers to him, who will pour him out.
They will empty his containers
and smash his jars.
13 Moab will be put to shame because of Chemosh, just as the house of Israel was put to shame because of Bethel † that they trusted in.

14 How can you say, "We are warriors — valiant men for battle"?
15 The destroyer of Moab and its towns has come up, †
and the best of its young men
have gone down to slaughter.
This is the King's declaration;
the LORD of Armies is his name. †
16 Moab's calamity is near at hand; his disaster is rushing swiftly.
17 Mourn for him, all you surrounding nations, everyone who knows his name.

Say, “How the mighty scepter † is shattered, the glorious staff! ”

18 Come down from glory; sit on parched ground, resident of the daughter of Dibon, †
for the destroyer of Moab has come against you; he has destroyed your fortresses.
19 Stand by the highway and watch, resident of Aroer! †
Ask him who is fleeing or her who is escaping, †
“What happened? ”
20 Moab is put to shame, indeed dismayed.
Wail and cry out! †
Declare by the Arnon
that Moab is destroyed.

21 “Judgment has come to the land of the plateau † — to Holon, Jahzah, Mephaath, 22 Dibon, Nebo, Beth-diblathaim, 23 Kiriathaim, Beth-gamul, Beth-meon, † 24 Kerioth, † Bozrah, and all the towns of the land of Moab, those far and near. 25 Moab’s horn is chopped off; † his arm is shattered.” †
This is the LORD’s declaration.
26 “Make him drunk, because he has exalted himself against the LORD. † Moab will wallow in his own vomit, and he will also become a laughingstock. 27 Wasn’t Israel a laughingstock to you? † Was he ever found among thieves? † For whenever you speak of him you shake your head.” †

28 Abandon the towns! Live in the cliffs, residents of Moab!
Be like a dove
that nests inside the mouth of a cave. †

29 We have heard of Moab’s pride, great pride, indeed — his insolence, arrogance, pride,
and haughty heart.
30 I know his outburst.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
It is empty.

His boast is empty.
31 Therefore, I will wail over Moab.
I will cry out for Moab, all of it;
he will moan for the men of Kir-heres.
32 I will weep for you, vine of Sibmah, with more than the weeping for Jazer.
Your tendrils have extended to the sea;
they have reached to the sea and to Jazer. †
The destroyer has fallen on your summer fruit and grape harvest.
33 Gladness and celebration are taken from the fertile field and from the land of Moab.
I have stopped the flow of wine from the winepresses; no one will tread with shouts of joy.
The shouting is not a shout of joy. †

34 "There is a cry from Heshbon to Elealeh; they make their voices heard as far as Jahaz † — from Zoar to Horonaim and Eglath-shelishiyah — because even the Waters of Nimrim have become desolate. 35 In Moab, I will stop" — this is the LORD's declaration — "the one who offers sacrifices on the high place and burns incense to his gods. † 36 Therefore, my heart moans like flutes for Moab, † and my heart moans like flutes for the people of Kir-heres. And therefore, the wealth he has gained has perished. 37 Indeed, every head is bald and every beard is chopped short. † On every hand is a gash † and sackcloth † around the waist. 38 On all the rooftops of Moab and in her public squares, everyone is mourning because I have shattered Moab like a jar no one wants." † This is the LORD's declaration. 39 "How broken it is! They wail! How Moab has turned his back! He is ashamed. Moab will become a laughingstock and a shock to all those around him." †
40 For this is what the LORD says:

Look! He will swoop down like an eagle
and spread his wings against Moab. †
41 The towns have † been captured, and the strongholds seized.
In that day the heart of Moab's warriors

will be like the heart of a woman with contractions. †
42 Moab will be destroyed as a people because he has exalted himself
against the LORD. †
43 Panic, † pit, and trap await you, resident of Moab.
This is the LORD's declaration.
44 He who flees from the panic will fall in the pit, and he who climbs
from the pit
will be captured in the trap,
for I will bring against Moab
the year of their punishment. †
This is the LORD's declaration. †

45 Those who flee will stand exhausted in Heshbon's shadow because fire
has come out from Heshbon
and a flame from within Sihon.
It will devour Moab's forehead
and the skull of the noisemakers.
46 Woe to you, Moab!
The people of Chemosh have perished
because your sons have been taken captive
and your daughters have gone into captivity. †
47 Yet, I will restore the fortunes † of Moab in the last days. †
This is the LORD's declaration.
The judgment on Moab ends here.

48:5 Lit *Luhith, weeping goes up with weeping* **48:6** Or *like Aroer* ; Is 17:2; Jr 48:19 **48:9** LXX reads *a sign* ; Vg reads *a flower* ; Syr, Tg read *a crown* **48:9** Hb obscure **48:10** Or *negligently* **48:15** Or *Moab is destroyed; he has come up against its cities* **48:32** Some Hb mss read *reached as far as Jazer* **48:41** Or *Kerioth has* **48:47** Or *will end the captivity*
48:1 Gn 19:37; Nm 22:1; 24:17; 25:1; Dt 23:3; 34:5-6; Jdg 3:30; Ru 1:2; 2Sm 8:2; 1Kg 11:7; 2Kg 1:1; Is 15:1; Ezk 25:8-11; Am 2:1-2; Zph 2:8-9 **48:1** Nm 32:3; Jr 48:22 **48:1** Nm 32:37; Jr 48:23; Ezk 25:9 **48:2** Jr 48:34,45; 49:3 **48:2** Jr 29:18; Am 1:11 **48:3** Is 15:5; Jr 48:34 **48:3** Jr 51:54 **48:5** Is 15:5 **48:6** Jr 51:6,45 **48:6** Is 41:19; Jr 17:6 **48:7** Nm 1:29; Jdg 11:24; 1Kg 11:7,33; 2Kg 23:13; Jr 48:13,45-47 **48:7** Jr 49:3 **48:8** Jr 6:26; 48:15,18,32 **48:8** Jos 13:9,17,21 **48:9** Jdg 9:45; Jr 17:6; Ezk 47:11; Zph 2:9 **48:9** Jos 8:26; Is 5:9; 6:11; Jr 2:15; 4:29; 6:8; 33:10; 34:22; 44:2,22; 51:37; Zph 3:6 **48:10** 1Kg 20:42 **48:11** Ps 75:8; Zph 1:12 **48:12** Jr 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 23:7; 49:2; 51:47,52 **48:13** 1Kg 12:28-33; 13:1-5; 2Kg 10:29; 23:15; Hs 4:15; Am 3:14; 4:4; 5:5-6 **48:15** Jr 46:18; 51:57 **48:17** Ps 110:2; Ezk 19:11-12,14 **48:18** Jos 13:8-9; Jr 46:19 **48:19** Dt 2:36 **48:19** 1Sm 4:13,16 **48:20** Is 14:31; Jr 25:34; 47:2; Ezk 21:12 **48:21** Jos 13:17-19 **48:23** Jos 13:17 **48:24** Jr 48:41; Am 2:2 **48:25** Ps 75:10; Lm 2:3; Am 3:14 **48:25** Jb 38:15; Ps 10:15; 37:17; Ezk

30:21-24 **48:26** Jr 48:42 **48:26-27** Gn 38:23; Jb 12:4; Ps 44:14; Jr 20:7; 48:39; Lm 2:15-17; 3:14 **48:27** Jr 2:26 **48:27** 2Kg 19:21; Jb 2:11; 16:4; 42:11; Ps 22:7; 64:8; 69:20; 109:25; Is 37:22; 51:19; Jr 15:5; 18:16; Lm 2:15; Nah 3:7 **48:28** Is 2:19-21 **48:31-33** Is 16:7-10 **48:34** Is 15:4-6 **48:35** Jr 11:12-13; 18:15 **48:36** Is 15:5 **48:37-38** Is 15:2-3; Jr 47:5 **48:37** Lv 19:28; 21:5; Jr 5:7; 41:5; 47:5 **48:37** Jr 4:8; 6:26; 49:3 **48:38** Jr 22:28 **48:29-39** Is 16:6-11; Zph 2:9-10 **48:40** Dt 28:49; Jr 49:22 **48:41** Is 13:8; Jr 49:22 **48:42** Jr 48:26 **48:43** Jr 30:5; 49:5 **48:44** Jr 23:12 **48:43-44** Is 24:17-18 **48:45-46** Nm 21:28-29 **48:47** Jr 49:6,39

48:7 As in 46:25, misplaced **trust** will be exposed. God alone is to be trusted (see the note on 17:5-8), and Moab (v.9) would be exiled for relying on its **works**, its **treasures**, and its god **Chemosh** (see the note on v. 13).

48:10 Because God has purposed to judge Moab, curses are pronounced on those who do not execute his plan.

48:13 Chemosh seems to have been the national god of Moab (Nm 21:29; 1Kg 11:7,33). The Israelites had worshiped a golden calf at **Bethel** (1Kg 12:28-33; Am 3:14; 5:5).

48:15 For a second time in this section (46:18), God is referred to as “the King”. His sovereignty over the nations is the basis for his judgment and salvation of them (see 10:7).

48:17 Like the judgment of Egypt (46:12), the destruction of Moab would be known to other peoples.

48:26-30 Moab, the nation, was also guilty of exalting itself **against the LORD** (v. 26) and **pride** (v. 29). Their arrogance is also cited in Isaiah 16:6. Jeremiah 9:23-24 forbids boasting in anything besides the genuine knowledge of God.

48:31-32 Jeremiah pleaded for mercy on Philistia in 47:6 (see note), but it seems to be God who mourns over Moab here. These verses share similarities with Isaiah 16:7-11.

48:35 A significant part of God’s judgment against Moab would be putting an end to their idolatry. This is consistent with his plan for all nations to worship him alone (3:17).

48:38 The imagery of a shattered **jar** was similarly used in 19:1,10-11.

48:44 This verse contains a common OT formula that describes inescapable judgment. A person **flees** from one disaster only to meet a greater disaster; escape from that greater disaster only brings worse trouble, and so on (cp. 1Kg 19:17; Is 24:18; Am 5:19). The phrase **the year of their punishment** is repeatedly used of the appointed time for God’s judgment (e.g., 8:12; 23:12; 46:21; 49:8; 50:27; 51:17).

48:45-47 The terms **Moab’s forehead** (v. 45) and **in the last days** (v. 47) are uncommon and are shared with Numbers 24:14,17. In that passage, Moab is crushed by the Messiah who is victorious over Israel’s enemies. Here, Moab is also soundly defeated but will have its **fortunes** restored in the end. This same promise had been given to Israel (e.g., 29:14; 30:3,18; 31:23). Hope of salvation thus extends to the nations (see the notes on 46:25-26; 49:38-39).

PROPHECIES AGAINST AMMON

49 About the Ammonites, † this is what the LORD says:

Does Israel have no sons?
Is he without an heir?
Why then has Milcom † † dispossessed Gad †
and his people settled in their cities?

2 Therefore look, the days are coming † — this is the LORD's declaration —
when I will make the shout of battle † heard against Rabbah †
of the Ammonites.
It will become a desolate mound,
and its surrounding villages will be set on fire.
Israel will dispossess their dispossessors, says the LORD.
3 Wail, Heshbon, † for Ai is devastated; cry out, daughters of Rabbah!
Clothe yourselves with sackcloth, † and lament; run back and forth
within your walls, †
because Milcom will go into exile
together with his priests and officials. †
4 Why do you boast about your valleys, your flowing valley, †
you faithless daughter —
you who trust in your treasures
and say, "Who can attack me? "
5 Look, I am about to bring terror on you † — this is the declaration
of the Lord GOD of Armies — from all those around you.
You will be banished, each person headlong, with no one to gather up
the fugitives.
6 But after that, I will restore the fortunes † of the Ammonites. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

PROPHECIES AGAINST EDOM

7 About Edom, † this is what the LORD of Armies says:

Is there no longer wisdom in Teman? †
Has counsel perished from the prudent?
Has their wisdom rotted away? †
8 Run! Turn back! Lie low, residents of Dedan, †
for I will bring Esau's calamity on him †
at the time I punish him. †
9 If grape harvesters came to you, wouldn't they leave some gleanings? †
Were thieves to come in the night,

they would destroy only what they wanted. †

10 But I will strip Esau bare; I will uncover his secret places. †
He will try to hide, † but he will be unable.
His descendants will be destroyed
along with his relatives and neighbors.
He will exist no longer. †

11 Abandon your fatherless; I will preserve them; let your widows trust in me. †

12 For this is what the LORD says: "If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, can you possibly remain unpunished? You will not remain unpunished, for you must drink it too. 13 For by myself I have sworn" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "Bozrah † will become a desolation, a disgrace, a ruin, and an example for cursing, and all its surrounding cities will become ruins forever." †

14 I have heard an envoy from the LORD; a messenger has been sent among the nations: Assemble yourselves to come against her.
Rise up for war!

15 I will certainly make you insignificant among the nations, despised among humanity.

16 As to the terror you cause, †
your arrogant heart has deceived you.
You who live in the clefts of the rock, †
you who occupy the mountain summit,
though you elevate your nest like the eagles, even from there I will bring you down.
This is the LORD's declaration. †

17 "Edom will become a desolation. Everyone who passes by her will be appalled and scoff because of all her wounds. † 18 As when Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown along with their neighbors," † says the LORD, "no one will live there; no human being will stay in it even temporarily. †

19 “Look, it will be like a lion coming from the thickets † of the Jordan to the watered grazing land. † I will chase Edom away from her land in a flash. I will appoint whoever is chosen for her. For who is like me? † Who will issue me a summons? † Who is the shepherd who can stand against me? ” †
20 Therefore, hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Edom and the strategies he has devised against the people of Teman: † The flock’s little lambs will certainly be dragged away, † and their grazing land will be made desolate because of them. † 21 At the sound of their fall the earth will quake; † the sound of her cry will be heard at the Red Sea. † 22 Look! It will be like an eagle soaring upward, then swooping down and spreading its wings over Bozrah. In that day the hearts of Edom’s warriors will be like the heart of a woman with contractions. †

PROPHECIES AGAINST DAMASCUS

23 About Damascus: †

Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, †
for they have heard a bad report and are agitated, like † the anxious sea
that cannot be calmed.
24 Damascus has become weak; she has turned to run;
panic has gripped her.
Distress and labor pains have seized her
like a woman in labor. †
25 How can the city of praise not be abandoned, †
the town that brings me joy?
26 Therefore, her young men will fall in her public squares; all the warriors
will perish in that day.
This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. †
27 I will set fire to the wall of Damascus; it will consume Ben-
hadad’s citadels. †

PROPHECIES AGAINST KEDAR AND HAZOR

28 About Kedar † and the kingdoms of Hazor, which King Nebuchadnezzar †
of Babylon defeated, this is what the LORD says:

Rise up, attack Kedar,
and destroy the people of the east!
29 They will take their tents and their flocks along with their tent curtains
and all their equipment.
They will take their camels for themselves.
They will call out to them,
"Terror is on every side! " †
30 Run! Escape quickly! Lie low, residents of Hazor — this is
the LORD's declaration — for King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon
has drawn up a plan against you;
he has devised a strategy against you.

31 Rise up, attack a nation at ease, one living in security.
This is the LORD's declaration.
They have no doors, not even a gate bar;
they live alone. †
32 Their camels will become plunder, and their massive herds of cattle will
become spoil. †
I will scatter them to the wind in every direction, those who clip the hair on
their temples;
I will bring calamity on them across all their borders.
This is the LORD's declaration.
33 Hazor will become a jackals' den, †
a desolation forever.
No one will live there;
no human being will stay in it even temporarily. †

PROPHECIES AGAINST ELAM

34 This is the word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah about Elam †
at the beginning of the reign of King Zedekiah of Judah. † 35 This is what the
LORD of Armies says:

I am about to shatter Elam's bow, †
the source † of their might.
36 I will bring the four winds against Elam from the four corners of the heavens,
and I will scatter them to all these winds.
There will not be a nation
to which Elam's banished ones will not go.
37 I will devastate Elam before their enemies, before those who intend to take
their lives.
I will bring disaster on them,
my burning anger.
This is the LORD's declaration.
I will send the sword after them †
until I finish them off.
38 I will set my throne in Elam, and I will destroy the king and officials
from there.
This is the LORD's declaration.

39 Yet, in the last days, I will restore the fortunes of Elam. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

49:1 LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *Malkam* **49:1** = Molech **49:3** Or *sheep pens* **49:4** Or *about your strength, your ebbing strength* **49:6** Or *will end the captivity*, also in v. 39 **49:13** = Edom's capital **49:16** Lit *Your horror* **49:16** = Petra **49:19** Lit *pride* **49:23** Lit *in* **49:34** = modern Iran **49:35** Lit *first*
49:1 Gn 19:38; Dt 2:19; 23:3; Jdg 10:6-7; 1Sm 11:11; 12:12; 1Kg 11:5-7,33; 2Kg 24:2; Neh 2:10; Is 11:14; Jr 40:14; Ezk 21:28-32; 25:2-10; Am 1:13-15; Zph 2:8-9 **49:1** 1Kg 11:5,7,33; Zph 1:5 **49:2** Jr 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 23:7; 48:12; 51:47,52 **49:2** Jr 4:19 **49:2** Dt 3:11; 2Sm 11:1; 12:26-29; Ezk 25:5; Am 1:14 **49:3** Nm 21:21-25,34; Dt 2:24,30; Jos 12:2; Jdg 11:26; Jr 48:2 **49:3** Jr 48:37 **49:3** Jr 48:7 **49:5** Jr 48:43-44 **49:6** Jr 48:47; 49:39 **49:7** Gn 25:30; 32:3; 36:1; Nm 20:18-21; 24:18; Jdg 11:17-18; 2Sm 8:14; 2Kg 8:20-22; Ps 60:8; Is 34:5-8 **49:7** Gn 36:15; Ezk 25:13; Am 1:12 **49:7** Ob 8-9 **49:8** Gn 25:1-3; Ezk 25:13 **49:8** Gn 25:25,30; 36:1; Ob 8,18 **49:8** Jr 6:15; 8:12; Ob 8-13 **49:9** Dt 24:21 **49:9** Ob 5 **49:10** Jr 23:24; Ob 6 **49:10** Ob 3 **49:10** Mal 1:3-4 **49:11** Dt 10:18; Ps 68:5; Pr 15:25; Jms 1:27 **49:13** Gn 22:16; 1Sm 3:14; Ps 89:3,35; Is 45:23; 54:9; Jr 22:5; 44:26 **49:12-13** Jr 25:28-29; Am 1:12 **49:14-16** Ob 1-4 **49:17** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 50:13; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **49:18** Gn 19:24-25 **49:18** Jr 49:33; 50:40; Zph 2:9 **49:19** Jr 50:44 **49:19** Mc 7:18 **49:19** Jb 9:19; Jr 12:5; 50:44; Zch 11:3 **49:19** 2Ch 20:6; Jb 41:10 **49:20** Is 14:26; 19:12,17; 23:8; Jr 18:11; 49:30; 50:45; 51:12; Mc 2:3 **49:20** Jr 15:3; 22:19 **49:20** Jr 9:10; 23:10; 25:30-38 **49:21** Is 29:6; 64:1; Ezk 26:15; 31:16; 38:19; Mt 28:2; Rv 8:5 **49:18-21** Jr 50:40,44-46 **49:22** Jr 48:40-41 **49:23** Is 17:1; Am 1:3 **49:23** 2Kg 18:34 **49:24** Is 13:8; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 22:23; 30:6; 50:43; Mc 4:9-10 **49:25** Jr 33:9 **49:26** Jr 50:30 **49:27** Am 1:4 **49:28** Gn 25:13; Ps 120:5; Is 21:16-17; 60:7; Jr 2:10; Ezk 27:21 **49:28** 2Kg 24:11; 25:22; 2Ch 36:6-13 **49:29** Ps 31:13; Jr 6:25; 20:3-4,10 **49:31** Jdg 18:7-10; Ps 73:12; Is 47:8; Ezk 38:10-11; Zph 2:15; Zch 7:7 **49:32** Is 10:6; Ezk 25:7; Nah 2:9 **49:33** Jr 9:11; 10:22; 51:37 **49:33** Jr 49:18; 50:40 **49:34** Jr 27:12; 28:1; 29:3 **49:35** Is 22:6 **49:37** Jr 9:16 **49:39** Jr 48:47; 49:6

49:1-2 The theme of Israel taking possession of others (lit "possess those who possessed them") is shared with Amos 9:12. Other prophetic passages likewise speak of them permanently taking possession of the land (Is 65:9; Ob 17-20). The related theme of **an heir** goes all the way back to Genesis 15:3-8.

49:3 Milcom is called "the god of the Ammonites" in 1Kg 11:33. Like Chemosh (48:7), this idol and its **priests and officials** would go into exile (see Is 46:1-2). The nations thus would suffer the same fate as Israel (46:19; 48:46) but also had the same hope (46:27; see the note on 48:45-47).

49:4 Like Egypt and Moab (46:8; 48:29), Ammon was also guilty of pride. Israel had also been called **faithless daughter** (31:22), probably because of her habitual backsliding (3:12; 8:5). Ammon, like Moab had also wrongly trusted in her **treasures** (48:7).

49:6 Despite God's judgment of them, Ammon's **fortunes** will be restored (see the notes on 46:25-26; 48:45-47).

49:7 The next nation addressed is **Edom**, which slightly differs from the order in 25:19-21. Edom was also mentioned in 27:3 and was known for its **wisdom** (see Ob 8).

49:11 Edom would suffer the severe judgment of God, but its **fatherless** and **widows** would be saved through **trust in** God. This contrasts with the misplaced trust in works and treasures described in the preceding context (v. 4; 48:7). The theme of the correct object of trust is important in Jeremiah (see the note on 17:5-8).

49:12 This **cup** of divine wrath had been introduced in 25:15-17.

49:17-18 The comparison to **Sodom and Gomorrah** (v. 18) implies that Edom's utter destruction will be permanent (see v. 13), in contrast with that of Egypt (46:26), Moab (48:47), and Ammon (49:6). This may relate to a wordplay on Edom and **human being** (Hb *'adam* vv. 15,18) such that Edom represents wicked humanity (see the note on Is 34:5).

49:21 The connection of Edom's judgment to **the Red Sea** echoes Exodus 15:15.

49:22 A similar thing had been said of Moab and its **warriors** in 48:40-41.

49:24 The suddenness and severity of God's judgment of Israel was also repeatedly compared to **labor pains** (4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6). The same is true for the king of Babylon (50:43), which shows God's equal treatment of Israel and the nations. Likewise, the punishment of Moab and Edom is compared to the anguish of **a woman in labor** (48:41).

49:28 For more on **Kedar**, see the notes on Isaiah 21:14-17 and 60:7.

49:29 The phrase **"Terror is on every side!"** is used similarly of overwhelming enemies in 6:25 and 46:5. It is also directed specifically toward an individual in 20:3,10 and Psalm 31:14.

49:32 Judgment on **those who clip the hair on their temples** had been predicted in 9:26 and 25:23.

49:33 This echoes what was said of Edom in vv. 13,18.

49:34 Elam's judgment had been foretold in 25:25. That text associates them with the land of the Medes (Media), as does Isaiah 21:2.

49:36 Like Kedar and Hazor (v. 32), **Elam** would also be scattered to the **winds** and exiled like other nations (see the note on v. 3).

49:38-39 Having already referred to himself as King in the preceding context (46:18; 48:15), God declares his direct rule over **Elam** in the future. The establishment of his **throne** precludes the rule of its own **king and officials.** This relates to the eschatological establishment of Jerusalem as the Lord's throne (3:17). As was the case for Moab (see the note on 48:45-47), judgment is balanced by the promise: **In the last days, I will restore the fortunes of Elam.**

PROPHECIES AGAINST BABYLON

50 This is the word the LORD spoke about Babylon, † the land of the Chaldeans, through the prophet Jeremiah:

2 Announce to the nations; proclaim and raise up a signal flag; †
proclaim, and hide nothing.
Say, “Babylon is captured;
Bel † is put to shame; Marduk is terrified.”
Her idols are put to shame;
her false gods, devastated.
3 For a nation from the north will attack her; †
it will make her land desolate.
No one will be living in it —
both people and animals will escape. † †
4 In those days and at that time — this is the LORD’s declaration — the Israelites and Judeans will come together, †
weeping as they come,
and will seek the LORD their God. †
5 They will ask about Zion, turning their faces to this road.
They will come and join themselves † to the LORD in a permanent covenant † that will never be forgotten.

6 My people were lost sheep; †
their shepherds led them astray, †
guiding them the wrong way in the mountains. †
They wandered from mountain to hill;
they forgot their resting place.
7 Whoever found them devoured them.
Their adversaries said, “We’re not guilty; instead, they have sinned against the LORD, their righteous grazing land, †
the hope of their ancestors, † the LORD.”

8 Escape from Babylon; †

depart from the Chaldeans' land.
Be like the rams that lead the flock.

9 For I will soon stir up and bring against Babylon †
an assembly of great nations from the north country.
They will line up in battle formation against her; †
from there she will be captured.
Their arrows will be like a skilled † warrior who does not return empty-handed.
10 The Chaldeans will become plunder; all Babylon's plunderers will be fully satisfied.
This is the LORD's declaration.
11 Because you rejoice, because you celebrate — you who plundered my inheritance —
because you frolic like a young cow treading grain and neigh like stallions, †
12 your mother † will be utterly humiliated; she who bore you will be put to shame.
Look! She will lag behind all † the nations — an arid wilderness, a desert. †
13 Because of the LORD's wrath, she will not be inhabited;
she will become a desolation, every bit of her.
Everyone who passes through Babylon
will be appalled
and scoff because of all her wounds. †
14 Line up in battle formation around Babylon, all you archers!
Shoot at her! Do not spare an arrow,
for she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Raise a war cry against her on every side!
She has thrown up her hands in surrender;
her defense towers have fallen;
her walls are demolished. †
Since this is the LORD's vengeance, †
take your vengeance on her;
as she has done, do the same to her.
16 Cut off the sower from Babylon as well as him who wields the sickle at harvest time.

Because of the oppressor's sword, †
each will turn to his own people, †
each will flee to his own land.

THE RETURN OF GOD'S PEOPLE

17 Israel is a stray lamb, chased by lions. †
The first who devoured him was the king of Assyria; the last who crushed his bones
was King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. †

18 Therefore, this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says: I am about to punish the king of Babylon † and his land just as I punished the king of Assyria.

19 I will return Israel to his grazing land, †
and he will feed on Carmel and Bashan;
he will be satisfied
in the hill country of Ephraim and of Gilead. †
20 In those days and at that time — this is the LORD's declaration — one will search for Israel's iniquity,
but there will be none,
and for Judah's sins,
but they will not be found,
for I will forgive † those I leave as a remnant. †

THE INVASION OF BABYLON

21 Attack the land of Merathaim, and those living in Pekod.
Put them to the sword;
completely destroy them —
this is the LORD's declaration — do everything I have commanded you. †
22 The sound of war is in the land † — a crushing blow!
23 How the hammer of the whole earth is cut down and smashed!
What a horror Babylon has become

among the nations! †

24 Babylon, I laid a trap for you, and you were caught, †
but you did not even know it.
You were found and captured
because you pitted yourself against the LORD.

25 The LORD opened his armory and brought out his weapons of wrath, †
because it is a task of the Lord GOD of Armies in the land of the Chaldeans.

26 Come against her from the most distant places. †
Open her granaries;
pile her up like mounds of grain
and completely destroy her.
Leave her no survivors.

27 Put all her young bulls to the sword; let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them because their day has come,
the time of their punishment. †

THE HUMILIATION OF BABYLON

28 There is a voice of fugitives and refugees from the land of Babylon.
The voice announces in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God, the vengeance
for his temple. †

29 Summon the archers to Babylon, all who string the bow;
camp all around her; let none escape.

Repay her according to her deeds; †
just as she has done, do the same to her,

for she has acted arrogantly against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel. †

30 Therefore, her young men will fall in her public squares;
all the warriors will perish in that day.

This is the LORD's declaration. †

31 Look, I am against you, you arrogant one — this is the declaration of
the Lord GOD of Armies — for your day has come,
the time when I will punish you.

32 The arrogant will stumble and fall †
with no one to pick him up.

I will set fire to his cities,
and it will consume everything around him. †

THE DESOLATION OF BABYLON

33 This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Israelites and Judeans alike have been oppressed.
All their captors hold them fast; †
they refuse to release them.
34 Their Redeemer is strong; the LORD of Armies is his name.
He will fervently champion their cause †
so that he might bring rest to the earth
but turmoil to those who live in Babylon. †
35 A sword is over the Chaldeans — this is the LORD's declaration — against those who live in Babylon,
against her officials, and against her sages.
36 A sword is against the diviners, and they will act foolishly.
A sword is against her heroic warriors,
and they will be terrified.
37 A sword is against his horses and chariots and against all the foreigners among them, †
and they will be like women. †
A sword is against her treasuries,
and they will be plundered.
38 A drought will come on her waters, and they will be dried up.
For it is a land of carved images,
and they go mad because of terrifying things. † †

39 Therefore, desert creatures † will live with hyenas, and ostriches will also live in her.
It will never again be inhabited
or lived in through all generations. †
40 Just as God demolished Sodom and Gomorrah and their neighboring towns †
— this is the LORD's declaration — so no one will live there;

no human being will stay in it even temporarily as a temporary resident. †

THE CONQUEST OF BABYLON

41 Look! A people comes from the north. †
A great nation and many kings will be stirred up from the remote regions
of the earth. †
42 They grasp bow and javelin.
They are cruel and show no mercy.
Their voice roars like the sea, †
and they ride on horses,
lined up like men in battle formation
against you, Daughter Babylon.
43 The king of Babylon has heard about them; his hands have become weak.
Distress has seized him —
pain, like a woman in labor. †

44 "Look, it will be like a lion coming from the thickets † † of the Jordan to the watered grazing land. I will chase Babylon † away from her land in a flash. I will appoint whoever is chosen for her. For who is like me? Who will issue me a summons? Who is the shepherd who can stand against me?"
45 Therefore, hear the plans that the LORD has drawn up against Babylon and the strategies he has devised against the land of the Chaldeans: † Certainly the flock's little lambs will be dragged away; certainly the grazing land will be made desolate because of them. 46 At the sound of Babylon's conquest the earth will quake; a cry will be heard among the nations. †

50:3 Lit *escape; they will walk* **50:5** LXX; MT reads *Come and join yourselves* **50:9** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *bereaving* **50:12** Lit *Look! The last of* **50:26** Lit *from the end* **50:38** Or *of dreaded gods* **50:39** Or *desert demons* **50:44** Lit *pride* **50:44** Lit *them*
50:1 Is 13:1 **50:2** Ps 60:4; Is 5:26; 18:3 **50:2** Is 46:1; Jr 51:44 **50:3** Is 41:25; Jr 1:13-15; 6:1,22; 47:2; 50:9,41; 51:48 **50:3** Ps 135:8; Jr 7:20; 21:6; 32:43; 33:10,12; 36:29; 51:62 **50:4** Is 11:12-13; Jr 3:18; Ezk 37:15-22; Hs 11:1 **50:4** 2Ch 11:16; 15:4; Hs 3:5 **50:5** Gn 9:16; 17:7,13,19; Is 55:3; 61:8; Jr 32:40; Ezk 16:60; 37:26 **50:6** Is 53:6 **50:6** Jr 23:2,13 **50:6** Ezk 34:6 **50:7** Jr 31:23; 40:2-3 **50:7** Jr 14:8; 17:13 **50:8** Jr 51:6; Rv 18:4 **50:9** Jr 51:1,11,29,35 **50:9** Jr 6:23; 50:14,42; 51:27 **50:11** Jdg 5:22; Jr 8:16; 47:3 **50:12** Jr 2:31; 51:47; Hs 2:4-5 **50:12** Jr 51:43 **50:13** Dt 28:37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Jr 5:30; 18:16; 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18; 42:18; 44:12,22; 49:17; Mc 6:16; Zph 2:15 **50:15** Jr 51:58 **50:15** Jr 46:10 **50:16** Jr 46:16 **50:16** Is 13:14 **50:17** Jr 2:15; 4:7 **50:17** 2Kg 24:10-12; 25:1-7 **50:18** Is 10:12 **50:19** Jr 22:6; 23:3; 33:12; Ezk 34:14 **50:19** Is 33:9; Mc 7:14; Nah 1:4 **50:20** Nm 14:20; Jr 31:34; 36:3 **50:20** Jr 39:10; 52:16; Zph 3:12 **50:21** 1Kg 9:4;

2Kg 21:8; 2Ch 7:17 **50:22** Jr 51:54-56 **50:23** Jr 51:41 **50:24** Jr 51:31; Dn 5:30-31 **50:25** Is 13:5 **50:27** Is 10:3; Jr 46:21; Ezk 21:25,29; Hs 5:9; Mc 7:4; 2Pt 2:9 **50:28** 2Kg 18:16; 23:4; 24:13; Jr 51:11 **50:29** Ps 28:4; Pr 24:12,29; Jr 25:14; 50:29; 51:24; Lm 3:64 **50:29** Ps 71:22; Is 1:4; 37:23; Jr 51:5 **50:30** Jr 49:26 **50:32** Ps 27:2; Pr 24:16-17; Is 3:8; 8:15; 31:3 **50:32** Jr 21:14 **50:33** 2Ch 28:11; 30:9; Is 14:17; 61:1; Jr 13:17 **50:34** 1Sm 24:15; Pr 23:11; Is 47:4; Jr 51:36 **50:34** Mc 4:10 **50:37** Ex 12:38; Neh 13:1-3; Jr 25:20 **50:37** Jr 51:30 **50:38** Ex 15:16; 23:27; Jb 20:25 **50:39** Is 13:20-21; 34:13-14 **50:40** Gn 19:24-25 **50:40** Jr 49:18-21,33 **50:41-43** Jr 6:22-24; 49:24 **50:41** Jr 6:22; 25:32; 31:8 **50:42** Is 5:30; 17:12 **50:43** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; 21:3; 42:14; Jr 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 49:24; Mc 4:9-10; 1Th 5:3 **50:44** Ps 10:9; 17:12; Is 5:29; Jr 2:15; 5:6; 12:5; 25:38; 50:17; Zch 11:3 **50:45** Jr 51:29 **50:44-46** Jr 49:19-21

50:1-3 As foretold in 25:12-14, **Babylon**, the instrument of God's judgment of the nations, will itself be judged, along with its gods. Its destruction would also come **from the north** (vv. 3,9).

50:4-5 The repentant, sorrowful return of Israel and Judah to God recall passages such as 3:18; 30:9; and 31:9. Whereas the ark of the LORD's covenant will be forgotten (3:16), the **permanent covenant** will not be. This reinforces the idea that the new covenant will accomplish what the covenant with Israel at Sinai could not (see 31:31-34; Heb 8:13).

50:8-9 The command to flee **Babylon** parallels v. 45 and Isaiah 48:20. The **assembly of great nations** that fights against her is in keeping with 25:14 (see Gn 17:5).

50:12 Babylon is personified as a woman. This imagery, including her humiliation and desolation, is found again in Revelation 18.

50:15 Babylon had delighted in the destruction of Israel (v. 11), but God would have **vengeance** against her (see Is 61:2; 63:4).

50:17 As in vv. 6-7, **Israel** is again compared to helpless sheep. **Assyria** had exiled the northern kingdom of Israel and **Babylon** the southern kingdom of Judah.

50:19-20 The salvation of Israel is again contrasted with the judgment of Babylon (see vv. 4-5; Is 14:1-2). The latter will be made a permanent desolation (vv. 13,39) but Israel will be brought back to its land (v. 19). Babylon will face God's "wrath" and "vengeance" for her sins (vv. 13-15), but **Israel's iniquity** and **sins** will be forgiven (v. 20) through the new covenant (31:34). Israel also faced God's judgment but still was left a remnant, unlike Babylon (v. 26; see the note on 51:5).

50:29-32 Babylon's sin of arrogance is repeatedly cited here (vv. 29,31-32). Other nations in this section were likewise guilty of this (46:8; 48:29-30; 49:4). The **day** and **time** (vv. 27,31) of God's "vengeance" on her will indeed come (v. 28; see the note on vv. 19-20).

50:33-34 Despite the strength of the **captors**, God is stronger and will free Israel and Judah. The language used here likens this future redemption to a second exodus (see the notes on Is 10:24-26; 11:11-16; 48:20-22). This redemption brings **rest to the earth.**

50:38 Babylon's idols were also mentioned in v. 2.

50:40 The utter destruction of Edom was also likened to that of **Sodom and Gomorrah** (50:18).

50:41 Judgment coming **from the north** is a common theme in this section and in the book of Jeremiah (see the note on 46:10). The involvement of **kings** in the judgment of Babylon had been likewise predicted in 25:14. An army coming **from the remote regions of the earth** was also foretold in 6:22. A "great assembly" of the redeemed is likewise brought from these same places (31:8; see Is 26:6; 33:23).

50:43 The focus here is on **the king of Babylon**, as in v. 18. Sudden, severe anguish is again compared to **labor** pains (see the note on 49:24). This is how Judah was described in 6:24.

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON BABYLON

51 This is what the LORD says:

I am about to rouse the spirit of a destroyer † against Babylon †
and against the population of Leb-qamai. † †

2 I will send strangers to Babylon who will scatter her and strip her land bare, †
for they will come against her
from every side in the day of disaster.

3 Don't let the archer string his bow; don't let him put on † his armor. †
Don't spare her young men;
completely destroy her entire army!

4 Those who were slain will fall in the land of the Chaldeans, those who were pierced through, in her streets. †

5 For Israel and Judah are not left widowed by their God, the LORD of Armies, though their land is full of guilt
against the Holy One of Israel. †

6 Leave Babylon; †
save your lives, each of you! †
Don't perish because of her guilt.
For this is the time of the LORD's vengeance — he will pay her what she deserves. †

7 Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's hand, †
making the whole earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine; †
therefore, the nations go mad. †

8 Suddenly Babylon fell and was shattered.
Wail for her;
get balm † for her wound — perhaps she can be healed.

9 We tried to heal Babylon, but she could not be healed.
Abandon her!
Let each of us go to his own land, †
for her judgment extends to the sky

and reaches as far as the clouds. †

10 The LORD has brought about our vindication; †
come, let's tell in Zion
what the LORD our God has accomplished. †

11 Sharpen the arrows! †
Fill the quivers! †
The LORD has roused the spirit of the kings of the Medes
because his plan is aimed at Babylon
to destroy her,
for it is the LORD's vengeance, vengeance for his temple. †
12 Raise up a signal flag †
against the walls of Babylon;
fortify the watch post;
set the watchmen in place;
prepare the ambush.
For the LORD has both planned and accomplished what he has threatened
against those who live in Babylon. †
13 You who reside by abundant water, †
rich in treasures,
your end has come,
your life thread is cut.

14 The LORD of Armies has sworn by himself:

I will fill you up with men as with locusts, and they will sing the victory song over you.

15 He made the earth by his power, established the world † by his wisdom, †
and spread out the heavens by his understanding. †
16 When he thunders, †
the waters in the heavens are tumultuous, †
and he causes the clouds
to rise from the ends of the earth.

He makes lightning for the rain
and brings the wind from his storehouses. †

17 Everyone is stupid and ignorant.
Every goldsmith is put to shame by his carved image, †
for his cast images are a lie; †
there is no breath in them. †
18 They are worthless, † a work to be mocked.
At the time of their punishment they will be destroyed. †
19 Jacob's Portion † is not like these because he is the one who formed all things. †
Israel is the tribe of his inheritance; †
the LORD of Armies is his name. †

20 You are my war club, my weapons of war.
With you I will smash nations;
with you I will bring kingdoms to ruin.
21 With you I will smash the horse and its rider; with you I will smash the chariot and its rider.
22 With you I will smash man and woman; †
with you I will smash the old man and the youth; with you I will smash the young man and the young woman.
23 With you I will smash the shepherd and his flock; with you I will smash the farmer and his ox-team. †
With you I will smash governors and officials.

24 "Before your very eyes, I will repay Babylon and all the residents of Chaldea for all their evil they have done in Zion." †
This is the LORD's declaration.

25 Look, I am against you, devastating mountain.
This is the LORD's declaration.
You devastate the whole earth.

I will stretch out my hand against you, †
roll you down from the cliffs,
and turn you into a charred mountain.
26 No one will be able to retrieve a cornerstone or a foundation stone from you,
because you will become desolate forever.
This is the LORD's declaration.

27 Raise a signal flag † in the land; blow a ram's horn among the nations; †
set apart the nations against her. †
Summon kingdoms against her —
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a marshal against her;
bring up horses like a swarm † of locusts.
28 Set apart the nations for battle against her — the kings of Media,
her governors and all her officials,
and all the lands they rule.
29 The earth quakes † and trembles because the LORD's intentions
against Babylon stand: to make the land of Babylon a desolation, without
inhabitant.
30 Babylon's warriors have stopped fighting; †
they sit in their strongholds.
Their might is exhausted;
they have become like women.
Babylon's homes have been set ablaze,
her gate bars are shattered. †
31 Messenger races to meet messenger, †
and herald to meet herald,
to announce to the king of Babylon
that his city has been captured
from end to end. †
32 The fords have been seized, †
the marshes set on fire,
and the fighting men are terrified.

33 For this is what the LORD of Armies, the God of Israel, says:

Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor at the time it is trampled. †
In just a little while her harvest time will come. †

34 “King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon has devoured me; he has crushed me.
He has set me aside like an empty dish;
he has swallowed me like a sea monster; †
he filled his belly with my delicacies;
he has vomited me out. †
35 Let the violence done to me and my family be done to Babylon,”
says the inhabitant of Zion.
“Let my blood be on the inhabitants of Chaldea,”
says Jerusalem.

36 Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

I am about to champion your cause †
and take vengeance on your behalf;
I will dry up her sea †
and make her fountain run dry.
37 Babylon will become a heap of rubble, a jackals’ den,
a desolation and an object of scorn, †
without inhabitant. †
38 They will roar together like young lions; they will growl like lion cubs.
39 While they are flushed with heat, I will serve them a feast, and I will make them drunk so that they celebrate. † †
Then they will fall asleep forever
and never wake up.
This is the LORD’s declaration.
40 I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams together with male goats. †

41 How Sheshach † † has been captured, †

the praise † of the whole earth seized.
What a horror Babylon has become
among the nations! †
42 The sea has risen over Babylon; †
she is covered with its tumultuous waves.
43 Her cities have become a desolation, †
an arid desert,
a land where no one lives,
where no human being even passes through.
44 I will punish Bel † in Babylon.
I will make him vomit what he swallowed. †
The nations will no longer stream to him; †
even Babylon's wall will fall.

45 Come out from among her, my people! †
Save your lives, each of you, †
from the LORD's burning anger.
46 May you not become cowardly and fearful when the report is proclaimed in the land, for the report will come one year,
and then another the next year.
There will be violence in the land
with ruler against ruler.
47 Therefore, look, the days are coming †
when I will punish Babylon's carved images. †
Her entire land will suffer shame,
and all her slain will lie fallen within her. †
48 Heaven and earth and everything in them will shout for joy † over Babylon because the destroyers from the north †
will come against her.
This is the LORD's declaration.

49 Babylon must fall because of the slain of Israel, even as the slain of the whole earth fell

because of Babylon.

50 You who have escaped the sword, †
go and do not stand still!
Remember the LORD from far away, and let Jerusalem come to your mind.

51 We are ashamed because we have heard insults. †
Humiliation covers our faces
because foreigners have entered
the holy places of the LORD's temple. †

52 Therefore, look, the days are coming — this is the LORD's declaration — when I will punish her carved images,
and the wounded will groan
throughout her land.

53 Even if Babylon should ascend to the heavens †
and fortify her tall fortresses,
destroyers will come against her from me.
This is the LORD's declaration.

54 The sound of a cry from Babylon! †
The sound of terrible destruction †
from the land of the Chaldeans!

55 For the LORD is going to devastate Babylon; he will silence her mighty voice.
Their waves roar like a huge torrent;
the tumult of their voice resounds,

56 for a destroyer is coming against her, against Babylon.
Her warriors will be captured,
their bows shattered,
for the LORD is a God of retribution; he will certainly repay.

57 I will make her princes and sages drunk, along with her governors, officials, and warriors.
Then they will fall asleep forever
and never wake up. †
This is the King's declaration;
the LORD of Armies is his name. †

58 This is what the LORD of Armies says:

Babylon's thick walls will be totally demolished, †
and her high gates set ablaze.
The peoples will have labored for nothing; †
the nations will weary themselves only to feed the fire.

59 This is what the prophet Jeremiah commanded Seraiah son of Neriah son of Mahseiah, † the quartermaster, when he went to Babylon with King Zedekiah of Judah in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign. 60 Jeremiah wrote on one scroll about all the disaster that would come to Babylon; † all these words were written against Babylon.
61 Jeremiah told Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud. 62 Say, 'LORD, you have threatened to cut off † this place so that no one will live in it — people or animals. † Indeed, it will remain desolate forever.' 63 When you have finished reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the middle of the Euphrates River. † 64 Then say, 'In the same way, Babylon will sink and never rise again because of the disaster I am bringing on her. They will grow weary.' "
The words of Jeremiah end here.

51:1 Or *to stir up a destructive wind* **51:1** Lit *heart of my adversaries* **51:1** = Chaldeans **51:3** Hb obscure **51:11** Or *Grasp the shields!* **51:16** Lit *At his giving of the voice* **51:19** = The Lord **51:23** Lit *yoke* **51:27** Hb obscure **51:34** Lit *has rinsed me off* **51:39** LXX reads *pass out* **51:41** = Babylon

51:1 Jr 4:11-12; 50:9 **51:2** Jr 15:7; Mt 3:12 **51:3** Jb 41:13; Jr 46:4 **51:4** Jr 51:47,52 **51:5** Ps 78:41; Is 37:23; Jr 50:29 **51:6** Jr 50:8; Rv 18:4 **51:6** Jr 48:6; 51:45 **51:6** Ps 28:4; 137:8; Is 66:6 **51:7** Rv 17:4 **51:7** Rv 14:8; 18:3 **51:7** Jr 25:16 **51:8** Jr 8:22; 46:11 **51:9** Is 13:14 **51:9** Rv 18:5 **51:10** Ps 37:6 **51:10** Jr 50:28 **51:11** Is 5:28; Jr 50:9,14,29; 51:3 **51:11** Jr 50:28 **51:12** Ps 60:4; Is 5:26; 18:3 **51:12** Is 14:26; 19:12,17; 23:8; Jr 18:11; 49:20,30; 50:45; Mc 2:3 **51:13** Rv 17:1 **51:15** Jb 38:4; Ps 93:1; 96:10 **51:15** Pr 3:19-20; 8:22-29 **51:15** Jb 9:8; Ps 104:2; Is 45:12 **51:16** Jr 5:22; 31:35 **51:16** Jb 38:25-30,34-38; Ps 135:7 **51:17** Is 40:18-31; 46:1-7 **51:17** Is 41:29 **51:17** Hab 2:19 **51:18** Jr 10:3,8 **51:18** Jr 6:15; 10:15; 49:8 **51:19** Gn 2:7-8,19; Ps 95:5; Is 43:1 **51:19** Dt 4:20; 32:8-9; Ps 74:2; 78:71; Is 63:17; Mc 7:18; Eph 1:18 **51:15-19** Jr 10:12-16 **51:22** 2Ch 36:17; Is 13:15-18 **51:24** 2Sm 12:11; Is 1:7; Jr 16:9; 20:4; 29:21; 39:16; 50:15,29 **51:25** Jr 15:6; Ezk 6:14; 25:7 **51:27** Ps 60:4; Is 5:26; 18:3 **51:27** Jr 4:5; 6:1 **51:27** Jr 6:4; 22:7; 50:9 **51:29** Ps 18:7; Is 13:13; Jr 50:46 **51:30** Jr 50:37 **51:30** Lm 2:9; Nah 3:13 **51:31** 2Ch 30:6 **51:31** Jr 50:24 **51:32** Jdg 12:5 **51:33** Is 21:10 **51:33** Is 17:5; Jl 3:13; Rv 14:15 **51:34** Ps 74:13; Is 27:1; Ezk 29:3 **51:36** 1Sm 24:15; Pr 23:11; Jr 50:34 **51:36** Ex 14:16–15:21 **51:37** 2Ch 29:8; Jr 18:16; 19:8 **51:37** Jr 4:7; 9:11; 33:10; 34:22; 44:2,22; 46:19; 48:9; 49:33 **51:39** Jr 51:57 **51:40** Is 34:6; Ezk 39:18 **51:41** Jr 25:26 **51:41** Jr 25:26 **51:41** Jr 33:9; 49:25 **51:41** Jr 50:23 **51:42** Is 8:7-8 **51:43** Jr 50:12 **51:44** Is 46:1; Jr 50:2 **51:44** Jb 20:15 **51:44** Is 2:2; Mc 4:1 **51:45** Jr 51:6 **51:45** Jr 48:6; 51:6 **51:47** Jr 7:32; 16:14; 19:6; 23:7; 48:12; 49:2; 51:52 **51:47** Jr 50:2 **51:47** Jr 50:12 **51:48** Is 44:23; 49:13 **51:48** Is 41:25; Jr 4:6,20; 6:1; 15:12; 47:2; 50:3,9,41 **51:50** Jr 44:28

51:51 Ps 44:15 **51:51** Lm 1:10 **51:53** Gn 11:4; Is 14:12-14; Jr 49:16 **51:54** Jr 50:22 **51:54** Jr 4:6; 6:1; 14:17; 48:3; Zph 1:10 **51:57** Jr 51:39 **51:57** Jr 46:18; 48:15 **51:58** Jr 50:15 **51:58** Hab 2:13 **51:59** Jr 32:12 **51:60** Jr 36:2 **51:62** 1Sm 20:15; Ps 109:13; Is 10:7; Jr 9:21; 44:11; 47:4; Ob 14 **51:62** Ps 135:8; Jr 7:20; 21:6; 32:43; 33:10,12; 36:29; 50:3 **51:63** Jr 19:10-11; Rv 18:21

51:5 Whereas Babylon is compared to a disgraced woman subjected to divine wrath (vv. 6-9; 50:12-15), God's people **are not left widowed** (see the note on 50:19-20).

51:8-9 Babylon's judgment (or **wound**) is irreversible. Characterizing her judgment as reaching **to the sky** and **the clouds** alludes to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 (see note). This connection also surfaces in v. 53 (see note).

51:10 This verse shares themes and some vocabulary with the significant messianic prophecy in 23:5-6.

51:11 The judgment of **Babylon** was a historical reality involving the **Medes** (see vv. 27-28). In other places, it seems also to represent the eschatological judgment of the wicked in general (see vv. 9,48,53; 50:34; the notes on Is 13:1–14:23).

51:14 The comparison of an innumerable army to **locusts** here and in v. 27 echoes the book of Joel.

51:15-19 This passage contrasts God with idols by highlighting his power and his wisdom. It is nearly identical to 10:12-16.

51:20-23 This **war club** seems to pick up on the imagery of 50:23 to describe Babylon. Nevertheless, the instrument of divine wrath would itself be judged (v. 24).

51:25-26 The description of Babylon as a **devastating mountain** that destroys **the whole earth** contrasts with eschatological Mount Zion, from which peace proceeds (Is 2:2-4; see Dn 2:35,44-45). Its lack of a **cornerstone or a foundation stone** likewise contrasts with Zion (Is 28:16).

51:34-35 The king of Babylon is compared to a **sea monster** who has swallowed up Zion. Such a creature represents a powerful, evil enemy in other OT passages (see the notes on Ps 74:12-17; Is 27:1).

51:39 This "everlasting sleep" (lit) relates to Babylon's permanent destruction and death (vv. 36-40). The same Hebrew phrase appears in v. 57 and contrasts with the resurrection of the righteous in Isaiah 26:19 (see note).

51:41 The term **Sheshach** was also used as a title for Babylon in 25:26.

51:44 The Babylonian idol **Bel** was likewise involved in swallowing Jerusalem (see the note on vv. 34-35). God, however, would force it to **vomit** them up (see Jnh 2:10). The pronouncement that **nations will no longer stream to him** contrasts with their streaming in the last days to Mount Zion (Is 2:2). This relationship is further strengthened through the comparison of Babylon to a "mountain" in v. 25.

51:45 A similar command to leave Babylon had been given in 50:8-9 (see note).

51:48 The destruction of Babylon brings **joy** not only to Israel but to all of creation. This is similar to the prophet Nahum celebrating over the destruction of the king of Assyria (Nah 3:19). God's people rejoice when he is vindicated, and they are saved when his enemies are destroyed.

51:50 Those fleeing Babylon (v. 45) are to move with haste. They are **far away** because they are in exile (see the note on 31:2-3), and their longing for **Jerusalem** parallels the common sentiment of the godly elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Ps 137:5-6; Is 62:1-7).

51:53 Similar to vv. 8-9, the condition, **if Babylon should ascend to the heavens**, alludes to the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 (see note). The same Hebrew word can be translated as either "Babylon" or "Babel."

51:57 Eternal sleep had been mentioned in v. 39 (see note), and the theme of God's rule appears yet again

(see 46:18; 48:15; 49:38).

51:58 The second half of this verse is similar to Habakkuk 2:13.

51:59-64 The dramatic conclusion to this extended judgment oracle against Babylon is yet another symbolic action (see the note on 13:1-7). The sinking of the **scroll** in the **Euphrates** represented the permanent fall of Babylon. Although Israel also would endure severe judgment, they would be restored in the end (see the notes on 1:9-10; 50:19-20).

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

52 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 2 Zedekiah did what was evil in the LORD's sight just as Jehoiakim had done. † 3 Because of the LORD's anger, it came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he finally banished them from his presence. Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. †

4 In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon advanced against Jerusalem with his entire army. They laid siege to the city and built a siege wall against it all around. 5 The city was under siege until King Zedekiah's eleventh year.

6 By the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was so severe in the city that the common people had no food. 7 Then the city was broken into, and all the warriors fled. They left the city at night by way of the city gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Chaldeans surrounded the city. They made their way along the route to the Arabah. † 8 The Chaldean army pursued the king and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. Zedekiah's entire army left him and scattered. 9 The Chaldeans seized the king and brought him to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he passed sentence on him.

10 At Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered Zedekiah's sons before his eyes, and he also slaughtered the Judean commanders. 11 Then he blinded Zedekiah and bound him with bronze chains. The king of Babylon brought Zedekiah to Babylon, where he kept him in custody † until his dying day. †

12 On the tenth day of the fifth month — which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon — Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, entered Jerusalem as the representative of † the king of Babylon. 13 He burned the LORD's temple, the king's palace, all the houses of Jerusalem; he burned down all the great houses. 14 The whole Chaldean army with the captain of the

guards tore down all the walls surrounding Jerusalem. † 15 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, deported some of the poorest of the people, as well as the rest of the people who remained in the city, the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16 But Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, left some of the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and farmers. †

17 Now the Chaldeans broke into pieces the bronze pillars for the LORD's temple and the water carts and the bronze basin † that were in the LORD's temple, † and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. 18 They also took the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling basins, dishes, and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. 19 The captain of the guards took away the bowls, firepans, sprinkling basins, pots, lampstands, pans, and drink offering bowls † — whatever was gold or silver.

20 As for the two pillars, the one basin, with the twelve bronze oxen under it, and the water carts † that King Solomon had made for the LORD's temple, the weight of the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 21 One pillar was 27 feet † tall, had a circumference of 18 feet, † was hollow — four fingers thick — 22 and had a bronze capital on top of it. † One capital, encircled by bronze grating and pomegranates, stood 7 1/2 feet † high. The second pillar was the same, with pomegranates. 23 Each capital had ninety-six pomegranates all around it. All the pomegranates around the grating numbered one hundred.

24 The captain of the guards also took away Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest of the second rank, and the three doorkeepers. 25 From the city he took a court official † who had been appointed over the warriors; seven trusted royal aides † found in the city; the secretary of the commander of the army, who enlisted the people of the land for military duty; and sixty men from the common people † who were found within the city. 26 Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27 The king of Babylon put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. So Judah went into exile from its land. †

28 These are the people Nebuchadnezzar deported: † in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews; 29 in his eighteenth year, † 832 people from Jerusalem; 30 in

Nebuchadnezzar's twenty-third year, Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guards, deported 745 Jews. Altogether, 4,600 people were deported.

JEHOIACHIN PARDONED

31 On the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Judah's King Jehoiachin, King Evil-merodach of Babylon, in the first year of his reign, pardoned King Jehoiachin of Judah and released him from prison. 32 He spoke kindly to him and set his throne above the thrones of the kings who were with him in Babylon. 33 So Jehoiachin changed his prison clothes, and he dined regularly in the presence of the king of Babylon for the rest of his life. 34 As for his allowance, a regular allowance was given to him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, for the rest of his life. †

52:11 Lit *in a house of guards* **52:12** Lit *Jerusalem; he stood before* **52:17** Lit *sea* **52:20** LXX, Syr; MT reads *oxen under the water carts* **52:21** Lit *18 cubits* **52:21** Lit *12 cubits* **52:22** Lit *five cubits* **52:25** Or *a eunuch* **52:25** Lit *seven men who look on the king's face* **52:25** Lit *the people of the land* **52:29** Some Hb mss, Syr add *he deported*

52:2 2Kg 23:34–24:6; 2Ch 36:4-8 **52:1-3** 2Kg 24:18-20; 2Ch 36:11-13 **52:7** Dt 2:8 **52:4-11** 2Kg 25:1-7; Jr 39:1-7 **52:13-14** 2Ch 36:19 **52:12-16** 2Kg 25:8-12; Jr 39:8-10 **52:17** 1Kg 7:23,27 **52:19** Ex 25:29; 37:16; Nm 4:7 **52:22** 1Kg 7:16-20,41-42; 2Ch 4:12-13 **52:17-27** 2Kg 25:13-21 **52:28** 2Kg 24:12-16 **52:31-34** 2Kg 25:27-30

52:1 Besides vv. 28-30, this chapter is nearly identical to 2 Kings 24:18–25:21,27-30.

52:4-11 The **siege** of Jerusalem and the capture of Zedekiah was also recounted in 39:1-7.

52:13-15 The burning of buildings, the breaking down of the walls, and the leaving behind of the poorest of the land was also described in 39:8-10.

52:31-34 Despite the fall of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah, Jeremiah, like 2 Kings, concludes with this hopeful passage concerning the favor shown to Jehoiachin while in exile (see the note on 2Kg 25:27-30).

LAMENTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The book of Lamentations addresses the extremes of human pain and suffering. For this reason, Lamentations is an important biblical source expressing the hard questions that arise during our times of pain. The suffering the author discusses was brought on by the brutal overthrow of Jerusalem in 586 BC. When naming a book of the Hebrew Bible, the first word was often adopted as the name of the whole book. In this case, 1:1; 2:1; and 4:1 begin the typical Hebrew cry of woe (Hb *'ekah*; "Ah," "Alas," "How"), an exclamatory Hebrew particle. Thus, the book would have been known as Alas! Later rabbis referred to the book more by its contents—*qinot*, i.e., "lamentations"—so this title came to be passed down in the Talmud and in the Greek translation (the Septuagint).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Jeremiah's name has long been associated with this book. The Alexandrian form of the Septuagint has these words preceding 1:1: "And it came to pass, after Israel had been carried away captive, and Jerusalem became desolate, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem." The Latin Vulgate adds this phrase: "and with a sorrowful mind, sighing and moaning, he said." The Talmud observes that "Jeremiah wrote his own book and the book of Kings and Lamentations." Given this rich tradition linking Jeremiah to Lamentations, it seems safe to conclude he did indeed write this book.

BACKGROUND: The background for lamentations was the sacking of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple in 587 BC by the Babylonian army. Even though the book lists only one proper name ("Edom," 4:21-22), the allusions and the historical connections to the events listed so dramatically in 2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36:11-21; and the book of Jeremiah are unmistakable. Perhaps a short list of the key events and some of their allusions in the book of Lamentations will help make this point:

EVENTS	LAMENTATIONS
1. Siege of Jerusalem	2:20-22; 3:5,7
2. Famine in the city	1:11,19; 2:11-12,19-20; 4:4-5, 9-10; 5:9-10
3. Flight of the Judean army	1:3,6; 2:2; 4:19-20
4.Burning of the temple, *etc*.	2:3-5; 4:11; 5:18
5. Breaching of the city walls	2:7-9
6. Exile of the people	1:1,4-5,18; 2:9,14; 3:2,19; 4:22; 5:2
7. Looting of the temple	1:10; 2:6-7
8. Execution of the leaders	1:15; 2:2,20
9. Vassal status of Judah	1:1; 5:8-9
10. Collapse of foreign help	4:17; 5:6

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Few things contrast religious and humanistic traditions more than their respective responses to suffering. The humanist sees suffering as a bare, impersonal event without ultimate meaning or purpose. For believers, suffering is a personal problem because they believe that all events of history are under the hand of a personal God. And if that is true, then how can God's love and justice be reconciled with our pain?

Lamentations gives no easy answers to this question, but it helps us meet God in the midst of our suffering and teaches us the language of prayer. Lamentations supplies: (1) an orientation, (2) a voice for working through grief from "A" to "Z," (3) instruction on how and what to pray, and (4) a focal point on the faithfulness of God and the affirmation that he alone is our portion.

STRUCTURE

The book of Lamentations exhibits remarkable artistic structure. Each of its five chapters (five poems) is a structurally unified text. The fact that there is an uneven number of poems allows the middle poem (chap. 3) to be the midpoint of the book. Thus, there is an ascent (or crescendo) up to a fixed climax for the entire book, thereby making chapter 3 central in its form and the message it imparts. Accordingly, the first two chapters form the steps leading up to the climax of 3:22-24, and from here there is a descent in chapters 4 and 5.

The poems of this book also exhibit the so-called acrostic form (a crisscross inversion such as a-b, b-a). As such, chapters 1 and 5 are overall summaries of the disaster, 2 and 4 are more detailed descriptions of what took place, and chapter 3 occupies the central position.

Lamentations also utilizes the form of the alphabetic acrostic with the twenty-two-letter Hebrew alphabet. In chapter 5, each of its twenty-two stanzas consists of a single line, but this is the only chapter that is not in an alphabetic acrostic.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God's holiness resulted in his destroying Jerusalem for her many sins. Yet at the very center of the book, the author emphasized God's mercy and faithfulness (Lm 3:22-26). The most often quoted text is 3:22-23: "Because of the LORD's faithful love we do not perish, for his mercies never end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness!" There is no specific reference to Christ or to the Holy Spirit.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Because human beings are moral agents responsible to God, their sins will be punished. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is the chief OT event showing that rebellion against God cannot go on indefinitely. Yet because God made humankind in his image, people are capable of emotion, including sorrow and despair. Even when the loss is deserved, intense expressions of grief are a normal part of human experience.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Despite the grief he expressed, the author did not waver in his faith in God (see 3:26). The author's steadfast trust in God in the presence of national catastrophe and personal disaster makes

him one of the greatest heroes of faith found in Scripture.

LAMENTATIONS TIMELINE

2000–700 BC

Lament for Ur, a Sumerian lament composed after the fall of Ur to the Elamites from the east and the Amorites from the west **2000**

The Assyrians sack Babylon. **1240**

Samaria, the capital of Israel, captured by the Assyrians **722**

Sargon II of Assyria deports 28,000 Israelites and settles them throughout the Assyrian Empire. **722**

The Assyrians capture numerous Judean cities—Jerusalem is spared. **701**

700–605 BC

Ashurbanipal leads the Assyrians to capture and destroy Babylon. **649**

Birth of Jeremiah **640?**

Jeremiah is called to be a prophet; he warns of an invasion from the north. **626**

The Medes destroy Assyrian capital of Asshur. **614**

The Babylonians and Medes destroy the Assyrian capital of Nineveh. Babylon has become the largest city in the world with a population of 200,000. **612**

Jeremiah's temple sermon **609**

605–600 BC

Babylonians defeat Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at Carchemish. The Babylonians hold the balance of power in the region. **605**

Babylonian force is exercised in the destruction of the Philistine cities of Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Ekron. **604**

Jehoiakim makes a decision to turn from his alliance with Egypt and submit to Nebuchadnezzar. **604**

Jehoiakim ignores Jeremiah's warning and turns back to Egypt for support after Egypt defeats Babylon at Migdol. **601**

A reinforced Babylonian army approaches Judah; Jehoiakim dies. **598**

600–585 BC

Nebuchadnezzar plunders the temple, takes Jehoiachin and the royal family into exile, and Zedekiah becomes king. **597**

Nebuchadnezzar destroys Jerusalem and the temple. **586**

Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliah as governor of Judah. **585**

Judah's provincial capital is moved from Jerusalem to Mizpah. **585**

Gedaliah is assassinated after only two months by a group of fanatically zealous nationalists under the leadership of Ishmael. **585**

Lamentations **585**

LAMENT OVER JERUSALEM

א *Aleph*

1 How † she sits alone, †
the city † once crowded with people!
She who was great among the nations has become like a widow. †
The princess among the provinces has been put to forced labor.

ב *Beth*

2 She weeps bitterly during the night, †
with tears on her cheeks.
There is no one to offer her comfort, not one from all her lovers. † †
All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

ג *Gimel*

3 Judah has gone into exile following † affliction and harsh slavery; she lives among the nations
but finds no place to rest. †
All her pursuers have overtaken her in narrow places.

ד *Daleth*

4 The roads to Zion † mourn, for no one comes to the appointed festivals. †
All her gates are deserted;
her priests groan,
her young women grieve,
and she herself is bitter.

ה *He*

5 Her adversaries have become her masters; †
her enemies are at ease, †
for the LORD has made her suffer because of her many transgressions.
Her children have gone away
as captives before the adversary.

ו *Waw*

6 All the splendor † has vanished from Daughter Zion. †
Her leaders are like stags
that find no pasture;
they stumble away exhausted
before the hunter. †

ז *Zayin*

7 During the days of her affliction and homelessness †
Jerusalem remembers all her precious belongings that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into the adversary's hand, she had no one to help.
The adversaries looked at her, laughing over her downfall.

ח *Cheth*

8 Jerusalem has sinned grievously; therefore, she has become an object of scorn. †
All who honored her now despise her, for they have seen her nakedness.
She herself groans and turns away.

ט *Teth*

9 Her uncleanness stains her skirts. †
She never considered her end.
Her downfall was astonishing; †
there was no one to comfort her.
LORD, look on my affliction, for the enemy boasts.

י *Yod*

10 The adversary has seized all her precious belongings.
She has even seen the nations enter her sanctuary — those you had forbidden
to enter your assembly. †

כ *Kaph*

11 All her people groan while they search for bread. †
They have traded their precious belongings for food in order to stay alive. †
LORD, look and see how I have become despised.

ל *Lamed*

12 Is this nothing to you, all you who pass by? †
Look and see!
Is there any pain like mine,
which was dealt out to me,
which the LORD made me suffer on the day of his burning anger? †

מ *Mem*

13 He sent fire from on high † into my bones; he made it descend. † †
He spread a net for my feet †
and turned me back.
He made me desolate,
sick all day long.

נ *Nun*

14 My transgressions have been formed into a yoke, † † †
fastened together by his hand; they have been placed on my neck, and the Lord has broken my strength.
He has handed me over
to those I cannot withstand.

ס *Samek*

15 The Lord has rejected †
all the mighty men within me.
He has summoned an army † against me to crush my young warriors.
The Lord has trampled Virgin Daughter Judah †
like grapes in a winepress. †

ע *Ayin*

16 I weep because of these things; my eyes flow † with tears. †
For there is no one nearby to comfort me, †
no one to keep me alive.
My children are desolate
because the enemy has prevailed.

פ *Pe*

17 Zion stretches out her hands; there is no one to comfort her.
The LORD has issued a decree against Jacob that his neighbors should be his adversaries.
Jerusalem has become
something impure † among them.

צ *Tsade*

18 The LORD is just, for I have rebelled against his command. †
Listen, all you people;
look at my pain.
My young women and young men
have gone into captivity. †

ק *Qoph*

19 I called to my lovers, †
but they betrayed me.
My priests and elders
perished in the city
while searching for food
to keep themselves alive. †

ר *Resh*

20 LORD, see how I am in distress.

I am churning within; †
my heart is broken, †
for I have been very rebellious.
Outside, the sword takes the children; inside, there is death. †

שׂ *Shin*

21 People have heard me groaning, †
but there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my misfortune; they are glad that you have caused it. †
Bring on the day you have announced, so that they may become like me. †

ת *Taw*

22 Let all their wickedness come before you, and deal with them
as you have dealt with me
because of all my transgressions. †
For my groans are many,
and I am sick at heart.

1:1 The stanzas in Lm 1–4 form an acrostic. **1:2** = Jerusalem's political allies **1:3** Or *because of* **1:8** Or *become impure* **1:13** DSS, LXX; MT reads *bones, and it prevailed against them* **1:14** Some Hb mss, LXX read *He kept watch over my transgressions* **1:14** Or *The yoke of my transgressions is bound* ; Hb obscure **1:15** Or *has announced an appointed time* **1:16** Lit *my eye, my eye flows* **1:20** Lit *is turned within me*
1:1 Lm 3:28 **1:1** Lm 1:17 **1:1** Ex 22:22; Dt 10:18; 24:19-21; Is 1:17; 47:8-9 **1:2** Ps 6:6 **1:2** Jr 3:1; 22:20-22 **1:3** Dt 28:65; Ps 116:7 **1:4** 2Sm 5:7; Ps 20:2; Jr 51:35 **1:4** Dt 16:16; 2Ch 8:13; Ps 84:5; Is 1:11-17 **1:5** Dt 28:13,44 **1:5** Jb 3:26; 12:6; Jr 12:1 **1:6** Ezk 27:10 **1:6** Lm 2:1,4,8; 4:22 **1:6** Jr 39:4-7 **1:7** Is 58:7; Lm 3:19 **1:9** Jr 13:22,26; Nah 3:5 **1:9** Dt 28:43 **1:10** Dt 23:3; Neh 13:1-3; Ezk 44:9 **1:11** Jr 38:9; 52:6 **1:11** Lm 1:19; 2:20; 4:10 **1:12** Ps 89:41; Jr 22:8 **1:12** Am 5:18 **1:13** Gn 19:24; Hs 8:14; Am 1:4–2:5 **1:13** 1Kg 18:38; 2Kg 1:10,12; Jb 30:30; Jr 20:9 **1:13** Ps 35:7; Is 51:20; Ezk 12:13; Hs 7:12 **1:14** Gn 27:40; Lv 26:13; Dt 28:48; 2Ch 10:3-11; Is 9:4; Jr 27:2,6-11 **1:15** Ps 119:118 **1:15** Lm 2:2,5 **1:15** Is 63:1-6; Jl 3:12-15; Rv 14:17-20; 19:15 **1:16** Jr 9:1,18; Lm 2:11,18; 3:48-49 **1:16** Is 40:1 **1:17** Lv 15:19-20; Ezk 7:19-20; 18:6 **1:18** Neh 9:33 **1:18** Dt 28:41; 2Ch 29:9; Ezr 9:7; Jr 48:46 **1:19** Lm 1:2 **1:19** Lm 1:11 **1:20** Jb 30:27 **1:20** Dt 32:25; Ezk 7:15 **1:21** Lm 1:4,8 **1:21** Lm 2:15-17 **1:21** Is 62:8–63:6; Ezk 38–39; Jl 3:1-3; Mc 7:8-13; Zch 14:1-9 **1:22** Lm 4:21-22

1:1 The book of Lamentations mourns the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of Judah. Due to its content and style, this short book has traditionally been associated with Jeremiah. Each of the first four chapters is an acrostic poem, in which each stanza or line begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The **city** is Jerusalem (cp. vv. 7-8), which is personified as a lonely woman who **has been put to forced labor.**

1:2 This verse focuses on the abandoned woman's deep sorrow. The reference to **her lovers** and **friends** is probably an allusion to the foreign nations and idols to which Judah had gone for help (5:6; Jr 3:1-13; 22:20,22; 30:14).

1:3 Closely related to the fall of Jerusalem was the **exile** of Judah, through which her children were taken "as captives" (v. 5).

1:5 The reason for this calamity was God's just punishment **because of her many transgressions.** She had sinned grievously (v. 8).

1:6-8 Divine judgment included not only destruction and exile but also dishonor, mockery, and **scorn.**

1:8-9 The people's sinful defilement is represented by **uncleanness** on a woman's **skirts**, similar to Jeremiah 13:22-27. **Nakedness** represented the shame of the sexually immoral (a picture of unfaithfulness to the covenant); it was also an ancient practice for humiliating prisoners of war.

1:10 The Babylonians had entered the temple and taken its treasures and articles (2Kg 24:13; 25:13-15).

1:11 One of the results of the siege of Jerusalem was famine (2Kg 25:3; Jr 38:2,9). As in vv. 9,20, Jerusalem pleaded with God to **look and see** her trouble. In v. 12, she similarly appeals to passersby.

1:15 The imagery of treading **a winepress** is also used to depict divine wrath in Isaiah 63:2-3 and Joel 3:13.

1:16-17 As in vv. 2,9,21, Jerusalem's sorrow was intensified through the lack of anyone to **comfort** her.

1:18-20 Zion again speaks in the first-person (e.g., vv. 9,11,16), this time to confess her sin (vv. 18,20). Regarding her **lovers**, see the note on v. 2.

1:21-22 This portion of Zion's prayer is for vengeance against her scornful enemies. God had also **announced** a **day** for their judgment (see Jr 46:21; 50:27), which would mirror Israel's (see the notes on Jr 49:3 and 49:36). Just as Zion had been punished for her **transgressions**, so she prayed for God's just punishment on enemy nations (see 4:20-21).

JUDGMENT ON JERUSALEM

א *Aleph*

2 How the Lord has overshadowed Daughter Zion with his anger!
He has thrown down Israel's glory from heaven to earth.
He did not acknowledge his footstool †
in the day of his anger. †

ב *Beth*

2 Without compassion † the Lord has swallowed up all the dwellings of Jacob.
In his wrath he has demolished the fortified cities † of Daughter Judah.
He brought them to the ground and defiled the kingdom and its leaders. †

ג *Gimel*

3 He has cut off every horn † of Israel in his burning anger
and withdrawn his right hand †
in the presence of the enemy.
He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire that consumes everything. †

ד *Daleth*

4 He has strung his bow like an enemy; †
his right hand is positioned like an adversary.
He has killed everyone who was the delight to the eye, †
pouring out his wrath like fire on the tent of Daughter Zion.

ה *He*

5 The Lord is like an enemy; he has swallowed up Israel.
He swallowed up all its palaces and destroyed its fortified cities.
He has multiplied mourning and lamentation within Daughter Judah. †

ו *Waw*

6 He has wrecked his temple †
as if it were merely a shack in a field, †
destroying his place of meeting. †
The LORD has abolished appointed festivals and Sabbaths in Zion.
He has despised king and priest in his fierce anger.

ז *Zayin*

7 The Lord has rejected his altar, repudiated his sanctuary; †
he has handed the walls of her palaces over to the enemy.
They have raised a shout in the house of the LORD as on the day of an appointed festival.

ח *Cheth*

8 The LORD determined to destroy the wall of Daughter Zion.

He stretched out a measuring line †
and did not restrain himself from destroying.
He made the ramparts and walls grieve; together they waste away.

ט *Teth*

9 Zion's gates have fallen to the ground; †
he has destroyed and shattered the bars on her gates.
Her king and her leaders live among the nations, instruction † is no more, and
even her prophets receive no vision from the LORD. †

י *Yod*

10 The elders of Daughter Zion sit on the ground in silence.
They have thrown dust on their heads †
and put on sackcloth.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads to the ground. †

כ *Kaph*

11 My eyes are worn out from weeping; †
I am churning within.
My heart is poured out in grief † †
because of the destruction of my dear people, †
because infants and nursing babies faint in the streets of the city. †

ל *Lamed*

12 They cry out to their mothers, "Where is the grain and wine? " †
as they faint like the wounded in the streets of the city,
as their life pours out
in the arms of their mothers.

מ *Mem*

13 What can I say on your behalf?
What can I compare you to, Daughter Jerusalem?
What can I liken you to,
so that I may console you, Virgin Daughter Zion?
For your ruin is as vast as the sea.
Who can heal you? †

נ *Nun*

14 Your prophets saw visions for you that were empty and deceptive; † †
they did not reveal your iniquity and so restore your fortunes. †
They saw pronouncements for you that were empty and misleading.

ס *Samek*

15 All who pass by scornfully clap their hands † at you.
They hiss † and shake their heads †
at Daughter Jerusalem:
Is this the city that was called the perfection of beauty, †
the joy of the whole earth? †

פ *Pe*

16 All your enemies open their mouths against you. †
They hiss and gnash their teeth, †
saying, “We have swallowed her up. †
This is the day we have waited for!
We have lived to see it.”

ע *Ayin*

17 The LORD has done what he planned; he has accomplished his decree, which he ordained in days of old.
He has demolished without compassion, †
letting the enemy gloat over you and exalting the horn of your adversaries.

צ *Tsade*

18 The hearts of the people cry out to the Lord.
Wall of Daughter Zion, †
let your tears run down like a river day and night. †
Give yourself no relief
and your † eyes no rest.

ק *Qoph*

19 Arise, cry out in the night from the first watch of the night.
Pour out your heart like water before the Lord's presence. †
Lift up your hands to him
for the lives of your children who are fainting from hunger
at the head of every street. †

ר *Resh*

20 LORD, look and consider to whom you have done this.
Should women eat their own children, †
the infants they have nurtured? †
Should priests and prophets
be killed in the Lord's sanctuary?

שׁ *Shin*

21 Both young and old are lying on the ground in the streets.
My young women and young men
have fallen by the sword.
You have killed them in the day of your anger, slaughtering without compassion. †

ת *Taw*

22 You summon those who terrorize me † on every side, †

as if for an appointed festival day; on the day of the LORD's anger no one
escaped or survived.
My enemy has destroyed
those I nurtured † and reared.

2:6 Lit *booth* **2:6** Lit *it were a garden* **2:9** Or *the law* **2:11** Lit *My liver is poured out on the ground* **2:14** Or *insipid* **2:18** Lit *and the daughter of your* **2:20** Or *infants in a healthy condition* ; Hb obscure **2:22** Or *terrors* **2:22** Or *I bore healthy* ; Hb obscure
2:1 1Ch 28:2; Ps 99:5; 132:7 **2:1** Jb 20:28; Ps 110:5; Zph 2:2-3 **2:2** Jb 16:13; Lm 3:43; Ezk 8:18 **2:2** Is 2:12,15 **2:2** Ps 89:39; Is 43:28; 47:6 **2:3** Ps 75:5,10; Jr 48:25 **2:3** Ex 6:6; Dt 4:34 **2:3** Dt 4:24; Heb 12:29 **2:4** Ps 7:12; Lm 3:12 **2:4** 1Kg 20:6; Ezk 24:16,21,25 **2:5** Is 29:2 **2:6** Ps 74:4 **2:7** Ps 89:39 **2:8** 2Kg 21:13; Is 28:17; 34:11,17 **2:9** Neh 1:3; Jr 14:2 **2:9** Ezk 7:26; Mc 3:6 **2:10** Gn 37:34; Jos 7:6; Neh 9:1; Jb 2:12-13; Ezk 27:30 **2:10** Jb 10:15; Is 58:5 **2:11** Ps 69:3; Jr 9:1; 14:17; Lm 3:48-49 **2:11** Ps 22:14; Jr 4:19 **2:11** Lm 3:48 **2:11** Jr 44:7 **2:12** Dt 28:51; Hs 2:8-9; 7:14 **2:13** Nah 3:19 **2:14** Jr 5:12-13; 23:9-40; 28:1-4; 29:29-32; Ezk 13:8-16 **2:14** Dt 30:1-3; Jr 29:11-14; 30:1-3 **2:15** Nm 24:10; Ezk 25:6 **2:15** 1Kg 9:8; Jr 19:8 **2:15** Ps 22:7; 109:25; Mk 15:29 **2:15** Ps 50:2 **2:15** Ps 48:2 **2:16** Dt 28:37; Jb 16:10; Ps 22:13; Lm 3:46 **2:16** Jb 16:9; Ps 35:16; 37:12 **2:16** Lm 2:2,5,8 **2:17** Lm 2:2,21; 3:43; Ezk 7:8-9 **2:18** Lm 2:8 **2:18** Jr 4:31; 14:17 **2:19** Ps 42:4; 62:8; 77:2; 84:2; 142:2 **2:19** Is 51:20 **2:20** Lv 26:27-29; Dt 28:53-57; 2Kg 6:24-31; Jr 19:9; Lm 4:10 **2:21** Lm 2:2,17; 3:43 **2:22** Ps 31:13; Jr 6:25; 20:10

2:1-2 The humiliation of **Zion** naturally coincides with that of the Davidic kingdom (see Ps 89:39,44). The glory of the nation was thrown down **from heaven to earth**, and their **fortified cities** likewise were brought down **to the ground.** Several times in this chapter the Lord is said to have **swallowed up** the nation (vv. 2,5,8; the note on v. 16).

2:3 The cutting off of **every horn** relates to the loss of sources of strength, be they leaders or things such as "fortified cities" (v. 2; see the note on Ps 75:2-5). This stands in contrast to v. 17.

2:6 Amos 9:11 correspondingly predicts the future restoration of "the fallen shelter of David."

2:7 The Hebrew verbs translated **rejected** and **repudiated** appear in a similar context in Psalm 89:38-39.

2:9 The scattering of the people among the nations in exile was accompanied by the cessation of **instruction** and prophetic **vision** (see Am 8:11-12; Mc 3:6-7).

2:14 The book of Jeremiah repeatedly speaks of the problem of false prophets during Judah's final era (see the notes on Jr 2:6-8; 6:13-15).

2:15 Jeremiah (51:48, see note) and Nahum (3:19) had previously announced that it would be Israel who rejoiced over the destruction of her enemies. Here, it is Zion's enemies who laugh at her destruction and downfall. Jerusalem is indeed called **the perfection of beauty** in Psalm 50:2 and **the joy of the whole earth** in Psalm 48:2. The Hebrew phrase differs slightly in Psalm 50:2, but the one used in Psalm 48:2 is identical.

2:16 Whereas vv. 2,5,8 spoke of the Lord having "swallowed up" Jerusalem (see the note on vv. 1-2), here it is the divine instrument, Israel's enemies, who do the same. Jeremiah 51:34-35,44 (see notes) likewise describe the king of Babylon and the Babylonian idol, Bel.

2:17 Though enemies gloated over the fall of Jerusalem, this calamity was ultimately what God had **planned** (see Zch 1:6). That this had been commanded from **days of old** seems to be an allusion to ancient predictions of apostasy and exile (e.g., Dt 4:25-27; 31:16-22).

2:18-19 As in 1:16, Zion is personified as a sobbing woman. She was to pray to God for her **children who**

are fainting from hunger (1:11; Is 62:6-7). Lifting up one's **hands** in prayer is also mentioned in 3:41 and Psalm 141:2.

2:20 One horrific result of the famine (v. 19; 1:11) was that mothers ate their **own children**, just as Deuteronomy 28:53-57 had foretold (cp. 2Kg 6:26-30).

2:21 The preceding verses mentioned children, infants, priests, and prophets among those who had died from the siege and attack of the Babylonians (vv. 19-20). No one was exempt, whether **young** or **old.**

HOPE THROUGH GOD'S MERCY

א *Aleph*

3 I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of God's wrath.
2 He has driven me away and forced me to walk in darkness instead of light. †
3 Yes, he repeatedly turns his hand against me all day long.

ב *Beth*

4 He has worn away my flesh and skin; †
he has broken my bones. †
5 He has laid siege against me, †
encircling me with bitterness and hardship. †
6 He has made me dwell in darkness like those who have been dead for ages. †

ג *Gimel*

7 He has walled me in so I cannot get out; †
he has weighed me down with chains.
8 Even when I cry out and plead for help, he blocks out my prayer. †
9 He has walled in my ways with blocks of stone; †
he has made my paths crooked. †

ד *Daleth*

10 He is † a bear waiting in ambush, a lion in hiding. †
11 He forced me off my way and tore me to pieces; he left me desolate.

12 He strung his bow †
and set me as the target for his arrow.

ה *He*

13 He pierced my kidneys with shafts from his quiver. †
14 I am a laughingstock † to all my people, †
mocked by their songs † all day long.
15 He filled me with bitterness, satiated me with wormwood. †

ו *Waw*

16 He ground my teeth with gravel †
and made me cower † in the dust.
17 I have been deprived † of peace; †
I have forgotten what prosperity is.
18 Then I thought, “My future † is lost, as well as my hope from the LORD.”

ז *Zayin*

19 Remember † my affliction and my homelessness, †
the wormwood and the poison. †
20 I continually remember them and have become depressed. † †
21 Yet I call this to mind, and therefore I have hope: †

ח *Cheth*

22 Because of the LORD’s faithful love †
we do not perish, †
for his mercies never end.
23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness! †
24 I say, “The LORD is my portion, †
therefore I will put my hope in him.”

ט *Teth*

25 The LORD is good to those who wait † for him, to the person who seeks him.
26 It is good to wait quietly †
for salvation from the LORD. †
27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke †
while he is still young.

י *Yod*

28 Let him sit alone and be silent, †
for God has disciplined † him.
29 Let him put his mouth in the dust † — perhaps there is still hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek to the one who would strike him; †
let him be filled with disgrace.

כ *Kaph*

31 For the Lord will not reject us forever.
32 Even if he causes suffering, he will show compassion
according to the abundance of his faithful love. †
33 For he does not enjoy bringing affliction †
or suffering on mankind.

ל *Lamed*

34 Crushing all the prisoners of the land †
beneath one's feet,
35 denying justice to a man †
in the presence of the Most High, 36 or subverting a person in his lawsuit † —
the Lord does not approve of these things.

מ *Mem*

37 Who is there who speaks and it happens, unless the Lord has ordained it? †

38 Do not both adversity and good come from the mouth of the Most High? †
39 Why should any living person complain, any man, because of the punishment for his sins?

נ *Nun*

40 Let us examine and probe our ways, and turn back to the LORD. †
41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands †
to God in heaven:
42 "We have sinned and rebelled; you have not forgiven. †

ס *Samek*

43 "You have covered yourself in anger and pursued us; you have killed without compassion. †
44 You have covered yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can get through. †
45 You have made us disgusting filth among the peoples. †

פ *Pe*

46 "All our enemies open their mouths against us. †
47 We have experienced panic and pitfall, †
devastation and destruction."
48 My eyes flow with streams of tears because of the destruction of my dear people.

ע *Ayin*

49 My eyes overflow unceasingly, without end, †
50 until the LORD looks down from heaven and sees. †
51 My eyes bring me grief because of the fate of all the women in my city.

צ *Tsade*

52 For no reason, my enemies †

hunted me like a bird. †

53 They smothered my life in † a pit †
and threw stones on me.

54 Water flooded over my head, †
and I thought, “I’m going to die! ” †

ק *Qoph*

55 I called on your name, LORD, from the depths of the pit.

56 You heard my plea: Do not ignore my cry for relief.

57 You came near whenever I called you; you said, “Do not be afraid.”

ר *Resh*

58 You championed my cause, Lord; †
you redeemed my life. †

59 LORD, you saw the wrong done to me; judge my case.

60 You saw all their vengefulness, all their plots against me. †

שׂ *Sin* / שׁ *Shin*

61 LORD, you heard their insults, †
all their plots against me.

62 The slander † and murmuring of my opponents attack me all day long.

63 When they sit and when they rise, look, I am mocked by their songs. †

ת *Taw*

64 You will pay them back what they deserve, LORD, according to the work of their hands. †

65 You will give them a heart filled with anguish. † †
May your curse be on them!

66 You will pursue them in anger and destroy them under your heavens. † †

3:10 Lit *is to me* **3:14** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss, Syr read *all peoples* **3:16** Or *and trampled*

me **3:17** Syr, Vg; MT reads *You deprived my soul* **3:18** Or *splendor* **3:19** Or *I remember* **3:20** Alt Hb tradition reads *and you cause me to collapse* **3:22** One Hb mss, Syr, Tg read *The Lord's faithful love, indeed, does not perish* **3:28** Lit *has laid a burden on* **3:34** Or *earth* **3:52** Or *Those who were my enemies for no reason* **3:53** Or *They ended my life in* ; Hb obscure **3:62** Lit *lips* **3:65** Or *them an obstinate heart* ; Hb obscure **3:66** Lit *under the Lord's heavens*
3:2 Jb 12:25; Am 5:18,20 **3:4** Jb 13:28; Ps 32:3; 38:3; 49:14; Mc 3:1-3 **3:4** Ps 51:8; Is 38:13 **3:5** Jb 19:8,12 **3:5** Lm 3:19 **3:6** Jb 10:20-22; Ps 88:6; 143:3 **3:7** Jb 19:8 **3:8** Jb 30:20; Ps 22:2; Is 59:2; Lm 3:44 **3:9** Jb 13:27; 23:12; Is 63:17; Hs 2:6 **3:9** Jb 19:8; Ps 23:3; Pr 2:15; 3:6,17; 4:11 **3:10** Hs 13:7-8 **3:12** Ps 7:12; Lm 2:4 **3:13** Jb 16:13; Pr 7:23 **3:14** Jb 12:4; Jr 20:7; Lm 1:7 **3:14** Jb 30:9; Ps 69:12 **3:15** Jr 9:15; 23:15 **3:16** Ps 3:7; 58:6; Pr 20:17 **3:17** Ps 88:15; Lm 3:31 **3:19** Is 58:7; Lm 1:7 **3:19** Dt 29:18; Jr 9:15; 23:15 **3:20** Ps 42:5-6,11; 43:5; 44:25 **3:21** Jb 13:15; Ps 33:22; 71:14; 130:5; Mc 7:7 **3:22** Ps 89:1; 103:17; Is 63:7 **3:23** Ps 36:5; 89:1-8; 100:5 **3:24** Nm 18:20; Ps 73:26; 142:5; Jr 10:16 **3:25** Ps 25:3; Is 40:31; 49:23 **3:26** Ps 37:7; 130:5,7; 1Th 5:10; 2Tm 4:8; 2Pt 3:14 **3:26** Ps 37:39; 119:81; Is 46:13 **3:27** Jr 27:11; Lm 1:14 **3:28** Jr 15:17 **3:29** Nm 22:31; Jos 7:6; 1Sm 25:23 **3:30** Is 50:6; Mt 5:39; Lk 6:29 **3:32** Ps 106:43-45; Ac 14:22; 2Co 4:17; Heb 12:6 **3:33** Heb 12:10-11 **3:35** Ex 23:6; Dt 16:19; 24:17; Mal 3:5 **3:36** Ex 23:2-3 **3:37** Ps 33:9-11 **3:38** Gn 50:20; 1Sm 16:14; Jb 2:10; Ps 78:49; Is 45:7; Jr 1:14; 32:42; Am 3:6 **3:40** Ps 119:5; 139:23-24 **3:41** Ps 25:1 **3:42** Dt 29:20; 2Kg 24:4; Jr 5:7 **3:43** Lm 2:2,17,21; Ezk 7:8-9; 8:18 **3:44** Lm 3:8 **3:45** 1Co 4:13 **3:46** Lm 2:16 **3:47** Is 24:17; Jr 48:43 **3:48-49** Jr 9:1,18; Lm 1:16; 2:11 **3:50** Ps 14:2; 102:19 **3:52** Ps 35:7 **3:53** Gn 37:20-29; Jr 38:6-13 **3:54** Ps 42:7; 69:1-2; Jnh 2:3,5 **3:54** Ezk 37:11 **3:58** Ps 43:1; Pr 23:11; Jr 50:34 **3:58** Ps 103:4; 119:154 **3:60** Jr 11:19 **3:61** Lm 5:1 **3:63** Jb 30:9; Ps 69:12; Lm 3:14 **3:64** Ps 28:4; Rm 2:6; Rv 20:12-13 **3:65** Is 6:10 **3:66** Ps 8:3

3:1 The destruction of Jerusalem is now described from the perspective of one **man** who went through it. His being a "laughingstock" to the people parallels the experience of Jeremiah (v. 14; see the note on 1:1).

3:2 The recent calamity is referred to in this context as **darkness** (v. 2; Is 9:2), which is associated with death (v. 6).

3:7 Being **walled** in relates to having no escape from the present distress (see v. 9).

3:8 Part of God's judgment on Zion was a rejection of their prayers (see v. 44; 1:9,11,20; 2:18-20).

3:9 To make **paths crooked** seems to be the exact opposite of what is described in Proverbs 3:6 and Isaiah 40:3.

3:12-13 The imagery of God with a **bow**, shooting arrows at his people in judgment also appeared in 2:4 (see the note on Jb 6:2-13).

3:16-21 Although here the speaker is deeply sorrowful and struggles with hopelessness, he is strengthened by remembering who God is (vv. 22-33).

3:22-24 Remembrance of God's **faithful love** and enduring **mercies** brought strong encouragement. In **faithfulness** to his covenant (v. 23; see Gn 12:2-3; 2Sm 7:16), he had not utterly destroyed Israel (Is 1:9; Jr 30:11; 46:28). Hope in the **morning** for those in darkness (vv. 2,6) parallels passages such as Psalm 90:14 and Isaiah 9:2.

3:25-30 Having been strengthened through meditation on God's faithful love and mercy, the speaker encourages the reader to patiently wait for his deliverance. The speaker is confident that God is **good to those who wait for him** (v. 25) and that he "will not reject [them] forever" (v. 31).

3:32-33 The Hebrew verb translated **causes suffering** is the same one as in 1:5,12, where it described God's judgment of Jerusalem.

3:37-38 Although God is certainly not the author of evil (Jms 1:13), these verses strongly affirm his sovereignty over all things (see Jb 2:10). If someone **speaks and it happens**, the fulfillment of that person's word is because God has **ordained** it.

3:40-42 Having been reassured of God's steadfast love and eventual deliverance, the speaker recognized that he and his countrymen had the responsibility to examine themselves, repent, pray, and confess their sins.

3:44 A **cloud** functions as a barrier between God and his people (see Ex 14:19-20; 19:9).

3:54 Enemy attack is compared to drowning in a flood (see Ps 18:16; Jnh 2:3-5).

3:55 The threat to the speaker's life is described as being thrown into a **pit** (cp. v. 53).

3:58-66 These verses show that the distress described in vv. 52-57 relates to attacks specifically targeting the speaker, as in v. 14. He is confident of God's vengeance on these enemies.

TERRORS OF THE BESIEGED CITY

א *Aleph*

4 How the gold has become tarnished, the fine gold become dull!
The stones of the temple † lie scattered at the head of every street. †

ב *Beth*

2 Zion's precious children — once worth their weight in pure gold † — how they are regarded as clay jars, the work of a potter's hands!

ג *Gimel*

3 Even jackals offer their breasts to nurse their young,
but my dear people have become cruel like ostriches † in the wilderness.

ד *Daleth*

4 The nursing baby's tongue clings to the roof of his mouth from thirst. †
Infants beg for food,
but no one gives them any.

ה *He*

5 Those who used to eat delicacies are destitute in the streets; those who were reared in purple garments †
huddle in trash heaps.

ו *Waw*

6 The punishment of my dear people is greater than that of Sodom, †
which was overthrown in an instant without a hand laid on it.

ז *Zayin*

7 Her dignitaries were brighter than snow, whiter than milk;
their bodies † were more ruddy than coral, their appearance like lapis lazuli.

ח *Cheth*

8 Now they appear darker than soot; †
they are not recognized in the streets.
Their skin has shriveled on their bones; it has become dry like wood.

ט *Teth*

9 Those slain by the sword are better off than those slain by hunger,
who waste away, pierced with pain because the fields lack produce.

י *Yod*

10 The hands of compassionate women have cooked their own children; †
they became their food
during the destruction of my dear people. †

כ *Kaph*

11 The LORD has exhausted his wrath, poured out his burning anger; he has ignited a fire in Zion, and it has consumed her foundations. †

ל *Lamed*

12 The kings of the earth and all the world's inhabitants did not believe that an enemy or adversary
could enter Jerusalem's gates. †

מ *Mem*

13 Yet it happened because of the sins of her prophets and the iniquities
of her priests, who shed the blood of the righteous within her. †

נ *Nun*

14 Blind, they stumbled in the streets, †
defiled by this blood, †
so that no one dared
to touch their garments.

ס *Samek*

15 “Stay away! Unclean! ” people shouted at them.
“Away, away! Don’t touch us! ” †
So they wandered aimlessly. †
It was said among the nations, “They can stay here no longer.”

פ *Pe*

16 The LORD himself has scattered them; he no longer watches over them.
The priests are not respected; the elders find no favor.

ע *Ayin*

17 All the while our eyes were failing as we looked in vain for help; †
we watched from our towers
for a nation that would not save us.

צ *Tsade*

18 Our steps were closely followed so that we could not walk in our streets.
Our end approached; † our time ran out.
Our end had come!

ק *Qoph*

19 Those who chased us were swifter than eagles in the sky; †

they relentlessly pursued us over the mountains and ambushed us
in the wilderness.

ר *Resh*

20 The LORD's anointed, the breath of our life, † †
was captured in their traps.
We had said about him,
"We will live under his protection among the nations."

שׁ *Sin*

21 So rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom, †
you resident of the land of Uz! †
Yet the cup † will pass to you as well; you will get drunk and expose yourself.

ת *Taw*

22 Daughter Zion, your punishment is complete; he will not lengthen
your exile. †
But he will punish your iniquity, Daughter Edom, and will expose your sins. †

4:1 Or *The sacred gems* **4:7** Lit *bones* **4:20** Lit *nostrils* **4:22** Or *not deport you again*
4:1 Ezk 7:19-20 **4:2** Is 62:3; Zch 9:16 **4:3** Jb 39:13-18 **4:4** Ps 22:15 **4:5** Jdg 8:26; Est 8:15 **4:6** Gn 18–19; Is 3:9; Jr 23:14 **4:8** Jb 30:30; Lm 5:10 **4:10** Dt 28:53; 2Kg 6:9 **4:10** Jr 8:11,21; Lm 2:11; 3:48 **4:11** Lm 2:3-4 **4:12** 2Sm 5:6-8; Ps 48:1-5 **4:13** Ps 106:38-39; Ezk 22:1-5 **4:14** Dt 28:29; Is 59:10; Zph 1:17 **4:14** Lv 21:11 **4:15** Lv 13:45-46 **4:15** Gn 4:12 **4:17** Jr 37:7-8 **4:18** Ezk 7:2-12; Am 8:2 **4:19** Jr 4:13; Hab 1:8 **4:20** Gn 2:7; 2Kg 25:7 **4:21** Ezk 35:15; Ob 12 **4:21** Jr 25:20 **4:21** Is 51:17; Jr 25:15-16; Hab 2:16 **4:22** Ps 137:7; Ezk 25:12-14; Jl 3:19

4:1 The scattering of the **stones of the temple** alludes to the destruction of Solomon's temple by the Babylonians (2Kg 25:9).

4:3-4 The famine had so affected Jerusalem that even **infants** went hungry and were not shown special care (see 1:11; 2:18-20).

4:6 Another way in which the Hebrew text could be translated is, "The guilt of the daughter of my people has exceeded the sin of Sodom." Taken thus, the thought is that of the seriousness of Judah's sins.

4:10 Mothers eating **their own children** is again cited as indicating the intensity of the famine in time of siege and the horror of God's judgment (see the notes on vv. 3-4; 2:20).

4:11 The consuming of the very foundations of Zion by **fire** corresponds to the hopeful prophecy in Isaiah 28:16 of a future "sure foundation" (see Ps 87:5; Is 54:11).

4:13 The responsibility of Judah's spiritual leaders in encouraging wickedness had been cited earlier (see the note on 2:14).

4:17 Judah vainly wished for help from another **nation** rather than repenting and relying on God (see the note on 1:2).

4:20 The capture of God's **anointed** is a reference to the capture of Zedekiah, king of Judah (2Kg 25:6). Since he was a son of David (see the note on 2Sm 7:8-16), the people had hoped that they could **live under his protection among the nations.** They were mistaken, since this is true only of Jesus Christ, the Son of David (see the notes on Ps 2:12; Is 32:1-2).

4:21-22 Zion would be avenged against her enemies (1:21-22), and **Edom** is especially singled out here. That nation's animosity toward Israel is detailed in Obadiah 1:10-15. Obadiah 1:16 similarly uses the metaphor of drinking and applies it not only to Edom but to all nations (see the notes on Is 34:5; Jr 49:17-18). The completion of Zion's punishment in v. 22 parallels Isaiah 40:2.

PRAYER FOR RESTORATION

5 LORD, remember what has happened to us.
Look, and see our disgrace! †
2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are widows.
4 We must pay for the water we drink; our wood comes at a price.
5 We are closely pursued; we are tired, and no one offers us rest.
6 We made a treaty with † Egypt and with Assyria, to get enough food. †
7 Our fathers sinned; they no longer exist, but we bear their punishment.
8 Slaves rule over us; †
no one rescues us from them.
9 We secure our food at the risk of our lives because of the sword in the wilderness.
10 Our skin is as hot † as an oven †
from the ravages of hunger.
11 Women have been raped in Zion, virgins in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes have been hung up by their hands; elders are shown no respect. †
13 Young men labor at millstones; †
boys stumble under loads of wood.
14 The elders have left the city gate, the young men, their music. †
15 Joy has left our hearts; †

our dancing has turned to mourning.

16 The crown has fallen from our head. †

Woe to us, for we have sinned. †

17 Because of this, our heart is sick; because of these, our eyes grow dim: †

18 because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate and has jackals prowling in it. †

19 You, LORD, are enthroned forever; your throne endures from generation to generation. †

20 Why do you continually forget us, †

abandon us for our entire lives?

21 LORD, bring us back to yourself, so we may return; †

renew our days as in former times, 22 unless you have completely rejected us and are intensely angry with us.

5:6 Lit *We gave the hand to* **5:10** Or *black* ; Hb obscure
5:1 Ps 74:18,22; 89:50-51 **5:6** Hs 12:1 **5:8** Pr 30:21-23; Ec 10:7 **5:10** Lm 4:8 **5:12** Lm 4:16 **5:13** Ex 11:5; Jdg 16:21; Is 47:2 **5:14** Is 24:8 **5:15** Am 8:10 **5:16** Jb 19:9; Is 28:3; Jr 13:18 **5:16** Jr 8:14; 14:20; Dn 9:11 **5:17** Ps 69:23; Ec 12:3 **5:18** Is 13:19-22; 34:11-15 **5:19** Ps 9:7; 45:6; 102:12; Ezk 43:7; Heb 1:8; Rv 4:9-10; 5:13 **5:20** Ps 13:1 **5:21** Jr 15:19; 31:18

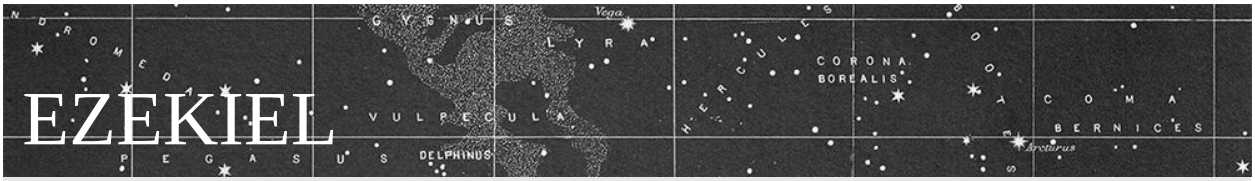
5:2-3 In the conquest of Jerusalem and the defeat of Judah, God's people as a whole had become the foreigner, the **fatherless**, and the widow, for whom the Law had repeatedly urged mercy (see the notes on Ex 22:21-24; Dt 14:22-29).

5:7 Although previous generations of Israelites had also been guilty of idolatry, only the present generation had to suffer through the destruction of Jerusalem and exile. This included the young and even infants (see 2:11,19; 3:27; 4:4).

5:17-18 Mount Zion represented the nation, the temple, the Davidic kingship, and the center of God's victory and redemption. Its desolation was a source of deep sorrow (see Is 61:3). Related to this, the people were to pray in hope of deliverance (2:19-20; 3:31,49-50; 4:22).

5:19 Although Davidic rule had ceased (v. 16; 4:20), God's throne still endured.

5:21 The final prayer in Lamentations is that God would restore his people so that they would **return.** This implies the need for a divine work of grace prior to their repentance (3:40). The thought here resembles passages such as Deuteronomy 30:2-3 and Psalm 80:3,7,19. The Hebrew verb translated **renew** recalls 3:23 and parallels Psalm 51:10 and Isaiah 61:4.



EZEKIEL

INTRODUCTION

The book of Ezekiel contains the divinely inspired prophecies of the prophet with the same name. These prophecies consist of oracles in the first person, giving the reader a sense of access to Ezekiel's private memoirs. Written primarily to the exiles in Babylon, the prophecies equally emphasize judgment of sins and the promise of hope and restoration.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: There is sufficient reason for maintaining that the prophet Ezekiel composed the book of Ezekiel in Babylon. The work demonstrates such homogeneity and literary coherence that it is reasonable to conclude that all editorial work was carried out by a single person, the prophet himself.

The inclusion of historical dates at the beginning of many of the oracles and prophecies in Ezekiel is another important unifying factor. The book is one of the most chronologically ordered books of the Bible. Thirteen times a passage is introduced by an indication of time. The common point of orientation for the dates given in Ezekiel is the exile of King Jehoiachin of Judah in 598/597 BC.

The occurrence of visions throughout the book (chaps. 1; 8–11; 40–48) is another strong argument in favor of its overall unity. Finally, stylistic features throughout the book strengthen the unity argument.

BACKGROUND: Ezekiel, son of Buzi, was among the approximately ten thousand citizens of Judah deported to Babylon when King Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem in 598/597 BC (2Kg 24:10-17). His prophetic call came to him five years later (the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile), in 593 BC. He received his call at the age of thirty (1:1), the year he should have begun his duties as a priest (Nm 4:3). The last dated oracle in the book occurs in the twenty-seventh year of King Jehoiachin (29:17), thus indicating that Ezekiel's ministry lasted twenty-two or twenty-three years. The prophet lived during the greatest crisis in Israel's history—the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, plus the exile of Judah's leading citizens to Babylon.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

There are few quotations of the book of Ezekiel in the NT, but there are some notable correlations. For instance, the structure of the book of Revelation, which begins with a vision of Christ, corresponds to the appearances of God in Ezekiel's visions. The end of the book of Revelation also reflects the end of Ezekiel, where the river flows from the presence of God (Ezk 47:1-12; Rv 21:1–22:6). Finally, the depiction of the return of the exiles as resurrected from the dead is analogous to Paul's concept of regeneration (Eph 2:5).

STRUCTURE

The prophet Ezekiel displayed a distinct style throughout his prophetic work. The phrase "son of man" occurs ninety-three times as a title for Ezekiel, focusing on the prophet's human nature. The expression "the hand of the LORD was on me," which is said elsewhere only of Elijah (1Kg 18:46) and Elisha (2Kg 3:15), occurs in the various major sections of Ezekiel (1:3; 3:22; 33:22; 37:1). The so-called recognition formula "that you (or they) may know that I am the LORD," a characteristic phrase of the exodus narrative (Ex 6:6-8; 7:5; 10:1-2; 14:4,18), occurs about sixty times in Ezekiel. The introductory oracle phrase "the word of the LORD came to me" occurs forty-six times in the book and alerts the reader to the beginning of a separate section. The phrase "I, the LORD, have spoken" also occurs frequently in Ezekiel (5:13,15,17; 17:21,24;

22:14; 24:14; 26:14; 30:12; 36:36; 37:14).

Another feature for which Ezekiel is well known is his performance of symbolic, dramatic actions. Accounts of this method of communication occur throughout the book. He also used the literary technique of allegory to communicate his prophecies. His allegories include: Jerusalem as a vine (chap. 15) and majestic eagles (17:1-21), the Davidic dynasty as a lioness (19:1-9) and a vineyard (19:10-14), a sword as judgment (21:1-17), and Oholah and Oholibah as corrupt sisters (23:1-35).

A final characteristic of the book is the citation of previously written Scripture in Ezekiel's prophecies. This is evident in the judgment oracles of chapters 4–5 that depend heavily on the curses listed in Leviticus 26. Ezekiel also references other portions of canonical Scripture, including Numbers 18:1-7,22-23 (in Ezk 44:9-16) and Zephaniah 3:1-4 (in Ezk 22:25-29).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

All that God does on behalf of people is ultimately for the sake of his name or glory (Ezk 39:7). He is absolutely sovereign in the affairs of all people and all nations. Prophecies of a coming Davidic King, fulfilled by Christ, are scattered throughout the book (17:22-24; 37:24-28). In the future the Spirit will enable God's people to obey his laws from their hearts (36:27; 39:29).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

One of the clearest biblical passages about the responsibility of each individual before God is Ezekiel 18. This is famously stated in 18:4: "The person who sins is the one who will die." Ezekiel illustrates one whom God used in a time of crisis and whose intimate family life became a symbol of God's dealing with his people (24:15-18).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Ezekiel teaches both the individual and the corporate dimensions of salvation. Chapter 18 teaches that the wicked child of a righteous parent will die (18:10-13). A person showing the fruit of righteousness—even if the parents are wicked—will live (18:14-17). Corporately, salvation is the sovereign act of God's Spirit, who breathes on spiritually dead people ("dry bones"; see 37:1-14), giving them spiritual life and enabling them to follow God's ways.

EZEKIEL TIMELINE

625–590 BC

Year of Ezekiel's birth **623**

First siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians and first wave of exiles, including Daniel, taken to Babylon **605**

Babylonians' second siege of Jerusalem; King Jehoiachin and 10,000 citizens of Judah, including Ezekiel, exiled to Babylon **597**

God calls Ezekiel, then thirty years old, to prophesy. **593**

Ezekiel prophesies against pagan practices at the temple in Jerusalem. **592**

Elders of Israel seek a word of the Lord from Ezekiel. **591**

590–585 BC

The Lord tells Ezekiel to let the captives know that the king of Babylon has once again laid siege to Jerusalem. **588**

Ezekiel prophesies Egypt's ruin and the destruction of Pharaoh and his army. **587**

Ezekiel prophesies the downfall of Tyre. **586**

After a two-year siege, the walls of Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed; a third wave of exiles is taken to Babylon. **586**

A messenger from Jerusalem comes to Ezekiel to announce the downfall of the city. **586/585**

Ezekiel's lament for Pharaoh **585**

575–550 BC

The Lord gives Ezekiel a vision of the new temple. **573**

The Lord shows Ezekiel that Egypt will be given over to the Babylonians. **571**

Nebuchadnezzar invades Egypt in fulfillment of both Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's prophecies. **569**

Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son, succeeds him as king of Babylon. **562**

Evil-merodach releases Judean King Jehoiachin from prison. **561**

Nergal-sharezer becomes king of Babylon. **560**

Cyrus the Great founds the Persian Empire. **559**

550–500 BC

Cyrus captures Babylon without resistance. **539**

Cyrus issues decree allowing the Jews to return to Judah. **538**

Work begins on rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem. **536**

Renewed work on the temple **520–518**

New temple dedicated **515**

The Greek thinker Hecataeus of Miletus draws the first recognizable map of the Mediterranean basin and writes the first known geography book. **500**

1 In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month,
while I was among the exiles by the Chebar Canal, † the heavens were
opened † and I saw visions of God. † 2 On the fifth day of the month
— it was the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile † — 3 the word of the LORD
came † directly to the priest Ezekiel † son of Buzi, in the land of the
Chaldeans † by the Chebar Canal. The LORD's hand was on him there. †

VISION OF THE LORD'S GLORY

4 I looked, and there was a whirlwind † coming from the north, a huge cloud
with fire flashing back and forth and brilliant light all around it. In the center of
the fire, there was a gleam like amber. † 5 The likeness of four living creatures
came from it, † and this was their appearance: They looked something like a
human, 6 but each of them had four faces and four wings. 7 Their legs were
straight, and the soles of their feet were like the hooves of a calf, sparkling like
the gleam of polished bronze. † 8 They had human hands under their wings on
their four sides. † All four of them had faces and wings. † 9 Their wings were
touching. The creatures did not turn as they moved; each one went straight
ahead. † 10 Their faces looked something like the face of a human, † and each
of the four had the face of a lion on the right, the face of an ox on the left, and
the face of an eagle. † 11 That is what their faces were like. Their wings were
spread upward; each had two wings touching that of another and two wings
covering its body. † 12 Each creature went straight ahead. † Wherever the
Spirit † wanted to go, they went without turning as they moved. †
13 The likeness of the living creatures was like the appearance of blazing coals
of fire or like torches. † Fire was moving back and forth between the living
creatures; it was bright, with lightning coming out of it. 14 The creatures were
darting back and forth † like flashes of lightning. †
15 When I looked at the living creatures, there was one wheel on the ground
beside each of the four-faced creatures. 16 The appearance of the wheels †
and their craftsmanship was like the gleam of beryl, † and all four had the same
likeness. Their appearance and craftsmanship was like a wheel within a wheel.
17 When they moved, they went in any of the four directions, without turning as
they moved. 18 Their rims were tall and awe-inspiring. Each of their four rims
were full of eyes † all around. 19 When the living creatures moved, †
the
wheels moved beside them, and when the creatures rose from the earth, the
wheels also rose. 20 Wherever the Spirit wanted to go, the creatures went in the
direction the Spirit was moving. The wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of
the living creatures was in the wheels. 21 When the creatures moved, the wheels
moved; when the creatures stopped, the wheels stopped; and when the creatures

rose from the earth, the wheels rose alongside them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.
22 Over the heads of the living creatures † the likeness of an expanse † was spread out. It gleamed like awe-inspiring crystal, † 23 and under the expanse their wings extended one toward another. They each also had two wings covering their bodies. 24 When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the roar of a huge torrent, † like the voice of the Almighty, † and a sound of tumult like the noise of an army. † When they stopped, they lowered their wings.
25 A voice came from above the expanse over their heads; when they stopped, they lowered their wings. 26 Something like a throne with the appearance of lapis lazuli was above the expanse over their heads. † On the throne, high above, was someone who looked like a human. † 27 From what seemed to be his waist up, I saw a gleam like amber, with what looked like fire enclosing it all around. † From what seemed to be his waist down, I also saw what looked like fire. There was a brilliant light all around him. 28 The appearance of the brilliant light all around was like that of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day. † This was the appearance of the likeness of the LORD's glory. † When I saw it, I fell facedown and heard a voice speaking. †

1:12 Or *spirit*, also in v. 20

1:1 Ezk 3:15,23; 10:15,20,22 **1:1** Mt 3:16; Mk 1:10; Lk 3:21; Jn 1:51; Ac 7:56; 10:11; Rv 4:1; 19:11 **1:1** Ex 24:10; Nm 12:6; Ezk 8:3; 11:24; 40:2 **1:2** 2Kg 24:8,12,15,17; 25:27,29 **1:3** Gn 15:1; 1Sm 15:10; 2Sm 7:4; 1Kg 6:11; 21:17; Is 38:4; Jr 1:2; Jnh 1:1; Hg 1:1; Zch 1:1 **1:3** Ezk 24:24 **1:3** Gn 11:28 **1:3** 1Kg 18:46; 2Kg 3:15; 1Ch 28:19; Ezk 3:14-22; 37:1; 40:1; Ezr 7:6,28 **1:4** 2Kg 2:1; Jb 38:1; 40:6; Ps 77:18; Is 66:15; Nah 1:3 **1:4** Ezk 1:27; 8:2 **1:5** Ezk 10:14,21; Rv 4:6-8 **1:7** Dn 10:6; Rv 1:15 **1:8** Ezk 1:17; 10:11 **1:8** Ezk 10:8,21 **1:9** Ezk 10:22 **1:10** Rv 4:7 **1:10** Ezk 10:14-21 **1:11** Is 6:2; Ezk 1:23 **1:12** Ezk 10:11,22 **1:12** Ezk 1:20 **1:13** Ps 104:4; Rv 4:5 **1:14** Zch 4:10 **1:14** Mt 24:27; Lk 17:24 **1:16** Ezk 10:9-11 **1:16** Dn 10:6 **1:18** Ezk 10:12; Rv 4:6,8 **1:19-21** Ezk 10:16-17,19 **1:22** Ezk 10:1 **1:22** Gn 1:6-8 **1:22** Rv 4:6 **1:24** Ezk 43:2; Rv 1:15; 19:6 **1:24** Ezk 10:5 **1:24** Dn 10:6 **1:26** Ezk 10:1 **1:26** Is 6:1; Ezk 24:10 **1:27** Ezk 1:4; 8:2 **1:28** Gn 9:13; Rv 4:3; 10:1 **1:28** Ex 24:16; Ezk 8:4; 11:22-23; 43:4-5 **1:28** Gn 17:3; Ezk 3:23; Dn 8:17; Rv 1:17

1:1-3 Ezekiel had gone into exile to Babylonia with King Jehoiachin during the first deportation (2Kg 24:14-16). He was a **priest** who was called by God to a prophetic ministry among his fellow exiles. During the **fifth year of King Jehoiachin's exile**, Zedekiah was still in power, and Jerusalem had not yet been destroyed (2Kg 24:11-18). The **Chebar Canal** lay about sixty miles southeast of Babylon.

1:4 The Hebrew phrase translated **whirlwind** uses the Hebrew word *ruach*, which can mean "wind" but in other contexts means "spirit" (see 2:2; Gn 1:2). This wordplay is exploited in verses 12,20-21 (see notes) and relates the meaning of Ezekiel's vision of a whirlwind to the work of the Spirit. Whereas **the north**

recalls many passages in Jeremiah (see the note on Jr 3:12-13), **cloud** and **fire** recalls the Lord's appearance to Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex 19:16-18). Powerful wind is associated with exile (5:2,10,12) and judgment (13:11,13) but also with life (37:5-6).

1:5-11 As 10:15,20 reveal, these **living creatures** are cherubim. For now, they are key players in Ezekiel's vision of God's glory. The various animal faces of the creatures are symbolic (v. 10). The **lion** symbolizes royalty and strength; the **ox** is a common symbol for fertility in the ancient Near East; and the **eagle** is swift and flies high and out of reach. This is an unsettling vision for Ezekiel, for the glory of God belongs in the temple back in Jerusalem—not in exile in Babylonia. We learn in chapters 8–11 (through repetition of the keyword "glory") that God has removed his glory from the temple in preparation for his handing Jerusalem over to the Babylonians in judgment (see 9:3; 10;4,18-19; 11:22-23).

1:12,20-21 These verses similarly describe the "Spirit-guided" movement of the living creatures and of the wheels. The former go where **the Spirit** goes (vv. 12,20). As for the wheels, they move with the living creatures not because they are attached to them but because the **spirit** of the living creatures is in them (vv. 20-21).

1:22-27 As the vision unfolds, the scene shifts first to an **expanse** above the living creatures (vv. 22-24), which is apparently supported by the wheels, and then to the likeness of a **throne** above the expanse (v. 26). **Lapis lazuli** had also been part of the glorious vision seen in Exodus 24:10. The present vision of the Lord's throne is strikingly accompanied by the likeness of a glorious **human** upon it (see the note on 34:23-24; Gn 1:26). Notice the use of the word **appearance** throughout this section. Ezekiel is not actually seeing God or angelic beings; he is seeing a vision, and this is his attempt to describe it.

MISSION TO REBELLIOUS ISRAEL

2 He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet † and I will speak
with you." 2 As he spoke to me, the Spirit entered me and set me on my
feet, † and I listened to the one who was speaking to me. 3 He said to
me, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to † the rebellious pagans
who have rebelled against me. The Israelites and their ancestors have
transgressed against me to this day. † 4 The descendants are obstinate † and
hardhearted. † I am sending you to them, and you must say to them, 'This is
what the Lord GOD says.' 5 Whether they listen or refuse to listen † — for they
are a rebellious house — they will know that a prophet has been among them. †
6 "But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them and do not be afraid of their
words, † even though briers and thorns are beside you and you live among
scorpions. † Don't be afraid of their words or discouraged by the look on their
faces, for they are a rebellious house. 7 Speak my words to them whether they
listen or refuse to listen, † for they are rebellious.

8 “And you, son of man, listen to what I tell you: Do not be rebellious like that
rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.” † 9 So I
looked and saw a hand reaching out to me, † and there was a written scroll in
it. † 10 When he unrolled it before me, it was written on the front and back;
words of lamentation, mourning, and woe were written on it.

2:3 Or *Israelites and to* **2:4** Lit *hard of face*

2:1 Dn 10:11 **2:2** Ezk 3:24; Dn 8:18 **2:3** Ezk 20:18,30 **2:4** Ezk 3:7 **2:5** Ezk 3:11,27 **2:5** Ezk 33:33 **2:6** Jr 1:8,17; Ezk 3:9 **2:6** 2Sm 23:6; Ezk 28:24; Mc 7:4 **2:7** Jr 1:7,17 **2:8** Jr 15:16; Ezk 3:3; Rv 10:9 **2:9** Ezk 8:3 **2:9** Jr 36:2; Ezk 3:1

2:1 The frequent addressing of Ezekiel as **son of man** (e.g., vv. 1,3,6,8) emphasizes the prophet’s humanity, shared not only with Israel but with everyone (see 20:11,13,21). This highlights his weakness and frailty but also relates him to the One seated on the throne (1:26).

2:2 The Spirit enabled Ezekiel to stand on his feet, in obedience to God’s command (v. 1). The dynamic empowerment of the Spirit is a key theme in 1:4,12,20-21 (see notes).

2:4 The stubbornness of the Israelites is also an important theme in Jeremiah (see the notes on Jr 6:10; 7:24-26; 9:12-16). Their hardness of heart resembled the infamous Pharaoh’s (Ex 8:19).

2:5 Ezekiel’s prophetic ministry was necessary and significant even if the people did not **listen** (see v. 7; 3:11,27). Whether they responded positively was not Ezekiel’s responsibility. His job was to proclaim faithfully the message that God had given him.

2:8–3:3 Unlike Israel, which was a **rebellious house** (vv. 5-6,8), Ezekiel was to **eat the scroll** containing the word of the Lord and “listen carefully” to its message (3:10). The particular message received by the prophet was one of judgment (2:10). His delight in the Lord’s word (not necessarily in the message of doom per se) is shown through it being **as sweet as honey in** [his] **mouth** (3:3; Ps 19:10).

3 He said to me: “Son of man, eat what you find here. Eat this scroll, †
then go and speak to the house of Israel.” 2 So I opened my mouth, and
he fed me the scroll. 3 “Son of man,” he said to me, “feed your stomach
and fill your belly with this scroll I am giving you.” So I ate it, † and it was as
sweet as honey in my mouth. †
4 Then he said to me: “Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak my
words to them. 5 For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech
or a difficult language but to the house of Israel — 6 not to the many peoples of
unintelligible speech or a difficult language, whose words you cannot
understand. No doubt, if I sent you to them, they would listen to you. † 7 But
the house of Israel will not want to listen to you because they do not want to
listen to me. † For the whole house of Israel is hardheaded and hardhearted.
8 Look, I have made your face as hard as their faces and your forehead as hard

as their foreheads. † 9 I have made your forehead like a diamond, harder than flint. Don't be afraid of them or discouraged by the look on their faces, though they are a rebellious house."
10 Next he said to me: "Son of man, listen carefully to all my words that I speak to you and take them to heart. 11 Go to your people, the exiles, and speak to them. Tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says,' whether they listen or refuse to listen." †
12 The Spirit then lifted me up, † and I heard a loud rumbling sound behind me — bless the glory of the LORD in his place! — 13 with the † sound of the living creatures' wings brushing against each other † and the sound of the wheels beside them, † a loud rumbling sound. 14 The Spirit lifted me up and took me away. I left in bitterness and in an angry spirit, and the LORD's hand was on me powerfully. † 15 I came to the exiles at Tel-abib, who were living by the Chebar Canal, and I sat there among them stunned for seven days. †

EZEKIEL AS A WATCHMAN

16 Now at the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me: † 17 "Son of man, I have made you a watchman over the house of Israel. † When you hear a word from my mouth, give them a warning from me. † 18 If I say to the wicked person, † 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn him — you don't speak out to warn him about his wicked way in order to save his life — that wicked person will die for his iniquity. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 19 But if you warn a wicked person and he does not turn from his wickedness or his wicked way, he will die for his iniquity, but you will have rescued yourself. †
20 Now if a righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, †
and I put a stumbling block in front of him, he will die. † If you did not warn him, he will die because of his sin, and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered. Yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 21 But if you warn the righteous person that he should not sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live because he listened to your warning, and you will have rescued yourself."
22 The hand of the LORD was on me there, and he said to me, "Get up, go out to the plain, † and I will speak with you there." † 23 So I got up and went out to

the plain. The LORD's glory was present there, † like the glory I had seen by the Chebar Canal, † and I fell facedown. 24 The Spirit entered me and set me on my feet. † He spoke with me and said: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you † and bind you with them so you cannot go out among them. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, † and you will be mute † and unable to be a mediator for † them, for they are a rebellious house. 27 But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, † and you will say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says.' Let the one who listens, listen, and let the one who refuses, refuse — for they are a rebellious house.

3:12-13 Some emend to *behind me as the glory of the Lord rose from his place:* 13*the* **3:26** Or *to rebuke*
3:1 Ezk 2:8-9 **3:3** Jr 15:16 **3:3** Ps 19:10; 119:103; Rv 10:9-10 **3:6** Mt 11:21,23 **3:7** Jn 15:20 **3:8** Jr 1:18; 5:3 **3:11** Ezk 2:5,7 **3:12** Ezk 8:3; Ac 8:39 **3:13** Ezk 1:24 **3:13** Ezk 1:15; 10:16-17 **3:14** 2Kg 3:15 **3:15** Jb 2:13; Ps 137:1 **3:16** Jr 42:7 **3:17** Is 52:8; 56:10; 62:6; Jr 6:17; Ezk 33:7-9 **3:17** 2Ch 19:10; Is 58:1 **3:18-19** Ezk 33:3,6,8-9 **3:19** Ezk 14:14,20; Ac 18:6; 1Tm 4:16 **3:20** Ezk 18:24 **3:20** Jr 6:21 **3:22** Ezk 8:4 **3:22** Ac 9:6 **3:23** Ezk 1:28; Ac 7:55 **3:23** Ezk 1:1 **3:24** Ezk 2:2 **3:25** Ezk 4:8 **3:26** Ps 22:15 **3:26** Lk 1:20,22 **3:27** Ezk 24:27; 33:22

3:5-7 Israel was less responsive to God's word than the Gentiles would have been (v. 6; Jnh 3:5; Mt 11:21-24). Israel's rejection of Ezekiel's ministry was rooted in their rejection of God. Their hardness had also been cited in 2:4 (see note; 36:26).

3:9 God says he will make Ezekiel's **forehead like a diamond** and **harder than flint** so that he might bear the hostility and rejection of his audience.

3:15 This marks the conclusion of the initial section of the book, which includes Ezekiel's first vision and prophetic call (vv. 12-14; 1:1; 2:2).

3:16-21 As he sat among the exiles by the Chebar Canal (v. 15; 1:1), Ezekiel received a divine message after **seven days** (v. 16). God appointed him as a **watchman over** Israel (v. 17). While his hearers were responsible for their own actions, Ezekiel's responsibility was to **warn** people to turn from their sin (cp. 2:5). God would instruct him when to do so (see the note on vv. 24-27) **3:22-23** As in 2:1-2, Ezekiel had to obey God's initial instructions before receiving further revelation. The divine glory that Ezekiel subsequently saw at **the plain** was like that which he had **seen by the Chebar Canal** (1:1-3; 2:12-15). As before, Ezekiel **fell facedown** (1:28) but was enabled to stand because the **Spirit** came upon him (v. 24; 2:2).

3:24-27 The next instruction to Ezekiel was to **shut** himself **inside** [his] **house**, where he would be bound with **ropes** (vv. 24-25). These actions symbolize the opposition and restriction he would face (vv. 7-9; 2:4,6; 4:8) even as he was sent to go preach against Israel (v. 5; 2:3). Similarly, the prophet was only to speak when God instructed him to do so (vv. 26-27; see vv. 11,16-21; 2:7).

JERUSALEM'S SIEGE DRAMATIZED

4 “Now you, son of man, take a brick, set it in front of you, and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. 2 Then lay siege against it: † Construct a siege wall, build a ramp, pitch military camps, and place battering rams against it on all sides. 3 Take an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between yourself and the city. Face it so that it is under siege, and besiege it. This will be a sign for the house of Israel. †

4 “Then lie down on your left side and place the iniquity † of the house of Israel on it. You will bear their iniquity for the number of days you lie on your side. 5 For I have assigned you the years of their iniquity according to the number of days you lie down, 390 days; so you will bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. † 6 When you have completed these days, lie down again, but on your right side, and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah. I have assigned you forty days, a day for each year. 7 Face the siege of Jerusalem with your arm bared, and prophesy against it. 8 Be aware that I will put cords on you so you cannot turn from side to side until you have finished the days of your siege. †

9 “Also take wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt. Put them in a single container and make them into bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the number of days you lie on your side, 390 days. 10 The food you eat each day will weigh eight ounces; † you will eat it at set times. † 11 You will also drink a ration of water, a sixth of a gallon, † which you will drink at set times. 12 You will eat it as you would a barley cake and bake it over dried human excrement in their sight.” 13 The Lord said, “This is how the Israelites will eat their bread — ceremonially unclean — among the nations where I will banish them.” †

14 But I said, “Oh, Lord God, I have never been defiled. From my youth until now I have not eaten anything that died naturally or was mauled by wild beasts. † And impure meat has never entered my mouth.” †

15 He replied to me, “Look, I will let you use cow dung instead of human excrement, and you can make your bread over that.” 16 He said to me, “Son of man, I am going to cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem. † They will anxiously eat food they have weighed out and in dread drink rationed water †
17 for lack of bread and water. Everyone will be devastated and waste away because of their iniquity. †

4:4 Or *punishment* **4:10** Lit *20 shekels* **4:10** Lit *from time to time*, also in v. 11 **4:11** Lit *hin*
4:2 Jr 6:6; Ezk 21:22 **4:3** Is 8:18; 20:3; Ezk 12:6,11; 24:24-27 **4:5** Nm 14:34 **4:8** Ezk 3:25 **4:13** Dn 1:8; Hs 9:3 **4:14** Lv 17:15; 22:8; Ezk 44:31 **4:14** Ac 10:14 **4:16** Lv 26:26; Ezk 5:16; 14:13 **4:16** Ezk 12:19 **4:17** Lv 26:39; Ezk 24:23; 33:10

4:1-3 Like Jeremiah (see the note on Jr 13:1-7), Ezekiel's prophetic ministry included performing symbolic actions (see 3:1-3,24-27; 5:1-4). Here he enacts a **siege** against **Jerusalem.** The **iron plate** that is set up as an **iron wall** (v. 3) may represent God's determination to destroy the city (see 3:8-9; Jr 15:20).

4:4-8 Though the reason why Israel's iniquity is associated with **390 days** and Judah's with **forty days** is unclear, the point is that they would suffer consequences for their sins over a long period of time (vv. 4-6,9; Lv 26:34-35; Hs 3:4). Ezekiel not only had to dramatize this by lying on his left and right sides, but he would also be bound with **cords** (v. 8; 3:25).

4:9-17 Ezekiel's diet of **unclean**, rationed food represented the diet that the Israelites would have to endure in exile in Mesopotamia (vv. 9-13,16-17; Lv: 26:26). The **eight ounces** (lit "twenty shekels") of food each day was much less than a regular daily amount (v. 10). The command to cook the food **over dried human excrement** ensured that it would be ritually unclean, a symbol of the unclean food that God's people soon would be forced to eat. This was particularly offensive to Ezekiel as a priest (cp. 1:1), so God slightly mitigated the command and allowed him to cook over **cow dung** (vv. 14-15).

EZEKIEL DRAMATIZES JERUSALEM'S FALL

5 "Now you, son of man, take a sharp sword, † use it as you would a barber's razor, and shave your head and beard. Then take a set of scales and divide the hair. 2 You are to burn a third of it in the city when the days of the siege have ended; † you are to take a third and slash it with the sword all around the city; and you are to scatter a third to the wind, for I will draw a sword to chase after them. 3 But you are to take a few strands from the hair and secure them in the folds of your robe. † 4 Take some more of them, throw them into the fire, and burn them in it. † A fire will spread from it to the whole house of Israel.

5 "This is what the Lord GOD says: I have set this Jerusalem in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. 6 She has rebelled against my ordinances with more wickedness than the nations, and against my statutes more than the countries that surround her. For her people have rejected my ordinances and have not walked in my statutes.

7 "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Because you have been more insubordinate than the nations around you † — you have not walked in my statutes or kept my ordinances; you have not even kept the ordinances of the nations around you — 8 therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: See, I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will execute judgments within you in the sight

of the nations. 9 Because of all your detestable practices, I will do to you what I
have never done before and what I will never do again. † 10 As a result, fathers
will eat their sons † within Jerusalem, † and sons will eat their fathers. I will
execute judgments against you and scatter all your survivors to every direction
of the wind.
11 "Therefore, as I live" — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — "I will
withdraw and show you no pity, because you have defiled my sanctuary † with
all your abhorrent acts and detestable practices. † Yes, I will not spare you. 12 A
third of your people will die by plague and be consumed by famine within
you; † a third will fall by the sword all around you; and I will scatter a third to
every direction of the wind, and I will draw a sword to chase after them. †
13 When my anger is spent and I have vented my wrath on them, I will be
appeased. † Then after I have spent my wrath on them, they will know that I, the
LORD, have spoken in my jealousy. †
14 "I will make you a ruin and a disgrace among the nations around you, in the
sight of everyone who passes by. 15 So you † will be a disgrace and a taunt, a
warning and a horror, to the nations around you when I execute judgments
against you in anger, † wrath, and furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken.
16 When I shoot deadly arrows of famine at them, arrows for destruction that I
will send to destroy you, inhabitants of Jerusalem, I will intensify the famine
against you and cut off your supply of bread. 17 I will send famine and
dangerous animals against you. They will leave you childless. Plague and
bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will bring a sword against you. I, the
LORD, have spoken." †

5:10 Lit *you* **5:15** DSS, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; MT reads *she*
5:1 Lv 21:5; Is 7:20; Ezk 44:20 **5:2** Ezk 4:2-8 **5:3** Jr 40:6; 52:16 **5:4** Jr 44:14 **5:7** Jr 2:10-11 **5:9** Dn 9:12; Am 3:2 **5:10** Lv 26:29; Dt 28:53-57; Jr 19:9 **5:11** Jr 7:9-11; Ezk 8:5-6,16 **5:11** Ezk 7:20; 11:18,21 **5:12** Jr 15:2; 21:9; Ezk 5:17; 6:11-12 **5:12** Jr 15:2; 43:10-11; 44:27 **5:13** Is 1:24 **5:13** Ezk 36:5-6; 38:19 **5:15** Ps 79:3-10; Ezk 22:4 **5:17** Lv 26:6; Dt 32:23-25

5:1-4 The shaving of Ezekiel's **head and beard** represented the manner in which destruction would come upon Israel. It is explained in verse 12 and is another example of a symbolic act performed by Ezekiel (see 3:1-3; 4:1-17).

5:6 Not only had Jerusalem rebelled against God but was actually guilty of **more wickedness than the nations** (16:45-52; Rm 2:17-24).

5:8 Jerusalem's rebellion severely incited God's "jealousy" (v. 13; 8:5), and the people's punishment

correspondingly would be carried out **in the sight of the nations** so that the city would be humiliated (vv. 14-15).

5:9-10 Part of God's unprecedented judgment against Jerusalem included **fathers** eating their **sons** (Lm 2:20), as foretold long before in Leviticus 26:29 and Deuteronomy 28:53-57. Ezekiel intensifies the statement with something new: **sons will** also **eat their fathers.**

5:11-12 Jerusalem had **defiled** [God's] **sanctuary** through **abhorrent acts and detestable practices** (see v. 9; 8:5-6; the note on 44:6-10). Consequently, God bound himself with an oath to destroy **a third** of its people by a **plague** in the city, to destroy another third by the **sword** outside of the city, and to scatter the last third to the **wind**—just as Ezekiel had enacted (see the note on vv. 1-4). Few would survive (vv. 3-4; 6:8).

5:13 Such judgment would lead the Israelites to acknowledge that God had **spoken** (vv. 15,17; 17:21; see the notes on 6:1-7; 12:22-28; 17:22-24).

PROPHECY AGAINST ISRAEL'S IDOLATRY

6 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, face the mountains of Israel † and prophesy against them. 3 You are to say: Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. † 4 Your altars will be desolated and your shrines † smashed. I will throw down your slain in front of your idols. 5 I will lay the corpses of the Israelites in front of their idols and scatter your bones around your altars. 6 Wherever you live the cities will be in ruins and the high places will be desolate, so that your altars will lie in ruins and be desecrated, † your idols smashed and obliterated, your shrines cut down, and what you have made wiped out. 7 The slain will fall among you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

8 "Yet I will leave a remnant when you are scattered among the nations, for throughout the countries there will be some of you who will escape the sword. †
9 Then your survivors will remember me among the nations where they are taken captive, † how I was crushed by their promiscuous hearts that turned away from me and by their eyes that lusted after their idols. † They will loathe themselves because of the evil things they did, † their detestable actions of every kind. 10 And they will know that I am the LORD; I did not threaten to bring this disaster on them without a reason.

LAMENT OVER THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

11 “This is what the Lord GOD says: Clap your hands, stamp your feet, † and cry
out over all the evil and detestable practices of the house of Israel, who will fall
by the sword, famine, and plague. † 12 The one who is far off will die by
plague; the one who is near will fall by the sword; and the one who remains and
is spared † will die of famine. In this way I will exhaust my wrath on them. †
13 You will all know that I am the LORD when their slain lie among their idols
around their altars, † on every high hill, † on all the mountaintops, and under
every green tree and every leafy oak — the places where they offered pleasing
aromas to all their idols. 14 I will stretch out my hand against them, † and
wherever they live I will make the land a desolate waste, from the wilderness to
Diblah. † Then they will know that I am the LORD.”

6:4 Or *incense altars,* also in v. 6 **6:6** Hb obscure **6:12** Or *besieged* **6:14** Some Hb mss, some LXX mss read *Riblah* ; 2Kg 23:33; Jr 39:5

6:2 Ezk 36:1 **6:3-4** Lv 26:30 **6:8** Jr 44:14,28; Ezk 7:16 **6:9** Dt 4:29 **6:9** Ps 78:40 **6:9** Ezk 20:43; 36:31 **6:11** Ezk 21:14,17; 25:6 **6:11** Ezk 5:12 **6:12** Ezk 5:13 **6:13** Ezk 6:4-7 **6:13** Is 57:5-7; Jr 2:20; Ezk 20:28; Hs 4:13 **6:14** Is 5:25

6:1-7 Judgment would come against **the mountains of Israel** (v. 2) because of their idolatrous **high places** (v. 3; 18:6,11,15). A high place was often a platform, situated on a hill, where idolatrous rites were performed. These sites are also mentioned in passages such as 2 Kings 17:9-11 and Isaiah 65:7. The desolation of **altars**, their being surrounded by **corpses**, and the corresponding destruction of Israelite cities (vv. 4-6) were predicted in Leviticus 26:30-31. This disaster would lead Israel to recognize that God is **the LORD** (vv. 7,10; 7:4,9; see the notes on 5:13; 11:7-12; 16:59-63; 25:5,8-11).

6:8-10 Despite severe judgment (vv. 4-7; 5:1-4,11-17), God will leave Israel **a remnant** who will **remember** [him] and mourn over their **promiscuous hearts** and **detestable actions** (vv. 8-9). Such repentance is predicted in Leviticus 26:40-41 and Deuteronomy 30:1-2.

6:11-12 The **sword, famine, and plague** relate to 5:12 and are repeatedly mentioned in Jeremiah (e.g., Jr 27:8,13; 29:18; 38:2).

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE END

7 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, this is what the Lord
GOD says to the land of Israel:

An end! The end has come
on the four corners of the earth. †
3 The end is now upon you; I will send my anger against you
and judge you according to your ways.
I will punish you for all your detestable practices.

4 I will not look on you with pity or spare you, †
but I will punish you for your ways †
and for your detestable practices within you.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.” †

5 This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, one disaster after another is coming! †
6 An end has come; the end has come!
It has awakened against you.
Look, it is coming!
7 Doom † has come on you, †
inhabitants of the land.
The time has come; the day is near.
There will be panic on the mountains
and not celebration. †

8 I will pour out my wrath on you very soon; †
I will exhaust my anger against you
and judge you according to your ways.
I will punish you for all your detestable practices.
9 I will not look on you with pity or spare you.
I will punish you for your ways
and for your detestable practices within you.
Then you will know
that it is I, the LORD, who strikes.

10 Here is the day! Here it comes!
Doom is on its way. †
The rod has blossomed; †
arrogance has bloomed. †
11 Violence has grown into a rod of wickedness. †
None of them will remain:
none of that crowd,

none of their wealth,
and none of the eminent † among them.

12 The time has come; the day has arrived.
Let the buyer not rejoice †
and the seller not mourn,
for wrath is on her whole crowd. †
13 The seller will certainly not return to what was sold
as long as he and the buyer remain alive. †
For the vision concerning her whole crowd
will not be revoked,
and because of the iniquity of each one,
none will preserve his life.

14 They have blown the trumpet †
and prepared everything,
but no one goes to war,
for my wrath is on her whole crowd.
15 The sword is on the outside; †
plague and famine are on the inside.
Whoever is in the field will die by the sword, and famine and plague will devour whoever is in the city.

16 The survivors among them will escape †
and live on the mountains.
Like doves of the valley,
all of them will moan,
each over his own iniquity.
17 All their hands will become weak, †
and all their knees will run with urine. †
18 They will put on sackcloth, and horror will overwhelm them.
Shame will cover all their faces,
and all their heads will be bald. †

19 They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will seem like
something filthy. †
Their silver and gold will be unable to save them in the day
of the LORD's wrath. †
They will not satisfy their appetites
or fill their stomachs,
for these were the stumbling blocks †
that brought about their iniquity.

20 He appointed his beautiful ornaments for majesty, but † they made
their detestable images from them, their abhorrent things. †
Therefore, I have made these
into something filthy to them.
21 I will hand these things over to foreigners as plunder †
and to the wicked of the earth as spoil,
and they will profane them.
22 I will turn my face from them as they profane my treasured place.
Violent men will enter it and profane it.

23 Forge the chain, †
for the land is filled with crimes of bloodshed, and the city is filled
with violence. †
24 So I will bring the most evil of nations †
to take possession of their houses.
I will put an end to the pride of the strong, and their sacred places
will be profaned. †
25 Anguish is coming!
They will look for peace, but there will be none.
26 Disaster after disaster will come, †
and there will be rumor after rumor. †
Then they will look for a vision from a prophet, †
but instruction will perish from the priests and counsel from the elders. †
27 The king will mourn; the prince will be clothed in grief;

and the hands of the people of the land will tremble.
I will deal with them according to their own conduct, and I will judge them
by their own standards. †
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

7:7 Or *A leash* ; Hb obscure, also in v. 10 **7:11** Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg read *and no rest* **7:13** Lit *sold, while still in life is their life* **7:17** Lit *knees will go water* **7:20** Or *They turned their beautiful ornaments into objects of pride, and*
7:2 Am 8:2,10 **7:4** Ezk 5:11 **7:4** Ezk 11:21 **7:4** Ezk 6:7,14 **7:5** 2Kg 21:12-13 **7:7** Ezk 7:10 **7:7** Jl 2:1-2; Am 5:18-20; Zph 1:14-15 **7:8** Ezk 20:8,21 **7:10** Ezk 7:7 **7:10** Nm 17:8 **7:10** Is 10:5; Mt 24:32-33 **7:11** Ps 73:8; 125:3 **7:12** Pr 20:14 **7:12** Is 24:2 **7:14** Nm 10:9 **7:15** Jr 14:18; Ezk 6:11-12 **7:16** Ezk 6:8; 14:22 **7:17** Is 13:7; Ezk 21:7 **7:18** Is 15:2-3; Am 8:10 **7:19** Is 2:20; 30:22 **7:19** Pr 11:4; Zph 1:18 **7:19** Ezk 14:3 **7:20** Jr 7:30; Ezk 16:17 **7:21** 2Kg 24:13 **7:23** Jr 27:2 **7:23** Ezk 8:17; 9:9 **7:24** Ezk 21:31; 28:7 **7:24** 2Ch 7:20; Ezk 24:21 **7:26** Is 47:11; Jr 4:20 **7:26** Ezk 21:7 **7:26** Jr 21:2; 37:17 **7:26** Ps 74:9; Mc 3:6 **7:27** Mt 7:2

7:2-4 Israel's impending doom is emphatically expressed through repetition of the word **end** (vv. 2,3,6). Judgment on the whole land is indicated by the phrase **four corners of the earth** (37:9). The reason for God's destruction is Israel's **detestable practices** (vv. 8-9), which relate especially to idol worship (v. 20; 5:11; 6:9; 8:6-17). The Hebrew word *to'evah* is also linked to sexual immorality (Lv 18:22-30), and Ezekiel 16:1-58 makes use of both connotations.

7:7 This **time** and **day** is that of judgment (see vv. 2-3,6,10,12). These are common prophetic references to an indeterminate time in the future when God will break into history with judgment for his enemies and salvation for his people.

7:9 The severity and inevitability of God's judgment on Israel is frequently expressed in this book through his refusal to show **pity** or to **spare** (see v. 4; 5:11; 8:18; 9:5,10; 24:14).

7:15-16 As stated in 6:8-10, there would be some **survivors** of the **sword**, **famine**, and **plague**, but each of these would **moan over his own iniquity.** The theme of sinners being held responsible for their own sin surfaces again (v. 13; 3:18-20; 4:4-6; 18:1-20; 33:1-9; see Lv 5:1,17).

7:19-20 It is a common temptation to view **silver** and **gold** as a means of deliverance from difficulty. This is idolatry. Yet Ezekiel predicts that wealth will be so worthless in the coming judgment that they will throw it **into the streets.** The association between treasure and idolatry echoes 16:7,11 and other OT passages (Ex 32:1-4; 33:4-6; Is 2:7-8,20; Zph 1:18).

7:26 This passage is part of a prophetic "vision" (v. 13), but the time would come when such **instruction** would **perish** and be unavailable. Several other OT passages likewise speak of this aspect of judgment (Ps 74:9; Is 29:10; Lm 2:9; Am 8:11-12; Mc 3:6-7).

7:27 The disaster described in the preceding verses would come upon everyone, including the royal household.

VISIONARY JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

8 In the sixth year, in the sixth month, on the fifth day of the month, I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting in front of me, †
and there the hand of the Lord GOD came down on me. † 2 I looked, and

there was someone who looked like a man. † From what seemed to be his waist down was fire, and from his waist up was something that looked bright, † like the gleam of amber. † 3 He stretched out what appeared to be a hand and took me by the hair of my head. Then the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and carried me in visions of God † to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the inner gate that faces north, where the offensive statue that provokes jealousy † was located. 4 I saw the glory of the God of Israel † there, like the vision I had seen in the plain. †

PAGAN PRACTICES IN THE TEMPLE

5 The LORD said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." I looked to the north, and there was this offensive statue north of the Altar Gate, at the entrance.
6 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing here — more detestable acts that the house of Israel is committing † — so that I must depart from my sanctuary? You will see even more detestable acts."
7 Then he brought me to the entrance of the court, and when I looked there was a hole in the wall. 8 He said to me, "Son of man, dig through the wall." So I dug through the wall and discovered a doorway. 9 He said to me, "Go in and see the detestable, wicked acts they are committing here."
10 I went in and looked, and there engraved all around the wall was every kind of abhorrent thing — crawling creatures and beasts — as well as all the idols of the house of Israel. † 11 Seventy elders from the house of Israel were standing before them, with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan † standing among them. Each had a firepan in his hand, and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising up. 12 He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the darkness, each at the shrine of his idol? For they are saying, 'The LORD does not see us. The LORD has abandoned the land.' " † 13 Again he said to me, "You will see even more detestable acts that they are committing."
14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the north gate of the LORD's house, and I saw women sitting there weeping for Tammuz. 15 And he said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? You will see even more detestable acts than these."
16 So he brought me to the inner court of the LORD's house, and there were about twenty-five men at the entrance of the LORD's temple, between the portico and

the altar, † with their backs to the LORD's temple and their faces turned to the east. † They were bowing to the east in worship of the sun. † 17 And he said to me, "Do you see this, son of man? Is it not enough for the house of Judah to commit the detestable acts they are doing here, that they must also fill the land with violence † and repeatedly anger me, † even putting the branch to their nose? † 18 Therefore I will respond with wrath. † I will not show pity or spare them. † Though they call loudly in my hearing, † I will not listen to them."

8:2 LXX; MT, Vg read *like fire* **8:17** Alt Hb tradition reads *my nose*

8:1 Ezk 14:1; 20:1 **8:1** Ezk 1:3 **8:2** Ezk 1:27 **8:2** Ezk 1:4,27 **8:3** Ezk 11:1,24; 40:2; 2Co 12:1-4 **8:3** Ex 20:4; Dt 32:16 **8:4** Ezk 9:3 **8:4** Ezk 1:28; 3:22-23 **8:6** Ezk 5:11; 8:9,17; 23:4-5 **8:10** Ex 20:4; Dt 4:16-18; Rm 1:23 **8:11** Nm 11:16,25; Lk 10:1 **8:12** Ps 14:1; Is 29:15; Ezk 9:9 **8:16** Jl 2:17 **8:16** Jr 2:27; 32:33 **8:16** Dt 4:19; 17:3 **8:17** Ezk 7:11,23; 9:9 **8:17** Jr 7:18-19 **8:18** Ezk 5:13 **8:18** Ezk 5:11 **8:18** Mc 3:4

8:1-3 The **hand** of God is again involved in **visions** given to Ezekiel (see 1:1-3). The **Spirit** had transported the prophet in 3:12-14 and does so again in this vision, this time **to Jerusalem** and its temple, which has become a place of idolatry (see the note on 6:1-7). The **man** whose appearance was like **fire** from the **waist down** and **amber** from the **waist up** is described similarly to the One seated on the throne in 1:26-27 and is naturally taken as the same person. The glorious "whirlwind" in 1:4 also had the appearance of "amber." Throughout the following section (8:4–11:23), the vision alternates between the idolatrous and sinful acts in Jerusalem and the consequent judgment (8:5-18; 9:1-11; 10:1-22; 11:1-21) and the glory of God leaving the temple and abandoning the holy city to its fate (8:4; 9:3a; 10:4,18-19; 11:22-23).

8:4 Ezekiel had beheld God's **glory** at the **plain** in 3:22-23, which itself is explicitly linked to the prophet's initial vision and its conclusion with a man on the throne (see 1:28).

8:5-6 As the vision concerning the temple unfolds (v. 3), Ezekiel was shown example after example of idolatry at the very site where God was supposed to be worshiped. God repeatedly calls such acts **detestable** (vv. 9,13,15,17). Such language is often used in this book to describe Israel's sins (see the notes on 5:11-12; 6:8-10; 7:2-4).

8:12 The worship of idols in secret is foolish because God does indeed notice it (see 1:18; Is 29:15). What the elders say here is paralleled in 9:9.

8:14 Tammuz was a god of vegetation who was believed to have died. Worship of this god involved mourning over it. It was likely worshiped alongside God in religious syncretism.

8:16 Turning one's back to God is also found in Jeremiah 2:27; 32:33. **Worship of the sun** is alluded to in 2 Kings 23:11.

8:17-18 The people of Judah had added to their sins of idolatry by filling **the land with violence** (9:9), and the punishment would be severe.

VISION OF SLAUGHTER IN JERUSALEM

9 Then he called loudly in my hearing, "Come near, executioners of the city, each of you with a destructive weapon in his hand." 2 And I saw six men coming from the direction of the Upper Gate, † which faces north,

each with a war club in his hand. There was another man among them, clothed in linen, † carrying writing equipment. They came and stood beside the bronze altar.

3 Then the glory of the God of Israel † rose from above the cherub where it had been, to the threshold of the temple. He called to the man clothed in linen and carrying writing equipment. 4 "Pass throughout the city of Jerusalem," the LORD said to him, "and put a mark on the foreheads † of the men who sigh and groan † over all the detestable practices committed in it."

5 He spoke to the others in my hearing: "Pass through the city after him and start killing; do not show pity or spare them! † 6 Slaughter the old men, the young men and women, as well as the children and older women, † but do not come near anyone who has the mark. † Begin at my sanctuary." † So they began with the elders who were in front of the temple. 7 Then he said to them, "Defile the temple and fill the courts with the slain. † Go! " So they went out killing people in the city.

8 While they were killing, I was left alone. And I fell facedown and cried out, "Oh, Lord GOD! † Are you going to destroy the entire remnant of Israel when you pour out your wrath on Jerusalem? "

9 He answered me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is extremely great; the land is full of bloodshed, † and the city full of perversity. For they say, 'The LORD has abandoned the land; † he does not see.' † 10 But as for me, I will not show pity or spare them. † I will bring their conduct down on their own heads." †

11 Then the man clothed in linen and carrying writing equipment reported back, "I have done all that you commanded me."

9:2 2Kg 15:35; Jr 20:2 **9:2** Lv 16:4 **9:3** Ezk 10:4,18; 11:22-23 **9:4** Rv 7:2-3; 9:4; 14:1 **9:4** Ps 119:53,136; Jr 13:17 **9:5** Ezk 5:11 **9:6** 2Ch 36:17 **9:6** Rv 9:4 **9:6** Jr 25:29 **9:7** Ezk 7:20-22 **9:8** Ezk 11:13 **9:9** 2Kg 21:16 **9:9** Ezk 8:12 **9:9** Is 29:15 **9:10** Ezk 5:11; 7:4; 8:18 **9:10** Ezk 11:21

9:1-7 The punishment for the **city** of Jerusalem is death (v. 1; 8:3,18). The man **clothed in linen** possessed **writing equipment** in order to place a **mark** on those who mourn over Jerusalem's detestable idolatry (vv. 2-4; see the notes on 8:5-6; 10:1-2; Is 61:1-3). Everyone else was to be killed, beginning **at** [God's] **sanctuary** with the **elders** (vv. 5-7; 8:11-12; 1Pt 4:17). The use of a **mark** on the forehead to distinguish the godly from the wicked is found also in Revelation 7:3; 9:4; and 14:1. Within the OT, there is also resemblance to Passover instructions (Ex 13:9,16) and to God's commandments generally (Dt 6:8; 11:18),

which were to be a sign “between your eyes” (lit). The singular **cherub** in 9:3 and 10:4 is understood as a reference to golden cherubim whose wings overshadowed the ark (Ex 25:18-22).

9:8-10 God responded to Ezekiel’s plea by emphasizing that the **iniquity** of **Israel and Judah** was **extremely great**. They would be held responsible for their sin (see the notes on 3:16-21; 4:4-17; 7:15-16), as is indicated by the statement that their actions would come back **on their own heads** (see 11:21; 22:31). The refusal to show **pity** repeats the sentiment expressed in 8:18 resulting from idolatry in the temple. Although God does not directly say so here, he would not utterly destroy Israel (6:8; 11:13).

GOD’S GLORY LEAVES THE TEMPLE

10 Then I looked, and there above the expanse over the heads † of the
cherubim was something like a throne with the appearance of lapis
lazuli. 2 The LORD spoke to the man clothed in linen and said, “Go inside the
wheelwork beneath the cherubim. Fill your hands with blazing coals from
among the cherubim and scatter them over the city.” † So he went in as I
watched.
3 Now the cherubim were standing to the south of the temple when the man
went in, and the cloud † filled the inner court. † 4 Then the glory of the LORD
rose from above the cherub to the threshold of the temple. † The temple was
filled with the cloud, † and the court was filled with the brightness of the LORD’s
glory. † 5 The sound of the cherubim’s wings could be heard as far as the outer
court; it was like the voice of God Almighty when he speaks.
6 After the LORD commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, “Take fire from
inside the wheelwork, from among the cherubim,” the man went in and stood
beside a wheel. 7 Then the cherub reached out his hand to the fire that was
among them. He took some and put it into the hands of the man clothed in linen,
who took it and went out. 8 The cherubim appeared to have the form of human
hands under their wings. †
9 I looked, and there were four wheels beside the cherubim, † one wheel beside
each cherub. The luster of the wheels was like the gleam of beryl. † 10 In
appearance, all four looked alike, like a wheel within a wheel. 11 When they
moved, they would go in any of the four directions, † without pivoting as they
moved. But wherever the head faced, they would go in that direction, without
pivoting as they went. 12 Their entire bodies, † including their backs, hands,
wings, and the wheels that the four of them had, were full of eyes all around. †

13 As I listened the wheels were called “the wheelwork.” 14 Each one had four
faces: † one was the face of a cherub, the second the face of a man, the third the
face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle.
15 The cherubim ascended; these were the living creatures I had seen by the
Chebar Canal. † 16 When the cherubim moved, the wheels moved beside them,
and when they lifted their wings to rise from the earth, even then the wheels did
not veer away from them. 17 When the cherubim stopped, † the wheels stood
still, and when they ascended, the wheels ascended with them, for the spirit of
the living creatures was in them.
18 Then the glory of the LORD moved away from the threshold of the temple †
and stopped above the cherubim. † 19 The cherubim lifted their wings and
ascended from the earth right before my eyes; † the wheels were beside them as
they went. The glory of the God of Israel was above them, and it stopped at the
entrance to the eastern gate of the LORD’s house.
20 These were the living creatures I had seen † beneath the God of Israel by the
Chebar Canal, † and I recognized that they were cherubim. 21 Each had four
faces and each had four wings, † with what looked something like human hands
under their wings. 22 Their faces looked like the same faces I had seen † by the
Chebar Canal. Each creature went straight ahead.

10:1 Ezk 1:22,26 **10:2** Ezk 1:13; Rv 8:5 **10:3** 1Kg 8:10-11 **10:3** Ezk 8:3,16 **10:4** Ezk 9:3; 10:18; 11:22-23; 43:2-5; 44:4 **10:4** Ex 40:34-35; Is 6:1-4; Rv 15:8 **10:4** Ezk 1:28; Hg 2:7 **10:8** Ezk 1:8 **10:9** Ezk 1:15-17 **10:9** Dn 10:6 **10:11** Ezk 1:17 **10:12** Rv 4:6,8 **10:12** Ezk 1:18 **10:14** Ezk 1:6,10; 10:21 **10:15** Ezk 1:3,5 **10:17** Ezk 1:21 **10:18** Ezk 10:4 **10:18** Ps 18:10 **10:19** Ezk 11:22 **10:20** Ezk 1:5,22,26; 10:15 **10:20** Ezk 1:1 **10:21** Ezk 1:6,8; 10:14; 41:18-19 **10:22** Ezk 1:10

10:1-2 References to an **expanse**, **lapis lazuli**, and a **throne** correspond to 1:22-26 and provide additional links to the glorious vision of Ezekiel 1 (see 8:1-4; 9:3; 10:5). The aforementioned **man clothed in linen** is mentioned again (9:2-3,11). The burning coals that he scattered on Jerusalem in judgment (see Gn 19:24) were also linked to the “living creatures” in 1:13. A man clothed in linen in Daniel 10:5 was an angel (see Dn 10:12-13), which suggests the same here (see Dn 12:6-7). Linen was also used in various priestly garments (Ex 28:42; 39:28; Lv 6:3; 16:4).

10:3-5 The same divine glory that Ezekiel beheld earlier (1:28; 3:12,23) now filled **the temple** and its **court.** The problem was that God’s glory and presence was utterly incompatible with the idolatry being practiced there (8:3-18). After moving from above the ark in the holy of holies to the **threshold of the temple** (see the note on 9:3), the glory of God would later leave the structure and then leave Jerusalem (vv. 18-19; 11:23-24; see the note on 8:1-3).

10:15-17 As strongly suggested by verses 1-2,5-6,8-14, the “living creatures” of 1:5-24 were **cherubim** (vv. 15,20). Such angelic beings guarded the garden of Eden (Gn 3:24), and the wings of two golden

cherubim overshadowed the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18-22). As before, **the wheels moved** with the cherubim because **the spirit of the living creatures was in them** (see the note on 1:12,20-21).

10:18-19 Having already moved to the temple **threshold** (v. 4; 9:3), the **glory** moved and **stopped above the cherubim.** This is not a reference to the cherubim in the holy of holies (see 9:3a) but rather to the creatures associated with the wheels. In this section, the glory is moving outward from the holy of holies (9:3a) to the threshold (10:4) and now to the cherubim (10:18). When these beings departed, the glory left with them (v. 19). Although God had set his name on the temple (1Kg 9:3) and had commanded the construction of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:10-22), his presence and glory were certainly not confined to them (1Kg 8:27; Is 66:1; Jr 3:16; 7:12-14), as implied by the motion of the living creatures and the wheels. His circumstantial enthronement above the golden cherubim of the ark (1Sm 4:4; 2Sm 6:2) thus reflected his eternal enthronement above real cherubim (see 2Sm 22:11; Ps 18:10).

VISION OF ISRAEL'S CORRUPT LEADERS

11 The Spirit then lifted me up † and brought me to the eastern gate of the LORD's house, which faces east, and at the gate's entrance were twenty-five men. Among them I saw Jaazaniah son of Azzur, and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. 2 The LORD † said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who plot evil † and give wicked advice in this city. 3 They are saying, 'Isn't the time near to build houses? † † The city is the pot, † and we are the meat.' 4 Therefore, prophesy against them. Prophesy, son of man! "
5 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and he told me, "You are to say, 'This is what the LORD says: That is what you are thinking, house of Israel; and I know the thoughts that arise in your mind. † 6 You have multiplied your slain in this city, † filling its streets with them.
7 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: The slain you have put within it are the meat, † and the city is the pot, but I † will take you out of it. † 8 You fear the sword, † so I will bring the sword against you. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 9 I will take you out of the city and hand you over to foreigners; I will execute judgments against you. † 10 You will fall by the sword, † and I will judge you at the border of Israel. † Then you will know that I am the LORD. 11 The city will not be a pot for you, † and you will not be the meat within it. I will judge you at the border of Israel, 12 so you will know that I am the LORD, whose statutes you have not followed and whose ordinances you

have not practiced. Instead, you have acted according to the ordinances of the nations around you.' " †

13 Now while I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. † Then I fell facedown and cried out loudly, "Oh, Lord GOD! † You are bringing the remnant of Israel to an end! "

PROMISE OF ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

14 The word of the LORD came to me again: 15 "Son of man, your own relatives, those who have the right to redeem your property, † † along with the entire house of Israel — all of them — are those to whom the residents of Jerusalem have said, 'You are far from the LORD; this land has been given to us as a possession.'

16 "Therefore say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Though I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them † in the countries where they have gone.'

17 "Therefore say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I will gather you from the peoples † and assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.'

18 "When they arrive there, they will remove all its † abhorrent acts † and detestable practices from it. 19 I will give them integrity of † heart † and put a new spirit within them; I will remove their heart of stone † from their bodies † and give them a heart of flesh, † 20 so that they will follow my statutes, † keep my ordinances, and practice them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. † 21 But as for those whose hearts pursue their desire for abhorrent acts and detestable practices, I will bring their conduct down on their own heads." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

GOD'S GLORY LEAVES JERUSALEM

22 Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, lifted their wings, † and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. 23 The glory of the LORD † rose up from within the city and stopped on the mountain † east of the city. † † 24 The Spirit lifted me up † and brought me to Chaldea and to the exiles in a vision

from the Spirit of God. After the vision I had seen left me, [25] I spoke to the exiles about all the things the LORD had shown me.

11:2 Lit *He* **11:3** Or *"The time is not near to build houses.* **11:7** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *he* **11:15** LXX, Syr read *your relatives, your fellow exiles* **11:15** Or *own brothers, your relatives* **11:19** Lit *give them one* **11:19** Lit *flesh* **11:23** = the Mount of Olives

11:1 Ezk 3:12,14; 8:3 **11:2** Gn 6:5; Ps 36:4; Pr 14:2; Mc 2:1 **11:3** Jr 29:28; Am 3:15; Zph 1:13 **11:3** Jr 1:13; Ezk 24:3,6 **11:5** Jr 17:10; Ezk 2:2 **11:6** Ezk 7:23; 22:2-6,9,12,27 **11:7** Ezk 24:3-13; Mc 3:2-3 **11:7** Ezk 11:9 **11:8** Pr 10:24; Is 66:4 **11:8** Jb 3:25; Is 24:17-18 **11:9** Ezk 5:8 **11:10** Jr 39:6; 52:9-10 **11:10** 2Kg 14:25 **11:11** Ezk 11:3,7 **11:12** Ezk 8:10,14,16 **11:13** Ac 5:5 **11:13** Ezk 9:8 **11:16** Is 8:14 **11:17** Ezk 20:34,41-42; 28:25 **11:18** Ezk 37:23 **11:18** Ezk 5:11 **11:19** Jr 32:39 **11:19** Zch 7:12 **11:19** Ps 51:10; Jr 31:33; Ezk 36:26; 2Co 3:3 **11:20** Ps 105:45; Ezk 36:27 **11:20** Ezk 36:28 **11:21** Ezk 9:10 **11:22** Ezk 10:19 **11:23** Ezk 8:4 **11:23** Zch 14:4 **11:22-23** Ezk 10:4 **11:24** Ezk 8:3

11:1-3 Corrupt leaders had also been singled out for judgment earlier (8:11; 9:6). Their foolish speech was part of the problem (8:12; 9:9).

11:7-12 The saying that "the city is the pot, and we are the meat" (v. 3) seems to express the people's confidence in safety behind Jerusalem's walls, but it would be for naught. God's judgment would lead to their acknowledgement of him (vv. 9-12; 13:21; 15:7; see the note on 6:1-7). Israel is again confronted because God's **statutes . . . have not** [been] **followed** and his **ordinances . . . have not** [been] **practiced** (v. 12; 5:6-7; 20:13-21). The similarity between the people of Israel and the nations resulted from their failure to follow (Lv 18:3-5,24-30; 20:22-26).

11:13 As in 9:8, Ezekiel prayed to God on behalf of the **remnant of Israel.** The fulfillment of God's promises of salvation for Israel and the nations depended on its preservation (see the following note).

11:16-21 The Lord's implied answer to Ezekiel's prayer was that he would spare a remnant and even be a **sanctuary for them** in exile (v. 16; Is 8:14). He will also **gather** them back to their land (v. 17; Is 56:8; Jr 23:3; 29:14) and give them one **heart** (see Jr 32:39) and a **new spirit** so that they finally will **follow** [his] **statutes, keep** [his] **ordinances, and practice them** (vv. 19-20; see the notes on vv. 7-12; 18:5-20). Such salvation is for the repentant only (vv. 18,21). This passage is similar to 36:24-32.

11:22-23 The preceding message was one of hope, but the vision fittingly concludes with **the glory of the LORD** leaving defiled Jerusalem (see the notes on 8:1-3; 10:3-5,18-19).

11:24-25 Ezekiel's return to the exiles concludes the vision of Ezekiel 8–11 with the reverse of how it had begun (see 8:1-3). This is similar to how 3:14-15 marked the end of his first vision.

EZEKIEL DRAMATIZES THE EXILE

12 The word of the LORD came to me: [2] "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious house. † They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear, † for they are a rebellious house. †

[3] "Now you, son of man, get your bags ready for exile and go into exile in their sight during the day. You will go into exile from your place to another place while they watch; perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. [4] During the day, bring out your bags like an exile's bags while they look on. Then in the evening go out in their sight like those going into exile. [5] As

they watch, dig through the wall and take the bags out through it. 6 And while
they look on, lift the bags to your shoulder and take them out in the dark; cover
your face so that you cannot see the land. For I have made you a sign to the
house of Israel." †
7 So I did just as I was commanded. In the daytime I brought out my bags like
an exile's bags. In the evening I dug through the wall by hand; I took them out in
the dark, carrying them on my shoulder in their sight.
8 In the morning the word of the LORD came to me: 9 "Son of man, hasn't the
house of Israel, that rebellious house, † asked you, 'What are you doing?' †
10 Say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: This pronouncement concerns
the prince † in Jerusalem and the whole house of Israel living there.' † 11 You
are to say, 'I am a sign for you. Just as I have done, it will be done to them; they
will go into exile, † into captivity.' 12 The prince who is among † them will lift
his bags to his shoulder in the dark and go out. They † will dig through the wall
to bring him out through it. He will cover his face so he cannot see the land with
his eyes. 13 But I will spread my net over him, and he will be caught in my
snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, yet he will not see
it, † and he will die there. 14 I will also scatter all the attendants who surround
him and all his troops to every direction of the wind, † and I will draw a sword
to chase after them. 15 They will know that I am the LORD † when I disperse
them among the nations and scatter them among the countries. † 16 But I will
spare a few of them from the sword, † famine, and plague, so that among the
nations where they go they can tell about all their detestable practices. Then they
will know that I am the LORD."

EZEKIEL DRAMATIZES ISRAEL'S ANXIETY

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, eat your bread with †
trembling and drink your water with anxious shaking. 19 Then say to the people
of the land, 'This is what the Lord GOD says about the residents of Jerusalem in
the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in
dread, for their † † land will be stripped of everything † in it because of the
violence of all who live there. 20 The inhabited cities will be destroyed, and the
land will become dreadful. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "

A DECEPTIVE PROVERB STOPPED

21 Again the word of the LORD came to me: 22 "Son of man, what is this proverb
you people have about the land of Israel, † which goes, 'The days keep passing
by, † and every vision fails'? 23 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Lord
GOD says: I will put a stop to this proverb, and they will not use it again in
Israel.' † But say to them, 'The days have arrived, † as well as the fulfillment
of every vision. 24 For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering
divination † within the house of Israel. 25 But I, the LORD, will speak whatever
message I will speak, and it will be done. † It will no longer be delayed. † For
in your days, rebellious house, I will speak a message and bring it to pass. This
is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "
26 The word of the LORD came to me: 27 "Son of man, notice that the house of
Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees concerns many years from now; † he
prophesies about distant times.' 28 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Lord
GOD says: None of my words will be delayed any longer. The message I speak
will be fulfilled. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

12:10 = King Zedekiah **12:10** Lit *Israel among them* **12:12** LXX, Syr read *He* **12:19** Lit *its* **12:19** = Jerusalem's

12:2 Ezk 2:3,5 **12:2** Jr 5:21 **12:2** Ezk 2:5-8 **12:6** Ezk 4:3; 24:24 **12:9** Ezk 2:5-8 **12:9** Ezk 17:12; 20:49; 24:19 **12:11** Jr 15:2; 52:15,28-30 **12:12** 2Kg 25:1-7; Jr 39:4; 52:7 **12:13** Jr 39:7; 52:11 **12:14** Ezk 5:2; 17:21 **12:15** Ezk 6:7,14 **12:15** Ezk 22:15; 29:12; 30:23 **12:16** Ezk 6:8-9 **12:18** Ezk 4:16 **12:19** Zch 7:14 **12:22** Ezk 16:44; 18:2-3 **12:22** Jr 5:12; Ezk 11:3; 12:27; 2Pt 3:4,9 **12:23** Ezk 18:3 **12:23** Zph 1:14 **12:24** Ezk 13:6,23 **12:25** Is 14:24 **12:25** Is 7:16 **12:27** Ezk 12:22; Dn 10:14

12:2-4 Israel is called a **rebellious house** (see 2:5-8; 3:9,26-27), and their spiritual senselessness picks up on an important theme in the Prophets (see the note on Is 6:8-10; Jr 5:21). Despite Israel's blindness, the subsequent dramatized prophecy in verses 3-7 was still set **in their sight** (v. 3; see Mt 13:10-15). In this symbolic act, Ezekiel packed his **bags** and went out in the evening to symbolize **going into exile.**

12:10-14 Ezekiel's packing his bags for exile in verses 3-7 highlights the exile of **the prince** (vv. 10,12). Just as the prophet covered his face and went out in the dark (vv. 6-7), so the prince would go to Babylon (vv. 12-13). This prophecy would be fulfilled when Zedekiah was exiled (2Kg 25:4-7).

12:16 A remnant would be spared, but these would confess **all their detestable practices among the nations** (see 6:8-10; 11:16-21).

12:17-20 This command that Ezekiel eat and drink in apparent fear and anxiety is similar to the one in 4:16-17. It was a symbolic act designed to depict the anxiety of the coming devastation of the land, which would come because of the people's **violence** (v. 19; 7:11,23; 8:17; 9:9).

12:22-28 The **proverb** quoted in verse 22 was dismissive of genuine prophetic messages. God, however, would fulfill his message of destruction and exile shortly, and this proverb would no longer be spoken (vv. 23-25). Likewise, the idea that the prophetic word concerned only the distant future would be proven false (vv. 26-28). God would thus vindicate his word (see the note on 5:13).

ISRAEL'S FALSE PROPHETS CONDEMNED

13 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the
prophets of Israel who † are prophesying. Say to those who prophesy
out of their own imagination, † 'Hear the word of the LORD! 3 This is what the
Lord GOD says: Woe to the foolish prophets who follow their own spirit and
have seen nothing. 4 Your prophets, Israel, are like jackals among ruins. 5 You
did not go up to the gaps † or restore the wall around the house of Israel so that
it might stand in battle on the day of the LORD. 6 They saw false visions and their
divinations were a lie. † They claimed, "This is the LORD's declaration," when
the LORD did not send them, † yet they wait for the fulfillment of their message.
7 Didn't you see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you
proclaimed, "This is the LORD's declaration," even though I had not spoken?
8 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: You have spoken falsely and had
lying visions; that's why you discover that I am against you. This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. 9 My hand will be against the prophets who see
false visions and speak lying divinations. † They will not be present in the
council of my people or be recorded in the register of the house of Israel, and
they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord
GOD.
10 " 'Since they have led my people astray by saying, "Peace," † when there is
no peace, and since when a flimsy wall is being built, they plaster it with
whitewash, † 11 therefore, tell those plastering it with whitewash that it will fall.
Torrential rain will come, † and I will send hailstones plunging † down, and a
whirlwind will be released. 12 When the wall has fallen, will you not be asked,
"Where's the whitewash you plastered on it? "
13 " 'So this is what the Lord GOD says: I will release a whirlwind in my wrath.
Torrential rain will come in my anger, and hailstones will fall in destructive fury.
14 I will demolish the wall you plastered with whitewash and knock it to the
ground so that its foundation is exposed. † The city will fall, and you will be
destroyed within it. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 15 After I exhaust
my wrath against the wall and against those who plaster it with whitewash, I will
say to you, "The wall is no more and neither are those who plastered it —

16 those prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw a vision of peace for her when there was no peace." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.'

17 "Now you, son of man, face † the women among your people who prophesy † out of their own imagination, and prophesy against them. † 18 Say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Woe to the women who sew magic bands on the wrist of every hand and who make veils for the heads of people of every size in order to ensnare lives. Will you ensnare the lives of my people but preserve your own? † 19 You profane me among my people for handfuls of barley † and scraps of bread; you put those to death who should not die and spare those who should not live, when you lie to my people, who listen to lies.

20 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am against your magic bands with which you ensnare people like birds, and I will tear them from your arms. I will free the people you have ensnared like birds. 21 I will also tear off your veils and rescue my people from your hands, † so that they will no longer be prey in your hands. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 22 Because you have disheartened the righteous person with lies (when I intended no distress), † and because you have supported † the wicked † person so that he does not turn from his evil way to save his life, 23 therefore you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. † I will rescue my people from your hands. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' "

13:11 One Hb ms, LXX, Vg; other Hb mss read *and you, hailstones, will plunge* **13:17** Lit *set your face* **13:22** Lit *strengthened the hand of*

13:2 Ezk 22:25,28 **13:2** Jr 23:16,26 **13:5** Ps 106:23; Ezk 22:30 **13:6** Ezk 22:28 **13:6** Jr 14:14; 23:21; 28:15 **13:9** Jr 20:3-6; 28:15-17 **13:10** Jr 6:14; 8:11; 14:13; Mc 3:5 **13:10** Ezk 22:28; Mt 23:27; Ac 23:3 **13:11** Ezk 38:22; Mt 7:27 **13:14** 1Co 3:10-15 **13:16** Jr 6:14; 8:11 **13:17** Jdg 4:4; 2Kg 22:14; Ac 21:9 **13:17** Ezk 13:2 **13:18** 2Pt 2:14 **13:19** Pr 28:21; Mc 3:5 **13:21** Ps 91:3; 124:7 **13:22** Jr 28:15 **13:22** Jr 23:14 **13:23** Mc 3:5-6

13:1-3 The preceding passage linked the vindication of God's word and the exposing of false prophecy (12:24). False prophets are characterized by speaking from **their own imagination** and **their own spirit** instead of from God (3:4,10-11). Their having **seen nothing** (v. 3) is in sharp contrast to Ezekiel's visions given by the Spirit (1:1; 3:12-14; 8:3).

13:4-5 Unlike Ezekiel and other true prophets (3:17-21), false prophets were **like jackals among ruins** because, even as the nation was wrecked, they scavenged for their own benefit and preyed on the people (v. 4). They provided no help because they did not call the people to repentance or strengthen the nation so that it would persevere on the day of judgment (v. 5).

13:9 The exclusion of false prophets from God's people and their omission from his **register** parallels Psalms 1:5; 87:4-6.

13:10-16 False prophets claimed there would be **peace** when there was none (Jr 6:14; 8:11), which is likened to whitewashing a structurally unsound wall when it should be repaired (see the note on vv. 4-5). The Hebrew verb translated **plaster** is also used of a superficial remedy in Leviticus 14:42-45 (see note). A spiritualized application of "a pleasing aroma" is likewise found in 20:39-44 (see note). The storm of judgment would reveal the weakness of the wall and the uselessness of the whitewash (vv. 11-15; Mt 7:24-27). The Hebrew phrase translated **whirlwind** (vv. 11,13) is almost identical to the one used in 1:4 and recalls that supernatural display of power.

13:17-23 There were also **women** who prophesied **out of their own imagination** (v. 17; see the note on vv. 1-3). They profaned God for the sake of their own gain (v. 19; 36:20-23; Lv 19:12) and did not call the wicked to repentance (v. 22; see the note on vv. 4-5). The judgment against these women who wore **magic bands** and **veils** generally parallels Isaiah 3:16-24. These bands and veils were probably used for rituals involving magic and divination.

IDOLATROUS ELDERS PUNISHED

14 Some of the elders of Israel came † to me and sat down in front of me. † 2 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3 "Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and have put their sinful stumbling blocks in front of themselves. † Should I actually let them inquire of me? †
4 "Therefore, speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: When anyone from the house of Israel sets up idols in his heart and puts his sinful stumbling block in front of himself, and then comes to the prophet, I, the LORD, will answer him appropriately. † I will answer him according to his many idols, 5 so that I may take hold of the house of Israel by their hearts. They are all estranged from me because of their idols.'
6 "Therefore, say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Repent and turn away † from your idols; turn your faces away from all your detestable things. 7 For when anyone from the house of Israel or from the aliens who reside in Israel separates himself from me, setting up idols in his heart and putting his sinful stumbling block in front of himself, and then comes to the prophet to inquire of me, I, the LORD, will answer him myself. 8 I will turn against that one and make him a sign and a proverb; I will cut him off from among my people. † Then you will know that I am the LORD.
9 " 'But if the prophet is deceived and speaks a message, it was I, the LORD, who deceived that prophet. † I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. † 10 They will bear their punishment — the punishment of the one who inquires will be the same as that of the prophet —

11 in order that the house of Israel may no longer stray from following me and
no longer defile themselves † with all their transgressions. Then they will be my
people and I will be their God. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

FOUR DEVASTATING JUDGMENTS

12 The word of the LORD came to me: 13 "Son of man, suppose a land sins
against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its
supply of bread, † to send famine through it, and to wipe out both man and
animal from it. 14 Even if these three men † — Noah, † Daniel, † and Job †
— were in it, they would rescue only themselves by their righteousness." This is
the declaration of the Lord GOD.

15 "Suppose I allow dangerous animals † to pass through the land and
depopulate it so that it becomes desolate, with no one passing through it for fear
of the animals. 16 Even if these three men were in it, as I live" — the declaration
of the Lord GOD — "they could not rescue their sons or daughters. They alone
would be rescued, but the land would be desolate. †

17 "Or suppose I bring a sword † against that land and say, 'Let a sword pass
through it,' so that I wipe out both man and animal from it. † 18 Even if these
three men were in it, as I live" — the declaration of the Lord GOD — "they could
not rescue their sons or daughters, but they alone would be rescued.

19 "Or suppose I send a plague into that land † and pour out my wrath on it with
bloodshed to wipe out both man and animal from it. 20 Even if Noah, Daniel,
and Job were in it, as I live" — the declaration of the Lord GOD — "they could
not rescue their son or daughter. They would rescue only themselves by their
righteousness.

21 "For this is what the Lord GOD says: How much worse will it be when I send
my four † devastating judgments against Jerusalem — sword, famine,
dangerous animals, and plague — in order to wipe out both man and animal
from it! 22 Even so, there will be survivors left in it, sons and daughters who will
be brought out. Indeed, they will come out to you, and you will observe their
conduct and actions. † Then you will be consoled about the devastation I have
brought on Jerusalem, about all I have brought on it. 23 They will bring you
consolation when you see their conduct and actions, and you will know that it

was not without cause that I have done what I did to it.” † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

14:4 Alt Hb tradition reads *him who comes*

14:1 Ezk 8:1; 20:1 **14:1** Ezk 33:31-32 **14:3** Ezk 7:19 **14:3** Ezk 20:3,31 **14:6** 1Sm 7:3; Neh 1:9; Is 2:20; 30:22; 55:6-7; Ezk 18:30 **14:8** Is 65:15; Jr 44:11; Ezk 5:15; 15:7 **14:9** Jdg 9:23; 1Sm 16:14; 1Kg 22:23; Jr 20:7; 2Th 2:11 **14:9** Jr 6:14-15; 14:15 **14:11** Ezk 11:18; 37:23 **14:11** Ezk 36:28 **14:13** Lv 26:26; Is 3:1; Ezk 4:16 **14:14** Jr 15:1 **14:14** Gn 6:8 **14:14** Ezk 28:3; Dn 1:6 **14:14** Jb 1:1,5; 42:8-9 **14:15** Lv 26:22; Nm 21:6; 2Kg 17:25; Ezk 5:17 **14:16** Gn 19:29; Ezk 18:20 **14:17** Lv 26:25; Ezk 5:12; 21:3-4 **14:17** Ezk 25:13; Zph 1:3 **14:19** 2Sm 24:15; Ezk 38:22 **14:21** Ezk 5:17; 33:27; Am 4:6-10; Rv 6:8 **14:22** Ezk 6:8; 12:16; 20:43; 36:20 **14:23** Jr 22:8-9

14:1-8 Ezekiel was again sitting with **the elders** of the people (8:1; 20:1), who were ostensibly seeking God (vv. 1-3). The problem was their insincerity, since they had **set up idols in their hearts** (vv. 3-4,7). Idolatry is thus not only an outward act but a sin of the heart (v. 5; 20:16). God knew that they had a **stumbling block** that would lead to their ruin (vv. 3-4,7-8; 3:20; Is 8:14; Jr 6:21).

14:11 The endurance of “punishment” (v. 10; see the note on 7:15-16) will ultimately give way to faithfulness, purity, and a perfected relationship with God (see 11:18-20; 36:25-29). Israel’s previous waywardness (vv. 5,7) will be resolved.

14:13 The Hebrew phrase translated **acting faithlessly** is often used of treachery or betrayal (e.g., Lv 26:40; Nm 5:12,27).

14:14 Noah, Daniel, and Job serve as godly examples who nevertheless would be unable to turn aside God’s judgment (vv. 16,18,20). They would only be able to save themselves, unlike the deliverance of Noah along with his family from the flood (Gn 6:9,18; see Gn 19:12-17; Jos 2:12-20). Along with 5:6 and 11:12, this passage illustrates how wicked Israel had grown.

14:21 These **four devastating judgments** are the same ones described in verses 13-20. Both **man and animal** would be wiped out (see vv. 13,17,19; 36:11). The use of the number four suggests totality (see 7:2; 37:9; Zch 6:1-8).

14:22-23 A remnant would survive the devastation (6:8-9; 11:16). As in 6:10, it would be known that God had not punished **without cause.**

PARABLE OF THE USELESS VINE

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, how does the wood of the vine, † that branch among the trees of the forest, compare to any other wood? 3 Can wood be taken from it to make something useful? Or can anyone make a peg from it to hang things on? 4 In fact, it is put into the fire as fuel. † The fire devours both of its ends, and the middle is charred. Can it be useful for anything? 5 Even when it was whole it could not be made into a useful object. How much less can it ever be made into anything useful when the fire has devoured it and it is charred! ”

6 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says, “Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire as fuel, so I will give up the

residents of Jerusalem. 7 I will turn against them. † They may have escaped from the fire, but it will still consume them. † And you will know that I am the LORD when I turn against them. 8 I will make the land desolate because they have acted unfaithfully." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

15:2 Ps 80:8-16; Is 5:1-7; Hs 10:1 **15:4** Jn 15:6 **15:7** Ezk 14:8 **15:7** Is 24:18

15:4-7 Fire has been frequently used as an image of fierce judgment (5:4; 10:2,6-7), and it had also been part of the manifestation of God's glory (1:4,13,27; 8:2).

15:8 The Hebrew phrase translated **acted unfaithfully** is equivalent to the one in 14:13 (see the note).

PARABLE OF GOD'S ADULTEROUS WIFE

16 The word of the LORD came to me again: 2 "Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices. † 3 You are to say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth were in the land of the Canaanites. Your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hethite. † 4 As for your birth, your umbilical cord wasn't cut on the day you were born, † and you weren't washed clean † with water. You were not rubbed with salt or wrapped in cloths. † 5 No one cared enough about you to do even one of these things out of compassion for you. But you were thrown out into the open field because you were despised on the day you were born.

6 " 'I passed by you and saw you thrashing around in your blood, and I said to you as you lay in your blood, "Live!" Yes, I said to you as you lay in your blood, "Live!" † 7 I made you thrive † like plants of the field. † You grew up and matured and became very beautiful. † Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, but you were stark naked.

8 " 'Then I passed by you and saw you, and you were indeed at the age for love. So I spread the edge of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. † I pledged myself to you, † entered into a covenant with you — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — and you became mine. † 9 I washed you with water, rinsed off your blood, and anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and provided you with fine leather † sandals. I also wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with jewelry, putting bracelets on your wrists and a necklace around your neck. 12 I put a ring

in your nose, † earrings on your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 So you were adorned with gold and silver, † and your clothing was made of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey, and oil. You became extremely beautiful and attained royalty. 14 Your fame spread among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through my splendor, † which I had bestowed on you. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
15 " 'But you trusted in your beauty and acted like a prostitute because of your fame. † You lavished your sexual favors on everyone who passed by. † Your beauty became his. † 16 You took some of your clothing and made colorful high places for yourself, and you engaged in prostitution on them. These places should not have been built, and this should never have happened! † 17 You also took your beautiful jewelry made from the gold and silver I had given you, † and you made male images so that you could engage in prostitution with them. 18 Then you took your embroidered clothing to cover them and set my oil and incense before them. 19 The food that I gave you — the fine flour, oil, and honey that I fed you — you set it before them as a pleasing aroma. † That is what happened. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
20 " 'You even took your sons and daughters you bore to me and sacrificed them to these images as food. † Wasn't your prostitution enough? 21 You slaughtered my children and gave them up when you passed them through the fire † to the images. 22 In all your detestable practices and acts of prostitution, you did not remember the days of your youth † when you were stark naked and thrashing around in your blood.
23 " 'Then after all your evil — Woe, woe to you! — the declaration of the Lord GOD — 24 you built yourself a mound and made yourself an elevated place in every square. † 25 You built your elevated place at the head of every street † and turned your beauty into a detestable thing. You spread your legs to everyone who passed by and increased your prostitution. 26 You engaged in promiscuous acts with Egyptian men, your well-endowed neighbors, and increased your prostitution † to anger me.
27 " 'Therefore, I stretched out my hand against you and reduced your provisions. I gave you over to the desire of those who hate you, the Philistine

women, † who were embarrassed by your indecent conduct. 28 Then you engaged in prostitution with the Assyrian men because you were not satisfied. †
Even though you did this with them, you were still not satisfied. 29 So you extended your prostitution to Chaldea, † the land of merchants, but you were not even satisfied with this!
30 " 'How your heart was inflamed with lust † — the declaration of the Lord GOD — when you did all these things, the acts of a brazen prostitute, 31 building your mound at the head of every street and making your elevated place in every square. But you were unlike a prostitute because you scorned payment. †
32 You adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband! 33 Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave gifts to all your lovers. You bribed them to come to you from all around for your sexual favors. 34 So you were the opposite of other women in your acts of prostitution; no one solicited you. When you paid a fee instead of one being paid to you, you were the opposite.
35 " 'Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of the LORD! 36 This is what the Lord GOD says: Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness exposed by your acts of prostitution with your lovers, and because of all your detestable idols and the blood of your children that you gave to them, † 37 I am therefore going to gather all the lovers you pleased † — all those you loved as well as all those you hated. I will gather them against you from all around and expose your nakedness † to them so they see you completely naked. 38 I will judge you the way adulteresses and those who shed blood are judged. † Then I will bring about the shedding of your blood in jealous wrath. † 39 I will hand you over to them, and they will demolish your mounds and tear down your elevated places. They will strip off your clothes, † take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you stark naked. 40 They will bring a mob against you † to stone you and to cut you to pieces with their swords. 41 They will burn your houses and execute judgments against you in the sight of many women. I will stop you from being a prostitute, † and you will never again pay fees for lovers. 42 So I will satisfy my wrath against you, † and my jealousy will turn away from you. Then I will be calm and no longer angry. 43 Because you did not remember the days † of your youth but enraged me with all these things, I will also bring your conduct down

on your own head. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. Haven't you committed depravity in addition to all your detestable practices?
44 " 'Look, everyone who uses proverbs will quote this proverb about you: "Like mother, like daughter." 45 You are the daughter of your mother, who despised her husband and children. You are the sister of your sisters, † who despised their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hethite and your father an Amorite. † 46 Your older sister was Samaria, † who lived with her daughters to the north of you, and your younger sister was Sodom, who lived with her daughters to the south of you. 47 Didn't you walk in their ways and do their detestable practices? It was only a short time before all your ways were more corrupt than theirs. †
48 " 'As I live — the declaration of the Lord GOD — your sister Sodom and her daughters have not behaved as you and your daughters have. † 49 Now this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters had pride, plenty of food, † and comfortable security, but didn't support † the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and did detestable acts before me, so I removed them when I saw this. † † 51 But Samaria did not commit even half your sins. You have multiplied your detestable practices beyond theirs and made your sisters appear righteous by all the detestable acts you have committed. 52 You must also bear your disgrace, since you have helped your sisters out. † For they appear more righteous than you because of your sins, which you committed more detestably than they did. So you also, be ashamed and bear your disgrace, since you have made your sisters appear righteous.
53 " 'I will restore their fortunes, † the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and those of Samaria and her daughters. I will also restore † your fortunes among them, † 54 so you will bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all you did when you comforted them. † 55 As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters and Samaria and her daughters will return to their former state. You and your daughters will also return to your former state. 56 Didn't you treat your sister Sodom as an object of scorn when you were proud, 57 before your wickedness was exposed? It was like the time you were scorned by the daughters of Aram † † and all those around her, and by the daughters of the Philistines —

those who treated you with contempt from every side. 58 You yourself must bear
the consequences of your depravity and detestable practices † — this is the
LORD's declaration.
59 " 'For this is what the Lord GOD says: I will deal with you according to what
you have done, since you have despised the oath by breaking the covenant. †
60 But I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth,
and I will establish a permanent covenant with you. † 61 Then you will
remember your ways † and be ashamed when you † receive your older and
younger sisters. I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your
covenant. 62 I will establish my covenant with you, † and you will know that I
am the LORD, 63 so that when I make atonement for all you have done, you will
remember and be ashamed, † and never open your mouth again because of your
disgrace. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

16:4 Hb obscure **16:6** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr omit *Yes, I said to you as you lay in your blood, "Live!"* **16:7** LXX reads *Thrive; I made you* **16:7** Or *matured and developed the loveliest of ornaments* **16:10** Hb obscure **16:15** Hb obscure **16:16** Hb obscure **16:30** Or *was sick* **16:49** Lit *strengthen the hand of* **16:50** Or *them as you have seen* **16:52** Lit *you have been the advocate for your sisters* **16:53** LXX, Vg; MT reads *Samaria and her daughters and the fortunes of* **16:57** Some Hb mss, Syr read *Edom* **16:61** Some LXX mss, Syr read *I*

16:2 Is 58:1; Ezk 20:4; 22:2 **16:3** Dt 7:1; Jdg 3:5; 1Kg 9:20-21; Ezk 16:45 **16:4** Hs 2:3 **16:4** Lk 2:12 **16:7** Ex 1:7 **16:8** Ru 3:9; Jr 2:2 **16:8** Gn 22:16-18 **16:8** Ex 19:5; 24:7-8 **16:11-12** Gn 24:22,47 **16:13** Dt 32:13-14; Ps 45:13-14 **16:14** Lm 2:15 **16:15** Is 57:8; Jr 2:20 **16:15** Pr 7:8-13 **16:17** Ex 12:35; 32:2-4 **16:19** Hs 2:8 **16:20** Jr 7:31; 19:5; Ezk 23:37 **16:21** Lv 18:21; Dt 18:10; 2Kg 17:17; Ezk 20:31 **16:22** Jr 2:2 **16:24** Jr 11:13 **16:25** Pr 9:14 **16:26** Ezk 23:19-20 **16:27** Ezk 16:57 **16:28** 2Kg 16:7,10-18; 2Ch 28:16,20-23; Jr 2:18,36 **16:29** Ezk 23:14-16 **16:31** Is 52:3 **16:36** Jr 2:34 **16:37** Jr 13:22,26; Ezk 23:9,22 **16:37** Is 47:3 **16:38** Ezk 23:45 **16:38** Gn 9:6; Ezk 23:25 **16:39** Ezk 23:26; Hs 2:3 **16:40** Ezk 23:47 **16:41** Ezk 23:48 **16:42** Ezk 5:13; 21:17 **16:43** Ps 78:42 **16:43** Ezk 11:21; 22:31 **16:45** Ezk 23:2 **16:45** Ezk 16:31 **16:46** Ezk 23:4,33 **16:47** Ezk 5:6 **16:48** Mt 10:15; 11:23-24 **16:49** Gn 13:10 **16:50** Gn 18:20-21 **16:53** Is 1:9 **16:53** Jr 20:16 **16:54** Ezk 14:22-23 **16:57** 2Kg 16:5-7 **16:58** Ezk 23:49 **16:59** Ezk 17:19 **16:60** Is 55:3; Jr 32:38-41 **16:61** Ezk 6:9 **16:62** Hs 2:19-20 **16:63** Ezk 36:31-32 **16:63** Rm 3:19

16:2-3 Jerusalem's **detestable practices** were shown to the prophet through a vision in Ezekiel 8. Here the prophet uses the extended metaphor of a promiscuous woman to **confront** the sin and covenant faithlessness of Jerusalem. For more on her heritage (v. 3), see the note on verses 45-52.

16:8-14 Not only had God cared for Jerusalem as for an abandoned newborn girl left for dead (vv. 4-6), but he had also nurtured her to maturity (v. 7), married her (a metaphor for the covenant relationship; see "A Biblical View of Marriage," *p. 1449*), and provided for her richly. Jerusalem's helplessness highlights all the more God's grace and initiative in giving life (v. 6; 37:3-14), covering her **nakedness** (vv. 7-8), loving her (v. 8), entering into a covenant with her (v. 8; 37:26), washing off her **blood** (v. 9; 36:25), and clothing and adorning her beautifully (vv. 10-14).

16:15-19 Jerusalem became proud and trusted in her **beauty**, which had been given to her by God (vv. 14-

15). She also took the **clothing**, **jewelry**, and food that he provided and used them instead for idolatry, which is described here as **prostitution** (see 6:9; Is 1:21; Jr 2:20; Hs 1:2).

16:20-21 Jerusalem had gone so far in her idolatry as to sacrifice God's **children** (see Lv 18:21).

16:26-34 Jerusalem's crass promiscuity (vv. 15,25) also involved Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians (**Chaldea**). The reference is to foreign alliances that are a form of idolatry since they involve trust in something other than God (Jr 2:18; Hs 7:11; 12:1). These nations had received tribute from Israel (vv. 31-34; 2Kg 16:8; 23:33-35). Continuing the metaphor, Ezekiel states that Jerusalem was an unusual **prostitute.** Typical prostitutes at least get paid for what they do, but she **gave gifts** to her lovers in an attempt to secure **favors** (v. 33-34).

16:38-39 Jerusalem initially had needed cleansing from blood and covering for nakedness (vv. 6-7), which God richly provided (vv. 8-14). Her promiscuity, however, involved the shedding of innocent blood and exposure of her nakedness (vv. 20,36; Lv 18:6-19). God would judge her for both of these by doing the same thing to her (v. 38). The humiliation of being stripped naked is also found in Hosea 2:3 and Habakkuk 2:15-16.

16:43 The **days of your youth** refers to the time in which Israel was helpless (vv. 22,60) and yet God graciously took her in (vv. 3-14; see Jr 2:2; Hs 2:15). To forget those days was to forget his grace (Dt 8:11-20), and her sins would be brought back on her head (see the notes on 4:4-17; 7:15-16).

16:45-52 The mention of Jerusalem's birth to an **Amorite** father and a **Hethite** mother in the land of the Canaanites (vv. 1,44-45) is a statement that there is nothing inherently special about her outside of God's gracious choice. This makes her no different from these idolatrous peoples who were judged for their detestable practices (Lv 18:24-28). Moreover, they were no different from **Samaria** and **Sodom** since they had not only walked **in their ways** but acted even **more corrupt** (vv. 46-47; see the note on 5:6; 11:12).

16:53 To **restore** the **fortunes** usually relates to the restoration of a nation that had been punished (see Jr 29:14; 30:3; 48:47; 49:6,39). The salvation of **Sodom** here is unusual because Sodom is typically an example of permanent destruction (Is 1:9; 13:19-20), but in this instance it may represent God's enemies generally (Dt 32:32). In any case, the redemption described includes not only Israel but Gentiles (Is 19:25).

16:59-63 Although Israel had broken **the covenant** God had made with them at Mount Sinai, he would remember his covenant with Abraham and **establish a permanent covenant** with them (v. 60; 37:26; Is 55:3; Jr 32:40). Jerusalem's remembrance of their sins and their shame (vv. 61,63; 6:9; 36:31) echoes Deuteronomy 30:1. Her **sisters** becoming her **daughters** may relate to their salvation coming from Zion (Ps 87:4-6; Hs 1:7). This time, God's faithfulness and grace will cause them to **know that** [he is] **the LORD** (v. 62; see the note on 6:1-7). In keeping with the emphasis on divine initiative and action, atonement will be made by God himself.

PARABLE OF THE EAGLES

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, pose a riddle and
speak a parable to the house of Israel. † 3 You are to say, 'This is what
the Lord GOD says: A huge eagle with powerful wings, † long feathers, and full
plumage of many colors came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar. † 4 He
plucked off its topmost shoot, brought it to the land of merchants, and set it in a
city of traders. 5 Then he took some of the land's seed and put it in a fertile
field; † he set it like a willow, † a plant † by abundant water. 6 It sprouted and

became a spreading vine, low in height with its branches turned toward him, † yet its roots stayed under it. So it became a vine, produced branches, and sent out shoots.
7 " 'But there was another huge eagle with powerful wings and thick plumage. And this vine bent its roots toward him! It stretched out its branches to him from the plot where it was planted, † so that he might water it. 8 It had been planted in a good field by abundant water in order to produce branches, bear fruit, and become a splendid vine.'
9 "You are to say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Will it flourish? Will he not tear out its roots † and strip off its fruit so that it shrivels? All its fresh leaves will wither! Great strength and many people will not be needed to pull it from its roots. 10 Even though it is planted, will it flourish? Won't it wither completely when the east wind strikes it? † It will wither on the plot where it sprouted.' "
11 The word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Now say to that rebellious house, † 'Don't you know what these things mean?' Tell them, 'The king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, took its king and officials, † and brought them back with him to Babylon. 13 He took one of the royal family † and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath. † Then he took away the leading men of the land, 14 so that the kingdom would be humble and not exalt itself † but would keep his covenant in order to endure. 15 However, this king revolted against him † by sending his ambassadors to Egypt so they might give him horses and a large army. † Will he flourish? Will the one who does such things escape? Can he break a covenant and still escape?
16 " 'As I live — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — he will die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, † whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke. 17 Pharaoh with his mighty army and vast company will not help him in battle, † when ramps are built and siege walls constructed to destroy many lives. 18 He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. He did all these things even though he gave his hand in pledge. † He will not escape!
19 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: As I live, I will bring down on his head my oath that he despised and my covenant that he broke. 20 I will

spread my net over him, † and he will be caught in my snare. † I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there for the treachery he committed against me. † 21 All the fugitives † among his troops will fall by the sword, and those who survive will be scattered to every direction of the wind. † Then you will know that I, the LORD, have spoken.

22 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will take a sprig
from the lofty top of the cedar and plant it. †
I will pluck a tender sprig
from its topmost shoots,
and I will plant it
on a high towering mountain.
23 I will plant it on Israel's high mountain †
so that it may bear branches, produce fruit, and become a majestic cedar.
Birds of every kind will nest under it, †
taking shelter in the shade of its branches.
24 Then all the trees of the field will know that I am the LORD.
I bring down the tall tree,
and make the low tree tall. †
I cause the green tree to wither
and make the withered tree thrive. †
I, the LORD, have spoken and I will do it.' " †

17:5 Hb obscure **17:21** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg read *choice men*
17:2 Ezk 20:49; 24:3 **17:3** Jr 48:40 **17:3** Ezk 17:12 **17:5** Dt 8:7-9 **17:5** Is 44:4 **17:6** Ezk 17:14 **17:7** Ezk 31:4 **17:9** 2Kg 25:7 **17:10** Gn 41:6; 2Kg 19:26; Ezk 19:12; Hs 13:15; Jnh 4:8 **17:12** Ezk 2:3-5; 12:9-11 **17:12** 2Kg 24:11-15 **17:13** 2Kg 24:17 **17:13** 2Ch 36:13 **17:14** Ezk 29:14 **17:15** 2Kg 24:20; 2Ch 36:13 **17:15** Dt 17:16 **17:16** Ezk 12:13 **17:17** Jr 37:5,7 **17:18** 1Ch 29:24 **17:20** Ezk 12:13 **17:20** 2Kg 25:5-6; Jr 39:5 **17:20** Ezk 20:35-36 **17:21** Ezk 5:10 **17:22** Ps 2:6 **17:23** Ezk 20:40 **17:23** Dn 4:12 **17:24** Is 40:4 **17:24** Am 9:11 **17:24** Nm 14:35; Ps 33:9; Is 46:11; 55:11; Ezk 17:24; 22:14; 24:14; 36:36; 37:14

17:2 The extended metaphor of the preceding chapter is followed here by a **riddle** and **a parable**.

17:3-6 The **huge eagle** is the king of Babylon (v. 12) who will take **the top of the cedar** tree (a symbol of King Jehoiachin) and carry it to exile. The **land of merchants** (v. 4) is Chaldea (see 16:29), where Jehoiachin had been taken (2Kg 24:10-15). The provision for the **vine** relates to a "covenant" between the newly-installed Zedekiah and Babylon (v. 13). The lowliness of the vine corresponds to the desired lowliness of his kingdom (v. 14).

17:7-10 The other **huge eagle** (v. 7) is Egypt, to whom Zedekiah had treacherously turned for help (v. 15; 2Kg 24:20). In so doing, he had violated his covenant with Babylon, to his own demise (vv. 9-10,15).

17:16-17 The certainty of Zedekiah's punishment is indicated through the oath formula, **as I live.** Zedekiah would indeed die in Babylon (2Kg 25:7), and **Pharaoh** would not be able to help him (Jr 37:1-8).

17:19-20 God saw Zedekiah as guilty also of breaking God's covenant and committing **treachery** against him.

17:22-24 Containing the image of the top of the cedar tree as a symbol for the king of Judah (v. 3), now God says that he himself would take **a tender sprig** from the top of this same cedar and plant it on a high mountain (see 20:40; 36:8; 40:2). There it will grow, bear fruit, and become **a majestic cedar** (v. 23). This is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah (cp. Is 2:2-4; 4:2; 11:1; 53:2). The image of **birds** dwelling under the **shade** of a large tree resembles the parable of the mustard seed (Mt 13:31-32). **The trees of the field** are the nations (31:3-15; see 34:27), and God's humiliation of the proud and exaltation of the lowly parallels Isaiah 2:11-17 and 10:34–11:1. Just as God's message of judgment would come to pass, so would this promise of salvation (v. 24; see the notes on 5:13; 12:22-28; 16:59-63).

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN

18 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "What do you mean by using this
proverb concerning the land of Israel:

'The fathers eat sour grapes, †
and the children's teeth are set on edge'? †

3 As I live" — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — "you will no longer use this proverb in Israel. † 4 Look, every life belongs to me. † The life of the father is like the life of the son — both belong to me. The person who sins is the one who will die. †
5 "Suppose a man is righteous and does what is just and right: 6 He does not eat at the mountain shrines † † or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife † or approach a woman during her menstrual impurity. † 7 He doesn't oppress anyone † but returns his collateral to the debtor. † He does not commit robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry † and covers the naked with clothing. 8 He doesn't lend at interest or for profit † but keeps his hand from injustice and carries out true justice between men. † 9 He follows my statutes and keeps my ordinances, acting faithfully. Such a person is righteous; he will certainly live." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

10 “But suppose the man has a violent son, who sheds blood † and does any of
these things, 11 though the father has done none of them. Indeed, when the son
eats at the mountain shrines and defiles his neighbor’s wife, 12 and when he
oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, and does not return collateral,
and when he looks to the idols, commits detestable acts, † 13 and lends at
interest or for profit, will he live? He will not live! Since he has committed all
these detestable acts, he will certainly die. His death will be his own fault. † †
14 “Now suppose he has a son who sees all the sins his father has committed,
and though he sees them, he does not do likewise. 15 He does not eat at the
mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile
his neighbor’s wife. 16 He doesn’t oppress anyone, hold collateral, or commit
robbery. He gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with clothing.
17 He keeps his hand from harming the poor, not taking interest or profit on a
loan. He practices my ordinances and follows my statutes. Such a person will not
die for his father’s iniquity. He will certainly live.
18 “As for his father, he will die for his own iniquity because he practiced fraud,
robbed his brother, and did among his people what was not good. † 19 But you
may ask, ‘Why doesn’t the son suffer punishment for the father’s iniquity? ’ †
Since the son has done what is just and right, carefully observing all my statutes,
he will certainly live. 20 The person who sins is the one who will die. † A son
won’t suffer punishment for the father’s iniquity, and a father won’t suffer
punishment for the son’s iniquity. † The righteousness of the righteous person
will be on him, † and the wickedness of the wicked person will be on him. †
21 “But if the wicked person turns from all the sins he has committed, †
keeps all my statutes, and does what is just and right, he will certainly live; he will not
die. 22 None of the transgressions he has committed will be held against him. †
He will live because of the righteousness he has practiced. † 23 Do I take any
pleasure in the death of the wicked? ” † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
“Instead, don’t I take pleasure when he turns from his ways and lives? 24 But
when a righteous person turns from his righteousness † and acts unjustly,
committing the same detestable acts that the wicked do, will he live? None of the

righteous acts he did will be remembered. † He will die because of the treachery
he has engaged in and the sin he has committed.
25 "But you say, 'The Lord's way isn't fair.' † Now listen, house of Israel: Is it
my way that is unfair? Instead, isn't it your ways that are unfair? 26 When a
righteous person turns from his righteousness and acts unjustly, he will die for
this. He will die because of the injustice he has committed. 27 But if a wicked
person turns from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and
right, he will preserve his life. 28 He will certainly live because he thought it
over and turned from all the transgressions he had committed; he will not die.
29 But the house of Israel says, 'The Lord's way isn't fair.' Is it my ways that are
unfair, house of Israel? Instead, isn't it your ways that are unfair?
30 "Therefore, house of Israel, I will judge each one of you according to his
ways." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn from all your
rebellious acts, so they will not become a sinful stumbling block to you.
31 Throw off all the transgressions you have committed, and get yourselves a
new heart and a new spirit. † Why should you die, house of Israel? 32 For I take
no pleasure in anyone's death." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. "So
repent and live!

18:6 Lit *the mountains*, also in vv. 11,15 **18:13** Lit *His blood will be on him*
18:2 Lm 5:7 **18:2** Jr 31:29 **18:3** Ezk 12:23 **18:4** Nm 16:22; 27:16 **18:4** Dt 24:16; Ezk 18:20; Rm 6:23 **18:6** Ezk 22:9 **18:6** Ex 20:17-18; Lv 20:10 **18:6** Lv 18:19-20 **18:7** Ex 22:21 **18:7** Dt 24:12-13 **18:7** Mt 25:35-40 **18:8** Ex 22:25; Lv 25:35-37 **18:8** Zch 8:16 **18:9** Am 5:4 **18:10** Nm 35:31 **18:12** Ezk 8:6,17 **18:13** Lv 20:9,11 **18:18** Ezk 3:18 **18:19** Ex 20:5 **18:20** Ezk 18:4 **18:20** Dt 24:16; Jn 9:2 **18:20** Is 3:10-11 **18:20** Rm 2:6-9 **18:21** Ezk 33:12,19 **18:22** Ezk 33:16 **18:22** Ps 18:20-24 **18:23** Ezk 33:11 **18:24** Ezk 3:20; 33:18 **18:24** 2Pt 2:20 **18:25** Ezk 18:29; 33:17,20 **18:30** Ezk 7:3,8; 33:20 **18:31** Jr 32:39

18:1-4 As in 12:22-25, God declares that he would put an end to a **proverb** commonly spoken by the people. This proverb expressed the belief that children suffer for sins committed by their fathers (vv. 2,4). Although it was true that previous generations did not suffer exile like the present one even though they deserved it too (see Ex 20:5; 34:7), this does not negate personal responsibility for sin. This reality will become clearer to Israel in the coming days as the proverb ceases to be used. The same proverb is similarly addressed in Jeremiah 31:29-30.

18:5-20 The principle of personal responsibility for sin ("the person who sins is the one who will die," vv. 4,20) is illustrated via the examples of a father, son, and grandson, each of whom **live** or **die** based on their respective conduct (vv. 9,13,17)—regardless of what the predecessor had done (vv. 18-20). Evidently, doing what is **just** and **right** along with walking in God's **statutes** and keeping his **ordinances** means to avoid idolatry and to live in right relationship with others (see the notes on 11:7-12,16-21; 20:18-20; Gn 26:5; Lv 20:22-26).

18:21-23 The preceding principle does not exclude forgiveness and life for the repentant (vv. 21-22). God has a clear preference that the wicked repent and live rather than die in their sins (v. 23; 33:11).

18:25-29 God insists that his ways of forgiving the repentant but punishing those who do not persevere in righteousness are fair. The truth was that the Israelites needed to repent of their wicked ways (see the note on 33:17-20).

18:31 What **Israel** needed was a **new heart and a new spirit**, which God would later provide (11:19; 36:26; 39:29). Fulfillment of God's commands requires the help of God himself (2:1-2; Dt 10:16; 30:6; the note on Jr 4:4; Rm 8:4).

A LAMENT FOR ISRAEL'S PRINCES

19 "As for you, take up a lament for the princes of Israel, † 2 and say:

What was your mother? A lioness!
She lay down among the lions;
she reared her cubs among the young lions.

3 She brought up one of her cubs, and he became a young lion. †
After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.

4 When the nations heard about him, he was caught in their pit.
Then they led him away with hooks
to the land of Egypt. †

5 When she saw that she waited in vain, that her hope was lost,
she took another of her cubs
and made him a young lion.

6 He prowled among the lions, †
and he became a young lion.
After he learned to tear prey,
he devoured people.

7 He devastated their strongholds †
and destroyed their cities.
The land and everything in it shuddered
at the sound of his roaring.

8 Then the nations from the surrounding provinces set out against him. †
They spread their net over him;
he was caught in their pit.

9 They put a wooden yoke on him † with hooks †
and led him away to the king of Babylon.

They brought him into the fortresses
so his roar could no longer be heard
on the mountains of Israel. †

10 Your mother was like a vine in your vineyard, † †
planted by the water;
it was fruitful and full of branches †
because of abundant water.
11 It had strong branches, fit for the scepters of rulers; its height towered among the clouds. †
So it was conspicuous for its height
as well as its many branches.
12 But it was uprooted in fury, †
thrown to the ground,
and the east wind dried up its fruit.
Its strong branches were torn off and dried up; †
fire consumed them.
13 Now it is planted in the wilderness, †
in a dry and thirsty land.
14 Fire has gone out from its main branch †
and has devoured its fruit,
so that it no longer has a strong branch,
a scepter for ruling. †

This is a lament and should be used as a lament.”

19:7 Tg, Aq; MT reads *knew their widows* **19:9** Or *put him in a cage* **19:10** Some Hb mss; other Hb mss read *blood* **19:11** Or *thick foliage* **19:14** Lit *from the branch of its parts*
19:1 Ezk 26:17; 27:2 **19:3** 2Kg 23:31-32 **19:4-5** 2Kg 23:34 **19:6** Jr 22:13-17 **19:8** 2Kg 24:2,11 **19:9** 2Ch 36:6 **19:9** Ezk 6:2 **19:10** Ps 80:8-11 **19:10** Dt 8:7-9 **19:12** Jr 31:28 **19:12** Hs 13:15 **19:13** 2Kg 24:12-16; Hs 2:3 **19:14** Lm 2:5

19:1-4 The princes of Israel refer to their kings (v. 1; 7:27; 12:10,12; 21:25). The **lion** was a common symbol of royalty in the ancient world; here it is a metaphor for the ways that the rulers of Israel and Judah have mistreated their own people (**he devoured people**, v. 3). The one taken captive to **Egypt** is Jehoahaz (v. 4; 2Kg 23:34).

19:9 The ruler taken captive to **Babylon** is either Jehoiachin or Zedekiah, both of whom fit this description (2Kg 24:12; 25:7). The latter was the focus of Ezekiel 17 (see notes).

19:10-12 The destruction of the **vine** (v. 12) parallels the humiliation of the Davidic dynasty in Psalm

89:39-44. The withering **east wind** is the same one as in 17:10. The short-lived prosperity of this vine and the enmity of nations toward it (vv. 4,8) sharply contrast with 17:22-24 (see note).

19:13 In contrast with verse 10, the vine is now **planted in the wilderness.** Psalm 63:1 voices prayer from such a place, and other OT passages predict redemption even in this **dry** land (Is 35:1; 41:18).

19:14 The lack of a **strong branch** or a **scepter** (see v. 11; Ps 2:9) describes the end of the Davidic dynasty (see preceding notes).

ISRAEL'S REBELLION

20 In the seventh year, in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month,
some of Israel's elders came to inquire of the LORD, † and they sat
down in front of me. 2 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3 "Son of man,
speak with the elders of Israel and tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:
Are you coming to inquire of me? As I live, I will not let you inquire of me. †
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.'
4 "Will you pass judgment against them, will you pass judgment, son of man?
Explain the detestable practices of their fathers to them. † 5 Say to them, 'This
is what the Lord GOD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore an oath † †
to the descendants of Jacob's house and made myself known to them in the land of
Egypt. I swore to them, saying, "I am the LORD your God." † 6 On that day I
swore † to them that I would bring them out † of the land of Egypt into a land I
had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, † the most
beautiful of all lands. † 7 I also said to them, "Throw away, each of you, the
abhorrent things that you prize, † and do not defile yourselves with the idols of
Egypt. † I am the LORD your God." †
8 " 'But they rebelled against me and were unwilling to listen to me. None of
them threw away the abhorrent things that they prized, † and they did not
abandon the idols of Egypt. So I considered pouring out my wrath on them, †
exhausting my anger against them within the land of Egypt. 9 But I acted for the
sake of my name, † so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations
they were living among, in whose sight I had made myself known to Israel by
bringing them out of Egypt.
10 " 'So I brought them out of the land of Egypt and led them into the
wilderness. † 11 Then I gave them my statutes and explained my ordinances to

them — the person who does them will live by them. † 12 I also gave them my Sabbaths to serve as a sign between me and them, † so that they would know that I am the LORD who consecrates them.

13 “ ‘But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. † They did not follow my statutes and they rejected my ordinances — the person who does them will live by them. † They also completely profaned my Sabbaths. † So I considered pouring out my wrath on them in the wilderness to put an end to them. † 14 But I acted for the sake of my name, so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. 15 However, I swore to them † in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them — the most beautiful of all lands, flowing with milk and honey — 16 because they rejected my ordinances, profaned my Sabbaths, and did not follow my statutes. For their hearts went after their idols. † 17 Yet I spared them from destruction and did not bring them to an end in the wilderness. †

18 “ ‘Then I said to their children in the wilderness, “Don’t follow the statutes of your fathers, defile yourselves with their idols, or keep their ordinances. † 19 I am the LORD your God. Follow my statutes, keep my ordinances, and practice them. † 20 Keep my Sabbaths holy, † and they will be a sign between me and you, so you may know that I am the LORD your God.”

21 “ ‘But the children rebelled against me. † They did not follow my statutes or carefully keep my ordinances — the person who does them will live by them. They also profaned my Sabbaths. So I considered pouring out my wrath on them and exhausting my anger against them in the wilderness. 22 But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, so that it would not be profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I brought them out. 23 However, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them among the countries. † 24 For they did not practice my ordinances but rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were fixed † on their fathers’ idols. 25 I also gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances † they could not live by. 26 When they sacrificed every firstborn in the fire, † † I defiled them through their gifts in order to devastate them so they would know that I am the LORD.’ †

27 “Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: In this way also your fathers blasphemed me by † committing treachery against me: 28 When I brought them into the land that I swore to give them and they saw any high hill or leafy tree, † they offered their sacrifices and presented their offensive offerings there. They also sent up their pleasing aromas and poured out their drink offerings there. 29 So I asked them, “What is this high place you are going to?” And it is still called Bamah † today.’

30 “Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: Are you defiling yourselves the way your fathers did, † and prostituting yourselves with their abhorrent things? 31 When you offer your gifts, sacrificing your children in the fire, † † you still continue to defile yourselves with all your idols today. So should I let you inquire of me, house of Israel? As I live — this is the declaration of the Lord God — I will not let you inquire of me!

ISRAEL’S RESTORATION

32 “ ‘When you say, “Let us be like the nations, like the clans of other countries, serving wood and stone,” † what you have in mind will never happen. † 33 As I live — the declaration of the Lord God — I will reign over you with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, † and outpoured wrath. 34 I will bring you from the peoples and gather you from the countries where you were scattered, † with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, † and outpoured wrath. 35 I will lead you into the wilderness of the peoples † and enter into judgment with you there face to face. 36 Just as I entered into judgment with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, † so I will enter into judgment with you. This is the declaration of the Lord God. 37 I will make you pass under the rod † and will bring you into the bond of the covenant. 38 I will purge you of those who rebel and transgress against me. † I will bring them out of the land where they live as foreign residents, but they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Lord.

39 “ ‘As for you, house of Israel, this is what the Lord God says: Go and serve your idols, each of you. But afterward you will surely listen to me, and you will

no longer defile my holy name with your gifts and idols. † 40 For on my holy
mountain, Israel's high mountain — the declaration of the Lord GOD — there the
entire house of Israel, all of them, † will serve me in the land. There I will
accept them and will require your contributions and choicest gifts, † all your
holy offerings. 41 When I bring you from the peoples and gather you from the
countries where you have been scattered, I will accept you as a pleasing aroma.
And I will demonstrate my holiness through you in the sight of the nations. †
42 When I lead you into the land of Israel, the land I swore to give your fathers,
you will know that I am the LORD. † 43 There you will remember your ways and
all your deeds by which you have defiled yourself, † and you will loathe
yourselves for all the evil things you have done. † 44 You will know that I am
the LORD, † house of Israel, when I have dealt with you for the sake of my
name † rather than according to your evil ways and corrupt acts. This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

FIRE IN THE SOUTH

45 The word of the LORD came to me: 46 "Son of man, face the south and preach
against it. Prophesy against the forest land in the Negev, † 47 and say to the
forest there, 'Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the Lord GOD says: I am
about to ignite a fire in you, and it will devour every green tree and every dry
tree in you. The blazing flame will not be extinguished, and every face from the
south to the north will be scorched by it. 48 Then all people will see that I, the
LORD, have kindled it. † It will not be extinguished.' "
49 Then I said, "Oh, Lord GOD, they are saying of me, 'Isn't he just composing
parables? ' " †

20:5 Lit *I lifted my hand* **20:6** Lit *lifted my hand*, also in vv. 15,23,28,42 **20:7** Lit *things of your eyes* **20:8** Lit *things of their eyes* **20:26** Lit *they made every firstborn pass through the fire* **20:29** = High Place **20:31** Lit *gifts, making your children pass through the fire*

20:1 Ezk 8:1,11-12; 14:1 **20:3** Ezk 14:3 **20:4** Ezk 16:2; 22:2 **20:5** Ex 6:6-8 **20:5** Ex 6:2-3 **20:6** Jr 32:22 **20:6** Ex 3:8 **20:6** Ps 16:6; 48:2; 50:2; Jr 3:19 **20:7** Lv 18:3 **20:7** Ex 20:2 **20:8** Ezk 5:13; 7:8 **20:9** Ezk 36:21-22 **20:10** Ex 13:18,20 **20:11** Lv 18:5; Rm 10:5; Gl 3:12 **20:12** Ex 31:13 **20:13** Nm 14:11-12,22 **20:13** Lv 18:5 **20:13** Ezk 22:8; 23:38; 44:24 **20:13** Ex 32:10; Dt 9:8 **20:15** Nm 14:28-30 **20:16** Ezk 11:21; 14:3-7 **20:17** Ezk 11:13 **20:18** Mt 15:1-3 **20:19** Dt 5:32-33 **20:20** Jr 17:22 **20:21** Nm 21:5; 25:1-3 **20:23** Lv 26:33 **20:24** Ezk 6:9 **20:25** Ps 81:12; Rm 1:21-25,28 **20:26** Lv 18:21 **20:26** Ezk 6:7 **20:27** Rm 2:24 **20:28** Ezk 6:13 **20:30** Jdg 2:19; Jr 7:26; 16:12 **20:31** Ezk 16:20 **20:32** Dt 4:28; 2Kg 19:18; Rv 9:20 **20:32** Ezk 11:5 **20:33** Jr 21:5 **20:34** Jr 31:8; Ezk 36:24; 37:21 **20:34** Ex 6:6; Dt 4:34 **20:35** Ezk 19:13 **20:36** Nm 14:21-

23,28 **20:37** Lv 27:32; Jr 33:13 **20:38** Ezk 34:17-22 **20:39** Is 1:13-15; Ezk 23:38-39 **20:40** Ezk 37:22,24 **20:40** Is 60:7; Ezk 43:27 **20:41** Is 5:16; Ezk 28:25; 2Co 6:17 **20:42** Ezk 36:23; 38:23 **20:43** Ezk 6:9; 16:61,63 **20:43** Ezk 36:31 **20:44** Ezk 24:24 **20:44** Ezk 36:22 **20:46** Ezk 21:2 **20:48** Jr 21:14 **20:49** Ezk 17:2

20:1-3 God's unwillingness to be inquired of by the **elders** parallels 14:1-8 (see note).

20:4 The Hebrew word for **detestable practices** appears again (5:9-11; 8:6; 16:2), this time with reference to previous generations of Israelites. This term is frequently used of idolatry (Dt 7:25-26; 12:31; 13:14) and sexual immorality (Lv 18:22-30).

20:7-8 Despite God's command to avoid defiling themselves with idols, the Israelites **did not abandon the idols of Egypt** (Jos 24:14). The Pentateuch speaks of the idolatry of this generation of Israelites in other ways (Ex 32:1-4; Lv 17:7).

20:9 Several times God relented from his fierce anger against Israel **for the sake of** his own **name** (see Ex 32:9-14; Nm 14:11-20; Ps 106:8;Is 48:9), so that it would not be **profaned in the eyes of the nations** (vv. 14,22).

20:18-20 Following their fathers' **statutes** and **ordinances** refers to their practices of idolatry (vv. 18,30). These contrast sharply with the instructions of God (v. 19; see the note on 18:5-20), including the command to set apart his Sabbaths as **holy** (v. 20).

20:25 Whereas God's commands are typically characterized as life-giving (vv. 11,13,21; 18:9,17,19,21; Lv 18:5), the different set of **statutes** and **ordinances** in view here **were not good** and did not result in life. The next verse suggests that these laws were the religious practices, such as child sacrifice, designed by the people. These were things that God had never commanded, and the result was defilement and devastation (v. 26).

20:27 The sin of **treachery** has been cited several times in Ezekiel (14:13; 15:8; 17:20; 18:24). The Hebrew word translated **blasphemed** also appears in Numbers 15:30 and Isaiah 37:6,23.

20:31 God's outrage over being consulted by brazen idolaters is the starting point for this passage (vv. 1-3).

20:32 Idolatry in Israel was linked to a desire to **be like the nations**, just like the request for a king had been (1Sm 8:5,20). It was always a powerful temptation for Israel to adopt the philosophies, religious practices, and conventional wisdom of the peoples around them. This was the polar opposite of God's will that they be sanctified (v. 12), of which Sabbath-keeping was to be a sign (v. 20; Ex 31:13-17; Lv 19:2-3). The pairing of the words **wood** and **stone** may refer to an Asherah idol since the goddess carved in stone was symbolized by a tree (cp. Dt 29:16; Jr 2:27). Asherah was a Canaanite goddess frequently associated with Baal.

20:33-38 Resembling the exodus from Egypt (see the notes on 34:13-16,27), the regathering to the land of Israel (vv. 40-42) will be effected by God's **strong hand** and **outstretched arm** (vv. 33-34; Dt 4:34; 5:15; 26:8; Ps 136:12). As before, it will involve a period of time in the **wilderness** for the purpose of judgment (vv. 35-38; Hs 2:14). The result will be the purging of rebels (v. 38; Is 1:28). The Hebrew verb translated **reign** in verse 33 is reinforced by the Hebrew word translated **rod** (or, "scepter") in verse 37. It is used in the preceding context to signify royalty (see the notes on 19:10-14; 21:10,13; 37:22-26).

20:39-44 Despite Israel's idolatry, they will ultimately **defile** [God's] **holy name** no longer (39:7; 43:7). This will take place when Israel is regathered from exile to his **holy mountain, Israel's high mountain** (v. 40; 17:22-23; 40:2), where they will all serve him (see Ex 3:12). Israel's acceptance as a **pleasing aroma** (v. 41; Is 66:20) spiritualizes the way this phrase is typically used (v. 28; 6:13; 16:19; Gn 8:21), similar to the references to "plaster" in 13:10-16 (see note). Their dwelling in the land will be accompanied by contrition over their sin and recognition of the grace and glory of God (vv. 43-44; 6:9; the note on 16:59-63; 36:22,31-32).

20:47-48 The **green tree** and the **dry tree** were also mentioned together in 17:24. The former are likely the same as the "well-watered trees" in 31:14,16. The phrase **all people will see** parallels the phrase "all the trees of the field will know" in 17:22-24.

20:49 Ezekiel used a riddle in 17:2 and a parable in 24:3. In this verse, Ezekiel's audience is impressed with his **parables** and creative speech, but they refuse to listen to or repent at his actual message.

GOD'S SWORD OF JUDGMENT

21 The word of the LORD came to me again: 2 "Son of man, face † Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuaries. Prophesy against the land of Israel, 3 and say to it, 'This is what the LORD says: I am against you. † I will draw my sword from its sheath and cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked. 4 Since I will cut off † both the righteous and the wicked, my sword will therefore come out of its sheath against all people from the south to the north. † 5 So all people will know that I, the LORD, have taken my sword from its sheath — it will not be sheathed again.' †

6 "But you, son of man, groan! Groan bitterly with a broken heart † right before their eyes. 7 And when they ask you, 'Why are you groaning?' then say, 'Because of the news that is coming. † Every heart will melt, and every hand will become weak. Every spirit will be discouraged, and all knees will run with urine. † Yes, it is coming and it will happen. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

8 The word of the LORD came to me: 9 "Son of man, prophesy, 'This is what the Lord says!' You are to proclaim,

'A sword! † A sword is sharpened and also polished. †
10 It is sharpened for slaughter, polished to flash like lightning!
Should we rejoice?
The scepter of my son,
the sword despises every tree. †
11 The sword is given to be polished, to be grasped in the hand.
It is sharpened, and it is polished,
to be put in the hand of the slayer.' †

12 "Cry out and wail, son of man, for it is against my people. It is against all the princes of Israel! They are given over to the sword with my people. Therefore

strike your thigh in grief. † 13 Surely it will be a trial! And what if the sword despises even the scepter? The scepter will not continue." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

14 "So you, son of man, prophesy and clap your hands together: †

Let the sword strike two times, even three.
It is a sword for massacre,
a sword for great massacre —
it surrounds † them!
15 I have appointed a sword † for slaughter †
at all their gates,
so that their hearts may melt
and many may stumble.
Yes! It is ready to flash like lightning; †
it is drawn † for slaughter.
16 Slash to the right; turn to the left — wherever your blade is directed.

17 I also will clap my hands together, and I will satisfy my wrath. † I, the LORD, have spoken."

18 The word of the LORD came to me: 19 "Now you, son of man, mark out two roads that the sword of Babylon's king can take. Both of them should originate from the same land. And make a signpost at the fork in the road to each city. 20 Mark out a road that the sword can take to Rabbah of the Ammonites † and to Judah into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the split in the road, at the fork of the two roads, to practice divination: he shakes the arrows, consults the idols, and observes the liver. 22 The answer marked † Jerusalem appears in his right hand, indicating that he should set up battering rams, † give the order to † slaughter, raise a battle cry, set battering rams against the gates, build a ramp, and construct a siege wall. 23 It will seem like false divination to those who have sworn an oath to the Babylonians, † † but it will draw attention to their guilt so that they will be captured.

24 "Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Because you have drawn attention to your guilt, exposing your transgressions, so that your sins are revealed in all

your actions — since you have done this, you will be captured by them. 25 And you, profane and wicked prince of Israel, † † the day has come † for your punishment. †
26 "This is what the Lord GOD says:

Remove the turban, and take off the crown.
Things will not remain as they are; †
exalt the lowly and bring down the exalted. †
27 A ruin, a ruin, I will make it a ruin!
Yet this will not happen
until he comes; †
I have given the judgment to him. †

28 "Now you, son of man, prophesy, and say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says concerning the Ammonites and their contempt.' You are to proclaim,

'A sword! A sword
is drawn for slaughter,
polished to consume, † to flash like lightning.
29 While they offer false visions †
and lying divinations about you,
the time has come to put you
to the necks of the profane wicked ones;
the day has come
for final punishment.

30 " 'Return it to its sheath! †

" 'I will judge you †
in the place where you were created,
in the land of your origin.
31 I will pour out my indignation on you; I will blow the fire of my fury on you. †
I will hand you over to brutal men,
skilled at destruction.

32 You will be fuel for the fire.
Your blood will be spilled within the land.
You will not be remembered, †
for I, the LORD, have spoken.’ ”

21:4 Lit *off from you* **21:6** Lit *insides*, or *waist* **21:7** Lit *knees will go water* **21:10** Hb obscure **21:13** Hb obscure **21:14** Or *penetrates* **21:15** Hb obscure **21:15** Hb obscure **21:22** Lit *The divination for* **21:22** Lit *rams, open the mouth in* **21:23** Lit *them* **21:25** = King Zedekiah **21:25** Lit *come in the time of the punishment of the end*, also in v. 29 **21:26** Lit *This not this* **21:27** Or *comes to whom it rightfully belongs, and I will give it to him* **21:30** = the Ammonites
21:2 Ezk 20:46 **21:3** Ezk 5:8 **21:4** Ezk 7:2; 20:47 **21:5** Ezk 21:30 **21:7** Ezk 7:26 **21:9** Dt 32:41 **21:9** Jr 46:4 **21:11** Ezk 21:19 **21:12** Jr 31:19 **21:14** Nm 24:10 **21:15** Ezk 32:20 **21:15** Ezk 21:28 **21:17** Ezk 5:13 **21:20** Jr 49:2 **21:22** Ezk 4:2; 26:9 **21:23** Ezk 17:16,18 **21:25** 2Kg 24:20 **21:25** Ezk 21:29 **21:26** Ezk 17:24; Lk 1:52 **21:27** Jr 23:5-6 **21:28** Is 31:8; Jr 12:12; 46:10,14 **21:29** Ezk 13:6-9; 22:28 **21:30** Jr 47:6-7 **21:31** Ezk 22:20-21 **21:32** Ezk 25:10

21:1-5 This passage clarifies and reinforces the previous one (20:45-49), as shown through the repetition of the phrases **from the south to the north** (v. 4; 20:47) and **all people** (vv. 4-5; 20:48). The destruction of both the “green tree” and the “dry tree” (20:47) corresponds to the cutting off of **both the righteous and the wicked** (vv. 3-4). The lack of distinction between the two groups indicates the certainty of the judgment. Normally, the righteous might expect to be spared, but there will be no hope for Jerusalem. The word **sword** (v. 3) is a significant key word in the book of Ezekiel (occurring ninety-one times), and it occurs fifteen times in chapter 21. It is a weapon used by God against his people (vv. 8-12). The “fire” that burns the “forest” of the “Negev” (20:46-47) is thus a picture of this sword that will come against Jerusalem and the land of Israel (vv. 2-3).

21:6-7 News of the divine “sword” (vv. 3-5) brings terror on all (7:17,26-27).

21:10-13 The theme of kingship continues through the references to the **princes of Israel** and the **scepter** (see the notes on 19:1-4,10-14; 20:33-38).

21:19-23 The divine sword is here linked to that of the king of Babylon (v. 19), who will come against Jerusalem through **false divination** but ultimately according to God’s purpose (vv. 20-23).

21:25-27 “The sword” would come against “all the princes of Israel” (v. 12; 22:6), but Zedekiah, last king of Judah, is singled out here (v. 25; the notes on 17:3-10; 19:9). His humiliation would be a public example of the abasement of the proud and the exaltation of the humble (v. 26; 17:24). In yet another allusion to the messianic prophecy of Genesis 49:8-12 (see the notes on 19:10-14; 20:33-38), the ruinous condition of the nation will persist until the Messiah comes. To him **judgment** belongs (v. 27; Gn 49:10).

21:28-29 Ammon would be spared only temporarily (see vv. 20-23).

INDICTMENT OF SINFUL JERUSALEM

22 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “As for you, son of man, will you pass judgment? Will you pass judgment against the city of blood? Then explain all her detestable practices to her. † 3 You are to say, ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: A city that sheds blood † within her walls so that her

time of judgment has come and who makes idols for herself so that she is defiled! 4 You are guilty of the blood you have shed, † and you are defiled from the idols you have made. You have brought your judgment † days near and have come to your years of punishment. † Therefore, I have made you a disgrace to the nations and a mockery to all the lands. 5 Those who are near and those far away from you will mock you, you infamous one full of turmoil.

6 " 'Look, every prince of Israel † within you has used his strength to shed blood. 7 Father and mother are treated with contempt, † and the resident alien is exploited within you. The fatherless and widow are oppressed in you. † 8 You despise my holy things and profane my Sabbaths. † 9 There are men within you who slander in order to shed blood. † People who live in you eat at the mountain shrines; † they commit depraved acts within you. 10 Men within you have sexual intercourse with their father's wife and violate women during their menstrual impurity. † 11 One man within you commits a detestable act with his neighbor's wife; † another defiles his daughter-in-law with depravity; and yet another violates his sister, his father's daughter. † 12 People who live in you accept bribes in order to shed blood. † You take interest and profit on a loan and brutally extort your neighbors. † You have forgotten me. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

13 " 'Now look, I clap my hands together against the dishonest profit you have made † and against the blood shed among you. 14 Will your courage endure † or your hands be strong in the days when I deal with you? I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will act. † 15 I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you among the countries; † I will purge your uncleanness. † 16 You † will be profaned in the sight of the nations. Then you will know that I am the LORD.' " †

JERUSALEM AS GOD'S FURNACE

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, the house of Israel has become merely dross to me. † All of them are copper, tin, iron, and lead inside the furnace; † they are just dross from silver. 19 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Because all of you have become dross, I am about to gather you into

Jerusalem. 20 Just as one gathers silver, copper, iron, lead, and tin into the furnace to blow fire † on them and melt them, so I will gather you in my anger and wrath, put you inside, and melt you. 21 Yes, I will gather you together and blow on you with the fire of my fury, and you will be melted within the city. 22 As silver is melted inside a furnace, so you will be melted inside the city. Then you will know that I, the LORD, have poured out my wrath on you." †

INDICTMENT OF A SINFUL LAND

23 The word of the LORD came to me: 24 "Son of man, say to her, 'You are a land that has not been cleansed, † that has not received rain in the day of indignation.' 25 The conspiracy of her prophets † within her is † like a roaring lion tearing its prey: they devour people, seize wealth and valuables, and multiply the widows within her. 26 Her priests do violence to my instruction and profane my holy things. † They make no distinction between the holy and the common, and they do not explain the difference between the clean and the unclean. † They close their eyes to my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

27 "Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey, shedding blood, and destroying lives in order to make profit dishonestly. 28 Her prophets plaster for them with whitewash by seeing false visions and lying divinations, † saying, 'This is what the Lord GOD says,' when the LORD has not spoken. 29 The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. † They have oppressed the poor and needy and unlawfully exploited the resident alien. 30 I searched for a man among them who would repair the wall † and stand in the gap before me on behalf of the land so that I might not destroy it, † but I found no one. 31 So I have poured out my indignation on them and consumed them with the fire of my fury. I have brought their conduct down on their own heads." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

22:4 *judgment* supplied for clarity **22:4** *punishment* supplied for clarity **22:9** Lit *the mountains* **22:16** One Hb ms, LXX, Syr, Vg read *I* **22:24-25** LXX reads *indignation*, 25*whose princes within her are*
22:2 Ezk 16:2; 20:4 **22:3** Ezk 22:6,27; 23:37,45 **22:4** 2Kg 21:16 **22:6** Is 1:23 **22:7** Ex 20:12; Lv 20:9; Dt 27:16 **22:7** Ex 22:22 **22:8** Lv 19:30; Ezk 20:13 **22:9** Lv 19:16 **22:10** Lv 18:7-8,19 **22:11** Ex 20:17; Ezk 18:11 **22:11** Lv 18:9,15; 20:17 **22:12** Ex 23:8 **22:12** Lv 19:13; 25:36; Dt 23:19 **22:12** Ezk 23:35 **22:13** Ezk 21:14,17 **22:14** Ezk 21:7 **22:14** Ezk 17:24 **22:15** Dt 4:27; Ezk 12:15 **22:15** Ezk 23:27,48 **22:16** Ps 83:18; Ezk 6:7 **22:18** Ps 119:119; Is 1:22 **22:18** Pr 17:3 **22:20** Is 1:25 **22:22** Ezk 20:8,33 **22:24** Ezk 24:13 **22:25** Jr

11:9; Hs 6:9 **22:26** 1Sm 2:12-17,22 **22:26** Lv 10:10 **22:28** Ezk 13:10-15 **22:29** Ezk 9:9; 22:7 **22:30** Ezk 13:5 **22:30** Ex 32:11-14; Ps 106:23 **22:31** Ezk 7:3,8-9; 9:10

22:2-12 Jerusalem is again confronted for her **detestable practices** (v. 2). Whereas the focus in Ezekiel 8 was on idolatry (8:6,9,13,15,17), bloodshed receives increased attention in this chapter (vv. 2-4,6,9,12-13; 16:38). Such violence coincided with idolatry and sexual impurity (vv. 3,8-11).

22:14 This rhetorical question reinforces the terrible reality of God's judgment (see 21:7).

22:15 Jerusalem's sins had made her unclean, and exile would precede her cleansing (see the note on 24:13; 36:24-25).

22:18-22 The comparison of **Israel** to dross that is smelted by God in judgment is also found in Isaiah 1:21-26.

22:24 Israel had been warned not to defile the land (Lv 18:24-28; Nm 35:33-34), lest they be punished.

22:26 The **priests** not only did violence to God's **instruction** (lit "the law"; Jr 8:8) but their failure to distinguish between the **holy** and the **common**, and the **clean** and the **unclean** was a failure of their basic covenant responsibilities (see the note on Lv 10:8-11).

22:28 Such whitewashing by false **prophets** is described in more detail in 13:10-16 (see note). These prophets reported false visions in order to excuse sinful behavior and to diminish the prospect of judgment, which might have motivated repentance.

22:30-31 The desperate spiritual state of Israel was likewise compared to a city with broken walls in 13:5. The failure of their leadership (vv. 25-28; 13:2-16) is reflected by the lack of a **man** to intercede. The only other person in the OT said to **stand in the gap before** [God] is Moses, whose intercession turned away God's wrath and destruction from Israel (v. 30; Ps 106:23). The lack of such a priestly figure like Moses parallels the earlier statement of how Noah, Daniel, or Job could not have prevented this national disaster (see the notes on 14:14; Dt 18:15-19; Ps 110:4). The result would be fearsome judgment (v. 31; Is 59:16; 63:5). Other passages speak of God performing priestly acts of atoning for and cleansing his people (16:63; 36:25).

THE TWO IMMORAL SISTERS

23 The word of the LORD came to me again: 2 "Son of man, there were
two women, † daughters of the same mother, 3 who acted like
prostitutes in Egypt, † behaving promiscuously in their youth. Their breasts
were fondled there, and their virgin nipples caressed. 4 The older one was
named Oholah, † and her sister was Oholibah. † They became mine and gave
birth to sons and daughters. As for their names, Oholah represents Samaria and
Oholibah represents Jerusalem.
5 "Oholah acted like a prostitute even though she was mine. She lusted after her
lovers, the Assyrians: † warriors 6 dressed in blue, governors and prefects, all of
them desirable young men, horsemen riding on steeds. 7 She offered her sexual
favors to them; all of them were the elite of Assyria. She defiled herself with all
those she lusted after and with all their idols. 8 She didn't give up her

promiscuity that began in Egypt, † when men slept with her in her youth,
caressed her virgin nipples, and poured out their lust on her. 9 Therefore, I
handed her over to her lovers, † the Assyrians she lusted for. 10 They exposed
her nakedness, seized her sons and daughters, and killed her with the sword.
Since they executed judgment against her, she became notorious among women.
11 “Now her sister Oholibah saw this, but she was even more depraved in her
lust than Oholah, and made her promiscuous acts worse than those of her
sister. † 12 She lusted after the Assyrians: † governors and prefects, warriors
splendidly dressed, horsemen riding on steeds, all of them desirable young men.
13 And I saw that she had defiled herself; both of them had taken the same path.
14 But she increased her promiscuity when she saw male figures carved on the
wall, † images of the Chaldeans, engraved in bright red, † 15 wearing belts on
their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like officers,
a depiction of the Babylonians in Chaldea, their native land. 16 At the sight of
them † she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. †
17 Then the Babylonians came to her, † to the bed of love, and defiled her with
their lust. But after she was defiled by them, she turned away from them in
disgust. 18 When she flaunted her promiscuity and exposed her nakedness, I
turned away from her in disgust just as I turned away from her sister. † 19 Yet
she multiplied her acts of promiscuity, remembering the days of her youth when
she acted like a prostitute in the land of Egypt 20 and lusted after their lovers,
whose sexual members † were like those of donkeys and whose emission was
like that of stallions. 21 So you revisited the depravity of your youth, when the
Egyptians caressed your nipples to enjoy your youthful breasts. †
22 “Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Lord God says: I am going to incite
your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust. I will bring them
against you from every side: 23 the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans; Pekod,
Shoa, and Koa; † and all the Assyrians with them — desirable young men, all of
them governors and prefects, officers and administrators, all of them riding on
steeds. 24 They will come against you with an assembly of peoples and with
weapons, chariots, and † wagons. They will set themselves against you on every
side with large and small shields and helmets. I will delegate judgment to them,

and they will judge you by their own standards. 25 When I vent my jealous rage
on you, † they will deal with you in wrath. They will cut off your nose and ears,
and the rest of you † will fall by the sword. They will seize your sons and
daughters, and the rest of you will be consumed by fire. 26 They will strip off
your clothes and take your beautiful jewelry. † 27 So I will put an end to your
depravity and sexual immorality, which began in the land of Egypt, and you will
not look longingly at them or remember Egypt anymore.
28 "For this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to hand you over to those you
hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. 29 They will treat you with
hatred, take all you have worked for, and leave you stark naked, † so that the
shame of your debauchery will be exposed, both your depravity and promiscuity.
30 These things will be done to you because you acted like a prostitute with the
nations, † defiling yourself with their idols. 31 You have followed the path of
your sister, so I will put her cup in your hand." †
32 This is what the Lord GOD says:

"You will drink your sister's cup, †
which is deep and wide.
You will be an object of † ridicule and scorn, for it holds so much. †
33 You will be filled with drunkenness and grief, with a cup of devastation
and desolation,
the cup of your sister Samaria.
34 You will drink it and drain it; then you will gnaw its broken pieces,
and tear your breasts.
For I have spoken."
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

35 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: "Because you have forgotten me †
and cast me behind your back, † you must bear the consequences of your
indecency and promiscuity."
36 Then the LORD said to me: "Son of man, will you pass judgment against
Oholah and Oholibah? † Then declare their detestable practices to them. †
37 For they have committed adultery, and blood is on their hands; they have

committed adultery with their idols. And the children they bore to me they have sacrificed in the fire † as food for the idols. † 38 They also did this to me: they defiled my sanctuary † on that same day and profaned my Sabbaths. † 39 On the same day they slaughtered their children for their idols, they entered my sanctuary to profane it. † Yes, that is what they did inside my house.
40 "In addition, they sent for men who came from far away when a messenger was dispatched to them. And look how they came! You bathed, painted your eyes, † and adorned yourself with jewelry for them. † 41 You sat on a luxurious couch with a table spread before it, † on which you had set my incense and oil.
42 The sound of a carefree crowd was there. Drunkards † from the desert were brought in, along with common men. They put bracelets on the women's hands and beautiful tiaras on their heads. 43 Then I said concerning this woman worn out by adultery: Will they † now have illicit sex with her, even her? 44 Yet they had sex with her as one does with a prostitute. This is how they had sex with Oholah and Oholibah, those depraved women. 45 But righteous men will judge them the way adulteresses † and those who shed blood are judged, for they are adulteresses and blood is on their hands.
46 "This is what the Lord GOD says: Summon † an assembly against them and consign them to terror and plunder. † 47 The assembly will stone them and cut them down with their swords. † They will kill their sons and daughters and burn their houses. 48 So I will put an end to depravity in the land, and all the women will be admonished not to imitate your depraved behavior. 49 They will punish you for your depravity, † and you will bear the consequences for your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Lord GOD."

23:4 = Her Tent **23:4** = My Tent Is in Her **23:16** Lit *of her eyes* **23:20** Lit *whose flesh* **23:24** LXX reads *peoples, from the north, chariots and* ; Hb obscure **23:25** Or *and your descendants* **23:32** Or *It will bring* **23:37** Lit *have made pass through the fire* **23:42** Or *Sabeans* **23:43** Or *They will* **23:46** Or *I will summon* **23:2** Ezk 16:46 **23:3** Lv 17:7; Jr 3:9 **23:5** 2Kg 15:19; 16:7; 17:3; Ezk 16:28; Hs 5:13; 8:9-10 **23:8** Ex 32:4; 1Kg 12:28; 2Kg 10:29; 17:16 **23:9** Ezk 16:37; 23:22 **23:11** Jr 3:8-11; Ezk 16:51 **23:12** 2Kg 16:7-20 **23:14** Ezk 8:10 **23:14** Ezk 16:29 **23:16** Is 57:9 **23:17** 2Kg 24:17 **23:18** Ps 78:59; 106:40; Jr 12:8 **23:21** Ezk 16:26 **23:23** Jr 50:21 **23:25** Ex 34:14; Ezk 5:13; 8:17-18; Zph 1:18 **23:26** Ezk 16:39 **23:29** Ezk 16:7,22,39 **23:30** Ezk 6:9 **23:31** 2Kg 21:13; Jr 7:14-15 **23:32** Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; Jr 25:15; Lm 4:21; Hab 2:16; Zch 12:2; Mt 20:22; 26:39; Rv 14:10 **23:32** Ezk 22:4-5 **23:35** Is 17:10; Jr 3:21; Ezk 22:12; Hs 8:14; 13:6 **23:35** 1Kg 14:9; Jr 2:27; 32:33 **23:36** Jr 1:10; Ezk 20:4; 22:2 **23:36** Is 58:1; Ezk 16:2; Mc 3:8 **23:37** Ezk 16:20-21; 20:26,31 **23:38** 2Kg 21:4,7 **23:38** Ezk 20:13 **23:39** Jr 7:9-11 **23:40** 2Kg 9:30; Jr 4:30 **23:40** Is 3:18-23; Ezk 16:13-16 **23:41** Is 57:7 **23:45** Ezk 16:38 **23:46** Jr 15:4; 24:9; 29:18 **23:47** Lv 20:10; Ezk 16:40 **23:49** Is

59:18; Ezk 7:4,9; 9:10

23:2-4 Jerusalem had been compared to a promiscuous woman at length in 16:1-45, and her sinful sister **Samaria** was briefly mentioned in 16:46,51. The metaphor of prostitution and illicit sexual behavior **in Egypt** (v. 3) refers to the people's reliance on political alliances with the Egyptians (16:26; 17:15; 29:6-7,16) rather than on God. It also points to their idolatry (vv. 30,37; 20:7-8).

23:11 Jerusalem's greater guilt than Samaria was also mentioned in 16:47,51-52.

23:18 This promiscuity led naturally to God turning away **in disgust.** Sin has repeatedly been described in such repulsive ways in the book of Ezekiel (4:12-15, 5:9-11; 16:25). The exposure of **nakedness** is also a common theme in the book (vv. 10,18,29; 16:8,36-37; 22:10) and is an example of sexual impropriety (Lv 18:6-19).

23:21 Israel's sin is also frequently described in this chapter as **depravity** (vv. 21,27,29,35). This had characterized them (v. 44) and would be punished (vv. 48-49).

23:27 Jerusalem's punishment at the hands of her "lovers" (vv. 22-24) would finally bring to an end Israel's longstanding sinful entanglement with Egypt (see vv. 3,19-21; Ex 13:17; 16:3; 17:3; Nm 11:5; 14:2-4; Ac 7:39).

23:35 Through Israel's idolatry (vv. 30,37) and reliance upon other nations, she had **forgotten** and rejected God.

23:38-39 A specific example of Israel's sin was the sacrificing of **their children,** which they followed with entering the temple on that **same day.**

23:45-49 Israel's sins included adultery, indecency, and idolatry. Their punishment included being plundered, stoned, cut down by the sword, having their houses burned, and disgrace.

PARABLE OF THE BOILING POT

24 The word of the LORD came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month: 2 "Son of man, write down today's date, this very day. The king of Babylon has laid siege to Jerusalem this very day. † 3 Now speak a parable † to the rebellious house. Tell them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Put the pot † on the fire — put it on,
and then pour water into it!
4 Place the pieces of meat in it, every good piece — thigh and shoulder.
Fill it with choice bones.
5 Take the choicest of the flock and also pile up the fuel † under it.
Bring it to a boil
and cook the bones in it.

6 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

Woe to the city of bloodshed, †
the pot that has corrosion inside it,
and its corrosion has not come out of it!
Empty it piece by piece;
lots should not be cast for its contents.
7 For the blood she shed † is still within her.
She put it out on the bare rock;
she didn't pour it on the ground
to cover it with dust. †
8 In order to stir up wrath and take vengeance, †
I have put her blood on the bare rock,
so that it would not be covered.

9 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

Woe to the city of bloodshed! †
I myself will make the pile of kindling large.
10 Pile on the logs and kindle the fire!
Cook the meat well
and mix in the spices! † †
Let the bones be burned!
11 Set the empty pot on its coals so that it becomes hot and its copper glows.
Then its impurity will melt inside it;
its corrosion will be consumed. †
12 It has frustrated every effort; †
its thick corrosion will not come off.
Into the fire with its corrosion!
13 Because of the depravity of your uncleanness — since I tried to purify you,
but you would not be purified from your uncleanness — you will not be pure again
until I have satisfied my wrath on you. †
14 I, the LORD, have spoken.
It is coming, and I will do it! †
I will not refrain, I will not show pity,

and I will not relent.
I † will judge you according to your ways and deeds. †

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

THE DEATH OF EZEKIEL'S WIFE: A SIGN

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 16 "Son of man, I am about to take the delight of your eyes † away from you with a fatal blow. But you must not lament or weep or let your tears flow. † 17 Groan quietly; do not observe mourning rites for the dead. † Put on your turban and strap your sandals on your feet; do not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners." † †
18 I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. The next morning I did just as I was commanded. 19 Then the people asked me, "Won't you tell us what these things you are doing mean for us? "
20 So I answered them: "The word of the LORD came to me: 21 Say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary, the pride of your power, the delight of your eyes, and the desire of your heart. Also, the sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. † 22 Then you will do just as I have done: You will not cover your mustache or eat the bread of mourners. 23 Your turbans will remain on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not lament or weep † but will waste away † because of your iniquities and will groan to one another. 24 Now Ezekiel will be a sign for you. † You will do everything that he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Lord GOD.'
25 "As for you, son of man, know that on that day I will take from them their stronghold — their pride and joy, the delight of their eyes, and the longing of their hearts — as well as their sons and daughters. 26 On that day a fugitive will come to you and report the news. † 27 On that day your mouth will be opened to talk with him; you will speak and no longer be mute. † So you will be a sign for them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

Prophecies Against the Nations

24:5 Lit *bones* **24:7** Lit *For her blood* **24:10** Some Hb mss read *well; remove the broth* ; LXX reads *fire so that the meat may be cooked and the broth may be reduced* **24:10** Or *and stir the broth* **24:12** Hb obscure **24:14** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *They* **24:17** Lit *men*, also in v. 22
24:2 2Kg 25:1 **24:3** Ezk 17:2; 20:49 **24:3** Jr 1:13-14; Ezk 11:3,7,11 **24:6** Ezk 22:2-3,27 **24:7** Lv 17:13-14;

Dt 12:16,24 **24:8** Is 26:21 **24:9** Hab 2:12 **24:11** Ezk 22:15; 23:27 **24:13** Ezk 5:13; 8:18 **24:14** Ezk 17:24 **24:14** Ezk 18:30; 36:19 **24:16** 1Kg 20:6; Pr 5:18; Ec 9:9; Sg 7:10 **24:16** Jr 16:5; 22:10 **24:17** Lv 21:10-12 **24:17** Jr 16:7; Hs 9:4 **24:21** Jr 6:11; 16:3-4; Ezk 23:25,47 **24:23** Jb 27:15; Ps 78:64 **24:23** Lv 26:39 **24:24** Ezk 4:3; Lk 11:29-30 **24:26** Ezk 33:21-22 **24:27** Ezk 3:26-27

24:2-3 The Babylonian siege of Jerusalem signaled that God's messages of judgment through Ezekiel were beginning to be fulfilled. **Rebellious house** recalls 2:5-6; 3:9,26-27 and 12:2-3,9,25.

24:6-8 The problem with this **pot** was that it had impurity in it that would **not come out** (vv. 6,11-12; 22:18-22). This relates to the people's shedding of innocent blood (vv. 6,9; 22:1-13), which could **not be covered** but was exposed on **bare rock** (vv. 7-8). Such violence calls out for divine **vengeance** (see Gn 4:10; Lv 17:13; Nm 35:33; Dt 21:8-9; Is 26:21).

24:9-10 The metaphor of the pot continues. Because the pot (Israel) is impure, God commands that it be set on the fire with nothing in it so that the intense heat will purify it (see vv. 3-5; 11:3-12).

24:13-14 Other attempts at purification have failed and Israel **would not be purified.** Therefore, God will not refrain from judgment in the form of the Babylonian conquest.

24:16-22 When Ezekiel's wife died, he was told not to **lament or weep.** This lack of mourning was a "sign" to the Israelites (v. 24) of the impending destruction of the temple and death of their children. At that time, the people would not mourn; rather, they would "waste away" (vv. 21-25). Wasting away in their sins is likewise mentioned in 4:17 and 33:10 and is an unfortunate fulfillment of Leviticus 26:39.

24:25-27 News of the fall of Jerusalem would bring an end to Ezekiel's silence (see 33:21-22). He had only been allowed to speak when God had given him a message (3:26-27).

JUDGMENT AGAINST AMMON

25 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, face the
Ammonites and prophesy against them. † 3 Say to the Ammonites,
'Hear the word of the Lord GOD: This is what the Lord GOD says: Because you
said, "Aha!" † about my sanctuary when it was desecrated, about the land of
Israel when it was laid waste, and about the house of Judah when they went into
exile, 4 therefore I am about to give you to the people of the east as a possession.
They will set up their encampments and pitch their tents among you. They will
eat your fruit and drink your milk. 5 I will make Rabbah a pasture † for camels
and Ammon a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD.
6 "'For this is what the Lord GOD says: Because you clapped your hands, †
stamped your feet, and rejoiced over the land of Israel with wholehearted
contempt, 7 therefore I am about to stretch out my hand against you † and give
you as plunder to the nations. I will cut you off from the peoples and eliminate
you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD.

JUDGMENT AGAINST MOAB

8 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Because Moab and Seir said, † "Look, the house of Judah is like all the other nations." 9 Therefore I am about to expose Moab's flank beginning with its † frontier cities, the splendor of the land: Beth-jeshimoth, Baal-meon, † and Kiriathaim. 10 I will give it along with Ammon to the people of the east as a possession, so that Ammon will not be remembered among the nations. 11 So I will execute judgments against Moab, and they will know that I am the LORD.

JUDGMENT AGAINST EDOM

12 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Because Edom acted vengefully against the house of Judah † and incurred grievous guilt by taking revenge on them, 13 therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom and cut off both man and animal from it. I will make it a wasteland; they will fall by the sword from Teman to Dedan. 14 I will take my vengeance † on Edom through my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom according to my anger and wrath. So they will know my vengeance. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

JUDGMENT AGAINST PHILISTIA

15 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with deep contempt, † destroying because of their perpetual hatred, 16 therefore this is what the Lord GOD says: I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines, † cutting off the Cherethites and wiping out what remains of the coastal peoples. † † 17 I will execute severe vengeance against them with furious rebukes. They will know that I am the LORD † when I take my vengeance on them.' "

25:9 Lit *with the cities, with its* **25:16** Lit *the seacoast*
25:2 Jr 49:1-6 **25:3** Ezk 21:28; 26:2 **25:5** Jr 49:2; Ezk 21:20 **25:6** Jb 27:23; Nah 3:19 **25:7** Zph 1:4 **25:8** Is 15:1; Jr 48:1; Am 2:1-2 **25:9** Jr 48:23 **25:12** 2Ch 28:17; Ps 137:7; Jr 49:7-22 **25:14** Is 11:14 **25:15** Is 14:29-31 **25:16** Jr 25:20; 47:1-7 **25:16** 1Sm 30:14; Zph 2:5 **25:17** Ps 9:16

25:3 The judgment of Ammon had been foretold earlier (21:28-32). Part of their guilt consisted in gloating over the fall of Jerusalem and Judah (vv. 3,6).

25:4,7 As punishment for their rejoicing over the exile of Judah (vv. 3,6), Ammon would also be given as **a possession** and **plunder** to other nations.

25:5 Like Israel, Ammon would **know that** [God is] **the LORD** when they were judged (see the notes on 6:1-7; Jr 49:6).

25:8-11 Though Israel's idolatrous behavior did resemble other nations' (see the note on 20:32) and their destruction at the hands of the Babylonians only strengthened this resemblance (v. 8), Israel was indeed unique because of its relationship to God. **Moab** itself would also be given as **a possession** to the sons of the east (v. 10), like Ammon (v. 4). As a result, Ammon would be forgotten (see 21:32), and Moab also would **know that** [God is] **the LORD** (v. 11; see the notes on v. 5; Jr 48:45-47).

25:12-14 God would punish Edom's vengeance against Judah (Ob 10-16) by laying waste to their land (v. 13). This is similar to the judgments against Ammon (v. 5) and Moab (v. 9). Israel's involvement in verse 14 relates to prophecies of Numbers 24:17-19 and Obadiah 17-19.

25:15-17 Philistia's **vengeance** would likewise be avenged by God (see the previous note). Divine judgment again will result in knowledge of God (v. 17; see vv. 5,11).

THE DOWNFALL OF TYRE

26 In the eleventh year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD
came to me: 2 "Son of man, because Tyre † said about Jerusalem,
'Aha! † The gateway to the peoples is shattered. She has been turned over to
me. † I will be filled now that she lies in ruins,' 3 therefore this is what the Lord
GOD says: See, I am against you, Tyre! † I will raise up many nations against
you, just as the sea raises its waves. 4 They will destroy the walls of Tyre and
demolish her towers. I will scrape the soil from her and turn her into a bare rock.
5 She will become a place in the sea to spread nets, for I have spoken." This is
the declaration of the Lord GOD. "She will become plunder for the nations, †
6 and her villages on the mainland will be slaughtered by the sword. † Then
they will know that I am the LORD."
7 For this is what the Lord GOD says: "See, I am about to bring King
Nebuchadnezzar † of Babylon, king of kings, † against Tyre from the north
with horses, chariots, cavalry, and a huge assembly of troops. 8 He will
slaughter your villages on the mainland with the sword. He will set up siege
works, † build a ramp, and raise a wall of shields against you. 9 He will direct
the blows of his battering rams against your walls and tear down your towers
with his iron tools. 10 His horses will be so numerous that their dust will cover
you. When he enters your gates as an army entering a breached city, your walls
will shake from the noise of cavalry, wagons, and chariots. 11 He will trample all
your streets with the hooves of his horses. † He will slaughter your people with
the sword, and your mighty pillars will fall to the ground. 12 They will take your
wealth as spoil and plunder your merchandise. † They will also demolish your

walls and tear down your beautiful homes. Then they will throw your stones, timber, and soil into the water. 13 I will put an end to the noise of your songs, †
and the sound of your lyres will no longer be heard. 14 I will turn you into a bare rock, and you will be a place to spread nets. You will never be rebuilt, for I, the LORD, have spoken." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
15 This is what the Lord GOD says to Tyre: "Won't the coasts and islands quake at the sound of your downfall, † when the wounded groan and slaughter occurs within you? 16 All the princes of the sea will descend from their thrones, †
remove their robes, and strip off their embroidered garments. They will clothe themselves with trembling; they will sit on the ground, tremble continually, and be appalled † at you. 17 Then they will lament † for you and say of you,

'How you have perished, city of renown,
you who were populated from the seas! †
She who was powerful on the sea,
she and all of her inhabitants
inflicted their terror. †
18 Now the coastlands tremble †
on the day of your downfall;
the islands in the sea
are alarmed by your demise.' "

19 For this is what the Lord GOD says: "When I make you a ruined city like other deserted cities, when I raise up the deep against you so that the mighty waters cover you, 20 then I will bring you down to be with those who descend to the Pit, † to the people of antiquity. I will make you dwell in the underworld †
like † the ancient ruins, with those who descend to the Pit, so that you will no longer be inhabited or display your splendor † in the land of the living. † 21 I will make you an object of horror, and you will no longer exist. † You will be sought but will never be found again." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
26:2 Or *It has swung open for me* **26:7** Lit *Nebuchadrezzar* **26:17** Some LXX mss read *'How you were destroyed from the seas, city of renown!* **26:17** Lit *and all her inhabitants who put their terror on all her inhabitants* ; Hb obscure **26:20** Lit *the lower parts of the earth* **26:20** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss, Syr read *in* **26:20** LXX reads *or appear*
26:2 2Sm 5:11; Jl 3:4 **26:2** Ezk 25:3 **26:3** Is 23:3; Ezk 26:17; 28:2; Am 1:9; Zch 9:2; Mt 11:22 **26:5** Ezk

25:7; 29:19 **26:6** Ezk 16:46,53; 26:8 **26:7** Jr 52:32; Dn 2:37,47 **26:8** Ezk 21:22 **26:11** Hab 1:8 **26:12** Ezk 27:3-27 **26:13** Is 23:16; 24:8-9; Am 6:5 **26:14** Is 14:27 **26:15** Jr 49:21 **26:16** Jnh 3:6 **26:16** Ezk 27:35 **26:17** Ezk 27:2,32; 28:12 **26:18** Ezk 26:15 **26:20** Jb 33:28; Ps 28:1; 30:3; Is 14:15; Ezk 28:8; 31:14; 32:18-30 **26:20** Jr 33:9; Zch 2:8 **26:21** Ezk 27:36; 28:19

26:1-6 Tyre, the capital city of Phoenicia (modern Lebanon), was known for its international trade: it had a reputation for great riches and status. *Tyre* means "rock," which referred to the main fortress of the city which was on an island one-half mile offshore. The judgment of Tyre is described at greater length (26:1–28:19) than that of the nations in the preceding chapter. Like them, Tyre rejoiced at Jerusalem's fall (v. 2; 25:3,6,8), would themselves be destroyed (vv. 3-5; 25:4-16), and would **know that** [God is] **the LORD** (v. 6; 25:5,7,17).

26:15-18 The destruction of Tyre would be mourned by **islands** and **all princes of the sea**, and it would fail in its rivalry with Jerusalem for power and praise (vv. 2,17; see the note on 27:3-4).

26:19-20 The very **deep** that brought so much wealth and power to Tyre through seaborne trade would be used by God to drown them (v. 19). Similar imagery was used in verse 3 of **many nations** coming against Tyre.

THE SINKING OF TYRE

27 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Now, son of man, lament for Tyre. † 3 Say to Tyre, who is located at the entrance of the sea, merchant of the peoples † to many coasts and islands, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Tyre, you declared,
"I am perfect in beauty."
4 Your realm was in the heart of the sea; your builders perfected your beauty.
5 They constructed all your planking with pine trees from Senir. †
They took a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.
6 They made your oars of oaks from Bashan.
They made your deck of cypress wood
from the coasts of Cyprus, †
inlaid with ivory.
7 Your sail was made of fine embroidered linen from Egypt,
and served as your banner.
Your awning was of blue and purple fabric
from the coasts of Elishah.
8 The inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad †
were your rowers.

Your wise men were within you, Tyre;
they were your captains.
9 The elders of Gebal and its wise men †
were within you, repairing your leaks.

" 'All the ships of the sea and their sailors came to you to barter for your goods.
10 Men of Persia, Lud, and Put †
were in your army, serving as your warriors.
They hung shields and helmets in you;
they gave you splendor.
11 Men of Arvad and Helech were stationed on your walls all around,
and Gammadites were in your towers.
They hung their shields † all around your walls; they perfected your beauty.

12 " 'Tarshish † was your trading partner because of your abundant wealth of every kind. They exchanged silver, iron, tin, and lead for your merchandise. 13 Javan, Tubal, and Meshech † were your merchants. They exchanged slaves † and bronze utensils for your goods. 14 Those from Beth-togarmah † exchanged horses, war horses, and mules for your merchandise. 15 Men of Dedan † † were also your merchants; many coasts and islands were your regular markets. They brought back ivory tusks † and ebony as your payment. 16 Aram † was your trading partner because of your numerous products. They exchanged turquoise, † purple and embroidered cloth, fine linen, coral, † and rubies † for your merchandise. 17 Judah and the land of Israel were your merchants. They exchanged wheat from Minnith, † meal, † honey, oil, and balm, for your goods. 18 Damascus was also your trading partner because of your numerous products and your abundant wealth of every kind, trading in wine from Helbon and white wool. † 19 Vedan † and Javan from Uzal † † dealt in your merchandise; wrought iron, cassia, † and aromatic cane were exchanged for your goods. 20 Dedan † was your merchant in saddlecloths for riding. 21 Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your business partners, trading with you in lambs, rams, and goats. 22 The merchants of Sheba † and Raamah traded

with you. For your merchandise they exchanged the best of all spices and all kinds of precious stones as well as gold. † 23 Haran, Canneh, Eden, † the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, † and Chilmad traded with you. 24 They were your merchants in choice garments, cloaks of blue and embroidered materials, and multicolored carpets, † which were bound and secured with cords in your marketplace. 25 Ships of Tarshish † were the carriers for your goods.

" 'So you became full and heavily loaded †
in the heart of the sea.
26 Your rowers have brought you onto the high seas, †
but the east wind has wrecked you
in the heart of the sea.
27 Your wealth, merchandise, and goods, your sailors and captains,
those who repair your leaks,
those who barter for your goods,
and all the warriors on board,
with all the other people within you,
sink into the heart of the sea
on the day of your downfall.

28 " 'The countryside shakes at the sound of your sailors' cries. †
29 All the oarsmen disembark from their ships.
The sailors and all the captains of the sea
stand on the shore.
30 Because of you, they raise their voices and cry out bitterly.
They throw dust on their heads; †
they roll in ashes.
31 They shave their heads because of you and wrap themselves in sackcloth.
They weep over you
with deep anguish and bitter mourning.

32 " 'In their wailing they lament for you, †
mourning over you:
"Who was like Tyre,

silenced † in the middle of the sea?
33 When your merchandise was unloaded from the seas, you satisfied many peoples.
You enriched the kings of the earth
with your abundant wealth and goods.
34 Now you are wrecked by the sea in the depths of the waters;
your goods and the people within you
have gone down.
35 All the inhabitants of the coasts and islands are appalled † at you.
Their kings shudder with fear;
their faces are contorted.
36 Those who trade among the peoples scoff † † at you; you have become an object of horror
and will never exist again.” ’ ” †

27:11 Or *quivers* ; Hb obscure **27:13** Lit *souls of men* **27:15** LXX reads *Rhodes* **27:16** Some Hb mss, Aq, Syr read *Edom* **27:16** Hb obscure **27:16** Hb obscure **27:16** Hb obscure **27:17** Or *resin* ; Hb obscure **27:18** Or *and wool from Zahar* **27:19** Or *Dan* **27:19** Hb obscure **27:24** Hb obscure **27:25** Or *and very glorious* **27:32** Hb obscure **27:36** Lit *hiss*
27:2 Ezk 28:12; 32:2 **27:3** Is 23:2 **27:5** Dt 3:9 **27:6-7** Gn 10:4; 1Ch 1:7 **27:8** Gn 10:18 **27:9** 1Kg 5:18 **27:10** Ezk 30:5; 38:5 **27:12** Gn 10:4; Ezk 38:13 **27:13** Gn 10:2; Ezk 38:2; 39:1 **27:14** Gn 10:3; Ezk 38:6 **27:15** Ezk 38:13 **27:15** 1Kg 10:22 **27:17** Jdg 11:33 **27:19** Gn 10:27 **27:19** Ex 30:24 **27:20** Ezk 38:13 **27:22** Gn 10:7; Ezk 38:13 **27:22** 1Kg 10:1-2; Rv 18:12 **27:23** 2Kg 19:12; Is 37:12 **27:23** Gn 25:3 **27:25** 1Kg 10:22; 22:48; Is 2:16 **27:26** Ezk 26:19 **27:28** Ezk 26:10,15 **27:30** Rv 18:17-19 **27:32** Ezk 26:17 **27:35** Ezk 26:15-16 **27:36** 1Kg 9:8; Jr 19:8; Zph 2:15 **27:36** Ezk 26:21; 28:19

27:3-4 Tyre’s strategic location and role as **merchant of the peoples** resulted in its influence reaching many **islands** (v. 3; the note on 26:15-18). The sons of Japheth populated these distant places (Gn 10:5), and even they will ultimately place their hope in the Messiah (Is 42:4; 51:5). In the meantime, Tyre’s power, pride, and beauty had put it in competition with the LORD and his city (see 16:14; Pss 45:11; 50:2; Is 33:17; Lm 2:15).

27:5-11 The **beauty** and majesty of **Tyre** is compared to a finely constructed ship (vv. 5-7) with a crew consisting of the **wise** and the strong from many nations (vv. 8-9). Its army also included warriors from other nations (vv. 10-11). The scope of Tyre’s power is shown through its attraction of **all the ships of the sea and their sailors** (v. 9).

27:12 Tyre’s close relationship to **Tarshish** and its “ships” (see v. 25) is also seen in Isaiah 23:1,14.

27:13-24 The extended listing of Tyre’s business partners and the varied goods exchanged serves to further emphasize the city’s reach through trade. “Chaldea,” or Babylon, was also a land of trade (16:29; 17:4; Rv 18:10-19).

27:25-27 The comparison of Tyre to a mighty ship is picked up again (cp. vv. 5-11), but this vessel is shipwrecked by the **east wind** (17:10; 19:12; Ps 48:7) so that its cargo and crew are lost.

27:32 This rhetorical question heightens the catastrophic destruction of Tyre.

27:33-36 Tyre's merchandise had **satisfied many peoples** and **enriched the kings of the earth** (v. 33). Her destruction horrified the **islands** and their **kings** (v. 35). She would be humiliated and never restored (v. 36; 26:21; 28:19). So it is with all who seem powerful and established, and yet fail to properly acknowledge the lordship and authority of God.

THE FALL OF TYRE'S RULER

28 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Your † heart is proud, and you have said, "I am a god; † I sit in the seat of gods in the heart of the sea." Yet you are a man and not a god, though you have regarded your heart as that of a god. 3 Yes, you are wiser than Daniel; † no secret is hidden from you! 4 By your wisdom and understanding you have acquired wealth for yourself. You have acquired gold and silver for your treasuries. † 5 By your great skill in trading you have increased your wealth, but your heart has become proud because of your wealth.

6 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says:

Because you regard your heart as that of a god, 7 I am about to bring strangers
against you, ruthless men from the nations.
They will draw their swords
against your magnificent wisdom
and will pierce your splendor. †
8 They will bring you down to the Pit, †
and you will die a violent death
in the heart of the sea.
9 Will you still say, "I am a god,"
in the presence of those who slay † you?
Yet you will be only a man, not a god,
in the hands of those who kill you.
10 You will die the death of the uncircumcised †
at the hands of strangers. †
For I have spoken.

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

A LAMENT FOR TYRE'S KING

A LAMENT FOR TYRE'S KING

11 The word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Son of man, lament † for the king of Tyre and say to him, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

You were the seal † of perfection, †
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. †
13 You were in Eden, † the garden of God.
Every kind of precious stone covered you:
carnelian, topaz, and diamond, †
beryl, onyx, and jasper,
lapis lazuli, turquoise † and emerald. †
Your mountings and settings were crafted in gold; †
they were prepared on the day you were created.
14 You were an anointed guardian cherub, †
for † I had appointed you.
You were on the holy mountain of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
15 From the day you were created you were blameless in your ways
until wickedness was found in you.
16 Through the abundance of your trade, you were filled with violence, and you sinned.
So I expelled you in disgrace
from the mountain of God,
and banished you, guardian cherub, †
from among the fiery stones.
17 Your heart became proud because of your beauty; †
For the sake of your splendor
you corrupted your wisdom.
So I threw you down to the ground; †
I made you a spectacle before kings.
18 You profaned your sanctuaries by the magnitude of your iniquities
in your dishonest trade.
So I made fire come from within you,

and it consumed you. †
I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of everyone watching you.
19 All those who know you among the peoples are appalled at you.
You have become an object of horror
and will never exist again.' " †

A PROPHECY AGAINST SIDON

20 The word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, face Sidon † and prophesy against it. 22 You are to say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look! I am against you, Sidon, †
and I will display my glory within you.
They will know that I am the LORD when I execute judgments against her †
and demonstrate my holiness through her.
23 I will send a plague against her †
and bloodshed in her streets;
the slain will fall within her,
while the sword is against her † on every side.
Then they will know that I am the LORD.

24 " 'The house of Israel will no longer be hurt by † prickly briers or painful thorns † from all their neighbors who treat them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.
25 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: When I gather the house of Israel † from the peoples where they are scattered, I will demonstrate my holiness through them in the sight of the nations, and they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 They will live there securely, † build houses, and plant vineyards. † They will live securely when I execute judgments † against all their neighbors who treat them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.' "

28:2 Lit *Because your* **28:9** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *of the one who kills* **28:12** Or *sealer* **28:12** Hb obscure **28:13** Hb obscure **28:13** Or *malachite*, or *garnet* **28:13** Or *beryl* **28:14** Or *With an anointed guardian cherub* **28:16** Or *and the guardian cherub banished you* **28:17** Or *earth* **28:23** Or *within her by the sword* **28:24** Lit *longer have*

28:2 Is 14:14; Ac 12:22-23; 2Th 2:4 **28:3** Dn 1:20; 2:20-23,28; 5:11-12 **28:4** Ezk 27:33; Zch 9:2-3 **28:7** Ezk 30:11; 31:12; 32:12 **28:8** Ezk 26:20 **28:10** Ezk 31:18; 32:30 **28:10** Ezk 30:12 **28:12** Ezk 27:2 **28:12** Ezk 27:3 **28:13** Gn 2:8; Ezk 31:9,16,18; 36:35 **28:13** Ex 39:10-13 **28:14** Ex 25:18-22 **28:17** Ezk 28:2 **28:18** Ezk 19:14 **28:19** Ezk 26:21; 27:36 **28:21** Gn 10:19; Is 23:2; Jl 3:4 **28:22** Ezk 26:3; Zch 9:2; Mt 11:22 **28:22** Ezk 30:19 **28:23** Ezk 38:22 **28:24** Nm 33:55 **28:25** Ps 106:47; Ezk 20:41; 34:13 **28:26** Jr 23:6; Ezk 34:25,28; 38:8 **28:26** Jr 32:15; Ezk 11:3 **28:26** Ezk 25:11

28:1-5 The lengthy treatment of Tyre's judgment now focuses on its **ruler** (v. 2). He was guilty of pride, even to the point of thinking himself to be a **god** (see Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:29; Is 31:3). His **wisdom** in amassing **wealth** also contributed to this arrogance.

28:6-10 The ruler of Tyre's arrogance in thinking that he was a **god** would be shown to be built on a lie when he was killed in disgrace (vv. 9-10; 32:19-32; 44:6-9). His **wisdom** and **splendor** would go down with him (vv. 7-8).

28:12-19 The "ruler" mentioned in verse 2 is now referred to as a **king**, who did indeed possess wisdom and beauty (see vv. 4-5,7; 27:3,4,11). He is described as dwelling in the garden of Eden and clothed in many of the same precious stones that adorned the high priest's breastplate (v. 13; Ex 28:17-20; 39:10-13). Despite his status as a **guardian cherub** (vv. 14,16), he was still a created being (v. 15; see previous note) and was expelled from the **mountain of God** because of his **wickedness.** His sins related to **violence**, pride related to his **beauty**, corruption of his **wisdom**, and **dishonest trade** (vv. 16-18). Such wickedness contrasts him with cherubim who do the Lord's will and display his glory (1:5-11; 10:19-22; 11:22). For a third time, Tyre's destruction is declared permanent (v. 19; 26:21; 27:36). The downfall of the king of Tyre (see v. 17) resembles that of the king of Babylon in Isaiah 14:12-15. See "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

28:22-23 The coastal city of **Sidon** was located twenty-five miles north of Tyre. The judgment against Sidon would manifest both God's glory and holiness. Judgment of other nations also would result in knowledge of God and a proper perspective concerning him (see 6:7; 25:5,7,17; 26:6).

28:24-26 The judgment of Sidon coincides with Israel's no longer being treated with **contempt** by **their neighbors** (vv. 24,26; 16:57). The likening of this reproach to **thorns** echoes Genesis 3:18. Such reproach resulted from Israel's judgment and exile (36:5) and has been a common theme in recent chapters (25:3,6,8,15; 26:2). Through this, God too was dishonored because of his identification with them (36:20-22), but he would regather them and thus demonstrate his **holiness . . . in the sight of the nations** (v. 25; see v. 22; 36:15,23).

A PROPHECY OF EGYPT'S RUIN

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth month on the twelfth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, face Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all of Egypt. † 3 Speak to him and say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great monster † †
lying in the middle of his Nile, who says, "My Nile is my own;
I made it for myself."
4 I will put hooks in your jaws †
and make the fish of your streams

cling to your scales.
I will haul you up
from the middle of your Nile,
and all the fish of your streams
will cling to your scales.
5 I will leave you in the desert, †
you and all the fish of your streams.
You will fall on the open ground
and will not be taken away
or gathered for burial. †
I have given you
to the wild creatures of the earth
and the birds of the sky as food. †

6 " 'Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will know that I am the LORD, for they †
have been a staff made of reed to the house of Israel.
7 When Israel grasped you by the hand, you splintered, † tearing all
their shoulders; when they leaned on you,
you shattered and made all their hips unsteady. †

8 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to bring a sword †
against you and cut off both man and animal from you. 9 The land of Egypt will
be a desolate ruin. † Then they will know that I am the LORD. Because you †
said, "The Nile is my own; I made it," 10 therefore, I am against you and your
Nile. I will turn the land of Egypt into ruins, a desolate waste from Migdol to
Syene, as far as the border of Cush. 11 No human foot will pass through it, and
no animal foot will pass through it. † It will be uninhabited for forty years. 12 I
will make the land of Egypt a desolation among † desolate lands, and its cities
will be a desolation among † ruined cities † for forty years. I will disperse the
Egyptians among the nations and scatter them throughout the lands. †
13 " 'For this is what the Lord GOD says: At the end of forty years I will gather
the Egyptians from the peoples where they were dispersed. † 14 I will restore
the fortunes of Egypt and bring them back to the land of Pathros, the land of

their origin. There they will be a lowly kingdom. 15 Egypt will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself over the nations. I will make them so small they cannot rule over the nations. 16 It will never again be an object of trust † for the house of Israel, drawing attention to their iniquity of turning to the Egyptians. Then they will know that I am the Lord GOD.' "

BABYLON RECEIVES EGYPT AS COMPENSATION

17 In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon made his army labor strenuously against Tyre. † Every head was made bald and every shoulder chafed, but he and his army received no compensation from Tyre for the labor he expended against it. 19 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I am going to give the land of Egypt to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, † and he will carry off its wealth, seizing its spoil and taking its plunder. This will be his army's compensation. 20 I have given him the land of Egypt as the pay he labored for, since they worked for me." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 21 "In that day I will cause a horn to sprout † for the house of Israel, and I will enable you to speak out † among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

29:3 Or *crocodile* **29:6** LXX, Syr, Vg read *you* **29:7** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *and you caused their hips to stand* **29:9** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *he* **29:12** Or *Egypt the most desolate of* **29:12** Or *be the most desolate of*

29:2 Is 19:1-17; Jr 46:2-26; Ezk 30–32 **29:3** Ps 74:13; Is 27:1; Ezk 32:2 **29:4** Jb 41:2; Ezk 38:4 **29:5** Ezk 32:4-6 **29:5** Jr 8:2; 25:33 **29:5** Ezk 39:4 **29:7** 2Kg 18:21; Is 36:6 **29:8** Ezk 14:17 **29:9** Ezk 30:7-8 **29:11** Ezk 32:13 **29:12** Ezk 30:7 **29:12** Ezk 12:15; 30:15,23,26 **29:13** Is 19:22-23 **29:16** Is 20:5; 30:1-3; Ezk 17:15 **29:18** Ezk 26:7-12 **29:19** Ezk 30:10,24-25; 32:11 **29:21** 1Sm 2:10; Ps 92:10; 132:17 **29:21** Ezk 3:27; 24:27; 33:22

29:1-2 Like that of Tyre (Ezk 26–28), Egypt's judgment is also described extensively (Ezk 29–33). Egypt's perennial enmity with Israel started in the days of Abraham (Gn 12:10-20), peaked during the centuries of Israelite enslavement (Ex 1:8-14), and continued after the exodus. Several passages in Ezekiel refer to **Egypt** as an ongoing source of trouble (see the notes on 20:7-8; 23:2-4,27; 29:16).

29:3 Like the king of Tyre who thought he was a god (28:2), the **king of Egypt** was arrogant in thinking that he had made **the Nile** and that it belonged to him. Another similarity between the two is their dwelling in bodies of water (see Ps 104:26), with the former sitting "in the heart of the sea" (28:2) and the latter **lying in the middle of** [the] **Nile** (32:2). Lofty language is used to describe both rulers. The king of Tyre is likened to a beautiful cherub in the garden of Eden (28:12-14), and the pharaoh of Egypt is called a **great monster** (see Gn 1:21; Is 27:1; Jr 51:34). The majesty of the latter also includes references to Eden (see the note on 31:8-9).

29:4-5 A secure dwelling in the Nile (see v. 3) would not protect the king of Egypt from gruesome death,

just as dwelling in the heart of the seas would not save the king of Tyre (28:2,8).

29:6-9 As was the case for other nations, the judgment of God would result in knowledge of him (vv. 6,9; see 25:5,7,11,17; 26:6). Israel's habitual reliance on Egypt had been futile and harmful (vv. 6-7,16; 16:26; 17:15).

29:12-15 Egypt's desolation, exile, regathering, and restoration parallels that of Israel (see 11:16-17; 12:15,20; 16:53). Other prophetic passages reinforce this striking resemblance between the Lord's dealings with Israel and with the nations (see the notes on 30:17-19; Jr 46:25-26; 48:45-47; 49:6,38-39). Egypt's future lowliness (v. 15) guarantees that it will pale in comparison to the glorious messianic kingdom (37:24-28).

29:16 The humiliation of Egypt would put an end to Israel's misplaced **trust** in them (see vv. 6-7; 17:15), reminding them of this sin (see 21:23-24; Heb 10:3).

29:18-20 Nebuchadnezzar had lain siege to Tyre for thirteen years (cp. 26:1-6 and note) but had been unable to utterly defeat it. He had captured the city, but the island fortress remained. Thus, God states here that he will **give** Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar as recompense for his attack on Tyre. This passage underscores God's total, sovereign authority over the affairs of the world.

29:21 In contrast to his judgment of Tyre and Egypt, God promises that he **will cause a horn to sprout** in Israel. The identical Hebrew phrase appears in Psalm 132:17 concerning the Messiah. The opening of Ezekiel's mouth was also mentioned in 24:25-27 (see note), although under different circumstances. The common thread is the fulfillment of God's word and the acknowledgement of him.

EGYPT'S DOOM

30 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy and say,
'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Wail, † "Woe because of that day! "
3 For a day is near; a day belonging to the LORD is near. †
It will be a day of clouds, †
a time of doom † for the nations.
4 A sword will come against Egypt, and there will be anguish in Cush
when the slain fall in Egypt,
and its wealth is taken away,
and its foundations are demolished.
5 Cush, Put, and Lud, †
and all the various foreign troops, †
plus Libya † and the men of the covenant land will fall by the sword
along with them.
6 This is what the LORD says: Those who support Egypt will fall,
and its proud strength will collapse.

From Migdol to Syene
they will fall within it by the sword.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
7 They will be desolate among † desolate lands, and their cities will lie
among ruined † cities. †
8 They will know that I am the LORD when I set fire to Egypt †
and all its allies are shattered.

9 On that day, messengers will go out from me in ships † to terrify confident Cush. Anguish will come over them on the day of Egypt's doom. † For indeed it is coming.
10 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will put an end to the hordes † of Egypt by the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
11 He along with his people, ruthless men from the nations,
will be brought in to destroy the land.
They will draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain. †
12 I will make the streams dry and sell the land to evil men. †
I will bring desolation
on the land and everything in it
by the hands of foreigners.
I, the LORD, have spoken.

13 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will destroy the idols and put an end
to the false gods in Memphis. †
There will no longer be
a prince from the land of Egypt.
And I will instill fear in that land.
14 I will make Pathros † desolate, set fire to Zoan,
and execute judgments on Thebes.
15 I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium, the stronghold of Egypt,

and will wipe out the hordes of Thebes.
16 I will set fire to Egypt; Pelusium will writhe in anguish,
Thebes will be breached,
and Memphis will face foes in broad daylight. †
17 The young men of On † and Pi-beseth will fall by the sword,
and those cities † will go into captivity.
18 The day will be dark † in Tehaphnehes, when I break the yoke of Egypt there
and its proud strength
comes to an end in the city.
A cloud † will cover Tehaphnehes, †
and its surrounding villages will go into captivity.
19 So I will execute judgments against Egypt, and they will know that I am the
LORD.' "

PHARAOH'S POWER BROKEN

20 In the eleventh year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, I have broken the arm † of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Look, it has not been bandaged — no medicine has been applied and no splint put on to bandage it so that it can grow strong enough to handle a sword. 22 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Look! I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break his arms, both the strong one and the one already broken, and will make the sword fall from his hand. 23 I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them among the countries. † 24 I will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king and place my sword † in his hand. But I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him as a mortally wounded man. 25 I will strengthen the arms of Babylon's king, but Pharaoh's arms will fall. They will know that I am the LORD when I place my sword in the hand of Babylon's king and he wields it against the land of Egypt. 26 When I disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them among the countries, they will know that I am the LORD."

30:3 *of doom* supplied for clarity **30:5** Or *all Arabia* **30:5** Lit *Cub* ; Hb obscure **30:7** Or *be the most desolate of* **30:7** Or *will be the most ruined of* **30:9** Lit *of Egypt* **30:10** Or *pomp*, or *wealth*, also in v. 15 **30:16** Or *foes daily* **30:17** LXX, Vg; MT reads *iniquity* **30:17** Or *and the women* ; lit *and they* **30:18** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg; other Hb mss read *will withhold* **30:18** Or *Egypt*

30:2 Is 13:6; Ezk 21:12; Jl 1:11,13 **30:3** Jl 2:1; Ob 15 **30:3** Ezk 32:7; 34:12 **30:5** Jr 46:9 **30:7** Ezk 29:12

30:8 Ezk 22:31 **30:9** Is 18:1-2 **30:11** Ezk 28:7; 31:12 **30:12** Is 19:4 **30:13** Jr 43:12-13 **30:14** Jr 44:1,15; Ezk 29:14 **30:18** Ezk 34:12 **30:21** Ps 10:15; 37:17 **30:23** Ezk 29:12 **30:24** Zph 2:12

30:2-3 The description of this frightening **day** of judgment resembles Joel 2:1-2. It is not merely for Egypt but **for the nations** (Ob 15).

30:5-8 Not only will Egypt **fall by the sword** but so will all who support and help it (vv. 6,8). Unfaithful Israelites are likely the referent of the phrase, "the sons of the land of the covenant" (lit v. 5).

30:9 The use of **ships** as part of God's plan of judgment also appears in Numbers 24:23-24.

30:10-11 The Egyptian army is further depicted as consisting of **hordes** (v. 10; 31:2,18). Egypt's affliction at the hands of **ruthless men** (v. 11) is mentioned again in 31:12 and 32:12. Tyre would suffer the same fate (28:7).

30:12-13 The rivers that Egypt boasted about and relied upon would be dried up (see 29:3-10); likewise, their **idols** would be destroyed.

30:17-19 Death **by the sword**, **captivity**, and humiliation were also punishments endured by Israel (7:24; 11:8-10; 12:11; 24:21; the note on 29:12-15).

30:23-26 The exile of Egypt is here declared twice more (see vv. 17-18) and **Babylon's** role reaffirmed (see vv. 10-11; 29:19-20).

DOWNFALL OF EGYPT AND ASSYRIA

31 In the eleventh year, † in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his hordes,

'Who are you like in your greatness?

3 Think of Assyria, a cedar in Lebanon, †
with beautiful branches and shady foliage
and of lofty height.

Its top was among the clouds. †

4 The waters caused it to grow; the underground springs made it tall,
directing their rivers all around
the place where the tree was planted
and sending their channels
to all the trees of the field.

5 Therefore the cedar became greater in height than all the trees of the field. †
Its branches multiplied,
and its boughs grew long
as it spread them out

because of the abundant water. †

6 All the birds of the sky nested in its branches, †
and all the animals of the field
gave birth beneath its boughs;
all the great nations lived in its shade.
7 It was beautiful in its size, in the length of its limbs,
for its roots extended to abundant water.
8 The cedars in God's garden could not eclipse it; †
the pine trees couldn't compare with its branches, nor could the plane trees match its boughs.
No tree in the garden of God
could compare with it in beauty.
9 I made it beautiful with its many limbs, and all the trees of Eden,
which were in God's garden, envied it.

10 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: Since it † towered high in stature and set its top among the clouds, and it † grew proud † on account of its height, 11 I determined to hand it over to a ruler of nations; † he would surely deal with it. I banished it because of its wickedness. 12 Foreigners, ruthless men from the nations, † cut it down and left it lying. Its limbs fell on the mountains and in every valley; its boughs lay broken in all the earth's ravines. All the peoples of the earth left its shade and abandoned it. 13 All the birds of the sky nested on its fallen trunk, and all the animals of the field were among its boughs. 14 This happened so that no trees planted beside water would become great in height and set their tops among the clouds, and so that no other well-watered trees would reach them in height. For they have all been consigned to death, to the underworld, among the people † who descend to the Pit. †
15 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I caused grieving on the day the cedar went down to Sheol. † I closed off the underground deep because of it: † I held back the rivers of the deep, and its abundant water was restrained. I made Lebanon mourn on account of it, and all the trees of the field fainted because of it. 16 I made the nations quake at the sound of its downfall, when I threw it down to Sheol to be with those who descend to the Pit. Then all the trees of Eden, † the choice and best of Lebanon, all the well-watered trees, were comforted † in

the underworld. 17 They too descended with it to Sheol, to those slain by the sword. As its allies † † they had lived in its shade among the nations.
18 " 'Who then are you like in glory and greatness among Eden's trees? You also will be brought down to the underworld to be with the trees of Eden. You will lie among the uncircumcised with those slain by the sword. † This is Pharaoh and all his hordes. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

31:3 Or *thick foliage*, also in vv. 10,14 **31:10** Syr, Vg; MT, LXX read *you* **31:10** Lit *its heart* **31:14** Or *the descendants of Adam* **31:15** Or *I covered it with the underground deep* **31:17** LXX, Syr read *offspring* **31:17** Lit *arm*

31:1 Ezk 30:20 **31:3** Is 10:33-34; Ezk 17:3-4,22; 31:16 **31:5** Dn 4:11 **31:5** Ezk 17:5 **31:6** Ezk 17:23; Dn 4:12,21; Mt 13:32 **31:8** Gn 2:8; Is 51:3; Ezk 28:13 **31:10** Ezk 28:17; Dn 5:20 **31:11** Ezk 30:10-11; Dn 5:18-19 **31:12** Ezk 28:7; 32:12 **31:14** Ezk 26:20 **31:15** Ezk 32:22-23 **31:16** Ezk 26:15; 27:28; Hg 2:7 **31:16** Ezk 32:31 **31:18** Ezk 28:10; 32:19,21

31:2-7 Pharaoh and his army are now compared to **Assyria**, which is pictured as a beautiful, lofty, well-watered tree, whose **roots extended to abundant water** (v. 7). As the tallest tree (v. 5), it provided shelter for **all the birds of the sky**, **all the animals of the field**, and **all the great nations** (v. 6). Nevertheless, the only **cedar** (v. 3) whose majesty will endure is the one planted by God on a high mountain in Israel (17:22-24; 37:24-25).

31:8-9 The splendor of this tree (i.e. Assyria) was so great that even the trees in **God's garden** could not compare to it. This garden was also used to describe the beauty and greatness of the king of Tyre (28:12-17). For additional similarities between the judgments of Egypt and Tyre, see the note on 29:3.

31:10-13 Like Tyre and its king (28:1-7), Pharaoh became **proud** and would be destroyed by **ruthless men**, so that **all the peoples** who had taken shelter under his shade would abandon him (v. 12; see v. 6).

31:14 The purpose of this downfall is so that no well-watered tree (see 20:47) would become so tall as to reach "the clouds" (see vv. 3-7; 17:24; 19:11). Such trees represent the proud, who will go to their deaths just like all other people.

31:15-17 The prophet continues to use **the cedar** as a metaphor for both Assyria and Egyptian political power. The ultimate humiliation of proud Pharaoh (vv. 2,10) would be death (see the note on 28:6-10). Nations will **quake** at his joining the ranks of the dead (v. 16).

31:18 The point of chapter 31 is that if God had destroyed Assyria, a great political and military superpower, it would be foolish for Egypt to think it could escape God's judgment. It had been incomparable in glory and greatness (see vv. 2,8) but would be no different than the **uncircumcised** (see 28:10; 32:19-32), who are excluded from the sanctuary of God (see the note on 44:6-10). God hates pride and will not allow it to go unaddressed. Though a nation or king may appear to be powerful, it is no more safe from accountability to God than the weak. For more on references to the garden of **Eden**, see the note on verses 8-9.

A LAMENT FOR PHARAOH

32 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, lament † for Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him,

‘You compare yourself to a lion of the nations, but † you are like a monster † †
in the seas.
You thrash about in your rivers,
churn up the waters with your feet,
and muddy the † rivers.

3 “ ‘This is what the Lord GOD says:

I will spread my net over you †
with an assembly of many peoples,
and they † will haul you up in my net.
4 I will abandon you on the land and throw you onto the open field.
I will cause all the birds of the sky
to settle on you
and let the wild creatures of the entire earth eat their fill of you. †
5 I will put your flesh on the mountains †
and fill the valleys with your carcass.
6 I will drench the land with the flow of your blood,
even to the mountains;
the ravines will be filled with your gore.

7 “ ‘When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens
and darken their stars.
I will cover the sun with a cloud, †
and the moon will not give its light.
8 I will darken all the shining lights in the heavens over you,
and will bring darkness on your land.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

9 “ ‘I will trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring about
your destruction
among the nations,
in countries you have not known.
10 I will cause many peoples to be appalled at you, and their kings will shudder
with fear because of you †

when I brandish my sword in front of them.
On the day of your downfall
each of them will tremble
every moment † for his life.

11 " 'For this is what the Lord GOD says:

The sword of Babylon's king
will come against you!
12 I will make your hordes fall by the swords of warriors,
all of them ruthless men from the nations. †
They will ravage Egypt's pride,
and all its hordes will be destroyed.
13 I will slaughter all its cattle that are beside many waters.
No human foot will churn them again,
and no cattle hooves will disturb them. †
14 Then I will let their waters settle and will make their rivers flow like oil.
This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
15 When I make the land of Egypt a desolation, so that it is emptied of everything in it,
when I strike down all who live there,
then they will know that I am the LORD. †

16 " 'The daughters of the nations will chant that lament. † They will chant it over Egypt and all its hordes. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

EGYPT IN SHEOL

17 In the twelfth year, † on the fifteenth day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, wail over the hordes of Egypt and bring Egypt and the daughters of mighty nations down to the underworld, † to be with those who descend to the Pit: †

19 Who do you surpass in loveliness?
Go down and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised!
20 They will fall among those slain by the sword.

A sword is appointed! †
They drag her and all her hordes away.
21 Warrior leaders will speak from the middle of Sheol
about him † and his allies: ‘They have come down;
the uncircumcised lie
slain by the sword.’ †

22 “Assyria is there with her whole assembly; her graves are all around her.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword.
23 Her graves are set in the deepest regions of the Pit, and her assembly is all around her burial place.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword — those who once spread terror
in the land of the living.

24 “Elam † is there with all her hordes around her grave.
All of them are slain, fallen by the sword — those who went down to the underworld uncircumcised, who once spread their terror
in the land of the living.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.
25 Among the slain they prepare a bed for Elam
with all her hordes.
Her graves are all around her.
All of them are uncircumcised,
slain by the sword,
although their terror was once spread
in the land of the living.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.
They are placed among the slain.

26 “Meshech and Tubal † † are there, with all their hordes.
Their graves are all around them.
All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword, although their terror was once spread
in the land of the living.

27 They do not lie down with the fallen warriors of the uncircumcised, †
who went down to Sheol
with their weapons of war,
whose swords were placed under their heads †
and their shields †
rested on their bones,
although the terror of these warriors
was once in the land of the living.
28 But you will be shattered and will lie down among the uncircumcised,
with those slain by the sword. †

29 "Edom † is there, her kings and all her princes, who, despite their strength, have been placed among those slain by the sword.
They lie down with the uncircumcised,
with those who descend to the Pit.
30 All the leaders of the north †
and all the Sidonians † are there.
They went down in shame with the slain,
despite the terror their strength inspired.
They lie down uncircumcised
with those slain by the sword.
They bear their disgrace
with those who descend to the Pit.

31 "Pharaoh will see them and be comforted † over all his hordes — Pharaoh and his whole army,
slain by the sword."

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

32 "For I will spread my † terror in the land of the living,
so Pharaoh and all his hordes
will be laid to rest among the uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword."

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

32:2 Or *'Lion of the nations, you are destroyed;* **32:2** Or *crocodile* **32:2** Lit *their* **32:3** LXX, Vg read *I*

32:17 LXX reads *year, in the first month*, **32:18** Lit *the lower parts of the earth*, also in v. 24 **32:21** Either Pharaoh or Egypt **32:26** Lit *Meshech-tubal* **32:27** LXX reads *of antiquity* **32:27** Or *Do they not . . . heads?* **32:27** Emended; MT reads *iniquities* **32:32** Alt Hb tradition, LXX, Syr read *his*
32:2 Ezk 19:1; 27:2; 28:12 **32:2** Is 27:1 **32:3** Ezk 12:13 **32:4** Ezk 29:3-5 **32:5** Ezk 31:12 **32:7** Jl 2:2,31; 3:15; Am 8:9; Mt 24:29; Rv 6:12; 8:12 **32:10** Ezk 27:35 **32:10** Ezk 26:16 **32:12** Ezk 28:7; 31:12 **32:13** Ezk 29:11 **32:15** Ex 7:5 **32:16** 2Sm 1:17; 2Ch 35:25; Jr 9:17; Ezk 26:17 **32:18** Ezk 26:20 **32:20** Ezk 21:15 **32:21** Is 14:9-11; Ezk 31:15-18 **32:24** Gn 10:22 **32:26** Gn 10:2; Ezk 27:13; 38:2-3 **32:28** Is 14:18 **32:29** Ezk 25:12-14 **32:30** Ezk 38:6,15; 39:2 **32:30** Ezk 28:21-23 **32:31** Ezk 31:16-18

32:2-6 In the previous chapter, Ezekiel had compared Pharaoh to a majestic cedar (see the note on 31:2-7). Here, he is compared to **a lion of the nations** and to **a monster in the seas.** Both images suggest power and the ability to evoke fear in other people. Yet God states in verses 3-6 that he will **spread** out his **net** over this sea monster, capture him, and **put** [his] **flesh on the mountains** (a motif from Assyrian inscriptions describing utter ruin). Pharaoh had been called a "sea monster" already in 29:3.

32:7-8 Such **darkness** and **cloud** correspond to Egypt's judgment in 30:18. This doomsday is not only for Egypt but also for the nations (see the note on 30:2-3; Jl 2:30-31).

32:9-10 The judgment of Pharaoh will elicit horror from many **nations** and **their kings** (see 26:15-18; 27:35; 28:19; 30:3), as they fear even for their own lives.

32:11-12 God's "sword" (v. 10) used to afflict Egypt is that of the king of Babylon, whose soldiers bear **swords** of their own. In his sovereign power, the Lord is able to use even the mightiest king and his army as the instrument of his judgment.

32:13-14 The settling of these **waters** contrasts with Pharaoh's disruption of them in verse 2 (see 34:18-19).

32:16 The mourning of women from various **nations** again demonstrates the worldwide significance of Egypt's fall (see v. 18; note on vv. 9-10).

32:18 The descent of **Egypt** into the **underworld** and the realm of the dead (see 31:14,16,18) is driven home here and in the following verses.

32:22-32 Starting with **Assyria**, several nations are described as having **fallen by the sword** and in their **graves** (see vv. 25-26; 37:12-13).

32:24-25 Elam, located in modern Iran, was devastated by Assyria. She bears **disgrace with those who descend to the Pit**, a statement used twice. Like the others, this one is **uncircumcised** (see vv. 19,21,24-32; the note on 44:6-10).

32:26 Meshech and Tubal were descendants of Noah's son Japheth (Gn 10:2) and in the end times would be ruled by Gog (38:2; 39:2). They were among Tyre's many trading partners (27:13).

32:28 The Hebrew verb translated **lie down** (*shakav*) is repeatedly used in this context to refer to death (vv. 19,21,27-30,32; see 1Kg 2:10). Ezekiel had taken a similar posture in 4:4,6 as a sign act for his prophecy of judgment on Israel.

32:29 Edom's guilt and punishment had also been mentioned in 25:12-14 and is treated again in 35:1-15.

32:30 Babylon and Gog also come from **the north** (26:7; 38:6,15; 39:2; see the notes on Jr 1:15; 4:5-9).

32:32 The **land of the living** (see vv. 23-27; 26:20) contrasts with "the underworld" (lit "the land below" in vv. 18,24; 26:20; 31:14,16,18).

EZEKIEL AS ISRAEL'S WATCHMAN

33 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, speak to your
people and tell them, ‘Suppose I bring the sword against a land, and the
people of that land select a man from among them, appointing him as
their watchman. 3 And suppose he sees the sword coming against the land and
blows his trumpet † to warn the people. 4 Then, if anyone hears the sound of the
trumpet but ignores the warning, † and the sword comes and takes him away,
his death will be his own fault. † 5 Since he heard the sound of the trumpet but
ignored the warning, his death is his own fault. † If he had taken warning, he
would have saved his life. 6 However, suppose the watchman sees the sword
coming but doesn’t blow the trumpet, so that the people aren’t warned, and the
sword comes and takes away their lives. Then they have been taken away
because of their iniquity, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their
blood.’
7 “As for you, son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of
Israel. † When you hear a word from my mouth, give them a warning from me.
8 If I say to the wicked, ‘Wicked one, you will surely die,’ † but you do not
speak out to warn him about his way, that wicked person will die for his iniquity,
yet I will hold you responsible for his blood. 9 But if you warn a wicked person
to turn from his way and he doesn’t turn from it, he will die for his iniquity, but
you will have rescued yourself.
10 “Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, ‘You have said this:
“Our transgressions and our sins are heavy on us, and we are wasting away
because of them! † How then can we survive?” ’ † 11 Tell them, ‘As I live —
this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — I take no pleasure in the death of the
wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. †
Repent, repent of your evil ways! Why will you die, house of Israel? ’
12 “Now, son of man, say to your people, ‘The righteousness of the righteous
person will not save him on the day of his transgression; neither will the
wickedness of the wicked person cause him to stumble on the day he turns from
his wickedness. The righteous person won’t be able to survive by his
righteousness on the day he sins. 13 When I tell the righteous person that he will
surely live, but he trusts in his righteousness and acts unjustly, then none of his

righteousness will be remembered, and he will die because of the injustice he has committed. †
14 " 'So when I tell the wicked person, "You will surely die," but he repents of his sin and does what is just and right — 15 he returns collateral, makes restitution for what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life † without committing injustice — he will certainly live; he will not die. 16 None of the sins he committed will be held † against him. He has done what is just and right; he will certainly live. †
17 " 'But your people say, "The Lord's way isn't fair," † even though it is their own way that isn't fair. 18 When a righteous person turns from his righteousness and commits injustice, he will die for it. 19 But if a wicked person turns from his wickedness and does what is just and right, he will live because of it. 20 Yet you say, "The Lord's way isn't fair." I will judge each of you according to his ways, house of Israel.' "

THE NEWS OF JERUSALEM'S FALL

21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, a fugitive from Jerusalem came to me and reported, "The city has been taken!" 22 Now the hand of the LORD had been on me the evening before the fugitive arrived, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer mute. †

ISRAEL'S CONTINUED REBELLION

23 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 24 "Son of man, those who live in the † ruins in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was only one person, † yet he received possession of the land. † But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as a possession.' † 25 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: You eat meat with blood in it, † look to your idols, and shed blood. Should you then receive possession of the land? 26 You have relied on your swords, you have committed detestable acts, and each of you has defiled his neighbor's wife. Should you then receive possession of the land? ' †
27 "Tell them this: 'This is what the Lord GOD says: As surely as I live, those who are in the ruins will fall by the sword, those in the open field I have given to

wild animals to be devoured, and those in the strongholds and caves will die by plague. † 28 I will make the land a desolate waste, † and its proud strength will come to an end. † The mountains of Israel † will become desolate, with no one passing through. 29 They will know that I am the LORD when I make the land a desolate waste because of all the detestable acts they have committed.'
30 "As for you, son of man, your people are talking about you near the city walls and in the doorways of their houses. One person speaks to another, each saying to his brother, 'Come and hear what the message is that comes from the LORD!' 31 So my people come to you in crowds, † sit in front of you, and hear your words, but they don't obey them. Their mouths go on passionately, but their hearts pursue dishonest profit. 32 Yes, to them you are like a singer of passionate songs who has a beautiful voice and plays skillfully on an instrument. They hear your words, but they don't obey them. 33 Yet when all this comes true † — and it definitely will — then they will know that a prophet has been among them."

33:4 Lit *his blood will be on his head* **33:5** Lit *his blood will be on him* **33:16** Lit *remembered* **33:24** Lit *these* **33:31** Lit *you like the coming of a people*

33:3 Nm 10:9 **33:4** Zch 1:4 **33:7** Ezk 3:17-19 **33:8** Ezk 18:4 **33:10** Lv 26:39; Ezk 4:17; 24:23 **33:10** Ezk 37:11 **33:11** Ezk 18:23,30-32; Hs 11:8; 1Tm 2:4; 2Pt 3:9 **33:13** Ezk 3:20; 18:24,26 **33:15** Lv 18:5; Dt 5:33; 1Kg 3:14; Ezk 20:11 **33:16** Is 1:18; 43:25; Ezk 18:21-22 **33:17** Ezk 18:25-30 **33:22** Ezk 3:26-27; 24:26-27 **33:24** Is 51:2 **33:24** Gn 15:7; 28:4 **33:24** Ezk 36:2 **33:25** Lv 19:26 **33:26** Ezk 18:6,10-11,15 **33:27** Ezk 5:12 **33:28** Ezk 35:3 **33:28** Ezk 7:24 **33:28** Ezk 6:2 **33:33** Jr 28:9; Ezk 33:29

33:1-9 God speaks to Ezekiel in this section and uses the metaphor of a **watchman** to describe his ministry. In the ancient world, messages and information about the enemy were sent from one outpost to the other via fire signals. It was critical that a lookout at a particular post be ready to warn the other fortresses that the enemy had arrived. God tells Ezekiel that if he faithfully proclaims what is true and warns his listeners, then he will have fulfilled his responsibility even if they do not treat it seriously.

33:10-11 Despite Israel's sins, they did not have to die. God does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked (see 18:23,32). Those who repent will **live!**

33:12-13 Living righteously in the past does not exempt one from punishment for decisively turning away from God (v. 12). Although a righteous person is promised life, it is a serious mistake to trust **in his righteousness** (Dt 9:4-6; Rm 10:3; Php 3:9).

33:17-20 God's ways of judging the righteous person who later turns to wickedness and of forgiving the wicked person who repents offended the people's understanding of justice (see 18:25-29). God reaffirmed that he would indeed **judge each . . . according to his ways** (v. 20).

33:21-22 News comes to Ezekiel and the other exiles in Babylonia **in the twelfth year of** their **exile** that Jerusalem had fallen and been captured by the Babylonians. The event vindicated Ezekiel's ministry. Israel had taken a great deal of pride in the Davidic monarchy, the temple, the status of Jerusalem as God's holy city, and the priesthood. But these things were no substitute for true faithfulness and were taken from them. As predicted in 24:25-27, this disaster was followed by the opening of the prophet's **mouth.**

33:24-26 Those living **in the ruins** were the poorest of the land. They had been left behind after the fall of

Jerusalem (see vv. 21-22; 2Kg 25:12,22). They wrongly assumed that they would take possession of the land simply because they were still living there and were more numerous than **Abraham.**

33:30-33 Despite widespread interest in hearing Ezekiel, such interest was superficial because **hearts** remained unchanged (vv. 30-31). The prophet was valued more as an entertainer rather than one whose prophetic messages were to be obeyed (v. 32). In time, he would be vindicated (v. 33).

THE SHEPHERDS AND GOD'S FLOCK

34 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy, and say to them, 'This is what the Lord GOD says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! † Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? 3 You eat the fat, wear the wool, and butcher the fattened animals, but you do not tend the flock. † 4 You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, brought back the strays, or sought the lost. † Instead, you have ruled them with violence and cruelty. 5 They were scattered for lack of a shepherd; † they became food for all the wild animals † when they were scattered. 6 My flock went astray on all the mountains and every high hill. † My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and there was no one searching or seeking for them.

7 " 'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD. 8 As I live — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — because my flock, lacking a shepherd, has become prey and food for every wild animal, and because my shepherds do not search for my flock, and because the shepherds feed themselves rather than my flock, 9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD!

10 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against the shepherds. † I will demand my flock from them † and prevent them from shepherding the flock. The shepherds will no longer feed themselves, for I will rescue my flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them.

11 " 'For this is what the Lord GOD says: See, I myself will search for my flock and look for them. 12 As a shepherd looks for his sheep on the day he is among his scattered flock, so I will look for my flock. I will rescue them from all the places where they have been scattered † on a day of clouds and total darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the peoples, gather them from the countries, and bring them to their own soil. I will shepherd them on the mountains of Israel, in

the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the land. 14 I will tend them in
good pasture, and their grazing place will be on Israel's lofty mountains. There
they will lie down in a good grazing place; they will feed in rich pasture on the
mountains of Israel. 15 I will tend my flock and let them lie down. † This is the
declaration of the Lord GOD. 16 I will seek the lost, † bring back the strays,
bandage the injured, † and strengthen the weak, but I will destroy † the fat and
the strong. I will shepherd them with justice.
17 " 'As for you, my flock, the Lord GOD says this: Look, I am going to judge
between one sheep and another, between the rams and goats. † 18 Isn't it
enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of
the pasture with your feet? Or isn't it enough that you drink the clear water?
Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? 19 Yet my flock has to feed on
what your feet have trampled, and drink what your feet have muddied.
20 " 'Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says to them: See, I myself will judge
between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. 21 Since you have pushed with flank
and shoulder and butted all the weak ones with your horns until you scattered
them all over, 22 I will save my flock. They will no longer be prey, and I will
judge between one sheep and another. 23 I will establish over them one
shepherd, my servant David, and he will shepherd them. He will tend them
himself and will be their shepherd. † 24 I, the LORD, will be their God, and my
servant David † will be a prince among them. I, the LORD, have spoken.
25 " 'I will make a covenant of peace † with them and eliminate dangerous
creatures † from the land, so that they may live securely † in the wilderness and
sleep in the forest. 26 I will make them and the area around my hill † a blessing:
I will send down showers in their season; † they will be showers of blessing.
27 The trees of the field will yield their fruit, and the land will yield its produce;
my flock will be secure in their land. They will know that I am the LORD when I
break the bars of their yoke and rescue them from the power of those who
enslave them. † 28 They will no longer be prey for the nations, and the wild
creatures of the earth will not consume them. They will live securely, and no one
will frighten them. 29 I will establish for them a place renowned for its
agriculture, † and they will no longer be victims of famine in the land. They will

no longer endure the insults of the nations. † 30 Then they will know that I, the LORD their God, am with them, and that they, the house of Israel, are my people. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 31 You are my flock, the human flock of my pasture, and I am your God. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' " †

34:10 Lit *their hand* **34:16** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg read *watch over* **34:29** LXX, Syr read *a plant of peace*

34:2 Jr 23:1 **34:3** Pr 27:23 **34:4** Zch 11:16; Lk 15:4 **34:5** Nm 27:17; 1Kg 22:17; Jr 10:21; 23:2; 50:6; Mt 9:36 **34:5** Ezk 34:28 **34:6** 1Pt 2:25 **34:10** Jr 21:13; Ezk 5:8; 13:8 **34:12** Jr 23:3 **34:15** Ps 23:1-2 **34:16** Ps 119:176; Lk 19:10 **34:16** Ps 147:3; Is 30:26; Hs 6:1 **34:17** Mt 25:31-33 **34:23** Ps 78:70-71; Jn 10:11,16 **34:24** Jr 30:9; Ezk 37:24 **34:25** Ezk 37:26 **34:25** Is 11:6-9 **34:25** Ezk 28:26 **34:26** Ps 2:6; 15:1; 133:3; Is 27:13; Jr 31:23 **34:26** Dt 11:13-14; 28:12 **34:27** Lv 26:13; Is 52:2-3; Jr 30:8 **34:29** Ezk 36:3,6,15 **34:30** Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12; Dt 29:13; Jr 30:22; 31:33; Ezk 11:20; 36:28; 37:23,27; Zch 8:8; 2Co 6:16; Heb 8:10; Rv 21:3 **34:31** Ps 100:3; Jr 23:1

34:2-6 Israel's **shepherds** (a metaphor for its kings) had been **feeding themselves** instead of caring for the flock (Jr 23:1-2). In this conception of kingship, the flock (the people) belonged to God. Their human king was supposed to act as their shepherd, caring for them on behalf of the ultimate divine ruler. In Israel's case, the **lack of a** genuine **shepherd** resulted in the scattering of the flock across **the whole face of the earth** (vv. 5-6; 12:15). Going **astray** on the **mountains** and **every high hill** alludes to idol worship in such places (6:13; 20:28).

34:10-12 Unlike the wicked **shepherds** who did not search for the flock (vv. 6-7), God will be a good shepherd who searches for them. His rescuing them on **a day of clouds and total darkness** links this deliverance to his judgment on Egypt and the nations (see the notes on 30:2-3; 32:7-8).

34:13-16 The Hebrew verb used in the phrase **I will bring them out from the peoples** (v. 13) is frequently used of God bringing Israel out of Egypt (Ex 12:17; 20:2) and thus casts this regathering as a second exodus (see the notes on v. 27; 20:33-38; Is 10:24-26; 11:11-16; 12:1-2; 48:20-22; Jr 50:33-34). This fits with the recent focus on Pharaoh in Ezekiel 29–32. The promise of regathering from exile is frequent in Ezekiel (11:17; 20:41; 28:25; 36:24; 37:21), and here it is linked to God's shepherding of Israel. Unlike the wicked shepherds (v. 4), God will help the weak **with justice** (v. 16).

34:18-19 The trampling of a **pasture** and the muddying of waters by wicked shepherds parallel the actions of Pharaoh in 32:2.

34:20-21 As in verse 16, it is the **fat,** strong sheep who had bullied the weak and would be punished.

34:23-24 Ezekiel had foretold and even witnessed the end of the Davidic dynasty (cp. 33:21-22). Here he prophesies that a new Davidic king would arise. The utter failure of the shepherds of Israel (v. 2) is an opportunity for God to save the flock (v. 22) and to appoint **one shepherd** who will be **a prince.** This is a reference to the Messiah, who will be the true Shepherd of Israel (see the note on Jr 23:5-6). The well-known promise "I will be their God" (v. 24; 11:20; Gn 17:7-8; Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12) is linked here to the Messiah's reign.

34:25-26 The rule of the Messiah (vv. 23-24) is tied to the new covenant (**covenant of peace**; see 37:26) and centers on Mount Zion (**[God's] hill**).

34:27 Trees of the field also appear in 17:24 and 31:4-5,15 (see 34:27), where they represent the nations. The references to breaking **the bars of their yoke** and freedom from **those who enslave them** reinforce the second exodus theme (see the note on vv. 13-16; 30:18; Lv 26:13; Is 9:4).

34:31 In keeping with the theme of shepherding, God reiterates that his people comprise his **flock** (see vv. 6,8,10-12,15,17; 36:37-38; Pss 74:1; 79:13; 95:7; 100:3; Jr 23:1).

A PROPHECY AGAINST EDOM

35 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, face Mount Seir † and prophesy against it. 3 Say to it, 'This is what the Lord GOD says:

Look! I am against you, Mount Seir.
I will stretch out my hand against you
and make you a desolate waste. †
4 I will turn your cities into ruins, and you will become a desolation.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

5 " 'Because you maintained a perpetual hatred † and gave the Israelites over to the power of the sword in the time of their disaster, the time of final punishment, † 6 therefore, as I live — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — I will destine you for bloodshed, and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, it will pursue you. † 7 I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and will cut off from it those who come and go. † 8 I will fill its mountains with the slain; † those slain by the sword will fall on your hills, in your valleys, and in all your ravines. 9 I will make you a perpetual desolation; your cities will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.
10 " 'Because you said, "These two nations and two lands will be mine, and we will possess them" — though the LORD was there † — 11 therefore, as I live — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — I will treat you according to the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them. I will make myself known among them † when I judge you. 12 Then you will know that I, the LORD, have heard all the blasphemies you uttered against the mountains of Israel, saying, "They are desolate. They have been given to us to devour!" 13 You boasted against me † with your mouth, and spoke many words against me. I heard it myself!
14 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: While the whole world rejoices, I will make you a desolation. 15 Just as you rejoiced over the inheritance of the house of Israel because it became a desolation, I will deal the same way with you: you

will become a desolation, Mount Seir, and so will all Edom in its entirety. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'

35:11 LXX reads *you*

35:2 Ezk 25:12-14 **35:3** Ezk 6:14 **35:5** Ps 137:7; Ezk 25:15 **35:5** Ezk 7:2; 21:25,29 **35:6** Is 63:2-6; Ezk 16:38; 32:6 **35:7** Ezk 33:28 **35:8** Ezk 31:12; 32:4-5 **35:10** Ps 48:1-3; Ezk 48:35 **35:13** Jr 48:26,42; Ob 12; Zph 2:8

35:2-4 The judgment of **Mount Seir** and its "mountains" (v. 8) is placed here as an intentional contrast to the coming blessing upon Zion and the "mountains of Israel" described in the surrounding context (34:13-14,26; 36:1-15). Mount Seir is another name for the land of Edom (v. 15; 36:5; Gn 36:8-9; Dt 2:5; Jos 24:4). The restoration of Israel from destruction sharply contrasts with Edom's desolation (see the note on vv. 14-15), which would be permanent (v. 9).

35:5 The **perpetual hatred** Edom had toward Israel (see 25:8,12-14) parallels that of the Philistines in 25:15.

35:10-13 Edom not only did violence to Israel (vv. 5-6; Ob 10-14), but they also saw this as an opportunity to **possess** their land (v. 10; 36:2). Edom showed contempt for the **mountains of Israel** and God himself (vv. 12-13).

35:14-15 The joy of **the whole world** contrasts with the desolation of **all Edom in its entirety.** This juxtaposition suggests that Edom represents wicked humanity as a whole, as it does in some other OT passages (see the notes on 36:1-5; Is 34:5; 63:1).

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL'S MOUNTAINS

36 "Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. † 2 This is what the Lord GOD says: Because the enemy has said about you, "Aha! † The ancient heights † have become our possession," ' 3 therefore, prophesy and say: 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Because they have made you desolate and have trampled you from every side, so that you became a possession for the rest of the nations and an object of people's gossip and slander, † 4 therefore, mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD. This is what the Lord GOD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and abandoned cities, which have become plunder † and a mockery to the rest of the nations all around.
5 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Certainly in my burning zeal I speak against the rest of the nations and all of Edom, † who took † my land as their own possession with wholehearted rejoicing and utter contempt † so that its pastureland became † plunder. 6 Therefore, prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I speak in my burning zeal † because you have

endured the insults of the nations. 7 Therefore, this is what the Lord GOD says: I swear † that the nations all around you will endure their own insults. †
8 " 'You, mountains of Israel, will produce your branches † and bear your fruit for my people Israel, since their arrival is near. 9 Look! I am on your side; I will turn toward you, † and you will be tilled and sown. 10 I will fill you with people, with the whole house of Israel in its entirety. † The cities will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11 I will fill you with people and animals, † and they will increase and be fruitful. I will make you inhabited as you once were and make you better off than you were before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. † 12 I will cause people, my people Israel, to walk on you; they will possess you, † and you will be their inheritance. You will no longer deprive them of their children.
13 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Because some are saying to you, "You devour people and deprive your nation of children," † 14 therefore, you will no longer devour people and deprive your nation of children. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 15 I will no longer allow the insults of the nations to be heard against you, and you will not have to endure the reproach of the peoples anymore; † you will no longer cause your nation to stumble. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.' "

RESTORATION OF ISRAEL'S PEOPLE

16 The word of the LORD came to me: 17 "Son of man, while the house of Israel lived in their land, they defiled it with their conduct and actions. † Their behavior before me was like menstrual impurity. † 18 So I poured out my wrath † on them because of the blood they had shed on the land, and because they had defiled it with their idols. 19 I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered among the countries. † I judged them according to their conduct and actions. † 20 When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned my holy name, † because it was said about them, 'These are the people of the LORD, yet they had to leave his land in exile.' 21 Then I had concern for my holy name, † which the house of Israel profaned among the nations where they went.

22 “Therefore, say to the house of Israel, ‘This is what the Lord God says: It is not for your sake that I will act, † house of Israel, but for my holy name, † which you profaned among the nations where you went. 23 I will honor the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations — the name you have profaned among them. The nations will know that I am the Lord — this is the declaration of the Lord God — when I demonstrate my holiness through you in their sight. †
24 “ ‘For I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and will bring you into your own land. † 25 I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. † I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. † 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; † I will remove your heart of stone † and give you a heart of flesh. † 27 I will place my Spirit within you † and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances. † 28 You will live in the land that I gave your fathers; † you will be my people, and I will be your God. † 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will summon the grain and make it plentiful, and I will not bring famine on you. † 30 I will also make the fruit of the trees and the produce of the field plentiful, so that you will no longer experience reproach among the nations on account of famine.
31 “ ‘You will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, † and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and detestable practices. †
32 It is not for your sake that I will act † — this is the declaration of the Lord God — let this be known to you. Be ashamed and humiliated because of your ways, house of Israel!
33 “ ‘This is what the Lord God says: On the day I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the ruins will be rebuilt. †
34 The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of everyone who passes by. 35 They will say, “This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden. † The cities that were once ruined, desolate, and demolished are now fortified and inhabited.” 36 Then the nations that remain

around you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt what was demolished and have replanted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken and I will do it. †
37 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I will respond to the house of Israel and do this for them: † I will multiply them in number like a flock. † 38 So the ruined cities will be filled with a flock of people, just as Jerusalem † is filled with a flock of sheep for sacrifice † during its appointed festivals. Then they will know that I am the LORD.' "

36:5 Lit *gave* **36:5** Or *contempt, to empty it of* ; Hb obscure **36:7** Lit *lift up my hand* **36:14** Alt Hb tradition reads *and cause your nation to stumble* **36:15** Some Hb mss, Tg read *no longer bereave your nation of children* **36:26** Lit *stone from your flesh* **36:37** Lit *flock of people* **36:38** Lit *as the consecrated flock, as the flock of Jerusalem*

36:1 Ezk 6:2 **36:2** Ezk 25:3; 26:2 **36:2** Dt 32:13 **36:3** Ezk 35:13 **36:4** Ezk 34:8,28 **36:5** Dt 4:24 **36:5** Ezk 35:10,15 **36:6** Ps 74:10; 123:3-4 **36:7** Ezk 20:5 **36:8** Ezk 17:23 **36:9** Lv 26:9 **36:10** Ezk 37:21-22 **36:11** Jr 33:12 **36:11** Is 51:3 **36:12** Ob 17 **36:13** Nm 13:32 **36:15** Ezk 34:29 **36:17** Jr 2:7 **36:17** Lv 15:19 **36:18** Ezk 16:36; 22:3 **36:19** Dt 28:64; Ezk 22:15 **36:19** Rm 2:6 **36:20** Is 52:5; Rm 2:24 **36:21** Is 48:9; Ezk 20:44 **36:22** Dt 9:5 **36:22** Ps 115:1; Is 43:25; 48:11; Ezk 20:9; Dn 9:18-19 **36:23** Ezk 20:41; 38:23; 39:7,25 **36:24** Ezk 34:13; 37:21 **36:25** Ps 51:7; Heb 9:13,19; 10:22 **36:25** Jr 33:8 **36:26** Ezk 18:31; Jl 2:28 **36:26** Dt 30:6; Ezk 11:19; 2Co 3:3 **36:27** Ezk 37:14 **36:27** Jr 24:7; 31:33; 32:40 **36:28** Ezk 37:23-25 **36:28** Ezk 34:30 **36:29-30** Ezk 34:27,29 **36:31** Ezk 16:61-63 **36:31** Ezk 6:9; 20:43 **36:32** Dt 9:5 **36:33** Ezk 36:10 **36:35** Is 51:3; Jl 2:3 **36:36** Ezk 17:24 **36:37** Ezk 14:3 **36:38** 2Ch 35:7-9

36:1-5 Whereas in 35:5,10 Edom harbored enmity and plotted to take possession of the land of Israel, here it is **the rest of the nations** doing so (vv. 2-3). This relationship is explicit in verse 5.

36:8-12 The **mountains of Israel** had suffered reproach, plundering, and desolation (vv. 2-7) but would be restored to fruitfulness as a place for Israel to dwell. Fruit-bearing and a branch on a mountaintop (v. 8) also appear together in 17:22-24, where they describe the Messiah's reign (see the note; Is 4:2). Whereas the Hebrew phrase translated **in its entirety** is used of Edom in verse 5 (see Hb) and 35:15, it is used in verse 10 of **the whole house of Israel.** The absence of **people and animals** had been a result of judgment (see the note on 14:21; 29:8,11), but these would now multiply in the land (v. 11).

36:13 This reputation for devouring **people** and depriving a nation of its **children** (see v. 12; Nm 13:32) may relate to men slain in judgment by its idolatrous sites and to child sacrifice (6:1-7,13; 16:20-21; 20:26; 23:37,39).

36:17-18 The people of Israel defiled the land through their evil conduct (see 14:11). The physical reality of **menstrual impurity** (see Lv 12:2,5; 15:19-27,33) is used as an illustration of spiritual reality (7:19-20) —much like whitewashing in 13:10-16 (see note).

36:20-23 While the exile vindicated God's justice before Israel (24:21-27), it also **profaned** his **holy name** in the eyes of the nations where they had been scattered (vv. 20-21). God had intended that Israel would bring glory to him and serve as a nation of priests who would mediate his truth to the rest of the world (cp. Ex 19:6). Their sin and punishment, however, brought reproach instead. As in 20:9,14,22, God's actions are motivated by concern for his **holy name.** The result of this display of his holiness is that **the nations will know that** [he is] **the LORD** (v. 23; see the notes on 17:22-24; 28:24-26). Emphasis on the unworthiness of his people and divine grace (vv. 22,31-32; Pss 25:11; 79:9) parallels 20:44.

36:25 Regathering from exile (v. 24; see the notes on 34:10-16) will be accompanied by removal of all **impurities** and **idols** (see v. 17; 6:4-6; 14:3-7; 24:11,13). As in 16:63 where God promises to "atone" for

them (see Lv 4:20,26,31,35; 16:32-33), he again takes on the role of a priest and promises to **sprinkle clean water** on them and **cleanse** them (see 37:23; Lv 13:6,17,23,28; Nm 19:17-20). Another passage in which the Lord takes on this role is 39:17-20 (see note).

36:26-27 In addition to cleansing (v. 25), God's salvation also brings a **new heart** and a **new spirit** (11:19; 18:31; see the note on 14:1-8). Related to this, he puts his Spirit in his people so that they will follow his **statutes** and **ordinances** (see the notes on 1:12,20-21; 11:7-12,16-21; 18:5-20). These new covenant realities contrast with having a **heart of stone** (see 11:19), which relates to both hardness of heart (2:4; 3:7; Dt 10:16) and the law written on tablets of stone (Ex 24:12; 31:18; 34:1,4; Dt 4:13; 5:22; 9:9-11; 10:1,3; see Jr 31:33).

36:35 The transformation of the **desolate** land to be **like the garden of Eden** implies a restoration to the original ideal (Gn 2:4-14). Outside of the Pentateuch, the book of Ezekiel mentions Eden more than any other book (28:13; 31:9,16,18).

36:36 The building of what had been pulled down and the planting of what had been desolate parallels Jeremiah 1:9-10 (see note).

36:37-38 Whereas God had ignored the inquiries of sinful Israel (14:3; 20:3,31), the people's salvation would include his hearing of their prayers. He will **multiply them** like the sheep in Jerusalem during its **festivals** (see the note on 34:31).

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES

37 The hand of the LORD was on me, † and he brought me out by his
Spirit † and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of
bones. 2 He led me all around them. There were a great many of them on the
surface of the valley, and they were very dry. 3 Then he said to me, "Son of
man, can these bones live? "
I replied, "Lord GOD, only you know." †
4 He said to me, "Prophesy concerning these bones and say to them: Dry bones,
hear the word of the LORD! 5 This is what the Lord GOD says to these bones: I
will cause breath to enter you, and you will live. † 6 I will put tendons on you,
make flesh grow on you, and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you so that
you come to life. Then you will know that I am the LORD." †
7 So I prophesied as I had been commanded. While I was prophesying, there
was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 As I
looked, tendons appeared on them, flesh grew, and skin covered them, but there
was no breath in them. 9 He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, † prophesy,
son of man. Say to it: This is what the Lord GOD says: Breath, come from the
four winds and breathe into these slain so that they may live! " † 10 So I

prophesied as he commanded me; the breath entered them, † and they came to life and stood on their feet, a vast army.
11 Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. † Look how they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, † and our hope has perished; † we are cut off.’ † 12 Therefore, prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Lord God says: I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them, † my people, and lead you into the land of Israel. 13 You will know that I am the Lord, my people, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. † 14 I will put my Spirit in you, † and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I have spoken, and I will do it. † This is the declaration of the Lord.’ ”

THE REUNIFICATION OF ISRAEL

15 The word of the Lord came to me: 16 “Son of man, take a single stick and write on it: † Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him. Then take another stick and write on it: Belonging to Joseph — the stick of Ephraim — and all the house of Israel associated with him. † 17 Then join them together into a single stick so that they become one in your hand. † 18 When your people ask you, ‘Won’t you explain to us what you mean by these things? ’ † — 19 tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel associated with him, and put them together with the stick of Judah. I will make them into a single stick so that they become one in my hand.’
20 “When the sticks you have written on are in your hand and in full view of the people, † 21 tell them, ‘This is what the Lord God says: I am going to take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. † I will gather them from all around and bring them into their own land. 22 I will make them one nation in the land, † on the mountains of Israel, and one king will rule over all of them. † They will no longer be two nations and will no longer be divided into two kingdoms. 23 They will not defile themselves anymore with their idols, † their abhorrent things, and all their transgressions. † I will save them from all their apostasies by which † they sinned, † and I will cleanse them. Then they will be

my people, and I will be their God. † 24 My servant David will be king over them, and there will be one shepherd for all of them. † They will follow my ordinances, and keep my statutes and obey them. †
25 " 'They will live in the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, † where your fathers lived. They will live in it forever with their children and grandchildren, and my servant David will be their prince forever. † 26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; † it will be a permanent covenant † with them. I will establish and multiply them and will set my sanctuary among them forever. 27 My dwelling place will be with them; † I will be their God, and they will be my people. † 28 When my sanctuary is among them forever, the nations will know that I, the LORD, sanctify Israel.' " †

37:9 Or *wind*, or *spirit*, also in v. 10 **37:23** Some Hb mss, LXX, Sym; other Hb mss read *their settlements where*

37:1 Ezk 1:3 **37:1** Ezk 8:3; 11:24 **37:3** Dt 32:39; 1Sm 2:6 **37:5** Gn 2:7; Ps 104:29-30 **37:6** Jl 2:27; 3:17 **37:9** Ps 104:30 **37:10** Rv 11:11 **37:11** Ezk 36:10 **37:11** Ps 141:7 **37:11** Eph 2:12 **37:11** Is 49:14; Lm 3:54 **37:12** Is 26:19; 66:14; Hs 13:14; Rm 11:15 **37:13** Jn 5:28-29; 1Co 15:21-22; Rv 20:4-5 **37:14** Ezk 36:27 **37:14** Ezk 17:24 **37:16** Nm 17:2-3 **37:16** 2Ch 11:11-17 **37:17** Is 11:13; Hs 1:11 **37:18** Ezk 12:9; 24:19 **37:20** Ezk 12:3 **37:21** Ezk 36:24 **37:22** Jr 3:18 **37:22** Ezk 34:23-24 **37:23** Ezk 36:25 **37:23** Ezk 36:28-29 **37:23** Rm 11:26 **37:23** Ezk 36:38 **37:24** Ezk 34:23-24; Jn 10:16 **37:24** Ezk 36:27 **37:25** Is 60:21 **37:25** Jn 12:34 **37:26** Is 54:10; Ezk 34:25 **37:26** Is 55:3; Jr 32:40; Ezk 16:60; Heb 13:20 **37:27** Jn 1:14 **37:27** Ezk 36:28 **37:28** Ezk 20:12

37:1-10 Ezekiel has another vision of a **valley** filled with **bones**: the remains are from a great battle (v. 10). The bones in the vision are **very dry** (v. 2); there is no life in them. Furthermore, they are unclean (9:7; Lv 5:2; Nm 6:6-7) and have been left shamefully exposed and unburied. On their own, they cannot rise and they have no future. This is a picture of Israel in exile. Yet there is hope, because just as God can powerfully resuscitate the bones into living people, he can restore Israel to life as a people. Like the vision in Ezekiel 1 (see notes), this vision plays on the Hebrew word *ruach*, which can refer to either breath, wind, or spirit. The necessity and life-giving power of the **breath** and **winds** (vv. 5-10) parallel that of the Spirit's aforementioned empowerment of obedience unto life (see 18:5-9,14-19; 33:14-19; 36:26-27). He alone can transform dead, dry bones into a living, mighty army. The combination of divine speech, the moving of the Spirit, and standing on one's feet in verse 10 parallels 2:1-2. The giving of life to human bodies through the Spirit parallels Genesis 2:7, except on a much larger scale.

37:11-14 The power of the Spirit to bring the dead to life is reinforced through the repeated mention of his bringing up Israel from their **graves** (vv. 12-13).

37:20-22 The symbolic unification of the two **sticks** (vv. 16-19) represents the regathering and reunification of Israel, which had not only been divided into two nations but was scattered in exile. The newly formed **single stick** (vv. 17,19) stands for the **one nation** ruled by **one king** (v. 22; see 11:19), the Messiah (v. 24; 34:23).

37:24 Israel's obedience while under messianic rule recalls 36:27, where such obedience is a result of the indwelling Spirit.

37:28 The divine sanctification of Israel fulfills the intent of Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 20:8; 21:8 and 22:32. The presence of God's **sanctuary** in their midst forever (vv. 26-28) resolves the tragedy of Ezekiel 8–10 and is developed at length in Ezekiel 40–48.

THE DEFEAT OF GOG

38 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, face Gog, of the land of Magog,† the chief prince of† Meshech and Tubal.† Prophesy against him 3 and say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. 4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws,† and bring you out with all your army, including horses and riders,† who are all splendidly dressed, a huge assembly armed with large and small shields, all of them brandishing swords. 5 Persia,† Cush, and Put are with them, all of them with shields and helmets; 6 Gomer† with all its troops; and Beth-togarmah† from the remotest parts of the north along with all its troops — many peoples are with you.

7 " 'Be prepared and get yourself ready, you and your whole assembly that has been mobilized around you; you will be their guard. 8 After a long time you will be summoned. In the last years you will enter a land that has been restored from war† and regathered from many peoples to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a ruin.† They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them now live securely. 9 You, all of your troops, and many peoples with you will advance, coming like a thunderstorm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

10 " 'This is what the Lord GOD says: On that day, thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will devise an evil plan. 11 You will say, "I will advance against a land of open villages; I will come against a tranquil people who are living securely,† all of them living without walls and without bars or gates"† — 12 in order to seize spoil and carry off plunder,† to turn your hand against ruins now inhabited and against a people gathered from the nations, who have been acquiring cattle and possessions and who live at the center of the world. 13 Sheba† and Dedan† and the merchants of Tarshish† with all its rulers† will ask you, "Have you come to seize spoil? Have you mobilized your assembly to carry off plunder, to make off with silver and gold, to take cattle and possessions, to seize plenty of spoil?" '

14 “Therefore prophesy, son of man, and say to Gog, ‘This is what the Lord GOD
says: On that day when my people Israel are dwelling securely, † will you not
know this 15 and come from your place in the remotest parts of the north † —
you and many peoples with you, who are all riding horses — a huge assembly, a
powerful army? 16 You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud
covering the land. It will happen in the last days, Gog, that I will bring you
against my land so that the nations may know me, when I show myself holy
through you in their sight. †
17 “ ‘This is what the Lord GOD says: Are you the one I spoke about in former
times through my servants, the prophets of Israel, who for years prophesied in
those times that I would bring you against them? 18 Now on that day, the day
when Gog comes against the land of Israel — this is the declaration of the Lord
GOD — my wrath will flare up. † 19 I swear in my zeal and fiery rage: † On that
day there will be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 20 The fish of the sea,
the birds of the sky, the animals of the field, every creature that crawls on the
ground, and every human being on the face of the earth will tremble before me.
The mountains will be demolished, the cliffs will collapse, and every wall will
fall to the ground. 21 I will call for a sword against him on all my mountains —
this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — and every man’s sword will be against
his brother. † 22 I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed. I
will pour out torrential rain, hailstones, fire, and burning sulfur on him, as well
as his troops and the many peoples who are with him. † 23 I will display my
greatness and holiness, and will reveal myself in the sight of many nations. †
Then they will know that I am the LORD.’

38:2 Or *the prince of Rosh,* **38:8** Lit *from the sword* **38:13** Lit *young lions,* or *villages* **38:18** Lit *up in my anger*

38:2 Gn 10:2; Ezk 39:1; Rv 20:8 **38:2** Ezk 27:13 **38:4** 2Kg 19:28; Ezk 29:4 **38:4** Dn 11:40 **38:5** Ezk 27:10 **38:6** Gn 10:2 **38:6** Gn 10:3 **38:8** Ezk 36:8-11 **38:11** Jdg 18:7 **38:11** Jr 49:31 **38:12** Is 10:6; Ezk 29:19 **38:13** Ezk 27:22 **38:13** Ezk 27:20 **38:13** Ezk 27:12 **38:14** Jr 23:6 **38:15** Ezk 39:2 **38:16** Ezk 28:22 **38:19** Ezk 36:6 **38:21** Ezk 14:17 **38:22** Rv 16:18-21 **38:23** Ezk 37:28

38:2-3 The last judgment oracle in Ezekiel follows the glorious promises of salvation for Israel in Ezekiel 36–37. Whereas other Gentiles were dealt with in Ezekiel 25–31, the focus of Ezekiel 38–39 is **Meshech and Tubal**, including their **chief prince**, **Gog.** These two nations had been mentioned earlier as one of Tyre’s many trading partners (27:13) and as awaiting Pharaoh’s descent into the grave (32:26). Gog does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew OT (see 1Ch 5:4 for another Gog), but he does appear twice in the Septuagint (Nm 24:7; Am 7:1) and in Revelation 20:8. Along with the present passage, these texts describe him as an eschatological enemy of God’s people and of the Messiah.

38:4-13 Gog would have its own wicked motives for invading Israel (vv. 10-13), but God sovereignly was working out his own purposes (vv. 3-4,16). The origin of Gog's army from the **remotest parts of the north** (vv. 6,15; 39:2) parallels the armies mentioned in Jeremiah 6:22 and 50:41. A final eschatological battle is also repeatedly referenced in other prophetic texts (Is 29:5-8; Jr 4:5-8; Jl 2:1-11). Its eschatological context is indicated by the phrase **in the last years** in verse 8 (and **in the last days** in v. 16). This battle evidently takes place after Israel has returned to their land and lived securely there (vv. 8,11-13).

38:16 God's orchestration of Gog's invasion (v. 4) and his defeat of them **in the last days** would powerfully display his holiness before the nations (see v. 23; 39:13,21-24).

38:17 The future invasion of Gog was not unheard of but had been spoken of **in former times** through **the prophets** (see Nm 24:7 LXX).

38:21 The self-destruction of eschatological enemies is also found in Haggai 2:22 and Zechariah 14:13.

38:22 These forms of judgment recall the exodus, the great flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

THE DISPOSAL OF GOG

39 "As for you, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: Look, I am against you, Gog, chief prince of † Meshech and Tubal. † 2 I will turn you around, drive you on, † and lead you up from the remotest parts of the north. I will bring you against the mountains of Israel. 3 Then I will knock your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand. 4 You, all your troops, and the peoples who are with you will fall on the mountains of Israel. I will give you as food to every kind of predatory bird and to the wild animals. 5 You will fall on the open field, † for I have spoken. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

6 " 'I will send fire against Magog † and those who live securely on the coasts and islands. Then they will know that I am the LORD. 7 So I will make my holy name known among my people Israel and will no longer allow it to be profaned. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. † 8 Yes, it is coming, and it will happen. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. This is the day I have spoken about.

9 " 'Then the inhabitants of Israel's cities will go out, kindle fires, and burn the weapons — the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them to make fires. 10 They will not gather wood from the countryside or cut it down from the forests, for they will use the weapons to make fires. They will take the loot from those who looted them and plunder those who plundered them. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

11 “ ‘Now on that day I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel — the Travelers’ Valley † east of the Sea. It will block those who travel through, for Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called Hordes of Gog † Valley. 12 The house of Israel will spend seven months burying them in order to cleanse the land. † 13 All the people of the land will bury them and their fame will spread † on the day I display my glory. † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.
14 “ ‘They will appoint men on a full-time basis to pass through the land and bury the invaders † who remain on the surface of the ground, in order to cleanse it. They will make their search at the end of the seven months. 15 When they pass through the land and one of them sees a human bone, he will set up a marker next to it until the buriers have buried it in Hordes of Gog Valley. 16 There will even be a city named Hamonah † there. So they will cleanse the land.’
17 “Son of man, this is what the Lord GOD says: Tell every kind of bird and all the wild animals, ‘Assemble and come! Gather from all around to my sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you, a great feast on the mountains of Israel; † you will eat flesh and drink blood. 18 You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the earth’s princes: rams, lambs, male goats, and all the fattened bulls of Bashan. 19 You will eat fat until you are satisfied † and drink blood until you are drunk, at my sacrificial feast that I have prepared for you. 20 At my table you will eat your fill of horses and riders, of mighty men and all the warriors. This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.’

ISRAEL’S RESTORATION TO GOD

21 “I will display my glory among the nations, † and all the nations will see the judgment I have executed and the hand I have laid on them. 22 From that day forward the house of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. 23 And the nations will know that the house of Israel went into exile on account of their iniquity, because they dealt unfaithfully with me. † Therefore, I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, so that they all fell by the sword. 24 I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and transgressions, and I hid my face from them.

25 “So this is what the Lord GOD says: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob † and have compassion on the whole house of Israel, † and I will be jealous for my holy name. 26 They will feel remorse for † † their disgrace † and all the unfaithfulness they committed against me, when they live securely in their land with no one to frighten them. 27 When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the countries of their enemies, I will demonstrate my holiness through them in the sight of many nations. † 28 They will know that I am the LORD their God when I regather them to their own land after having exiled them among the nations. I will leave none of them behind. † 29 I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the house of Israel.” † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

39:1 Or *Gog, prince of Rosh,* **39:11** Hb obscure **39:11** = Hamon-gog, also in v. 15 **39:14** Or *basis, some to pass through the land, and with them some to bury those* **39:16** In Hb, *Hamonah* is related to the word “horde.” **39:26** Some emend to *will forget* **39:26** Lit *will bear* **39:28** Lit *behind there any longer*
39:1 Ezk 38:2-3 **39:2** Ezk 38:4 **39:5** Ezk 32:4 **39:6** Am 1:4,7,10 **39:7** Ezk 36:20-23 **39:10** Is 14:2; 33:1 **39:12** Dt 21:23 **39:13** Jr 33:9; Zph 3:19-20 **39:13** Ezk 28:22 **39:17** Rv 19:17-18 **39:19** Rv 19:21 **39:21** Ezk 36:23; 38:16,23 **39:23** Ezk 36:18-20,23 **39:25** Is 27:12-13; Jr 33:7; Ezk 34:13 **39:25** Ezk 36:10; 37:21-22; Hs 1:11 **39:26** Ezk 16:53-54,63 **39:27** Ezk 20:41; 38:23 **39:29** Ezk 36:27; 37:14; Jl 2:28

39:1 The focus on the leader of **Meshech and Tubal** continues (see 38:2-3,14-18). His status as **prince** over these enemies juxtaposes him with the Messiah, who is “prince” over Israel (34:24; 37:25).

39:2-5 God again asserts his sovereignty over Gog and his power over him (see 38:4). The defeat of Gog and his being eaten by **animals** in an open field (vv. 4-5) parallels the fate of Pharaoh in 29:5. As is the case elsewhere (6:2-3; 33:28; 34:13-14; 35:12; 36:1-8; 37:22), dramatic events play out on the **mountains of Israel** (vv. 2,4).

39:6 The **islands** are repeatedly linked to Tyre in Ezekiel 27 (see vv. 3,6-7,15,35).

39:8 This dreadful **day** had been foretold (see the note on 30:2-3) and is elsewhere referred to as the “day of the LORD” (see 13:5; Is 13:6,9; Jl 1:15; 2:1). This is an expression for the time, in the near or distant future, when God breaks into human history, saves his people, and defeats his enemies.

39:9-10 The use of weapons as firewood for **seven years** reinforces the vastness of the enemy forces. Israel’s plundering those **who plundered them** is a reversal of what they suffered at the hands of their enemies (7:21; 34:8,22; 36:4-5) and of the motives of Gog (38:12-13).

39:11-16 The burial of Gog and his hordes generally relates to that of Pharaoh and other nations in Ezekiel 32:18-32. It also contrasts with the resurrection of Israel to form a mighty army (see the note on 37:11-14). The present passage also emphasizes the cleansing of the land (vv. 12,14,16), which itself relates to the themes of cleansing and defilement throughout the book (e.g., 5:11; 22:24; 24:13; 36:25; 37:23).

39:17-20 Again taking up the role of a priest (16:63; 36:25; 37:23), God, in grim fashion this time, invites birds and wild animals to his **table** (v. 20) for the **sacrificial feast** he has prepared. They are to consume the corpses of Gog’s army.

39:21-24 God’s **glory** will thus be evident both in the eyes of Israel and in those of **the nations** (see Is

40:5; 66:19). The former had defiled his sanctuary (8:5-16) and turned against God wholesale (22:24-30), whereas the latter had blasphemed him when Israel was exiled (36:20-21).

39:25-29 The restoration of Israel sharply contrasts with the humiliation of Gog. Likewise, the outpouring of God's **Spirit on the house of Israel** (v. 29; 36:27) contrasts with the outpouring of his wrath in judgment (7:8; 9:8; 22:22,31; 36:18) and fulfills Moses's ancient wish (Nm 11:29)

THE NEW TEMPLE

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month in the fourteenth year after Jerusalem had been captured, † on that very day the LORD's hand was on me, † and he brought me there. 2 In visions of God † he took me to the land of Israel and set me down on a very high mountain. † On its southern slope was a structure resembling a city. 3 He brought me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze, † with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. † He was standing by the city gate. 4 He spoke to me: "Son of man, look with your eyes, listen with your ears, † and pay attention to everything I am going to show you, for you have been brought here so that I might show it to you. Report everything you see to the house of Israel." †

THE WALL AND OUTER GATES

5 Now there was a wall surrounding the outside of the temple. † The measuring rod in the man's hand was six units of twenty-one inches; † each unit was the standard length plus three inches. † He measured the thickness of the wall structure; it was 10 1/2 feet, † and its height was the same. 6 Then he came to the gate that faced east and climbed its steps. † He measured the threshold of the gate; it was 10 1/2 feet deep — one threshold was 10 1/2 feet deep. 7 Each recess was 10 1/2 feet long and 10 1/2 feet deep, and there was a space of 8 3/4 feet † between the recesses. The inner threshold of the gate on the temple side next to the gate's portico was 10 1/2 feet. 8 Next he measured the gate's portico; 9 it † was 14 feet, † and its jambs were 3 1/2 feet. † The gate's portico was on the temple side.

10 There were three recesses on each side of the east gate, each with the same measurements, and the jambs on either side also had the same measurements.

11 Then he measured the width of the gate's entrance; it was 17 1/2 feet, † while
the width † of the gate was 22 3/4 feet. † 12 There was a barrier of 21 inches †
in front of the recesses on both sides, and the recesses on each side were 10 1/2
feet † square. 13 Then he measured the gate from the roof of one recess to the
roof of the opposite one; the distance was 43 3/4 feet. † The openings of the
recesses faced each other. 14 Next, he measured the porch — 105 feet. † †
15 The distance from the front of the gate at the entrance to the front of the
gate's portico on the inside was 87 1/2 feet. † 16 The recesses and their jambs
had beveled windows all around the inside of the gate. † The porticoes also had
windows all around on the inside. Each jamb was decorated with palm trees. †
17 Then he brought me into the outer court, † and there were chambers and a
paved surface laid out all around the court. † Thirty chambers faced the
pavement, 18 which flanked the courtyard's gates and corresponded to the length
of the gates; this was the lower pavement. 19 Then he measured the distance
from the front of the lower gate to the exterior front of the inner court; it was 175
feet. † This was the east; next the north is described.
20 He measured the gate of the outer court facing north, both its length and
width. 21 Its three recesses on each side, its jambs, and its portico had the same
measurements as the first gate: 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 22 Its
windows, portico, and palm trees had the same measurements as those of the
gate that faced east. Seven steps led up to the gate, and its portico was ahead of
them. 23 The inner court had a gate facing the north gate, like the one on the
east. He measured the distance from gate to gate; it was 175 feet.
24 He brought me to the south side, and there was also a gate on the south. He
measured its jambs and portico; they had the same measurements as the others.
25 Both the gate and its portico had windows all around, like the other windows.
It was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 26 Its stairway had seven steps, and
its portico was ahead of them. It had palm trees on its jambs, one on each side.
27 The inner court had a gate on the south. He measured from gate to gate on the
south; it was 175 feet.

THE INNER GATES

28 Then he brought me to the inner court through the south gate. When he measured the south gate, it had the same measurements as the others. 29 Its recesses, jambs, and portico had the same measurements as the others. Both it and its portico had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 30 (There were porticoes all around, 43 3/4 feet long and 8 3/4 feet wide. †) 31 Its portico faced the outer court, and its jambs were decorated with palm trees. Its stairway had eight steps.

32 Then he brought me to the inner court on the east side. When he measured the gate, it had the same measurements as the others. 33 Its recesses, jambs, and portico had the same measurements as the others. Both it and its portico had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 34 Its portico faced the outer court, and its jambs were decorated with palm trees on each side. Its stairway had eight steps.

35 Then he brought me to the north gate. † When he measured it, it had the same measurements as the others, 36 as did its recesses, jambs, and portico. It also had windows all around. It was 87 1/2 feet long and 43 3/4 feet wide. 37 Its portico † faced the outer court, and its jambs were decorated with palm trees on each side. Its stairway had eight steps.

ROOMS FOR PREPARING SACRIFICES

38 There was a chamber whose door opened into the gate's portico. † The burnt offering was to be washed there. † 39 Inside the gate's portico there were two tables on each side, on which to slaughter the burnt offering, sin offering, † and guilt offering. † 40 Outside, as one approaches the entrance of the north gate, there were two tables on one side and two more tables on the other side of the gate's portico. 41 So there were four tables inside the gate and four outside, eight tables in all on which the slaughtering was to be done. 42 There were also four tables of cut stone for the burnt offering, † each 31 1/2 inches † long, 31 1/2 inches wide, and 21 inches high. The utensils used to slaughter the burnt offerings and other sacrifices were placed on them. 43 There were three-inch † hooks † fastened all around the inside of the room, and the flesh of the offering was to be laid on the tables.

ROOMS FOR SINGERS AND PRIESTS

44 Outside the inner gate, within the inner court, there were chambers for the singers: † † one † beside the north gate, facing south, and another beside the south † gate, facing north. 45 Then the man said to me: “This chamber that faces south is for the priests who keep charge of the temple. † 46 The chamber that faces north is for the priests who keep charge of the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, † the ones from the sons of Levi who may approach the LORD to serve him.” † 47 Next he measured the court. It was square, 175 feet long and 175 feet wide. The altar † was in front of the temple.

48 Then he brought me to the portico of the temple and measured the jambs of the portico; they were 8 3/4 feet thick on each side. The width of the gate was 24 1/2 feet, † and the side walls of the gate were † 5 1/4 feet † wide on each side. 49 The portico was 35 feet † across and 21 † feet † deep, and 10 steps led † up to it. † There were pillars by the jambs, one on each side. †

40:5 = a long cubit **40:5** Lit *six cubits by the cubit and a handbreadth* **40:5** Lit *was one rod*, also in v. 7 **40:7** Lit *five cubits*, also in v. 30 **40:8-9** Some Hb mss, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *gate facing the temple side; it was one rod.* 9*Then he measured the gate’s portico; it* **40:9** Lit *eight cubits* **40:9** Lit *two cubits* **40:11** Lit *10 cubits* **40:11** Lit *length* **40:11** Lit *13 cubits* **40:12** Lit *one cubit*, also in v. 42 **40:12** Lit *six cubits* **40:13** Lit *25 cubits*, also in vv. 21,25,29,33,36 **40:14** MT adds *To the jamb of the court, the gate was all around* ; Hb obscure **40:14** Lit *60 cubits* **40:15** Lit *50 cubits*, also in vv. 21,25,29,33,36 **40:19** Lit *100 cubits*, also in vv. 23,27,47 **40:30** Some Hb mss, LXX omit v. 30 **40:37** LXX; MT reads *jambs* **40:38** Text emended; MT reads *door was by the jambs, at the gates* **40:42** Lit *one and a half cubits* **40:43** Lit *one handbreadth* **40:43** Or *ledges* **40:44** LXX reads *were two chambers* **40:44** LXX; MT reads *singers, which was* **40:44** LXX; MT reads *east* **40:48** Lit *14 cubits* **40:48** LXX; MT omits *24 1/2 feet, and the side walls of the gate were* **40:48** Lit *three cubits* **40:49** Lit *20 cubits* **40:49** LXX; MT reads *19 1/4* **40:49** Lit *12 cubits* **40:49** MT reads *and it was on steps that they would go*

40:1 2Kg 25:1-7; Jr 39:1-9; 52:4-11; Ezk 33:21 **40:1** Ezk 1:3; 3:14,22; 37:1 **40:2** Ezk 1:1; 8:3; Dn 7:1,7 **40:2** Is 2:2-3; Ezk 17:23; 20:40; 37:22; Mc 4:1; Rv 21:10 **40:3** Ezk 1:7; Dn 10:6; Rv 1:15 **40:3** Ezk 47:3; Zch 2:1-2; Rv 11:1; 21:15 **40:4** Ezk 2:1,3,6,8; 44:5 **40:4** Ezk 43:10 **40:5** Is 26:1; Ezk 42:20 **40:6** Ezk 43:1 **40:16** 1Kg 6:4; Ezk 41:16,26 **40:16** 1Kg 6:29,32,35; 2Ch 3:5; Ezk 41:18-20,25-26 **40:17** Ezk 10:5; 42:1; 46:21; Rv 11:2 **40:17** 2Kg 23:11; 1Ch 9:26; 23:28; 2Ch 31:11 **40:35** Ezk 47:2 **40:38** 2Ch 4:6 **40:39** Lv 1:3-4; 4:2-3 **40:39** Lv 5:1-6 **40:42** Ex 20:25 **40:44** 1Ch 6:31-32; 16:41-43; 25:1-7 **40:45** 1Ch 9:23; Ps 134:1 **40:46** 1Kg 2:35 **40:46** Lv 6:12-13; Ezk 43:19; 44:15 **40:47** Ezk 43:13-17 **40:49** 1Kg 6:3 **40:49** 1Kg 7:15-22; 2Ch 3:17; Jr 52:17-23; Rv 3:12

40:1-3 The book of Ezekiel began with a dramatic vision (Ezk 1), and it ends with another—this one by far the longest in the book (Ezk 40–48). Jerusalem had fallen (v. 1; 33:21), but Ezekiel saw **a structure resembling a city** (v. 2). His visionary journey **there** (vv. 1,3) forms an inclusio with the name of this eternal city, “The Lord Is There” in 48:35 (see Is 65:18; Rv 21:2). The eschatological nature of this vision is reinforced by the presence of **a very high mountain**, which echoes earlier promises of eternal salvation (17:22-23; 20:40; 34:26).

40:4 Ezekiel’s need to properly use his **eyes** and **ears** and to **pay attention** to understand the vision (see

44:5; Nm 24:3-4,15-16) contrasts with Israel, which lacked such spiritual senses (12:2; Dt 29:4; Is 6:9-10; Jr 5:21). Along these lines, the following vision should not be interpreted in a woodenly literal way but in the sense of the realization of ideals, especially regarding the temple, holiness, and the land. This is consistent with frequent visions and figurative language in the book of Ezekiel (e.g., 17:22-24; 20:40-41; 28:24; 36:17,37-38).

40:5 The focus narrowed first from "the land of Israel" to a "city" (v. 2); here it narrows to **the temple**. Its **wall** is meant to separate the holy from the common (42:20; see the note on 44:20-27), thus fulfilling a long-neglected ideal (22:26; Lv 10:10-11; 11:47; 14:57). This agrees with the purity of the new Jerusalem as described in Revelation 21:27 and 22:15.

40:22 Palm trees (see vv. 16,26,31,34,37) had also decorated Solomon's temple (1Kg 6:29,32,35).

40:38-39 Such references to a **burnt offering**, **sin offering**, and **guilt offering** in Ezekiel 40–48 have long puzzled interpreters (see 42:13; 43:19-25; 44:27-29) because they do not fit with the broader biblical portrait of the new Jerusalem in which animal sacrifice is no longer necessary (see Heb 9:11-14; 10:12-14). As such, the original intention may have been figurative (see the notes on v. 4; 20:39-44; 36:37-38).

40:45-46 Whereas **the priests** have charge of the **temple**, only the **sons of Zadok** have charge of the **altar**. This ministry is a result of their faithfulness in the midst of widespread apostasy (44:15; 48:11; see 2Sm 20:25; 1Ch 29:22).

INSIDE THE TEMPLE

41 Next he brought me into the great hall and measured the jambs; † on
each side the width of the jamb was 10 1/2 feet. † † 2 The width of the
entrance was 17 1/2 feet, † and the side walls of the entrance were 8 3/4 feet †
wide on each side. He also measured the length of the great hall, 70 feet, †
and the width, 35 feet. † † 3 He went inside the next room and measured the jambs
at the entrance; † they were 3 1/2 feet † wide. The entrance was 10 1/2 feet wide,
and the width of the entrance's side walls on each side † was 12 1/4 feet. † 4 He
then measured the length of the room adjacent to the great hall, 35 feet, and the
width, 35 feet. † And he said to me, "This is the most holy place." †

OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE

5 Then he measured the wall of the temple; it was 10 1/2 feet thick. The width of
the side rooms all around the temple was 7 feet. † † 6 The side rooms were
arranged one above another in three stories of thirty rooms each. † There were
ledges on the wall of the temple all around to serve as supports for the side
rooms, so that the supports would not be in the temple wall itself. † 7 The side
rooms surrounding the temple widened at each successive story, for the structure
surrounding the temple went up by stages. This was the reason for the temple's

broadness as it rose. And so, one would go up from the lowest story to the highest by means of the middle one. † †

8 I saw that the temple had a raised platform surrounding it; this foundation for the side rooms was 10 1/2 feet high. † † 9 The thickness of the outer wall of the side rooms was 8 3/4 feet. The free space between the side rooms of the temple 10 and the outer chambers was 35 feet wide all around the temple. † 11 The side rooms opened into the free space, one entrance toward the north and another to the south. The area of free space was 8 3/4 feet wide all around.

12 Now the building that faced the temple yard toward the west was 122 1/2 feet † wide. The wall of the building was 8 3/4 feet thick on all sides, and the building's length was 157 1/2 feet. †

13 Then the man measured the temple; it was 175 feet † long. † In addition, the temple yard and the building, including its walls, were 175 feet long. 14 The width of the front of the temple along with the temple yard to the east was 175 feet. 15 Next he measured the length of the building facing the temple yard to the west, with its galleries † on each side; † it was 175 feet.

INTERIOR WOODEN STRUCTURES

The interior of the great hall and the porticoes of the court — 16 the thresholds, the beveled windows, † and the balconies all around with their three levels opposite the threshold — were overlaid with wood on all sides. † They were paneled from the ground to the windows (but the windows were covered), 17 reaching to the top of the entrance, and as far as the inner temple and on the outside. On every wall all around, on the inside and outside, was a pattern 18 carved with cherubim and palm trees. † There was a palm tree between each pair of cherubim. † Each cherub had two faces: 19 a human face turned toward the palm tree on one side, † and a lion's face turned toward it on the other. They were carved throughout the temple on all sides. 20 Cherubim and palm trees were carved from the ground to the top of the entrance and on the wall of the great hall.

21 The doorposts of the great hall were square, † and the front of the sanctuary had the same appearance. 22 The altar was † made of wood, 5 1/4 feet † high

and 3 1/2 feet long. † It had corners, and its length † and sides were of wood. †
The man told me, “This is the table that stands before the LORD.” †
23 The great hall and the sanctuary each had a double door, † 24 and each of the
doors had two swinging panels. † There were two panels for one door and two
for the other. 25 Cherubim and palm trees were carved on the doors of the great
hall like those carved on the walls. There was a wooden canopy † † outside, in
front of the portico. 26 There were beveled windows and palm trees on both
sides, † on the side walls of the portico, the side rooms of the temple, and the
canopies. †

41:1 LXX; MT reads *jambs; they were 10 1/2 feet wide on each side — the width of the tabernacle* **41:1** Lit *six cubits*, also in vv. 3,5 **41:2** Lit *10 cubits* **41:2** Lit *five cubits*, also in vv. 9,11,12 **41:2** Lit *40 cubits* **41:2** Lit *20 cubits*, also in vv. 4,10 **41:3** Lit *two cubits*, also in v. 22 **41:3** LXX; MT reads *width of the entrance* **41:3** Lit *seven cubits* **41:5** Lit *four cubits* **41:6** Lit *another three and thirty times* **41:7** Hb obscure **41:8** Lit *a full rod of six cubits of a joint* ; Hb obscure **41:12** Lit *70 cubits* **41:12** Lit *90 cubits* **41:13** Lit *100 cubits* **41:15** Or *ledges* **41:21-22** Or *and in front of the sanctuary was something that looked like* 22*an altar* **41:22** Lit *three cubits* **41:22** LXX reads *long and 3 1/2 feet wide* **41:22** LXX reads *base* **41:25** Hb obscure **41:26** Hb obscure

41:1 Ezk 40:2-3,17 **41:2** 1Kg 6:2,17 **41:3** Ezk 40:16 **41:4** 1Kg 6:20 **41:4** 1Kg 6:16 **41:5** 1Kg 6:5-10 **41:6** 1Kg 6:6 **41:7** 1Kg 6:8 **41:8** Ezk 40:5 **41:10** Ezk 40:17 **41:13** Ezk 40:47 **41:15** Ezk 42:3,5 **41:16** 1Kg 6:4; Ezk 40:16,25 **41:16** 1Kg 6:15 **41:18** 1Kg 6:29 **41:18** 2Ch 3:5; Ezk 40:16 **41:19** Ezk 1:10; 10:14 **41:21** 1Kg 6:33; Ezk 40:9,14,16; 41:1 **41:22** Ex 30:1-3; 1Kg 6:20; Rv 8:3 **41:22** Ex 25:23,30; Lv 24:6; Ezk 23:41; 44:16; Mal 1:7,12 **41:23** 1Kg 6:31-35 **41:24** 1Kg 6:34 **41:25** 1Kg 7:6 **41:26** Ezk 40:16

41:4 Like the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple (Ex 26:33; 1Kg 8:6), this temple has a **most holy place**. There is no mention of an ark, which agrees with Jeremiah 3:16.

41:18-19 Cherubim also decorated the tabernacle and Solomon’s temple (Ex 25:18-22; 1Kg 6:23-29) and guarded the garden of Eden (Gn 3:24). They also played significant parts in Ezekiel’s visions (9:3; 10:19-20; 11:22), where they displayed the glory of the Lord and likewise had multiple faces (1:3-11).

41:22 This **table** corresponds to similar items in the tabernacle and in Solomon’s temple (Ex 25:23; 1Kg 7:48). This piece, however, is also referred to as an **altar**.

THE PRIESTS’ CHAMBERS

42 Then the man led me out by way of the north gate into the outer court. † He brought me to the group of chambers opposite the temple
yard and opposite the building † to the north. 2 Along the length of the
chambers, which was 175 feet, † † there was an entrance on the north; the
width was 87 1/2 feet. † 3 Opposite the 35 foot space † belonging to the inner
court and opposite the paved surface † belonging to the outer court, the structure

rose gallery by gallery † in three tiers. 4 In front of the chambers was a walkway toward the inside, † 17 1/2 feet † wide and 175 feet long, † and their entrances were on the north. 5 The upper chambers were narrower because the galleries took away more space from them than from the lower and middle stories of the building. 6 For they were arranged in three stories and had no pillars like the pillars of the courts; † therefore the upper chambers were set back from the ground more than the lower and middle stories. 7 A wall on the outside ran in front of the chambers, parallel to them, toward the outer court; it was 87 1/2 feet long. 8 For the chambers on the outer court were 87 1/2 feet long, while those facing the great hall were 175 feet long. † 9 At the base of these chambers there was an entryway on the east side as one enters them from the outer court. †

10 In the thickness of the wall of the court toward the south, † there were chambers facing the temple yard † and the western building, 11 with a passageway in front of them, just like the chambers that faced north. † Their length and width, as well as all their exits, measurements, and entrances, were identical. 12 The entrance at the beginning of the passageway, the way in front of the corresponding † wall as one enters on the east side, was similar to the entrances of the chambers that were on the south side.

13 Then the man said to me, “The northern and southern chambers that face the courtyard are the holy chambers where the priests who approach the LORD will eat † the most holy offerings. † There they will deposit the most holy offerings — the grain offerings, sin offerings, and guilt offerings — for the place is holy. † 14 Once the priests have entered, they are not to go out from the holy area to the outer court until they have removed the clothes they minister in, for these are holy. † They are to put on other clothes before they approach the public area.” †

OUTSIDE DIMENSIONS OF THE TEMPLE COMPLEX

15 When he finished measuring inside the temple complex, he led me out by way of the gate that faced east and measured all around the complex. †

16 He measured the east side with a measuring rod;
it was 875 feet † by the measuring rod. †
17 He † measured the north side;
it was 875 feet by the measuring rod.
18 He † measured the south side;
it was 875 feet by the measuring rod.
19 Then he turned to the west side
and measured 875 feet by the measuring rod.

20 He measured the temple complex on all four sides. It had a wall all around it, † 875 feet long and 875 feet † wide, to separate the holy from the common. †

42:2 Lit *100 cubits*, also in vv. 4,8 **42:2** Lit *50 cubits*, also in v. 7 **42:3** Lit *20 cubits* **42:4** Lit *10 cubits* **42:4** LXX, Syr; MT reads *wide, a way of one cubit* **42:10** LXX; MT reads *east* **42:12** Or *protective* ; Hb obscure **42:16** Lit *500 in rods*, also in vv. 17,18,19 **42:16** Lit *rod all around*, also in vv. 17,18,19 **42:17** LXX reads *Then he turned to the north and* **42:18** LXX reads *Then he turned to the south and*
42:1 Ezk 40:17,28,48; 41:1 **42:1** Ezk 41:12; 42:10,13 **42:2** Ezk 41:13 **42:3** Ezk 40:17 **42:3** Ezk 41:15-16 **42:4** Ezk 46:19 **42:6** Ezk 41:6 **42:8** Ezk 41:13-14 **42:9** Ezk 44:5; 46:19 **42:10** Ezk 42:1 **42:11** Ezk 42:4 **42:13** Lv 10:3; Dt 21:5; Ezk 40:46 **42:13** Ex 29:31; Lv 7:6; 10:13-14,17 **42:13** Lv 6:25,29; 14:13; Nm 18:9-10 **42:14** Ex 29:4-9; Lv 8:7,13; Is 61:10; Zch 3:4-5 **42:14** Ezk 44:19 **42:15** Ezk 40:6; 43:1 **42:20** Is 60:18; Ezk 40:5; Zch 2:5 **42:20** Ezk 45:2; Rv 21:16 **42:20** Ezk 22:26; 44:23; 48:15

42:13-14 The priests' handling of offerings and special clothing appropriately honors God's holiness, in contrast with what had been done in the past (22:26).

RETURN OF THE LORD'S GLORY

43 He led me to the gate, † the one that faces east, 2 and I saw the glory of the God of Israel † coming from the east. † His voice sounded like the roar of a huge torrent, † and the earth shone with his glory. † 3 The vision I saw † was like the one I had seen when he † came to destroy the city, † and like the ones I had seen by the Chebar Canal. † I fell facedown. † 4 The glory of the LORD entered the temple by way of the gate that faced east. † 5 Then the Spirit lifted me up † and brought me to the inner court, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. †

6 While the man was standing beside me, I heard someone speaking to me from the temple. † 7 He said to me: “Son of man, this is the place of my throne and the place for the soles of my feet, † where I will dwell among the Israelites forever. † The house of Israel and their kings will no longer defile my holy name by their religious prostitution and by the corpses † † of their kings at their high places. † † 8 Whenever they placed their threshold next to my threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they were defiling my holy name by the detestable acts they committed. † So I destroyed them in my anger. 9 Now let them remove their prostitution and the corpses † of their kings far from me, and I will dwell among them forever. †

10 “As for you, son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel, † so that they may be ashamed of their iniquities. † Let them measure its pattern, †
11 and they will be ashamed of all that they have done. Reveal † the design of the temple to them — its layout with its exits and entrances † — its complete design along with all its statutes, design specifications, and laws. Write it down in their sight † so that they may observe its complete design and all its statutes and may carry them out. † 12 This is the law of the temple: All its surrounding territory on top of the mountain † will be especially holy. Yes, this is the law of the temple.

THE ALTAR

13 “These are the measurements of the altar † in units of length (each unit being the standard length plus three inches): † † The gutter is 21 inches † deep and 21 inches wide, with a rim of nine inches † around its edge. This is the base † of the altar. 14 The distance from the gutter on the ground to the lower ledge is 3 1/2 feet, † and the width of the ledge is 21 inches. There are 7 feet † from the small ledge to the large ledge, whose width is also 21 inches. 15 The altar hearth † is 7 feet high, and four horns † project upward from the hearth. 16 The hearth is square, 21 feet † long by 21 feet wide. † 17 The ledge is 24 1/2 feet †

long by 24 1/2 feet wide, with four equal sides. † The rim all around it is 10 1/2 inches, † and its gutter is 21 inches all around it. The altar's steps face east." †
18 Then he said to me: "Son of man, † this is what the Lord GOD says: These are the statutes for the altar on the day it is constructed, so that burnt offerings † may be sacrificed on it and blood may be splattered on it: † 19 You are to give a bull from the herd † as a sin offering † to the Levitical priests who are from the offspring of Zadok, † who approach me in order to serve me." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 20 "You are to take some of its blood and apply it to the four horns † of the altar, the four corners of the ledge, and all around the rim. In this way you will purify the altar and make atonement for it. † 21 Then you are to take away the bull for the sin offering, and it must be burned outside the sanctuary in the place appointed for the temple. †
22 "On the second day you are to present an unblemished male goat as a sin offering. They will purify the altar just as they did with the bull. 23 When you have finished the purification, you are to present a young, unblemished bull † and an unblemished ram from the flock. † 24 You are to present them before the LORD; the priests will throw salt on them and sacrifice them as a burnt offering to the LORD. † 25 You will offer a goat for a sin offering each day for seven days. † A young bull and a ram from the flock, both unblemished, are also to be offered. 26 For seven days the priests are to make atonement for the altar and cleanse it. In this way they will consecrate it † 27 and complete the days of purification. Then on the eighth day † and afterward, the priests will offer your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar, and I will accept you." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

43:3 Some Hb mss, Theod, Vg; other Hb mss, LXX, Syr read *I* **43:7** Or *monuments*, also in v. 9 **43:7** Some Hb mss, Theod, Tg read *their death* **43:10-11** LXX, Vg; MT reads *pattern.* 11*And if they are ashamed . . . done, reveal* **43:13** Lit *in cubits (a cubit being a cubit plus a handbreadth)* **43:13** Lit *one cubit*, also in vv. 14,17 **43:13** Lit *one span* **43:13** LXX reads *height* **43:14** Lit *two cubits* **43:14** Lit *four cubits*, also in v. 15 **43:15** Hb obscure **43:16** Lit *12 cubits* **43:17** Lit *14 cubits* **43:17** Lit *one-half cubit* **43:26** Lit *will fill its hands*

43:1 Ezk 10:19; 40:6; 42:15; 44:1 **43:2** Is 6:3; Ezk 1:28; 3:23; 10:18-19 **43:2** Ezk 11:22-23 **43:2** Ezk 1:24; Rv 1:15 **43:2** Ezk 1:28; 10:4; Rv 18:1 **43:3** Ezk 1:4-28 **43:3** Jr 1:10; Ezk 9:1 **43:3** Ezk 1:3 **43:3** Ezk 1:28; 3:23 **43:4** Ezk 10:19 **43:5** Ezk 3:14; 2Co 12:2-4 **43:5** Ezk 10:4 **43:6** Ezk 1:26 **43:7** Ps 47:8 **43:7** Ezk 37:26-28 **43:7** Lv 26:30; Ezk 6:5,13 **43:7** Ezk 6:3-5 **43:8** Ezk 8:3 **43:9** Ezk 18:30 **43:9** Ezk 37:26-28 **43:10** Ezk

40:4 **43:10** Ezk 16:61-63 **43:10** Ezk 28:12 **43:11** Ezk 44:5 **43:11** Ezk 12:3 **43:11** Ezk 11:20 **43:12** Ezk 40:2 **43:13** Ex 27:1-8; 2Ch 4:1 **43:13** Ezk 40:5 **43:15** Ex 27:2; Lv 9:9; 1Kg 1:50; Ps 118:27 **43:16** Ex 27:1 **43:17** Ex 20:26 **43:17** Ezk 40:6 **43:18** Ezk 2:1 **43:18** Ex 40:29 **43:18** Lv 1:5,11; Heb 9:21-22 **43:19** Lv 4:3 **43:19** Ezk 45:19; Heb 7:27 **43:19** 1Kg 2:35; Ezk 40:46 **43:19** Nm 16:5 **43:20** Lv 8:15; 9:9 **43:20** Lv 16:19 **43:21** Ex 29:14; Lv 4:12; Heb 13:11 **43:23** Ex 29:1,10; Ezk 45:18 **43:23** Ex 29:1 **43:24** Lv 2:13; Nm 18:19; Mk 9:49-50; Col 4:6 **43:25** Ex 29:35-37; Lv 8:33 **43:27** Lv 9:1 **43:27** Ezk 20:40

43:1-5 Even more significant than the temple itself is the entrance of the **glory** of God **coming from the east**. This glory had departed in the same direction from the first temple because of the people's detestable idolatry (see the notes on 8:5-6; 10:18-19; 11:23). Now it returns (in Ezekiel's vision) as a sign of the restored relationship between God and the permanent removal of their evil deeds. Ezekiel's present vision of glory (v. 3) resembles his previous ones (see 1:3-4; 3:23; 9:1-7).

43:7-9 God's promise to **dwell among the Israelites forever** parallels his promise to set his "sanctuary among them forever" in 37:26-28. The glorious temple is thus associated with the new covenant and messianic rule described in the earlier context. Israel no longer defiling God's name (v. 7) likewise relates to 36:20 and 37:23. The particular sins in view here relate to idolatry (religious **prostitution**; see 8:8-12) seemingly linked to burying kings within the temple precincts. Proper **thresholds** and **doorposts** are described above in 40:6-7 and 41:16,21.

43:10-12 The detailed description of the ideal temple also has the purpose of bringing conviction of sin (vv. 10-11). This building has **statutes** and **laws** (v. 11; 18:9; 36:27; see the note on 44:5), the most important of which is the top of the mountain. Its surrounding **will be especially holy** (v. 12).

43:18 More specific **statutes** (see the previous note) concern the construction of the **altar.** The attention to detail in the following verses points to the importance of careful concern for God's requirements.

43:26 Elsewhere in Ezekiel God makes **atonement** and cleanses his people (16:63; 36:25,33; 37:23), so this and other similar statements in Ezekiel 40–48 may be figurative (v. 20; 45:15,17,20; see the notes on v. 27; 40:4).

43:27 The construction and consecration of **the altar** allows for God's acceptance of his people, as promised in 20:40-41 and 36:37.

THE PRINCE'S PRIVILEGE

44 The man then brought me back toward the sanctuary's outer gate that faced east, and it was closed. 2 The LORD said to me: "This gate will remain closed. It will not be opened, and no one will enter through it, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it. † Therefore it will remain closed. 3 The prince himself will sit in the gate to eat a meal before the LORD. † He is to enter by way of the portico † of the gate and go out the same way."

4 Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple. I looked, and the glory of the LORD filled his temple. † And I fell facedown. †

5 The LORD said to me: "Son of man, pay attention; † look with your eyes and listen with your ears to everything I tell you about all the statutes and laws of the

LORD's temple. † Take careful note of the entrance of the temple along with all the exits of the sanctuary.

THE LEVITES' DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES

6 "Say to the rebellious people, † the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord GOD says: I have had enough † of all your detestable practices, house of Israel. 7 When you brought in foreigners, † uncircumcised in both heart and flesh, † to occupy my sanctuary, you defiled my temple while you offered my food — the fat and the blood. You † broke my covenant by all your detestable practices. 8 You have not kept charge of my holy things † but have appointed others to keep charge of my sanctuary for you.'

9 "This is what the Lord GOD says: No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart and flesh, may enter my sanctuary, not even a foreigner who is among the Israelites. 10 Surely the Levites who wandered away from me when Israel went astray, and who strayed from me after their idols, † will bear the consequences of their iniquity. † 11 Yet they will occupy my sanctuary, serving as guards at the temple gates † and ministering at the temple. They will slaughter the burnt offerings † and other sacrifices for the people and will stand before them to serve them. † 12 Because they ministered to the house of Israel before their idols and became a sinful stumbling block to them, therefore I swore an oath † against them" † — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — "that they would bear the consequences of their iniquity. 13 They must not approach me to serve me as priests † or come near any of my holy things or the most holy things. They will bear their disgrace and the consequences of the detestable acts they committed. 14 Yet I will make them responsible for the duties of the temple † — for all its work and everything done in it.

THE PRIESTS' DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES

15 "But the Levitical priests descended from Zadok, † who kept charge of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, will approach me to serve me. They will stand before me to offer me fat and blood." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 16 "They are the ones who may enter my sanctuary † and

approach my table to serve me. † They will keep my mandate. 17 When they enter the gates of the inner court they are to wear linen garments; † they must not have on them anything made of wool when they minister at the gates of the inner court and within it. 18 They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. † They are not to put on anything that makes them sweat. 19 Before they go out to the outer court, † to the people, they must take off the clothes they have been ministering in, leave them in the holy chambers, and dress in other clothes † so that they do not transmit holiness to the people through their clothes. †

20 "They may not shave their heads † or let their hair grow long, † but are to carefully trim their hair. 21 No priest may drink wine before he enters the inner court. † 22 He is not to marry a widow or a divorced woman, but may marry only a virgin from the offspring of the house of Israel, † or a widow who is the widow of a priest. 23 They are to teach my people the difference between the holy and the common, and explain to them the difference between the clean and the unclean. †

24 "In a dispute, they will officiate as judges and decide the case according to my ordinances. † They are to observe my laws and statutes regarding all my appointed festivals, and keep my Sabbaths holy. † 25 A priest may not come near a dead person so that he becomes defiled. † However, he may defile himself for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or an unmarried sister. 26 After he is cleansed, he is to count off seven days for himself. † 27 On the day he goes into the sanctuary, into the inner court † to minister in the sanctuary, he is to present his sin offering." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

28 "This will be their inheritance: I am their inheritance. † You are to give them no possession in Israel: I am their possession. 29 They will eat the grain offering, the sin offering, † and the guilt offering. Everything in Israel that is permanently dedicated to the LORD will belong to them. † 30 The best of all the firstfruits of every kind and contribution of every kind from all your gifts will belong to the priests. † You are to give your first batch of dough to the priest † so that a

blessing may rest on your homes. † 31 The priests may not eat any bird or animal that died naturally or was mauled by wild beasts. †

44:7 LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *They* **44:12** Lit *I lifted my hand* **44:19** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *court, to the outer court*

44:2 Ezk 43:2-4 **44:3** Gn 31:54; Ex 24:9-11 **44:3** Ezk 46:2,8-10 **44:4** Is 6:3; Ezk 3:23; 43:5 **44:4** Ezk 1:28; 43:3 **44:5** Dt 32:46; Ezk 40:4 **44:5** Dt 12:32; Ezk 43:10-11 **44:6** Ezk 2:5-7; 3:9 **44:6** Ezk 45:9; 1Pt 4:3 **44:7** Lv 22:25 **44:7** Lv 26:41; Dt 10:16; Jr 4:4; 9:26 **44:8** Lv 22:2; Nm 18:7 **44:10** 2Kg 23:8-9 **44:10** Nm 18:23 **44:11** 1Ch 26:1-19 **44:11** 2Ch 29:34; 30:17 **44:11** Nm 16:9 **44:12** Ps 106:26 **44:13** 2Kg 23:9 **44:14** Nm 18:4; 1Ch 23:28-32 **44:15** Ezk 40:46 **44:16** Nm 18:5,7-8 **44:16** Ezk 41:22 **44:17** Ex 28:42-43; 39:27-29 **44:18** Ex 28:40 **44:19** Ezk 42:14 **44:19** Lv 6:27 **44:20** Lv 21:5 **44:20** Nm 6:5 **44:21** Lv 10:9 **44:22** Lv 21:7,13-14 **44:23** Lv 10:10; Ezk 22:26 **44:24** Dt 17:8-9; 2Ch 19:8 **44:24** Ezk 20:20; 22:26 **44:25** Lv 21:1-4 **44:26** Nm 19:11-19 **44:27** Lv 5:3,6 **44:28** Nm 18:20; Dt 18:2; Jos 13:33 **44:29** Nm 18:9,14; Jos 13:14 **44:29** Lv 27:21,28 **44:30** Nm 18:8-13; Neh 10:35-37 **44:30** Nm 15:20-21 **44:30** Mal 3:10 **44:31** Lv 22:8

44:1-3 The east gate was closed out of reverence for God's entrance through it (see 43:1-5). The **prince** who may enter and exit by **the portico** of this gate may be a reference to the Messiah. Ezekiel 37:25 states that "David" (a messianic title) will be "prince forever." In 45:22, however, the prophet states that the prince will offer a sin offering for himself for seven days (45:23). This is difficult to reconcile with the Messiah who is without sin (Heb 9:22-28). It may be that the prince in the present passage is a special administrator of the temple who serves the Messiah.

44:5 As in 40:4, Ezekiel is to use his **eyes** and **ears** to understand. Reference to the **statutes** and **laws** of the temple, especially its **entrance** and **exits** (43:10-12), is again paired with confrontation of Israel's sins (vv. 6-14; 43:7-9). This suggests that these terms are meant to recall God's instructions more generally and Israel's habitual disobedience to them (5:6; 20:13,16,21,24).

44:6-10 Mention of temple "statutes and laws" (v. 5; 43:11-12) is again associated with disobedience to God's instructions generally. As in 43:7-9, the sin committed is defiling the temple (see the note on 5:11-12). The problem here is not merely being uncircumcised physically but being so in **heart** (see 31:18; 32:19-32; Dt 30:6; Jr 4:4; 9:25-26). **The Levites** were especially responsible and would bear the consequences (v. 10), thus repeating an important theme in Ezekiel (see the notes on 3:16-21; 4:4-17; 7:15-16; 9:8-10).

44:12 The Levites were complicit in Israel's idolatry and became a **stumbling block to them** (see 7:19; 14:3-7).

44:15 In contrast with the Levites (vv. 10,12), the Zadokite priests faithfully kept charge of the **sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from** [God] (see 14:11; 40:46; 43:19; 48:11). These verses thus reiterate that spiritual leaders will be held accountable (see 3:17-21; 14:9; 34:2-10; Jms 3:1).

44:17-19 As in 42:14 (see 46:20), special attention had been given to priestly **garments** for the sake of properly respecting what is holy (see Ex 28:40-42; 39:27-29).

44:20-27 The following priestly regulations resemble those from Leviticus 10:6,9-11 and 21:1-7. The priests thus embody the ideals of holiness that were originally intended. Perhaps the priests here in some way represent God's people generally (see the following note), since other OT passages prophesy the expansion of the priesthood (Ex 19:6; Is 61:6; 66:20-21). In contrast to their earlier failure (see the note on 22:26) and consistent with the purpose of the temple wall (see the note on 40:5; 42:20), the priests teach the **difference between the holy and the common** and **between the clean and the unclean** (v. 23), as they were supposed to have done (Lv 10:10-11).

44:28 Consistent with Numbers 18:20 and Deuteronomy 18:2, the priests would not receive land in Israel

because God is **their inheritance.** In Psalm 16:5-6 (see note), the psalmist generalizes this experience and applies it to himself.

THE SACRED PORTION OF THE LAND

45 "When you divide the land by lot as an inheritance, † set aside a
donation to the LORD, a holy portion of the land, † 8 1/3 miles † long
and 6 2/3 miles † wide. This entire region will be holy. 2 In this area there will
be a square section † for the sanctuary, 875 by 875 feet, † † with 87 1/2 feet †
of open space all around it. 3 From this holy portion, † you will measure off an
area 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles † wide, in which the sanctuary, the most
holy place, † will stand. † 4 It will be a holy area of the land to be used by the
priests who minister in the sanctuary, who approach to serve the LORD. † It will
be a place for their houses, as well as a holy area for the sanctuary. 5 There will
be another area 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide for the Levites who minister
in the temple; † it will be their possession for towns to live in. †
6 "As the property of the city, set aside an area 1 2/3 miles † wide and 8 1/3
miles long, adjacent to the holy donation of land. † It will be for the whole
house of Israel. 7 And the prince will have the area on each side of the holy
donation of land and the city's property, adjacent to the holy donation and the
city's property, stretching to the west on the west side and to the east on the east
side. † Its length will correspond to one of the tribal portions from the western
boundary to the eastern boundary. 8 This will be his land as a possession in
Israel. My princes will no longer oppress my people † but give the rest of the
land to the house of Israel according to their tribes.
9 "This is what the Lord GOD says: You have gone too far, † † princes of Israel!
Put away violence and oppression and do what is just and right. † Put an end to
your evictions of my people." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 10 "You
are to have honest scales, an honest dry measure, † and an honest liquid
measure. † † 11 The dry measure † and the liquid measure † will be uniform,
with the liquid measure containing 5 1/2 gallons † and the dry measure holding
half a bushel. † Their measurement will be a tenth of the standard larger

capacity measure. † 12 The shekel † will weigh twenty gerahs. † Your mina will equal sixty shekels.

THE PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE SACRIFICES

13 "This is the contribution you are to offer: Three quarts † from five bushels † of wheat and † three quarts from five bushels of barley. 14 The quota of oil in liquid measures † will be one percent of every † cor. The cor equals ten liquid measures or one standard larger capacity measure, † since ten liquid measures equal one standard larger capacity measure. 15 And the quota from the flock is one animal out of every two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These are for the grain offerings, burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings, to make atonement for the people." † This is the declaration of the Lord GOD. 16 "All the people of the land must take part in this contribution for the prince in Israel. 17 Then the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings for the festivals, New Moons, and Sabbaths — for all the appointed times of the house of Israel — will be the prince's responsibility. He will provide the sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings to make atonement on behalf of the house of Israel.

18 "This is what the Lord GOD says: In the first month, on the first day of the month, you are to take a young, unblemished bull and purify the sanctuary. 19 The priest is to take some of the blood from the sin offering and apply it to the temple doorposts, the four corners of the altar's ledge, and the doorposts of the gate of the inner court. † 20 You are to do the same thing on the seventh day of the month for everyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance. † In this way you will make atonement for the temple.

21 "In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you are to celebrate the Passover, a festival of seven days during which unleavened bread will be eaten. † 22 On that day the prince will provide a bull as a sin offering on behalf of himself and all the people of the land. 23 During the seven days of the festival, he will provide seven bulls and seven rams without blemish as a burnt offering to the LORD on each of the seven days, along with a male goat each day for a sin offering. 24 He will also provide a grain offering of half a bushel † per bull and half a bushel per ram, along with a gallon † of oil for every half bushel.

25 At the festival that begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, † † he will provide the same things for seven days — the same sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings, and oil.

45:1 Lit *25,000 cubits*, also in vv. 3,5,6 **45:1** LXX reads *20,000 cubits* ; MT reads *10,000 cubits* **45:2** Lit *square all around* **45:2** Lit *500 by 500 cubits* **45:2** Lit *50 cubits* **45:3** Lit *this measured portion* **45:3** Lit *10,000 cubits*, also in v. 5 **45:3** Lit *be* **45:5** LXX; MT, Syr, Tg, Vg read *possession — 20 chambers* **45:6** Lit *5,000 cubits* **45:9** Lit *Enough of you* **45:10** Lit *an honest ephah* **45:10** Lit *and an honest bath* **45:11** Lit *The ephah* **45:11** Lit *the bath* **45:11** Lit *one-tenth of a homer* **45:11** Lit *one-tenth of a homer* **45:11** Lit *be based on the homer* **45:12** A shekel is about two-fifths of an ounce of silver **45:13** Lit *One-sixth of an ephah* **45:13** Lit *a homer* **45:13** LXX, Vg; MT reads *and you are to give* **45:14** Lit *oil, the bath, the oil* **45:14** Lit *be a tenth of the bath from the* **45:14** Lit *10 baths, a homer* **45:24** Lit *an ephah* **45:24** Lit *a hin* **45:25** = the Festival of Shelters

45:1 Ezk 47:21; 48:29 **45:1** Ezk 48:8-9 **45:2** Ezk 42:20 **45:3** Ezk 43:12 **45:4** Ezk 48:10-11 **45:5** Ezk 48:13 **45:6** Ezk 48:15-18 **45:7** Ezk 48:21 **45:8** Ezk 19:7; 22:27 **45:9** Ezk 44:6 **45:9** Jr 22:3 **45:10** Lv 19:36; Dt 25:15 **45:12** Ex 30:13; Lv 27:25 **45:15** Lv 1:4; 6:30 **45:19** Ezk 43:20 **45:20** Lv 4:2; 5:17 **45:21** Ex 12:18; Lv 23:4-8; Nm 28:16-17; Dt 16:1 **45:25** Lv 23:33-43; Dt 16:13-15

45:1-7 Mention of the priestly **inheritance** (44:28) naturally transitions to further discussion of the division of the land as an inheritance. The **holy portion** for the **sanctuary** is set aside first (vv. 1-5), followed by land for **the city** (v. 6) and for **the prince** (v. 7). The division of the rest of the land among the tribes of Israel is treated in 47:13–48:29.

45:8-9 The vision again makes specific reference to the sins of Israel (see 43:7-11; 44:6-15). This time it is the **princes of Israel** (see 12:10; 19:1; 21:12,25-27; 22:6) who are singled out for **violence** and **oppression**. They had been guilty of using dishonest weights and measures (vv. 10-12; Lv 19:36) and seizure of land (46:18).

45:15-17 In place of the adversarial relationship between prince and people (vv. 8-9), the picture here is of harmonious collaboration. The people make their contribution to the prince, who is responsible for the offerings **for all the appointed times of the house of Israel** (v. 17). His role in the **sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and fellowship offerings** (see Lv 1–5) for making **atonement** on behalf of Israel casts him in a priestly role (see the note on 44:1-3).

45:18-20 The purification of the sanctuary is accomplished via a **sin offering.** Such **atonement for the temple** in view of the people's sins (v. 20) recalls the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:16).

45:21-22 The priestly act of the **prince** in bringing a **sin offering** is in keeping with verse 17. The celebration of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread specifically with sin offerings is absent from Exodus 12:1-28 but is in line with "second exodus" themes (see the notes on Is 52:11-12; 53:10; 1Co 5:6-8).

45:25 This **festival** is the Festival of Shelters (Lv 23:33-36,39-43).

SACRIFICES AT APPOINTED TIMES

46 "This is what the Lord GOD says: The gate of the inner court that faces east is to be closed during the six days of work, but it will be opened on the Sabbath day † and opened on the day of the New Moon. 2 The prince should enter from the outside by way of the gate's portico and stand at the

gate's doorpost while the priests sacrifice his burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He will bow in worship at the gate's threshold and then depart, but the gate is not to be closed until evening. 3 The people of the land will also bow in worship before the LORD at the entrance of that gate on the Sabbaths and New Moons.

4 "The burnt offering that the prince presents to the LORD † on the Sabbath day is to be six unblemished lambs † and an unblemished ram. 5 The grain offering will be half a bushel † with the ram, † and the grain offering with the lambs will be whatever he wants to give, as well as a gallon † of oil for every half bushel. 6 On the day of the New Moon, the burnt offering is to be a young, unblemished bull, as well as six lambs and a ram without blemish. 7 He will provide a grain offering of half a bushel with the bull, half a bushel with the ram, and whatever he can afford with the lambs, together with a gallon of oil for every half bushel. 8 When the prince enters, † he is to go in by way of the gate's portico and go out the same way.

9 "When the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed times, † † whoever enters by way of the north gate to worship is to go out by way of the south gate, and whoever enters by way of the south gate is to go out by way of the north gate. No one may return through the gate by which he entered, but is to go out by the opposite gate. 10 When the people enter, the prince will enter with them, and when they leave, he will leave. 11 At the festivals and appointed times, the grain offering will be half a bushel with the bull, half a bushel with the ram, and whatever he wants to give with the lambs, along with a gallon of oil for every half bushel.

12 "When the prince makes a freewill offering, whether a burnt offering or a fellowship offering as a freewill offering to the LORD, † the gate that faces east is to be opened for him. He is to offer his burnt offering or fellowship offering just as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he will go out, and the gate is to be closed after he leaves.

13 "You are to offer an unblemished year-old male lamb as a daily burnt offering to the LORD; you will offer it every morning. † 14 You are also to prepare a grain offering every morning along with it: three quarts, † with one-third of a gallon † of oil to moisten the fine flour — a grain offering to the LORD. This is a

permanent statute to be observed regularly. 15 They will offer the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil every morning as a regular burnt offering.

TRANSFER OF ROYAL LANDS

16 "This is what the Lord GOD says: If the prince gives a gift to each of his sons as their inheritance, it will belong to his sons. It will become their property by inheritance. 17 But if he gives a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, it will belong to that servant until the year of freedom, † when it will revert to the prince. His inheritance belongs only to his sons; it is theirs. 18 The prince must not take any of the people's inheritance, evicting them from their property. † He is to provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of my people will be displaced from his own property."

THE TEMPLE KITCHENS

19 Then he brought me through the entrance † that was at the side of the gate, into the priests' holy chambers, which faced north. I saw a place there at the far western end. 20 He said to me, "This is the place where the priests will boil the guilt offering and the sin offering, † and where they will bake the grain offering, † so that they do not bring them into the outer court and transmit holiness to the people." 21 Next he brought me into the outer court and led me past its four corners. There was a separate court in each of its corners. 22 In the four corners of the outer court there were enclosed † courts, 70 feet † long by 52 1/2 feet † wide. All four corner areas had the same dimensions. 23 There was a stone wall † around the inside of them, around the four of them, with ovens built at the base of the walls on all sides. 24 He said to me: "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple will cook the people's sacrifices."

46:5 Lit *an ephah*, also in vv. 7,11 **46:5** Lit *a hin*, also in vv. 7,11 **46:9** Or *the festivals* **46:14** Lit *one-sixth of an ephah* **46:14** Lit *one-third of a hin* **46:22** Hb obscure **46:22** Lit *40 cubits* **46:22** Lit *30 cubits* **46:23** Or *a row*

46:1 Ex 20:9-10 **46:4** Ezk 45:17 **46:4** Nm 28:9 **46:5** Nm 28:12; Ezk 45:24 **46:8** Ezk 44:3 **46:9** Ex 23:14-17 **46:12** Lv 23:38 **46:13** Ex 29:38 **46:17** Lv 25:10 **46:18** Ezk 45:8-9 **46:19** Ezk 42:9 **46:20** 2Ch 35:13; Ezk 44:29 **46:20** Lv 2:4-7

46:1-3 The importance of the east gate is that the glory of God had entered through it (43:1-5). Whereas the outer gate was to remain closed (44:1-3), the inner gate could be opened on the **Sabbath** and **New**

Moon. The prince's special access to it (v. 2) recalls 44:3. His responsibilities during Israel's festivals were discussed in 44:18-25.

46:10 Despite his special privileges and responsibilities (vv. 2,8; 44:3; 45:17), Israel's **prince** would also move about in their midst. The Messiah is described in 34:24 as being "a prince among them."

46:13 This **daily burnt offering** parallels those mentioned in Exodus 29:38-41 and Numbers 28:3-8, except that the earlier passages include a second **lamb** offered at twilight.

46:18 For a second time in the context of property rights (45:8), God declares that the prince will no longer oppress the people.

46:20 As in 42:14 and 44:19, special care is taken in the preparation of offerings so as to respect what is holy.

THE LIFE-GIVING RIVER

47 Then he brought me back to the entrance of the temple and there was water flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the temple faced east. The water was coming down from under the south side of the threshold of the temple, south of the altar. † 2 Next he brought me out by way of the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate that faced east; there the water was trickling from the south side. 3 As the man went out east with a measuring line in his hand, † he measured off a third of a mile † and led me through the water. It came up to my ankles. 4 Then he measured off a third of a mile and led me through the water. It came up to my knees. He measured off another third of a mile and led me through the water. It came up to my waist. 5 Again he measured off a third of a mile, and it was a river that I could not cross on foot. For the water had risen; it was deep enough to swim in, a river that could not be crossed on foot.

6 He asked me, "Do you see this, son of man? " Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7 When I had returned, I saw a very large number of trees along both sides of the riverbank. † 8 He said to me, "This water flows out to the eastern region and goes down to the Arabah. When it enters the sea, the sea of foul water, † † the water of the sea becomes fresh. † 9 Every kind of living creature that swarms will live wherever the river flows, † and there will be a huge number of fish because this water goes there. Since the water will become fresh, there will be life everywhere the river goes. 10 Fishermen will stand beside it from En-gedi to En-eglaim. † These will become places where nets are spread out to dry. Their fish will consist of many different kinds, like the fish of

the Mediterranean Sea. † 11 Yet its swamps and marshes will not be healed;
they will be left for salt. 12 All kinds of trees providing food will grow along
both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not
fail. † Each month they will bear fresh fruit because the water comes from the
sanctuary. Their fruit will be used for food and their leaves for medicine." †

THE BORDERS OF THE LAND

13 This is what the Lord GOD says: "This is † the border you will use to divide
the land † as an inheritance for the twelve tribes of Israel. Joseph will receive
two shares. † 14 You will inherit it in equal portions, since I swore † to give it
to your ancestors. † So this land will fall to you as an inheritance.
15 This is to be the border of the land:
On the north side † it will extend from the Mediterranean Sea by way of
Hethlon and Lebo-hamath to Zedad, † 16 Berothah, and Sibraim (which is
between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), as far as Hazer-
hatticon, which is on the border of Hauran. 17 So the border will run from the
sea to Hazar-enon at the border † of Damascus, with the territory of Hamath to
the north. This will be the northern side.
18 On the east side it will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan
between Gilead and the land of Israel; you will measure from the northern
border to the eastern sea. † This will be the eastern side.
19 On the south side it will run from Tamar to the Waters of Meribath-kadesh, †
and on to the Brook of Egypt † as far as the Mediterranean Sea. † This will be
the southern side.
20 On the west side the Mediterranean Sea will be the border, from the southern
border up to a point opposite Lebo-hamath. This will be the western side.
21 "You are to divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of
Israel. † 22 You will allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the aliens
residing among you, † who have fathered children among you. You will treat
them † like native-born Israelites; along with you, they will be allotted an
inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 23 In whatever tribe the alien resides, you
will assign his inheritance there." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

47:3 Lit *1,000 cubits*, also in vv. 4,5 **47:8** Or *enters the sea, being brought out to the sea* ; Hb obscure **47:8** = the Dead Sea **47:9** LXX, Vg; MT reads *the two rivers flow* **47:10** Two springs near the Dead Sea **47:13** Tg, Vg; Syr reads *The valley of* **47:14** Lit *lifted my hand* **47:15** LXX; MT reads *and Lebo to Zedad, Hamath* ; Ezk 48:1 **47:18** = the Dead Sea **47:19** = Kadesh-barnea **47:22** Lit *They will be to you*
47:1 Ps 46:4; Zch 14:8; Rv 22:1 **47:3** Ezk 40:3 **47:7** Rv 22:2 **47:8** Ex 15:26; 2Kg 2:21 **47:10** Nm 34:3; Ezk 48:28 **47:12** Ps 1:3 **47:12** Rv 22:2 **47:13** Nm 34:2-12 **47:13** Gn 48:15-16 **47:14** Dt 1:8; Ezk 20:6 **47:15** Nm 34:7-9; Ezk 48:1 **47:17** Nm 34:9 **47:19** Nm 34:5; 1Kg 8:65; Is 27:12 **47:19** Ezk 48:28 **47:21** Ezk 45:1 **47:22** Ac 11:18; 15:9; Eph 2:12-14; 3:6; Col 3:11

47:1-5 The **water flowing** from the temple **threshold** (v. 1) supernaturally increased in depth downstream until it became a **river** (vv. 2-5). Psalm 46:4 and Revelation 22:1-2 speak of a river in the new Jerusalem.

47:7-12 This river brings life and healing to plants, other bodies of water, and to animals (vv. 7-9). Even **fishermen** are helped (v. 10). The image of fruit-bearing trees along the banks of this river (v. 12) is an allusion to the garden of Eden (Gn 2:8-10), which has been directly referenced several times in Ezekiel (28:13; 31:8-9,16,18). It will be as though Israel has been restored to this idyllic garden (36:35). **Trees** represent people in 17:22-24 and 31:2-18 (see notes), and they may represent the godly here (see 34:27; Ps 1:3; Jr 17:8), who are given life by the river and then in turn bless others. Life-giving water is a symbol for the Spirit in Isaiah 32:15 and John 7:38-39. The **swamps** and **marshes** may be symbols of judgment (v. 11). **Salt** is sometimes used in that way (see Gn 19:26; Jdg 9:45; Zph 2:9).

47:13-14 Israel's possession of **the land** is a key part of God's promises to them (36:28; 37:25; Gn 12:7). The division of the land was discussed in part in 45:1-8, and it is completed here.

47:18 The setting of the **eastern** boundary as the **Jordan** River means that, unlike before, the portions of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh would not be on the east side of the Jordan (48:4,6,27; Nm 32; Jos 18:7).

47:21-23 The opportunity for **aliens** (foreigners) to receive **an inheritance** of land and to have equal status with the Israelites (see the notes on Ex 12:48-49; Lv 16:29) shows that the eschatological blessings in Ezekiel 40–48 are not restricted to the chosen nation. Many other passages in Ezekiel foretell the nations coming to know God (17:24; 36:23,36; 37:28; 38:16; 39:7,21).

THE TRIBAL ALLOTMENTS

48 "Now these are the names of the tribes:

From the northern end, along the road of Hethlon, to Lebo-hamath as far as Hazar-enon, at the northern border of Damascus, alongside Hamath and extending from the eastern side to the sea, will be Dan — one portion.

2 Next to the territory of Dan, from the east side to the west, will be Asher — one portion.

3 Next to the territory of Asher, from the east side to the west, will be Naphtali — one portion.

4 Next to the territory of Naphtali, from the east side to the west,

will be Manasseh — one portion.

5 Next to the territory of Manasseh, from the east side to the west,
will be Ephraim — one portion.

6 Next to the territory of Ephraim, from the east side to the west,
will be Reuben — one portion.

7 Next to the territory of Reuben, from the east side to the west,
will be Judah — one portion.

8 “Next to the territory of Judah, from the east side to the west, will be the portion you donate to the LORD, 8 1/3 miles † wide, and as long as one of the tribal portions from the east side to the west. † The sanctuary will be in the middle of it.
9 “The special portion you donate to the LORD will be 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles † wide. 10 This holy donation will be set apart for the priests alone. It will be 8 1/3 miles long on the northern side, 3 1/3 miles wide on the western side, 3 1/3 miles wide on the eastern side, and 8 1/3 miles long on the southern side. The LORD’s sanctuary will be in the middle of it. 11 It is for the consecrated priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept my charge † and did not go astray as the Levites did when the Israelites went astray. 12 It will be a special donation for them out of the holy donation of the land, a most holy place adjacent to the territory of the Levites.
13 “Next to the territory of the priests, the Levites will have an area 8 1/3 miles long and 3 1/3 miles wide. The total length will be 8 1/3 miles and the width 3 1/3 miles. † 14 They must not sell or exchange any of it, and they must not transfer this choice part of the land, for it is holy to the LORD. †
15 “The remaining area, 1 2/3 miles † wide and 8 1/3 miles long, will be for common use by the city, † for both residential and open space. The city will be in the middle of it. 16 These are the city’s measurements:

1 1/2 miles † on the north side;
1 1/2 miles on the south side;

1 1/2 miles on the east side;
and 1 1/2 miles on the west side.

17 The city's open space will extend:

425 feet † to the north,
425 feet to the south,
425 feet to the east,
and 425 feet to the west.

18 "The remainder of the length alongside the holy donation will be 3 1/3 miles to the east and 3 1/3 miles to the west. It will run alongside the holy donation. Its produce will be food for the workers of the city. 19 The city's workers from all the tribes of Israel will cultivate it. † 20 The entire donation will be 8 1/3 miles by 8 1/3 miles; you are to set apart the holy donation along with the city property as a square area.
21 "The remaining area on both sides of the holy donation and the city property will belong to the prince. † He will own the land adjacent to the tribal portions, next to the 8 1/3 miles of the donation as far as the eastern border and † next to the 8 1/3 miles of the donation as far as the western border. The holy donation and the sanctuary of the temple will be in the middle of it. 22 Except for the Levitical property and the city property in the middle of the area belonging to the prince, the area between the territory of Judah and that of Benjamin will belong to the prince. †
23 "As for the rest of the tribes:

From the east side to the west, will be Benjamin — one portion.
24 Next to the territory of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, will be Simeon — one portion.
25 Next to the territory of Simeon, from the east side to the west, will be Issachar — one portion.
26 Next to the territory of Issachar, from the east side to the west,

will be Zebulun — one portion.

27 Next to the territory of Zebulun, from the east side to the west,
will be Gad — one portion.

28 Next to the territory of Gad toward the south side, the border will run from Tamar to the Waters † of Meribath-kadesh, to the Brook of Egypt, and out to the Mediterranean Sea. 29 This is the land you are to allot as an inheritance to Israel's tribes, † and these will be their portions." This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

THE NEW CITY

30 "These are the exits of the city:

On the north side, which measures 1 1/2 miles, 31 there will be three gates facing north, the gates of the city being named for the tribes of Israel: one, the gate of Reuben; one, the gate of Judah; and one, the gate of Levi.

32 On the east side, which is 1 1/2 miles, there will be three gates: one, the gate of Joseph; one, the gate of Benjamin; and one, the gate of Dan.

33 On the south side, which measures 1 1/2 miles, there will be three gates: one, the gate of Simeon; one, the gate of Issachar; and one, the gate of Zebulun.

34 On the west side, which is 1 1/2 miles, there will be three gates: one, the gate of Gad; one, the gate of Asher; and one, the gate of Naphtali.

35 The perimeter of the city will be six miles, † and the name of the city from that day on will be, The LORD Is There." †

48:8 Lit *25,000 cubits*, also in vv. 9,10,13,15,20,21 **48:9** Lit *10,000 cubits*, also in vv. 10,13,18 **48:15** Lit *5,000 cubits* **48:16** Lit *4,500 cubits*, also in vv. 30,32,33,34 **48:17** Lit *250 cubits* **48:21** Lit *border, and to the west,* **48:35** Lit *18,000 cubits*

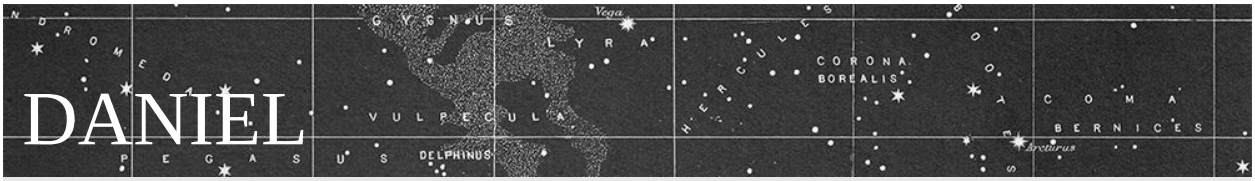
48:8-9 Ezk 45:1-5 **48:11** Ezk 44:10,15 **48:13** Ezk 45:1 **48:14** Lv 25:34; 27:28 **48:15** Ezk 45:6 **48:19** Ezk 45:6 **48:21** Ezk 34:24; 45:7 **48:22** Jos 18:21-28 **48:28** 2Ch 20:2 **48:29** Ezk 47:13-20 **48:35** Is 12:6; 14:32;

24:23; Jr 3:17; 8:19; 14:9; Ezk 35:10; Jl 3:21; Zch 2:10; Rv 21:3; 22:3

48:8-22 This **portion** of land had also been discussed briefly in 45:1-8. The faithfulness of the **sons of Zadok** is cited again (v. 11; 44:15) **48:29** Unlike the division of the land under Joshua, the assignment of tribal allotments here does not involve the casting of lots (see Jos 14:1-2; 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; 18:6-11). Even more significantly, there will be no more enemies remaining in the land (see the note on Jos 13:13).

48:30-34 The twelve gates of the city are named after the twelve tribes, thus representing their unity and participation (see Rv 21:12-14).

48:35 The name of this city, **The LORD "Is" There**, captures the eternal presence of God with his people, just as he had promised (11:20; 14:11; 34:24; 36:28; 37:23,27). This is the reason for the temple (a dwelling place for God) and the conclusion to the book. In the restored order, God will protect his cleansed and transformed people and be in relationship with them forever.



DANIEL

INTRODUCTION

Daniel, whose name means “God Judges” or “God’s Judge,” was a sixth-century BC prophet living in exile in Babylon. Daniel recounts key events firsthand that occurred during the Jewish captivity and also shares visions that were given to him by God.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The critical view of the book of Daniel suggests it was written by a second-century BC Jewish author, not the historical Daniel. This view is largely based on a naturalistic perspective that denies the possibility of the authentic foretelling found in Daniel. On the other hand, the traditional view maintains that Daniel the prophet did indeed write this book sometime shortly after the end of the Babylonian captivity (sixth century BC). Internal testimony supports this claim. In the text itself, Daniel claimed to have written down visions given by God (8:2; 9:2,20; 12:5). Passages which contain third-person references to Daniel do not disprove his authorship. After all, authors commonly refer to themselves in the third person. Moreover, God speaks of himself in the third person (Ex 20:2,7). The prophet Ezekiel referred to Daniel several times (Ezk 14:14,20; 28:3), a prominence that would befit the writing prophet. Finally, Jesus Christ attributed the book of Daniel to Daniel himself (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14).

BACKGROUND: The historical setting of the book of Daniel is the Babylonian captivity. The book opens after King Nebuchadnezzar’s first siege of Judah (605 BC) when he brought Daniel and his friends to Babylon along with other captives among the Judean nobility. Nebuchadnezzar assaulted Judah again in 597 and brought ten thousand captives back to Babylon. In 586 he once again besieged Jerusalem, this time destroying the city, the holy temple, and exiling the people of Judah to Babylon. Daniel’s ministry began in 605 when he arrived at Babylon with the first Jewish captives, extended throughout the Babylonian captivity (which ended in 539), and concluded sometime after the third year of Cyrus the Great, the Medo-Persian king who overthrew Babylonia (see Dn 1:21 and 10:1).

When was the book written? While the critical view maintains a date of 165 BC in the Maccabean period primarily because of the precise prophecies related to that time, the traditional view asserts that it was written just after the end of the Babylonian captivity in the late sixth century BC. The book contains a factual recounting of events from the life of Daniel, supernatural prediction of events that took place during the intertestamental period, and prophecies that are yet to be fulfilled.

Manuscript evidence supports the early date. Fragments from Daniel were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, a collection that included other books of the Bible that were written well before the second century. Linguistic evidence demonstrates that the use of Aramaic in Daniel fits a fifth-to sixth-century BC date. Historical evidence also supports the early date. For example, Daniel accurately described Belshazzar as coregent with another king (Nabonidus), a fact that was not known elsewhere until modern times. In summary, the late-date view is driven by a presuppositional rejection of supernatural prophecy and not objective evidence.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Daniel’s book establishes the validity of predictive prophecy and lays the foundation for understanding end-times prophecy, especially the book of Revelation in the NT. But most importantly, it emphasizes that the Lord has dominion over all the kingdoms of the earth, even in evil days when wicked empires reign. Two

key words in the book are “king” (used over 150 times) and “kingdom” (used over 50 times). Above all, Daniel teaches that the God of Israel is the Sovereign of the universe, “for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation” (4:34).

STRUCTURE

The genre of the book of Daniel is narrative, recounting historical events for the purpose of present and future instruction. The narrative contains history, prophecy, and apocalyptic visions. Apocalyptic literature refers to revelation by God given through visions and symbols with a message of eschatological (end-time) triumph. Although Daniel contains apocalyptic elements, it is not an apocalyptic book; rather, it is a narrative that includes apocalyptic visions.

Noting that the book of Daniel contains both history (chaps. 1–6) and prophecy (chaps. 7–12), some divide the book into two sections. A better way to view the book’s structure is based on the two languages it uses: 1:1–2:3 (Hebrew); 2:4–7:28 (Aramaic); and 8:1–12:13 (Hebrew). The Hebrew sections pertain primarily to the people of Israel, which is fitting since Hebrew was Israel’s national language. Aramaic was the international language of that time. Fittingly, the Aramaic section of Daniel demonstrates God’s dominion over the international Gentile nations.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is both the Revealer of secrets and the Sovereign of the universe. His ultimate purpose is to give dominion to the Son of Man (Dn 7:13-14), fulfilled by Jesus, who deliberately called himself “Son of Man.” Daniel was recognized as having “a spirit of the holy gods” (4:8-9), but this appears to fall short of a clear reference to the Holy Spirit.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Daniel and his friends modeled living as God’s people in a pagan world. The kings in the book—Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius—are all seen to be agents of God. Truly evil characters are predicted, yet they too are unwittingly God’s agents. The clearest OT statement about a future bodily resurrection is found in Daniel 12:2-3.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Daniel 9:26 (“After those sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing”) refers to Christ’s crucifixion on behalf of his people. Some scholars believe that 9:27 predicts Christ’s first coming, when he established the new covenant, resulting in the end of animal sacrifices. (Other scholars believe that the covenant referred to will be made not by Christ but by the antichrist shortly before Jesus’s second coming.) In any event, 9:24 anticipates “everlasting righteousness.”

DANIEL TIMELINE

650–620 BC

650–620 BC

Under Ashurbanipal, Assyrians capture and destroy Babylon. **649**

Birth of Jeremiah **640?**

Jeremiah's call to be a prophet; warns of invasion from the north **626**

Birth of Ezekiel **623**

Birth of Daniel **620**

620–605 BC

Under Nabopolassar **(626–605)** Asshur and Nineveh fall, marking the end of the Assyrian Empire. **612**

Babylonians and Medes take Harran from what remained of Assyrian forces. **610**

Jeremiah's temple sermon **609**

Josiah killed by the Egyptians at Megiddo **609**

Babylonians defeat Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at Carchemish. The Babylonians hold the balance of power in the region. **605**

605–560 BC

The Babylonians besiege Jerusalem; some of the royal family and nobles, including Daniel, are taken to Babylon. **605**

Daniel and his Hebrew companions are trained to serve Nebuchadnezzar. **604–603**

Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the colossal statue and Daniel's interpretation **602**

Jerusalem falls to the third Babylonian siege and the temple is destroyed. **586**

Nebuchadnezzar's seven years of insanity **573–566**

Evil-merodach, Nebuchadnezzar's son, succeeds him as king of Babylon. **562**

560–525 BC

Daniel interprets the handwriting on the wall for Belshazzar. Cyrus captures Babylon without resistance. **539**

Gabriel visits Daniel with the message of 70 weeks. **539**

Cyrus issues a decree allowing the Jews to return to Judah. **538**

Daniel, now 84 years old, is thrown into the lions' den. **536**

Daniel receives vision of future events **535**

DANIEL'S CAPTIVITY IN BABYLON

1 In the third year of the reign of King Jehoiakim † of Judah, King
Nebuchadnezzar † † of Babylon came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it.
2 The Lord handed King Jehoiakim of Judah over to him, along with
some of the vessels from the house of God. † Nebuchadnezzar carried them to
the land of Babylon, † † to the house of his god, † and put the vessels in the
treasury of his god.

3 The king ordered Ashpenaz, his chief eunuch, † to bring some of the Israelites
from the royal family † and from the nobility — 4 young men without any
physical defect, good-looking, suitable for instruction in all wisdom, †
knowledgeable, perceptive, and capable of serving in the king's palace. † He
was to teach them the Chaldean language † and literature. 5 The king assigned
them daily provisions from the royal food and from the wine that he drank. †
They were to be trained for three years, and at the end of that time they were to
attend the king. † † 6 Among them, from the Judahites, were Daniel, †
Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 The chief eunuch gave them names; he gave
the name Belteshazzar to Daniel, Shadrach to Hananiah, Meshach to Mishael,
and Abednego to Azariah. †

FAITHFULNESS IN BABYLON

8 Daniel determined that he would not defile himself with the king's food † or
with the wine he drank. So he asked permission from the chief eunuch not to
defile himself. † 9 God had granted Daniel kindness and compassion from the
chief eunuch, † 10 yet he said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who assigned
your food and drink. What if he sees your faces looking thinner than the other
young men your age? You would endanger my life † with the king."
11 So Daniel said to the guard whom the chief eunuch had assigned to Daniel,
Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days. Let
us be given vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then examine our
appearance and the appearance of the young men who are eating the king's food,
and deal with your servants based on what you see." 14 He agreed with them
about this and tested them for ten days. 15 At the end of ten days they looked
better and healthier † than all the young men who were eating the king's
food. † 16 So the guard continued to remove their food and the wine they were
to drink and gave them vegetables.

FAITHFULNESS REWARDED

17 God gave these four young men knowledge and understanding † in every
kind of literature and wisdom. Daniel also understood visions and dreams † of

every kind. [18] At the end of the time that the king had said to present them, the chief eunuch presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. [19] The king interviewed them, and among all of them, no one was found equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. † So they began to attend the king. [20] In every matter of wisdom and understanding that the king consulted them about, he found them ten times † † better than all the magicians and mediums † in his entire kingdom. [21] Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus. †

1:1 Or *Nebuchadrezzar* **1:2** Lit *Shinar* **1:2** Or *gods* **1:3** Or *his eunuchs* **1:5** Lit *to stand before the king* **1:10** Lit *would make my head guilty* **1:15** Lit *fatter of flesh* **1:20** Lit *hands*

1:1 2Kg 24:1-2; 2Ch 36:5-6 **1:1** Jr 25:1; 52:12,28-30 **1:2** 2Kg 24:13; 2Ch 36:7-10; Ezr 5:14; Jr 27:19-22; Dn 5:2 **1:2** Gn 10:10; 11:2; Is 11:11; Zch 5:11 **1:3** 2Kg 20:18; 24:15; Is 39:7; Dn 1:9 **1:4** Dn 9:22 **1:4** Is 39:7 **1:4** Jr 5:15 **1:5** 2Kg 25:30; Dn 11:26 **1:5** Gn 41:46; 1Sm 16:22 **1:6** Ezk 14:14,20; 28:3 **1:7** 2Kg 23:34; 24:17; Dn 4:8,19; 5:12; 10:1 **1:8** Pr 23:1-2 **1:8** Lv 3:17; 11:47; Ps 141:4; Ezk 4:13; Hs 9:3; Ac 10:11-15 **1:9** Gn 39:21; 1Kg 8:50; Jb 5:15; Ps 106:46; Pr 16:7; Ac 7:10 **1:15** Ex 23:25 **1:17** Jb 32:8; Ac 7:22; Jms 1:5 **1:17** 1Kg 3:10-12; Dn 2:19,30; 4:18-19; 7:1 **1:18-19** Gn 41:37-39 **1:20** Gn 31:7; Nm 14:22; Jb 19:3 **1:20** Pr 3:13-18; Dn 5:11-12 **1:21** Ezr 1:1-2; Is 45:1; Dn 6:28; 10:1

1:1-2 Nebuchadnezzar's capture of **Jehoiakim** along with some temple **vessels** was part of God's plan (v. 2; see 2Kg 24:1-2). The temple vessels, made of valuable metals, would have been part of the spoils of war. The transfer of these vessels to the **house of his god** and the **treasury of his god** was also an attempt to demonstrate the inferiority of Israel's God to Babylon and its gods (see the note on 5:1-4).

1:7 The Babylonians changed the names of the four young men as a way of exercising authority over them. Daniel means "God is my Judge." Hananiah means "Yah[weh] is gracious." Mishael means "Who is like God?" Azariah means "Yah[weh] is my help." The chief official changed their names to **Belteshazzar,** which means "Bel, protect his life," **Shadrach**, which means, "command of Aku," **Meshach,** which means, "Who is like Aku?" and **Abednego**, which means "Servant of Nego." The changing of these names from being reminders of God to references to Babylonian gods is yet another attempt to conform these Israelites to pagan culture (see vv. 4-5; 4:8).

1:8 Daniel had little control over being taken into exile, being trained for the king's service, and having his name changed (vv. 3-7), but he would not allow himself to be defiled by **the king's food** (see v. 5). The word **defile** suggests that he viewed consuming the food as a violation of his faith and commitment to God. It may have been offered to idols or unclean according to the standards of the Mosaic law (see Lv 11; 17:10-16); perhaps it was simply symbolic of assimilating to the Babylonian culture and losing his identity as a member of God's special people.

1:12-16 Daniel creatively and wisely proposed a plan that both respected the chief official's concerns and avoided defilement (see vv. 8-10; 2:14-16; 10:3). Revelation 2:10 likewise mentions testing for **ten days**, a short period.

1:17 The number **four** appears significantly several times in the book of Daniel, sometimes with reference to the godly (3:25), as it does here. Other times it is used with reference to the kingdoms of this world (2:36-40; 7:4-7), all of which will be overtaken by the kingdom of God.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM

2 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams † that troubled him, and sleep deserted him. † 2 So the king gave orders to summon the magicians, mediums, sorcerers, and Chaldeans † † to tell the king his dreams. When they came and stood before the king, 3 he said to them, “I have had a dream and am anxious to understand it.”

4 The Chaldeans spoke to the king (Aramaic † † begins here): “May the king live forever. † Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation.”

5 The king replied to the Chaldeans, “My word is final: If you don’t tell me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, † and your houses will be made a garbage dump. † 6 But if you make the dream and its interpretation known to me, you’ll receive gifts, a reward, and great honor from me. † So make the dream and its interpretation known to me.”

7 They answered a second time, “May the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will make known the interpretation.”

8 The king replied, “I know for certain you are trying to gain some time, because you see that my word is final. 9 If you don’t tell me the dream, there is one decree for you. † You have conspired to tell me something false or fraudulent until the situation changes. So tell me the dream and I will know you can give me its interpretation.”

10 The Chaldeans answered the king, “No one on earth can make known what the king requests. † Consequently, no king, however great and powerful, has ever asked anything like this of any magician, medium, or Chaldean. 11 What the king is asking is so difficult that no one can make it known to him except the gods, whose dwelling is not with mortals.” † 12 Because of this, the king became violently angry † and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. 13 The decree was issued that the wise men were to be executed, and they searched for Daniel and his friends, to execute them.

14 Then Daniel responded with tact and discretion to Arioch, the captain of the king’s guard, † † who had gone out to execute the wise men of Babylon. 15 He asked Arioch, the king’s officer, “Why is the decree from the king so harsh?” † † Then Arioch explained the situation to Daniel. 16 So Daniel went

and asked the king to give him some time, so that he could give the king the interpretation.
17 Then Daniel went to his house and told his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah about the matter, 18 urging them to ask the God of the heavens † for mercy † concerning this mystery, so Daniel and his friends would not be destroyed with the rest of Babylon's wise men. † 19 The mystery was then revealed to Daniel in a vision † at night, and Daniel praised the God of the heavens 20 and declared:

May the name of God
be praised forever and ever, †
for wisdom † and power belong to him.
21 He changes the times and seasons; he removes kings and establishes kings. †
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to those
who have understanding. †
22 He reveals the deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, †
and light dwells with him. †
23 I offer thanks and praise to you, God of my fathers, †
because you have given me
wisdom and power.
And now you have let me know
what we asked of you,
for you have let us know †
the king's mystery. †

24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, † whom the king had assigned to destroy the wise men of Babylon. He came and said to him, "Don't destroy the wise men of Babylon! Bring me before the king, and I will give him the interpretation." †
25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king and said to him, "I have found a man among the Judean exiles † who can let the king know the interpretation."

26 The king said in reply to Daniel, whose name was Belteshazzar, † “Are you
able to tell me the dream I had and its interpretation?” †
27 Daniel answered the king: “No wise man, medium, magician, or diviner † is
able to make known to the king the mystery he asked about. 28 But there is a
God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and he has let King Nebuchadnezzar
know what will happen in the last days. † Your dream and the visions that came
into your mind as you lay in bed † were these: 29 Your Majesty, while you were
in your bed, thoughts came to your mind about what will happen in the
future. † † The revealer of mysteries † has let you know what will happen.
30 As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, † not because I have more
wisdom than anyone living, but in order that the interpretation might be made
known to the king, and that you may understand the thoughts of your mind. †

THE DREAM’S INTERPRETATION

31 “Your Majesty, as you were watching, suddenly a colossal statue appeared.
That statue, tall and dazzling, was standing in front of you, and its appearance
was terrifying. 32 The head of the statue was pure gold, its chest and arms were
silver, its stomach and thighs were bronze, 33 its legs were iron, and its feet were
partly iron and partly fired clay. 34 As you were watching, a stone broke off
without a hand touching it, † † struck the statue † on its feet of iron and fired
clay, and crushed them. † 35 Then the iron, the fired clay, the bronze, the silver,
and the gold were shattered and became like chaff † from the summer threshing
floors. The wind carried them away, and not a trace of them could be found. But
the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled † the whole
earth.
36 “This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. 37 Your
Majesty, you are king of kings. † The God of the heavens has given you
sovereignty, power, † strength, and glory. 38 Wherever people live — or wild
animals, or birds of the sky — he has handed them over to you and made you
ruler over them all. † You are the head of gold.
39 “After you, there will arise another kingdom, inferior to yours, and then
another, a third kingdom, of bronze, which will rule the whole earth. † 40 A

fourth kingdom will be as strong as iron; for iron crushes and shatters everything, and like iron that smashes, it will crush and smash all the others. † † 41 You saw the feet and toes, partly of a potter's fired clay and partly of iron — it will be a divided kingdom, though some of the strength of iron will be in it. You saw the iron mixed with clay, 42 and that the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly fired clay — part of the kingdom will be strong, and part will be brittle. 43 You saw the iron mixed with clay — the peoples will mix with one another † but will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with fired clay.

44 "In the days of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, † and this kingdom will not be left to another people. It will crush all these kingdoms † and bring them to an end, but will itself endure forever. 45 You saw a stone † break off from the mountain without a hand touching it, † † and it crushed the iron, bronze, fired clay, silver, and gold. The great God has told the king what will happen in the future. † The dream is certain, and its interpretation reliable."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S RESPONSE

46 Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell facedown, worshiped Daniel, and gave orders to present an offering and incense to him. † 47 The king said to Daniel, "Your God is indeed God of gods, Lord of kings, † and a revealer of mysteries, † since you were able to reveal this mystery." 48 Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many generous gifts. He made him ruler over the entire province of Babylon and chief governor over all the wise men of Babylon. † 49 At Daniel's request, the king appointed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego † to manage the province of Babylon. But Daniel remained at the king's court. †

2:2 In this chap. Chaldeans are influential Babylonian wise men. **2:4** Dn 2:4–7:28 is written in Aramaic. **2:5** Lit *be made into limbs* **2:14** Or *executioners* **2:15** Or *urgent* **2:23** Lit *matter* **2:29** Lit *happen after this*, also in v. 45 **2:34** Lit *off not by hands* **2:40** Lit *all these* **2:43** Lit *another in the seed of men* **2:45** Lit *mountain, not by hands*

2:1 Gn 40:5-8; Dn 4:5; 5:9 **2:1** Gn 41:1,8; Est 6:1; Dn 6:18 **2:2** Dt 18:10,11; 2Ch 33:6; Is 47:9,12 **2:4** Ezr 4:7; Is 36:11 **2:4** 1Kg 1:31; Dn 3:9; 5:10; 6:6,21 **2:5** Ezr 6:11; Dn 3:29 **2:6** Dn 5:7,16 **2:9** Is 41:23 **2:10** Dn 5:11-16 **2:11** Ex 29:45; Is 57:15 **2:12** Ps 76:10; Dn 2:24; 3:13,19 **2:14** Gn 37:36 **2:15** Dn 3:22 **2:18** Mt 18:19 **2:18** Jr 33:3 **2:18** Mal 3:18 **2:19** Nm 12:6; Jb 33:15-16; Am 3:7 **2:20** 1Ch 29:10; Ps 72:18; Lk 1:68

2:20 Jb 12:13; Is 28:29 **2:21** 1Ch 29:11-12; Dn 4:17; Rm 13:1 **2:21** Jb 12:16-22 **2:22** Jb 12:22; Ps 139:12; Jr 23:24; Am 4:13; Heb 4:13 **2:22** Jn 1:4-5; 1Tm 6:16; Jms 1:17; 1Jn 1:5 **2:23** Gn 31:42; Ex 3:15; Dt 26:7; 1Ch 12:17; 29:18 **2:23** Dn 1:17-18 **2:24** Dn 2:14-15 **2:24** Ac 27:24 **2:25** Ezr 4:1; 6:16,19-20; 10:7,16; Dn 5:13 **2:26** Dn 1:7; 5:12 **2:26** Dn 5:16 **2:27** Dn 1:20; 4:7; 5:7,11 **2:28** Is 2:2; Dn 10:14; Hs 3:5; Mc 4:1 **2:28** Dn 4:5; 7:15 **2:29** Rv 1:1 **2:29** Jb 12:20-22; Dn 2:45 **2:30** Eph 3:3 **2:30** Gn 41:16; Ec 3:18; Am 4:13; Ac 3:12 **2:34** Jb 34:20; Lm 4:6; Dn 8:25; 2Co 5:1 **2:34** Mt 21:44; Lk 20:18 **2:34** Ps 2:9; Is 60:12 **2:35** Ps 1:4; Is 17:13; 41:15-16; Hs 13:3 **2:35** Is 2:2; Mc 4:1 **2:37** Is 47:5; Jr 27:6-7; Ezk 26:7 **2:37** Pr 8:15 **2:38** Ps 50:10; Jr 27:6; 28:14; Dn 4:21 **2:39** Dn 5:28,31; 7:6 **2:40** Dn 7:7,23 **2:44** Ps 145:13; Ezk 37:25; Dn 4:3; 6:26; 7:14; Lk 1:33 **2:44** Ps 2:9; Mt 21:44 **2:45** Is 28:16 **2:45** Dn 2:34 **2:45** Jr 32:18-19; Dn 2:29; Mal 1:11 **2:46** Mt 8:2; Ac 10:25; 14:13; Rv 19:10; 22:8 **2:47** Dt 10:17; Ps 136:2-3; 1Tm 6:15; Rv 17:14; 19:16 **2:47** Am 3:7 **2:48** Gn 41:41; Dn 3:1,12,30 **2:49** Dn 1:17; 3:12 **2:49** Est 2:19,21; Am 5:15

2:1 Nebuchadnezzar's **dreams** were significant because he was a king, and in the ancient world this is one of the ways that the gods were thought to communicate with humans.

2:4 Daniel 2:4–7:28 is written in **Aramaic**, whereas the rest of the book is in Hebrew. The book of Ezra is the other OT book that has Aramaic sections (Ezr 4:7–6:18; 7:12-26).

2:8-9 The king demanded he be told the interpretation of his **dream** without first sharing what the dream was. Perhaps he did not trust his wise men and would only be certain that their interpretation was genuine if they could first declare details of his dream.

2:10-11 Having had their request to know the dream rejected twice (vv. 4,7), **the Chaldeans** object that the king's demand is impossible for men—unless somehow they were to receive supernatural aid. This revealed their inability and set the stage for God to reveal his power through Daniel (see 3:15).

2:14-16 Daniel and his friends were to be executed because they were included among **the wise men** (vv. 12-13; 1:19-20). Once again, Daniel acted creatively and wisely while under pressure by asking for **time** (see 1:12-16).

2:17-23 Having more time was not going to prevent Daniel and his friends from being executed. They needed God himself to reveal the dream and its interpretation, and he answered their prayer concerning this **mystery** (vv. 18-19,23). Before the dream is even explained to the reader, Daniel praises God for his **wisdom** in revealing secrets and his **power** over kings and kingdoms (vv. 20-22). He had imparted these same two things to Daniel (v. 23).

2:27-30 Daniel was careful to explain that his knowledge of the dream was not due to his own superior wisdom but because the **God in heaven** had revealed it to him (see vv. 10-11; 1:17). This was no ordinary dream but a revelation of **what will happen in the last days** (v. 28; see the note on Gn 49:1).

2:31-35 Nebuchadnezzar's dream involved a composite statue, with four distinct parts: **gold**, **silver**, **bronze** and **iron/clay** (vv. 31-33). This statue was struck and crushed to bits by a **stone**, which became a **great mountain** (vv. 34-35). The imagery of **wind** blowing away the wicked as **chaff** (v. 35) echoes Psalm 1:4.

2:37-45 Daniel explained that the four parts of the statue correspond to four kingdoms while the gold **head** symbolizes Nebuchadnezzar himself, king of Babylon (v. 38). With the help of other passages (5:28,30; 7:5-6; 8:3-8,20-21), it can be deduced that the second kingdom symbolized by silver chest and arms is Medo-Persia. The third, symbolized by iron legs, is Greece (v. 39). The fourth kingdom (with feet made of mixed iron and clay) is stronger than the others (v. 40) but is also divided and has inherent weaknesses (vv. 41-43). The **stone** is supernaturally cut out, strikes the feet of the statue, and crushes all kingdoms. It will become a mountain and an eternal kingdom. This is a prophecy of the Messiah and his kingdom (vv. 44-45; see vv. 34-35; Ps 118:22; Is 2:2; 28:16). See also "How Should Christians Relate to Government?" *p. 1213*.

2:47 As a result of this incident, the same Babylonian king who had taken the temple vessels from Jerusalem into the house of his own god (1:2) gave glory to the one true God. Nevertheless, this confession did not yet result in lasting change, as Daniel 3–4 show.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLD STATUE

3 King Nebuchadnezzar made a gold statue, † ninety feet high and nine
feet wide. † He set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of
Babylon. † 2 King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to assemble the satraps,
prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates, and all the rulers †
of the provinces to attend the dedication of the statue King Nebuchadnezzar had
set up. 3 So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges,
magistrates, and all the rulers of the provinces assembled for the dedication of
the statue the king had set up. Then they stood before the statue Nebuchadnezzar
had set up.
4 A herald loudly proclaimed, "People of every nation and language, you are
commanded: 5 When you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, † lyre, †
harp, drum, † and every kind of music, † you are to fall facedown and
worship † the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. 6 But whoever
does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a furnace of
blazing fire." †
7 Therefore, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre,
harp, and every kind of music, people of every nation and language fell down
and worshiped the gold statue that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

THE FURNACE OF BLAZING FIRE

8 Some Chaldeans † took this occasion to come forward and maliciously
accuse † † the Jews. 9 They said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live
forever. 10 You as king have issued a decree † that everyone who hears the
sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of music must
fall down and worship the gold statue. 11 Whoever does not fall down and
worship will be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire. 12 There are some Jews
you have appointed to manage the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego. † These men have ignored you, † the king; they do not serve your
gods or worship the gold statue you have set up."

13 Then in a furious rage † Nebuchadnezzar gave orders to bring in Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king.
14 Nebuchadnezzar asked them, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, is it true that you don’t serve my gods or worship the gold statue † I have set up? 15 Now if you’re ready, when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, drum, and every kind of music, fall down and worship the statue I made. But if you don’t worship it, you will immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire — and who is the god who can rescue you from my power? ” †
16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied to the king, “Nebuchadnezzar, we don’t need to give you an answer to this question. 17 If the God we serve exists, † then he can rescue † us from the furnace of blazing fire, and he can † rescue us from the power of you, the king. 18 But even if he does not rescue us, † we want you as king to know that we will not serve † your gods † or worship the gold statue you set up.”
19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with rage, † and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He gave orders to heat the furnace seven times more than was customary, 20 and he commanded some of the best soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the furnace of blazing fire. 21 So these men, in their trousers, robes, head coverings, † and other clothes, were tied up and thrown into the furnace of blazing fire. 22 Since the king’s command was so urgent † † and the furnace extremely hot, the raging flames † killed those men who carried Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego up. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell, bound, into the furnace of blazing fire.

DELIVERED FROM THE FIRE

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar jumped up in alarm. † He said to his advisers, “Didn’t we throw three men, bound, into the fire? ”
“Yes, of course, Your Majesty,” they replied to the king.
25 He exclaimed, “Look! I see four men, not tied, walking around in the fire unharmed; † and the fourth looks like a son of the gods.” † †
26 Nebuchadnezzar then approached the door of the furnace of blazing fire and called: “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, you servants of the Most High God

— come out!” So Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out of the fire. †
27 When the satraps, prefects, governors, and the king’s advisers gathered
around, they saw that the fire had no effect † on † the bodies of these men: not
a hair of their heads was singed, their robes were unaffected, and there was no
smell of fire on them. † 28 Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Praise to the God of
Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! He sent his angel † † and rescued his
servants who trusted in him. † They violated the king’s command and risked
their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. †
29 Therefore I issue a decree † that anyone of any people, nation, or language †
who says anything offensive against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and
Abednego will be torn limb from limb and his house made a garbage dump. †
For there is no other god who is able to deliver like this.” 30 Then the king
rewarded Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the province of Babylon. †

3:1 Lit *statue, its height sixty cubits, its width six cubits* **3:5** Or *lyre* **3:5** Or *sambuke* **3:5** Or *pipe* **3:8** Lit *and eat the pieces of* **3:17** Or *If the God whom we serve is willing to save us from the furnace of blazing fire, then he will* **3:18** Lit *But if not* **3:21** The identity of these articles of clothing is uncertain. **3:22** Or *harsh* **3:22** Lit *the flame of the fire* **3:25** Or *of a divine being* **3:27** Lit *fire had not overcome* **3:28** Or *messenger* **3:1** 1Kg 12:28; Is 46:6; Jr 16:20; Hs 2:8; 8:4; Hab 2:19 **3:1** Gn 11:2; Dn 2:48-49 **3:2** Ezr 8:36; Dn 2:48; 6:1-7 **3:5** Gn 4:21; 1Ch 6:31; 25:6; Jb 21:12; 30:31; Ps 33:2; 71:22; 81:2; 149:3; 150:4; Is 5:12 **3:5** Dn 2:46 **3:6** Jr 29:22; Mt 13:42,50; Rv 9:2 **3:8** Dn 2:2,4-5,10 **3:8** Ezr 4:12-16; Est 3:8-9; Dn 6:12,24 **3:10** Dn 4:6; 6:26 **3:12** Dn 1:7 **3:12** Dn 6:13 **3:13** Dn 2:12 **3:14** Jr 50:2 **3:15** Ex 5:20; 2Kg 18:35; Is 36:18 **3:17** Ps 10:4; 14:1; 53:1; Hs 13:4; Heb 11:6 **3:17** 1Sm 17:37; Jb 5:19; Jr 15:20-21; 2Co 1:10 **3:18** Heb 11:25 **3:18** Jos 24:15 **3:19** Est 7:7 **3:22** Dn 2:15 **3:24** Dn 4:19 **3:25** Ps 91:3-9; Is 43:2 **3:25** Mt 14:33; Mk 1:1; Lk 1:35; Jn 3:18; Ac 9:20 **3:26** Dn 4:2 **3:27** Heb 11:34 **3:27** Dt 29:5 **3:28** Heb 1:14 **3:28** Ps 34:7; Is 37:36; Ac 5:19; 12:7 **3:28** Ps 22:4-5; Is 12:2; 26:3-4; Jr 17:7 **3:29** Dn 4:6 **3:29** Dn 3:4,7; 4:1; 5:19; 6:25; 7:14; Rv 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6; 17:15 **3:29** Ezr 6:11; Dn 2:5 **3:30** Dn 2:48-49

3:1 Perhaps with the meaning of his dream that he was “the head of gold” (2:38) in mind, Nebuchadnezzar made a **gold statue** for his subjects to worship.

3:4-6 Idolatry was required of **people of every nation and language.** It would be facilitated by **music** and came with a threat: non-compliance would result in being **thrown into a furnace of blazing fire.** Perhaps the furnace had been used in constructing the king’s golden image.

3:13-15 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego boldly refused to worship the golden statue since doing so would violate their commitment to worship God alone (v. 12,17). They were subsequently called into Nebuchadnezzar’s presence. His insistence that they obey him includes what is intended as a rhetorical question: **who is the god who can rescue you from my power?** This is again a perfect setup for the glory of God to be revealed (see 2:10-11).

3:16-18 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied that their God indeed **can rescue** them from the fire and from the king (v. 17). God certainly has that kind of power, but even if he chose not to exercise it in this instance, they declared that they would remain faithful to him.

3:19-21 Nebuchadnezzar was again enraged (see v. 13; 2:12) and commanded that the furnace be heated even more. Unlike in Daniel 1–2, the godly could not avoid serious persecution.

3:23-24 The repetition of the number **three** sets up the surprise of verse 25 (see note).

3:25 Nebuchadnezzar's arrogant assertion that no god could deliver from his hand (v. 15) had been proven wrong. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were **unharmed** and even accompanied by a fourth man, who resembled **a son of the gods**, an expression used for a supernatural being (see 2:11). As was the case for the fourth kingdom in the king's dream (2:40-43), the fourth man is unique and receives special attention.

3:27 With God's help, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had overcome the fire (see 7:9-11).

3:28-29 As in 2:47, Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God, but this time the king went even further by forbidding anyone from speaking against him (v. 29). Whereas Nebuchadnezzar acknowledged God's wisdom through the interpretation of the dream, this time he recognized his saving power.

3:30 Again severe trial of the godly resulted in greater blessing (see 1:17-21; 2:48-49).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S PROCLAMATION

4 King Nebuchadnezzar, To those of every people, nation, and language,
who live on the whole earth: †
May your prosperity increase. † 2 I am pleased to tell you about the
miracles and wonders † the Most High God has done for me.

3 How great are his miracles, and how mighty his wonders! †
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom, †
and his dominion is from generation to generation. †

THE DREAM

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at ease in my house and flourishing in my palace. †
5 I had a dream, and it frightened me; while in my bed, the images and visions in
my mind alarmed me. † 6 So I issued a decree † to bring all the wise men of
Babylon to me in order that they might make the dream's interpretation known
to me. † 7 When the magicians, mediums, Chaldeans, and diviners came in, I
told them the dream, but they could not make its interpretation known to me. †
8 Finally Daniel, named Belteshazzar † after the name of my god — and a spirit
of the holy gods is in him † — came before me. I told him the dream:
9 "Belteshazzar, head of the magicians, because I know that you have the spirit
of the holy gods † and that no mystery puzzles you, † explain to me the visions

of my dream that I saw, and its interpretation. 10 In the visions of my mind as I was lying in bed, I saw this:

There was a tree in the middle of the earth, and it was very tall.
11 The tree grew large and strong; its top reached to the sky, †
and it was visible to the ends of the † earth.
12 Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit was abundant, and on it was food for all. †
Wild animals found shelter under it,
the birds of the sky † lived in its branches, and every creature was fed from it. †

13 "As I was lying in my bed, I also saw in the visions of my mind a watcher, a holy one, † † coming down from heaven. † 14 He called out loudly:

Cut down the tree and chop off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
Let the animals flee from under it,
and the birds from its branches. †
15 But leave the stump with its roots in the ground †
and with a band of iron and bronze around it in the tender grass of the field.
Let him be drenched with dew from the sky and share the plants of the earth †
with the animals.
16 Let his mind be changed from that of a human, and let him be given the mind of an animal for seven periods of time. † † †
17 This word is by decree of the watchers, and the decision is by command from the holy ones.
This is so that the living will know
that the Most High is ruler
over human kingdoms.
He gives them to anyone he wants
and sets the lowliest of people over them. †

18 This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me the interpretation, because none of the wise men of my kingdom can make

the interpretation known to me. † But you can, because you have a spirit of the holy gods."

THE DREAM INTERPRETED

19 Then Daniel, whose name is Belteshazzar, was stunned for a moment, and his thoughts alarmed him. The king said, "Belteshazzar, don't let the dream or its interpretation alarm you."
Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, may the dream apply to those who hate you, and its interpretation to your enemies! † 20 The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, whose top reached to the sky and was visible to the whole earth, 21 and whose leaves were beautiful and its fruit abundant — and on it was food for all, under it the wild animals lived, and in its branches the birds of the sky lived — 22 that tree is you, Your Majesty. For you have become great and strong: your greatness has grown and even reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to the ends of the earth. †
23 "The king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump with its roots in the ground and with a band of iron and bronze around it in the tender grass of the field. Let him be drenched with dew from the sky and share food with the wild animals for seven periods of time.' 24 This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree of the Most High that has been issued against my lord the king: † 25 You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals. You will feed on grass like cattle † and be drenched with dew from the sky for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants. † 26 As for the command to leave the tree's stump with its roots, your kingdom will be restored † to you as soon as you acknowledge that Heaven † rules. †
27 Therefore, may my advice seem good to you my king. Separate yourself from your sins by doing what is right, † and from your injustices by showing mercy to the needy. † Perhaps there will be an extension of your prosperity." †

THE SENTENCE EXECUTED

28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. † 29 At the end of twelve months, as he was walking on the roof of the royal palace in Babylon, 30 the

king exclaimed, “Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built to be a royal residence by my vast power and for my majestic glory? ” †
31 While the words were still in the king’s mouth, a voice came from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared that the kingdom has departed from you. † 32 You will be driven away from people to live with the wild animals, and you will feed on grass like cattle for seven periods of time, until you acknowledge that the Most High is ruler over human kingdoms, and he gives them to anyone he wants.”
33 At that moment the message against Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people. He ate grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky, until his hair grew like eagles’ feathers and his nails like birds’ claws. †

NEBUCHADNEZZAR’S PRAISE

34 But at the end of those days, I, Nebuchadnezzar, looked up to heaven, and my sanity returned to me. Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever: †

For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation
to generation. †
35 All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, †
and he does what he wants † with the army of heaven and the inhabitants
of the earth.
There is no one who can block his hand
or say to him, “What have you done? ” †

36 At that time my sanity returned to me, and my majesty and splendor returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and my nobles sought me out, I was reestablished over my kingdom, and even more greatness came to me. †
37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of the heavens, because all his works are true and his ways are just. † He is able to humble †
those who walk in pride. †

4:11 Lit *of all the* **4:13** = an angel **4:16** Lit *animal as seven times pass over him* **4:16** Perhaps seven years **4:26** Lit *enduring* **4:26** = God
4:1 Dn 6:25 **4:1** 2Pt 1:2 **4:2** Dn 6:27; Jn 4:48; Ac 2:22; 2Co 12:12; Heb 2:4 **4:3** Ps 105:27; Is 25:1 **4:3** Ps

145:13; Dn 2:44; 4:34; 7:14,27; 2Pt 1:11 **4:3** Is 9:7; Dn 6:26; 1Pt 5:11; Rv 1:6; 5:13 **4:4** Ps 30:6; Is 47:7-8 **4:5** Dn 2:28; 7:15 **4:6** Dn 3:10,29 **4:6** Gn 41:8; Dn 2:12 **4:7** Dn 2:2 **4:8** Dn 1:7 **4:8** Gn 41:38; Dn 2:11 **4:9** Dn 5:11 **4:9** Ezk 28:3 **4:11** Gn 11:4 **4:12** Gn 2:9; Rv 22:2 **4:12** Ezk 17:23; Mt 13:32; Lk 13:9 **4:12** Ezk 31:3-6 **4:13** Dt 33:2; Ps 89:7; Zch 14:5; Jd 14 **4:13** Rv 10:1; 18:1; 20:1 **4:14** Ezk 31:10-14 **4:15** Jb 14:7-9 **4:15** Gn 3:18 **4:16** Dn 7:25 **4:17** 1Sm 2:8; Ps 9:16; Jr 27:5-7; Dn 5:21 **4:18** Gn 41:8; Dn 5:8 **4:19** 2Sm 18:32 **4:22** Jr 27:6-8; Ezk 31:3 **4:24** Jb 40:11-12; Ps 107:40 **4:25** Ps 106:20; Jr 27:5 **4:25** Ps 83:18; Dn 5:21 **4:26** Dn 2:37 **4:27** Pr 28:13; Ac 8:22 **4:27** Ps 41:1-3; Is 58:6-7; Ezk 18:7 **4:27** Jr 18:8; Jn 3:10 **4:28** Nm 23:19; Zch 1:6 **4:30** Is 24:23; Ezk 26:20; 28:22; 38:23; 39:13,21; Hab 2:4; 1Co 4:7 **4:31** Lk 12:20 **4:32-33** Dn 5:21 **4:34** Dn 6:26; 12:7; Rv 4:10 **4:34** Ps 145:13; Jr 10:10; Mc 4:7 **4:35** Is 40:15-17 **4:35** Jb 9:12; 42:2; Ps 115:3; 135:6; Rm 9:20; Eph 1:11 **4:35** Is 40:17; 43:13; 45:9; Rm 9:20 **4:36** 2Ch 33:12-13; Pr 22:4 **4:37** Dt 32:4; Ps 33:4; Rv 15:3 **4:37** Ex 18:11; Jb 40:11-12 **4:37** 2Sm 22:28; Ps 18:27; Pr 16:18; 29:23; Rm 12:16; Jms 4:6; 1Pt 5:5

4:1-2 Nebuchadnezzar's declaration to **every people, nation, and language** of the **miracles and wonders the Most High God has done for** him sharply contrasts with the command to worship the golden image in 3:4-6.

4:3 Nebuchadnezzar's confession that the Lord's **kingdom is an eternal kingdom** implicitly recognizes that his own kingdom is not. This was a key theme in his earlier dream (2:39,44).

4:4-9 Nebuchadnezzar had another troubling **dream**, and again Daniel was the only one able to interpret it (2:1-11,24-30). This time around, the king was already aware of Daniel's reputation as one who has **the spirit of the holy gods** (vv. 9,18; 1:17).

4:10-12 The representation of a powerful king and kingdom as a mighty **tree** that provides shelter for various animals is also found in Ezekiel 31.

4:14-15 The chopping down of the tree is clearly an act of judgment, but the sparing of **the stump** provides a glimmer of hope.

4:16 The command to change the king's **mind** to that **of an animal** blurs the distinction between man and beast (see 7:3-8). As in 3:19, the use of the number **seven** appears to carry some symbolic meaning (see vv. 23,25,32; 9:24-27). Seven **periods** may refer to seven years, but that detail is left unspecified.

4:17 The humiliation of this mighty tree would demonstrate the supremacy of God over human kings and their kingdoms (see 2:21). Nebuchadnezzar had not yet explicitly acknowledged this important truth (see 2:47; 3:28-29).

4:20-27 Daniel explained that the dream concerned the greatness, humiliation, and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar. His kingdom would be given back after he acknowledged the rule of **the Most High** (vv. 25-26; see previous note). Daniel appealed to Nebuchadnezzar to repent of his **sins** (v. 27), which presumably would prevent the threatened judgment.

4:29-33 The dream came to fulfillment **twelve months** later. Nebuchadnezzar's boast showed that he had not taken his dream or Daniel's exhortation to heart (vv. 29-30). Immediately, he lost his kingdom and lived like an animal (vv. 31-33), as foretold (vv. 16,25).

4:34-35 Through this humiliation, Nebuchadnezzar came to know that only God has **an everlasting dominion** and that the inhabitants of the earth, even earthly kings, are nothing compared to him (see Is 40:15,17).

4:36-37 Nebuchadnezzar's genuine acknowledgement of God's rule over the kingdoms of men resulted in the restoration of his kingdom and, more importantly, a changed heart that humbly honored the **King of the heavens.** God's power to humble the proud is power indeed.

BELSHAZZAR'S FEAST

5 King Belshazzar † held a great feast for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine in their presence. 2 Under the influence of † the wine, Belshazzar gave orders to bring in the gold and silver vessels † that his predecessor † Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, wives, and concubines could drink from them. 3 So they brought in the gold † vessels that had been taken from the temple, the house of God in Jerusalem, † and the king and his nobles, wives, and concubines drank from them. 4 They drank the wine and praised their gods made of gold and silver, bronze, iron, wood, and stone. †

THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL

5 At that moment the fingers of a man's hand appeared and began writing on the plaster of the king's palace wall next to the lampstand. As the king watched the hand † that was writing, 6 his face turned pale, † and his thoughts so terrified him that he soiled himself † and his knees knocked together. 7 The king shouted to bring in the mediums, Chaldeans, and diviners. He said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this inscription and gives me its interpretation will be clothed in purple, have a gold chain around his neck, † and have the third highest position in the kingdom." 8 So all the king's wise men came in, but none could read the inscription or make its interpretation known to him. 9 Then King Belshazzar became even more terrified, his face turned pale, † and his nobles were bewildered. †

10 Because of the outcry of the king and his nobles, the queen † came to the banquet hall. "May the king live forever," she said. "Don't let your thoughts terrify you or your face be pale. † † 11 There is a man in your kingdom who has a spirit of the holy gods in him. † In the days of your predecessor he was found to have insight, intelligence, and wisdom like the wisdom of the gods. Your predecessor, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, mediums, Chaldeans, and diviners. Your own predecessor, the king, 12 did this because Daniel, the one the king named Belteshazzar, was found to have an extraordinary spirit, knowledge and intelligence, and the ability to interpret

dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems. † Therefore, summon Daniel, and he will give the interpretation."

DANIEL BEFORE THE KING

13 Then Daniel was brought before the king. The king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the Judean exiles that my predecessor the king brought from Judah? † 14 I've heard that you have a spirit of the gods in you, and that insight, intelligence, and extraordinary wisdom are found in you. 15 Now the wise men and mediums were brought before me to read this inscription and make its interpretation known to me, but they could not give its interpretation. 16 However, I have heard about you that you can give interpretations and solve problems. Therefore, if you can read this inscription and give me its interpretation, you will be clothed in purple, have a gold chain around your neck, and have the third highest position in the kingdom." †

17 Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts and give your rewards to someone else; † however, I will read the inscription for the king and make the interpretation known to him. 18 Your Majesty, the Most High God gave sovereignty, † greatness, glory, and majesty to your predecessor Nebuchadnezzar. † 19 Because of the greatness he gave him, all peoples, nations, and languages † were terrified and fearful of him. He killed anyone he wanted and kept alive anyone he wanted; he exalted anyone he wanted and humbled anyone he wanted. 20 But when his heart was exalted and his spirit became arrogant, † he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken from him. † 21 He was driven away from people, † his mind was like an animal's, he lived with the wild donkeys, † he was fed grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with dew from the sky until he acknowledged that the Most High God is ruler over human kingdoms and sets anyone he wants over them. †

22 "But you his successor, Belshazzar, have not humbled your heart, † even though you knew all this. 23 Instead, you have exalted yourself against the Lord of the heavens. The vessels from his house were brought to you, and as you and your nobles, wives, and concubines drank wine from them, † you praised the gods made of silver and gold, bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or

hear or understand. † But you have not glorified the God who holds your life-breath in his hand and who controls the whole course of your life. † †
24 Therefore, he sent the hand, and this writing was inscribed.

THE INSCRIPTION'S INTERPRETATION

25 "This is the writing that was inscribed: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, and PARSIN.
26 This is the interpretation of the message:

'Mene' † means that God has numbered † the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. †
27 'Tekel' † means that you have been weighed † on the balance and found deficient.
28 'Peres' † † means that your kingdom has been divided and given to the Medes and Persians." †

29 Then Belshazzar gave an order, and they clothed Daniel in purple, placed a gold chain around his neck, † and issued a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.
30 That very night Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was killed, 31 and Darius the Mede † received the kingdom at the age of sixty-two.

5:2 Or *When he tasted* **5:2** Or *father*, or *grandfather* **5:3** Theod, Vg add *and silver* **5:5** Lit *part of the hand* **5:5-6** Lit *writing*, 6*the king's brightness changed* **5:6** Lit *that the knots of his loins were loosed* **5:9** Lit *his brightness changed on him* **5:10** Perhaps the queen mother **5:10** Lit *your brightness change* **5:23** Lit *and all your ways belong to him* **5:26** Or *a mina* **5:26** The Aramaic word for *numbered* sounds like *mene*. **5:27** Or *a shekel* **5:27** The Aramaic word for *weighed* sounds like *tekel*. **5:28** Or *half a shekel* **5:28** In Aramaic, the word *peres* is the sg form of "parsin" in v. 25. **5:28** The Aramaic word for *divided* and *Persians* sounds like *peres*.

5:1 Dn 7:1; 8:1 **5:2** 1Kg 7:51; 2Kg 24:13; 2Ch 36:7,10; Ezr 5:14; 6:5; Jr 52:19; Dn 1:2 **5:3** 1Ch 22:2; Ezr 1:4; 2:68; 3:8; 4:24; 5:2,16-17; 6:3,12; Neh 6:10; Ps 42:4; Mt 12:4; Heb 10:21 **5:4** Is 46:6 **5:7** Gn 41:42 **5:9** Dn 2:1; 5:6; 7:28 **5:10** 1Kg 21:5 **5:11** Dn 4:8-9,18 **5:12** Gn 41:11-15; Dn 6:3 **5:13** Dn 1:3-4; 2:25 **5:16** Gn 40:8; Dn 5:7,29 **5:17** 2Kg 5:15-16 **5:18** Dn 4:2 **5:18** Jr 27:5-7 **5:19** Dn 2:12-13; 3:6 **5:20** Ex 9:17; Jb 15:25; Pr 16:18; Is 57:15; Jr 48:29; Dn 4:30-31 **5:20** Jr 13:18 **5:21** Ex 9:17; Jb 15:25 **5:21** Jb 39:5-8 **5:21** Dn 4:30-31 **5:22** Ex 10:3; 2Ch 33:23; 36:12 **5:23** Jr 51:39,57 **5:23** Is 2:12; 37:23; Jr 50:29; Dn 5:3-4 **5:23** Ps 31:15 **5:26** Is 13:17-19; Dn 2:44; 6:26; Hs 1:4 **5:29** Dn 5:7,16 **5:31** Dn 6:1; 9:1; 11:1

5:1-4 Belshazzar would be the last Babylonian king (see v. 30), and he may have been Nebuchadnezzar's grandson. The taking of the temple **vessels** by Nebuchadnezzar (v. 2) is one of the first things narrated in the book of Daniel (see the note on 1:1-2); the reference to it here is significant. It was unnecessary for

Belshazzar to use the temple items from Jerusalem, and his doing so while praising his own gods is an intentional insult to the God of Israel (vv. 2-4).

5:5-12 The frightening sight of a disembodied hand **writing on** the wall demonstrated again the uselessness of Babylonian wise men and provided an opportunity for Daniel to glorify God (see 2:10-16; 4:6-9).

5:17 Daniel was not motivated by the promise of reward from Belshazzar.

5:22-24 Before interpreting the writing on the wall, Daniel first recounted to Belshazzar God's humbling of Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 18-21), which Belshazzar already **knew** about. Nevertheless, he had not **humbled** [his] **heart** before God and spitefully used the temple **vessels** (vv. 22-23; see 4:37). The message written on the wall was God's response to Belshazzar's arrogant act.

5:25-28 The writing consisted of three common Aramaic words for Babylonian weights. Archaeologists have found ancient weights labeled with these words. A **mene** (or Mina) was sixty times the value of a **tekel** (or shekel). A **peres** was either half of a mina or shekel. Daniel interprets the words as verbs, rather than nouns; they express a message of imminent doom. The words were symbols of God numbering and weighing Belshazzar and finding him inadequate. Therefore, the days of his rule were coming **to an end** (v. 26). The kingdom of Babylon would be **given to the Medes and Persians** (v. 28).

5:30 The fulfillment of this message of judgment was swift, as Belshazzar was killed **that very night.** The fall of the kingdom of Babylon also fulfilled 2:39.

THE PLOT AGAINST DANIEL

6 Darius decided † to appoint 120 satraps over the kingdom, stationed throughout the realm, 2 and over them three administrators, including Daniel. † These satraps would be accountable to them so that the king would not be defrauded. † 3 Daniel † distinguished himself above the administrators and satraps because he had an extraordinary spirit, † so the king planned to set him over the whole realm. † 4 The administrators and satraps, therefore, kept trying to find a charge against Daniel † regarding the kingdom. But they could find no charge or corruption, † for he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We will never find any charge against this Daniel unless we find something against him concerning the law of his God." †

6 So the administrators and satraps went together to the king and said to him, "May King Darius live forever. † 7 All the administrators of the kingdom, † the prefects, satraps, advisers, and governors have agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an edict that for thirty days, anyone who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lions' den. † 8 Therefore, Your Majesty, establish the edict † and sign the document

so that, as a law of the Medes and Persians, it is irrevocable and cannot be changed.” † 9 So King Darius signed the written edict. †

DANIEL IN THE LIONS’ DEN

10 When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went into his house. The windows in its upstairs room opened toward Jerusalem, † and three times a day he got down on his knees, prayed, and gave thanks to his God, † just as he had done before. 11 Then these men went as a group and found † Daniel petitioning and imploring his God. 12 So they approached the king † and asked about his edict: “Didn’t you sign an edict that for thirty days any person who petitions any god or man except you, the king, will be thrown into the lions’ den? ”

The king answered, “As a law of the Medes and Persians, the order stands † and is irrevocable.” †

13 Then they replied to the king, “Daniel, one of the Judean exiles, has ignored you, † the king, and the edict you signed, for he prays three times a day.” 14 As soon as the king heard this, he was very displeased; he set his mind on rescuing Daniel † and made every effort until sundown to deliver him.

15 Then these men went together to the king and said to him, “You know, Your Majesty, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no edict or ordinance the king establishes can be changed.” †

16 So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. † The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you continually serve, † rescue you! ” 17 A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. † The king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signet rings of his nobles, so that nothing in regard to Daniel could be changed. 18 Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting. † No diversions † were brought to him, and he could not sleep. †

DANIEL RELEASED

19 At the first light of dawn the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. 20 When he reached the den, he cried out in anguish to Daniel. “Daniel, servant

of the living God," the king said, † "has your God, whom you continually serve, been able to rescue you † from the lions?"
21 Then Daniel spoke with the king: "May the king live forever. 22 My God sent his angel † and shut the lions' mouths; and they haven't harmed me, for I was found innocent before him. And also before you, Your Majesty, I have not done harm."
23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders to take Daniel out of the den. When Daniel was brought up from the den, he was found to be unharmed, for he trusted in his God. † 24 The king then gave the command, and those men who had maliciously accused Daniel † † were brought and thrown into the lions' den — they, their children, and their wives. † They had not reached the bottom of the den before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

DARIUS HONORS GOD

25 Then King Darius wrote to those of every people, nation, and language who live on the whole earth: "May your prosperity abound. † 26 I issue a decree † that in all my royal dominion, people must tremble in fear before the God of Daniel: †

For he is the living God,
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will never be destroyed, †
and his dominion has no end.
27 He rescues and delivers; he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth, †
for he has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions."

28 So Daniel prospered † during the reign of Darius and † the reign of Cyrus the Persian. †

6:1 Lit *It was pleasing before Darius* **6:3** Lit *Now this Daniel* **6:12** Lit *the word is certain* **6:18** Aramaic obscure **6:20** Lit *said to Daniel* **6:24** Lit *had eaten his pieces* **6:28** Or *Darius, even*
6:2 Dn 2:48-49; 5:16,29 **6:2** Ezr 4:22; Est 7:4 **6:3** Dn 5:12,14; 9:23 **6:3** Gn 41:40; Est 10:3 **6:4** Gn 43:18; Jdg 14:4; Jr 20:10; Dn 3:8; Lk 20:20 **6:4** Dn 6:22; Lk 20:26; 23:14; Php 2:15; 1Pt 2:12; 3:16 **6:5** Ac 24:13-16,20-21 **6:6** Neh 2:3; Dn 2:4; 5:10; 6:21 **6:7** Dn 3:2,27 **6:7** Ps 10:9; Dn 3:6; 6:16 **6:8** Est 3:12; 8:10; Is

10:1 **6:8** Est 1:9; 8:8; Dn 6:12,15 **6:9** Ps 118:9; 146:3 **6:10** 1Kg 8:44-49; Ps 5:7; Jnh 2:4 **6:10** Ps 34:1; Dn 9:4-19; Php 4:6; 1Th 5:17-18 **6:11** Ps 37:32-33; Dn 6:6 **6:12** Dn 3:8-12; Ac 16:19-21 **6:12** Est 1:19; Dn 6:8,15 **6:13** Est 3:8; Dn 3:12; Ac 5:29 **6:14** Mk 6:26 **6:15** Est 8:8; Ps 94:20,21; Dn 6:8,12 **6:16** 2Sm 3:39; Jr 38:5; Dn 6:7 **6:16** Jb 5:19; Ps 37:39-40; Is 41:10; 2Co 1:10 **6:17** Lm 3:53; Mt 27:66 **6:18** 2Sm 12:16,17 **6:18** Est 6:1; Ps 77:4; Dn 2:1 **6:20** Gn 18:14; Nm 11:23; Jr 32:17; Dn 3:17 **6:22** Nm 20:16; Is 63:9; Dn 3:28; Ac 12:11; Heb 1:14 **6:23** 1Ch 5:20; 2Ch 20:20; Ps 118:8-9; Is 26:3; Dn 3:17-18 **6:24** Dn 3:8; 6:12-13 **6:24** Dt 24:16; 2Kg 14:6; Est 9:10 **6:25** Ezr 4:17; 1Pt 1:2 **6:26** Ezr 6:8-12; 7:13,21; Dn 3:29; 4:6 **6:26** Dn 5:19 **6:26** Ps 93:1-2; Dn 2:44; 7:14; Mal 3:6 **6:27** Dn 4:2-3 **6:28** Dn 1:21 **6:28** 2Ch 36:22-23; Dn 10:1

6:1-3 Despite the regime change, Daniel continued in a prominent position (see 1:21; 2:48; 4:9). He had outlasted the Babylonian kings.

6:6-9 Unable to find anything against Daniel (vv. 4-5), the **administrators of the kingdom** pressured **King Darius** into enacting a law that forbade prayer to anyone besides him (see vv. 14,18-23). Apparently, the king did not realize that this would implicate Daniel, one of his most trusted advisors (v. 3). The trap was set.

6:10-11 Despite the new law, Daniel went home and **prayed** to God as usual. He could have been more discreet or even taken a break from his habit, but he was unwilling to compromise his faith—even when threatened with a violent death (v. 7).

6:18-19 As in verses 3,14, Darius's actions showed his deep respect and concern for Daniel.

6:20-21 Darius's question highlights God's power to save Daniel from lions, which recalls the display of his power to save from fire (3:15,17,29). God's ability to deliver from beasts and from fire connects to 7:2-11.

6:22 Though Daniel has been unwilling to make the smallest compromise of his faith in God, he still considers himself to be loyal to the king. When the two commitments are not in conflict, Daniel is loyal to both. But where they are in conflict, Daniel chooses his loyalty to God over his loyalty to king and country. The sending of God's **angel** parallels 3:28 (see "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*).

6:23 The fact that Daniel was unharmed is explicitly linked here to his faith in God.

6:26-27 As Nebuchadnezzar had done in response to God's works (2:47; 3:28-29; 4:3,34-37), now Darius glorifies the eternal King, who **rescued** Daniel from the lions.

DANIEL'S VISION OF THE FOUR BEASTS

7 In the first year of King Belshazzar of Babylon, Daniel had a dream with visions in his mind † as he was lying in his bed. He wrote down the dream, † and here is the summary † of his account. 2 Daniel said, "In my vision at night I was watching, and suddenly the four winds of heaven † stirred up the great sea. 3 Four huge beasts † came up from the sea, † each different from the other.

4 "The first was like a lion † but had eagle's wings. I continued watching until its wings were torn off. It was lifted up from the ground, set on its feet like a man, and given a human mind.

5 “Suddenly, another beast appeared, a second one, that looked like a bear. † It was raised up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, ‘Get up! Gorge yourself on flesh.’
6 “After this, while I was watching, suddenly another beast appeared. It was like a leopard † with four wings of a bird on its back. It had four heads, † and it was given dominion.
7 “After this, while I was watching in the night visions, suddenly a fourth beast † appeared, frightening and dreadful, and incredibly strong, with large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed, and it trampled with its feet whatever was left. It was different from all the beasts before it, and it had ten horns. †
8 “While I was considering the horns, suddenly another horn, † a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. And suddenly in this horn there were eyes like the eyes of a human and a mouth that was speaking arrogantly. †

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS AND THE SON OF MAN

9 “As I kept watching,

thrones were set in place, †
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was white like snow, †
and the hair of his head like whitest wool. †
His throne was flaming fire; †
its wheels were blazing fire. †
10 A river of fire was flowing, coming out from his presence.
Thousands upon thousands † served him; ten thousand times ten thousand †
stood before him.
The court was convened, †
and the books were opened. †

11 “I watched, then, because of the sound of the arrogant words the horn was speaking. As I continued watching, the beast was killed and its body destroyed and given over to the burning fire. † 12 As for the rest of the beasts, their

dominion was removed, but an extension of life was granted to them for a certain period of time. † 13 I continued watching in the night visions,

and suddenly one like a son of man †
was coming with the clouds of heaven. †
He approached the Ancient of Days
and was escorted before him.
14 He was given dominion, †
and glory, and a kingdom;
so that those of every people,
nation, and language †
should serve † him.
His dominion is an everlasting † dominion that will not pass away,
and his kingdom is one
that will not be destroyed.

INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION

15 "As for me, Daniel, my spirit was deeply distressed within me, † and the visions in my mind terrified me. † 16 I approached one of those who were standing by and asked him † to clarify all this. So he let me know the interpretation of these things: † 17 'These huge beasts, four in number, are four kings who will rise from the earth. 18 But the holy ones of the Most High will receive the kingdom and possess it forever, yes, forever and ever.' †
19 "Then I wanted to be clear about the fourth beast, † the one different from all the others, extremely terrifying, with iron teeth and bronze claws, devouring, crushing, and trampling with its feet whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns † on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three fell — the horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spoke arrogantly, † and that looked bigger than the others. 21 As I was watching, this horn waged war † against the holy ones and was prevailing over them 22 until the Ancient of Days arrived and a judgment † was given in favor of the holy ones of the Most High, for the time had come, and the holy ones took possession of the kingdom.

23 “This is what he said: ‘The fourth beast will be a fourth kingdom on the earth,
different from all the other kingdoms. It will devour the whole earth, trample it
down, and crush it. 24 The ten horns † are ten kings who will rise from this
kingdom. Another king, different from the previous ones, will rise after them
and subdue three kings. 25 He will speak words against the Most High † and
oppress † the holy ones † of the Most High. He will intend to change religious
festivals † and laws, † and the holy ones will be handed over to him for a time,
times, and half a time. † † 26 But the court will convene, † and his dominion
will be taken away, to be completely destroyed forever. † 27 The kingdom,
dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the
people, the holy ones of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting
kingdom, † and all rulers will serve and obey him.’
28 “This is the end of the account. As for me, Daniel, my thoughts terrified me
greatly, † and my face turned pale, † but I kept the matter to myself.” †

7:1 Lit *beginning* **7:15** Lit *was distressed in the middle of its sheath* **7:25** Lit *wear out* **7:25** Lit *change times* **7:25** Or *for three and a half years* **7:28** Lit *my brightness changed on me*

7:1 Jb 33:14-16; Dn 1:17; 2:1; 4:5-9; Jl 2:28 **7:1** Jr 36:4,32 **7:2** Ezk 37:9; Zch 2:6; Rv 7:1 **7:3** Dn 7:17 **7:3** Rv 13:1; 17:8 **7:4** Jr 4:7; 25:9; Rv 13:2 **7:5** Rv 13:2 **7:6** Hab 1:8; Rv 13:2 **7:6** Dn 8:22 **7:7** Dn 7:19,23 **7:7** Dn 7:20,24; Rv 12:3; 13:1 **7:8** Dn 7:11,20-26; 8:9 **7:8** Rv 13:5-6 **7:9** Mt 19:28; Rv 20:4 **7:9** Mk 9:3 **7:9** Is 1:18; Rv 1:14 **7:9** Ezk 1:13,26 **7:9** Ezk 10:2,6 **7:10** Dt 33:2; 1Kg 22:19; Rv 5:11 **7:10** Ps 96:11-13; Rv 9:16 **7:10** Dn 7:26 **7:10** Dn 12:1; Rv 20:11-15 **7:11** Dn 7:26; Rv 19:20; 20:10 **7:12** Ps 75:6-7; Dn 2:21 **7:13** Mt 16:27-28; 24:30; Lk 21:27; Ac 7:56; Rv 1:7,13; 14:14 **7:13** Mt 26:64; Mk 13:26; 14:62 **7:14** Jn 3:35; 1Co 15:27; Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9; Rv 1:6; 11:15 **7:14** Ps 72:11; 102:22; Rv 10:11 **7:14** Dn 3:14,17-18,28; 6:17,21; 7:27 **7:14** Heb 12:28 **7:15** Dn 4:19; 7:1,28 **7:16** Zch 1:9,19; Rv 5:5; 7:13-14 **7:16** Dn 7:3 **7:18** Ps 149:5-9; Is 60:12-14; Rv 2:26-27; 11:15; 22:5 **7:19** Dn 7:7-8 **7:20** Rv 12:3 **7:20** Dn 7:8; 2Th 2:9-10 **7:21** Rv 11:7; 13:7 **7:22** Dn 7:10; 1Co 6:2-3 **7:24** Dn 7:7; Rv 17:12 **7:25** Dn 11:36; Rv 13:1-6 **7:25** Rv 13:7; 18:24 **7:25** Dn 2:21 **7:25** Dn 12:7; Rv 11:2; 12:14 **7:26** Dn 7:10 **7:26** Rv 17:14; 19:20 **7:27** Ps 145:13; Is 9:7; Lk 1:33; Rv 11:15; 22:5 **7:28** Dn 4:19 **7:28** Lk 2:19,51

7:2-3 Daniel’s dream of the four **beasts** parallels Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the composite statute in 2:31-45 (see notes).

7:4 The first beast looks like a **lion** with **eagle’s wings** and represents Babylon. The imagery is reminiscent of the humbling and restoration of Nebuchadnezzar (see Dn 4).

7:5 The second beast, which looked like a **bear**, refers to the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians (see 5:28; see the note on 8:3-4). It was **raised up on one side** to symbolize the fact that Persia was more dominant than Media. The **three ribs** may refer to three territories within the empire.

7:6 The third beast is like a **leopard** with **four heads.** This refers to the kingdom of Greece (see 8:5-8,21) which, after the death of Alexander the Great, was divided among four of his generals: Cassander, Ptolemy, Antigonus, and Seleucus.

7:7 The **fourth beast** was especially frightening and was not compared to any animal (see vv. 19-26),

unlike the previous three. Its **iron** teeth link it to the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:40). Power is again shown through the ability to crush other things (see 2:34,40,44-45; 6:24).

7:8 The small, arrogant **horn** on the fourth beast is associated with the fourth kingdom (see v. 7) and is especially opposed to God (see vv. 9-11).

7:9-10 The focus shifts quickly from the power and pride of the fourth kingdom (vv. 7-8) to the surpassing majesty and might of God, **the Ancient of Days**, who sits enthroned for judgment. The repeated references to **fire** emphasize his awesome power, and the **wheels** recall Ezekiel 1:15-21; 2:13; 10:9-13,16-19 and 11:22.

7:11-12 The death of the boastful horn by **fire** (v. 11) is naturally connected to judgment by the Ancient of Days, who is surrounded by fire (vv. 9-10; see v. 22). In contrast, God had delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from fire (3:24-27). The other **beasts** lose their rule but are still permitted to live for a **period of time** (v. 12).

7:13-14 The climax of the vision is **one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven.** This is the Messiah (Mk 13:26; Rv 1:7), and his rule over an **everlasting dominion** and over a **kingdom . . . that will not be destroyed** show that the same "kingdom" repeatedly referenced earlier (2:44; 4:3,34; 6:26) is the messianic kingdom.

7:15-18 Despite Daniel's distress over the dream and the power of the four beasts (vv. 15-17), the encouraging end result is that saints will **receive the kingdom and possess it forever** (vv. 18,22), presumably as subjects of the messianic King (vv. 13-14).

7:21-22 The arrogant horn (vv. 8,11,20) will persecute the saints and have power over them (v. 21; see v. 25) until **the Ancient of Days** passes **judgment** on him (v. 22; see vv. 9-11).

7:27-28 For a third time in this passage (vv. 18,22), the saints are assured that they will receive **an everlasting kingdom.** This is important because of their being persecuted severely by the fourth kingdom and the little horn (vv. 21,25). The seriousness of this suffering may have been a cause for Daniel's distress over the vision (vv. 15,28).

THE VISION OF A RAM AND A GOAT

8 In the third year of King Belshazzar's † reign, a vision appeared to me, Daniel, after the one that had appeared to me earlier. † 2 I saw the vision, and as I watched, I was in the fortress city of Susa, † in the province of Elam. † I saw in the vision that I was beside the Ulai Canal. 3 I looked up, † and there was a ram † standing beside the canal. He had two horns. The two horns were long, but one was longer than the other, and the longer one came up last. 4 I saw the ram charging to the west, the north, and the south. † No animal could stand against him, and there was no rescue from his power. He did whatever he wanted † and became great.

5 As I was observing, a male goat appeared, coming from the west across the surface of the entire earth without touching the ground. The goat had a

conspicuous horn † between his eyes. † 6 He came toward the two-horned ram
I had seen standing beside the canal and rushed at him with savage fury. 7 I saw
him approaching the ram, and infuriated with him, he struck the ram, breaking
his two horns, and the ram was not strong enough to stand against him. The goat
threw him to the ground and trampled him, and there was no one to rescue the
ram from his power. 8 Then the male goat acted even more arrogantly, † but
when he became powerful, the large horn was broken. † Four conspicuous horns
came up in its place, pointing toward the four winds of heaven. †

THE LITTLE HORN

9 From one of them a little horn † emerged and grew extensively toward the
south and the east and toward the beautiful land. † † 10 It grew as high as the
heavenly army, made some of the army and some of the stars † fall to the
earth, † and trampled them. † 11 It acted arrogantly † even against the Prince
of the heavenly army; † it revoked his regular sacrifice † and overthrew the
place of his sanctuary. 12 In the rebellion, the army was given up, together with
the regular sacrifice. The horn threw truth to the ground and was successful † in
what it did.

13 Then I heard a holy one speaking, † and another holy one said to the speaker,
"How long will the events of this vision last † — the regular sacrifice, the
rebellion that makes desolate, and the giving over of the sanctuary and of the
army to be trampled? " †

14 He said to me, † "For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will
be restored."

INTERPRETATION OF THE VISION

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there
stood before me someone who appeared to be a man. † 16 I heard a human
voice calling from the middle of the Ulai: "Gabriel, † explain the vision to this
man."

17 So he approached where I was standing; when he came near, I was terrified
and fell facedown. † "Son of man," he said to me, "understand that the vision

refers to the time of the end.” † 18 While he was speaking to me, I fell into a deep sleep, † with my face to the ground. Then he touched me, made me stand up, † 19 and said, “I am here to tell you what will happen at the conclusion of the time of wrath, because it refers to the appointed time of the end. † 20 The two-horned ram † that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 The shaggy goat represents the king of Greece, and the large horn between his eyes represents the first king. † 22 The four horns that took the place of the broken horn represent four kingdoms. They will rise from that nation, but without its power.

23 Near the end of their kingdoms, when the rebels have reached
the full measure of their sin, †
a ruthless † king, skilled in intrigue, †
will come to the throne.
24 His power will be great, but it will not be his own.
He will cause outrageous destruction †
and succeed in whatever he does.
He will destroy the powerful
along with the holy people. †
25 He will cause deceit to prosper through his cunning and by his influence, and in his own mind he will exalt himself.
He will destroy many in a time of peace; he will even stand against the Prince of princes.
Yet he will be broken — not by human hands. †
26 The vision of the evenings and the mornings that has been told is true.
Now you are to seal up the vision †
because it refers to many days in the future.”

27 I, Daniel, was overcome and lay sick for days. † Then I got up and went about the king’s business. † I was greatly disturbed by the vision and could not understand it.

8:3 Lit *I lifted my eyes and looked* **8:5** Lit *a horn of a vision* **8:9** = Israel **8:10** Or *some of the army, that is, some of the stars* **8:14** LXX, Theod, Syr, Vg read *him* **8:21** = Alexander the Great **8:23** Lit *have become complete* **8:23** Lit *strong of face* **8:23** Lit *king, and understanding riddles*

8:1 Dn 5:1 **8:1** Dn 7:1 **8:2** Ezr 4:9; Neh 1:1; Est 1:2; 2:8 **8:2** Gn 10:22; 14:1; Is 11:11; Jr 25:25; Ezk 33:24 **8:3** Dn 8:20 **8:4** Dt 33:17; 1Kg 22:11; Ezk 34:21 **8:4** Dn 11:3 **8:5** Dn 8:21 **8:8** 2Ch 26:16; Dn 5:20 **8:8** Dn 8:22 **8:8** Dn 7:2; Rv 7:1 **8:9** Dn 7:8; 8:23 **8:9** Ps 48:2; Dn 11:16,41 **8:10** Is 14:13; Jr 48:26; Rv 12:4 **8:10** Dn 7:7 **8:11** 2Kg 19:22-23; 2Ch 32:15-17; Is 37:23; Dn 11:36-37 **8:11** Jos 5:13-15 **8:11** Ezk 46:14; Dn 11:31; 12:11 **8:12** Is 59:14; Dn 11:36 **8:13** Dn 4:13,23; 1Pt 1:12 **8:13** Ps 74:10; 79:5; Is 6:11; Dn 12:6,8; Rv 6:10 **8:13** Is 63:18; Jr 12:10; Lk 21:24; Heb 10:29; Rv 11:2 **8:15** Dn 7:13; 10:16,18 **8:16** Dn 9:21; Lk 1:19,26 **8:17** Ezk 1:28; 44:4; Dn 2:46; Rv 1:17 **8:17** Dn 11:35,40 **8:18** Dn 10:9; Lk 9:32 **8:18** Ezk 2:2; Dn 10:10,16,18 **8:19** Mt 13:7 **8:20** Dn 8:3 **8:24** Dn 11:36; 12:7 **8:24** Dn 7:27 **8:25** Jb 34:20; Dn 2:34,45 **8:26** Ezk 12:27; Dn 12:4,9; Rv 10:4; 22:10 **8:27** Dn 7:28; 8:17; Hab 3:16 **8:27** Dn 2:48

8:1 Like the preceding **vision** (7:1), this one was also given to Daniel during the reign of Belshazzar. These visions took place before the events of Daniel 5–6. The book of Daniel is not in strict chronological order.

8:3-4 The **ram** with **two horns** of differing length parallels the bear that is raised up on one side in 7:5. This ram is identified in verse 20 as "the kings of Media and Persia." The longer horn and upraised side corresponds to Persia, the stronger of the two.

8:5-8 The **male goat** with a **conspicuous horn** defeats the ram, but later this horn is broken and four other horns arise in its place (see 7:6). This goat is identified in verse 21 as "the king of Greece" and its large horn with its **first king**, Alexander the Great. After his untimely death in 323 BC, his kingdom was divided into four (v. 22; see the note on 7:6).

8:9-12 This proud **little horn** that opposes the worship of the true God sounds like the one in 7:8,11,20-25. Despite this one seemingly arising from Greece whereas the other arises from the fourth kingdom (7:7,19; Rv 13:1-8), the present vision also bears eschatological overtones (see the notes on vv. 13-14,23-26).

8:13-14 Along with references to "the end" in verses 17,19 (see 9:26), the restoration of the **sanctuary** seems to refer to eschatological salvation. The **rebellion that makes desolate** seems to parallel "the abomination of desolation" in 9:27 (see Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14). Some take **2,300 evenings and mornings** as 1,150 days, which falls between three and three and a half years (see 7:25; 9:27; 12:11; Rv 11:2-3).

8:16 Gabriel is an angel that appears twice to **explain** a mystery to Daniel (see 9:21).

8:23-26 This strong and crafty **king** will have a measure of supernatural power (v. 24) and will be destroyed by divine power (v. 25; see 2:34,45). His success and exaltation of himself over the **Prince** shows that he is the "little horn" of 8:9-12. His persecution of the **holy people** (v. 24) recalls 7:21,25. The **evenings** and **mornings** (v. 26) have to do with the length of time before the sanctuary is restored (vv. 13-14).

DANIEL'S PRAYER

9 In the first year of Darius, † the son of Ahasuerus, a Mede by birth, who
was made king over the Chaldean kingdom — 2 in the first year of his
reign, I, Daniel, understood from the books according to the word of the
LORD to the prophet Jeremiah that the number of years for the desolation of
Jerusalem would be seventy. † 3 So I turned my attention to the Lord God to
seek him by prayer and petitions, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. †
4 I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

Ah, Lord — the great and awe-inspiring God † who keeps his gracious covenant † with those who love him † and keep his commands † — 5 we have sinned, † done wrong, acted wickedly, rebelled, † and turned away from your commands and ordinances. † 6 We have not listened to your servants the prophets, † who spoke in your name to our kings, leaders, fathers, and all the people of the land.

7 Lord, righteousness belongs to you, † but this day public shame belongs to us: the men of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, and all Israel — those who are near and those who are far, in all the countries where you have banished them because of the disloyalty they have shown toward you. 8 LORD, public shame † belongs to us, our kings, our leaders, and our fathers, because we have sinned against you. † 9 Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him 10 and have not obeyed the LORD our God by following his instructions that he set before us through his servants † the prophets.

11 All Israel has broken your law and turned away, † refusing to obey you. The promised curse † written in the law of Moses, † the servant of God, has been poured out on us because we have sinned against him. 12 He has carried out his words † that he spoke against us and against our rulers † † by bringing on us a disaster that is so great that nothing like what has been done to Jerusalem has ever been done † under all of heaven. 13 Just as it is written in the law of Moses, † all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of † the LORD our God by turning from our iniquities and paying attention to your truth. † 14 So the LORD kept the disaster in mind and brought it on us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all he has done. But we have not obeyed him.

15 Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a strong hand † and made your name renowned † as it is this day, we have sinned, we have acted wickedly. 16 Lord, in keeping with all your righteous acts, may your anger and wrath † turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy mountain; † for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become an object of ridicule to all those around us.

17 Therefore, our God, hear the prayer and the petitions of your servant. Make your face shine † on your desolate sanctuary † for the Lord's sake. 18 Listen closely, † my God, and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations and the city that bears your name. For we are not presenting our petitions before you based on our righteous acts, but based on your abundant compassion. 19 Lord, hear! Lord, forgive! Lord, listen and act! My God, for your own sake, do not delay, † because your city and your people bear your name.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF YEARS

20 While I was speaking, praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, † and presenting my petition before the LORD my God concerning the holy mountain of my God — 21 while I was praying, Gabriel, † the man I had seen in the first vision, † reached me in my extreme weariness, about the time of the evening offering. † 22 He gave me this explanation: "Daniel, I've come now to give you understanding. † 23 At the beginning of your petitions an answer went out, and I have come to give it, for you are treasured by God. † † So consider the message and understand the vision: †

24 Seventy weeks are decreed †
about your people and your holy city —
to bring the rebellion to an end,
to put a stop to sin,
to atone for iniquity,
to bring in everlasting righteousness, †
to seal up vision and prophecy,
and to anoint the most holy place.
25 Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree
to restore and rebuild Jerusalem †
until an Anointed One, † the ruler, †
will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks.
It will be rebuilt with a plaza and a moat, but in difficult times.
26 After those sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off †
and will have nothing.

The people of the coming ruler
will destroy the city † and the sanctuary. †
The † end will come with a flood, †
and until the end there will be † war; desolations are decreed.
27 He will make a firm covenant †
with many for one week,
but in the middle of the week
he will put a stop to sacrifice and offering.
And the abomination of desolation †
will be on a wing † of the temple † †
until the decreed destruction †
is poured out on the desolator."

9:11 Lit *The curse and the oath* **9:12** Lit *against rulers who ruled us* **9:18** Lit *Stretch out your ear* **9:23** *by God* added for clarity **9:25** Or *until an anointed one, a prince* **9:26** MT; Theod, some mss read *The city and the sanctuary will be destroyed when the ruler comes.* **9:26** Lit *Its*, or *His* **9:26** Or *end of a* **9:27** Or *will enforce a covenant* **9:27** LXX; MT reads *of abominations* **9:27** Or *And the desolator will be on the wing of abominations*, or *And the desolator will come on the wings of monsters* (or *of horror*); Hb obscure
9:1 Dn 5:31; 6:1; 11:1 **9:2** 2Ch 36:21; Ezr 1:1; Jr 25:11-12; 29:10; Zch 7:5 **9:3** Neh 1:4; Jb 2:8; Is 61:3; Lk 10:13 **9:4** Dt 7:21; Neh 9:32 **9:4** Dt 7:9 **9:4** 1Jn 4:20 **9:4** Dt 7:9; Neh 1:5 **9:5** 1Kg 8:48; Neh 9:33; Ps 106:6; Is 64:5-7; Jr 14:7 **9:5** Lm 1:18,20 **9:5** Ps 119:176; Is 53:6; Dn 9:11 **9:6** 2Ch 36:16; Jr 44:4-5 **9:7** Jr 23:6; 33:16; Dn 9:18 **9:8** Ps 37:1-2 **9:8** Ps 78:56-64 **9:10** 2Kg 17:13-15; 18:12 **9:11** Is 1:3-4; Jr 8:5-10 **9:11** Dt 28:15-68; 29:16–30:20; Lk 2:22 **9:12** Is 44:26; Jr 44:2-6; Lm 2:17; Zch 1:6 **9:12** Jb 12:17; Ps 82:2-7; 148:11 **9:12** Lm 1:12; 2:13; Ezk 5:9 **9:13** Lv 26:14-45; Dt 28:15-68; Dn 9:11 **9:13** Jb 36:13; Is 9:13; Jr 2:30; 5:3; Mal 1:9 **9:13** Jr 31:18 **9:15** Dt 5:15 **9:15** Neh 9:10; Jr 32:20 **9:16** Jr 32:31-32 **9:16** Ps 87:1-3; Dn 9:20; Jl 3:17; Zch 8:3 **9:17** Nm 6:25; Ps 31:17; 67:2 **9:17** Lm 5:18 **9:19** Ps 44:23; 74:10-11 **9:20** Ps 145:18; Is 58:9; Dn 9:3; 10:12 **9:21** Dn 8:16; Lk 1:19,26 **9:21** Dn 8:1,15 **9:21** Ex 29:39; 1Kg 18:36; Ezr 9:4 **9:22** Dn 8:16; 10:21; Zch 1:9 **9:23** Dn 10:11,19 **9:23** Mt 24:15 **9:24** Lv 25:8; Nm 14:34; Ezk 4:5-6 **9:24** Is 51:6,8; 56:1; Jr 23:5-6; Rm 3:21-22 **9:25** Ezr 4:24; 6:1-15; Neh 2:1-8; 3:1 **9:25** Mt 1:17; Jn 1:41; 4:25 **9:26** Is 53:8; Mk 9:12; Lk 24:26 **9:26** Mt 24:2; Mk 13:2; Lk 19:43-44 **9:26** Nah 1:8 **9:27** Dn 11:31; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; Lk 21:20 **9:27** Is 7:7-8; Mt 4:5 **9:27** Is 10:23; 28:22

9:2 Though a prophet, Daniel himself was a student of Scripture (see Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2) and learned from the book of **Jeremiah** that Jerusalem would be desolate for **seventy** years (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10).

9:4-6 Daniel did not presume upon God's promises of salvation in the book of Jeremiah (see previous note) but humbled himself in prayer, in accordance with Jeremiah 29:12-14. Although not personally responsible for the sins of his nation, Daniel confessed as a member of that guilty nation (vv. 5-6,11; Is 6:5).

9:7-10 The **shame** and exile that Israel was experiencing was the nation's own fault. They had shown **disloyalty** to God (v. 7) and had both sinned and rebelled against the instruction given through **the prophets** (v. 10).

9:11-14 The **disaster** that Israel was enduring should have been no surprise because it had been foretold **in**

the law of Moses (see Dt 4:25-27; 31:16-21).

9:15-19 After affirming his nation's guilt again (v. 15), Daniel pleaded for mercy. Having already cited God's faithfulness to his covenant (v. 4) and his compassion (v. 9), Daniel cited the exodus (v. 15) and appealed to God to act for his name's sake in forgiving his people and removing their reproach and that of the city and the sanctuary (vv. 16-19).

9:20-23 The angelic message was directly linked to Daniel's confession and petition (vv. 20,23). Again it is Gabriel who comes to **give . . . understanding** (vv. 21-22; 8:16).

9:24 The mention of "seven weeks of years" in Leviticus 25:8 suggests that **seventy weeks** here refers to seventy weeks of years: four-hundred and ninety weeks total. There are many different approaches by commentators to explain how these seventy weeks work out in history. The periodization of history demonstrates that God is in control, knows the beginning and the end, and will bring it to completion. The bringing to an end of **sin**, making atonement for **iniquity**, establishment of **everlasting righteousness**, and proper treatment of the **most holy place** are eschatological (see 8:13-14). Thus, the problems of Israel's sin and reproach (vv. 5-19)—as well as the sins of the Gentiles—will be resolved (7:8,11,20-21,25; 8:9-13,23-25).

9:25-26 The eschatological events of verse 24 are linked to the coming of the Messiah. The cutting off of the Messiah, **the Anointed One**, is a reference to his death (v. 26), which precedes his triumphant "coming with the clouds of heaven" in 7:13. The desolation of the **city** and the **sanctuary** will persist for a period of time even after the Messiah's coming.

9:27 The coming prince whose people "destroy the city and the sanctuary" (v. 26) is juxtaposed with Messiah, **"**the ruler" (v. 25; see 8:11,25). He is the One who will stop worship of God until judgment is poured out on him. As such, this wicked one is naturally equated with the aforementioned "little horn" (7:8,11,25; 8:9-13,23-25). He desecrates **the temple** by setting up **the abomination of desolation** (see the note on 8:13-14).

VISION OF A GLORIOUS ONE

10 In the third year of King Cyrus of Persia, † a message was revealed to
Daniel, who was named Belteshazzar. † The message was true and was
about a great conflict. He understood the message and had understanding of the
vision. †

2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three full weeks. † 3 I didn't eat any
rich food, † no meat or wine entered my mouth, and I didn't put any oil on my
body until the three weeks were over. 4 On the twenty-fourth day of the first
month, † as I was standing on the bank of the great river, † the Tigris, 5 I
looked up, and there was a man dressed in linen, † with a belt of gold † from
Uphaz † † around his waist. 6 His body was like beryl, † his face like the
brilliance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, † his arms and feet like the

gleam of polished bronze, and the sound of his words like the sound of a multitude. †

7 Only I, Daniel, saw the vision. † The men who were with me did not see it, †
but a great terror fell on them, † and they ran and hid. 8 I was left alone, looking
at this great vision. † No strength was left in me; my face grew deathly
pale, † † and I was powerless. 9 I heard the words he said, and when I heard
them I fell into a deep sleep, † † with my face to the ground.

ANGELIC CONFLICT

10 Suddenly, a hand touched me and set me shaking on my hands and knees.
11 He said to me, “Daniel, you are a man treasured by God. † † Understand the
words that I’m saying to you. Stand on your feet, † for I have now been sent to
you.” † After he said this to me, I stood trembling.

12 “Don’t be afraid, † Daniel,” he said to me, “for from the first day that you
purposed to understand and to humble yourself before your God, † your prayers
were heard. I have come because of your prayers. † 13 But the prince of the
kingdom of Persia opposed me for twenty-one days. Then Michael, † one of the
chief princes, came to help me after I had been left there with the kings of
Persia. † 14 Now I have come to help you understand what will happen to your
people in the last days, † for the vision refers to those days.” †

15 While he was saying these words to me, I turned my face toward the ground
and was speechless. † 16 Suddenly one with human likeness † touched my
lips. † I opened my mouth and said to the one standing in front of me, “My lord,
because of the vision, anguish overwhelms me and I am powerless. † 17 How
can someone like me, † your servant, † speak with someone like you, my lord?
Now I have no strength, and there is no breath in me.”

18 Then the one with a human appearance touched me again and strengthened
me. † 19 He said, “Don’t be afraid, † you who are † treasured by God. † Peace
to you; be very strong! ” †

As he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, “Let my lord speak, for you
have strengthened me.” †

20 He said, “Do you know why I’ve come to you? I must return at once to fight
against the prince of Persia, and when I leave, the prince of Greece will come. †
21 However, I will tell you what is recorded in the book of truth. (No one has the
courage to support me against those princes except Michael, † your prince.
10:4 = Nisan (March–April) **10:5** Some Hb mss read *Ophir* **10:6** The identity of this stone is uncertain. **10:8** Lit *my splendor was turned on me to ruin* **10:9** Lit *a sleep on my face* **10:11** *by God* added for clarity, also in v. 19 **10:17** Lit *Can I, a servant of my lord* **10:19** Lit *afraid, man*
10:1 Dn 1:21; 6:28 **10:1** Dn 1:7 **10:1** Dn 1:17; 2:21 **10:2** Ezr 9:4-5; Neh 1:4 **10:3** Dn 6:18; Am 6:6; Mt 6:17 **10:4** Ezk 1:3; Dn 8:2 **10:5** Ezk 9:2; Dn 12:6-7 **10:5** Rv 1:13; 15:6 **10:5** Jr 10:9 **10:6** Rv 1:14; 2:18; 19:12 **10:6** Rv 19:6 **10:7** 2Kg 6:17-20 **10:7** Ac 9:7 **10:7** Ezk 12:18 **10:8** Gn 32:24 **10:8** Dn 7:28; 8:27; Hab 3:16 **10:9** Gn 15:12; Jb 4:13; Dn 8:18 **10:11** Dn 9:23; 10:19 **10:11** Ezk 2:2; Dn 8:18 **10:11** Heb 11:14 **10:12** Is 41:10,14; Dn 10:19 **10:12** Dn 9:2-23; 10:2-3 **10:12** Ac 10:30-31 **10:13** Dn 10:21; 12:1; Jd 9; Rv 12:7 **10:13** Dn 7:17; 8:21 **10:14** Dt 31:29; Dn 2:28 **10:14** Dn 8:26; 12:4,9 **10:15** Ezk 3:26; 24:27; Lk 1:20 **10:16** Dn 8:15 **10:16** Is 6:7; Jr 1:9 **10:16** Dn 7:15,28; 8:17,27; 10:8-9 **10:17** Ex 24:10-11; Is 6:1-5 **10:18** Is 35:3-4 **10:19** Jdg 6:23; Is 43:1; Dn 10:12 **10:19** Dn 9:23; 10:11 **10:19** Jos 1:6-7,9; Is 35:4 **10:19** Ps 138:2; 2Co 12:9 **10:20** Dn 8:21; 11:2 **10:21** Dn 10:13; Rv 12:7

10:1 The themes of **conflict** and war continue (see v. 20; 7:21,25; 8:24-25; 9:26).

10:3 Daniel’s diet in these weeks parallels his earlier diet in 1:8,12.

10:5-6 This glorious messenger was **a man dressed in linen** (see Ezk 9:2). Many commentators identify this heavenly being as an angel, perhaps Gabriel as in 9:21. Alternatively, this may be God himself. The description of his appearance parallels the description of divine glory in Ezekiel 1:26-28 (see Rv 1:13-16). There, God appeared as a man on the throne. In addition, in 12:7 the man in linen knows the answer to a question asked by angels.

10:12-14 Daniel’s **prayers were heard** from the **first day** he started praying (v. 12; see v. 2), but the messenger did not reach him because of the opposition in the spiritual realm (v. 13). The **prince of the kingdom of Persia** refers to a spiritual being, opposed to God, who by virtue of his title is closely associated with the earthly kingdom of the same name (see the note on vv. 20-21; see “Spiritual Warfare,” *p. 1454*). The Hebrew phrase translated **the last days** (v. 14) is the same one used in other important OT prophecies (see the notes on Gn 1:1; 49:1). Although the whole message in its entirety does not concern the end, some of it does (see 11:30-36; 12:1-3).

10:20-21 Just as Persia had a representative in the spiritual realm, so would **Greece.** Conflict on earth thus corresponds to a real spiritual conflict. Michael is the **prince** over God’s people (see v. 13; 12:1).

11 In the first year of Darius the Mede, † I stood up to strengthen and
protect him.) 2 Now I will tell you the truth. †

PROPHECIES ABOUT PERSIA AND GREECE

“Three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth will be far richer than the
others. By the power he gains through his riches, he will stir up everyone against
the kingdom of Greece. † 3 Then a warrior king will arise; he will rule a vast
realm and do whatever he wants. † 4 But as soon as he is established, his

kingdom will be broken up and divided to the four winds of heaven, † but not to his descendants; it will not be the same kingdom that he ruled, because his kingdom will be uprooted and will go to others besides them. †

KINGS OF THE SOUTH AND THE NORTH

5 "The king of the South † will grow powerful, but one of his commanders will grow more powerful and will rule a kingdom greater than his. 6 After some years they will form an alliance, and the daughter of the king of the South will go to the king of the North † to seal the agreement. She will not retain power, and his strength will not endure. She will be given up, together with her entourage, her father, † and the one who supported her during those times. 7 In the place of the king of the South, one from her family † will rise up, come against the army, and enter the fortress of the king of the North. He will take action against them and triumph. 8 He will take even their gods captive to Egypt, with their metal images and their precious articles of silver and gold. † For some years he will stay away from the king of the North, 9 who will enter the kingdom of the king of the South and then return to his own land.

10 "His sons will mobilize for war and assemble a large number of armed forces. They will advance, sweeping through like a flood, † † and will again wage war as far as his fortress. 11 Infuriated, the king of the South will march out to fight with the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but they will be handed over to his enemy. 12 When the army is carried off, he will become arrogant and cause tens of thousands to fall, but he will not triumph. 13 The king of the North will again raise a multitude larger than the first. After some years † † he will advance with a great army and many supplies.

14 "In those times many will rise up against the king of the South. Violent ones among your own people will assert themselves to fulfill a vision, but they will fail. 15 Then the king of the North will come, build up a siege ramp, † and capture a well-fortified city. The forces of the South will not stand; even their select troops will not be able to resist. 16 The king of the North who comes against him will do whatever he wants, † and no one can oppose him. He will establish himself in the beautiful land † † with total destruction in his hand.

17 He will resolve † to come with the force of his whole kingdom and will reach
an agreement with him. † He will give him a daughter in marriage † to destroy
it, † but she will not stand with him or support him. 18 Then he will turn his
attention to the coasts and islands † † and capture many. But a commander will
put an end to his taunting; instead, he will turn his taunts against him. † 19 He
will turn his attention back to the fortresses of his own land, but he will stumble,
fall, † and be no more. †
20 "In his place one will arise who will send out a tax collector † for the glory of
the kingdom; but within a few days he will be broken, though not in anger †
or in battle.
21 "In his place a despised † person will arise; royal honors will not be given to
him, but he will come during a time of peace † † and seize the kingdom by
intrigue. 22 A flood of forces will be swept away before him; they will be
broken, as well as the covenant prince. 23 After an alliance is made with him, he
will act deceitfully. He will rise to power with a small nation. † 24 During a
time of peace, † he will come into the richest parts of the province † and do
what his fathers and predecessors never did. He will lavish plunder, loot, and
wealth on his followers, and he will make plans against fortified cities, but only
for a time.
25 "With a large army he will stir up his power and his courage against the king
of the South. The king of the South will prepare for battle with an extremely
large and powerful army, but he will not succeed, because plots will be made
against him. 26 Those who eat his provisions † will destroy him; his army will
be swept away, and many will fall slain. 27 The two kings, whose hearts are bent
on evil, will speak lies † at the same table but to no avail, for still the end will
come at the appointed time. † 28 The king of the North will return to his land
with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant; † he will
take action, then return to his own land.
29 "At the appointed time he will come again to the South, but this time † will
not be like the first. 30 Ships of Kittim † † will come against him, and being
intimidated, he will withdraw. Then he will rage against the holy covenant and

take action. On his return, he will favor those who abandon the holy covenant.
31 His forces will rise up and desecrate the temple fortress. They will abolish the
regular sacrifice † and set up the abomination of desolation. † 32 With flattery
he will corrupt those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who
know their God will be strong and take action. † 33 Those who have insight
among the people † will give understanding to many, yet they will fall by the
sword and flame, † and be captured and plundered for a time. 34 When they fall,
they will be helped by some, but many others will join them insincerely. †
35 Some of those who have insight will fall so that they may be refined, †
purified, and cleansed † until the time of the end, for it will still come at the
appointed time.
36 “Then the king will do whatever he wants. † He will exalt and magnify
himself above every god, † and he will say outrageous things against the God of
gods. † He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, † because
what has been decreed will be accomplished. 37 He will not show regard for the
gods † of his fathers, the god desired by women, or for any other god, †
because he will magnify himself above all. 38 Instead, he will honor a god of
fortresses — a god his fathers did not know — with gold, silver, precious stones,
and riches. 39 He will deal with the strongest fortresses with the help of a foreign
god. He will greatly honor those who acknowledge him, † making them rulers
over many and distributing land as a reward.
40 “At the time of the end, the king of the South will engage him in battle, but
the king of the North will storm against him † with chariots, horsemen, and
many ships. He will invade countries and sweep through them like a flood. †
41 He will also invade the beautiful land, † and many will fall. But these will
escape from his power: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people † of the
Ammonites. † 42 He will extend his power against the countries, and not even
the land of Egypt will escape. 43 He will get control over the hidden treasures of
gold and silver and over all the riches of Egypt. The Libyans and Cushites will
also be in submission. † † 44 But reports from the east † and the north will
terrify him, and he will go out with great fury to annihilate and completely

destroy many. [45] He will pitch his royal tents between the sea and † the beautiful holy mountain, † but he will meet his end with no one to help him.

11:6 Some Hb mss, Theod read *the child* ; Syr, Vg read *her children* **11:7** Lit *from the shoot of her roots* **11:10** Lit *advance and overflow and pass through* **11:13** Lit *At the end of the times* **11:16** = Israel **11:17** = the king of the South **11:17** Lit *him the daughter of women* **11:17** Perhaps the kingdom **11:18** of the Mediterranean **11:20** Or *not openly* **11:21** Or *come without warning* **11:23** Or *a few people* **11:24** Or *Without warning* **11:28** Or *the Jewish people and religion* **11:29** Lit *but the last* **11:30** = the Romans **11:37** Or *God* **11:39** Or *those he acknowledges* **11:41** Lit *the first* **11:43** Lit *Cushites at his steps* **11:45** Or *the seas at*

11:1 Dn 5:31; 9:1 **11:2** Dn 8:26; 10:1,21 **11:2** Dn 8:21; 10:20 **11:3** Dn 5:19; 8:4; 11:16,36 **11:4** Jr 49:36; Ezk 37:9; Dn 7:2; 8:8; Zch 2:6; 6:5; Rv 7:1 **11:4** Jr 12:15,17; 18:7 **11:5** Dn 11:9,11,14,25,40 **11:6** Dn 11:13,15,40 **11:8** Is 37:19; 46:1-2; Jr 43:12-13 **11:10** Is 8:8; Jr 46:7-8; 51:42; Dn 11:26,40 **11:13** Dn 4:16; 12:7 **11:15** Jr 6:6; Ezk 4:2; 17:17 **11:16** Dn 5:19; 11:3,36 **11:16** Dn 8:9; 11:41 **11:17** 2Kg 12:17; Ezk 4:3,7 **11:18** Gn 10:5; Is 66:19; Jr 2:10; 31:10; Zph 2:11 **11:18** Hs 12:14 **11:19** Ps 27:2; Jr 46:6 **11:19** Jb 20:8; Ps 37:36; Ezk 26:21 **11:20** 2Kg 23:35 **11:21** Is 53:3 **11:21** Dn 8:25; 11:24 **11:24** Nm 13:20; Neh 9:25; Ezk 34:14 **11:26** Dn 1:5,8,13,15 **11:27** Ps 12:2; Jr 9:3-5; 41:1-3 **11:27** Dn 8:19; 11:35,40; Hab 2:3 **11:30** Gn 10:4; Nm 24:24; 1Ch 1:7; Is 23:1,12; Jr 2:10 **11:31** Dn 8:11-13; 12:11 **11:31** Dn 9:27; 12:11; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14 **11:32** Mc 5:7-9; Zch 9:13-16; 10:3-6 **11:33** Mal 2:7 **11:33** Mt 24:9; Jn 16:2; Heb 11:36-38 **11:34** Dn 11:21,32; Mt 7:15; Ac 20:29-30; Rm 16:18 **11:35** Dt 8:16; Pr 17:3; Dn 12:10; Zch 13:9; Mal 3:2-3 **11:35** Dn 12:10 **11:36** Dn 5:19; 11:3,16 **11:36** Is 14:13; Dn 5:20; 8:11,25; 2Th 2:4 **11:36** Rv 13:5-6 **11:36** Is 10:25; 26:20; Dn 8:19 **11:37** 1Co 8:5-6 **11:40** Is 5:28; Jr 4:13 **11:40** Dn 11:10,26; Zch 9:14 **11:41** Is 11:14; Dn 8:9; 11:16 **11:41** Jr 48:47; 49:6 **11:43** 2Ch 12:3; Ezk 30:4; Nah 3:9 **11:44** Rv 16:12 **11:45** Is 11:9; 27:13; 65:25; 66:20; Dn 9:16,20

11:2-5 This describes the transition of power from Persia to Greece, led by Alexander the Great (the **warrior king**, v. 3). His premature death would lead to the division of his kingdom into four parts. The **king of the South** (v. 5) is Ptolemy I, one of Alexander's generals who became king of Egypt.

11:21-24 The preceding details in verses 5-20 give way to an extended focus on the rule of **a despised person** (v. 21), whose deception and opposition to God's people recall earlier passages (vv. 22-24; see 8:23-25; 9:27).

11:25-28 This king is evidently from **the North** (vv. 25,28). His coming against **the South** (vv. 25,29) and against the land of Israel (vv. 22,28) matches 8:9-12.

11:30 Ships from **Kittim** are also mentioned in the context of eschatological battle in Numbers 24:23-24 (see the note on Nm 24:14-19).

11:31 The abolition of the **regular sacrifice** and the setting up of the **abomination of desolation** ties back to 8:12-13 and 9:27.

11:32-35 Despite such overwhelming evil, those who truly know God will be **strong** (v. 32). At the cost of their lives, they **will give understanding to many** (v. 33), as they bear witness to the truth. Such suffering, even to the point of martyrdom, is sobering but is clearly predicted here as elsewhere in Daniel (7:21,25; 8:24). Through these intense trials, the wise will be **refined, purified, and cleansed until the time of the end** (v. 35; 12:10).

11:36 His pride and blasphemy correspond to that of the "little horn" (7:8,11,20,25).

11:44-45 While gripped by **fury** and fear, this evil king **will meet his end.**

12 At that time Michael, † the great prince who stands watch
over your people, will rise up.
There will be a time of distress †
such as never has occurred †
since nations came into being until that time. †
But at that time all your people
who are found written in the book † will escape. †
2 Many who sleep in the dust †
of the earth will awake,
some to eternal life, †
and some to disgrace and eternal contempt. †
3 Those who have insight will shine like the bright expanse of the heavens, †
and those who lead many to righteousness, †
like the stars forever and ever.

4 “But you, Daniel, keep these words secret † and seal the book † until the time of the end. † Many will roam about, † and knowledge will increase.” †
5 Then I, Daniel, looked, and two others were standing there, one on this bank of the river and one on the other. 6 One of them said to the man dressed in linen, † who was above the water of the river, † “How long until the end † of these wondrous things?” 7 Then I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the water of the river. He raised both his hands † † toward heaven and swore by him who lives eternally † that it would be for a time, times, and half a time. †
When the power of the holy people is shattered, all these things will be completed.
8 I heard but did not understand. So I asked, “My lord, what will be the outcome of these things?” †
9 He said, “Go on your way, Daniel, for the words are secret † and sealed until the time of the end. † 10 Many will be purified, † cleansed, and refined, † but the wicked will act wickedly; † none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. † 11 From the time the daily sacrifice is

abolished and the abomination of desolation † is set up, † there will be 1,290 days. 12 Happy is the one who waits † for and reaches 1,335 days. 13 But as for you, go on your way to the end; † you will rest, and then you will stand to receive † your allotted inheritance at the end of the days."

12:4 LXX reads *and the earth will be filled with unrighteousness* **12:7** Lit *raised his right and his left* **12:13** LXX omits *to the end*

12:1 Dn 10:13,21; Jd 9; Rv 12:7 **12:1** Mt 24:21; Mk 13:19 **12:1** Jr 30:7; Ezk 5:9; Dn 9:12 **12:1** Rv 16:18 **12:1** Dn 7:10; 10:21; Rv 20:12 **12:1** Php 4:3; Rv 20:12; 21:27 **12:2** Is 26:19; Ezk 37:12-14 **12:2** Mt 25:46; Jn 5:28-29 **12:2** Is 66:24 **12:3** Gn 1:6; Ps 19:1; Jn 5:35 **12:3** Is 53:11; Dn 11:33 **12:4** Dn 8:26; 12:9; Rv 10:4 **12:4** Is 8:16; Jr 32:9-12; Rv 22:10 **12:4** Dn 8:17; 12:9,13 **12:4** 2Ch 16:9; Jr 5:1; Am 8:12 **12:6** Ezk 9:2; Dn 10:5 **12:6** Dn 8:16 **12:6** Dn 8:13; Mt 24:3; Mk 13:4 **12:7** Ezk 20:5; Rv 10:5-6 **12:7** Dn 4:34 **12:7** Dn 7:25; Rv 11:2; 12:14 **12:8** 1Th 5:10; 2Pt 3:10-14 **12:9** Rv 10:4 **12:9** Dn 12:4 **12:10** Zch 13:9; Ac 1:6-7; 2Th 2:7-12 **12:10** Dn 11:35 **12:10** Is 32:6-7; Rv 22:11 **12:10** Dn 12:3; Hs 14:9; Jn 7:17; 8:47 **12:11** Dn 9:27 **12:11** Dn 11:31; Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14 **12:12** Is 30:18 **12:13** Is 57:2; Rv 14:13

12:1-3 The **distress** that comes when God judges the world will be even worse than what was just described (v. 1; 11:21-45). Whereas the books in 7:10 contain those who will be judged, those written in this particular **book will escape** (see Rv 20:12-15). Physical death is not the end of human existence—either **eternal life** or **eternal contempt** will be (v. 2). The same wise people who had sacrificed their very lives for God (11:33-35) will live forever in glory. Their witness to others is cited again in verse 3 (see 11:33).

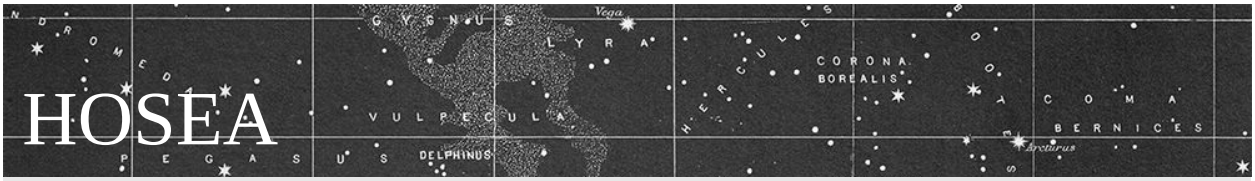
12:6-7 The events discussed concerned **the end.** The **man dressed in linen** first appeared in 10:5-6. The period of **time, times, and half a time** relates to timeframes cited earlier (7:25; 8:14; 9:27). What is clearer about the fulfillment of these things is that it will coincide with intense persecution of God's people (see v. 10; 11:33-35).

12:9-10 For a second time (v. 4), Daniel was informed that these **words are secret** and **sealed until the time of the end.** The wicked will not **understand**, but the wise (**those who have insight**) will. The latter are those who endure for God's sake and thus are **purified, cleansed, and refined** (see 11:33-35).

12:11 The abolition of **the daily sacrifice** and the setting up of the **abomination of desolation** (see 8:12-13; 11:31) for about three and a half years (1,290 days) agrees with the same things set into motion "in the middle of the week" (taken as a seven-year period) in 9:27.

12:12 The faithful will have to endure, but the worst will have passed after forty-five more days.

12:13 These things will not be fulfilled during Daniel's lifetime, but he will receive his eternal reward at the appointed time (see vv. 2-3).



HOSEA

INTRODUCTION

Hosea is one of the most autobiographical of the Prophetic Books in that the opening account of Hosea's own marriage and family form a vital part of his unique message. God's word of grace and his call to repent are dramatically portrayed and punctuated by Hosea's scorned but constant love for his wife Gomer and by the odd names of his three children. Apart from this information about his immediate family, hardly anything is known about Hosea. His divinely commissioned marriage to the promiscuous Gomer, which brought Hosea such heartache, seems to have been the beginning of his long career. But rather than ministering in spite of personal sorrow, Hosea found that his troublesome marriage was the foundation stone of his ministry.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: According to the first verse, Hosea's prophetic career spanned at least forty years. It began some time during the reign of Jeroboam II, who ruled Israel, the northern kingdom, as co-regent with his father Jehoash from 793 to 782 BC, then independently until 753 BC. Hosea's ministry ended sometime during the reign of Hezekiah, who ruled Judah from 716 to 686 BC.

Although the southern kingdom of Judah was not neglected in Hosea's prophecy (e.g., 1:7,11; 6:11; 12:2), his messages were directed primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel, often referred to as "Ephraim" (5:3,12-14; 6:4; 7:1), and represented by the royal city, Samaria (7:1; 8:5-6; 10:5,7; 13:16). Hosea apparently lived and worked in or around Samaria, probably moving to Jerusalem at least by the time Samaria fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC.

BACKGROUND: The reign of Jeroboam II, the northern kingdom's greatest ruler by worldly standards, was a time of general affluence, military might, and national stability. The economy was strong, the future looked bright, and the mood of the country was optimistic—at least for the upper class (Hs 12:8; Am 3:15; 6:4-6). Syria was a constant problem to Israel, but Adad-nirari III of Assyria had brought Israel relief with an expedition against Damascus, the Syrian capital, in 805 BC.

After Adad-nirari's death in 783 BC Israel and Judah expanded during a time of Assyrian weakness (the time of Jonah). But after Jeroboam's death in 753 BC Israel sank into near anarchy, going through six kings in about thirty years, four of whom were assassinated (Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah). Since Assyria also regained power during this time, Israel was doomed. Of course the real reason Israel crumbled was God's determination to judge the people for their sins, as Hosea and Amos made clear. Most of Hosea's messages were probably delivered during these last thirty years of Israel's nationhood.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Hosea compared the relationship between God and his people to that of a husband and his wife, drawing a parallel between spiritual and marital unfaithfulness. "The Bible is very clear in its moral code that the sexual act can only legitimately take place within the context of the marriage relationship. Thus the image of marriage and sex, a relationship that is purely exclusive and allows no rivals, is an ideal image of the relationship between God and his people" (*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, p. 778). Yet nothing can quench God's love for his covenant people. Like a marriage partner, God is deeply involved in our lives and is pained when we go our own way. God demands love and loyalty from his own. Often God's people have failed to demonstrate whole-hearted love for him, but he stands ready to forgive and restore those who turn

to him in repentance. In buying Gomer's freedom, Hosea pointed ahead to God's love perfectly expressed in Christ, who bought the freedom of his bride, the church, with his own life.

STRUCTURE

The first three chapters of the book establish a parallel between the Lord and Hosea. Both were loving husbands of unfaithful wives. Hosea's three children, whose names served as messages to Israel, represent an overture to the second main division of the book, which presents its accusations and the call to repent in groups of three. Just as chapter 1—a third-person account of Hosea's family—is balanced by chapter 3—a first-person account—so the final main division of the book alternates between first-person announcements of God's message and third-person reports from the prophet.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Hosea's doctrine of God is based mainly on the analogy of a husband-wife relationship. The Lord is jealous and will not forever tolerate his people "lusting" after other deities. He must judge unfaithfulness. At the same time, his love for his covenant people endures forever, and one day Ephraim (the northern kingdom of Israel) will be healed of rebelliousness (chap. 14). Matthew recognized Hosea's historical note about Israel's exodus from Egypt as a picture foreshadowing Jesus's coming from Egypt (Hs 11:1; Mt 2:15). The Spirit is not directly present in the book.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The adultery of Gomer and the idolatry of Israel both paint rather dark portraits of human shame and sinfulness. Hosea's exceptional love for Gomer provides a stark contrast and shows something of what it means to experience the love of God.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The clearest text in this book on the nature of salvation is Hosea 6:6: "For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." Offering sacrificial animals without an inner heart of love for God and one's neighbors was never a part of the biblical understanding of salvation. The Hebrew word *chesed* denotes loyalty to God as well as compassionate actions toward others.

HOSEA TIMELINE

850–775 BC

Jehu, king of northern kingdom **841–814**

Jehoahaz, king of northern kingdom **814–798**

Jehoash, king of northern kingdom **798–782**

Jeroboam II, king of northern kingdom **793–753**

Uzziah, king of southern kingdom **792–740**

Amos is called to prophetic ministry. **783**

775–740 BC

Zechariah, king of northern kingdom **753–752**, assassinated by Shallum Shallum, king of northern kingdom **752**, assassinated by Menahem Menahem, king of northern kingdom **752–742**

Pekah, king of northern kingdom **752–732**, assassinated by Hoshea Micah is called to be a prophet. **750**

Jotham, king of southern kingdom **750–732**

Hosea's prophetic ministry **750–710?**

Pekahiah, king of northern kingdom **742–740**, assassinated by Pekah 740–730 BC

Isaiah is called to be a prophet. **740**

Ahaz, king of southern kingdom **735–716**

Damascus and Israel attack Jerusalem hoping to replace Ahaz with a king favorable to their alliance. **735**

Tiglath-pileser's continued expansion takes territory along the Mediterranean coast, destroys Damascus, and captures most of the northern kingdom. **733–732**

730–675 BC

Hoshea, last king of northern kingdom **732–722**

Tiglath-pileser III's successor, Shalmaneser V besieges Samaria. **725–722**

Samaria falls to the hands of Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon II. **722**

Sargon's inscriptions say that nearly 28,000 captives were deported from Israel. **722**

Hezekiah, king of southern kingdom **716–686**

1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea son of Beeri during the reigns
of Uzziah, † Jotham, † Ahaz, † and Hezekiah, † kings of Judah, and of
Jeroboam † son of Jehoash, king of Israel.

HOSEA'S MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

2 When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, he said this to him:

Go and marry a woman of promiscuity, †
and have children of promiscuity,
for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity by abandoning the LORD.

3 So he went and married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and
bore him a son. † 4 Then the LORD said to him:

Name him Jezreel, † † for in a little while I will bring the bloodshed
of Jezreel †
on the house of Jehu †
and put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.
5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel †
in the Valley of Jezreel. †

6 She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter, and the LORD said to him:

Name her Lo-ruhamah, †
for I will no longer have compassion on the house of Israel.
I will certainly take them away.
7 But I will have compassion on the house of Judah, †
and I will deliver them by the LORD their God. †
I will not deliver them by bow, sword, or war, or by horses and cavalry. †

8 After Gomer had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and gave birth to a son.
9 Then the LORD said:

Name him Lo-ammi, †
for you are not my people,
and I will not be your God. † †
10 Yet the number of the Israelites will be like the sand of the sea, †
which cannot be measured or counted.
And in the place where they were told: You are not my people,
they will be called: Sons of the living God. †
11 And the Judeans and the Israelites will be gathered together. †
They will appoint for themselves a single ruler †
and go up from † the land.
For the day of Jezreel † will be great.

1:4 = God Sows **1:6** = No Compassion **1:9** = Not My People **1:9** Lit *not be yours* **1:11** Or *and flourish in* ; Hb obscure
1:1 2Ch 26:1-23; Is 1:1; Am 1:1 **1:1** 2Kg 15:5; 2Ch 27:1-9 **1:1** 2Kg 16:1-20; 2Ch 28:1-27; Is 1:1; 7:1-17;

Mc 1:1 **1:1** 2Kg 18:1–20:21; 2Ch 29:1–32:33; Mc 1:1 **1:1** 2Kg 13:13; 14:23-29; Am 1:1 **1:2** Hs 3:1 **1:3** Ezk 23:4 **1:4** Hs 2:22 **1:4** 2Kg 9:24–10:11 **1:4** 2Kg 9:7; 10:30; 15:10 **1:5** Gn 49:24; Jb 29:20; Jr 49:35 **1:5** Jos 17:16; Jdg 6:33 **1:7** Is 30:18 **1:7** Jr 25:5-6; Zch 9:9-10 **1:7** Ps 44:3-7 **1:9** Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12; Jr 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; Ezk 36:28 **1:10** Gn 22:17; Jr 33:22 **1:10** Rm 9:25-27 **1:11** Jr 23:5-6; 50:4-5; Ezk 37:18-25; Hs 3:5 **1:11** Jr 30:21; Hs 3:5 **1:11** Ezk 36:9-11

1:1 Hosea is the first book in the Minor Prophets (Hosea–Malachi). Ancient and contemporary interpreters have observed a unity among these twelve books. Thematic and lexical connections will be pointed out as appropriate in the notes below. Hosea was a contemporary of Isaiah (see Is 1:1), though neither references the other.

1:2 The dominant motif of the book of Hosea, especially in the earlier chapters, is that of a wife that is habitually unfaithful to her husband. Hosea's marriage to Gomer (vv. 2-3) is a prophetic sign-act that represents Israel's unfaithfulness to God in breaking the covenant and turning to other gods and means of deliverance. The use of marriage and divorce as a metaphor for God's covenant relationship with Israel is used regularly in other parts of the OT (Ex 34:15-16; Lv 17:7; 20:5-6; Nm 15:39; Dt 31:16; Jdg 2:17; Jr 2:20; Ezk 16:15-17).

1:3-5 Obediently, Hosea **married Gomer**, and they had **a son**. He was named **Jezreel** after a slaughter committed at the city of Jezreel (see 2Kg 10:11,14). The name was a sign that God would bring an end to the northern kingdom of Israel (see 10:3,7,15; 13:10-11).

1:6-7 In contrast with the firstborn son (v. 3), the report of the birth of Gomer's second and third children does not include the words "bore him" (referring to Hosea as father, v. 3). This implies that they were born out of wedlock and as such were children of promiscuity (v. 2; 2:4; Is 57:3). The naming of the daughter as **Lo-ruhamah** represents a lack of **compassion** and judgment **on the house of Israel**. Nevertheless, God would later save the **house of Judah** through supernatural means (see the note on 10:13-15; 11:12). This, in turn, will result in the salvation of Israel (v. 11).

1:8-10 Like the second child, this son was likely born out of wedlock too (see previous note). His name **Lo-ammi**, meaning "not my people" (v. 9; see the note on 8:5-6) is a tragic reversal of the intended relationship between God and Israel (see Lv 26:12; Jr 7:23; 11:4; Ezk 36:28). Nevertheless, this broken relationship would be restored such that they would become numerous and be called **Sons of the living God** (v. 10; Dt 32:21; Rm 9:24-26; 10:19).

1:11–2:1 The future salvation of Judah (v. 7) will result not only in the multiplication of Israelites in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (v. 10; Gn 22:17; 32:12) but also the reunification of the Israelites' kingdom under **a single ruler**, the Messiah (see 3:5; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:22-24). Their being **gathered** will be necessary because of exile (Jr 29:14; 31:8; Ezk 11:17; 28:25; see Gn 49:1) and the command to **go up from the land** alludes to a second exodus (see 2:14-15; 11:10-11; 12:9,13; 13:14; Ex 17:3; the note on Is 11:11-16; Jr 3:18). **Jezreel** was not only the site of bloodshed (vv. 4-5) but also means "God sows" in Hebrew. The wordplay on the names of all three children (see vv. 6,9; 2:23) powerfully communicates the reversal of fortunes from estrangement to love.

2 Call † your brothers: My People and your sisters: Compassion.

ISRAEL'S ADULTERY REBUKED

2 Rebuke your mother; rebuke her. †
For she is not my wife and I am not her husband. †

Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face †
and her adultery from between her breasts.
3 Otherwise, I will strip her naked †
and expose her as she was on the day of her birth.
I will make her like a desert †
and like a parched land,
and I will let her die of thirst. †
4 I will have no compassion on her children †
because they are the children of promiscuity.
5 Yes, their mother is promiscuous; she conceived them and acted shamefully. †
For she thought, “I will follow my lovers, †
the men who give me my food and water, my wool and flax, my oil and drink.” †
6 Therefore, this is what I will do: I will block her † way † with thorns; †
I will enclose her with a wall,
so that she cannot find her paths. †
7 She will pursue her lovers but not catch them; †
she will look for them but not find them.
Then she will think,
“I will go back to my former husband, †
for then it was better for me than now.” †
8 She does not recognize †
that it is I who gave her the grain, †
the new wine, and the fresh oil.
I lavished silver and gold on her,
which they used for Baal.
9 Therefore, I will take back my grain in its time †
and my new wine in its season;
I will take away my wool and linen,
which were to cover her nakedness.
10 Now I will expose her shame †
in the sight of her lovers,
and no one will rescue her from my power.

11 I will put an end to all her celebrations: †
her feasts, † New Moons, † and Sabbaths — all her festivals.
12 I will devastate her vines and fig trees. †
She thinks that these are her wages
that her lovers have given her.
I will turn them into a thicket, †
and the wild animals will eat them. †
13 And I will punish her for the days of the Baals, †
to which she burned incense. †
She put on her rings and her jewelry †
and followed her lovers,
but she forgot me. †

This is the LORD's declaration.

ISRAEL'S ADULTERY FORGIVEN

14 Therefore, I am going to persuade her, lead her to the wilderness, †
and speak tenderly to her. †
15 There I will give her vineyards back to her †
and make the Valley of Achor † †
into a gateway of hope.
There she will respond as she did
in the days of her youth, †
as in the day she came out of the land of Egypt.
16 In that day — this is the LORD's declaration — you will call me, "My husband," †
and no longer call me, "My Baal." †
17 For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth;
they will no longer be remembered by their names.
18 On that day I will make a covenant for them with the wild animals, the birds of the sky, and the creatures that crawl on the ground. †
I will shatter bow, sword,

and weapons of war in the land † †
and will enable the people to rest securely. †
19 I will take you to be my wife forever. †
I will take you to be my wife in righteousness, justice, love, and compassion. †
20 I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness, and you will know the LORD. †
21 On that day I will respond † — this is the LORD's declaration.
I will respond to the sky,
and it will respond to the earth.
22 The earth will respond to the grain, †
the new wine, and the fresh oil,
and they will respond to Jezreel.
23 I will sow her † in the land for myself, †
and I will have compassion †
on Lo-ruhamah;
I will say to Lo-ammi: †
You are my people, †
and he will say, "You are my God."

2:1 Lit *Say to* **2:6** LXX, Syr; MT reads *your* **2:14** Lit *speak to her heart* **2:15** = Trouble **2:16** Or *My Master* **2:18** Or *war on the earth* **2:23** = Israel
2:2 Ezk 23:45 **2:2** Is 50:1 **2:2** Jr 3:1,9,13 **2:3** Ezk 16:7,22,39 **2:3** Is 32:13-14; Hs 13:15 **2:3** Jr 14:3; Am 8:11-13 **2:4** Jr 13:14 **2:5** Is 1:21; Hs 3:1 **2:5** Jr 2:25 **2:5** Jr 44:17-18 **2:6** Jb 19:8 **2:6** Hs 9:6; 10:8 **2:6** Jr 18:15 **2:7** Hs 5:13 **2:7** Jr 2:2; 3:1; Ezk 16:8; 23:4 **2:7** Jr 14:22; Hs 13:6 **2:8** Is 1:3 **2:8** Ezk 16:19 **2:9** Hs 8:7; 9:2 **2:10** Ezk 16:37 **2:11** Jr 7:34; 16:9 **2:11** Hs 3:4; Am 5:21; 8:10 **2:11** Is 1:13-14 **2:12** Jr 5:17; 8:13 **2:12** Ps 80:12; Is 5:5; 7:23 **2:12** Is 32:13-15 **2:13** Hs 4:13; 11:2 **2:13** Jr 7:9 **2:13** Ezk 16:12,17; 23:40 **2:13** Hs 4:6; 8:14; 13:6 **2:14** Ezk 20:33-38 **2:15** Ezk 28:25-26 **2:15** Jos 7:26 **2:15** Jr 2:1-3 **2:16** Is 54:5 **2:18** Jb 5:23; Is 11:6-9; Ezk 34:25 **2:18** Ezk 39:1-10 **2:18** Ezk 34:25 **2:19** Is 62:4-5 **2:19** Is 1:27; 54:6-8 **2:20** Hs 6:6; 13:4 **2:21** Is 55:10; Zch 8:12; Mal 3:10-11 **2:22** Jr 31:12; Jl 2:19 **2:23** Jr 31:37 **2:23** Hs 1:6 **2:23** Hs 1:9 **2:23** Hs 2:1; Rm 9:25

2:2 Israel's **adultery** with idols results in the breaking of her covenant relationship to God.

2:3 Her becoming like a **desert** and **parched land** alludes to judgment through destruction of her land (see vv. 5,7,10,12).

2:5-8 Israel's unfaithfulness is repeatedly described as going after other **lovers** (vv. 5,7,10,12). These "lovers" include **Baal** (vv. 8,13,16,17; see the note on Jdg 3:7-11). Baal was the primary Canaanite fertility deity. Israel had worshiped this idol while still in the wilderness (9:10; Nm 25:1-3), and King Ahab had dragged the whole nation of Israel down this destructive path (2Kg 16:31-32; 19:18). Israel foolishly believed that these liaisons had blessed her with material abundance (vv. 5,12; 11:3), when in fact

blessings came from God (v. 8). He would discipline her so that she would see the futility of following other gods and turn back to him (vv. 6-7; see following note).

2:9-13 God would discipline Israel by taking away her material abundance (v. 9) and by humiliating her before **her lovers** (v. 10; see previous note), which may also allude to the nations (see 7:8-11; 8:9; Lm 1:2; Ezk 22:22-23). Moreover, religious worship would **end** (v. 11; 3:4; Is 1:13-14), and the land would be made desolate (v. 12; Hab 3:17). The combination of idolatry and **jewelry** (v. 13) directly parallels Ezekiel 16:17 and 23:40-41 and to a lesser extent the golden calf incident in Exodus 32:1-4.

2:14-15 Israel's eventual restoration (see 1:7,10-11) is detailed further here. Despite her adultery and estrangement, God will again **speak tenderly to her** (v. 14). Her future response to God while in the wilderness parallels what she had done in **her youth** after leaving **Egypt** (v. 15; 9:10; Ex 14:31–15:21; Jr 2:2). The transformation of the **Valley of Achor**, a site of sin and shame (Jos 7:24-26), **into a gateway of hope** parallels the transformation in 1:10.

2:18 The wild animals had been instruments of judgment against the land (v. 12; see 13:8). God's shattering of **bow** and **sword** establishes eternal peace on earth (1:7; Ps 46:9; Is 9:4-7).

2:19-20 The marriage relationship between God and his people will be permanently restored in **righteousness** and in **love** (Ps 85:10; Is 16:5; 54:8). Israel's future knowledge of God contrasts with their present state (4:1,6; 5:4), while also alluding to marital intimacy (Gn 4:1 [Hb]). See also "A Biblical View of Marriage," *p. 1449*.

2:21-23 When Israel responds to God (v. 15), he will also **respond** to the people (v. 21). This triggers the **sky** responding to the **earth**, which itself will **respond** with fruitfulness (v. 22). This chain reaction of fertility will bring blessing and restoration to the land. Such material blessings had been wrongly attributed to idols previously and subsequently taken away in judgment (vv. 5,8-9,12). God's sowing of Israel in the land is a wordplay on the Hebrew meaning of **Jezreel** ("God sows"; see 8:7; 10:12; 14:5-8); thus, the names of all three children are again transformed positively (v. 23; see 1:11).

WAITING FOR RESTORATION

3 Then the LORD said to me, "Go again; show love to a woman who is
loved by another man and is an adulteress, † just as the LORD loves the
Israelites though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes." †

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and five bushels of barley. † † †
3 I said to her, "You are to live with me many days. You must not be
promiscuous or belong to any man, and I will act the same way toward you."
4 For the Israelites must live many days without king or prince, † without
sacrifice † or sacred pillar, † and without ephod † or household idols. †
5 Afterward, the people of Israel will return † and seek the LORD their God and
David their king. † They will come with awe to the LORD † and to his goodness
in the last days.

3:2 LXX reads *barley and a measure of wine* **3:2** Lit *silver, a homer of barley, and a lethek of barley*
3:1 Hs 1:2 **3:1** 2Sm 6:19; 1Ch 16:3; Sg 2:5 **3:2** Ru 4:10 **3:4** Hs 13:10-11 **3:4** Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Hs 2:11 **3:4** Hs 10:1-2 **3:4** Ex 28:4-12; 1Sm 23:9-12 **3:4** Gn 31:19,34; Jdg 17:5; 18:14,17 **3:5** Jr 50:4-5 **3:5** Is

11:1-10; Jr 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Ezk 34:24; Rm 11:23 **3:5** Jr 31:9

3:1-5 Hosea was again called to enact the prophetic message (see 1:2-9), this time by loving his adulterous wife (vv. 1-3). Her being disciplined for **many days** (v. 3) represents Israel's endurance of exile (v. 4; 10:2). They would be without their own **king** (see 10:3,7) but **in the last days** will turn back and seek God and the Messiah (v. 5; 1:7,11; Is 10:20-21; Jr 30:9; Ezk 37:24). Their **awe** matches their "trembling" in 11:10.

GOD'S CASE AGAINST ISRAEL

4 Hear the word of the LORD, † people of Israel, for the LORD has a case †
against the inhabitants of the land: There is no truth, † no faithful love, †
and no knowledge of God † in the land!
2 Cursing, † lying, † murder, † stealing, †
and adultery † are rampant; one act of bloodshed follows another. †
3 For this reason the land mourns, †
and everyone who lives in it languishes, along with the wild animals †
and the birds of the sky; even the fish of the sea disappear. †
4 But let no one dispute; † let no one argue, for my case is
against you priests. † † †
5 You will stumble by day; †
the prophet will also stumble with you by night.
And I will destroy your mother. †
6 My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. †
Because you have rejected knowledge, †
I will reject you † from serving as my priest.
Since you have forgotten the law of your God, †
I will also forget your sons.

7 The more they multiplied, †
the more they sinned against me.
I † will change their † honor into disgrace. †
8 They feed on the sin † of my people; †
they have an appetite for their iniquity. †

9 The same judgment will happen to both people and priests. †
I will punish them for their ways †
and repay them for their deeds.
10 They will eat but not be satisfied; †
they will be promiscuous † but not multiply.
For they have abandoned their devotion to the LORD. †
11 Promiscuity, † wine, and new wine take away one's understanding. †

12 My people consult their wooden idols, †
and their divining rods inform them.
For a spirit of promiscuity leads them astray; †
they act promiscuously †
in disobedience to † their God.
13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops, †
and they burn offerings on the hills, †
and under oaks, poplars, and terebinths, †
because their shade is pleasant.
And so your daughters act promiscuously and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.
14 I will not punish your daughters when they act promiscuously
or your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
for the men themselves go off with prostitutes †
and make sacrifices with cult prostitutes. †
People without discernment are doomed. †

WARNINGS FOR ISRAEL AND JUDAH

15 Israel, if you act promiscuously, don't let Judah become guilty!
Do not go to Gilgal †
or make a pilgrimage to Beth-aven, † †
and do not swear an oath: As the LORD lives! †

16 For Israel is as obstinate as a stubborn cow. †
Can the LORD now shepherd them like a lamb in an open meadow? †
17 Ephraim is attached to idols; †
leave him alone! †
18 When their drinking is over, they turn to promiscuity.
Israel's leaders † fervently love disgrace. †
19 A wind with its wings will carry them off, † †
and they will be ashamed of their sacrifices.

4:4 Text emended; MT reads *argue, and your people are like those contending with a priest* **4:4** Hb obscure **4:7** Alt Hb tradition, Syr, Tg read *They* **4:7** Alt Hb tradition reads *my* **4:8** Or *sin offerings* **4:12** Lit *promiscuously from under* **4:15** = House of Wickedness **4:18** Lit *Her shields* ; Ps 47:9; 89:18 **4:18** Hb obscure **4:19** Lit *wind will bind it in its wings*
4:1 Hs 5:1 **4:1** Hs 12:2; Mc 6:2 **4:1** Is 59:4; Jr 7:28 **4:1** Hs 6:6 **4:1** Hs 5:4 **4:2** Hs 10:4 **4:2** Hs 7:3; 10:13; 11:12 **4:2** Hs 6:9 **4:2** Hs 7:1 **4:2** Hs 7:4 **4:2** Hs 6:8; 12:14 **4:3** Is 24:4; 33:9 **4:3** Jr 4:25 **4:3** Gn 1:20-25 **4:4** Ezk 3:26; Am 5:10,13 **4:4** Dt 17:12-13 **4:5** Ezk 14:3; Hs 5:5 **4:5** Hs 2:2,5 **4:6** Is 5:13 **4:6** Mal 2:7-8 **4:6** Zch 11:8-9,15-17 **4:6** Hs 2:13; 8:14; 13:6 **4:7** Hs 10:1; 13:6 **4:7** Hab 2:16 **4:8** Hs 10:13 **4:8** Is 56:11; Mc 3:11 **4:9** Is 24:2; Jr 5:31 **4:9** Hs 8:13; 9:9 **4:10** Lv 26:26; Is 65:13; Mc 6:14 **4:10** Hs 7:4 **4:10** Hs 9:17 **4:11** Hs 5:4 **4:11** Is 5:12; 28:7 **4:12** Is 44:19; Jr 2:27 **4:12** Hs 5:4 **4:12** Hs 9:1 **4:13** Jr 3:6 **4:13** Hs 2:13; 11:2 **4:13** Jr 2:20 **4:14** Hs 4:18; 7:4 **4:14** Dt 23:17 **4:14** Hs 5:4 **4:15** Hs 9:15; 12:1 **4:15** 1Kg 12:28-29; Hs 5:8; 10:5,8 **4:15** Jr 5:2; 44:26 **4:16** Ps 78:8 **4:16** Is 5:17; 7:25 **4:17** Hs 13:2 **4:17** Ps 81:12; Hs 4:4 **4:19** Hs 12:1; 13:5

4:1-6 Israel's fundamental problem was a lack of the **knowledge of God** (v. 1; see v. 6; 5:4; 6:6; 11:3). The practical consequence was **rampant** sin (v. 2), including those clearly addressed in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:13-16). Their spiritual leaders were also guilty (vv. 4-5,9; 5:1).

4:10-12 Israel's **promiscuity** in turning to other gods is again the focus here (see the note on 1:2). This was a heart problem, as shown by their being led astray by a **spirit of promiscuity** (v. 12; 5:4). The word "spirit" describes the dominant ideas and values in the culture.

4:13-14 The language of promiscuity is appropriate to describe both Israel's spiritual adultery and the actual rituals involved in the worship of Canaanite fertility gods. Apparently, **sacrifice on the mountaintops** and other high places involved relations with **cult prostitutes** as well. Rejection of the knowledge of God (see the note on vv. 1-6) naturally results in foolishness and being **without discernment** (Ps 14:1).

4:15 Despite this wish, the southern kingdom of **Judah** would also become corrupt like the northern kingdom of **Israel** (5:5,10-14; 6:4,11).

4:16 Israel's stubbornness is likewise described in Isaiah 1:6,23 and 65:2.

4:19 The word **wind** is the same Hebrew word (*ruach*) translated **spirit** in verse 12. The wordplay indicates that their values and pervasive idolatry will lead to humiliating judgment (see Ps 1:4; Ezk 27:26).

5 Hear this, priests! †
Pay attention, house of Israel!
Listen, royal house!
For the judgment applies to you
because you have been a snare at Mizpah †
and a net spread out on Tabor.
2 Rebels † are deeply involved in slaughter; †
I will be a punishment for all of them. †
3 I know Ephraim, †
and Israel is not hidden from me.
For now, Ephraim, †
you have acted promiscuously;
Israel is defiled.
4 Their actions do not allow them to return to their God, †
for a spirit of promiscuity is among them, †
and they do not know the LORD. †
5 Israel's arrogance testifies against them. † †
Both Israel and Ephraim stumble
because of their iniquity; †
even Judah will stumble with them. †
6 They go with their flocks and herds to seek the LORD †
but do not find him; †
he has withdrawn from them. †
7 They betrayed the LORD; †
indeed, they gave birth to illegitimate children. †
Now the New Moon † will devour them along with their fields. †

8 Blow the horn in Gibeah, †
the trumpet in Ramah; †
raise the war cry in Beth-aven: †
Look behind you, † Benjamin! †

9 Ephraim will become a desolation †
on the day of punishment; †
I announce what is certain
among the tribes of Israel. †
10 The princes of Judah are like those who move boundary markers; †
I will pour out my fury † on them like water. †
11 Ephraim is oppressed, crushed in judgment, †
for he is determined to follow what is worthless. †
12 So I am like rot to Ephraim †
and like decay to the house of Judah.
13 When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah his wound,
Ephraim went to Assyria †
and sent a delegation to the great king. † †
But he cannot cure you or heal your wound. †
14 For I am like a lion to Ephraim †
and like a young lion to the house of Judah.
Yes, I will tear them to pieces and depart. †
I will carry them off,
and no one can rescue them. †
15 I will depart and return to my place until they recognize their guilt and seek my face; †
they will search for me in their distress. †

5:2 Hb obscure **5:5** Lit *against his face* **5:8** Or *We will follow you* **5:11** Or *follow a command* ; Hb obscure **5:13** Or *to King Yareb*
5:1 Hs 4:1 **5:1** Hs 9:8 **5:2** Hs 9:15 **5:2** Hs 4:2; 6:9 **5:3** Hs 6:4; 7:1; Am 3:2; 5:12 **5:3** Hs 6:10 **5:4** Hs 4:11 **5:4** Hs 4:12 **5:4** Hs 4:6,11,14 **5:5** Hs 7:10 **5:5** Hs 4:5 **5:5** Ezk 23:31-35 **5:6** Hs 8:13; Mc 6:6-7 **5:6** Is 1:15; Jr 14:12 **5:6** Ezk 8:6 **5:7** Is 48:8; Hs 6:7 **5:7** Hs 2:4 **5:7** Hs 2:11 **5:7** Is 1:14 **5:8** Hs 9:9; 10:9 **5:8** Is 10:29; Jr 31:15 **5:8** Hs 4:15 **5:8** Jdg 5:14 **5:9** Is 28:1-4; Hs 9:11-17 **5:9** Is 37:3 **5:9** Is 46:10; Zch 1:6 **5:10** Dt 27:17 **5:10** Ezk 7:8 **5:10** Ps 32:6; 93:3-4 **5:11** Hs 9:16 **5:12** Ps 39:11; Is 51:8 **5:13** Hs 7:11; 8:9; 12:1 **5:13** Hs 10:6 **5:13** Hs 14:3 **5:14** Ps 7:2; Hs 13:7; Am 3:4 **5:14** Ps 50:22 **5:14** Mc 5:8 **5:15** Is 64:7-9; Jr 3:13-14 **5:15** Ps 50:15; 78:34; Jr 2:27; Hs 3:5

5:3 Israel did not know God (v. 4; 4:1,6), but he knew them and their sin well. Promiscuity resulted in Israel becoming **defiled** (see 6:10; Lv 18:20,23; Nm 5:13).

5:4-6 Israel's **spirit of promiscuity** is closely linked to their ignorance of God (v. 4; 4:1; see the note for

4:10-12). Despite appearance to the contrary, Israel had not returned to God (v. 4) and sought him in vain with their sacrifices (v. 6; 6:6; see 3:5; Jr 29:13). **Judah** also **stumble**[d] in this wickedness (v. 5; 4:15).

5:7 Israel's unfaithfulness to God was shown through her **illegitimate children**, which is another allusion to the dominant metaphor of the book of Hosea (see the note on 1:2).

5:9 The northern kingdom's fall and exile is thus predicted.

5:10 The movement of **boundary markers** was an attempt to encroach upon or to steal ancestral land. This action is cursed in Deuteronomy 27:17 and thus represents the guilt of Judah's aristocracy.

5:12-14 God's well-earned judgment on **Ephraim** and **Judah** is likened to **rot** and **decay** (v. 12; see Is 50:9; 51:8; Hab 3:16). Despite this **sickness**, Ephraim would turn to Assyria, rather than to God, for help (v. 13; 7:11; 8:9).

5:15 Israel's pretentious seeking of God and his withdrawal from them was described in verses 5-6. Nevertheless, they will eventually **recognize their guilt** and humbly seek him while in **distress** (see 3:5; Dt 4:30).

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

6 Come, let us return to the LORD. †
For he has torn us, †
and he will heal us; †
he has wounded us,
and he will bind up our wounds. †
2 He will revive us after two days, †
and on the third day he will raise us up so we can live in his presence. †
3 Let us strive to know the LORD. †
His appearance is as sure as the dawn. †
He will come to us like the rain, †
like the spring showers that water the land.

THE LORD'S FIRST LAMENT

4 What am I going to do with you, Ephraim? †
What am I going to do with you, Judah?
Your love is like the morning mist †
and like the early dew that vanishes.
5 This is why I have used the prophets to cut them down; † †
I have killed them with the words from my mouth.

My judgment strikes like lightning. †

6 For I desire faithful love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God † rather than
burnt offerings. †

7 But they, like Adam, † have violated the covenant; †
there they have betrayed me. †
8 Gilead is a city of evildoers, †
tracked with bloody footprints. †
9 Like raiders who wait in ambush for someone, †
a band of priests murders on the road to Shechem. †
They commit atrocities. †
10 I have seen something horrible † in the house of Israel: Ephraim's
promiscuity is there; † Israel is defiled.
11 A harvest is also appointed for you, Judah. †

When I † return my people from captivity, †

6:5 Or *have cut down the prophets* **6:5** LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *Your judgments go out as light* **6:7** Or *they, as at Adam,* or *they, like men,* **6:11** Or *you. Judah, when I*
6:1 Jr 50:4-5 **6:1** Hs 5:14 **6:1** Hs 14:4 **6:1** Is 30:26 **6:2** Ps 30:5 **6:2** Dt 32:39 **6:3** Is 2:3; Mc 4:2 **6:3** Ps 19:6; Mc 5:2 **6:3** Jl 2:23 **6:4** Hs 7:1; 11:8 **6:4** Ps 78:34-37 **6:5** 1Sm 15:32-33; Jr 1:10,18; 5:14 **6:6** Hs 4:1 **6:6** Mt 9:13; 12:7 **6:7** Hs 8:1 **6:7** Hs 5:7 **6:8** Hs 12:11 **6:8** Hs 4:2 **6:9** Hs 7:1 **6:9** Jr 7:9-10; Hs 4:2 **6:9** Ezk 22:9; 23:27; Hs 2:10 **6:10** Jr 5:30-31; 23:14 **6:10** Hs 5:3 **6:11** Jr 51:33; Jl 3:13 **6:11** Zph 2:7

6:1-3 The Hebrew verbs for **come** and **return** in verse 1 are the same as in 2:7 (see 3:5; 4:9). God had **torn** his people to pieces like a lion tears its prey, and he alone could heal their fatal wound (vv. 13-14). Their desire to **know the LORD** contrasts with 4:1,6 and 5:4. His appearance being **as the dawn** (v. 3) echoes Isaiah 60:1, and his coming **like the rain** parallels 10:12 and 2 Samuel 23:4.

6:4-6 The people's problem was that their covenant loyalty was **like the morning mist** and the **early dew that vanishes** (v. 4; 13:3). God proclaimed judgment for this through his prophets (v. 5) and reminded his people that covenant **love** (loyalty) is more important than **sacrifice** (v. 6; 5:6; 8:13; 12:6; 1Sm 15:22). This priority is also mentioned with the "knowledge of God" in 4:1, where it is translated as **faithful love.**

6:7 Israel **violated the covenant** (see 8:1). Some commentators understand **Adam** as a reference to Adam's disobedience in the garden of Eden (Gn 2:16-17; 3:1-6). The name, however, may be a reference to a location (cp. Jos 3:16). This would match well with the word "there" in the second part of the verse.

6:8–7:4 The sins of murder (vv. 8-9), theft (7:1), lying (7:3), and adultery (7:4) were also mentioned together in 4:2. These heinous offenses were done **right in front of** [God's] **face** (7:2).

7 when I heal Israel, †
the iniquity of Ephraim † and the crimes of Samaria †
will be exposed.
For they practice fraud; †
a thief breaks in;
a raiding party pillages outside. †
2 But they never consider that I remember all their evil. †
Now their actions are all around them; †
they are right in front of my face.

ISRAEL'S CORRUPTION

3 They please the king with their evil, †
the princes with their lies. †
4 All of them commit adultery; †
they are like an oven heated by a baker who stops stirring the fire
from the kneading of the dough until it is leavened.
5 On the day of our king, the princes are sick with the heat of wine † — there is
a conspiracy with traitors. †
6 For they — their hearts like an oven — draw him into their oven.
Their anger smolders all night;
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.
7 All of them are as hot as an oven, †
and they consume their rulers. †
All their kings fall;
not one of them calls on me. †

8 Ephraim has allowed himself to get mixed up with the nations.
Ephraim is unturned bread baked on a griddle.
9 Foreigners consume his strength, †
but he does not notice. †
Even his hair is streaked with gray, but he does not notice.
10 Israel's arrogance testifies against them, † †

yet they do not return to the LORD their God, †
and for all this, they do not seek him.

11 So Ephraim has become like a silly, senseless dove; †
they call to Egypt, † and they go to Assyria. †
12 As they are going, I will spread my net over them; †
I will bring them down like birds of the sky.
I will discipline them in accordance with the news that reaches † their assembly.

THE LORD'S SECOND LAMENT

13 Woe to them, † for they fled from me; †
destruction to them, for they rebelled against me!
Though I want to redeem them, †
they speak lies against me.
14 They do not cry to me from their hearts; rather, they wail on their beds.
They slash themselves † † for grain and new wine; †
they turn away from me.
15 I trained and strengthened their arms, †
but they plot evil against me. †
16 They turn, but not to what is above; †
they are like a faulty bow. †
Their leaders will fall by the sword because of their insolent tongue. †
They will be ridiculed for this in the land of Egypt. †

7:5 Lit *wine — he stretches out his hand to scorners* ; Hb obscure **7:3-7** These vv. may refer to a king's assassination; Hb obscure. **7:10** Lit *against his face* **7:12** Lit *news to* **7:14** Some Hb mss, LXX; other Hb mss read *They stay* **7:16** Some emend to *turn to what is useless*
7:1 Ezk 24:13; Hs 6:4; 7:13; 11:8 **7:1** Hs 5:3 **7:1** Hs 8:5-6; 10:5,7; 13:16 **7:1** Hs 4:2 **7:1** Hs 6:9 **7:2** Ps 25:7; Jr 14:10; 17:1; Am 8:7 **7:2** Jr 2:19; 4:18; Hs 4:9 **7:3** Jr 28:1-4; Mc 7:3 **7:3** Hs 4:2; 11:12 **7:4** Jr 9:2; 23:10 **7:5** Is 28:1,7-8 **7:7** Ps 21:9 **7:7** Hs 13:10 **7:9** Is 1:7 **7:9** Hs 4:6 **7:10** Hs 5:5 **7:10** Hs 5:4 **7:11** Hs 4:6,11,14; 5:4 **7:11** Hs 8:13; 9:3,6 **7:11** Hs 5:13; 8:9; 12:1 **7:12** Ezk 12:13 **7:13** Hs 9:12 **7:13** Jr 14:10; Hs 9:17 **7:13** Jr 51:9; Hs 7:1; Mt 23:37 **7:14** 1Kg 18:28 **7:14** Am 2:8 **7:15** Hs 11:3 **7:15** Nah 1:9 **7:16** Ps 78:57 **7:16** Ps 12:3-4; 17:10; Dn 7:25; Mal 3:13-14 **7:16** Ezk 23:32

7:6 Israel's problem was rooted in **their hearts** (see vv. 2,14; 10:2; 13:6) **7:7** The utter failure of Israel's **kings** sketched above is summed up by **not one of them calls on** [God] (see Ps 14:2; Ezk 19:10-14). They

would meet their end (3:4; 10:3,7,15), preparing the way for the righteous rule of the Messiah (3:5; 2Sm 23:3-4; Is 9:7; Jr 23:5).

7:10 Israel's arrogance had also been cited in 5:5. Their refusal to **return** and **seek** God contrasts with their eschatological repentance in 3:5 and 5:15. The phrase **their God** appears again (1:7; 3:5; 4:12; 5:4). Other passages likewise highlight this relationship through the phrase "your God" (1:9; 4:6; 9:1; 12:6,9; 13:4; 14:1).

7:11 Ephraim is like a **senseless dove** in that the people flit here and there without really thinking about where they are going. In this case, they go to **Egypt** and **Assyria** looking for political alliances to solve their problems instead of turning to God.

7:15 God's training of Ephraim's **arms** parallels 11:3, which uses similar language to depict his raising them like a child.

ISRAEL'S FALSE HOPES

8 Put the horn to your mouth! †
One like an eagle comes
against the house of the LORD, †
because they transgress my covenant †
and rebel against my law. †
2 Israel cries out to me, †
"My God, we know you! "
3 Israel has rejected what is good; †
an enemy will pursue him.

4 They have installed kings, †
but not through me.
They have appointed leaders,
but without my approval.
They make their silver and gold †
into idols for themselves
for their own destruction. †
5 Your calf-idol † † is rejected, Samaria. †
My anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of innocence? †
6 For this thing is from Israel — a craftsman made it, † and it is not God.
The calf of Samaria will be smashed to bits!

7 Indeed, they sow the wind †
and reap the whirlwind. †
There is no standing grain;
what sprouts fails to yield flour. †
Even if they did,
foreigners would swallow it up.
8 Israel is swallowed up! †
Now they are among the nations
like discarded pottery. †
9 For they have gone up to Assyria †
like a wild donkey going off on its own.
Ephraim has paid for love. †
10 Even though they hire lovers among the nations, I will now round them up,
and they will begin to decrease in number †
under the burden of the king and leaders. †

11 When Ephraim multiplied his altars for sin, †
they became his altars for sinning.
12 Though I were to write out for him ten thousand points of my instruction, †
they would be † regarded as something strange.
13 Though they offer sacrificial gifts † †
and eat the flesh, †
the LORD does not accept them.
Now he will remember their guilt †
and punish their sins; †
they will return to Egypt. †
14 Israel has forgotten his Maker † and built palaces; †
Judah has also multiplied fortified cities.
I will send fire on their cities, †
and it will consume their citadels.

8:4 Lit *themselves that it might be cut off* **8:5** Lit *calf* **8:12** Or *Though I wrote out . . . instruction, they are*

8:13 Hb obscure
8:1 Hs 5:8 **8:1** Dt 28:49 **8:1** Hs 6:7 **8:1** Hs 4:6; 8:12 **8:2** Hs 7:14 **8:3** Hs 3:5 **8:4** Hs 13:10-11 **8:4** Hs 2:8; 13:1-2 **8:5** Hs 10:5; 13:2 **8:5** 1Kg 12:28-29; Hs 7:1 **8:5** Ps 19:13; Jr 13:27 **8:6** Hs 13:2 **8:7** Hs 10:13 **8:7** Is 66:15; Nah 1:3 **8:7** Hs 2:9 **8:8** Jr 51:34 **8:8** Jr 25:34; Hs 13:15 **8:9** Hs 7:11 **8:9** Ezk 16:33 **8:10** Jr 42:2 **8:10** Is 10:8 **8:11** Hs 10:1; 12:11 **8:12** Hs 4:6 **8:13** Hs 5:6; 9:4 **8:13** Jr 6:20; 7:21 **8:13** Hs 7:2; Lk 12:2; 1Co 4:5 **8:13** Hs 4:9; 9:7 **8:13** Hs 9:3,6 **8:14** Hs 2:13; 4:6; 13:6 **8:14** Is 9:9-10 **8:14** Jr 17:27

8:1-3 Israel's **cries** to God were not genuine (v. 2; see the note on 4:1-6; 7:14), as evidenced by their transgression of his **covenant** and **law** (v. 1; 5:5-7). Rejection of **what is good** (v. 3; Mc 6:8) is linked to evil (7:1-3,15; 9:15; 10:15), idolatry (4:13), and to rejection of God himself (3:5; 4:6).

8:4 The **kings** and **leaders** of Israel were not only wicked (5:1; 7:3-7), but they never should have been given those positions in the first place (see 13:10-11; Is 30:1).

8:5-6 Samaria's **calf** either refers to the two golden calves set up by Jeroboam for the northern kingdom (1Kg 12:28-33), or it is analogous to them. The Israelites had combined the worship of the Lord with that of the local Canaanite deities.

8:7 The sowing of **wind** and reaping **the whirlwind** is a picture foolishness, futility, and destruction (see the note on 4:10-12; also 12:1; Jr 4:11-13; Am 1:14). It contrasts with wise planting (10:12).

8:8 Israel being **swallowed up** refers to conquest, domination, and exile by other nations. **It** echoes other prophetic passages (Jr 51:34; Jnh 2:1; Hab 1:13), as does the nation's likeness to **discarded pottery** (Jr 19:10-11; 48:38).

8:9-10 Going to **Assyria** for help continues the theme of depending on foreign nations instead of God (see 7:11).

8:13 As in 5:6 and 6:6, Israel's sacrifices would not be accepted by God because of their **guilt** and **sins** (see 9:4).

8:14 The construction of **palaces** and multiplication of **fortified cities** in Israel is associated with forgetting their **Maker** (see v. 11; Is 17:7). His sending **fire** to **consume** the fortifications of a wicked nation is repeated in Amos 1:7,10,12,14 and 2:2,5.

THE COMING EXILE

9 Israel, do not rejoice jubilantly as the nations do, †
for you have acted promiscuously, † leaving your God.
You love the wages of a prostitute
on every grain-threshing floor. †
2 Threshing floor and wine vat will not sustain them, †
and the new wine will fail them.
3 They will not stay in the land of the LORD.
Instead, Ephraim will return to Egypt, †
and they will eat unclean food † in Assyria. †

4 They will not pour out their wine offerings to the LORD, †
and their sacrifices will not please him.

Their food will be like the bread of mourners; all who eat it become defiled. †
For their bread will be for their appetites alone; it will not enter the house of the LORD.

5 What will you do on a festival day, †

on the day of the LORD's feast? †

6 For even if they flee from devastation, Egypt will gather them, and Memphis will bury them. †
Thistles will take possession of their precious silver; thorns will invade their tents. †

7 The days of punishment have come; †

the days of retribution have come. †
Let Israel recognize it!

The prophet is a fool, †

and the inspired man is insane, †
because of the magnitude

of your iniquity and hostility. †

8 Ephraim's watchman is with my God.

Yet the prophet encounters a bird trap on all his pathways. †
Hostility is in the house of his God!

9 They have deeply corrupted themselves †

as in the days of Gibeah. †
He will remember their iniquity;

he will punish their sins. †

EPHRAIM BEREAVED OF OFFSPRING

10 I discovered Israel like grapes in the wilderness. †
I saw your fathers

like the first fruit of the fig tree in its first season. †

But they went to Baal-peor, †
consecrated themselves to Shame, † †
and became abhorrent, †
like the thing they loved.
11 Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird: †
no birth, no pregnancy, no conception. †
12 Even if they raise children, I will bereave them of each one.
Yes, woe to them when I depart from them! †
13 I have seen Ephraim like Tyre, †
planted in a meadow,
so Ephraim will bring out his children to the executioner.
14 Give them, LORD — What should you give?
Give them a womb that miscarries
and breasts that are dry! †

15 All their evil appears at Gilgal, †
for there I began to hate them.
I will drive them from my house
because of their evil, wicked actions. †
I will no longer love them;
all their leaders are rebellious. †
16 Ephraim † is struck down; their roots are withered;
they cannot bear fruit. †
Even if they bear children,
I will kill the precious offspring of their wombs. †
17 My God will reject them because they have not listened to him; †
they will become wanderers among the nations. †

9:10 = Baal
9:1 Is 22:12-13; Hs 10:5 **9:1** Hs 4:12 **9:1** Hs 7:14 **9:2** Hs 2:9 **9:3** Hs 7:16; 8:13 **9:3** Ezk 4:13 **9:3** Hs 11:7 **9:4** Nm 15:5,7,10 **9:4** Nm 19:11-14; Dt 26:12-14; Jr 16:5-7 **9:5** Is 10:3; Jr 5:31 **9:5** Hs 2:11; Jl 1:13 **9:6** Is 19:13; Jr 2:16; 44:1; 46:14,19; Ezk 30:13,16 **9:6** Is 5:6; 7:23; Hs 10:8 **9:7** Is 10:3; Jr 10:15; Mc 7:4 **9:7** Is 34:8; Jr 16:18; 25:14 **9:7** Lm 2:14 **9:7** Is 44:25 **9:7** Ezk 14:9-10 **9:8** Pr 29:5-6; Hs 5:1 **9:9** Is 31:6 **9:9** Jdg 19–21; Hs 5:8; 10:9 **9:9** Hs 7:2; 8:13 **9:10** Mc 7:1 **9:10** Jr 24:2 **9:10** Nm 25:1-9 **9:10** Jr 11:13; Hs 4:18 **9:10**

Ezk 20:8 **9:11** Hs 4:7; 10:4 **9:11** Hs 4:10 **9:12** Hs 7:13 **9:13** Ezk 27:3-4 **9:14** Gn 49:25 **9:15** Hs 4:15; 12:11 **9:15** Hs 4:9; 7:2; 12:2 **9:15** Hs 5:2 **9:16** Hs 5:11 **9:16** Hs 8:7 **9:16** Ezk 24:21 **9:17** Hs 4:10 **9:17** Hs 7:13

9:1-3 Here Israel's promiscuity is emphasized again (1:2; 8:9) with the result that they will not dwell **in the land of the LORD** (v. 3). The places of their exile will include **Egypt** and **Assyria** (see 7:11; 8:9,13), where they will be defiled by **unclean food** (vv. 3,4; 5:3; 6:10).

9:6 Thorns and **thistles** are a sign of judgment (see 10:8), as shown by other OT passages (Gn 3:18; Is 5:6; 7:23-25).

9:7-8 Israel's judgment would come, and the people's guilt was shown through their disregard for the true **prophet** and the **inspired man.**

9:9 As in 6:7 (see note), a past failure is overlaid with Israel's current sins. The notorious episode at **Gibeah** is recorded in Judges 19–21 and involved failure to show hospitality, intent to engage in homosexual acts, sexual immorality, cutting a woman into pieces, and civil war which resulted in the near-extermination of the tribe of Benjamin (see notes).

9:10 Another past failure is brought up here. Despite a promising beginning in the **wilderness** (see 2:14-15), Israel worshiped **Baal-peor.** This was the incident when the women of Moab seduced the Israelites to sexual relations and the worship of their gods (see Nm 25:3). The people involved thus **became abhorrent, like the thing they loved** (see 2Kg 17:15; Jr 2:5).

9:12-14 God's judgment of **Ephraim** included the killing of their **children** by enemies (vv. 12-13; 10:14; 13:16). The prophet Hosea calls on God to give Israel a miscarrying **womb** and dry **breasts**, signifying the removal of fertility in response to their worship of fertility deities.

9:15-17 Based on 4:15 and 12:11, the wickedness **at Gilgal** seems to have involved false worship in the name of God (see Am 4:4; 5:5). God's **hate** and refusal to **love them** (v. 15) would not be permanent (3:1; see the note on 14:4) but corresponds to 1:6. He would punish Israel by driving them away from the temple and into the nations (vv. 15,17) and by bereaving them of their children (vv. 12-13,16).

THE VINE AND THE CALF

10 Israel is a lush † vine; †
it yields fruit for itself.
The more his fruit increased,
the more he increased the altars. †
The better his land produced,
the better they made the sacred pillars. †
2 Their hearts are devious; † †
now they must bear their guilt. †
The LORD will break down their altars †
and demolish their sacred pillars.
3 In fact, they are now saying, "We have no king!
For we do not fear the LORD. †

What can a king do for us? ”

4 They speak mere words, taking false oaths while making covenants. †
So lawsuits break out

like poisonous weeds in the furrows of a field. †

5 The residents of Samaria † will have anxiety over the calf † of Beth-aven. †
Indeed, its idolatrous priests rejoiced over it; the people will mourn over it,

over its glory. †
It will certainly go into exile.

6 The calf itself will be taken to Assyria †

as an offering to the great king. † †

Ephraim will experience shame; †

Israel will be ashamed of its counsel. †

7 Samaria’s king will disappear † †

like foam † on the surface of the water.

8 The high places † of Aven, the sin of Israel, †
will be destroyed;

thorns and thistles will grow over their altars. †

They will say to the mountains, † “Cover us! ”

and to the hills, “Fall on us! ” †

ISRAEL’S DEFEAT BECAUSE OF SIN

9 Israel, you have sinned since the days of Gibeah; †
they have taken their stand there.
Will not war against the unjust
overtake them in Gibeah?

10 I will discipline † them at my discretion; †

nations will be gathered against them to put them in bondage †

for their double iniquity. †

11 Ephraim is a well-trained calf †
that loves to thresh,

but I will place a yoke on † her fine neck. †
I will harness Ephraim; †
Judah will plow;
Jacob will do the final plowing.
12 Sow righteousness for yourselves †
and reap faithful love;
break up your unplowed ground. †
It is time to seek the LORD †
until he comes † and sends righteousness on you like the rain. †

13 You have plowed wickedness and reaped injustice; †
you have eaten the fruit of lies. †
Because you have trusted in your own way †
and in your large number of soldiers, †
14 the roar of battle will rise against your people, and all your fortifications will be demolished †
in a day of war,
like Shalman's destruction of Beth-arbel.
Mothers will be dashed to pieces
along with their children. †
15 So it will be done to you, Bethel, †
because of your extreme evil.
At dawn the king of Israel will be totally destroyed.

10:1 Or *ravaged* **10:2** Or *divided* **10:6** Or *to King Yareb* **10:7** Or *will be cut off* **10:7** Or *a stick* **10:10** LXX, Syr, Vg read *against them when they are disciplined* **10:11** Lit *will pass over* **10:13** LXX reads *your chariots*
10:1 Is 5:1-7; Ezk 15:1-6 **10:1** Hs 8:11; 12:11 **10:1** 1Kg 14:23; Hs 3:4 **10:2** 1Kg 18:21; Zph 1:5 **10:2** Hs 13:16 **10:2** Mc 5:13 **10:3** Ps 12:4; Is 5:19 **10:4** Ezk 17:13-19; Hs 4:2 **10:4** Dt 31:16-17; 2Kg 17:3-4 **10:5** Hs 7:1 **10:5** Hs 8:5-6 **10:5** Hs 4:15; 5:8 **10:5** Hs 9:11 **10:6** Hs 11:5 **10:6** Hs 5:13 **10:6** Hs 4:7 **10:6** Is 30:3; Jr 7:24 **10:7** Hs 13:11 **10:8** Dt 12:2; Hs 4:13 **10:8** 1Kg 12:28-30; 13:34 **10:8** Is 32:13; Hs 9:6 **10:8** Lk 23:30; Rv 6:16 **10:8** Rv 6:16 **10:9** Hs 5:8; 9:9 **10:10** Hs 4:9 **10:10** Ezk 5:13 **10:10** Jdg 19–21; 1Kg 12:28-30 **10:11** Jr 5:11; Hs 4:16 **10:11** Jr 28:14 **10:11** Ps 66:12 **10:12** Pr 11:18 **10:12** Jr 4:3 **10:12** Hs 4:1; 12:6 **10:12** Hs 6:3 **10:12** Is 44:3; 45:8 **10:13** Jb 4:8; Gl 6:7 **10:13** Hs 4:2; 7:3; 11:12 **10:13** Ps 33:16 **10:14** Is 17:3 **10:14** Hs 13:16 **10:15** Hs 4:15; 10:5

10:1-3 The increase of Israel's crops had resulted in **increased** idolatry, and God would destroy their

altars and **sacred pillars** (see the notes on 2:5-13; 3:4; 8:11). Combined with the absence of a **king** (v. 3; see vv. 7,15; 7:7), the portrait of judgment matches 3:4.

10:4 Their empty **words** (see 8:2) contrasts the genuine "words" of confession in 14:2-3.

10:5-6 This **calf** is the golden calf at Bethel (meaning "house of God"; see v. 15; the note on 8:5-6; 1Kg 12:28-33), which is sarcastically called **Beth-aven** ("house of wickedness"; see 4:15). This idol **will be taken to Assyria** in exile **as an offering to the great king** (v. 6; 5:13).

10:8 The judgment as described above would be so terrible that people will wish for death (see Rv 6:16).

10:9 Israel had not only sinned as in **the days of Gibeah** (9:9) but they had continued in that sinful pattern.

10:10 God would **discipline** Israel (see 7:12,15) through the foreign peoples taking them captive.

10:11 Ephraim was similarly compared to a "cow," though a stubborn one, in 4:16.

10:12 Sowing and reaping clearly refer to spiritual realities here (see 6:11; 8:7; 9:16), just as the related name "Jezreel" is used in 1:11 and 2:21-23 (see notes). The frequent references to physical agriculture (vv. 4,8; 2:5,8,9,12,15; 4:3,11; 5:7, 7:14; 9:1-2) are thus linked to the spiritual. Along these lines, the coming of God to bring **righteousness . . . like the rain** parallels 6:1-3 (see note; Jl 2:28).

10:13-15 Contrary to the exhortation of verse 12, Israel had **plowed wickedness and reaped injustice**. Their trust in themselves and in their own army would bring humiliation at the hands of enemy armies (v. 14; 1:7; Ps 20:7; Jr 17:5). The identity of **Shalman** is uncertain, with some scholars suggesting Shalmaneser I or V and others suggesting a Moabite king called Sal[a]manu. The Hebrew verb translated **destroyed** in verse 15 was used regarding the people in 4:5-6.

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

11 When Israel was a child, I loved him, †
and out of Egypt I called my son. †
2 Israel called to the Egyptians †
even as Israel was leaving them. †
They kept sacrificing to the Baals †
and burning offerings to idols. †
3 It was I who taught Ephraim to walk, †
taking them † by the hand, † †
but they never knew that I healed them. †
4 I led them with human cords, with ropes of love. †
To them I was like one
who eases the yoke from their jaws; †
I bent down to give them food. †
5 Israel will not return to the land of Egypt and Assyria will be his king, †

because they refused to repent. †

6 A sword will whirl through his cities; †
it will destroy and devour the bars of his gates, † †
because of their schemes. †

7 My people are bent on turning from me. †
Though they call to him on high,
he will not exalt them at all.

8 How can I give you up, Ephraim? †
How can I surrender you, Israel?
How can I make you like Admah? †
How can I treat you like Zeboiim? †
I have had a change of heart;
my compassion is stirred!

9 I will not vent the full fury of my anger; †
I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim. †
For I am God and not man,
the Holy One among you; †
I will not come in rage. †

10 They will follow the LORD; †
he will roar like a lion. †
When he roars,
his children will come trembling from the west. †

11 They will be roused like birds from Egypt and like doves † from the land of Assyria. †
Then I will settle them in their homes. †

This is the LORD's declaration.

12 Ephraim surrounds me with lies, †
the house of Israel, with deceit.
Judah still wanders with God

and is faithful to the holy ones. †

11:2 Lit *They called to them; thus they went from before them* **11:3** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *him* **11:3** Lit *them on his arms* **11:6** Or *devour his empty talkers*, or *devour his limbs* ; Hb obscure **11:9** Or *come into any city* ; Hb obscure **11:12** Hb obscure
11:1 Dt 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:14-15; Ps 78:68; Is 41:8; Am 3:2; Mal 1:2 **11:1** Ex 4:22-23; Dt 32:5-6,18-20; Ps 103:13; Jr 3:19; Hs 1:10; Mt 2:15 **11:2** 2Kg 17:13-15 **11:2** Hs 2:13; 4:13 **11:2** Is 65:7; Jr 18:15 **11:3** Hs 7:15 **11:3** Dt 1:31; 32:10-11 **11:3** Ex 15:26 **11:4** Jr 31:2-3 **11:4** Hs 10:11 **11:4** Ex 16:32 **11:5** Hs 7:16; 8:13; 9:3; 10:6 **11:5** Hs 7:16 **11:6** Hs 13:16 **11:6** Lm 2:9 **11:6** Hs 4:16-17 **11:7** Jr 8:5 **11:8** Hs 6:4; 7:1 **11:8** Gn 14:8; Dt 29:23 **11:8** Gn 14:2; 19:1-29; Dt 29:23 **11:9** Dt 13:17 **11:9** Jr 26:3; 30:11 **11:9** Is 5:24; 12:6; 41:14,16 **11:10** Hs 3:5; 6:1-3 **11:10** Is 31:4; Jl 3:16; Am 1:2 **11:10** Is 66:2-5 **11:11** Is 60:8; Hs 7:11 **11:11** Is 11:11 **11:11** Ezk 34:27-28 **11:12** Hs 4:2; 7:3

11:1 The preceding has emphasized the destruction of Israel (vv. 2,8,10, especially that of their king (vv. 3,7,15). This chapter begins a new section in the book describing the hope of restoration. God's favor toward Israel when he was a **child** agrees with 2:15 and 9:10a. This is a backward-looking allusion to the exodus, when God brought Israel **out of Egypt**. The allusion to this in Matthew 2:15 likely refers to all of Hosea 11 and therefore identifies Jesus as the means by which God will restore his people. The book of Hosea does have "second exodus" themes (vv. 10-11; 2:14-15; 12:9; 13:14), and sometimes this eschatological deliverance is explicitly linked to the Messiah's rule (1:11; 3:5) or a prophet like Moses (12:13). The book also has several passages in which the past as recorded in Scripture is similarly seen as a pattern for the future (2:23; 6:7; 9:9-10; 10:9; 12:2-4,12).

11:2-7 Despite God's tender love for Israel (vv. 1,3-4), the people turned **to idols** (v. 2), **refused to repent**, and would be overthrown by **Assyria** (vv. 5-7).

11:8-9 The destruction of the king of Israel (10:15) would result in Assyria being Israel's king (v. 5). This sad state, however, would not persist forever (3:5). This verse personifies God as conflicted: though he must judge sin, he is unwilling to let judgment be the final word on his people. **Admah** and **Zeboiim** were sister cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, here symbolizing total destruction (Gn 19:24-25; Dt 29:23). God's compassion is in keeping with his covenant with Abraham and with David, and as such is evidence for his faithfulness as **God and not man** (see Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:29).

11:10 Israel will at last **follow the LORD**, instead of going after her own "lovers" (2:5,13). His resemblance to a **lion** who leads children out of captivity parallels the "single ruler" who leads exiles home (1:11). The imagery of God roaring like a lion reappears in Joel 3:16 and Amos 1:2; 3:8. The returnees' **trembling** matches their awe in 3:5.

11:11 Although exiles will also return "from the west" (v. 10; Is 11:11-12), their return from **Egypt** and **Assyria** resolves the problem of Israel's entanglement with these nations (vv. 1,5; 7:11,16; 8:9,13; 9:3,6; 10:6).

GOD'S CASE AGAINST JACOB'S HEIRS

12 Ephraim chases † the wind †
and pursues the east wind. †
He continually multiplies lies and violence.
He makes a covenant with Assyria, †

and olive oil is carried to Egypt. †

2 The LORD also has a dispute with Judah.
He is about to punish Jacob according to his conduct; †
he will repay him based on his actions.
3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel, †
and as an adult he wrestled with God. †
4 Jacob struggled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought his favor. †
He found him at Bethel, †
and there he spoke with him. † †
5 The LORD is the God of Armies; the LORD is his name. †
6 But you must return to your God. †
Maintain love and justice, †
and always put your hope in God. †

7 A merchant loves to extort †
with dishonest scales in his hands. †
8 But Ephraim thinks, "How rich I have become; †
I made it all myself.
In all my earnings,
no one can find any iniquity in me †
that I can be punished for! " †

JUDGMENT ON APOSTATE ISRAEL

9 I have been the LORD your God ever since † the land of Egypt. †
I will make you live in tents again, †
as in the festival days.
10 I will speak through the prophets †
and grant many visions;
I will give parables through the prophets. †
11 Since Gilead is full of evil, †

they will certainly come to nothing.
They sacrifice bulls in Gilgal; †
even their altars will be like piles of rocks †
on the furrows of a field.

FURTHER INDICTMENT OF JACOB'S HEIRS

12 Jacob fled to the territory of Aram. †
Israel worked to earn a wife; †
he tended flocks for a wife. †
13 The LORD brought Israel from Egypt by a prophet, †
and Israel was tended by a prophet.

14 Ephraim has provoked bitter anger, †
so his Lord will leave his bloodguilt on him †
and repay him for his contempt. †

12:1 Or *grazes on*, or *tends* **12:4** LXX, Syr; MT reads *us* **12:8** Lit *iniquity which is sin* **12:9** LXX reads *God who brought you out of*
12:1 Jr 22:22; Hs 4:19 **12:1** Gn 41:6; Ezk 17:10 **12:1** Hs 5:13; 7:11; 8:9 **12:1** 2Kg 17:4 **12:2** Hs 4:9; 7:2 **12:3** Gn 25:26; 27:36 **12:3** Gn 32:24-28 **12:4** Gn 32:26 **12:4** Gn 28:13-15; 35:10-15 **12:4** Gn 28:10-22; 35:1-14 **12:5** Ex 3:15 **12:6** Hs 6:1-3; 10:12 **12:6** Hs 6:6 **12:6** Mc 7:7 **12:7** Hs 7:14 **12:7** Pr 11:1; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11 **12:8** Ps 62:10; Hs 13:6 **12:8** Hs 4:8; 14:1; Am 3:15; 6:4-6 **12:9** Hs 11:1; 13:3 **12:9** Lv 23:42 **12:10** Jr 7:25 **12:10** Ezk 17:2; 20:49 **12:11** Hs 6:8 **12:11** Hs 4:15; 9:15 **12:11** Hs 8:11; 10:1-2 **12:12** Gn 28:5 **12:12** Gn 29:20 **12:12** Gn 29:1-20 **12:13** Ex 14:19-22; Is 63:11-14 **12:14** 2Kg 17:7-18 **12:14** Ezk 18:10-13 **12:14** Dn 11:18; Mc 6:16

12:1 Ephraim's chasing **the wind** is as futile as sowing the same (8:7). "Wind" may be another reference to the spirit of the age ("spirit" and "wind" translate the same Hebrew word; see the note on 4:10-12). The context connects this foolish act to **lies** (see v. 11) and relying on foreign nations (see 8:9,13).

12:2 The name **Jacob** is the subject of wordplay, referring to the nation of Israel and to the patriarch and father of the nation (vv. 3-4). The names of Gomer's three children were similarly employed (1:4–2:1,22-23). Simultaneously, Israel's past as recorded in Scripture again serves as a pattern for the future (see 2:23; 6:7; 9:9; 10:9; see the note on 11:1). Just as Jacob had been a deceiver (v. 3; Gn 25:26; 27:36), so Ephraim his offspring, "multiplies lies" (v. 1; see 11:12).

12:3-4 Given that Jacob is a pattern for the nation of Israel (see previous note), it is significant that the patriarch is not only cast as a deceiver (v. 3a) but also as someone who **as an adult** (v. 3b) **struggled with the angel and prevailed** (v. 4; Gn 32:24-30). This victory came about through humble supplication (see Gn 32:9-12). The deceiver Jacob was at that time renamed Israel (see v. 12). The sinful nation, therefore, also should have hope for such transformation. Another episode in Jacob's life explains the origin of

Bethel as the site of a revelation of the covenant-keeping God (Gn 28:10-19; 31:13; 35:1-15), not as a place to worship a golden calf (see the note on 10:5-6) or to seek God in vain (see 5:6).

12:5-6 The message concerning the exclusive devotion to God alone and repentance toward him is primarily for Israel the nation (see 2:16; 3:5; 5:4,15; 7:10; 13:4; 14:1-2). The simple instructions to **maintain love and justice** and to **hope in God** parallel 6:6 and Micah 6:8.

12:7-8 Ephraim is the **merchant** who has enriched himself through **dishonest scales** yet claims innocence. Such scales were forbidden in Leviticus 19:36 (see Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:23; Am 8:5; Mc 6:11). The Hebrew word translated "merchant" (see Ezk 16:29; 17:4; Zph 1:11; 2:5; Zch 14:21) in other contexts is the proper noun for "Canaan" (e.g., Gn 9:18); thus, the effect is to liken Israel to the wicked inhabitants of this land. This is in harmony with Israel's resemblance to Sodom and Gomorrah (see the notes on 9:9; 10:9; 11:8-9) and to other wordplays in this book (see the notes on 1:11; 2:21-23).

12:9-10 The exodus again serves as a pattern for the future (see the notes on 1:11; 2:14-15; 9:10; 11:1,10-11), this time with a prophecy that Israel will **live in tents again.** Fittingly, God's messages through prophets are characterized as **visions** and **parables** (see the notes on vv. 2-8,12-13; 1:11; 2:21-23; 6:7; 9:9-10; 10:9,12-15).

12:12-13 In yet another parable (see previous note), Jacob's faithfulness despite having to flee into exile suggests that the nation of Israel can do the same (v. 12; see 3:4-5).

13 When Ephraim spoke, † there was trembling; he was exalted in Israel. †
But he incurred guilt through Baal † and died.

2 Now they continue to sin and make themselves a cast image, †
idols skillfully made from their silver, †
all of them the work of craftsmen. †
People say about them,
"Let the men who sacrifice † kiss the calves." †
3 Therefore, they will be like the morning mist, †
like the early dew that vanishes,
like chaff blown from a threshing floor, †
or like smoke from a window. †

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

4 I have been the LORD your God †
ever since † the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, †
and no Savior exists besides me. †
5 I knew † you in the wilderness, †

in the land of drought.

6 When they had pasture, they became satisfied; †
they were satisfied,
and their hearts became proud. †
Therefore they forgot me. †

7 So I will be like a lion † to them; I will lurk like a leopard † on the path.

8 I will attack them like a bear robbed of her cubs
and tear open the rib cage over their hearts.
I will devour them there like a lioness, †
like a wild beast that would rip them open.

9 I will destroy you, Israel; you have no help but me. † †

10 Where now is your king, † †
that he may save you in all your cities, and the † rulers † † you demanded, saying, “Give me a king and leaders”?

11 I give you a king in my anger †
and take away a king in my wrath. †

12 Ephraim’s guilt is preserved; his sin is stored up. †

13 Labor pains come on him. †
He is not a wise son; †
when the time comes,
he will not be born. † †

14 I will ransom them from the power of Sheol.
I will redeem † them from death. †
Death, where are your barbs?
Sheol, where is your sting? †
Compassion is hidden from my eyes. †

THE COMING JUDGMENT

15 Although he flourishes among his brothers, † †

an east wind will come, †
a wind from the LORD rising up from the desert.
His water source will fail,
and his spring will run dry. †
The wind † will plunder the treasury †
of every precious item.

16 Samaria † will bear her guilt †
because she has rebelled against her God. †
They will fall by the sword; †
their children will be dashed to pieces, †
and their pregnant women ripped open. †

13:2 Or *"Those who make human sacrifices* **13:4** DSS, LXX read *God who brought you out of* **13:5** LXX, Syr read *fed* **13:9** LXX reads *At your destruction, Israel, who will help you?* **13:10** LXX, Syr, Vg; MT reads *I will be your king* **13:10** Lit *your* **13:10** Or *judges* **13:13** Lit *he will not present himself at the opening of the womb for sons* **13:14** Or *Should I ransom . . . ? Should I redeem . . . ?* **13:15** Or *among reeds* **13:15** Probably the Assyrian king
13:1 Jb 29:21-22 **13:1** Jdg 8:1; 12:1 **13:1** Hs 2:8-17; 11:2 **13:2** Is 46:6; Jr 10:4; Hs 2:8 **13:2** Is 44:17-20 **13:2** Hs 8:6 **13:2** Hs 8:5-6; 10:5 **13:3** Hs 6:4 **13:3** Ps 1:4; Is 17:13; Dn 2:35 **13:3** Ps 68:2 **13:4** Hs 12:9 **13:4** Ex 20:3; 2Kg 18:35 **13:4** Is 43:11; 45:21-22 **13:5** Dt 32:10 **13:6** Dt 8:12,14; 32:13-15; Jr 5:7 **13:6** Hs 7:14 **13:6** Hs 2:13; 4:6; 8:14 **13:7** Hs 5:14 **13:7** Jr 5:6 **13:8** Ps 50:22 **13:9** Jr 2:17,19; Hs 6:1-2; Mal 1:12-13 **13:10** 2Kg 17:4; Hs 8:4 **13:10** Hs 7:7 **13:11** 1Sm 8:7 **13:11** 1Kg 14:7-10; Hs 10:7 **13:12** Dt 32:34-35; Jb 14:17; Rm 2:5 **13:13** Mc 4:9-10 **13:13** Dt 32:6; Hs 5:4 **13:13** Is 37:3; 66:9 **13:14** Hs 6:1-2 **13:14** 1Co 15:55 **13:14** Jr 20:16; 31:35-37 **13:15** Gn 49:22; Hs 10:1 **13:15** Gn 41:6; Jr 4:11-12; Ezk 17:10; 19:12 **13:15** Jr 51:36 **13:15** Jr 20:5 **13:16** Hs 7:1 **13:16** Hs 10:2 **13:16** Hs 7:14 **13:16** Hs 11:6 **13:16** Hs 10:14 **13:16** 2Kg 15:16

13:1 The wages of Ephraim's sin of Baal worship was **guilt** and death (see Rm 6:23).

13:3 Ephraim's loyalty had been compared to the "morning mist" and to the "early dew" (6:4), but here it is the people and their lives that will be like these fleeting things (see Ps 1:4).

13:4 God repeats that he has been the people's true **LORD** and **Savior ever since the land of Egypt** (see 12:9).

13:5-6 Israel had responded well to God early on when they were **in the wilderness** (2:15; 9:10; 11:1), but their prosperity resulted in forgetting him (2:5,13; 4:6; 8:14).

13:7-8 God acting like a wild beast tearing Israel apart parallels 5:14 (see the notes on 2:18; 11:10).

13:10-11 The destruction of Israel included the fall of their **king** (see 7:7; 10:3,7,15). He would not **save** them (v. 10) because there is no savior besides God (v. 4). The people's request for a king as well as God's displeasure refers to 1 Samuel 8:4-9,19-20 and 12:6-17 (see notes). In contrast with the house of David (3:5), these kings were given in **anger** and taken away in **wrath** (8:4).

13:13 The reason for Israel's sin and judgment was the people's own foolishness, as emphasized earlier in

2:5-8; 4:1,6,11-12.

13:14 The focus on judgment in the surrounding context is suddenly interrupted with this important and climactic promise of deliverance **from death** itself (see 1Co 15:55). The preceding has emphasized the consequences of Israel's sin being death (vv. 1,3,7-9; see Rm 6:23; 1Co 15:55), which itself is related to defeat by foreign armies (2:18; 9:12-14,16; 10:8,14-15; 11:6). An expanded scope for this eschatological salvation is also seen in Micah 7:15-20.

A PLEA TO REPENT

14 Israel, return to the LORD your God, †
for you have stumbled in your iniquity. †
2 Take words of repentance with you †
and return to the LORD.
Say to him: "Forgive all our iniquity and accept what is good,
so that we may repay you
with praise † from our † lips. †
3 Assyria will not save us, †
we will not ride on horses, †
and we will no longer proclaim, 'Our gods! ' †
to the work of our hands. †
For the fatherless receives compassion in you." †

A PROMISE OF RESTORATION

4 I will heal their apostasy; †
I will freely love them, †
for my anger will have turned from him. †
5 I will be like the dew to Israel; †
he will blossom like the lily †
and take root like the cedars of Lebanon. †
6 His new branches will spread, and his splendor will be like the olive tree, †
his fragrance, like the forest of Lebanon. †
7 The people will return and live beneath his shade. †
They will grow grain †

and blossom like the vine.
His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.

8 Ephraim, why should I † have anything more to do with idols? †
It is I who answer and watch over him.
I am like a flourishing pine tree; †
your fruit comes from me. †

9 Let whoever is wise † understand these things, and whoever is insightful recognize them.
For the ways of the LORD are right, †
and the righteous walk in them, †
but the rebellious stumble in them. †

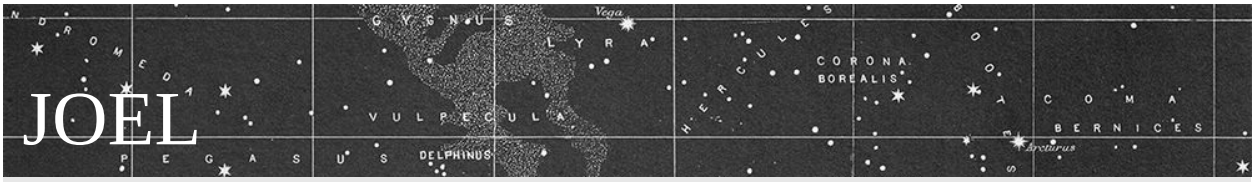
14:2 LXX reads *with the fruit* **14:2** Lit *repay the bulls of our* **14:8** LXX reads *he*
14:1 Hs 6:1; 10:12; 12:6 **14:1** Hs 4:8; 5:5; 9:7 **14:2** Mc 7:18-19 **14:2** Heb 13:15 **14:3** Hs 5:13 **14:3** Is 31:1 **14:3** Hs 4:12 **14:3** Hs 8:6; 13:2 **14:3** Ps 68:5 **14:4** Is 57:18; Hs 6:1 **14:4** Zph 3:17 **14:4** Is 12:1 **14:5** Is 26:19 **14:5** Sg 2:1; Mt 6:28 **14:5** Is 35:2 **14:6** Jr 11:16 **14:6** Sg 4:11 **14:7** Ezk 17:23 **14:7** Hs 2:21-22 **14:8** Jb 34:32 **14:8** Is 41:19 **14:8** Ezk 17:13 **14:9** Ps 107:43; Jr 9:12 **14:9** Ps 111:7-8; Zph 3:5 **14:9** Is 26:7 **14:9** Is 1:28

14:1-3 A final appeal to Israel to **return to the LORD** [their] **God** is given (see the notes on 7:10; Is 10:20-22). They had indeed **stumbled** (v. 1; see 4:5; 5:5). In verses 2-3, Hosea suggests what Israel should say to God. These words include a genuine request for forgiveness (see 5:6; 10:4) and the renunciation of all other forms of security, including alliances with foreign nations, military might, and idols (vv. 2-3; 3:5; 5:15). These sources of security have been repeatedly mentioned in the book (see the notes on 1:6-7; 2:5-8,9-13; 7:11; 9:1-3). The **fatherless** finding **compassion** in the Lord ties back to 1:6-7; 2:1,23.

14:4 When Israel repents, **God will heal their** waywardness; **apostasy** was their root problem (4:12,16; 5:4; 11:7). His **love** for them will flow **freely** (see 2:14-20; 3:1; 11:1), and his fierce anger will have ceased (see 5:10; 8:5; 11:9; 13:11).

14:5-7 The imagery of **dew** (v. 5; Ps 133:3; Mc 5:7) bringing growth to a majestic tree relates to agricultural imagery elsewhere in the book (see the note on 10:12), especially God planting Israel (2:23) and coming like rain (6:3). The nation taking **root** contrasts with 9:16 and is the result of God's doing (vv. 3,8; Is 11:1,10). The splendor of this tree and its provision of shelter (vv. 6-7) match that of Ezekiel 17:22-24, where it is a picture of the messianic reign (see note). All of this imagery of fertility and flourishing is significant; it shows that it is God—not idols—who brings these things to Israel. He did so all along.

14:9 Like the book of Daniel (see Dn 12:8-10), the book of Hosea closes with an appeal for wisdom so that its contents will be understood. This wisdom is centered on upright living (see the note on 13:13; Pr 1:7) unto the comprehension of prophetic visions and parables (12:10; Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2).



JOEL

INTRODUCTION

The book of Joel is one of the shortest in the OT. The first part (1:1–2:17) describes a terrible locust plague concluding with a plea for confession of sins. The second part (2:18–3:21) proclaims hope for the repentant people coupled with judgment upon their enemies. Circumstances of writing CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Joel ("Yahweh is God") is identified as the son of Pethuel. He is not easily identified with the other Joels of Scripture (1Sm 8:2; 1Ch 4:35; 6:33; 11:38; 15:7; Ezr 10:43; Neh 11:9), leaving us only his book to know him, his calling from God, and his work. The book itself gives no biographical information other than his father's name.

BACKGROUND: Dating the book of Joel has always been difficult and mainly conjecture, with suggestions ranging as widely as premonarchial Israel to the postexilic period, sometimes well into the Hellenistic period.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Joel shows us the Creator and Redeemer God of all the universe in complete control of nature. Joel made clear that the God of judgment also is a God of mercy who stands ready to redeem and restore when his people come before him in repentance. Joel points to a time when the Spirit of God would be present upon all people. On the day of Pentecost, Peter proclaimed that the new day of Spirit-filled discipleship, foretold by Joel, had arrived (Ac 2:17-21).

STRUCTURE

Joel's use of repetition gives the book the appearance of a series of folding doors, in some cases doors within doors. The overall structure balances the section on God's judgment through the locust plague (1:1-20) with a section on the land's physical restoration (2:21-27). The prophecy of an invading army (2:1-11) is balanced by a prophecy on the destruction of this army (2:20). In the center is the highly prominent call to repent and the promise of renewal (2:12-19). But this balanced structure overlaps with another. The prophecy of the destruction of the invading army (2:20) is also balanced with the final prophecy of the Lord's vengeance against all the nations (3:1-21). Finally, the assurance of the land's physical restoration through rain (2:21-27) is balanced by the promise of the people's spiritual restoration through the outpouring of God's Spirit (2:28-32).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is a righteous Judge, and in the coming "day of the LORD" (Jl 1:15;2:1) he will bring sure and swift devastation on all who have opposed him. Yet he also "spared his people" (2:18).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Joel explicitly denied the tendencies of God's people to presume that they are immune from God's judgment. Although God's judgment will utterly destroy the pagan nations (3:1-13), it will also be a decisive turning point that his people must go through—on the way to ultimate blessing.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This short book contains two profound passages on salvation. First, "everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved" (2:32; see Rm 10:13). Second, Joel describes repentance as a tearing of one's heart rather than external actions such as tearing one's clothes (Jl 2:12-14).

JOEL TIMELINE

750–700 BC

Alliance between Syria and Israel collapses with the fall of Damascus **(732)** and the fall of Samaria **(722)**.

Joel's prophecy likely occurred between **722** and **605** or after the Babylonian exile. (See events under **450** for possible later date.) Greeks establish trading posts in Philistine territory along the Mediterranean coast. **700**

700–600 BC

Philistines and Phoenicians sell the people of Judah and Jerusalem as slaves to the Greeks (3:6). **700**

God delivers Jerusalem from the Assyrian forces. **701**

Ashurbanipal **(668–631)** rules over a declining Assyrian Empire that experiences revolts in **642**, contributing to the assassination of Amon of Judah **(641)** and the rise of his son Josiah. **641–609**

Josiah killed by the Egyptians at Megiddo **609**

Babylonians defeat Pharaoh Neco of Egypt at Carchemish. **605**

600–450 BC

Second temple construction begins under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership. **536**

Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to finish rebuilding the temple. **520–518**

Second temple is dedicated. **515**

Events in Esther **486–465**

Greek victory over Persians in Battle of Salamis, **480**, and Plain of Plataea, **479**, thwarted Persian expansion into Europe and were keys to Greek hegemony in the Mediterranean Basin and Europe.

Ezra goes to Jerusalem. **458**

450–400 BC

Joel's prophecy occurred sometime after **445** when Jerusalem's walls had been rebuilt. (See events under **725** for a different view of when Joel prophesied.) Events in Nehemiah **445–430**

Nehemiah's ministry **445–420?**

Nehemiah in Jerusalem **445–432**

Jerusalem's walls rebuilt **445**

The Peloponnesian War between Sparta and Athens **431–404**

1 The word of the LORD that came † to Joel son of Pethuel:

A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

2 Hear this, † you elders; listen, all you inhabitants of the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your days †
or in the days of your ancestors?
3 Tell your children about it, †
and let your children tell their children, and their children the next generation.
4 What the devouring locust † has left, the swarming locust has eaten;
what the swarming locust has left, the young locust † has eaten; and what the young locust has left, the destroying locust † has eaten.

5 Wake up, you drunkards, † and weep; wail, all you wine drinkers,
because of the sweet wine,
for it has been taken from your mouth.
6 For a nation has invaded my land, †
powerful and without number;
its teeth are the teeth of a lion, and it has the fangs of a lioness. †
7 It has devastated my grapevine and splintered my fig tree.
It has stripped off its bark and thrown it away; its branches have turned white.
8 Grieve like a young woman dressed in sackcloth, †
mourning for the husband of her youth.
9 Grain and drink offerings have been cut off †
from the house of the LORD; the priests, who are ministers of the LORD, mourn. †
10 The fields are destroyed; †
the land grieves;
indeed, the grain is destroyed; the new wine is dried up; †
and the fresh oil fails. †
11 Be ashamed, you farmers, †
wail, you vinedressers, †

over the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field has perished. †
12 The grapevine is dried up, †
and the fig tree is withered;
the pomegranate, † the date palm, † and the apple † — all the trees of the orchard — have withered.
Indeed, human joy has dried up. †

13 Dress in sackcloth and lament, † you priests; †
wail, † you ministers of the altar.
Come and spend the night in sackcloth, †
you ministers of my God,
because grain and drink offerings are withheld from the house of your God.
14 Announce a sacred fast; †
proclaim an assembly!
Gather the elders †
and all the residents of the land at the house of the LORD your God, †
and cry out to the LORD. †

THE DAY OF THE LORD

15 Woe because of that day! †
For the day of the LORD is near and will come as devastation from the Almighty. †
16 Hasn't the food been cut off before our eyes, †
joy and gladness †
from the house of our God?
17 The seeds lie shriveled in their casings. † †
The storehouses are in ruin,
and the granaries are broken down, because the grain has withered away.
18 How the animals groan! †
The herds of cattle wander in confusion since they have no pasture.
Even the flocks of sheep and goats suffer punishment.

19 I call to you, LORD, †
for fire has consumed
the pastures of the wilderness, †
and flames have devoured
all the trees of the orchard.
20 Even the wild animals cry out to † you, †
for the river beds are dried up, †
and fire has consumed
the pastures of the wilderness.

1:11 Or *The farmers are dismayed, the vinedressers wail* **1:17** Or *clods* ; Hb obscure **1:20** Or *animals pant for* ; Hb obscure
1:1 Hs 1:1; Mc 1:1; Zph 1:1 **1:2** Hs 4:1; 5:1 **1:2** Dt 4:32; Jr 2:10; Mk 2:12 **1:3** Ex 10:2; Jos 4:22; Ps 78:4 **1:4** Ex 10:4; Jl 2:25; Am 4:9 **1:4** Ps 105:34; Nah 3:15-16 **1:4** Ps 78:46; Is 33:4 **1:5** Jl 3:3 **1:6** Jl 2:2,11,25 **1:6** Rv 9:7-8 **1:8** Is 22:12; Jr 4:8; 6:26 **1:9** Hs 9:4; Jl 2:14 **1:9** Hs 10:5; Jl 2:17 **1:10** Is 24:4 **1:10** Hs 9:2 **1:10** Dt 28:51; Hs 2:8-13; Hg 1:11 **1:11** Jr 14:4; 51:23; Am 5:16 **1:11** Is 17:11; Jr 9:12 **1:12** Hab 3:17 **1:12** Hg 2:19 **1:12** Sg 7:8 **1:12** Sg 2:3 **1:12** Is 16:10; 24:11 **1:13** Jr 4:8; Ezk 7:18 **1:13** Jl 2:17 **1:13** Jr 9:10 **1:13** 1Kg 21:27 **1:14** Jl 2:15-16 **1:14** Jl 1:2 **1:14** 2Ch 20:3; Neh 9:1; Jr 36:6,9 **1:14** Jnh 3:8 **1:15** Jr 30:7; Am 5:16 **1:15** Is 13:6,9; Ezk 30:2-3; Jl 2:1-2,11,31 **1:16** Is 3:7 **1:16** Is 16:10; Jr 48:33 **1:17** Is 17:10-11 **1:18** 1Kg 18:5; Jr 12:4; 14:5-6; Hs 4:3 **1:19** Ps 50:15; Mc 7:7 **1:19** Jr 9:10; Am 7:4 **1:20** Ps 104:21; 147:9 **1:20** 1Kg 17:7; 18:5

1:2-3 The severity of the imminent disaster would be such that **elders** had never heard of anything like it even in earlier generations, and it would be worth remembering for future generations (see v. 14; 2:2; Ex 10:14).

1:4 Locusts were one of the forms of divine judgment used against Egypt (Ex 10:4-6,12-15). Such insects could also come against Israel if they were disobedient (Dt 28:38; 1Kg 8:37). In the Minor Prophets, locusts are also mentioned in Amos 4:9 and Nahum 3:15-17.

1:6 The incoming locust swarm is related to **a nation** overtaking the **land**, thus hinting that an invading army is also in view (see 2:2-9). Other passages similarly describe mighty armies (Jdg 6:5; 7:12; Is 33:4; Jr 46:23; 51:14). The mention of **teeth** relates to locusts devouring crops, which they do voraciously.

1:7-13 Like a locust swarm, the incoming nation will devour all plant-life, including the **grapevine** and the **fig tree** (v. 7). This will cause grief for the people like that experienced by a young widow (v. 8; Hs 2:2,15-16). Sorrow will be upon “drunkards” deprived of their drink (v. 5), the **priests** who do not see **grain and drink offerings** brought to the temple (vv. 9,13), and the **farmers** who have lost their **harvest** (v. 11). Indeed, the **joy** of the people will have **dried up** (v. 12; 2:6). Such loss of crops matches other passages in the Minor Prophets (see the notes on Hs 2:5-13; 10:12) and fits with the desolation to be brought by a foreign army (Hab 3:16-17).

1:14 The situation will be so dire that the priests (v. 13) are to call everyone together for a **fast** and an **assembly** at the temple in order to **cry out to the LORD.**

1:15 The preceding has depicted the **day of the LORD**, a reference to the time when God breaks into human history to save his people and destroy his enemies. In this case, it is a day of his fierce judgment on his own people because they have broken the covenant relationship with him. This phrase occurs more often in the

Minor Prophets (2:1,11,31; 3:14; Am 5:18,20; Ob 15; Zph 1:7,14; Mal 4:5) than in any other corpus in Scripture (see Is 13:6,9; Jr 46:10; Ezk 13:5; 30:3).

1:19-20 The prophet perceives the dangers and calls out to God (see vv. 13-14). The destruction of the land is described here as resulting from consuming **fire** and **flames** (see 2:3,5; the note on Hs 8:14; Am 5:6; 7:4; Nah 1:6), such that the **animals** have no food and the streams are **dried up**.

2 Blow the horn in Zion; †
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

Let all the residents of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming; †
in fact, it is near —

2 a day of darkness and gloom, †
a day of clouds and total darkness, †
like the dawn spreading over the mountains; a great
and strong people † appears, such as never existed in ages past †
and never will again
in all the generations to come. †

3 A fire devours in front of them, †
and behind them a flame blazes.
The land in front of them
is like the garden of Eden, †
but behind them,
it is like a desert wasteland; †
there is no escape from them.
4 Their appearance is like that of horses, †
and they gallop like war horses.
5 They bound on the tops of the mountains.
Their sound is like the sound of chariots, †
like the sound of fiery flames consuming stubble, †
like a mighty army deployed for war.

6 Nations writhe in horror before them; †
all faces turn pale.
7 They attack as warriors attack; they scale walls as men of war do.

Each goes on his own path, †
and they do not change their course.
8 They do not push each other; each proceeds on his own path.
They dodge the arrows, never stopping.
9 They storm the city; they run on the wall;
they climb into the houses; †
they enter through the windows like thieves. †

10 The earth quakes before them; †
the sky shakes.
The sun and moon grow dark, †
and the stars cease their shining. †
11 The LORD makes his voice heard †
in the presence of his army. †
His camp is very large;
those who carry out his command are powerful. †
Indeed, the day of the LORD is terrible and dreadful † — who can endure it? †

GOD'S CALL FOR REPENTANCE

12 Even now — this is the LORD's declaration — turn to me with all your heart, †
with fasting, weeping, and mourning. †
13 Tear your hearts, †
not just your clothes, †
and return to the LORD your God.
For he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love,
and he relents from sending disaster. †
14 Who knows? He may turn and relent †
and leave a blessing behind him, †
so you can offer grain and wine to the LORD your God. †

15 Blow the horn in Zion! †

Announce a sacred fast; †
proclaim an assembly.
16 Gather the people; sanctify the congregation; †
assemble the aged; † †
gather the infants,
even babies nursing at the breast.
Let the groom leave his bedroom, †
and the bride her honeymoon chamber.
17 Let the priests, † the LORD's ministers, weep between the portico and the altar. †
Let them say:
"Have pity on your people, LORD, †
and do not make your inheritance a disgrace, †
an object of scorn among the nations.
Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' " †

GOD'S RESPONSE TO HIS PEOPLE

18 Then the LORD became jealous for his land † and spared his people. † 19 The LORD answered his people:

Look, I am about to send you
grain, new wine, and fresh oil. †
You will be satiated with them, and I will no longer make you
a disgrace among the nations. †

20 I will drive the northerner far from you †
and banish him to a dry and desolate land, his front ranks into the Dead Sea, †
and his rear guard into the Mediterranean Sea. †
His stench will rise;
yes, his rotten smell will rise, †
for he has done astonishing things.

21 Don't be afraid, land; †

rejoice and be glad,
for the LORD has done astonishing things. †
22 Don't be afraid, wild animals, for the wilderness pastures have turned green, †
the trees bear their fruit,
and the fig tree and grapevine yield their riches.
23 Children of Zion, † rejoice and be glad in the LORD your God, †
because he gives you the autumn rain for your vindication. † †
He sends showers for you,
both autumn and spring rain † as before.
24 The threshing floors will be full of grain, †
and the vats will overflow
with new wine and fresh oil.

25 I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust ate, †
the young locust, the destroying locust, and the devouring locust — my great army that I sent against you.
26 You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied. †
You will praise the name of the LORD your God, †
who has dealt wondrously with you. †
My people will never again be put to shame. †
27 You will know that I am present in Israel †
and that I am the LORD your God, and there is no other. †
My people will never again be put to shame. †

GOD'S PROMISE OF HIS SPIRIT

28 After this †
I will pour out my Spirit † on all humanity; †
then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your old men will have dreams,
and your young men will see visions.
29 I will even pour out my Spirit on the male and female slaves in those days. †

30 I will display wonders in the heavens and on the earth: †
blood, fire, and columns of smoke.
31 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood †
before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. †
32 Then everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved, †
for there will be an escape
for those on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, as the LORD promised, †
among the survivors the LORD calls.

2:16 Or *elders* **2:23** Or *righteousness*
2:1 Jr 4:5; 51:27; Jl 2:15 **2:1** Jl 1:15; 2:11,31; 3:14 **2:2** Jl 2:31; Zph 1:15 **2:2** Is 60:2; Zph 1:15 **2:2** Jl 1:6; 2:11,25 **2:2** Lm 1:12; Dn 9:12; 12:1; Jl 1:2 **2:2** Ex 10:14 **2:3** Ps 97:3; Is 9:18-19 **2:3** Gn 2:8-15; Ezk 36:35 **2:3** Ex 10:5,15; Ps 105:34-35 **2:4** Rv 9:7 **2:5** Rv 9:9 **2:5** Is 5:24; 30:30 **2:6** Is 13:8; Nah 2:10 **2:7** Pr 30:27 **2:9** Ex 10:6 **2:9** Jr 9:21 **2:10** Ps 18:7; Nah 1:5 **2:10** Is 13:10; 34:4; Jr 4:23; Ezk 32:7-8; Mt 24:29; Rv 8:12 **2:10** Jl 3:15 **2:11** Ps 46:6; Is 13:4 **2:11** Jl 2:25 **2:11** Jr 50:34; Rv 18:8 **2:11** Jl 1:15; 2:31; 3:14 **2:11** Ezk 22:14 **2:12** 1Kg 8:35-40; 2Ch 7:14 **2:12** Est 4:3 **2:13** Ps 51:17; Is 57:15 **2:13** Jr 41:5 **2:13** Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; 1Ch 21:15; Neh 9:17; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Jr 18:8; Jnh 4:2 **2:14** Jnh 3:9 **2:14** Hg 2:19 **2:14** Jl 1:9,13 **2:15** Jl 2:1 **2:15** 2Kg 10:20 **2:16** 1Sm 16:5; 2Ch 29:5 **2:15-16** 2Ch 20:3; Neh 9:1; Jr 36:6,9 **2:16** Ps 19:5 **2:17** Jl 1:9 **2:17** Hs 10:5; Jl 1:13 **2:17** Is 37:20; Am 7:2,5 **2:17** Ps 44:13; 74:10 **2:17** Ps 42:3,10; 79:10; 115:2 **2:18** Ezk 36:5,6; Zch 1:14; 8:2 **2:18** Is 60:10; 63:9,15 **2:19** Jr 31:12; Hs 2:21-22 **2:19** Ezk 34:29; 36:15 **2:20** Jr 1:14-15 **2:20** Zch 14:8 **2:20** Dt 11:24 **2:20** Is 34:3; Am 4:10 **2:21** Jl 1:10 **2:21** Ps 126:2-3 **2:22** Ps 65:12; Jr 9:10; Jl 1:19 **2:23** Ps 149:2 **2:23** Is 12:2-6 **2:23** Dt 11:13-15 **2:23** Hs 6:3; Zch 10:1 **2:24** Lv 26:10; Am 9:13; Mal 3:10 **2:25** Jl 1:4-7; 2:2-11 **2:26** Dt 11:15; Is 62:9 **2:26** Ps 113:1; 135:1; 148:5,13 **2:26** Ps 126:2; Is 25:1 **2:26** Is 45:17 **2:27** Jl 3:17,21 **2:27** Dt 4:35,39; 1Kg 8:60; Is 45:5-6 **2:27** Is 49:23 **2:28-32** Ac 2:17-21 **2:28** Is 32:15; 44:3; Ezk 39:29 **2:28** Is 40:5; 49:26 **2:29** 1Co 12:13 **2:30** Lk 21:11,25-26 **2:31** Is 13:9-10; 34:4; Mt 24:29; Mk 13:24 **2:31** Zph 1:14-16; Mal 4:1,5 **2:32** Rm 10:13 **2:32** Ob 17

2:1-2 The emphasis on the temple continues (1:9,13-14,16) with this first of two commands to **blow the horn in Zion** (vv. 1,15). The **day of the LORD** is further described as a **day of darkness** (see the note on Ezk 30:2-3), which involves the invasion of an unprecedented army (v. 2; see 1:2-3).

2:3 The transformation of an **Eden**-like land into a **desert wasteland** shows the fearsome power of the invading army (v. 2).

2:4-9 The blurring of the distinction between the swarm of locusts and an invading army has already begun with the references to a “great and strong people” in verse 2 and to a “nation” in 1:6. The lines are blurred even further with the blending of war imagery and locust imagery here (see Rv 9:3-11). The horror that comes upon peoples and upon every face shows that the “day of the LORD” concerns not only Israel but the whole earth (v. 6; see vv. 31-32; 3:9-16; the note on Ezk 30:2-3).

2:10 The quaking of heaven and earth is associated with eschatological events in Isaiah 13:10-13 (see note) and Haggai 2:6-9,21-23. Other prophetic texts similarly predict an earthquake (see the notes on Is 24:18-20; Jr 4:23-26).

2:11 The **very large** force (see v. 2) is called God’s **army** because it is the instrument of his judgment (see v. 25).

2:12-14 Reinforcing the earlier call to the priests to gather the people and “cry out to the LORD” in 1:13-14,

God directly calls for wholehearted repentance on the basis of his mercy (vv. 12-13), which was revealed to Moses long ago (Ex 34:6-7). Out of concern for his glory and his covenant, he did **relent** from bringing **disaster** on the Israelites for worshiping the golden calf (Ex 32:12-14). He could act similarly again (v. 14; 2Sm 24:16; Jr 18:8; Jnh 3:9).

2:15-17 Picking up on God's preceding call for repentance, everyone is to be called together to Zion to plead for God to **have pity on** his people (v. 17; see Jnh 4:11) and spare them from **disgrace** (see v. 1; 1:13-14; Ps 79:10).

2:18-19 In answer to prayer (v. 17), God indeed will be **jealous for his land** and have mercy on **his people** (Dt 32:43). Whereas their crops had been devoured previously (v. 3; 1:4-13,17), they would be satisfied with **grain, new wine, and fresh oil** and would no longer be a **disgrace among the nations** (see vv. 26-27).

2:20 The invading army comes from the north, in agreement with related prophetic passages (see the notes on Jr 3:12-13; 50:41; Ezk 38:4-13).

2:21-24 The enemy's mighty acts will be overshadowed and undone by God's (v. 21; Nm 23:23). Joy and gladness will return as God restores abundance to the land. **Rain** is also an image of restoration in the book of Hosea, where it is connected to God's coming (see Hs 6:3; 14:5) and to "righteousness" (Hs 10:12). **Vindication** in verse 23 can also be translated "righteousness."

2:25 The various types of locusts that consumed everything (1:4) would not only be banished (v. 20) but the **years** lost to them would be repaid by God.

2:26-27 God's deliverance will unmistakably demonstrate his presence **in Israel** and that he alone is God (see 3:17; Hs 12:10; 13:4).

2:28-29 The Spirit will be poured out not only on Israel but **on all humanity** (see v. 32; Is 40:5; 66:23). Outward signs that often accompany the Spirit coming upon a person are prophesying, dreams, and visions (see Ac 2:4). This fulfills Moses's wish in Numbers 11:29 and resolves the root problem in the hearts of sinners (Ezk 36:26-27; Hs 4:12; 5:4). The outpouring of the Spirit is associated with rain in Isaiah 32:15, and the same association seems to be present here (see v. 23; Hs 6:3; 10:12) **2:30-32** Despite the terrifying **wonders** (see vv. 2,3,10; 3:15; Nah 2:14), **everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved** and find **escape** (Is 37:31-32; Ob 17). Utter destruction will be avoided by those who humbly repent and cry out to God (see vv. 12-17; 1:14). References to "nations" (v. 6; Ex 15:14), "humanity" (v. 28), and "human" (1:12) reinforce the worldwide scope of this passage.

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

3 Yes, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah
and Jerusalem, †
2 I will gather all the nations †
and take them to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. † †
I will enter into judgment with them there †
because of my people, my inheritance Israel.
The nations have scattered the Israelites in foreign countries †
and divided up my land. †

3 They cast lots for my people; †
they bartered a boy for a prostitute and sold a girl for wine to drink. †

4 And also: Tyre, † Sidon, and all the territories of Philistia † — what are you to me? Are you paying me back or trying to get even with me? I will quickly bring retribution on your heads. † 5 For you took my silver and gold and carried my finest treasures † to your temples. 6 You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks † to remove them far from their own territory. 7 Look, I am about to rouse them up from the place where you sold them; † I will bring retribution on your heads. 8 I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, † and they will sell them to the Sabeans, † † to a distant nation, for the LORD has spoken.

9 Proclaim this among the nations: †
Prepare for holy war; †
rouse the warriors; †
let all the men of war advance and attack!
10 Beat your plows into swords and your pruning knives into spears. †
Let even the weakling say, “I am a warrior.”
11 Come quickly, † all you surrounding nations; gather yourselves. †
Bring down your warriors there, LORD. †

12 Let the nations be roused and come to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit down
to judge all the surrounding nations. †
13 Swing the sickle because the harvest is ripe. †
Come and trample the grapes
because the winepress is full; †
the wine vats overflow
because the wickedness of the nations is extreme. †

14 Multitudes, multitudes †

in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near †
in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark, and the stars will cease their shining. †
16 The LORD will roar from Zion †
and make his voice heard from Jerusalem; †
heaven and earth will shake. †
But the LORD will be a refuge for his people, †
a stronghold for the Israelites. †

ISRAEL BLESSED

17 Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, †
who dwells in Zion, my holy mountain. †
Jerusalem will be holy, †
and foreigners will never overrun it again. †
18 In that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine, †
and the hills will flow with milk. †
All the streams of Judah will flow with water, †
and a spring will issue from the LORD's house, †
watering the Valley of Acacias. † †
19 Egypt will become desolate, and Edom a desert wasteland,
because of the violence done to the people of Judah †
in whose land they shed innocent blood.
20 But Judah will be inhabited forever, †
and Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21 I will pardon their bloodguilt, † †
which I have not pardoned,
for the LORD dwells in Zion.

3:2 = The Lord Will Judge **3:8** Probably the south Arabian kingdom of Sheba (modern Yemen) **3:11** LXX, Syr, Tg read *Gather yourselves and come* ; Hb obscure **3:18** Or *Shittim* **3:21** LXX, Syr read *I will avenge their blood*

3:1 Jr 32:44; 33:7,11; Ezk 39:25 **3:2** Is 66:18; Mc 4:12 **3:2** Jl 3:12,14 **3:2** Is 66:16; Jr 25:31 **3:2** Jr 50:17; Ezk 34:6 **3:2** Ezk 35:10; 36:1-5 **3:3** Ob 11; Nah 3:10 **3:3** Am 2:6 **3:4** Am 1:9; Zch 9:2-4 **3:4** Am 1:6-8; Zch 9:5-7 **3:4** Ps 28:4 **3:5** 1Kg 20:6; 2Ch 36:19; Lm 1:10-11 **3:6** Is 66:19; Ezk 27:13 **3:7** Zch 9:13 **3:8** Is 14:2; 60:14 **3:8** Jb 1:15; Ps 72:10; Ezk 38:13 **3:9** Jr 51:27-28 **3:9** Jr 6:4; Mc 3:5 **3:9** Is 8:9-10; Jr 46:3-4; Zch 14:2-3 **3:10** Is 2:4; Mc 4:3 **3:11** Ezk 38:15-16 **3:11** Is 13:3 **3:12** Ps 7:6; 98:9; Is 3:13 **3:13** Jr 51:33; Hs 6:11 **3:13** Is 63:3; Lm 1:15 **3:13** Gn 18:20; Rv 19:14-16 **3:14** Is 34:2-8 **3:14** Jl 1:15; 2:1,11 **3:15** Jl 2:10,31 **3:16** Hs 11:10; Am 1:2 **3:16** Jr 25:30; Am 1:2 **3:16** Ezk 38:19; Jl 2:10; Hg 2:6 **3:16** Ps 46:1; 62:8; Pr 14:26 **3:16** Jr 16:19; Nah 1:7 **3:17** Ex 6:7; 29:46; Ezk 20:20 **3:17** Is 11:9; 56:7; Ezk 20:40 **3:17** Is 4:3; Ob 17 **3:17** Is 52:1; Nah 1:15 **3:18** Am 9:13 **3:18** Ex 3:8 **3:18** Is 30:25; 35:6 **3:18** Ezk 47:1-12 **3:18** Nm 25:1; Ezk 47:8 **3:19** Ob 10 **3:20** Ezk 37:25; Am 9:15 **3:21** Is 4:4

3:1 The references to **those days** and **that time** indicate that the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh and salvation from destruction for all who call on God (2:28-32) will take place in the same general time period that God restores **the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem** (see the notes on Jr 30:1-3; 33:11; Ezk 16:53).

3:2-8 Related to the restoration of Judah and Jerusalem (v. 1) will be judgment on the enemies who had scattered them (vv. 2-4). These were also guilty of looting the temple (v. 5; Hg 2:7-8) and selling **the people of Judah to the Greeks** (v. 6). Nevertheless, God would bring his people back **from the place** to which they were sold (v. 7). As retribution, the children of enemy nations will be sold to Judah, who will in turn sell them to **a distant nation** (v. 8; Ob 15-18). For more on the **Valley of Jehoshaphat** (v. 2), see the note on verse 12.

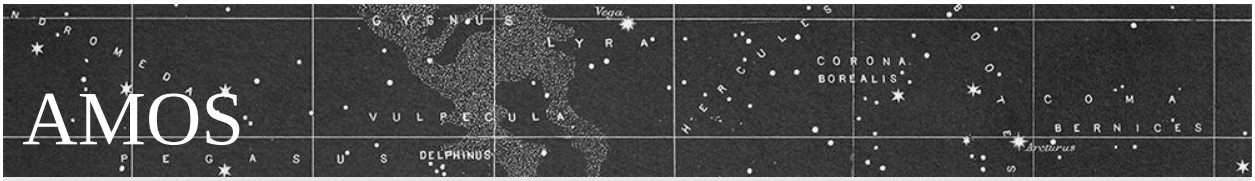
3:9-11 The gathering of the **nations** for **war** against God will be futile (see vv. 12-14). The transformation of farming tools into weapons (v. 10) will ultimately be reversed (Is 2:4).

3:12 The **Valley of Jehoshaphat** is not referred elsewhere in Scripture and appears to be a wordplay on the name Jehoshaphat, which means “the Lord judges” (see v. 14; see Hs 1:4-5,11; 2:2). His judgment of **the nations** (see v. 2) parallels prophetic passages such as Isaiah 2:4 and Ezekiel 38:22.

3:13 The bloodbath that results from God’s wrath is represented by the treading of **grapes**, a full **winepress**, and overflowing **wine vats** (see Is 63:1-3).

3:14-16 The darkening of heavenly bodies and the shaking of heaven and earth, which were also mentioned earlier (see 2:10,30-31), coincide with God’s judgment on the nations on **the day of the LORD**. Whereas his roaring like a lion shakes the universe (see Hs 11:10; Am 1:2), he will be **a refuge for his people** (v. 16; 2:32).

3:17-21 The dramatic judgment and salvation on the “day of the LORD” will result in knowledge of him **who dwells in Zion** (vv. 17,21). Holiness and fruitfulness will characterize Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 17-18; 2:18-27; Am 9:13-15; Zch 14:20-21). The **spring** that goes out from the temple parallels the life-giving river of Ezekiel 47:1-12. The secure, eternal dwelling of God’s people is explicitly linked to the messianic kingdom in Jeremiah 23:5-6; Ezekiel 37:25, and Amos 9:11-15.



AMOS

INTRODUCTION

Amos is the first of the four eighth-century BC prophets, which also included Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah. Along with Hosea, Amos's ministry was to Israel even though he was from Judah. He was a layman who did not consider himself a professional prophet (7:14-15). Through words and visions, Amos spoke against the superficial religious institutions of his day.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Amos was a shepherd from Tekoa, a village about ten miles south of Jerusalem. He received a call from God to go north and prophesy against Samaria and the kingdom of Israel around 760 BC. We do not know how long he actually was in the north; it appears to have been a fairly short time. He provoked a great deal of opposition and anger, as illustrated by his encounter with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel (7:10-17). He wrote his book, a summary of his prophecies, after his return to Judah. He probably wrote it with the aid of a scribe.

BACKGROUND: Amos prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah (792–740 BC) and Jeroboam II of Israel (793–753 BC). This was a time of great prosperity and military success for both nations, as all their traditional enemies were in a weakened condition. Samaria, the capital city of Israel, enjoyed enormous wealth, and luxuries flowed into the city.

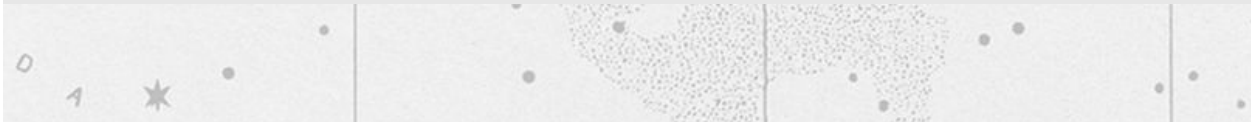
At the same time, decades of struggle with Damascus had left the population exhausted. Many farmers were reduced to poverty. Their more affluent neighbors, and especially the aristocracy, swooped in with loans that the poor could not repay and then reduced the debtors to slavery and seized their lands. The leaders of society believed they had no reason to fear for the future. Their city had high walls and fortified citadels, and their army was everywhere victorious. They were the chosen people of God, and they considered themselves immune from judgment.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Amos reminds us of the sovereignty of God in his involvement with his people. God will bring his judgment, a reality that certainly came to pass. Amos's emphasis on the day of the Lord had implications for Amos's contemporaries, but it also reminds the modern reader of a coming day referred to repeatedly in the NT—the day of Christ's return.

STRUCTURE

After the superscript (1:1), the book of Amos is divided into seven parts. The first part, the introduction, is a single verse (1:2). This is followed by six major divisions: 1:3–2:16; 3:1-15; 4:1-13; 5:1–6:14; 7:1–8:3; 8:4–9:15. Remarkably, formulas of divine speech (statements such as, "the LORD says," "the LORD has spoken," and "the LORD's declaration") are evenly distributed in these sections. Amos 1:3–2:16 has fourteen such formulas, and each of the following sections have seven each, for a total of forty-nine. The basic structure and content of each section is described in the notes.



CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is absolutely sovereign. He raises up and puts down nations. He is also a God who reveals himself and his plans to "his servants the prophets" (Am 3:7). Therefore, he has revealed himself to be the Judge of all, pagan and people of God alike. He is also—and not least—a God who has a wonderful future for his people when they are restored at last (9:11-15).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The people of Amos's day showed the universal human tendency to do the wrong thing rather than the right thing. In particular, this often evidences itself in perfunctory rituals (4:4-5). On the other hand, humanity will be salvaged. Both Israel and "all the nations that bear my name" (9:12) will one day experience unmeasured blessings. (James declared that this prophecy began to be fulfilled by Gentiles turning to Jesus, Ac 15:15-18.) TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION
In Amos redemption is based entirely on God's initiative. God reminded them that they were "the entire clan that I brought from the land of Egypt" and that "I have known only you out of all the clans of the earth" (Am 3:1-2). What God desires from redeemed people is righteous living and obedience. Religious rituals and festivals, even those that God commanded, cannot substitute for a right relationship with him (5:21-24).

AMOS TIMELINE

800–760 BC

Adad-Nirari III led his Assyrian army to victory over Syria and the destruction of Damascus. **802**

For half a century after the fall of Damascus, Assyrian expansion was thwarted by internal problems. **802–745**

Jeroboam II, king of northern kingdom, enjoyed an era of peace, expansion, increased trade and affluence. **793–753**

Uzziah, king of southern kingdom **792–740**

Eclipse of the sun visible in Judah/Israel **June 15, 763**

Earthquake at Hazor between **765** and **755**

760–750 BC

Amos is called to travel from Judah to Israel to prophesy in Samaria. **760**

Zechariah, king of northern kingdom **753–752**, assassinated by Shallum Shallum, king of northern kingdom **752**, assassinated by Menahem Menahem, king of northern kingdom **752–742**

Hosea's prophetic ministry **750–722?**

Micah called to be a prophet **750**

750–740 BC

Assyrian aggression was thwarted by internal problems until **745** when Tiglath-pileser III came to power.

Pekahiah, king of northern kingdom **742–740**, assassinated by Pekah Death of King Uzziah of Judah

740

Isaiah's call to be a prophet **740**

Other states in the region pay tribute to the growing power of Assyria. **740**

740–700 BC

Tiglath-pileser III's invasions of Israel **734–732**

Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus form a mutual defense alliance against Assyria and invite Ahaz of Judah to join them. **734**

Ahaz refuses Isaiah's counsel and seeks protection from Assyria by paying tribute to them, creating a heavy financial burden on Judah for years to come. **734**

Alliance between Syria and Israel collapses with the fall of Damascus **(732)** and the fall of Samaria **(722)** Pekah, king of northern kingdom **752–732**, assassinated by Hoshea, last king of northern kingdom **732–722**

1 The words of Amos, who was one of the sheep breeders † † from Tekoa † — what he saw regarding Israel in the days of King Uzziah † of Judah and Jeroboam † son of Jehoash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake. †

2 He said:

The LORD roars † from Zion and makes his voice heard from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn, † †
and the summit of Carmel † withers.

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL'S NEIGHBORS

3 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Damascus †
for three crimes, even four, †
because they threshed Gilead with iron sledges.

4 Therefore, I will send fire against Hazael's palace, and it will consume Ben-hadad's † citadels.

5 I will break down the gates † † of Damascus.
I will cut off the ruler from the Valley of Aven, and the one who wields the scepter from Beth-eden.

The people of Aram will be exiled to Kir. †
The LORD has spoken.

6 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Gaza †
for three crimes, even four,
because they exiled a whole community, handing them over to Edom.
7 Therefore, I will send fire against the walls of Gaza, and it will consume its citadels.
8 I will cut off the ruler from Ashdod, †
and the one who wields the scepter from Ashkelon. †
I will also turn my hand against Ekron, and the remainder of the Philistines † will perish.
The Lord GOD has spoken.

9 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Tyre †
for three crimes, even four,
because they handed over
a whole community of exiles to Edom
and broke † a treaty of brotherhood. †
10 Therefore, I will send fire † against the walls of Tyre, and it will consume its citadels.

11 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Edom †
for three crimes, even four,
because he pursued his brother with the sword. †
He stifled his compassion,
his anger tore at him † continually, and he harbored his rage incessantly.
12 Therefore, I will send fire against Teman, †
and it will consume the citadels of Bozrah.

13 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing the Ammonites †
for three crimes, even four,
because they ripped open
the pregnant women of Gilead †
in order to enlarge their territory. †
14 Therefore, I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah, †
and it will consume its citadels.
There will be shouting on the day of battle †
and a violent wind on the day of the storm. †
15 Their king and his princes will go into exile together. †
The LORD has spoken.

1:1 Or *the shepherds* **1:2** Or *dry up* **1:5** Lit *gate bars* **1:9** Lit *and did not remember*
1:1 2Kg 3:4; Am 7:14-15 **1:1** 2Sm 14:2; Jr 6:1 **1:1** 2Kg 15:1-7; 2Ch 26:1-23; Is 1:1; Hs 1:1 **1:1** 2Kg 14:23-29 **1:1** Zch 14:5 **1:2** Is 42:13; Jr 25:30; Jl 3:16; Am 3:8 **1:2** Is 24:4-7; Jr 12:4; 23:10; Jl 1:10,18-19 **1:2** Am 9:3 **1:3** Is 17:1-3 **1:3** Pr 30:15-29; Am 2:1,4,6 **1:4** 2Kg 8:11-15; 13:3,22,24 **1:5** Gn 22:17; Neh 1:3; Lm 2:9; Hs 11:6; Nah 3:13 **1:5** 2Kg 16:9; Am 9:7 **1:6** Jr 47:1,4-5; Ezk 25:15-17 **1:8** 2Ch 26:6; Am 3:9; Zch 9:6 **1:8** Jr 47:5; Zph 2:4 **1:8** Is 14:29-31; Ezk 25:16 **1:9** Is 23; Ezk 26:1–28:19 **1:9** 1Kg 5:1,12; 9:11-14 **1:10** Zch 9:4 **1:11** Jr 49:8-22; Ezk 25:12-14 **1:11** Nm 20:14; Dt 2:4; 23:7; Ob 10-14 **1:11** Gn 37:33; Ps 7:2; Hs 5:14 **1:12** Jr 49:7,20 **1:13** Jr 49:1-6; Ezk 25:1-7; Zph 2:8-11 **1:13** 2Kg 8:12; 15:16; Hs 13:16 **1:13** Is 5:8; Ezk 35:10 **1:14** 1Ch 20:1; Jr 49:2 **1:14** Ezk 21:22; Am 2:2 **1:14** Is 29:6; 30:30 **1:15** Jr 49:3

1:1 Like Hosea (see Hs 1:1), Amos focuses his message on the northern kingdom of **Israel** (see 7:12-15). The **Jeroboam** referred to here is Jeroboam II (see 2Kg 14:23-29).

1:2 For the third time in the Minor Prophets, God is compared to a roaring lion (see Hs 11:10; Jl 3:16). Each time his power is dramatically displayed over created things.

1:3-5 The mere fact that God judges Gentile nations here and in the following verses shows that they are accountable to him for their rebellion (see Is 13–23; Jr 46–51; Ezk 25–32). This first oracle is against **Damascus**, the capital city of Syria (also called Aram), Israel's neighbor to the north. **For three crimes, even four** (v. 3) is an idiom, which means "more than enough" (see Pr 6:16-19; 30:18-19,21-23,29-31). **Gilead** was Israelite territory (see v. 13; Nm 26:29; 32:40), which had been treated with cruelty by Damascus (see 2Kg 13:7). **Hazael** was a king of Aram, as was his son **Ben-hadad** (v. 4; see 1Kg 19:15-17; 2Kg 13:3). Like Israel, they too would be **exiled** (v. 5; see the notes on Jr 46:17-19; Jr 48:7; 49:3).

1:6-8 The second oracle is against the **Philistines**, represented by the cities of **Gaza**, **Ashdod**, **Ashkelon**, and **Ekron.** This nation was guilty of handing over a whole community **to Edom** (v. 6; Ex 21:16). This was probably an Israelite community (see the note on v. 11). As in the previous oracle (v. 5), the king (**the one who wields the scepter**) will be **cut off** (v. 8).

1:9-10 The third oracle is against **Tyre**, an ancient city on the coast in modern Lebanon. It was known for

trade and wealth. Its people were guilty of the same thing as Philistia (v. 6). God's judgment repeatedly consists of consuming **fire** that destroys cities and important buildings (vv. 4,7,12,14; 2:2,5).

1:11-12 The fourth oracle is against **Edom**, which was located southeast of Jerusalem in modern Jordan. Edom originated with Esau, Jacob's twin brother (cp. Gn 36); thus, that nation had a particularly close relationship to Israel. Nevertheless, Edom was cruel to **his brother** Israel (see Ob 10-14), provoking the wrath of God.

1:13-15 The fifth oracle is against the **Ammonites**, a nation situated to the east of Israel. The prophet states that they were also guilty of violence against **Gilead** (v. 13) and would also **go into exile** with **their king** and **princes** (see the note on vv. 3-5).

2 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Moab †
for three crimes, even four,
because he burned the bones
of the king of Edom to lime. †
2 Therefore, I will send fire against Moab, and it will consume the citadels
of Kerioth. †
Moab will die with a tumult, †
with shouting and the sound of the ram's horn.
3 I will cut off the judge † from the land and kill all its officials † with him.
The LORD has spoken.

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

4 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Judah †
for three crimes, even four,
because they have rejected the instruction of the LORD †
and have not kept his statutes. †
The lies † that their ancestors followed †
have led them astray.
5 Therefore, I will send fire † against Judah, and it will consume the citadels
of Jerusalem.

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

6 The LORD says:

I will not relent from punishing Israel †
for three crimes, even four,
because they sell a righteous person for silver and a needy person for a pair of sandals. †

7 They trample the heads of the poor †
on the dust of the ground
and obstruct the path of the needy. †
A man and his father have sexual relations with the same girl, †
profaning my holy name. †
8 They stretch out beside every altar †
on garments taken as collateral, †
and in the house of their God
they drink wine obtained through fines. †

9 Yet I destroyed the Amorite † as Israel advanced; his height † was like the cedars, and he was as sturdy as the oaks;
I destroyed his fruit † above and his roots beneath.
10 And I brought you from the land of Egypt †
and led you forty years in the wilderness †
in order to possess the land of the Amorite. †
11 I raised up some of your sons as prophets †
and some of your young men as Nazirites. †
Is this not the case, Israelites?

This is the LORD's declaration.

12 But you made the Nazirites drink wine and commanded the prophets,
"Do not prophesy." †
13 Look, I am about to crush † you in your place †
as a wagon crushes when full of grain.
14 Escape will fail the swift, †
the strong one will not maintain his strength, †

and the warrior will not save his life.

15 The archer will not stand his ground, †
the one who is swift of foot
will not save himself,

and the one riding a horse will not save his life. †

16 Even the most courageous of the warriors will flee naked on that day † —

this is the LORD's declaration.

2:13 Or *hinder* ; Hb obscure

2:1 Is 15–16; Jr 48; Ezk 25:8-11 **2:1** Lv 20:14; 21:9 **2:2** Jr 48:24,41 **2:2** Jr 48:45 **2:3** Ps 2:10; 141:6 **2:3** Jb 12:21; Is 40:23 **2:4** 2Kg 17:19; Hs 2:12; Am 3:2 **2:4** Jdg 2:17-20; 2Kg 22:11-17; Jr 6:19; 8:9 **2:4** Jr 44:10; Ezk 5:7 **2:4** Is 9:15-16; Jr 11:10-13; 23:14,21-22 **2:4** Jr 9:14; 16:11-12; Ezk 20:18,24,30 **2:5** Jr 17:27; 21:10 **2:6** 2Kg 18:12 **2:6** Dt 16:18-20; Am 5:12; 8:6 **2:7** Am 5:11; 8:4; Mc 2:2,9 **2:7** Jb 24:4 **2:7** Hs 4:14 **2:7** Lv 18:21; Pr 30:9; Ezk 36:20-23 **2:8** Am 3:14 **2:8** Ex 22:26 **2:8** Am 4:1; 6:6 **2:9** Jos 10:12 **2:9** Nm 13:28-33 **2:9** Ezk 17:9; Mal 4:1 **2:10** Ex 20:2; Am 3:1; 9:7 **2:10** Dt 2:7 **2:10** Nm 21:25 **2:11** Dt 18:18-19; Jr 1:4-5; Am 7:14-15 **2:11** Nm 6:1-21; Jdg 13:2-5; 1Sm 1:11 **2:12** Jr 11:21; Am 7:13,16 **2:13** Jl 3:13 **2:14** Is 30:16-17 **2:14** Jr 9:23 **2:15** Jr 51:56; Ezk 39:3 **2:15** Is 31:3 **2:16** Jdg 4:17

2:1-3 The sixth oracle is against **Moab**, also east of Israel and to the south of Ammon (see 1:13-15). God holds the nations accountable not only for sins committed against Israel but also for sins committed against one another. Moab was guilty for having **burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime** (v. 1) and would **die** in **tumult** with her leaders (vv. 2-3).

2:4-5 The seventh oracle is against **Judah**, the sister nation of Israel that had been divided from it after the reign of Solomon. Judah was guilty of having **rejected the instruction of the LORD** and breaking his commandments. God's impartial justice is shown through sending **fire** against Judah's land and **citadels** (v. 5; see 3:11; Hs 8:14), just as he would do to other nations (v. 2; 1:4,7,10,12,14).

2:6-8 To this point, Amos's oracles have been directed at all of the nations (including Judah), which surrounded Israel. Now he adds **Israel**, his primary audience, to the list. This rhetorical move shows that Israel is no different than any of the other nations, even though they are the special people of God. As a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel (1:1; 7:12-15), Amos proclaimed their judgment at greater length (vv. 6-16). They had brazenly oppressed the **righteous** and **needy** (v. 6; 4:1; 5:12; 8:6), engaged in sexual immorality (v. 7; Lv 18:15), and held on to **garments** as **collateral** (v. 8; Ex 22:26-27; Dt 24:12-13). All the while they maintained a superficial association with religion (4:4-5; 5:21-24). Whereas Gaza and Tyre had handed over Israelites to Edom (1:6,9,11), the Israelites were selling one another. Israel and the nations thus share the same essential problem of sin, and God's dealings with them share many commonalties (see the notes on 9:7-8; Jr 3:14-18; 48:45-47; 49:3).

2:12 Despite God's grace in bringing Israel out of Egypt to their own land and raising up godly **prophets** and **Nazirites** (vv. 9-11), the nation rejected God's authority by attempting to silence the prophets and to cause the Nazirites to violate their vows.

2:13-16 As a result of Israel's rejection of prophets and Nazirites (see the note on v. 12), God would bring crushing judgment on Israel (v. 13). Neither human strength nor military strength would be of any help (vv. 14-16).

GOD'S REASONS FOR PUNISHING ISRAEL

3 Listen to this message that the LORD has spoken against you, Israelites,
against the entire clan that I brought from the land of Egypt: †

2 I have known only you †
out of all the clans of the earth;
therefore, I will punish you for all your iniquities. †
3 Can two walk together †
without agreeing to meet?
4 Does a lion roar † in the forest when it has no prey?
Does a young lion growl from its lair unless it has captured something?
5 Does a bird land in a trap on the ground if there is no bait for it?
Does a trap spring from the ground
when it has caught nothing?
6 If a ram's horn † is blown in a city, aren't people afraid? †
If a disaster † occurs in a city, hasn't the LORD done it? †
7 Indeed, the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his counsel
to his servants the prophets. †
8 A lion has roared; †
who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken; †
who will not prophesy? †

9 Proclaim on the citadels in Ashdod †
and on the citadels in the land of Egypt: Assemble on the mountains
of Samaria, †
and see the great turmoil in the city and the acts of oppression within it. †
10 The people are incapable of doing right † — this is the LORD's declaration —
those who store up violence and destruction †
in their citadels.

11 Therefore, the Lord GOD says:

An enemy † will surround the land; he will destroy † your strongholds and plunder your citadels. †

12 The LORD says:

As the shepherd snatches two legs
or a piece of an ear
from the lion's mouth, †
so the Israelites who live in Samaria will be rescued
with only the corner of a bed †
or the † cushion † of a couch. † †

13 Listen and testify † against the house of Jacob — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD, the God of Armies.

14 I will punish the altars of Bethel †
on the day I punish Israel for its crimes; the horns of the altar † will be cut off and fall to the ground. †

15 I will demolish the winter house †
and the summer house; †
the houses inlaid with ivory † will be destroyed, and the great houses † will come to an end.

This is the LORD's declaration.

3:12 Or *Israelites will be rescued, those who sit in Samaria on a corner of a bed or a* **3:12** Hb obscure **3:12** LXX, Aq, Sym, Theod, Syr, Tg, Vg read *or in Damascus*

3:1 Am 2:10 **3:2** Ex 19:5-6; Dt 4:32-37 **3:2** Jr 14:10; Ezk 20:36; Dn 9:12 **3:3** Lv 26:23-24 **3:4** Ps 104:21; Hs 5:14; 11:10 **3:6** Jr 4:5,19,21; 6:1; Hs 5:8; Zph 1:16 **3:6** Nm 10:9; Jr 4:19; Jl 2:1 **3:6** Is 14:24-27; 45:7 **3:6** Lm 3:37-39 **3:7** Gn 18:17; Jr 23:18,22; Jnh 1:2 **3:8** Am 1:2 **3:8** Jnh 1:1-3; 3:1-3 **3:8** Jr 6:10-11; 20:9 **3:9** 1Sm 5:1; Am 1:8 **3:9** Am 4:1; 6:1 **3:9** Am 5:11; 6:8 **3:10** Ps 14:4; Jr 4:22; Am 5:7; 6:12 **3:10** Hab 2:8-10; Zph 1:9; Zch 5:3-4 **3:11** Am 6:14 **3:11** Am 2:14 **3:11** 2Kg 17:5-6; 18:9-12 **3:12** 1Sm 17:34-37 **3:12** Ps 132:3 **3:12** Est 1:6; 7:8; Am 6:4 **3:13** Ezk 2:7 **3:14** Hs 10:5-8,14-15; Am 4:4; 5:5-6; 7:10,13 **3:14** Lv 8:15; 16:18-19; 1Kg 1:50-51; 2:28; Ps 118:27 **3:14** Hs 10:1-2 **3:15** Jr 36:22 **3:15** Jdg 3:20 **3:15** 1Kg 22:39; 2Ch 9:17; Am 6:4 **3:15** Am 2:5; 6:11

3:1-2 This new section (see Am 1–2) continues with judgment on Israel, whom God had chosen **out of all the clans of the earth** (see Gn 12:3; Ex 19:5) and brought up from the land of Egypt (see 2:10). Although the sins of the nations would also be punished, Israel had been given much (see Hs 2:20); much would be expected of them (Lk 12:48).

3:3-6 Each of these rhetorical questions expects a negative response and builds toward the implicit declaration that the coming **disaster** is the work of God (v. 6). The preceding imagery of a **lion** roaring over **prey**, a young lion having **captured** its food, a bird being caught in a **trap**, and the sound of a **ram's horn** depict destruction with increasing clarity (see Is 8:14; 24:17-18; Hs 5:14; 13:7-8; Jl 2:1,15). The two who **walk together** (v. 3) alludes to the special relationship between God and Israel (vv. 1-2). The Hebrew verb translated **meet** is used of God meeting with the Israelites at the tabernacle (Ex 25:22; 30:6), sometimes also referred to as a "tent of meeting" (Ex 29:42-43; 30:36; 40:2,6; not to be confused with Ex 33:7-11 [see note]).

3:7-8 God reveals **his counsel** to the prophets in advance so that they may **prophesy.** Another use of **lion** imagery in this context (see vv. 4,12) reinforces its earlier use to illustrate the overwhelming power and majesty of God (see the note on 1:2).

3:9-12 Samaria became the capital of the northern kingdom (see the note on 1Kg 16:23-26). The city was guilty of **oppression** (v. 9) and storing up **violence and destruction in their citadels** (v. 10; see v. 15), which themselves would be plundered by an enemy (v. 11; see the note on 2:4-5). Their devastation would be nearly complete (v. 12). All of this is proclaimed in **Ashdod** and **Egypt** (v. 9). Israel has no claim on moral superiority; the pagan nations watch as God judges his own people.

3:14-15 The **altars of Bethel** were related to the worship of a golden calf, as instituted by Jeroboam I (1Kg 12:28-29). Israel's "oppression" (v. 9) of the righteous and the poor (see the note on 2:6-8) was so that the rich could live in luxury. Their **great houses** would be destroyed (5:11; see Is 5:8; Hab 2:9-13).

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL CORRUPTION

4 Listen to this message, you cows of Bashan †
who are on the hill of Samaria,
women who oppress the poor
and crush the needy, †
who say to their husbands,
"Bring us something to drink." †

2 The Lord GOD has sworn † by his holiness: †

Look, the days are coming †
when you will be taken away with hooks, †
every last one of you with fishhooks. †
3 You will go through breaches in the wall, †
each woman straight ahead,
and you will be driven along toward Harmon.
This is the LORD's declaration.

4 Come to Bethel and rebel; rebel even more at Gilgal! †
Bring your sacrifices every morning, †
your tenths every three days.
5 Offer leavened bread as a thank offering, †
and loudly proclaim your freewill offerings, †
for that is what you Israelites love to do! †

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

GOD'S DISCIPLINE AND ISRAEL'S APOSTASY

6 I gave you absolutely nothing to eat † †
in all your cities,
a shortage of food in all your communities, yet you did not return to me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

7 I also withheld the rain from you †
while there were still three months until harvest.
I sent rain on one city
but no rain on another. †
One field received rain
while a field with no rain withered. †
8 Two or three cities staggered to another city to drink water †
but were not satisfied, †
yet you did not return † to me.
This is the LORD's declaration.

9 I struck you with blight and mildew; †
the locust devoured †
your many gardens and vineyards,
your fig trees and olive trees, †
yet you did not return to me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

10 I sent plagues like those of Egypt; †
I killed your young men with the sword, †
along with your captured horses. †
I caused the stench of your camp
to fill your nostrils, †
yet you did not return to me. †
This is the LORD's declaration.

11 I overthrew some of you as I † overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, †
and you were like a burning stick
snatched from a fire, †
yet you did not return to me † — This is the LORD's declaration.

12 Therefore, Israel, that is what I will do to you, and since I will do that to you,
Israel, prepare to meet your God! †
13 He is here: the one who forms the mountains, †
creates the wind, †
and reveals his thoughts to man, †
the one who makes the dawn out of darkness and strides on the heights
of the earth. †
The LORD, the God of Armies, is his name. †

4:2 Lit *coming on you* **4:6** Lit *you cleanness of teeth* **4:11** Lit *God*
4:1 Ps 22:12; Ezk 39:18 **4:1** Ex 23:3,6; Lv 19:15; 25:35; Dt 15:4-11; Am 5:11; 8:6 **4:1** Am 2:8; 6:6 **4:2** Am 6:8; 8:7 **4:2** Ps 89:35 **4:2** Is 37:29; Ezk 38:4 **4:2** 2Kg 19:28; 2Ch 33:10-11 **4:3** Jr 52:7 **4:4** Am 5:5 **4:4** Am 5:21-22 **4:5** Lv 7:12 **4:5** Lv 22:18-21 **4:5** Jr 7:9-10; Hs 9:1,10 **4:6** Is 3:1; Jr 14:18 **4:6** Is 9:13; Jr 5:3; Hg 2:17 **4:7** Jr 3:1-3; 5:23-25 **4:7** Ex 9:4,26; 10:22-23 **4:7** Lv 26:18-19; Jl 1:10-12 **4:8** 1Kg 18:5; Jr 14:4 **4:8** Ezk 4:16; Hg 1:6 **4:8** Jr 3:7 **4:9** Dt 28:22; Hg 2:17 **4:9** Jl 1:4; Am 7:1-2 **4:9** Dt 28:38-42; Jl 1:4-7,12 **4:9** Jr 3:10 **4:10** Ex 11:4-5; Dt 28:27,60 **4:10** Jr 11:22; 18:21; 48:15 **4:10** 2Kg 13:3,7 **4:10** Is 34:3 **4:10** Is 9:13 **4:11** Gn 19:24-25 **4:11** Zch 3:1-2 **4:11** Is 9:13 **4:12** Is 32:11; 64:2; Jr 5:22 **4:13** Jb 38:4-7; Ps 65:6; Is 40:12 **4:13** Ps 135:7 **4:13** Ps 139:2; Dn 2:30 **4:13** Mc 1:3 **4:13** Am 5:8-9,27; 9:5-6

4:1 Some women were complicit in oppressing the **poor** and **needy** (see the note on 2:6-8; 3:15; Is 3:16–4:1), while indulging their own appetites. **Bashan** was a prime region for cattle to the northeast. Amos calls the women **cows** as an insulting rebuke for their lazy lifestyle built on the backs of others.

4:2 Being caught with **hooks** is also a picture of judgment in Isaiah 37:29; Ezekiel 19:4,9; 29:4 and 38:4. Fish are also mentioned in several other passages in the Minor Prophets (Hs 4:3; Jnh 1:17; 2:10; Hab 1:14; Zph 1:3,10).

4:4-5 Bethel had historically been an important place in the history of Israel's relationship with God (cp. Gn 12:8; 28:10-22). Now it was the site of one of the golden calves (see the note on 3:14-15). **Gilgal** was a place to **rebel even more** (see the note on Hs 9:15-17). The sacrifices, tithes, and offerings offered at these places were useless and made for show (see 2:6-8; 5:21-24; Mt 6:1; 23:5).

4:6-11 Despite God sending famine, drought, blight, mildew, locusts, ruthless foreign armies, and destruction (see Dt 28:15-68), Israel still **did not return** to him.

4:12-13 Israel's stubborn refusal to repent would result in the mighty and majestic God himself coming to meet them directly (see 1:2; 5:8-9,16-20; Jb 28:25-28; Mc 1:3).

LAMENTATION FOR ISRAEL

5 Listen to this message that I am singing for you, a lament, † house of Israel:

2 She has fallen; Virgin Israel † will never rise again. †
She lies abandoned on her land
with no one to raise her up. †

3 For the Lord GOD says:

The city that marches out a thousand strong will have only a hundred left, †
and the one that marches out a hundred strong will have only ten left †
in the house of Israel.

SEEK GOD AND LIVE

4 For the LORD says to the house of Israel:

Seek me and live! †
5 Do not seek Bethel †
or go to Gilgal †
or journey to Beer-sheba, †
for Gilgal will certainly go into exile, and Bethel will come to nothing.
6 Seek the LORD † and live, or he will spread like fire †
throughout the house of Joseph;
it will consume everything
with no one at Bethel to extinguish it. †
7 Those who turn justice into wormwood †

also throw righteousness to the ground.

8 The one who made the Pleiades and Orion, †
who turns darkness † into dawn †
and darkens day into night, †
who summons the water of the sea †
and pours it out over the surface of the earth † — the LORD is his name. †
9 He brings destruction † on the strong, † †
and it falls on the fortress. †

10 They hate the one who convicts the guilty †
at the city gate,
and they despise † the one who speaks with integrity.
11 Therefore, because you trample on the poor †
and exact a grain tax from him,
you will never live in the houses of cut stone †
you have built;
you will never drink the wine
from the lush vineyards
you have planted. †
12 For I know your crimes are many and your sins innumerable.
They oppress the righteous, † take a bribe, and deprive the poor of justice †
at the city gates.
13 Therefore, those who have insight will keep silent † †
at such a time,
for the days are evil.

14 Pursue good and not evil so that you may live,
and the LORD, the God of Armies, will be with you
as you have claimed. †
15 Hate evil and love good; †
establish justice in the city gate. †

Perhaps the LORD, the God of Armies, will be gracious †
to the remnant of Joseph. †

16 Therefore the LORD, the God of Armies, the Lord, says:

There will be wailing in all the public squares; †
they will cry out in anguish † in all the streets.
The farmer will be called on to mourn, †
and professional mourners † † to wail.
17 There will be wailing in all the vineyards, †
for I will pass among you. †
The LORD has spoken.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

18 Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! †
What will the day of the LORD be for you?
It will be darkness and not light. †
19 It will be like a man who flees from a lion †
only to have a bear confront him.
He goes home and rests his hand against the wall only to have a snake bite him.
20 Won't the day of the LORD be darkness rather than light, †
even gloom without any brightness in it? †
21 I hate, I despise, your feasts! †
I can't stand the stench
of your solemn assemblies. †
22 Even if you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, †
I will not accept them; †
I will have no regard
for your fellowship offerings of fattened cattle. †
23 Take away from me the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps. †

24 But let justice flow like water, and righteousness, like an unfailing stream. †

25 "House of Israel, was it sacrifices and grain offerings that you presented to me during the forty years in the wilderness? † 26 But you have taken up † Sakkuth your king and Kaiwan your star god, † images you have made for yourselves. † 27 So I will send you into exile beyond Damascus." † The LORD, the God of Armies, is his name. † He has spoken.

5:8 Or *turns the shadow of death* **5:9** Hb obscure **5:9** Or *stronghold* **5:13** Or *who are prudent will perish* **5:16** Lit *will say, "Alas! Alas! "* **5:16** Lit *and those skilled in lamentation* **5:26** Or *you will lift up* **5:26** LXX reads *taken up the tent of Molech and the star of your god Rephan* ; Ac 7:43

5:1 Jr 7:29; 9:10,17; Ezk 19:1 **5:2** Jr 14:17; 31:4,21 **5:2** Am 8:14 **5:2** Is 51:18 **5:3** Is 6:13 **5:3** Am 6:9 **5:4** Dt 4:29; 32:46-47 **5:5** 1Kg 12:28-29 **5:5** 1Sm 7:16; 11:14 **5:5** Gn 21:31-33 **5:6** Is 55:3,6-7 **5:6** Dt 4:24; 32:22; Heb 12:29 **5:6** Is 33:14; 66:24; Jr 4:4 **5:7** Am 6:12 **5:8** Jb 9:9; 38:31 **5:8** Gn 1:2-3; Jb 38:12 **5:8** Am 8:9 **5:8** Ps 104:6-9; Jr 10:13 **5:8** Jb 36:27-30 **5:8** Am 4:13; 9:5-6 **5:9** Is 29:5 **5:9** Mc 5:11 **5:10** Is 29:21 **5:10** Is 59:15 **5:11** Am 3:9; 8:6; Jms 1:27 **5:11** Am 3:15; 6:11 **5:11** Dt 28:30; Mc 6:15; Zph 1:13 **5:12** Is 1:23; 5:23 **5:12** Am 2:6-7 **5:13** Ec 3:7; Hs 4:4 **5:14** Is 48:1-2 **5:15** Rm 12:9 **5:15** Is 1:17 **5:15** Jl 2:14 **5:15** Mc 3:5,7-8 **5:16** Jr 9:10,18-20; Am 8:3 **5:16** Jl 1:11 **5:16** Jr 9:17 **5:17** Is 16:10; Jr 48:33 **5:17** Ex 12:12 **5:18** Is 5:19; Jl 1:15; 2:1,11,31 **5:18** Is 5:30 **5:19** Jb 20:24; Is 24:17; Jr 15:2-3 **5:20** Is 13:10; Zph 1:15 **5:20** Jl 2:2; Zph 1:15 **5:21** Is 1:11-16; 66:3; Am 6:8 **5:21** Lv 26:31; Jr 14:12; Hs 5:6 **5:22** Mc 6:6-7 **5:22** Jr 14:12 **5:22** Lv 7:11-15 **5:23** Is 5:12 **5:21-24** Mc 6:6-8 **5:25** Dt 32:17; Jos 24:14; Neh 9:18-21; Ac 7:42-43 **5:26** Is 44:12-20 **5:25-27** 2Kg 17:5-6; Ac 7:42-43 **5:27** Am 4:13

5:2 The depiction of Israel as a **fallen**, helpless, and lonely woman parallels that of Jerusalem in Lamentations 1:1-2. It also looks forward to the restoration of "the fallen shelter of David" in Amos 9:11.

5:4-6 God calls Israel to **seek** him and **live** (Hs 10:12), rather than seeking the idolatrous shrines at **Bethel**, **Gilgal**, and **Beer-sheba** (see the notes on 3:14-15; 8:14; Hs 9:15-17). The Hebrew phrase translated **will certainly go into exile** is a wordplay on the name "Gilgal." The Hebrew word translated **nothing** is *'awen* and relates to references to Bethel as Beth-Aven (Hs 4:15; 5:8; 10:5,8).

5:10-13 Israel's rejection of "justice" and "righteousness" (v. 7; 6:12) is detailed further here (see the note on 2:6-8). The people hated the upright and oppressed **the poor**, while indulging in luxury (vv. 10-12; 3:15–4:1; 6:4-6,11). Their corrupt acts of building and planting, however, would be futile (see 9:11-15; Hs 2:23; Jr 24:6).

5:14-15 Closely related to seeking God unto life (vv. 4,6) is seeking **good and not evil so that you may live** (see Hs 3:5). To do so is also to **hate evil**, **love good**, and **establish justice in the city gate** (see vv. 10,12).

5:16-17 Despite the wish for divine grace on "the remnant of Joseph" (v. 15) and its eventual bestowal (9:14), mourning would come first. The reference to God passing **among you** echoes the Passover (Ex 12:12), except this time it will be Israel being judged (see Jl 1:9-13; 2:12).

5:18-20 As in Joel (see Jl 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14), the catastrophic day of darkness and destruction is called the **day of the LORD.** This is the first mention of this concept in Amos. It is the time in the indeterminate future when God breaks into history to bring judgment on his enemies and salvation for his people. In this case, however, Amos states that it is not good news for Israel. Because of the people's sin, it will be a time of **darkness and not light**; a time of judgment and doom. Multiple beasts are also related to the defeat of Israel in Hosea 13:7-8.

5:21-24 Israel hated justice (v. 10) rather than evil (v. 15), and God aptly declares that he hates their religious gatherings (v. 21). Their sacrifices and their songs are also distasteful to him (vv. 22-23; Hs 6:6; Mc 6:6-8) because they had forsaken **justice** and **righteousness** (v. 24; see v. 7; Is 9:7; Jr 23:5-6). The desire that these flow like **water** and an **unfailing stream** echoes passages such as Hosea 10:12 (see note), Joel 2:21-24,28-29 (see notes), and Habakkuk 2:14.

5:25-27 The point of the rhetorical question in verse 25 is that **Israel** did not offer such **sacrifices** while **in the wilderness**, despite the many instructions concerning them. Hence, in and of themselves, apart from an obedient relationship with God, they are of no value in pleasing him (see Gn 4:3-5; 1Sm 15:22-23; Jr 7:21-23; Hs 6:6; Mc 6:6-7), especially for idolaters (vv. 26-27; Ac 7:42-43).

WOE TO THE COMPLACENT

6 Woe to those who are at ease in Zion †
and to those who feel secure on the hill of Samaria — the notable people in this first of the nations, those the house of Israel comes to.

2 Cross over to Calneh † and see; go from there to great Hamath; †
then go down to Gath † of the Philistines.
Are you better than these kingdoms?
Is their territory larger than yours?

3 You dismiss any thought of the evil day †
and bring in a reign of violence. †

4 They lie on beds inlaid with ivory, †
sprawled out on their couches, †
and dine on lambs from the flock †
and calves from the stall.

5 They improvise songs † to the sound of the harp †
and invent † their own musical instruments like David. †

6 They drink wine by the bowlful †
and anoint themselves with the finest oils but do not grieve over the ruin of Joseph. †

7 Therefore, they will now go into exile as the first of the captives, †
and the feasting † of those who sprawl out will come to an end.

ISRAEL'S PRIDE JUDGED

8 The Lord GOD has sworn by himself † — this is the declaration of the LORD,
the God of Armies:

I loathe Jacob's pride †
and hate his citadels, †
so I will hand over the city † and everything in it.

9 And if there are ten men left in one house, they will die. † 10 A close
relative † and burner † † will remove his corpse † from the house. He will call
to someone in the inner recesses of the house, "Any more with you? "
That person will reply, "None."
Then he will say, "Silence, because the LORD's name must not be invoked." †
11 For the LORD commands:

The large house will be smashed to pieces, and the small house to rubble. †

12 Do horses gallop on the cliffs?
Does anyone plow there with oxen? †
Yet you have turned justice into poison †
and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood † — 13 you who rejoice over Lo-
debar †
and say, "Didn't we capture Karnaim
for ourselves by our own strength? " †
14 But look, I am raising up a nation against you, house of Israel † — this is
the declaration of the Lord, the GOD of Armies — and they will oppress you
from the entrance of Hamath † †
to the Brook of the Arabah. †

6:5 Hb obscure **6:5** Or *compose on* **6:10** Lit *His uncle* **6:10** A burner of incense, a memorial fire, or a body; Hb obscure **6:10** Lit *remove bones* **6:12** Some emend to *plow the sea* **6:14** Or *from Lebo-hamath* **6:14** Probably the Valley of Zared at the southeast end of the Dead Sea
6:1 Is 32:9-11; Zph 1:12 **6:2** Gn 10:10; Is 10:9 **6:2** 1Kg 8:65; 2Kg 18:34; Is 10:9 **6:2** 1Sm 5:8; 2Ch 26:6 **6:3** Am 9:10 **6:3** Am 3:10 **6:4** Am 3:15 **6:4** Am 3:12 **6:4** Ezk 34:2-3 **6:5** Am 5:23; 8:10 **6:5** 1Ch 15:16 **6:6** Am 2:8; 4:1 **6:6** Jr 8:21; Lm 2:11 **6:7** Am 7:11,17 **6:7** 1Kg 20:16-21; Dn 5:4-6,30 **6:8** Gn 22:16; Jr 22:5; 51:14 **6:8** Lv 26:30; Dt 32:19; Ps 106:40 **6:8** Am 3:10-11 **6:8** Hs 11:6 **6:9** Am 5:3 **6:10** 1Sm 31:12; 2Ch 16:14; Jr 34:5 **6:10** Is 48:1; Jr 44:26; Hs 4:15 **6:11** Am 1:1; 9:9 **6:12** 1Kg 21:7-13; Is 59:13-14 **6:12** Is 5:20; Am 5:7;

Rv 8:11 **6:13** Jb 8:14-15; Ps 2:2-4; Lk 12:19-20 **6:13** Ps 75:4; Is 28:14-15 **6:14** Am 3:11 **6:14** Nm 34:7-8; 2Kg 14:25

6:1-7 Zion is a name for the temple mount in Jerusalem and sometimes, by metonymy, a reference to Jerusalem itself. It is the epicenter of God's salvific work and victory. Yet here it is confronted for sin along with the northern kingdom's capital, **Samaria** (v. 1). Neither kingdom was any better than Gentiles **kingdoms** that had already fallen (v. 2; see the note on 2:4-5; Is 10:9; 37:13). In their complacency and excess that came from oppression (vv. 4-6; 3:15; 4:1; 5:11), they dismissed warnings of **the evil day** (v. 3; see 5:18-20), but they would indeed **go into exile** (v. 7; 5:27).

6:8 This time using an oath (see 4:2), God declares that he also hates Israel's **citadels** (see the notes on 2:4-5; 3:9-12; 5:21-24). The people's **pride** can be seen in passages such as verses 3-6,13.

6:12 Israel's perversion of **justice** and **righteousness** is highlighted again (5:7,21).

6:14 The **entrance of Hamath** and the **Brook of the Arabah** were the northern and southern boundaries of Israel, respectively, during the reign of Jeroboam II (see 1:1; 2Kg 14:25).

FIRST VISION: LOCUSTS

7 The Lord GOD showed me this: He was forming a swarm of locusts † at
the time the spring crop first began to sprout — after the cutting of the
king's hay. 2 When the locusts finished eating the vegetation of the
land, † I said, "Lord GOD, please forgive! † How will Jacob survive since he is
so small? " †

3 The LORD relented concerning this. † "It will not happen," he said.

SECOND VISION: FIRE

4 The Lord GOD showed me this: The Lord GOD was calling for a judgment by
fire. † It consumed the great deep and devoured the land. 5 Then I said, "Lord
GOD, please stop! † How will Jacob survive since he is so small? "

6 The LORD relented concerning this. † "This will not happen either," said the
Lord GOD.

THIRD VISION: A PLUMB LINE

7 He showed me this: The Lord was standing there by a vertical wall with a
plumb line in his hand. 8 The LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos? " †
I replied, "A plumb line."

Then the Lord said, "I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; † I will
no longer spare them: †

9 Isaac's high places † will be deserted, and Israel's sanctuaries
will be in ruins; †
I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with a sword."

AMAZIAH'S OPPOSITION

10 Amaziah the priest † of Bethel sent word to King Jeroboam of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you † right here in the house of Israel. The land cannot endure all his words, 11 for Amos has said this: 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will certainly go into exile from its homeland.' " †
12 Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go away, you seer! † Flee to the land of Judah. Earn your living † and give your prophecies there, 13 but don't ever prophesy † at Bethel again, for it is the king's sanctuary † and a royal temple."
14 So Amos answered Amaziah, "I was † not a prophet or the son of a prophet; † † rather, I was † a herdsman, † and I took care of sycamore figs.
15 But the LORD took me from following the flock † and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' " †
16 Now hear the word of the LORD. You say:

Do not prophesy † against Israel; do not preach † against the house of Isaac.

17 Therefore, this is what the LORD says:

Your wife will be a prostitute in the city, †
your sons and daughters will fall by the sword, †
and your land will be divided up
with a measuring line.
You yourself will die on pagan † soil, †
and Israel will certainly go into exile †
from its homeland.

7:12 Lit *Eat bread* **7:14** Or *am* **7:14** = a prophet's disciple or a member of a prophetic guild **7:14** Or *am* **7:17** Lit *unclean*
7:1 Ex 10:12-15; Dt 28:38,42; Jl 1:4 **7:2** Ex 10:15 **7:2** Jr 14:7,20-21; Ezk 9:8; 11:13 **7:2** Is 37:4; Jr 42:2 **7:3** Jr 26:19; Hs 11:8 **7:4** Am 1:3–2:5 **7:5** Ps 85:4; Jl 2:17 **7:6** Ps 106:45; Jnh 3:10 **7:8** Jr 1:11; Am 8:2 **7:8** Is

28:17; 34:11; Lm 2:8 **7:8** Am 8:2 **7:9** 2Kg 17:9-13; Hs 10:8 **7:9** Lv 26:31; Is 63:18; Jr 51:51 **7:10** 1Kg 12:31-32; 13:33 **7:10** Jr 26:8-11; 38:4 **7:11** Am 5:27 **7:12** Mt 8:34 **7:13** Am 2:12; Ac 4:18 **7:13** 1Kg 12:29; Am 7:9 **7:14** 2Kg 2:3; 4:38; 2Ch 19:2 **7:14** Am 1:1 **7:15** 2Sm 7:8 **7:15** Jr 1:7; Ezk 2:3-4 **7:16** Am 2:12 **7:16** Mc 2:6 **7:17** Hs 4:13-14 **7:17** Jr 14:16 **7:17** 2Kg 17:6; Ezk 4:13; Hs 9:3 **7:17** Jr 36:29-31

7:1-9 In response to Amos's intercession, God **relented** from bringing locusts and fire upon Israel (v. 6). Nevertheless, he used the image of a **plumb line** (v. 7) to show that Israel was not in compliance with his covenant expectations. Therefore, judgment would not be held back (v. 8) so that Israel's idolatrous **high places** and **sanctuaries** would be destroyed (v. 9). The use of an instrument of measurement suggests that punishment cannot be avoided because of the fixed standard of God's justice and holiness.

7:10-17 Amos's message of doom (see v. 9) led to accusations of conspiracy (vv. 10-11) and to rejection (vv. 12-13). As **priest of Bethel**, a major site of idolatry and faithlessness to God (v. 10; see the note on 4:4-5), **Amaziah** was naturally threatened by the prophet's message. Amos explains that God's calling to prophesy specifically to Israel had come while he was still a **herdsman** (vv. 14-15). His point is that the message is not his own. It comes from God and is thus authoritative. He then responds with yet another prophetic message that reaffirmed impending exile and pronounced judgment on Amaziah (vv. 16-17; see v. 9; 5:27; 6:7).

FOURTH VISION: A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT

8 The Lord GOD showed me this: a basket of summer fruit. 2 He asked
me, "What do you see, Amos? " †
I replied, "A basket of summer fruit." † †
The LORD said to me, "The end has come for my people Israel; † I will no longer
spare them. † 3 In that day the temple † songs † will become wailing" † —
this is the Lord GOD's declaration. "Many dead bodies, thrown everywhere! †
Silence! " †

4 Hear this, you who trample on the needy †
and do away with the poor of the land, †
5 asking, "When will the New Moon be over so we may sell grain, †
and the Sabbath,
so we may market wheat? †
We can reduce the measure
while increasing the price †
and cheat with dishonest scales. †
6 We can buy the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals †
and even sell the chaff! "

7 The LORD has sworn † by the Pride of Jacob: † †

I will never forget all their deeds. †
8 Because of this, won't the land quake †
and all who dwell in it mourn? †
All of it will rise like the Nile; †
it will surge and then subside
like the Nile in Egypt. †

9 And in that day — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — I will make the sun go down at noon; †
I will darken the land in the daytime. †
10 I will turn your feasts into mourning †
and all your songs into lamentation; †
I will cause everyone † to wear sackcloth †
and every head to be shaved. †
I will make that grief
like mourning for an only son †
and its outcome like a bitter day.

11 Look, the days are coming — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — when I will send a famine through the land: not a famine of bread or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. †
12 People will stagger from sea to sea and roam from north to east
seeking the word of the LORD, †
but they will not find it.
13 In that day the beautiful young women, †
the young men also, will faint from thirst. †
14 Those who swear by the guilt of Samaria †
and say, "As your god lives, Dan," †

or, “As the way † † of Beer-sheba lives” † — they will fall,
never to rise again. †

8:2 In Hb the word for *summer fruit* sounds like the word for *end*. **8:3** Or *palace* **8:5** Lit *reduce the ephah and make the shekel great* **8:7** = the Lord or the promised land **8:10** Lit *every waist* **8:14** LXX reads *god* **8:14** Or *power*
8:2 Am 7:8 **8:2** Jr 24:3 **8:2** Ezk 7:2-3,6 **8:2** Am 7:8 **8:3** Am 5:23; 6:4-5 **8:3** Am 5:16 **8:3** Is 34:3; Jr 33:5; Nah 3:3 **8:3** Am 6:10 **8:4** Am 2:7; 5:11-12 **8:4** Is 10:2 **8:5** Nm 28:11; 2Kg 4:23 **8:5** Ex 31:13-17 **8:5** Dt 25:13-15; Pr 20:23; Hs 12:7 **8:6** Am 2:6 **8:7** Am 4:2; 6:8 **8:7** Dt 33:26,29; Ps 47:4 **8:7** Ps 10:11; Hs 7:2; 8:13 **8:8** Ps 18:7; 60:2; Is 5:25; Am 1:1 **8:8** Hs 4:3 **8:8** Jr 46:7-8 **8:8** Am 9:5 **8:9** Is 13:10; Ezk 32:7; Jl 2:10,31 **8:9** Is 59:9-10; Am 4:13; 5:8; Mt 27:45 **8:10** Jb 20:23; Am 5:21 **8:10** Lm 5:15; Hs 2:11; Jms 4:9 **8:10** Ezk 7:18 **8:10** Is 22:12; Jr 48:37; Ezk 7:18 **8:10** Zch 12:10-14 **8:9-11** Mc 3:6-7 **8:12** Ezk 20:3,31 **8:13** Lm 1:18; 2:21 **8:13** Is 41:17; Hs 2:3 **8:14** Hs 8:5 **8:14** 1Kg 12:28-29 **8:14** Am 5:5 **8:14** Am 5:2; Jr 25:27

8:1-2 The Hebrew word for **summer** sounds like the word for **end** (see Ezk 7:2-6; Dn 11:35; 12:4; Hab 2:3). The resulting wordplay is poignant: what should be a celebration for the time of harvest will instead be a time of destruction (5:17-20,27; 6:7; 7:9,17).

8:3 God’s displeasure with such **songs** was mentioned in 5:27 (see 6:5; 8:10). Corpses everywhere and **silence** also appear together in 6:9-10 (see Hab 2:20; Zph 1:7; 2:13).

8:4-10 Israel’s oppression of **the poor** along with dishonest business practices are again cited as the reason for the coming catastrophic judgment (vv. 4-7; see the notes on 2:6-8; 4:1; 5:10-13). The description of this **day** as one of darkness and mourning (vv. 8-10) matches that of the “day of the LORD” in 5:16-20 (see Jl 1:5-13; 2:31). Likewise, the **land** will **quake** on that day (v. 8; see the notes on Jl 2:10; 3:14-16). Such intense **mourning** like that over an **only son** also appears in Zechariah 12:10.

8:11-12 The famine that Israel had experienced (4:6-9; see Hs 2:9-12; Jl 1:4-12) would be projected onto the spiritual plane through a **famine** in **hearing the words of the LORD** (see the note on Hs 10:12). Such judgment was fitting for a nation that had repeatedly rejected the prophets (2:12; 7:10-13).

8:14 Jeroboam had set up one of the golden calves in **Dan** (1Kg 12:29-30). **Beer-sheba** (in Judah) was also a site of deviant worship (see the note on 5:4-6; 2Kg 23:8).

FIFTH VISION: THE LORD BESIDE THE ALTAR

9 I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, † and he said:

Strike the capitals of the pillars †
so that the thresholds shake;
knock them down on the heads of all the people.
Then I will kill the rest of them with the sword. †
None of those who flee will get away; †
none of the fugitives will escape.
2 If they dig down to Sheol, †
from there my hand will take them;

if they climb up to heaven, †
from there I will bring them down.
3 If they hide on the top of Carmel,
from there I will track them down †
and seize them;
if they conceal themselves
from my sight on the sea floor, †
from there I will command
the sea serpent to bite them. †
4 And if they are driven by their enemies into captivity, †
from there I will command
the sword to kill them. †
I will keep my eye on them
for harm and not for good. †

5 The Lord, the God of Armies — he touches the earth; †
it melts, and all who dwell in it mourn; all of it rises like the Nile
and subsides like the Nile of Egypt. †
6 He builds his upper chambers in the heavens †
and lays the foundation of his vault on the earth. †
He summons the water of the sea
and pours it out over the surface of the earth. †
The Lord is his name. †

ANNOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT

7 Israelites, are you not like the Cushites to me? †
This is the Lord's declaration.
Didn't I bring Israel from the land of Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor, † †
and the Arameans from Kir? †
8 Look, the eyes of the Lord God are on the sinful kingdom, †
and I will obliterate it
from the face of the earth. †

However, I will not totally destroy
the house of Jacob † — this is the LORD's declaration — 9 for I am about to give
the command, and I will shake the house of Israel †
among all the nations,
as one shakes a sieve,
but not a pebble will fall to the ground.
10 All the sinners among my people †
who say: "Disaster will never overtake †
or confront us," †
will die by the sword.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESTORATION

11 In that day I will restore the fallen shelter † of David: †
I will repair its gaps,
restore its ruins, †
and rebuild it as in the days of old, †
12 so that they may possess the remnant of Edom †
and all the nations
that bear my name — † †
this is the declaration of the LORD; he will do this.

13 Look, the days are coming — this is the LORD's declaration — when the
plowman will overtake the reaper †
and the one who treads grapes,
the sower of seed.
The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. †
14 I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel. † †
They will rebuild and occupy ruined cities, †
plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their produce. †
15 I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted from the
land I have given them. †
The LORD your God has spoken.

9:7 Probably Crete **9:10** Or *"You will not let disaster come near* **9:12** LXX reads *so that the remnant of man and all the nations . . . may seek me* ; Ac 15:17 **9:14** Or *restore my people Israel from captivity*
9:1 Am 3:14 **9:1** Zph 2:14 **9:1** Jos 5:13-15; Am 7:9,17 **9:1** Jr 11:11 **9:2** Ps 139:8 **9:2** Jr 51:53; Ob 4 **9:3** Jb 34:22; Ps 139:9-10 **9:3** Jnh 2:2-6 **9:3** Is 27:1 **9:4** Lv 26:33 **9:2-4** Jb 34:21-22; Ps 139:7-12; Jr 23:24 **9:4** Jr 21:10; 44:27 **9:5** Ps 104:32; 144:5; Is 64:1 **9:5** Am 8:8 **9:6** Ps 104:3,13 **9:6** Ps 102:25; Is 48:13; 51:13 **9:6** Ps 104:6 **9:6** Am 4:13; 5:8-9 **9:7** 2Ch 14:9,12; Is 20:4; 43:3 **9:7** Dt 2:23; Jr 47:4 **9:7** 2Kg 16:9; Is 22:6 **9:8** Am 9:4 **9:8** Am 3:12 **9:8** Jr 5:10; 30:11; 31:35-36; Jl 2:32 **9:9** Is 30:28; Lk 22:31 **9:10** Is 33:14; Zch 13:8 **9:10** Jr 5:12; 23:17; Am 6:3 **9:11** Lv 23:42-43; 2Sm 11:11; 1Kg 20:12; Is 4:6 **9:11** 2Sm 7:11-16; Jr 23:5; Ezk 34:23-24; Zch 9:9-10; Lk 1:32; Rv 5:5 **9:11** Is 44:26 **9:11** Is 63:11; Jr 46:26 **9:12** Ezk 36:5; Ob 21 **9:11-12** Is 43:6-7; Mal 1:11; Ac 15:15-18 **9:13** Lv 26:5 **9:13** Jl 2:24; 3:18 **9:14** Dt 30:3; Jr 31:23; 32:42-44 **9:14** Jr 30:18; 33:10-11 **9:14** Is 65:21; Jr 31:5 **9:15** 2Sm 7:10; Jr 24:6

9:1 Amos sees a vision of God **standing beside the altar** to announce the destruction of the temple at Bethel. This will put an end to Israel's sins at such places (2:8; 3:14; 5:22; see Hab 2:20; Mal 3:1) **9:2-4** The inability of anyone to escape death (v. 1) is reinforced through this passage (see Ob 3-4). For a second time, Israel's judgment is compared to being bitten by a **serpent** (v. 3; 5:19; see Nm 21:6; Mc 7:17). God's setting his eye on them **for harm and not for good** (v. 4) parallels Jeremiah 21:10; 39:16; and 44:27.

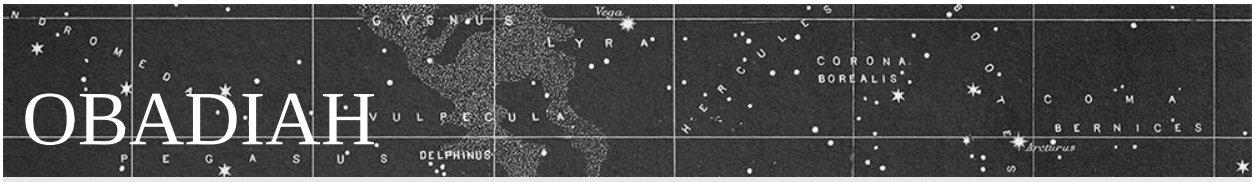
9:5-6 God's majesty and power over creation were also the subject of 4:13 and 5:8-9.

9:7-8 In the **eyes** of God, Israel was essentially no different from the surrounding nations (see the note on 2:4-5; 6:2). Just as he brought Israel out of Egypt, so he had brought the **Philistines from Caphtor** and the **Arameans from Kir.** Israel was a **sinful kingdom** and would be destroyed, though not completely (v. 8).

9:9 The restoration of Israel will involve shaking **the house of Israel among all the nations**. This is similar to Haggai 2:6-7.

9:11-12 Although "the sinful kingdom" of Israel would be destroyed (v. 8; 7:11; Hs 7:7; 10:3,7,15), God would **restore the fallen shelter of David.** Judah and the house of David would also fall in conquest, but God would bring the Messiah in faithfulness to his covenant with David (2Sm 7:12-16; Is 11:1-4). The repair of breaches and rebuilding of ruins echoes other important prophetic passages (Is 61:4; Jr 1:10; 24:6; Ezk 13:5; 22:30). **Edom** may represent all humanity here (see the notes on Is 34:5; 63:1), especially in view of its association with **all the nations** (v. 12; Ob19-21). Israel was "called by my name" (2Ch 7:14), as was the temple (Jr 7:10-11,14), and Jerusalem (Jr 25:29). The nations being similarly called suggests their salvation through the Messiah (see Is 11:10; 43:6-7; 56:3-7).

9:13-15 The future salvation of Israel is again depicted with images of a fruitful land (see Hs 2:15; Jl 2:22-26). This resolves the punishment of a barren land (4:6-9), while simultaneously relating to the permanent "planting" of Israel (v. 15; Jr 24:6; see the notes on Hs 2:21-23; 10:12; 14:5-7). Elsewhere in the Minor Prophets, God also promises to **restore the fortunes** (v. 14) of his people (see Hs 6:11; Jl 3:1; Ob 1:11).



OBADIAH

INTRODUCTION

Many Prophetic Books contain prophecies against several nations, but the book of Obadiah focuses exclusively on the nation of Edom. Obadiah's short message centers on the approaching day of the Lord and the promise that Israel will possess the land of Edom.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Presumably Obadiah (v. 1) was the author of this book, but nothing else is known about him. His common Hebrew name, denoting "servant of the Lord," is shared by at least a dozen persons in the OT.

BACKGROUND: The time of writing of Obadiah is disputed, with a wide variety of proposed dates from the tenth to the fifth centuries BC, depending on when the invasion and plunder of Jerusalem (vv. 11-14) occurred. The two most popular views are during the reign of King Jehoram of Judah (ca. 848–841 BC) and shortly after the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (587/586 BC).

The former date (ca 845 BC) was when the Philistines and Arabs plundered Judah (2Ch 21:16-17) and the Edomites revolted (2Kg 8:20), presumably then becoming allies of the invaders. Since the text does not explicitly indicate the cooperation of the Edomites with the Philistines and Arabs, the latter date (mid-sixth or even fifth century BC) fits the biblical data better, including Ob 20 (the dispersed exiles of the Israelites and of Jerusalem to be restored), as opposed to dates before the dispersion of Israel (by 722 BC) or of Judah (605–586 BC). This postexilic view is also supported by the mention of Edomite involvement in Jerusalem's downfall (Ob 10-14, gloating over the fall of Jerusalem, as in other sixth-century BC texts—Lm 4:21a; Ezk 35:15; cp. Lm 2:15-17—and participating in the plunder) which would result in the Lord's promised justice ("As you have done, it will be done to you" on their heads, Ob 15).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Like the book of Revelation, which proclaims the downfall of the persecuting Roman Empire, the book of Obadiah sustains faith in God's moral government and hope in the eventual triumph of his just will. It brings a pastoral message to aching hearts that God is on his throne and he cares for his own.

STRUCTURE

The text declares the book of Obadiah is a prophetic "vision" from the Lord (v. 1) which also appears to be a war oracle (v. 1) communicating the Lord's imminent judgment upon Edom (v v. 2-9). As a subtype of the prophetic "oracle against foreign nations" (Is 13–23; Jr 46–51; Ezk 25–32; Am 1–2; Zph 2:4-15), it is typical in announcing judgment on a foreign power (specifically Edom; see also Lm 4:21-22) to bring deliverance for Judah (Ob 17-20; see Jr 46:25-28; Nah 1:1-15; Zph 3:14-20). Yet it, like Nahum and Jonah, is atypical in focusing solely on judgment for a foreign nation, rather than specifying judgment for Israel as well.

This shortest OT book consists of several parts. A war oracle from the Lord announces certain judgment on Edom for their arrogant presumption and self-deception (v. 3) that they were immune from divine intervention (v v. 1-9). Next is an explanation of the further cause for coming judgment on Edom (v v. 10-14)—a lack of brotherly commitment (v v. 10-11) in gloating over the day of disaster for God's people Judah (v v. 12-13) and cooperating with Judah's enemies in her destruction (v v. 10-11,13-14). Then the text focuses on the day of the Lord (v v. 15-21) in which imminent judgment on the historical nation of

Edom (v v. 15-16), followed by ultimate judgment on “Edom” as representative of Israel’s end-time enemies (v. 16), would result in the deliverance of both Judah and Israel (v v. 17-21).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God’s justice in dealing with human sin is displayed in Obadiah. His promised destruction of Edom will be based on the criterion in verse 15.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

On one hand, Obadiah continues the biblical emphasis that there are only two kinds of people: those who belong to “Mount Zion” (God’s covenant people) and all the rest. On the other hand, the book shows that when God judges people and nations, he will have enough evidence to condemn them based on their (mis)treatment of others.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In Obadiah salvation is thought of in terms of God’s ultimate deliverance of his people based on his sovereign care: “There will be a deliverance on Mount Zion” (v. 17). Nothing is said about personal conversion.

OBADIAH TIMELINE

1900–1000 BC

Edomites are descendants of Esau and seen as “brothers of Israel.” **1900**

The Edomites refused the Israelites’ passage through their land as Israel journeyed from Egypt to Canaan. **1406**

Egyptian texts from about **1300–1100** refer to Shasu, apparently semi-nomadic tribes, from Seir and Edom.

Saul delivers Israel from the hands of neighbors on almost all sides, including Edom. **1020**

1000–900 BC

David resisted Edom’s encroachment on Israel by striking down 18,000 Edomites in the region of the Dead Sea. To further secure Israel’s southeastern flank, David builds garrisons throughout Edom, which are then subject to David. **982**

Hadad, a member of Edom’s royal family, flees to Egypt during the time David subjected Edom. When Solomon was king, God brought Hadad back as an enemy of Solomon, a disciplinary measure for Solomon’s turning away from God. **940**

900–800 BC

During Jehoram’s reign as king of the southern kingdom, Edom begins to rebel against domination

by Judah and becomes an independent state with its own king. **848–841**

Some interpreters place Obadiah's prophecy in the ninth century when Edom rebelled against Judah. **848–841**

600–500 BC

Edom puts aside its hostilities toward Judah during the reign of Zedekiah. **594**

Edom becomes Judah's ally in resisting the Babylonians. **594**

Edom soon commits an act of hostility against Judah that brings impassioned denunciation of Edom from Jeremiah, a psalmist (Ps 137), and Ezekiel. **586**

The more likely setting of Obadiah's prophecy is in this era surrounding the Babylonian devastation of Jerusalem and the temple. **586**

The vision of Obadiah.

1 **EDOM'S CERTAIN JUDGMENT**

This is what the Lord GOD has said about Edom: †

We have heard a message from the LORD; †
an envoy has been sent † among the nations: "Rise up, † and let us go to war against her." †

2 Look, I will make you insignificant †
among the nations;
you will be deeply despised.

3 Your arrogant heart has deceived you, †
you who live in clefts of the rock † † †
in your home on the heights, who say to yourself,
"Who can bring me down to the ground? " †

4 Though you seem to soar † like an eagle †
and make your nest among the stars, †
even from there I will bring you down.
This is the LORD's declaration.

5 If thieves came to you, †
if marauders by night —
how ravaged you would be! — wouldn't they steal only what they wanted?
If grape pickers came to you, wouldn't they leave some grapes? †

6 How Esau will be pillaged, †
his hidden treasures searched out! †
7 Everyone who has a treaty with you †
will drive you to the border; everyone at peace with you
will deceive and conquer you.
Those who eat your bread †
will set † a trap for you.
He will be unaware of it. †
8 In that day — this is the LORD's declaration — will I not eliminate
the wise ones of Edom †
and those who understand
from the hill country of Esau?
9 Teman, † † your warriors † will be terrified so that everyone
from the hill country of Esau will be destroyed by slaughter. †

EDOM'S SINS AGAINST JUDAH

10 You will be covered with shame and destroyed forever
because of violence done to your brother Jacob. †
11 On the day you stood aloof, †
on the day strangers captured his wealth, †
while foreigners entered his city gate and cast lots for Jerusalem, †
you were just like one of them. †
12 Do not † gloat over your brother †
in the day of his calamity; do not rejoice over the people of Judah †
in the day of their destruction; do not boastfully mock † †
in the day of distress. †
13 Do not enter my people's city gate in the day of their disaster. †
Yes, you — do not gloat over their misery in the day of their disaster, and do not
appropriate their possessions †
in the day of their disaster.

14 Do not stand at the crossroads † †
to cut off their fugitives, and do not hand over their survivors in the day of distress.

JUDGMENT OF THE NATIONS

15 For the day of the LORD † is near, against all the nations. †
As you have done, † it will be done to you; what you deserve will return on your own head. †
16 As you have drunk on my holy mountain, †
so all the nations will drink continually. †
They will drink and gulp down and be as though they had never been.
17 But there will be a deliverance on Mount Zion, †
and it will be holy; †
the house of Jacob will dispossess †
those who dispossessed them. † †
18 Then the house of Jacob will be a blazing fire, †
and the house of Joseph, a burning flame, but the house of Esau will be stubble;
Jacob † will set them on fire and consume Edom. †
Therefore no survivor will remain †
of the house of Esau,
for the LORD has spoken.

FUTURE BLESSING FOR ISRAEL

19 People from the Negev will possess †
the hill country of Esau; †
those from the Judean foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. †
They † will possess the territories of Ephraim and Samaria, †
while Benjamin will possess Gilead.
20 The exiles of the Israelites who are in Halah †
and who are among the Canaanites as far as Zarephath †

as well as the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad will possess the cities
of the Negev. †

21 Saviors † will ascend Mount Zion †

to rule over the hill country of Esau, but the kingdom will be the LORD's. †

1 = Edom **3** Or *in Sela* ; probably = Petra **3** Probably Petra **4** Or *to build high* **7** Some LXX mss, Sym, Tg, Vg; MT reads *They will set your bread as* **9** = a region or city in Edom **11** Or *forces* **12-14** Or *You should not* throughout vv. 12-14 **12** Lit *not make your mouth big* **14** Hb obscure **17** DSS, LXX, Syr, Vg, Tg; MT reads *Jacob will possess its inheritance* **18** Lit *they* **18** Lit *them* **19** = The house of Jacob **20** Or *of this host of the Israelites* ; Hb obscure **21** Or *Those who have been delivered*

1 Gn 25:30; Ps 137:7; Is 21:11-12; 34:1-17; 63:1-6; Ezk 25:12-14; Am 1:11-12; Mal 1:2-5 **1-4** Jr 49:14-16 **1** Is 18:2; 30:4 **1** Jr 6:4-5 **2** Nm 24:18; Is 23:9 **3** Is 16:6 **3** 2Kg 14:7; 2Ch 25:12 **3** Is 14:13-15 **4** Jb 20:6-7; Hab 2:9 **4** Is 14:12-15 **5** Jr 49:9 **5** Lv 19:10; 25:5,11 **6** Jr 49:10 **6** Mal 1:2-3 **7** Ps 55:20; Jr 30:14; Am 1:9 **7** Ps 41:9 **7** Jr 49:7 **8** Jb 4:1; 5:12-14 **9** Gn 36:11; 1Ch 1:45; Jb 2:11; Hab 3:3 **9** Jr 49:22 **9** Is 34:5-8; 63:1-3; Jr 49:7,20; Ezk 25:13; Am 1:12; Ob 5 **10** Ezk 25:12-14; Jl 3:19; Am 1:11 **11** Ps 83:5-6; 137:7; Am 1:6,9 **11** Jl 3:3; Nah 3:10 **11** 2Ch 21:17; Ezk 35:10 **12** Mc 4:11; 7:10 **12** Ps 83:1-6; 137:7-9; Lm 4:21-22; Ezk 35:15; 36:5 **12** Ps 31:18; Ezk 35:12 **12** Gn 35:3; Ps 50:15; Jr 16:19 **13** Ezk 35:5 **13** Ezk 35:10; 36:2-3 **14** Is 16:3-4 **15** Jl 1:15; 2:1,11,31; Am 5:18,20 **15** Is 13:6; Jl 3:14; Zph 1:7,14 **15** Jr 50:29; 51:56 **15** Jr 50:15; Ezk 35:11 **16** Jr 49:12 **16** Is 51:22-23 **17** Is 4:2-3 **16-17** Is 66:20; Jl 2:32 **17** Is 14:1-2; Am 9:11-15 **17** Ezk 36:2-5 **18** Is 5:24; 9:18-19; Am 1:12; Zch 12:6 **18** Jr 11:23 **19** Is 11:14 **19** Am 9:11-12 **19** Is 11:14 **19** Jr 31:5; 32:44 **20** 1Kg 17:9-10; Lk 4:26 **20** Jr 32:44; 33:13 **21** Neh 9:27; Is 4:5; 18:7; 24:23; Dn 2:44; Mc 4:7 **21** Ps 22:28; 47:7-9; 67:4; Zch 14:9

1 The subject of this brief book is the judgment of **Edom.** This nation was descended from Jacob's twin brother Esau (see v. 6; Gn 25:23-30) and was in longstanding conflict with Israel (e.g., Ex 15:15; Nm 20:14-21; Ezk 35:5). A messenger is sent **among the nations** to call them to fight against Edom (see Jr 49:14).

2-4 Edom was proud of its strength but would be **deeply despised** by the **nations**. This people's belief that they were out of the reach of harm (vv. 3-4) was mistaken (see Am 9:2-4).

7 Edom would be defeated despite their treaties with others.

8 Edom was also known for its wisdom (Jr 49:7; see Jb 2:11), but this too would perish on the day of their judgment.

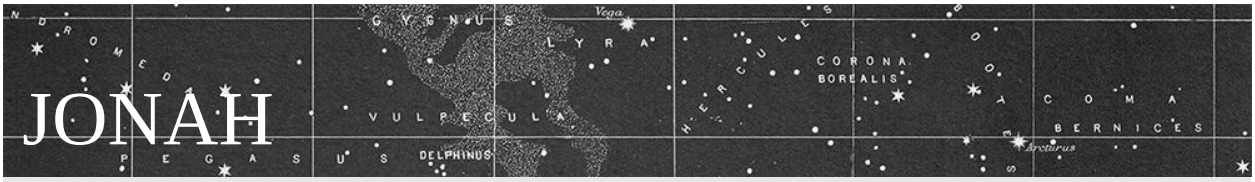
10-14 Edom's sin that receives the greatest attention is their **violence** against their **brother Jacob** (v. 10). When Jerusalem fell, not only did they not help but they were like one of the attacking **foreigners** (v. 11). They gloated over Judah and even handed over their survivors to the enemy (vv. 12-14). Other passages in the Minor Prophets confirm this portrait of Edom (Jl 3:19; Am 1:6-12).

15-16 The reason why Edom should neither rejoice nor assist in the destruction of Judah is because **the day of the LORD is near**, when **all the nations** will be judged (see the notes on Ezk 30:2-3; Jl 2:4-9). Just recompense will be dealt to Edom on that day (Lm 1:21-22; 4:21-22). Edom had **drunk** in triumph **on** [God's] **holy mountain**, but **all the nations will drink** the wine of divine wrath until they are destroyed (see the notes on Jr 25:15-17,27-29). Here Edom is a symbol for all the nations of the earth with eschatological significance. Just as Edom was judged in history for its rebellion against God, in the last days all nations who have set themselves against God will be judged.

17-18 Despite the attempt to cut off survivors (v. 14) and the humiliation of God's holy mountain (v. 16), there will be a holy remnant **on Mount Zion** (Is 37:31-32; Jl 2:32). Isaiah 4:2 connects this to the reign of

the Messiah. Whereas Israel had been possessed by foreigners, on that day they will possess those who had defeated them (see Am 9:11-12). Likewise, the temple and other important buildings had been burned down (vv. 10-14; 2Kg 25:9), but Israel would become a **fire** that consumes Edom (v. 18) in such a way as resembles divine judgment (see Am 1:4,7,10,12,14; 2:2,5). Whereas there would be a remnant of Israel, there will be no survivor for Esau (see v. 10; the notes on Is 34:1-5,8-15; Ezk 35:2-4,14-15).

19-21 Israel will take possession of both their own land and their enemies' lands. This will be fulfilled when God's **kingdom** is perfectly established (v. 21; Ex 15:18) through the Messiah (see Nm 24:17-19; Am 9:11-12). The defeat of **the hill country of Esau** (vv. 8-9,19,21) contrasts with the glory of Mount Zion (vv. 17,21), much like in Ezekiel 34–36 (see the note on 35:2-4).



JONAH

INTRODUCTION

The book of Jonah, the fifth of the Minor Prophets, is more like the stories of the prophets found in the Historical Books in both form and content. The book gives us a brief glimpse into the life of Jonah, the "wrong-way prophet," who ran from God and was swallowed by a fish. Throughout the book, we see evidence of God's grace and his love for all people.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The book is an anonymous narrative about Jonah.

BACKGROUND: Jonah appears in 2 Kings 14:25 as a prophet from Gath-hepher in the territory of Zebulun in northern Israel. He was active around the first half of the eighth century BC. Jonah predicted the restoration of the northern kingdom's boundaries. This occurred during the reign of Jeroboam II (ca. 793–753 BC). This book about Jonah could have been composed at any time from the eighth century to the end of the OT period.

Jonah preached to the city of Nineveh. Nineveh was a major city of the Assyrians, a cruel and warlike people who were longtime enemies of Israel. This explains Jonah's reluctance to preach to the infamous city of Nineveh.

The key debate about the book of Jonah is the question of its genre. Is Jonah history or parable? The parable view argues that Jonah is a fictional story or fable made up to convey a theological point about God's attitude toward Gentiles. Proponents of the parable view argue that the ironic and fantastic events described by the book is the author's way of tipping the reader off that this is not literal history. There are also historical difficulties that the fictional view would resolve: the exaggerated size of Nineveh (3:3) and the lack of extrabiblical, Assyrian evidence to confirm that the city ever repented.

Five considerations suggest taking the book of Jonah as genuine history. First, Jonah was a real historical figure, said to be a prophet in 2 Kings 14:25. The book of Jonah portrays Jonah as a flawed character. Were the book of Jonah a piece of fiction, it would be guilty of slander, saying something derogatory and untrue about a real person who is elsewhere presented positively.

Second, Jonah is part of the collection of twelve Minor Prophets. All the other books of this collection convey prophecies by genuine, historical prophets. By placing Jonah in this collection, the compiler of the Minor Prophets signaled that he considered Jonah to be an historical account.

Third, the miracles in Jonah are not impossible for the God of the Bible. Presuming otherwise, some interpreters allow their antisupernaturalism to drive them to the parable view of Jonah.

Fourth, Jesus spoke of Jonah being in the fish and preaching in Nineveh as real events (Mt 12:39-41; Lk 11:29-32). In particular, Jesus's statement that "the men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at Jonah's proclamation" (Mt 12:41; Lk 11:32) makes little sense if the people of Nineveh never actually repented due to Jonah's preaching. Unless one is willing to affirm that Jesus was wrong, it is best to say that the book of Jonah is historical.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Jonah shows God's gracious concern for the whole world, his power over nature, and the futility of running from him. In addition, it foreshadows Jesus's burial and resurrection. Matthew 12:38-45 and Luke 11:24-32 compare the ministry of Jesus with that of Jonah, Jesus being the greater. Both texts see

Jonah's great fish as a foreshadowing of Jesus's burial in the tomb, making Jonah a "type" of Christ. If Jonah actually died in the fish (see note at Jnh 2:1-2), then his resurrection further parallels the resurrection of Jesus.

STRUCTURE

The book of Jonah exhibits a high degree of Hebrew literary excellence. Its style is rich and varied, considered a masterpiece of rhetoric. There is symmetry and balance in the book, and it can be divided into two sections of two chapters each. The peak of the first discourse is marked by its poetic form, which has a higher prominence in narrative than prose. The peak in the second discourse is marked by the dialogue between Jonah and God. The Lord and Jonah are indicated as the two main characters of the story by being the only ones who are named; the other characters are anonymous.

Phenomena of nature also serve in each half as props: wind, storm, sea, dry land, and fish in the first half; herd and flock, plant, worm, sun, and wind in the second half. Therefore, chapters 1 and 3 and chapters 2 and 4 can be seen as parallel. Finally, both chapters 1 and 3 begin with Jonah receiving a word from the Lord consisting of a call to go to Nineveh.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Jonah reveals God as Creator. He is sovereign over the storms and fish of the sea, as well as the plants and worms of the land. The book also shows God as loving and compassionate. God's unanswered question that ends the book (see 4:11) is meant to provoke readers to think about how his mercy relates to "the nations."

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

God's enumeration of the vast city of Nineveh shows that each human life is valuable in the eyes of God. Jonah was personally a mass of contradictions—a prophet known mainly for disobeying God; a preacher angry at the success of his ministry; a believer more concerned about "creature comforts" than about people dying without knowing God. As such, he certainly demonstrates that God may use imperfect and reluctant individuals to accomplish his plans.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Jonah demonstrates the principle that those whom God saves find deliverance in response to hearing the word of God. No salvation occurs apart from the proclamation—whether willingly or reluctantly, partially or completely—of a word from God. The apostle Paul (who also knew about storms on the Mediterranean Sea) would later ask, "How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher?" (Rm 10:14).

JONAH TIMELINE

5000–1000 BC

5000–1000 BC

Earliest settlement of Nineveh **5000**

Three major Assyrian cities, Nineveh, Asshur, and Calah, engage in vigorous trading as far as Cappadocia. **1900**

An expanding Assyria wars with Babylon's King Hammurabi shortly before breaking up into smaller city-states. **1700**

Adad-nirari establishes the first Assyrian Empire. **1307**

Tiglath-pileser I is monarch of the second Assyrian Empire. **1115–1077**

At Tiglath-pileser's death the empire falls into a 166-year decline. **1077–911**

1000–850 BC

Neo-Assyrian Empire established by Ashur-dan II, lays the foundation for a unified rule in the ancient Near East from Egypt to the Caspian Sea. **934**

Adad-nirari II **(911–891)** and his grandson, Ashurnasirpal II **(883–859)** lead a resurgent Assyria.

Ashurnasirpal's son, Shalmaneser III **(859–824)**, fights a coalition of 12 kings including Ben-Hadad of Aram-Damascus and Ahab of Israel at Qarqar in north Syria. **853**

Shalmaneser defeats Hazael of Damascus and receives tribute from Israel's King Jehu. **(841)** This scene is carved in relief on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser, unearthed at Nimrud, Iraq, in AD 1846.

With the death of Shalmaneser III, Assyrian expansion is held in check. **824–745**

Jonah prophesies that the Lord will restore the border of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah.

Jeroboam II strengthens Israel. **793–753**

God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance.

During its time of weakness, Assyria experiences two severe plagues **(765** and **759)** and a total eclipse **(763)**.

750–700 BC

Tiglath-pileser III checks the aggression of the Kingdom of Urartu on Assyria's north and leads an expansion of Assyria, conquering Babylon and greatly reducing Israel's territory. **745–727**

Assyria's Shalmaneser V besieges Samaria. **725–722**

Samaria falls to Assyria's Sargon II; nearly 28,000 Israelites are sent into exile, and Gentiles from Assyrian-controlled territories are resettled into what was the northern kingdom. **722**

JONAH'S FLIGHT

1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: † 2 "Get up! † Go
to the great city † of Nineveh † and preach against it † because their
evil † has come up before me." † 3 Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish †
from the LORD's presence. † He went down † to Joppa † and found a ship
going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to
Tarshish from the LORD's presence.

4 But the LORD threw † a great wind onto the sea, † and such a great storm
arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart. 5 The sailors were afraid,
and each cried out to his god. † They threw the ship's cargo into the sea to
lighten the load. † Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down to the lowest part of the
vessel and had stretched out and fallen into a deep sleep. †
6 The captain approached him and said, "What are you doing sound asleep? Get
up! Call to your god. † † Maybe this god will consider us, † and we won't
perish."
7 "Come on! " the sailors said to each other. "Let's cast lots. † Then we'll know
who is to blame for this trouble we're in." So they cast lots, and the lot singled
out Jonah. † 8 Then they said to him, "Tell us who is to blame for this trouble
we're in. † What is your business, † and where are you from? What is your
country, and what people are you from? "
9 He answered them, "I'm a Hebrew. † I worship † the LORD, † the God of the
heavens, † who made the sea † and the dry land."
10 Then the men were seized by a great fear and said to him, "What is this
you've done? " The men knew he was fleeing from the LORD's presence †
because he had told them. 11 So they said to him, "What should we do to you so
that the sea will calm down for us? " For the sea was getting worse and worse.
12 He answered them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea so that it will calm
down for you, for I know that I'm to blame † for this great storm that is against
you." 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they
couldn't because the sea was raging against them more and more.
14 So they called out to the LORD: † "Please, LORD, don't let us perish because
of this man's life, and don't charge us with innocent blood! For you, LORD, have
done just as you pleased." † 15 Then they picked up Jonah and threw him into
the sea, and the sea stopped its raging. † 16 The men were seized by great fear
of the LORD, † and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. †
17 The LORD appointed a great fish † to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the
belly of the fish three days and three nights. †

1:6 Or *God* **1:9** Or *fear*

1:1 2Kg 14:25; Jnh 3:1; Mt 12:39-41; 16:4; Lk 11:29-30,32 **1:2** Nm 22:20; Dt 10:11; Jos 7:10 **1:2** Jnh 3:2-

3; 4:11 **1:2** Gn 10:11; 2Kg 19:36; Is 37:37; Nah 1:1; Zph 2:13 **1:2** Dt 15:9; 24:15; 2Kg 23:17; Is 58:1 **1:2** Jnh 3:8 **1:2** Gn 18:20; Hs 7:2 **1:3** Is 23:1,6,10; Jr 10:9 **1:3** Gn 4:16; Ps 139:7,9-10 **1:3** Jnh 2:6 **1:3** 2Ch 2:16; Ezr 3:7; Ac 9:36,43 **1:4** 1Sm 18:11; 20:33; Is 22:17; Jr 22:26-28 **1:4** Ps 107:25-28; 135:7 **1:5** 1Kg 18:26 **1:5** Ac 27:18-19,38 **1:5** Gn 2:21; 15:12; Jdg 4:21; Dn 8:18; 10:9; 1Th 5:6 **1:6** Ps 107:28 **1:6** 2Sm 12:22; Am 5:15; Jnh 3:9 **1:7** Jos 7:14-18; 1Sm 10:20-21; 14:41-42; Pr 16:33; Ac 1:23-26 **1:7** Nm 32:23; Pr 16:33 **1:8** Jos 7:19; 1Sm 14:43 **1:8** Gn 47:3; 1Sm 30:13 **1:9** Gn 14:13; 39:14; Ex 1:15; 2:13; 1Sm 4:6 **1:9** 2Kg 17:25,28,32-33 **1:9** Gn 24:3,7; Ezr 1:2; Neh 1:4; Ps 136:26; Dn 2:18 **1:9** Neh 9:6; Ps 95:5; 146:6 **1:10** Jnh 1:3 **1:12** 2Sm 24:17; 1Ch 21:17 **1:14** Ps 107:28 **1:14** Ps 51:18; 115:3; 135:6; Pr 21:1; Is 55:11; Lm 3:37-39; Dn 4:34-35; Mt 11:25 **1:15** Ps 65:7; 93:3-4; 107:29 **1:16** Is 59:19; Mc 7:17; Zph 2:11; Mal 1:14; Lk 8:22-25 **1:16** Ps 50:14; 66:13-14; 76:11; 116:17-18 **1:17** Gn 9:2; Nm 11:22; 1Kg 4:33; Ps 8:8 **1:17** Mt 12:40; 16:4; Lk 11:29-30; Jn 11:6,14

1:1 The prophet **Jonah** preached to the northern kingdom of Israel (2Kg 14:25). The book of Jonah stands out among the Minor Prophets that precede and follow it because it is primarily narrative (though see Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). It contains only one prophetic oracle consisting of five words in Hebrew (3:4). Jonah is not primarily the deliverer of a message from God. Rather, he *is* the message, serving as a negative example of a faulty perspective. This book focuses on the nature and extent of God's grace.

1:2 Nineveh was the capital of Assyria (2Kg 19:36; see Gn 10:10-11), the nation that would eventually take the northern kingdom of Israel into exile (2Kg 17:1-6,23). Jonah's calling to go to a foreign country to preach is unusual in the context of the OT but fits perfectly with Matthew 28:19-20. God knew of their **evil** and was about to punish them (see Am 1:3–2:3).

1:3 Jonah rebelled against God's calling and boarded a boat headed for **Tarshish**, which was evidently a port city (see Is 2:16; 23:1). Nineveh was in the opposite direction. We are not told why Jonah runs from God's calling. Is it because he was afraid of the people there? The answer comes at the end and climax of the book in 4:2.

1:4 Through sending this **great storm**, God showed his opposition to Jonah's flight. But the storm put the sailors in danger as well.

1:5-6 The pagan sailors were desperate and **each cried out to his** [own] **god.** Jonah was called to help in the hope that his God would **consider** the ship so that its crew and passengers would not **perish** (3:9). The prophet's slumber reflects his apathy.

1:9 Jonah's response (**I worship the LORD**) is ironic because although he technically did follow God, he was currently rebelling against him. The response is also informative since it helps the sailors understand the reason for the storm (vv. 7-8,10-11).

1:12-13 Jonah could have stopped the storm and brought an end to the danger by repenting. He refuses to do so and also unnecessarily places guilt on the sailors by asking them to kill him. The pagan sailors cared more about Jonah's life than he did (see 4:3,8).

1:14-16 The sailors are more concerned about God's values than Jonah, and they are afraid of being held accountable for Jonah's life (v. 14). Their calling **out to the LORD** (Jl 1:14; 2:32), **fear** of him, **sacrifice**, and **vows** show that they had experienced a conversion (see v. 5; Ps 107:23-30). This understanding of God had not come through Jonah the prophet, but in spite of him.

1:17 God rescued Jonah from drowning by sending a **great fish to swallow** him. Large sea creatures appear in other parts of the OT (see Gn 1:21), where they often represent an overpowering evil force (see the notes on Jb 3:8; 41:1-11; Is 27:1; Jr 51:34-35; Ezk 29:3). The sea creature here is linked to death by the phrase "deep inside Sheol" in 2:2 (see Is 25:7-8; Pr 1:12; Hab 2:5). Jesus refers to Jonah's stay in the fish's belly for **three days and three nights** and compares it to his own death and resurrection (Mt 12:40). The

main point of this reference (Mt 12:39-42) is the Pharisees' hard hearts. The people of Nineveh understood grace, but Jonah did not; neither do the Pharisees.

JONAH'S PRAYER

2 Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish: †

2 I called to the LORD in my distress, †
and he answered me.
I cried out for help from deep inside † Sheol; †
you heard my voice. †
3 You threw me into the depths, †
into the heart of the seas, †
and the current † overcame me.
All your breakers and your billows swept over me. †
4 But I said, "I have been banished †
from your sight, †
yet I will look once more †
toward your holy temple. †
5 The water engulfed me up to the neck; † †
the watery depths overcame me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. †
6 I sank to the foundations of the mountains, †
the earth's gates shut behind me forever! †
Then you raised my life † from the Pit, LORD my God! †
7 As my life was fading away, †
I remembered the LORD, †
and my prayer came to you, †
to your holy temple. †
8 Those who cherish worthless idols †
abandon their faithful love, †
9 but as for me, I will sacrifice † to you with a voice of thanksgiving. †

I will fulfill † what I have vowed.
Salvation † belongs to the LORD." †

10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, † and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

2:2 Lit *from the stomach of* **2:3** Lit *river* **2:4** LXX reads *said, "Indeed, will I look . . . ?* **2:5** Or *me, threatening my life* **2:9** Or *Deliverance*

2:1 Jb 13:15; Ps 130:1-2; Lm 3:53-56 **2:2** 1Sm 30:6; Ps 18:4-6; 22:24; 120:1 **2:2** Ps 18:5-6; 86:13; 88:1-7; Is 28:15; 38:18 **2:2** Ps 34:7 **2:3** Ps 69:1-2,14-15; Lm 3:54 **2:3** Neh 9:11 **2:3** Ps 42:7 **2:4** Lv 21:7 **2:4** Ps 31:22-23; Jr 7:15 **2:4** 1Kg 8:38; 2Ch 6:38; Ps 5:7; 138:2 **2:5** Ps 69:1-2; 105:18; Pr 23:2; Lm 3:54 **2:5** Ps 18:4-5 **2:6** Ps 116:3 **2:6** Jb 38:10; Ps 9:13; Is 38:10; Mt 16:18 **2:6** Jb 33:28; Ps 16:10; 30:3; Is 38:17 **2:6** Ps 30:3; 86:13 **2:7** Ps 142:3 **2:7** 2Sm 14:11; Ps 77:10-11; 143:5 **2:7** 2Ch 30:27; Ps 18:6 **2:7** Ps 11:4; 65:4; 88:2; Mc 1:2; Hab 2:20 **2:8** 2Kg 17:15; Ps 31:6; Jr 16:18 **2:8** Ps 31:6 **2:9** Ps 50:14,23; Jr 33:11; Hs 14:2 **2:9** Ps 26:7 **2:9** Jb 22:27; Ps 22:25; 116:14,18; Ec 5:4-5 **2:9** Ps 3:8; Is 12:2; 45:17; Rv 7:10 **2:10** Jnh 1:17

2:2 Jonah's cry and God's answer closely resemble Pss 3:5; 20:1; and 120:1. They also recall many other prayers of thanksgiving in the Psalter (e.g., 22:11). The focus of the prayer is deliverance from death (see the note on 1:17).

2:3-6 The saving of the prophet's life from the **depths** and **seas** parallels Psalm 18:16, a psalm which also concerns David's deliverance from Sheol (18:5) resulting from a distressed prayer (vv. 4,7; Ps 18:6). Other passages in Davidic psalms that describe rescue from drowning include Pss 69:1-2 and 144:7. As in Jonah's case (v. 6), salvation from such trouble impacts "foundations of the mountains" and the "earth" itself in Pss 18:7-15 and 144:5-6. In the exodus, Israel had also been delivered from the "depths" (Ex 15:5,8,10) and the "earth" (Ex 15:12), and their sins will ultimately be cast into these depths (Mc 7:19). The raising of Jonah's life **from the Pit** (v. 6) also parallels descriptions of deliverance in many Davidic psalms (e.g., Pss 16:10; 30:3,10).

2:7 Psalms 142:3 and 143:4 similarly describe David's life **fading away** (see Ps 61:2). Throughout the prayer, Jonah's words are obtuse and inappropriate. In 2:3, Jonah says that God "threw" him into the sea; in reality, Jonah refused to submit to God and asked to be thrown in. In 2:4, Jonah states that he was "banished" from God's sight, when in reality he ran away. In the present verse, he states that he **remembered the LORD** when he was close to death. But his entire reason for the situation was his conflict with God. The words of the prayer sound typical of piety and faith on the surface, but in context, they demonstrate Jonah's lack of understanding.

2:8 Jonah's rejection of **worthless idols** is ironic in the context of chapter 1. There it was the pagan, idol-worshiping sailors who had the spiritual sensitivity to turn to the Lord, while Jonah refused to submit and obey.

2:9 Jonah concludes his prayer with the statement, **Salvation belongs to the LORD.** On a surface reading, this is true and significant. But within the book, the subtext is that Jonah appreciates God's salvation when it is given to him, but is dismayed when it is given to pagans like the sailors or people of Nineveh (cp. 4:1-3).

JONAH'S PREACHING

3 The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: † 2 "Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh † and preach † the message that I tell you."

3 Jonah got up and went to Nineveh according to the LORD's command.
Now Nineveh was an extremely great city, † † a three-day walk. 4 Jonah set out on the first day of his walk in the city and proclaimed, † "In forty days Nineveh will be demolished!" 5 Then the people of Nineveh believed God. They proclaimed a fast † and dressed in sackcloth — from the greatest of them to the least.
6 When word reached the king of Nineveh, he got up from his throne, took off his royal robe, put on sackcloth, † and sat in ashes. 7 Then he issued a decree † in Nineveh:
By order of the king and his nobles: No person or animal, herd or flock, is to taste anything at all. They must not eat or drink water. 8 Furthermore, both people and animals must be covered with sackcloth, and everyone must call out earnestly to God. † Each must turn from his evil ways † and from his wrongdoing. † 9 Who knows? † God may turn and relent; he may turn from his burning anger so that we will not perish. †
10 God saw their actions — that they had turned from their evil ways † — so God relented from the disaster † he had threatened them with. And he did not do it.

3:3 Or *was a great city to God* **3:8** Or *injustice*, or *violence*
3:1 Jnh 1:1 **3:2** Zph 2:13-15 **3:2** Jr 1:17; Ezk 2:7 **3:3** Gn 10:11-12; Jnh 1:2; 4:11 **3:4** 2Kg 18:26-28; Mt 12:41; Lk 11:32 **3:5** Dn 9:3; Jl 1:14 **3:6** 1Kg 21:27; Est 4:1-4; Jr 6:26; Ezk 27:30-31 **3:7** 2Ch 20:3; Ezr 8:21 **3:8** Ps 130:1; Jnh 1:6,14 **3:8** Is 1:16-19; 55:6-7; Jr 18:11 **3:9** 2Sm 12:22; Jl 2:14 **3:9** Jr 18:7-8 **3:10** 1Kg 21:27-29; 2Kg 17:13; 2Ch 7:14; Jr 18:11; 31:18 **3:10** Ex 32:14; Am 7:3,6

3:1-3 Having been delivered from a great sea creature and from death (see the notes on 1:17; 2:2-6), Jonah this time obeyed God's instruction to preach to Nineveh.

3:5-10 Nineveh's response of fasting, mourning, prayer, and repentance (vv. 5-8) was exactly what was called for in Joel 1:14; 2:12-13,32. Their hope that God would **relent** (v. 9) also parallels Joel 2:14. His decision not to bring **disaster** on a genuinely repentant people is consistent with his character (4:2; Ex 34:6-7; Jl 2:13) and his dealings with Israel (see Ex 32:14; Jr 18:8). God is thus merciful to the nations, just as he is to Israel.

JONAH'S ANGER

4 Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. † 2 He prayed to the LORD: † "Please, LORD, isn't this what I thought while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. † I

knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, † slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. † 3 And now, LORD, take my life from me, † for it is better for me to die than to live." †
4 The LORD asked, "Is it right for you to be angry? "
5 Jonah left the city and found a place east of it. † He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew over Jonah to provide shade for his head to rescue him from his trouble. † Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. 7 When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered. †
8 As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. † The sun beat down on Jonah's head † so much that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, "It's better for me to die than to live." †
9 Then God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant? "
"Yes, it's right! " he replied. "I'm angry enough to die! "
10 So the LORD said, "You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. 11 But may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, † which has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, † as well as many animals? " †

4:6 Or *disaster*, or *evil*

4:1 Jnh 4:9; Mt 20:15; Lk 15:28 **4:2** Jr 20:7 **4:2** Jnh 1:3 **4:2** Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; Ps 86:5,15; Jl 2:13 **4:2** Neh 9:17 **4:3** 1Kg 19:4; Jb 6:8-9 **4:3** Jb 7:15-16; Ec 7:1 **4:5** 1Kg 19:9,13 **4:7** Jl 1:12 **4:8** Ezk 19:12; Hs 13:15 **4:8** Ps 121:6; Is 49:10 **4:8** Jnh 4:3 **4:11** Jnh 3:10 **4:11** Dt 1:39; Is 7:16 **4:11** Ps 36:6

4:1-2 Jonah's hatred for Nineveh is now on full display. He had fled for Tarshish because he was afraid the city would be spared. His worst fears were realized, since God's grace and compassion is for all nations, not only for Israel (v. 11; Ex 34:6-7; Jl 2:13).

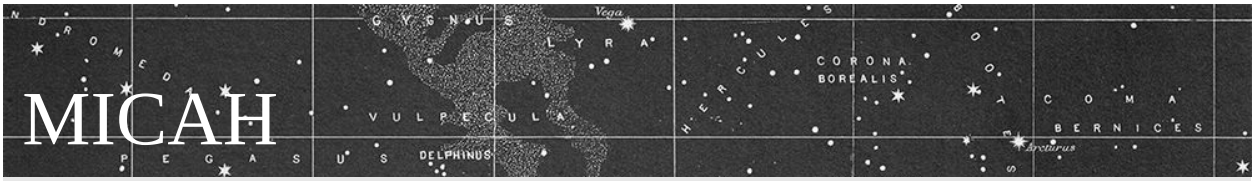
4:3-4 God showed his mercy and patience not only to the sailors and the people of Nineveh but also to Jonah. He saved him from drowning (1:17) and afterwards patiently reasoned with him.

4:5-7 God continued to work with Jonah (1:4,17; 2:10; 3:1), this time through trying to teach him a lesson through **a plant** and **a worm.** Jonah's selfishness is shown even more clearly through his happiness about the plant, especially when this is related to his great displeasure over the sparing of Nineveh (v. 1).

4:8-9 Jonah still **wanted to die** (see v. 3), and God tried again to get him to deal with his anger (see v. 4).

4:10-11 If Jonah **cared about the plant** that was here today and gone tomorrow (vv. 6,10), how much more does God have pity on Nineveh and its **hundred and twenty thousand** confused people and the

area’s animals? This is one of the clearest verses in Scripture concerning God’s love for the lost cities of the nations. Also see “Animal Rights,” *p. 21*.



MICAH

INTRODUCTION

Micah's name, "Who is like Yahweh?," found at the beginning of the book (1:1) and the question Micah asked at the book's end, "Who is a God like you?" (Mc 7:18), sum up the book's overall message: People should ponder the person, acts, and character of the incomparable "Lord of the whole earth" (4:13). He is incomparable in his holiness, power, and love. All people answer to this sovereign God for their worship and the kind of lives they lead. The rebellious and sinful will meet his judgment (1:5), but those who earnestly watch and wait for him will find his listening ear (7:7).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Micah's hometown of Moresheth-gath (1:1,14) was about twenty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. The fact that his hometown is mentioned probably means that Micah ministered elsewhere, including Jerusalem. He was a skilled orator, a master of metaphors with a genius for wordplay and blunt, vivid imagery. Few prophets saw the future more clearly. Micah prophesied the fall of Samaria (1:5-9), Jerusalem's destruction (1:1-16; 3:12), the Babylonian captivity and return from exile (4:6-10), as well as the birth of God's future Davidic ruler in Bethlehem (5:2).

Micah's ministry probably began late in Jotham's reign and ended early in Hezekiah's, dating between 730 and 690 BC. As such, Micah's ministry overlapped Isaiah's. The elders in Jeremiah's day remembered Micah's prophecy as having spurred Hezekiah's religious reform (Jr 26:17-19).

BACKGROUND: Both Israel and Judah experienced affluence and material prosperity in the late eighth century BC. In the south, King Uzziah's military victories brought wealth for some. A wealthy merchant class developed, and many poorer farmers found themselves at the mercy of government-supported businessmen.

Judah's commercial and secular culture replaced God's covenant ideal. The rich became wealthy at the expense of the poor. God's people were to be different socially and economically. They were stewards of God's land (Lv 25:23) that he had allotted to each family (Jos 13–19). God's law protected family property rights (Lv 25:1-55) and provided for the poor and less fortunate (Dt 14:28-29; 15:7-11). But growing affluence in Micah's day led to increasing callousness toward the weak (Mc 2:1-2) and a blatant disregard for God's foundational laws (6:10-12).

At this time the ancient Near East experienced an international power shift. Assyria was ascending, becoming one of the most evil empires of the ancient world. Four Assyrian kings made military inroads into Palestine during Micah's ministry, taking Samaria in 722 BC and making Israel an Assyrian province. In 701 BC Sennacherib took 46 Judean towns and villages and besieged Jerusalem. King Hezekiah had allied with Egypt and Babylon against Assyria, for which both Micah and Isaiah urged him to repent. God miraculously spared Jerusalem (2Kg 19:35-36; 2Ch 32:22-23; Is 37:36-37), and according to Micah the Jerusalem siege was both an act of God's judgment and an occasion for God's deliverance.

The people of Judah wavered between faith and apostasy and suffered many crises. Micah preached to people who had long since abandoned covenant loyalty, including the king, the royal court, judges, and religious leaders. As the rulers proved increasingly unfaithful, Micah prophesied Judah's destruction and exile by the Babylonians (586 BC). Beyond that, however, he saw a future restoration for a remnant of the people (539 BC).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Micah's holy and just God demands holiness and justice from all people. This is the "good" he requires (6:8). The people had grown content with going through the religious motions while practicing very little genuine spiritual devotion. As such, religion and ethics are inseparable.

STRUCTURE

Structured thematically as a balanced chiasm, the book highlights the central and final sections. Each matching section reflects on the other. This literary structure emphasizes Micah's main themes of Judah's social sins, the moral failure of its leadership, and the establishment of God's kingship over the land.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God's wrath in response to idolatry and all forms of human sin against others (violence, corruption, exploitation) is manifest in this book. The Assyrian and Babylonian captivities were the result of God's justice. Yet he is also a merciful God who does not retain anger forever. He will ultimately "cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Mc 7:19). Christ's birth in Bethlehem is specifically prophesied (5;2). The Spirit of God was present to empower the prophet (3:8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Micah painted a dark picture of humanity as all too prone to wickedness. People from small to great were lying awake at night planning evil (2:1). The only hope was divine intervention, which will happen when God personally takes over shepherding his flock (2:12).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In Micah, salvation is mainly corporate. It is based on God forgiving sins (7:18-20) and restoring his people under the coming King. There is, however, an individual dimension. Those in a right relationship with God in this lifetime show it in the way they live now, reflected in perhaps the most beloved text from this book: "Mankind, he has told each of you what is good and what it is the LORD requires of you: to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

MICAH TIMELINE

750 BC

Jotham, king of Judah **750–732**

Micah begins his prophetic ministry. **750**

Tiglath-pileser III comes to power as king of Assyria and begins a program of expansion and domination of the region. **745**

Death of King Uzziah of Judah **740**

Isaiah's call to be a prophet **740**

Ahaz, king of Judah **735–716**

735 BC

Tiglath-pileser III's invasions of Israel **734–732**

Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus form a mutual defense alliance against Assyria and invite Ahaz of Judah to join them. **734**

Ahaz refuses Isaiah's counsel and seeks protection from Assyria by paying tribute to them, creating a heavy financial burden on Judah for years to come. **734**

Micah prophesies the fall of Samaria.

Alliance between Syria and Israel collapses with the fall of Damascus. **732**

725–600 BC

Assyria's Shalmaneser V besieges Samaria **(725–722)** which falls to Sargon II. **722**

Hezekiah, king of Judah **716–687**

Micah prophesies Jerusalem's destruction, the Babylonian captivity, the return from exile, and the birth of God's future Davidic ruler in Bethlehem.

Hezekiah's reforms **715**

Assyria's King Sennacherib conquers 46 Judean towns and villages and besieges Jerusalem. **701**

Micah's prophetic work ends about the time of Hezekiah's death. **686**

Josiah's reforms **622**

600–5 BC

Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem and leads citizens of Judah into exile. The temple is destroyed. **605, 597, 586**

Cyrus issues decree allowing the Jews to return to Judah. **538**

Events in Ezra **538–457**

Second temple construction under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership. **536–515**

Second temple dedicated **515**

Jesus of Nazareth, son of David, is born in Bethlehem. **5**

1 The word of the LORD that came † to Micah † the Moreshite † — what
he saw regarding Samaria and Jerusalem in the days of Jotham, †
Ahaz, † and Hezekiah, † kings of Judah.

COMING JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

2 Listen, all you peoples; †
pay attention, earth † and everyone in it! †
The Lord GOD will be a witness against you, †
the Lord, from his holy temple. †

3 Look, the LORD is leaving his place †
and coming down to trample
the heights † of the earth. †
4 The mountains will melt beneath him, and the valleys will split apart, like wax
near a fire, †
like water cascading down a mountainside.
5 All this will happen because of Jacob's rebellion and the sins of the house
of Israel.
What is the rebellion of Jacob?
Isn't it Samaria? †
And what is the high place of Judah? †
Isn't it Jerusalem?
6 Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap of ruins † in the countryside, a planting
area † for a vineyard.
I will roll her stones † into the valley and expose her foundations. †
7 All her carved images will be smashed † to pieces; all her wages †
will be burned in the fire, and I will destroy all her idols.
Since she collected the wages of a prostitute, †
they will be used again for a prostitute.

MICAH'S LAMENT

8 Because of this I will lament and wail; I will walk barefoot and naked. †
I will howl like the jackals †
and mourn like ostriches. †
9 For her wound is incurable †
and has reached even Judah; †
it has approached my people's city gate, †
as far as Jerusalem.

10 Don't announce it in Gath, †
don't weep at all.
Roll in the dust in Beth-leaphrah.

11 Depart in shameful nakedness, †
you residents of Shaphir;
the residents of Zaanan † will not come out.
Beth-ezel is lamenting;
its support † is taken from you.
12 Though the residents of Maroth anxiously wait for something good, †
disaster has come from the LORD †
to the gate of Jerusalem.
13 Harness the horses to the chariot, you residents of Lachish. †
This was the beginning of sin for Daughter Zion because Israel's acts of rebellion † can be traced to you.
14 Therefore, send farewell gifts † to Moresheth-gath; the houses of Achzib † are a deception †
to the kings of Israel.
15 I will again bring a conqueror against you who live in Mareshah. †
The nobility † of Israel will come to Adullam. †
16 Shave yourselves bald and cut off your hair †
in sorrow for your precious children; make yourselves as bald as an eagle, for they have been taken from you into exile. †

1:2 Or *land* **1:3** Or *high places* **1:8** Or *eagle owls* ; lit *daughters of the desert* **1:11** Lit *its standing place* ; Hb obscure **1:15** Lit *glory*
1:1 Hs 1:1; Jl 1:1; Zph 1:1 **1:1** 2Ch 29:5-11; 32:24-26; Jr 26:18 **1:1** Mc 1:14 **1:1** 2Kg 15:5,32-38; 2Ch 27:1-9; Is 1:1; Hs 1:1 **1:1** 2Kg 16:1-20; 2Ch 28:1-27; Is 7:1-12 **1:1** 2Kg 18:1-20; 2Ch 29:1-31 **1:2** 1Kg 22:28; 2Ch 18:27; Jr 6:19; 22:29 **1:2** Ps 24:1; Is 34:1; Jr 47:2 **1:2** 1Sm 12:5-6; Ps 50:7; Jr 42:5; Mal 3:5 **1:2** Ps 11:4; Hab 2:20 **1:3** Is 26:21 **1:3** Am 4:13 **1:4** Ps 97:5; Is 64:1-2; Nah 1:5 **1:5** Is 7:9; Am 8:14 **1:5** 2Ch 34:3-4 **1:6** Mc 3:12 **1:6** Jr 31:5; Am 5:11 **1:6** Lm 4:1 **1:6** Ezk 13:14 **1:7** Dt 9:21; 2Ch 34:7 **1:7** Dt 23:18 **1:7** Dt 23:18 **1:8** Is 20:2-4; 32:11 **1:8** Is 13:21-22 **1:9** Is 3:26; Jr 30:12,15 **1:9** 2Kg 18:13-16; 19:31-37; Is 8:7-8 **1:9** Mc 1:12 **1:10** 2Sm 1:20 **1:11** Ezk 23:29 **1:11** Jos 15:37 **1:12** Is 59:9-11; Jr 14:19 **1:12** Jdg 2:15; 2Kg 17:7; 21:12; Is 45:7; Mc 2:3 **1:13** Jos 10:3; 2Kg 14:19; Is 36:2 **1:13** Mc 1:5 **1:14** 2Kg 16:8 **1:14** Jos 15:44 **1:14** Jr 15:18 **1:15** Jos 15:44 **1:15** Jos 12:15; 15:35; 1Sm 22:1; 2Sm 23:13 **1:16** Jb 1:20; Is 22:12; Jr 7:29 **1:16** 2Kg 17:6; Am 7:11,17

1:1 Micah's messages confronted **Samaria and Jerusalem**, the respective capitals of the northern and southern kingdoms (see v. 5). His ministry overlapped with that of Isaiah (see Is 1:1). The prophet Micah and his prophecy in 3:12 are mentioned in Jeremiah 26:18.

1:2-4 Though the judgment will soon focus on Samaria (vv. 5-7), **all . . . peoples** are to take notice of

God's exit **from his holy temple** (see vv. 10-15). This displays his majesty and power (see Jnh 2:4,7; Hab 2:20; Zch 6:12-15; Mal 3:1). **His place** (v. 3) is also mentioned in Hosea 5:15.

1:5 God's coming in judgment is in response to the sins of **Israel** and **Judah**, especially their respective capital cities of **Samaria** and **Jerusalem** (see v. 1).

1:6-7 Samaria would become desolate **ruins** because of her idolatry. Her comparison to a **prostitute** echoes Hosea 1:2 (see note).

1:8-9 Micah's grief over divine judgment parallels that of other prophets (e.g., Is 21:3-4; 22:4; Jr 9:1-2). Isaiah had also gone about **naked** (Is 20:2-4). **Jackals** and **ostriches** are associated with a desolate land in Isaiah 13:21-22; 34:13; and 43:20. Such an **incurable** wound would also be dealt to Judah and Jerusalem (see Jr 17:9; 30:12-17).

1:10-14 Jerusalem's downfall (v. 12) meant trouble for other cities in the vicinity.

1:15 The helpless "kings of Israel" (v. 14) contrast with the coming **again** of a **conqueror**, who is associated with the **nobility of Israel** (see 1Sm 4:21-22; 15:29).

1:16 The reference is probably to Zion mourning over her exiled children (see Lm 1:17-18).

OPPRESSORS JUDGED

2 Woe to those who dream up wickedness and prepare evil plans †
on their beds!
At morning light † they accomplish it because the power is in their hands. †
2 They covet fields † and seize them; †
they also take houses.
They deprive a man of his home, †
a person of his inheritance. †

3 Therefore, the LORD says:

I am now planning † a disaster against this nation; †
you cannot free your necks from it. †
Then you will not walk so proudly †
because it will be an evil time. †
4 In that day one will take up † a taunt against you and lament
mournfully, † saying, "We are totally ruined! †
He measures out the allotted land of my people.
How he removes it from me!
He allots our fields † to traitors."

5 Therefore, there will be no one in the assembly of the LORD to divide the land
by casting lots. † †

GOD'S WORD REJECTED

6 "Quit your preaching," † they † preach.
"They should not preach these things; †
shame will not overtake us." † †
7 House of Jacob, should it be asked, "Is the Spirit of the LORD impatient? †
Are these the things he does? "
Don't my words bring good †
to the one who walks uprightly? †
8 But recently my people have risen up like an enemy: †
You strip off the splendid robe †
from those who are passing through confidently, †
like those returning from war.
9 You force † the women of my people out of their comfortable homes,
and you take my blessing † †
from their children forever.
10 Get up and leave, for this is not your place of rest †
because defilement † brings destruction — a grievous destruction! †
11 If a man comes and utters empty lies — †
"I will preach to you about wine and beer" — †
he would be just the preacher for this people! †

THE REMNANT REGATHERED

12 I will indeed gather † all of you, Jacob; I will collect the remnant of Israel. †
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in the middle
of its pasture.
It will be noisy with people. †
13 One who breaks open the way will advance before them;

they will break out, pass through the city gate, and leave by it.
Their King will pass through before them, the LORD as their leader.

2:5 Lit *Lord stretching the measuring line by lot* **2:6** = the prophets **2:6** Text emended; MT reads *things. Shame will not depart* **2:9** Perhaps the land
2:1 Ps 36:4; Is 32:7; Nah 1:11 **2:1** Hs 7:6-7 **2:1** Gn 31:29; Dt 28:32; Pr 3:27 **2:2** Jr 22:17; Am 8:4 **2:2** Is 5:8 **2:2** 1Kg 21:1-15 **2:2** Ex 20:17; Is 5:8 **2:3** Dt 28:48; Jr 18:11 **2:3** Jr 8:3; Am 3:1-2 **2:3** Lm 1:14; 5:5 **2:3** Is 2:11-12 **2:3** Am 5:13 **2:4** Hab 2:6 **2:4** Jr 9:10,17-21; Mc 1:8 **2:4** Is 6:11; 24:3; Jr 4:13 **2:4** Jr 6:12; 8:10 **2:5** Nm 34:13,16-29; Jos 18:4,10 **2:6** Is 30:10; Am 2:12; 7:16 **2:6** Is 29:10; Mc 3:6 **2:6** Mc 6:16 **2:7** Is 50:2; 59:1 **2:7** Ps 119:65,68,116; Jr 15:16 **2:7** Ps 15:2; 84:11 **2:8** Jr 12:8 **2:8** Mc 3:2-3; 7:2-3 **2:8** Ps 120:6-7 **2:9** Jr 10:20 **2:9** Ezk 39:21; Hab 2:14 **2:10** Dt 3:19-20; 12:8-10 **2:10** Ps 106:38 **2:10** Lv 18:25-28 **2:11** Jr 5:13,31 **2:11** Is 28:7 **2:11** Is 30:10-11 **2:12** Mc 4:6-7 **2:12** 2Kg 19:31; Mc 5:7-8; 7:18 **2:12** Jr 23:3; Ezk 36:35-38

2:1-5 In response to those who planned evil against their neighbor (vv. 1-2), God was planning **a disaster against this nation** (v. 3). The Hebrew word translated "disaster" is the same one recently used in Jonah 3:10; 4:2. The Hebrew word for "clan" or "family" was also used in Amos 3:1-2 of God's gracious choice of Israel out of "all the clans of the earth" (see Gn 12:3). The people's pride would be turned into humiliation, sorrow, and devastation (vv. 3-5).

2:6-11 Opposition to the prophetic message (v. 6) parallels Amos 2:12; 7:10-13 and contrasts with the favorable Ninevite response in Jonah 3:5-9. The **Spirit of the LORD** was not dealing impatiently with them (v. 7) but justly responding to their oppression of their fellow man (vv. 8-9). The **defilement** of the people meant that they would not have a **place of rest** (v. 10). The kind of prophet they would have liked would be one who would tell lies **about wine and beer** (v. 11; 3:5-7).

2:12-13 Despite Israel's exile (v. 10; 1:16), God promises to **gather** the **remnant** like **sheep** (Jr 23:3-4). The Messiah in 5:2-4 is likewise described as one who will "shepherd" the people (see Ezk 34:23; 37:24). He is also **their King (**Hs 3:5) and **their leader** (see Hs 1:11 and note).

UNJUST LEADERS JUDGED

3 Then I said, "Now listen, † leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house
of Israel.
Aren't you supposed to know what is just? †
2 You hate good and love evil.
You tear off people's skin †
and strip their flesh from their bones.
3 You eat the flesh † of my people after you strip their skin from them and
break their bones.
You chop them up †
like flesh for the cooking pot,
like meat in a cauldron."

4 Then they will cry out † to the LORD, but he will not answer them.
He will hide his face from them at that time †
because of the crimes they have committed.

FALSE PROPHETS JUDGED

5 This is what the LORD says concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray, †
who proclaim † peace when they have food to sink their teeth into but declare war against the one
who puts nothing in their mouths.
6 Therefore, it will be night † for you — without visions;
it will grow dark for you —
without divination. †
The sun will set † on these prophets, and the daylight will turn black over them.
7 Then the seers will be ashamed †
and the diviners disappointed. †
They will all cover their mouths † †
because there will be no answer from God. †

8 As for me, however, I am filled with power †
by the Spirit of the LORD, with justice and courage,
to proclaim to Jacob his rebellion and to Israel his sin. †

ZION'S DESTRUCTION

9 Listen to this, leaders of the house of Jacob, †
you rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice †
and pervert everything that is right, 10 who build Zion with bloodshed †
and Jerusalem with injustice.
11 Her leaders issue rulings for a bribe, †
her priests teach for payment, †
and her prophets practice divination for silver.

Yet they lean on the LORD, saying, “Isn’t the LORD † among us?
No disaster will overtake us.”
12 Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become ruins, †
and the temple’s mountain †
will be a high thicket. †

3:7 Lit *mustache*
3:1 Is 1:10; Mc 3:9 **3:1** Ps 82:1-5; Jr 5:5 **3:2** Ps 53:4; Ezk 22:27; Mc 2:8; 7:2-3 **3:3** Ps 14:4; 27:2; Zph 3:3 **3:3** Ezk 11:3,6-7 **3:4** Ps 18:41; Pr 1:28; Is 1:15; Jr 11:11 **3:4** Dt 31:17; Is 59:2 **3:5** Is 3:12; 9:15-16; Jr 14:14-15 **3:5** Jr 6:14 **3:6** Is 8:20-22; 29:10-12 **3:6** Dt 18:10; Jos 13:22 **3:6** Is 59:10 **3:7** Zch 13:4 **3:7** Is 44:25; 47:12-14 **3:7** Lv 13:45; Lm 4:13-15; Ezk 24:17,22; Mc 7:16 **3:7** 1Sm 28:6; Is 29:9-12; Mc 3:4 **3:8** Is 61:1-2; Jr 1:18 **3:8** Is 58:1 **3:9** Mc 3:1 **3:9** Ps 58:1-2; Is 1:23 **3:10** Jr 22:13,17; Hab 2:12 **3:11** Is 1:23; Mc 7:3 **3:11** Jr 6:13 **3:11** Is 48:2 **3:12** Jr 9:11 **3:12** Mc 4:1 **3:12** Jr 26:18

3:1-4 The wicked **leaders** (see vv. 9,11; 2:13) should have known justice but instead **hate**[d] **good and love**[d] **evil** (2:1; Am 5:14-15). They oppressed the people (v. 3; 2:1-2,8-9) and would have their prayers ignored by God (v. 4; Is 1:15; 8:17).

3:5-7 False prophets proclaimed **peace** even though God had not (Jr 6:14; 8:11; Ezk 13:10). As a result, **night** and **dark** would come upon them (v. 6; Is 8:19-22; 29:10; Jl 2:31). **There will be no answer from God** (see v. 4; Am 8:11-12).

3:8 In contrast with false prophets (vv. 5-7; 2:11), Micah was **filled with . . . the Spirit** (see 2:7) and with **justice** to declare the truth concerning Israel’s sins.

3:9-12 The **leaders** and **rulers** had abhorred **justice** and were confronted again (v. 9; see v. 1). Their building Jerusalem with **bloodshed** and **injustice** (v. 10) parallels one of the sins of Babylon (Hab 2:12). The spiritual leaders, such as **priests** and **prophets**, had also been corrupted (see vv. 5-7; 2:11). Despite an appearance of piety (v. 11; 2:4), **Zion** would be destroyed (v. 12; 1:12; Jr 26:18) and made into **a field** and **ruins** just like Samaria (1:6,9).

THE LORD’S RULE FROM RESTORED ZION

4 In the last days †
the mountain of the LORD’s house †
will be established
at the top of the mountains
and will be raised above the hills.
Peoples will stream to it, †
2 and many nations will come and say, †
“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, †

to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us about his ways †
so we may walk in his paths.”

For instruction will go out of Zion †
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3 He will settle disputes among many peoples †
and provide arbitration for strong nations that are far away.
They will beat their swords into plows and their spears into pruning knives.
Nation will not take up the sword against nation, and they will never again train for war.

4 But each person will sit under his grapevine †
and under his fig tree

with no one to frighten him. †

For the mouth of the LORD † of Armies has spoken.

5 Though all the peoples each walk in the name of their gods, †

we will walk † in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. †

6 On that day — this is the LORD’s declaration — I will assemble the lame

and gather the scattered, †
those I have injured.

7 I will make the lame into a remnant, †
those far removed into a strong nation.

Then the LORD will reign over them † in Mount Zion from this time on and forever.

8 And you, watchtower for the flock, †

fortified hill † of Daughter Zion, the former rule † will come to you; sovereignty will come to Daughter Jerusalem.

FROM EXILE TO VICTORY

9 Now, why are you shouting loudly? †
Is there no king with you?

Has your counselor perished †

so that anguish grips you like a woman in labor?
10 Writhe and cry out, † † Daughter Zion, like a woman in labor,
for now you will leave the city †
and camp in the open fields.
You will go to Babylon;
there you will be rescued; †
there the LORD will redeem you †
from the grasp of your enemies!
11 Many nations have now assembled against you; †
they say, “Let her be defiled,
and let us feast our eyes on Zion.”
12 But they do not know the LORD’s intentions †
or understand his plan,
that he has gathered them
like sheaves to the threshing floor.
13 Rise and thresh, † Daughter Zion, for I will make your horns iron
and your hooves bronze
so you can crush many peoples. †
Then you † will set apart their plunder †
for the LORD, their wealth for the Lord of the whole earth.

4:8 Or *flock, Ophel* **4:10** Hb obscure **4:13** LXX, Syr, Tg; MT reads *I*
4:1-3 Is 2:2-4; Dn 2:28; 10:14; Hs 3:5; Mc 5:10 **4:1** Ezk 43:12; Mc 3:12; Zch 8:3 **4:1** Ps 22:27; 86:9; Jr 3:17 **4:2** Zch 2:11; 14:16 **4:2** Is 56:6-7; Jr 31:6 **4:2** Ps 25:8-9,12; Is 54:13 **4:2** Is 42:1-4; Zch 14:8-9 **4:3** Is 11:3-5 **4:4** 1Kg 4:25; Zch 3:10 **4:4** Lv 26:6; Jr 30:10 **4:4** Is 1:20; 40:5 **4:5** 2Kg 17:29 **4:5** Zch 10:12 **4:5** Jos 24:15; Is 26:8,13 **4:6** Is 35:6; Jr 31:8; Mc 2:12; Zph 3:19 **4:7** Mc 5:7-8; 7:18; Mt 11:5; Lk 14:21 **4:7** Is 24:23 **4:8** Ps 48:3,12; 61:3 **4:8** Is 1:26; Zch 9:10 **4:9** Jr 8:19 **4:9** Is 3:1-3 **4:10** Mc 5:3 **4:10** 2Kg 20:18; Hs 2:14 **4:10** Is 43:14; 45:13; Mc 7:8-12 **4:10** Is 48:20; 52:9-12 **4:11** Is 5:25-30; 17:12-14 **4:12** Ps 147:19-20 **4:13** Is 41:15 **4:13** Jr 51:20-23 **4:13** Is 60:9

4:1-4 The devastation of **Zion** and the hill of the temple mount (3:12) set the stage for this prophecy of the exaltation of **the mountain of the LORD’s house**, which will bring blessing to the whole world. **In the last days**, the **nations** will gather there to receive **instruction** from God (v. 2; 7:11-12). He will judge them and establish permanent, worldwide peace and prosperity (vv. 3-4; 5:4-5; Zch 3:10). Israel had experienced such an era, but it was limited to Solomon’s reign (1Kg 4:25). Verses 1-3 are similar to Isaiah 2:2-4.

4:5 The present idolatry of **all the peoples** (see Jnh 1:5) contrasts with those among them who will join those faithful to God (vv. 1-3; Is 2:5).

4:6-8 The exaltation of Zion, the worldwide rule of God, and the salvation of the nations (vv. 1-4) are related to the gathering of a **remnant** (v. 6-7). God’s eternal reign at this mount matches Isaiah 9:7 (see Ex

15:17-18; Jl 3:16-17). **The lame** are similarly mentioned in Zephaniah 3:19, and both texts recall Jacob's injury in Genesis 32:32 (see the notes on Hs 12:2-4).

4:9-11 The eschatological certainty of God's rule coupled with the exaltation of Zion over the nations (vv. 1-8) contrasts with Israel's loss of their **king**, their exile to **Babylon**, and their humiliation before **many nations** (vv. 9-10). A similar contrast between God as leader (2:13) and their own wicked leaders appeared earlier (see 3:1,9,11; the note on 5:2-4). God's redemption of Israel from **there** (i.e., Babylon) was foretold in Deuteronomy 30:1-4 (see Dt 4:28-31; Is 48:20; 52:11-12).

4:12-13 What the "nations" (v. 11) did not understand was that the humiliation of Israel was part of God's **plan** (see Is 25:1; 40:13; 55:8-9). In due time, Israel will be delivered (v. 10) and **thresh** her enemies like an ox (see 5:8; Nm 23:22-24; Ps 60:12; Is 41:15; Jr 51:33).

FROM DEFEATED RULER TO CONQUERING KING

5 Now, daughter who is under attack, you slash yourself in grief;
a siege is set against us!
They are striking the judge † of Israel on the cheek with a rod.

2 Bethlehem Ephrathah, †
you are small among the clans of Judah; one will come from you †
to be ruler over Israel for me. †
His origin † is from antiquity, †
from ancient times.

3 Therefore, Israel will be abandoned † until the time when she who is in labor † has given birth; then the rest of the ruler's brothers † will return to the people of Israel. †

4 He will stand and shepherd them †
in the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD his God.
They will live securely,
for then his greatness will extend to the ends of the earth. †

5 He will be their peace. †
When Assyria invades our land, †
when it marches against our fortresses, we will raise against it seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men.

6 They will shepherd † the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod † with a drawn blade. †
So he will rescue us † from Assyria when it invades our land,

when it marches against our territory.

THE GLORIOUS AND PURIFIED REMNANT

7 Then the remnant of Jacob †
will be among many peoples
like dew from the LORD, †
like showers on the grass, †
which do not wait for anyone
or linger for mankind.
8 Then the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, among many peoples,
like a lion among animals of the forest, †
like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which tramples † and tears †
as it passes through, and there is no one to rescue them. †
9 Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, †
and all your enemies will be destroyed.

10 In that day — this is the LORD's declaration — I will remove your horses
from you †
and wreck your chariots.
11 I will remove the cities of your land †
and tear down all your fortresses. †
12 I will remove sorceries from your hands, †
and you will not have any more fortune-tellers.
13 I will remove your carved images †
and sacred pillars from you
so that you will no longer worship the work of your hands.
14 I will pull up the Asherah poles † from among you †
and demolish your cities. †
15 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath †
against the nations that have not obeyed me.

5:2 Lit *His going out* **5:6** Aq, Vg; MT, Sym read *Nimrod at its gateways* **5:14** Or *shrines*
5:1 1Kg 22:24; Jb 16:10; Lm 3:30 **5:2** Gn 35:19; Ru 4:11; 1Sm 17:12; Mt 2:6 **5:2** Is 11:1; Lk 2:4 **5:2** 2Ch

7:18; Is 11:1; Jr 30:21; Zch 9:9; Mt 2:6 **5:2** Ps 74:2; 102:25; Pr 8:22-23; Hab 1:12 **5:3** Hs 11:8; Mc 4:10; 7:13 **5:3** Mc 4:9-10 **5:3** Is 10:20-22; Mc 5:7-8 **5:3** Mc 4:6-7 **5:4** Is 40:11; 49:9; Ezk 34:13-15,23-24; Mc 7:14 **5:4** Is 45:22; 52:10 **5:5** Is 9:6 **5:5** Is 8:7-8; 10:24-27 **5:6** Nah 2:11-13; Zph 2:13 **5:6** Gn 10:8-12 **5:6** Is 14:25; 37:36-37 **5:7** Is 10:21; Mc 2:12; 4:7; 7:18 **5:7** Dt 32:2; 2Sm 17:12; Ps 110:3; Hs 14:5 **5:7** Ps 72:6; Is 44:3 **5:8** Gn 49:9; Nm 24:9 **5:8** Ps 44:5; Is 41:15-16; Mc 4:13; Zch 10:5 **5:8** Hs 5:14 **5:8** Ps 50:22 **5:9** Ps 10:12; 21:8; Is 26:11 **5:10** Dt 17:16; Is 2:7; Hs 14:3 **5:11** Is 1:7; 6:11 **5:11** Is 2:12-17; Hs 10:14; Am 5:9 **5:12** Dt 18:10-12; Is 2:6; 8:19 **5:13** Is 2:18,20; 17:8; Ezk 6:9 **5:14** Dt 16:21 **5:14** Ex 34:13; Is 27:9 **5:15** Is 1:24; 65:12

5:2-4 Although the punishment of Israel would include "striking the judge of Israel" (v. 1; i.e., the king), the promised Messiah from the tribe of Judah will be **ruler over Israel** (v. 2; Gn 49:8-12; 2Sm 23:3-4). His birth in **Bethlehem Ephrathah** assumes at least a partial return to the land and links him to David (1Sm 16:1; 17:12; Ru 1:1-2; 4:11) and the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (see Gn 15:4; 2Sm 7:12-13). His going forth **from antiquity** suggests his eternal existence and hence divinity (see Is 9:6; Hab 1:12). Just as Israel's judgment was like labor pains (4:9-10), the new age of salvation would begin with a birth (v. 3; Is 7:14). Scattered Israelites (his **brothers**, v. 3) **will return** (see Is 10:21), and he will **shepherd them** (v. 4; see the notes on 2:12-13; 4:6-8; 7:14). His rule over Israel and the **ends of the earth** matches 4:1-8 and fulfills Genesis 27:29; 49:8-10; Pss 2:6-8; and 72:8.

5:5 In contrast with the false prophets' empty promises of peace (3:5), **he will be their peace.** This fits with the picture painted in 4:3-4 and with Isaiah 9:6-7.

5:6 The Messiah's deliverance of Israel from **Assyria** agrees with Isaiah 7:14-25 and 8:6-10. Assyria and Babylon are also prominent enemies of Israel in the book of Isaiah (see the note on 4:9-11).

5:7-9 The likening of **the remnant of Jacob** (see v. 3; 2:12; 4:7) to **dew from the LORD like showers** (v. 7) suggests that the nation has become a channel of divine blessing to **many peoples** (see Dt 32:2; 2Sm 23:4; Pss 72:6; 133:3; Hs 6:3; 14:5). They hope not in man but in God (7:7; Pss 27:14; 131:3; Hs 12:6; Hab 2:3). On the other hand, the "remnant" will also be an instrument of divine judgment to "many peoples" (v. 8). Their comparison to an overpowering **lion** recalls their earlier association with a threshing ox (4:13; see Nm 23:22,24). Those who had formerly been "scattered" and "lame" have been made by the Messiah into a "strong nation" (4:6-7). The deciding factor between receiving blessing or judgment will be whether one submits to God or not (v. 15; 4:1-5).

5:10-15 Continuing the theme of judgment (vv. 8-9) but now focusing on sinful Israel, God will destroy their military might (v. 10; Ex 15:1; Hs 1:5,7; Zch 9:10), fortifications (v. 11; Hs 10:14; Am 5:9), and false religion (vv. 12-14; Hs 3:4). The humiliation of these sources of confidence is necessary in view of 4:1-5 and resembles Isaiah 2:12-18. Such judgment will come not only upon Israel but on **nations that have not obeyed** [God] (v. 15; see Is 14:24-26; 61:2).

GOD'S LAWSUIT AGAINST JUDAH

6 Now listen to what the LORD is saying:

Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your complaint. †

2 Listen to the LORD's lawsuit, †

you mountains and enduring foundations of the earth, †

because the LORD has a case against his people, †

and he will argue it against Israel.

3 My people, † what have I done to you, †
or how have I wearied you? †
Testify against me!

4 Indeed, I brought you up † from the land of Egypt and redeemed you †
from that place of slavery. †
I sent Moses, † Aaron, and Miriam † ahead of you.

5 My people, remember what King Balak of Moab † proposed, what Balaam
son of Beor answered him, †
and what happened from the Acacia Grove † † to Gilgal †
so that you may acknowledge
the LORD's righteous acts. †

6 What should I bring before the LORD †
when I come to bow before God on high?
Should I come before him with burnt offerings, †
with year-old calves?

7 Would the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams †
or with ten thousand streams of oil?
Should I give my firstborn for my transgression, †
the offspring of my body for my own sin?

8 Mankind, he has told each of you what is good †
and what it is the LORD requires of you: †
to act justly, †
to love faithfulness, †
and to walk humbly with your God. †

VERDICT OF JUDGMENT

9 The voice of the LORD calls out to the city †
(and it is wise to fear your name): "Pay attention to the rod

and the one who ordained it. †

10 Are there still † the treasures of wickedness †
and the accursed short measure †
in the house of the wicked?

11 Can I excuse wicked scales or bags of deceptive weights? †

12 For the wealthy of the city are full of violence, †
and its residents speak lies; †
the tongues in their mouths are deceitful. †

13 "As a result, I have begun to strike you severely, † †
bringing desolation because of your sins. †

14 You will eat but not be satisfied, †
for there will be hunger within you.
What you acquire, you cannot save, †
and what you do save,
I will give to the sword. †

15 You will sow but not reap; †
you will press olives
but not anoint yourself with oil; and you will tread grapes
but not drink the wine. †

16 The statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house have been observed;
you have followed their policies. †
Therefore, I will make you a desolate place †
and the city's † residents an object of contempt; † †
you will bear the scorn of my people." † †

6:1 Lit *voice* **6:5** Or *from Shittim* **6:9** = Jerusalem **6:9** Or *attention, you tribe. Who has ordained it?* ; Hb obscure **6:10** Hb obscure **6:13** LXX, Aq, Theod, Syr, Vg; MT reads *I have made you sick by striking you down* **6:14** Hb obscure **6:16** Lit *and its* **6:16** Lit *residents a hissing* **6:16** LXX reads *of the peoples* **6:2** Is 3:13; Jr 2:9 **6:2** 2Sm 22:16; Ps 104:5 **6:2** Is 1:18; Hs 4:1; 12:2 **6:3** Ps 50:7 **6:3** Jr 2:5 **6:3** Is 43:22-23 **6:4** Ex 12:51; 20:2 **6:4** Dt 7:8 **6:4** Ex 20:2 **6:4** Ps 77:20 **6:4** Ex 15:20 **6:5** Nm 22:5-6 **6:5** Nm 22–24 **6:5** Nm 25:1; Jos 2:1; 3:1 **6:5** Jos 4:19; 5:9-10 **6:5** 1Sm 12:7; Ps 103:6; Is 1:27 **6:6** Ps 40:6-8 **6:6** Ps 51:16-17 **6:7** Ps 50:9; Is 40:16 **6:7** Lv 18:21; 20:1-5; Jr 7:31 **6:8** Dt 30:15 **6:8** Dt 10:12 **6:8** Is 56:1; Jr 22:3; Mt 23:23 **6:8** Hs

6:6 **6:8** Is 57:15; 66:2 **6:10** Jr 5:26-27; Am 3:10 **6:10** Ezk 45:9-10; Am 8:5 **6:11** Lv 19:36; Hs 12:7 **6:12** Is 1:23; 5:7; Am 6:3-4; Mc 2:1-2 **6:12** Jr 9:2-6,8; Hs 7:13; Am 2:4 **6:12** Is 3:8 **6:13** Mc 1:9 **6:13** Is 1:7; 6:11 **6:14** Is 9:20 **6:14** Is 30:6 **6:15** Dt 28:38-40; Jr 12:13 **6:15** Am 5:11; Zph 1:13 **6:16** 1Kg 16:25-34; 2Kg 21:3; 2Ch 21:6,13; Jr 7:24 **6:16** Jr 18:16 **6:16** Jr 19:8; 25:9,18; 29:18 **6:16** Ps 44:13; Jr 51:51; Hs 12:14

6:1-5 The summoning of **mountains and enduring foundations of the earth** (v. 2) to hear God's **lawsuit** against his people resembles Isaiah 1:2. He had not only brought them out of Egypt (v. 4) but also protected them when **Balak** hired **Balaam** to curse Israel (v. 5; Nm 22–24).

6:6-7 In these verses, the prophet quotes a hypothetical response from his audience. He is, in effect, putting words in their mouths so that he can respond to them in turn. They describe possible ways to please God with increasing intensity, from presenting **burnt offerings** to **ten thousand streams of oil** to sacrificing their **firstborn**. Yet all of these are attempted substitutes for true submission and obedience to God. Even religious worship can be a means of attempted manipulation.

6:8 The prophet responds that God has told them all along what he really requires: a life of justice, steadfast love, and walking humbly with God (see v. 5; Gn 5:22; 17:1). The sacrifices and rituals were a component of true relationship with God, but they were not designed to be a substitute for it. They were worthless if not accompanied by covenant faithfulness demonstrated in obedience, fidelity, and kindness to their fellow countrymen. This is the **good** that should be sought (see 2:1; 3:2; 7:3; Am 5:14-15), which agrees with Hosea 6:6; 12:6; and Amos 5:24. The addressee, **mankind**, shows that this instruction is not only for Israel but for humanity generally (see the note on 5:10-15).

6:10-15 Israel had not followed the requirements of verse 8 and instead were guilty of greed, corrupt business practices, violence, lies, and idolatry. As a result, God would **strike** them (v. 13), and they would **eat but not be satisfied** and **sow but not reap** (vv. 14-15). The **sword** (v. 14) and desolation (vv. 13,16) awaited them.

ISRAEL'S MORAL DECLINE

7 How sad for me!
For I am like one who —
when the summer fruit has been gathered after the gleaning of the grape harvest † — finds no grape cluster to eat,
no early fig, which I crave. †
2 Faithful people have vanished from the land; †
there is no one upright among the people. †
All of them wait in ambush to shed blood; †
they hunt each other with a net. †
3 Both hands are good † at accomplishing evil: the official and the judge demand a bribe; †
when the powerful man communicates his evil desire, they plot it together.
4 The best of them is like a brier; †

the most upright is worse than a hedge of thorns. †
The day of your watchmen,
the day of your punishment, is coming; †
at this time their panic is here. †
5 Do not rely on a friend; †
don't trust in a close companion.
Seal your mouth
from the woman who lies in your arms.
6 Surely a son considers his father a fool, †
a daughter opposes her mother,
and a daughter-in-law is against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own household.
7 But I will look to the LORD; †
I will wait for the God of my salvation. †
My God will hear me. †

ZION'S VINDICATION

8 Do not rejoice over me, † my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will stand up; †
though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light. †
9 Because I have sinned against him, I must endure the LORD's rage until he champions my cause †
and establishes justice for me. †
He will bring me into the light; †
I will see his salvation. † †
10 Then my enemy will see, and she will be covered with shame, the one who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God? " †
My eyes will look at her in triumph; at that time she will be trampled like mud in the streets. †

11 A day will come for rebuilding your walls; †
on that day your boundary will be extended. †
12 On that day people will come to you †
from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, even from Egypt to the Euphrates River and from sea to sea
and mountain to mountain.
13 Then the earth will become a wasteland †
because of its inhabitants
and as a result of their actions. †

MICAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED

14 Shepherd your people † with your staff, †
the flock that is your possession.
They live alone † in a woodland surrounded by pastures.
Let them graze in Bashan and Gilead †
as in ancient times. †

15 I will perform miracles for them †
as in the days of your exodus
from the land of Egypt. †
16 Nations will see and be ashamed of † all their power.
They will put their hands over their mouths, †
and their ears will become deaf.
17 They will lick the dust like a snake; †
they will come trembling out of their hiding places †
like reptiles slithering on the ground. †
They will tremble in the presence of the LORD our God; †
they will stand in awe of you.

18 Who is a God like you, †
forgiving iniquity and passing over rebellion †

for the remnant of his inheritance? †
He does not hold on to his anger forever †
because he delights in faithful love. †
19 He will again have compassion on us; he will vanquish our iniquities. †
You will cast all our † sins into the depths of the sea. †
20 You will show loyalty to Jacob †
and faithful love to Abraham,
as you swore to our fathers †
from days long ago.

7:9 Or *righteousness* **7:15** = Israel **7:16** Or *ashamed in spite of* **7:19** Some Hb mss, LXX, Syr, Vg; other Hb mss read *their*
7:1 Is 24:13 **7:1** Is 28:4; Hs 9:10 **7:2** Is 57:1 **7:2** 1Kg 19:10 **7:2** Is 59:7; Mc 3:10 **7:2** Jr 5:26; Hs 5:1 **7:3** Pr 4:16-17 **7:3** Am 5:12; Mc 3:11 **7:4** Ezk 2:6; 28:24 **7:4** Nah 1:10 **7:4** Is 10:3; Hs 9:7 **7:4** Is 22:5 **7:5** Jr 9:4 **7:6** Mt 10:21,35-36; Lk 12:53 **7:7** Hab 2:1 **7:7** Ps 130:5; Is 25:9 **7:7** Ps 4:3 **7:8** Ob 12 **7:8** Am 9:11 **7:8** Ps 27:1; Is 9:2 **7:9** Jr 50:34 **7:9** Jb 23:3-7; Lm 3:58 **7:9** Ps 37:6; Is 42:7,16 **7:9** Is 46:13; 56:1 **7:10** Ps 42:3,10; 79:10; 115:2; Jl 2:17 **7:10** Ps 18:42; Zch 10:5 **7:11** Is 54:11; Am 9:11 **7:11** Zph 2:2 **7:12** Is 19:23-25; 60:4,9 **7:13** Jr 25:11; Mc 6:13 **7:13** Is 3:10-11; Mc 3:4 **7:14** Ps 95:7; Is 40:11; 49:10; Mc 5:4 **7:14** Lv 27:32; Ps 23:4 **7:14** Nm 23:9; Dt 33:28 **7:14** Jr 50:19 **7:14** Am 9:11 **7:15** Ex 3:20; 34:10; Ps 78:11-16 **7:16** Mc 3:7 **7:17** Ps 72:9; Is 49:23 **7:17** Ps 18:45 **7:17** Dt 32:24 **7:17** Is 25:3; 59:19 **7:18** Ex 15:11; Ps 71:19; Is 40:18 **7:18** Ex 34:7,9; Is 43:25; Rm 3:25 **7:18** Mc 2:12; 4:7; 5:7-8 **7:18** Ps 103:8-9,13 **7:18** Jr 32:41 **7:19** Jr 50:20 **7:18-19** Ps 103:9-12; Is 38:17; 43:25; Jr 31:34 **7:20** Gn 24:27; 32:10 **7:20** Dt 7:8,12

7:1-2 Scarcity of harvest (v. 1; 6:14-15) corresponds to the scarcity of the godly (v. 2). There were no **upright among the people.**

7:5-7 As a result of widespread wickedness, neither friend, spouse, nor family member could be trusted. In such times, the faithful must **look to the LORD** and **wait** for him alone (5:7; Hab 2:1; 3:16-18).

7:8-10 The speaker is now Zion, who has **fallen** and sits **in darkness** because of her sins (v. 8; 4:9-10; Is 9:2; Lm 1:1). Nevertheless, in due time, God will take up her cause so that she experiences **light** and **salvation** (v. 9; Ps 27:1; Is 60:1). God had a "case" for judging Israel (6:1-2; see 1:2-5), but Zion also had one—especially on the grounds of God's glory (v. 10; 4:11; Is 49:4). The tables will be turned, and Israel will glory while her enemies are **trampled** (v. 10; 4:13; 5:8-9; Nm 24:18; Pss 44:5; 60:12).

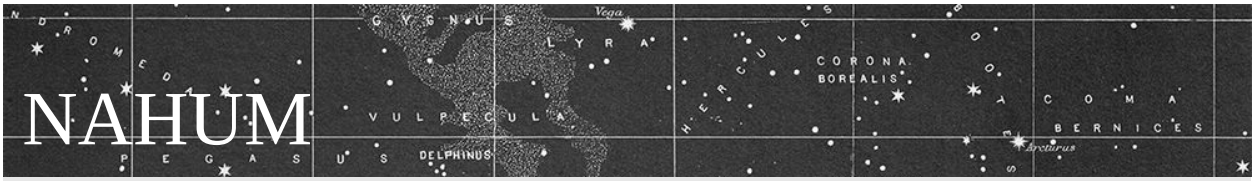
7:11-13 Jerusalem's **walls** would be destroyed, but they would ultimately be rebuilt (v. 11; Is 58:12; Am 9:11). The extension of her **boundary** parallels Isaiah 54:2-3. People coming to Zion from every direction (v. 12) fits with 4:1-3. **Assyria**, **Egypt**, the **Euphrates River**, and the phrase **from sea to sea** also tie to prophetic passages elsewhere (Ps 72:8; Is 11:11-12; 19:23-25; Hs 11:10-11). The salvation of Zion contrasts with the destruction of the earth's wicked (v. 13; Is 24:1-5).

7:14 The Messiah was described above as one who will **shepherd** the people (see the note on 5:2-4). The Hebrew word translated **staff** appears in several significant messianic prophecies, such as Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17; and Psalms 2:9 (see the notes on Ezk 19:10-12,14; 20:33-38). The picture of a holy people dwelling **alone** matches Numbers 23:9.

7:15-17 The eschatological deliverance accomplished by the Messiah (see the notes on v. 14; 2:12-13; 5:2-

4) will be a second **exodus** (v. 15; see the notes on Is 11:11-16; Hs 11:10-11; 13:14). The humiliation and silence of the **nations** (v. 16) parallels Exodus 15:14-16 and Isaiah 52:15. Israel also trembles before God in Hosea 3:5, but this experience is related to divine goodness as well. The nations' experience here is contrasted with Israel's and is depicted in terms of only shame, silence, and fear.

7:18-20 Along with Hosea 13:14 (see note), this concluding passage to the book of Micah clearly ties the second exodus to key new covenant themes. Rather than defeating Pharaoh and his army, God decisively deals with a greater enemy, sin (vv. 18-19; Gn 4:7). Resembling what he had done in the past, God casts all the sins of his people **into the depths of the sea** (see Ex 15:5; Jnh 2:3). The divine attributes of mercy, patience (v. 18), **compassion** (v. 19), **loyalty**, and **faithful love** (v. 20) draw on Exodus 34:6-7. This classic expression of God's character is also alluded to elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (Jl 2:13; Jnh 4:2; Nah 1:3). Forgiveness of sin under the new covenant (see Jr 31:34; Ezk 36:25; Zch 3:9) is thus tied to the Abrahamic covenant (v. 20).



NAHUM

INTRODUCTION

The book of Nahum dramatically portrays God overwhelming Assyria to relieve his oppressed people. It was certainly a harsh message for Israel's enemies, but for the people of Judah it was a message of hope.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The presumed author Nahum (1:1) is the only person with that name in the OT. Like Jonah in the previous century, Nahum prophesied judgment upon Nineveh. The Ninevites in Jonah's time had repented (Jnh 3). But now that Nineveh's leaders had resumed their wicked actions, the Lord called Nahum to reaffirm his coming judgment. Ironically Nahum's Hebrew name means "comfort"—comfort for Judah (1:12-15) because its cruel overlord Assyria would be punished without any "comforters" (3:7). Except for the name of his hometown Elkosh (1:1), nothing certain is known about Nahum.

Two events circumscribe the earliest and latest possible dates for the composition of the book of Nahum: the capture and downfall of Thebes in about 663 BC and the announcements of Nineveh's certain destruction (1:1; 2:8; 3:7) which would happen in 612 BC. The book's emphasis on the fall of Thebes, seemingly a recent event, would favor a date shortly after 663 BC, during the reign of the notoriously wicked King Manasseh (ca. 686–642 BC) and/or his evil son Amon (642–640 BC). Certainly Nahum 1:12 (Assyria was still "strong [or at full strength] and numerous") suggests a time before the decline of that empire. This fits the reign of cruel Ashurbanipal (ca. 668–627 BC) when Assyria was at the pinnacle of its power.

BACKGROUND: The Assyrian capital Nineveh was located about 220 miles north of the modern Iraqi capital of Baghdad. By Nahum's time, Israel and Judah had experienced long and distressing affliction by the Assyrians. As early as Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC), King Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrians. The Lord often used Assyria as "the rod of my anger" (Is 10:5) to punish his people. Shalmaneser V (727–722 BC) and his successor Sargon II (722–705 BC) besieged and destroyed Samaria, taking the northern kingdom of Israel into captivity (2Kg 17:3-6). Similarly, Sennacherib captured and devastated Judah, besieging Jerusalem by 701 BC (2Kg 18–19; Is 36–37). By Ashurbanipal's reign (ca. 669–627 BC) Assyrian rulers were infamous for their cruelty (see notes at 3:10 and 3:18-19).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Nahum provides a great view of a powerful, just God who maintains his absolute moral standards and offers hope to those who are despised and downtrodden. Nahum teaches us to trust God. Even when we despair of any help, we can know that God will stand with those who belong to him.

STRUCTURE

Nahum interweaved typical prophetic strands such as judgment songs against God's enemies (1:9-11,14; cp. 2:13; 3:5-7), a woe oracle or mock lament (3:1-7), salvation oracles for his people Judah (1:12-15), a victory hymn to Yahweh the divine warrior (1:2-8; cp. Ex 15; Ps 98), and a sarcastic "word vision" of imminent enemy invasion (Nah 2:1-10; cp. 3:2-3). He colored this literary tapestry with satirical "taunt songs" mocking Nineveh's soon-coming role reversal (2:11-12; 3:8-19; cp. 2:1-2; 3:4-5). He ridiculed Nineveh's practice of scattering of peoples to other nations by announcing that God's "scatterer" (2:1-2; 3:18-19) would pay her back in like manner. He taunted that her lion's lair of military booty would soon be

looted (2:11-13). He also mocked her as a witch-prostitute condemned to appropriate punishment: nakedness exposed with shame (3:4-7).

Using psychological warfare (as the Assyrians had used against Judah), Nahum taunted Nineveh's dependence on allies and other supposed defenses (3:8-10; cp. Is 36:4-20). Esar-haddon, father of Ashurbanipal, had threatened King Manasseh of Judah in 672 BC with treaty curses from the gods if they rebelled. The Lord converted borrowed treaty terminology to reverse this curse on Judah. It would not be Judah but Assyria's military men who would become defenseless like women (Nah 3:13). The Assyrians' ravaging of the land like a swarming army of locusts (cp. Jl 1:4-12; 2:4-9) was evoked and modified in order to mock Nineveh's merchants and military personnel, comparing them to harmless locusts on a wall, easily frightened and scattered (Nah 3:15-18). The incurable disease threatened from their gods would boomerang and inflict Assyria instead (3:19).

Yahweh as the caring warrior who would bring vengeance on his enemies, especially Nineveh, in order to save Judah, forms the backbone not only of Nahum's purpose statement but also of the book's literary structure.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God's wrath against every affront to his holiness is on full display in Nahum. He is patient, but this should not be misunderstood as weakness. His promised destruction of Nineveh was necessary because of the divine attributes noted in 1:2.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

On one hand, this book shows that human beings can achieve a great deal apart from God. The Assyrian civilization was highly advanced economically and militarily. On the other hand, the Assyrians were cruel and evil, an abomination to God. The book shows that God does not recognize as great (or good) any person or nation that measures success apart from obedience to him.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In Nahum, salvation is presented as God's final rescue of his people based on his sovereign care: "The LORD is good, a stronghold in a day of distress; he cares for those who take refuge in him" (1:7).

800–705 BC

At a time the Assyrian Empire is in decline, God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. This was likely during the reigns of Uzziah of Judah **(792–740)** and Jeroboam II of Israel **(793–753)**.

During its time of weakness, Assyria experiences two severe plagues **(765** and **759)** and a total eclipse **(763)**.

Nineveh repents in response to Jonah's preaching and is spared God's judgment.

Nineveh repents in response to Jonah's preaching and is spared God's judgment.

Assyria's Shalmaneser V besieges Samaria. **725–722**

Samaria falls to Assyria's Sargon II; nearly 28,000 Israelites are sent into exile. **722**

705–675 BC

Sennacherib establishes Nineveh as the capital of the Assyrian Empire. **705–681**

Sennacherib captures and devastates Judah, besieging but not capturing Jerusalem. **701**

When Babylon rebels against Sennacherib, he destroys the city. **689**

Sennacherib is murdered by his two sons, one of whom, Esar-haddon **(681–669)**, succeeds him as king. **681**

Esar-haddon immediately begins the rebuilding of Babylon, an act that wins the allegiance of the local populace.

675–610 BC

Nahum **(675–612)** prophesies that just as Assyria destroyed Thebes, Nineveh (Assyria's capital) will be destroyed.

Esar-haddon invades Egypt. **671**

Egypt rebels **(669)** and Esar-haddon's son, Ashurbanipal **(668–627),** sets out to reconquer Egypt. **667**

Egypt rebels again, so Ashurbanipal destroys Thebes. **665**

Calah is destroyed and the combined armies of the Babylonians and the Medes lay siege to Nineveh. After two months, the city falls. **612**

610–600 BC

An Assyrian general claims the throne and rallies what is left of the Assyrian army in Haran. An alliance with Egypt brings a few troops to Assyria's aid, but as the Babylonians approach, Haran is abandoned. **610**

The last remnants of the battered Assyrian Empire, along with their recent Egyptian allies, are defeated at the Battle of Carchemish, bringing the Assyrian Empire to an end. **605**

1 The pronouncement † concerning Nineveh. † The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

GOD'S VENGEANCE

2 The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD takes vengeance and is fierce in † wrath.

The LORD takes vengeance against his foes; †

he is furious with his enemies. †

3 The LORD is slow to anger but great in power; the LORD will never leave the guilty unpunished. †

His path is in the whirlwind and storm, †

and clouds are the dust beneath his feet. †

4 He rebukes the sea and dries it up, and he makes all the rivers run dry. †
Bashan and Carmel wither; †
even the flower of Lebanon withers.
5 The mountains quake before him, and the hills melt;
the earth trembles † † at his presence — the world and all who live in it. †
6 Who can withstand his indignation?
Who can endure his burning anger? †
His wrath is poured out like fire; †
even rocks are shattered before him.

DESTRUCTION OF NINEVEH

7 The LORD is good, a stronghold in a day of distress; he cares for those who take refuge † in him.
8 But he will completely destroy Nineveh †
with an overwhelming flood, †
and he will chase his enemies into darkness.

9 Whatever you † plot against the LORD, he will bring it to complete destruction; †
oppression will not rise up a second time.
10 For they will be consumed like entangled thorns, †
like the drink of a drunkard and like straw that is fully dry. †
11 One has gone out from you, †
who plots evil against the LORD, and is a wicked counselor.

PROMISE OF JUDAH'S DELIVERANCE

12 This is what the LORD says:

Though they are strong † and numerous, they will still be mowed down, and he † will pass away.
Though I have punished you, † †

I will punish you no longer. †
13 For I will now break off his yoke from you and tear off your shackles.

THE ASSYRIAN KING'S DEMISE

14 The LORD has issued an order concerning you:

There will be no offspring
to carry on your name. † †
I will eliminate the carved idol and cast image from the house of your gods; †
I will prepare your grave,
for you are contemptible.

15 Look to the mountains — the feet of the herald, †
who proclaims peace.
Celebrate your festivals, Judah; fulfill your vows.
For the wicked one will never again march through you;
he will be entirely wiped out.

1:2 Lit *is a master of* **1:5** Some emend to *earth is laid waste* **1:5** Lit *lifts* **1:8** Lit *her place* **1:9** = Nineveh **1:10** Hb obscure **1:11** Possibly Nineveh **1:12** Lit *intact* **1:12** Either the king of Assyria or his army **1:12** = Judah **1:14** Lit *It will not be sown from your name any longer*
1:1 Is 13:1; 30:6; Jr 18:18; Ezk 12:10; Hab 1:1; Zch 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1 **1:1** Jnh 3:3-4; 4:11; Nah 2:8; Zph 2:13 **1:2** Dt 32:35, 41,43; Ps 94:1; 149:7; Is 1:24; 59:17; Jr 5:9,29; 9:9; 46:10; 50:15; 51:6,11,36; Ezk 25:14-17; Mc 5:15; 2Th 1:8; Heb 10:30 **1:2** Dt 6:15; Ps 94:1; Is 63:1-6; Jr 46:10; 50:28-29; Mc 5:15; Zph 1:18 **1:3** Ex 34:6-7; Nm 14:18 **1:3** Pr 1:27; 10:25; Is 66:15; Jr 4:13; Hs 8:7 **1:3** Dt 33:26; Ps 68:4; 104:3; Mt 24:30; 26:64 **1:4** 2Sm 22:16; Ps 106:9; Is 50:2; Mt 8:26 **1:4** Is 33:9; Jr 50:19 **1:5** Jdg 5:5; Ps 18:7; 46:2-3; 97:5; Is 5:25; 64:1,3; Jr 4:24; Am 8:8; Mc 1:4 **1:6** Ps 7:11; 69:24; 78:49; Jl 2:11; Mal 3:2 **1:6** Ps 21:9; Is 9:19; 30:30; Jr 4:4; Lm 4:11; Ezk 22:20; Zph 1:18 **1:7** 2Sm 22:3; Ps 17:7; 34:8 **1:8** Nah 2:6 **1:9** Ps 2:1-4 **1:10** Mal 4:1 **1:12** Is 10:5-34 **1:12** Ps 30:5; 103:9; Is 54:8 **1:14** Lv 20:3; 1Sm 24:21; Ps 89:4; Is 48:19; 66:22 **1:14** Dt 27:15; Jdg 18:14 **1:15** Is 52:7; 61:1; Rm 10:15

1:1 The Assyrian capital **Nineveh** had been spared in Jonah 3 but is an example of God's judgment in this book. This city is thus used to demonstrate both divine mercy and divine justice. Likewise, the repentant in Zion would be saved but its sinners destroyed (Is 1:27-28). As with Edom in Obadiah, God's judgment on his enemies and vindication of his people in history is used as a pattern for his ultimate, eschatological victory.

1:2-3 Whereas the conclusion of the book of Micah had emphasized God's forgiveness, compassion, faithfulness, and love from Exodus 34:6-7 (see the note on Mc 7:18-20), the book of Nahum opens with an emphasis on his jealousy, **vengeance**, and **wrath** toward **his foes** (v. 2; Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 32:41-43; Is 59:17-18). While it is true that he is **slow to anger** (v. 3; Ex 34:6), it is also true that he will **never leave the guilty unpunished** (see Ex 34:7).

1:4-6 God's mighty power in judgment is shown not only through "whirlwind and storm" (v. 3; Is 66:15; Jr

23:19; Zch 9:14; see Jnh 1:4) but also through drying up bodies of water (v. 4; Ex 14:21-22), causing plants to wither (v. 4; Is 33:9), shaking mountains (v. 5; Ps 46:4; Mc 1:4), and shattering rocks (v. 6; Jr 23:29). The judgment on Nineveh represents what God will do to all of his "enemies" (vv. 2,8) in "the world" (v. 5; Is 24:1-6).

1:7 God judges evil (1:4-6), so his people find that he is **good** and a **stronghold** to **those who take refuge in him** (Pss 2:12; 28:8; 34:8; Is 25:4; Hs 3:5).

1:8 The enemies' fate in **darkness** contrasts with Zion going into "light" in Micah 7:8-9 (see Is 9:2; 49:6; 60:1). Ironically, Assyria's power is likened to "flood" in Isaiah 8:7-8.

1:9-11 God's enemies had plotted **against** him and were led by one **wicked counselor** in particular (see Is 10:7).

1:12-13 Israel had been afflicted before by the Assyrians, but this would not happen again (vv. 9,12). The breaking of the Assyrian **yoke** and **shackles** here parallels Isaiah 9:4 (see Jr 30:8).

1:14 The lack of a **name** contrasts with promises made to Abraham and David (Gn 12:2; 2Sm 7:9). Nineveh's idols will also be judged.

1:15 Judgment of the wicked is again juxtaposed with the salvation of God's people (see vv. 7,12-13; Is 52:7). Judah could celebrate **festivals** and fulfill **vows** (see Jnh 1:16; 2:9; Zch 14:16-19) because of the permanent **peace** (see Mc 5:5; Hg 2:9; Zch 9:10). The **wicked one** may refer back to "the wicked counselor" in verse 11.

ATTACK AGAINST NINEVEH

2 One who scatters is coming up against you. †
Man the fortifications!
Watch the road!
Brace † yourself!
Summon all your strength! †

2 For the LORD will restore the majesty of Jacob, †
yes, † the majesty of Israel, though ravagers have ravaged them †
and ruined their vine branches. †

3 The shields of his † warriors are dyed red; the valiant men are dressed in scarlet. †
The fittings of the chariot flash like fire †
on the day of its battle preparations, and the spears are brandished.
4 The chariots dash madly through the streets; they rush around in the plazas.
They look like torches;
they dart back and forth like lightning.

5 He gives orders to his officers; they stumble as they advance.
They race to its wall;
the protective shield is set in place.
6 The river gates are opened, and the palace erodes away. †

7 Beauty † is stripped; †
she is carried away;
her ladies-in-waiting moan
like the sound of doves †
and beat their breasts. †
8 Nineveh has been like a pool of water from her first days, †
but they are fleeing.
“Stop! Stop! ” they cry,
but no one turns back.
9 “Plunder the silver! Plunder the gold! ” †
There is no end to the treasure, an abundance of every precious thing. †
10 Desolation, decimation, devastation!
Hearts melt, †
knees tremble, †
insides churn, †
every face grows pale! †

11 Where is the lions’ lair, †
or the feeding ground of the young lions, where the lion and lioness prowled, and the lion’s cub,
with nothing to frighten them away? †
12 The lion mauled whatever its cubs needed and strangled prey for its lionesses.
It filled up its dens with the kill, and its lairs with mauled prey. †
13 Beware, I am against you. †
This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.
I will make your chariots go up in smoke, †
and the sword will devour your young lions. †

I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the sound of your messengers will never be heard again. †

2:1 Lit *Strengthen* **2:2** Or *like* **2:3** = the army commander attacking Nineveh **2:7** Text emended; MT reads *Huzzab* **2:7** Hb obscure **2:8** Hb obscure **2:13** Lit *will burn her chariots in smoke*
2:1 Ezk 29:12-13; 30:23,26 **2:1** Pr 24:5; Am 2:14 **2:2** Ps 47:4; Am 6:8; 8:7 **2:2** Is 24:1,3 **2:2** Ps 80:12-15; Jr 12:10 **2:3** Ezk 23:14 **2:3** 2Kg 2:11; 6:17; Is 66:15 **2:6** Nah 1:8 **2:7** Is 38:14; 59:11 **2:7** Is 32:12 **2:9** Ezk 38:13 **2:9** 2Ch 32:27; 36:10; Dn 11:8; Nah 3:3 **2:10** Dt 20:8; Jos 7:5; Is 13:7; 19:1; Ezk 21:7,15 **2:10** Is 35:3 **2:10** Ps 69:23 **2:10** Is 21:3; Jl 2:6 **2:11** Is 2:15; 5:26-29; Jr 4:7; 5:6; 50:17; 51:38; Jl 1:6; Am 3:12 **2:11** Lv 26:6; Dt 28:26; Jr 7:33 **2:12** Jb 38:39-40 **2:13** Jr 21:13; 23:30-32; 50:31; 51:25; Ezk 5:8; 13:8; 21:3; 26:3; 28:22; 29:3,10; 38:3; 39:1; Nah 3:5 **2:13** Is 31:8; Jr 46:10 **2:13** Rv 18:22-23

2:1-2 The thought switches back to the imminent destruction of Nineveh (1:1) and back again to the restoration and glory of Israel, despite the earlier destruction of **their vine branches** (v. 2; see Is 24:1; Jr 51:2).

2:3-10 An invading army will overrun the city, recalling Joel 2:1-10. The color **red** (v. 3) also is associated with an army in Zechariah 1:8; 6:2. **Nineveh** (v. 8) is explicitly mentioned for the first time since 1:1. The erosion of the **palace** (v. 6; see 1:5; Am 9:5) and plundering of **every precious thing** (v. 9) contrasts with the latter glory of the temple (Hg 2:7-9).

2:11-13 Mighty Nineveh is compared to a **lions' lair** where they **strangled prey** (vv. 11-12), but God would bring a **sword** to **devour** [their] **young lions** (v. 13). Elsewhere in the Minor Prophets, God himself is likened to a lion (Hs 5:14; 11:10; 13:7-8; Jl 3:16; Am 1:2; 3:8).

NINEVEH'S DOWNFALL

3 Woe to the city of blood, †
totally deceitful,
full of plunder,
never without prey. †
2 The crack of the whip and rumble of the wheel,
galloping horse
and jolting chariot! †
3 Charging horseman, flashing sword,
shining spear;
heaps of slain,
mounds of corpses, †
dead bodies without end † — they stumble over their dead.
4 Because of the continual prostitution of the prostitute, the attractive mistress of sorcery, who treats nations and clans like merchandise by her prostitution and sorcery, †

5 I am against you. †
This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.
I will lift your skirts over your face and display your nakedness to nations, your shame to kingdoms. †
6 I will throw filth on you and treat you with contempt; †
I will make a spectacle of you.
7 Then all who see you will recoil from you, saying, †
“Nineveh is devastated;
who will show sympathy to her? ”
Where can I find anyone to comfort you?

8 Are you better than Thebes † †
that sat along the Nile
with water surrounding her,
whose rampart was the sea,
the river † † her wall?
9 Cush and Egypt were her endless source of strength; Put and Libya were among her † allies.
10 Yet she became an exile; she went into captivity.
Her children were also dashed to pieces †
at the head of every street.
They cast lots for her dignitaries, †
and all her nobles were bound in chains.
11 You † also will become drunk; you will hide. †
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your fortresses are fig trees with figs that ripened first; when shaken, they fall — right into the mouth of the eater!

13 Look, your troops are like women among you; your land’s city gates
are wide open to your enemies.
Fire will devour the bars of your gates.

14 Draw water for the siege; strengthen your fortresses.
Step into the clay and tread the mortar; take hold of the brick-mold!

15 The fire will devour you there; the sword will cut you down.
It will devour you like the young locust. †
Multiply yourselves like the young locust; multiply like the swarming locust!
16 You have made your merchants †
more numerous than the stars of the sky.
The young locust strips † the land and flies away.
17 Your court officials are like the swarming locust, and your scribes like clouds
of locusts, which settle on the walls on a cold day; when the sun rises,
they take off, and no one knows where they are.

18 King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; †
your officers sleep.
Your people are scattered across the mountains †
with no one to gather them together. †
19 There is no remedy for your injury; your wound is severe. †
All who hear the news about you will clap their hands because of you, †
for who has not experienced
your constant cruelty?

3:8 Hb *No-amon* **3:8** LXX, Syr, Vg read *water* **3:8** Lit *sea from sea* **3:9** Lit *your* **3:11** = Nineveh **3:11** Or *will be overcome* **3:16** Or *sheds its skin*
3:1 Ezk 7:23; 9:9; 22:2-3; 24:6,9; Hab 2:12 **3:1** Nah 2:9 **3:2** Jdg 5:22; Jb 39:24; Jr 47:3 **3:3** Lv 26:30; Ps 110:6; Is 66:24; Jr 41:9; Ezk 6:5 **3:3** Nah 2:9 **3:4** 2Kg 9:22; Pr 7:10-23; Ezk 16:15; 23:1-21; Rv 17:3-6 **3:5** Nah 2:13 **3:5** Is 47:3; Jr 13:22,26; Ezk 16:37; 23:29 **3:6** Ps 107:40; Is 16:14; Dn 12:2; Mc 6:16; Mal 2:3 **3:7** Dt 28:25,37; 2Ch 29:8; 30:7; Ps 31:11; Is 66:24; Jr 15:4; 24:9; 50:23 **3:8** Jr 46:25; Ezk 30:14-16 **3:10** 2Kg 8:12; Is 13:16; Hs 10:14 **3:10** Ob 11 **3:15** Jl 1:4 **3:16** Ezk 16:29; 17:4; 27:3,13,20,23-24; Zph 1:11; Rv 18:3,11,15,23 **3:18** Jr 23:1-2; 50:6 **3:18** Ezk 34:6 **3:18** 1Kg 22:17 **3:19** Jr 10:19; 14:17; 30:12 **3:19** Ps 47:1; 98:8; Lm 2:15; Ezk 22:13

3:1 Zion and Babylon are also condemned for their bloodshed (Mc 3:10; Hab 2:12).

3:3 Seeing **corpses** lying everywhere was also experienced in Israel (see Am 8:3).

3:4-7 Like Israel (see Hs 1:2), Nineveh is called a **prostitute** (v. 4). She was guilty of dragging down **nations** through **sorcery**, which may refer to her trade (v. 16; see Ezk 27–28), wealth (2:9), and idolatry (1:14). The shame and devastation to be suffered by Nineveh (vv. 5-7) parallels that of Israel (Jr 13:26; Hs 2:3), though the key difference is that the latter is ultimately restored (1:15; 2:2).

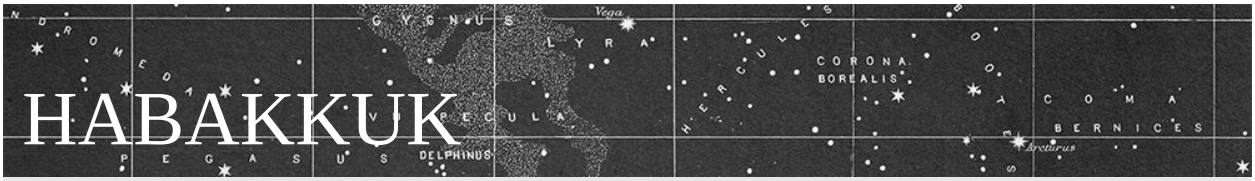
3:8-11 God's judgment on Nineveh was consistent with his dealing with other cities, such as **Thebes** (v. 8). Despite the advantages of being surrounded by water and having many allies, Egypt went into **exile** and **captivity** (v. 10), just like Nineveh would (v. 11). The consistency of God's dealings with all nations was similarly emphasized to Israel in Amos 9:7-8 (see note). The only adequate **refuge** is God himself (1:7).

3:12 Nineveh's **fortresses** will be useless on the day of judgment and will be so weak that they will fall like a ripe fig from a tree.

3:13 The opening of **gates** was also mentioned in 2:6 and depicts the vulnerability of the city.

3:16 Nineveh's **merchants** likely relate to her entrapment of the nations (v. 4) and her wealth (2:9). Tyre is similarly described in Ezekiel 27:3,12-27.

3:18-19 The conclusion to the book of Nahum addresses the **king of Assyria**. His people would be **scattered across the mountains** (see v. 10; 1:15; Mc 2:12; 4:6). He would be devastated and humiliated forever when God brings vengeance (v. 19; see v. 7; 1:8,14). In contrast, Israel's afflictions will eventually end (1:12-13,15; 2:2).



HABAKKUK

INTRODUCTION

One of the Minor Prophets, the book of Habakkuk is unique in its style. Rather than speaking to the people on God's behalf, Habakkuk spoke to God on behalf of the people. Habakkuk struggled with how to understand God's actions in history, especially his use of an unrighteous nation as the instrument of his justice. God's answer to Habakkuk's objection was that "the righteous one will live by his faith" (2:4).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Habakkuk is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. His name is thought to derive from the Hebrew word *chabaq*, "to embrace," but its form appears non-Hebraic. More likely the name is related to *habbaququ*, a word found in the related Semitic language of Akkadian. It denotes a species of garden plant or fruit tree.

BACKGROUND: Habakkuk predicted the invasion of Judah by the Chaldeans (1:6). The term Chaldean (Hb *kasdim*; Akk *kaldu*) was originally used of an ethnic group that appeared in southern Babylonia in the ninth century BC. In the eighth century BC, Chaldeans began to rise to power in Babylon. Among the early Chaldean kings was Merodach-baladan II (2Kg 20:12; Is 39:1), who twice in the late eighth century took (and lost) Babylon's throne. The Chaldean Nabopolassar (626–605 BC) began to dismantle the Assyrian Empire with help from the Medes and founded the Neo-Babylonian Empire. By the time of Habakkuk "Chaldean" had come to be a synonym for "Babylonian."

These world events came to affect Judah. Pharaoh Neco of Egypt passed through Palestine in an attempt to support the remnant of the Assyrians in northern Syria against Babylon. The godly King Josiah confronted him at Megiddo but was killed by Neco in 609 BC. Judah then fell into the hands of Egypt from 609–605 BC.

Judah's fortunes changed again when Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar II defeated Neco at the battle of Carchemish (May/June 605 BC) on the Euphrates River northeast of Aleppo and succeeded his father on the throne of Babylon in September of that year. The Babylonian army pursued Neco back to Egypt. This led to Judah falling under control of the Babylonians by 604 BC.

Habakkuk predicted the Chaldean devastation of Judah (1:5-11), but that does not seem to have been fulfilled by the relatively bloodless Babylonian occupation in 604 BC. But when Jehoiakim, whom Neco had placed on Judah's throne in 609 BC, rebelled against Babylon in roughly 600 BC, Nebuchadnezzar eventually invaded the land and besieged Jerusalem from 598 to 597 BC. This led to Jehoiakim being deposed and killed in 598 BC and his son Jehoiachin going into Babylonian exile in 597 BC. The last king of Judah, Zedekiah, brought even more devastation upon Judah by rebelling against Babylon in 588 BC. When Judah fell to the Babylonians in August of either 587 or 586 BC, Nebuchadnezzar devastated Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. And yet as Habakkuk predicted (2:6-20), Babylon had its own day of reckoning in 539 BC when Cyrus of Persia conquered it.

These historical events help us to attach a date to the book of Habakkuk. Habakkuk probably wrote his prophecy during the time of trouble after the death of King Josiah of Judah in 609 BC but before the devastations of Judah in 598/597 BC and 587/586 BC by the Chaldeans. That places the prophecy during the reign of Jehoiakim (ca. 609–599 BC), probably in the period of Egyptian domination before Babylon invaded Judah (609–605 BC).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Habakkuk looks at an issue that often confronts people: trying to discern God's purposes in the midst of this world. There is a realization of the will of God for this world. This truth is seen throughout the Scripture: God's promises to Abraham; God's desire for us to have life abundantly; and God's will for a human community of joy, security, and righteousness. We ultimately triumph in the world and live abundantly only through faith. Habakkuk's message that the righteous will live by faith prepared the way for the greater understanding of this truth in the NT, which emphasizes salvation through faith in Christ (Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11; Heb 10:38-39).

STRUCTURE

The first two chapters consist of a dialogue between the prophet and God. Habakkuk first complained of injustice in Judah (1:2-4). God responded by announcing that he was sending the Chaldeans to punish Judah (1:5-11). Habakkuk then complained about God's answer, arguing that it seemed unfair for God to use the more wicked Babylonians to punish the less wicked Judeans (1:12–2:1). God responded that the Babylonians were indeed arrogant and would ultimately be punished; nonetheless, God would use the Babylonians just as he had determined (2:2-20). The final chapter consists of a psalm in which Habakkuk reflected on this dialogue with God.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The answers God gave the prophet show him as the Revealer of truth. The revelations God made focus on his absolute sovereignty over human history. Habakkuk's own passion was a concern for the glory of God's name to be known among all people: "His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise" (3:3).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Apart from divine revelation, human reasoning will never understand the ways of God. They will always be a mystery. It is fitting for people to ask God for revelation, but they must wait for the divine answers to their questions. When God reveals himself, people are to acknowledge his perfections by worship and praise.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The apostle Paul quoted Habakkuk 2:4 ("the righteous one will live by his faith") twice as OT evidence of the doctrine of justification by faith (Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11). Steadfast, persevering trust in God for deliverance has always been the hallmark of God's people. The final verses of the book, a hymn of faith in the God who saves, include the remarkable confession, "yet I will celebrate in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!" (Hab 3:18).

HABAKKUK TIMELINE

630–605 BC

Jeremiah is called to be a prophet; he warns of invasion from the north. **626**

Second phase of King Josiah's reforms when the book of the law is found in the temple **622**

Jeremiah's temple sermon **609**

Judah's King Josiah seeks to block the movement of Pharaoh Neco II's Egyptian troops as they pass through territory north of Judah en route to join forces with Assyria. Josiah is killed by the Egyptians at Megiddo. **609**

Josiah's son, Jehoahaz II, succeeds him and is deposed, replaced by his brother, Jehoiakim. **609**

605–600 BC

Pharaoh Neco II presses on to engage the Babylonian army at Carchemish with the aim of saving what is left of the Assyrian Empire. Nebuchadnezzar leads the Babylonians to defeat Neco at Carchemish. **605**

Habakkuk prophesies shortly before or after the battle at Carchemish to point out what the growing Babylonian strength means for Judah. **605**

Jehoiakim makes a decision to turn from his alliance with Egypt and submit to Nebuchadnezzar. **604**

Jehoiakim ignores Jeremiah's warning and turns back to Egypt for support after Egypt defeats Babylon at Migdol. **601**

600–590 BC

Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem and leads the citizens of Judah into exile. **605, 597, 586**

A reinforced Babylonian army approaches Judah; Jehoiakim dies. **598**

Nebuchadnezzar plunders the temple, takes Jehoiachin and the royal family into exile, and Zedekiah becomes king. **597**

Ezekiel begins to prophesy. **593**

587–580 BC

Zedekiah rebels against Babylon and is taken to Riblah along with his family. At Riblah he witnesses the executions of his sons, before his own eyes are blinded. Then Zedekiah is taken to Babylon. He apparently dies in captivity. **587**

Gedaliah is appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in **587**. He is soon assassinated.

As punishment for the uprising against Gedaliah, Nebuchadnezzar deports more citizens. **582**

1 The pronouncement † that the prophet Habakkuk saw. †

HABAKKUK'S FIRST PRAYER

2 How long, † LORD, must I call for help †
and you do not listen
or cry out to you about violence †
and you do not save?
3 Why do you force me to look at injustice? †

Why do you tolerate † wrongdoing?
Oppression and violence are right in front of me.
Strife is ongoing, and conflict escalates.
4 This is why the law is ineffective and justice never emerges.
For the wicked restrict † the righteous; therefore, justice † comes out perverted.

GOD'S FIRST ANSWER

5 Look at the nations † † and observe † — be utterly astounded! †
For I am doing something in your days that you will not believe †
when you hear about it. †
6 Look! I am raising up † the Chaldeans, †
that bitter, † impetuous nation that marches across the earth's open spaces to seize territories not its own.
7 They are fierce † and terrifying; their views of justice and sovereignty stem from themselves.
8 Their horses are swifter † than leopards †
and more fierce † than wolves of the night.
Their horsemen charge ahead; their horsemen come from distant lands.
They fly like eagles, swooping to devour. †
9 All of them come to do violence; their faces † are set in determination. †
They gather † prisoners like sand. †
10 They mock † kings, and rulers are a joke to them.
They laugh † at every fortress and build siege ramps to capture † it.
11 Then they sweep † by like the wind and pass through.
They are guilty; † their strength is their god.

HABAKKUK'S SECOND PRAYER

12 Are you not from eternity, LORD my God? †
My Holy One, † you † will not die.

LORD, you appointed them to execute judgment; my Rock, † you destined them
to punish us.
13 Your eyes † are too pure † to look on evil, and you cannot
tolerate wrongdoing.
So why do you tolerate those who are treacherous? †
Why are you silent
while one † who is wicked swallows up one † who is more righteous
than himself?
14 You have made mankind like the fish of the sea, †
like marine creatures that have no ruler.
15 The Chaldeans pull them all up with a hook, catch them in their dragnet, †
and gather them in their fishing net; that is why they are glad and rejoice.
16 That is why they sacrifice to their dragnet and burn incense
to their fishing net, for by these things their portion is rich and
their food plentiful. †
17 Will they therefore empty their net and continually slaughter nations
without mercy?

1:3 Lit *observe*, also in v. 13 **1:5** DSS, LXX, Syr read *Look, you treacherous people* **1:6** = the Babylonians **1:8** Or *and quicker* **1:9** Hb obscure **1:11** Or *wind, and transgress and incur guilt* **1:12** Alt Hb tradition reads *we* **1:13** = Babylon **1:13** = Judah

1:1 Is 13:1; 30:6; Jr 18:18; Ezk 12:10; Hab 1:1; Zch 9:1; 12:1; Mal 1:1 **1:1** Nm 24:4; Jb 19:26; Is 13:1 **1:2** Ps 4:2; 6:3; 13:1 **1:2** Jb 19:7; Ps 5:2; Lm 3:8 **1:2** Jr 6:7; Ezk 7:11,23; 8:17; 12:19; 45:9; Mc 6:12; Hab 1:9; 2:8,17 **1:3** Jb 4:8; Ps 5:5; Is 5:7 **1:4** Jdg 20:43; Ps 22:12 **1:4** Ex 23:6 **1:5** Ps 2:1 **1:5** Gn 15:5 **1:5** Gn 43:33; Ps 48:5; Ec 5:8 **1:5** Gn 15:6 **1:5** Ac 13:41 **1:6** Ru 4:5 **1:6** Jdg 18:25 **1:7** Sg 6:4,10 **1:8** 2Sm 1:23 **1:8** Is 11:6; Jr 5:6; 13:23; Hs 13:7 **1:8** Dt 28:49 **1:9** Gn 48:11 **1:9** Dt 11:14 **1:9** Jos 11:4 **1:10** 2Kg 2:23 **1:10** 2Ch 30:10 **1:10** Nm 21:32 **1:11** Is 8:8 **1:12** 1Ch 29:10; Ps 90:2; 93:2; 103:17; Mc 5:2 **1:12** Is 1:4 **1:12** Dt 32:4; Ps 18:2 **1:13** 2Ch 6:20; 16:9 **1:13** Ex 25:11; Ps 12:6; 19:9; 51:10; Pr 22:11; Ezk 36:25 **1:13** Jdg 9:23 **1:14** Ec 9:12 **1:15** 2Kg 19:28; 2Ch 33:11; Is 37:29; Jr 16:16; Ezk 19:4,9; 29:4; 38:4; Am 4:2 **1:16** Dt 8:17; Is 10:13; 37:24-25

1:1 The book of Habakkuk consists of a dialogue between the prophet and God. Habakkuk's struggles center on God's justice in a fallen world (see following notes). The book concludes with a prayer of praise and confidence (3:1-19). Whereas the preceding book, Nahum, focuses on judgment on Nineveh and Assyria, the present one deals with judgment on Judah and Babylon.

1:2-4 The prophet had been crying out to God about the **violence** in Judah but to no avail (v. 2). Because God is sovereign and had not taken action, Habakkuk saw him as tolerating such **injustice** and **wrongdoing** (v. 3). The **wicked** restricting the **righteous** (v. 4) is also referenced elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (Am 2:6; 5:10-13; Mc 7:2-6). The uselessness of the **law** and the perversion of **justice** are familiar themes (Hs 4:6; 8:1; Am 2:4; 5:7; Mc 3:9).

1:5-11 God's response was that he did intend to bring judgment on Judah and was raising up **the Chaldeans** as his instrument (v. 6). Judah would believe this when they heard of it (v. 5; Ac 13:41; see Is 52:15). The powerful army described in verses 6-11 recalls Joel 2:1-10 and Nahum 2:1-10. Their power and pride is shown through their likeness to **eagles** (v. 8; see 2:9; Ex 19:4; Ob 4), gathering captives **like sand** (v. 9; see Gn 22:17; Hs 1:10), mockery of **kings** (v. 10; see Pss 2:4; 59:8), and worship of their own **strength** (v. 11).

1:12-13 Habakkuk recognized that God had appointed the Babylonians **to execute judgment** on Judah, but the broader issues regarding "justice" and "violence" (vv. 2-4) were only compounded (vv. 7,9). God's holiness coupled with his use of the wicked for his purposes generated even more questions for the prophet (v. 13; see vv. 2-3).

1:14-17 From the prophet's perspective, it was as though God was not ruling over the affairs of men, who are compared to the **fish of the sea**. Instead, the powerful Babylonian simply does as he pleases (v. 15) and worships idols (v. 16; see v. 11) with no end in sight (v. 17).

HABAKKUK WAITS FOR GOD'S RESPONSE

2 I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the lookout tower. †
I will watch to see what he will say to me †
and what I should † reply about my complaint.

GOD'S SECOND ANSWER

2 The LORD answered me:

Write down this vision; †
clearly inscribe it on tablets so one may easily read it. †
3 For the vision is yet for the appointed time; †
it testifies about the end and will not lie.
Though it delays, wait for it, since it will certainly come and not be late. †
4 Look, his ego is inflated; †
he is without integrity.
But the righteous one will live by his faith. † †
5 Moreover, wine † betrays; an arrogant man is never at rest. †
He enlarges his appetite like Sheol, and like Death he is never satisfied. †
He gathers all the nations to himself; †
he collects all the peoples for himself.

THE FIVE WOE ORACLES

6 Won’t all of these take up a taunt against him, †
with mockery and riddles about him?
They will say:

Woe to him who amasses what is not his — how much longer? † — and loads himself with goods taken in pledge. †

7 Won’t your creditors suddenly arise, and those who disturb you wake up?
Then you will become spoil for them. †

8 Since you have plundered many nations, †
all the peoples who remain will plunder you † — because of human bloodshed
and violence † against lands, cities, and all who live in them. †

9 Woe to him who dishonestly makes wealth for his house † †
to place his nest on high,
to escape the grasp of disaster! †

10 You have planned shame for your house by wiping out many peoples
and sinning against your own self.

11 For the stones will cry out † from the wall, and the rafters will answer them from the woodwork.

12 Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and founds a town with injustice! †

13 Is it not from the LORD of Armies that the peoples labor only to fuel the fire and countries exhaust themselves for nothing? †

14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD’s glory, as the water covers the sea. †

15 Woe to him who gives his neighbors drink, pouring out your wrath †
and even making them drunk, in order to look at their nakedness!

16 You will be filled with disgrace instead of glory.
You also — drink,
and expose your uncircumcision! †
The cup in the LORD’s right hand will come around to you,

and utter disgrace will cover your glory. †
17 For your violence against Lebanon will overwhelm you;
the destruction of animals will terrify you †
because of your human bloodshed and violence against lands, cities, and all who live in them.

18 What use is a carved idol after its craftsman carves it?
It is only a cast image, a teacher of lies.
For the one who crafts its shape trusts in it and makes idols that cannot speak.
19 Woe to him who says to wood: Wake up!
or to mute stone: Come alive!
Can it teach?
Look! It may be plated with gold and silver, yet there is no breath † in it at all.

20 But the LORD is in his holy temple; †
let the whole earth
be silent in his presence. †

2:1 Syr reads *what he will* **2:2** Lit *one who reads in it may run* **2:4** Hb obscure **2:4** Or *faithfulness* **2:5** DSS read *wealth* **2:5** Or *man does not endure* ; Hb obscure **2:9** Or *dynasty* **2:15** Or *venom* **2:16** DSS, LXX, Aq, Syr, Vg read *and stagger* **2:17** DSS, LXX, Aq, Syr, Tg, Vg; MT reads *them*
2:1 1Ch 9:27; 2Ch 8:14; Is 21:6-9 **2:1** Ps 85:8 **2:2** 1Sm 3:1; Ps 89:19; Pr 29:18; Is 1:1 **2:3** Gn 18:14; 21:2; 2Kg 4:16-17; Dn 8:19; 11:27,29,35 **2:3** Dn 10:1,14; 11:35; Heb 10:36-37; 2Pt 3:9; Rv 22:10 **2:4** Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11 **2:5** Pr 27:20; 30:15-16; Is 5:14 **2:5** Is 13:4; 43:9; 66:18; Jr 3:17; Hs 10:10; Jl 3:2,11; Zph 3:8; Zch 12:3; 14:2; Mt 25:32 **2:6** Is 14:4; Mc 2:4 **2:6** 1Kg 18:21; Ps 82:2; Pr 1:22; Jr 4:14,21; 23:26; 31:22; Hs 8:5 **2:6** Dt 24:10-13 **2:7** 2Kg 21:14; Is 42:22,24; Jr 49:32 **2:8** Is 10:13; Ezk 36:4 **2:8** Zph 3:8 **2:8** Jr 6:7; Ezk 7:11,23; 8:17; 12:19; 45:9; Mc 6:12; Hab 1:2-3,9; 2:17 **2:8** Is 33:1; Jr 25:12,14; Hab 2:17; Rv 13:10 **2:9** Pr 1:9; 15:27; Jr 6:13; 8:10; Ezk 22:27 **2:9** Pr 11:28; Jr 22:13; 49:16; Ob 4; Rv 18:7 **2:11** Lk 19:40 **2:12** Ezk 22:2-3; Mc 3:10 **2:13** Jr 51:58 **2:14** Nm 14:21; Ps 33:5; 72:19; 119:64; Is 6:3; 11:9; Jr 23:24 **2:15-16** Rv 14:8-10 **2:19** Ex 32:4; Dt 27:15; Jdg 17:4; Is 30:22; 40:18-20; 44:9-20; Jr 10:14 **2:20** Ps 11:4 **2:20** Zph 1:7; Zch 2:13

2:1 As the prophet awaited God's response (see Mc 7:7), he also anticipated how he would **reply** to it. The change in perspective in Habakkuk 3 suggests that his actual response was different from what he had thought at this moment.

2:2-3 God's first response (1:5-11) was not the full story. At the **appointed time**, a **vision** would be fulfilled. This prophetic message needed to be both clearly inscribed (see Dt 27:8) and proclaimed (see Nah 1:15). The Babylonian army would come (1:8-9), but even more importantly, this vision **will certainly come** (v. 3). It concerns the **end** (see Dn 11:35; 12:4,9), and the faithful are to **wait for it** (see Dn 12:12; Zph 3:8).

2:4 The Lord begins his explanation by declaring his knowledge of the Babylonians' wickedness, which speaks to Habakkuk's struggle with divine justice (see 1:2-3,13). But he also implicitly calls the prophet to

exercise patient **faith.** By this, the **righteous** will **live** instead of die (see v. 5; 1:17). God indeed will make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked (see 1:4,13; Ps 1:6; Mal 3:18).

2:5 The proud Babylonian is compared to **Sheol** and **Death** because both have an insatiable appetite and are never satisfied with killing (see Pr 1:12). Likewise, the prophet had earlier lamented that "the wicked swallows up one who is more righteous than himself" (1:13). The Babylonian's gathering **all the nations** and collecting **all the peoples** to himself (see 1:9,15) directly opposes the eschatological promises of Micah 2:12-13 and 4:1-4,6-8 (see notes).

2:8 The **many nations** and **peoples** that Babylon **plundered** will **plunder** Babylon (see vv. 5,10). The **violence** Habakkuk had lamented would be avenged (see the notes on 1:12-17).

2:9 The setting of **his nest on high** alludes to his likeness to an "eagle" in 1:8 and to the very origins of Babylon (see the note on Gn 11:1-9). Edom had acted similarly (see Ob 3), but such exaltation is reserved for God alone (see Mc 1:3; 4:1-2; 6:6).

2:12-14 Babylon's **bloodshed** against others is again condemned (vv. 8,12). Nineveh (Nah 3:1) and Zion were guilty of the same (Mc 3:10), but the latter will be ultimately redeemed with justice and righteousness (Is 1:27; 9:7). Thus, the godless efforts of the **peoples** and **countries** are **for nothing** (v. 13), since it is the **knowledge of the LORD's glory** that will fill the earth (v. 14; see Jl 2:28-32; Am 9:11-12; Jnh 3:5; Mc 4:1-4; 5:4).

2:15-17 Whereas God's "glory" will cover the world (v. 14), Babylon will be utterly humiliated when the Lord's wrath and justice **overwhelm** them (v. 17; "cover" and "overwhelm" translate the same Hebrew word in these verses). Their **violence** and **bloodshed** committed against humanity are cited again (see vv. 5,8,10; 1:9,17). The probably senseless **destruction of animals** contrasts with God's concern for such creatures in Jonah 4:11.

2:18-20 The downfall of Babylon also includes the judgment of idols (vv. 18-19; see Is 46:1-2) and the vindication of God himself (v. 20). Whereas idols teach **lies** and are actually **mute** and lifeless (since they have **no breath** or spirit), God reveals truth (vv. 2-3). His Spirit is active and powerful (see Jl 2:28-29; Mc 3:8). Therefore, idols should not be trusted, and the whole earth should **be silent in** [God's] **presence** (v. 20; see Mc 1:2; Am 8:3; Jnh 2:4,7; Zph 1:7; 2:17; Mal 3:1).

HABAKKUK'S THIRD PRAYER

3 A prayer of the prophet Habakkuk. According to *Shigionoth*. † †

2 LORD, I have heard the report about you; LORD, I stand in awe of your deeds. †
Revive your work in these years; make it known in these years.
In your wrath remember mercy! †

3 God comes from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. †
Selah His splendor covers the heavens, and the earth is full of his praise. †

4 His brilliance is like light; rays are flashing from his hand.
This is where his power is hidden.

5 Plague goes before him, and pestilence follows in his steps.

6 He stands and shakes † the earth; †
he looks and startles the nations.
The age-old mountains break apart; the ancient hills sink down. †
His pathways are ancient. †

7 I see the tents of Cushan † in distress; the tent curtains of the land of Midian tremble.

8 Are you angry at the rivers, LORD?
Is your wrath against the rivers?
Or is your rage against the sea when you ride on your horses, your victorious chariot? †

9 You took the sheath from your bow; the arrows are ready † to be used with an oath. † †

Selah You split the earth with rivers.

10 The mountains see you and shudder; †
a downpour of water sweeps by.
The deep roars with its voice †
and lifts its waves † high.

11 Sun and moon stand still in their lofty residence, †
at the flash of your flying arrows, at the brightness of your shining spear.

12 You march across the earth with indignation; you trample down the nations in wrath. †

13 You come out to save your people, †
to save your anointed. †
You crush the leader of the house of the wicked and strip him from foot † to neck.

Selah 14 You pierce his head with his own spears;
his warriors storm out to scatter us, gloating as if ready to secretly devour the weak.

15 You tread the sea with your horses, stirring up the vast water. †

HABAKKUK'S CONFIDENCE IN GOD EXPRESSED

16 I heard, and I trembled within; †
my lips quivered at the sound.
Rottenness entered my bones; I trembled where I stood.
Now I must quietly wait for the day of distress †
to come against the people invading us.
17 Though the fig tree does not bud and there is no fruit on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though the flocks disappear from the pen and there are no herds in the stalls, 18 yet I will celebrate in the LORD; I will rejoice in the God of my salvation! †
19 The LORD my Lord is my strength; †
he makes my feet like those of a deer †
and enables me to walk on mountain heights! †

For the choir director: on † stringed instruments.

3:1 Perhaps a passionate song with rapid changes of rhythm, or a dirge **3:6** Or *surveys* **3:7** = Midian **3:9** Or *set* **3:9** Hb obscure **3:10** Lit *hands* **3:13** The Davidic king or the nation of Israel **3:13** Lit *foundation* **3:19** Lit *on my*

3:1 Ps 7 title **3:2** Ps 44:1; 64:9; 77:12; 90:16; 92:4; 111:3; 143:5 **3:2** Is 60:10 **3:3** Dt 33:2; Jdg 5:4-5 **3:3** 1Ch 29:11; Jb 37:22; Ps 48:10; 72:19; 148:13; Is 42:10 **3:6** Jb 9:6; Is 13:13; 24:19; Jl 2:10; 3:16; Hg 2:6,21; Heb 12:26 **3:6** Mc 1:4; Zch 14:4 **3:6** Jr 6:16; 18:15 **3:8** Ps 68:17 **3:9** Dt 32:40-43 **3:10** Ps 77:16 **3:10** Ex 19:18; Ps 77:16 **3:11** Jos 10:12-13 **3:12** Ps 60:12; 68:30; 108:13; Is 25:10; 63:3; Mc 1:3 **3:13** Dt 33:29; Jdg 2:18; Ps 28:9; Jr 15:20; Ezk 37:23; Zch 8:7; 9:16; Mt 1:21 **3:15** Ps 77:19 **3:16** Dn 10:4-9; Rv 1:17 **3:16** Is 37:3; Ob 12,14; Nah 1:7 **3:18** 1Sm 2:1; 1Ch 16:35; Ps 9:14; 40:16; 73:25; Is 25:9; 61:10 **3:19** 1Sm 30:6; 1Ch 16:11; Ps 18:1; 22:19; 28:7-8; 29:11; 105:4; 118:14; Is 12:2; 33:2; 45:24; 49:5; 51:9; Jr 16:19; Eph 6:10 **3:19** Ps 18:33 **3:19** 2Sm 22:34; Ps 18:33

3:1 God's second response (2:2-20) drastically changed Habakkuk's mindset, as can be seen by the content of his psalm-like prayer (see Pss 7; 17; 86; 90; 102; 142). Gone are laments concerning God's slowness to act against violence and wickedness (1:2-4,12-17). They are replaced by a declaration of God's coming judgment and salvation.

3:2 The prophet now is in awe of God's **deeds** (see 1:5; 2:20). For God to **make it known** contrasts with mute idols (2:18-19). His **wrath** will be poured out on Judah and Babylon, but Habakkuk prays for **mercy** (see the notes on Jl 2:12-14; Jnh 3:5-10).

3:3 In keeping with the vision that will certainly come (2:3; see LXX; Heb 10:37), God will come from **Teman**, which is associated with Edom. As such, this recalls other passages in the Minor Prophets concerning Edom (Jl 3:19; Am 1:6,9,11-12; 9:11-12; Ob 1). **Mount Paran** was the home of Ishmael (Gn 21:21) but is similarly mentioned along with "Seir" (Edom) in Deuteronomy 33:2. The covering of the **heavens** with divine **splendor** and the filling of the **earth** with **praise** anticipate the fulfillment of 2:14

when God comes. The Hebrew term for **God** used here is atypical, occurring mostly in Job (forty-one times) and seventeen times elsewhere in the OT (e.g., Dt 32:15,17).

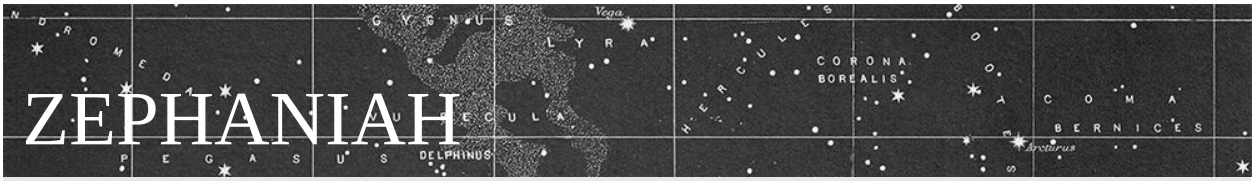
3:4-6 The Hebrew words for **brilliance** and **light** (v. 4) appear together in other prophetic passages (2Sm 23:4; Is 60:3; see Is 9:2; 50:10; 62:1). God's coming in power (vv. 5-6) parallels Joel 3:16 and Micah 1:3-4; 4:1 in the Minor Prophets and 2 Samuel 22:8-14 and Pss 18:7-13; 46:2-3. **Plague** and **pestilence** are means of his judgment (see Ex 9:3; Lv 26:25; Dt 32:24).

3:7-12 God's coming in power to judge (vv. 3-6) will recall his victory over the Egyptian army at the Red Sea (Ex 15:1-3; see the notes on Hs 13:14; Mc 7:15-20). Peoples had trembled then (Ex 15:14), and they will **tremble** again (v. 7). This judgment concerns not only Babylon but **the nations** (vv. 6,12). God will ride on his **horses** and **chariot** of salvation (v. 8) and will even shoot **arrows** (vv. 9,11), which are symbols of his power as a divine warrior. God's threshing of the nations in **indignation** (v. 12) parallels Isaiah 63:1-6. In other passages, Israel does this (Mc 4:13; 5:8; see Is 26:6) because of God's salvation (Pss 44:5; 60:12; 108:13).

3:13-15 Whereas "the nations" experience divine wrath (v. 12), God will **save** his **people** and his **anointed** (v. 13; see Dt 33:7; 2Sm 22:51; Ps 20:6). The latter is sometimes translated Messiah (Dn 9:25-26), and the underlying Hebrew word only appears here in the Minor Prophets. Salvation from such **vast water** (v. 15; see previous note) foregrounds second exodus themes in the Minor Prophets again (see the notes on 2:5; Hs 1:11; 11:1; 13:14; Mc 7:15-20).

3:16 Habakkuk **trembled** but would **wait** for God to judge the Babylonians and save his people (see v. 13). The prophet's laments had been answered (1:2-4,12-17), and he obeyed the implicit directive to wait in faith in 2:2-4.

3:17-19 Despite material lack (v. 17; see Hs 2:9,12; Jl 1:4), Habakkuk's faith gave him confidence and joy in God (v. 18; Mc 7:7), who is his **strength** (Ex 15:2; Is 12:2). God causes the prophet to **walk on mountain heights** (see Dt 32:13; 2Sm 22:34; Is 58:14; Mc 1:3).



ZEPHANIAH

INTRODUCTION

One of the Minor Prophets, Zephaniah focuses on the need to live in righteousness before God. Of all the prophets, Zephaniah probably gave the most forceful description of judgment, but he also lifted up the possibility of restoration for those who repented and turned to righteousness.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Zephaniah's lengthy genealogy (1:1, four generations back to Hezekiah) suggests he was of royal lineage. Why list four generations (other prophets, at most, listed two generations; see Zch 1:1) unless this final name was significant? Perhaps because his father's name was "Cushi," people tended to suspect that Zephaniah was of mixed ancestry, including Cushite bloodlines. In fact, Zephaniah twice mentions the Cushites/Cush ("Ethiopians") in his short prophecy (2:12; 3:10), possibly suggesting his Cushite roots.

Internal evidence indicates the book of Zephaniah was written sometime between 640 and 612 BC. Zephaniah 1:1 refers to King Josiah's reign (ca. 640–609 BC), and 2:13-15 prophesies Nineveh's fall. Since Nineveh fell in 612 BC, Zephaniah's prophecy would have been given prior to that time. Furthermore, existing idolatrous practices in Judah (1:4-6) imply Zephaniah's ministry began before Josiah's reforms in roughly 621 BC (2 Kg 23).

BACKGROUND: King Josiah's father, King Amon (1:1), was a wicked man, as was his father before him, King Manasseh (2Kg 21:1-7,11,16,20-22). This heritage of wickedness helps explain the rampant idolatry in the land when Josiah inherited the throne in 640 BC. Josiah struggled to squelch idolatry in Judah (Zph 1:4-9). Together pagan and "orthodox priests" led worship of the Lord while also bowing before Baal, Molech, and other pagan gods (1:4-6). The public reading of the book of the law (ca. 621 BC) helped spawn the reforms of Josiah as people repented and tore down the numerous altars (cp. Jr 11:13) and other idolatrous paraphernalia of Baal and Molech (2Kg 23:1-14; cp. Zph 1:3-4). This included abolishing the false priests (2Kg 23:5).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The promise of a remnant illustrates God's amazing grace counterbalancing his jealous wrath and blazing fury against the wicked (Nah 1:2-8). He would judge the proud nations (Zph 2:8-11,13-15) and purge the haughty braggarts from his people (3:11) to preserve the humble. Thus Zephaniah invited everyone who humbly obeyed the Lord to seek him for possible deliverance (2:2-3). The NT highlights the wonderful truth that all of us can find salvation through faith in Christ. Paul underscored the idea of the Jewish remnant and reminded us that the remnant is "chosen by grace," not by works (Rm 11:5-6).

STRUCTURE

"The word of the LORD" (1:1a) and "the LORD has spoken" (3:20b) frame the whole book of Zephaniah to emphasize crucial complementary messages: imminent, universal judgment (1:1–3:8) but eventual blessing for the remnant (3:9-20). The chiastic first section, interlaced by the reinforcing refrain "this is the LORD's declaration" (see 1:2-3,10a; 2:9a; 3:8a; cp. 2:5, "word of the LORD"), highlights an all-inclusive judgment.

Zephaniah 3:8 is a transitional exhortation that looks both backward ("therefore," v. 8a) and forward (wait patiently for God to consummate judgment which will yield salvation for the remnant; v v. 9-13, introduced by Hebrew *ki*, "for/because" v v. 9,11). To offer hope during judgment in 3:8-13 may synthesize two

exhortations: 1:7 (hush/wait for the day of the Lord's "cutting off " the wicked) and 2:1-3 (pivotal invitation to seek him for possible salvation).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is righteous and jealous for his people. In the coming "day of the LORD," he will bring about justice on all who have shown their opposition to him by living in violence and treachery, including those who claimed to belong to him. Although there is no direct prediction of Christ or the coming of the Holy Spirit, Christians have understood Zephaniah's prediction of the day when "the King of Israel, the LORD, is among you" (3:15) to refer to Jesus.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Zephaniah shows the universal tendency among humans toward evil. All kinds of people—Jerusalemites, Philistines, Moabites, Assyrians, and Ethiopians—will alike be condemned because of their sins against God. Arrogance, oppression, and violence deserve God's judgment, no matter what persons or nations have committed them.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Because of Zephaniah's emphasis on the "day of the LORD," his understanding of salvation focuses on God's subsequent blessing on the righteous remnant of Israel. God's restoration of the covenant people, however, also means that all the nations of the earth will know him: "all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him with a single purpose" (3:9; see Rv 21:24-26).

ZEPHANIAH TIMELINE

800–725 BC

Amos is called to travel from Judah to Israel to prophesy in Samaria. **783**

Jonah is called to go to Nineveh and preach repentance.

Hosea's prophetic ministry **750–722?**

Micah begins his prophetic ministry. **750**

Assyria emerges from years of decline as Tiglath-pileser III invades Israel and other territories in the region. **745–727**

Isaiah is called to be a prophet. **740**

725–640 BC

Assyria's Shalmaneser V besieges Samaria. **725–722**

Samaria falls to Assyria's Sargon II, nearly 28,000 Israelites are sent into exile, and Gentiles from Assyrian-controlled territories are resettled into what was the northern kingdom. **722**

Third temple reform under Hezekiah **715**

Years of prophetic silence **(698–626)** in Judah coincides with some of Judah's darkest years under the rule of Manasseh **(697–642)** and Amon **(642–640)**.

640–615 BC

Josiah is placed on Judah's throne at the age of eight when his father, Amon, is assassinated. **640**

Initial reforms of Josiah **631**

Zephaniah's years of prophecy range between **626 and 612**.

Jeremiah called to be a prophet; warns of invasion from the north **626**

The book of the law is found and read publicly, spurring additional reform under Josiah. **621**

Zephaniah and Nahum both prophesy the fall of Nineveh that occurred in **621**.

615–580 BC

With the fall of Nineveh, the Babylonian Empire succeeds the Assyrian Empire as the dominant force in the ancient Near East. **612**

Josiah killed in battle by Pharaoh Neco **609**

Habakkuk prophesies shortly before or after the battle at Carchemish **(605)** to point out what the growing Babylonian strength means for Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar attacks Jerusalem and leads citizens of Judah into exile. **605, 597, 586, 582**

1 The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, son of Gedaliah, son of Amariah, son of Hezekiah, † in the days of Josiah † son of Amon, † king of Judah.

THE GREAT DAY OF THE LORD

2 I will completely sweep away everything from the face of the earth † — this is the LORD's declaration.

3 I will sweep away people and animals; †
I will sweep away the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea,
and the ruins † along with the wicked. †
I will cut off mankind
from the face of the earth.
This is the LORD's declaration.

4 I will stretch out my hand † against Judah and against all the residents of Jerusalem.

I will cut off every vestige of Baal †
from this place,

the names of the pagan priests †
along with the priests;
5 those who bow in worship on the rooftops †
to the stars in the sky;
those who bow and pledge loyalty to the LORD †
but also pledge loyalty to Milcom; † †
6 and those who turn back from following the LORD, who do not seek the LORD
or inquire of him.
7 Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD, †
for the day of the LORD is near. †
Indeed, the LORD has prepared a sacrifice; †
he has consecrated his guests. †

8 On the day of the LORD's sacrifice I will punish the officials, the king's sons,
and all who are dressed in foreign clothing.
9 On that day † I will punish all who skip over the threshold, † †
who fill their master's house with violence and deceit.

10 On that day — this is the LORD's declaration — there will be an outcry
from the Fish Gate, †
a wailing from the Second District, †
and a loud crashing from the hills.
11 Wail, you residents of the Hollow, †
for all the merchants † will be silenced; all those loaded with silver will be
cut off.

12 And at that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish
those who settle down comfortably, † †
who say to themselves:
The LORD will not do good or evil. †
13 Their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin.
They will build houses but never live in them, plant vineyards but never drink
their wine. †

14 The great day of the LORD is near, †
near and rapidly approaching.
Listen, the day of the LORD — then the warrior's cry is bitter.
15 That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of destruction
and desolation, a day of darkness † and gloom, a day of clouds and total
darkness, †
16 a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities, and against
the high corner towers.
17 I will bring distress on mankind, and they will walk like the blind †
because they have sinned against the LORD.
Their blood will be poured out like dust and their flesh like dung.
18 Their silver and their gold will be unable to rescue them on the day
of the LORD's wrath. †
The whole earth will be consumed by the fire of his jealousy, †
for he will make a complete,
yes, a horrifying end
of all the inhabitants of the earth.

1:3 Perhaps objects connected with idolatry **1:5** Some LXX mss, Syr, Vg; MT, other LXX mss read *their king* **1:9** Hb obscure **1:11** Or *the market district* **1:11** Or *Canaanites* **1:12** Lit *who thicken on their dregs* **1:1** 2Kg 16:20; 18:1–20:21 **1:1** 2Kg 22:1–23:30; 2Ch 34:1–36:1; Jr 1:2 **1:1** 2Kg 21:18-25 **1:2** Gn 6:7; 7:4 **1:3** 1Kg 14:10; Ezk 14:17 **1:3** Is 13:9-12; Mt 13:41 **1:4** Ex 3:20; Ps 138:7; Ezk 14:9; 25:7,16; Zph 2:13 **1:4** 1Kg 16:30-32 **1:4** 2Kg 23:5 **1:5** Jr 19:13; 32:29 **1:5** Dt 6:13; Is 48:1 **1:5** 1Kg 11:5; 2Kg 23:13; Jr 49:1,3 **1:7** Nm 13:30; Jdg 3:19; Hab 2:20; Zch 2:13 **1:7** Zph 1:14,18; 2:2-3 **1:7** Is 34:6; Jr 46:10 **1:7** Lv 7:11-21; 1Sm 16:5; 2Ch 35:5-13; Jr 22:17 **1:9** Zph 1:10; 3:11,16 **1:9** 1Sm 5:5 **1:10** 2Ch 33:14; Neh 3:3; 12:39 **1:10** 2Kg 22:14; 2Ch 34:22 **1:12** Ex 15:8; Is 25:6; Jr 48:11 **1:12** Mal 2:17 **1:13** Dt 28:30; Am 5:11; Mc 6:15 **1:14** Is 13:6,9; Jl 1:15; 2:1,11,31; 3:14; Am 5:18,20; Ob 15; Zch 14:1; Mal 4:5 **1:15** Am 1:14; 5:18-20; Ob 12-14 **1:15** Ps 97:2; Ezk 34:12; Jl 2:2 **1:17** Lm 4:14 **1:18** Ezk 7:19 **1:18** Ex 34:14; Dt 29:20; Ps 79:5; Zph 3:8; Zch 1:14; 8:2

1:1 An Israelite king had not been mentioned since the book of Micah, whose ministry took place during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Mc 1:1). Since then, the northern kingdom had fallen to Assyria. Zephaniah's ministry took place during the latter period of the kingdom of Judah, during the reign of Josiah (see 2Kg 22–23).

1:2-3 God's coming judgment will be against **everything**: man and animals of the land, sky, and sea (see Jl 3:2). The use of the Hebrew word *'adam* (**man** or **mankind**) shows that all humanity is in view, not only Israel (v. 3). This will take place on the "day of the LORD" (vv. 7,14). In some prophetic books, such as Amos, that phrase refers to God's actions in the near future. Zephaniah's references to this day are more eschatological in character, describing God's final judgment and vindication at the end of time.

1:4-6 The focus narrows to Judah and Jerusalem, which was guilty of idolatry while simultaneously paying

lip service to God (Hs 5:4-6). Indeed, the people did not **seek** or **inquire** him (v. 6; see Dt 4:29; Hs 3:5; 5:15; Am 5:4-6). **Baal** worship had also been condemned in Hosea 2:8,13,17; 11:2; 13:1.

1:7 The preceding will be fulfilled on the **day of the LORD**, an important theme in the Minor Prophets (see the note on Jl 1:15) and in Zephaniah in particular. The call for silence in God's presence recalls Habakkuk 2:20. His preparation of a **sacrifice** for his **guests** is an ominous way of alluding to their deaths (see Jl 3:9-14).

1:8-13 Judgment day is again referred to as a day of **sacrifice** (vv. 7,8). Mentioned first is the house of David, **the king's sons**, whose guilt may have included maintaining close relations with **foreign** nations. Skipping **over the threshold** may be a reference to pagan superstition (v. 9; 1Sm 5:5). The sins of **violence**, **deceit**, and greed (vv. 9,11-13) recall social justice themes elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (e.g., Am 5:10-15; Mc 6:10-12; Hab 1:2-4). The Hebrew phrase translated **all the merchants** (v. 11), if taken in isolation, could be translated "all the people of Canaan," thus linking the judgment of these traders to the destruction of the Canaanites (see 2:5; the note on Hs 12:7-8). The presumptuous belief that God **will not do** anything (v. 12) resembles Amos 5:18. The inability to enjoy **houses** and **vineyards** (v. 13) fulfills Deuteronomy 28:30 (see Am 5:11; Mc 6:14-15) and contrasts with Micah 4:4.

1:14 In response to the claim that God will not do anything (v. 12), the **day of the LORD** is said two more times to be **near** (see v. 7), even **rapidly approaching** (see Hab 2:3). The **bitter** cry of the warrior shows that he has been overpowered by God, the Almighty warrior (3:17; see Ex 15:3; Is 9:6; 42:13).

1:15-18 Parallel to other passages in the Minor Prophets, the **day of the LORD** is characterized as day of **distress** (v. 15; Nah 1:7; Hab 3:16) and of **darkness** (Jl 2:2,31; Am 5:18,20). The sounds of a **trumpet** and shouting (v. 16) are linked to war (Hs 5:8; Jl 2:1; Am 1:14; 2:2; 3:6). Judgment of **fortified cities** and **high corner towers** relates to Hosea 8:15 and Isaiah 2:15. Although verses 4-13 focused on Judah and Jerusalem, the scope of this doomsday is **mankind** and **the whole earth** (vv. 17-18), as it was in verses 2-3. The blindness that plagues sinful humanity is characteristic of Israel in Deuteronomy 28:29; Isaiah 42:18-19; 43:8; and 59:10. The uselessness of **silver** and **gold** on the day of judgment parallels Ezekiel 7:19; these may be related also to idolatry (Is 2:20; 31:7; Hs 8:4; Hab 2:19).

A CALL TO REPENTANCE

2 Gather yourselves together; gather together, undesirable † nation, 2 before
the decree † takes effect and the day passes like chaff, before the
burning of the LORD's anger † overtakes you, before the day
of the LORD's anger overtakes you. †
3 Seek the LORD, † all you humble † of the earth, who carry out
what he commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility; perhaps you will be concealed †
on the day of the LORD's anger.

JUDGMENT AGAINST THE NATIONS

4 For Gaza will be abandoned, and Ashkelon will become a ruin.

Ashdod will be driven out at noon, and Ekron will be uprooted. †

5 Woe, inhabitants of the seacoast, nation of the Cherethites! † †
The word of the LORD is against you, †
Canaan, land of the Philistines: I will destroy you until there is no one left. †
6 The seacoast will become pasturelands with caves for shepherds and pens
for sheep.
7 The coastland will belong to the remnant of the house of Judah; they will find
pasture there.
They will lie down in the evening among the houses of Ashkelon, for the LORD
their God will return to them and restore their fortunes. †

8 I have heard the taunting † of Moab and the insults of the Ammonites, †
who have taunted my people
and threatened their territory.
9 Therefore, as I live — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies, the God
of Israel — Moab will be like Sodom †
and the Ammonites like Gomorrah: †
a place overgrown with weeds, a salt pit, and a perpetual wasteland.
The remnant of my people will plunder them; the remainder of my nation
will dispossess them.
10 This is what they get for their pride, because they have taunted
and acted arrogantly †
against the people of the LORD of Armies.
11 The LORD will be terrifying to them when he starves all the gods of the earth.
Then all the distant coasts and islands of the nations will bow in worship to him,
each in its own place.

12 You Cushites will also be slain by my sword. †

13 He will also stretch out his hand against the north and destroy Assyria;
he will make Nineveh a desolate ruin, †
dry as the desert.
14 Herds will lie down in the middle of it, every kind of wild animal. †

Both eagle owls † and herons †
will roost in the capitals of its pillars.
Their calls will sound † from the window, but devastation † will be
on the threshold, for he will expose the cedar work. †
15 This is the jubilant † city that lives in security,
that thinks to herself:
I exist, and there is no one else.
What a desolation she has become, a place for wild animals to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
scoffs † and shakes his fist.

2:1 Or *shameless* **2:5** = Sea Peoples **2:14** Lit *every wild animal of a nation* **2:14** Or *the pelicans* **2:14** Or *the hedgehogs* **2:14** Lit *sing* **2:14** LXX, Vg read *ravens* **2:14** Hb obscure **2:15** Or *hisses*
2:2 Jb 23:14; Ps 2:7; 148:6 **2:2** Nm 25:4; 32:14; Jr 4:8; 12:13; 25:37; 30:24; 51:45 **2:2** Lm 2:22 **2:3** 1Ch 22:19; 2Ch 12:14; 14:4; 15:12-13; 16:12; Ps 34:10; Is 9:13; 51:1; Hs 10:12; Am 5:14; Zph 1:6; Zch 8:21-22 **2:3** Nm 12:3; Ps 25:9; 37:11; 76:9; Am 8:4 **2:3** Gn 4:14; Ex 3:6; Ps 17:8 **2:4** Jr 25:20; Am 1:6-8; Zch 9:5-7 **2:5** Ezk 25:16 **2:5** Is 37:22; Jr 16:10; 42:19; Am 3:1 **2:5** Is 5:9; 6:11; Jr 4:7; 26:9; 33:10; 34:22; 44:22; 46:19; 48:9; Zph 3:6 **2:7** Ps 85:1; Jr 30:18; 48:47; Lm 2:14 **2:8** Ps 42:10; 102:8; 119:42; Mt 27:44; Heb 10:33 **2:8** Am 1:13 **2:9** Is 1:9; 3:9; 13:19; Jr 23:14; Rm 9:29 **2:9** Gn 19:24-25 **2:10** Jr 48:42 **2:12** Is 18:1-7 **2:13** Nah 2:8; 3:7 **2:15** Is 13:3; 22:2; 23:7; 24:8; 32:13; Zph 3:11

2:1-3 The **undesirable nation** is Judah (v. 1), and the call for its people to gather together is similar to Joel 1:14; 2:15-16. As in 1:15,18, the dominant characteristic of the **day of the LORD** is that of wrath (vv. 2-3). The only hope for escaping this holy **anger** is to **seek the LORD**, **righteousness**, and **humility** (v. 3; Nah 1:7). These simple instructions resemble those given in Hosea 6:6; 12:6; Amos 5:4-6,14-15; Micah 6:8; and Habakkuk 2:3-4. Verse 3 represents a turning point in the book. The "day of the Lord" is a terrifying day of judgment for those who are guilty, but this verse suggests a way to escape: turning to God in humility.

2:4-6 The alternation between the nations and Israel (see 2:1; 1:2,4,17-18) continues with the reference to these Philistine cities. The Philistines are also called **Cherethites** in Ezekiel 25:16.

2:7 Although Judah would also be judged severely (vv. 1-2; 1:4-13), they would be left a **remnant**, unlike the Philistines (see Ezk 25:16). This remnant will possess the land of the Philistines, as foretold also in Obadiah 19. The phrases **find pasture** and **lie down** echo others in the Minor Prophets that describe Israel's eschatological salvation in terms of shepherding language (see 3:13; Mc 2:12; 4:8; 5:4; 7:14; Zch 13:7). All this will be fulfilled when the Lord **restore**[s] **their fortunes** (see Hs 6:11; Jl 3:1; Am 9:14). Thus, the day of the LORD is very good news for those whole belong to him, even while it is very bad news for those who do not.

2:8-10 Like the Philistines (see vv. 4-7), the Moabites and **Ammonites** will also be punished, and the **remnant of** [God's] **people** will possess their land (vv. 8-9), as Obadiah 17-21 likewise foretells. The permanent and complete destruction of these two peoples is likened to that of **Sodom** and **Gomorrah.** The sin that they were especially guilty of was arrogant boasting over Israel (vv. 8,10; Is 16:6; Jr 48:29; Ob 12-13; Mc 4:11).

2:11 God's judgment on the nations will also include judgment against **all the gods of the earth.** As a

result, **all the distant coasts and islands** will worship him (see Gn 10:5; Is 42:4; Am 9:11-12; Mc 5:4; Hab 2:14). Each person giving glory from his **own place** relates to Micah 4:4 and to the use of this word elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (see 1:4; Hs 1:10; Jl 3:7; Mal 1:11).

2:13-15 After a brief mention of the judgment of Cush (v. 12), the destruction and humiliation of **Nineveh** is proclaimed. The downfall of this Assyrian capital was the focus of the book of Nahum. The judgment on Assyria is mentioned in Micah 5:4-5 and Zechariah 10:11. The desolation of the land (v. 14) and the arrogant boast **I exist, and there is no one else** (v. 15) respectively parallel Edom in Isaiah 34:11 and Babylon in Isaiah 47:8,10 (see 14:23).

WOE TO OPPRESSIVE JERUSALEM

3 Woe to the city that is rebellious † † and defiled, †
the oppressive city!
2 She has not obeyed; †
she has not accepted discipline. †
She has not trusted † in the LORD; she has not drawn near to her God.
3 The † princes within her are roaring lions; †
her judges are wolves of the night, †
which leave nothing for † the morning.
4 Her prophets are reckless † — treacherous men.
Her priests profane the sanctuary; they do violence to instruction. †
5 The righteous LORD is in her; †
he does no wrong. †
He applies his justice morning by morning; he does not fail at dawn,
yet the one who does wrong knows no shame. †

6 I have cut off nations; their corner towers † are destroyed.
I have laid waste their streets, with no one to pass through.
Their cities lie devastated,
without a person, without an inhabitant. †
7 I thought: You will certainly fear me and accept correction.
Then her dwelling place †
would not be cut off
based on all that I had allocated to her.
However, they became more corrupt in all their actions.

8 Therefore, wait for me † — this is the LORD's declaration — until the day
I rise up for plunder. †
For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms,
in order to pour out my indignation † on them, all my burning anger;
for the whole earth will be consumed by the fire of my jealousy. †

FINAL RESTORATION PROMISED

9 For I will then restore pure † speech to the peoples so that all of them may call
on the name of the LORD and serve him with a single purpose. †
10 From beyond the rivers of Cush †
my supplicants, my dispersed people, will bring an offering to me.
11 On that day you † will not be put to shame †
because of everything you have done in rebelling † against me.
For then I will remove
from among you your jubilant, † arrogant people, and you will never again
be haughty on my holy mountain. †
12 I will leave a meek and humble people † among you, and they will take
refuge in the name of the LORD.
13 The remnant † of Israel will no longer do wrong or tell lies;
a deceitful tongue will not be found in their mouths.
They will pasture and lie down, with nothing to make them afraid. †

14 Sing for joy, Daughter Zion; shout loudly, Israel!
Be glad and celebrate with all your heart, Daughter Jerusalem!
15 The LORD has removed your punishment; he has turned back your enemy.
The King of Israel, the LORD, is among you; you need no longer fear harm.
16 On that day it will be said to Jerusalem: "Do not fear;
Zion, do not let your hands grow weak. †
17 The LORD your God is among you, a warrior † who saves.
He will rejoice over you † with gladness.
He will be quiet † in his love.

He will delight in you with singing.” †

18 I will gather those who have been driven †
from the appointed festivals; they will be a tribute from you †
and a reproach on her. †
19 Yes, at that time I will deal with all who oppress you.
I will save the lame † and gather the outcasts; †
I will make those who were disgraced throughout the earth
receive praise and fame.
20 At that time I will bring you † back, yes, at the time I will gather you.
I will give you fame and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore
your fortunes † before your eyes.
The LORD has spoken.

3:1 Or *filthy* **3:3** Lit *Her* **3:3** Or *that had nothing to gnaw in* **3:7** LXX, Syr read *her eyes* **3:8** LXX, Syr read *for a witness* ; Vg reads *up forever* **3:9** Lit *with one shoulder* **3:11** = Israel **3:17** LXX, Syr read *He will renew you* **3:18** = Jerusalem **3:18** Hb obscure **3:20** = people of Israel
3:1 Ex 23:21; Dt 9:24; Ps 106:43 **3:1** Is 59:3 **3:2** 1Sm 15:22 **3:2** Jb 5:17 **3:2** Pr 3:5 **3:3** Ezk 22:25 **3:3** Hab 1:8; Mt 7:15; Ac 20:29 **3:4** Jdg 9:4 **3:4** Ezk 22:26 **3:5** Ps 129:4 **3:5** Ps 92:15 **3:5** Jr 8:12 **3:6** Zph 1:16 **3:6** Jr 44:2; Zph 2:5 **3:8** Jb 3:21; Ps 33:20; Is 8:17; 30:18; 64:4 **3:8** Ps 69:24; Ezk 21:31; 22:31; Nah 1:6 **3:8** Dt 29:20; Ps 79:5; Zch 1:14; 8:2 **3:9** Dn 12:10 **3:10** Is 18:1-3 **3:11** Gn 2:25; 2Sm 19:5; Ps 25:3 **3:11** Is 1:2 **3:11** Jr 48:29 **3:11** Is 11:9 **3:12** Is 66:2 **3:13** Gn 45:7; 2Kg 19:31; Jr 23:3 **3:13** Gn 42:28; Jr 50:19; Ezk 34:14; Mc 4:4; 7:14 **3:16** Jr 6:24; 50:43 **3:17** Jos 1:14; Jb 16:14; Ps 78:65 **3:17** Dt 28:63; 30:9 **3:17** Ps 30:5 **3:18** Lm 1:4-5; 3:33 **3:19** Ex 14:30 **3:19** Mc 4:6 **3:20** Jb 42:10; Jr 29:14; Ezk 39:25; Hs 6:11; Jl 3:1

3:1-2 The self-assured city of Nineveh was guilty (2:13-15), but so was Jerusalem, a **rebellious**, **defiled**, and **oppressive** city. She was disobedient and had not **trusted in the LORD** (see Hs 10:13; Am 6:1; Mc 7:5; Hab 2:18). Referring to him as **her God** parallels 2:7 and emphasizes the relationship between God and his people, as is common in Hosea (see the note on Hs 7:10).

3:3-5 Jerusalem’s civic leaders were ruthless (v. 3), and her spiritual leaders were corrupt (v. 4; Jr 2:8; Ezk 22:26; Hab 1:4). There is a wordplay in this section: wicked **princes** are **within her** (v. 3), but the **righteous LORD** is also **in her** (the same word in Hebrew), carrying forth **his justice** every morning (v. 5).

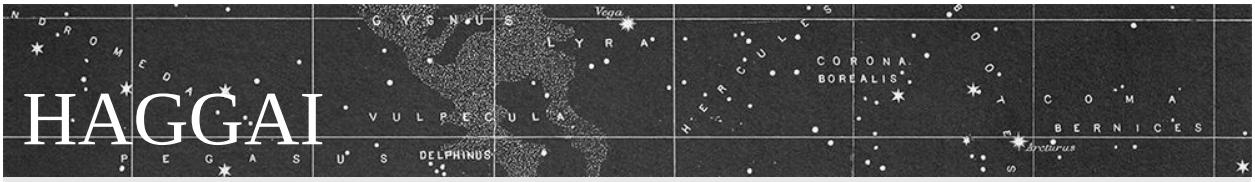
3:6-8 Despite God’s judgment on the **nations** and **their cities** (v. 6), Judah had not learned (v. 7; see v. 2). Consequently, the people were to **wait** for him to **pour out** his wrath on **the whole earth** (v. 8; Hab 2:3). God’s **decision** to **gather** and **assemble** the **nations** is for the purpose of punishing them, as in 1:2-3 (see Hb); Joel 3:2,11; and Zechariah 14:2. These two verbs are used elsewhere of regathering God’s people from exile (Mc 2:12; 4:6), so these actions seem to carry notes of both salvation and judgment. Incidentally, Judah was exhorted to gather together and seek God in 2:1-3 (see note).

3:9-13 The outpouring of wrath on the nations is not the whole story (v. 8; Hs 5:10), however, because at that time God will also cause the **peoples**, **all of them**, to call on his name and serve him together (v. 9; see 2:11; Ps 67:3; Jl 2:28-32; Am 9:11-12; Mc 4:1-4). The day of the LORD is good news for those who seek the LORD (2:3). **Cush** was slain by God’s “sword” in 2:12 but is now linked to those who will **bring an**

offering to him (v. 10; Is 18:7; 60:5; Hg 2:7). The destruction of the **arrogant**, especially those who were so **on** [God's] **holy mountain** (v. 11; Ob 16; see Jl 3:17), concerns both Israelites (1:12; Am 6:8) and Gentiles (1:16; 2:8,10,15; Is 2:11-17; Ob 3-4,12-13; Zch 9:6; 10:11). The **people** who remain will be **humble** (v. 12; 2:3; Am 8:4; Hab 3:14; Mt 5:5) and **take refuge in the name of the LORD** (v. 12; Jl 2:32; Mc 4:5; Nah 1:7). Fittingly, the king of this saved people is also "humble" (Zch 9:9). Included in this international group (v. 9; Is 19:25; Zch 2:11) is **the remnant of Israel**, who will be like flock well-cared for (v. 13; 2:7).

3:14-17 The salvation of not only Judah (2:7) but of Israel (vv. 13-14) is cause for celebration. The Hebrew words and phrases translated "humble" (v. 12), **Daughter Zion; shout loudly**, **Israel** (v. 14), **King** (v. 15), and **delight** (v. 17) are also found in Zechariah 9:9, which predicts the coming of the Messiah who brings salvation. The implication is that the righteous **King of Israel** in their midst (vv. 5,15,17) is actually the Messiah. The Hebrew word translated **warrior** is part of the Hebrew name translated "Mighty God" in Isaiah 9:6.

3:18-20 God promises to **save the lame and gather the outcasts** (v. 19; see the note on Mc 2:12-13). These two groups were mentioned together in Micah 4:6 (see the note on Mc 4:6-8). The shame of his people had been known to the whole earth (see 2:8,10; Ob 12-16; Mc 4:11) but will be turned to **fame and praise among all the peoples** (Dt 26:19; Is 4:2; 55:13; Jr 33:9).



HAGGAI

INTRODUCTION

Haggai challenged the discouraged people in Jerusalem to examine the way they were living and to set new priorities that would please God. They must remember that God was with them; he controls their future and wants his people to be holy.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: There is no statement that strictly identifies who wrote this book, but the words recorded are repeatedly connected to what God spoke to the prophet Haggai (1:1,3,13; 2:1,10,14,20).

BACKGROUND: In 587 BC Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem for the third time, this time destroying the walls, the temple, and the city (2Kg 25:8-21; Jr 39–40). Most of the people were taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years (Jr 25:11-12; 29:10), although Jeremiah and a few survivors stayed in Jerusalem (Jr 41–43). God predicted through Isaiah that the strong king named Cyrus (Is 44:24–45:2) would defeat Babylon and her gods (Is 46–47). After the Persian king Cyrus defeated Babylon, he issued a decree in 538 BC that allowed the exiled nations in Babylon to return to their homelands (Ezr 1:1-4; Cyrus Cylinder). Sheshbazzar (Ezr 1:8-11) led about 43,000 Jewish pilgrims back to the state of *Yehud* (Judah) to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (Ezr 2:64-65). In the seventh month the governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua led the people in building an altar to worship God (Ezr 3:1-7), then in their second year the people laid the foundation of the new temple (Ezr 3:8-10). But this effort was stopped for the next sixteen years because the Samaritan people who lived north of Jerusalem frustrated these rebuilding efforts, plus they hired lawyers to cause the Persian authorities to stop supporting the work on this temple (Ezr 4:1-5). This led to a period of great discouragement. Apathy set in because many of the hopes of the Jewish people were unfulfilled. The walls of the city were not repaired, the temple was not rebuilt, there was a famine in the land (Hg 2:9-11), and the people were still under Persian control. They could do nothing without the approval of Tattenai, the governor of the "region west of the Euphrates River," and his officials (Ezr 5:3-5). There seemed to be no way to move forward and rebuild the temple.

After the death of Cyrus, his son Cambyses became king (530–522 BC). He marched through Judah and conquered most of Egypt, but on his way home he died (possibly an assassination). A high army official named Darius took control of the Persian army, marched back to Babylon, defeated a rebel force led by Gaumata, and became king in 522 BC. Darius put down several revolts and then reformed the satrapy administrative system, with the result that by 520 BC the Persian Empire was at peace.

In the second year of Darius (520 BC; Hg 1:1; Ezr 4:24–5:2) when the conflict over political control of the empire was over, God directed Haggai to encourage the leaders in Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. When governor Tattenai heard about this rebuilding, he questioned the plan's legitimacy and wrote to Darius to find out whether the government was sanctioning this project (Ezr 5:3-17). Darius approved the rebuilding campaign and even supported it through the royal treasury, as was confirmed by the discovery of Cyrus's original decree in a palace at Ecbatana (Ezr 6:1-12). Consequently, the temple rebuilding was completed in four years (Ezr 6:15).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Throughout the Bible, there is a call and a reminder to place God first. The period following the return from exile was no exception. Haggai's challenge was to call the postexilic community of Jews living in

Jerusalem not simply to focus on their own creature comforts but to honor God. This commitment would be reflected in their work on the temple. Haggai's call was later reflected in the words of Jesus: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you" (Mt 6:33).

Haggai's call for the people to get their priorities in order and place God first by rebuilding his temple was of great importance. For the people to return to this task was a sign of their priorities. It also showed that God was with the remnant and that his promises of restoration had begun to be fulfilled. Their obedience in this matter declared God's glory and thus brought him pleasure. It served to vindicate the Lord since the temple's destruction had disgraced the Lord's name. Finally, their obedience to Haggai's words served as a pledge of the new covenant and the messianic age. The restoration of the temple was a sign that God had not revoked his covenant with Levi or his covenant with David. He would provide cleansing and restoration through a glorious temple and a messianic ruler.

STRUCTURE

The book of Haggai contains four short confrontational speeches in chronological order that identify ways the leaders and people in Jerusalem should change their theological thinking and behavior. There is a logical progression in the structure. People must glorify God (1:1-15), stay committed to God's plans (2:1-9), please God by living holy lives (2:10-19), and serve him faithfully (2:20-23).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God desires to be honored by his people (see 1:8). Because of this, he has the right to prescribe what pleases him. His concern in the time of Haggai was to be worshiped properly in his temple.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

On one hand, the people whom Haggai addressed needed to be rebuked. They were under a divine curse because of their inactivity concerning the things of God. It was not so much that they were actively evil but that they were passive when they should have been passionate. On the other hand, the book shows that people can be moved to do right things, but even this must be at God's initiative: "The LORD roused . . . the spirit of all the remnant of the people" (1:14).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The people who returned from exile were cured of the idolatry that took their ancestors into captivity. Haggai revived an emphasis from the era of the Davidic monarchy: the need for a temple as a place for redeemed people to worship.

HAGGAI TIMELINE

605–540 BC

Babylonian campaign against Jerusalem begins; Daniel and others of Israelite nobility taken to Babylon. **605**

A second deportation to Babylon includes the prophet Ezekiel. **597**

Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem begins. **JANUARY, 588**

Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed by the Babylonians; a third wave of exiles taken to Babylon. **586**

Cyrus, who ruled the Persian Empire from **559** to **530**, takes Babylon with little resistance. **539**

540–525 BC

Cyrus issues a decree allowing the Jews to return to Judah and rebuild the temple. **538**

Events in Ezra **538–457**

Second temple construction begins under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership. **536**

Cyrus dies in battle and his son Cambyses succeeds him and rules from **530** to **522**.

Discouragement reinforced by opposition from transplanted people brings work on the temple to a halt. **526**

Darius succeeds Cambyses and rules from **522** to **486**.

525–520 BC

Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume construction of the temple. **520–518**

Haggai's first message **AUGUST 29, 520**

Temple building resumes. **SEPTEMBER 21, 520**

Haggai's second message **OCTOBER 17, 520**

520–515 BC

Haggai's third and fourth messages **DECEMBER 18, 520**

Zechariah's night visions **FEBRUARY 15, 519**

Temple completed **MARCH 12, 515**

COMMAND TO REBUILD THE TEMPLE

1 In the second year of King Darius, † † on the first day of the sixth
month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet † Haggai to
Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, † the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son
of Jehozadak, the high priest: †
2 "The LORD of Armies says this: These people say: The time has not come for
the house of the LORD to be rebuilt." †
3 The word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai: 4 "Is it a time for you
yourselves to live in your paneled houses, † while this house † lies in ruins?"
5 Now, the LORD of Armies says this: "Think carefully † about † your ways:

6 You have planted much but harvested little.

You eat
but never have enough to be satisfied.
You drink
but never have enough to be happy.
You put on clothes
but never have enough to get warm.
The wage earner puts his wages into a bag with a hole in it.” †

7 The LORD of Armies says this: “Think carefully about your ways. 8 Go up into the hills, bring down lumber, and build the house; and I will be pleased with it and be glorified,” says the LORD. 9 “You expected much, but then it amounted to little. When you brought the harvest to your house, I ruined † it. Why? ” This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. “Because my house still lies in ruins, while each of you is busy with his own house.

10 So on your account, †
the skies have withheld the dew and the land its crops. †
11 I have summoned a drought on the fields and the hills, on the grain, new wine, fresh oil, and whatever the ground yields, on man and animal,
and on all that your hands produce.”

THE PEOPLE’S RESPONSE

12 Then Zerubbabel † son of Shealtiel, the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the entire remnant of the people † obeyed the LORD their God and the words of the prophet Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent him. So the people feared the LORD. †
13 Then Haggai, the LORD’s messenger, delivered the LORD’s message to the people: “I am with you † — this is the LORD’s declaration.”
14 The LORD roused the spirit † of Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, the spirit of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. They began work on the house of the LORD of Armies, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

1:1 King of Persia reigned 522–486 BC> **1:4** = the temple **1:5** Lit *Place your heart on,* also in v. 7 **1:9** Lit *blew on* **1:10** Or *So above you*

1:1 Ezr 4:5; Neh 12:22; Dn 9:11; 11:1; Hg 1:15; 2:10; Zch 1:1,7; 7:1 **1:1** Ezr 5:1; 6:14 **1:1** 1Ch 3:19; Ezr 3:2,8; 5:2; Neh 12:1; Hg 1:12,14; 2:2,23; Lk 3:27 **1:1** Hg 1:12,14; 2:2,4; Zch 3:1,8; 6:11 **1:2** Ezr 1:3 **1:4** 1Kg 7:7; Jr 22:14 **1:5** Hg 2:15,18 **1:6** Lv 26:20; Dt 28:38-40 **1:10** Lv 26:20; Dt 11:17 **1:12** 1Ch 13:9; Ezr 3:8; Neh 12:1; Hg 2:2; Zch 4:6 **1:12** Is 10:20-21; Jr 41:10; Hg 2:2 **1:12** Ex 14:31; Dt 4:10; 1Sm 12:18 **1:13** Hg 2:4 **1:14** 1Ch 5:26; Ezr 1:1,5; Is 13:17; 14:9; 41:10; 45:13; Jr 51:11

1:1 The book of Haggai begins the final section of the Minor Prophets, consisting of three books that concern the postexilic period. The prophetic ministries of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were directed toward the Israelites who had returned to the land from exile in Babylon (see Ezr 1:1-5). The prophets **Haggai** and Zechariah are also mentioned in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14. **Zerubabbel** was from the royal line of David (1Ch 3:17-19; Mt 1:12) but was only a **governor** because the returnees were still under foreign rule (Neh 9:36-37). **Joshua son of Jehozadak** was the **high priest** (see 1Ch 6:1-15 for his lineage). These two represented the royal and priestly leadership of Israel and are frequently referred to in the postexilic books (e.g., Ezr 3:2,8; Neh 12:1; Zch 3:1-9; 4:6-10; 6:11). Note that Haggai's prophetic word in this book is especially addressed to the political and religious leaders.

1:2-4 Haggai's first message concerns the people neglecting to build the **house of the LORD** (v. 2) while themselves living in **paneled houses** (v. 4). The people (or perhaps the leaders) were pouring resources into their own dwellings for the purpose of luxury while the temple was still in ruins. A similar situation had troubled David's conscience (2Sm 7:2). Solomon's temple was paneled with cedar (1Kg 6:9,15).

1:5-11 Haggai charges them twice to consider their ways (vv. 5,7). Their neglect of God's **house** (i.e., temple), which was in ruins (vv. 4,9), had not **glorified** God (v. 8; 2:9) and had brought about consequences in the form of small harvests and drought (vv. 6,10-11)—just like what they experienced before the exile (e.g., Hs 2:9; 8:7; Jl 1:4; Am 5:11; Zph 1:13). Such were covenant curses (see Dt 28:23,31,38-40) and demonstrate that the return of some Israelites to the land fell far short of fulfilling the glorious promises of salvation (Jl 2:23-26; Am 9:13-14). These promises are also linked to **grain, new wine,** and **fresh oil** (v. 11) in Hosea 2:22; Joel 2:19.

1:12-15 Twenty-three days later (vv. 1,15), Zerubbabel, Joshua, and the **entire remnant of the people** responded in obedience to the word of God shared through Haggai (v. 12). He assured them of God's presence with them (v. 13; 2:4). This encouraging response came about because God **roused** their **spirit** to this end (v. 14), similar to what was done in Exodus 35:21-29 and Ezra 1:1,5.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMISE

2 On the twenty-first day of the seventh month, † the word of the LORD
came through the prophet Haggai: 2 "Speak to Zerubbabel son of
Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak,
and to the remnant of the people: 3 'Who is left among you who saw this house
in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Doesn't it seem to you like
nothing by comparison? † 4 Even so, be strong, Zerubbabel — this is the LORD's
declaration. † Be strong, Joshua son of Jehozadak, high priest. Be strong, all
you people of the land — this is the LORD's declaration. Work! For I am with
you † — the declaration of the LORD of Armies. 5 This is the promise I made to

you when you came out of Egypt, † and my Spirit is present among you; don't be afraid.' "
6 For the LORD of Armies says this: "Once more, in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, † the sea and the dry land. † 7 I will shake all the nations so that the treasures of all the nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory," † says the LORD of Armies. 8 "The silver and gold belong to me" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. 9 "The final glory of this house † will be greater than the first," † says the LORD of Armies. "I will provide peace in this place" † — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

FROM DEPRIVATION TO BLESSING

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: 11 "This is what the LORD of Armies says: Ask the priests for a ruling. † 12 If a man is carrying consecrated meat in the fold of his garment, and it touches bread, stew, wine, oil, or any other food, does it become holy? " †
The priests answered, "No."
13 Then Haggai asked, "If someone defiled by contact with a corpse touches any of these, does it become defiled? " †
The priests answered, "It becomes defiled."
14 Then Haggai replied, "So is this people, and so is this nation before me — this is the LORD's declaration. And so is every work of their hands; even what they offer there is defiled.
15 "Now from this day on, think carefully: Before one stone was placed on another in the LORD's temple, 16 what state were you in? † When someone came to a grain heap of twenty measures, it only amounted to ten; when one came to the winepress to dip fifty measures from the vat, it only amounted to twenty. 17 I struck you — all the work of your hands — with blight, mildew, † and hail, † but you didn't turn to me — this is the LORD's declaration. 18 "From this day on, think carefully; † from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid; think carefully. 19 Is there still seed left in the granary? The vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yet produced. But from this day on I will bless you." †

PROMISE TO ZERUBBABEL

20 The word of the LORD came to Haggai a second time on the twenty-fourth day
of the month: 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah: I am going to shake
the heavens and the earth. † 22 I will overturn royal thrones and destroy the
power of the Gentile kingdoms. † I will overturn chariots and their riders.
Horses and their riders will fall, each by his brother's sword. 23 On that day" —
this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — "I will take you, Zerubbabel son
of Shealtiel, my servant" — this is the LORD's declaration — "and make you like
my signet ring, † for I have chosen you." † This is the declaration of the LORD
of Armies.

2:9 Or *The glory of this latter house* **2:16** Hb obscure

2:1 Lv 23:33-43; 2Ch 7:8-10 **2:3** 1Kg 5:13-16; 6:38; 1Ch 29:1-8; Ezr 3:10-13; Zch 4:10 **2:4** Jos 1:6-9; 1Ch 28:10,20 **2:4** Hg 1:13; Zch 8:9 **2:5** Ex 33:14-17 **2:6** Hg 2:21 **2:6** Is 64:2; Ezk 38:19-20; Heb 12:26-28 **2:7** Ex 40:34-35; 1Kg 8:10-11; Is 60:1-13 **2:9** Mt 12:42 **2:9** Is 60:18 **2:11** Mal 2:7 **2:12** Jr 11:15 **2:13** Lv 11:39; 22:4-6; Nm 19:11-13,22 **2:17** Dt 28:22; 1Kg 8:37; Am 4:9 **2:17** Ps 105:32-33 **2:18** Hg 1:5,7 **2:19** Zch 8:9-13 **2:21** Hg 2:6-7; Ezk 38:19-20 **2:22** Gn 19:25; Am 4:11 **2:23** Est 8:8; Jr 22:23-25 **2:23** Mt 1:12-13

2:1-5 Almost one month later (v. 1; 1:15), Zerubbabel, Joshua, and **the remnant** were encouraged to **be strong** and continue to **work** even though **this house** they were rebuilding paled in comparison to the **former glory** of Solomon's temple (vv. 2-4; Jos 1:6-9; Zch 4:10). God again assured them of his presence (v. 4; 1:13; Jos 1:5,9; Is 35:4; 43:5), especially of his Spirit in their midst since the exodus from **Egypt** (v. 5; Neh 9:20; Is 63:11).

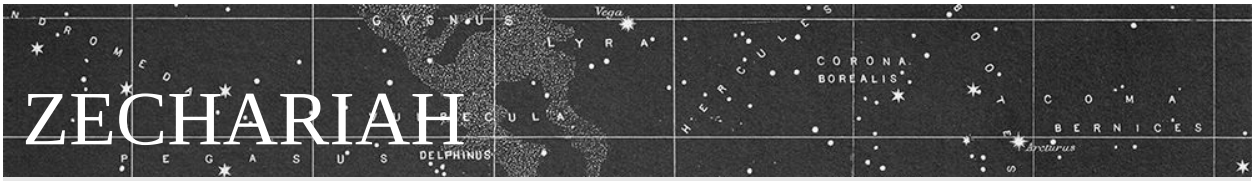
2:6-9 Despite the present humble state of God's temple (v. 3), its latter **glory** will exceed its former glory (v. 9). This will happen when God shakes the **heavens and the earth.** Such a shaking is associated with eschatological events in verses 21-22; Isaiah 13:13; Joel 2:10; and 3:16. **The nations** too will be shaken and will bring their **treasures** to the temple (v. 7; Is 60:5-7; Hs 13:15; Nah 2:9; Zph 3:10). The picture of the nations coming to worship at Zion parallels Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 3:17; Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 2:10-12; and 8:20-23. The filling of the temple with **glory** parallels Habakkuk 2:14. While contrasting with Zephaniah 1:4, the granting of **peace in this place** echoes Isaiah 66:1 and Micah 5:5.

2:10-14 The prophetic word that begins here came a little more than two months after the previous one (v. 10; see v. 1). Although holiness cannot be transmitted (vv. 11-12), uncleanness is transmitted (v. 13). Sadly, the point is that **this people** is **defiled** and likewise the **work of their hands** and even their offerings are too (v. 14). Despite their return to the land from exile, this longstanding spiritual problem had not yet been resolved (see the note on 1:5-11; Hs 5:3; 6:10; 9:3-4; Ezk 36:25).

2:15-19 The prophetic message continues and is explicitly described as having been given on **the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid** (v. 18; Zch 4:9; 8:9). This momentous day will mark a dramatic transition from being cursed (vv. 16-17; 1:6,9-11; Am 4:9) and unclean (v. 14) to being blessed (v. 19). This future hope related to the temple picks up on that of verses 6-9 (see Zch 4:6-10; 6:12-15).

2:20-23 The focus on the priests in verses 10-13 is followed by another message on the same day to the royal, Davidic representative **Zerubbabel** (vv. 20-21; see the note on 1:1). The eschatological shaking of **heavens** and **earth** is repeated (see the note on vv. 6-9) but this time with reference to the downfall of the **Gentile kingdoms** (v. 22), including their armies (see the notes on Hab 3:7-15). In such a context, the favor shown to Zerubbabel takes on messianic implications (v. 23), much like David does in Jeremiah

30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24; and Hosea 3:5. Haggai announces that Zerubbabel will be like a **signet ring** (v. 23), a deliberate allusion to Jeremiah 22:24-30 which shows that God is reversing his earlier judgment on the Davidic line. Zerubbabel will reinstate the Davidic, messianic line. Thus, Haggai points to Zerubbabel as a symbol of hope for the future.



ZECHARIAH

INTRODUCTION

Zechariah prophesied to a group of discouraged Israelites, announcing that it was a new day for God's chosen people. He sought to inspire those who had returned from captivity to rebuild the temple and rededicate their lives to the Lord. The message of encouragement involved surrealistic visions and vivid poetic images, focused on a reversal of God's judgment, and called for a reversal of the people's behavior.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Zechariah returned to Judah with the former exiles and was apparently a priest (Neh 12:16). He was a contemporary of Haggai. Though nothing is known of cooperation between the two prophets, they had similar missions and are credited with the successful reconstruction of the temple (Ezr 5:1-2; 6:14). Zechariah gave dates for two periods of his prophetic ministry (520 and 518 BC; Zch 1:1,7; 7:1). Whether he was the author of the entire book is debated. Many scholars, impressed with the differences between chapters 1–8 and 9–14, conclude that Zechariah did not write the last six chapters. The concept of authorship at the time of the Bible, however, was different from modern standards. In the OT, there is evidence of portions of books under a single author's name that were not written by that author (Nm 12:3; Dt 34:5-12; Jr 51:64c).

BACKGROUND: A key moment in the history of the Israelites came after King Cyrus of Persia granted the captives permission to return to Palestine (538 BC). The chosen people had just come through one of the worst experiences possible in the ancient world. Their homeland was devastated by invading armies, their capital city and temple were plundered and flattened, many of their people and leaders were killed, and most of the rest were carried off into pagan lands. The returnees who made the long trek back to Judah were faced with the challenge of reestablishing Jerusalem and the temple. Based on the account in the book of Ezra, work began immediately. But after the altar was rebuilt and the foundation stones were laid, problems arose and the work stopped (Ezr 3:1–4:24). Though sacrifices were offered on the altar, the temple continued to lie in ruins for almost two more decades.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Zechariah is full of the language of judgment, but it is also full of God's promises. The Lord challenged his people to undertake an overwhelmingly difficult task, and he assured them of their success through his power. But the nature of these promises extended beyond rebuilding the temple. From beginning to end, the Bible tells the story of God's redemptive plan, culminating in God's triumph over evil and salvation for sinners. Zechariah's prophecies anticipate this grand culmination of history, describing a coming glorious king, a God who triumphs over all, and a world with all wrongs corrected. These promises set the stage for God's future kingdom, as evidenced by the quotes and allusions to Zechariah in the NT.

STRUCTURE

The book of Zechariah is complex, sometimes with seemingly disjointed units, like a series of snapshots that need to be put in order. The apparent lack of organization may reflect the oral origin of the book, a collection of sermons that were patched together in written form. But it may also have been intentional. With the goal of shocking the hearers and bringing them to their senses, rapid-fire movement from one thought to another may have been part of Zechariah's technique. Chapters 1–8 contain carefully dated

visions and sermons, while chapters 9–14 consist of undated poetic oracles and narrative descriptions of judgment and blessing.

Zechariah used a mix of genres. His sermons, poetry, and oracles of judgment and salvation were typical of the prophetic genre. But his visions had similarities with apocalyptic literature, best represented in the OT by the book of Daniel. The content of some of his oracles, describing divine intervention and a radically different world, are also typical of apocalyptic literature. Thus, Zechariah may represent a stage of development between a prophetic form and an apocalyptic form.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Zechariah emphasizes God's mercy—for his name's sake—on his beloved people. For this reason they will one day dwell in security and blessing in Jerusalem forever. God's Spirit is present to enable his servants (4:6). Jesus is predicted in a number of places: his royal entrance into Jerusalem (9:9); his betrayal for thirty silver pieces (11:12); and his role as Shepherd (13:7) and Branch (3:8; 6:12).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

In general, Zechariah looks forward to the time that God's people—having been punished for their sins—will be restored in righteousness. In particular, the book shows what God can accomplish through individuals committed to obedience. These exemplary persons are Zechariah the prophet, Joshua the priest (chap. 3), and Zerubbabel the governor (4:6-10). These men foreshadow the coming of the Messiah, the greatest Prophet, Priest, and King.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Zechariah draws attention to the future redemption of God's people corporately, as they live safely in the land and he lives among them (chap. 8). This salvation will follow the horrible "day belonging to the LORD" (14:1) when God will defeat the nations that have come against Jerusalem (chap. 14). All those who share in this salvation "will be holy to the LORD of Armies" (14:21).

ZECHARIAH TIMELINE

625–525 BC

Jeremiah prophesies that the Babylonian exile will last 70 years. **605**

Nebuchadnezzar's three invasions of Judah **605, 597, 586**

Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. **586**

Fall of Babylon and rise of Persia **539**

Cyrus's decree allows return of Jews from exile; 42,360 return initially. **538**

Second temple construction begins under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership. **536**

Discouragement reinforced by opposition from transplanted peoples brought work on the temple to a halt. **526**

525–520 BC

Aeschylus, **(525–456)** Greek tragedian, many of whose plays dealt with the Persian invasion of Greece. He participated in the Greek victories at Marathon and Salamis.

Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume construction of the temple. **520–518**

Haggai's first message **AUGUST 29, 520**

Temple building resumes. **SEPTEMBER 21, 520**

Haggai's second message **OCTOBER 17, 520**

Zechariah's first prophetic message **OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 520**

520–460 BC

Haggai's third and fourth messages **DECEMBER 18, 520**

Zechariah's night visions **FEBRUARY 15, 519**

Zechariah's message on fasting **DECEMBER 7, 518**

Temple completed **MARCH 12, 515**

Greeks, outnumbered almost five to one, defeat Persians in Battle of Marathon through superior military intelligence and strategy, forestalling Persian expansion into Europe. **490**

Malachi's prophecy **460**

460–425 BC

Second group of exiles returns to Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra. **458**

Third group of exiles return under Nehemiah's leadership. **445**

Jerusalem's walls rebuilt under Nehemiah's leadership **445**

Nehemiah returns to Persia. **432**

The second Peloponnesian Wars between Athens and other Greek city-states **431–404**

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem. **425**

A PLEA FOR REPENTANCE

1 In the eighth month, in the second year of Darius, † the word of the
LORD came to the prophet Zechariah † son of Berechiah, son of Iddo:
2 "The LORD was extremely angry with your ancestors. † 3 So tell the
people, 'This is what the LORD of Armies says: Return to me — this is the
declaration of the LORD of Armies — and I will return to you, says the LORD of
Armies. † 4 Do not be like your ancestors; † the earlier prophets proclaimed to
them: † This is what the LORD of Armies says: Turn from your evil ways and
your evil deeds. † But they did not listen or pay attention to me — this is the
LORD's declaration. 5 Where are your ancestors now? And do the prophets live

forever? 6 But didn't my words and my statutes that I commanded my servants
the prophets overtake your ancestors? ' "
So the people repented and said, "As the LORD of Armies decided to deal with us
for our ways and our deeds, so he has dealt with us." †
The Night Visions 7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is
the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to
the prophet Zechariah son of Berechiah, son of Iddo:

FIRST VISION: HORSEMEN

8 I looked out in the night and saw a man riding on a chestnut † horse. † He
was standing among the myrtle trees in the valley. † Behind him were chestnut,
brown, and white horses. 9 I asked, "What are these, my lord? "
The angel who was talking to me replied, "I will show you what they are."
10 Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones
the LORD has sent to patrol the earth."
11 They reported to the angel of the LORD standing among the myrtle trees, "We
have patrolled the earth, and right now the whole earth is calm and quiet." †
12 Then the angel of the LORD responded, "How long, LORD of Armies, will you
withhold mercy from Jerusalem and the cities of Judah that you have been angry
with these seventy years? " † 13 The LORD replied with kind and comforting
words to the angel who was speaking with me.
14 So the angel who was speaking with me said, "Proclaim: The LORD of Armies
says: I am extremely jealous † for Jerusalem and Zion. 15 I am fiercely angry
with the nations that are at ease, † for I was a little angry, but they made the
destruction worse. † 16 Therefore, this is what the LORD says: In mercy, I have
returned to Jerusalem; my house will be rebuilt within it — this is the declaration
of the LORD of Armies — and a measuring line will be stretched out over
Jerusalem. †
17 "Proclaim further: This is what the LORD of Armies says: My cities will again
overflow with prosperity; the LORD will once more comfort Zion and again
choose Jerusalem." †

SECOND VISION: FOUR HORNS AND CRAFTSMEN

18 Then I looked up and saw four horns. † 19 So I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “What are these? ”
And he said to me, “These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.”
20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21 I asked, “What are they coming to do? ”
He replied, “These are the horns that scattered Judah so no one could raise his head. These craftsmen have come to terrify them, to cut off † the horns of the nations that raised a horn against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

1:8 Lit *red* **1:8** Lit *depths* **1:15** Lit *they helped for evil* **1:21** Lit *throw down*

1:1 Ezr 4:5,24; 5:5-7; Ezr 6:1,12-15; Neh 12:22; Hg 1:1,15; 2:10; Zch 7:1 **1:1** Ezr 5:1; 6:14 **1:2** Zch 8:14 **1:3** Neh 1:9; Is 44:22; Jr 3:7,10; 24:7; Am 4:6-11; Mal 3:7 **1:4** 2Ch 30:7,8; Ps 78:8,57 **1:4** Dn 9:6,10; Am 3:7 **1:4** 2Kg 17:13; 2Ch 7:14; Ezk 33:9,11 **1:6** Jr 51:12; Lm 2:17; Zch 8:14-15 **1:8** Rv 6:4 **1:11** Jos 11:23; Jdg 5:31; Is 14:7 **1:12** Ps 13:1; 79:5; 89:46; 90:13; Jr 25:11-12; 29:10 **1:14** Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; Jos 24:19; Nah 1:2; Zch 8:2 **1:15** Is 34:2; Nah 1:2 **1:16** 2Kg 21:13; Is 28:17; 34:11; Lm 2:8; Am 7:17 **1:17** 2Ch 6:6; Is 40:1; Zch 2:12 **1:18** Ezk 43:15,20

1:1 Like his contemporary and colleague Haggai (see the note on Hg 1:1), **Zechariah** was a prophet to the post-exilic community that had returned to the land under Zerubabbel and Joshua. The date of his first message **in the eighth month** of Darius’s second year puts it between Haggai’s messages beginning in 2:1 and 2:10.

1:2-6 The **ancestors** refer to previous generations of Israelites, especially those who had been exiled (v. 2). Despite the present generation’s return to the land, their continuing need was, as God says, to **return to** [him] so that [he] **will return to** [them] (v. 3; Dt 30:2-3; Is 10:21; Jl 2:12; Mal 3:7). The **earlier prophets** had called previous generations to repent but to no avail (v. 4; 7:7,12; 2Kg 17:13; 2Ch 7:14). Although those prophets had since died, God’s **words** through them continue on and had overtaken the people’s **ancestors** (vv. 5-6; Is 40:6-8). Awareness of existing prophetic writings and their enduring significance is thus implied (see 2Ch 20:20). The confession of the people recognizes God’s justice and gives hope for the future (see Neh 9:33; Dn 9:5-7).

1:7 Following the introductory message in verses 1-6, Zechariah was given a series of visions three months later (1:8–6:15).

1:8-17 This is Zechariah’s first vision. The **horses** had gone throughout the earth and found it **calm and quiet** (vv. 8-11). The unfavorable response of **the angel of the LORD** indicates that God had not yet redeemed Jerusalem and Judah (v. 12). Jeremiah had said that the duration of the exile would last **seventy years** (v. 12; see 2Ch 36:21; Jr 25:11-12; 29:10; Dn 9:2,24). God’s kind and comforting reply (v. 13) relates to his great jealousy for Zion (v. 14) and his purpose to judge the nations of the earth (v. 15). His return to Jerusalem (see v. 3; 8:3,15; Ezk 43:2-5) **in mercy** (see Hs 1:7; 2:1,19,23; Mc 7:19) will include the building of his **house** (i.e. temple), the construction of Jerusalem, and the growth of his **cities** (vv. 16-17; 2:1-5; Ezk 40:3). God’s purpose to **comfort Zion** and **choose Jerusalem** (v. 17) is a major theme in Zechariah (see 2:12; 8:2-3,15; 9:9; Dt 12:5; Pss 78:68; 132:13).

1:18-21 Zechariah’s second vision. The **nations** that afflicted Israel (1:11,15) are represented by four **horns** that **scattered** them (vv. 18-19; 2:6). Such would include Babylon (2:7). Four kingdoms likewise rule over God’s people in Daniel 2:31-45 and 7:2-27 prior to the establishment of the messianic kingdom. These horns, however, would be defeated by **four craftsmen** (vv. 20-21; Jr 50:14). The craftsmen may

relate to the emphasis on the temple in Zechariah (see v. 16; the note on 3:8-10; 4:1-3; Ex 35:30-35; 38:22-23). They may also represent the Persian Empire and its ability to restrain the destructive power of other nations. In any case, the overall point is that Israel's enemies will be punished in fulfillment of verses 12-17.

THIRD VISION: SURVEYOR

2 I looked up and saw a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 I asked, "Where are you going?"

He answered me, "To measure Jerusalem to determine its width and length."

3 Then the angel who was speaking with me went out, and another angel went out to meet him. 4 He said to him, "Run and tell this young man: Jerusalem will be inhabited without walls because of the number of people and livestock in it." † 5 The declaration of the LORD: "I myself will be a wall † of fire around it, and I will be the glory within it."

6 "Listen! Listen! Flee from the land of the north" † — this is the LORD's declaration — "for I have scattered you like the four winds of heaven" — this is the LORD's declaration. 7 "Listen, Zion! Escape, you who are living with Daughter Babylon." 8 For the LORD of Armies says this: "In pursuit of his glory, he sent me against the nations plundering you, for whoever touches you touches the pupil † of my † eye. 9 For look, I am raising my hand against them, and they will become plunder for their own servants. † Then you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me.

10 "Daughter Zion, shout for joy and be glad, for I am coming to dwell among you" — this is the LORD's declaration. 11 "Many nations will join themselves to the LORD on that day and become my † people. † I will dwell among you, and you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you. 12 The LORD will take possession of Judah as his portion in the Holy Land, and he will once again choose Jerusalem. † 13 Let all people be silent † before the LORD, for from his holy dwelling he has roused himself."

2:8 Or *apple* **2:8** Alt Hb tradition; MT reads *his* **2:11** LXX, Syr read *his*
2:4 Is 49:19; Jr 31:27; Ezk 36:11 **2:5** Is 26:1 **2:6** Jr 6:22; 10:22; 50:9 **2:9** Is 11:15; 19:16 **2:10-11** Ps 47:9; Is 42:6; Mc 4:2 **2:12** 2Ch 6:6; Zch 1:17; 3:2 **2:13** Hab 2:20

2:1-5 Zechariah's third vision is recorded in 2:1-13. The **measuring line** for Jerusalem (vv. 1-2) refers back to the promise in 1:16 (see Ezk 40:3), but the unfolding of these visions reveals that the city is so spread out because of its overflowing population that it cannot be measured (vv. 3-4; 10:8; Is 54:2-3). The

lack of typical city walls is a non-issue because God will be a **wall of fire** surrounding her (see Ex 14:19-20) and **glory** within her (v. 5; Is 4:2).

2:6-9 The future glory of Jerusalem is naturally coupled with the return of God's people from the **north** (v. 6; Jr 3:18). Zion is depicted as being in exile in **Babylon**, which she must escape (v. 7; Is 48:20; 52:11-12). Her prior scattering to the **four winds of heaven** connects back to the "four horns" in 1:18-19. This deliverance will be tied to the judgment of Babylon and enemy **nations** (vv. 8-9; see 1:15,21).

2:10-13 The eschatological salvation of the daughter of Zion (vv. 7,10) will result in Zion's great **joy** (see 9:9; Zph 3:14). God will **dwell** in her midst (vv. 5,10-11; Ezk 48:35; Zph 3:15,17), and **many nations** will **become** [his] **people** (v. 11; Is 56:3-7; Jr 3:17; Mc 4:1-4; Zph 3:9). His favor toward Judah and Jerusalem **in the Holy Land** (v. 12) picks up on 1:16-17. The worldwide scope of this passage is reinforced through the call to all people to **be silent before the LORD** (v. 13; Hab 2:20; Zph 1:7).

FOURTH VISION: HIGH PRIEST AND BRANCH

3 Then he showed me the high priest Joshua † standing before the angel of the LORD, † with Satan † † standing at his right side to accuse him.
2 The LORD † said to Satan: "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! May the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Isn't this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" †
3 Now Joshua was dressed with filthy † clothes † as he stood before the angel. † 4 So the angel of the LORD † spoke to those † standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes!" Then he said to him, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, † and I will clothe you with festive robes."
5 Then I said, "Let them put a clean turban † on his head." So a clean turban was placed on his head, and they clothed him in garments while the angel of the LORD was standing nearby.
6 Then the angel of the LORD charged Joshua: 7 "This is what the LORD of Armies says: If you walk in my ways and keep my mandates, you will both rule my house and take care of my courts; I will also grant you access among these who are standing here.
8 "Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your colleagues sitting before you; indeed, these men are a sign that I am about to bring my servant, the Branch. †
9 Notice the stone † I have set before Joshua; on that one stone are seven eyes. † I will engrave an inscription on it" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — "and I will take away the iniquity of this land in a single day.

10 On that day, each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree." † This is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.

3:1 Or *the accuser* **3:2** Syr reads *The Angel of the Lord* **3:3** Probably stained with human excrement **3:4** Lit *he* **3:4** = the angels

3:1 Hg 1:1,12,14; 2:4; Zch 6:11 **3:1** Gn 16:7-13; 21:17; 22:11-16; 31:11-13 **3:1** 1Ch 21:1; Jb 1:6-12; Rv 12:10 **3:2** Dt 4:20; Am 4:11 **3:3** Dt 23:13; Is 4:4 **3:3** Lv 22:3 **3:4** 2Sm 24:10; Jb 7:21; Mc 7:18 **3:5** Ex 28:36-38 **3:8** Is 4:2; 11:1; Jr 23:5; 33:15; Ezk 17:22-24; Zch 6:12 **3:9** Ps 118:22-23; Is 8:14; 28:16; Dn 2:35,45; Zch 4:10; Rv 5:6 **3:9** Zch 4:10 **3:10** 1Kg 4:25; 2Kg 18:31; Mc 4:1-8

3:1-5 Zechariah's fourth vision is presented in 3:1-10. The following two visions relate to **Joshua** (v. 1) and Zerubbabel (4:6-10), two key leaders in the post-exilic community (see the note on Hg 1:1). The accusations made against **the high priest** were at least partially justified as implied by his **filthy clothes** (vv. 1-3; Dt 23:13; 2Kg 18:27; Ezk 4:12). His guilt, however, was taken away as his **garments** were changed and a **clean turban** put on his head (vv. 4-5).

3:8-10 After charging **Joshua** to be obedient (vv. 6-7), the broader significance of the preceding is explained. Just as the high priest was cleansed from his **iniquity** (vv. 4-5) so would **the iniquity of this land** be removed **in a single day** (v. 9; 13:1-2; 14:7-8). This both recalls the Day of Atonement and surpasses it (Lv 16:29-34). This will come about through God's **servant, the Branch** (v. 8), who is also the **stone** with **seven eyes** (v. 9). Both are references to the Messiah (4:7,10; 6:12-13; Is 4:2; 28:16; Jr 23:5-6), whose rule ushers in permanent peace and prosperity (v. 10; Mc 4:4; 5:4-5).

FIFTH VISION: GOLD LAMPSTAND

4 The angel who was speaking with me then returned and roused me as one awakened out of sleep. 2 He asked me, "What do you see? "

I replied, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top. The lampstand also has seven lamps at the top with seven spouts for each of † the lamps. 3 There are also two olive trees beside it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

4 Then I asked the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these, my lord? "

5 "Don't you know what they are? " replied the angel who was speaking with me.

I said, "No, my lord."

6 So he answered me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by strength or by might, but by my Spirit,' † says the LORD of Armies. 7 'What are you, great mountain? † Before Zerubbabel you will become a plain. † And he will bring out the capstone accompanied by shouts of: Grace, grace to it! ' "

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me: † 9 "Zerubbabel's hands have laid the foundation of this house, † and his hands will complete it. Then you will know

that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you. 10 For who despises the day of small things? † These seven eyes of the LORD, which scan throughout the whole earth, will rejoice when they see the ceremonial stone † in Zerubbabel's hand." †

11 I asked him, "What are the two olive trees on the right and left of the lampstand?" 12 And I questioned him further, "What are the two streams † of the olive trees, from which the golden oil is pouring through the two golden conduits?"

13 Then he inquired of me, "Don't you know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

14 "These are the two anointed ones," † † he said, "who stand by the Lord of the whole earth." †

4:2 Or *seven lips to* **4:10** Lit *the tin stone* **4:12** Or *branches* **4:14** = Joshua and Zerubbabel
4:6 Hs 1:7; Hg 2:4-5 **4:7** Mt 17:20; 21:21; 1Co 13:2 **4:7** Is 40:4 **4:8** Zch 6:9 **4:9** Ezr 3:8-11; 5:16 **4:10** Hg 2:3-4 **4:10** 2Ch 16:9; Ps 34:15; Pr 15:3; Am 9:8; 1Pt 3:12 **4:14** Jr 33:17-22 **4:14** Rv 11:3-4

4:1-3 Zechariah's fifth vision is presented in 4:1-14. Temple imagery continues in this vision of a **gold lampstand** (Ex 25:31-35; 37:21-20). Its **seven lamps** and **seven spouts** seem related to "the seven eyes of the LORD" mentioned in verse 10, which themselves echo the "stone" with "seven eyes" in the previous vision (3:9).

4:6-7 In an indirect response to the prophet's question (vv. 4-5), the angel declares God's word that he works **not by strength or by might, but by** [God's] **Spirit** (12:9; Hs 1:7; Jl 2:28). This especially pertains to the temple. Even a **great mountain** would not stop Zerubbabel (Is 40:4; Mc 1:4; 4:1; Hab 3:6). The **capstone** that receives praise (or **grace**; see the note on 12:10; Ps 118:26) is the key part of the temple as is the cornerstone in Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22. Messianic overtones are likewise found in the surrounding context of the recent mention of "one stone" in 3:9 (see 14:9).

4:8-10 The focus on temple construction continues with the prediction that Zerubbabel will finish building the temple (v. 9). The laying of its **foundation** was a significant moment (see 8:9; Ezr 3:10-12; Hg 2:18-19). Although the structure was unimpressive (see Hg 2:3), its completion would bring joy to many (v. 10). The completion of the temple takes on messianic overtones in relation to verses 6-7 (see note) and 6:12-13. This is consistent with Hg 2:6-9,20-23 (see notes), which uses the name "Zerubbabel" representatively. The names "David" and "Elijah" are likewise used to represent someone else in Hosea 3:5 and Malachi 4:5, respectively.

4:11-14 The **two olive trees** (vv. 3,11) are **two anointed ones** who **stand by the Lord** (v. 14). Based on 3:7, they faithfully serve God (see 6:5). Some commentators believe they represent Zerubbabel and Joshua; others opt for Haggai and Zechariah.

SIXTH VISION: FLYING SCROLL

5 I looked up again and saw a flying scroll. † 2 “What do you see? ” he asked me.

“I see a flying scroll,” I replied, “thirty feet † long and fifteen feet † wide.” †

3 Then he said to me, “This is the curse † that is going out over the whole land, for everyone who is a thief, contrary to what is written on one side, has gone unpunished, † and everyone who swears falsely, contrary to what is written on the other side, has gone unpunished. 4 I will send it out,” † — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — “and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by my name. It will stay inside his house and destroy it along with its timbers and stones.” †

SEVENTH VISION: WOMAN IN THE BASKET

5 Then the angel who was speaking with me came forward and told me, “Look up and see what this is that is approaching.”

6 So I asked, “What is it? ”

He responded, “It’s a measuring basket † that is approaching.” And he continued, “This is their iniquity † in all the land.” 7 Then a lead cover was lifted, and there was a woman † sitting inside the basket. † 8 “This is Wickedness,” he said. He shoved her down into the basket and pushed the lead weight over its opening. 9 Then I looked up and saw two women approaching with the wind in their wings. Their wings were like those of a stork, † and they lifted up the basket between earth and sky.

10 So I asked the angel who was speaking with me, “Where are they taking the basket? ”

11 “To build a shrine for it in the land of Shinar,” † he told me. “When that is ready, the basket will be placed there on its pedestal.”

5:2 Lit *20 cubits* **5:2** Lit *10 cubits* **5:3** Or *side, will be removed* **5:6** Lit *It’s an ephah* **5:6** One Hb ms, LXX, Syr; other Hb mss read *eye*

5:1 Ezk 2:9-10; Rv 5:1; 10:2 **5:2** Ex 26:15-25; 1Kg 6:3; 1Pt 4:17 **5:3** Dt 11:26-28; 28:15-68 **5:4** Ps 147:15; Is 55:11 **5:4** Ezr 6:11; Dn 2:5; 3:29 **5:7** Hs 9:15; Rv 17:1 **5:7** Lv 19:36; Dt 25:14; Pr 20:10; Ezk 45:10; Am 8:5 **5:9** Jr 8:7 **5:11** Gn 11:9

5:1-4 This is Zechariah’s sixth vision. As his experience continues, the focus turns from the temple, Joshua, and Zerubbabel (Zch 3–4) to the judgment of sinners. Theft and swearing falsely (vv. 3-4) are cited several times in the Minor Prophets (Hs 4:2,15; 7:1; Zph 1:5; Mal 3:5).

5:5-11 The seventh vision. Whereas the previous scene showed the punishment of sinners, this one depicts the removal of **iniquity** and **wickedness** (vv. 6,8; see 3:9; Mal 1:4). The **land of Shinar** is the land of Babylon (v. 11; Gn 10:10; 11:2; Dn 1:2), which is contrasted with Jerusalem and Israel through its building **a shrine** for such evil (see 2:7; 6:10).

EIGHTH VISION: FOUR CHARIOTS

6 Then I looked up again and saw four chariots coming from between two
mountains. The mountains were made of bronze. [2] The first chariot had
chestnut † horses, † the second chariot black horses, † [3] the third
chariot white horses, † and the fourth chariot dappled † horses — all strong
horses. [4] So I inquired of the angel who was speaking with me, "What are these,
my lord? "

[5] The angel told me, "These are the four spirits † † of heaven going out after
presenting themselves to the Lord of the whole earth. [6] The one with the black
horses is going to the land of the north, the white horses are going after them, but
the dappled horses are going to the land of the south." [7] As the strong horses
went out, they wanted to go patrol the earth, and the LORD said, "Go, patrol the
earth." So they patrolled the earth. [8] Then he summoned me saying, "See, those
going to the land of the north have pacified my Spirit in the northern land."

CROWNING OF THE BRANCH

[9] The word of the LORD came to me: † [10] "Take an offering from the exiles,
from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon, and go that
same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. [11] Take silver and gold, make
a crown, † and place it on the head of Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest.
[12] You are to tell him: This is what the LORD of Armies says: Here is a man
whose name is Branch; † he will branch out from his place and build the LORD's
temple. [13] Yes, he will build the LORD's temple; he will be clothed in splendor †
and will sit on his throne and rule. There will also be a priest on his throne, and
there will be peaceful counsel between the two of them. † [14] The crown will
reside in the LORD's temple as a memorial to Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and
Hen † son of Zephaniah. [15] People who are far off will come and build the
LORD's temple, and you will know that the LORD of Armies has sent me to you.
This will happen when you fully obey the LORD your God." †

6:2 Lit *red* **6:5** Or *winds* **6:11** Lit *crowns* **6:14** Probably Josiah

6:2 Rv 6:4 **6:2** Rv 6:5-6 **6:3** Rv 6:2; 19:11 **6:3** Gn 31:10,12 **6:5** Jr 49:36; Rv 7:1-3 **6:9** Zch 4:8 **6:12** Zch 3:8 **6:13** 1Ch 16:27; 29:25; Ps 96:6 **6:13** Ps 45:6-7; 110:1-7; Dn 7:9-14; Heb 1:3,13; Rv 5:6 **6:15** Dt 28:1

6:1-8 This is Zechariah's eighth vision. The **four chariots** (v. 1) are **the four spirits of heaven** (v. 5) that have gone throughout the earth (vv. 6-7). Whereas the horses in 1:8-11 had "patrolled the earth" and found it at ease, those who went to the **north** gave rest to God's Spirit (v. 10; 1:12-17). This region must be punished (Nah 2:13) so that the remnant can return from there (2:6; Jr 3:18).

6:9-13 This prophetic word continues the train of thought in verses 1-8 (see note). Exiles from Babylon had begun to return, and they were to offer **silver and gold** to **make a crown** for Joshua the high priest (vv. 10-11). Picking up on language and themes from 3:8-10 and 4:6-10, this act represents that the messianic **Branch** will be a priest-king who will build the house of God (vv. 12-13; Ps 110:1-4). The vision for the temple in the books of Haggai and Zechariah thus clearly exceeds that of the historical second temple. This building was founded in the days of Zerubbabel (4:9; 8:9; Hg 2:18), but the relative silence concerning its completion (see 11:13) allows its construction to merge into eschatological realities.

6:15 The construction of the temple will not be a solo effort by the Branch (vv. 12-13), since others will help (see Ex 35:10,25; 36:1). Their coming from **far off** relates to the return of exiles (2:6) and perhaps also to the nations (2:11; 8:20-23; 9:9-10; Is 46:12; 49:1). As with the gathering of the nations to serve God in 2:15 and the completion of the temple by Zerubbabel in 4:9, these remarkable things will confirm **that the LORD of Armies has sent** Zechariah.

DISOBEDIENCE AND FASTING

7 In the fourth year of King Darius, † the word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month, which is Chislev. 2 Now the people of Bethel had sent Sharezer, Regem-melech, and their men to plead for the LORD's favor † 3 by asking the priests who were at the house of the LORD of Armies as well as the prophets, "Should we mourn and fast in the fifth month as we have done these many years?"

4 Then the word of the LORD of Armies came to me: 5 "Ask all the people of the land and the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and in the seventh months for these seventy years, did you really fast for me? † 6 When you eat and drink, don't you eat and drink simply for yourselves? † 7 Aren't these the words that the LORD proclaimed through the earlier prophets when Jerusalem was inhabited and secure, † along with its surrounding cities, and when the southern region and the Judean foothills were inhabited?"

8 The word of the LORD came to Zechariah: 9 "The LORD of Armies says this: 'Make fair decisions. † Show faithful love and compassion † to one another. 10 Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the resident alien or the poor, † and do not plot evil in your hearts against one another.' † 11 But they refused to

pay attention † and turned a stubborn shoulder; they closed their ears so they could not hear. † 12 They made their hearts like a rock so as not to obey the law or the words that the LORD of Armies had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. † Therefore intense anger came from the LORD of Armies. 13 Just as he had called, and they would not listen, so when they called, I would not listen, says the LORD of Armies. 14 I scattered them with a windstorm over all the nations that had not known them, and the land was left desolate behind them, with no one coming or going. They turned a pleasant land into a desolation."

7:7 Or *prosperous*

7:1 Zch 1:1 **7:2** Zch 8:21-22 **7:5** Is 58:1-7 **7:6** 1Co 10:31 **7:9** Ex 18:19-23; Zch 8:16 **7:9** Jr 7:5-7; Hs 10:12; Mc 6:8 **7:10** Dt 14:29; 16:11 **7:10** Mt 22:39; Jms 3:5-6 **7:11** Zch 1:4 **7:11** Is 6:10 **7:12** Jr 7:13,24

7:1-7 Zechariah 7–8 are a unit, as shown by the discussion of fasting that is begun here and concluded in 8:19-23. The **ninth month** of the **fourth year** of **Darius** (7:1) is about two years since the visions introduced in 1:1,7. The question about whether times of fasting should continue (vv. 2-3) was met with a rebuke from God, who confronted their selfish motives (vv. 4-6). **The earlier prophets** had spoken about this already (Is 58:3-7). The enduring importance of their words was cited in 1:2-6 (see note), and the time period of **seventy years** appeared in 1:12.

7:8-14 The fasts of "these seventy years" (v. 5) did not change the ongoing, underlying problems of the people. As **the earlier prophets** had said (vv. 7,12), what God seeks is not fasting in and of itself but justice, **faithful love**, and **compassion** (v. 9)—especially for the needy (v. 10). This simple ethic commonly appears in the Minor Prophets (Hs 6:6; 12:6; Am 5:14-15,24; Mc 6:8; Zph 2:3). The present generation, however, had not obeyed (v. 6), just like their fathers who were **stubborn** and hardened (vv. 11-12; Is 6:9-10; Jr 7:24; Hs 4:16). Rejection of God's word through the prophets resulted in divine displeasure, exile, and **desolation** (vv. 12-14; 1:2).

OBEDIENCE AND FEASTING

8 The word of the LORD of Armies came: 2 The LORD of Armies says this: "I am extremely jealous † for Zion; I am jealous for her with great wrath." 3 The LORD says this: "I will return to Zion and live in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City; † the mountain of the LORD of Armies will be called the Holy Mountain." 4 The LORD of Armies says this: "Old men and women will again sit along the streets of Jerusalem, each with a staff in hand because of advanced age. 5 The streets of the city will be filled with boys and girls playing in them." 6 The LORD of Armies says this: "Though it may seem impossible to the remnant of this people in those days, should it also seem impossible to me? " — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. 7 The LORD of Armies says this: "I will save my people from the land of

the east and the land of the west. † 8 I will bring them back † to live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their faithful and righteous God." †
9 The LORD of Armies says this: "Let your hands be strong, you who now hear these words that the prophets spoke when the foundations were laid for the rebuilding of the temple, the house of the LORD of Armies. 10 For prior to those days neither man nor animal had wages. There was no safety from the enemy for anyone who came or went, for I turned everyone against his neighbor. 11 But now, I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies. 12 "For they will sow in peace: the vine will yield its fruit, the land will yield its produce, and the skies will yield their dew. I will give the remnant of this people all these things as an inheritance. †
13 As you have been a curse among the nations, † house of Judah and house of Israel, so I will save you, and you will be a blessing. † Don't be afraid; let your hands be strong." 14 For the LORD of Armies says this: "As I resolved to treat you badly when your fathers provoked me to anger, and I did not relent," says the LORD of Armies, 15 "so I have resolved again in these days to do what is good to Jerusalem and the house of Judah. † Don't be afraid. 16 These are the things you must do: Speak truth to one another; make true and sound decisions within your city gates. 17 Do not plot evil † in your hearts against your neighbor, † and do not love perjury, † for I hate all this" — this is the LORD's declaration.
18 Then the word of the LORD of Armies came to me: 19 The LORD of Armies says this: "The fast of the fourth month, † the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth † will become times of joy, gladness, and cheerful festivals for the house of Judah. Therefore, love truth and peace."
20 The LORD of Armies says this: "Peoples will yet come, the residents of many cities; 21 the residents of one city will go to another, saying: Let's go at once to plead for the LORD's favor and to seek the LORD of Armies. I am also going.
22 Many peoples and strong nations will come to seek the LORD of Armies in Jerusalem and to plead for the LORD's favor." † 23 The LORD of Armies says this: "In those days, ten men from nations of every language will grab the robe

of a Jewish man tightly, urging: Let us go with you, † for we have heard that God is with you."

8:7 Lit *sunset*

8:2 Zch 1:14 **8:3** Is 1:26 **8:8** Is 11:11-12; Mc 2:12-13 **8:8** Gn 17:7-8; Dt 26:17-18; Rv 21:3 **8:12** Dt 31:7; Jos 1:6; Is 49:8 **8:13** Dt 21:23; 2Kg 22:19 **8:13** Gn 12:2-3 **8:15** Dt 8:16; Jr 32:40-41; Ezk 36:11 **8:17** Mc 2:1 **8:17** Dt 10:12-22; Mt 22:39 **8:17** Lv 5:4; Nm 30:2; Jr 5:2 **8:19** 2Kg 25:3-4; Jr 39:2 **8:19** 2Kg 25:1; Jr 39:1 **8:20-22** Is 2:2-3; Jr 16:19; Mc 4:1-3; Mal 1:11-14 **8:23** Is 4:1

8:1-8 The emphasis on judgment in Zechariah 7 sets up God's promises of salvation in Zechariah 8. In another reference to Zechariah 1 (see the note on 7:1-7), God declares that he is **extremely jealous for Zion** (v. 2; 1:14). This will include the outpouring of **great wrath** (v. 2; 1:15) along with his returning to Zion to dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (v. 3; 1:3,16; 2:10-11; Jl 3:17,21; Ezk 43:7,9). Calling Jerusalem **the Faithful City** and Zion **the Holy Mountain** show that cleansing and thorough transformation have taken place (3:9; 13:1-2; Is 1:26; 4:2-4) such that the people now keep the ethic of 7:9-10 (see 8:16-17). At that time, the city will be filled with both the old and young living in peace (vv. 4-5; Jl 2:28). This wonder will result from God saving his **people** from **east** and **west** (Mal 1:11) and bringing them to live in Jerusalem (vv. 6-8; 2:11; the note on 6:15; Is 9:6).

8:9-12 The encouragement to **be strong** in response to the prophetic word (v. 9) recalls Haggai 2:4. As in Haggai 2:15-19 (see note), the laying of **the foundations** of the temple is a major turning point in God's dealings with his people (see the notes on 4:8-10; 6:9-13). The **former days** having passed (v. 11; see v. 15), henceforth the land will be fruitful for **the remnant** to enjoy (v. 12).

8:13-15 The repetition of **let your hands be strong** (vv. 9,13) maintains the connection between the building of the temple and the other glorious promises of salvation in this context (see 4:6-10; 6:12-15). Whereas Judah and Israel had been **a curse among the nations**, God would save them so that they become a **blessing** (v. 13; Gn 12:2-3; Dt 30:1). His purpose to afflict them in wrath because of the sins of their **fathers** (v. 14) has changed **in these days** to one of doing good to Jerusalem (v. 15; 1:14-17; 2:12; 3:8-10; Jr 24:6; 29:11).

8:16-17 The ethic of truth, justice, and not plotting evil against one's neighbor is essentially the same as in 7:9-10, which demonstrates its enduring importance.

8:18-23 The climactic conclusion of Zechariah 7–8 picks up on the initial question about fasting, which was met with a displeased response from the Lord (7:2-7). It declares that such will become instead **cheerful festivals** (v. 19). Furthermore, peoples and nations will seek God in Jerusalem (vv. 20-23; see v. 3). On that day, people everywhere—not just a few Israelites—will **plead for the LORD's favor** (v. 21; see 7:2). The joy of Zion and the salvation of the nations also appear together in 2:10-13 and 9:9-10.

JUDGMENT OF ZION'S ENEMIES

A pronouncement:

9 The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrach,
and Damascus † is its resting place — for the eyes of humanity
and all the tribes of Israel
are on the LORD † — 2 and also against Hamath, † which borders it, as well as
Tyre † and Sidon, †

though they are very shrewd.
3 Tyre has built herself a fortress; she has heaped up silver like dust and gold
like the dirt of the streets.
4 Listen! The Lord will impoverish her and cast her wealth into the sea; she
herself will be consumed by fire. †
5 Ashkelon will see it and be afraid; Gaza too, and will writhe in great pain, as
will Ekron, for her hope will fail.
There will cease to be a king in Gaza, and Ashkelon will become uninhabited.
6 A mongrel people will live in Ashdod, and I will destroy the pride
of the Philistines. †
7 I will remove the blood from their mouths and the abhorrent things †
from between their teeth.
Then they too will become a remnant for our God; they will become like a clan
in Judah and Ekron like the Jebusites. †
8 I will encamp at my house as a guard, against those who march back and forth,
and no oppressor will march against them again, for now I have seen
with my own eyes.

THE COMING OF ZION'S KING

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem!
Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, †
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey. †
10 I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem.
The bow of war will be removed,
and he will proclaim peace to the nations.
His dominion will extend from sea to sea, from the Euphrates River
to the ends of the earth. †
11 As for you, because of the blood of your covenant, †
I will release your prisoners
from the waterless cistern. †
12 Return to a stronghold, you prisoners who have hope;

today I declare that I will restore double to you. †
13 For I will bend Judah as my bow; I will fill that bow with Ephraim.
I will rouse your sons, Zion,
against your sons, Greece. † †
I will make you like a warrior's sword.
14 Then the LORD will appear over them, and his arrow will fly like lightning.
The Lord GOD will sound the trumpet and advance with the southern storms. †
15 The LORD of Armies will defend them.
They will consume and conquer with slingstones; they will drink and be rowdy
as if with wine. †
They will be as full as the sprinkling basin, †
like those at the corners of the altar. †
16 The LORD their God will save them on that day as the flock of his people; †
for they are like jewels in a crown, †
sparkling over his land.
17 How lovely and beautiful!
Grain will make the young men flourish, and new wine, the young women.

9:1 Or *eyes of the Lord are on mankind* — **9:9** Or *and has salvation* **9:13** Lit *Javan*
9:1 Gn 15:2; 1Kg 11:24; Sg 7:4; Is 7:8; Am 1:3 **9:2** 2Kg 14:25 **9:2** Jos 19:29; Is 23:1 **9:2** Gn 10:15 **9:4** Ezk 26:4-6; 27:27 **9:6** Am 1:6-8; Zph 2:4-6 **9:7** Lv 11:10; Dt 29:17; Dn 11:31 **9:7** 2Sm 5:6-10; 24:16-25 **9:9** Is 62:11; Mt 21:5; Jn 12:15 **9:10** Ps 72:8; Mc 7:12 **9:11** Heb 10:29; 13:20 **9:11** Gn 37:24; Jr 38:6 **9:12** Jb 42:10; Is 61:7; Jr 16:18 **9:13** Dn 8:21; 10:20 **9:14** Ps 83:15 **9:15** Nm 23:24 **9:15** Ex 27:3 **9:15** Lv 1:5,11; 3:2 **9:16** Ezk 36:38 **9:16** Lv 8:9

9:1-8 This oracle begins a new section in the book of Zechariah. It concerns God's judgment and salvation of the nations. In particular, the wisdom, strength, and wealth of **Tyre** will be taken away (vv. 2-4; Ezk 26–28). The Hebrew verb translated **impoverish** in verse 4 could instead be translated "possess" (e.g., Gn 15:7-8). Either way, this word is likewise strategically used elsewhere in the Minor Prophets (Am 9:12; Ob 17,19-20; Mc 1:15). The phrase **cast her wealth into the sea** could instead be translated "strike her army in the sea," which would resemble Exodus 15:4 and pick up on second exodus themes (see 10:11; the notes on Is 11:11-16; Hab 3:7-15). **The Philistines** will also be judged (vv. 5-6; Ezk 25:15-7; Zph 2:4-7), but **a remnant** of them will become part of God's people (v. 7; 2:11; 8:20-23). He will protect his **house** from any **oppressor** (v. 8; 2:5).

9:9-10 The judgment of the nations and the establishment of the temple (vv. 1-8) is inextricably linked to the coming of the Messiah. He is the King who brings joy and salvation to Israel (v. 9; 2:10; 8:7,13,20; Zph 3:17,19). His **righteous** and **humble** character echoes Zephaniah 3:5,12. The cutting off of **chariot**, **horse**, and **bow of war** is necessary for the establishment of **peace to the nations** (v. 10; Hs 1:7; Mc 4:1-4; 5:5; Is 9:6; 42:1). The reach of his dominion **from sea to sea**, and **from the Euphrates River to the ends of the earth** is identical to Psalm 72:8 and also resembles other messianic predictions (Ps 2:8; Mc 5:4).

9:11-12 The **you** and **your** are feminine and refer to Zion and Jerusalem (see v. 9). The coming of the Messiah in the preceding verses evidently leads to the institution of a **covenant** (v. 11; Is 42:6; 49:8; Jr 31:31-34), sealed in **blood** like some previous covenants (Gn 15:9-10,18; Ex 24:5-8). In Zechariah, this seems to relate thematically to the atonement foretold in 3:9 and even to the piercing of God in 12:10 (see Jn 19:37; Heb 9:22). The blood results in the **release** of Zion's **prisoners**, which alludes to a second exodus (Ex 5:1-2; Ps 69:33; Is 10:4; 14:17; 42:7). Like Joseph and David, they were in a pit, **a cistern** (Gn 37:20-29; 40:15; 41:14; Pss 30:3; 40:2). Nevertheless, their **hope** will be fulfilled (see Jr 29:11; Hs 2:15) because **today** (see Pss 2:7; 95:7; 118:24) God will **restore double** to them (v. 12; Is 61:7; Jl 2:25).

9:13-17 Conventional warfare having been done away with (v. 10), the instrument of God's judgment on **Greece** is his own people (v. 13). The dramatic defeat of his enemies (v. 14) parallels other passages in the Minor Prophets (see the note on Hab 3:4-6), and his defense of his people (v. 15; 12:8) parallels 2 Kings 19:34; 20;6; Isaiah 31:5; 37:35; and 38:6. In verse 16, the salvation of **the LORD their God** is similarly predicted in Hosea 1:7, and the mention of **the flock of his people** ties to Micah 5:4; 7:14; and Zephaniah 2:7 (see note). **Jewels in a crown** play on priestly imagery in 3:9; 6:11-14; Ex 28:36; 29:6; and 39:30.

THE LORD RESTORES HIS PEOPLE

10 Ask the LORD for rain in the season of spring rain.
The LORD makes the rain clouds, and he will give them showers of rain and
crops in the field for everyone. †

2 For the idols speak falsehood, and the diviners † see illusions; they relate
empty dreams
and offer empty comfort.
Therefore the people wander like sheep; they suffer affliction because there is
no shepherd.

3 My anger burns against the shepherds, so I will punish the leaders. †
For the LORD of Armies has tended his flock, the house of Judah;
he will make them like his majestic steed in battle.

4 The cornerstone † will come from Judah. †
The tent peg † will come from them and also the battle bow † and
every † ruler.
Together 5 they will be like warriors in battle trampling down the mud
of the streets.
They will fight because the LORD is with them, and they will put horsemen
to shame.

6 I will strengthen the house of Judah and deliver the house of Joseph. †
I will restore † them because I have compassion on them, and they will be
as though I had never rejected them. †

For I am the LORD their God, and I will answer them.

7 Ephraim † will be like a warrior, and their hearts will be glad as if with wine.
Their children will see it and be glad; †
their hearts will rejoice in the LORD.

8 I will whistle † and gather them because I have redeemed † them; they will be as numerous as they once were.

9 Though I sow † them among the nations, they will remember † me in the distant lands; they and their children will live and return.

10 I will bring them back from the land of Egypt and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to the land of Gilead †
and to Lebanon,
but it will not be enough for them.

11 The LORD † will pass through the sea of distress and strike the waves of the sea;
all the depths of the Nile will dry up. †
The pride of Assyria will be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt will come to an end.

12 I will strengthen † them in the LORD, and they will march † in his name —

this is the LORD's declaration.

10:3 Lit *male goats* **10:4** Lit *him* **10:4** Lit *also from him the . . . , from him every* **10:6** = the northern kingdom **10:6** Other Hb mss, LXX read *settle* **10:11** Lit *He*
10:1 Dt 28:12; Is 30:23; Jr 51:16 **10:2** Jr 27:9; Mc 3:7 **10:4** Jdg 20:2; 1Sm 14:38; Ps 118:22; Is 28:16 **10:4** Jdg 4:21 **10:4** 2Kg 13:15-17; Rv 6:2 **10:6** Ps 103:12 **10:7** Is 7:8 **10:7** Ex 4:14; Ps 16:9 **10:8** Is 5:26; 7:18 **10:8** Ex 13:13; 21:8; 34:20; Jb 5:20; Ps 130:8; Is 51:11; Mc 6:4 **10:9** Gn 26:12; Ex 23:16; Ps 126:5 **10:9** Gn 40:23; Jos 1:13 **10:10** Gn 31:21; Dt 34:1; Ps 60:7 **10:11** Gn 8:7; Jos 2:10; 4:23; 1Kg 17:7; Jb 12:15; Ps 74:15; Pr 17:22 **10:12** Zch 10:6 **10:12** Jos 6:3; Ps 68:7; Jr 46:9

10:1 The fruitfulness of the land (9:17) and the giving of **rain** pick up on familiar themes in the Minor Prophets (see the notes on Hs 6:1-3; 10:12; Jl 2:21-24; Am 9:13-15).

10:2-3 God's ability to bring rain (v. 1) contrasts with the impotence of **idols** and those who speak for them (v. 2). The situation is like that of **sheep** without a **shepherd** (v. 2), or similarly of having wicked **shepherds** (v. 3). As in Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Ezekiel 34:1-24, the solution is for God himself to shepherd his people. Both passages also involve the Messiah in this task (Jr 23:5-6; Ezk 34:23-24; see the note on Mc 5:2-4; Zch 13:7).

10:4 In view of the preceding verses as well as Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16, **the cornerstone** seems to be an allusion to the Messiah. The Hebrew text can also be interpreted to mean that this stone comes "**from** him," that is, from God. Stones were similarly mentioned in 3:8-10 and 4:6-7 (see notes). A **tent peg** is

used to bear a load in Isaiah 22:23-25 and to fix the edges of the tabernacle (Ex 27:19; 35:18; 38:20,31) or the tent of Zion (Is 33:20; 54:2). It could also be used as a weapon (Jdg 4:21-22; 5:26). Based on 9:13, the **battle bow** refers to Judah (see Gn 49:8-12).

10:5-7 The **shame** brought upon **horsemen** (v. 5) along with the joy of Israel (v. 7) relate back to the peace ushered in by the Messiah in 9:9-10 (see note; Is 7:14). Israel's salvation is restored in such a way that their former judgment is forgotten (v. 6), likewise recalls 9:11-12 (see note).

10:8-11 God's redemption and regathering of his people here parallels 2:6 and 8:7-8 (see the note on Hs 13:14). **Egypt** and **Assyria** (vv. 10-11) are similarly mentioned together in Isaiah 11:11-16 and Hosea 11:11 (see notes). Crossing a body of water not only reinforces second exodus themes (v. 11; see the notes on Hab 3:7-15) but declares that God himself will **pass through the sea of distress** and **depths** (see 9:4; 12:10; Is 63:9). The thought seems to be that he will lead the way for his people (see the notes on Hs 1:11; 11:10; 12:12-13; Mc 2:12-13), who will walk about "in his name" (v. 12; Mc 4:5; Hab 3:19).

ISRAEL'S SHEPHERDS: GOOD AND BAD

11 Open your gates, Lebanon, and fire will consume your cedars. †
2 Wail, cypress, † for the cedar has fallen; the glorious trees are destroyed!
Wail, oaks of Bashan, †
for the stately forest has fallen!
3 Listen to the wail † of the shepherds, †
for their glory is destroyed.
Listen to the roar of young lions, †
for the thickets of the Jordan † are † destroyed.

4 The LORD my God says this: "Shepherd the flock intended for slaughter.
5 Those who buy them slaughter them but are not punished. † Those who sell them say: Blessed be the LORD because I have become rich! Even their own shepherds have no compassion for them. 6 Indeed, I will no longer have compassion on the inhabitants of the land" — this is the LORD's declaration. "Instead, I will turn everyone over to his neighbor and his king. They will devastate the land, and I will not rescue it from their hand." †
7 So I shepherded the flock intended for slaughter, the oppressed of the flock. †
I took two staffs, calling one Favor † and the other Union, and I shepherded the flock. 8 In one month I got rid of three shepherds. I became impatient with them, and they also detested me. 9 Then I said, "I will no longer shepherd you. Let what is dying die, and let what is perishing perish; let the rest devour each other's flesh." 10 Next I took my staff called Favor and cut it in two, annulling

the covenant I had made with all the peoples. [11] It was annulled on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock † who were watching me knew that it was the word of the LORD. [12] Then I said to them, “If it seems right to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.” So they weighed my wages, thirty pieces of silver. †

[13] “Throw it to the potter,” † the LORD said to me — this magnificent price I was valued by them. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw it into the house of the LORD, to the potter. † † [14] Then I cut in two my second staff, Union, annulling the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

[15] The LORD also said to me: “Take the equipment of a foolish shepherd. [16] I am about to raise up a shepherd in the land who will not care for those who are perishing, and he will not seek the lost † or heal the broken. He will not sustain the healthy, † but he will devour the flesh of the fat sheep † and tear off their hooves.

[17] Woe to the worthless shepherd who deserts the flock! †
May a sword strike † his arm and his right eye!
May his arm wither away
and his right eye go completely blind! ”

11:3 Lit *for the majesty of the Jordan is* **11:7** LXX reads *slaughter that belonged to the sheep merchants* **11:11** LXX reads *and the sheep merchants* **11:13** Syr reads *treasury* **11:13** One Hb ms, Syr read *treasury* **11:16** Or *young* **11:16** Or *exhausted* **11:17** Lit *be against*
11:1 Jdg 9:15; 2Kg 19:23; Ps 29:5; Sg 5:15; Is 2:13 **11:2** Is 14:8 **11:2** Is 2:13; Ezk 27:6 **11:3** Is 15:8; Zph 1:10 **11:3** Zch 10:2-3 **11:3** Jb 4:10; Ps 34:10; Is 5:29; Nah 2:11 **11:3** Jr 49:19 **11:5** Ps 34:22 **11:6** Jr 13:14; Lm 2:2,17,21; Ezk 7:4,9 **11:7** Ps 90:17; Zch 11:10 **11:12** Ex 21:32 **11:13** Mt 26:15; 27:3-10 **11:16** Ezk 34:3-4 **11:17** Jr 23:2

11:3-14 Israel’s wicked **shepherds** were cited again in v. 3. Although in 10:3 this grim reality sets up the promise that God will ultimately shepherd his people to their salvation, the focus of the present passage is mutual displeasure between God and his own flock, as enacted by Zechariah (see 3:6-10; 6:10-15). Evidently his judgment on Israel included handing them over to evil leaders (vv. 5-6), including their **king** (see 1Sm 8:18). Shepherding as a metaphor for rule is also apparent in Micah 5:2-4 (see note), where it concerns the Messiah. The **flock** itself was guilty and worthy of **slaughter** (v. 4) because it rejected God’s appointed shepherd who had done them good (vv. 7-8; 13:7). Consequently, this shepherd resigned his position (v. 9). The flock’s utter lack of appreciation for this shepherd is sealed by the insultingly low wage they paid him (vv. 12-13). The rejection of a benevolent shepherd appointed by God is also hinted at in 12:10 and 13:7, and it is directly foretold in Isaiah 53:1-3.

11:15-17 The rejection of a good shepherd leads to the flock being ruled by a **foolish shepherd** (v. 13). He will not care for the **lost** or the **broken** (v. 16; Ezk 34:3-4,16), but he will ultimately meet his end (v. 17).

JUDAH'S SECURITY

12 A pronouncement:
The word of the LORD concerning Israel.
A declaration of the LORD, who stretched out the heavens, †
laid the foundation of the earth, †
and formed the spirit of man within him.

2 "Look, I will make Jerusalem a cup that causes staggering † for the peoples
who surround the city. The siege against Jerusalem will also involve Judah. †
3 On that day I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples; all who
try to lift it will injure themselves severely when all the nations of the earth
gather against her. † 4 On that day" — this is the LORD's declaration — "I will
strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness. † I will keep a
watchful eye on † the house of Judah but strike all the horses of the nations with
blindness. 5 Then each of the leaders of Judah will think to himself: The
residents of Jerusalem are my strength through the LORD of Armies, their God.
6 On that day I will make the leaders of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, †
like a flaming torch among sheaves; they will consume all the peoples around
them on the right and the left, while Jerusalem continues to be inhabited on its
site, in Jerusalem. 7 The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory
of David's house and the glory of Jerusalem's residents may not be greater than
that of Judah. 8 On that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, †
so that on that day the one who is weakest among them will be like David on
that day, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD,
before them. † 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that come
against Jerusalem.

MOURNING FOR THE PIERCED ONE

10 "Then I will pour out a spirit † † of grace and prayer on the house of David
and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at † me whom they pierced.
They will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for
him as one weeps for a firstborn. † 11 On that day the mourning in Jerusalem

will be as great as the mourning of Hadad-rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.
12 The land will mourn, every family by itself: the family of David's house by itself and their women by themselves; the family of Nathan's † † house by itself and their women by themselves; 13 the family of Levi's house by itself and their women by themselves; the family of Shimei † † by itself and their women by themselves; 14 all the remaining families, every family by itself, and their women by themselves.

12:10 Or *out the Spirit* **12:10** Or *to* **12:12** = a son of David **12:13** = a descendant of Levi
12:1 Is 45:12; 51:13; Jr 10:12; 51:15 **12:1** Jb 38:4; Heb 1:10 **12:2** Is 51:22-23; Jr 25:15-16; Rv 16:19 **12:2** Jr 4:16; Ezk 38:8-9,14-16; Zch 14:2 **12:3** Jl 3:1-2 **12:4** Dt 28:28 **12:4** Is 37:17; Jr 32:19 **12:6** Jr 5:14; Ob 18 **12:8** 2Kg 19:34; 20:6; Is 37:35; 38:6; Zch 9:15 **12:8** Lv 26:8; Jos 23:10 **12:10** Is 44:3; Ezk 36:27; 39:29; Jl 2:28-29; Zch 4:6; Ac 2:17 **12:10** Jr 6:26; Jn 19:37; Rv 1:7 **12:12** 2Sm 5:14; Lk 3:31 **12:13** Ex 6:17; Nm 3:18; 1Ch 6:17

12:1 The section beginning in 9:1 was similarly prefaced as a **pronouncement.**

12:2-9 The repetition of the phrase **on that day** (vv. 3-4,6,8-9) directs attention to a future deliverance of Jerusalem and Judah from **peoples** and **nations** gathered against them (vv. 2-3; see 14:2; Is 7:1; 36:1-2). Such a picture contrasts with 2:11 and 8:20-23, thus showing God's judgment on and salvation of the nations (see Is 13–23; Jr 46–51). Joel 3:9-16 describes a similar scene of nations gathering for war against God. The defeat of **horse** and **rider** (v. 4) recalls 9:10 and 10:5, and **blindness** likewise recalls 11:17. The people of Jerusalem will find strength in the **LORD . . . their God** (v. 5; 9:16; 10:6; note on Hs 7:10), who will make them like a fire to their enemies (v. 6; 2:5; note on Mc 4:12-13). The **tents of Judah** will share equally in this glorious deliverance (v. 7).

12:10 The repentance of the people of Zion is the basis for God's defeat of the nations who attack Jerusalem (v. 9). Having rejected God's shepherding previously (11:7-14), they will mourn deeply over their sin (see the notes on Jl 2:12-14; Jnh 3:5-10). Piercing clearly implies death in 13:3, thus suggesting the death of the Messiah (Gn 3:15; Ps 22:16; Is 53:5; Dn 9:26; Jn 19:37). Along with **the house of David** becoming **like God** (v. 8), the comparison of this pierced one to an **only child** and a **firstborn** son reinforces messianic overtones (Gn 22:2,12,16; Ex 12:29-30; Pss 2:7; 89:27; Am 8:10).

GOD'S PEOPLE CLEANSED

13 "On that day a fountain † will be opened for the house of David and for the residents of Jerusalem, to wash away sin and impurity. † 2 On that day" — this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies — "I will remove the names of the idols from the land, and they will no longer be remembered. † I will banish the prophets † and the unclean spirit from the land. 3 If a man still prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will say to him: You cannot remain alive because you have spoken a lie in the name of the LORD. When he prophesies, his father and his mother who bore him will pierce him through. †

4 On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies;
they will not put on a hairy cloak † in order to deceive. 5 He will say: I am not a
prophet; I work the land, for a man purchased † me as a servant since my
youth. † 6 If someone asks him: What are these wounds † on your chest? † —
then he will answer: I received the wounds in the house of my friends.

7 Sword, awake against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate —
this is the declaration of the LORD of Armies.
Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; †
I will turn my hand against the little ones.
8 In the whole land — this is the LORD's declaration — two-thirds † will be
cut off and die, but a third will be left in it.
9 I will put this third through the fire; I will refine them as silver is refined and
test them as gold is tested. †
They will call on my name,
and I will answer them. †
I will say: They are my people,
and they will say: The LORD is our God." †

13:2 = false prophets **13:5** Or *sold* **13:6** Lit *wounds between your hands* **13:8** Lit *two-thirds in it*
13:1 Ps 36:9; 68:26; Pr 14:27; Jr 2:13; 17:13 **13:1** Zch 3:1-10 **13:2** Ex 17:14; Dt 12:3; 25:19; 29:20; 32:26; Ps 34:16; 109:15 **13:3** Dt 13:5; 18:20; Jr 14:14-15; 23:14-16,30-31; 27:15-16; Ezk 13:2-4,9,16; Mc 3:5-6,11 **13:4** 1Kg 19:13,19; 2Kg 2:8 **13:5** Am 7:14 **13:6** 1Kg 18:28 **13:7** Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27 **13:9** Ps 66:10; Pr 17:3; Is 48:10; Mal 3:3 **13:9** Ps 20:9; 27:7; 86:7; 102:2; Pr 1:28; Is 58:9; 65:24; Jr 33:3 **13:9** Ex 6:7; Lv 26:12; Jr 7:23; 11:4; 24:7; 30:22; 31:1,33; 32:38; Ezk 11:20; 14:11; 36:28; 37:23,27; Zch 8:8; 2Co 6:16; Heb 8:10

13:1-2 The genuine repentance of the **house of David** and **Jerusalem** is followed by their being cleansed from **sin and impurity** through a **fountain** (14:8; Jl 3:18). In 3:8-10 (see note), such purification was related to a "stone with seven eyes" and the removal of "iniquity" in "a single day." **Idols** and false **prophets** and the **unclean spirit** will be no more (see Hs 4:12; 5:4).

13:7 The striking of God's **shepherd** relates to the rejection of the good shepherd in 11:7-8 and the piercing of the Messiah in 12:10 (see Ex 17:6; Is 53:4).

13:9 The result of the refining process will be that people will **call on** [God's] **name** in truth (see 5:4; Jl 2:32; Zph 3:12-13) and will be his **people** (see 2:11; 8:8; Hs 2:1). The cleansing of God's people is similarly described in Isaiah 1:22-27; Ezekiel 22:18-22; Daniel 11:35; and 12:10.

THE LORD'S TRIUMPH AND REIGN

14 Look, a day belonging to the LORD is coming † when the plunder
taken from you will be divided in your presence. 2 I will gather all the
nations against Jerusalem for battle. † The city will be captured, the houses
looted, and the women raped. Half the city will go into exile, but the rest of the
people will not be removed from the city.
3 Then the LORD will go out to fight against those nations as he fights on a day
of battle. † 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, † which
faces Jerusalem on the east. The Mount of Olives will be split in half from east
to west, forming a huge valley, so that half the mountain will move to the north
and half to the south. 5 You will flee by my mountain valley, † for the valley of
the mountains will extend to Azal. You will flee as you fled † from the
earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. † Then the LORD my God will
come and all the holy ones † with him. † †
6 On that day there will be no light; the sunlight and moonlight will
diminish. † † † 7 It will be a unique day known only to the LORD, † without
day or night, but there will be light at evening.
8 On that day living water will flow out from Jerusalem, † half of it toward the
eastern sea † and the other half toward the western sea, † in summer and winter
alike. 9 On that day the LORD will become King over the whole earth † — the
LORD alone, and his name alone. † 10 All the land from Geba † to Rimmon †
south of Jerusalem will be changed into a plain. But Jerusalem will be raised up
and will remain † on its site from the Benjamin Gate † to the place of the First
Gate, † to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the royal
winepresses. † 11 People will live there, and never again will there be a curse of
complete destruction. So Jerusalem will dwell in security.
12 This will be the plague with which the LORD strikes all the people who have
warred against Jerusalem: their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, their
eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. 13 On
that day a great panic from the LORD will be among them, so that each will seize
the hand of another, and the hand of one will rise against the other. 14 Judah will
also fight at Jerusalem, and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be
collected: gold, silver, and clothing in great abundance. † 15 The same plague as

the previous one will strike † the horses, mules, camels, donkeys, and all the animals that are in those camps.
16 Then all the survivors from the nations that came against Jerusalem will go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of Armies, and to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. † 17 Should any of the families of the earth not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of Armies, rain will not fall on them.
18 And if the people † of Egypt will not go up and enter, then rain will not fall on them; this will be the plague the LORD inflicts on the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Shelters. 19 This will be the punishment of Egypt and all the nations that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of Shelters.
20 On that day, the words HOLY TO THE LORD will be on the bells of the horses. † The pots in the house of the LORD will be like the sprinkling basins before the altar. 21 Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah will be holy to the LORD of Armies. All who sacrifice will come and use the pots to cook in. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite † in the house of the LORD of Armies.

14:5 Some Hb mss, LXX, Sym, Tg read *The valley of my mountains will be blocked* **14:5** LXX reads *It will be blocked as it was blocked* **14:5** Some Hb mss, LXX, Vg, Tg, Syr; other Hb mss read *you* **14:6** LXX, Sym, Syr, Tg, Vg read *no light or cold or ice* **14:6** Lit *no light; the precious ones will congeal* **14:8** = the Dead Sea **14:8** = the Mediterranean Sea **14:10** Or *will be inhabited* **14:10** Or *the former gate* **14:15** Lit *be on* **14:18** Lit *family* **14:21** Or *merchant*

14:1 Is 39:6; Jr 7:32; Am 9:13 **14:2** Jl 3:2; Zch 12:2-3 **14:3** Rv 19:11-21 **14:4** Ezk 11:23; Mt 24:3; Ac 1:11-12 **14:5** Am 1:1 **14:5** Dt 33:2-3; Ps 89:5,7; Dn 7:21; Jd 14 **14:5** Ps 89:5-7; Mt 25:31 **14:6** Is 13:10; Jl 2:10; 3:15 **14:7** Mt 24:36 **14:8** Ezk 41:7; 47:1-12; Jl 3:18; Rv 8:8-9; 16:3 **14:9** Mt 25:31 **14:9** Dt 4:35,39; 6:4; Is 45:5 **14:10** 2Kg 23:8 **14:10** Neh 11:29 **14:10** Jr 37:13 **14:10** Neh 3:1; 12:39; Jr 31:38-40 **14:14** Mc 4:13; Hg 2:7 **14:16** Lv 23:33-36 **14:20** Ex 28:36; 39:30

14:1-3 Reference to **a day** on which **all the nations** fight against Jerusalem only to be defeated by God takes the reader back to 12:2-9 (see note). The afflictions that come on the city prior to its deliverance (v. 2) may relate to the refining process in 13:9 (see note).

14:4-5 The moving of mountains and of the earth itself is also linked to eschatological events in Isaiah 2:2-4; 40:2-5; and Haggai 2:6-9 (see note). Centuries later, Jesus would speak of the end times while sitting on the **Mount of Olives** (Mt 24:3; Mk 13:3). God and his **holy ones** also appear together in Deuteronomy 33:2-3 and Psalm 89:5-8.

14:6-7 The unusual character of this day related to having **no light** but **light at evening** echoes descriptions of the "day of the LORD" in Joel 2:1-2,30-31; and Amos 5:18-20. That it will be one literal day links this eschatological battle to the removal of sin "on one day" in 3:9 (lit).

14:8 The **living water** flowing from Jerusalem echoes the cleansing "fountain" in 13:1 and strongly resembles the river of life in Ezekiel 47. "Living water" refers to water that is moving as opposed to stagnant water.

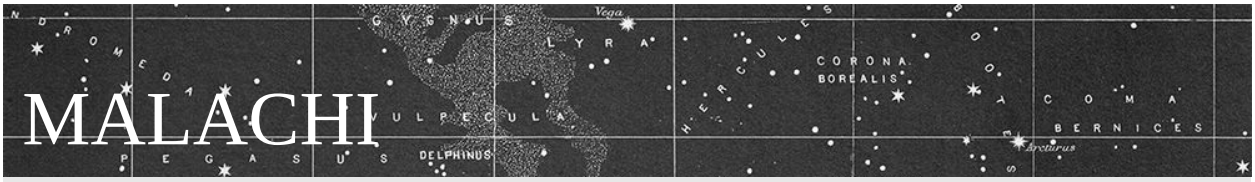
14:9 God's worldwide rule is tied to the messianic kingdom (see the notes on 9:9-10; Zph 3:14-17) and the fulfillment of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 by **the whole earth.**

14:11 The Hebrew word translated **curse of complete destruction** is also found in Malachi 3:24 and relates to things devoted to destruction (Dt 7:2,26; Jos 7:1). The secure dwelling of **Jerusalem** is a frequent theme in the Prophets (Hs 2:18; Jr 23:6; 32:37; 33:16; Ezk 34:25-28; 39:26).

14:12-15 Those peoples that fight against Jerusalem will be struck with a gruesome **plague** (vv. 12,15; see vv. 2-3). The Hebrew verb translated **rot** is typically used of rotting away because of sin (Lv 26:39; Ps 38:5; Ezk 4:17; 24:23; 33:10). The enemies will also destroy one another (v. 13), as in Judges 7:22 and 2 Chronicles 20:23. The collection of the **wealth of all the surrounding nations** (v. 14) agrees with Haggai 2:6-9 (see note).

14:16-19 Despite their defeat, there will be **survivors** from all the nations who will go up to Jerusalem yearly to **worship the king, the LORD of Armies** (vv. 16-17; the notes on v. 9; 9:9-10). This suggests that there will be a remnant of the nations that is saved in addition to a remnant of Israel (see the notes on Am 9:11-12; Zph 3:9-13). These are all the true people of God who repent and respond to him in faith. The nations coming to worship at Jerusalem had been directly foretold in 2:10-13 and 8:18-23 (see notes). The latter associates this with the transformation of fasts into joyful gatherings, which in turn relates to the **Festival of Shelters** (see the notes on Lv 23:1-2; Nah 1:15). This feast originally began five days after the Day of Atonement (see the note on 3:8-10; Lv 23:27,34) and was to be a time of rejoicing (Lv 27:40; Dt 16:13-15). The punishment for resisting the Lord is once again described as a **plague** (v. 18; see also vv. 12,15). The parallel with the exodus is strengthened through the dual mention of **Egypt** in verses 18-19 (Ex 9:14; 11:1).

14:20-21 In contrast with the spread of uncleanness in Haggai 2:10-14 (see note), holiness will spread beyond the temple to even the **bells of the horses** and **every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah** (see 2:16; 8:3). The future glory will thus exceed anything that had ever been experienced in the past (see 13:8; Hg 2:6-9). The absence of a **Canaanite** in the temple concerns the banishment of the wicked (see Dt 7:1-2). Since the Hebrew word used can also mean “merchant” (Ezk 17:4), it may simultaneously speak of those greedy for money (see 11:5,12-13; the notes on Hs 12:7-8; Nah 3:16; Zph 1:8-13).



MALACHI

INTRODUCTION

Malachi is the last prophetic message from God before the close of the OT period (although non-prophetic books such as Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles may have been written later). This small book captures the essential message of the OT and shows the reader the nature of God and our relationship and responsibility to him and to others in the covenant community.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Nothing is known about the author except his name. The book emphasizes the message rather than the messenger; God is the speaker in about forty-seven of the fifty-five verses. The one prophesied in 3:1 to "clear the way" for God to come to his temple is identified as (Hb) *malakiy*, "my messenger," a word identical to the name of the book's author.

BACKGROUND: Although the book is not dated by a reference to a ruler or a specific event, internal evidence, as well as its position in the canon, favors a postexilic date. Reference to a governor in 1:8 favors the Persian period when Judah was a province or sub-province of the Persian satrapy Abar Nahara, which included Palestine, Syria, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and, until 485 BC, Babylon. The temple had been rebuilt (515 BC) and worship reestablished there (1:6-11; 2:1-3; 3:1,10). But the excitement and enthusiasm for which the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were the catalysts had waned. The social and religious problems that Malachi addressed reflect the situation portrayed in Ezra 9 and 10 and Nehemiah 5 and 13, suggesting dates not long before Ezra's return to Judah (ca. 460 BC) or Nehemiah's second term as governor of Judah (Neh 13:6-7; ca. 435 BC). Linguistic data favors the earlier date.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Malachi was the last prophetic message from God before the close of the OT period. This book is a fitting conclusion to the OT and a transition for understanding the kingdom proclamation in the NT. Malachi spoke to the hearts of a troubled people whose circumstances of financial insecurity, religious skepticism, and personal disappointments were similar to those often experienced by God's people today. The book contains a message that must not be overlooked by those who wish to encounter God and his kingdom and to lead others to a similar encounter. We have a great, loving, and holy God, who has unchanging and glorious purposes for his people. Our God calls us to genuine worship, fidelity to himself and to one another, and to expectant faith in what he is doing and says he will do in this world and for his people.

God's love is paramount. It is expressed in Malachi in terms of God's election and protection of Israel above all the nations of the world. Since God had served the interests of Judah out of his unchanging love, he required Judah to live up to its obligations by obedience, loyalty, and sincere worship. This love relationship between God and Judah is the model for how people were expected to treat other members of the redeemed community. They were required to be faithful in all their dealings with one another.

As a community devoted to God, his people enjoy his protection and provision. But failure to live right before God and one another will bring God's judgment. Thus, God's people could not expect the joy of his blessings if they continued to fail in their duties to him and to one another. Before God would hold Judah in the balance of judgment, he would grant one last call for repentance. A forerunner would precede the fearsome day of the Lord and herald the coming of God's kingdom on earth.

STRUCTURE

Malachi's message is communicated in three interrelated addresses. Each address contains five sections arranged in a mirror-like repetitive structure surrounding a central section (a-b-c-b-a). The first two addresses begin with positive motivation or hope (1:2-5; 2:10a) and end with negative motivation or judgment (2:1-9; 3:1-6). In between is God's indictment (1:6-9 and 1:11-14; 2:10b-15a and 2:17) surrounding his commands (1:10; 2:15b-16). The final climactic address begins and ends with commands to repent (3:7-10a; 4:4-6). In between are sections of motivation (3:10b-12; 3:16–4:3) surrounding the indictment (3:13-15).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Malachi presents God's immutability. He does not change. For this reason, his promises are enduring. Further, he is One who judges rightly, beginning with his own people. The eternal God, moreover, is personal, as frequent use of the pronoun "I" in this book emphasizes. Christ is prophesied as the Messenger who will purify priests and people alike (3:1-5). The Holy Spirit is not mentioned.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

God's people were addressed in this book, yet they were disheartened and disillusioned. The promises that earlier prophets had made of a coming golden age seemed empty. These people illustrate that in times when God does not appear to be acting on behalf of his people, it is easy for them to become complacent. It is even easy for them to be apathetic about obeying God's specific moral commands. This book offers God's cure for such doubtful people.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Redemption in Malachi has two aspects. First is the notion of the covenant (mentioned six times). Salvation comes because God has initiated it in his covenant. Second is the work of the coming Messenger. Malachi predicted that his coming would bring cleansing: "He will be like a refiner's fire and like launderer's bleach" (3:2). The implications of this prophecy would not be entirely clear until Jesus fulfilled it by his atoning death.

MALACHI TIMELINE

625–525 BC

The Assyrian Empire comes to an end when the Babylonians and Medes destroy Nineveh. **612**

The Babylonians level Jerusalem and the temple. **586**

Cyrus, founding ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire, captures Babylon with little resistance. **539**

Cyrus's decree allows return of Jews from exile; 42,360 return initially. **538**

Second temple construction begins under Zerubbabel's and Joshua's leadership. **536**

Cambyses, son of Cyrus, rules Persian Empire. **530–522**

525–480 BC

Discouragement reinforced by opposition from transplanted people brings work on the temple to a halt. **526**

Darius I (Darius the Great) succeeds Cambyses. **521–486**

Haggai and Zechariah encourage the people to resume construction of the temple. **520–518**

Temple completed **MARCH 12, 515**

Xerxes (Ahasuerus) ascends the throne of Persia upon the death of his father, Darius I. **486**

480–460 BC

Greek victories over Persians in Battles of Salamis **(480)** and Plain of Plataea **(479),** thwart Persian expansion into Europe and are keys to Greek hegemony in the Mediterranean Basin and Europe.

Esther becomes queen of Persia. **479**

Esther intercedes with Xerxes for her people. **474**

First celebration of Purim **473**

Xerxes I (Ahasuerus), husband of Esther, assassinated **465**

Artaxerxes I succeeds his father. **465–423**

460–425 BC

Malachi's prophecy **460**

Ezra leads second group of Jewish exiles to Jerusalem. **458**

Events in Nehemiah **445–430**

Jerusalem's walls rebuilt under Nehemiah's leadership **445**

Nehemiah returns to Persia. **432**

The second Peloponnesian Wars between Athens and other Greek city-states **431–404**

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem. **425**

THE LORD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL

1 A pronouncement: †
The word of the LORD † to Israel through † Malachi. †
2 "I have loved you," † says the LORD.
Yet you ask, "How have you loved us?"
"Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother?" † This is the LORD's declaration. "Even so, I loved Jacob, 3 but I hated Esau. † I turned his mountains into a wasteland, and gave his inheritance to the desert jackals." †
4 Though Edom says: "We have been devastated, but we will rebuild † the ruins," the LORD of Armies says this: "They may build, but I will demolish. They

will be called a wicked country † and the people the LORD has cursed † forever. † 5 Your own eyes will see this, and you yourselves will say, 'The LORD is great, even beyond † the borders of Israel.' †

DISOBEDIENCE OF THE PRIESTS

6 "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. But if I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is your fear of me? † says the LORD of Armies to you priests, who despise my name."
Yet you ask: "How have we despised your name? "
7 "By presenting defiled food on my altar."
"How have we defiled you? " you ask. †
When you say: "The LORD's table is contemptible." †
8 "When you present a blind animal for sacrifice, is it not wrong? And when you present a lame or sick animal, is it not wrong? † Bring it to your governor! Would he be pleased with you or show you favor? " asks the LORD of Armies.
9 "And now plead for God's favor. Will he be gracious to us? † Since this has come from your hands, will he show any of you favor? " † asks the LORD of Armies. 10 "I wish one of you would shut the temple doors, † so that you would no longer kindle a useless fire on my altar! † I am not pleased with you," says the LORD of Armies, "and I will accept † no offering from your hands. †
11 "My name will be great among the nations, † from the rising of the sun to its setting. Incense † and pure offerings will be presented in my name in every place because my name will be great among the nations," † says the LORD of Armies.
12 "But you are profaning it † when you say: 'The Lord's table is defiled, and its product, its food, is contemptible.' 13 You also say: 'Look, what a nuisance! ' And you scorn † it," † † says the LORD of Armies. "You bring stolen, † † lame, or sick animals. You bring this as an offering! Am I to accept that from your hands? " asks the LORD.
14 "The deceiver is cursed who has an acceptable male in his flock and makes a vow but sacrifices a defective animal to the Lord. † For I am a great King," says the LORD of Armies, "and my name will be feared among the nations.

1:1 = My Messenger **1:4** Or *will return and build* **1:4** Or *Lord is angry with* **1:5** Or *great over* **1:11** Or *Burnt offerings* **1:11** Or *is great . . . are presented . . . is great* **1:13** Lit *blow at* **1:13** Alt Hb tradition reads *me* **1:13** Or *injured*
1:1 Is 13:1; Zch 9:1; 12:1 **1:1** Hs 1:1; Jl 1:1; Mc 1:1; Zph 1:1 **1:1** Jr 37:2; Hg 1:1 **1:2** Dt 4:37; 7:6-8; 10:14-15; Neh 13:26; Ps 78:68 **1:2** Gn 25:25-26; 36:19 **1:3** Gn 25:23; Rm 9:10-13 **1:3** Is 34:5-17; Jr 49:7-22; Ezk 35:1-15 **1:4** Mal 3:12,15 **1:4** Is 34:5-17; Jr 49:17-18; Mal 1:14; 2:2; 3:9; 4:6 **1:5** Ps 67:1-7; 72:8-11; Ezk 39:7; Zch 12:1-10; Rm 11:11-12 **1:6** 1Sm 2:30; Dn 5:23; Hg 1:8 **1:7** Ezk 22:26 **1:7** Ezk 41:22; 44:16 **1:8** Lv 22:18-25; Dt 15:21; 17:1 **1:9** 1Sm 13:12; Pr 19:6; Dn 9:13 **1:9** Nm 6:25-26 **1:10** 2Ch 28:24 **1:10** Pr 1:17; Is 1:14 **1:10** Lv 22:19-21 **1:10** Is 1:10-17; Jr 6:20; Am 5:21-23; Mc 6:6-8 **1:11** Ps 113:3; Is 45:6; 59:19; Mt 8:11 **1:12** Lv 22:2; Ezk 13:19; 22:26; 36:20-23; Mal 2:10-11 **1:13** 1Sm 2:29 **1:13** 2Sm 24:24 **1:14** Lv 22:18-25; 27:9-10; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21-23; Ec 5:4-7

1:1 The name **Malachi** means “my messenger.” The prophet’s name thus relates to the messengers in 2:7 and 3:1. The reference to **Israel** serves as a reminder of God’s continuing concern for the whole nation (see vv. 2-5).

1:2-5 Despite a return from exile that was disappointing in some ways (Ezr 3:12-13; Hg 2:3,14; Zch 4:10), God still **loved** Israel (v. 2; Jr 31:3)—as shown through his gracious choosing of **Jacob** (the ancestor of Israel) instead of **Esau** (v. 3; Gn 25:23). Love and hate are used similarly of choosing and rejecting in Matthew 6:24 and Luke 14:26. **Edom** had been made a **wasteland** and would never recover (vv. 3-4), whereas Israel had also been devastated but would be restored (Is 1:7; Jr 24:6; 31:28; Ezk 36:34-35; Mc 3:12–4:4). The description of Edom as **wicked** (v. 4) parallels Zechariah 5:8 and relates to its broader role as a foil for Israel (see the notes on Is 63:1,3-6; Ob10-21). God’s judgment of this nation demonstrates that his greatness and rule extend beyond Israel to the whole earth (Zch 9:9-10; 14:9; see Am 1:13).

1:6-10 The **priests** had not rendered to God the glory and awe he deserved (v. 6), as shown by their offering of **blind**, **lame**, and **sick** animals for sacrifices instead of animals without defect (vv. 7-10,12-14; see Lv 22:18-25; Hg 1:2-4).

1:11 Despite the actions of the priests, who should have been setting a good example, God will one day be worshiped rightly **in every place** (see Hs 1:10; Hab 2:14; Zph 2:11; Zch 8:7). His name will be great **among the nations** because he is “a great King” (v. 14; Zch 9:9; 14:9,16-17).

WARNING TO THE PRIESTS

2 “Therefore, this decree † is for you priests: 2 If you don’t listen, and if you don’t take it to heart † to honor my name,” says the LORD of Armies, “I will send a curse among you, and I will curse your blessings. † In fact, I have already begun to curse them because you are not taking it to heart.

3 “Look, I am going to rebuke your descendants, † and I will spread animal waste † over your faces, the waste from your festival sacrifices, † and you will be taken away with it. 4 Then you will know that I sent you this decree, so that my covenant with Levi † may continue,” says the LORD of Armies. 5 “My covenant with him was one of life and peace, † and I gave these to him; it called

for reverence, and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. † 6 True instruction was in his mouth, and nothing wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me † in peace and integrity and turned many from iniquity. † 7 For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should desire instruction from his mouth, because he is the messenger of the LORD of Armies. †

8 "You, on the other hand, have turned from the way. † You have caused many to stumble † by your instruction. You have violated † the covenant of Levi," says the LORD of Armies. 9 "So I in turn have made you despised † and humiliated before all the people because you are not keeping my ways but are showing partiality in your instruction." †

JUDAH'S MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS

10 Don't all of us have one Father? † Didn't one God create us? † Why then do we act treacherously against one another, † profaning † the covenant of our fathers? † 11 Judah has acted treacherously, and a detestable † act has been done in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned † the LORD's sanctuary, † † which he loves, † and has married the daughter of a foreign god. † † 12 May the LORD cut off † from the tents of Jacob the man who does this, whoever he may be, † † even if he presents an offering to the LORD of Armies.

13 This is another thing you do. You are covering the LORD's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning, † because he no longer respects your offerings or receives them gladly from your hands. †

14 And you ask, "Why? " Because even though the LORD has been a witness † between you and the wife of your youth, † you have acted treacherously against her. She was your marriage partner † and your wife by covenant. † 15 Didn't God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? † Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully, † † so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his † youth.

16 "If he hates † and divorces his wife," † says the LORD God of Israel, "he † covers his garment with injustice," † says the LORD of Armies. Therefore, watch

yourselves carefully, † and do not act treacherously.

JUDGMENT AT THE LORD'S COMING

17 You have wearied the LORD † with your words.
Yet you ask, "How have we wearied him? "
When you say, "Everyone who does what is evil is good in the LORD's sight, and he is delighted with them, † or else where is the God of justice? " †

2:3 Dung or entrails **2:8** Lit *corrupted* **2:11** Or *profaned what is holy to the Lord* **2:11** = a woman who worshiped a foreign god **2:12** Hb obscure **2:15** Hb obscure **2:15** Lit *So guard yourselves in your spirit* **2:15** Lit *your* **2:16** Or *The Lord God of Israel says that he hates divorce and the one who* **2:16** Lit *Therefore, guard yourselves in your spirit*

2:1 Nah 1:14 **2:2** Is 42:25; 57:1; Jr 12:11 **2:2** Dt 28:20; Pr 3:33; 28:27; Mal 3:9 **2:3** Hs 4:6-8 **2:3** Ex 29:14; Lv 16:27 **2:4** Nm 25:11-13; Dt 10:8; 33:8-11; Neh 13:29; Jr 33:17-22 **2:5** 1Sm 25:6; Pr 3:2 **2:5** Mal 1:6 **2:6** Gn 5:22,24; 6:9; Mc 6:8 **2:6** Is 53:6; Jr 23:22; Ezk 3:19-20 **2:7** 2Ch 36:15-16; Hg 1:13 **2:8** Ex 32:8; Dt 31:29; Mal 3:7 **2:8** Pr 4:16; Is 8:14-15; Hs 14:1 **2:9** Mal 1:6-7 **2:9** Lv 19:15; Dt 10:17; Ps 82:2; Mt 22:16; 1Tm 5:21; Jms 2:1,9 **2:10** Ex 4:22-23; Is 63:16; Hs 11:1; Mal 1:6; Jn 8:41 **2:10** Dt 32:6; Is 43:1-7; 64:8 **2:10** Ex 21:8; Jdg 9:23; Jb 6:15; Is 21:2; Jr 3:20 **2:10** Nm 30:2; Ps 55:20; 89:34; Mal 1:12 **2:10** 1Kg 8:21 **2:11** Lv 18:22-30; Ezr 9:1-14; Neh 13:4-9 **2:11** Jr 16:18; Ezk 44:7 **2:11** Ex 36:1-6; Zph 3:4 **2:11** Ps 78:68-69 **2:11** Dt 7:3-4; Ezr 9:1-2,10-14; Neh 13:23-30 **2:12** Ex 12:19; 31:14 **2:12** Ru 4:10; 1Sm 24:21 **2:13** Ps 6:6-10 **2:13** 1Kg 8:28-30; Is 56:7 **2:14** Gn 31:50-53; Jdg 11:10; 1Sm 12:5 **2:14** Pr 2:16-17; 5:18; Is 54:6 **2:14** Ec 4:10 **2:14** Ezk 16:8,59-62; Hs 2:16-20 **2:15** Ex 23:13; Jos 23:11 **2:16** Gn 29:31; Dt 21:15-17; 22:13,16; Jdg 15:2; Pr 30:23 **2:16** Dt 24:1-4 **2:16** Gn 6:11,13; Ps 73:6; Jr 22:3; Hab 1:2-3 **2:17** Is 43:22-24 **2:17** Dt 25:16; Mal 3:15 **2:17** Neh 9:33; Is 40:27

2:1-3 The call for priests to obey God and the prophecy that God will defile them parallels Zechariah 3:1-7 (see Hg 2:14). Their failure is again characterized as a failure **to honor** God (v. 2; 1:6). The presence of a **curse** instead of **blessings** shows Israel's continuing need for redemption (see Dt 28:15-68), even in the postexilic period (see the notes on Hg 1:5-11; Zch 1:2-6).

2:5-9 The priests were part of the tribe of Levi, which had been specially set apart to serve God (Ex 32:26-29; Nm 3:12-13). Rather than imparting truth, knowledge, and instruction as God's messengers (vv. 6-7), however, the priests had caused others **to stumble** (v. 8) and would be **despised and humiliated** as a result (v. 9).

2:10-13 As in 1:6, God is referred to as a **Father** (v. 10). Whereas the "covenant" with Levi was discussed above (vv. 4-5,8), here it is the **covenant of our fathers**, which refers to God's covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai. Judah **acted treacherously** by marrying **the daughter of a foreign god** (v. 11). The problem here is not ethnic intermarriage. Rather, to marry a foreign woman was to join with a foreign god and thus to mix idol worshipers in among the community of God's people. As a result, their offerings were useless (vv. 12-13; 1:7-14).

2:14-16 Parallel and related to their unfaithfulness to God (vv. 10-13), the people had also **acted treacherously** against the **wife of** their **youth** (v. 14; see "A Biblical View of Marriage," *p. 1449*). Such was contrary to God's own faithfulness to Israel (Hs 2:14-16; 3:1-5) and may have related to problems with intermarriage to foreigners in the postexilic period (Ezr 9:1-2; Neh 10:30; 13:23-27). For a third time in this context, a **covenant** has been violated (vv. 8,10,14).

3 “See, I am going to send my messenger, † and he will clear the way
before me. † Then the Lord you seek † will suddenly come to his
temple, † the Messenger of the covenant you delight in — see, he is
coming,” says the LORD of Armies. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming?
And who will be able to stand when he appears? † For he will be like a refiner’s
fire † and like launderer’s bleach. † † 3 He will be like a refiner and purifier of
silver; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. †
Then they will present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. 4 And the
offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will please the LORD as in days of old † and
years gone by.
5 “I will come to you in judgment, and I will be ready to witness against
sorcerers and adulterers; against those who swear falsely; against those who
oppress the hired worker, the widow, and the fatherless; and against those who
deny justice to the resident alien. † They do not fear me,” † says the LORD of
Armies. 6 “Because I, the LORD, have not changed, † you descendants of Jacob
have not been destroyed. † †

ROBBING GOD

7 “Since the days of your fathers, you have turned from my statutes; you have
not kept them. † Return to me, † and I will return to you,” † says the LORD of
Armies.
Yet you ask, “How can we return? ”
8 “Will a man rob † God? Yet you are robbing me! ”
“How do we rob you? ” you ask.
“By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions. † 9 You are
suffering under a curse, yet † you — the whole nation — are still robbing me.
10 Bring the full tenth into the storehouse † so that there may be food in my
house. † Test me in this way,” † says the LORD of Armies. “See if I will not
open the floodgates of heaven † and pour out a blessing for you without
measure. † 11 I will rebuke the devourer † † for you, so that it will not ruin the
produce of your land and your vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit,”

says the LORD of Armies. 12 “Then all the nations will consider you fortunate,
for you will be a delightful land,” says the LORD of Armies.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED

13 “Your words against me are harsh,” † says the LORD.
Yet you ask, “What have we spoken against you? ”
14 You have said: “It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping
his requirements † and walking mournfully † before the LORD of Armies? 15 So
now we consider the arrogant † to be fortunate. † Not only do those who
commit wickedness prosper, they even test God † and escape.” †
16 At that time those who feared the LORD spoke to one another. The LORD took
notice and listened. So a book of remembrance † was written before him for
those who feared the LORD and had high regard for his name. 17 “They will be
mine,” says the LORD of Armies, † “my own possession on the day I am
preparing. I will have compassion on them as a man has compassion on his son
who serves him. † 18 So you will again see the difference between the righteous
and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve him.

3:2 Lit *cleansing agent* **3:6** Or *Because I, the Lord, do not change, you descendants of Jacob are not destroyed* **3:9** Or *because* **3:11** Perhaps locusts

3:1 Ex 23:20; 33:2; 2Ch 36:15-16 **3:1** Is 40:3; Mk 1:2; Lk 1:76 **3:1** Hs 5:6 **3:1** Ps 24:7-10 **3:2** Rv 6:17 **3:2** Dt 4:24; Is 1:25; Zch 13:9 **3:2** Jr 2:22 **3:3** Ps 12:6; Pr 17:3; Ezk 22:22 **3:4** Am 9:11 **3:5** Ex 20:14,16; 22:18-24; Dt 18:10; 24:14,17; Jr 5:2,7; 7:6,9 **3:5** Dt 10:17-20; Mal 2:5 **3:6** Nm 23:19; 1Sm 15:29; Ps 33:11; 119:89-91; Rm 11:29; Heb 6:17-18; Jms 1:17 **3:6** Ps 124; Hs 11:9 **3:7** Jos 1:7; 23:6; 1Kg 8:58; 2Kg 17:15; Ezr 9:7; Am 2:4; Mal 2:8 **3:7** Dt 4:30; 30:2; 2Ch 30:6,9; Is 55:7; Jl 2:13; Zch 1:3 **3:7** 1Kg 8:33; Jr 15:19; 24:7 **3:8** Pr 22:22-23 **3:8** Lv 7:14,32-33; 27:30-32; Nm 18:8-24; Dt 12:5-19; 14:22-29; 26:12 **3:10** Jos 6:19,24; 1Kg 7:51 **3:10** 2Ch 31:4-10; Neh 10:34-39; Ezk 44:28-31 **3:10** Ex 4:1-9; Jdg 6:36-40 **3:10** Gn 7:11; 8:2; Dt 11:16-17 **3:10** Dt 28:12; Is 41:18-20; Jl 2:18-32; Am 9:13-15 **3:11** Jl 1:4; 2:25 **3:13** Ps 119:23; Ezk 35:13 **3:14** Lv 8:35; Dt 11:1 **3:14** Ps 35:14; 38:6 **3:15** Ps 119:21,85; Is 13:11; Jr 43:2 **3:15** Gn 30:13; Ps 72:17; Pr 31:28 **3:15** Ps 78:18,41,56; 95:9 **3:15** Ezk 17:15 **3:16** Ex 32:32; Est 6:1; Dn 12:1 **3:17** Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4 **3:17** Ps 103:13; Jl 2:18; Zch 11:5-6

3:1-4 The complaint against God’s justice (2:17) will be finally put to rest on the **day** the Lord’s coming, which will be like a **refiner’s fire** and **launderer’s bleach** (v. 2; see the note on Zch 3:1-5,8-10; 13:9). Then the uncleanness of Levi and Judah (see 1:6–2:16) will be removed so that they **present offerings to the LORD in righteousness** (vv. 3-4). The **messenger** who precedes God will **clear the way** for him (v. 1). This person is called **Elijah** in 4:5 which, along with 1:1 (see note; Hg 1:13), implies that he is primarily a prophetic figure. Indeed, John the Baptist, the “Elijah who is to come” (Mt 11:13-14), fits this description (Lk 1:5,13,17).

3:5 The **judgment** of **sorcerers**, **adulterers**, and oppressors of the weak parallels the sins addressed at greater length in 2:10-16. The longed-for **justice** (2:17) would indeed come.

3:7 Like the priests (2:8), the people had turned away from God's **statutes**. Despite their return to the land and participation in the temple worship, they needed to **return** to him (see the note on Zch 1:2-6).

3:8-12 Rebellion against God once again manifests itself through improper worship and disregard for the temple (see 1:6-14; 2:10-13; Neh 13:10-12; Hg 1:2-4). The law commanded that tithes and a contribution be paid by the Israelites (v. 8; Lv 27:30-33; Nm 18:21-28; Dt 12:6,11,17). The failure of the postexilic community to do so brought a **curse** (v. 9; 1:14; 2:2). The promises of blessing for obedience in terms of opening the **floodgates of heaven** and the fruitfulness of the land in verses 10-11 echo Genesis 7:11; Joel 2:19-29; Amos 9:13-15; and Haggai 2:18-19. At that time, **all the nations** will bless them (v. 12), just as they will the Messiah (Ps 72:17). God's people being **a delightful land** contrasts with the fate of Edom in 1:4.

3:13-18 Similar to 2:17, the people complained concerning God's justice because there seemed to be no benefit to those who serve and obey God (vv. 13-14). The arrogant were prospering and were apparently getting away with **wickedness** (v. 15). Nevertheless, God took notice of those who feared him and promised that they would be his **own possession** (vv. 16-17; Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6). His fatherly **compassion** in verses 17 draws upon 1:6 and 2:10 (see Dt 1:31; 8:5). When God comes in judgment (see 3:1-5), he will make a clear distinction between the **righteous and the wicked** (v. 18; Ps 1:6; Hab 2:4).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

4 "For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them," says the LORD of Armies, "not leaving them root or branches. 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, † and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. † 3 You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing," says the LORD of Armies.

A FINAL WARNING

4 "Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb † for all Israel. 5 Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah † before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. † 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. † Otherwise, I will come and strike the land † with a curse."

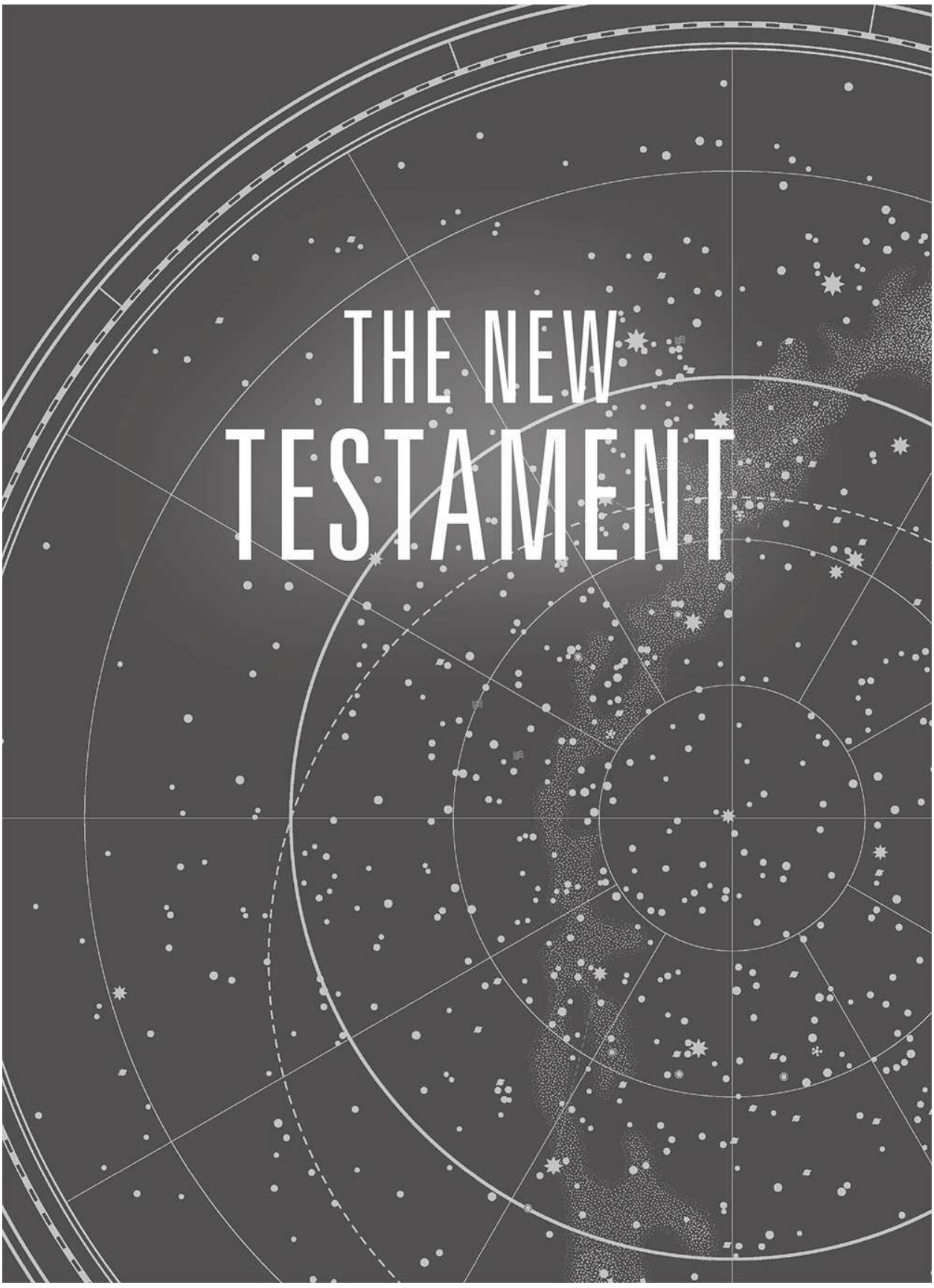
4:2 Or *like stall-fed calves* **4:6** Or *earth*

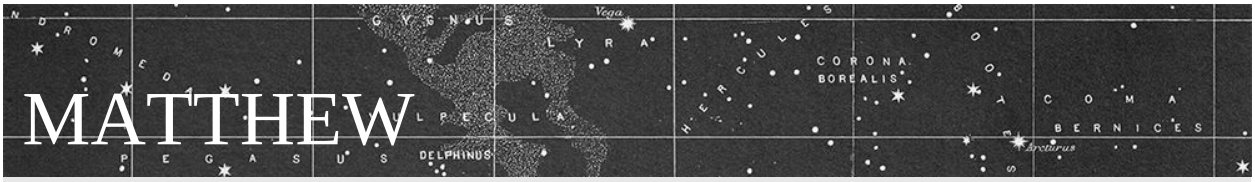
4:2 Ps 37:6; Is 58:8 **4:4** Dt 4:10,15; 5:2 **4:5** Mt 11:13-14 **4:5** Jl 2:31; Ac 2:20 **4:6** Lk 1:17

4:1-3 The **coming day** of judgment is again described in terms of fire (v. 1; see 3:2-3), in this case **a furnace.** The prosperity of the **arrogant** and those who do **wickedness** had been a source of discontent earlier (3:15). The litmus test for survival is whether one fears God's **name** (v. 2; see 1:14; 3:6,16). The joy of the redeemed recalls Zephaniah 3:14 and Zechariah 2:10; 9:9. Their trampling of the wicked likewise echoes Genesis 3:15; Psalms 44:5; 60:12; and 91:13.

4:4-5 The conclusion to the Minor Prophets (see the note on Hs 1:1) and to the Prophets in general reaffirms the continuing importance of the **instruction of Moses** (see Jos 1:8; Zch 1:4; 7:7,12). It also issues a warning concerning the future **great and terrible day of the LORD** (Jl 2:11). This day will be preceded by the coming of **Elijah** (see 1Kg 17:1; 2Kg 2:1-12).

4:6 The turning of **the hearts of fathers to their children** and vice versa is a concrete example of inner transformation, which is promised in the new covenant (see Dt 30:6; Jr 31:33; Ezk 36:26-27).


THE NEW
TESTAMENT



MATTHEW

INTRODUCTION

This Gospel was written from a strong Jewish perspective to show that Jesus truly is the Messiah promised in the OT.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author did not identify himself in the text. However, the title that ascribes this Gospel to Matthew appears in the earliest manuscripts and is possibly original. Titles became necessary to distinguish one Gospel from another when the four Gospels began to circulate as a single collection. Many early church fathers (Papias, Irenaeus, Pantaenus, and Origen) acknowledged Matthew as the author. Papias also contended that Matthew first wrote in Hebrew, implying that this Gospel was later translated into Greek.

Many modern scholars dispute these traditional claims. For instance, against Papias they argue that this Gospel was not originally written in Hebrew since the Greek of Matthew does not appear to be translation Greek. However, the excellent Greek of Matthew could have been produced by a skilled translator of an original Hebrew text. Furthermore, there are many hints of Hebraic influence in this Gospel (see notes at 1:17, 1:21, and 2:22-23). Finally, since Hebrew quickly ceased to be the dominant language of early Christians as the church expanded into Gentile territories, requiring the Gospel to circulate in a Greek translation, the absence of ancient Hebrew texts of Matthew is not surprising.

The early church unanimously affirmed that the Gospel of Matthew was authored by the apostle Matthew. It would require impressive evidence to overturn this early consensus.

Clues from the Gospel itself support its ascription to Matthew. First, both Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27 identify the tax collector whom Jesus called to be his disciple as “Levi.” This Gospel, however, identifies Levi as “Matthew.” Matthew, a Hebrew name meaning “gift of God,” appears to be the apostolic name that Jesus gave to Levi after he chose to follow Christ, much like Simon was named “Peter” by Jesus after his confession of faith (16:18). The use of “Matthew” in this Gospel may be Matthew’s personal touch, a self-reference that gives us a clue about authorship.

BACKGROUND: Most scholars believe that Matthew utilized Mark’s Gospel in writing his own Gospel. If this is correct, Matthew’s Gospel must postdate Mark’s. Irenaeus (ca. AD 180) seems to claim that Mark wrote his Gospel after Peter’s death in the mid-60s. However, Clement of Alexandria, who wrote only twenty years after Irenaeus, claimed that Mark wrote his Gospel while Peter was still alive. Given the ambiguity of the historical evidence, a decision must be based on other factors.

The date of composition for Mark is best inferred from the date of Luke and Acts. The abrupt ending of Acts which left Paul under house arrest in Rome implies that Acts was written before Paul’s release. This evidence dates Acts to the early 60s. Luke and Acts were two volumes of a single work, as the prologues to these books demonstrate. Luke was written before Acts. Given the amount of research that Luke invested in the book, a date in the late 50s is reasonable. If Luke used Mark in writing his own Gospel, as seems likely, Mark was written some time before the late 50s, perhaps the early to mid-50s. Thus, despite Matthew’s dependence on Mark, Matthew may have been written any time beginning in the mid-50s once Mark was completed. The earliest historical evidence is consistent with this opinion, since Irenaeus (ca. AD 180) claimed that Matthew wrote his Gospel while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome (early 60s).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

As the first book in the NT, the Gospel of Matthew serves as a gateway between the two testaments. Of the NT books, and certainly of the four Gospels, Matthew has the strongest connections to the OT. Matthew looked back and referred to Hebrew prophecies about sixty times ("was fulfilled" and "so that what was spoken . . . might be fulfilled").

STRUCTURE

Matthew divided his Gospel into three major sections. He introduced new major sections with the words "from then on Jesus began to" (4:17; 16:21). These transitional statements divide the Gospel into the introduction (1:1–4:16), body (4:17–16:20), and conclusion (16:21–28:20). Matthew also divided his Gospel into five major blocks of teaching, each of which concludes with a summary statement (8:1; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). Some scholars believe these five major discourses were meant to correspond to the five books of Moses and to confirm Jesus's identity as the new Moses.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The First Gospel shows God in action, taking the initiative in fulfilling the Scriptures about the coming Messiah. It teaches about the Trinity, and it contributes greatly to the Christian understanding of the deity of Christ. Jesus's constant reference to himself as the Son of Man plays a key role in understanding Jesus's earthly mission.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

The author documented the sinfulness of humans in stark terms: Both Jews and Romans were responsible for Jesus's crucifixion. Yet he also showed that humans committed to following Jesus can accomplish great good. Matthew noted the importance of people putting faith in Jesus; he also showed Jesus's criticism of those with little faith.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is presented mainly in terms of belonging to the kingdom of God that arrived in a fresh way in the person of Jesus (12:28). The death and resurrection of Jesus were the divine means by which God provided salvation. Although Jesus took the message of the kingdom only to Jews during his lifetime, his last act in this Gospel was to commission his followers to go to Gentiles ("all nations") as well (28:18-20).

MATTHEW TIMELINE

2200–1800 BC

FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

Abraham **2166–1991**

Isaac **2066–1886**

Jacob **2006–1859**

Joseph **1915–1805**

1526–1000 BC

Moses **1526–1406**

Exodus **1446**

Joshua **1490?–1380?**

Destruction of Jericho **1406**

Judges **1380?–1060?**

Ruth **1175?–1125?**

Samuel **1105?–1025?**

Saul **1080?–1010**

1000–586 BC

FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

David **1050?–970**

Solomon **990?–931**

Rehoboam **971?–913**

Jeroboam **971–909**

Fall of the northern kingdom **722**

Fall of the southern kingdom **586**

586–63 BC

FROM THE EXILE TO THE MESSIAH

Babylonian Exile **586–538**

Temple completed **515**

Greeks thwart Persian expansion into Europe with victories at Plataea and Mycale. **479**

Jerusalem’s walls completed **445**

Alexander the Great invades Persia. **334**

Greek control of Palestine **323–167**

Years of Jewish independence **167–63**

Roman dominance begins. **63**

5 BC–AD 33

MESSIAH

Jesus’s birth **WINTER 5 BC**

Herod the Great’s death **4 BC**

John the Baptist’s ministry begins **AD 29**

Jesus’s ministry begins **AD 29**

Jesus’s final week **MARCH 28–APRIL 3, AD 33**

Jesus’s resurrection **APRIL 5, AD 33**

Jesus’s ascension **MAY 14, AD 33**

Feast of Pentecost **MAY 24, AD 33**

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

1 An † account † of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, †
the Son of Abraham: †

FROM ABRAHAM TO DAVID

2 Abraham fathered † Isaac,
Isaac fathered Jacob,
Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers, †
3 Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar,
Perez fathered Hezron,
Hezron fathered Aram, †
4 Aram fathered Amminadab,
Amminadab fathered Nahshon,
Nahshon fathered Salmon,
5 Salmon fathered Boaz by Rahab,
Boaz fathered Obed by Ruth,
Obed fathered Jesse, †
6 and Jesse fathered King David.

FROM DAVID TO THE BABYLONIAN EXILE

David fathered Solomon † by Uriah's wife, †
7 Solomon fathered Rehoboam,
Rehoboam fathered Abijah,
Abijah fathered Asa, †
8 Asa † fathered Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, †
Joram fathered Uzziah, †
9 Uzziah fathered Jotham,
Jotham fathered Ahaz,
Ahaz fathered Hezekiah,
10 Hezekiah fathered Manasseh,
Manasseh fathered Amon, †
Amon fathered Josiah, †
11 and Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers
at the time of the exile to Babylon. †

FROM THE EXILE TO THE CHRIST

12 After the exile to Babylon
Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel,
Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel,
13 Zerubbabel fathered Abiud,
Abiud fathered Eliakim,
Eliakim fathered Azor, †
14 Azor fathered Zadok,
Zadok fathered Achim,
Achim fathered Eliud,
15 Eliud fathered Eleazar,
Eleazar fathered Matthan,
Matthan fathered Jacob,
16 and Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary,
who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Christ. †

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Christ, fourteen generations. †

THE NATIVITY OF THE CHRIST

18 The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After his mother Mary had been engaged † to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit. † 19 So her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, † and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. †

20 But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. † 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, † because he will save his people from their sins." †

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 **See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son,**
and they will name him Immanuel, †
which is translated "God is with us." †

24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her † 25 but did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son. † And he named him Jesus. †

1:2 In vv. 2-16 either a son, as here, or a later descendant, as in v. 8 **1:6** Other mss add *King* **1:7** Other mss read *Asaph* **1:8** Other mss read *Asaph* **1:8** = Jehoram **1:10** Other mss read *Amos* **1:18** Or *betrothed* **1:25** Other mss read *to her firstborn son*

1:1-6 Ru 4:18-22; 2Sm 7:12-16; 1Ch 2:1-15; Lk 3:32-34 **1:1** Mk 12:26; Lk 3:4; Ac 1:20; Php 4:3; Rv 3:5 **1:1** Ps 89:3; Is 9:6; Lk 1:32,69 **1:1** Gn 22:18; Mt 9:7; Rm 1:3; Gl 3:16 **1:2** Gn 29:35; Ps 14:7; 105:9; Mt 8:11; 22:32; Jms 2:21 **1:3** Gn 38:29-30; 46:12; Lk 3:33 **1:5** Ru 1:4; 2:1; Lk 3:32 **1:6** 1Sm 16:1; 17:12; 2Sm 11:27; 12:24 **1:7-8** 1Kg 11:43; 14:31; 15:8,24; 22:50; 2Kg 14:21 **1:9-10** 2Kg 15:5,38; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18,24 **1:11** 2Kg 24:6,14; Is 5:13; Jr 27:20; Ezk 1:1; Mt 1:17 **1:12-13** Gn 10:10; 1Ch 3:17; Lk 3:27,30 **1:16** Mt 27:17,22; Lk 2:11; Jn 1:45; 4:25 **1:17** 2Kg 24:14; Jr 27:20; Dn 9:25-26; Mk 8:29; Ac 2:31,36,38 **1:18** Mt 12:46; Lk 1:27,35 **1:19** Mt 13:17; Mk 10:12; Lk 2:36; 1Co 14:35; 2Co 11:2; Gl 4:27 **1:19** Dt 22:20-24; 24:1-4; Mt 2:7; Lk 16:18; Jn 8:4-5 **1:20** 2Ch 1:1; Mt 13:49; 27:19; Jn 6:20; Rm 1:3 **1:21** Lk 1:31; 2:21; Jn 10:25; 1Jn 2:12 **1:21** Lk 2:11; Jn 1:29; Ac 4:12; 5:31; 13:23,38-39 **1:23** Is 7:14 **1:22-23** Is 7:14; Mt 21:1-4; Lk 24:44; Rm 1:2-4 **1:24** Mt 1:6; 13:49; Lk 1:1; 19:32; Jd 5 **1:25** Gn 4:1,17; Ex 13:2; Jdg 11:39; 1Sm 1:19; Lk 2:7,21

1:1 Matthew begins his Gospel with the title, **An account of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham**. Genealogies were important to Jewish people; they recorded a person's ancestry and were often used to establish matters of legitimacy and inheritance. This genealogy offers a preview of what Matthew does throughout the Gospel—he demonstrates that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah promised throughout the OT. The Jews of Jesus's day were expecting a descendant of King David to rescue his people. Jesus was that expected heir.

1:17 The genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:2-16 is not intended to be exhaustive. The lists of names are divided into three sets of **fourteen generations**. To keep the lists of equal length, a number of OT kings are omitted. Matthew's three sets of names highlight three major turning points in the history of God's people: the anointing of King David (Mt v. 6), the fall of Israel into captivity (Mt v. 11), and the coming of Jesus the Messiah (Mt v. 16). Though scholars disagree as to why Matthew chose the number fourteen for the length of each set, the story he tells is clear. David was God's anointed king, but God's people still fell into sin and captivity. Thus, God sent David's greatest Son into the world: Jesus the Messiah rescued his people from their sins once and for all.

1:18-19 Engagement in the ancient Jewish world was strict by modern standards. Couples were betrothed by contract and were often called "husband and wife" even before the wedding. Sexual contact between the betrothed was forbidden, and infidelity—even during the engagement period—was considered adultery and was grounds for divorce or, in some places in Israel, public stoning.

1:21 The angel instructs Joseph to name Mary's son **Jesus**, the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*. It means "the Lord saves," furthering Matthew's argument that Jesus is the Messiah of the OT—the One God promised to send to **save his people from their sins**.

WISE MEN VISIT THE KING

2 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of King Herod,
wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, † 2 saying, "Where is he
who has been born king of the Jews? † For we saw his star at its
rising † and have come to worship him." †
3 When King Herod heard this, he was deeply disturbed, and all Jerusalem with
him. 4 So he assembled all the chief priests and scribes † of the people and
asked them where the Christ would be born.
5 "In Bethlehem of Judea," they told him, "because this is what was written by
the prophet:
6 **And you, Bethlehem,** in the land of Judah, are by no means **least**
among the rulers of Judah:
Because out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel." † †
7 Then Herod secretly summoned the wise men and asked them the exact time
the star appeared. 8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search

carefully for the child. When you find him, report back to me so that I too can go and worship him.” † †

9 After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was — the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. 11 Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. † Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. † 12 And being warned † in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their own country by another route.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

13 After they were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, “Get up! Take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to kill him.” † 14 So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night, and escaped to Egypt. 15 He stayed there until Herod’s death, so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled: **Out of Egypt I called my Son.** † †

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

16 Then Herod, when he realized that he had been outwitted by the wise men, flew into a rage. He gave orders to massacre all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, in keeping with the time he had learned from the wise men. † 17 Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18 **A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping, † and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children;**
and she refused to be consoled,
because they are no more. † †

THE RETURN TO NAZARETH

19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, † 20 saying, “Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, because those who intended to kill the child are dead.” 21 So he got up,

took the child and his mother, and entered the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the region of Galilee. † 23 Then he went and settled in a town called Nazareth to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene. †

2:2 Or *to pay him homage* **2:8** Or *and pay him homage* **2:11** Or *they paid him homage* **2:18** Other mss read *Ramah, lamentation, and weeping,*

2:1 Gn 25:6; 1Kg 4:30; Lk 1:5; 2:4-7 **2:2** Jr 23:5; 30:9; Zch 9:9; Mt 27:11; Lk 19:38; Jn 1:49 **2:2** Nm 24:17; Rv 22:16 **2:4** Mt 16:21; 20:18; 21:15; 27:41; Lk 9:22 **2:6** Mc 5:2 **2:6** 2Sm 5:2; Mc 5:2; Jn 7:42; 21:16 **2:7-8** Mk 5:6; Lk 1:7; Ac 13:6; Rv 1:16 **2:11** Ps 72:10; Is 60:6; Mt 1:18; 12:46; Mk 5:6 **2:12** Mt 27:19; Lk 2:26; Ac 10:22; Heb 8:5; 11:7 **2:13** Mt 1:20; 13:49; Mk 11:18; Jms 4:7 **2:15** Hs 11:1 **2:15** Ex 4:22; Nm 24:8; Hs 11:1 **2:16** Is 59:7; Mk 10:34; Ac 13:6; 25:3; Rv 12:4 **2:18** Jr 31:15 **2:18** Gn 35:19; Jdg 4:5; Jr 31:15; Ac 8:2; 2Co 7:7 **2:19** Mt 1:20; 13:49; Lk 1:11; Jd 5 **2:22** Mt 17:22; Lk 1:5; Ac 27:29; Col 3:21; Heb 8:5 **2:23** Mk 1:24; Lk 1:26; Jn 1:45-46

2:1-2 The **wise men from the east** were most likely magi, astrologers from Persia or Babylon (or perhaps Arabia), who had some exposure to Judaism and were following up on OT prophecies (e.g., Nm 24:17). Though Matthew is not explicit about the how, the magi respond to their astronomical observations (**we saw his star at its rising**) and travel to Jerusalem looking for **he who has been born king of the Jews**. When they find Jesus, they offer him kingly gifts and worship him. Though the theology of these particular magi is unknown, Matthew is clear that even pagan astrologers ought to pay homage to God's Son. The significance of Jesus for the Gentiles is a constant theme throughout Matthew's Gospel.

2:5 In Bethlehem of Judea. The prophet Micah located the birthplace of the expected Messiah in Bethlehem (Mc 5:2). Though a small village, Bethlehem was the birthplace of King David and was home to his ancestors.

2:11 Gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Gifts were offered to royalty or people of high political or religious status. Gold was a highly precious metal, used for jewelry and ornaments. Frankincense was a type of incense that released a sweet fragrance when burned. Myrrh was a perfume made from the gum resin of certain trees.

THE HERALD OF THE CHRIST

3 In those days John the Baptist came, † preaching in the wilderness of Judea † 2 and saying, "Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near! " † 3 For he is the one spoken of through the prophet Isaiah, who said:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight! † †

4 Now John had a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then people from Jerusalem, all Judea,

and all the vicinity of the Jordan were going out to him, 6 and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. †

7 When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees † coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? † 8 Therefore produce fruit † consistent with † repentance. 9 And don’t presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ † For I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. 10 The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. †

11 “I baptize you with † water for repentance, † but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I. I am not worthy to remove † his sandals. He himself will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. † 12 His winnowing shovel is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn. But the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out.” †

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. †

14 But John tried to stop him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me? ”

15 Jesus answered him, “Allow it for now, because this is the way for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John allowed him to be baptized.

16 When Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water. The heavens † suddenly opened for him, † and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. † 17 And a voice from heaven said: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased.” †

3:8 Lit *fruit worthy of* **3:11** Or *in* **3:11** Or *to carry* **3:16** Other mss omit *for him*

3:1-12 Mk 1:3-8; Lk 3:2-17; Jn 1:6-8,19-28 **3:1** Jos 15:61; Jdg 1:16 **3:2** Dn 2:44; Mt 4:17; 6:10; 10:7; Mk 1:15; Lk 10:9; 11:20; 21:31 **3:3** Is 40:3 **3:3** Is 40:3; Lk 1:17,76; Jn 1:23 **3:5-6** Mt 23:37; Mk 1:5; Lk 3:3; Jn 15:22; Ac 19:18 **3:7** Mt 16:1; 22:23; 23:15; Ac 4:1; 5:17; 23:6 **3:7** Mt 12:34; 23:33; Rm 5:9; 1Th 1:10 **3:8** Mt 3:10; 12:33; 13:8,26; 21:19,34,41,43; Mk 11:14 **3:9** Lk 3:8; Jn 8:33,39; Ac 13:26; Rm 4:1 **3:10** Mt 7:19; Lk 13:7,9; Jn 15:2,6 **3:11** Mk 1:4,8; Jn 1:26; Ac 1:5 **3:11** Is 4:4; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:3-4; 11:16; Ti 3:5 **3:12** Is 30:24; Mt 13:30; Mk 9:43,48; Lk 3:17 **3:13-17** Mk 1:9-11; Lk 3:21-22; Jn 1:31-34 **3:16** Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10 **3:16** Is 11:2; Jn 1:32; Ac 7:56; 2Pt 1:17 **3:17** Ps 2:7; Is 42:1; Lk 9:35; Jn 12:28

3:2 Repent. Repentance in the OT meant turning back to God. It involved change in specific actions as

well as in the direction of a person's life. Repentance includes a massive shift in one's worldview, demonstrated in confession of sin, prayer, and rejection of sinful practices.

3:4 John, in his unusual dress, activity, and message, presented himself like an OT prophet (specifically Elijah—e.g., 2Kgs 1:8), who prophesied that God would send his Messiah to save the world. Jesus frequently compares John the Baptist with Elijah (e.g., 11:14; 17:12), and the people of Jesus's day readily identify John as one of the prophets (e.g., 14:5).

3:12 John the Baptist illustrates his message of judgment with a description of the Messiah with a **winnowing shovel in his hand** and ready to **clear his threshing floor**. In Jesus's day, farmers used pitchfork-like shovels to throw harvested grain into the air to allow the wind to separate the grain from the chaff. The grain was then put **into the barn**, and the chaff was burned for fuel. John described the judgment activity of the Messiah at his coming in such terms. Those who receive the Messiah are the grain that will be saved. Those who reject the Messiah are the chaff that **he will burn with fire that never goes out.**

3:13 Baptism—the use of water in religious rituals, frequently by immersion—was relatively common in the ancient Jewish world. Since water often symbolized religious purity (e.g., Ps 51:1-2), immersion in water was used to mark religious revival, the conversion of a non-Jew to Judaism, or identification with a particular religious movement. John baptized Jewish people to identify them with the repentance of sins and the coming of the Messiah. Jesus personally participated in this baptism to demonstrate that he is the Messiah at the center of that movement (Jn 1:31). See also "The Holy Trinity," *p.xxx.*

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

4 Then † Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted
by the devil. † 2 After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, † he
was hungry. 3 Then the tempter approached him and said, "If you are the
Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." †
4 He answered, "It is written: **Man must not live on bread alone but on every
word that comes from the mouth of God.**" † †
5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, had him stand on the pinnacle of the
temple, † 6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down.
For it is written:

He will give his angels † orders concerning you, and **they will support you
with their hands
so that you will not strike
your foot against a stone.**" † †

7 Jesus told him, "It is also written: **Do not test the Lord your God.**" † †
8 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the
kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 9 And he said to him, "I will give you

all these things if you will fall down and worship me.” †

10 Then Jesus told him, “Go away, † Satan! For it is written: **Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”** † †

11 Then the devil left him, and angels came and began to serve him. †

MINISTRY IN GALILEE

12 When he heard that John had been arrested, † he withdrew into Galilee. †

13 He left Nazareth and went to live in Capernaum † by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali. 14 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

15 **Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, along the road by the sea, beyond the Jordan,**
Galilee of the Gentiles.

16 **The people who live in darkness have seen a great light,**
and for those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned. † † †

17 From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven † has come near.”

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

18 As † he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, † he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter), and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the sea — for they were fishermen. 19 “Follow me,” he told them, “and I will make you fish for † people.” 20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

21 Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They were in a boat with Zebedee their father, preparing their nets, and he called them. 22 Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

TEACHING, PREACHING, AND HEALING

23 Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, † teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every † disease and sickness † among the people. † 24 Then the news about him spread throughout

Syria. † So they brought to him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. † And he healed them. 25 Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. †

4:9 Or *and pay me homage* **4:10** Other mss read *"Get behind me* **4:16** Lit *dawned on them* **4:19** Or *you fishers of* **4:23** Or *every kind of* **4:23** Or *physical ailment*

4:1-11 Mk 1:12-13; Lk 4:1-13 **4:1** Jos 15:61; Jdg 1:16; Jn 1:6-7; Jms 1:14 **4:2** Ex 34:28; 1Kg 19:8; Jn 9:4 **4:3** Mk 3:11; 5:7; Lk 1:35; 4:41; Jn 1:34,49; Ac 9:20 **4:4** Dt 8:3 **4:4** Dt 8:3 **4:5** Neh 11:1,18; Dn 9:24; Mt 27:53 **4:6** Gn 16:7; Mt 13:49; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **4:6** Ps 91:11-12 **4:6** Ps 91:11-12; 1Pt 2:8 **4:7** Dt 6:16; 1Sm 7:3; 1Ch 21:1 **4:7** Dt 6:16 **4:10** Dt 6:13 **4:10** Dt 6:13; 1Ch 21:1 **4:11** Mt 26:53; Lk 22:43; Heb 1:14 **4:12** Mt 14:3; Mk 1:14; Lk 3:20; Jn 3:24 **4:12** Lk 4:14; Jn 1:43; 2:11 **4:13** Mk 1:21; 2:1; Lk 4:23; Jn 2:12; 4:46 **4:15-16** Is 9:1-2 **4:15-16** Is 9:1-2; 42:7; Lk 2:32 **4:17** Mt 3:2; 5:3,10,19-20; 7:21; 8:11; Mk 1:14 **4:18-22** Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:2-11; Jn 1:40-42 **4:18** Mt 15:29; Mk 7:31; Lk 5:1; Jn 6:1 **4:23-25** Mk 1:35-39; Lk 4:42-44 **4:23** Mt 13:54; 24:14; Ac 10:38 **4:24** Lk 2:2; Ac 15:23; Gl 1:21 **4:24** Mt 8:16; 9:32; Mk 5:15; Jn 10:21 **4:25** Mk 3:7; 5:20; Lk 6:17

4:1 A parallel exists between Israel's testing in the wilderness (e.g., Nm 14:1-4) and Jesus's temptation in **the wilderness**. The purpose of the temptations is not to find out if Jesus can resist sin. It is to demonstrate that God's Messiah is the sinless Son of God who succeeds where God's people failed. It is part of Matthew's presentation of Jesus as the true Israel.

4:11 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p.1531*.

4:23 Synagogues were the local religious gatherings of Jews. From the time of the Babylonian captivity onward, Jews gathered regularly in synagogues for prayer and Scripture study. In some places synagogue meetings also served civil and judicial functions.

The Sermon on the Mount

5 When he saw the crowds, he went up on the mountain, † and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. 2 Then † he began to teach them, saying: †

THE BEATITUDES

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, †
for the kingdom of heaven † is theirs.
4 Blessed are those who mourn, †
for they will be comforted.
5 Blessed are the humble, †
for they will inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, †
for they will be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. †
8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. †
9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. †
10 Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven † is theirs.

11 "You are blessed when they insult you and persecute you and falsely say every kind of evil against you because of me. 12 Be glad and rejoice, because your reward is great in heaven. For that is how they persecuted † the prophets who were before you. †

BELIEVERS ARE SALT AND LIGHT

13 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt should lose its taste, how can it be made salty? † It's no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. †
14 "You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. †
15 No one lights a lamp † and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. † 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. †

CHRIST FULFILLS THE LAW

17 "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. † 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter † or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law until all things are accomplished. 19 Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. † 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

MURDER BEGINS IN THE HEART

21 “You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **Do not murder**, † † and
whoever murders will be subject to judgment. † 22 But I tell you, everyone who
is angry with his brother or sister † will be subject to judgment. Whoever
insults † his brother or sister, will be subject to the court. † Whoever says, ‘You
fool! ’ will be subject to hellfire. † † 23 So if you are offering your gift on the
altar, and there you remember that your brother or sister has something against
you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled with
your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Reach a settlement
quickly with your adversary while you’re on the way with him to the court, or
your adversary will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to † the officer,
and you will be thrown into prison. † 26 Truly I tell you, you will never get out
of there until you have paid the last penny. †

ADULTERY BEGINS IN THE HEART

27 “You have heard that it was said, **Do not commit adultery.** † † 28 But I tell
you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery
with her in his heart. † 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, † gouge it out and
throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for
your whole body to be thrown into hell. † 30 And if your right hand causes you
to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts
of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

DIVORCE PRACTICES CENSURED

31 “It was also said, **Whoever divorces † his wife must give her a written**
notice of divorce. † † 32 But I tell you, everyone who divorces his wife, except
in a case of sexual immorality, causes her to commit adultery. And whoever
marries a divorced woman commits adultery. †

TELL THE TRUTH

33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, **You must not**
break your oath, but you must keep your oaths to the Lord. † † 34 But I tell
you, don’t take an oath at all: either by heaven, because it is God’s throne; 35 or
by the earth, because it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, because it is the city of

the great King. † 36 Do not swear by your head, because you cannot make a single hair white or black. 37 But let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no.’ Anything more than this is from the evil one. †

GO THE SECOND MILE

38 “You have heard that it was said, **An eye for an eye** and **a tooth for a tooth.** † † 39 But I tell you, don’t resist † an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. † 40 As for the one who wants to sue you and take away your shirt, let him have your coat as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to the one who asks you, and don’t turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. †

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

43 “You have heard that it was said, **Love your neighbor** † † and hate your enemy. 44 But I tell you, love your enemies † and pray for those who † persecute you, † 45 so that you may be † children of your Father in heaven. For he causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. † 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward will you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what are you doing out of the ordinary? † † Don’t even the Gentiles † do the same? 48 Be perfect, † therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

5:2 Lit *Then opening his mouth* **5:13** Or *how can the earth be salted?* **5:18** Or *not one iota* ; *iota* is the smallest letter of the Gk alphabet. **5:22** Other mss add *without a cause* **5:22** Lit *Whoever says ‘Raca’* ; an Aramaic term of abuse that puts someone down, insulting one’s intelligence **5:22** Lit *Sanhedrin* **5:22** Lit *the gehenna of fire* **5:25** Other mss read *judge will hand you over to* **5:26** Lit *quadrans*, the smallest and least valuable Roman coin, worth 1/64 of a daily wage **5:39** Or *don’t set yourself against*, or *don’t retaliate against* **5:44** Other mss add *bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you,* **5:44** Other mss add *mistreat you and* **5:45** Or *may become*, or *may show yourselves to be* **5:47** Or *doing that is superior* ; lit *doing more* **5:47** Other mss read *tax collectors*

5:1 Mk 3:13; Lk 9:28; Jn 6:3,15 **5:2** Ac 8:35; 10:34; 18:14 **5:3** Is 57:15; 66:2 **5:3** Mt 19:14; 25:34; Mk 10:14; Lk 6:20 **5:4** Is 61:2; Mt 11:29; 21:5; Jn 16:20; Rv 7:17 **5:5** Ps 37:11; Rm 4:13; Rv 21:7 **5:6** Is 55:1-2; Jn 4:14; 6:48; 7:37 **5:7** Pr 11:17; Mt 18:33; Lk 6:36; 2Tm 1:16 **5:8** Ps 24:4; Heb 12:14; 1Jn 3:2; Rv 22:4 **5:9** Mt 5:45; Lk 6:35; Rm 8:14; Jms 3:18; 1Jn 3:1 **5:10** Mt 19:14; 25:34; Mk 10:14; Lk 6:20; 22:29 **5:12** Mt 2:23; 2Tm 3:12 **5:12** Mt 23:37; Ac 7:52; 1Th 2:15 **5:13** Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34 **5:14** Pr 4:18; Jn 8:12; Php 2:15 **5:15** Jn 5:35; Rv 21:23 **5:15** Mk 4:21; Lk 8:16; 11:33 **5:16** Mt 9:8; Jn 15:8; 1Pt 2:12 **5:17** Mt 7:12; Rm 3:31; 10:4; 13:8; Gl 3:24 **5:18-19** Mt 11:11; 24:35; Lk 16:17; Jms 2:10 **5:21** Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17 **5:21** Ex

20:13; Dt 5:17 **5:21** Mt 19:18; 23:31,35; Mk 10:19; Lk 18:20; Rm 13:9; Jms 2:11 **5:22** Mt 18:9; Mk 9:43; Jms 3:6; 1Jn 3:15 **5:25** Pr 25:8; Lk 12:58 **5:27** Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18 **5:27** Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18 **5:28** 2Sm 11:2; Jb 31:1; Pr 6:25 **5:29** Mt 18:9; Mk 9:47 **5:29** Mt 10:28; 23:15,33; Lk 12:5 **5:31** Jr 3:1; Mt 19:7; Mk 10:4 **5:31** Dt 24:1 **5:31** Dt 24:1 **5:32** Mt 19:9; Mk 10:11; Lk 16:18; Rm 7:3; 1Co 7:11 **5:33** Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21 **5:33** Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Mt 23:16 **5:34-35** Ps 48:2; Is 66:1; Mt 23:22; Ac 7:49; Jms 5:12 **5:37** Mt 6:13; 13:19,38; Jn 17:15; 2Th 3:3 **5:38** Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21 **5:38** Ex 21:24; Lv 24:20; Dt 19:21 **5:39** Lk 6:29-30; Rm 12:17; 1Co 6:7; 1Pt 3:9 **5:42** Dt 15:8; Lk 6:34 **5:43** Lv 19:18 **5:43** Lv 19:18; Dt 23:6; Lk 10:29 **5:44** Lk 6:27; 23:34; Ac 7:60; Rm 12:20; 1Co 4:12; 1Pt 2:23 **5:45** Jb 25:3; Mt 5:9; Lk 6:35; Ac 14:17 **5:47** Mt 5:37; Mk 6:51; Jn 10:10; Rm 3:1; 2Co 9:1 **5:48** Gn 17:1; Lv 19:2; Php 3:15; Col 4:12; Jms 1:4; 1Pt 1:15

5:1 Matthew 5–7 is frequently referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. This seminal sermon of Jesus is the first major discourse in Matthew and is the foundational declaration of Jesus's ethic for how his followers are to live. The sermon covers the blessings of living in the kingdom of God (e.g., 5:1-12; 6:25-34) and the practice of religious faith by the genuinely repentant (e.g., 6:5-24). At the center of the Sermon on the Mount is Jesus as the fulfillment of all the OT Law and Prophets (e.g., 5:17-48).

5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart. Rabbis developed a system of ceremonial purification, but this could not secure inner purity of heart. Such purity involves genuine devotion to God.

5:13 Salt was an essential element for life in the ancient world, serving many functions in Jesus's day: it added flavor, preserved, fertilized, and was an ingredient in curing techniques. It is unclear which of these functions Jesus intends when describing his followers as **the salt of the earth**, but his larger meaning is obvious. Followers of Jesus are to be as beneficial and essential to the world as salt is—otherwise they are **no longer good for anything**.

5:16 See "Chief Purpose of Humanity," *p. 1464.*

5:17-18 See "Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy," *p. XXXI.*

5:20 The **scribes and Pharisees** were among the most religious people in Jesus's day, but they did not accept Jesus. They sought to obey the Law of God at an external level. Thus, Jesus says that to **get into the kingdom of heaven**, a different kind of obedience to the Law and a different kind of righteousness is required—an obedience and righteousness that begins with genuine faith.

5:22 The **court**, or Sanhedrin, was the Jewish judicial body that operated with Roman permission under strict regulations. Jesus's point in invoking the **judgment**, the Sanhedrin, and **hellfire** is to demonstrate that God judges the heart and that sins of the heart (e.g., hatred) are no less damaging than overt sins (e.g., name calling and murder).

5:31-32 In Deuteronomy 24:1, the passage Jesus quotes in 5:31, Moses says **divorce** is allowed if a spouse does something indecent. Consequently, there was debate in Jesus's day as to the exact biblical grounds for divorce. Many men used the perceived ambiguity in the Mosaic law to divorce their wives for trivial reasons. Jesus argued that the only legitimate grounds for divorce is **sexual immorality** (Gk *pornea*). Thus, anyone who marries a divorced woman is guilty of adultery since she is still regarded as married to her first husband.

5:33-37 Jews in Jesus's day followed a complex system of oaths and vows to give assurance of their sincerity. The OT allows for careful oath taking (e.g., Dt 23:21-23), but Jesus instructed his disciples to tell the truth in a straightforward manner without invoking God's name, or his glory, in order to establish sincerity.

5:38-42 The issues at stake here are matters related to personal honor. **An eye for an eye** and **a tooth for a tooth** are references to the OT system of crime and punishment (i.e., the punishment should fit the crime; Ex 21:23-25). Unlike in the legal system, however, Jesus's followers are to show mercy instead of

responding in kind when their personal honor is affronted. The follower of Jesus has already set aside his own life to follow the Messiah (16:25). He has no need to defend his own honor. If he is insulted with a slap in the face, a frivolous lawsuit, a legal compulsion to do labor, or a request for help, he should respond with kindness, without retaliation. Jesus set the ultimate example of this idea in his suffering and death on the cross for the sins of the world.

HOW TO GIVE

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness † in front of others to be
seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in
heaven. 2 So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet
before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be
applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. † 3 But when you
give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,
4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will
reward you. † †

HOW TO PRAY

5 “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to
pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people.
Truly I tell you, they have their reward. † 6 But when you pray, go into your
private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your
Father who sees in secret will reward you. † † 7 When you pray, don’t babble
like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. †
8 Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you
ask him. †

THE LORD’S PRAYER

9 “Therefore, you should pray like this: †

Our Father in heaven,
your name be honored as holy. †
10 Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven. †
11 Give us today our daily bread. †

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. †
13 And do not bring us into † temptation, †
but deliver us from the evil one. † †

14 “For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. † 15 But if you don’t forgive others, † your Father will not forgive your offenses.

HOW TO FAST

16 “Whenever you fast, don’t be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive † † so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, † 18 so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. †

GOD AND POSSESSIONS

19 “Don’t store up for yourselves treasures † on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. † 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, † where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness! †
24 “No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. †

THE CURE FOR ANXIETY

25 “Therefore I tell you: † Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? † 26 Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

Aren't you worth more than they? † 27 Can any of you add one moment to his life-span † by worrying? 28 And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don't labor or spin thread. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. 30 If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't he do much more for you — you of little faith? † 31 So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat? ' or 'What will we drink? ' or 'What will we wear? ' 32 For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God † † and his righteousness, † and all these things will be provided for you. † 34 Therefore don't worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble † of its own.

6:1 Other mss read *charitable giving* **6:4** Other mss read *will himself reward you openly* **6:6** Other mss add *openly* **6:11** Or *our necessary bread*, or *our bread for tomorrow* **6:13** Or *do not cause us to come into* **6:13** Or *from evil* ; some later mss add *For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.* **6:15** Other mss add *their wrongdoing* **6:16** Or *unrecognizable*, or *disfigured* **6:18** Other mss add *openly* **6:19** Or *valuables* **6:27** Or *add a single cubit to his height* **6:33** Other mss omit *of God*

6:1-2 Mt 23:5; Lk 6:24 **6:4** Jr 17:10; Lk 14:14; Col 3:23-24; Heb 4:13 **6:5** Mt 6:16; Mk 11:25; Lk 6:24; 18:11 **6:6** 2Kg 4:33; Is 26:20; Mt 6:18 **6:7** 1Kg 18:26; Ec 5:2 **6:8** Mt 9:12; Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31; 9:11; 10:42; Ac 2:45 **6:9-13** Lk 11:1-13 **6:9** Lk 11:2; 1Co 7:14 **6:10** Ps 103:20; Mt 3:2; 4:17; 26:42; Lk 22:42; Ac 21:14 **6:11-12** Pr 30:8; Rm 4:4; Gl 5:3 **6:13** Mt 26:41; 1Co 10:13; 2Pt 2:9 **6:13** Mt 5:37; Jn 17:15; 2Th 3:3; 2Tm 4:18 **6:14** Mk 11:25; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13 **6:15-16** Is 58:5; Mt 18:35; Jms 2:13 **6:17** Ru 3:3; 2Sm 12:20; Dn 10:3 **6:19** Pr 23:4; Heb 13:5 **6:20** Mt 19:21; Lk 12:33; 18:22; 1Tm 6:19 **6:23** Mt 4:16; 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; 27:45 **6:24** Lk 16:13; Gl 1:10; Jms 4:4 **6:25-33** Lk 12:22-31 **6:25** Lk 10:41; Php 4:6; 1Pt 5:7 **6:26** Jb 38:41; Ps 147:9; Mt 10:29-31 **6:29-30** 1Kg 10:4-7; Mt 8:26; 14:31; 16:8 **6:33** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **6:33** Mt 27:19; Lk 7:29; 23:41,47; Jn 5:30; 17:25; Ac 3:14 **6:33** 1Kg 3:13; Mt 19:28; Mk 10:29; Lk 18:29; 1Tm 4:8 **6:34** Mt 6:25; Lk 10:41; Php 4:6; 1Pt 5:7

6:1-18 In Jesus's day, good deeds were commonly performed in public in order to show allegiance to Judaism so that the practitioner would be respected within society. Jesus teaches that his followers should strive to do righteous acts in secret in order to avoid the dangers of human recognition. Jesus addresses three popular acts of righteousness—charity giving, prayer, and fasting—to represent a variety of good deeds. He draws the same conclusion about each: the blessing of God does not fall on hypocrites, on those who make a show of their good deeds in order to receive the praise of others. Jesus wants his followers to love and serve God in such a way that even when knowledge of their righteousness becomes public, God receives the glory for it (e.g., 5:16).

6:19-20 See verses 26-29 and "Personal Finances," *p. 758.* See also "The Apocalyptic and the Environment," *p. 1565.*

6:26 See "Divine Providence and Naturalism," *p. 1355.*

6:33 See "Do My Beliefs Fit a Christian Worldview?" *p. 1461.*

DO NOT JUDGE

DO NOT JUDGE

7 “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged. † 2 For you will be judged
by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be
measured by the same measure you use. † 3 Why do you look at the
splinter in your brother’s eye but don’t notice the beam of wood in your own
eye? † 4 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the splinter out of
your eye,’ and look, there’s a beam of wood in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First
take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the
splinter out of your brother’s eye. 6 Don’t give what is holy to dogs or toss your
pearls before pigs, † or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear
you to pieces.

ASK, SEARCH, KNOCK

7 “Ask, † and it will be given to you. † Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the
door † will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and the one
who seeks finds, † and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 Who
among you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks
for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you then, who are evil, † know how to
give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give
good things to those who ask him. 12 Therefore, whatever you want others to do
for you, do also the same for them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. †

ENTERING THE KINGDOM

13 “Enter through the narrow gate. † For the gate is wide and the road broad that
leads to destruction, † and there are many who go through it. 14 How narrow is
the gate and difficult the road that leads to life, and few find it.
15 “Be on your guard against false prophets † who come to you in sheep’s †
clothing † but inwardly are ravaging wolves. † 16 You’ll recognize them by
their fruit. † Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? † 17 In
the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad
fruit. 18 A good tree can’t produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good
fruit. 19 Every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into
the fire. † 20 So you’ll recognize them by their fruit. †

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of
heaven, † but only the one who does the will † of my Father in heaven. †
22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your
name, drive out demons † in your name, and do many miracles in your
name?’ † 23 Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. **Depart from
me, you lawbreakers!**’ † † †

THE TWO FOUNDATIONS

24 “Therefore, † everyone who hears these words † of mine and acts on them
will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain fell, the
rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse,
because its foundation was on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words
of mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house
on the sand. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that
house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, † the crowds were astonished at
his teaching, † 29 because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and
not like their scribes.

7:7 Lit *and it* **7:23** Lit *you who work lawlessness*
7:1-5 Mk 4:24-25; Lk 6:37-42 **7:2** Mk 4:24; Lk 6:38; Rm 2:1; 14:10; Jms 2:13 **7:3** Lk 6:41; Jn 8:7-9 **7:6** Pr 9:7-8; 23:9; Mt 15:26 **7:7-11** Lk 11:9-13 **7:7** Mt 18:22; Mk 11:24; Jn 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:24; Jms 1:5; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14 **7:8** Pr 8:17; Is 55:6; Jr 29:12-13 **7:11** Gn 6:5; 8:21 **7:12** Mt 22:40; Lk 6:31; Rm 13:8; Gl 5:14 **7:13-14** Lk 13:23-24 **7:13** Mt 26:8; Mk 14:4; Jn 17:12; Ac 8:20; Rm 9:22; Php 1:28 **7:15** Mt 24:11,24; Mk 13:22; Lk 6:26; Ac 13:6; 2Pt 2:1 **7:15** Mt 9:36; 10:6,16; 12:11-12; 15:24; 18:12-13 **7:15** Mc 3:5; 2Tm 3:5 **7:15** Ezk 22:27; Jn 10:12; Ac 20:29 **7:16-21** Pr 11:30; Mt 12:33; Lk 6:43-44; Jn 4:36; Jms 3:12 **7:16** Mt 13:7; Heb 6:8 **7:19** Jr 11:19; Mt 3:10; Lk 3:9; 13:7; Jn 15:2; Jd 12 **7:20** Mt 7:16; 12:33; Lk 6:44; Jms 3:12 **7:21** Mt 3:2; 18:3; Mk 9:43 **7:21** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Mt 12:50; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **7:21** Hs 8:2; Mt 25:11; Lk 6:46; Rm 2:13; Jms 1:22 **7:22** Mk 3:15; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **7:22** Nm 24:4; Mt 10:15; Lk 13:25; Jn 11:51; 1Co 13:2 **7:23** Ps 5:5; 6:8; Mt 25:12,41; Lk 13:25-27 **7:23** Ps 6:8 **7:24-27** Lk 6:47-49; Jms 1:22-25 **7:24** Mt 12:36; Mk 4:14; Lk 6:47; 8:21; Jn 1:1; 2:22 **7:28** Mt 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1 **7:28** Mt 13:54; 22:23; Mk 1:22; 6:2; 11:18; Lk 4:32; Jn 7:46

7:6 Dogs was a derogatory term for Gentiles. In the ancient world, dogs were scavengers, often living in squalor. **Pigs** were also scavenging animals, regarded as unclean. Jewish rejection of pork was a symbol of Israel’s distinctiveness.

7:7 See “Prayer and Recovery from Illness,” *p. 1551.*

7:12 See “Biblical Models for Business,” *p. 782.*

7:24-29 In concluding the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pronounces judgment on those who hear but do not obey his words. Jesus’s audience would never expect a rabbi to say such a thing about his own words.

Nevertheless, the crowds were **astonished** because of the **authority** with which Jesus taught. Jesus is God's Messiah and no mere rabbi.

A MAN CLEANSED

8 When he came down from the mountain, large crowds † followed him.
2 Right away † a man with leprosy † came up and knelt before him, †
saying, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."
3 Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, saying, "I am willing; be made
clean." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 Then Jesus told him, "See that
you don't tell anyone; † but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift
that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." †

A CENTURION'S FAITH

5 When he entered Capernaum, † a centurion came to him, pleading with him,
6 "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony."
7 He said to him, "Am I to come and heal him? " †
8 "Lord," the centurion replied, "I am not worthy to have you come under my
roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. † 9 For I too am a
man under authority, having soldiers under my command. † I say to this one,
'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant,
'Do this! ' and he does it."
10 Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell
you, I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith. 11 I tell you that
many will come from east and west to share the banquet † with Abraham, Isaac,
and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. † 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be
thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of
teeth." † 13 Then Jesus told the centurion, "Go. As you have believed, † let it
be done for you." And his servant was healed that very moment. †

HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

14 Jesus went into Peter's house † and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with
a fever. 15 So he touched her hand, and the fever left her. Then she got up and
began to serve him. 16 When evening came, they brought to him many who were

demon-possessed. He drove out the spirits † with a word and healed all who were sick, † 17 so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

He himself took our weaknesses

and carried our diseases. † †

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

18 When Jesus saw a large crowd † † around him, he gave the order to go to the other side of the sea. 19 A scribe approached him and said, † "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

20 Jesus told him, "Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man † has no place to lay his head."

21 "Lord," another of his disciples said, "first let me go bury my father."

22 But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

23 As he got into the boat, † his disciples † followed him. 24 Suddenly, a violent storm arose on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves — but Jesus kept sleeping. 25 So the disciples came and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to die! "

26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith? " Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, † and there was a great calm.

27 The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the sea obey † him! "

DEMONS DRIVEN OUT BY JESUS

28 When he had come to the other side, † to the region of the Gadarenes, † two demon-possessed men met him as they came out of the tombs. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 29 Suddenly they shouted, "What do you have to do with us, † Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time? " †

30 A long way off from them, a large herd of pigs was feeding. 31 "If you drive us out," the demons begged him, "send us into the herd of pigs."

32 "Go! " he told them. So when they had come out, they entered the pigs, and

the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. 33 Then the men who tended them fled. They went into the city and reported everything, especially what had happened to those who were demon-possessed. 34 At that, the whole town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged him to leave their region. †

8:2 Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases, also in v. 3; see Lv 13–14 **8:7** Or *"I will come and heal him."* **8:9** Lit *under me* **8:11** Lit *recline at the table* **8:13** Or *that hour* ; lit *very hour* **8:18** Other mss read *saw large crowds* **8:28** Other mss read *Gergesenes* **8:29** Other mss add *Jesus*
8:1 Mt 5:1; Lk 3:7 **8:2-4** Mk 1:40-44; Lk 5:12-14 **8:2** Mt 9:18; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20; Jn 9:38; Ac 10:25 **8:4** Mt 9:30; 17:9; Mk 5:43; 7:36; 8:30 **8:4** Lv 14:3-4,10; Lk 5:14; 17:14 **8:5-13** Lk 7:1-10; Jn 4:46-54 **8:8** Ps 107:20; Lk 15:19,21 **8:11** Is 49:12; 59:19; Mk 1:11; Lk 13:29; Eph 3:6 **8:12** Mt 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Lk 13:28 **8:13** Mt 9:22,29; Jn 4:53 **8:14-16** Mk 1:29-34; Lk 4:38-41 **8:16** Mk 3:15; 1Tm 4:1; 1Jn 4:1 **8:16** Mt 4:24; 8:33; Ac 19:12 **8:17** Is 53:4 **8:17** Is 53:4; Mt 1:22 **8:18** Mt 14:22; Mk 4:35; Lk 8:22; Jn 6:15-17 **8:19-22** Lk 9:57-60 **8:20** Dn 7:14; Mt 9:6; 12:8; 13:41; Mk 8:31 **8:23-27** Mk 4:36-41; Lk 8:22-25; Jn 6:16-21 **8:23** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **8:26** Ps 65:7; 89:9; 107:29; Mt 6:30; Lk 4:39 **8:27** Mk 1:27; Lk 5:9 **8:28-34** Mk 5:1-17; Lk 8:26-37 **8:29** Jdg 11:12; 2Sm 16:10; Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; Jn 2:4; Ac 8:7 **8:34** 1Kg 17:18; Lk 5:8; Ac 16:39

8:1 Matthew 8–9 contain ten miracles performed by Jesus. These miracles were carefully selected by Matthew to make the case that Jesus is the miracle-working Messiah of OT expectation. He does things only God can do. He heals the sick, raises the dead, commands creation, and casts out demons.

8:2 The Greek word translated **leprosy** (*lepros*) here was a broad term used to describe a number of serious and often-contagious skin conditions. Matthew highlights these cases because of the discussion of them in Leviticus 13–14 and because those afflicted were considered ceremonially unclean by Jewish society. The use of *lepros* does not exclusively indicate (but may include) Hansen's Disease, known today as "leprosy."

8:5-13 Matthew records several incidents in which Gentiles demonstrate profound faith in Jesus (e.g., 15:21-31) in order to indicate that the good news about Jesus ought to go to all the nations. Jesus's words in verse 11 look to the day when Jews and Gentiles will celebrate together **in the kingdom of heaven.** See also "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

8:21-22 Likely the disciple's father had died some time ago, or was dying. The disciple is essentially using family obligation to excuse himself from following Jesus immediately. Jesus's response is direct and harsh: **Follow me, and let the** (spiritually) **dead bury their own dead** (i.e., attend to family obligations). Following Jesus means prioritizing him and his kingdom above all else.

THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

9 So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town. † 2 Just then † some men † brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven." †

3 At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, "He's blaspheming! " †

4 Perceiving their thoughts, † Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil things in
your hearts? † 5 For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say,
'Get up and walk'? 6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has
authority on earth to forgive sins" — then he told the paralytic, "Get up, take
your stretcher, and go home." 7 So he got up and went home. 8 When the
crowds saw this, they were awestruck † † and gave glory † to God, who had
given such authority to men.

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

9 As Jesus went on from there, † he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the
toll booth, and he said to him, "Follow me," and he got up and followed him. †
10 While he was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and
sinners came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. † 11 When the Pharisees saw
this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and
sinners? " †
12 Now when he heard this, he said, "It is not those who are well who need a
doctor, but those who are sick. † 13 Go and learn what this means: **I desire
mercy and not sacrifice.** † † For I didn't come to call the righteous, but
sinners." †

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

14 Then John's disciples came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees
fast often, but your disciples do not fast? " †
15 Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests † be sad while the groom is with
them? The time † will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and
then they will fast. 16 No one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth,
because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse.
17 And no one puts † new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst,
the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh
wineskins, and both are preserved."

A GIRL RESTORED AND A WOMAN HEALED

18 As he was telling them these things, † suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before him, saying, “My daughter just died, † but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” † 19 So Jesus and his disciples got up and followed † him.

20 Just then, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years approached from behind and touched the end of his robe, † 21 for she said to herself, “If I can just touch his robe, I’ll be made well.” † †

22 Jesus turned and saw her. “Have courage, daughter,” he said. “Your faith has saved you.” † † And the woman was made well from that moment. †

23 When Jesus came to the leader’s house, he saw the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly. † 24 “Leave,” he said, “because the girl is not dead but asleep.” † And they laughed at him. 25 After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. † 26 Then news of this spread throughout that whole area. †

HEALING THE BLIND

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David! ” †

28 When he entered the house, the blind men approached him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe † that I can do this? ”

They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”

29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, “Let it be done for you according to your faith.” 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them sternly, “Be sure that no one finds out.” † 31 But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that whole area.

DRIVING OUT A DEMON

32 Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable to speak was brought to him. † 33 When the demon had been driven out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed, saying, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel! ”

34 But the Pharisees said, “He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons.” †

THE LORD OF THE HARVEST

35 Jesus continued going around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, † and healing every † disease and every sickness. † † 36 When he saw the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dejected, † like sheep without a shepherd. † 37 Then he said to his disciples, † "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

9:2 Lit *then they* **9:4** Or *minds* **9:8** Other mss read *amazed* **9:8** Lit *afraid* **9:13** Other mss add *to repentance* **9:15** Lit *the sons of the bridal chamber* **9:15** Lit *days* **9:17** Lit *And they do not put* **9:18** Lit *daughter has now come to the end* **9:21** Or *be saved* **9:22** Or *has made you well* **9:22** Lit *hour* **9:35** Or *every kind of* **9:35** Other mss add *among the people* **9:35** Or *physical ailment*

9:1 Mt 4:13; Mk 5:21 **9:2-8** Mk 2:3-12; Lk 5:18-26 **9:2** Mt 4:24; 8:10,13; 9:22; Lk 7:48; Jn 16:33 **9:3** Mt 26:65; Jn 10:36 **9:4** Mt 12:25; Lk 6:8; 9:47; 11:17 **9:8** Mt 5:16; 15:31; Lk 7:16; 13:13; Jn 15:8; Ac 4:21 **9:9-17** Mk 2:14-22; Lk 5:27-38 **9:9** Mt 10:3; Mk 2:14; 3:18; Lk 6:15; Ac 1:13 **9:10** Mt 10:42; 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1 **9:11** Mt 11:19; Lk 5:30; 15:2; Gl 2:15 **9:12** Mk 2:17; Lk 5:31 **9:13** Hs 6:6 **9:13** Hs 6:6; Mc 6:6-8; Mt 12:7 **9:14** Mt 11:2; 14:12; 15:2; Lk 11:1; 18:12 **9:18-26** Mk 5:22-43; Lk 8:41-56 **9:18** Mt 8:2-3; Mk 5:23 **9:19** Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12 **9:20** Lv 15:25; Nm 15:38; Dt 22:12; Mt 14:36; 23:5 **9:21** Mt 14:36; Mk 3:10; Lk 6:19 **9:22** Mt 15:28; Mk 10:52; Lk 7:50; 17:19; 18:42 **9:23** 2Ch 35:25; Jr 9:17; 16:6; Ezk 24:17; Rv 18:22 **9:24** Jn 11:13; Ac 20:10 **9:25** Mk 9:27; Ac 3:7; 9:40-41 **9:26** Mt 4:24; 9:31; 14:1; Mk 1:28; Lk 4:14 **9:27** Mt 1:1; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; Mk 10:47; Lk 18:38-39 **9:28** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **9:29-30** Mt 8:4,13; 9:22; Mk 8:25; Jn 9:26 **9:32-34** Mt 12:22-24; Lk 11:14-15 **9:34** Mk 3:22; Jn 7:20 **9:35** Mt 4:23; Mk 1:15 **9:36** Mt 14:14; 15:32; Mk 6:34; 8:2 **9:36** Nm 27:17; 1Kg 22:17; Ezk 34:5; Zch 10:2 **9:37** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16

9:9-11 Tax collectors were universally reviled in Jesus's day because they were seen as traitors to their people and extortionists of the worst kind. Typically, Jews were chosen to collect Roman taxes in Jewish areas, and tax collectors were primarily paid from the excess money they extracted from their fellow Jews. They often grew quite wealthy.

9:15-17 Just as no one puts on a sad face at a wedding, so **no one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth** or **puts new wine into old wineskins.** It would be inappropriate for Jesus's disciples to fast while he was with them. Rather, the presence of the Messiah is a time to celebrate. There will, however, come a day when the Messiah **will be taken away from them**, and temporary mourning and fasting will be appropriate.

9:20 The **woman who had suffered from bleeding** was most likely afflicted with some type of menstrual disorder that rendered her ceremonially unclean. Anyone who touched her would also become ceremonially unclean. When she touched Jesus, however, he was not made unclean; rather, she was healed. Likewise, Jesus did not become unclean when he touched a corpse (see v. 25); instead, the girl returned to life. Matthew highlights these miracles to show that Jesus came into the world to bring cleanness out of uncleanness and life out of death. See "Equality of the Sexes," *p. 1434.*

COMMISSIONING THE TWELVE

10 Summoning his twelve disciples, † he gave them authority over
unclean spirits, to drive them out and to heal every † disease and
sickness. † † 2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: † First, Simon, who
is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his
brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;
James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; † 4 Simon the Zealot, † and Judas
Iscariot, who also betrayed him. †
5 Jesus sent out these twelve after giving them instructions: "Don't take the road
that leads to the Gentiles, and don't enter any Samaritan † town. 6 Instead, go to
the lost sheep † of the house of Israel. † 7 As you go, proclaim: 'The kingdom
of heaven has come near.' † 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with
leprosy, † drive out demons. † Freely you received, freely give. 9 Don't acquire
gold, silver, or copper for your money-belts. † 10 Don't take a traveling bag for
the road, or an extra shirt, sandals, or a staff, for the worker † is worthy of his
food. 11 When you enter any town or village, find out who is worthy, and stay
there until you leave. 12 Greet a household when you enter it, † 13 and if the
household is worthy, let your peace be on it; but if it is unworthy, let your peace
return to you. † 14 If anyone does not welcome you or listen to your words,
shake the dust off your feet † when you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell
you, it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment † for the land of Sodom
and Gomorrah than for that town. †

PERSECUTIONS PREDICTED

16 "Look, I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as
shrewd as serpents and as innocent as doves. † 17 Beware of them, because they
will hand you over to local courts † and flog you in their synagogues. † 18 You
will even be brought before governors and kings because of me, to bear witness
to them and to the Gentiles. † 19 But when they hand you over, don't worry
about how or what you are to speak. † For you will be given what to say at that

hour, [20] because it isn't you speaking, but the Spirit † of your Father is speaking through you. †
[21] "Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise up against parents and have them put to death. † [22] You will be hated by everyone because of my name. † But the one who endures to the end will be saved. † [23] When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. † For truly I tell you, you will not have gone through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes. [24] A disciple † is not above his teacher, or a slave above his master. † [25] It is enough for a disciple to become like his teacher and a slave like his master. If they called the head of the house 'Beelzebul,' how much more the members of his household! †

FEAR GOD

[26] "Therefore, † don't be afraid of them, since there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered and nothing hidden that won't be made known. † [27] What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light. What you hear in a whisper, † proclaim on the housetops. † [28] Don't fear those who kill the body but are not able to kill the soul; † rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. †
[29] Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? † Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's † consent. † [30] But even the hairs of your head have all been counted. † [31] So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. †

ACKNOWLEDGING CHRIST

[32] "Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge me before others, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. † [33] But whoever denies me before others, † I will also deny him before my Father in heaven. [34] Don't assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. † [35] For I came to turn
a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

36 **and a man's enemies will be**
the members of his household. † †
37 The one who loves a father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; †
the one who loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And
whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Anyone
who finds his life will lose it, † and anyone who loses his life because of me
will find it. †

A CUP OF COLD WATER

40 "The one who welcomes you welcomes me, † and the one who welcomes me
welcomes him who sent me. † 41 Anyone who welcomes a prophet †
because he is a prophet † will receive a prophet's reward. And anyone who
welcomes a righteous person because he's righteous † will receive a
righteous person's reward. 42 And whoever gives † even a cup of cold
water to one of these little ones because he is a disciple, † † truly I tell you,
he will never lose his reward."

10:1 Or *every kind of* **10:1** Or *physical ailment* **10:3** Other mss read *and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus* **10:4** Lit *the Cananaean* **10:8** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **10:17** Or *sanhedrins* **10:24** Or *student* **10:27** Lit *in the ear* **10:29** Gk *assarion*, a small copper coin **10:29** Lit *ground apart from your Father* **10:41** Lit *prophet in the name of a prophet* **10:41** Lit *person in the name of a righteous person* **10:42** Lit *little ones in the name of a disciple*

10:1-4 Mk 3:13-19; 6:13-16 **10:1** Mt 9:35; Mk 6:7; Lk 9:1 **10:2** Mt 4:18,21; 16:18; Jn 1:42 **10:4** Mt 26:14; Lk 22:3; Jn 6:71; 13:2,26 **10:5** 2Kg 17:24; Lk 9:52; 17:16; Jn 4:9; Ac 8:25 **10:6** Ps 119:36; Is 53:6; Jr 50:6; Mt 9:36; 18:12 **10:6** Ac 2:36; 7:42; Heb 8:8,10 **10:7** Mt 3:2-3; 4:17; Lk 10:9 **10:8** Mk 3:15; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **10:9-15** Mk 6:6-8; Lk 9:3-5; 10:4-12 **10:10** Lk 10:7; 1Co 9:14; 1Tm 5:18 **10:12** 1Sm 25:6; 1Ch 12:18; Ps 122:7-8 **10:13** Ps 35:13; Mt 8:8; Ac 16:15 **10:14** Neh 5:13; Lk 10:11; Ac 13:51 **10:15** Mt 12:36; Ac 17:31; Heb 10:25; 2Pt 2:9; 1Jn 4:17 **10:15** Mt 11:22,24; 2Pt 2:6; Jd 6-7 **10:16** Gn 3:1; Lk 10:3; Rm 16:19; Php 2:15 **10:17** Mk 13:9,11; Lk 12:11-12; Ac 5:40; 26:11 **10:18** Mt 28:19; Rm 1:5; Gl 1:16 **10:19** Ex 4:12; Nm 23:5; Dt 18:18; Mt 6:25 **10:20** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5 **10:20** Lk 12:12; Ac 4:8; 13:9; 2Co 13:3 **10:21** Mc 7:6; Mt 10:35-36; Mk 13:12 **10:22** Mt 24:9; Lk 21:17; Jn 15:18 **10:22** Mt 24:13; Mk 13:13; Jn 12:12-13 **10:23** Mt 12:15; Ac 8:1; 9:25; 14:6; 17:10 **10:24** Lk 6:40; Jn 13:16; 15:20 **10:25** 2Kg 1:2; Mt 12:24,27; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15,18-19 **10:26-33** Lk 12:2-9 **10:26** Mk 4:22; Lk 8:17; 12:2 **10:27** Mt 24:17; Lk 5:19; 12:3; Ac 5:20 **10:28** Is 8:12-13; 51:12-13; Jr 1:8; 1Pt 3:14 **10:28** Mt 5:22; Lk 12:5; Heb 10:31; Jms 4:12 **10:29** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42 **10:30** 1Sm 14:45; 2Sm 14:11; Lk 21:18; Ac 27:34 **10:31** Mt 6:26; 12:12 **10:32** Lk 12:8; Rm 10:9-10; Rv 3:5 **10:33** Mk 8:38; Lk 9:26; 2Tm 2:12; 2Pt 2:1 **10:34-36** Lk 12:51-53 **10:35-36** Mc 7:6 **10:36** Ps 41:9; 55:12-13; Mc 7:6; Jn 13:18 **10:37-39** Lk 14:25-27 **10:39** Mt 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; 17:33; Jn 12:25 **10:39** Mt 9:9; Jn 8:12; 12:26; 21:19 **10:40** Mt 18:5; Lk 10:16; Jn 13:20; Gl 4:14 **10:40** Mk 9:37; Lk 9:48; Jn 12:44 **10:41** 1Kg 17:10-15; 18:4; 2Kg 4:8; 3Jn 5-8 **10:42** Mt 25:40; Mk 9:41; Heb 6:10 **10:42** Mt 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1

10:4 The Zealots were a social and political group that promoted aggressive resistance against the occupation of the Roman Empire. Scholars disagree as to whether Matthew is describing Simon as *zealous*

or indicates that Simon was connected to the Zealot movement. If the latter, then he was almost certainly a *former* Zealot, as the teachings of Jesus were contrary to most Zealot teaching (e.g., 5:38-42).

10:14 Shake the dust off your feet was a symbolic gesture of separation. Those who refuse to hear the message of Jesus separate themselves from God's kingdom, and the disciples were to declare that reality openly with this symbolic act.

10:25 On several occasions, the religious leaders accuse Jesus of being in league with Satan (e.g., 9:34), **Beelzebul** (lit "master of the house"), who was thought to be the **ruler of the demons** (12:24). Jesus warns his disciples that if the Pharisees think that he is the leader of demons, his followers should not be surprised when they too are accused of being in league with demons.

10:29 See "A Biblical View of History," *p. 525*.

10:38 When Jesus says a disciple must **take up his cross and follow** him, he is drawing on crucifixion—the torturous Roman method of execution—to illustrate true discipleship. Genuine belief in Jesus produces followers who are willing to lay down their lives, even in crucifixion, for the Messiah and the kingdom of God.

JOHN THE BAPTIST DOUBTS

11 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he
moved on from there to teach and preach in their towns. † 2 Now when
John heard in prison what the Christ was doing, he sent a message through his
disciples † 3 and asked him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we
expect someone else? " †
4 Jesus replied to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The
blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy † are cleansed, the
deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, † 6 and
blessed is the one who isn't offended by me." †
7 As these men were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John:
"What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? †
8 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those
who wear soft clothes are in royal palaces. 9 What then did you go out to see? A
prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. † 10 This is the one about
whom it is written:
See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you. † †
11 "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one greater than John the
Baptist has appeared, † but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been
suffering violence, † and the violent have been seizing it by force. 13 For all the
prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you're willing to accept it,
he is the Elijah who is to come. † 15 Let anyone who has ears † listen. †

AN UNRESPONSIVE GENERATION

16 "To what should I compare this generation? It's like children sitting in the
marketplaces who call out to other children:

17 We played the flute for you, but you didn't dance;
we sang a lament,
but you didn't mourn! †

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a
demon! ' † 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a
glutton and a drunkard, † a friend of tax collectors and sinners! ' † Yet wisdom
is vindicated † by her deeds." †

20 Then he proceeded to denounce the towns where most of his miracles were
done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! † Woe to you,
Bethsaida! † For if the miracles that were done in you had been done in Tyre
and Sidon, † they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes long ago. 22 But I
tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment †
than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you
will go down to Hades. † For if the miracles that were done in you had been
done in Sodom, it would have remained until today. 24 But I tell you, it will be
more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

THE SON GIVES KNOWLEDGE AND REST

25 At that time Jesus said, † "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed
them to infants. † 26 Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure. † 27 All
things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except

the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son desires † to reveal him. †
28 “Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. † 29 Take up my yoke and learn from me, † because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. † 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

11:5 Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **11:11** Lit *arisen* **11:12** Or *has been forcefully advancing* **11:15** Other mss add *to hear* **11:17** Or *beat your chests in grief* **11:19** Or *declared right* **11:19** Other mss read *children* **11:26** Lit *was well-pleasing in your sight* **11:27** Or *wills*, or *chooses* **11:1** Mt 7:28; 9:35; Lk 23:5 **11:2-19** Lk 7:18-35 **11:3** Ps 118:26; Jn 6:14; 11:27; Heb 10:37 **11:5** Is 35:5; 61:1; Lk 4:18; Jms 2:5 **11:6** Is 8:14-15; Mt 13:21; Jn 6:61; 16:1 **11:7** Mt 3:1; Eph 4:14 **11:9** Mt 14:5; 21:26; Lk 1:76 **11:10** Mal 3:1 **11:10** Mal 3:1; Mk 1:2 **11:14** Mal 4:5; Mt 17:10-13; Mk 9:11-13; Lk 1:17; Jn 1:21 **11:15** Mt 13:9; Mk 4:23; Lk 8:8; 14:35; Rv 2:7 **11:18** Mt 3:4; Lk 1:15 **11:19** Mt 9:10; Lk 7:36; 14:1; Jn 2:1; 12:2 **11:19** Mt 9:11; 18:17; Lk 15:2; 19:7 **11:21-24** Lk 10:12-15 **11:21** Mk 6:45; Lk 9:10; Jn 12:21 **11:21** Mt 15:21; Lk 6:17; Ac 12:20 **11:22** Ezk 28:2-4; Am 1:9-10; Mt 10:15; 15:21; Mk 3:8 **11:23** Is 14:13,15; Mt 4:13 **11:25-27** Lk 10:21-22 **11:25** Ps 8:2; Lk 22:42; Jn 11:41; 1Co 1:26; 2Co 3:14 **11:27** Mt 28:18; Jn 1:18; 7:29; 8:19; 10:15; 17:25-26 **11:28** Jr 31:25; Jn 7:37 **11:29** Jn 13:15; Eph 4:20; Php 2:5; 1Pt 2:21; 1Jn 2:6 **11:29** Jr 6:16; Zch 9:9; 2Co 10:1; Php 2:7-8

11:7 The metaphor of **a reed swaying in the wind** describes a person who is weak and unsure. Jesus’s questions are rhetorical; John the Baptist was obviously neither weak nor unsure. He was the prophet who heralded the coming of the Messiah to God’s people (3:1-12).

11:28-30 It was common in Jesus’s day to refer to Jewish religious duty as a yoke, a wooden frame joining two animals for the purpose of hard labor. The term was used metaphorically to describe someone’s subjection to another. Consequently, Jesus describes the yoke of the Pharisees and all the religious obligations they placed on people as wearying and burdensome. In contrast, faith in Jesus not only provides a righteousness that exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees (5:20), but his **yoke is easy** and his **burden is light.**

LORD OF THE SABBATH

12 At that time Jesus passed through the grainfields on the Sabbath. † His disciples † were hungry and began to pick and eat some heads of grain.
2 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “See, your disciples are doing what is not lawful † to do on the Sabbath.”
3 He said to them, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and those who were with him were hungry: 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate † the bread of the Presence — which is not lawful for him or for those with him to eat, but only for the priests? † 5 Or haven’t you read in the law that on Sabbath days the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and are innocent? † 6 I tell

you that something greater than the temple is here. † 7 If you had known what this means, **I desire mercy and not sacrifice**, † † you would not have condemned the innocent. 8 For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." †

THE MAN WITH THE SHRIVELED HAND

9 Moving on from there, he entered their synagogue. † 10 There he saw a man who had a shriveled hand, and in order to accuse him they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? " †

11 He replied to them, "Who among you, if he had a sheep that fell into a pit on the Sabbath, wouldn't take hold of it and lift it out? † 12 A person is worth far more than a sheep; † so it is lawful to do what is good on the Sabbath."

13 Then he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and it was restored, † as good as the other. 14 But the Pharisees went out and plotted against him, how they might kill him. †

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD

15 Jesus was aware of this and withdrew. Large crowds † followed him, and he healed them all. † 16 He warned them not to make him known, † 17 so that what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

18 **Here is my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom I delight;**
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations. †

19 **He will not argue or shout, and no one will hear his voice in the streets.**

20 **He will not break a bruised reed, and he will not put out a smoldering wick,**
until he has led justice to victory. †

21 **The nations will put their hope in his name.** † †

A HOUSE DIVIDED

22 Then a demon-possessed man † who was blind and unable to speak was brought to him. He healed him, so that the man † could both speak and see. †

23 All the crowds were astounded and said, "Could this be the Son of David? " †

24 When the Pharisees heard this, they said, “This man drives out demons only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.” †

25 Knowing their thoughts, † he told them: “Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. 26 If Satan † drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. † 28 If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. † 29 How can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up † the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. 30 Anyone who is not with me is against me, † and anyone who does not gather with me scatters. 31 Therefore, † I tell you, people will be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, † but the blasphemy against † the Spirit will not be forgiven. † 32 Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, † it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the one to come. †

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

33 “Either make the tree good and its fruit will be good, or make the tree bad † and its fruit will be bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. † 34 Brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For the mouth speaks from the overflow † of the heart. 35 A good person produces good things from his storeroom of good, and an evil person produces evil things from his storeroom of evil. † 36 I tell you that on the day of judgment † people will have to account † for every careless † word they speak. † 37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

THE SIGN OF JONAH

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” †

39 He answered them, † “An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. † 40 For as

Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish † † three days and three nights, † so the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights. 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, † because they repented at Jonah's preaching; and look — something greater than Jonah is here. † 42 The queen of the south † will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and look — something greater than Solomon is here.

AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT'S RETURN

43 "When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest but doesn't find any. † 44 Then it says, 'I'll go back to my house that I came from.' Returning, it finds the house vacant, swept, and put in order. 45 Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person's last condition is worse than the first. † That's how it will also be with this evil generation."

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

46 While he † was still speaking with the crowds, his mother and brothers were standing outside wanting to speak to him. † 47 Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." †
48 He replied to the one who was speaking to him, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" 49 Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, † he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." †

12:4 Other mss read *he ate* **12:15** Other mss read *Many* **12:20** Or *until he has successfully put forth justice* **12:22** Lit *mute* **12:31** Or *of* **12:31** Other mss add *people* **12:33** Or *decayed* ; lit *rotten* **12:36** Lit *worthless* **12:36** Lit *will speak* **12:40** Or *sea creature* ; Jnh 1:17 **12:47** Other mss omit this v.
12:1-8 Mk 2:23-28; Lk 6:1-5 **12:1** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **12:2** Mt 12:10; Lk 13:14; 14:3; Jn 5:10; 7:23; 9:16 **12:4** Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9; 1Sm 21:6 **12:5** Nm 28:9-10; 1Ch 9:32; Jn 7:22-23 **12:6** 2Ch 6:18; Mal 3:1; Mt 12:41-42 **12:7** Hs 6:6; Mc 6:8; Mt 9:13 **12:7** Hs 6:6 **12:8** Mt 8:20; 9:6; 12:32,40 **12:9-14** Mk 3:1-6; Lk 6:6-11 **12:10** Mt 12:2; Lk 13:14; 14:3; Jn 9:16 **12:11** Ex 23:4-5; Dt 22:4; Lk 14:5 **12:12** Mt 6:26; 10:31 **12:13** 1Kg 13:4; Mt 8:3; Ac 28:8 **12:14** Mt 26:4; 27:1; Mk 3:6; Lk 6:11; Jn 10:39; 11:53 **12:15** Mt 4:23; 10:23; 19:2; Mk 3:7 **12:16** Mt 8:4; 9:30 **12:18** Mt 3:17; 17:5; Lk 4:18; Jn 3:34 **12:18-21** Is 42:1-4 **12:18-21** Is 42:1-4; Jn 10:25 **12:22-24** Lk 11:14-15 **12:22** Mt 4:24; 9:32-34 **12:23** 2Ch 1:1; Mt 1:1; Rm 1:3 **12:24** Mt 9:34; 10:25; Mk 3:22 **12:25-29** Mk 3:23-27; Lk 11:17-22 **12:26** Mt 4:1,10;

13:19; Ac 13:10 **12:27** 2Kg 2:7; Ac 19:13 **12:28** Lk 17:21; 1Jn 3:8 **12:29** Is 49:24; 53:12 **12:30** Mk 9:40; Lk 9:50; 11:23 **12:31-32** Mk 3:28-30; Lk 12:10 **12:31** Heb 6:4-6; 10:26; 1Jn 5:16 **12:32** Mt 11:19; Mk 2:10; Jn 7:12; 9:24 **12:32** Mk 10:30; Lk 12:10; 20:34-35; Eph 1:21; Ti 2:12; Heb 6:5 **12:33** Mt 7:18-19,23; Lk 6:43-44; Jn 15:4-7 **12:34** 1Sm 24:13; Mt 3:7; 23:33; Lk 6:45; Eph 4:29 **12:35** Mt 13:52; Col 4:6 **12:36** Mt 12:41; Jn 5:29; 1Jn 4:17 **12:36** Lk 16:2; Ac 19:40; Rm 14:12; Heb 13:17; 1Pt 4:5 **12:38** Mt 16:1; Mk 8:11-12; Lk 11:16; Jn 2:18; 6:30; 1Co 1:22 **12:39** Mk 8:11-12; Lk 11:29-32 **12:39** Is 57:3; Mt 16:4; Mk 8:38 **12:40** Jnh 1:17 **12:40** Jnh 1:17 **12:41** Jr 3:11; Ezk 16:51; Rm 2:27 **12:41** Jnh 1:2; 3:5 **12:42** 1Kg 10:1; 2Ch 9:1 **12:43-45** Lk 11:24-26 **12:45** Heb 6:4; 2Pt 2:20 **12:46-50** Mk 3:31-35; Lk 8:19-21 **12:46** Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Jn 2:12; Ac 1:14; 1Co 9:5; Gl 1:19 **12:49** Mt 10:42; 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1 **12:50** Mt 6:1; 7:21; Jn 15:14; Heb 2:11

12:6 Three times in this chapter Jesus points to key concepts from the OT and compares himself to them, concluding that he is greater. Jesus is **greater than the temple**. He is greater than Jonah, the prophet sent to a Gentile nation (12:41). And he is greater than Solomon, the wise king of Israel (12:42). Jesus is the ultimate place where people meet God (cp. the temple). He is the final good news to the Gentiles (cp. Jonah), and he is the wisest King of Israel (cp. Solomon).

12:13-14 Matthew highlights irony here. It was a crime worthy of death to say **stretch out your hand** on the Sabbath, but the Pharisees have no qualms about plotting the murder of an innocent man on the Sabbath.

12:25 See also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

12:43-45 Jesus compares his generation to a man possessed by an evil spirit. The spirit is exorcised, but since the exorcist apparently has no real power over the demon, it returns to its victim who is then much worse off. In the same way, the religious practices of the Pharisees gave the appearance of godliness, and of making life better for their practitioners, but it had no real power to fix what is truly wrong with humankind. As a result, they fared worse than if they had no religion at all.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

13 On that day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. †
2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the whole crowd stood on the shore. †
3 Then he told them many things in parables, † saying: "Consider the sower who went out to sow. 4 As he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Other seed fell on rocky ground where it didn't have much soil, and it grew up quickly since the soil wasn't deep. 6 But when the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and choked it. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground and produced fruit: some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times what was sown. † 9 Let anyone who has ears † listen." †

WHY JESUS USED PARABLES

10 Then the disciples † came up and asked him, “Why are you speaking to them in parables? ” †
11 He answered, “Because the secrets of the kingdom of heaven have been given for you to know, † but it has not been given to them. 12 For whoever has, more will be given to him, and he will have more than enough; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. † 13 That is why I speak to them in parables, because looking they do not see, † and hearing they do not listen or understand. † 14 Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in them, which says:
You will listen and listen,
but never understand;
you will look and look,
but never perceive. †
15 **For this people’s heart has grown callous;**
their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
otherwise they might see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears, and
understand with their hearts,
and turn back —
and I would heal them. † †
16 “Blessed are your eyes † because they do see, and your ears because they do hear. † 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but didn’t see them, to hear the things you hear but didn’t hear them. †

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

18 “So listen to the parable of the sower: † 19 When anyone hears the word about the kingdom and doesn’t understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the one sown along the path. † 20 And the one sown on rocky ground — this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. † 21 But he has no root and is short-lived. When distress or persecution † comes because of the word, immediately he falls away. 22 Now the one sown among the thorns — this is one who hears the word,

but the worries of this age † and the deceitfulness † of wealth † choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 23 But the one sown on the good ground — this is one who hears and understands the word, who does produce fruit and yields: some a hundred, some sixty, some thirty times what was sown."

THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

24 He presented another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. † 25 But while people were sleeping, his enemy came, sowed weeds among the wheat, and left. 26 When the plants sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also appeared. 27 The landowner's servants † came to him and said, 'Master, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Then where did the weeds come from? '
28 " 'An enemy did this,' he told them.
" 'So, do you want us to go and pull them up? ' the servants asked him.
29 " 'No,' he said. 'When you pull up the weeds, you might also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I'll tell the reapers: Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles to burn them, but collect the wheat in my barn.' "

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND OF THE LEAVEN

31 He † presented another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven † is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It's the smallest of all the seeds, but when grown, it's taller than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches." †

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven † that a woman took and mixed into fifty pounds † of flour until all of it was leavened." †

USING PARABLES FULFILLS PROPHECY

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables, and he did not tell them anything without a parable, † 35 so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:
I will open my mouth in parables;
I will declare things kept secret

from the foundation of the world. † † †

JESUS INTERPRETS THE PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND THE WEEDS

36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples approached
him and said, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.” †
37 He replied: “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field
is the world; and the good seed — these are the children of the kingdom. The
weeds are the children of the evil one, † 39 and the enemy who sowed them is
the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels. †
40 Therefore, just as the weeds are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be
at the end of the age. † 41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they
will gather from his kingdom all who cause sin † and those guilty of
lawlessness. † † 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace † where
there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. † 43 Then the righteous will shine
like the sun in their Father’s kingdom. Let anyone who has ears † listen. †

THE PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND OF THE PRICELESS PEARL

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found
and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that
field. †
45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.
46 When he found one priceless † pearl, he went and sold everything he had and
bought it. †

THE PARABLE OF THE NET

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea. It
collected every kind of fish, † 48 and when it was full, they dragged it ashore,
sat down, and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw out the worthless
ones. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, separate the
evil people from the righteous, † 50 and throw them into the blazing furnace,
where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. †

THE STOREHOUSE OF TRUTH

51 “Have you understood all these things?” †
They answered him, “Yes.”
52 “Therefore,” he said to them, “every teacher of the law † who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom treasures new and old.” †

REJECTION AT NAZARETH

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he left there. 54 He went to his hometown † and began to teach them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? † 55 Isn’t this the carpenter’s son? † Isn’t his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, † Joseph, † Simon, and Judas? † 56 And his sisters, aren’t they all with us? So where does he get all these things?” 57 And they were offended by him.
Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his household.” † 58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

13:9 Other mss add *to hear* **13:22** Or *pleasure* **13:33** Or *yeast* **13:33** Lit *three sata* ; about 40 liters **13:35** Some mss omit *of the world* **13:41** Or *stumbling* **13:41** Or *those who do lawlessness* **13:43** Other mss add *to hear* **13:46** Or *very precious* **13:51** Other mss add *Jesus asked them* **13:52** Or *every scribe* **13:55** Other mss read *Joses* ; Mk 6:3

13:1-15 Mk 4:1-12; Lk 8:4-10 **13:2** Mk 3:9; Lk 5:3 **13:3** Mt 13:10,34-36; 15:15; 21:33,45; 22:1; 24:32; Mk 4:2 **13:8** Gn 26:12; Mt 13:23 **13:9** Mt 11:15; 13:43; Lk 8:8; 14:35; Rv 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22 **13:10** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **13:10** Mt 13:35; 15:15; 21:33,45; 22:1; 24:32 **13:11** Mt 11:25; 19:11; Jn 6:65; 1Co 2:10; Col 1:27; 1Jn 2:20,27 **13:12** Mt 25:29; Lk 8:18; 19:26; Jn 15:2; Jms 4:6 **13:13** Dt 29:4; Is 42:19-20; Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2 **13:13** Mt 15:10; 16:12; 17:13; Mk 8:21 **13:14** Is 6:9; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40; Ac 28:26-27; Rm 11:8 **13:14-15** Is 6:9-10 **13:15** Is 6:10; Mt 15:8; Heb 5:11 **13:16-17** Lk 10:23-24 **13:16** Mt 16:17; Jn 20:29 **13:17** Jn 8:56; Heb 11:13; 1Pt 1:10-12 **13:18-23** Mk 4:13-20; Lk 8:11-15 **13:19** Mt 4:23; 5:37; 6:13 **13:20** Is 58:2; Ezk 33:31-32; Mk 6:20; Jn 5:35 **13:21** Mk 4:17; 10:30; Ac 8:1; 13:50; Rm 8:35; 2Co 12:10 **13:22** Rm 12:2; 2Tm 4:10; 1Jn 2:15 **13:22** Mt 19:23; Mk 10:23; 1Tm 6:9-10; 2Tm 4:10 **13:24** Mt 18:23; 20:1; 25:1; Mk 4:26,30 **13:27** Mt 10:24; Col 3:11; 4:1; Rv 1:1 **13:31-32** Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19 **13:31** Mt 13:24; 17:20; Lk 17:6 **13:32** Ps 104:12; Ezk 17:23; 31:6; Dn 4:12 **13:33** Gn 18:6; Lk 13:21; Gl 5:9 **13:34** Mk 4:34; Jn 10:6; 16:25 **13:35** Ps 78:2 **13:35** Ps 78:2; Rm 16:25-26; 1Co 2:7; Eph 3:9; Col 1:26 **13:36** Mt 13:3; 15:15; 21:33,45; 22:1; 24:32 **13:38** Mt 8:12; Jn 8:44; Ac 13:10; 1Jn 3:10 **13:39** Jl 3:13; Heb 9:26; Rv 14:15 **13:40** Mt 24:3; 28:20 **13:41** Zph 1:3; Mt 8:20; 18:7; 24:31 **13:42** Rv 1:15; 9:2 **13:42** Mt 8:12; Rv 19:20; 20:10 **13:43** Dn 12:3; Mt 11:15; 1Co 15:42 **13:44** Is 55:1; Php 3:7-8; Rv 3:18 **13:46** Pr 2:4; Mt 7:6 **13:47** Mt 3:2; 13:44; 22:10 **13:49** Mt 13:39-40; 25:32 **13:50** Mt 8:12; 13:42 **13:52** Mt 12:35; 28:19 **13:54-58** Mk 6:1-6; Lk 4:16-30 **13:54** Mt 2:23; 4:23; 7:28 **13:55** Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Lk 3:23; Jn 6:42 **13:55** Jms 1:1; Jd 1 **13:55** Mt 12:46; Jn 7:5 **13:57** Jr 11:21; 12:6; Lk 4:24; Jn 4:44

13:1 Because many in Israel openly rejected Jesus's claims to be the Messiah, he began to teach the crowds in parables that could only be interpreted correctly when Jesus and his kingdom were properly understood (vv. 10-17). Jesus did, however, use parables on other occasions (e.g., 7:24-27) and sometimes spoke openly to skeptical and hostile crowds (e.g., 15:1-20). Jesus's parables in Matthew 13 are mostly natural analogies designed to explain to his disciples how God could have come to earth in the person of the Messiah, and yet people still reject him.

13:19 See also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

13:31-32 Calling the mustard seed **the smallest of all the seeds** is intentional hyperbole—exaggeration for emphasis or effect—a technique that Jesus frequently used in teaching (e.g., 11:23; 19:24; 23:24). Jesus's point is that the kingdom he is offering will grow into the mighty, all-encompassing kingdom of heaven even though it appears to have a modest start—a Messiah born in a small town, rejected by his people, and executed.

13:41-42 See "The Eternal State," *p. 1622*.

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

14 At that time † Herod the tetrarch † heard the report about Jesus.
2 "This is John the Baptist," he told his servants. "He has been raised
from the dead, and that's why miraculous powers are at work in him." †
3 For Herod had arrested John, chained † him, and put him in prison on account
of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, † 4 since John had been telling him, "It's
not lawful † for you to have her." 5 Though Herod wanted to kill John, he
feared the crowd since they regarded John as a prophet. †
6 When Herod's birthday celebration came, Herodias's daughter danced before
them † and pleased Herod. 7 So he promised with an oath to give her whatever
she asked. 8 Prompted by her mother, she answered, "Give me John the
Baptist's head here on a platter." 9 Although the king regretted it, he
commanded that it be granted because of his oaths and his guests. 10 So he sent
orders and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 His head was brought on a platter
and given to the girl, who carried it to her mother. 12 Then his disciples came,
removed the corpse, † buried it, and went and reported to Jesus.

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

13 When Jesus heard about it, † he withdrew from there by boat to a remote
place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed him on foot from

the towns. 14 When he went ashore, † he saw a large crowd, had compassion on them, and healed their sick. †

15 When evening came, the disciples † approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. † Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.”

16 “They don’t need to go away,” Jesus told them. “You give them something to eat.”

17 “But we only have five loaves and two fish here,” they said to him.

18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. 19 Then he commanded the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. † 20 Everyone ate and was satisfied. They picked up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces. † 21 Now those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

WALKING ON THE WATER

22 Immediately † he † made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone. † 24 Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance † from land, † battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. 25 Jesus came toward them walking on the sea † very early in the morning. † 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost! ” they said, and they cried out in fear.

27 Immediately Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” †

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter answered him, “command me to come to you on the water.”

29 He said, “Come.”

And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strength of the wind, † he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me! ”

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand, caught hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt? ” †

32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 Then those in the boat
worshiped him and said, “Truly you are the Son of God.” †

MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

34 When they had crossed over, † they came to shore at Gennesaret. † 35 When
the men of that place recognized him, they alerted the whole vicinity and
brought to him all who were sick. 36 They begged him that they might only
touch the end of his robe, and as many as touched it were healed. †

14:3 Or *bound* **14:6** Lit *danced in the middle* **14:12** Other mss read *body* **14:14** Lit *Coming out* (of the boat) **14:15** Lit *and the time* (for the evening meal) *has already passed* **14:22** Other mss read *Jesus* **14:24** Lit *already many stadia* ; one *stadion* = 600 feet **14:24** Other mss read *already in the middle of the sea* **14:25** Lit *fourth watch of the night* = 3 to 6 a.m. **14:30** Other mss read *saw the wind*
14:1-12 Mk 6:14-29; Lk 9:7-9 **14:1** Mk 8:15; Lk 3:19; 13:31; 23:7; Ac 4:27; 12:1; 13:1 **14:2** Mt 16:14; Mk 6:14; Lk 9:7 **14:3** Mt 4:12; 11:2; Jn 3:24 **14:4** Lv 18:16; 20:21 **14:5** Mt 11:9; 21:26,46 **14:13-21** Mk 6:32-44; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-13 **14:14** Mt 4:23; 9:36 **14:15** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **14:19** 1Sm 9:13; Mt 26:26; Mk 8:7; 14:22; Lk 24:30; Ac 27:35 **14:20** Mt 16:9; Mk 6:43; 8:19; Lk 9:17; Jn 6:13 **14:22-33** Mk 6:45-51; Jn 6:15-21 **14:23** Lk 6:12; 9:48 **14:25** Mt 24:23; Mk 13:35 **14:27** Dt 31:6; Is 41:13; 43:1-2; Mt 17:7; Lk 2:10; Rv 1:17 **14:31** Mt 6:30; 8:26; 16:8 **14:33** Ps 2:7; Mt 16:16; 26:63; Mk 1:1; Lk 4:41; Jn 11:4 **14:34-36** Mk 6:53-56; Jn 6:24-25 **14:34** Mk 6:5; Lk 5:1 **14:36** Mt 9:20; Mk 3:10; Lk 6:19; Ac 5:15

14:2 Herod knew enough of the OT to know that God sometimes brings people back from the dead (e.g., 1Kg 17:17-24; 2Kg 4:32-35). In his guilt and superstition, Herod feared God brought John back to life to condemn Herod for his sins.

THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS

15 Then † Jesus was approached by Pharisees and scribes from
Jerusalem, who asked, † 2 “Why do your disciples † break the
tradition of the elders? For they don’t wash their hands when they eat.” † †
3 He answered them, “Why do you break God’s commandment because of your
tradition? 4 For God said: † **Honor your father and your mother;** † † and,
Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to death. † † 5 But
you say, ‘Whoever tells his father or mother, “Whatever benefit you might have
received from me is a gift committed to the temple,” 6 he does not have to honor
his father.’ † In this way, you have nullified the word of God † because of your
tradition. 7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said:
8 **This people † honors me with their lips,**
but their heart is far from me.

9 **They worship me in vain,**
teaching as doctrines human commands.” † †

DEFILEMENT IS FROM WITHIN

10 Summoning the crowd, he told them, “Listen and understand: 11 It’s not what goes into the mouth that defiles † a person, but what comes out of the mouth — this defiles a person.” †

12 Then the disciples came up and told him, “Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said? ”

13 He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father didn’t plant will be uprooted. † 14 Leave them alone! They are blind guides. † And if the blind guide the blind, both will fall into a pit.” †

15 Then Peter said, “Explain this parable to us.” †

16 “Do you still lack understanding? ” he † asked. 17 “Don’t you realize † that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is eliminated? †

18 But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a person. † 19 For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, † slander. † 20 These are the things that defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile a person.” †

A GENTILE MOTHER’S FAITH

21 When Jesus left there, † he withdrew to the area of Tyre and Sidon. † 22 Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came and kept crying out, † “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon.” †

23 Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples † approached him and urged him, “Send her away because she’s crying out after us.”

24 He replied, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” †

25 But she came, knelt before him, and said, “Lord, help me! ”

26 He answered, “It isn’t right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” †

27 “Yes, Lord,” she said, “yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”
28 Then Jesus replied to her, “Woman, your faith is great. Let it be done for you as you want.” And from that moment † her daughter was healed. †

HEALING MANY PEOPLE

29 Moving on from there, † Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee. † He went up on a mountain and sat there, 30 and large crowds came to him, including the lame, the blind, the crippled, those unable to speak, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he healed them. 31 So the crowd was amazed when they saw those unable to speak talking, the crippled restored, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, † and they gave glory to the God of Israel.

FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND

32 Jesus called his disciples and said, † “I have compassion on the crowd, because they’ve already stayed with me three days and have nothing to eat. I don’t want to send them away hungry, otherwise they might collapse on the way.”
33 The disciples said to him, “Where could we get enough bread in this desolate place † to feed such a crowd? ”
34 “How many loaves do you have? ” Jesus asked them.
“Seven,” they said, “and a few small fish.”
35 After commanding the crowd to sit down on the ground, 36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. † 37 They all ate and were satisfied. They collected the leftover pieces — seven large baskets full. 38 Now there were four thousand men who had eaten, besides women and children. 39 After dismissing the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan. † †

15:2 Lit *eat bread* = eat a meal **15:4** Other mss read *commanded, saying* **15:6** Other mss read *then he does not have to honor his father or mother* **15:6** Other mss read *commandment* **15:8** Other mss add *draw near to me with their mouths, and* **15:14** Other mss add *for the blind* **15:16** Other mss read *Jesus* **15:17** Other mss add *yet* **15:17** Lit *and goes out into the toilet* **15:22** Other mss read *and cried out to him* **15:28** Lit *hour* **15:39** Other mss read *Magdala*

15:1-20 Mk 7:1-23 **15:1** Mk 3:22; Jn 1:19 **15:2** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **15:2** Lk 11:38; Gl 1:14; Col 2:8; Heb 11:2 **15:4** Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16 **15:4** Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16; Eph 6:2 **15:4** Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 **15:4** Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 **15:8-9** Is 29:13; Ezk 33:31; Col 2:22; Ti 1:14 **15:8-9** Is 29:13 LXX **15:11** Mt 15:18; Mk 7:15; Ac 21:28; Heb 9:13 **15:11** Ac 10:14-15; 1Tm 4:3 **15:13** Is 60:21; 61:3; Jn 15:2; 1Co

3:9 **15:14** Mal 2:8; Mt 23:16,24; Lk 6:39 **15:15** Mt 13:36; Mk 7:17 **15:18** Mt 12:34; Jms 3:6 **15:19** Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; 1Tm 6:4 **15:19** Ex 20:13-16; Gl 5:19-21; Jms 2:4 **15:20** Mt 11:18; Mk 7:2,5; 1Co 6:9-10 **15:21-28** Mk 7:24-30 **15:21** Mt 11:21; Mk 7:24 **15:22** Gn 10:15,19; Jdg 1:30-33; Mt 4:24; 9:27 **15:23** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **15:24** Mt 10:6,23; Jn 4:22; Rm 15:8 **15:26** Ex 22:31; 2Kg 9:10; Mt 8:2; Php 3:2 **15:28** Mt 9:22; 17:18; Jn 4:52-53 **15:29-31** Mk 7:31-37 **15:29** Mt 9:8; 18:8; Mk 9:43 **15:31** Is 29:23; Lk 1:68; Ac 13:17 **15:32-39** Mt 14:14-21; Mk 8:1-10 **15:33** Mk 8:4; 2Co 11:26; Heb 11:38 **15:36** Mt 26:27; Lk 22:17; Jn 6:11,23; Ac 27:35; Rm 14:6; 1Co 10:30 **15:39** Mk 3:9; 8:10

15:2-9 Hand washing here is ceremonial in nature, not related to hygiene. It was a **tradition of the elders**, not a biblical command. Jesus condemns the **Pharisees and scribes** for constantly putting their traditions above Scripture. He focuses on *corban* (cp. Mk 7:11), the practice of dedicating money to the temple instead of using it to care for aging parents.

15:22-28 The woman who approached Jesus was a **Canaanite** from a Gentile region north of Galilee. She knows something about Judaism because she calls Jesus **Son of David**, an exclusively Jewish messianic term. Though Jesus appears to dismiss her pleas rather harshly at first, her persistence demonstrates faith. Jesus calls her faith **great** and heals her daughter. This woman is one of many believing Gentiles whom Matthew highlights to show God's grace to the whole world.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES

16 The Pharisees and Sadducees approached, † and tested him, asking
him to show them a sign from heaven. † 2 He replied, "When evening
comes you say, 'It will be good weather because the sky is red.' 3 And in the
morning, 'Today will be stormy because the sky is red and threatening.' You †
know how to read the appearance of the sky, but you can't read the signs of the
times. † 4 An evil and adulterous generation demands a sign, but no sign will be
given to it except the sign of † Jonah." † Then he left them and went away.
5 The disciples reached the other shore, † and they had forgotten to take bread.
6 Then Jesus told them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven † of the Pharisees
and Sadducees." †
7 They were discussing among themselves, "We didn't bring any bread."
8 Aware of this, Jesus said, "You of little faith, † why are you discussing among
yourselves that you do not have bread? 9 Don't you understand yet? Don't you
remember the five loaves for the five thousand and how many baskets you
collected? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand and how many large
baskets you collected? † 11 Why is it you don't understand that when I told you,
'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,' it wasn't about

bread?” † 12 Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the leaven in bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. †

PETER’S CONFESSION OF THE MESSIAH

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, † † he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” †
14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” †
15 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am?”
16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” †
17 Jesus responded, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, † † because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. † 18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, † and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, † and whatever you bind on earth will have been bound † in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed † in heaven.” 20 Then he gave the disciples orders to tell no one that he was † the Messiah. †

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION PREDICTED

21 From † then on Jesus began to point out to his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day. † 22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, “Oh no, † Lord! This will never happen to you!”
23 Jesus turned and told Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me because you’re not thinking about God’s concerns † but human concerns.” †

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. † 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it. † 26 For what will it benefit someone if he gains the whole world yet loses his life? Or what will anyone give in exchange for his life? † 27 For the Son of Man is going

to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, † and then he will reward each according to what he has done. 28 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." †

16:3 Other mss read *Hypocrites! You* **16:2-3** Other mss omit *When* (v. 2) through end of v. 3 **16:4** Other mss add *the prophet* **16:5** Lit *disciples went to the other side* **16:6** Or *yeast*, also in vv. 11,12 **16:13** A town north of Galilee at the base of Mount Hermon **16:13** Other mss read *that I, the Son of Man, am* **16:17** Or *son of John* **16:19** Or *earth will be bound* **16:19** Or *earth will be loosed* **16:20** Other mss add *Jesus* **16:22** Lit *"Mercy to you = "May God have mercy on you* **16:23** Lit *about the things of God*
16:1-12 Mt 12:38-39; Mk 8:11-21; Lk 12:54-56 **16:1** Lk 11:16; 1Co 1:22 **16:4** Mt 4:13; 21:17; Lk 11:29 **16:6** Mt 3:7; 8:15; Lk 12:1; 1Co 5:6-8; Gl 5:9 **16:8** Mt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; Lk 12:28 **16:9-10** Mt 14:17-21; 15:34-38 **16:11** Mt 3:7; 16:6; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1 **16:12** Mt 5:20; 17:13; 23:3 **16:13-16** Mk 8:27-29; Lk 9:18-20 **16:14** Mt 14:2; 17:10; Mk 6:15; Lk 9:8; Jn 1:21 **16:16** Mt 1:16; Jn 11:27 **16:17** Jn 1:42; 21:15-17 **16:17** 1Co 15:50; Gl 1:16; Eph 6:12; Heb 2:14 **16:18** Mt 18:17; Ac 5:11; 7:38; 8:1,3; 9:31; 11:22,26 **16:19** Is 22:22; Mt 18:18; Jn 20:23; Rv 1:18; 3:7 **16:20** Mk 8:30; Lk 9:21 **16:21-28** Mk 8:31–9:1; Lk 9:22-27 **16:21** Mt 17:9; 20:18; 27:63; Lk 24:7; Jn 2:19 **16:23** 2Sm 19:22; Rm 8:5,7; Php 2:5; 3:19; Col 3:2 **16:24** Mt 10:38; Lk 14:27 **16:25** Mt 10:39; Jn 12:25 **16:26** Ps 49:7-8; Lk 12:20 **16:27** Mt 26:64; Mk 8:38; Ac 1:11; 1Th 1:10; 4:16; Rv 1:7 **16:28** Mt 4:23; 10:23; Ac 20:25

16:1-4 The religious leaders wanted Jesus **to show them a sign from heaven**, but Jesus had already revealed himself to them and they rejected him. Just as Jonah had proclaimed God's judgment on Nineveh, so Jesus, one greater than Jonah (12:41), declared judgment on that **evil and adulterous generation.**

16:6 Leaven (or yeast) typically represents sin and corruption. Just as a little yeast will spread throughout an entire loaf of bread to leaven it, so the corrupting influence of **the Pharisees and Sadducees**—those in the best position to recognize the Messiah—had permeated the community. The disciples needed to be wary of them.

16:18 Jesus uses the word **church** here, and in Matthew 18:17, to mean the "gathering" or "community" of his followers. Such gatherings around popular teachers were common in Jesus's day. His use of "church," however, both foreshadows and informs Paul's use of the word to describe the churches of Gentile believers (e.g., Gl 1:2; 1Th 1:1).

16:18-19 The gates of Hades was a common expression for death in Jesus's day. Jesus uses it to explain the work of the Messiah: God is establishing a people of faith whom even death cannot overcome, because he will die and rise again, conquering death (see 16:21). The language of **keys** and binding and loosing reflects the duty of the apostles—to take the truth of Jesus to the nations and to open the kingdom of heaven to the whole world.

16:20 Jesus's disciples still do not understand that the Messiah did not come to restore Israel to its former military and economic glory; rather, he came to rescue humankind from sin and death by dying and rising again (e.g., vv. 22-23). Jesus instructs them to **tell no one that he is the Messiah**—until they understand this properly.

16:23 Jesus strongly rebukes Peter by calling him **Satan** (lit *adversary*). Peter had insisted that the Messiah cannot suffer and die when that is the very thing Jesus came to do. Peter's thinking is shaped by Jewish expectation of a political messianic figure, who will deliver Israel from Roman oppression. Such an expectation did not involve the suffering and death of Israel's political savior.

16:27 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

THE TRANSFIGURATION

THE TRANSFIGURATION

17 After six days † Jesus took Peter, James, and his brother John and led
them up on a high mountain by themselves. † 2 He was transfigured in
front of them, and his face shone like the sun; his clothes became as white as the
light. † 3 Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with him.
4 Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it’s good for us to be here. I will set up †
three shelters here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” †
5 While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud covered † them, and a
voice from the cloud said: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-
pleased. Listen to him!” † 6 When the disciples † heard this, they fell
facedown and were terrified.
7 Jesus came up, touched them, and said, “Get up; don’t be afraid.” † 8 When
they looked up they saw no one except Jesus alone.
9 As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, † “Don’t
tell anyone about the vision until the Son of Man is raised † from the dead.”
10 So the disciples asked him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must
come first?” †
11 “Elijah is coming † and will restore everything,” he replied. † † 12 “But I
tell you: Elijah has already come, and they didn’t recognize him. On the
contrary, they did whatever they pleased to him. In the same way the Son of
Man is going to suffer at their hands.” † 13 Then the disciples understood that
he had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

THE POWER OF JESUS OVER A DEMON

14 When they reached the crowd, † a man approached and knelt down before
him. 15 “Lord,” he said, “have mercy on my son, because he has seizures † and
suffers terribly. He often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 I brought
him to your disciples, but they couldn’t heal him.” †
17 Jesus replied, “You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long will I be
with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to me.” † 18 Then

Jesus rebuked the demon, † and it † came out of him, † and from that moment † the boy was healed.
19 Then the disciples approached Jesus privately and said, “Why couldn’t we drive it out? ”
20 “Because of your little faith,” he † told them. “For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of † a mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. † Nothing will be impossible for you.” † †

THE SECOND PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

22 As † they were gathering together † in Galilee, Jesus told them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men. 23 They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up.” And they were deeply distressed.

PAYING THE TEMPLE TAX

24 When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the temple tax approached Peter and said, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax? ” †
25 “Yes,” he said.

When he went into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, † “What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tariffs or taxes? From their sons or from strangers? ” † †

26 “From strangers,” he said. †
“Then the sons are free,” Jesus told him. 27 “But, so we won’t offend them, go to the sea, cast in a fishhook, and take the first fish that you catch. When you open its mouth you’ll find a coin. † Take it and give it to them for me and you.” †

17:4 Other mss read *Let’s make* **17:5** Or *enveloped* ; Ex 40:34-35 **17:9** Other mss read *Man has risen* **17:11** Other mss add *first* **17:11** Other mss read *Jesus said to them* **17:15** Lit *he is moonstruck* ; thought to be a form of epilepsy **17:18** Lit *rebuked him* or *it* **17:18** Lit *the demon* **17:18** Lit *hour* **17:20** Other mss read *your unbelief, Jesus* **17:20** Lit *faith like* **17:20** Some mss include v. 21: *“However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting.”* **17:22** Other mss read *were staying* **17:25** Lit *Jesus anticipated him by saying* **17:25** Or *foreigners* **17:26** Other mss read *Peter said to him* **17:27** Gk *stater*, worth 2 double-drachmas
17:1-8 Mk 9:2-8; Lk 9:28-36 **17:1** Mt 26:37; Mk 5:37 **17:2** Ps 104:2; Dn 7:9; Mt 28:3; 2Co 3:18; Rv 1:16; 10:1 **17:4** Mk 9:5; Lk 9:33 **17:5** Is 42:1; Mt 3:17; Mk 1:11; Lk 3:22; Ac 3:22; 2Pt 1:16-18 **17:6** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **17:7** Dn 8:18; 9:21; 10:10; Mt 14:27 **17:9-13** Mk 9:9-13 **17:10** Mal 4:5; Mt 11:14 **17:11** Mal 4:6; Lk 1:16-17 **17:12** Mt 14:3,10; 16:21 **17:14-21** Mk 9:14-29; Lk 9:37-43 **17:16** Mt 10:1; Mk 6:7; Lk 10:17 **17:17** Jn 14:9; 20:27; Php 2:15 **17:18** Zch 3:2; Mt 8:26; Mk 1:25; Lk

4:35; Jd 9 **17:20** Mt 21:21-22; Mk 11:23; Lk 17:6; Jn 11:40; 1Co 13:2 **17:20** Mk 9:23,29; 13:31 **17:22-23** Mt 16:21; 20:17; Mk 8:31; 9:30-32; Lk 9:44-45 **17:24** Ex 30:13; 38:26; Mk 9:33 **17:25** Mt 22:17,19; Mk 12:14; Rm 13:7 **17:27** Mt 5:29; Jn 6:61

17:2 Like Moses on Mount Sinai, those in the presence of God experience a dazzling countenance. In his transfiguration, Jesus gives the disciples a preview of his glory.

17:3 The appearance of **Moses and Elijah**, two of the greatest figures in Israel's history, probably represents Jesus's fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (5:17). They also point to Jesus's significance, since Moses was regarded as the model prophet (Dt 18:18) and Elijah was the forerunner of the Messiah (11:7-10; Mal 4:5-6).

17:5 No Jew could miss the significance of the voice from the cloud: **This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased. Listen to him!** The voice draws attention only to God's Son, Jesus, rather than to Moses and Elijah, two of Israel's greatest figures who were also present. He alone is described as the Son, and it is to Jesus alone that God says to listen.

17:23 The disciples still did not understand what kind of Messiah Jesus was. They were hoping for a military and economic restoration for Israel, and thus were **deeply distressed** when Jesus taught that his kingdom is not founded on economic or military power but on the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

17:24 The OT instructed everyone over the age of twenty to pay an offering in support of the tabernacle (Ex 30:11-16). In Jesus's day, representatives of the Jerusalem priesthood traveled throughout Palestine collecting the **temple tax**.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

18 At that time † † the disciples † came to Jesus and asked, "So who is
greatest in the kingdom of heaven? " † 2 He called a child and had him
stand among them. 3 "Truly I tell you," he said, "unless you turn and become
like children, † you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. † 4 Therefore,
whoever humbles himself like this child — this one is the greatest in the
kingdom of heaven. 5 And whoever welcomes † one child like this in my name
welcomes me.
6 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to fall away —
it would be better for him if a heavy millstone were hung around his neck and he
were drowned in the depths of the sea. † 7 Woe to the world because of
offenses. For offenses will inevitably come, but woe to that person by whom the
offense comes. † 8 If your hand or your foot causes you to fall away, cut it off
and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have
two hands or two feet and be thrown into the eternal fire. † 9 And if your eye
causes you to fall away, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to
enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hellfire. † †

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

10 “See to it that you don’t despise one of these little ones, † because I tell you
that in heaven their angels † continually view the face of my Father in
heaven. † † 12 What do you think? † If someone has a hundred sheep, and one
of them goes astray, won’t he leave the ninety-nine on the hillside and go and
search for the stray? † 13 And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over that
sheep † more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 In the same
way, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

RESTORING A BROTHER

15 “If your brother sins against you, † go and rebuke him in private. † If he
listens to you, you have won your brother. † 16 But if he won’t listen, take one
or two others with you, so that **by the testimony † of two or three witnesses
every fact may be established.** † † 17 If he doesn’t pay attention to them, tell
the church. † † If he doesn’t pay attention even to the church, let him be like a
Gentile and a tax collector to you. † 18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on
earth will have been bound † in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will
have been loosed † in heaven. † 19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you on
earth agree about any matter that you † pray for, it will be done for you † by
my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my
name, I am there among them.”

THE PARABLE OF THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

21 Then Peter approached him and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive
my brother or sister who sins against me? As many as seven times? ” †

22 “I tell you, not as many as seven,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven. †
23 “For this reason, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who
wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 When he began to settle accounts,
one who owed ten thousand talents † was brought before him. 25 Since he did
not have the money to pay it back, his master commanded that he, his wife, his
children, and everything he had be sold to pay the debt. †

26 “At this, the servant fell facedown before him and said, ‘Be patient with me,
and I will pay you everything.’ 27 Then the master of that servant had
compassion, released him, and forgave him the loan.
28 “That servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a
hundred denarii. † † He grabbed him, started choking him, and said, ‘Pay what
you owe! ’
29 “At this, his fellow servant fell down † and began begging him, ‘Be patient
with me, and I will pay you back.’ 30 But he wasn’t willing. Instead, he went
and threw him into prison until he could pay what was owed. 31 When the other
servants saw what had taken place, they were deeply distressed and went and
reported to their master everything that had happened. 32 Then, after he had
summoned him, his master said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all
that debt because you begged me. 33 Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your
fellow servant, as I had mercy on you? ’ † 34 And because he was angry, his
master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured until he could pay everything
that was owed. 35 So also my heavenly Father will do to you unless every one of
you forgives his brother or sister † from your † heart.” †

18:1 Lit *hour* **18:5** Or *receives* **18:9** Lit *gehenna of fire* **18:10** Some mss include v. 11: *For the Son of Man has come to save the lost.* **18:13** Lit *over it* **18:15** Other mss omit *against you* **18:15** Lit *him between you and him alone* **18:16** Lit *mouth* **18:17** Or *congregation* **18:18** Or *earth will be bound* **18:18** Or *earth will be loosed* **18:19** Lit *they* **18:19** Lit *for them* **18:22** Or *but seventy-seven times* **18:24** A talent is worth about 6,000 denarii, or twenty years’ wages for a laborer **18:28** A denarius = one day’s wage **18:29** Other mss add *at his feet* **18:35** Other mss add *their trespasses* **18:35** Lit *his*

18:1-5 Mk 9:33-37; Lk 9:46-48 **18:1** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **18:1** Mt 22:24; Jn 3:35; 13:20 **18:3** Mt 19:14; Mk 10:15; Lk 18:17; 1Co 14:20; 1Pt 2:2 **18:3** Mt 5:20; 7:21; 19:23-24; Mk 9:47; Jn 3:5 **18:6** Mk 9:42; Lk 17:2; 1Co 8:12 **18:7** Mt 26:24; Lk 17:1; 1Co 11:19 **18:8** Mt 5:30; 25:41; Mk 9:43 **18:9** Mt 5:22,29; Mk 9:47 **18:10** Est 1:14; Lk 1:19; Rv 8:2 **18:10** Ps 34:7; 91:11; Heb 1:14 **18:10** Mt 6:29; 25:40,45; Lk 15:7,10 **18:12-14** Lk 15:1-7 **18:12** Mt 17:25; 21:28 **18:15** Lv 19:17; Lk 17:3; Gl 6:1; 2Th 3:15; Jms 5:19; 1Pt 3:1 **18:16** Dt 19:15 **18:16** Nm 35:30; Jn 8:17; 2Co 13:1; 1Tm 5:19; Heb 10:28 **18:17** Mt 16:18; 1Co 14:4; Rv 1:4 **18:17** Rm 16:17; 1Co 5:9; 6:1-6; 2Th 3:6,14; 2Jn 10 **18:18** Mt 16:19; Jn 20:23 **18:21** Lk 17:3-4; Col 3:13 **18:25** Ex 21:2; Lv 25:39; 2Kg 4:1; Neh 5:5,8; Lk 7:42 **18:28** Mt 20:2; 22:19; Mk 6:37; 14:5; Lk 7:41; 10:35; Jn 6:7 **18:33** Mt 6:12; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13; 1Jn 4:11 **18:35** Pr 21:13; Mt 6:14; Jms 2:13

THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

19 When Jesus had finished saying these things, † he departed from
Galilee and went to the region of Judea across the Jordan. † 2 Large
crowds followed him, and he healed them there. † 3 Some Pharisees approached

him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on any grounds?” †

THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Self-consciousness is a blessing of being human—and an aspect in which the burden of sin may be felt acutely. The capacity to reflect on one’s own existence and actions and to make rational choices based on such reflection distinguishes humans from other living creatures. In this way, human beings have the privilege of bearing a unique likeness to the Creator and enjoying communication and friendship with him.

Yet where harmony originally existed in God’s good creation, the effects of sin have produced tension, shaking human self-perception. For example, the error of materialism reduces the mind and soul to physical existence. On the other hand, some worldviews identify the self entirely with the spiritual aspect of human nature and see it as alien to or conflicting with the body. At the level of individual experience, such body-self dualism can lead to doubts about the objective reality, integrity, and goodness of one’s bodily identity. Interpersonally, it can lead to denying the dignity of all humans at all stages of life.

Both personally and relationally, the temptation is to treat the body as a means to the end of self-gratification, ignoring its status as an integral part of human nature and denying the moral implications of choices about bodily actions. Such views are at odds with the biblical account of the nature of the human as a union of body and soul, created in the image of God, and designed to represent his glory.

THE GOOD OF CREATION AND THE IMAGE OF GOD

The created, material world is a result of God’s good design, intended to display his glory (Pss 8:1-4; 19:1). Sin has marred that goodness and distorted that reflection, and no part of creation has escaped the curse of the fall. But this does not destroy the reality of God’s design. Nor should humans ignore God’s purposes in creation, or treat the physical world with moral ambivalence. This is especially true when it comes to the physical aspects of human nature itself.

To be human, the Bible teaches, is to be made in the image of God (Gn 1:26-28; 5:1-2; 9:6). Distinctive aspects of this representation of the glory of God are illuminated in the details about God’s creation of Adam and Eve (Gn 1:26-28; 2:7,21-22). Genesis 1:26 presents God’s deliberation about his intention in creating the human race: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.’” No other part of the creation account discloses this divine reasoning and intention, and in the forming of no creature other than humans is analogous rational deliberation found. Previously in the creation account, God had simply commanded the earth to bring forth living plants and animals. When he makes Adam, by contrast, God takes earthly matter, fashions it into human form and breathes life into it: “Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being” (Gn 2:7).

The spiritual nature and rationality of humans reflect attributes of God in ways that other creatures do not, but the image of God is not limited to these or any particular part or capacity of a person. The totality of what humans were created to be represents God, in body, soul, intellect, will, and all faculties and capacities. The body, like the soul, is essential to human nature (Jb 10:8-12; Is 64:8). That the body is an integral aspect of the image of God is confirmed in the creation account of God’s forming humanity of matter and spirit, the incarnation of Christ (whom to see is to see the Father, according to Jn 14:9), and the promise of a bodily resurrection after death (1Co 15:44-45,49).

Once again, no part of any person remains untouched by the effects of sin. But neither can sin obliterate the image of God (Gn 9:6). Redemption reaches far as the curse is found and restores believers in the image of God (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).

Scripture repeatedly conveys that God's design of humans in general and each human life in particular is deliberate and full of care. Psalms 8 and 139 especially highlight this, as these excerpts from Psalm 139:13-16 illustrate: "For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. . . . My bones were not hidden from you when I was made in secret. . . . Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began."

IMPLICATIONS

God's purposeful creation of humans in his image as a union of body and soul has many implications. Because human existence entails both body and soul, it is the organic unity, the whole person, that makes all human choices and takes all human actions. God's design of this reality shapes norms for self-perception and personal conduct, as well as interpersonal relations and social ethics.

One important aspect of imaging God is the charge to exercise leadership and stewardship of creation according to God's purposes, reflecting his authority over all the earth (Gn 1:27). This includes the responsibility to make choices with one's own body in keeping with God's design and to submit all of one's existence to the lordship of Christ (1Co 6:19-20).

To be made in the image of God means that each person is created male or female (Gn 1:28; 2:20-22; 5:1-2). Sex is a created biological reality, not a construct of human socialization. The suggestion that gender identity exists as a category different from or even at odds with biological sex assumes an opposition between body and self that is contrary to what Scripture teaches about God's design of humans. An individual bodily reality, including being created male or female, is one of the most particularized forms of God's good provision for each person. The experience of this gift may be troubled by sin but God's design is not the source of such grief, and his redemption offers the hope of overcoming it.

These truths about the nature of persons also have implications for how we treat others. For example, some perspectives in ethical debates suggest that human dignity depends on the presence of particular attributes, such as a certain level of rationality or functionality. Such arguments have been used to justify abortion in the case of severe abnormalities in unborn children or assisted suicide for those whose mental or physical incapacities have become exceptionally burdensome. But to determine a person's right to life on such variable characteristics of human existence is arbitrary. Rather than the presence of a spectrum of particular attributes, the definitive fact of human nature created in the image of God is the biblical basis of human dignity.

Only after crowning creation with humanity, does God declare all he has made "very good" (Gn 1:31). Humans have unique dignity as the image of God in body and soul and unique responsibility to bring him glory in every thought, word, and deed.

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4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that he who created † them in the beginning
made them male and female, † † 5 and he also said, '**For this reason a man
will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will
become one flesh**'? † † 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore,
what God has joined together, let no one separate."

7 “Why then,” they asked him, “did Moses command us to give divorce papers † and to send her away? ”
8 He told them, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts, but it was not like that from the beginning. 9 I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.” † †
10 His disciples † said to him, “If the relationship of a man with his wife is like this, it’s better not to marry.”
11 He responded, “Not everyone can accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given. † 12 For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb, there are eunuchs who were made by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves that way because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who is able to accept it should accept it.”

BLESSING THE CHILDREN

13 Then children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. † 14 Jesus said, “Leave the children alone, and don’t try to keep them from coming to me, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.” † † 15 After placing his hands on them, he went on from there.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

16 Just then someone came up and asked him, † “Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life? ” †
17 “Why do you ask me about what is good? ” † he said to him. “There is only one who is good. † If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” †
18 “Which ones? ” he asked him.
Jesus answered: **Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; † 19 honor your father and your mother; and love your neighbor as yourself.** † †
20 “I have kept all these,” † the young man told him. “What do I still lack? ”
21 “If you want to be perfect,” † Jesus said to him, “go, sell your belongings and give to the poor, † and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow

me.”
22 When the young man heard that, he went away grieving, because he had many possessions.

POSSESSIONS AND THE KINGDOM

23 Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. † 24 Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” †
25 When the disciples heard this, they were utterly astonished and asked, “Then who can be saved?”
26 Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” †
27 Then Peter responded to him, “See, we have left everything and followed you. So what will there be for us?”
28 Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, in the renewal of all things, † when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, † you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother † or children or fields because of my name will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life. † 30 But many who are first will be last, and the last first. †

19:4 Other mss read *made* **19:9** Other mss add *Also whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery* ; Mt 5:32 **19:14** Lit *heaven is of such ones* **19:17** Other mss read *“Why do you call me good?”* **19:17** Other mss read *“No one is good but one — God* **19:20** Other mss add *from my youth* **19:21** Or *complete* **19:29** Other mss add *or wife*

19:1-9 Mk 10:1-12 **19:1** Mt 7:28; Lk 9:51; Jn 10:40 **19:2** Mt 4:23; 12:15 **19:3** Mt 5:31; Jn 8:6 **19:4** Gn 2:18; Mt 21:16 **19:4** Gn 1:27; 5:2 **19:5** Gn 2:24; Mal 2:15; 1Co 6:16; Eph 5:31 **19:5** Gn 2:24 **19:7** Dt 24:1-4; Mt 5:31 **19:9** Mt 5:32; Lk 16:18 **19:10** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **19:11** Mt 13:11; 1Co 7:7 **19:13-15** Mk 10:13-16; Lk 18:15-17 **19:14** Mt 18:3; 1Pt 2:2 **19:16-29** Mk 10:17-30; Lk 10:25-28; 18:18-30 **19:16** Mk 10:17; Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **19:17** Lv 18:5; Neh 9:29; Ezk 20:21 **19:18** Ex 20:13-16; Dt 5:17-20 **19:18-19** Ex 20:12-16; Lv 19:18; Dt 5:16-20 **19:19** Ex 20:12; Lv 19:18; Dt 5:16; Mt 5:43; 22:39; Gl 5:14; Jms 2:8 **19:21** Lk 12:33; 16:9; Ac 2:45; 4:35; 1Tm 6:18 **19:23** Mt 13:22; Mk 10:23; 1Co 1:26; 1Tm 6:9 **19:24** Mt 12:28; Mk 10:25; Lk 18:25 **19:26** Gn 18:14; Jb 42:2; Jr 32:17; Zch 8:6; Mk 10:27; Lk 18:27 **19:28** Is 65:17; 66:22; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1 **19:28** Ps 45:6; Mt 25:31; Heb 1:8; Rv 3:21; 22:1,3 **19:29** Mt 6:33; Mk 10:29; Lk 18:29 **19:30** Mt 20:16; 21:31; Mk 10:31; Lk 13:30

19:4-6 See “Christian Worldview and Same-Sex Marriage,” *p. 1499.*

19:3-9 This is the second time Jesus comments on **divorce** in Matthew (see the note at Mt 5:32). Here Jesus expands on his earlier comments. God never intended for anyone to divorce—**what God has joined**

together, let no one separate. (See "The Christian Worldview and the Early Chapters of Genesis," *p. 32*.) But because sinful people are prone to victimize the weak, in cases of **sexual immorality**, God allows for divorce and requires those seeking a divorce to conform to certain legal requirements (see Dt 24:1-4).

19:12 Jesus uses the term **eunuchs** to describe someone who does not engage in normal marital sexual relations. Just as some people cannot have such relations because of congenital defects, and others cannot because their genitals have been mutilated (e.g., by castration), so there are some who voluntarily abstain from marriage and sex in order to focus on serving **the kingdom of heaven.**

19:24-26 Jesus engages in hyperbole—exaggeration for emphasis—when he says **it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.** Rich people can follow Jesus, but being wealthy makes it much more difficult because of the lure of greed, idolatry, and the false sense of security riches create. Jesus's humorous image emphasizes this point. Consequently, the disciples begin to despair of anyone being saved, to which Jesus responds that **with God all things are possible.**

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD WORKERS

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in
the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. † 2 After agreeing with
the workers on one denarius, † he sent them into his vineyard for the day.
3 When he went out about nine in the morning, † he saw others standing in the
marketplace doing nothing. 4 He said to them, 'You also go into my vineyard,
and I'll give you whatever is right.' So off they went. 5 About noon and about
three, † he went out again and did the same thing. 6 Then about five † he went
and found others standing around † and said to them, 'Why have you been
standing here all day doing nothing? '
7 " 'Because no one hired us,' they said to him.
" 'You also go into my vineyard,' he told them. † 8 When evening came, the
owner of the vineyard told his foreman, 'Call the workers and give them their
pay, † starting with the last and ending with the first.'
9 "When those who were hired about five came, they each received one
denarius. 10 So when the first ones came, they assumed they would get more,
but they also received a denarius each. 11 When they received it, they began to
complain to the landowner: 12 'These last men put in one hour, and you made
them equal to us who bore the burden of the day's work and the burning heat.' †
13 "He replied to one of them, 'Friend, I'm doing you no wrong. Didn't you
agree with me on a denarius? † 14 Take what's yours and go. I want to give this

last man the same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to do what I want with what is mine? Are you jealous † because I'm generous? ' † †
16 "So the last will be first, and the first last." † †

THE THIRD PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

17 While going up to Jerusalem, † Jesus took the twelve disciples aside privately and said to them on the way, 18 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death. † 19 They will hand him over to the Gentiles † to be mocked, flogged, † and crucified, and on the third day he will be raised. " †

SUFFERING AND SERVICE

20 Then the mother of Zebedee's sons approached him with her sons. † She knelt down to ask him for something. † 21 "What do you want? " he asked her.
"Promise," † she said to him, "that these two sons of mine may sit, one on your right and the other on your left, in your kingdom." †
22 Jesus answered, "You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? " † †
"We are able," they said to him.
23 He told them, "You will indeed drink my cup, † but to sit at my right and left is not mine to give; instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father." †
24 When the ten disciples heard this, they became indignant with the two brothers. 25 Jesus called them over and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. 26 It must not be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, † 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, † and to give his life as a ransom for many." †

TWO BLIND MEN HEALED

29 As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. † 30 There were two blind men sitting by the road. When they heard that Jesus was passing by,

they cried out, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” 31 The crowd demanded that they keep quiet, but they cried out all the more, “Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!” †

32 Jesus stopped, called them, and said, “What do you want me to do for you?”
33 “Lord,” they said to him, “open our eyes.” 34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they could see, and they followed him.

20:2 A denarius = one day’s wage, also in vv. 9,10,13 **20:3** Lit *about the third hour* **20:5** Lit *about the sixth hour and the ninth hour* **20:6** Lit *about the eleventh hour*, also in v. 9 **20:6** Other mss add *doing nothing* **20:7** Other mss add *‘and you’ll get whatever is right.’* **20:15** Lit *Is your eye evil* ; an idiom for jealousy or stinginess **20:15** Lit *good* **20:16** Other mss add *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”* **20:19** Or *scourged* **20:19** Other mss read *will rise again* **20:21** Lit *Say* **20:22** Other mss add *and (or) to be baptized with the baptism which I am baptized? ”* **20:23** Other mss add *and be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized*.
20:1 Mt 13:24; 21:28,33 **20:8** Lv 19:13; Dt 24:15 **20:12** Jnh 4:8; Lk 12:55; Jms 1:11 **20:13** Mt 22:12; 26:50 **20:15** Dt 15:9; Pr 23:6; Mt 6:23; Mk 7:22 **20:16** Mt 19:30; Mk 10:31; Lk 13:30 **20:17-19** Mk 10:32-34; Lk 18:31-33 **20:18** Mt 16:21; 26:66; Jn 19:7 **20:19** Mt 27:2; Ac 2:23; 3:13; 4:27; 21:11 **20:20-28** Mk 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-27 **20:20** Mt 4:21; 8:2 **20:21** Mt 16:28; 19:28; 25:31,34; Lk 23:42 **20:22** Is 51:22; Jr 49:12; Mk 14:36 **20:23** Ac 12:2; Rv 1:9 **20:26** Mt 23:11; Mk 9:35 **20:28** Lk 22:27; Jn 13:13-15; 2Co 8:9; Php 2:7 **20:28** Mt 26:28; 1Tm 2:6; Ti 2:14; Heb 9:28 **20:29-34** Mk 10:46-52; Lk 18:35-43 **20:30-31** Mt 9:27; 21:9; 22:42

20:20-28 Traditionally, the seat directly to the right of a judge, king, or any important official, was reserved for the honored guest, trusted advisor, or beloved family member. The seat directly to the left was of only a little less importance. **The mother of Zebedee’s sons** asks that Jesus make her two sons, James and John, the highest-ranking officials in his coming kingdom. She misunderstands that the kingdom of God is not founded on political and economic power, but is inaugurated by the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. Jesus says that the highest-ranking people in his kingdom will be marked by suffering and service, not elevation and privilege.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

21 When they approached Jerusalem † and came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, † Jesus then sent two disciples, 2 telling them, “Go into the village ahead of you. At once you will find a donkey tied there with her foal. Untie them and bring them to me. 3 If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them at once.”

4 This took place so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled:

5 **Tell Daughter Zion, “See, your King is coming to you,**
gentle, and mounted on a donkey,
and on a colt,
the foal of a donkey.” † †

6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus directed them. 7 They brought the
donkey and its foal; then they laid their clothes on them, and he sat on them. 8 A
very large crowd spread their clothes on the road; others were cutting branches
from the trees and spreading them on the road. 9 Then the crowds who went
ahead of him and those who followed shouted:
Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name
of the Lord! †
Hosanna in the highest heaven! †
10 When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar, saying, "Who is
this?" 11 The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus † from Nazareth
in Galilee."

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

12 Jesus went into the temple † † and threw out all those buying and selling. He
overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling
doves. † 13 He said to them, "It is written, **my house will be called a house of
prayer,** † but you are making it **a den of thieves**!" † †

CHILDREN PRAISE JESUS

14 The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he healed them.
15 When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonders that he did and the
children shouting in the temple, "*Hosanna* to the Son of David!" they were
indignant 16 and said to him, "Do you hear what these children are saying?"
Jesus replied, "Yes, have you never read:
You have prepared † **praise** †
from the mouths of infants and nursing babies?" †
17 Then he left them, went out of the city to Bethany, † and spent the night
there.

THE BARREN FIG TREE

18 Early in the morning, † as he was returning to the city, he was hungry.
19 Seeing a lone fig tree by the road, he went up to it and found nothing on it

except leaves. And he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” At once the fig tree withered.
20 When the disciples saw it, they were amazed and said, “How did the fig tree wither so quickly?”
21 Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but even if you tell this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. † 22 And if you believe, you will receive † whatever you ask for in prayer.”

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

23 When he entered the temple, † the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching and said, “By what authority are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority?” †
24 Jesus answered them, “I will also ask you one question, and if you answer it for me, then I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 25 Did John’s baptism come from heaven, or was it of human origin?”
They discussed it among themselves, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ † 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we’re afraid of the crowd, † because everyone considers John to be a prophet.” † 27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”
And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS

28 “What do you think? A man had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘My son, go work in the vineyard today.’ †
29 “He answered, ‘I don’t want to,’ but later he changed his mind and went.
30 Then the man went to the other and said the same thing. ‘I will, sir,’ he answered, but he didn’t go. 31 Which of the two did his father’s will?”
They said, “The first.”
Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, † and you didn’t believe him. Tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him; but you, when you saw it, didn’t even change your minds then and believe him.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

33 “Listen † to another parable: † There was a landowner, who planted a
vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress in it, and built a watchtower. †
He leased it to tenant farmers and went away. † 34 When the time came to
harvest fruit, he sent his servants to the farmers to collect his fruit. 35 The
farmers took his servants, beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. †
36 Again, he sent other servants, more than the first group, and they did the same
to them. 37 Finally, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.
38 “But when the tenant farmers saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the
heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ † 39 So they seized him,
threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40 Therefore, when the owner of
the vineyard comes, what will he do to those farmers? ”
41 “He will completely destroy those terrible men,” they told him, “and lease his
vineyard to other farmers who will give him his fruit at the harvest.” †
42 Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures:
The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone. †
This is what the Lord has done
and it is wonderful in our eyes? † †
43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and
given to a people producing its fruit. 44 Whoever falls on this stone will be
broken to pieces; † but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him.” †
45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, † they knew he
was speaking about them. 46 Although they were looking for a way to arrest
him, they feared the crowds, because the people regarded him as a prophet. †

21:12 Other mss add *of God* **21:16** Or *restored* **21:42** Lit *the head of the corner* **21:44** Some mss omit this verse

21:1-9 Mk 11:1-10; Lk 19:28-38; Jn 12:12-19 **21:1** Zch 14:4; Mt 24:3; 26:30; Lk 19:29,37; 21:37; Jn 8:1; Ac 1:12 **21:5** Is 62:11; Zch 9:9 **21:5** Is 62:11; Zch 9:9 **21:9** Ps 118:25-26 **21:9** Ps 118:25; Mt 9:27; 23:39; Lk 2:14 **21:11** Mk 6:15; Lk 7:16; 13:33; 24:19; Jn 1:21; 4:19; 6:14 **21:12-16** Mk 11:15-18; Lk 19:45-47; Jn 2:14-16 **21:12** Ex 30:13; Lv 1:14; 5:7; 12:8; Dt 14:25 **21:13** Is 56:7 **21:13** Jr 7:11 **21:13** Jr 7:11 **21:16** Ps 8:2; Mt 11:25; 12:3,5; 19:4; 22:31 **21:16** Ps 8:2 **21:17** Mt 26:6; Mk 11:1; Lk 19:29; 24:50; Jn 11:18 **21:18-22** Mk 11:12-14,20-24 **21:21** Mt 17:20; Lk 17:6; 1Co 13:2; Jms 1:6 **21:22** Mt 7:7-8; Jn 11:22 **21:23-27** Mk 11:27-33; Lk 20:1-8 **21:23** Ex 2:14; Mt 26:55; Ac 4:7; 7:27 **21:25** Mt 13:54; Lk 7:30; 15:18,21; Jn 3:27 **21:26** Mt 14:5; 21:46; Mk 11:32; 12:12 **21:26** Mt 11:9; Mk 6:20 **21:28** Mt 20:1 **21:32** Pr 8:20; Mt 3:8-12;

2Pt 2:21 **21:33-46** Mk 12:1-12; Lk 20:9-19 **21:33** Mt 13:3,34-36; 15:15; 22:1; 24:32 **21:33** Is 5:1-2; Lk 14:28 **21:33** Ps 80:8; Sg 8:11-12; Mt 25:14 **21:35** 2Ch 24:21; Neh 9:26; Mt 5:12; 23:34,37; Ac 7:52; 1Th 2:15; Heb 11:36-37 **21:38** Ps 2:8; Heb 1:2 **21:41** Mt 8:11; Ac 13:46; 18:6; 28:28 **21:42** Ps 118:22-23; Ac 4:11; Rm 9:33; 1Pt 2:7 **21:42** Ps 118:22-23 **21:44** Is 8:14-15; Rm 9:32-33; 1Pt 2:8 **21:45** Mt 13:3,35; 15:15; 21:33; 22:1; 24:32 **21:46** Mt 26:4; Mk 11:18; Lk 19:47-48; Jn 7:25,30,44

21:6-11 Jesus's intentional and public fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 sparks an outbreak of messianic fervor in Jerusalem. Crowds line the streets and shout ***Hosanna*** **to the Son of David!** as he enters the city. As Matthew has repeatedly made clear, they misunderstand the nature of Jesus's kingdom, expecting the Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression. When Jesus does not live up to their expectations, they quickly turn on him (e.g., 27:20-23).

21:12 The **money changers** exchanged currencies to allow foreign Jews to buy and make the appropriate sacrifices in the temple. They had reduced the worship of God to a financial transaction and were notorious for gouging pilgrims and the poor.

21:42 The **cornerstone** was the stone at the top of an arch or at the top corner of a building. Scripture uses it as a figure of speech that means "crucial" or "most important." Though Israel rejected the Messiah, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is still the foundation on which the kingdom of God is built.

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables: 2 "The kingdom of
heaven † is like a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. †
3 He sent his servants to summon those invited to the banquet, † but they didn't
want to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants and said, 'Tell those who are
invited: See, I've prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been
slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' †
5 "But they paid no attention and went away, one to his own farm, another to his
business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them.
7 The king † was enraged, and he sent out his troops, killed those murderers,
and burned down their city.
8 "Then he told his servants, 'The banquet is ready, but those who were invited
were not worthy. † 9 Go then to where the roads exit the city and invite
everyone you find to the banquet.' † 10 So those servants went out on the roads
and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good. The wedding banquet †
was filled with guests. † 11 When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a
man there who was not dressed for a wedding. † 12 So he said to him,
'Friend, † how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was
speechless.

13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, † and throw
him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.” †

GOD AND CAESAR

15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to trap him by what he said. † †
16 So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians. † “Teacher,”
they said, “we know that you are truthful and teach truthfully the way of God.
You don’t care what anyone thinks nor do you show partiality. † † 17 Tell us,
then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar † or not? ”
18 Perceiving their malicious intent, Jesus said, “Why are you testing me,
hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin used for the tax.” They brought him a
denarius. † 20 “Whose image and inscription is this? ” he asked them.
21 “Caesar’s,” they said to him.
Then he said to them, “Give, then, to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to
God the things that are God’s.” † 22 When they heard this, they were amazed.
So they left him and went away.

THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

23 That same day some Sadducees, † who say there is no resurrection, came up
to him and questioned him: † 24 “Teacher, Moses said, **if a man dies, having
no children, his brother is to marry his wife and raise up offspring for his
brother.** † † 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first got married
and died. Having no offspring, he left his wife to his brother. 26 The same thing
happened to the second also, and the third, and so on to all seven. 27 Last of all,
the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, then, whose wife will she be of the
seven? For they all had married her.” †
29 Jesus answered them, “You are mistaken, because you don’t know the
Scriptures or the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor
are given in marriage but are like † angels in heaven. † 31 Now concerning the
resurrection of the dead, haven’t you read what was spoken to you by God: 32 **I**

am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob? † †
He † is not the God of the dead, but of the living."
33 And when the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

THE PRIMARY COMMANDS

34 When † the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together. 35 And one of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test him: †

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW, THE GREAT COMMANDMENT,AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Becoming a Christian who holds to a biblical worldview means learning to think well and to think Christianly. And in noting these two points, we want to say that they must be both at once. Making this observation recognizes that it is possible to be quite thoughtful without being Christian, and that it is possible to be a Christian without being thoughtful. Frankly, in our current duality-promoting context, either of these would be easier for most people to contemplate. What is challenging is to love God with our minds in vigorous and vital ways, without failing to love God with our hearts, while also loving others. We believe, however, that such holistic living is precisely what is needed at this time in the church and in our culture.

To be a thoughtful Christian does not mean that one only thinks about Christian matters, though the way one thinks should be thoroughly shaped by Christian teaching, the pattern of Christian truth. A person holding a biblical worldview will explore a wide, complex, and diverse range of topics, through the lens of the Christian faith as illustrated in the notes of this study Bible. Such exploration implies more than being a serious-thinking person about life in general, even by a person who claims to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, for unfortunately, it is quite possible to be a Christ-follower without thinking faithfully or consistently in Christian categories. We also recognize that there are times, even when we want to be faithful believers holding to a Christian worldview that we, like the apostle Paul, often do not do the good we want to do (Rm 7:14-16). Being a Christian who thinks in light of a worldview framework, then, has more to do with the intentional way we process ideas, issues, and information and learn to think in a Christian manner on a consistent basis.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND THE GREAT COMMANDMENT

We certainly want to love God with our hearts and our souls. We must, however, as Christ-followers who desire to be Great Commandment Christians living in line with the teaching of Jesus (Mt 22:37-39), love God with our minds as well. Learning to be a Christian holding a biblical worldview, or, to express it

differently, to think in Christian categories, will shape the way we think about all aspects of life—whether we are talking about businesses, health care agencies, governments, social structures, recreational activities, and our homes and churches, too. To hold a truly Christian worldview means that we seek to think differently about the way we live and love, the way we worship and serve, the way we work to earn our livelihood, and the way we learn and teach.

More than just new ideas and enhanced programs for churches and Christian organizations, the need of the hour is for Christ-followers who reflect distinctively Christian thinking, the kind of serious-minded thinking that results in faithful engagement with the great ideas of history and the issues of our day. Such thinking means seeing all of life and learning from a Christian vantage point; this is thinking shaped by the Christian faith.

Beginning with these commitments to the Great Commandment that shape our thinking, Christians holding a biblical worldview recognize that even though it may not be readily apparent at first glance, there is a unity of all knowledge that can be observed, because all true knowledge flows from the one Creator to his one creation. Thus, all truth has its source in God, composing a single universe of knowledge. This approach to worldview thinking involves the development and construction of a convictional way of seeing the world by which we can see, learn, and interpret life from the vantage point of God's revelation to us. Christians are encouraged to be intellectually curious and to grow in their understanding and appreciation of God, of his creation and grace, and of humanity's place of privilege and responsibility in God's world.

Christian worldview thinking involves the renewal of the mind by God's Spirit (Rm 12:1-2), for such thinking is shaped by God's revelation to us as we contemplate God and his creation. In doing so, we recall Augustine's model of faith, seeking understanding, acknowledging that wherever we find truth, it is the Lord's, even as faithful believers struggle with issues and carry on debate in pursuit of truth. In doing so, we will hear afresh the admonition of the apostle Paul to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2Co 10:5).

Christians having a biblical worldview recognize their dependence on God in seeking to follow this course, for such a lofty calling can *only* take place as our minds are renewed by God's Spirit (Rm 12:2). A serious commitment to Christian worldview thinking and to the renewing of minds, esteems exploration and genuine intellectual struggle while wrestling with the culture-shaping ideas and issues of the past and the present. We do so with faith commitments, seeking to discover and expound God's truth as it has been revealed in creation and redemption, and as it has been made alive and understandable for us by the ministry of God's Spirit.

THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

To the extent we succeed in putting these important tenets into practice, we will begin to see holistic development of the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and character formation among thoughtful Christians. At the heart of this development is the belief that God has revealed himself in creation, in history, in our consciences, and ultimately in Christ, and that this revelation is now primarily available to us in Holy Scripture. This revealed truth is the foundation of all we believe, teach, and do. We have observed that this God-revealed truth provides the framework for understanding and interpreting our world and the events of human history, as well as our responsibilities toward God and one another in this world, helping us know how to love God with our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.

We believe that a person who thinks deeply about the things of God and applies these truths wisely will be equipped to live well in relation to others in the world, thus being prepared to lead others in thoughtful ethical and moral reflection. We also recognize that the fullest embodiment of good, love, holiness, grace, and truth is found in Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14-18). Right thinking, as important as it may be, is not all there is to the Christian faith; we must also mind the heart.

Thoughtful Christians will seek to initiate spiritual transformation through the renewing of minds (Rm 12:2) and the doing of the Word (Jms 1:22). We are to love our neighbor and care for orphans and widows (Jms 1:27). We are to be agents of reconciliation in the church and in society, building bridges where there

are walls—particularly with reference to the need for ethnic reconciliation (Eph 2:11-18).

This is what it means to love our neighbors, to be doers of the Word. We are normally hearers of the Word, thinkers about and students of the Word, but doing the Word puts a different shape on what it means for us to apply Christian teaching to all aspects of life. Reflective Christian thinking, therefore, points to ethics. Certainly it is possible to act one way and to think another, but it is not possible to do so for long (Pr 23:7). Since one of the goals for helping Christ-followers who become thoughtful Christians involves helping them live with a lifestyle that issues in glory to God, then we must think—and think deeply—not only of personal ethics, but also of the implications of the biblical faith for social, economic, and political ethics.

We need to seek God's guidance in how we can best contribute to constructive exercises that will help us honor, respect, and love one another. We want to model the love and forgiveness of Christ in relationships, in the home, in local churches, and in the marketplace. We desire to be quick to offer forgiveness when we have been wronged. At the same time, we want to claim responsibility and seek forgiveness when we have wronged others. We will ask God to help us become agents of reconciliation to a broken and hurting world, which remains in dysfunctional disorder as a result of the presence of sin since the fall. We trust that God will give us grace to be agents of redemption in this broken world and to embrace one another regardless of national, ethnic, or socioeconomic background.

Thinking Christians should also be kind and considerate Christians. Humility, gentleness, love, and kindness are virtues of thoughtful believers. We are to speak in ways that are helpful in building up others. In our actions we are to be kind and loving, reflecting the character of God who has forgiven us in Christ (Eph 4:32). This results in lives that encourage harmony in relationships and sensitivity to the needs of others.

On this foundation can be built authentic Christian communities characterized by "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gl 5:22-23). Divine love issues in interpersonal love, influencing even the most basic elements of life. If we do not show love to one another, the world will question the truth claims and authenticity of the Christian faith. Christians holding to a worldview based on Scripture need to be convictional, but also civil and conciliatory at the same time. Ultimately the love and grace that has been lavished on us will lead us to lives of dependence on God and thoughtfulness toward others. With wisdom, humility, and hope, let us recognize that the calling to be faithful and thoughtful Christians involves being ready to provide an answer for the hope that is ours through Jesus Christ the Lord (1Pt 3:15).

DAVID S. DOCKERY

36 "Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?"
37 He said to him, **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.** † † 38 This is the greatest and most important † command. 39 The second is like it: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** † † 40 All the Law and the Prophets depend † on these two commands." †

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE CHRIST

41 While the Pharisees were together, Jesus questioned them, † 42 "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?"

They replied, “David’s.”

43 He asked them, “How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, † calls him
‘Lord’ † :

44 **The Lord declared to my Lord,**
‘Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies under your feet’? † † †

45 “If David calls him ‘Lord,’ how then can he be his son?” 46 No one was able
to answer him at all, † and from that day no one dared to question him
anymore. †

22:7 Other mss read *But when the (that) king heard about it he* **22:10** Other mss read *wedding hall* **22:10** Lit *those reclining* (to eat) **22:13** Other mss add *take him away* **22:15** Lit *trap him in a word* **22:16** Lit *don’t look on the face of men* **22:19** A denarius = one day’s wage **22:28** Lit *all had her* **22:30** Other mss add *God’s* **22:32** Other mss read *God* **22:38** Lit *and first* **22:40** Or *hang* **22:43** Lit *David in Spirit* **22:44** Other mss read *until I make your enemies your footstool’* **22:46** Lit *answer him a word*
22:2-14 Lk 14:16-24 **22:2** Mt 13:24; Lk 12:36; Jn 2:2; Rv 19:7 **22:3** Est 6:14; Pr 9:3,5 **22:4** Pr 9:2; Mt 21:36 **22:8** Mt 10:11; Ac 13:46 **22:9** Ezk 21:21; Ob 14 **22:11** Rv 19:8; 22:14 **22:12** Mt 20:13; 26:50 **22:14** Mt 20:16; Rv 17:14 **22:15-22** Mk 12:13-17; Lk 20:20-26 **22:16** Mk 2:8; 3:6; 8:15 **22:16** Jn 3:2; Ac 10:34; 13:10; 18:26 **22:17** Mk 12:14,16-17; Lk 2:1; 3:1; 20:22,24-25; Jn 19:12,15 **22:21** Mt 17:25; Rm 13:7 **22:23-32** Mk 12:18-27; Lk 20:27-38 **22:23** Mt 3:7; Ac 4:1; 23:8 **22:24** Dt 25:5 **22:24** Dt 25:5 **22:30** Mt 24:38; Lk 17:27 **22:32** Ex 3:6; Ac 7:32 **22:32** Ex 3:6,15-16 **22:34-40** Mk 12:28-33; Lk 10:25-28 **22:35** Lk 7:30; 10:25; 11:45; 14:3 **22:37** Dt 6:5 **22:37** Dt 6:5; Lk 10:27 **22:39** Lv 19:18 **22:39** Lv 19:18; Mt 19:19 **22:40** Mt 7:12; Rm 13:8-10; Gl 5:14 **22:41-46** Mk 12:35-37; Lk 20:41-44 **22:43** 2Sm 23:2; Rv 1:10; 4:2 **22:44** Ps 110:1; Ac 2:34-35; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13; 10:13 **22:44** Ps 110:1 **22:46** Mk 12:34; Lk 14:6; 20:40

22:15-22 See “The Bible and Government Models,” *p.768.*

22:17 Caesar was the family name of Julius Caesar; it was used as a title for the Roman emperors following him. Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus was the reigning emperor of Rome. The **taxes** mentioned here are the census taxes that the people of Israel were required to pay in support of the Roman Empire.

22:21 See “Religious Freedom,” *p. 1521.*

22:23 The Sadducees rejected much of the teaching of the Pharisees and only believed that the Torah, the first five books of the OT, were Scripture. Consequently, their doctrine differed substantially from that of the Pharisees and other rabbis, especially on the issue of the **resurrection** of the dead. Many of the Sadducees believed there was no life after death for either the righteous or the wicked.

22:30 See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531.*

22:32 See “Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy,” *p. XXXI.*

22:35-40 See “Ethics of Personal Evangelism,” *p. 1234.*

22:37 See “The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit,” *p. 1512.*

RELIGIOUS HYPOCRITES DENOUNCED

23 Then † Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples: † 2 “The
scribes and the Pharisees are seated in the chair of Moses. †
3 Therefore do whatever they tell you, and observe it. But don’t do what they do,
because they don’t practice what they teach. † 4 They tie up heavy loads that
are hard to carry † and put them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves
aren’t willing to lift a finger to move them. † 5 They do everything † to be seen
by others: They enlarge their phylacteries † and lengthen their tassels. † †
6 They love the place of honor at banquets, the front seats in the synagogues, †
7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by people.
8 “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ because you have one Teacher, † and
you are all brothers and sisters. † 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father,
because you have one Father, who is in heaven. † 10 You are not to be called
instructors either, because you have one Instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest
among you will be your servant. † 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,
and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. †
13 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the door of the
kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you don’t go in, and you don’t allow
those entering to go in. † †
15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You travel over land and sea
to make one convert, † and when he becomes one, you make him twice as fit for
hell † as you are!
16 “Woe to you, blind guides, † who say, ‘Whoever takes an oath by the temple,
it means nothing. But whoever takes an oath † by the gold of the temple is
bound by his oath.’ † 17 Blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the
temple that sanctified the gold? 18 Also, ‘Whoever takes an oath by the altar, it
means nothing; but whoever takes an oath by the gift that is on it is bound by his
oath.’ 19 Blind people! † For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies
the gift? † 20 Therefore, the one who takes an oath by the altar takes an oath by
it and by everything on it. 21 The one who takes an oath by the temple takes an

oath by it and by him who dwells † in it. 22 And the one who takes an oath by heaven takes an oath by God's throne † and by him who sits on it. †
23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of † mint, dill, and cumin, and yet you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, † mercy, and faithfulness. † These things should have been done without neglecting the others. 24 Blind guides! † You strain out a gnat, but gulp down a camel!
25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed † and self-indulgence. † 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, † so that the outside of it † may also become clean.
27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, † which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of impurity. 28 In the same way, on the outside you seem righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.
29 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, 30 and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we wouldn't have taken part with them in shedding the prophets' blood.' 31 So you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors' sins! †
33 "Snakes! Brood of vipers! How can you escape being condemned to hell? † † 34 This is why I am sending you prophets, † sages, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will flog in your synagogues † and pursue from town to town. 35 So all the righteous blood shed on the earth will be charged to you, † from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, † son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. † 36 Truly I tell you, all these things will come on this generation. †

JESUS'S LAMENTING OVER JERUSALEM

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, † who kills the prophets and stones those who are
sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers
her chicks † under her wings, but you were not willing! † 38 See, your house is
left to you desolate. † 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say,
‘**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**’!” † †

23:4 Other mss omit *that are hard to carry* **23:5** Lit *do all their works* **23:5** Other mss add *on their robes* **23:8** Other mss add *the Christ* **23:13** Some mss include v. 14: *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You devour widows’ houses and make long prayers just for show. This is why you will receive a harsher punishment.* **23:15** Lit *twice the son of gehenna* **23:16** Lit *is obligated*, also in v. 18 **23:19** Other mss read *Fools and blind* **23:23** Or *You tithe* **23:23** Or *faith* **23:25** Or *full of violence* **23:26** Other mss add *and dish* **23:26** Other mss read *of them* **23:33** Lit *escape from the judgment of gehenna* **23:35** Lit *will come on you* **23:37** Or *as a mother bird gathers her young*

23:1-7 Mk 12:38-39; Lk 20:45-46 **23:1** Mt 10:42; 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1 **23:2** Ezr 7:6,25; Neh 8:4 **23:3** Mt 5:20; 15:3-9; Rm 2:17-23 **23:4** Lk 11:46; Ac 15:10; Gl 6:13 **23:5** Ex 13:9; Dt 6:8; 11:18; Mt 6:1,5,16 **23:5** Mt 9:20; 14:36; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44 **23:6** Lk 11:43; 14:7; 20:46 **23:7-8** Mk 9:5; 10:51; Jn 1:38,49; 11:8; Jms 3:1 **23:9** Mal 1:6; Mt 6:9; 7:11 **23:11** Mt 20:26-27; Mk 9:35; 3Jn 9 **23:12** Pr 29:23; Ezk 21:26; Lk 14:11; 18:14; Jms 4:6,10; 1Pt 5:5-6 **23:13** Mt 23:15,23,25; Lk 11:52 **23:15** Ac 2:11; 6:5; 13:43 **23:16** Mt 15:14; 23:24; Ac 1:16; Rm 2:19 **23:16** Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Mt 5:33; 14:7; 26:63,72 **23:19** Ex 29:37; 30:29 **23:21** 1Kg 8:13; 2Ch 6:2; Ps 26:8; 132:14 **23:22** Ex 17:16; Ps 11:4; Mt 5:34; Heb 8:1 **23:22** Ps 47:8; Mt 19:28; Rv 4:2 **23:23** 1Sm 15:22; Ps 33:5; Jr 5:1; Mc 6:8; Zch 7:9; Lk 11:42 **23:24** Mt 15:14; 23:16 **23:25** Mk 7:4; Lk 11:39 **23:27** Lk 11:44; Ac 23:3 **23:31-32** Gn 15:16; Ac 7:51; 1Th 2:15-16 **23:33** Mt 3:7; 5:22; 12:34 **23:34** Ac 13:1; 1Co 12:28 **23:34** 2Ch 36:15-16; Mt 10:17; Ac 22:19 **23:35** 2Ch 24:21; Zch 1:1 **23:35** Gn 4:8; Heb 11:4; 1Jn 3:12; Rv 18:24 **23:36** Mt 10:23; 16:28; 24:34 **23:37-39** Lk 13:34-35 **23:37** Dt 32:11-12; Ru 2:12; Mt 5:12 **23:38** 1Kg 9:7; Is 64:11; Jr 12:7; 22:5 **23:39** Ps 118:26; Mt 21:9 **23:39** Ps 118:26

23:27-28 It was common for Jews to decorate the exteriors of family tombs as a memorial to the deceased, and as a way of marking the presence of the dead so that unaware passersby would not accidently become unclean by contact with the tomb. The description of **scribes and Pharisees** as **whitewashed tombs** is a clever metaphor indicating that their pleasant outward appearance conceals inner ugliness and death.

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED

24 As Jesus left and was going out of the temple, † his disciples † came
up and called his attention to its buildings. 2 He replied to them, “Do
you see all these things? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here on
another that will not be thrown down.”

SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

3 While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him
privately and said, “Tell us, when will these things happen? And what is the sign
of your coming and of the end of the age?” †

4 Jesus replied to them: “Watch out that no one deceives † you. 5 For many will
come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and they will deceive many. †
6 You are going to hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not
alarmed, because these things must take place, but the end is not yet. 7 For
nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be
famines † † and earthquakes in various places. † 8 All these events are the
beginning of labor pains. †

PERSECUTIONS PREDICTED

9 “Then they will hand you over to be persecuted, and they will kill you. You
will be hated by all nations because of my name. † 10 Then many will fall away,
betray one another, and hate one another. 11 Many false prophets † will rise up
and deceive many. 12 Because lawlessness † will multiply, the love of many
will grow cold. 13 But the one who endures to the end will be saved. 14 This
good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world † as a testimony
to all nations, † and then the end will come. †

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

15 “So when you see **the abomination of desolation**, † spoken of by the
prophet Daniel, † standing in the holy place” † (let the reader understand),
16 “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. 17 A man on the housetop †
must not come down to get things out of his house, † 18 and a man in the field
must not go back to get his coat. 19 Woe to pregnant women and nursing
mothers in those days! 20 Pray that your escape may not be in winter or on a
Sabbath. 21 For at that time there will be great distress, † † the kind that hasn’t
taken place from the beginning of the world until now and never will again.
22 Unless those days were cut short, no one would † be saved. But those days
will be cut short because of the elect. †

23 “If anyone tells you then, ‘See, here is the Messiah! ’ † or, ‘Over here! ’ do
not believe it. † 24 For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and perform
great signs and wonders to lead astray, † if possible, even the elect. 25 Take

note: I have told you in advance. 26 So if they tell you, ‘See, he’s in the wilderness! ’ don’t go out; or, ‘See, he’s in the storerooms! ’ do not believe it. 27 For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. † 28 Wherever the carcass is, there the vultures † will gather. †

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

29 “Immediately after the distress † of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the peoples of the earth † will mourn; † and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. † 31 He will send out his angels with a loud trumpet, † and they will gather his elect from the four winds, † from one end of the sky to the other.

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

32 “Learn this lesson † from the fig tree: As soon as its branch becomes tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 In the same way, when you see all these things, recognize † that he † is near — at the door. † 34 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things take place. † 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, † but my words will never pass away. †

NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

36 “Now concerning that day and hour no one knows — neither the angels of heaven nor the Son † — except the Father alone. † 37 As the days of Noah were, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. 38 For in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah boarded the ark. † 39 They didn’t know until the flood came and swept them all away. This is the way the coming of the Son of Man will be. 40 Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. 41 Two women will be grinding grain with a hand mill; one will be taken and one left. † 42 Therefore be alert, since you don’t know what day † your Lord is coming. †

43 But know this: If the homeowner had known what time † the thief was
coming, he would have stayed alert and not let his house be broken into. †
44 This is why you are also to be ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an
hour you do not expect. †

FAITHFUL SERVICE TO CHRIST

45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, † whom his master has put in
charge of his household, to give them food at the proper time? † 46 Blessed is
that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes. † 47 Truly I
tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 But if that wicked
servant says in his heart, 'My master is delayed,' 49 and starts to beat his fellow
servants, and eats and drinks with drunkards, † 50 that servant's master will
come on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. 51 He
will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there
will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

24:7 Other mss add *epidemics* **24:14** Or *in all the inhabited earth* **24:17** Or *roof* **24:21** Or *tribulation*, also in v. 29 **24:22** Lit *short, all flesh would not* **24:28** Or *eagles* **24:30** Or *all the tribes of the land* **24:30** Lit *will beat* ; that is, beat their chests **24:33** Or *things, you know* **24:33** Or *it* ; that is, summer **24:36** Other mss omit *nor the Son* **24:42** Other mss read *hour* ; = time **24:43** Lit *watch* ; a division of the night in ancient times

24:1-51 Mk 13:1-37; Lk 21:5-36 **24:1** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; 12:16 **24:3** Mt 21:1; 24:27,37,39 **24:4** Jr 29:8; Eph 5:6; Col 2:8; 2Th 2:3 **24:5** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **24:7** Ac 11:28; Rv 6:8 **24:7** 2Ch 15:6; Is 19:2 **24:8-20** Lk 21:12-24 **24:9** Mt 10:17,22; Jn 16:2 **24:11** Is 44:25; Mt 7:15; 24:24; Mk 13:22; Lk 6:26; Ac 13:6; 2Pt 2:1; 1Jn 4:1 **24:12** Mt 13:41; 2Th 2:3 **24:14** Mt 4:23; Rm 10:18; Col 1:6,23; 1Th 1:8 **24:14** Lk 2:1; 4:5; Ac 11:28; 17:6; Rv 3:10; 16:14 **24:15** Dn 9:27 **24:15** Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; Mk 13:14; Lk 21:20 **24:15** Ac 6:13; 21:28 **24:17** 1Sm 9:25; Mt 10:27; Lk 5:19; 12:3; 17:31; Ac 10:9 **24:21** Dn 12:1; Jl 2:2; Mt 24:29; Rv 7:14 **24:22** Mt 22:14; 24:24,31; Mk 13:20,22,27; 1Tm 5:21; 2Tm 2:10; Rv 17:14 **24:23** Lk 17:3; 21:28 **24:23** Mk 11:24; Jn 6:64 **24:24** Dt 13:1-3; Mt 24:11; Ac 8:9; 2Th 2:9-11; Rv 13:13-14; 16:14; 19:20 **24:27** Zch 9:14; Mt 8:20; 24:3,37,39; Lk 17:24 **24:28** Jb 39:30; Lk 17:37 **24:29** Is 13:10; 24:23; Ezk 32:7; Jl 2:10,31; 3:15; Zph 1:15; Rv 6:12-13 **24:30** Dn 7:13; Zch 12:12; Mt 24:3; Rv 1:7 **24:31** Is 27:13; 1Co 15:52; 1Th 4:16; Rv 8:2; 11:15 **24:31** Dn 7:2; Zch 2:6; Rv 7:1 **24:32** Mt 13:3,34-36; 15:15; 21:33,45; 22:1 **24:33** Jms 5:9; Rv 3:20 **24:34** Mt 10:23; 16:28; 23:36 **24:35** Ps 102:26; Is 51:6; Mt 5:18; Heb 12:27; 2Pt 3:10 **24:35** Ps 119:89; Is 40:8; Mk 13:31; Lk 21:33; 1Pt 1:23,25 **24:36** Zch 14:7; Mt 25:13; Mk 13:32; Ac 1:7; 1Th 5:1-2 **24:37-38** Gn 6:5; 7:6-23; Mt 22:30; Lk 17:26 **24:41** Ex 11:5; Is 47:2; Lk 17:35 **24:42** Mt 25:13; Lk 12:40; 21:36 **24:43** Lk 12:39; 1Th 5:2; Rv 3:3 **24:44** Mt 25:10; 1Th 5:6 **24:45-51** Lk 12:42-46 **24:45** Mt 7:24; 10:16; 25:2,21 **24:46** Jn 13:17; Rv 16:15 **24:49** Ac 2:15; 1Co 11:21; 1Th 5:7; Rv 17:6

24:15 The temple in Jerusalem had suffered a long history of desecrations and violence (e.g., as perpetrated against it by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC and Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC). Within a decade of Jesus's crucifixion, Roman Emperor Caligula tried to set up an image of himself in the Jerusalem temple (ca AD 40). Jesus quotes from **the prophet Daniel** in order to warn his disciples to be watchful for

the desecration Daniel prophesied (Dn 9:27); desecrations such as those seen in Israel's history, only much worse. This would be among the signs marking the end of the age.

24:29-31 Jesus's listeners would have closely associated the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple with the end of the world, but Jesus appears to be using the impending disaster—the razing of Jerusalem and temple by the Romans in AD 70—to indicate what the last days will be like. By verse 29, Jesus appears to be no longer talking about historical events near to his own time but is speaking eschatologically about the end of the age and his second coming.

24:31 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

24:34 Because Jesus spoke prophetically of events in the near and distant future, the word **generation** must be understood in that context. The near future upheaval that the followers of Jesus would face—persecution, war, destruction at the hands of the Romans (vv. 1-28)—were but signs of the coming tribulation **of those days** (v. 29). Jesus's contemporary generation would see all of these signs come to pass, as Jesus said, and would be assured that his words were true.

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

25 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins † who
took their lamps † and went out to meet the groom. † 2 Five of them
were foolish and five were wise. † 3 When the foolish took their lamps, they
didn't take oil with them; 4 but the wise ones took oil in their flasks with their
lamps. 5 When the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.
6 "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come out to
meet him.'
7 "Then all the virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said
to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'
9 "The wise ones answered, 'No, there won't be enough for us and for you. Go
instead to those who sell oil, and buy some for yourselves.'
10 "When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived, and those who were
ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut. †
11 Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, 'Master, master, open up for
us! '
12 "He replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you! '
13 "Therefore be alert, because you don't know either the day or the hour. †

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

14 "For it is just like a man about to go on a journey. † He called his own
servants and entrusted his possessions to them. 15 To one he gave five talents, †
to another two talents, and to another one talent, depending on each one's ability.

Then he went on a journey. † Immediately 16 the man who had received five
talents went, put them to work, and earned five more. 17 In the same way the
man with two earned two more. 18 But the man who had received one talent
went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.
19 "After a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts
with them. 20 The man who had received five talents approached, presented five
more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I've earned five
more talents.'
21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were
faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your
master's joy.' †
22 "The man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me
two talents. See, I've earned two more talents.'
23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You were
faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your
master's joy.'
24 "The man who had received one talent also approached and said, 'Master, I
know you. You're a harsh man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering
where you haven't scattered seed. † 25 So I was afraid and went off and hid
your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.'
26 "His master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy servant! † If you knew that I reap
where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered, 27 then † you should
have deposited my money with the bankers, and I would have received my
money † back with interest when I returned.
28 " 'So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents.
29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than
enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken
away from him. † 30 And throw this good-for-nothing servant into the outer
darkness, † where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels † † with him,
then he will sit on his glorious throne. † 32 All the nations † † will be gathered

before him, and he will separate them one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. † 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom † prepared for you from the foundation of the world. †

35 " 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; 36 I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me.' †

37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and take you in, or without clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick, or in prison, and visit you? '

40 "And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' †

41 "Then he will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels! † 42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; 43 I was a stranger and you didn't take me in; I was naked and you didn't clothe me, sick and in prison and you didn't take care of me.'

44 "Then they too will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or without clothes, or sick, or in prison, and not help you? '

45 "Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' †

46 "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." †

25:1 Or *bridesmaids* **25:1** Or *torches*, also in vv. 3,4,7,8 **25:13** Other mss add *in which the Son of Man is coming*. **25:15** A talent is worth about 6,000 denarii, or twenty years' wages for a laborer **25:26-27** Or *So you knew . . . scattered? Then* (as a question) **25:27** Lit *received what is mine* **25:31** Other mss read *holy angels* **25:32** Or *the Gentiles*

25:1 Mt 13:24; Ac 20:8; Rv 4:5; 19:7; 21:2,9 **25:2** Mt 7:24; 10:16; 24:45 **25:10** Mt 22:2; Lk 13:25 **25:14-30** Lk 19:12-27 **25:15** Mt 18:24; Lk 19:13; Rm 12:6; 1Co 12:11; Eph 4:7 **25:21** Mt 24:45,47; Lk 12:44; 22:28; Heb 12:2 **25:24** 1Sm 25:3; 2Co 8:12 **25:26** Pr 20:4; Mt 18:32; Rm 12:11 **25:29** Mt 13:12; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18; 19:26; Jn 15:2 **25:30** Mt 8:12; 22:13; Lk 13:28 **25:31** Gn 16:7; Mt 5:34; 13:49; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **25:31** Mt 16:27; 19:28; 2Th 1:7; Jd 14; Rv 1:7 **25:32** Jl 3:12; Mt 24:14; 28:19; Rm 1:5; Gl 1:16 **25:32** Ezk 34:17,20; Mt 13:49 **25:34** Mt 19:29; Lk 12:32; 1Co 15:50; Gl 5:21; Jms 2:5; 1Pt 3:9; Rv 21:7 **25:34** Mt

13:35; 20:23; 1Co 2:9; Heb 4:3; 9:26; 11:16; Rv 13:8; 17:8 **25:35-36** Jb 31:32; Is 58:7; Ezk 18:7; 2Tm 1:16; Heb 13:2; Jms 1:27; 2:15-16 **25:40** Pr 19:17; Mt 10:42; 25:34; Heb 6:10 **25:41** Mt 7:23; 13:40,42; Mk 9:48; 2Pt 2:4; Jd 6-7 **25:45** Pr 14:31; 17:5; Ac 9:5 **25:46** Dn 12:2; Jn 5:21; Ac 24:15; Rm 2:7

25:1-13 Jesus instructs his disciples to be alert, watching for the signs that will precede and introduce the end of the age described in Matthew 24. Jesus compares watchful disciples to wise bridesmaids (lit **virgins**), who are prepared and waiting for the wedding processional of the groom so the formal wedding celebration can begin.

25:31-46 See "The Gospel and Social Ministry," *p. 1547.*

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, † he told his disciples,
2 "You know † that the Passover takes place after two days, and the
Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified." †
3 Then the chief priests † and the elders of the people assembled in the
courtyard of the high priest, who was named Caiaphas, † 4 and they conspired
to arrest Jesus in a treacherous way and kill him. † 5 "Not during the festival,"
they said, "so there won't be rioting among the people."

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

6 While Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon † the leper, † 7 a woman
approached him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume. She poured it
on his head as he was reclining at the table. 8 When the disciples † saw it, they
were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. 9 "This might have been sold for
a great deal and given to the poor."
10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She
has done a noble thing for me. 11 You always have the poor with you, but you
do not always have me. † 12 By pouring this perfume on my body, she has
prepared me for burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel † is proclaimed
in the whole world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her."
14 Then † one of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief
priests † 15 and said, "What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to
you?" So they weighed out thirty pieces of silver for him. † 16 And from that
time he started looking for a good opportunity to betray him.

BETRAYAL AT THE PASSOVER

17 On the first day of Unleavened Bread † the disciples came to Jesus and
asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the
Passover? ”
18 “Go into the city to a certain man,” he said, “and tell him, ‘The Teacher says:
My time is near; I am celebrating the Passover at your place † with my
disciples.’ ” † 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared
the Passover. 20 When evening came, he was reclining at the table with the
Twelve. 21 While they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will
betray me.” †
22 Deeply distressed, each one began to say to him, “Surely not I, Lord? ”
23 He replied, “The one who dipped his hand with me in the bowl — he will
betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, † but woe
to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for
him if he had not been born.”
25 Judas, his betrayer, replied, “Surely not I, Rabbi? ” †
“You have said it,” he told him.

THE FIRST LORD’S SUPPER

26 As they were eating, † Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to the
disciples, † and said, “Take and eat it; this is my body.” † 27 Then he took a
cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them and said, “Drink from it, all of
you. 28 For this is my blood of the covenant, † which is poured out for many for
the forgiveness of sins. † 29 But I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the
vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s
kingdom.” † 30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. †

PETER’S DENIAL PREDICTED

31 Then Jesus said to them, “Tonight all of you will fall away because of me, for
it is written:
I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. † †
32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” †

33 Peter told him, “Even if everyone falls away because of you, I will never fall
away.”
34 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to him, “tonight, before the rooster crows, you
will deny me three times.” †
35 “Even if I have to die with you,” Peter told him, “I will never deny you,” and
all the disciples said the same thing.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, † and he told the
disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” 37 Taking along Peter and
the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. † 38 He said to
them, “I am deeply grieved † to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake
with me.” † 39 Going a little farther, † he fell facedown and prayed, “My
Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you
will.” †
40 Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. He asked Peter, “So,
couldn’t you stay awake with me one hour? 41 Stay awake and pray, so that you
won’t enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
42 Again, a second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this † cannot
pass † unless I drink it, your will be done.” † 43 And he came again and found
them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open.
44 After leaving them, he went away again and prayed a third time, saying the
same thing once more. 45 Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are
you still sleeping and resting? See, the time is near. The Son of Man is betrayed
into the hands of sinners. † 46 Get up; let’s go. See, my betrayer is near.”

JUDAS’S BETRAYAL OF JESUS

47 While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, suddenly arrived. † A
large mob with swords and clubs was with him from the chief priests and elders
of the people. 48 His betrayer had given them a sign: “The one I kiss, he’s the
one; arrest him.” 49 So immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Greetings,
Rabbi! ” and kissed him.
50 “Friend,” † Jesus asked him, “why have you come? ” †

Then they came up, took hold of Jesus, and arrested him. 51 At that moment one
of those with Jesus reached out his hand and drew his sword. He struck the high
priest's servant and cut off his ear. †
52 Then Jesus told him, "Put your sword back in its place because all who take
up the sword will perish by the sword. † 53 Or do you think that I cannot call on
my Father, and he will provide me here and now with more than twelve legions
of angels? † 54 How, then, would the Scriptures be fulfilled † that say it must
happen this way? "
55 At that time Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and
clubs, as if I were a criminal, † to capture me? Every day I used to sit, teaching
in the temple, and you didn't arrest me. † 56 But all this has happened so that
the writings of the prophets † would be fulfilled." Then all the disciples †
deserted him and ran away.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

57 Those † who had arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas † the high priest,
where the scribes and the elders had convened. 58 Peter was following him at a
distance right to the high priest's courtyard. He went in and was sitting with the
servants to see the outcome. †
59 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false testimony
against Jesus so that they could put him to death, † 60 but they could not find
any, even though many false witnesses † came forward. † Finally, two † who
came forward 61 stated, "This man said, 'I can destroy the temple of God † and
rebuild it in three days.' "
62 The high priest stood up and said to him, "Don't you have an answer to what
these men are testifying against you? " 63 But † Jesus kept silent. † The high
priest said to him, "I charge you under oath † by the living God: Tell us if you
are the Messiah, the Son of God." †
64 "You have said it," Jesus told him. "But I tell you, in the future † you will
see **the Son of Man seated at the right hand** of Power and **coming on the
clouds of heaven**." † †

65 Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has blasphemed! † Why do we still need witnesses? See, now you’ve heard the blasphemy. † 66 What is your decision? ”

They answered, “He deserves death! ” † 67 Then they spat in his face † and beat him; others slapped him 68 and said, “Prophesy to us, Messiah! Who was it that hit you? ” †

PETER DENIES HIS LORD

69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. † A servant girl approached him and said, “You were with Jesus the Galilean too.”

70 But he denied it in front of everyone: “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

71 When he had gone out to the gateway, another woman saw him and told those who were there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene! ” †

72 And again he denied it with an oath: † “I don’t know the man! ”

73 After a little while those standing there approached and said to Peter, “You really are one of them, since even your accent † gives you away.”

74 Then he started to curse and to swear with an oath, “I don’t know the man! ” Immediately a rooster crowed, 75 and Peter remembered the words Jesus had spoken, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” † And he went outside and wept bitterly.

26:2 Or *“Know* (as a command) **26:3** Other mss add *and the scribes* **26:6** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **26:18** Lit *Passover with you* **26:28** Other mss read *new covenant* **26:38** Lit *“My soul is swallowed up in sorrow* **26:39** Other mss read *Drawing nearer* **26:42** Other mss add *cup* **26:42** Other mss add *from me* **26:50** Or *Jesus told him, “do what you have come for.”* **26:55** Lit *as against a criminal* **26:60** Other mss add *they found none* **26:60** Other mss add *false witnesses* **26:64** Lit *you, from now* **26:73** Or *speech*

26:1-5 Mk 14:1-2; Lk 22:1-2; Jn 11:47-53 **26:2** Jn 11:55; 13:1 **26:3** Ps 2:2; Mt 26:57; Lk 3:2; Jn 11:47; 18:13,15; Ac 4:6 **26:4** Mt 21:46; Jn 11:53 **26:6-13** Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8 **26:8** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **26:11** Dt 15:11; Jn 12:8 **26:13** Mt 24:14; Mk 1:1; 13:10 **26:14-16** Mk 14:10-11; Lk 22:3-6 **26:14** Mt 10:4; Jn 6:71; 12:4; 13:30; Ac 1:16 **26:15** Ex 21:32; Zch 11:12-13; Mt 27:3 **26:17-19** Mk 14:12-16; Lk 22:7-13 **26:18** Jn 7:6,8; 8:20; 13:1; 17:1 **26:21-24** Mk 14:17-21; Lk 22:21-23; Jn 13:21-26 **26:24** Dn 9:26; Mk 9:12; Lk 24:25-27; Ac 17:2-3; 26:22-23; 1Co 15:3; 1Pt 1:10 **26:25** Lk 22:70; Jn 1:38 **26:26-29** Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:17-20; 1Co 11:23-25 **26:26** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **26:26** Mt 14:19; 1Co 10:16 **26:28** Ex 24:8; Mt 20:28; Mk 1:4; Heb 9:20 **26:29** Mt 4:23; Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **26:30** Mt 21:1; Lk 22:39; Jn 18:1 **26:31** Zch 13:7 **26:31** Zch 13:7; Mt 11:6; Jn 16:32 **26:32** Mt 28:7,10,16; Mk 16:7 **26:34** Mt 26:75; Lk 22:34; Jn 13:38 **26:36-46** Mk 14:32-42; Lk 22:40-46 **26:37** Mt 4:21; 17:1 **26:38** Ps 42:5-6; Mt 24:42; Jn 12:27 **26:39** Mt 20:22; Jn 5:30; 6:38; Php 2:8; Heb 5:7 **26:42** Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42; Jn 6:38 **26:45** Jn 12:27; 13:1 **26:47-56** Mk 14:43-50; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:3-11

26:50 Mt 20:13; 22:12 **26:51** Lk 22:38; Jn 18:10 **26:52** Gn 9:6; Rv 13:10 **26:53** 2Kg 6:17; Dn 7:10; Mt 4:11; Lk 8:30 **26:54** Mt 1:22; 26:24 **26:55** Mk 12:35; Lk 21:37; Jn 7:19; 8:2; 18:20 **26:56** Mt 26:54; Rm 1:2; 2Pt 1:20 **26:56** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **26:57-68** Mk 14:53-65; Jn 18:12-13,19-24 **26:57** Mt 26:3; Jn 11:49 **26:58** Jn 7:32; 18:15 **26:59** Mt 5:22; Ac 6:11 **26:60** Dt 19:15; Ps 27:12; 35:11; Ac 6:13 **26:61** Mt 27:40; Jn 2:19; Ac 6:14 **26:63-66** Lk 22:67-71 **26:63** Is 53:7; Mt 27:12,14; Jn 19:9 **26:63** Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Mt 5:33; 14:7; 23:16 **26:63** Lv 5:1; 1Sm 14:24,26; Mt 16:16 **26:64** Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13; Mt 16:27; 24:30; Rv 1:7 **26:64** Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13 **26:65** Mk 3:29; Jn 10:33 **26:65** Nm 14:6; Mk 14:63; Ac 14:14 **26:66** Lv 24:16; Jn 19:7 **26:67** Mt 27:30; Mk 10:34; Lk 22:63-65; Jn 18:22 **26:68** Mk 14:65; Lk 22:64 **26:69-75** Mk 14:66-72; Lk 22:55-62; Jn 18:16-18,25-27 **26:71** Mk 14:67; Ac 6:14 **26:72** Lv 19:12; Nm 30:2; Dt 23:21; Mt 5:33; 14:7; 23:16 **26:75** Mt 26:34; Jn 13:38; Ac 3:13-14

26:2 Passover was the feast in which Israel commemorated God's rescue of his people from the judgment of death (Ex 12:1-28) and slavery in Egypt (Ex 12:29-42). The Passover lamb was killed on the fourteenth day of Nisan. After sunset, which marked the beginning of the next day according to Jewish timekeeping, the Passover meal was eaten. Jesus probably spoke these words on Tuesday, celebrating Passover on Thursday, shortly before his arrest.

26:7 The **woman** was probably a servant or member of the household. It was customary for guests to be given a little oil for their heads to refresh them with pleasant fragrance. This woman, however, pours extremely valuable perfume on Jesus's head, out of her devotion to him. The disciples are shocked and disapprove. Jesus, however, commends her for her devotion, identifying her sacrificial act with his impending death and burial (v. 12).

26:10-13 See "Equality of the Sexes," *p. 1434.*

26:26-30 Jesus uses the traditional Passover formulas to teach his disciples the significance of his impending death. Jesus interprets the elements of the Passover ritual with reference to himself. The **bread** and **cup** of wine symbolize his body and blood, the sacrificial death of the Messiah **for the forgiveness of sins.** Just as God allowed a lamb to die in the place of the captive firstborn of every Hebrew household in Egypt (Ex 12:1-28), so God allows the Messiah to die in the place of all who rely on his blood, so that they might be rescued from spiritual death.

26:30 See "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727.*

26:55-56 Sending an armed mob to arrest a man late in the evening, essentially in secret, and then holding court in the middle of the night, was highly irregular. But apparently the Pharisees and elders did it because of their fear of the messianic fervor in Jerusalem (see the note at 21:6-11). They did not anticipate how quickly the crowds would turn on Jesus once it was clear he was not the type of messiah they were expecting. Jesus indicates, however, that everything has happened this way **so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled.**

JESUS HANDED OVER TO PILATE

27 When daybreak came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put him to death. † 2 After tying him up, they led him away and handed him over to Pilate, † the governor. †

JUDAS HANGS HIMSELF

3 Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, was full of remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. †

4 “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood,” he said.
“What’s that to us? ” they said. “See to it yourself! ” 5 So he threw the silver into the temple † and departed. Then he went and hanged himself.
6 The chief priests took the silver and said, “It’s not permitted † to put it into the temple treasury, since it is blood money.” 7 They conferred together and bought the potter’s field with it as a burial place for foreigners. 8 Therefore that field has been called “Blood Field” to this day. 9 Then what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: **They took † the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him whose price was set by the Israelites,** 10 **and they gave † them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.** † †

JESUS FACES THE GOVERNOR

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor. † “Are you the King of the Jews? ” the governor asked him.
Jesus answered, “You say so.” † 12 While he was being accused by the chief priests and elders, he didn’t answer. †
13 Then Pilate said to him, “Don’t you hear how much they are testifying against you? ” 14 But he didn’t answer him on even one charge, so that the governor was quite amazed. †

JESUS OR BARABBAS

15 At the festival † the governor’s custom was to release to the crowd a prisoner they wanted. 16 At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. †
17 So when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, “Who is it you want me to release for you — Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? ” † 18 For he knew it was because of envy that they had handed him over.
19 While he was sitting on the judge’s bench, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for today I’ve suffered terribly in a dream because of him.” †
20 The chief priests and the elders, however, persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to execute Jesus. 21 The governor asked them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you? ”
“Barabbas! ” they answered.

22 Pilate asked them, “What should I do then with Jesus, who is called Christ? ”
They all answered, “Crucify him! ” †
23 Then he said, “Why? What has he done wrong? ”
But they kept shouting all the more, “Crucify him! ” †
24 When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that a riot was starting instead, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said, “I am innocent of this man’s blood. † See to it yourselves! ” †
25 All the people answered, “His blood be on us † and on our children! ”
26 Then he released Barabbas to them and, after having Jesus flogged, handed him over to be crucified. †

MOCKED BY THE MILITARY

27 Then † the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the governor’s residence and gathered the whole company † around him. † 28 They stripped him and dressed him in a scarlet robe. † 29 They twisted together a crown of thorns, put it on his head, and placed a staff in his right hand. And they knelt down before him and mocked him: “Hail, King of the Jews! ” 30 Then they spat on him, took the staff, and kept hitting him on the head. 31 After they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. †

CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

32 As they were going out, they found a Cyrenian man named Simon. They forced him to carry his cross. † 33 When they came to a place called *Golgotha* † (which means Place of the Skull), 34 they gave him wine † mixed with gall to drink. But when he tasted it, he refused to drink it. 35 After crucifying him, they divided his clothes by casting lots. † † 36 Then they sat down and were guarding him there. 37 Above his head they put up the charge against him in writing: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.
38 Then two criminals † were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. † 39 Those who passed by were yelling insults at † him, shaking their heads † 40 and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the

cross!” † 41 In the same way the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, †
mocked him and said, 42 “He saved others, but he cannot save himself! He is the
King of Israel! † Let him † come down now from the cross, and we will believe
in him. 43 He trusts in God; let God rescue him now — if he takes pleasure in
him! † For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’ ” 44 In the same way even the
criminals who were crucified with him taunted him. †

THE DEATH OF JESUS

45 From noon until three in the afternoon † darkness came over the whole
land. † † 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ***“Elí,***
Elí, lemá † ***sabachtháni?”*** that is, **“My God, my God, why have you**
abandoned me?” † †
47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling for
Elijah.”
48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it
on a stick, and offered him a drink. † 49 But the rest said, “Let’s see if Elijah
comes to save him.”
50 But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit. †
51 Suddenly, the curtain of the sanctuary † was torn in two from top to bottom,
the earth quaked, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs were also opened †
and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 And they came
out of the tombs after his resurrection, entered the holy city, and appeared to
many.
54 When the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus,
saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they were terrified and
said, “Truly this man was the Son of God! ” †
55 Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him
were there, watching from a distance. †

GOD’S PURPOSES IN A

CHRISTIAN'S PARTICIPATION IN MISSIONS

Perhaps you've heard the story of the young William Carey? In 1792, this shoe cobbler and pastor of a small church in the midlands of England wrote an inquiry and made a plea for the pastors in his region to send missionaries into the world. Carey publicly challenged his senior colleagues to mobilize their churches to go and disciple the nations. One of the leading pastors in that assembly cut Carey off, by saying, "Young man, sit down! You are an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, he'll do it without consulting you or me."

Today William Carey is known as the "father of modern missions." He led a movement that lasted over a hundred years and laid Christian foundations around the world. Yet, the older colleague's question reflected a dominant worldview that haunts the church to this day. How dare Carey think that God needed or even wanted him to participate in his mission? Indeed, what kind of God needs people to carry out his work in the world?

GOD'S MISSION

Carey discovered the biblical worldview of the mission of God as he read his Bible. He was overwhelmed with the reality that God's mission was for "all the peoples on earth [to] be blessed" (Gn 12:3-4), that God would be renown among *all* nations. This, in fact, is the theme of the Bible. It's the central agenda behind the church, the reason for Christianity.

But what did God mean when he said all peoples would be blessed? Over and over again in Scripture God explained this blessing to Israel. He promised Israel that if they followed him, he would walk among them and be their God (Lv 26:12). Yet Israel never really understood this agenda. God delayed his wrath on Israel in order to be glorified (Is 48:11), repeatedly reminding Israel that his mission for them was bigger than themselves. He said, "It is not enough for you to be my servant raising up the tribes of Jacob and restoring the protected ones of Israel. I will also make you a light for the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Is 49:6). But the worldview of Israel's citizens was stuck because the people focused only on themselves. How ironic that God still used them to shine the light of Jesus the Messiah on the Gentiles.

Young Carey was right. He understood the true meaning of the good news about Jesus. God's greatest desire is to be known by all peoples, even the entire creation—including "the rulers and authorities in the heavens" (Eph 3:10). The most amazing thing about this mission of God is that he uses his followers, the church, to participate in and carry out the mission.

Like the ancient Israelites, Carey's generation was self-centered about God's mission. In their minds, God had finished his Great Commission by their day. The call of Jesus to disciple all nations was not for them. After all, they had enough of their own problems to deal with. Sending their best disciples to the ends of the earth to minister the gospel to the uncivilized "heathen" was not on their agenda. William Carey's worldview, by contrast, was transformed by the Bible. He captured God's agenda and the reality that we cannot opt out of serving in God's mission to the nations.

But do we share in this mission today? Or could it be that we too have adopted a self-centered version of a biblical worldview, like Israel and like Carey's colleagues? Have we replaced God's mission to be known and worshiped by his creation with a goal of making ourselves happy, successful, and fulfilled?

THE BASICS

What are the basics concerning God's mission? The root of the Latin term *missio* means "sending" or "to send." What begins in Genesis 1 with God sending the Creator (Jn 1:3) and Spirit (Gn 1:1-2) continues

throughout Scripture as one sending of God after another. God sends Abraham to Canaan to establish the nation of Israel (Gn 12). The OT is the story of God's mission through Israel that culminates with the sending of God himself through Immanuel—God with us (Is 7:14; Mt 1:23). The NT is the story of Jesus establishing the church and the Holy Spirit sending the church on mission to the nations. In Revelation we see the mission accomplished on that final day when the Lamb of God is worshiped among all peoples. This is the mission of God—past, present, and future—as revealed in his Word. The Bible teaches us about God's mission and where we fit in it.

Whose mission is it? It is God's mission. He is the One who accomplishes the mission. The Bible is his revelation to us.

What is this mission of God? It is a blessing for all peoples. Revelation 5:9 indicates it is for "every tribe and language and people and nation." This is the "mystery" that the apostle Paul speaks of frequently. The God of Abraham is the God of all peoples, of all creation (Eph 3:3-6,10)!

Why is this the mission of God? Because God desires to be . . . no, God *will* be worshiped and praised among all nations. God's name will be hallowed; he will be famous; his kingdom will come (Mt 6:9-10); and he will be glorified (Is 48:11). The reason for the mission to all peoples is God's glory.

How does God accomplish his mission? God sends (e.g., Gn 1:27; 3:23,8-9; 11:8; 12:2; Ex 6:7). God loves by sending his Son (Jn 3:16). He compels us to love him (Mt 22:37-38). And he expects us to love each other (22:39). Yes, God's mission is all about God's love.

God's mission strategy is people-to-people. He is a relational God who works relationally, and we are created in his image. There is no place for the lone-ranger Christian in God's mission. From the beginning, it has been a people-to-people mission. God worked in the past through Abraham and his physical descendants (Gn 12:2-3); remarkably, he works in the present through Abraham's spiritual descendants (Gl 3:7,29; Eph 3:6)—the church (Eph 3:10)—and in the end he will continue to work through worshipers from all nations for eternity (Rv 7:9). God accomplishes his mission through people.

What is the primary task of this mission of God? Discipling. In the well-known commission text, Matthew 28:18-20, God directs us toward this task. We are to disciple all nations; that is, we are to teach all nations to become followers of Jesus. Right there in the same command he tells us how. Jesus says we enlist them into the community of faith by "teaching" and "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (vv. 19-20). We introduce them to Jesus. We engage them into fellowship with Jesus. We proclaim the good news, the gospel, and they join us in following Jesus. But we do not stop there. We teach them not simply the teachings of Jesus, but how to obey them. To wholeheartedly follow everything he commanded. This is the primary task of the mission of God. Teaching each other to obey.

How can we do this among *all* nations? By following God's plan, his strategy for multiplication. We can no longer simply rely on priests to serve in a single temple in Jerusalem or employ pastors to perform the ministry of established churches. We must equip all believers to do the work of the mission of God through the church. Yes, some will be called as equippers to train church members to do the mission (Eph 4:11-12); but all are called to be witnesses (Ac 1:8) and disciple makers (Mt 28:18-20).

THE BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

God's Word from Genesis to Revelation is the story of God conducting his mission. It reveals a biblical worldview, God's worldview, of his mission and our role in it. When William Carey read the Bible in 1792, he could not escape the reality that God commands all believers to participate in his global mission. This is God's intent. It is not a sign of a weak God who needs us. It is the reality of a sovereign God who demands for us to serve alongside him. This is for his glory, not ours. Yes, we are blessed when we embrace this mission of God. He becomes our God, we become his people, and we serve his mission. It doesn't get any better than that.

MIKE BARNETT

56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,
and the mother of Zebedee's sons. †

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

57 When it was evening, † a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph came, who
himself had also become a disciple † of Jesus. 58 He approached Pilate and
asked for Jesus's body. Then Pilate ordered that it † be released. 59 So Joseph
took the body, wrapped it in clean, fine linen, 60 and placed it in his new tomb,
which he had cut into the rock. He left after rolling a great stone against the
entrance of the tomb. † 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were seated
there, facing the tomb.

THE CLOSELY GUARDED TOMB

62 The next day, which followed the preparation day, the chief priests and the
Pharisees gathered before Pilate † 63 and said, "Sir, we remember that while
this deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise again.' † 64 So
give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his
disciples † may come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from
the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."
65 "You have † a guard of soldiers," Pilate told them. "Go and make it as secure
as you know how." 66 They went and secured the tomb by setting a seal on the
stone and placing the guard. †

27:2 Other mss read *Pontius Pilate* **27:9** Or *I took* **27:10** Some mss read *I gave* **27:16** Other mss read *Jesus Barabbas*, also in v. 17 **27:24** Other mss read *this righteous man's blood* **27:27** Lit *cohort* **27:34** Other mss read *sour wine* **27:35** Other mss add *that what was spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled: "They divided my clothes among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."* **27:38** Or *revolutionaries* **27:39** Lit *passed by blasphemed*, or *were blaspheming* **27:41** Other mss add *and Pharisees* **27:42** Other mss read *If he . . . Israel, let him* **27:43** Or *if he wants him* **27:45** Lit *From the sixth hour to the ninth hour* **27:45** Or *whole earth* **27:46** Some mss read *lama* ; other mss read *lima* **27:58** Other mss read *that the body* **27:65** Or *"Take* **27:1** Mk 15:1; Lk 22:66; Jn 18:28 **27:2** Mt 20:19; Lk 13:1; Ac 3:13; 1Tm 6:13 **27:3** Mt 21:29; 26:14-15 **27:5** 2Sm 17:23; Lk 1:19,21; Ac 1:18 **27:6** Mk 2:24; Jn 18:31 **27:9-10** Jr 32:6-9; Zch 11:12-13 **27:9-10** Jr 32:6-9; Zch 11:12-13; Mt 1:22 **27:11-14** Mk 15:2-5; Lk 23:2-3; Jn 18:29-38 **27:11** Mt 2:2; 1Tm 6:13 **27:12** Mt 26:63; Jn 19:9 **27:14** Mk 15:5; Lk 23:9 **27:15-26** Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:16-25; Jn 18:39-40; 19:16 **27:17** Mt 1:16; 27:22 **27:19** Gn 20:6; Nm 12:6; Jb 33:14-16; Mt 2:12; Jn 19:13 **27:22** Mt 1:16; Ac 13:28 **27:23** Lk 23:41; Jn 8:46 **27:24** Dt 21:6-8; Ps 26:6; Mt 26:5; 27:4,19 **27:25** Jos 2:19; Ac 5:28 **27:26** Is 53:5; Mk 15:15; Lk 23:16; Jn 19:1 **27:27-31** Mk 15:16-20; Jn 19:2-3 **27:27** Jn 18:28,33; 19:9; Ac 10:1 **27:28** Lk 23:11; Jn 19:2 **27:30-31** Is 53:7; Mt 26:67 **27:32** Nm 15:35; Mk 15:21; Lk 23:26; Heb 13:12 **27:33-44** Mk 15:22-32; Lk 23:33-43; Jn 19:17-24 **27:34-35** Ps 22:17; 69:21 **27:38** Is 53:12; Mt 20:21; Jn 18:40 **27:39** Jb 16:4; Ps 22:7; 109:25; Lm 2:15; Mk 15:29 **27:40** Mt 4:3,6; 26:61,63; Jn 2:19 **27:42** Jn 1:49; 12:13 **27:43-44**

Ps 22:8; Lk 23:39-43 **27:45-56** Mk 15:33-41; Lk 23:44-49; Jn 19:28-30 **27:46** Ps 22:1; Heb 5:7 **27:46** Ps 22:1 **27:48** Ps 69:21; Mk 15:36; Lk 23:36; Jn 19:29 **27:50** Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46; Jn 10:18; 19:30 **27:51** Ex 26:31-33; 2Ch 3:14; Heb 9:3 **27:52** Ezk 37:12 **27:54** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **27:55** Ps 38:11; Lk 8:2-3; Jn 19:25 **27:56** Mt 20:20; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25 **27:57-61** Mk 15:42-47; Lk 23:50-56; Jn 19:38-42 **27:57** Mt 10:42; 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1 **27:60** Is 53:9; Mt 27:66; 28:2; Mk 16:4 **27:62** Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:14,31,42 **27:63** Mt 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:19; Mk 8:31; 10:34; Lk 9:22; 18:33 **27:64** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **27:66** Dn 6:17; Mt 28:2,11

27:11-13 Throughout his trials, Jesus is selective as to who and what charges he answers. He affirms to the Sanhedrin that he is Messiah, the Son of God (26:63-64), and he confesses to Pilate that he is the **King of the Jews.** Jesus, however, never answers any of the false accusations made against him; he remains silent. Jesus knows that his mission is to die for the sins of the world. He is not seeking to exonerate himself or escape his fate. Though innocent, he accepts the treatment of a guilty man so that he can die on the cross for a guilty world.

27:15-18 The custom of releasing a **prisoner** on a holy day, or in the midst of a festival, was common in ancient Rome. Unlike modern governmental pardons, it had little to do with guilt or innocence. The practice was intended to placate the nations that Rome occupied. Pilate attempts to steer the crowd toward freeing Jesus because he knows that Jesus was arrested **because of envy.**

27:28-29 Roman soldiers in Jerusalem liked to mock condemned prisoners, especially revolutionaries, by dressing them as kings and offering false homage. Since Jesus had been charged as **King of the Jews**, he was an easy target of the soldiers' mockery.

27:35 Crucifixion was a means of execution designed to expose victims to shame and humiliation. It was a viciously cruel practice in which various positions were used to maximize the torture. Death was caused by loss of blood, exposure, exhaustion, and suffocation. Victims often took days to die, leading ancient writers to regard crucifixion as the most barbaric punishment practiced by the Romans.

RESURRECTION MORNING

28 After the Sabbath, † as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary
Magdalene and the other Mary went to view the tomb. 2 There was a
violent earthquake, because an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and
approached the tomb. He rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. † 3 His
appearance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. † 4 The
guards were so shaken by fear of him that they became like dead men.
5 The angel told the women, "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking
for Jesus who was crucified. † 6 He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said.
Come and see the place where he lay. † 7 Then go quickly and tell his
disciples, † 'He has risen from the dead and indeed he is going ahead of you to
Galilee; you will see him there.' Listen, I have told you." †
8 So, departing quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, they ran to tell his
disciples the news. 9 Just then † Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" They

came up, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. † 10 Then Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there." †

THE SOLDIERS BRIBED TO LIE

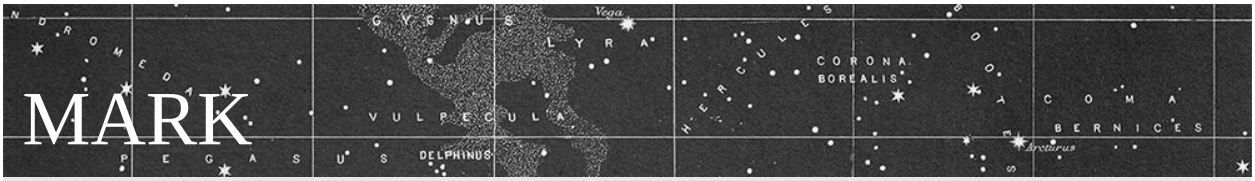
11 As they were on their way, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 After the priests † had assembled with the elders and agreed on a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money 13 and told them, "Say this, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him while we were sleeping.' 14 If this reaches the governor's ears, we will deal with † him and keep you out of trouble." † 15 They took the money and did as they were instructed, and this story has been spread among Jewish people to this day. †

THE GREAT COMMISSION

16 The eleven disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. † 17 When they saw him, they worshiped, † but some doubted. 18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. † 19 Go, therefore, and make disciples † of † all nations, † baptizing † them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, † I am with you always, † to the end of the age." †

28:9 Other mss add *as they were on their way to tell the news to his disciples* **28:12** Lit *After they* **28:14** Lit *will persuade* **28:17** Other mss add *him* **28:19** Or *and disciple* **28:20** Lit *see* **28:20** Lit *all the days*
28:1-8 Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-10; Jn 20:1-8 **28:2** Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12 **28:3** Dn 7:9; 10:6; Mk 9:3; Jn 20:12; Ac 1:10 **28:5** Mt 14:27; 28:10; Rv 1:17 **28:6** Mt 12:40; 16:21; 27:63 **28:7** Mt 10:1; 26:56; Mk 3:7; 16:20; Lk 6:13; Jn 12:16 **28:7** Mt 26:32; Mk 16:7 **28:9** Mk 16:9; Jn 20:14 **28:10** Jn 20:17; Rm 8:29; Heb 2:11-12,17 **28:14** Mt 27:2; Ac 12:20 **28:15** Mt 9:31; 27:8; Mk 1:45 **28:16** Mt 26:32; 28:7 **28:18** Dn 7:13-14; Jn 17:2; Rm 14:9; Eph 1:20-22; Php 2:9-10; Col 2:10; 1Pt 3:22 **28:19** Mt 10:42; 28:19; Lk 14:26; Jn 8:31; 13:35; 15:8; Ac 6:1 **28:19** Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47 **28:19** Ac 2:38; 8:16 **28:20** Mt 13:39; 18:20; Ac 1:2; 2:42; 18:10

28:16-20 Matthew concludes his Gospel with the Great Commission. He has already highlighted stories about Gentiles to whom God has revealed the good news of the Messiah (e.g., 2:1-12; 8:5-13; 15:21-28), and now Jesus instructs his followers to continue that work in a deliberate fashion. He commands them to take the good news to the **nations**, to the ends of the earth. This represents a radical movement in the overarching story of the Bible. No longer will God's covenant relationship be solely with Israel, but he will bless all who respond to Jesus in repentance and faith. See also "A Biblical View of the Nations," *p. 688*; "The Holy Trinity," *p. 1426;* "Ethics of Global Missions," *p. 1323.*



MARK

INTRODUCTION

Mark's Gospel emphasizes actions and deeds. Jesus is on the go—healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, hurrying from place to place, and teaching. In Mark everything happens "immediately." As soon as one episode ends, another begins. The rapid pace slows down when Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1). Thereafter, events are marked by days, and his final day by hours.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The Gospel of Mark is anonymous. Eusebius, the early church historian, writing in AD 326, preserved the words of Papias, an early church father. Papias quoted "the elder," probably John, as saying that Mark recorded Peter's preaching about the things Jesus said and did, but not in order. Thus, Mark was considered the author of this Gospel even in the first century.

The Mark who wrote this Gospel was John Mark, the son of a widow named Mary, in whose house the church in Jerusalem sometimes gathered (Ac 12:12-17) and where Jesus possibly ate the Last Supper with his disciples. Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10), and he accompanied Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch after their famine relief mission to Jerusalem (Ac 12:25). Mark next went with Barnabas and Paul on part of the first missionary journey as an assistant (Ac 13:5), but at Perga, Mark turned back (Ac 13:13).

When the apostle Peter wrote to the churches in Asia Minor shortly before his martyrdom, he sent greetings from Mark, whom he called "my son" (1Pt 5:13). Then shortly before his execution, Paul asked Timothy to "Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry" (2Tm 4:11). After Paul's execution, Mark is said to have moved to Egypt, established churches, and served them in Alexandria (Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.*, 2:16). Some have suggested the young man in Mark 14:51-52 was Mark himself.

BACKGROUND: According to the early church fathers, Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome just before or just after Peter's martyrdom. Further confirmation of the Roman origin of Mark's Gospel is found in Mark 15:21 where Mark noted that Simon, a Cyrenian who carried Jesus's cross, was the father of Alexander and Rufus, men apparently known to the believers in Rome.

Because Mark wrote primarily for Roman Gentiles, he explained Jewish customs, translated Aramaic words and phrases into Greek, used Latin terms rather than their Greek equivalents, and rarely quoted from the OT. Most Bible scholars are convinced that Mark was the earliest Gospel and served as one of the sources for Matthew and Luke.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Many concepts of the Messiah existed in Jesus's day, and several individuals laid claim to the title. What Mark contributes is a clarification of the concept of Messiah and a redefining of the term. Peter's insightful confession at Caesarea Philippi in 8:29 became the turning point at which Jesus began to explain that the divine conception of the Messiah involved rejection, suffering, death, and then resurrection (8:31). Mark also shows us the human side of Jesus. In fact, more than the other Gospel writers, Mark emphasizes Jesus's human side and his emotions. Thus Mark gives us a strong picture of both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus.

STRUCTURE

Mark's Gospel begins with a Prologue (1:1-13), which is then followed by three major sections. The first

(1:14–8:21) tells of Jesus's Galilean ministry. There Jesus healed and cast out demons and worked miracles. The second section (8:22–10:52) is transitional. Jesus began his journey that would take him to Jerusalem. The final section (11:1–16:8) involves a week in Jerusalem. From the time Jesus entered the city he was at odds with the religious leaders, who quickly brought about his execution. A brief appendix (16:9-20) in which some of Jesus's appearances, his commissioning of his disciples, and his ascension are recorded is attached to the Gospel.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Jesus emphasized God as "your Father" in this Gospel. He is also the Father of Jesus, and from his opening words Mark declared Jesus to be "the Son of God" (1:1). The Holy Spirit is present, empowering Jesus's ministry and mission. This is seen especially in his triumph over every unholy spirit.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Jesus encountered both the sick and the sinful in this Gospel. He healed the sick and forgave the sinful. Multitudes (at the feeding of the five thousand and the triumphal entry) and small groups (the apostles) were transformed by Jesus. Yet other large crowds (at Jesus's trial and crucifixion) and small groups (Jewish religious leaders) utterly rejected him. Mark emphasized that humans could not remain neutral about Jesus. They had to decide either for him or against him.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

A higher percentage of this book is given over to the events of Jesus's suffering and death than any other Bible book. By quoting the three times that Jesus predicted his death, Mark emphasized the necessity of the cross, that he "must" die (8:31; 9:31; 10:33). At the Last Supper, Jesus explained his death was as a substitute: "for many" (14:24).

MARK TIMELINE

75–50 BC

Spartacus, the Roman gladiator, leads a slave revolt based near Mount Vesuvius. **73**

Pompey conquers Jerusalem. **63**

Rome's Gallic wars begin after Julius Caesar becomes Roman governor of Gaul. **58–51**

Pompey builds first stone amphitheater in Rome. **55**

Julius Caesar invades Britain. **55–54**

50 BC–AD 9

Circus Maximus is built in Rome. **50**

Mark Antony controls Rome; Julius Caesar is assassinated. **44**

Parthians conquer Jerusalem. **40–37**

Herod becomes “king of the Jews.” **37**

Qumran is abandoned as a result of an earthquake in the vicinity of Jericho. **31**

Octavian becomes Augustus Caesar. **27**

AD 9–30

Jesus visits the temple at the age of twelve. **9**

Tiberius, Rome’s second emperor **14–37**

Caiaphas, Jewish high priest **18–36**

Jesus is baptized and begins calling disciples. **29**

Jesus’s early ministry in Judea **Autumn 29 to Spring 30** (John 2–4) AD 30–33

Jesus’s Galilean ministry **Summer 30 to Spring 32** (all four Gospels) Jesus travels with disciples and engages in intensive training. **Summer and early Autumn 32** (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) Jesus’s later ministry in Judea **late Autumn and early Winter 32** (Luke and John) Jesus’s Perean ministry **late Winter and early Spring 33** (Luke and John) Jesus’s crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation **33** (all four Gospels)

THE MESSIAH’S HERALD

1 The beginning † of the gospel † of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. † †
2 As it is written in Isaiah † the prophet: † †

See, I am sending my messenger † ahead of you; he will prepare your way. † † †

3 **A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:** †
Prepare the way for the Lord; †
make his paths straight! † †

4 John came baptizing † † in the wilderness † and proclaiming a baptism of repentance † for the forgiveness † of sins. † 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem † were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan † River, confessing † their sins. † 6 John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts † and wild honey. †

7 He proclaimed, “One who is more powerful † than I am is coming after me. † I am not worthy † to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals. † 8 I baptize you with † water, † but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” †

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

9 In † those days Jesus came from Nazareth † in Galilee † and was baptized in
the Jordan by John. 10 As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the
heavens † being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And
a voice † came from heaven: † "You are my beloved † Son; † with you I am
well-pleased." †

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

12 Immediately † the Spirit † drove † him into the wilderness. † 13 He was in
the wilderness forty days, being tempted † by Satan. † He was with the wild
animals, † and the angels † were serving him.

MINISTRY IN GALILEE

14 After † John was arrested, † Jesus went to Galilee, † proclaiming † the
good news † † † of God: † 15 "The time † is fulfilled, and the kingdom of
God † has come † near. † Repent † and believe † the good news! "

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

16 As † he passed alongside the Sea of Galilee, † he saw Simon † and
Andrew, † Simon's brother, casting a net into the sea † — for they were
fishermen. 17 "Follow me," † Jesus told them, "and I will make you fish
for † † people." † 18 Immediately they left their nets and followed † him. †
19 Going on a little farther, he saw James † the son of Zebedee † and his
brother John † in a boat putting their nets in order. 20 Immediately he called
them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and
followed him. †

DRIVING OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

21 They † went into Capernaum, † and right away he entered the synagogue †
on the Sabbath † and began to teach. † 22 They were astonished † at his
teaching † because he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not like
the scribes.

23 Just then a man with an unclean † spirit † was in their synagogue. † He
cried out, 24 “What do you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? † Have you
come to destroy † us? I know who you are — the Holy † One of God! ” †
25 Jesus rebuked † him saying, “Be silent, † and come out of him! ” 26 And the
unclean spirit threw him into convulsions, † shouted with a loud voice, and
came out of him.
27 They were all amazed, † and so they began to ask † each other: “What is
this? A new teaching † with authority! † † He commands even the unclean †
spirits, † and they obey him.” 28 At once the news about him spread throughout
the entire vicinity of Galilee. †

HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

29 As † soon as they left the synagogue, † they went into Simon † and
Andrew’s † house † with James † and John. † 30 Simon’s mother-in-law was
lying in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 So he went to
her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. † The fever † left her, † and she
began to serve † them. †
32 When † evening came, after the sun had set, they brought to him all those
who were sick † and demon-possessed. † 33 The whole town was assembled at
the door, 34 and he healed † many who were sick with various diseases † and
drove out † many demons. † And he would not permit the demons to speak,
because they knew him. †

PREACHING IN GALILEE

35 Very † early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and
made his way to a deserted place; † and there he was praying. † 36 Simon †
and his companions searched for him, 37 and when they found him they said,
“Everyone is looking for you.”
38 And he said to them, “Let’s go on to the neighboring villages so that I may
preach † there too. This is why I have come.”

A MAN CLEANSED

39 He went into all of Galilee, † preaching in their synagogues † and driving
out demons. 40 Then † a man with leprosy † † came to him and, on his
knees, † † begged him: “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” †
41 Moved with compassion, † † Jesus reached out his hand and touched † him.
“I am willing,” he told him. “Be made clean.” 42 Immediately the leprosy †
left him, and he was made clean. 43 Then he sternly warned † him and sent him
away † at once, 44 telling him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; † but go
and show † yourself to the priest, † and offer † what Moses commanded for
your cleansing, † as a testimony † to them.” † 45 Yet he went out and began to
proclaim † it widely and to spread the news, † with the result that Jesus could
no longer enter a town openly. But he was out in deserted places, and they came
to him from everywhere.

1:1 Some mss omit *the Son of God* **1:2** Other mss read *in the prophets* **1:2** Other mss add *before you* **1:4** Or *John the Baptist came* **1:8** Or *in* **1:14** Other mss add *of the kingdom* **1:14** Or *gospel* **1:17** Or *you to become fishers of* **1:27** Other mss read *”What is this? What is this new teaching? For with authority* **1:31** Other mss add *at once* **1:40** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases, also in v. 42; see Lv 13–14 **1:40** Other mss omit *on his knees* **1:41** Other mss *Moved with indignation* **1:44** Or *against them*

1:1 Jn 1:1; Php 4:15 **1:1-8** Mt 3:1-12; Lk 3:1-18 **1:1** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **1:2** Mt 3:3; 4:14; 12:17 **1:2** Lk 16:29 **1:2** Mt 13:49 **1:2** Mal 3:1 **1:2** Mal 3:1 **1:3** Jn 1:23 **1:3** Lk 10:1; 17:5 **1:3** Is 40:3 **1:3** Is 40:3 **1:4** Lk 7:29; Ac 22:16 **1:4** Rv 12:6 **1:4** Lk 3:3; Ac 13:24; 19:4; 26:20 **1:4** Mt 9:2; Lk 24:47 **1:4** Jn 15:22; Ac 26:18 **1:5** Mt 23:37; Jn 11:36 **1:5** Gn 13:10; Ps 114:3; Lk 3:3 **1:5** Ac 19:18 **1:5** Jn 15:22; Rm 6:23; 1Pt 4:1 **1:6** Rv 9:3,7 **1:6** Rv 10:9-10 **1:7** Rv 18:8 **1:7** Jn 1:15 **1:7** Mt 3:11 **1:7** Lk 3:16; Ac 13:23-25 **1:8** Jn 1:26,31,33; Ac 1:5; 8:36; 11:16 **1:8** Jn 1:33 **1:9-11** Mt 3:13-17; Lk 3:21-23 **1:9** Mt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; Lk 1:26; 2:4,39,51; 4:16; Jn 1:45-46 **1:9** Mt 17:22 **1:10** Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10 **1:11** Jn 5:37 **1:11** Rv 14:13 **1:11** Lk 20:13; Eph 1:6; Phm 1 **1:11** Ps 2:7 **1:11** Is 42:1 **1:12-13** Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13 **1:12** Jn 1:33 **1:12** 3Jn 10 **1:12** Mt 3:1; Rv 12:6 **1:13** Jms 1:13 **1:13** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **1:13** Rv 6:8 **1:13** Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **1:14-15** Mt 4:17; Jn 4:45 **1:14** Mt 3:12; Lk 3:20; 9:7-9; Jn 3:24 **1:14** Mt 17:22 **1:14** Mk 13:10 **1:14** Mk 1:1 **1:14** Rm 15:16; 1Th 2:2,8-9 **1:15** Ps 37:39; Lk 20:10; Jn 7:8 **1:15** Mt 3:2; 6:33; 12:28; 19:24; 21:31,43; Mk 4:11; 9:1; 10:14; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43 **1:15** Mk 9:1 **1:15** Rm 13:11; 1Pt 4:7 **1:15** Ac 3:19; 26:20 **1:15** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **1:16-20** Mt 4:18-22; Lk 5:1-11 **1:16** Mt 4:18; 15:29; Jn 6:1 **1:16** Mt 16:17 **1:16** Jn 6:8 **1:16** Mk 7:31 **1:17** Mt 4:19 **1:17** Mt 4:18-19; Lk 5:2 **1:17** Mt 4:19 **1:18** Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12 **1:18** Lk 18:28 **1:19** Ac 12:2 **1:19** Jn 21:2 **1:19** Jn 21:7 **1:20** Lk 18:28 **1:21-26** Lk 4:31-35 **1:21** Lk 10:15 **1:21** Mk 3:1; Jms 2:2 **1:21** Mk 2:23; Lk 13:10 **1:21** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **1:22** Mk 6:2 **1:22** Mt 7:28; 22:33; Mk 11:18; Lk 4:32; Ac 2:42; 17:19 **1:23** 2Co 6:17 **1:23** Lk 11:24 **1:23** Jms 2:2 **1:24** Mk 14:67 **1:24** Jn 6:27 **1:24** 1Co 7:14 **1:24** Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69; Eph 4:30 **1:25** 2Tm 4:2 **1:25** Mt 22:12 **1:26** Mk 9:26; Lk 9:39 **1:27** Mk 10:24,32 **1:27** Mk 8:11 **1:27** Mk 11:18; Ac 2:42 **1:27** Jd 25 **1:27** 2Co 6:17 **1:27** Lk 11:24 **1:28** Mt 17:22 **1:29-31** Mt 8:14-15; Lk 4:38-39 **1:29** Jms 2:2 **1:29** Mt 16:17 **1:29** Jn 6:8 **1:29** Mk 9:33 **1:29** Ac 12:2 **1:29** Jn 21:7 **1:31** Mk 5:41 **1:31** Lk 4:38 **1:31** Phm 13 **1:31** Rm 12:13 **1:32-34** Mt 8:16-17; Lk 4:40-41 **1:32** Lk 5:31 **1:32** Mt 9:32 **1:34** Ac 8:7 **1:34** Ac 19:12 **1:34** 3Jn 10 **1:34** Rv 9:20; 18:2 **1:34** Mk 3:11-12; 5:7 **1:35-38** Mt 4:23-25; Lk 4:42-44 **1:35** Mt 14:13; Mk 6:31-32; Lk 4:42; 9:12; Rv 12:6 **1:35** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **1:36** Mt 16:17 **1:38** Mk 1:4 **1:39** Mt 17:22 **1:39** Mk 3:1 **1:40-44** Mt 8:2-4; Lk 5:12-14 **1:40** Mt 11:5 **1:40** Mt 17:14 **1:40** 1Jn 1:7 **1:41** Lk 15:20 **1:41** Jn 20:17 **1:42** Lk

5:12 **1:43** Mt 9:30; Mk 14:5; Jn 11:33,38 **1:43** 3Jn 10 **1:44** Mk 5:43; 7:36; 8:26,30; 9:9; 16:8; Lk 5:14 **1:44** Rv 1:1 **1:44** Ac 4:1 **1:44** Heb 5:1; 8:3 **1:44** Lv 13–14; Heb 1:3 **1:44** Mk 6:11; 1Tm 2:6 **1:45** Mk 1:4; Jn 18:32 **1:45** Mk 4:14

1:1 Mark introduces his writing as **the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** Here **gospel** (Gk *euangelion*, "good news") refers to the message concerning Jesus. **Jesus** (Gk *Iesous*), the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua (Hb *Yehoshua*), was a common name in first-century Palestine. The designation **Christ** (i.e., "messiah," "anointed one") is a formal title applied to Jesus rather than an actual name given by his parents (8:29; 9:41; 12:35; 13:21; 14:61; 15:32). **Son of God** serves as the main theological theme of this Gospel. Ancient writers often introduced the main theme of their works in the beginning, as does Mark. He also emphasizes this theme through repetition (1:11; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 12:6; 13:23; 14:61; 15:39).

1:4-5 John's wilderness ministry prepared people for Jesus's coming (1:2-3,7-8; see also Lk 7:27; Jn 1:29-51). **John came baptizing . . . and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.** Repentance involves a change of mind in regard to one's sins that results in a change of behavior (Lk 15:17-21; 19:8). John's ministry resulted in people from rural and urban settings flocking to him, **confessing their sins.** Western culture's view of people as basically good contrasts sharply with Mark's presentation of the human condition. Jesus will also call sinners to repent (Mk 1:15).

1:7 From John's perspective, Jesus is so great that he (John) is **not worthy** to perform a task commonly reserved for slaves in ancient times—that of removing their master's sandals.

1:15 Mark summarizes the content of Jesus's preaching: **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!** The kingdom of God, the central theme of Jesus's teaching, refers to the rule or reign of God. The kingdom has arrived in the person of Jesus.

1:17 Jesus's command to Simon and Andrew to **follow** him was unique, for Jewish students typically chose the rabbi they would study under. Furthermore, Jesus's announcement that he will **make** [them] **fish for people** would have called to mind OT texts that portray God as one who fishes for people for the purpose of judgment (e.g., Jr 16:16; Ezk 29:4-5; 38:4; Am 4:2; Hab 1:14-17). The context of 1:17 presents the image of fishing in more positive terms—that is, for salvation.

1:23-28 Mark's Gospel contains several examples of exorcism (1:34,39; 5:1-20; 9:14-29). Jesus, rather than the exorcised spirits, is always the focus of such stories. Here Jesus cleanses a man with an **unclean spirit.** According to the OT, uncleanness causes people to be unfit for God's presence. But Jesus has come to purify the unclean.

1:35-36 Jesus prayed in a deserted place **early in the morning, while it was still dark**. Mark's Gospel records Jesus at prayer on two other occasions, after the feeding of the five thousand (6:46) and in the garden of Gethsemane (13:32-42). Though possessing great power and authority, Jesus was dependent on God the Father.

1:40-45 After healing **a man with leprosy**, Jesus sends him to the priest. The man is to **offer what Moses commanded for** [his] **cleansing** (see Lv 14:2-31). Jesus's intent in sending the man to the priest is to have him pronounced clean so he can be reinstituted into society, **as a testimony to them.**

THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

2 When † he entered Capernaum † again after some days, it was reported
that he was at home. 2 So many people gathered together that there was
no more room, not even in the doorway, and he was speaking the word †

to them. 3 They came to him bringing a paralytic, † carried by four of them.
4 Since they were not able to bring him to † Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and after digging through it, they lowered the mat on which the paralytic was lying. 5 Seeing their faith, † Jesus told the paralytic, "Son, your sins † are forgiven." †

6 But some of the scribes † were sitting there, questioning † in their hearts:
7 "Why does he speak like this? He's blaspheming! † Who can forgive † sins † but God alone? " †

8 Right away † Jesus perceived in his spirit † that they were thinking like this within themselves and said to them, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? 9 Which is easier: † to say to the paralytic, † 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat, and walk'? † 10 But so that you may know that the Son of Man † has authority † on earth to forgive sins" † — he told the paralytic — 11 "I tell you: get up, † take your mat, and go home."
12 Immediately he got up, took the mat, and went out in front of everyone. As a result, they were all astounded † and gave glory † to God, † saying, "We have never seen anything like this! " †

THE CALL OF LEVI

13 Jesus † went out again beside the sea. The whole crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching † them. 14 Then, passing by, he saw Levi † the son of Alphaeus sitting at the toll booth, † and he said to him, "Follow me," † and he got up and followed † him.

15 While he was reclining at the table in Levi's house, many tax collectors † and sinners † were eating † with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. 16 When the scribes † who were Pharisees † † saw that he was eating † with sinners † and tax collectors, † they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat † with tax collectors and sinners? "

17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, "It is not those who are well who need † a doctor, † but those who are sick. † I didn't come to call the righteous, † but

sinners." †

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

18 Now † John's † disciples † and the Pharisees † † were fasting. † People came and asked him, "Why do John's disciples and the Pharisees' disciples fast, but your disciples do not fast? "

19 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot fast while the groom † is with them, can they? As long as they have the groom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the time † will come † when the groom will be taken away from them, † and then they will fast † on that day. 21 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new patch pulls away from the old cloth, † and a worse tear is made. 22 And no one puts new wine † into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst † the skins, and the wine is lost as well as the skins. No, new wine is put into fresh wineskins."

LORD OF THE SABBATH

23 On † the Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and his disciples † began to make their way, picking some heads of grain. 24 The Pharisees † said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful † on the Sabbath? "

25 He said to them, "Have you never read what David † and those who were with him did when he was in need † and hungry † — 26 how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar † the high priest † and ate the bread of the Presence † — which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests † — and also gave some to his companions? " 27 Then he told them, "The Sabbath was made for † man and not man for the Sabbath. † 28 So then, the Son of Man † is Lord † even of the Sabbath." †

2:4 Other mss read *able to get near* **2:15** Lit *reclining together* **2:16** Other mss read *scribes and Pharisees* **2:16** Other mss add *and drink* **2:18** Other mss read *The disciples of John and of the Pharisees* **2:20** Or *the days* **2:27** Or *because of*

2:1-12 Mt 9:1-8; Lk 5:17-26 **2:1** Lk 10:15 **2:2** Mk 4:14; Jn 18:32 **2:3** Mt 4:24; 8:6; 9:2,6; Mk 2:3-10 **2:5** Mt 8:10; Ac 3:16; Rm 1:8; 1Co 2:5; Gl 2:16; 1Tm 1:2; Heb 4:2 **2:5** Jn 15:22 **2:5** Mt 9:2,5; Lk 5:20,23; 7:48 **2:6** Mt 2:4 **2:6** Mk 9:33 **2:7** Ex 22:28; Mk 3:29; Rv 13:6 **2:7** Ps 25:11; Mt 9:2 **2:7** Jn 15:22 **2:7** Ex 34:6-7; Is 43:25; 44:2 **2:8** Mk 10:52 **2:8** Lk 5:22; 16:15; Jn 2:25 **2:9** Lk 16:17; 18:25 **2:9** Mk 2:3 **2:9** Mt 11:5 **2:10** Ps 8:4; Lk 5:24; Ac 7:56 **2:10** Mt 28:18; Mk 1:22 **2:10** Jn 15:22 **2:11** Mk 5:41 **2:12** Ac 10:45 **2:12** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **2:12** Lk 2:14 **2:12** Mt 9:33 **2:13-17** Mt 9:9-13; Lk 5:27-32 **2:13** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11

2:14 Lk 5:27,29 **2:14** Lk 5:27 **2:14** Lk 5:27 **2:14** Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12 **2:15** Lk 3:12; 18:13 **2:15** Mt 9:10; 1Tm 1:15 **2:16** Mt 2:4 **2:16** Mk 7:3 **2:16** Mt 11:18 **2:16** 1Tm 1:15 **2:16** Lk 3:12 **2:17** Mt 6:8 **2:17** Col 4:14 **2:17** Lk 5:31 **2:17** Mt 13:17; Rm 1:17 **2:17** Lk 5:32 **2:18-22** Mt 9:14-17; Lk 5:33-39 **2:18** Mk 1:4 **2:18** Jn 3:25 **2:18** Mk 7:3 **2:18** Lk 18:12; Ac 13:2 **2:19** Jn 2:9 **2:20** Mk 13:24 **2:20** Lk 17:22; Jn 16:16-20 **2:20** Lk 18:12 **2:21** Lk 19:36 **2:22** Lk 5:37 **2:22** Jn 6:27 **2:23-28** Mt 12:1-8; Lk 6:1-5 **2:23** Mk 10:10 **2:24** Mk 7:3 **2:24** Lk 6:2 **2:25** Lk 1:27 **2:25** Ac 2:45 **2:25** Rv 7:16 **2:26** 1Sm 21:1-6 **2:26** Lv 16:32 **2:26** Ex 25:30 **2:26** Ac 4:1 **2:27** Col 2:16 **2:28** Mk 2:10 **2:28** Rm 7:25; 1Co 8:6; Col 3:22 **2:28** Lk 6:5

2:10 Jesus employed the title **Son of Man** to describe himself more often than any other name. While its OT background is clear (Dn 7:13-14), Jesus's hearers did not seem to make the connection. This may be because the term can simply refer to a human (cp. Ezk 2:1; 3:1). Jesus may have used the title's ambiguous meaning in order to conceal his identity.

2:18-22 Just as no one puts on a sad face at a wedding, so **no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment** and **no one puts new wine into old wineskins.** It would be inappropriate for Jesus's disciples to fast while he was with them. The presence of the Messiah is, rather, a time to celebrate. There will, however, come a day when the Messiah **will be taken away from them.** Then temporary mourning and fasting will be appropriate.

3 Jesus † entered the synagogue † again, and a man was there who had a shriveled † hand. 2 In order to accuse † him, they were watching him closely † to see whether he would heal † him on the Sabbath. † 3 He told the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand before us." 4 Then he said to them, "Is it lawful † to do good † on the Sabbath or to do evil, † to save life † or to kill?" † But they were silent. † 5 After looking around at them with anger, † he was grieved at the hardness † of their hearts and told the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. † 6 Immediately the Pharisees † went out and started plotting † with the Herodians † against him, how they might kill † him.

MINISTERING TO THE MULTITUDE

7 Jesus † departed with his disciples to the sea, and a large crowd followed from Galilee, † and a large crowd followed from Judea, † 8 Jerusalem, † Idumea, beyond the Jordan, † and around Tyre † and Sidon. † The large crowd came to him because they heard about everything he was doing. 9 Then he told his disciples to have a small boat † ready for him, so that the crowd wouldn't crush him. 10 Since he had healed † many, all who had diseases were pressing toward him to touch † him. 11 Whenever the unclean † spirits † saw him, they fell

down † before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God!” † 12 And he would strongly warn † them not to make him known. †

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

13 Jesus † went up the mountain † and summoned those he wanted, and they came to him. 14 He appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, † † to be with him, to send them out to preach, † 15 and to have authority to † drive out demons. 16 He appointed the Twelve: † † To Simon, † he gave the name Peter; † 17 and to James † the son of Zebedee, † and to his brother John, † he gave the name “Boanerges” (that is, “Sons of Thunder” †); 18 Andrew; † Philip † and Bartholomew; Matthew † and Thomas; † James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, 19 and Judas Iscariot, † who also betrayed him.

A HOUSE DIVIDED

20 Jesus entered a house, and the crowd gathered again so that they were not even able to eat. † 21 When his family † heard this, they set out to restrain him, because they said, “He’s out of his mind.” †

22 The scribes † who had come down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul,” † and, “He drives out † demons † by the ruler † of the demons.” †

23 So he summoned † them and spoke to them in parables: † “How can Satan † drive out Satan? † 24 If a kingdom † is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand but is finished. 27 But no one can enter a strong man’s house and plunder his possessions unless he first ties up † the strong man. Then he can plunder his house.

28 “Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for all sins and whatever blasphemies † they utter. 29 But whoever blasphemes † against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, † but is guilty † of an eternal sin” † † — 30 because they were saying, “He has an unclean spirit.” †

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

31 His † mother † and his brothers † came, and standing outside, they sent
word to him and called him. 32 A crowd was sitting around him and told him,
"Look, your mother, your brothers, † and your sisters † are outside asking for
you."
33 He replied to them, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" 34 Looking at
those sitting in a circle around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my
brothers! † 35 Whoever does the will of God † is my brother and sister and
mother."

3:14 Other mss omit *he also named them apostles* **3:15** Other mss add *heal diseases, and to* **3:16** Other mss omit *He appointed the Twelve* **3:20** Or *eat a meal* ; lit *eat bread* **3:29** Other mss read *is subject to eternal judgment* **3:32** Other mss omit *and your sisters*

3:1-6 Mt 12:9-14; Lk 6:6-11 **3:1** Mk 1:21,39; Jms 2:2 **3:1** Mk 4:6; 5:29; 9:18; 11:20-21 **3:2** Rv 12:10 **3:2** Lk 6:7; 14:1; 20:20 **3:2** Ac 8:7 **3:2** Mk 2:23; Lk 13:10; 14:3 **3:4** Jn 18:31 **3:4** Ps 34:14; Lk 18:18 **3:4** Ps 34:12-16; 1Pt 3:17 **3:4** Php 2:12; Jms 5:20 **3:4** Lk 20:15 **3:4** Lk 1:20; 19:40 **3:5** Jms 1:19 **3:5** Ex 7:13; Rm 11:25 **3:5** Mk 8:25 **3:6** Mk 7:3 **3:6** Mt 12:14; Mk 15:1 **3:6** Mt 22:16; Mk 12:13 **3:6** Mk 11:18; Jn 5:18; 6:27 **3:7-12** Mt 4:24-25; 12:15-16; Lk 6:17-19 **3:7** Mt 17:22 **3:7** Lk 1:5 **3:8** Mt 23:37 **3:8** Lk 3:3 **3:8** Ac 21:7 **3:8** Gn 49:13 **3:9** Jn 21:8 **3:10** Ac 8:7 **3:10** Jn 20:17 **3:11** 2Co 6:17 **3:11** Lk 11:24 **3:11** Lk 8:47 **3:11** Lk 4:34,41 **3:12** 2Tm 4:2 **3:12** Mk 1:34 **3:13-19** Mt 10:2-4; Lk 6:12-16 **3:13** Mt 4:8 **3:14** Ac 1:2; Jd 17 **3:14** Mk 1:4 **3:16** Mk 11:11; Jn 1:35-51 **3:16** Mt 16:17 **3:16** Ac 10:32 **3:17** Ac 12:2 **3:17** Jn 21:2 **3:17** Jn 21:7 **3:17** Rv 6:1 **3:18** Jn 6:8 **3:18** Jn 1:43-48; 6:5,7; 12:21-22; 14:8-9 **3:18** Ac 1:13 **3:18** Jn 11:16; 14:5; 20:24,26-28; 21:2 **3:19** Mk 14:10,43; Ac 1:16,25 **3:21** Jn 7:3 **3:21** Lk 2:48; Jn 2:3-4; 7:3-5 **3:22** Mt 2:4 **3:22** Mt 10:25; 12:24,27; Lk 11:15-19 **3:22** 3Jn 10 **3:22** Rv 9:20; 18:2 **3:22** Lk 12:58 **3:22** Mt 9:34; 12:24; Lk 11:15 **3:23** Lk 18:16 **3:23** Mk 12:1 **3:23** Mk 1:13; 4:15; 8:33 **3:23-27** Mt 12:25-29; Lk 11:17-22 **3:24** Lk 4:5 **3:27** Mk 15:1 **3:28-30** Mt 12:31-32; Lk 12:10 **3:29** Ac 7:51 **3:29** Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 1Jn 5:16 **3:29** Mk 14:64 **3:29** 1Jn 5:16 **3:30** Lk 11:24 **3:31-35** Mt 12:46-50; Lk 8:19-21 **3:31** Mt 1:16 **3:31** Jn 2:12 **3:32** Mk 6:3 **3:34** Ac 9:30 **3:35** Rm 8:27; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17

3:22 The **scribes** attribute Jesus's power to **Beelzebul**, the ruler of the demons (described as the prince of demons in the *Testament of Solomon* 2:9–4:2). Beelzebul is an alternative name for Satan (v. 23). The name, as used by Mark, is not found in the OT, and scholars do not know its origin. It may be a deliberate corruption of the name of a Philistine deity.

3:23 The **parable** was a common teaching tool used in many ancient cultures. Approximately thirty-five percent of Jesus's teaching in the Synoptic Gospels is expressed in parabolic form. A parable makes comparisons and draws contrasts. It may be defined as "an expanded analogy used to convince and persuade" (Klyne Snodgrass, *Stories with Intent*, 9).

3:31-35 Jesus's comments about his true family would have caught the attention of his listeners. In first-century Judaism, one's ties to his biological family were regarded as the strongest of bonds. Jesus realigns loyalties according to those who do **the will of God.**

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4 Again † he began to teach † by the sea, and a very large crowd
gathered around him. So he got into a boat on the sea and sat down,
while the whole crowd was by the sea on the shore. 2 He taught them
many things in parables, † and in his teaching † he said to them: 3 "Listen!
Consider the sower who went out to sow. † 4 As he sowed, some seed fell along
the path, † and the birds came and devoured † it. 5 Other seed fell on rocky
ground where it didn't have much soil, and it grew up quickly, † since the soil
wasn't deep. 6 When the sun came up, it was scorched, and since it had no root,
it withered away. † 7 Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns came up and
choked it, and it didn't produce fruit. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground and it
grew up, producing fruit that increased † thirty, sixty, and a hundred times." †
9 Then he said, "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen." †

WHY JESUS USED PARABLES

10 When he was alone, those around him with the Twelve, † asked him about
the parables. † 11 He answered them, "The secret † of the kingdom of God †
has been given to you, but to those outside, † everything comes in parables
12 so that

they may indeed look,
and yet not perceive;
they may indeed listen,
and yet not understand; †
otherwise, they might turn back
and be forgiven." † † †

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

13 Then † he said to them: "Don't you understand this parable? † How then
will you understand all of the parables? 14 The sower sows † the word. †
15 Some are like the word sown on the path. † When they hear, immediately
Satan † comes and takes away the word † sown in them. † 16 And others are
like seed sown on rocky ground. When they hear the word, immediately they
receive it with joy. † 17 But they have no root; they are short-lived. When

distress † or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away. † 18 Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who hear the word, 19 but the worries † of this age, † the deceitfulness † † of wealth, † and the desires † for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. † 20 And those like seed sown on good ground hear the word, † welcome it, and produce fruit † thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown."

USING YOUR LIGHT

21 He † also said to them, "Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed? † Isn't it to be put on a lampstand? † 22 For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, † and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light. 23 If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen." † 24 And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure † you use, † it will be measured to you — and more will be added † to you. 25 For whoever has, more will be given to him, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him." †

THE PARABLE OF THE GROWING SEED

26 "The kingdom of God † is like this," he said. "A man scatters seed on the ground. 27 He sleeps † and rises † night † and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn't know how. 28 The soil produces a crop † by itself — first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain † on the head. 29 As soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, † because the harvest † has come."

THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

30 And † he said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, † or what parable † can we use to describe it? 31 It's like a mustard seed † that, when sown upon the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on the ground. 32 And when sown, † it comes up and grows taller than all the garden plants, † and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky † can nest in its shade."

USING PARABLES

USING PARABLES

33 He was speaking the word † to them with many parables † like these, as they were able to understand. † 34 He did not speak to them without a parable. Privately, however, he explained everything to his own disciples. †

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

35 On † that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." 36 So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm † arose, and the waves † were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 He was in the stern, sleeping † on the cushion. So they woke him up † and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?" †

39 He got up, rebuked † the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! † Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? † Do you still have no faith?"

41 And they were terrified † † and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey † him!" †

4:12 Other mss read *and their sins be forgiven them* **4:15** Other mss read *in their hearts* **4:19** Or *seduction* **4:41** Or *were filled with awe*

4:1-12 Mt 13:1-15; Lk 8:4-10 **4:1** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **4:2** Mk 12:1 **4:2** Mk 11:18; Ac 2:42; 17:19 **4:3** Gl 6:7 **4:4** Mk 8:27 **4:4** Gl 5:15 **4:5** Mk 10:52 **4:6** Mk 3:1 **4:8** 1Pt 2:2 **4:8** Jn 15:5; Col 1:6 **4:9** Is 6:9; Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2; Mk 8:18; Lk 14:35 **4:10** Mk 11:11 **4:10** Mk 12:1 **4:11** 1Co 2:7 **4:11** Mk 1:15 **4:11** Rm 9:27 **4:12** Mk 7:18 **4:12** Is 6:9-10 **4:12** Is 6:9-10 **4:13-20** Mt 13:18-23; Lk 8:9-15 **4:13** Mk 12:1 **4:14** Gl 6:7 **4:14** Mk 16:20 **4:15** Mk 8:27 **4:15** Mt 4:10 **4:15** Lk 6:47 **4:16** Jn 5:43; 15:11 **4:17** 2Co 1:4 **4:17** Jn 16:1 **4:19** 1Pt 5:7 **4:19** Lk 16:8; Eph 1:21 **4:19** Mt 13:22 **4:19** Mt 13:22; Lk 8:14 **4:19** 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **4:19** Rm 1:13; Ti 3:14; Jd 12 **4:20** Lk 6:47 **4:20** Col 1:10 **4:21-25** Lk 8:16-18 **4:21** Lk 5:18 **4:21** Rv 1:12 **4:22** 2Co 4:11 **4:23** Mk 4:9 **4:24** 2Co 10:13 **4:24** Mt 7:2; Lk 6:38 **4:24** Lk 17:5 **4:25** Mt 25:29; Lk 19:26 **4:26** Mk 1:15 **4:27** Mt 9:24 **4:27** Mk 5:41 **4:27** Jn 9:4 **4:28** Col 1:10 **4:28** Lk 16:7 **4:29** Jl 3:13; Rv 14:14-19 **4:29** Rv 14:15 **4:30-34** Mt 13:31-35; Lk 13:18-21 **4:30** Mk 1:15 **4:30** Mk 12:1 **4:31** Mt 17:20; Lk 17:6 **4:32** Gl 6:7 **4:32** Lk 11:42 **4:32** Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10 **4:33** Lk 6:47; Jn 18:32 **4:33** Mk 12:1 **4:33** Jn 16:12 **4:34** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **4:35-41** Mt 8:23-27; Lk 8:22-25 **4:37** Ps 107:25; Jnh 1:5-6 **4:37** Jd 13 **4:38** Mt 9:24 **4:38** Mk 5:41 **4:38** Jn 6:27 **4:39** 2Tm 4:2 **4:39** Mt 22:12; Mk 3:4 **4:40** Mt 8:26; Rv 21:8 **4:41** Rv 11:11 **4:41** Mk 1:27 **4:41** Jnh 1:10,16; Mk 6:50-51

4:10-12 Drawing on the prophet Isaiah, Jesus explains a key reason why he taught in parables—to hide kingdom truth from those outside it (see also Mt 13:10-15; Lk 8:9-10). Thus, parables are used to give those who understand yet more understanding, while those who do not understand remain unenlightened.

DEMONS DRIVEN OUT BY JESUS

5 They † came to the other side of the sea, to the region of the Gerasenes. † 2 As soon as he got out of the boat, a man with an unclean † spirit † came out of the tombs † and met him. 3 He lived in the tombs, † and no one was able to restrain him anymore — not even with a chain † — 4 because he often had been bound with shackles and chains, but had torn the chains apart and smashed † the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue † him. 5 Night † and day among the tombs † and on the mountains, † he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and knelt down before him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son † of the Most High God? † I beg you before God, don't torment † me! " 8 For he had told him, "Come out of the man, you unclean † spirit! " †

9 "What is your name? " he asked him.

"My name is Legion," † he answered him, "because we are many." 10 And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the region.

11 A large herd of pigs † was there, feeding † on the hillside. 12 The demons † begged him, "Send us to the pigs, so that we may enter them." 13 So he gave them permission, and the unclean † spirits † came out and entered the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned there.

14 The men who tended them † ran off † and reported it in the town and the countryside, and people went to see what had happened. 15 They came to Jesus and saw the man who had been demon-possessed, † † sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; † and they were afraid. † 16 Those who had seen it described to them what had happened to the demon-possessed † man and told about the pigs. 17 Then they began to beg him to leave their region.

18 As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged him earnestly that he might remain with him. 19 Jesus did not let him but told him, "Go home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord † has done † for you and how he has had mercy on you." 20 So he went

out and began to proclaim † in the Decapolis † how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed. †

A GIRL RESTORED AND A WOMAN HEALED

21 When † Jesus had crossed over again by boat † to the other side, a large crowd † gathered around him while he was by the sea. 22 One of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, † came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet †
23 and begged him earnestly, "My little daughter is dying. Come and lay your hands on † her so that she can get well † † and live." 24 So Jesus went with him, and a large crowd was following and pressing against him.

25 Now a woman suffering from bleeding † for twelve years 26 had endured † much under many doctors. † She had spent everything she had and was not helped at all. On the contrary, she became worse. 27 Having heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched † his clothing. † 28 For she said, "If I just touch his clothes, I'll be made well." † 29 Instantly her flow of blood ceased, and she sensed in her body that she was healed † of her affliction.

30 At once Jesus realized in himself that power † had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd † and said, "Who touched my clothes? " †

31 His disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing against you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me? ' "

32 But he was looking around to see who had done this. 33 The woman, with fear and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down † before him, and told him the whole truth. † 34 "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith † has saved you. † Go in peace and be healed † from your affliction." †

35 While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue leader's house and said, "Your daughter is dead. Why bother the teacher † anymore? "

36 When Jesus overheard † what was said, he told the synagogue leader, "Don't be afraid. † Only believe." 37 He did not let anyone accompany him except Peter, † James, † and John, † James's brother. 38 They came to the leader's house, and he saw a commotion — people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 He went in and said to them, "Why are you making a commotion and weeping? †

The child † is not dead but asleep." † 40 They laughed at him, but he put them all outside. He took the child's father, † mother, and those who were with him, and entered the place where the child was. 41 Then he took the child † by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum" † (which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, get up" †). 42 Immediately the girl got up † and began to walk. † (She was twelve years old.) At this they were utterly astounded. † 43 Then he gave them strict orders that no one should know about this † and told them to give her something to eat.

5:1 Some mss read *Gadarenes* ; other mss read *Gergesenes* **5:12** Other mss read *All the demons* **5:14** Other mss read *tended the pigs* **5:21** Other mss omit *by boat* **5:23** Or *she might be saved* **5:36** Or *ignored* **5:41** An Aramaic expression

5:1-20 Mt 8:28-34; Lk 8:26-39 **5:2** 2Co 6:17 **5:2** Lk 11:24 **5:2** Jn 5:28 **5:3** Lk 23:53 **5:3** Mk 15:1 **5:4** Rm 16:20; Rv 2:27 **5:4** Jms 3:7-8 **5:5** Jn 9:4 **5:5** Lk 23:53 **5:5** Mt 4:8 **5:7** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **5:7** Ps 78:35 **5:7** Rv 20:10 **5:8** 2Co 6:17 **5:8** Lk 11:24 **5:9** Mt 26:53; Lk 8:30 **5:11** Mt 7:6; 8:30-32; Lk 8:32-33; 15:15-16 **5:11** Jn 21:15 **5:13** 2Co 6:17 **5:13** Lk 11:24 **5:14** Jms 4:7 **5:15** Mt 9:32 **5:15** Mk 5:9 **5:15** 1Pt 4:7 **5:15** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **5:16** Mt 9:32 **5:19** Col 4:1; Jd 5 **5:19** Lk 1:25; 8:39; Ac 15:17; Rm 9:28 **5:20** Mk 1:4 **5:20** Mt 4:25; Mk 7:31 **5:20** Rv 17:6 **5:21-43** Mt 9:18-26; Lk 8:40-56 **5:21** Mk 2:4 **5:22** Lk 8:41 **5:22** Rv 19:10 **5:23** 1Tm 5:22 **5:23** Mk 6:56 **5:25** Lk 8:43 **5:26** Php 1:29 **5:26** Col 4:14 **5:27** Jn 20:17 **5:27** Lk 19:36 **5:28** Mk 6:56; Ac 16:31 **5:29** Lk 7:7 **5:30** Lk 5:17; 6:19; 8:46 **5:30** Mk 2:13 **5:30** Lk 19:36 **5:33** Lk 8:47 **5:33** Jn 14:6 **5:34** Mt 8:10 **5:34** Mt 9:22; Mk 6:56 **5:34** Ac 4:10 **5:34** Mk 5:29 **5:35** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **5:36** Jn 6:20 **5:37** Lk 6:14 **5:37** Ac 12:2 **5:37** Jn 21:7 **5:39** Mt 9:23 **5:39** Lk 1:7 **5:39** Mt 9:24 **5:40** Col 3:21 **5:41** Lk 1:7 **5:41** Mk 1:31; 2:11; 4:27,38; 9:27; 14:41-42 **5:42** Mk 9:27 **5:42** Mt 11:5 **5:42** Mk 16:8; Ac 10:45 **5:43** Mk 1:44; Lk 8:56

5:9 See "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454.*

5:19-20 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

5:22,35-36 Synagogue leaders served as rulers of a synagogue. They were normally selected from a board of elders—men who guided the activities of the synagogue. The position of synagogue leader was sometimes held for life and passed to one's son. In some synagogues, a leader was merely a figurehead; in others, he played a key role in decision-making.

5:25-26 See "Issues in Medical Ethics," *p. 1507.*

5:41 That Mark translates the Aramaic command, ***Talitha koum***, for his readers, strongly suggests that he expected Gentile readers (see also 7:34). Additional evidence supporting this idea includes his explanation of certain Jewish religious practices (7:3-4).

REJECTION AT NAZARETH

6 He † left there and came to his hometown, † and his disciples † followed him. 2 When the Sabbath † came, he began to teach † in the synagogue, † and many who heard him were astonished. "Where did

this man get these things?” they said. “What is this wisdom † that has been given to him, and how are these miracles † performed by his hands? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter, † the son of Mary, † and the brother of James, † Joses, Judas, † and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” So they were offended † by him.

4 Jesus said to them, “A prophet † is not without honor † except in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his household.” 5 He was not able to do a miracle † there, except that he laid his hands on † a few sick † people and healed † them. 6 And he was amazed † at their unbelief. † He was going around the villages teaching. †

COMMISSIONING THE TWELVE

7 He † summoned † the Twelve † and began to send † them out in pairs and gave them authority over unclean † spirits. † 8 He instructed them to take nothing for the road except a staff — no bread, no traveling bag, † no money in their belts, 9 but to wear sandals and not put on an extra shirt. † 10 He said to them, “Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that place. 11 If any place does not welcome † you or listen to you, when you leave there, shake the dust off your feet † as a testimony † against them.” † 12 So they went out and preached † that people should repent. † 13 They drove out many demons, † anointed † many sick † people with oil † and healed them. †

JOHN THE BAPTIST BEHEADED

14 King † Herod † heard about it, because Jesus’s name † had become well known. Some † said, “John the Baptist † has been raised from the dead, † and that’s why miraculous powers † are at work † in him.” 15 But others said, “He’s Elijah.” † Still others said, “He’s a prophet, like one of the prophets from long ago.” †

16 When Herod † heard of it, he said, “John, † the one I beheaded, has been raised!” †

17 For † Herod himself had given orders to arrest John and to chain † him in

prison on account of Herodias, † his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. † 18 John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful † for you to have your brother's wife." † 19 So Herodias held a grudge against him and wanted to kill † him. But she could not, 20 because Herod feared † John and protected him, knowing he was a righteous † and holy † man. When Herod heard him he would be very perplexed, † † and yet he liked to listen to him. †
21 An opportune time came on his birthday, when Herod gave a banquet † for his nobles, † military commanders, † and the leading men of Galilee. †
22 When Herodias's own daughter † came in and danced, † she pleased Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I'll give it to you." 23 He promised her with an † oath: † "Whatever you ask me I will give you, up to half my kingdom." †
24 She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for? "
"John the Baptist's † head," she said.
25 At once she hurried to the king and said, "I want you to give me John the Baptist's † head on a platter † immediately." 26 Although the king was deeply distressed, † because of his oaths † and the guests † he did not want to refuse † her. 27 The king immediately sent for an executioner and commanded him to bring John's head. So he went and beheaded him in prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother.
29 When John's disciples † heard about it, they came and removed his corpse and placed it in a tomb. †

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

30 The † apostles † gathered around Jesus and reported to him all that they had done and taught. 31 He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a remote place and rest for a while." For many people were coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.
32 So they went away in the boat by themselves to a remote place, 33 but many saw them leaving and recognized them, and they ran on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. †

34 When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd and had compassion † on them,
because they were like sheep † without a shepherd. Then he began to teach them
many things.
35 When it grew late, his disciples † approached him and said, “This place is
deserted, † and it is already late. 36 Send them away so that they can go into the
surrounding countryside and villages to buy themselves something to eat.”
37 “You give them something to eat,” he responded.
They said to him, “Should we go and buy two hundred denarii † worth of bread
and give them something to eat? ”
38 He asked them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”
When they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 Then he instructed them
to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down
in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 He took the five loaves and the two fish,
and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves. He kept giving them
to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them
all. 42 Everyone ate and was satisfied. † 43 They picked up twelve baskets full
of pieces of bread and fish. 44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were five
thousand men.

WALKING ON THE WATER

45 Immediately † he made his disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to
the other side, to Bethsaida, † while he dismissed the crowd. 46 After he said
good-bye to them, he went away to the mountain † to pray. † 47 Well into the
night, the boat was in the middle of the sea, and he was alone on the land. 48 He
saw them straining † at the oars, † because the wind was against them. Very
early in the morning † he came toward them walking on the sea and wanted to
pass by them. 49 When they saw him walking on the sea, they thought it was a
ghost † and cried out, 50 because they all saw him and were terrified. †
Immediately he spoke with them and said, “Have courage! † It is I. † Don’t be
afraid.” † 51 Then he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. They
were completely astounded, 52 because they had not understood about the
loaves. Instead, their hearts were hardened. †

MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

53 When they had crossed over, they came to shore at Gennesaret † and
anchored there.
54 As they got out of the boat, people immediately recognized him. 55 They
hurried throughout that region and began to carry the sick † on mats to wherever
they heard he was. 56 Wherever he went, into villages, towns, or the country,
they laid the sick in the marketplaces and begged him that they might touch just
the end † of his robe. † And everyone who touched it was healed.

6:11 Other mss add *Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah on judgment day than for that town.* **6:14** Other mss read *He* **6:20** Other mss read *When he heard him, he did many things* **6:22** Other mss read *When his daughter Herodias* **6:26** Lit *and those reclining at the table* **6:33** Other mss add *and gathered around him* **6:37** A denarius = one day's wage **6:48** Or *them being battered as they rowed* **6:48** Lit *Around the fourth watch of the night* = 3 to 6 a.m.

6:1-6 Mt 13:53-58 **6:1** Mk 1:9 **6:1** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **6:2** Mk 2:23; Lk 13:10 **6:2** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **6:2** Jms 2:2 **6:2** Pr 3:19; Ac 7:22; 1Co 1:21 **6:2** Ac 19:11 **6:3** Mt 13:55 **6:3** Mt 1:16 **6:3** Jms 1:1; Jd 1 **6:3** Mt 13:55; Jd 1 **6:3** Jn 16:1 **6:4** Mt 2:23 **6:4** Mt 13:57; 1Co 4:10; 12:23 **6:5** Ac 19:11 **6:5** 1Tm 5:22 **6:5** 1Co 11:30 **6:5** Ac 8:7 **6:6** Rv 17:6 **6:6** Heb 3:12,19 **6:6** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **6:7-13** Mt 10:5-42; Lk 9:1-6 **6:7** Lk 18:16 **6:7** Mk 11:11 **6:7** Mk 3:14 **6:7** 2Co 6:17 **6:7** Lk 11:24 **6:8** Lk 10:4 **6:9** Jn 19:23 **6:11** Ac 17:11 **6:11** Mt 10:14; Lk 9:5; 10:11; Ac 13:51 **6:11** 1Tm 2:6 **6:12** Mk 1:4 **6:12** Ac 3:19; 26:20 **6:13** Mk 3:15; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **6:13** Mk 16:1 **6:13** 1Co 11:30 **6:13** Jms 5:14 **6:13** Ac 8:7 **6:14-16** Lk 9:7-9 **6:14** Mt 14:1 **6:14** Jn 10:25 **6:14** Mk 1:4 **6:14** Mt 17:9; Jn 21:14 **6:14** Mk 5:30 **6:14** 1Co 12:6 **6:15** Mk 8:28 **6:15** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52 **6:16** Mt 14:1 **6:16** Mk 1:4 **6:16** Mt 26:32 **6:17-29** Mt 14:6-12 **6:17** Mk 15:1 **6:17** Mt 14:3,6; Lk 3:19 **6:17** 1Tm 5:14 **6:18** Mk 2:24; Jn 18:31 **6:18** Lv 18:16; 20:21 **6:19** Lk 20:15 **6:20** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **6:20** Mt 13:17 **6:20** Ps 20:6; 1Co 7:14 **6:20** Lk 24:4; Jn 13:22; Ac 25:20; 2Co 4:8; Gl 4:20 **6:20** 2Co 11:19 **6:21** Jn 13:2 **6:21** Rv 6:15 **6:21** Ac 21:31 **6:21** Mt 17:22 **6:22** Mt 11:17 **6:23** Heb 6:16 **6:23** Mt 5:34 **6:23** Lk 4:5 **6:24** Mk 1:4 **6:25** Lk 7:20 **6:25** Mt 14:8 **6:26** Mt 26:38; Mk 14:34 **6:26** Mt 5:33 **6:26** 1Th 4:8 **6:29** Mk 10:10; Jn 3:25 **6:29** Jn 5:28 **6:30-44** Mt 14:13-21; Lk 9:10-17; Jn 6:1-15 **6:30** Ac 1:2; Jd 17 **6:34** Lk 15:20 **6:34** Mt 7:15 **6:35** Mk 10:10 **6:35** Jn 1:23; Rv 12:6 **6:42** Mt 5:6 **6:45-56** Mt 14:22-36; Jn 6:16-21 **6:45** Jn 12:21 **6:46** Mt 4:8 **6:46** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **6:48** Rv 20:10 **6:49** Mt 14:26 **6:50** Jn 5:7 **6:50** Jn 16:33 **6:50** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **6:50** Jn 6:20 **6:52** Mk 8:17; Heb 3:8 **6:53** Mt 14:34; Lk 5:1 **6:55** Lk 5:31 **6:56** Mt 23:5 **6:56** Mt 9:20; 14:36; Lk 8:44; 19:36

6:11 Jews would **shake the dust off** their feet after returning to Israel from Gentile territory. This could be understood as a prophetic warning to those who do not know the God of Israel, or as a kind of cleansing from them.

6:26 In Bible times, people felt a great sense of responsibility to keep their oaths (Nm 30:2; Jdg 11:29-40). This fact, coupled with Herod's concern that he would lose the respect of his guests if he denied the girl's request, resulted in John's execution.

6:37 A denarius equaled one day's wages for a common laborer. Two hundred **denarii** would have equaled roughly eight months of labor.

6:41 Prior to performing the miracle, Jesus prayed. His act of **looking up to heaven** illustrates a prayerful gesture practiced by pious Jews (7:34; Lk 18:13; Jn 11:41). Jesus's posture here does not represent a unique manner of praying, as some suggest.

6:49-50 The disciples' initial understanding of Jesus's walking on water (**they thought it was a ghost and**

cried out . . . and were terrified) reveals how ancient people would have viewed this supernatural event.

THE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS

7 The † Pharisees † and some of the scribes † who had come from
Jerusalem † gathered around him. 2 They observed that some of his
disciples were eating bread with unclean † — that is, unwashed —
hands. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their
hands a ceremonial washing, keeping the tradition of the elders. 4 When they
come from the marketplace, † they do not eat unless they have washed. † And
there are many other customs they have received and keep, like the washing of
cups, pitchers, kettles, and dining couches. † †) 5 So the Pharisees † and the
scribes † asked him, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of
the elders, † instead of eating bread with ceremonially unclean † hands?"
6 He answered them, "Isaiah † prophesied † correctly about you hypocrites, †
as it is written: †

This people honors † me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me.
7 **They worship me in vain,**
teaching † as doctrines † human commands. † †

8 Abandoning the command of God, you hold on to human tradition." † 9 He
also said to them, "You have a fine way of invalidating God's command in order
to set up † your tradition! 10 For Moses † said: **Honor your father and your**
mother; † † and **Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must be put to**
death. † † 11 But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or mother: Whatever
benefit † you might have received from me is *corban*' " (that is, an offering †
devoted to God), 12 "you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.
13 You nullify the word of God † by your tradition that you have handed †
down. And you do many other similar things."
14 Summoning † the crowd again, he told them, "Listen to me, all of you, and
understand: † 15 Nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him but
the things that come out of a person are what defile him." †

17 When he went into the house away from the crowd, his disciples asked him
about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Are you also as lacking in
understanding? Don't you realize that nothing going into a person from the
outside can defile him? 19 For it doesn't go into his heart but into the stomach †
and is eliminated" (thus he declared all foods clean † †). 20 And he said, "What
comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of people's
hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, † thefts, murders, †
22 adulteries, † greed, † evil actions, deceit, † self-indulgence, † envy, †
slander, † pride, † and foolishness. † 23 All these evil things come from within
and defile a person."

A GENTILE MOTHER'S FAITH

24 He got up and departed from † there to the region of Tyre. † † He entered a
house and did not want anyone to know it, but he could not escape notice.
25 Instead, immediately after hearing about him, a woman whose little daughter
had an unclean spirit † came and fell at his feet. † 26 The woman was a
Gentile, † † a Syrophoenician by birth, and she was asking him to cast the
demon † out of her daughter. 27 He said to her, "Let the children be fed first,
because it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." †
28 But she replied to him, "Lord, † even the dogs under the table eat the
children's crumbs."
29 Then he told her, "Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has left
your daughter." 30 When she went back to her home, she found her child lying
on the bed, and the demon was gone.

JESUS DOES EVERYTHING WELL

31 Again, leaving the region of Tyre, † he went by way of Sidon to the Sea of
Galilee, † through † the region of the Decapolis. † 32 They brought to him a
deaf † man who had difficulty speaking † and begged Jesus to lay his hand
on † him. 33 So he took him away from the crowd in private. After putting his
fingers in the man's ears and spitting, † he touched his tongue. 34 Looking up to
heaven, † he sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha! " † (that is, "Be

opened! ”). 35 Immediately his ears were opened, † his tongue was loosened,
and he began to speak clearly. † 36 He ordered them to tell no one, † but the
more he ordered them, the more they proclaimed it. †
37 They were extremely astonished and said, “He has done everything well. †
He even makes the deaf † hear and the mute speak.” †

7:4 Other mss omit *and dining couches* **7:5** Other mss read *with unwashed* **7:8** Other mss add *The washing of jugs, and cups, and many other similar things you practice.* **7:9** Or *to maintain* **7:15** Some mss include v. 16: *“If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen.”* **7:19** Other mss read *is eliminated, making all foods clean”* **7:22** Or *evil eye* **7:24** Many early mss add *and Sidon* **7:26** Or *a Greek (speaker)* **7:31** Or *into* **7:34** An Aramaic expression

7:1-23 Mt 15:1-20 **7:1** Mk 7:3 **7:1** Mt 2:4 **7:1** Mt 23:37 **7:2** Ac 10:28 **7:4** Mk 6:56 **7:4** Heb 6:2; 9:10 **7:4** Lk 5:18 **7:5** Mk 7:3 **7:5** Mt 2:4 **7:5** 3Jn 1 **7:6** Mt 3:3; 4:14; 12:17 **7:6** Jn 11:51 **7:6** Lk 6:42 **7:6** Ac 15:15 **7:6** 1Tm 5:3 **7:7** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **7:7** Rm 15:4 **7:6-7** Is 29:13 **7:7** Is 29:13; Col 2:22 **7:10** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **7:10** Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16 **7:10** Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16 **7:10** Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 **7:10** Ex 21:17; Lv 20:9 **7:11** Mk 5:26 **7:11** Heb 5:1; 9:9; 11:4 **7:13** Mk 4:14; Lk 8:21; Jn 18:32 **7:13** Jd 3 **7:14** Lk 18:16 **7:14** Mt 13:13 **7:19** Php 3:19 **7:19** 1Jn 1:7 **7:21** 1Th 4:3 **7:21** Pr 1:16 **7:22** Nm 5:11 **7:22** Eph 5:3 **7:22** Ps 10:7 **7:22** Rm 13:13; 2Co 12:21; Gl 5:19; Eph 4:19; 1Pt 4:3; 2Pt 2:2,7,18 **7:22** Jn 10:33; Rv 13:6 **7:22** Ps 17:10 **7:22** 2Co 11:1 **7:24-30** Mt 15:21-28 **7:24** Ac 21:7 **7:25** Lk 11:24 **7:25** Lk 8:47 **7:26** Ac 17:12 **7:26** Mk 3:15; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **7:27** Ex 22:31 **7:28** Lk 10:1 **7:31** Ac 21:7 **7:31** Mt 4:18; 15:29; Mk 1:16; Jn 6:1 **7:31** Mt 4:25; Mk 5:20 **7:32** Lk 7:22 **7:32** Ex 4:11; Is 35:6; 56:10 **7:32** 1Tm 5:22 **7:33** Jn 9:6 **7:34** Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10 **7:35** Phm 10 **7:35** Lk 20:21 **7:36** Mk 1:44; Lk 8:56 **7:36** Mk 1:4 **7:37** Gn 1:31 **7:37** Lk 7:22 **7:37** Mk 9:17

7:3,5 The **tradition of the elders** was a collection of oral teachings that developed over time among the Jews. These teachings were not inspired Scripture; rather, they included expansions on the Torah motivated by a two-fold concern: to apply the Torah’s teachings to everyday life and to build a safety net around the Torah to keep people from violating it. Some Pharisees and scribes showed greater concern for the tradition of men than the commands of God.

7:10-12 Jesus provides an example of the Pharisees and scribes’ invalidation of God’s command in order to maintain their human traditions. Scripture required Jews to honor their parents, which practically speaking, included caring for their physical needs with their wealth (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16). But in order to avoid this responsibility, some Jews declared their wealth ***corban***, or **an offering devoted to God**. Following this human tradition—or only claiming to—allowed them to set aside God’s command to honor their parents.

7:14-23 See “Illness and a Christian Worldview,” *p. 646.*

7:19 In the parenthetical comment, **thus he declared all foods clean**, Mark explains the significance of Jesus’s teaching about ritual purity. OT food laws (e.g., Lv 11:1-47) are not binding for God’s people because Jesus has come to fulfill the law (Mt 5:17).

7:32-35 Jesus’s healing of the deaf man, who also had speech difficulty, included the act of **spitting** (see also 8:23; Jn 9:6). Some have suggested that Jesus spat into his own hand then touched the man’s tongue with his moistened finger. Others suggest that he spat directly onto the man’s tongue, similar to his actions in 8:23. The ancients took a variety of views concerning saliva. Some Gentiles and Jews believed it represented a person’s force, and thus had the potential to convey power; others saw it as having a therapeutic function; and still others regarded it as disgusting.

FEEDING FOUR THOUSAND

8 In † those days there was again a large crowd, and they had nothing to
eat. He called † the disciples † and said to them, 2 "I have
compassion † on the crowd, because they've already stayed with me
three days and have nothing to eat. 3 If I send them home hungry, they will
collapse on the way, † and some of them have come a long distance."
4 His disciples answered him, "Where can anyone get enough bread here in this
desolate place to feed † these people?"
5 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked them.
"Seven," they said. 6 He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground.
Taking the seven loaves, he gave thanks, broke † them, and gave them to his
disciples to set before the people. So they served them to the crowd. 7 They also
had a few small fish, and after he had blessed them, he said these were to be
served as well. 8 They ate and were satisfied. Then they collected seven large
baskets of leftover pieces. 9 About four thousand were there. He dismissed
them. 10 And he immediately got into the boat with his disciples and went to the
district of Dalmanutha.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND HEROD

11 The † Pharisees † came and began to argue with him, demanding of him a
sign † from heaven † to test † him. 12 Sighing deeply in his spirit, † he said,
"Why does this generation † demand a sign? Truly I tell you, † no sign will be
given to this generation." 13 Then he left them, got back into the boat, and went
to the other side.
14 The disciples had forgotten to take bread and had only one loaf with them in
the boat. 15 Then † he gave them strict orders: "Watch out! Beware of the
leaven † † of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." † 16 They were
discussing among themselves that they did not have any bread. 17 Aware of this,
he said to them, "Why are you discussing the fact you have no bread? Don't you
understand or comprehend? Do you have hardened hearts? † 18 **Do you have
eyes and not see; do you have ears and not hear?** † † And do you not

remember? † 19 When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of leftovers did you collect? ”
“Twelve,” they told him.
20 “When I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many baskets full of pieces did you collect? ”
“Seven,” they said.
21 And he said to them, “Don’t you understand yet? ” †

HEALING A BLIND MAN

22 They came to Bethsaida. † They brought a blind † man to him and begged him to touch him. 23 He took the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village. Spitting † on his eyes and laying his hands on † him, he asked him, “Do you see anything? ”
24 He looked up and said, “I see people — they look like trees walking.” †
25 Again Jesus placed his hands on the man’s eyes. The man looked intently and his sight was restored and he saw everything clearly. 26 Then he sent † him home, saying, “Don’t even go into the village.” † †

PETER’S CONFESSION OF THE MESSIAH

27 Jesus † went out with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi. And on the road he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am? ”
28 They answered him, “John the Baptist; † others, Elijah; still others, one of the prophets.” †
29 “But you,” he asked them, “who do you say that I am? ”
Peter † answered him, “You are the Messiah.” † 30 And he strictly warned † them to tell no one about him.

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION PREDICTED

31 Then † he began to teach them that it was necessary for the Son of Man † to suffer many things and be rejected † by the elders, † chief priests, and scribes, † be killed, and rise † after three days. † 32 He spoke openly about this. Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning around and

looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! † You are not thinking about God's concerns † but human concerns."

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

34 Calling the crowd along with his disciples, he said to them, "If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, † take up his cross, † and follow me. † 35 For whoever wants to save † his life will lose it, † but whoever loses † his life † because of me † and the gospel † will save it. † 36 For what does it benefit † someone to gain † the whole world † and yet lose † his life? † 37 What can anyone give in exchange for his life? † 38 For whoever is ashamed † of me and my words † in this adulterous and sinful † generation, † the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory † of his Father † with the holy † angels." †

8:15 Or *yeast* **8:26** Other mss add *or tell anyone in the village* **8:33** Or *about the things of God*
8:1-10 Mt 15:29-38 **8:1** Lk 18:16 **8:1** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **8:2** Lk 15:20 **8:3** Mk 8:27 **8:4** Mt 5:6; 15:33 **8:6** Mk 14:22 **8:11-12** Mt 16:1-4 **8:11** Mk 7:3 **8:11** Mk 13:22; Jn 2:11; Heb 2:4 **8:11** Mt 24:35; Lk 12:33; Ac 17:24; Eph 6:9; Rv 21:10 **8:11** Jms 1:13 **8:12** Ps 51:12 **8:12** Lk 11:29 **8:12** Rv 22:21 **8:15-21** Mt 16:5-12 **8:15** Lk 13:21; Gl 5:9 **8:15** Mt 14:1 **8:17** Mk 6:52; Jn 12:40; Rm 11:7; 2Co 3:14 **8:18** Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2 **8:18** Jr 5:21; Ezk 12:2; Mk 4:9,40 **8:18** Rv 2:5 **8:21** Mk 4:40 **8:22** Jn 12:21 **8:22** Mt 15:14 **8:23** Mk 7:33; 8:23; Jn 9:6 **8:23** 1Tm 5:22 **8:24** Mt 11:5 **8:26** Mk 3:14 **8:26** Mk 1:44 **8:27-30** Mt 16:13-20; Lk 9:18-20 **8:28** Mk 1:4; Lk 7:20 **8:28** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52 **8:29** Lk 6:14 **8:29** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **8:30** 2Tm 4:2 **8:31–9:1** Mt 16:21-28; Lk 9:21-27 **8:31** Mk 2:10 **8:31** Mt 21:42; Mk 12:10; Lk 9:22; 17:25; 20:17; Heb 12:17; 1Pt 2:4,7 **8:31** 3Jn 1 **8:31** Mt 2:4 **8:31** Mt 16:21; Lk 18:33; Ac 2:24 **8:31** Lk 9:22 **8:33** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **8:34** Mk 10:45 **8:34** Lk 9:23 **8:34** Jn 8:12; 3Jn 9 **8:35** Ac 16:30; Jms 5:20; Jd 23 **8:35** 1Jn 3:16 **8:35** Mt 16:26 **8:35** Mt 10:39 **8:35** Mk 10:29; Rm 8:36 **8:35** Mk 1:1; Php 1:5 **8:35** Mt 16:25; Lk 9:24 **8:36** Mk 5:26 **8:36** Mt 16:26 **8:36** Mt 13:38 **8:36** 1Co 3:15; Php 3:7 **8:36** Rm 15:1 **8:37** Mt 20:28 **8:38** Rm 1:16 **8:38** Mk 4:14; Jn 18:32 **8:38** 1Tm 1:15 **8:38** Mt 12:39; Lk 11:29 **8:38** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **8:38** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **8:38** 1Co 7:14 **8:38** Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Jd 14; Rv 14:6

8:11-13 The Pharisees demanded that Jesus perform **a sign from heaven**. They were probably not looking for a miracle, for they were already aware of miraculous acts performed by Jesus (3:22). Rather, it seems they wanted confirmation from God himself that Jesus's authority came from him.

9 Then he said to them, "Truly I tell you, † there are some standing here who will not taste death † until they see the kingdom of God come in power." †

THE TRANSFIGURATION

2 After † six days † Jesus took Peter, James, and John † and led them up a high mountain † by themselves to be alone. He was transfigured † in front of them, 3 and his clothes † became dazzling — extremely white † as no launderer on earth could whiten † them. 4 Elijah † appeared to them with Moses, † and they were talking with Jesus. 5 Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, † it’s good † for us to be here. Let us set up three shelters: † one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” — 6 because he did not know what to say, † since they were terrified. †

7 A cloud † appeared, overshadowing † them, and a voice † came from the cloud: † “This is my beloved † Son; † listen to him! ” †

8 Suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

9 As † they were coming down the mountain, † he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen † until the Son of Man † had risen † from the dead. †

10 They kept this word † to themselves, questioning what “rising from the dead” meant.

11 Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes † say that Elijah must come first? ” †

12 “Elijah does come first and restores † all things,” † he replied. “Why then is it written † that the Son of Man must suffer † many things and be treated with contempt? † 13 But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written † about him.”

THE POWER OF FAITH OVER A DEMON

14 When † they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and scribes disputing † with them. 15 When the whole crowd saw him, they were amazed and ran to greet him. 16 He asked them, “What are you arguing with them about? ”

17 Someone from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, † I brought my son to you. He has a spirit † that makes him unable to speak. † 18 Whenever it seizes

him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they couldn't."

19 He replied to them, "You unbelieving † generation, how long will I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me." 20 So they brought the boy to him. When the spirit saw him, it immediately threw the boy into convulsions. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. 21 "How long has this been happening to him?" Jesus asked his father.

"From childhood," he said. 22 "And many times it has thrown him into fire or water to destroy † him. But if you can do anything, have compassion † on us and help us."

23 Jesus said to him, "'If you can'? † Everything is possible † for the one who believes." †

24 Immediately the father of the boy cried out, "I do believe; help my unbelief!"

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked † the unclean † spirit, saying to it, "You mute and deaf † spirit, I command you: Come out of him and never enter him again."

26 Then it came out, shrieking and throwing him † into terrible convulsions. †

The boy became like a corpse, so that many said, "He's dead." 27 But Jesus, taking him by the hand, raised him, † and he stood up.

28 After he had gone into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

29 And he told them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer." † †

THE SECOND PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

30 Then † they left that place and made their way through Galilee, but he did not want anyone to know it. † 31 For he was teaching † his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man † is going to be betrayed † into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, he will rise † three days later." † 32 But they did not understand this statement, and they were afraid to ask him. †

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

33 They † came to Capernaum. † When he was in the house, † he asked them,
"What were you arguing about on the way?" † 34 But they were silent, †
because on the way they had been arguing with one another about who was the
greatest. † 35 Sitting down, he called the Twelve † and said to them, "If anyone
wants to be first, he must be last and servant of all." † 36 He took a child, † had
him stand among them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them,
37 "Whoever welcomes † one little child such as this in my name † welcomes
me. And whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but him who sent †
me." †

IN HIS NAME

38 John † said to him, "Teacher, † we saw someone † driving out demons † in
your name, † and we tried to stop him because he wasn't following us." †
39 "Don't stop him," said Jesus, "because there is no one who will perform a
miracle † in my name who can soon afterward speak evil of me. 40 For whoever
is not against us is for us. † 41 And whoever gives you a cup of water to drink †
in my name, because you belong to Christ † — truly I tell you, † he will never
lose his reward. †

WARNINGS FROM JESUS

42 "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to fall away †
— it would be better for him if a heavy millstone † were hung around his neck
and he were thrown into the sea.
43 "And if your hand causes you to fall away, cut it off. † It is better for you to
enter life maimed † than to have two hands and go to hell, the unquenchable
fire. † † 45 And if your foot causes you to fall away, cut it off. It is better for
you to enter life lame † than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. † 47 And
if your eye causes you to fall away, gouge it out. It is better for you to enter the
kingdom of God † with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown † into
hell, † 48 where **their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.** †
49 For everyone will be salted with fire. † † † 50 Salt is good, but if the salt

should lose its flavor, how can you season it? † Have salt † among yourselves, and be at peace † with one another."

9:23 Other mss add *believe* **9:26** Other mss omit *him* **9:29** Other mss add *and fasting* **9:31** Or *handed over* **9:37** Or *"Whoever receives* **9:38** Other mss add *who didn't go along with us* **9:43** Some mss include v. 44: *Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.* **9:45** Some mss include v. 46: *Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.* **9:49** Other mss add *and every sacrifice will be salted with salt*

9:1 Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **9:1** Mk 13:28-32; 14:25; Jn 21:22-23; 2Pt 3:4 **9:1** Lk 6:19 **9:2-8** Mt 17:1-8; Lk 9:28-36 **9:2** Ex 24:15-18; Hs 6:2 **9:2** Mt 10:2; Mk 5:37; 13:3; 14:33; Ac 1:13 **9:2** Mt 4:8; 2Pt 1:18 **9:2** Rm 12:2; 2Co 3:18 **9:3** Lk 19:36 **9:3** Rv 3:4 **9:3** Rv 7:14 **9:4** Mk 8:28 **9:4** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **9:5** Jn 11:8 **9:5** Gn 1:31 **9:5** Ex 25:9 **9:6** Mk 14:40 **9:6** Heb 12:21 **9:7** Ex 24:15; Mt 26:64 **9:7** Lk 1:35 **9:7** Jn 5:37 **9:7** 2Pt 1:16-18 **9:7** Eph 1:6; Phm 1 **9:7** Lk 20:13; Jn 5:19 **9:7** Dt 18:15 **9:9-13** Mt 17:9-13 **9:9** Mt 4:8 **9:9** Lk 8:56 **9:9** Mk 2:10 **9:9** Mt 16:21; Lk 18:33 **9:9** Jn 20:9 **9:10** Mk 4:14 **9:11** Mt 2:4 **9:11** Mal 4:5 **9:12** Mk 8:25 **9:12** Lk 1:17 **9:12** Ac 15:15 **9:12** Mk 8:31 **9:12** Lk 23:11 **9:13** Mk 1:2 **9:14-29** Mt 17:14-20; Lk 9:37-42 **9:14** Mk 8:11 **9:17** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **9:17** Lk 11:24; 1Tm 4:1; 1Jn 4:1 **9:17** Mk 7:37 **9:19** Lk 12:46 **9:22** Jn 6:27 **9:22** Lk 15:20 **9:23** Mt 17:20; Jn 11:40 **9:23** Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **9:25** 2Tm 4:2 **9:25** 2Co 6:17 **9:25** Lk 7:22 **9:26** Mk 1:26 **9:27** Mk 1:31 **9:29** Ac 12:5; 16:13; Phm 22 **9:30-32** Mt 17:22-23; Lk 9:43-45 **9:30** Mk 1:44 **9:31** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **9:31** Mk 2:10 **9:31** Mt 16:21; Lk 18:33; Ac 2:24 **9:31** Mk 8:31; Lk 9:22 **9:32** Mk 4:40; Lk 2:50 **9:33-50** Mt 18:1-10; Lk 9:46-50 **9:33** Lk 10:15 **9:33** Mk 1:29 **9:33** Mk 8:27 **9:34** Mk 3:4 **9:34** Lk 22:24-27; Ac 8:9 **9:35** Mk 11:11 **9:35** Mt 20:16-27; 23:11; Mk 10:43-44; Lk 22:26 **9:36** Lk 1:7 **9:37** Jn 10:25 **9:37** Mt 15:24; Mk 12:6; Jn 3:16-17 **9:37** Mt 10:40 **9:38** Jn 21:7 **9:38** Mk 4:38 **9:38** Mk 3:15; Rv 9:20 **9:38** Jn 10:25; 14:13 **9:38** Nm 11:26-30 **9:39** Ac 19:11 **9:40** Mt 12:30; Lk 11:23 **9:41** Mt 10:42; 25:35-42; Rm 12:20 **9:41** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **9:41** Rv 22:21 **9:41** Mt 10:42; 2Pt 2:13 **9:42** Ex 23:33; Jn 6:35 **9:42** Jdg 9:53; Mt 24:41; Rv 18:22 **9:43** Mt 5:29-30 **9:43** Mt 15:30-31 **9:43** Mt 3:12; 5:22; 25:41; 2Th 1:8 **9:45** Jn 5:3 **9:47** Mk 1:15 **9:47** 3Jn 10 **9:47** Jms 3:6 **9:48** Is 66:24 **9:49** Lv 2:13; Ezk 43:24 **9:49** Lv 2:13; Ezk 43:24 **9:50** Mt 5:13; Lk 14:34 **9:50** Ex 30:35; 2Kg 2:19-23; Col 4:6 **9:50** Mt 5:9; Rm 12:18; 14:13; 2Co 13:11; 1Th 5:13; Heb 12:14

9:4 The appearance of Moses and Elijah, two of the greatest figures of Israel's history, probably represents Jesus's fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17). They also point to Jesus's significance, since **Moses** was regarded as the model prophet (Dt 18:18) and **Elijah** was the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal 4:5-6; Mt 11:7-10).

9:7 God speaks *directly* to the disciples present with Jesus. Jewish tradition viewed this type of communication from God as rare. Mark's inclusion of the event draws attention to Jesus as God's beloved Son, One who is greater than Moses and Elijah.

9:36-37 While children were loved and well-treated, they occupied the lowest position on the social scale. Jesus reorients his disciples' perspective, encouraging them to welcome the humble and lowly just as they would welcome him. Indeed, those who welcome the humble are welcoming the greatest of all—God.

9:43,45,47 Jesus speaks of cutting off one's **hand** and **foot** and gouging out one's **eye.** Like many great teachers in ancient times, Jesus employs hyperbole. Such exaggerated commands are not to be taken literally. Their intent is to encourage listeners to deal with sin swiftly, for eternal existence is at stake.

9:48 See "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

THE QUESTION OF DIVORCE

10 He † set out from there and went to the region of Judea † and across
the Jordan. † Then crowds converged on him again, and as was his
custom he taught † them again.
2 Some Pharisees † came to test † him, asking, “Is it lawful † for a man to
divorce † his wife? ” †
3 He replied to them, “What did Moses † command you? ”
4 They said, “Moses permitted us to write divorce papers † and send her
away.” †
5 But Jesus told them, “He wrote this command for you because of the hardness
of your hearts. † 6 But from the beginning † of creation † God † **made them
male and female.** † † 7 **For this reason a man will leave** † **his father and
mother** † 8 **and the two will become one flesh.** † † So they are no longer two,
but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” †
10 When they were in the house again, the disciples questioned him about this
matter. 11 He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife † and marries † another
commits adultery † against her. 12 Also, if she divorces her husband † and
marries another, she commits adultery.”

BLESSING THE CHILDREN

13 People † were bringing little children † to him in order that he might touch
them, but the disciples rebuked † them. 14 When Jesus saw it, he was
indignant † and said to them, “Let the little children come to me. † Don’t
stop † them, because the kingdom of God † belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I
tell you, † whoever does not receive † † the kingdom of God like a little
child † will never enter it.” 16 After taking them in his arms, he laid his hands
on † them and blessed † them.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

17 As † he was setting out on a journey, † a man ran up, knelt down † before
him, and asked him, “Good † teacher, † what must I do to inherit † eternal
life? ” †

18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “No one is good except God
alone. † 19 You know the commandments: **Do not murder;** † **do not commit**
adultery; † **do not steal;** † **do not bear false witness;** † **do not defraud;** †
honor † **your father and mother.**” † †
20 He said to him, “Teacher, † I have kept all these from my youth.”
21 Looking at him, Jesus loved him † and said to him, “You lack one thing: Go,
sell all you have and give to the poor, † and you will have treasure † in
heaven. † Then come, † follow me.” † 22 But he was dismayed by this
demand, and he went away grieving, † because he had many possessions. †

POSSESSIONS AND THE KINGDOM

23 Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who
have wealth † to enter the kingdom of God!” †
24 The disciples were astonished at his words. Again Jesus said to them,
“Children, † how hard it is † to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a
camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich † person to enter the
kingdom of God.”
26 They were even more astonished, saying to one another, “Then who can be
saved?” †
27 Looking at them, Jesus said, “With man it is impossible, † but not with God,
because all things are possible with God.”
28 Peter † began to tell him, “Look, we have left everything and followed you.”
29 “Truly I tell you,” † Jesus said, “there is no one who has left house or
brothers or sisters or mother or father † or children or fields for my sake and for
the sake of the gospel, †

GENDER EQUALITY AND CHURCH HISTORY

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, day and night, land and sea, animals and birds, man and woman (Gn 1:2). He created male and female in his image. Gender was the unique design of God the Creator. God declared that his plan for two sexes was “very good” (Gn 1:31).

Since humanity’s fall into sin and throughout history, however, men and women have struggled with their identities and challenged their roles. Christians today must seek truth from God’s Word to know who they are and to understand their purposes in life. God does not desire for his children to blur the lines of gender or embrace the views of secular culture. He wants Christians to believe biblical principles and to live godly lives that embody his purposes.

The body of Christ, the church, has faced challenges with gender roles throughout history. Men and women were both involved in the ministry of the early church though they fulfilled different roles. As the church has grown and diversified, men and women have assumed various leadership roles. Evangelical churches have considered gender roles differently. Most reserve positions of spiritual authority for men, in accordance with a traditional interpretation of biblical guidelines (1Tm 3:1-7).

God has a perfect design for the sexes. His human creations rebelled against that design, resulting in confusion and consequences. Even when the culture seeks to redefine God’s gender roles in the home and the church, Christians in the past, present, and future have the responsibility to follow biblical teachings and live counterculturally in the world. This article discusses God’s gender design and describes the Christian’s lifestyle response in today’s world.

GOD’S DESIGN

God created man, male and female, in his own image (Gn 1:27). From the beginning, men and women were designed to be distinct, equal in worth and dignity but different in role and function. Man was created by God from the dust of the ground and assigned the tasks of working the field and naming the animals (Gn 2:7-17). Woman was then created by God from the rib of man to be his helper, to complement or complete him (Gn 2:18-25). Later in the OT, the Lord clarified to the prophet Isaiah his creative design for male and female. All of God’s children are created for his glory; we are meant to be his witnesses (Is 43:6-13).

In the NT, numerous passages confirm God’s unique design for men and women (Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19; 1Pt 3:1-7). Man did not create himself, and culture did not conceive the idea of gender. Man and woman are distinct creations of God, who had a distinct plan for each gender.

MAN’S REBELLION

Though God had a perfect plan for each of his creations, man chose to disobey God and follow his own desires. Tempted by a serpent, the woman sinned against God when she ate of the forbidden fruit and then persuaded her husband to eat too (Gn 3:6).

Both man and woman were created by God in his likeness, and both chose to rebel against him. As a result, both man and woman received God’s judgment (Gn 3:8-24). God confronted the man about his sin. Man responded with fear, guilt, and shame. He blamed the woman for the sinful act, and she in turn blamed the serpent. God pronounced a curse on the serpent and declared judgment on mankind. Their rebellion against God resulted in equal but different consequences for the man and woman.

WOMAN’S CONSEQUENCE

When the woman and man chose to disobey God and rebel against his creative plan, they experienced painful consequences. As a result of sin, women throughout the generations would have more pain in childbirth (Gn 3:16), while men would have more difficulty in work (Gn 3:17-19).

Perhaps the most difficult consequence of the fall, however, was a change in the relationship between man and woman. Sin turned what God intended to be a complementary relationship into a competitive one. Instead of husbands and wives seeking to nurture one another, sin encourages them to desire power and position in the relationship. Thus, the woman will “desire” her husband, his roles and responsibilities. Because of sin, his role as servant leader can be distorted also, resulting in autocratic and tyrannical rule,

causing the wife to resent his leadership of the family.

CULTURE'S DISTORTION

Since the garden of Eden, people in the world have lived according to their personal desires and sinful human natures. Individuals seek to define their own roles and relationships, ignoring the mandate of God. The sexual revolution has extended rebellion against God's plan to issues of gender and family. The current culture confuses equality of worth and significance with equivalence of roles, denying the biblical guidelines of male headship. The women's movement has introduced the idea of gender sameness into our culture, but it has not delivered the happiness and fulfillment it once promised. A worldview that refuses to accept any difference between men and women diminishes the distinctive contributions God intended each gender to make in the family and culture.

The world's viewpoint has distorted the personal lives of men and women as well as the marriage relationship and the family system. Modern Western culture claims that marriage can be between any two people who love each other, regardless of gender. Moreover, the dramatic increase in the rate of divorce reflects a lack of permanency in marriage. While the Bible clearly teaches that marriage is the uniting of one man to one woman in lifetime covenant commitment (Gn 2:24; Mt 19:5), the world has little vision for such relationships. The Bible teaches a better way, that God's design for the family is the foundational institution of human society (Dt 6:6-9).

Christians are commanded by God to be in the world but not of it (Jn 17:13-16). Despite strong cultural influences that act to shape us all, Christians are to adhere to God's plan for gender and his purposes in life. The Bible teaches that gender differences are a part of God's perfect purpose for men and women. Men and women are to complement or to complete one another, not to compete with each other for significance.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

God wants men and women to live in complementary unions, not competitive relationships. Lives submitted to God's design are his clearest example of gender equality—men and women are equal in worth and value yet distinct in role and function.

RHONDA KELLEY

30 who will not receive a hundred times † more, now at this time † — houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions † — and eternal life † in the age to come. † 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last first." †

THE THIRD PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

32 They † were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, † and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were astonished, but those who followed him were afraid. † Taking the Twelve aside again, he began to tell them the things that would happen to him. † 33 "See, we are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man † will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, † and they will condemn him to death. Then they will hand him over to the Gentiles, † 34 and

they will mock him, spit on him, flog † him, and kill him, and he will rise † after three days." †

SUFFERING AND SERVICE

35 James † and John, † the sons of Zebedee, † approached him and said, "Teacher, † we want you to do whatever we ask you."
36 "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked them.
37 They answered him, "Allow us to sit at your right and at your left in your glory." †
38 Jesus said to them, "You don't know what you're asking. † Are you able to drink the cup † I drink or to be baptized with the baptism † I am baptized with?" †
39 "We are able," they told him.
Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with. † 40 But to sit at my right or left is not mine to give; instead, it is for those for whom it has been prepared."
41 When the ten disciples heard this, they began to be indignant with James and John. † 42 Jesus called them over and said to them, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over † them, and those in high positions act as tyrants over them. 43 But it is not so among you. † On the contrary, whoever wants to become great among you will be your servant, † 44 and whoever wants to be first among you will be a slave to all. † 45 For even the Son of Man † did not come to be served, but to serve, † and to give his life † as a ransom † for many." † †

A BLIND MAN HEALED

46 They † came to Jericho. † And as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus (the son of Timaeus), a blind † beggar, † was sitting by the road. † 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, † he began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, † have mercy † on me!" † 48 Many

warned him to keep quiet, but he was crying out all the more, “Have mercy on me, † Son of David! ”
49 Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”
So they called the blind man and said to him, “Have courage! † Get up; he’s calling for you.” 50 He threw off his coat, † jumped up, and came to Jesus.
51 Then Jesus answered him, “What do you want † me to do for you? ”
“*Rabboni*,” † † the blind man said to him, “I want to see.”
52 Jesus said to him, “Go, your faith has saved you.” † Immediately he could see and began to follow Jesus on the road.

10:6 Other mss omit *God* **10:7** Some mss add *and be joined to his wife* **10:15** Or *not welcome* **10:21** Other mss add *taking up the cross, and* **10:24** Other mss add *for those trusting in wealth* **10:29** Other mss add *or wife* **10:34** Or *scourge* **10:45** Or *in the place of many* ; Is 53:10-12 **10:51** Hb word for *my lord*
10:1-12 Mt 19:1-2 **10:1** Lk 1:5 **10:1** Mt 4:15,25; Lk 3:3; Jn 1:28; 3:26; 10:40 **10:1** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **10:2** Mk 7:3 **10:2** Jms 1:13 **10:2** Jn 18:31 **10:2** Lv 21:7 **10:2** 1Pt 3:1 **10:3** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **10:4** Mt 5:31 **10:4** Dt 24:1,3 **10:5** Mk 16:14 **10:6** Jn 1:1; Ac 26:4 **10:6** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **10:6** Gn 1:27; 5:2 **10:6** Gn 1:27; 5:2 **10:7** Lk 15:4 **10:7-8** Gn 2:24 **10:7-8** Gn 2:24 **10:9** 1Co 7:10-15; Heb 7:26 **10:11** 1Pt 3:1 **10:11** 1Tm 5:14 **10:11** Mt 5:27-28 **10:12** Mt 1:19 **10:13-16** Mt 19:13-15; Lk 18:15-17 **10:13** Lk 1:7 **10:13** 2Tm 4:2 **10:14** Lk 13:14 **10:14** Lk 14:26 **10:14** 1Co 14:39 **10:14** Mk 1:15 **10:15** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **10:15** Ac 17:11 **10:15** Lk 1:7 **10:16** 1Tm 5:22 **10:16** Gn 48:15 **10:17-31** Mt 19:16-30; Lk 18:18-30 **10:17** Mk 8:27 **10:17** Mt 17:14; 27:29; Mk 1:40 **10:17** Gn 1:31 **10:17** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **10:17** Rv 21:7 **10:17** Lk 10:25-28; Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **10:18** Ps 69:16 **10:19** Mt 5:21 **10:19** Mt 5:27-28 **10:19** Eph 4:28 **10:19** Pr 6:19 **10:19** 1Co 6:7-8; 7:5; 1Tm 6:5; Jms 5:4 **10:19** 1Tm 5:3 **10:19** Ex 21:15 **10:19** Ex 20:12-16; Dt 5:16-20 **10:20** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **10:21** Lk 6:35; 2Th 2:13; Heb 12:6 **10:21** Mk 14:7; Rm 15:26 **10:21** 2Co 4:7 **10:21** Mt 6:20; 13:44; Lk 12:33 **10:21** Jn 8:12 **10:22** 2Co 2:2 **10:22** Ac 2:45; 5:1 **10:23** Ac 4:37; 8:18,20; 24:26 **10:23** Mk 1:15 **10:24** Lk 1:7 **10:25** Gn 24:35; Rv 2:9 **10:26** Ac 16:30; Eph 2:8 **10:27** Heb 6:4 **10:28** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **10:29** Rv 22:21 **10:29** Mk 1:1; Php 1:5 **10:30** Lk 21:8 **10:30** Lk 20:10 **10:30** Mt 13:21 **10:30** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **10:30** Mt 12:32; Lk 20:35; Eph 1:21; 2:7 **10:31** Mk 9:35 **10:32-34** Mt 20:17-19; Lk 18:31-34 **10:32** Ps 79:1; Mt 23:37 **10:32** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **10:32** Jn 6:61 **10:33** Mk 2:10 **10:33** Mt 2:4 **10:33-34** Mk 8:31; 9:31 **10:34** Mt 16:21; Ac 2:24 **10:34** Lk 9:22 **10:35-45** Mt 20:20-28; Ac 12:2 **10:35** Jn 21:7 **10:35** Jn 21:2 **10:35** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **10:37** Mt 19:28; Lk 9:26 **10:38** Jn 11:22 **10:38** Ps 75:8 **10:38** Lk 12:50; Ac 22:16 **10:38** Lk 12:50; Rm 6:3; 2Co 4:10-11; Gl 2:20 **10:39** Ac 12:2; Rv 1:9 **10:41** Jn 21:7 **10:42** Ac 19:16; 1Pt 5:3 **10:43** Mk 9:35; 10:45 **10:43-44** Lk 22:26 **10:44** Mt 10:24; Php 2:7; Rv 1:1 **10:45** Mk 2:10 **10:45** Jn 13:13-15; Php 2:7 **10:45** Jn 6:51; 10:15; Gl 2:20 **10:45** Lv 27:31; Ps 49:8; Mt 26:28; Eph 1:7 **10:45** Is 52:13–53:12; Mt 20:28 **10:46-52** Mt 20:29-34; Lk 18:35-43 **10:46** Nm 22:1 **10:46** Mt 15:14 **10:46** Jn 9:8 **10:46** Mk 8:27 **10:47** Mk 14:67 **10:47** 2Ch 1:1; Mt 1:1; Rm 1:3 **10:47** Mt 5:7; Mk 5:19; Lk 1:50 **10:47** Mt 15:22; 17:15; Mk 10:48; Lk 16:24 **10:48** Mk 10:47 **10:49** Jn 16:33 **10:50** Lk 19:36 **10:51** Mk 1:40 **10:51** Jn 20:16 **10:52** Mt 9:22; Mk 6:56; Lk 5:20

10:2 The grounds or basis for **divorce** was commonly debated in Jesus’s day. Debate often centered on the meaning of the phrase “something improper” in Deuteronomy 24:1 (Hb *erwat dabar*, lit, “the nakedness of a thing”). Adultery was not likely in view as it was covered elsewhere (Lv 20:10).

10:6 Jesus articulates the Jewish (and later Christian) understanding of gender, **male and female.** God created two distinct sexes that complement one another. Modern views of gender (e.g., transgenderism) cannot be reconciled with Jesus’s teaching.

10:9 See “A Biblical View of Marriage,” *p. 1449.*

10:25 Jesus uses a proverb to communicate the idea of impossibility. A **camel** was the largest animal encountered by most people in ancient Israel, while a **needle** represented an exceedingly small opening. Theophylact, an eleventh-century exegete, suggested that the needle refers to a gate in Jerusalem that required camels to crouch down in order to enter. This interpretation, however, should be rejected.

10:47-48 Bartimaeus references Jesus as **Son of David**, a name associated with the Messiah. This is the only instance in Mark’s Gospel in which Jesus is addressed by this name.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

11 When † they approached Jerusalem, † at Bethphage and Bethany †
near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples 2 and told them,
“Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a colt
tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 3 If anyone says to
you, ‘Why are you doing this? ’ say, ‘The Lord needs it and will send it back
here right away.’ ”
4 So they went and found a colt outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied
it, 5 and some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing,
untying the colt? ” 6 They answered them just as Jesus had said; so they let them
go.
7 They brought the donkey to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and he sat on
it. 8 Many people spread their clothes on the road, † and others spread leafy
branches cut from the fields. † 9 Those who went ahead and those who followed
shouted:
Hosanna!
Blessed is he who comes
in the name † of the Lord! † †
10 Blessed is the coming kingdom †
of our father David! †
Hosanna † in the highest heaven!
11 He went into Jerusalem † and into the temple. † After looking around at
everything, since it was already late, he went out to Bethany † with the Twelve.

THE BARREN FIG TREE IS CURSED

12 The † next day when they went out from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig † tree with leaves, he went to find out if there was anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for it was not the season for figs. 14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit † from you again!" † And his disciples † heard it.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

15 They came to Jerusalem, † and he went into the temple † and began to throw out those buying and selling. He overturned the tables of the money changers † and the chairs of those selling doves, 16 and would not permit anyone to carry goods through the temple. 17 He was teaching them: "Is it not written, † **My house † will be called a house of prayer † for all nations**? † But you have made it **a den of thieves**!" † †

18 The chief priests and the scribes † heard it and started looking for a way to kill him. For they were afraid † of him, because the whole crowd was astonished by his teaching.

19 Whenever evening came, they would go out of the city.

THE BARREN FIG TREE IS WITHERED

20 Early † in the morning, as they were passing by, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots up. 21 Then Peter † remembered and said to him, "Rabbi, † look! The fig tree that you cursed † has withered."

22 Jesus replied to them, "Have faith in God. † 23 Truly I tell you, † if anyone says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt † in his heart, but believes † that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. † 24 Therefore I tell you, everything you pray † and ask for † — believe that you have received † † it and it will be yours. 25 And whenever you stand † praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive † him, so that your Father † in heaven † will also forgive † you your wrongdoing." †

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

27 They † came again to Jerusalem. † As he was walking in the temple, † the
chief priests, the scribes, † and the elders † came 28 and asked him, “By what
authority † are you doing these things? Who gave you this authority to do these
things? ”
29 Jesus said to them, “I will ask you one question; † then answer me, and I will
tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 Was John’s baptism † from
heaven or of human origin? Answer me.”
31 They discussed it among themselves: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say,
‘Then why didn’t you believe † him? ’ 32 But if we say, ‘Of human origin’ ” —
they were afraid of the crowd, because everyone thought that John was truly a
prophet. † 33 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.”
And Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these
things.”

11:8 Other mss read *others were cutting leafy branches from the trees and spreading them on the road* **11:24** Some mss read *you receive* ; other mss read *you will receive* **11:25** Some mss include v. 26: *“But if you don’t forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your wrongdoing.”*
11:1-11 Mt 21:1-11; Lk 19:28-44; Jn 12:12-19 **11:1** Mt 23:37; Ac 8:1 **11:1** Mt 26:6; Lk 24:50; Jn 11:1,18; 12:1 **11:8** Mk 8:27 **11:9** Jn 10:25 **11:9** Ps 118:26 **11:9** Lk 1:42; Heb 6:14 **11:10** Mk 1:15; 9:1 **11:10** Lk 1:27; Ac 2:29; 4:25 **11:10** Mk 11:9 **11:11** Mt 23:37 **11:11** Ac 21:26 **11:11** Mk 11:1 **11:12-19** Mt 21:12-19; Lk 19:45-48 **11:13** Lk 6:44; Jn 1:48 **11:14** Mt 3:8; 7:16-21 **11:14** Jr 8:13 **11:14** Mk 10:10 **11:15** Mt 23:37 **11:15** Ac 21:26 **11:15** Jn 2:15 **11:17** Mk 1:2; Ac 15:15 **11:17** Lk 11:51; Jn 2:17 **11:17** Ac 12:5; 16:13 **11:17** Is 56:7 **11:17** Jr 7:11 **11:17** Jr 7:11 **11:18** Mt 2:4 **11:18** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **11:20-26** Mt 21:19-22 **11:21** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **11:21** Jn 11:8 **11:21** Jms 3:9 **11:22** Mt 17:20 **11:23** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **11:23** Ac 10:20 **11:23** Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **11:23** Mk 9:23; Jn 11:22 **11:24** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **11:24** Jn 14:13; Jms 1:5 **11:24** Mt 7:8 **11:25** Lk 18:11 **11:25** Mt 6:12; 9:2 **11:25** Mt 5:16; Lk 11:13 **11:25** Mt 6:1; Lk 12:33 **11:25** Ps 25:11; Mt 9:2 **11:27-33** Mt 21:23-27; Lk 20:1-8 **11:27** Mt 23:37 **11:27** Ac 21:26 **11:27** Mt 2:4 **11:27** 3Jn 1 **11:28** Mk 1:22 **11:29** Mk 4:14 **11:30** Lk 7:29; Ac 18:25; 19:3 **11:31** 1Jn 5:10 **11:32** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52

11:15-18 Worshipers traveling to the **temple** needed appropriate coinage to purchase animals or to pay the temple tax (Ex 30:11-16). Pagan coinage could not be used as it featured graven images. Such coins were exchanged for imageless Tyrian (the closest coin to the old Hebrew shekel) or Jewish temple coins. Jesus [threw] **out those buying and selling** because they conducted business in the **temple**, **a house of prayer.** This most likely involved corrupt transactions, since Jesus says they **have made it a den of thieves**.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

12 He † began to speak to them in parables: “A man planted a
vineyard, † put a fence around it, dug out a pit for a winepress, and
built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenant farmers and went away. 2 At

harvest time he sent † a servant † to the farmers to collect some of the fruit † of the vineyard from them. 3 But they took him, beat † him, and sent him away empty-handed. † 4 Again he sent another servant to them, and they † hit him on the head and treated him shamefully. † 5 Then he sent another, and they killed that one. He also sent many others; some they beat, and others they killed. 6 He still had one to send, a beloved † son. Finally † he sent him to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 But those tenant farmers said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. 9 What then will the owner † † of the vineyard do? He will come and kill the farmers and give the vineyard to others. 10 Haven't you read this Scripture: †

The † stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone. †
11 **This came about from the Lord †**
and is wonderful in our eyes? " †

12 They were looking for a way to arrest him but feared the crowd because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. So they left him and went away.

GOD AND CAESAR

13 Then † they sent some of the Pharisees † and the Herodians † to Jesus to trap him in his words. † 14 When they came, they said to him, "Teacher, we know you are truthful and don't care what anyone thinks, nor do you show partiality † but teach the way of God truthfully. Is it lawful to pay taxes † to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we? "

15 But knowing their hypocrisy, † he said to them, "Why are you testing † me? Bring me a denarius † † to look at." 16 They brought a coin. "Whose image † and inscription † is this? " he asked them.
"Caesar's," they replied.
17 Jesus told them, "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." † And they were utterly amazed † at him.

THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

18 Sadducees, † who say there is no resurrection, † came to him and questioned
him: 19 “Teacher, † Moses † wrote for us that **if a man’s brother dies**, leaving
a wife behind but **no child, † that man should take the wife † and raise up
offspring for his brother.** † † 20 There were seven brothers. The first married
a woman, and dying, left no offspring. 21 The second also took her, and he died,
leaving no offspring. And the third likewise.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS RELATE TO GOVERNMENT?

Politics brings to mind campaigns and elections, propaganda and partisanship, powerbrokers and policy disputes. Scripture is not an instructional handbook for dealing with these elements of day-to-day political life, but it provides an overarching framework for thinking about the world of politics.

What is politics? Derived from the Greek word *polis*, politics is about life in community, about how people organize their collective life together. It entails reflection on perennial political questions: What are the aims of government? Which forms of government best serve those aims? How should power and authority be wielded? What are the duties and responsibilities of citizens?

When reflecting on these questions, Christians find principles and insights in Scripture, and in theological tradition that may be Calvinist, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Wesleyan, or Anabaptist, among others. As a result, Christians do not speak with one voice on all political matters. Nonetheless, common themes predominate whenever believers strive to reconcile tradition with the Bible.

FOUNDATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN POLITICAL THINKING

Christian political thinking begins with the notion that God’s sovereign authority undergirds and frames earthly political life. God’s power is first seen in creation. His creation of the universe was good in every way, and humans, created in his image (Genesis 1), represent his greatest handiwork. Thus, they share inherent worth and dignity.

Human communal existence was God’s design from the beginning—“it is not good for the man to be alone” (Gn 2:18). Community starts in the form of man and woman, the family, but extends as families form communities, and communities form nations (Gn 4; 9–10).

Adam and Eve’s willful choice to defy God changed everything, including how people live life together (Gn 3). Henceforth, humans live rebellious and sinful lives. Because of hearts, minds, and wills devoted to self, sinfulness in the form of pride becomes humanity’s predominant spiritual and political characteristic. This inordinate love of oneself prompts a quest to satisfy insatiable desires. Greed, envy, and lust soon breed rancor. Rancor triggers conflict (Jms 3; 4).

Thus, political problems are due to fallen human nature—not human nature as it was initially created. The pervasiveness, intractability, and the consequences of sin plague earthly existence. Humans are responsible for this condition but are unable to change it. While conscious of what ought to be done, they generally lack the heart to do it (Rm 2; 7).

Attributing the discord and dissension to something other than our fallen nature is mistaken, offering false hope and exculpating the guilty. Sin—not ignorance, corruption, repression, class conflict, or faulty laws and institutions—is the problem. These all reflect wrongdoing and are deleterious, but they are symptoms rather than the disease.

To mitigate the ravages of sin, civil society becomes indispensable. Civic authority, "God's servant for [humanity's] good" (Rm 13:4), aims to preserve social order so that the necessities of life are secured among quarrelsome people. God establishes rulers, kings, and princes, giving them "sovereignty, power, strength, and glory" (Dn 2:37; Pr 8). They wield the sword (Rm 13:4) to "punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good" (1Pt 2:14). The tools at their disposal—sanction, punishment, taxation, legislation, education, and military action—maintain a semblance of peace on earth.

Because these tools are coercive, politics is often described as the quest for power. The real question, however, is "power to what end?" Any judgment about whether power is abused or well used depends on a judgment about its aim. So, while politics often succumbs to power struggles, the competing aims are far more fundamental than mere differences in power.

Maintaining order and securing safety are the initial tasks for civil authorities, but more can be done; governments should "pursue justice" (Dt 16:20). Humanity's desire to live well, indeed to flourish, reflects a consciousness that something better is possible. Cain established the first city, not simply to preserve life—God already promised him security—but no doubt to make a better life for himself (Gn 4). Without justice, our grasp of common goods—peace and prosperity, stability and security, liberty and fraternity—remains tenuous.

The challenge is empowering governments to do what they are capable of doing—preserving order and securing justice—while restraining them from doing what they cannot do well or should not do at all. Scripture, therefore, suggests government's role must be limited. Because the root problem, sin, is a spiritual condition requiring a spiritual solution, governments that aim to cure the disease rather than palliate its symptoms exceed their role. Governments cannot change fallen human nature, guarantee happiness, or, most importantly, secure spiritual redemption.

POLITICAL REALISM

Given that humanity's predicament is chronic, Christians generally embrace political realism. Every civic institution, social structure, and economic system will be exploited by those tainted by iniquity. No single ruler, form of government, or humanly constructed blueprint will eradicate civil strife. Neither the sovereign claims of kings and emperors, nor the utopian dreams of modern revolutionaries, nor the universal consent of the governed fulfill exaggerated political expectations. Sin and strife are permanent features of life on earth until God makes all things new (see Rv 21), thus making politics all the more intriguing, important, and worthy of attention.

Thankfully, justice will prevail in the end, and it can prevail, on occasion, in the interim. There is hope in the present because civic authorities, a providential gift from God, serve as instruments of justice. They provide for temporal needs both when the redeemed, those with the Holy Spirit working in them, do good in the world and when God, in his mysterious ways, uses nonbelievers to bring about his holy will—such as he did through his anointing of the Persian king Cyrus to free the Jews from Babylon (Is 45–46). Ultimately, Jesus Christ, who lived, died, and rose again for the salvation of humanity, will establish his kingdom. His final victory insures that truth, beauty, goodness, and justice triumph (Is 9:6-7; Rv 21–22).

KINGDOM CITIZENS ON EARTH

In the meantime, believers are citizens of both a temporal kingdom and God's kingdom. The two demand and deserve allegiance; they also entail duties and responsibilities.

Biblical directives strengthen the grip of earthly citizenship. Christ-followers are to obey rulers (Ti 3:1), render "petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings . . . for kings and all those who are in authority" (1Tm 2:1-2), and pay "taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe

respect, and honor to those you owe honor" (Rm 13:7). In principled obedience, the faithful are to "pursue the well-being of the city" (Jr 29:7), "speak up, judge righteously, and defend the cause of the oppressed and needy" (Pr 31:9). Believers must "turn away from evil and do what is good" and pursue peace (Ps 34:14). These biblical admonitions steel believers against despair and defeatism, against the temptation to retreat when estranged from an often gloomy and discouraging world.

The devout know life on earth is no longer tragic; rather, it is a place providing ample opportunities to love God and neighbor (Mt 22:34-40). The latter entails the pursuit of justice, the preservation of order, and the promotion of peace on earth. To do otherwise denies the full lordship of Christ.

At the same time, citizenship in the celestial city binds man's will to God's, radically placing conscience in control. The Bible insists, "[Christians] must obey God rather than people" (Ac 5:29) whenever temporal dictates contravene what God requires or requires what God prohibits (Dn 3; 6). Because earthly government is limited to earthly affairs, it should neither meddle in spiritual matters nor impinge on religious freedom.

Christians also embrace a higher law tradition, providing insight into how one ought to live. The definition of justice and goodness is not a human construct; it resides in the mind and will of God, who "judges the world with righteousness" and sets the standard by which all human laws are judged (Ps 9:8). Those standards are known by all—they are "written on [human] hearts" (Rm 2:15)—and thus valuable in urging nations to do their God-given duty. A faithful prophetic presence bears witness to the higher law to which human affairs are accountable.

THE FUTURE OF POLITICS

Only in God's coming kingdom will perfect justice be experienced. For now, Christians remain in a temporal kingdom where justice can prevail in particular times and in particular places. It prevails when wise and prudent leaders make good choices in the face of imperfect options. The wise leader and the faithful citizen seek both the common good and the greatest good while keeping in mind human depravity, the vagaries of life, and the complexity of the human heart. They must also recognize that while civil society is indispensable, no political panacea will save the world. There is no final political solution; there is only God's redemption in Christ.

DAVID L. WEEKS

22 None of the seven † left offspring. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 In the
resurrection, when they rise, † whose wife will she be, since the seven had
married her? "
24 Jesus spoke to them, "Isn't this the reason why you're mistaken: you don't
know the Scriptures † or the power † of God? † 25 For when they rise † from
the dead, † they neither marry nor are given in marriage † but are like angels †
in heaven. 26 And as for the dead being raised — haven't you read in the book
of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God said to him: **I** † **am
the God of Abraham** † **and the God of Isaac** † **and the God of Jacob**? † †
27 He is not the God of the dead but of the living. You are badly mistaken."

THE PRIMARY COMMANDS

28 One † of the scribes † approached. When he heard them debating and saw
that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which command is the most
important of all? ”
29 Jesus answered, “The most important † is **Listen, O Israel! The Lord † our
God, the Lord † is one.** † 30 **Love † the Lord your God † with all your
heart, with all your soul, with all your mind,** † **and with all your
strength.** † † † 31 The second is, **Love your neighbor † as yourself.** † †
There is no other command † greater than these.”
32 Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, teacher. You have correctly said
that he is one, and there is no one † else except him. † 33 And to love † him
with all your heart, with all your understanding, † and with all your strength,
and to love your neighbor as yourself, is far more important than all the burnt
offerings and sacrifices.” †
34 When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far
from the kingdom of God.” † And no one dared † to question him any longer.

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE CHRIST

35 While † Jesus was teaching in the temple, he asked, † “How can the
scribes † say that the Messiah † is the son of David? † 36 David † himself
says by the Holy Spirit: †

The Lord † declared to my Lord,
‘Sit at my right hand †
until I put your enemies under your feet.’ † †
37 David himself calls him ‘Lord’; how then can he be his son? ” And the large
crowd was listening to him with delight.

WARNING AGAINST THE SCRIBES

38 He † also said in his teaching, “Beware of the scribes, who want to go around
in long robes † and who want greetings in the marketplaces, † 39 the best
seats † in the synagogues, † and the places of honor † at banquets. † 40 They
devour † widows’ † houses and say long prayers † just for show. These will
receive harsher judgment.”

THE WIDOW'S GIFT

41 Sitting † across from the temple treasury, † he watched how the crowd
dropped money into the treasury. Many rich † people were putting in large
sums. 42 Then a poor † widow came and dropped in two tiny coins worth very
little. 43 Summoning his disciples, † he said to them, "Truly I tell you, † this
poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. † 44 For they all
gave out of their surplus, † but she out of her poverty † has put in everything
she had † — all she had to live on." †

12:4 Other mss add *threw stones and* **12:4** Other mss add *and sent him off* **12:9** Or *lord* **12:15** A denarius = one day's wage **12:22** Other mss add *had taken her and* **12:23** Other mss omit *when they rise* **12:29** Other mss add *of all the commands* **12:29** Or *the Lord our God is Lord alone.* **12:30** Other mss add *This is the first commandment.* **12:33** Other mss add *with all your soul*

12:1-12 Mt 21:33-46; Lk 20:9-19 **12:1** Gn 9:20 **12:2** Mk 3:14 **12:2** Mt 10:24 **12:2** Mt 3:8; 7:16 **12:3** Lk 22:63 **12:3** Col 2:8 **12:6** Eph 1:6; Phm 1 **12:6** Heb 1:1-2 **12:9** Col 3:22 **12:10** Mt 26:54; 2Pt 1:20 **12:10-11** Ps 118:22-23 **12:10** Ac 4:11; 1Pt 2:7 **12:11** Col 4:1; Jd 5 **12:10-11** Ps 118:22-23 **12:13-17** Mt 22:15-22; Lk 20:20-26 **12:13** Mk 7:3 **12:13** Mk 3:6 **12:13** Lk 11:54 **12:14** Dt 1:17 **12:14** Mt 17:25 **12:15** Mt 23:28; Lk 12:1; Gl 2:13; 1Tm 4:2; 1Pt 2:1 **12:15** Jms 1:13 **12:15** Mt 18:28 **12:16** Rv 13:14 **12:16** Mk 15:26; Lk 23:38 **12:17** Rm 13:7 **12:17** Rv 17:6 **12:18-27** Mt 22:23-33; Lk 20:27-40 **12:18** Ac 23:6 **12:19** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **12:19** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **12:19** Lk 1:7 **12:19** Mt 1:6 **12:19** Gn 38:8; Dt 25:5 **12:19** Gn 38:8; Dt 25:5-10 **12:24** Mt 26:54; 2Pt 1:20 **12:24** Lk 1:35; 6:19 **12:24** 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **12:25** Lk 18:33 **12:25** Jn 5:25; 20:9 **12:25** 1Tm 5:14 **12:25** Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **12:26** Ex 3:6,15-16 **12:26** Gl 3:6 **12:26** Jms 2:21 **12:26** Ex 3:6,15-16 **12:26** Mt 1:2; Lk 1:33 **12:28-34** Mt 22:34-40 **12:28** Mt 2:4 **12:29** Col 4:1; Jd 5 **12:29** Dt 6:4 **12:30** Lk 6:35 **12:30** Dt 6:5; Lk 10:27 **12:30** 1Jn 5:20 **12:30** Dt 6:4-5; Jos 22:5 **12:30** Dt 6:4-5; Jos 22:5 **12:31** Lk 10:29 **12:31** Lv 19:18 **12:31** Lv 19:18; 1Jn 4:21 **12:31** Mk 7:8 **12:32** Rm 3:30 **12:32** Dt 4:35,39; 6:4; Is 37:20; 43:10; 44:6; 45:21 **12:33** Lk 6:35 **12:33** 1Sm 15:22; Ps 51:16; Hs 6:6; Am 5:22; Mc 6:6-8 **12:34** Mk 1:15 **12:34** Lk 20:40 **12:35-37** Mt 22:41-46; Lk 20:41-44 **12:35** Ac 21:26 **12:35** Mt 2:4 **12:35** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **12:35** 2Ch 1:1; Mt 1:1; Rm 1:3 **12:36** Lk 1:27 **12:36** Jn 1:33; Ac 19:21 **12:36** Lk 17:5 **12:36** Mt 20:21 **12:36** Ps 110:1 **12:36** Ps 110:1 **12:38-40** Mt 23:1-36; Lk 20:45-47 **12:38** Rv 7:14 **12:38** Mk 6:56 **12:39** Lk 11:43 **12:39** Jms 2:2 **12:39** Lk 14:7-8 **12:39** Jn 13:2 **12:40** Gl 5:15 **12:40** Jms 1:27 **12:40** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **12:41-44** Lk 21:1-4 **12:41** Jn 8:20 **12:41** Gn 24:35; Rv 2:9 **12:42** Mk 14:7 **12:43** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **12:43** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **12:43** Jn 8:20 **12:44** 1Co 15:58 **12:44** Php 4:11 **12:44** Lk 15:12 **12:44** 1Jn 3:17

12:12 In ancient times, teachers sometimes employed parables to criticize or critique the behavior of others (2Sm 12:1-12). Jesus used parables in his encounters with Israel's religious leaders to draw attention to their rejection of him or their sinful behavior (Mt 21:28-46 [see esp. v. 45]; see also Lk 15:1-3a).

12:13-17 See "Church and State," *p. 1374.*

12:14 The Pharisees and Herodians seek to trap Jesus with the question, **Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar or not?** Jews in Judea had been required to pay a poll tax since AD 6 when the Romans designated Judea as a province directly under Roman rule. The tax was exceedingly unpopular among the Judeans. As a Galilean, Jesus was probably not required to pay it, for Galilee was not under direct Roman rule. He thus approaches the question as an outsider. Answering "no" could label him a revolutionary. Answering "yes" could be seen as support of a pagan government that oppresses the Jews.

12:18 Though the **Sadducees** valued many books within the Hebrew Bible, they only regarded the Pentateuch (the first five books of the OT) as binding or authoritative. They rejected the **resurrection** of the dead because, in their view, the Pentateuch offered no support for the doctrine. Writings outside the Pentateuch appear to contain references to the resurrection of the dead (Is 26:19; Dn 12:2).

12:24-27 See "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

12:30 See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED

13 As † he was going out of the temple, † one of his disciples said to him, "Teacher, † look! What massive stones! What impressive buildings! " †

2 Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? † Not one stone will be left upon another — all will be thrown down."

SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

3 While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives † across from the temple, † Peter, † James, † John, † and Andrew † asked him privately, 4 "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished? "

5 Jesus told them, "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6 Many will come in my name, † saying, 'I am he,' † and they will deceive † many. 7 When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, † don't be alarmed; † these things must take place, † but it is not yet the end. 8 For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. † There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. † These are the beginning † of birth pains. †

PERSECUTIONS PREDICTED

9 "But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to local courts, † † and you will be flogged † in the synagogues. † You will stand before governors and kings † because of me, † as a witness † to them. † 10 And it is necessary that the gospel † be preached to all nations. 11 So when they arrest you and hand you over, don't worry beforehand what you will say, but say whatever is given to you at that time, for it isn't you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12 “Brother will betray † brother to death, † and a father his child. Children will
rise up against parents and have them put to death. 13 You will be hated by
everyone because of my name, † but the one who endures to the end will be
saved. †

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

14 “When you see **the abomination of desolation** † † standing where it should
not be” (let the reader understand), “then those in Judea † must flee to the
mountains. 15 A man on the housetop must not come down or go in to get
anything out of his house, † 16 and a man in the field must not go back to get
his coat. † 17 Woe † to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days!
18 “Pray † it † won’t happen in winter. 19 For those will be days of
tribulation, † the kind that hasn’t been from the beginning † of creation † until
now and never will be again. 20 If the Lord † had not cut those days short, † no
one would be saved. But he cut those days short for the sake of the elect, †
whom he chose. †
21 “Then if anyone tells you, ‘See, here is the Messiah! † See, there! ’ do not
believe it. 22 For false messiahs and false prophets will arise and will perform
signs and wonders † to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 And you must
watch! I have told you everything in advance.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

24 “But in those days, after that tribulation: † The sun will be darkened, and the
moon will not shed its light; 25 the stars † will be falling from the sky, and the
powers in the heavens will be shaken. † 26 Then they will see the Son of Man †
coming † in clouds † with great power † and glory. † 27 He will send out the
angels † and gather his elect † from the four winds, from the ends of the earth
to the ends of heaven. †

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

28 “Learn † this lesson † from the fig † tree: As soon as its branch becomes
tender and sprouts leaves, you know that summer is near. † 29 In the same way,
when you see these things happening, recognize † that he † is near — at the
door.
30 “Truly I tell you, † this generation will certainly not pass away until all these
things take place. 31 Heaven and earth † will pass away, † but my words will
never pass away. †

NO ONE KNOWS THE DAY OR HOUR

32 “Now concerning that day † or hour no one knows — neither the angels † in
heaven nor the Son † — but only the Father. †
33 “Watch! Be alert! † For you don’t know when the time † is coming. †
34 “It is like † a man on a journey, who left his house, gave authority to his
servants, † gave each one his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to be alert.
35 Therefore be alert, † since you don’t know when the master † of the house is
coming — whether in the evening or at midnight or at the crowing of the rooster
or early in the morning. 36 Otherwise, when he comes suddenly he might find
you sleeping. † 37 And what I say to you, I say to everyone: Be alert! ”

13:8 Other mss add *and disturbances* **13:9** Or *sanhedrins* **13:18** Other mss read *“Pray that your escape* **13:29** Or *you know* **13:29** Or *it* **13:33** Other mss add *and pray*

13:1-37 Mt 24:1-51; Lk 21:5-38 **13:1** Ac 21:26 **13:1** Mk 4:38 **13:1** 1Co 14:3 **13:2** Mk 14:58 **13:3** Mt 21:1 **13:3** Ac 21:26 **13:3** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **13:3** Ac 12:2 **13:3** Jn 21:7 **13:3** Jn 6:8 **13:6** Jn 10:25; 14:13 **13:6** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **13:6** 1Jn 4:6 **13:7** Jr 51:46; Dn 11:44 **13:7** 2Th 2:2 **13:7** Dn 2:28-29 **13:8** Is 19:2 **13:8** Ac 26:4 **13:8** Gl 4:19 **13:9** Mt 10:17 **13:9** Lk 22:63; Ac 5:40; 16:19-23,37 **13:9** Jms 2:2 **13:9** Ac 24:10-27; 25:1-12,23-27 **13:9** Rm 8:36 **13:9** Mk 6:11; 1Tm 2:6 **13:9** Php 1:12 **13:10** Mk 1:1; Php 1:5 **13:12** Jn 13:21 **13:12** Is 19:2; Mc 7:6 **13:13** Mt 10:22; Lk 6:22; Jn 15:18-21 **13:13** 1Co 4:12; 2Th 1:4; 2Tm 2:12; Jms 1:12 **13:14** Dn 9:27 **13:14** Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 **13:14** Lk 1:5 **13:15** Mt 24:17; Lk 17:31 **13:16** Lk 19:36 **13:17** Rv 9:12 **13:18** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **13:19** 1Co 1:4 **13:19** Ac 26:4 **13:19** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **13:20** Col 4:1; Jd 5 **13:20** Is 60:21-22 **13:20** Mt 24:22 **13:20** Eph 1:4 **13:21** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **13:22** Ex 7:3; Dn 6:27; Jn 4:48; Ac 4:30; Rm 15:19; 2Th 2:9; Heb 2:4 **13:24** 2Co 1:4 **13:25** Rv 1:16 **13:24-25** Is 13:10; 34:4; Jl 2:10,31; 3:15 **13:26** Mk 2:10 **13:26** Mk 8:38; 1Th 4:16 **13:26** Dn 7:13-14 **13:26** Lk 6:19 **13:26** Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32 **13:27** Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **13:27** Mt 22:14,22 **13:27** Zch 2:6 **13:28** Jn 7:15 **13:28** Mk 12:1 **13:28** Jn 1:48 **13:28** Rv 1:1 **13:30** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **13:31** Lk 10:21 **13:31** 2Pt 3:10 **13:31** Ps 102:25-27; Is 40:6-8; 51:6; Mt 5:18; Lk 16:17 **13:32** Mt 25:13 **13:32** Mt 13:49 **13:32** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **13:32** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **13:33** Lk 20:20 **13:33** Ac 1:7; 1Th 5:1-2; 1Pt 5:6 **13:34** Lk 12:35-40 **13:34** Mt 10:24 **13:35** Rv 16:15 **13:35** Col 3:22 **13:36** Pr 6:4

13:14 The abomination of desolation is referenced multiple times in Daniel (Dn 9:27; 11:31; 12:11; see also Mt 24:15). The initial fulfillment of this event took place in the winter of 167 BC when Antiochus IV

Epiphanes transformed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem into a place of worship for the Greek god, Zeus. The Greeks sacrificed pigs on the holy altar for a three-year period. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus uses the phrase in reference to the future (2Th 2:3-10; Rv 13:1-10,14-15).

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

14 It † was two days before the Passover † and the Festival † of Unleavened Bread. † The chief priests and the scribes † were looking for a cunning † way to arrest Jesus and kill him. † 2 "Not during the festival," they said, "so that there won't be a riot among the people."

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

3 While † he was in Bethany † at the house of Simon the leper, † † as he was reclining at the table, † a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured it on his head. † 4 But some were expressing indignation to one another: "Why has this perfume been wasted? 5 For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii † † and given to the poor." † And they began to scold her.

6 Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a noble thing † for me. 7 You always have the poor † with you, and you can do what is good for them whenever you want, but you do not always have me. †

8 She has done what she could; she has anointed my body † in advance for burial. † 9 Truly I tell you, † wherever the gospel † is proclaimed in the whole world, † what she has done will also be told in memory of her."

10 Then † Judas Iscariot, † one of the Twelve, † went to the chief priests † to betray Jesus † to them. 11 And when they heard this, they were glad and promised to give him money. † So he started looking for a good opportunity to betray † him.

PREPARATION FOR PASSOVER

12 On † the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrifice the Passover lamb, † his disciples † asked him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare the Passover so that you may eat it? "

13 So he sent two of his disciples and told them, “Go into the city, and a man
carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Wherever he enters, tell the
owner of the house, ‘The Teacher † says, “Where is my guest room where I may
eat the Passover with my disciples?” ’ 15 He will show you a large room
upstairs, furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there.” 16 So the
disciples † went out, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them, and
they prepared the Passover.

BETRAYAL AT THE PASSOVER

17 When † evening came, he arrived with the Twelve. † 18 While they were
reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me —
one who is eating with me.”
19 They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, “Surely not I? ”
20 He said to them, “It is one of the Twelve — the one who is dipping bread in
the bowl with me. 21 For the Son of Man † will go just as it is written † about
him, † but woe † to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would
have been better for him if he had not been born.”

THE FIRST LORD’S SUPPER

22 As † they were eating, he took bread, † blessed and broke † it, gave it to
them, † and said, “Take it; this is my body.” † 23 Then he took a cup, and after
giving thanks, † he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 He said to
them, “This is my blood of the covenant, † † which is poured out † for
many. † 25 Truly I tell you, † I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine †
until that day when I drink it new † † in the kingdom of God.” †
26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. †

PETER’S DENIAL PREDICTED

27 Then † Jesus said to them, “All of you will fall away, † because it is
written: †
I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep † will be scattered. † †
28 But after I have risen, † I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” †

29 Peter † told him, “Even if everyone falls away, I will not.”
30 “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to him, “today, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” †
31 But he kept insisting, “If I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” And they all said the same thing.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

32 Then † they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he told his disciples, † “Sit here while I pray.” † 33 He took Peter, † James, † and John † with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 He said to them, “I am deeply grieved † to the point of death. Remain here and stay awake.” † 35 He went a little farther, fell to the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour † might pass from him. 36 And he said, “*Abba*, † Father! † All things are possible † for you. Take this cup † away from me. Nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will.” 37 Then he came and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Simon, † are you sleeping? † Couldn’t you stay awake one hour? 38 Stay awake and pray † so that you won’t enter into temptation. † † The spirit † is willing, but the flesh † is weak.” 39 Once again he went away and prayed, saying the same thing. 40 And again he came and found them sleeping, because they could not keep their eyes open. They did not know what to say to him. † 41 Then he came a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The time has come. See, the Son of Man † is betrayed into the hands of sinners. † 42 Get up; † let’s go. See, my betrayer is near.”

JUDAS’S BETRAYAL OF JESUS

43 While † he was still speaking, Judas, † one of the Twelve, † suddenly arrived. With him was a mob, with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, † and the elders. † 44 His betrayer had given them a signal. “The one I kiss,” he said, “he’s the one; arrest him and take him away under guard.” 45 So when he came, immediately he went up to Jesus and said, “Rabbi!” † and kissed him. 46 They took hold of him and arrested him. 47 One of those who stood by drew his sword, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear.

48 Jesus said to them, “Have you come out with swords and clubs, as if I were a criminal, † to capture me? 49 Every day I was among you, teaching in the temple, † and you didn’t arrest me. But the Scriptures † must be fulfilled.” †
50 Then they all deserted him and ran away. † 51 Now a certain young man, wearing nothing but a linen cloth, was following him. They caught hold of him,
52 but he left the linen cloth behind and ran away naked. †

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

53 They † led Jesus away to the high priest, † and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes † assembled. † 54 Peter † followed him at a distance, right into the high priest’s courtyard. He was sitting with the servants, † † warming himself by the fire.
55 The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin † were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death, † but they could not find any. 56 For many were giving false testimony † against him, and the testimonies did not agree.
57 Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, stating, 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with human hands, † and in three days I will build another not made by hands.’ ” 59 Yet their testimony did not agree † even on this.
60 Then the high priest stood up before them all and questioned Jesus, “Don’t you have an answer to what these men are testifying against you? ” 61 But he kept silent and did not answer. † Again the high priest questioned him, “Are you the Messiah, † the Son † of the Blessed † One? ”
62 “I am,” † said Jesus, “and you will see **the Son of Man** † **seated at the right hand** † of Power and **coming with the clouds** † **of heaven**.” † †
63 Then the high priest † tore his robes † and said, “Why do we still need witnesses? † 64 You have heard the blasphemy. † What is your decision? ” They all condemned him as deserving death. †
65 Then some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to beat him, saying, “Prophesy! ” † The temple servants † also took him and slapped him.

PETER DENIES HIS LORD

66 While † Peter † was in the courtyard below, one of the high priest's
maidservants came. 67 When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him
and said, "You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." †
68 But he denied it: "I don't know or understand what you're talking about."
Then he went out to the entryway, † and a rooster crowed. †
69 When the maidservant saw him again, she began to tell those standing nearby,
"This man is one of them."
70 But again he denied it. After a little while those standing there said to Peter
again, "You certainly are one of them, since you're also a Galilean." † †
71 Then he started to curse and swear, † "I don't know this man you're talking
about! "
72 Immediately a rooster crowed a second time, † and Peter remembered when
Jesus had spoken the word to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will
deny me three times." And he broke down and wept.

14:3 Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **14:5** A denarius = one day's wage **14:24** Other mss read *the new covenant* **14:25** Or *drink new wine* ; lit *drink it new* **14:27** Other mss add *because of me this night* **14:34** Or *"My soul is swallowed up in sorrow* **14:36** Aramaic for *father* **14:38** Or *won't be put to the test* **14:48** Or *insurrectionist* **14:54** Or *temple police*, or *officers*, also in v. 65 **14:68** Or *forecourt* **14:68** Other mss omit *and a rooster crowed* **14:70** Other mss add *and your speech shows it*
14:1-2 Mt 26:1-5; Lk 22:1-2 **14:1** Ex 12:11 **14:1** Jn 5:1 **14:1** Ex 23:15 **14:1** Mt 2:4 **14:1** Ps 10:7 **14:1** Jn 5:18 **14:3-9** Mt 26:6-13; Jn 12:2-8 **14:3** Mk 11:1 **14:3** Mt 11:5 **14:3** Lv 19:34 **14:3** Rm 12:13 **14:5** Mt 18:28 **14:5** Rm 15:26 **14:6** 1Pt 2:12 **14:7** Dt 15:11 **14:7** Lk 10:38-42 **14:8** Lk 12:4 **14:8** Jn 19:40 **14:9** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **14:9** Mk 1:1; Php 1:5 **14:9** Mt 13:38; 1Jn 2:2 **14:10-11** Mt 26:14-16; Lk 22:3-6 **14:10** Mk 3:19 **14:10** Mk 11:11 **14:10** Mt 2:4 **14:10** Mk 9:31 **14:11** Lk 19:15 **14:11** Jn 13:21 **14:12-16** Mt 26:17-19; Lk 22:7-13 **14:12** Ex 12:21 **14:12** Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **14:14** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **14:16** Mk 10:10 **14:17-21** Mt 26:20-25; Lk 22:21-23; Jn 13:21-30 **14:17** Mk 11:11 **14:21** Mk 2:10 **14:21** Mk 1:2; Ac 15:15 **14:21** Dn 7:21,25; 9:26 **14:21** Rv 9:12 **14:22-26** Mt 26:26-30; Lk 22:17-20; 1Co 11:23-25 **14:22** 1Co 10:16 **14:22** Mt 14:19; 15:36; Ac 2:46; 20:7,11; 27:35 **14:22** Lk 24:30 **14:22** Lk 12:4; Jn 2:21; 6:51 **14:23** Mk 8:6 **14:24** Ex 24:8; Zch 9:11; Heb 9:18-20; 10:29; 13:20 **14:24** Gn 4:11; Nm 35:33; Lm 4:13; Mt 23:35 **14:24** Is 52:13–53:12 **14:25** Rv 22:21 **14:25** Is 32:12; Hab 3:17; Jms 3:12 **14:25** Is 25:6; Lk 13:28-29; 14:15-24 **14:25** Mk 1:15 **14:26** Mt 21:1 **14:27-31** Mt 26:31-35; Lk 22:31-38; Jn 13:31-38 **14:27** Ac 15:15 **14:27** Mt 7:15 **14:27** Zch 13:7 **14:27** Zch 13:7 **14:28** 1Co 15:4 **14:28** Mt 17:22 **14:29** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **14:30** Mk 14:72 **14:32-42** Mt 26:36-46; Lk 22:39-46 **14:32** Mk 10:10 **14:32** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **14:33** Lk 6:14 **14:33** Ac 12:2 **14:33** Jn 21:7 **14:34** Rv 16:15 **14:35** Jn 2:4 **14:36** Rm 8:15; Gl 4:6 **14:36** Mt 19:26; Mk 9:23 **14:36** Ps 11:6; Is 51:17,22; Lm 4:21; Ezk 23:32-34; Mk 10:38-39; Jn 18:11 **14:37** Mt 16:17 **14:37** Lk 6:14 **14:38** Mt 5:44 **14:38** Mt 6:13; Lk 4:13 **14:38** Ps 51:12 **14:38** Php 3:3 **14:40** Mk 4:40 **14:41** Mk 2:10 **14:41** Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34 **14:42** Mk 5:41 **14:43-52** Mt 26:47-56; Lk 22:47-53; Jn 18:1-2 **14:43** Mk 3:19 **14:43** Mk 11:11 **14:43** Mt 2:4 **14:43** 3Jn 1 **14:45** Jn 11:8 **14:49** Ac 21:26 **14:49** 2Pt 1:20 **14:49** Mt 1:22; Mk 9:12 **14:50** Mk 4:40; Jms 4:7 **14:52** Am 2:16 **14:53-65** Mt 26:57-68; Lk 22:54,63-65; Jn 18:24 **14:53** Mt 26:3 **14:53** Mt 2:4 **14:53** Mk 8:31; 10:33 **14:54** Lk 6:14 **14:54** Jn 18:18 **14:55** Mk 13:9 **14:55** Mt 10:21 **14:56** Pr 6:19; 1Jn 5:10 **14:58** Col 2:11 **14:59** Nm 35:30; Dt 17:6; 19:15; Php 2:6 **14:61** Is 53:7; Mt 27:12,14; Mk 15:5; Lk 23:9; Jn 19:9 **14:61** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **14:61** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **14:61** Lk 1:68; Rm

1:25; 9:5; 2Co 1:3; 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1Pt 1:3 **14:62** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **14:62** Mk 2:10; Ac 7:56 **14:62** Mt 20:21 **14:62** Mt 26:64; Mk 13:26 **14:62** Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13 **14:62** Ps 110:1; Dn 7:13 **14:63** Mt 26:3 **14:63** Lv 10:6; 21:10; Nm 14:6; Jn 19:23 **14:63** Heb 12:1 **14:64** Jn 10:33; Rv 13:6 **14:64** Mk 10:33 **14:65** Jn 11:51 **14:65** Jn 18:18 **14:66-72** Mt 26:69-75; Lk 22:54-62; Jn 18:15-18,25-27 **14:66** Lk 6:14 **14:67** Mk 1:24; 10:47; 16:6; Lk 4:34; 24:19 **14:70** Jn 4:45 **14:71** Mt 5:34 **14:72** Mk 14:30

14:3-8 Mark records the action of an unidentified **woman** who pours **expensive perfume of pure nard** on Jesus's head. While the gift of oil was a common feature of hospitality toward an honored guest, the expense of nard caused the woman's action to stand out. A whole jar of nard, a highly valued plant product from India, would cost a day laborer a year's wage (**three hundred denarii**). This is why some people scolded the woman, but Jesus interprets her action with reference to his **burial.** John identifies this woman as Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (Jn 12:3).

14:44-45 Judas identified Jesus to the mob with a **kiss.** A kiss was a normal form of greeting in the first century (Lk 7:45; Ac 20:37; Rm 16:16), even between a rabbi and his students. Judas's act would not have caused Jesus's disciples to suspect his corrupt intentions toward their Lord.

14:53-65 The **Sanhedrin** was the Jewish Supreme Court led by the **high priest.** Though some Pharisees participated in it, the Sadducees held the majority of seats. Mark suggests they were looking for testimony that would result in Jesus's death, **but they could not find any** (v. 55). The law strictly required that two witnesses provide consistent testimony before a death penalty could be given (Nm 35:30; Dt 17:6; 19:15). The witnesses failed to meet this requirement.

JESUS FACES PILATE

15 As † soon as it was morning, having held a meeting with the elders, † scribes, † and the whole Sanhedrin, the chief priests † tied Jesus up, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. †

2 So Pilate asked him, "Are you the King † of the Jews? " †
He answered him, "You say so."

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things. 4 Pilate † questioned him again, "Aren't you going to answer? Look how many things they are accusing you of! " 5 But Jesus still did not answer, and so Pilate was amazed.

JESUS OR BARABBAS

6 At † the festival † Pilate † used to release for the people a prisoner whom they requested. 7 There was one named Barabbas, who was in prison with rebels who had committed murder † during the rebellion. † 8 The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them as was his custom. 9 Pilate answered them, "Do you want me to release the King † of the Jews † for you? " 10 For he knew it was because of envy † that the chief priests had handed him over. 11 But the chief priests stirred up the crowd so that he would release Barabbas to them

instead. 12 Pilate asked them again, “Then what do you want me to do with the one you call the King of the Jews? ”
13 Again they shouted, “Crucify him! ”
14 Pilate said to them, “Why? What has he done wrong? ”
But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him! ”
15 Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them; and after having Jesus flogged, he handed him over to be crucified.

MOCKED BY THE MILITARY

16 The † soldiers led him away into the palace (that is, the governor’s residence †) and called the whole company together. 17 They dressed him in a purple † robe, twisted together a crown † of thorns, and put it on him. 18 And they began to salute him, “Hail, † King † of the Jews! ” 19 They were hitting him on the head with a stick and spitting on him. Getting down on their knees, † they were paying him homage. 20 After they had mocked † him, they stripped him of the purple robe and put his clothes on him.

CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

They led him out to crucify him. 21 They † forced a man coming in from the country, who was passing by, to carry Jesus’s cross. † He was Simon of Cyrene, † the father of Alexander and Rufus. †
22 They † brought Jesus to the place called *Golgotha* (which means Place of the Skull †). 23 They tried to give him wine † mixed with myrrh, † but he did not take it.
24 Then they crucified him and divided his clothes, casting lots † for them to decide what each would get. 25 Now it was nine in the morning † when they crucified him. 26 The inscription of the charge written against him was: THE KING † OF THE JEWS. † 27 They † crucified two criminals † † with him, one on his right and one on his left. †
29 Those † who passed by were yelling insults † at † him, shaking their heads, † and saying, “Ha! The one who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, † 30 save yourself by coming down from the cross! ” † 31 In the

same way, the chief priests with the scribes † were mocking him among themselves and saying, “He saved others, but he cannot save himself! 32 Let the Messiah, † the King † of Israel, † come down now from the cross, † so that we may see and believe.” † Even those who were crucified with him taunted him.

THE DEATH OF JESUS

33 When † it was noon, † darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. † † 34 And at three Jesus cried out with a loud voice, **“Eloi, Eloi, lemá sabachtháni?”** which is translated, **“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”** † †

35 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “See, he’s calling for Elijah.”

36 Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, fixed it on a stick, offered him a drink, † and said, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to take him down.”

37 Jesus let out a loud cry and breathed his last. 38 Then the curtain † of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 When the centurion, who was standing opposite him, saw the way he † breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” † †

40 There † were also women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, † Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 In Galilee † these women followed him and took care of him. Many other women had come up with him to Jerusalem. †

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

42 When † it was already evening, because it was the day of preparation (that is, the day before the Sabbath), 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin who was himself looking forward † to the kingdom of God, † came and boldly went to Pilate † and asked for Jesus’s body. † 44 Pilate was surprised that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had already died. 45 When he found out from the centurion, he gave the corpse to Joseph. 46 After he bought some linen cloth, Joseph took him down and wrapped him in the linen. Then he laid him in a tomb † cut out of the rock

and rolled a stone † against the entrance to the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene † and Mary the mother of Joses were watching where he was laid.

15:25 Lit *was the third hour* **15:27** Or *revolutionaries* **15:27** Some mss include v. 28: *So the Scripture was fulfilled that says: And he was counted among criminals.* **15:29** Or *passed by blasphemed* **15:33** Lit *the sixth hour* **15:33** Lit *the ninth hour*, also in v. 34 **15:39** Other mss read *saw that he cried out like this and* **15:39** Or *a son of God*

15:1-5 Mt 27:2,11-14; Lk 23:25; Jn 18:28-38 **15:1** 3Jn 1 **15:1** Mt 2:4 **15:1** Mk 13:9 **15:1** 1Tm 6:13 **15:2** Lk 19:38 **15:2** Jn 19:21 **15:4** 1Tm 6:13 **15:6-15** Mt 27:15-26; Lk 23:13-25; Jn 18:39–19:6 **15:6** Mk 14:1 **15:6** 1Tm 6:13 **15:7** Pr 1:16 **15:7** Ac 23:7 **15:9** Lk 19:38 **15:9** Jn 19:21 **15:10** Ps 37:1 **15:16-20** Mt 27:27-31 **15:16** Jn 18:28,33; 19:9; Ac 23:35; Php 1:13 **15:17** Mk 15:20; Lk 16:19; Rv 18:12 **15:17** Jn 19:2,5; Rv 12:1 **15:18** Mt 26:49; Lk 1:28; Jn 19:3 **15:18** Lk 19:38 **15:19** Mk 5:6; Lk 22:41; Eph 3:14 **15:20** Mk 10:34 **15:21** Mt 27:32; Lk 23:26-31 **15:21** Lk 9:23 **15:21** Ac 6:9 **15:21** Rm 16:13 **15:22-26** Mt 27:33-37; Lk 22:32-34; Jn 19:17-24 **15:22** Jn 19:17 **15:23** Gn 9:21; Dt 7:13; Ps 4:7; Pr 3:10; Lk 5:37 **15:23** Ps 69:21 **15:24** Ps 22:18 **15:26** Lk 19:38 **15:26** Jn 11:36 **15:27-28** Mt 27:38,44; Lk 23:39-43 **15:27** Mk 14:48 **15:29-32** Mt 27:39-43; Lk 23:35-38 **15:29** Ex 22:28; Mk 3:29; Rv 13:6 **15:29** Ps 22:7 **15:29** Jn 2:19 **15:30** Lk 23:26 **15:31** Mt 2:4 **15:32** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **15:32** Lk 19:38 **15:32** Jn 1:49 **15:32** Lk 23:26 **15:32** Mk 8:11-12; 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **15:33-39** Mt 27:45-54; Lk 23:44-48; Jn 19:28-30 **15:33** Am 8:9 **15:34** Ps 22:1 **15:34** Ps 22:1 **15:36** Ps 69:21 **15:38** Ex 26:31-33; 2Ch 3:14; Heb 6:19; 9:3; 10:20 **15:39** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **15:40-41** Mt 27:55-56; Lk 23:49; Jn 19:25-27 **15:40** Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1,9; Lk 8:2; 24:10; Jn 20:1-18 **15:41** Mt 17:22 **15:41** Mt 23:37 **15:42-46** Mt 27:57-60; Lk 23:50-54; Jn 19:38-42 **15:43** Jd 21 **15:43** Mk 1:15 **15:43** 1Tm 6:13 **15:43** Lk 12:4; Jn 2:21 **15:46** Jn 5:28; 11:38; Ac 13:29 **15:46** Jn 20:1 **15:47** Mt 27:61-66; Lk 23:55-56

15:6-10 The custom of releasing a **prisoner** on a holy day, or in the midst of a festival, was common in ancient Rome. Unlike modern governmental pardons, it had little to do with guilt or innocence. The practice was intended to placate the nations Rome occupied. Pilate attempts to steer the crowd toward freeing Jesus, because he knows that Jesus was arrested **because of envy.**

15:16-20 Roman soldiers in Jerusalem liked to mock condemned prisoners, especially revolutionaries, by dressing them as kings and offering false homage. Since Jesus had been charged as **King of the Jews**, he was an easy target of the soldiers' mockery.

15:24 Crucifixion was a means of execution designed to expose victims to shame and humiliation. It was a viciously cruel practice in which various positions were used to maximize torture. Death was caused by loss of blood, exposure, exhaustion, and suffocation. Victims often took days to die, leading ancient writers to regard crucifixion as the most barbaric punishment practiced by the Romans.

15:34 Mark includes Jesus's cry in Aramaic and its translation for his Gentile readers. Jesus quotes the first verse of Psalm 22, which describes a righteous man who experiences suffering at the hands of the ungodly. See also "Language and Meaning," *p. 29.*

RESURRECTION MORNING

16 When † the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, † Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they could go and anoint him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, † they went to the tomb † at sunrise. 3 They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away

the stone from the entrance to the tomb for us?” 4 Looking up, they noticed that the stone — which was very large — had been rolled away.

5 When † they entered the tomb, † they saw a young man † dressed † in a white † robe sitting on the right side; they were alarmed. 6 “Don’t be alarmed,” he told them. “You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, † who was crucified. He has risen! † He is not here. See the place where they put him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, † ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; † you will see him there just as he told you.’ ”

8 They went out and ran from the tomb, † because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them. And they said nothing to anyone, † since they were afraid. [Some of the earliest mss conclude with 16:8.] †

THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK: APPEARANCES OF THE RISEN LORD

TEXTUAL CRITICISM

Paul reminds Timothy that “all Scripture is inspired by God” (2Tm 3:16). It is created by God.

Textual criticism concerns not the writing of the original scriptural text but its transmission. The Scriptures have been transmitted by hundreds of scribes through the centuries, and through it all God’s providential guidance has been demonstrated in many ways. Caesar’s *Gallic War* (58–50 BC) has only nine or ten good manuscripts, and the oldest is nine-hundred years later than Caesar’s day. Thucydides’s *History of the Peloponnesian War* (460–400 BC) is known from eight manuscripts, the earliest of which dates to AD 900. F. F. Bruce comments, “No classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest manuscripts of their works which are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals” (*The New Testament Documents*). We have around 5,800 Greek handwritten manuscripts of the NT produced before the invention of the printing press, and more manuscripts continue to be discovered. The oldest of these are probably the papyrus fragments, P52 and P90 (excerpts of the Gospel of John). Both come from approximately sixty years after the original composition of that Gospel.

Textual criticism is the application of reasoned considerations in choosing among various variant readings in manuscripts in order to determine the most authentic version of a text. Textual critics study the making and transmission of ancient manuscripts, describing the most important documents (witnesses) and the history of textual criticism itself. Also called “lower criticism,” textual criticism is the first or basic step in biblical study. The Bible student needs to have a reliable biblical text before commencing its interpretation. In translations, crucial variants are indicated with a footnote, for example, Mark 16:8: “Other mss include vv. 9-20 as a longer ending.” Nevertheless, the vast majority of variants merely involve differences in spelling and the absence or inclusion of the Greek article (“the”).

HISTORY OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM

When Paul asked Timothy to bring him "the scrolls, especially the parchments" (2Tm 4:13), he requested manuscripts written on papyrus and parchment, which were rolled up as scrolls or bound as codices. Papyrus plants grew in the shallow waters of the Nile in Egypt. Parchment was made from the skins of cattle, sheep, goats, and antelopes. Probably over 350 skins of sheep or goats were needed to make Codex Sinaiticus, a fourth-century AD manuscript that contains the whole NT and most of the OT. Codices were made of sheets folded in the middle and then sewn together—the precursor of paper books today. Because of their love of studying God's Word, Christians preferred the codex over the scroll since students could more easily locate a passage. Moreover, only a codex could contain the whole NT, it was cheaper to produce than a scroll, and the effect would appear more similar to the original NT letters that Paul probably kept in a notebook of codex form, as used by artisans. Eventually paper was used instead of papyrus and parchment.

Ancient manuscripts could be written in capital letters (majuscules) or smaller, cursive letters (minuscules). Handwriting styles enable paleographers to date a manuscript within a generation (half a century). The more reliable manuscripts are older, having been produced closest in time to the original manuscript. In addition, when manuscripts from different geographical areas without any genealogical relationship (one manuscript not being a copy of the other manuscript) agree, that normally points to a reading that goes back to an older common ancestor. Most evangelical scholars prefer these types of criteria ("external evidence") for reconstructing the original text because they are more objective. To confirm such objective criteria, however, a text critic can suggest reasoned guesses as to why differences may have occurred on the basis of probable errors that scribes tended to make, or intentional alterations that reflect textual harmonization or filling out details and descriptions (e.g., changing "Jesus" to "Jesus Christ"). Such considerations are regarded factors of "internal evidence."

By the fourth century AD, manuscripts usually were produced by commercial book manufacturers (scriptoria). A reader or lector would read aloud the exemplar text, and several trained scribes would write down the text. A corrector, or copy editor, would then check each copy. Ancient Christians and Jews had such an elevated view of the biblical text that instead of scraping off any original words, they would copy a later text in the margin. Sometimes, centuries later, scribes would also add variants better known to them in the margins of the original.

By the fifth century, copies of Bibles were produced by individual monks in monastic scriptoria. The end of the book of Revelation demonstrates the importance of accuracy; it notes that if anyone adds to the words of the prophecy, "God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book" and, if anyone takes away from the words of the prophecy, "God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city" (Rv 22:18-20). The NT was copied by hand until Gutenberg's invention of the moveable type print; in 1456, the Latin Vulgate Bible was produced. In 1516 the first printed Greek NT was made available to the public. The Geneva Bible of 1560 was the first English Bible with verse divisions.

TEXTUAL TRADITIONS

The OT has two principal text types: the Masoretic (Hebrew) and the Septuagint (Greek). The goal of the Masoretes was "to transmit the Hebrew text in a form unchanged from that which they had received" (R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*). Every consonant was considered sacred. Hebrew scribes counted words and letters to ensure accuracy and memorized the appropriate vowels to be vocalized between the consonants. The Masoretic scholars inserted these vowels in the written text by the sixth century AD. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered with OT manuscripts dating centuries earlier, they testified "independently to the traditions lying behind the Masoretic form, and have furnished powerful support for the general trustworthiness of the Masoretic text" (Harrison, *ibid.*). The oldest known translation of the OT is the "Greek of the Seventy" (or 72) translators, the Septuagint (LXX). It began with the Pentateuch at Alexandria, Egypt, under Ptolemy II Philadelphus around 250 BC. The OT was fully translated by the second century BC. The NT writers quoted both the Masoretic and Septuagint texts.

Around the region of the Mediterranean, in important cities, the early church developed schools that became centers for authoritative Christian leaders. Renowned for its scholarship, as well as having an excellent climate to preserve papyri, Alexandria in Egypt became an important center of learning and of Christian thought before the siege of the Muslim Arabs in the seventh century AD. Textual criticism began in Alexandria with the study of the Greek epic poetry of Homer. The goal was to identify the oldest Homeric manuscripts. The early church father Origen, in his early years, used the "Alexandrian" text type of the NT. Codices Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, and the Coptic versions, exemplify this text type. In contrast, in Italy, Gaul, and Carthage, the "Western" text was used. Western texts are known for their paraphrases, free addition and occasional omission of words, sentences, and incidents. Thus, most text critics consider the Western texts to be less reliable in terms of their fidelity to the original text, although they may also include early textual traditions. For instance, Codex Bezae's book of Acts is almost one-tenth longer than the normal text. Since Christians in Ephesus often traveled to Rome, they too tended to use the Western text type.

When Origen moved to Caesarea (after AD 230), he used the "Caesarean" text, which is a compromise between the Alexandrian and Western text types. Scholars in Antioch and the historian Eusebius in Caesarea also used it. When Armenia became the first nation to accept Christianity as its official religion (fourth century AD), the NT was translated into Armenian using the Caesarean text type (especially for Matthew and Mark).

Lucian of Antioch, who died in AD 312, combined the text at Antioch with the Western and Alexandrian texts, creating the basis for the "Byzantine" text; it became the prevailing text throughout the Byzantine Church when Emperor Constantine adopted it in AD 380. Most scholars consider the Byzantine text a later, derivative text. Its aim was to make the Greek smoother and more attractive to the ordinary reader, but the result impoverished its sense and force. Since the center of Christianity shifted to Constantinople in the fourth century, and the patriarch John Chrysostom (who had been in Antioch) preferred this text type, the Byzantine text nevertheless became the universal standard of the church, especially after the seventh century. The oldest Greek Byzantine text may be found in the Gospels of Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century). Eventually the Byzantine text came to be called the Textus Receptus ("Received Text") or "majority text" because the majority of witnesses produced in the Middle Ages were of the Byzantine text type. It even became the basis for the King James Version. Most text critics would agree with Bruce Metzger, however, that the Alexandrian text type is "far superior" to the Western and Byzantine texts since the quality of witnesses should be "weighed" rather than "counted" (*The Text of the New Testament*).

CONCLUSION

Contrary to some popular perceptions—that our modern Bibles were produced through the making of copies of copies, that gradually eroded the trustworthiness of the Bible over the centuries—our Bibles are constructed from the best and earliest manuscripts. And since we continue to discover new ancient manuscripts, the text is getting more accurate, not less. This fact, together with the huge supply of textual evidence available to us—which dramatically supersedes the evidence for any other ancient texts—means that we enjoy great confidence in the reliability of the text of Scripture.

AIDA BESANCON SPENCER

[9 Early † on the first day of the week, † after he had risen, † he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, † out of whom he had driven seven demons. † 10 She went and reported to those who had been with him, as they were mourning and

weeping. [11] Yet, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe it. †

[12] After this, he appeared † in a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country. † [13] And they went and reported it to the rest, who did not believe them either.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

[14] Later he appeared to the Eleven † themselves as they were reclining at the table. He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw him after he had risen. † [15] Then † he said to them, "Go into all the world † and preach the gospel to all creation. † [16] Whoever believes † and is baptized will be saved, † but whoever does not believe will be condemned. † [17] And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; † [18] they will pick up snakes; † † if they should drink anything deadly, it will not harm † them; they will lay hands on † the sick, and they will get well."

THE ASCENSION

[19] So the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them, † was taken up into heaven † and sat down at the right hand † of God. [20] And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs.]

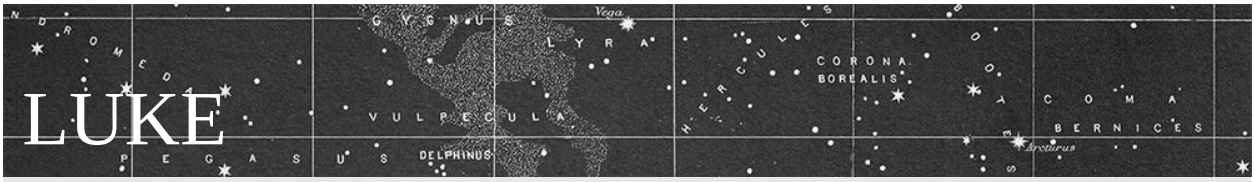
16:8 Other mss include vv. 9-20 as a longer ending. The following shorter ending is found in some mss between v. 8 and v. 9 and in one ms after v. 8 (each of which omits vv. 9-20): *And all that had been commanded to them they quickly reported to those around Peter. After these things, Jesus himself sent out through them from east to west, the holy and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.* **16:17** = languages **16:18** Other mss add *with their hands*

16:1-4 Mt 28:1; Lk 24:1-2 **16:1** Mk 15:40 **16:2** Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 **16:2** Jn 5:28 **16:5-8** Mt 28:5-8; Lk 24:3-8; Jn 20:1-2 **16:5** Jn 5:28 **16:5** Lk 7:14 **16:5** Lk 12:27 **16:5** Rv 3:4 **16:6** Mk 14:67 **16:6** 1Co 15:4 **16:7** Lk 6:14 **16:7** Mt 17:22 **16:8** Jn 5:28 **16:8** Mk 1:44; 4:40 **16:9-11** Jn 20:11-18 **16:9** Lk 24:1; Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 **16:9** Lk 18:33; Ac 2:24 **16:9** Mk 15:40 **16:9** Mk 3:15; Lk 8:2 **16:11** Lk 24:5,11,23 **16:12** Jn 21:1; 2Co 4:11 **16:12** Lk 24:13-35 **16:14** Lk 24:9 **16:14** Lk 24:38,41 **16:15-18** Mt 28:16-20 **16:15** Mt 13:38; 1Jn 2:2 **16:15** Rm 8:22 **16:16** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **16:16** Ac 2:38; 22:16 **16:16** Mt 12:41; Jn 3:18,36; 5:11; 20:23 **16:18** Lk 10:19; Ac 28:3-6 **16:18** Ac 28:5 **16:18** Ac 9:12,17; 1Tm 5:22 **16:19** Lk 24:3 **16:19** Lk 24:51; Ac 1:2,11,22; 1Tm 3:16 **16:19** Lk 22:69; Heb 10:12

16:1 Anointing a corpse with oil reduced the odor of decomposition. Anointing with aromatics (**spices**), however, was reserved for the burial of kings (2Ch 16:14; Sg 4:10). Thus, the anointing of Jesus's body

with spices affirms the women's belief that he was indeed the King of Israel. The dignity of such an anointing may have been intended to remove the disgrace of crucifixion.

16:5 The **white robe** would be understood to belong to a heavenly being. Contrary to popular depictions today, the Bible does not describe angels as having wings (except in the case of the seraphim; cp. Is 6:2). Generally in the Bible, angels are described with human-like features.



LUKE

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the NT. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to "most honorable Theophilus" (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1-3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called "we" sections of the book (Ac 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-37; 28:1-16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural ("they," "them"), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural ("we," "us"). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no "we" passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Among Paul's well-known coworkers, the most likely candidate is Luke, the doctor (see Col 4:14; Phm 24). That is also the unanimous testimony of the earliest Christian writers (e.g., Justin Martyr, the Muratorian Canon, and Tertullian). Since Luke is not named among the workers who were "of the circumcised" (i.e., a Jew; Col 4:11), he was almost certainly a Gentile. That explains the healthy emphasis on Gentiles in Luke (6:17; 7:1-10). Luke also reflects an interest in medical matters (e.g., 4:38; 14:2).

BACKGROUND: Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the 60s or 70s AD have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the 70s or 80s AD.

Since Luke wrote both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts (Ac 1:1-3), it is relevant to consider the dating of both books together. The events at the end of Acts occurred around AD 62–63. That is the earliest point at which Acts could have been written. If Acts was written in the early 60s AD from Rome, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Ac 28:30), the Third Gospel could date from an earlier stage of that period of imprisonment. The other reasonable possibility is during Paul's earlier two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 24:27). From that location, Luke would have been able to travel and interview the eyewitnesses to Jesus's life and ministry who were still alive.

The Third Gospel is addressed to "most honorable Theophilus" (Lk 1:3), about whom nothing else is known other than that he is also the recipient of the book of Acts (Ac 1:1). The Greek name Theophilus means "lover of God" or "friend of God" and implies that he was a Gentile, probably Greek. He seems to have been a relatively new believer, recently instructed about Jesus and the Christian faith (Lk 1:4). The title "most honorable" indicates that, at the least, he was a person of high standing and financial substance. It may also reflect that he was an official with some governmental authority and power.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Nearly sixty percent of the material in the Gospel of Luke is unique. Thus, there is a great deal that readers of Scripture would not know if the Third Gospel were not in the Bible. Notable among the larger distinctive portions are: (1) much of the material in Luke 1–2 about the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, (2) the only biblical material on Jesus's childhood and pre-ministry adult life (2:40-52), (3) a genealogy for Jesus

(3:23-38) that is significantly different from the one in Matthew 1:1-17, (4) most of the "travelogue" section about Jesus's journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51–19:44), (5) a considerably different slant on the destruction of the temple (21:5-38) from the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24–25 and Mark 13, and (6) quite a bit of fresh material in the post-resurrection appearances, including the Emmaus Road, a distinctive statement of the Great Commission, and the only description in the Gospels of Jesus's ascension into heaven (Lk 24:13-53).

STRUCTURE

Luke's distinctive "narrative about the events" (1:1) of the life of Jesus is written in "orderly sequence" (1:3), though not strict chronological sequence in many cases (as the notes will explain at various points). Generally, after the key events leading up to the beginning of Christ's public ministry (1:5–4:13), the flow of the book is from his early ministry in and around Galilee (4:14–9:50), through an extended description of ministry related to his journey to Jerusalem (9:51–19:44), climaxing in the events of Passion Week and post-resurrection appearances in and around Jerusalem (19:45–24:53).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

In this Gospel, God initiates everything concerning salvation. The glory of God is especially emphasized from the song of the angels (2:14) to the triumphal entry (19:38). Equally important is the glory of Jesus himself, from the transfiguration (9:32) to his resurrection splendor (24:26). Jesus is, of course, the virgin-born Son of God in this book. The Spirit is active from Jesus's conception to the great power of his ministry (1:35; 4:14). The Spirit is also the gift Jesus promised to his followers (11:13).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This Gospel focuses on humanity in two ways. First, Jesus is the ideal or perfect Human. Luke shows what a Spirit-filled person, wholly obedient to God, is like. (Note the centurion's confession at Jesus's death: "This man really was righteous!" 23:47). Second, Luke painted a vivid portrait of a number of individuals Jesus influenced, showing the value of each human life.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The turning point in this Gospel is 9:51, when "he determined to journey to Jerusalem." Jerusalem was the proper place for Jesus to offer himself as a sacrifice. In his own words, "Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?" (24:26). On the night he was betrayed, he taught his disciples that his death was a substitute and that it brought about the new covenant (see Jr 31:31-34).

LUKE TIMELINE

50–5 BC

Augustus Caesar's reign begins. **MARCH 15, 44 BC**

Roman Senate declares Herod king of the Jews. **39 BC**

Herod assumes possession of the domain to which he had been named earlier. **37 BC**

Herod begins thorough expansion of the temple in Jerusalem in **20 BC.** The inner sanctuary was completed in 1 1/2 years and the rest of the temple was finished in **AD 63,** only seven years before it was destroyed.

Imperial census in territory governed by Herod **6 to 4 BC**

5 BC–AD 9

Jesus's birth **5 BC**

Eclipse of the moon just prior to Herod's death **MARCH 12/13, 4 BC**

Passover celebrated just after Herod's death **APRIL 11, 4 BC**

Herod's sons, Herod Phillip, Herod Antipas, and Archelaus divide Palestine and rule three territories under the aegis of Rome. **4 BC**

Jesus travels with his parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. **AD 9**

AD 10–30

Caiaphas is high priest. **18–36**

Pontius Pilate is prefect of Judea. **26–36**

John the Baptist's ministry begins. **29**

Jesus's baptism **29**

Jesus's wilderness temptations **29**

Jesus's call of his first disciples **29**

The first Passover of Jesus's ministry, an occasion on which it was said that the temple (inner sanctuary) had stood for 46 years **30**

Jesus goes from Judea to Galilee when he learns of John the Baptist's death. **30**

AD 31–33

Second Passover of Jesus's ministry; he comes under increasing scrutiny for plucking grain on the Sabbath. **31**

Jesus feeds the 5,000 around the time of his third Passover. **32**

Between Passover of **32** and **33** Jesus withdraws from public ministry and focuses on preparing his disciples. During this time period is Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi and Jesus's transfiguration.

Jesus's trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14-16** or **APRIL 3-5, 33**

THE DEDICATION TO THEOPHILUS

1 Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have
been fulfilled † among us, † 2 just as the original eyewitnesses † and
servants of the word † handed them down to us. 3 It also seemed good
to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write

to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable † Theophilus, † 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed. † †

GABRIEL PREDICTS JOHN'S BIRTH

5 In the days of King Herod † of Judea, there was a priest of Abijah's division † named Zechariah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 Both were righteous in God's sight, † living without blame † according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no children because Elizabeth could not conceive, and both of them were well along in years. †

8 When his division was on duty † and he was serving as priest before God, 9 it happened that he was chosen by lot, † according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. † 10 At the hour of incense the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. 11 An angel of the Lord † appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. † 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified and overcome with fear. † 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, † Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. † Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. † 14 There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will never drink wine or beer. † He will be filled with the Holy Spirit † while still in his mother's womb. † 16 He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. † 17 And he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, † and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people." †

18 "How can I know this? " Zechariah asked the angel. "For I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years."

19 The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, † who stands in the presence of God, † and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. 20 Now listen. You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take

place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.”
21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. 22 When he did come out, he could not speak to them. Then they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was making signs to them † and remained speechless. 23 When the days of his ministry were completed, he went back home.
24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived and kept herself in seclusion for five months. She said, 25 “The Lord has done this for me. He has looked with favor in these days to take away my disgrace † among the people.”

GABRIEL PREDICTS JESUS’S BIRTH

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel † was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, † 27 to a virgin engaged † † to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. † The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And the angel came to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you.” † 29 But she was deeply troubled † by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be. 30 Then the angel told her: “Do not be afraid, Mary, † for you have found favor with God. † 31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. † 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, † and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. †
33 He will reign over the house of Jacob † forever, and his kingdom will have no end.” †
34 Mary asked the angel, “How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man? ” †
35 The angel replied to her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, † and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. † 36 And consider your relative Elizabeth — even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” †
38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary. “May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel left her.

MARY'S VISIT TO ELIZABETH

39 In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah
40 where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When
Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was
filled with the Holy Spirit. † 42 Then she exclaimed with a loud cry: "Blessed
are you among women, and your child will be blessed! † 43 How could this
happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For you see,
when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside
me. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill what he has
spoken to her! "

MARY'S PRAISE

46 And Mary said:

My soul praises the greatness of † the Lord, †
47 and my spirit rejoices † in God my Savior, †
48 because he has looked with favor
on the humble condition of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations
will call me blessed, †
49 because the Mighty One †
has done great things for me, †
and his name † is holy.
50 His mercy is from generation to generation †
on those who fear him.
51 He has done a mighty deed with his arm; †
he has scattered the proud
because of the thoughts of their hearts; †
52 he has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. †
53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things †
and sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering his mercy

55 to Abraham and his descendants † forever, †
just as he spoke to our ancestors.

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months; then she returned to her home.

THE BIRTH AND NAMING OF JOHN

57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she had a son. 58 Then her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her his great mercy, † and they rejoiced with her.

59 When they came to circumcise the child on the eighth day, † they were going to name him Zechariah, after his father. 60 But his mother responded, “No. He will be called John.” †

61 Then they said to her, “None of your relatives has that name.” 62 So they motioned to his father † to find out what he wanted him to be called. 63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote: “His name is John.” And they were all amazed. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened † and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 Fear came on all those who lived around them, and all these things were being talked about throughout the hill country of Judea. 66 All who heard about him † took it to heart, saying, “What then will this child become? ” For, indeed, the Lord’s hand was with him.

ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit † and prophesied: †

68 Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, †
because he has visited
and provided redemption for his people. †
69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us †
in the house of his servant David, †
70 just as he spoke by the mouth
of his holy prophets in ancient times; †
71 salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of those who hate us.

72 He has dealt mercifully with our fathers †
and remembered his holy covenant † — 73 the oath that he swore to our father
Abraham. †
He has given us the privilege,
74 since we have been rescued
from the hand of our enemies,
to serve him without fear
75 in holiness and righteousness
in his presence all our days.
76 And you, child, will be called
a prophet of the Most High, †
for you will go before the Lord
to prepare his ways, †
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness
of their sins. †
78 Because of our God's merciful compassion, the dawn from on high †
will visit us 79 to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow
of death, †
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 The child grew up and became spiritually strong, † and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

1:1 Or *events that have been accomplished*, or *events most surely believed* **1:4** Or *informed* **1:27** Lit *betrothed* **1:28** Other mss add *Blessed are you among women.* **1:34** Lit *since I do not know a man* **1:42** Lit *and the fruit of your abdomen* (or *womb*) *is blessed* **1:46** Or *soul magnifies* **1:55** Or *offspring* ; lit *seed*
1:1 Rm 4:21; 14:5; Col 2:2; 4:12; 1Th 1:5; 2Tm 4:17; Heb 6:11; 10:22 **1:2** Jn 15:27; Ac 1:21; 2Pt 1:16; 1Jn 1:1 **1:2** Ac 26:16; 1Co 4:1; Heb 2:3 **1:3** Ac 23:26; 24:3; 26:25 **1:3** Ac 1:1 **1:4** Ac 18:25; Rm 2:18; 1Co 14:19; Gl 6:6 **1:5** Mt 2:1 **1:5** 1Ch 24:10 **1:6** Gn 7:1; Ac 2:25; 8:21 **1:6** Php 2:15; 3:6; 1Th 3:13 **1:7** Gn 4:1; 18:11; Jdg 13:2-3; 1Sm 1:2; 2:20; Ps 113:9; 127:3-5; Heb 11:11-12 **1:8** 1Ch 24:19; 2Ch 8:14; 31:2 **1:9** Jos 18:6,8,10; 1Ch 24:31; 25:8; 26:13-14; Neh 10:34; 11:1; Ac 1:26 **1:9** Ex 30:7-8 **1:11** Mt 2:13-14; 28:2; Lk 2:9; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7 **1:11** Mk 16:5; Ac 2:33 **1:12** Gn 21:17; Jdg 6:22-23; 2Kg 1:15; Mt 1:20; 28:5; Lk 2:10; Ac 10:3-4; 27:23-24 **1:13** Gn 15:1; Mt 14:27; Lk 1:30 **1:13** Gn 25:21; 1Kg 8:45,49; 2Kg 20:5; Ps 6:9; Is 38:5 **1:13** Gn 16:11; 17:15,19; Is 8:3; Hs 1:4,9; Mt 1:20,23; Lk 1:60,63 **1:13-15** Nm 6:3; Jdg 13:3-5; Mt 11:18; Lk 7:33 **1:15** Ex 28:3; 31:3; 35:31; Dt 34:9; Mc 3:8; Lk 1:41,67; Ac 2:4; 4:8,31; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9; 13:52; Eph 5:18 **1:15** Is 44:2; Lk 1:41,44 **1:16** Ps 22:27; Lm 3:40 **1:16-17** Mal 4:5-6; Mt 11:14; 17:10-12 **1:17** Is 40:3; Lk 1:76; 3:4 **1:19** Dn 8:16; 9:21; Lk 1:26 **1:19** Mt 18:10 **1:22** Lk 1:62 **1:25** Gn 30:23; Is 4:1; 25:8 **1:26** Lk 1:19 **1:26** Mt 2:23 **1:27** Dt 21:23; Is 7:14; Mt 1:18,23 **1:27** Mt 1:20; Lk 2:4 **1:29** Lk 1:12 **1:30** Mt 14:27; Lk 1:13 **1:30** Gn 6:8; Ex 33:12-17; Jr 31:2 **1:31** Is 7:14; Mt 1:21,25; Lk 2:21 **1:32** Lk 1:35,76;

3:38; 6:35; 8:28; 9:35; Jn 1:34,49; 11:27; Ac 7:48 **1:32** 2Sm 7:12-13; 1Kg 2:12; Ps 132:11; Is 9:7; Jr 33:17; Mk 11:10 **1:33** Ex 19:3; Ps 114:1; Is 14:1; 29:22; 46:3 **1:33** Is 9:6 LXX; Dn 7:14 **1:35** Mt 1:18 **1:35** Mt 14:33; Lk 4:3,9,41; 22:70 **1:37** Gn 18:14; Lk 18:27 **1:41** Lk 1:67; Ac 2:4; 4:8; 9:17; 13:9 **1:46-53** 1Sm 2:1-10 **1:47** Ps 35:9; Hab 3:18 **1:47** 1Tm 1:1; 2:3; Ti 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jd 25 **1:48** Lk 11:27 **1:49** Ps 89:8; Zph 3:17 **1:49** Ps 71:19; 126:2-3 **1:49** Lv 20:3; 22:2,32; 1Ch 16:10,35; 29:16; Ps 30:4; 99:3; 103:1; 111:9; Is 57:15 **1:50** Ps 100:5; 103:11,17 **1:51** Ps 89:10; 98:1; 118:15 **1:51** Lk 2:35; 9:47 **1:52** 1Sm 2:7-8 **1:53** Ps 34:10; 107:9; Lk 6:21,24-25 **1:55** Gn 17:9,15; 21:12 **1:58** Gn 19:19 **1:59** Gn 17:12; Lv 12:3; Lk 2:21; Php 3:5 **1:60** Lk 1:13,63 **1:62** Lk 1:22 **1:64** Lk 1:20 **1:66** Ac 11:21 **1:67** Lk 1:41 **1:67** Jl 2:28 **1:68** Ps 41:13 **1:68** Lk 1:71; 2:38; Heb 9:12 **1:69** 1Sm 2:1,10; Ps 18:2; 89:17; 132:17; Ezk 29:21 **1:69** 2Sm 7:26; Ps 89:3,20; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:24-25 **1:70** 2Kg 21:10; Hs 12:10; Ac 3:21; Rm 1:2; Heb 1:1 **1:72** Mc 7:20 **1:72** Ps 105:8-9,42; 106:45 **1:73** Gn 22:16-17; Heb 6:13 **1:76** Mt 11:9 **1:76** Lk 1:17; Is 40:3; Mal 3:1 **1:77** Jr 31:34; Mk 1:4 **1:78** Is 58:8; Jr 23:5; Zch 3:8; 6:12 LXX; Mal 4:2; Lk 24:49; Eph 4:8; 2Pt 1:19 **1:79** Is 9:2; 60:2-3 **1:80** Lk 2:40

1:1 Luke's statement that **many have undertaken to compile a narrative** suggests that many before him compiled accounts of Jesus's life and ministry. Luke was not an eyewitness himself (v. 2). Instead, he conducted a careful investigation of many sources (v. 3). We do not know all sources employed, but most NT scholars contend that Luke at least used Mark's Gospel. See "Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy," *p. XXXI.*

1:3 Theophilus (Gk *Theophilus*, "loved by God" or "one who loves God") was a common name in antiquity. **Most honorable** was sometimes employed as a formal title in reference to people of social standing (Ac 23:26; 24:3). Other times it was used as a polite form of address. Publishing a literary work was costly in ancient times; Theophilus likely served as the patron or sponsor for the Gospel of Luke and Acts (Ac 1:1). It was common for a patron's name to appear in the introduction of an ancient writing.

1:5 King Herod of Judea served as the client king of the Romans from 37 BC through AD 4. He was known as a great builder and ruthless leader. His most famous building project was the temple in Jerusalem. Fear of losing his throne led him to murder his wife, Mariamne, and three of his sons. Jesus and John the Baptist were born shortly before Herod's death. Here **Judea** probably refers to Judea, Galilee, Samaria, and a large portion of Perea and Coele-Syria.

1:9 Due to the great number of priests, being chosen **to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense** was a once in a lifetime privilege. Priests burned incense during the morning and evening sacrifices. The rising smoke symbolized the prayers of God's people rising up to him (Ps 141:2; Rv 5:8; 8:3-4).

1:15 See "A Biblical Assessment of Abortion," *p. 718.*

1:27 In Jewish culture, the engagement period usually lasted one year before the wedding. Luke does not indicate the ages of Joseph and Mary at the time of their betrothal, but Jewish females could be pledged as early as their twelfth year. Most Jewish men married between the ages of eighteen and twenty, while most Jewish women married in their early teens, usually thirteen to sixteen.

1:31 Jesus (Gk *Iesous*), the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name "Joshua" (Hb *Yehoshua*), was a common name in first-century Palestine. It means "Yahweh saves."

1:32-33 The throne of his father David refers to the covenant God made to David (2Sm 7; Ps 89), in which he promised to raise up his "seed" whose **kingdom will have no end.** This promise became the basis for Israel's expectation of a Messiah.

1:52-53 The OT looks forward to a time when God will bring about justice for the **lowly** and **hungry.** God will reverse social and political fortunes. This theme is also found in the Wisdom literature of Second

Temple Judaism: “The Lord overthrows the thrones of rulers, and enthrones the lowly in their place” (Sir 10:14).

1:59-63 Elizabeth insists that her newborn son be called **John.** This choice was unusual as it was customary to use the name of the infant’s father or grandfather, rather than a non-family name.

1:63 A **writing tablet** was a wooden board with a depressed area into which one poured melted wax. A person could scratch writing into the dried wax with a stylus.

1:67-79 Like Mary’s Praise (1:46-55), Zechariah’s Prophecy is nationalistic, incorporating attention to Israel’s physical salvation—a theme of many psalms and other writings within Judaism. Zechariah also points forward to the roles of Jesus and John and this work is thus similar to the royal psalms that focus on God’s salvation coming through his Messiah (e.g., Pss 2; 110).

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus † that the whole
empire † should be registered. 2 This first registration took place
while † Quirinius was governing Syria. † 3 So everyone went to be
registered, each to his own town.
4 Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth † in Galilee, to Judea, to the
city of David, which is called Bethlehem, † because he was of the house and
family line of David, † 5 to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to
him † and was pregnant. 6 While they were there, the time came for her to give
birth. 7 Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in
cloth and laid him in a manger, † because there was no guest room available for
them.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

8 In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch
at night over their flock. 9 Then an angel of the Lord † stood before them, †
and the glory of the Lord † shone around them, and they were terrified. †
10 But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, † for look, I proclaim to you
good news of great joy that will be for all the people: † 11 Today in the city of
David a Savior † was born for you, who is the Messiah, † the Lord. † 12 This
will be the sign for you: † You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and
lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host † with the angel,
praising God and saying:

14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, †
and peace on earth † to people he favors! † † †

15 When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to
one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which
the Lord has made known to us.”
16 They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was
lying in the manger. 17 After seeing them, they reported the message they were
told about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed † at what the
shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her
heart † and meditating on them. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and
praising God † for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as
they had been told.

THE CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION OF JESUS

21 When the eight days were completed for his circumcision, † he was named
Jesus † — the name given by the angel before he was conceived. 22 And when
the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, †
they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (just as it is
written in the law of the Lord, **Every firstborn male will be dedicated † to the
Lord** † †) 24 and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of
the Lord, **a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons** † †).

SIMEON’S PROPHETIC PRAISE

25 There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was
righteous and devout, † looking forward to Israel’s consolation, † and the Holy
Spirit was on him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit † that he
would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah. † 27 Guided by the
Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to

perform for him what was customary under the law, [28] Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,

[29] Now, Master,
you can dismiss your servant in peace,
as you promised.
[30] For my eyes have seen your salvation. †
[31] You have prepared it
in the presence of all peoples —
[32] a light for revelation to the Gentiles † †
and glory to your people Israel. †

[33] His father and mother † were amazed at what was being said about him. [34] Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary: "Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel † and to be a sign that will be opposed † — [35] and a sword will pierce your own soul — that the thoughts † of many hearts may be revealed."

ANNA'S TESTIMONY

[36] There was also a prophetess, † Anna, a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. † She was well along in years, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, † † [37] and was a widow for eighty-four years. † She did not leave the temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayers. †
[38] At that very moment, † she came up and began to thank God and to speak about him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. † †

THE FAMILY'S RETURN TO NAZARETH

[39] When they had completed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. † [40] The boy grew up and became strong, filled with wisdom, and God's grace was on him. †

IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

41 Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. †
42 When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival. † 43 After those days were over, † as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents † did not know it.
44 Assuming he was in the traveling party, they went a day's journey. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46 After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all those who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, † "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." †
49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked them. "Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?" † 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. †

IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND WITH PEOPLE

51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. † 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people. †

2:1 Or *the whole inhabited world* **2:2** Or *This registration was the first while*, or *This registration was before* **2:5** Lit *betrothed* **2:7** Or *feeding trough*, also in vv. 12,16 **2:9** Lit *they feared a great fear* **2:10** Or *the whole nation* **2:13** Lit *heavenly army* **2:14** Other mss read *earth good will to people* **2:14** Or *earth to men of good will* **2:23** Lit *be called holy* **2:32** Or *the nations* **2:33** Other mss read *But Joseph and his mother* **2:34** Or *spoken against* **2:35** Or *schemes* **2:36** Lit *years from her virginity* **2:37** Or *she was a widow until the age of eighty-four* **2:38** Lit *very hour* **2:38** Other mss read *in Jerusalem* **2:43** Other mss read *but Joseph and his mother* **2:49** Or *be involved in my Father's interests* (or *things*), or *be among my Father's people*
2:1 Mt 22:17; Lk 3:1 **2:2** Mt 4:24 **2:4** Mt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; Jn 1:45 **2:4** Gn 35:19; 48:7; Jos 19:15; Jdg 12:10; 17:7-9; Ru 1:1; 1Sm 16:1; Mc 5:2 **2:4** Lk 1:27 **2:9** Mt 1:20; 2:13,19; 28:2; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7; 12:23 **2:9** Lk 24:4; Ac 12:7 **2:9** Ex 24:16; 40:34-35; Lv 9:6,23; Nm 20:6; 1Kg 8:11; Is 35:2; 40:5; 60:1 **2:10** Mt 14:27 **2:11** Mt 1:21; Jn 4:42; Ac 5:31 **2:11** Mt 1:16; 16:16,20; Jn 11:27 **2:11** Lk 1:43; Ac 2:36; 10:36 **2:12** 1Sm 2:34; 2Kg 19:29; 20:8-9; Is 7:11,14 **2:14** Mt 21:9; Lk 19:38 **2:14** Lk 12:51 **2:14** Lk 3:22; Eph 1:9; Php 2:13 **2:18** Lk 1:63; 2:33; 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14,38; 20:26; 24:12,41 **2:19** Lk 2:51 **2:20** Mt 9:8 **2:21** Lk 1:59 **2:21** Lk 1:31 **2:22** Lv 12:6-8 **2:23** Ex 13:2,12 **2:23** Ex 11:5; 12:12,29; 13:2,12; 34:19; Dt 15:19 **2:24** Lv 5:11; 12:8 **2:24** Lv 5:11; 12:8 **2:25** Lk 1:6 **2:25** Ps 135:14; Is 40:1-2,11; 49:10,13; 51:3,12; 57:18; 61:2; 66:13; Jr 31:9; Mk 15:43; Lk 2:38; 23:51 **2:26** Mt 2:12 **2:26** Ps 89:48; Jn 8:51; Heb 11:5 **2:30** Ps 119:166,174; Is 52:10; Lk 3:6 **2:32** Is 42:6; 49:6,9; Ac 13:47; 26:23 **2:32** Is 46:13 LXX **2:34** Mt 21:44; 1Co 1:23; 2Co 2:16; 1Pt 2:8 **2:36** Lk 2:38; Ac 21:9 **2:36** Jos 19:24 **2:36** 1Tm 5:9 **2:37** Lk 5:33; Ac 13:3; 14:23; 1Tm 5:5 **2:38** Is 52:9; Lk 1:68; 2:25 **2:39** Mt 2:23; Lk 1:26; 2:51; 4:16 **2:40** Lk 1:80; 2:52

2:41 Ex 12:11; 23:15; Dt 16:1-6 **2:42** Dt 16:16-17 **2:43** Ex 12:15 **2:48** Mt 12:46 **2:48** Lk 2:49; 3:23; 4:22 **2:50** Mk 9:32; Lk 9:45; 18:34 **2:51** Lk 2:19 **2:52** Lk 2:40

2:1-4 Caesar Augustus served as emperor from 31 BC to AD 14. Luke mentions a census that took place during the governorship of **Quirinius.** A census was used to determine either the number of available fighting men for military service, or to obtain an accurate record used for taxation purposes. Ancient records refer to a census that took place in AD 6 (Josephus, *Ant*. 18.26; see also Ac 5:37). Biblical scholars, however, argue that Jesus was born around 5 BC, although no ancient record mentions a census that took place at this time. One plausible explanation, supported by some inscriptional evidence, is that Quirinius may have been governor of Syria twice. The first census may have taken place during his first term while the second occurred during his second (AD 6). Another possibility is that the phrase **this first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria** could be translated to mean that "**this registration was before Quirinius was governing Syria"** (see the related footnote for this variation). Such a translation would alleviate the historical difficulty of Luke's account.

2:7 The Greek term *katalyma*, **guest room,** likely refers to a room in a private home (see 22:11), rather than a commercial inn (Gk *pandocheion*, 10:34). Since animals were sometimes kept in rooms within private residences, a **manger**, or feeding trough, would not have been out of place in such a room.

2:13-14 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

2:22 In cases in which a son was born, the OT prescribed a period of **purification** for forty days—seven days before the circumcision and thirty-three days after (Lv 12:1-8). The child's mother must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary during this time. A sacrifice was made for her purification after that (Lk 2:24).

2:37 See "A Biblical View of Retirement," p. 175.

THE MESSIAH'S HERALD

3 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, † Herod was tetrarch † of Galilee, † his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas † and Caiaphas, † God's word came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. † 3 He went into all the vicinity of the Jordan, † proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, † 4 as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
Prepare the way for the Lord;
make his paths straight!
5 **Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low; †**
the crooked will become straight,
the rough ways smooth,

6 **and everyone will see the salvation of God.** † †
7 He then said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! † Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? † 8 Therefore produce fruit † consistent with repentance. And don’t start saying to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ † for I tell you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” †
10 “What then should we do? ” † the crowds were asking him.
11 He replied to them, “The one who has two shirts must share with someone who has none, and the one who has food must do the same.” †
12 Tax collectors † also came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do? ” †
13 He told them, “Don’t collect any more than what you have been authorized.”
14 Some soldiers also questioned him, “What should we do? ”
He said to them, “Don’t take money from anyone by force or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”
15 Now the people were waiting expectantly, and all of them were questioning in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. † 16 John answered them all, †
“I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I am is coming. I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with † the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing shovel † is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and gather the wheat into his barn, † but the chaff he will burn with fire that never goes out.” † 18 Then, along with many other exhortations, he proclaimed good news to the people. 19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch † because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and all the evil things he had done, † 20 Herod added this to everything else — he locked up John in prison. †

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

21 When all the people were baptized, † Jesus also was baptized. As he was praying, † heaven opened, † 22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in a

physical appearance like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased.” †

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

23 As he began his ministry, Jesus was about thirty years old and was thought to be the

son of Joseph, † son of Heli,
24 son of Matthat, son of Levi,
son of Melchi, son of Jannai,
son of Joseph, 25 son of Mattathias,
son of Amos, son of Nahum,
son of Esli, son of Naggai,
26 son of Maath, son of Mattathias,
son of Semein, son of Josech,
son of Joda, 27 son of Joanan,
son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, †
son of Shealtiel, son of Neri,
28 son of Melchi, son of Addi,
son of Cosam, son of Elmadam,
son of Er, 29 son of Joshua,
son of Eliezer, son of Jorim,
son of Matthat, son of Levi,
30 son of Simeon, son of Judah,
son of Joseph, son of Jonam,
son of Eliakim, 31 son of Melea,
son of Menna, son of Mattatha,
son of Nathan, son of David,
32 son of Jesse, † son of Obed, †

son of Boaz, son of Salmon, †
son of Nahshon, 33 son of Amminadab,
son of Ram, † son of Hezron,
son of Perez, † son of Judah,
34 son of Jacob, son of Isaac,
son of Abraham, † son of Terah,
son of Nahor, 35 son of Serug,
son of Reu, son of Peleg, †
son of Eber, son of Shelah,
36 son of Cainan, son of Arphaxad,
son of Shem, son of Noah, †
son of Lamech, 37 son of Methuselah,
son of Enoch, † son of Jared,
son of Mahalalel, son of Cainan,
38 son of Enos, son of Seth,
son of Adam, son of God.

3:1 Or *ruler* **3:5** Lit *be humbled* **3:16** Or *in* **3:32** Other mss read *Sala* **3:33** Other mss read *Amminadab, son of Aram, son of Joram* ; other mss read *Amminadab, son of Admin, son of Arni*
3:1 Mt 27:2; Lk 13:1; 23:1-24,52; Ac 3:13; 4:27; 13:28; 1Tm 6:13 **3:1** Mt 14:1 **3:2** Jn 18:13,24; Ac 4:6 **3:2** Mt 26:3 **3:2-10** Mt 3:1-10; Mk 1:3-5 **3:3** Mt 3:5 **3:3** Mk 1:4; Ac 2:38 **3:4-6** Is 40:3-5 **3:4-6** Is 40:3-5 **3:7** Mt 12:34; 23:33 **3:7** Lk 3:7; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6; 1Th 1:10; Rv 6:17; 11:18 **3:8** Lk 3:8; Jn 15:2,4,16 **3:8** Jn 8:33 **3:9** Mt 3:10; 7:19; Lk 13:6-9 **3:10** Ac 2:37-38 **3:11** Is 58:7 **3:12** Lk 5:29-30; 7:29,34; 15:1 **3:12** Mt 9:10-11; 21:31-32; Lk 5:29-30; 7:29; 15:1 **3:15** Jn 1:19-20 **3:16-17** Mt 3:11-12; Mk 1:7-8 **3:17** Is 30:24 **3:17** Mt 13:29-30 **3:17** Mk 9:43,48 **3:19** Mt 14:3; Mk 6:17 **3:19** Mt 14:1; Lk 3:1 **3:20** Jn 3:24 **3:21-22** Mt 3:13-17; Mk 1:9-11 **3:21** Mt 14:23; Lk 5:16; 9:18,28-29 **3:21** Jn 1:51; Ac 7:55; 10:11; Rv 19:11 **3:22** Ps 2:7; Is 42:1; Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; Lk 9:35; 2Pt 1:17 **3:23** Mt 1:16 **3:27** Hg 1:1,12,14; 2:4,21,23; Mt 1:12 **3:32-34** Mt 1:1-6 **3:32** Ru 4:17,21-22 **3:33** Gn 38:29; 46:12 **3:34-36** Gn 11:26-30; 1Ch 1:24-27 **3:35** Gn 10:25; 11:16-19 **3:36-38** Gn 5:3-32; 1Ch 1:1-4 **3:37** Gn 5:21-26

3:1-2 Demonstrating a concern to establish his narrative within world history, Luke references **the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius Caesar**, stepson of Augustus, reigned from AD 14–37. If Luke followed the Roman method for measuring time, the fifteenth year could have been anywhere between the fall of AD 27 and that of 29. **Pontius Pilate** was the Roman governor of Judea from

AD 26–36. **Herod** Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 BC–AD 39) and son of Herod the Great. All later references to Herod in this Gospel are to Herod Antipas (3:19-20; 8:3; 9:7-9; 13:31; 23:7-12). **Philip** was another son of Herod the Great. He ruled territories northeast of Palestine, Iturea, and Traconius (4 BC–AD 33). **Annas** was an important Jewish high priest (AD 6–15) and the father-in-law of **Caiaphas**, who served as high priest at the time of Jesus's crucifixion (Jn 18:13-14). Though formally removed from the high priesthood in AD 15 by Valerius Gratus, **Annas** continued to exercise great influence. Little is known of **Lysanius.**

3:19 John criticized **Herod** Antipas for divorcing his first wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, in order to marry **Herodias** in AD 26. Herodias was first married to Herod Antipas's brother, Philip. Jews in Herod's day would have regarded his behavior as scandalous.

3:23-38 To emphasize Jesus's connection to the whole of humanity, Luke traces his genealogy back to **Adam**, the first man (see "Creation: A Young Earth Perspective ," *p. 9.*) In contrast, Matthew traces Jesus's genealogy back to Abraham, the Jewish patriarch (Mt 1:1-2,17). Ancient genealogies, Jewish or non-Jewish, did not necessarily include every name in a family line. Both Luke and Matthew demonstrate that Jesus's lineage is in keeping with messianic expectation, as the seed of David.

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

4 Then Jesus † left the Jordan, † full of the Holy Spirit, † and was led by
the Spirit † in the wilderness 2 for forty days † to be tempted by the
devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over, he
was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to
become bread."
4 But Jesus answered him, "It is written: **Man must not live on bread
alone.**" † † †
5 So he took him up † and showed him all the kingdoms of the world † in a
moment of time. 6 The devil said to him, "I will give you their splendor and all
this authority, because it has been given over to me, † and I can give it to
anyone I want. 7 If you, then, will worship me, † all will be yours."
8 And Jesus answered him, † "It is written: **Worship the Lord your God, and
serve † him only.**" †
9 So he took him to Jerusalem, had him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and
said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. 10 For it
is written:
He will give his angels orders concerning you,
to protect you, † † 11 and **they will support you with their hands,**
so that you will not strike

your foot against a stone.” † †

12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said: **Do not test the Lord your God.**” † †

13 After the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

MINISTRY IN GALILEE

14 Then Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, † and news about him spread throughout the entire vicinity. † 15 He was teaching in their synagogues, † being praised † by everyone.

REJECTION AT NAZARETH

16 He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. † As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day † and stood up to read. † 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written:

18 **The Spirit of the Lord is on me,**
because he has anointed me
to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me †
to proclaim release † **to the captives**
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed,
19 **to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.** † †

20 He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. † And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled.” †

22 They were all speaking well of him † and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son? ” †

23 Then he said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb † to me: ‘Doctor, heal yourself. What we’ve heard that took place in Capernaum, † do here in your hometown also.’ ”

24 He also said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. †
25 But I say to you, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah’s
days, † when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great
famine came over all the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except a
widow at Zarephath in Sidon. † 27 And in the prophet Elisha’s time, there were
many in Israel who had leprosy, † and yet not one of them was cleansed except
Naaman the Syrian.” †
28 When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. 29 They got
up, drove him out of town, † and brought him to the edge of the hill that their
town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. 30 But he passed right
through the crowd and went on his way. †

DRIVING OUT AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT

31 Then he went down to Capernaum, † a town in Galilee, and was teaching
them on the Sabbath. 32 They were astonished at his teaching because his
message had authority. † 33 In the synagogue there was a man with an unclean
demonic spirit who cried out with a loud voice, † 34 “Leave us alone! What do
you have to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know
who you are — the Holy One of God! ” †
35 But Jesus rebuked him † and said, “Be silent and come out of him! ” † And
throwing him down before them, the demon came out of him without hurting
him at all.
36 Amazement came over them all, and they were saying to one another, “What
is this message? For he commands the unclean spirits with authority and power,
and they come out! ” 37 And news about him began to go out to every place in
the vicinity.

HEALINGS AT CAPERNAUM

38 After he left the synagogue, he entered Simon’s house. † Simon’s mother-in-
law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her. † 39 So he
stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up immediately †
and began to serve them.

40 When the sun was setting, all those who had anyone sick with various diseases brought them to him. As he laid his hands on each one of them, he healed them. † 41 Also, demons were coming out of many, shouting and saying, "You are the Son of God! " † But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ. †

42 When it was day, he went out and made his way to a deserted place. † But the crowds were searching for him. They came to him and tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he said to them, "It is necessary for me to proclaim the good news about the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because I was sent for this purpose." 44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea. † †

4:4 Other mss add *but on every word of God* **4:5** Other mss read *So the devil took him up on a high mountain* **4:7** Lit *will fall down before me* **4:8** Other mss add *"Get behind me, Satan!* **4:15** Or *glorified* **4:18** Other mss add *to heal the brokenhearted,* **4:18** Or *freedom,* or *forgiveness* **4:22** Or *They were testifying against him* **4:23** Or *parable* **4:27** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **4:44** Other mss read *Galilee*

4:1-13 Mt 4:1-11; Mk 1:12-13 **4:1** Lk 3:3 **4:1** Lk 1:15,41,67; Ac 2:4; 4:8,31; 9:17; 11:24; 13:9 **4:1** Gl 5:18 **4:2** Ex 24:18; 34:28; Dt 9:9,11,18,25; 10:10 **4:4** Dt 8:3 **4:4** Dt 8:3 **4:5** Is 23:17; Jr 25:26 **4:6** 1Jn 5:19 **4:8** Dt 6:13 **4:8** Dt 6:13 **4:10** Ps 91:11 **4:10** Ps 91:11 **4:11** Ps 91:12 **4:11** Ps 91:12 **4:12** Dt 6:16 **4:12** Dt 6:16 **4:14** Mt 4:12 **4:14** Mt 4:24; 9:26,31; Mk 1:28,45; Lk 4:37; 5:15; 9:60 **4:15** Mt 4:23; 9:35; Lk 4:44; 13:10; Ac 9:20; 13:5 **4:16** Lk 2:39,51 **4:16** Mt 13:54; Mk 6:1-2 **4:16** Ac 13:14-16 **4:18-19** Is 61:1-2 **4:18-19** Is 61:1-2; Mt 11:5; 12:18; Jn 3:34 **4:20** Mt 26:55 **4:21** Jn 13:18; 15:25; 17:12; 19:28,36; Ac 1:16; Jms 2:23 **4:22** Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Jn 6:42 **4:23** Mt 11:23; Mk 2:1-12; Jn 4:46-53 **4:24** Mt 13:57; Mk 6:4; Jn 4:44 **4:25** 1Kg 17:1; 18:1; Jms 5:17 **4:26** 1Kg 17:8-24 **4:27** 2Kg 5:1-14 **4:29** Nm 15:35; Ac 7:58; Heb 13:12 **4:30** Jn 10:39 **4:31-37** Mk 1:21-28 **4:32** Mt 7:28-29; Mk 1:22; Jn 7:46 **4:33-37** Mk 1:23-28 **4:34** Mk 1:24; Jn 6:69 **4:35** Mt 8:26; Mk 4:39; Lk 4:39,41; 8:24 **4:35** Mk 1:25; 9:25 **4:38-41** Mt 8:14-17; Mk 1:29-34 **4:38** 1Co 9:5 **4:39** Mt 8:3; 14:31; 20:34; Mk 5:42; 10:52; Lk 1:64; 5:13,25; Ac 9:34 **4:40** Mt 4:23; Mk 5:23 **4:41** Mt 4:3; 8:29; Mk 3:11 **4:41** Mt 8:16; Mk 1:34; 3:11-12 **4:42-43** Mt 14:13; Mk 1:35-38,45; 6:31-32; Lk 9:12 **4:44** Mt 4:23; Mk 1:39

4:1-13 A comparison ordering of the temptation events detailed in Luke and Matthew reveals some differences. Luke lists them in this order: turning a stone to bread, worshiping the devil, and leaping off the temple. Matthew presents them this way: turning stones to bread (Mt 4:3); leaping off the temple (Mt 4:6); and worshiping the devil (Mt 4:9). It was accepted literary practice among ancient writers to rearrange the chronology of events to emphasize certain themes. Either Luke or Matthew rearranged the temptation narrative for theological purposes. Perhaps Matthew wishes to emphasize the kingdom by aligning it with the last temptation (Mt 4:8-9), while Luke wishes to emphasize the temple.

4:18-19 Reading from Isaiah 61:1-2, Jesus claims that his ministry will be characterized by the **Spirit of the Lord**'s anointing (see also 4:1,14) and will **preach good news to the poor.** Jesus employs a Jewish method of interpretation known as *pesher,* showing how an OT prophetic text applies to the present moment. Jesus's ministry is the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1-2 (Lk 4:21). See also "The Gospel and Social Ministry," *p. 1547.*

4:24 Jesus's statement, **Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown** (cp. Mt 13:57; Mk 6:4; Jn 4:44), expresses an idea found in various cultures: the more familiar we are with someone, the less

likely we are to regard them as exceptional or unique. The people of Nazareth were unimpressed by the local man they had known from infancy to adulthood. Their rejection foreshadows a wider rejection to come.

4:35 See "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454.*

4:43 The kingdom of God referred to God's rule over the entire universe through the establishment of a righteous kingdom on earth.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

5 As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word, † he was
standing by Lake Gennesaret. † 2 He saw two boats at the edge of the
lake; the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. 3 He got
into one of the boats, † which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a
little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the
boat.
4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and
let down your nets for a catch." †
5 "Master," † Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught
nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets." †
6 When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets † began
to tear. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help
them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.
8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from
me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" † 9 For he and all those with him were
amazed † at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John,
Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners.
"Don't be afraid," † Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching
people." † 11 Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed
him. †

A MAN CLEANSED

12 While he was in one of the towns, a man was there who had leprosy † all
over him. † He saw Jesus, fell facedown, and begged him: "Lord, if you are
willing, you can make me clean."

13 Reaching out his hand, Jesus touched him, † saying, “I am willing; be made
clean,” and immediately the leprosy left him. 14 Then he ordered him to tell no
one: † “But go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses
commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them.”
15 But the news † about him spread even more, and large crowds would come
together to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. 16 Yet he often
withdrew to deserted places and prayed. †

THE SON OF MAN FORGIVES AND HEALS

17 On one of those days while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the
law † were sitting there who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea,
and also from Jerusalem. And the Lord’s power to heal was in him. † 18 Just
then some men came, † carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed. They
tried to bring him in and set him down before him. 19 Since they could not find a
way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered
him on the stretcher through the roof tiles into the middle of the crowd before
Jesus.
20 Seeing their faith he said, “Friend, † your sins are forgiven.”
21 Then the scribes and the Pharisees † began to think to themselves: “Who is
this man who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? ” †
22 But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus replied to them, “Why are you thinking
this in your hearts? † 23 Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or
to say, ‘Get up and walk’? 24 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has
authority on earth to forgive sins” — he told the paralyzed man, “I tell you: Get
up, take your stretcher, and go home.”
25 Immediately he got up before them, picked up what he had been lying on, and
went home glorifying God. † 26 Then everyone was astounded, and they were
giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe † and said, “We have seen
incredible things today. ”

THE CALL OF LEVI

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the tax
office, † and he said to him, “Follow me.” 28 So, leaving everything behind, he

got up and began to follow him.

ETHICS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Stereotypes of personal evangelism abound. The caricature of a Christian cornering an unbeliever until he relents and repents fits the image of many of those looking at the matter from the outside. Rarely, however, do Christian pastors, leaders, and scholars present the ethical mandate of personal evangelism. Telling people the good news about who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish is not something we merely should do. It is something we must do.

Biblical texts teach us about the ethics of personal evangelism in three broad categories. First, evangelism is mandated in Scripture; this requires an ethical response. Second, we have an ethical relationship that must be forged with unbelievers. Third, there is the ethical reality of an eternal destiny that precludes our silence.

THE ETHICAL RESPONSE

A key component of any ethical system is a proper response to those whom we have pledged our obedience and faithfulness. A husband, for example, pledges fidelity and faithfulness toward his wife. That ethical statement is typically made in the presence of God, his bride, and witnesses present. The exchanging of vows is both a joyous moment and a solemn one. And it is no coincidence that if the husband breaks the vow, he is deemed "unfaithful." He has broken the ethical promise through an unethical response.

Christians, both explicitly and implicitly, make vows or promises to God. If he commands us to do something, our only ethical response is obedience. Any other response is unethical or is, like the wayward husband's actions, unfaithful.

Most Christians know that God through Jesus Christ gave us the Great Commission to share the gospel. The most commonly used example is Matthew 28:19: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Acts 1:8 is yet another common example: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

The mandates for personal evangelism are not limited to the better-known biblical texts, however. To the contrary, the mandate was so infused in the lives of the early believers that they could not imagine ignoring it. The disciples Peter and John were commanded by the Sanhedrin to cease speaking about Christ and the gospel. Yet facing further imprisonment and perhaps even more horrific punishment, the two followers responded to the august body with their ethical decision on whether to obey the mandate of the Sanhedrin or the mandate of Christ. Their response is recorded in Acts 4:19-20: "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

The ethical dilemma was resolved. The ethical response was obedience to God.

THE ETHICAL RELATIONSHIP

Much of Scripture is infused with directions on our relationships with God and with others. Pastors and theologians often refer to the two as the vertical relationship and the horizontal relationship respectively. Perhaps no single verse of the Bible embodies this truth as well as that which is commonly called the Great

Commandment: “One of them, an expert in the law, asked a question to test him: ‘Teacher, which command in the law is the greatest?’ He said to him, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important command. The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands’” (Mt 22:35-40).

The horizontal relationship is thus second only to the vertical relationship a Christian has with God. The clear ethical response to this command becomes an ethical relationship with others. What does it mean, therefore, to love our neighbors as ourselves? On the one hand, we should certainly demonstrate concern and care for their physical and emotional needs. Though the responsibility of social ministry has been abdicated by many Christians to government agencies and other organizations, it is—biblically speaking—first the responsibility of believers and the churches to which they belong.

Even more, however, Christians have been commanded to be concerned about the eternal state of others. That need far outweighs any of the physical and emotional needs people may have. Jesus made that reality abundantly clear: “For what does it benefit someone to gain the whole world and yet lose his life?” (Mk 8:36). The struggles of this life are but a blip in the scope of eternity.

The greatest way for Christians to demonstrate obedience to the second portion of the Great Commandment is to declare the availability of God’s love through Jesus Christ. We cannot truly say that we love others until we enter into that ethical relationship, a relationship in which we proclaim the gospel to others in word and deed. The Great Commandment demands an ethical relationship where we are intentionally and unashamedly personally evangelistic to those who are not believers.

THE ETHICAL REALITY

Perhaps the following illustration regarding the necessity of personal evangelism is trite and overplayed, but it still resonates. Imagine a small child skating on thin ice in winter. As you walk by, you see and hear the horror of breaking ice and watch the child teeter slowly toward an icy death in the water. The child reaches out for you to grab her. You have the means to do so. You have the opportunity to do so. You have the strength to do so. The only question is whether or not you will choose to do so.

Of course, most will respond that they will eagerly and willingly do whatever it takes to save the child in such a scenario. So let us take the same principle and apply it to the eternal reality of hell for those who do not place their trust in salvation through Christ.

If we know of persons who are not Christians, we are confronted with the ethical reality of their destinies. That means we must choose whether or not we will take the time and face the possible awkwardness of sharing the gospel. The good news of Christ, of course, includes such biblical realities as forgiveness, adoption, reconciliation, regeneration, and many others. But the gospel also includes the reality of heaven and hell, and the ethical reality that there is only one way to heaven. Jesus left no doubt as to the exclusivity of salvation through him: “Jesus [said], ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’ ” (Jn 14:6).

So the Christian is no longer dealing with a hypothetical story of a child falling into icy waters. He is now confronted with the ethical reality of a literal heaven, a literal hell, and the narrow way to the former.

The unavoidable question is thus basic but profound: Will we be obedient to Christ? As we would all reach for the dying child, will we reach out to those who do not know Jesus? Our response will determine whether we are faithful or unfaithful to his calling on our lives.

THOM S. RAINER

29 Then Levi hosted a grand banquet for him at his house. Now there was a large
crowd of tax collectors and others who were guests † with them. † 30 But the

Pharisees and their scribes † were complaining to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? ”

31 Jesus replied to them, “It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

A QUESTION ABOUT FASTING

33 Then they said to him, “John’s disciples fast often and say prayers, and those of the Pharisees do the same, but yours eat and drink.” †

34 Jesus said to them, “You can’t make the wedding guests fast while the groom is with them, can you? 35 But the time † will come † when the groom will be taken away from them — then they will fast in those days.”

36 He also told them a parable: “No one tears a patch from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. Otherwise, not only will he tear the new, but also the piece from the new garment will not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins, it will spill, and the skins will be ruined. 38 No, new wine is put into fresh wineskins. † 39 And no one, after drinking old wine, wants new, because he says, ‘The old is better.’ ” †

5:5 Other mss read *net* (Gk sg) **5:6** Other mss read *net* (Gk sg) **5:12** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases, also in v. 13; see Lv 13–14 **5:15** Lit *the word* **5:20** Lit *“Man* **5:22** Or *minds* **5:29** Lit *were reclining* **5:33** Other mss read *“Why do John’s . . . drink? ”* (as a question) **5:35** Lit *days* **5:38** Other mss add *And so both are preserved.* **5:39** Other mss read *is good*

5:1-11 Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Jn 1:40-42 **5:1** Nm 34:11; Dt 3:17; Jos 12:3; 13:27; Mt 4:18 **5:3** Mt 13:2; Mk 3:9-10; 4:1 **5:4-6** Jn 21:3-6 **5:5** Lk 8:24; 9:33,49; 17:13 **5:8** Is 6:5; Lk 19:7 **5:9** Lk 4:36; Ac 3:10 **5:10** Mt 14:27 **5:10** 2Tm 2:26 **5:11** Mt 4:20,22; 19:29; Mk 1:18,20; Lk 5:28; 18:43 **5:12-14** Mt 8:2-4; Mk 1:40-44 **5:13** Mt 8:15; 9:29; 17:7; 20:34; Lk 18:15; 22:51 **5:14** Mt 16:20; 17:9; Mk 1:44; 7:36; 8:30; Lk 8:56; 9:21 **5:16** Mt 14:23; Mk 1:35; Lk 6:12 **5:17** Ac 5:34; 1Tm 1:7 **5:17** Mk 5:30; Lk 6:19; 8:46 **5:18-26** Mt 9:2-8; Mk 2:3-12 **5:21** Mt 23:2; Lk 11:53; Jn 8:3 **5:21** Is 43:25 **5:25** Lk 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47 **5:26** Lk 1:65; 7:16 **5:27-39** Mt 9:9-17; Mk 2:14-22 **5:29** Lk 15:1 **5:30** Mk 2:16; Ac 23:9 **5:35** 1Sm 2:31; Ps 37:13; Ec 2:16; 12:1; Lk 17:22

5:1 Lake Gennesaret was also known as the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:18; Mk 1:16) and the Sea of Tiberius (Jn 6:1; 21:1).

5:12 The term **leprosy** could refer to various skin diseases, and was not precisely the same as modern leprosy. People with serious skin diseases were required to live outside the community. Jesus’s willingness to show compassion to the man (v. 13) is an example of his attitude toward the outcasts of society, which included the poor (4:18), women (7:36-50), lepers (17:11-19), tax collectors, and sinners (19:10).

5:24 Jesus refers to himself as **the Son of Man.** This title, used twenty-five times by Luke, was Jesus’s most common designation for himself. While its OT background is clear (Dn 7:13-14), Jesus’s hearers did

not make the connection. This may be because the term can simply refer to a human being (cp. Ezk 2:1; 3:1). Jesus may have used the title's ambiguous meaning to conceal his identity.

5:30 Tax collectors were Jews who collected money from their fellow Jews in order to support the Roman Empire. The Roman taxation system in Israel was subject to gross abuses by those in authority, prompting the universal hatred of tax collectors. **Sinners** were those who violated the teachings of the Jewish religion. Jesus's decision to dine with such people was shocking to the religious leadership; sharing a meal implied identification with, and acceptance of, those with whom one ate.

5:33 Although Jews were only required by Scripture to **fast**—to go without food—once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lv 16:29-31), in Jesus's day many regarded regular fasting an indication of piety. The Pharisees were known to fast twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays (Lk 18:12). The comment to Jesus here implies that his disciples were irreligious gluttons.

5:34-35 It would be inappropriate for Jesus's disciples to **fast** while he was with them. The presence of the Messiah is, rather, occasion to celebrate. There will, however, come a day when the Messiah **will be taken away from them.** Then temporary mourning and fasting will be appropriate.

LORD OF THE SABBATH

6 On a Sabbath, he passed through the grainfields. † His disciples were
picking heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating them.
2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful
on the Sabbath? " †
3 Jesus answered them, "Haven't you read what David and those who were with
him did when he was hungry — 4 how he entered the house of God and took
and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to
eat? † He even gave some to those who were with him." † 5 Then he told them,
"The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."
6 On another Sabbath † he entered the synagogue and was teaching. A man was
there whose right hand was shriveled. 7 The scribes and Pharisees were
watching him closely, † to see if he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they
could find a charge against him. † 8 But he knew their thoughts † and told the
man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand here." † So he got up and stood
there. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you: Is it lawful to do good on the
Sabbath or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it? " † 10 After looking around at
them all, † he told him, "Stretch out your hand." † He did, and his hand was
restored. † 11 They, however, were filled with rage and started discussing with
one another what they might do to Jesus.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

12 During those days he went out to the mountain to pray † and spent all night
in prayer to God. 13 When daylight came, he summoned his disciples, † and he
chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: † 14 Simon, whom he also
named Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew;
15 Matthew and Thomas; † James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called the
Zealot; 16 Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

TEACHING AND HEALING

17 After coming down with them, he stood on a level place with a large crowd of
his disciples and a great number of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and
from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon. † 18 They came to hear him and to be
healed of their diseases; and those tormented by unclean spirits were made well.
19 The whole crowd was trying to touch him, † because power was coming out
from him and healing them all. †

THE BEATITUDES

20 Then looking up at his disciples, he said: †

Blessed are you who are poor,
because the kingdom of God is yours.
21 Blessed are you who are now hungry, because you will be filled.
Blessed are you who weep now,
because you will laugh.
22 Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, † insult you,
and slander your name as evil †
because of the Son of Man. †

23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy. Take note — your reward is great in
heaven, for this is the way their ancestors used to treat the prophets. †

WOE TO THE SELF-SATISFIED

24 But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your comfort.
25 Woe to you who are now full, for you will be hungry.
Woe to you † who are now laughing, for you will mourn and weep.

26 Woe to you †
when all people speak well of you,
for this is the way their ancestors
used to treat the false prophets. †

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

27 "But I say to you who listen: Love your enemies, do what is good to those
who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. †
29 If anyone hits you on the cheek, † offer the other also. And if anyone takes
away your coat, don't hold back your shirt either. 30 Give to everyone who asks
you, and from someone who takes your things, don't ask for them back. 31 Just
as you want others to do for you, do the same for them. † 32 If you love those
who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love
them. † 33 If you do what is good to those who are good to you, what credit is
that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you
expect to receive, what credit is that to you? † Even sinners lend to sinners to be
repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do what is good, and lend, expecting
nothing in return. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the
Most High. † For he is gracious to the ungrateful and evil. 36 Be merciful, just
as your Father also is merciful. †

DO NOT JUDGE

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. † Do not condemn, and you will
not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. † 38 Give, and it will be
given to you; a good measure — pressed down, shaken together, and running
over — will be poured into your lap. † For with the measure you use, it will be
measured back to you." †
39 He also told them a parable: "Can the blind guide the blind? Won't they both
fall into a pit? † 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully
trained will be like his teacher. †
41 "Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye, but don't notice the
beam of wood in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother,

‘Brother, let me take out the splinter that is in your eye,’ when you yourself don’t see the beam of wood in your eye? Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the splinter in your brother’s eye.

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

43 “A good tree doesn’t produce bad fruit; on the other hand, a bad tree doesn’t produce good fruit. † † 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs aren’t gathered from thornbushes, or grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 A good person produces good out of the good stored up in his heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in his heart, for his mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.

THE TWO FOUNDATIONS

46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and don’t do the things I say? † 47 I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them: † 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. When the flood came, the river crashed against that house and couldn’t shake it, because it was well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The river crashed against it, and immediately it collapsed. And the destruction of that house was great.” †

6:8 Lit *stand in the middle* **6:10** Other mss add *as sound as the other* **6:25** Other mss omit *to you* **6:26** Other mss omit *to you* **6:43** Lit *on the other hand, again, a bad tree doesn’t produce good fruit*
6:1-5 Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23-28 **6:2** Mt 19:3; Lk 14:3; 20:22 **6:4** Ex 25:30; Lv 24:5-9 **6:4** 1Sm 21:6 **6:6-11** Mt 12:9-14; Mk 3:1-6 **6:7** Mk 3:2; Lk 14:1; 20:20 **6:7** Jn 8:6 **6:8** Mt 9:4 **6:9** Lk 14:3 **6:10** Mk 3:5 **6:10** 1Kg 13:4 **6:12** Mt 14:23; Lk 5:16; 9:18,28 **6:13-16** Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-19; Ac 1:13 **6:13** Mk 6:30 **6:15** Mt 9:9 **6:17** Mt 11:21 **6:19** Mt 9:21; 14:36; Mk 3:10 **6:19** Lk 5:17 **6:20-23** Mt 5:3-12 **6:22** Jn 9:22; 16:2 **6:22** Heb 11:26; 1Pt 4:14 **6:22** Jn 15:21 **6:23** Neh 9:26; Ezk 2:1-7; Ac 7:52 **6:26** Jr 5:12-13; 6:13-15; Mc 2:11 **6:28** Mt 5:44 **6:29-30** Mt 5:39-42 **6:31** Mt 7:12 **6:32** Mt 5:46 **6:34** Pr 19:17; Mt 5:42; Lk 14:12-14 **6:35** Mt 5:45; Lk 1:32 **6:36** Mt 5:7,48; Jms 5:11 **6:37-42** Mt 7:1-5 **6:37** Mt 6:14; 18:23-35; Lk 23:16; Ac 3:13 **6:38** Ps 79:12; Is 65:6-7; Jr 32:18 **6:38** Mk 4:24 **6:39** Mt 15:14 **6:40** Mt 10:24; Jn 13:16; 15:20 **6:43-44** Mt 7:16,18,20; 12:33-35 **6:46** Mal 1:6; Mt 7:21 **6:47-49** Mt 7:24-27 **6:49** Ezk 13:10-16

6:1-2 Modern readers may struggle to appreciate the sacredness that ancient Jews attributed to the Sabbath and its prohibition against work (Ex 20:1-17). The Jews observed the Sabbath from sunset Friday until sunset Saturday. The law permitted people to pick ears of grain and eat them while walking through a field on the Sabbath (Dt 23:25). The Pharisees regarded **rubbing** the heads of grain as a violation of the sacred day, since it was thought of as reaping the grain.

6:12 Jesus spends **all night in prayer to God** prior to selecting his twelve disciples. Luke portrays Jesus

engaging in prayer prior to the most important events of his life (9:28; 22:39-46). His all-night prayer to God highlights his dependence, as well as his desire to do his Father's will.

6:13 The number **twelve** is significant. The selection of twelve disciples recalls the twelve tribes of Israel, implying a reconstitution of God's people under Jesus's leadership.

6:17-49 This passage is known as the Sermon on the Plain (**level place**). Its message contains many parallels to the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). Biblical scholars have varied in their understanding of the relationship between these two texts. During the AD 200s and 300s, most viewed them as two accounts of the same sermon (e.g., Origen, Chrysostom). Beginning in the AD 400s, it became more popular to regard them as two different sermons (e.g., Augustine). The Reformation of the 1600s again regarded them as the same message (e.g., Calvin)—a view that most scholars continue to affirm. Careful comparison of the two passages reveals how biblical authors shaped and arranged material to fit their own theological purposes.

6:21 In the OT, God promises to feed the **hungry** and to bring comfort to his people, when "the LORD of Armies will prepare for all the peoples a feast of choice meat, a feast with aged wine, prime cuts of choice meat, fine vintage wine. . . [he] will wipe away the tears from every face" (Is 25:6,8). The expectation of such an eschatological banquet is a recurring theme in Luke (see Lk 13:29; 14:15). Also see "A Biblical View of Recreation," *p. 737*.

6:31 Jesus instructs his hearers to do for others **as you want others to do for you**, which is known as the Golden Rule. Such a sentiment is found elsewhere in the ancient world. The OT instructs to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lv 19:18). Roman philosopher Seneca wrote, "Let us show our generosity in the same manner that we would wish to have it bestowed on us."

A CENTURION'S FAITH

7 When he had concluded saying all this to the people who were listening,
he entered Capernaum. † 2 A centurion's servant, who was highly
valued by him, was sick and about to die. 3 When the centurion heard
about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, requesting him to come and save
the life of his servant. 4 When they reached Jesus, they pleaded with him
earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to grant this, 5 because he loves our
nation and has built us a synagogue." †
6 Jesus went with them, and when he was not far from the house, the centurion
sent friends to tell him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, since I am not worthy to
have you come under my roof. 7 That is why I didn't even consider myself
worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. † †
8 For I too am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under my
command. I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he
comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."
9 Jesus heard this and was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following
him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found so great a faith even in Israel."

10 When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant in good health.

A WIDOW'S SON RAISED TO LIFE

11 Afterward he was on his way to a town called Nain. His disciples and a large crowd were traveling with him. 12 Just as he neared the gate of the town, a dead man was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. † A large crowd from the city was also with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her † and said, "Don't weep." 14 Then he came up and touched the open coffin, and the pallbearers stopped. And he said, "Young man, I tell you, get up! " †

15 The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. †
16 Then fear † came over everyone, † and they glorified God, † saying, "A great prophet has risen among us," † and "God has visited † his people." †
17 This report about him went throughout Judea and all the vicinity.

IN PRAISE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

18 Then John's disciples told him about all these things. † So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord, asking, "Are you the one † who is to come, or should we expect someone else? "
20 When the men reached him, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? ' "
21 At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, † afflictions, and evil spirits, † and he granted sight to many blind people. † 22 He replied to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy † are cleansed, the deaf hear, † the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, † 23 and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."
24 After John's messengers left, he began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind?
25 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who are splendidly dressed and live in luxury are in royal palaces. 26 What then

did you go out to see? A prophet? † Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.
27 This is the one about whom it is written:
See, I am sending my messenger
ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you. † †
28 I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John, † but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."
29 (And when all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they acknowledged God's way of righteousness, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. † 30 But since the Pharisees and experts in the law † had not been baptized by him, they rejected the plan of God for themselves. †)

AN UNRESPONSIVE GENERATION

31 "To what then should I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to each other:

We played the flute for you,
but you didn't dance;
we sang a lament,
but you didn't weep!

33 For John the Baptist did not come eating bread or drinking wine, † and you say, 'He has a demon! ' 34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! ' † 35 Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

MUCH FORGIVENESS, MUCH LOVE

36 Then one of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. † 37 And a woman in the town who was a sinner found out that Jesus was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house. † She brought an alabaster jar of perfume 38 and stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to wash his feet with her tears. She wiped his feet with her hair, kissing them and anointing them with the perfume. †

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him — she’s a sinner! ” †

40 Jesus replied to him, “Simon, I have something to say to you.”
He said, “Say it, teacher.”

41 “A creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, † † and the other fifty. 42 Since they could not pay it back, † he graciously forgave them both. So, which of them will love him more? ”

43 Simon answered, “I suppose the one he forgave more.”
“You have judged correctly,” he told him. 44 Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, † but she, with her tears, has washed my feet and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, † but she hasn’t stopped kissing my feet since I came in. 46 You didn’t anoint my head with olive oil, † but she has anointed my feet with perfume. 47 Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that’s why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.”

48 Then he said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” †

49 Those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, “Who is this man who even forgives sins? ” †

50 And he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. † Go in peace.” †

7:7 Other mss read *and let my servant be healed* **7:16** Or *awe* **7:16** Or *come to help* **7:22** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **7:28** Other mss read *women is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist* **7:41** A denarius = one day’s wage

7:1-10 Mt 8:5-13 **7:5** Ac 10:22 **7:7** Ps 107:20; Mt 8:16 **7:12** Jdg 11:34; Lk 8:42; 9:38; Heb 11:17 **7:13** Mt 20:34 **7:14** Mt 11:5; Mk 5:41; Lk 7:22; 8:54; Jn 11:43; Ac 9:40 **7:15** 1Kg 17:23; 2Kg 4:36 **7:16** Lk 5:26 **7:16** Mt 5:16; Lk 2:20; 13:13; 23:47; Ac 4:21; 11:18 **7:16** Dt 18:15; Mt 21:11; Lk 7:39; Jn 7:40 **7:16** Lk 1:68 **7:18-35** Mt 11:2-19 **7:19** Jn 4:25; 6:14; 11:27; Rm 5:14; Heb 10:37 **7:21** Mt 4:23 **7:21** Mk 1:34 **7:21** Mt 9:30; 12:22; Mk 8:25; Lk 18:42; Jn 9:7 **7:22** Is 29:18; 35:5-6 **7:22** Is 61:1; Lk 4:18 **7:26** Mt 14:5; Lk 1:76; 20:6 **7:27** Mal 3:1 **7:27** Mal 3:1; Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 1:17 **7:29** Mt 21:32; Lk 3:12; Ac 18:25; 19:3 **7:30** Mt 22:35; Lk 10:25; 11:45-46,52; 14:3 **7:30** Mt 21:25,32; 23:13; Mk 7:9 **7:33** Lk 1:15 **7:34** Mt 9:10-11; Lk 15:2; 19:7 **7:36** Lk 11:37; 14:1 **7:37-39** Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-8 **7:38** Jn 11:2 **7:39** Lk 7:16; Jn 4:19 **7:41** Mt 18:28; Mk 6:37 **7:42** Mt 18:25 **7:44** Gn 18:4; 19:2; 43:24; Jdg 19:21; 1Tm 5:10 **7:45** 2Sm 15:5; 19:39; 20:9 **7:46** 2Sm 12:20; Ps 23:5; Ec 9:8; Dn 10:3 **7:48** Mt 9:2; Mk 2:5; Lk 5:20; Jms 5:15; 1Jn 2:12 **7:49** Lk 5:21 **7:50** Mt 9:22; Mk 10:52; Lk 17:19; 18:42 **7:50** 1Sm 1:17; Mk 5:34; Lk 8:48

7:12,14 Luke describes a funeral procession encountered by Jesus as he approaches the town of **Nain.** The normal Jewish practice was to carry the deceased in an open coffin outside the town for burial on the day of death. That Jesus **touched** the deceased would have shocked those present, as it would have made him ritually unclean (see Nm 19:11,16).

7:19-20 The one who is to come refers to the Messiah: “Look your King *is* coming to you; he is righteous and victorious” (Zch 9:9). The Qumran scrolls also taught of the “coming” of the Messiah, the descendant of David.

MANY WOMEN SUPPORT CHRIST’S WORK

8 Afterward he was traveling from one town and village to another, †
preaching and telling the good news of the kingdom of God. † The
Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of
evil spirits and sicknesses: † Mary, called Magdalene (seven demons had come
out † of her); 3 Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward; Susanna; and many
others who were supporting them from their possessions.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

4 As a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every
town, he said in a parable: † 5 “A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed,
some seed fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the sky
devoured it. 6 Other seed fell on the rock; when it grew up, it withered away,
since it lacked moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns; the thorns grew up with
it and choked it. 8 Still other seed fell on good ground; when it grew up, it
produced fruit: a hundred times what was sown.” † As he said this, he called
out, “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.” †

WHY JESUS USED PARABLES

9 Then his disciples asked him, “What does this parable mean?” † 10 So he
said, “The secrets of the kingdom of God have been given for you † to know,
but to the rest it is in parables, so that
Looking they may not see,
and hearing they may not understand. † †

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER EXPLAINED

11 “This is the meaning of the parable: † The seed is the word of God. † 12 The
seed along the path are those who have heard and then the devil comes and takes
away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.
13 And the seed on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word
with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while and fall away in a time of

testing. † 14 As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, † and produce no mature fruit. 15 But the seed in the good ground — these are the ones who, having heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by enduring, † produce fruit.

USING YOUR LIGHT

16 "No one, after lighting a lamp, † covers it with a basket or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in may see its light. †
17 For nothing is concealed that won't be revealed, and nothing hidden that won't be made known and brought to light. † 18 Therefore take care how you listen. For whoever has, more will be given to him; † and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him."

TRUE RELATIONSHIPS

19 Then his mother and brothers † came to him, † but they could not meet with him because of the crowd. 20 He was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."
21 But he replied to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear and do the word of God." †

WIND AND WAVE OBEY JESUS

22 One day he and his disciples got into a boat, † and he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the lake." † So they set out, 23 and as they were sailing he fell asleep. Then a fierce windstorm came down on the lake; they were being swamped and were in danger. 24 They came and woke him up, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to die! "
Then he got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves. So they ceased, and there was a calm. † 25 He said to them, "Where is your faith? "
They were fearful and amazed, asking one another, "Who then is this? † He commands even the winds and the waves, and they obey him! "

DEMONS DRIVEN OUT BY JESUS

26 Then they sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, † † which is opposite
Galilee. 27 When he got out on land, a demon-possessed man from the town met
him. For a long time he had worn no clothes and did not stay in a house but in
the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out, † fell down before him, and said
in a loud voice, “What do you have to do with me, † Jesus, Son of the Most
High God? † I beg you, don’t torment me! ” 29 For he had commanded the
unclean spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though
he was guarded, bound by chains and shackles, he would snap the restraints and
be driven by the demon into deserted places.
30 “What is your name? ” Jesus asked him.
“Legion,” † he said, because many demons had entered him. 31 And they
begged him not to banish them to the abyss. †
32 A large herd of pigs was there, feeding on the hillside. The demons begged
him to permit them to enter the pigs, and he gave them permission. 33 The
demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the
steep bank into the lake and drowned.
34 When the men who tended them saw what had happened, they ran off and
reported it in the town and in the countryside. 35 Then people went out to see
what had happened. They came to Jesus and found the man the demons had
departed from, sitting at Jesus’s feet, † dressed and in his right mind. And they
were afraid. 36 Meanwhile, the eyewitnesses reported to them how the demon-
possessed man was delivered. † 37 Then all the people of the Gerasene region †
asked him to leave them, † because they were gripped by great fear. So getting
into the boat, he returned.
38 The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be
with him. But he sent him away and said, 39 “Go back to your home, and tell all
that God has done for you.” And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town
how much Jesus had done for him.

A GIRL RESTORED AND A WOMAN HEALED

40 When Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, † for they were all expecting
him. † 41 Just then, a man named Jairus came. He was a leader of the
synagogue. † He fell down at Jesus’s feet and pleaded with him to come to his

house, 42 because he had an only daughter † about twelve years old, and she was dying.

While he was going, the crowds were nearly crushing him. † 43 A woman suffering from bleeding † for twelve years, † who had spent all she had on doctors † and yet could not be healed by any, 44 approached from behind and touched the end of his robe. † Instantly her bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me? " Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter † said, "Master, † the crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you." †

46 "Someone did touch me," said Jesus. "I know that power has gone out from me." † 47 When the woman saw that she was discovered, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she declared the reason she had touched him and how she was instantly healed. 48 "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has saved you. † Go in peace." †

49 While he was still speaking, † someone came from the synagogue leader's house and said, "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother † the teacher † anymore."

50 When Jesus heard it, he answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved." † 51 After he came to the house, he let no one enter with him except Peter, John, James, † and the child's father and mother. 52 Everyone was crying † and mourning for her. † But he said, "Stop crying, because she is not dead but asleep." †

53 They laughed at him, because they knew she was dead. 54 So he † took her by the hand † and called out, "Child, get up! " † 55 Her spirit returned, † and she got up at once. Then he gave orders that she be given something to eat.

56 Her parents were astounded, but he instructed them to tell no one what had happened. †

8:26 Other mss read *the Gadarenes* **8:37** Other mss read *the Gadarenes* **8:43** Other mss omit *who had spent all she had on doctors* **8:45** Other mss add *and those with him* **8:45** Other mss add *and you say, 'Who touched me?'* **8:48** Or *has made you well* **8:50** Or *she will be made well* **8:54** Other mss add *having put them all outside*

8:1 Mk 6:6 **8:1** Mt 4:23; Lk 4:43 **8:2** Mt 27:55; Mk 15:40-41; Lk 23:49,55; Ac 1:14 **8:2** Mt 27:56,61; 28:1; Mk 16:9; Lk 24:10; Jn 19:25; 20:1,18 **8:4-8** Mt 13:3-9; Mk 4:3-9 **8:8** Gn 26:12 **8:8** Mt 11:15; Lk 13:34 **8:9-10** Mt 13:10-11; Mk 4:10-11 **8:10** Mt 19:11 **8:10** Is 6:9 **8:10** Is 6:9 **8:11-15** Mt 13:18-23; Mk 4:13-20 **8:11**

Lk 8:21; 11:28; Ac 18:11; Jms 1:21; 1Pt 1:23 **8:13** Ezk 33:31-32; Gl 1:6 **8:14** Mt 6:25 **8:15** Heb 10:36; Jms 5:7 **8:16** Mt 5:15-16; Lk 11:33 **8:16-18** Mk 4:21-25 **8:17** Mt 10:26; Lk 12:2; 1Tm 5:25 **8:18** Mt 13:12 **8:19** Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Jn 2:12; 7:3,5,10; Ac 1:14; 1Co 9:5; Gl 1:19 **8:19-21** Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35 **8:21** Lk 11:28; Jms 1:22 **8:22-25** Mt 8:23-27; Mk 4:36-41; Jn 6:16-21 **8:22** Lk 5:1 **8:24** Ps 65:7; 104:7; Mt 14:32; Mk 6:51; Lk 4:39 **8:25** Mt 21:10; Lk 1:66; 5:21; 7:49; 9:9 **8:26-39** Mt 8:28-34; Mk 5:1-20 **8:28** Lk 4:33-34; Ac 8:7 **8:28** Jn 2:4 **8:28** Gn 14:18; Ps 57:2; Dn 3:26; Lk 1:32; Ac 16:17 **8:30** Mt 26:53 **8:31** Ps 140:10; Rm 10:7; Rv 9:1-2,11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3 **8:35** Lk 8:41; 10:39 **8:36** Mt 4:24 **8:37** 1Kg 17:18; Lk 5:8; Ac 16:39 **8:40** Lk 9:11 **8:40-42** Mt 9:18-19; Mk 5:21-24 **8:41** Lk 13:14; Ac 13:15; 18:8,17 **8:42** Lk 7:12 **8:42** Mk 3:9 **8:43** Lv 15:25 **8:43-48** Mt 9:20-22; Mk 5:25-34 **8:44** Nm 15:38-39; Dt 22:12; Mt 14:36; 23:5 **8:45** Lk 5:5 **8:46** Lk 5:17; 6:19; Ac 10:38 **8:48** Lk 7:50 **8:49-56** Mt 9:23-26; Mk 5:35-43 **8:49** Lk 7:6 **8:49** Jn 11:28 **8:51** Mk 3:17; 14:33; Lk 9:28 **8:52** Lk 7:13 **8:52** Mt 11:17; Lk 23:27 **8:52** Jn 11:4,11; Ac 20:10 **8:54** Mk 1:31 **8:54** Mt 11:5; Lk 7:14,22; Jn 11:43 **8:55** Jdg 15:19; 1Sm 30:12 **8:56** Mt 8:4

8:8 Seed producing a crop **a hundred times what was sown** would have been regarded as exceedingly good (Gn 26:12). Scholars debate what constituted a normal harvest. Suggestions fall between the range of three to seven-and-one-half times what was sown.

8:21 Jesus declares that those who obey God's word belong to his family. Obedience, rather than bloodline, denotes one's relationship to Jesus. His statement would have surprised his listeners, given the importance placed on family in Jewish culture.

8:26-39 As with other biblical authors (e.g., Matthew, Mark), Luke understands demon possession not as a myth but as a real world phenomenon. Modern claims of possession should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Demons cannot possess those within whom the Holy Spirit dwells. See the note on 11:14-15.

8:27 In first-century Palestine, **tombs** were often man-made caves carved into a hillside. This type of construction would have provided shelter for the demon-possessed man. Jews viewed corpses as ritually unclean, and they assumed tombs were inhabited by demons (Nm 19:11,14,16).

8:29 See "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454.*

8:41 That Jairus was **a leader of the synagogue** means that he served as ruler of a synagogue. Such men were normally selected from a board of elders—men who guided the activities of the synagogue. The position of synagogue leader was sometimes held for life and passed on to one's son. In some synagogues, a leader was merely a figurehead; in others they played key roles in decision-making.

COMMISSIONING THE TWELVE

9 Summoning the Twelve, † he gave them power and authority over all
the demons and to heal diseases. † 2 Then he sent them to proclaim the
kingdom of God and to heal the sick. †
3 "Take nothing for the road," † he told them, "no staff, † no traveling bag, no
bread, no money; and don't take an extra shirt. 4 Whatever house you enter, stay
there and leave from there. 5 If they do not welcome you, when you leave that
town, shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." † 6 So
they went out and traveled from village to village, proclaiming the good news
and healing everywhere.

HEROD'S DESIRE TO SEE JESUS

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7 Herod the tetrarch † heard about everything that was going on. † He was
perplexed, because some said that John had been raised from the dead, 8 some
that Elijah had appeared, † and others that one of the ancient prophets had
risen. † 9 "I beheaded John," Herod said, "but who is this I hear such things
about? " And he wanted to see him. †

FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

10 When the apostles returned, † they reported to Jesus all that they had done. †
He took them along and withdrew privately to a † town called Bethsaida. †
11 When the crowds found out, they followed him. He welcomed them, † spoke
to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.
12 Late in the day, † the Twelve approached and said to him, "Send the crowd
away, † so that they can go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find
food and lodging, because we are in a deserted place here."
13 "You give them something to eat," he told them.
"We have no more than five loaves † and two fish," they said, "unless we go
and buy food for all these people." 14 (For about five thousand men were there.)
Then he told his disciples, "Have them sit down † in groups of about fifty each."
15 They did what he said, and had them all sit down. 16 Then he took the five
loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, † he blessed and broke
them. † He kept giving them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
17 Everyone ate and was filled. They picked up twelve baskets of leftover
pieces.

PETER'S CONFESSION OF THE MESSIAH

18 While he was praying in private † and his disciples were with him, he asked
them, "Who do the crowds say that I am? "
19 They answered, "John the Baptist; others, Elijah; still others, that one of the
ancient prophets has come back." † †
20 "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am? "
Peter answered, "God's Messiah." †

HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION PREDICTED

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21 But he strictly warned and instructed them to tell this to no one, † 22 saying, † "It is necessary that the Son of Man † suffer many things † and be rejected † by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, † be killed, and be raised the third day." †

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

23 Then he said to them all, "If anyone wants to follow after † me, let him deny himself, † take up his cross daily, † and follow me. † 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will save it. † 25 For what does it benefit someone if he gains the whole world, and yet loses or forfeits himself? † 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, † the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory † and that of the Father and the holy angels. † 27 Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death † until they see the kingdom of God." †

THE TRANSFIGURATION

28 About eight days after this conversation, † he took along Peter, John, and James † and went up on the mountain to pray. † 29 As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, † and his clothes became dazzling white. † 30 Suddenly, two men were talking with him — Moses and Elijah. 31 They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.

32 Peter and those with him were in a deep sleep, † † and when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men who were standing with him. 33 As the two men were departing from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, † it's good for us to be here. Let us set up three shelters: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah" — not knowing what he was saying. †

34 While he was saying this, a cloud appeared and overshadowed † them. They became afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 Then a voice came from the cloud, † saying: "This is my Son, † the Chosen One; † † listen to him! " †

36 After the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. They kept silent, and at
that time told no one what they had seen.

THE POWER OF JESUS OVER A DEMON

37 The next day, † when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met
him. 38 Just then a man from the crowd cried out, “Teacher, I beg you to look at
my son, because he’s my only child. † 39 A spirit seizes him; suddenly he
shrieks, and it throws him into convulsions until he foams at the mouth; severely
bruising him, it scarcely ever leaves him. 40 I begged your disciples to drive it
out, but they couldn’t.” †

41 Jesus replied, “You unbelieving and perverse † generation, † how long will I
be with you and put up with you? † Bring your son here.”

42 As the boy was still approaching, the demon knocked him down and threw
him into severe convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the
boy, † and gave him back to his father. † 43 And they were all astonished at the
greatness of God. †

THE SECOND PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

While everyone was amazed at all the things he was doing, † he told his
disciples, 44 “Let these words sink in: † The Son of Man is about to be betrayed
into the hands of men.” †

45 But they did not understand this statement; † it was concealed from them so
that they could not grasp it, † and they were afraid to ask him about it.

WHO IS THE GREATEST?

46 An argument started among them about who was the greatest of them. †
47 But Jesus, knowing their inner thoughts, † † took a little child and had him
stand next to him. 48 He told them, “Whoever welcomes † this little child in my
name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. †
For whoever is least among you — this one is great.” †

IN HIS NAME

49 John responded, † “Master, we saw someone driving out demons in your name, † and we tried to stop him because he does not follow us.” †
50 “Don’t stop him,” Jesus told him, “because whoever is not against you is for you.” † †

THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

51 When the days were coming to a close for him to be taken up, † he determined † † to journey to Jerusalem. † 52 He sent messengers ahead of himself, † and on the way they entered a village of the Samaritans † to make preparations for him. 53 But they did not welcome him, because he determined to journey to Jerusalem. † 54 When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to consume them? ” † †
55 But he turned and rebuked them, † 56 and they went to another village.

FOLLOWING JESUS

57 As they were traveling on the road someone said to him, † “I will follow you wherever you go.”
58 Jesus told him, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” 59 Then he said to another, “Follow me.”
“Lord,” he said, “first let me go bury my father.”
60 But he told him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and spread the news of the kingdom of God.” †
61 Another said, “I will follow you, Lord, but first let me go and say good-bye to those at my house.” †
62 But Jesus said to him, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.”

9:10 Other mss add *deserted place near a* **9:14** Lit *them recline* **9:19** Lit *has risen* **9:23** Lit *come after* **9:23** Other mss omit *daily* **9:32** Lit *were weighed down with sleep* **9:35** Other mss read *the Beloved* **9:41** Or *corrupt*, or *perverted*, or *twisted* ; Dt 32:5 **9:44** Lit *“Put these words in your ears* **9:47** Lit *the thoughts of their hearts* **9:48** Or *receives*, throughout the verse **9:50** Other mss read *against us is for us* **9:51** Lit *he stiffened his face to go* ; Is 50:7 **9:54** Other mss add *as Elijah also did* **9:55-56** Other mss add *and said, “You don’t know what kind of spirit you belong to.* 56*For the Son of Man did not come to destroy people’s lives but to save them,”*
9:1 Lk 6:12-16 **9:1** Mt 10:1; Mk 3:13-15; 6:7 **9:2** Mt 10:5,7-8; Lk 4:43; 9:11,60; 10:1,9 **9:3-5** Mt 10:9-15; Mk 6:8-11; Lk 10:4-12; 22:35 **9:3** Mk 6:8 **9:5** Neh 5:13; Ac 13:51; 18:6 **9:7** Lk 3:1,19; 13:31; 23:7; Ac

13:1 **9:7-9** Mt 14:1-2; Mk 6:14-16 **9:8** Mt 11:14; 16:14; 17:3-4,10-12; Lk 1:17; 4:26 **9:8** Mk 6:15 **9:9** Lk 23:8 **9:10-17** Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:32-44; Jn 6:5-13 **9:10** Mk 6:30 **9:10** Mt 11:21; Mk 8:22; Jn 1:44; 12:21 **9:11** Lk 8:40 **9:12** Lk 24:29 **9:12** Mt 15:23 **9:13** Mt 16:9; Mk 8:19 **9:16** Mk 7:34; Jn 11:41; 17:1 **9:16** Mt 26:26; Mk 8:7; 14:22; Lk 24:30 **9:18-20** Mt 16:13-16; Mk 8:27-29 **9:19** Lk 9:7-8 **9:20** Mt 1:17; Lk 23:35; Ac 3:18; Rv 12:10 **9:21** Mt 12:16; 16:20; Mk 7:36; 8:30; 9:9; Lk 5:14; 8:56 **9:22-27** Mt 16:21-28; Mk 8:31–9:1 **9:22** Lk 13:33; 18:31 **9:22** Mt 17:12,22-23; Lk 24:7 **9:22** Lk 17:25; 20:17; 1Pt 2:4 **9:22** Lk 20:1; 22:66 **9:22** Mt 27:63; Jn 2:19 **9:23** 2Tm 2:12-13 **9:23** Mt 10:38-39; Lk 14:27; 1Co 15:31 **9:24** Lk 17:33; Jn 12:25 **9:25** Lk 12:20 **9:26** Mt 10:33; Rm 1:16; 2Tm 1:8; Heb 11:16; 1Jn 2:28 **9:26** Dn 7:10; Zch 14:5; Mt 24:30; Jn 1:51; Ac 1:11; 1Th 1:10 **9:26** Lk 12:9; Rv 14:10 **9:27** Jn 8:52; Heb 2:9 **9:27** Mt 10:23; 23:36; 24:34; Mk 13:30; Lk 21:31-32 **9:28-36** Mt 17:1-8; Mk 9:2-8 **9:28** Mk 14:33; Lk 8:51 **9:28** Mt 14:23; Lk 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18 **9:29** Mk 16:12 **9:29** Ps 104:2; Dn 7:9; Mt 28:3 **9:32** Gn 2:21; 15:12; 1Sm 26:12; Dn 8:18; 10:9; Mt 26:43 **9:33** Lk 5:5; 9:49 **9:33** Mk 14:40 **9:34** Lk 1:35; Ac 5:15 **9:35** Ex 24:15-16; 2Pt 1:16-18 **9:35** Ex 4:23; Ps 2:7; Hs 11:1; Ac 13:33; Heb 1:5 **9:35** Ps 89:3; Is 42:1; Lk 23:35 **9:35** Ac 3:22 **9:37-42** Mt 17:14-18; Mk 9:14-27 **9:38** Lk 7:12 **9:40** Lk 9:1; 10:17 **9:41** Php 2:15 **9:41** Jn 14:9 **9:42** Zch 3:2; Mt 8:26; Mk 1:25; Lk 4:35,39; Jd 9 **9:42** Lk 7:15 **9:43** 2Pt 1:16 **9:43-45** Mt 17:22-23; Mk 9:30-32 **9:44** Lk 9:22 **9:45** Mk 6:52; Lk 2:50; 18:34; 24:25; Jn 10:6; 12:16; 16:17-19 **9:45** Lk 18:34; 24:16 **9:46-48** Mt 18:1-5; Mk 9:33-37; Lk 22:24 **9:47** Mt 9:4 **9:48** Mt 10:40,42; Lk 10:16; Jn 13:20 **9:48** Lk 22:26 **9:49-50** Mk 9:38-40 **9:49** Mt 7:22; 12:27; Mk 16:17; Lk 10:17; Ac 19:13 **9:49** Nm 11:28 **9:50** Mt 12:30; Lk 11:23 **9:51** Mk 16:19 **9:51** 2Kg 12:17; Is 50:7; Jr 42:15 **9:51** Lk 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:11,28 **9:52** Lk 10:1 **9:52** Mt 10:5 **9:53** Jn 4:9,20 **9:54** 2Kg 1:9-16; Rv 13:13 **9:57-60** Mt 8:19-22 **9:60** Lk 8:1; 9:2; 16:16 **9:61** 1Kg 19:20

9:5 To **shake off the dust from . . . feet** indicated a formal separation between Jesus's disciples and those who rejected them, and it suggested impending divine judgment. Paul and Barnabas did this in Pisidian Antioch (Ac 13:51). It recalls the Jewish practice of shaking the dust from one's sandals when returning to Israel from a pagan land. Jewish travelers sought to remove any hint of pagan contamination. See also Luke 10:10-12.

9:20 Messiah (Gk *christos*) means "anointed one." In OT times, a flask of oil was poured on the head of a man who was to serve as a priest or king, denoting that God had set him apart for his work or office (1Sm 16:12b-13). Messianic expectation looked forward to the rule of a descendent of King David.

9:30 The appearance of **Moses and Elijah**, two of the greatest figures of Israel's history, probably represents Jesus's fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17). They also point to Jesus's significance, since **Moses** was regarded as the model prophet (Dt 18:18) and **Elijah** was the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal 4:5-6; Mt 11:7-10).

9:35 God speaks *directly* to the disciples present with Jesus. Jewish tradition viewed this type of communication from God as rare. Luke's inclusion of the event draws attention to Jesus as God's beloved Son, One who is greater than Moses and Elijah.

9:50 Jesus's statement is proverbial and should be understood as a general principle rather than a rule to be applied in every situation. In 11:23, Jesus articulates the inverse of this principle (see also Mt 12:30).

9:51 Jesus **determined to journey to Jerusalem.** Thus begins what some scholars have designated the "Travel Narrative" (9:51–19:27), a section that comprises about thirty-eight percent of Luke's Gospel and portrays Jesus traveling toward Jerusalem and the cross (see also 9:57; 10:1; 17:11; 19:28).

SENDING OUT THE SEVENTY-TWO

10 After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two † others, and he sent them ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself was

about to go. 2 He told them, † “The harvest † is abundant, but the workers † are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest. † 3 Now go; I’m sending you out like lambs among wolves. † 4 Don’t carry a money-bag, † traveling bag, † or sandals; † don’t greet anyone along the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace † to this household.’ 6 If a person of peace is there, your peace † will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they offer, for the worker is worthy of his wages. † Don’t move from house to house. 8 When you enter any town, and they welcome you, eat the things set before you. † 9 Heal the sick † who are there, and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God † has come near † you.’ 10 When you enter any town, and they don’t welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘We are wiping off even the dust of your town that clings to our feet as a witness against you. † Know this for certain: The kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I tell you, on that day † it will be more tolerable for Sodom † than for that town. †

UNREPENTANT TOWNS

13 “Woe † to you, † Chorazin! † Woe to you, Bethsaida! † For if the miracles † that were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, † they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. † 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment † than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, † will you be exalted to heaven? † No, you will go down to Hades. † 16 Whoever listens to you listens to me. † Whoever rejects you rejects me. † And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.” †

THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY-TWO

17 The seventy-two † † returned with joy, saying, † “Lord, even the demons † submit to us in your name.” †

18 He said to them, “I watched Satan † fall from heaven like lightning. † 19 Look, I have given you the authority † to trample † on snakes † and scorpions † and over all the power of the enemy; † nothing at all will harm

you. † 20 However, don't rejoice that † the spirits † submit to you, † but rejoice that your names are written † in heaven."

THE SON REVEALS THE FATHER

21 At that time † he † rejoiced in the Holy † Spirit † and said, "I praise † you, Father, † Lord of heaven and earth, † because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent † and revealed them to infants. † Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure. † † 22 All things have † been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son desires † to reveal him." †

23 Then turning to his disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you see but didn't see them; to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them." †

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

25 Then † an expert in the law † stood up to test † him, saying, "Teacher, † what must I do to inherit eternal life? " †

26 "What is written in the law? " he asked him. "How do you read it? "

27 He answered, **"Love the Lord your God † with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind;"** † and **"your neighbor as yourself."** † †

28 "You've answered correctly," he told him. "Do this and you will live." †

29 But wanting to justify himself, † he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor? " †

30 Jesus took up the question and said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan † on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had

compassion. † 34 He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil † and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day † he took out two denarii, † gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'
36 "Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers? "
37 "The one who showed mercy † to him," he said.
Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

MARTHA AND MARY

38 While they were traveling, he entered a village, and a woman named Martha † welcomed him into her home. † 39 She had a sister named Mary, who also sat at the Lord's † feet † and was listening to what he said. † 40 But Martha was distracted by her many tasks, and she came up and asked, "Lord, don't you care † that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand." † †
41 The Lord † answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, † 42 but one thing is necessary. † † Mary has made the right choice, † and it will not be taken away from her."

10:1 Other mss read *seventy* **10:17** Other mss read *The seventy* **10:20** Lit *don't rejoice in this, that* **10:21** Other mss read *Jesus* **10:21** Other mss omit *Holy* **10:21** Or *thank*, or *confess* **10:21** Lit *was well-pleasing in your sight* **10:22** Other mss read *And turning to the disciples, he said, "Everything has* **10:22** Or *wills*, or *chooses* **10:35** Other mss add *as he was leaving* **10:35** A denarius = one day's wage. **10:38** Other mss omit *into her home* **10:39** Other mss read *at Jesus's* **10:39** Lit *to his word* or *message* **10:40** Or *tell her to help me* **10:41** Other mss read *Jesus* **10:42** Some mss read *few things are necessary*, or *only one* **10:42** Lit *has chosen the good part*, or *has chosen the better portion* ; = the right meal

10:2 Mt 9:37-38; Jn 4:35 **10:2** Rv 14:15 **10:2** Mt 20:1 **10:2** 2Th 3:1 **10:3** Mt 7:15; 10:16; Jn 10:12; Ac 20:29 **10:4** Lk 12:33; 22:35-36 **10:4** Mk 6:8; Lk 9:3; 22:35-36 **10:4** Mt 10:9-10 **10:5** Mt 11:26; Lk 10:21; 12:51 **10:6** Lk 7:50; 8:48; 24:36; Jn 20:19; Ac 15:33; 1Co 16:11; Jms 2:16 **10:7** Mt 10:10; 1Tm 5:18; 2Pt 2:13 **10:8** 1Co 10:27 **10:9** Mt 10:8; 1Th 5:14 **10:9** Mt 12:28; Lk 11:20; 17:20 **10:9** Mt 10:7; Mk 1:15; 1Pt 4:7 **10:11** Mt 10:14; Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5; Ac 13:51; 18:6 **10:12** Mt 7:22; 13:1; Lk 17:31; 2Pt 3:10 **10:12** Rv 11:8 **10:12** Mt 10:15; 11:22,24; Lk 10:14 **10:13-15** Mt 11:20-24 **10:13** Ezk 16:23; Mt 23:13-16; Lk 6:24; Rv 9:12 **10:13** Mt 11:21 **10:13** Jn 12:21 **10:13** Ex 3:20; Lk 19:37; Ac 2:22 **10:13** Ezr 3:7; Jr 25:22; 47:4; Jl 3:4; Lk 6:17 **10:13** Est 4:1,3; Dn 9:3; Jnh 3:6 **10:14** Ps 1:5; Mt 12:41 **10:15** Mt 4:13; Lk 4:23,31; 7:1 **10:15** Ac 2:33 **10:15** Is 14:12-15; Ac 2:27 **10:16** Mt 10:40; Jn 13:20 **10:16** Mt 25:45; Lk 9:48; Jn 12:48 **10:16** Jn 5:23; 1Th 4:8 **10:17** Ezk 8:11 **10:17-20** Mk 16:17-18; Jn 12:31 **10:17** Rv 9:20 **10:17** Jn 10:25; 14:13 **10:18** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10; Rv 12:9 **10:18** Mt 28:3; Col 2:15 **10:19** Mk 1:22 **10:19** Lk 21:24; Rv 11:2 **10:19** Gn 3:16; Mt 23:33; Rv 9:19 **10:19** Lk 11:12; Rv 9:3 **10:19** Mt 13:39; 1Co 15:25 **10:19** Ps 91:13; Mk 16:18; Ac

28:5 **10:20** 1Tm 4:1; 1Jn 4:1 **10:20** Mt 7:22-23 **10:20** Ex 32:32; Neh 9:38; Mal 3:16 **10:21-24** Mt 11:25-27; 13:16-17 **10:21** Lk 2:27; 4:1; 19:21; Ac 2:4 **10:21** Mt 7:21; Lk 23:34,46; Jn 8:42; 11:41; 12:27-28; 17:1-25 **10:21** Gn 14:19; Ac 17:24 **10:21** Is 44:25; Jr 8:9; Ac 13:7; 1Co 1:19-27; 3:19-20 **10:21** Ps 8:2; Mt 21:16 **10:21** Lk 2:14 **10:22** Jn 1:18; 6:46; 7:29; 8:19; 10:15; 17:25-26 **10:24** Jn 8:56; Heb 11:13; 1Pt 1:10-12 **10:25-28** Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34 **10:25** Lk 7:30 **10:25** Mt 16:1; 19:3 **10:25** Mt 8:19; Lk 3:12; Jn 1:38 **10:25** Mt 19:29; Lk 18:18; Jn 12:25; Rv 21:7 **10:27** Lk 4:8 **10:27** Dt 6:5 **10:27** Lv 19:18; Dt 6:5 **10:27** Lv 19:18 **10:28** Lv 18:5; Neh 9:29; Ezk 20:11; Rm 10:5; Gl 3:12 **10:29** Lk 16:15 **10:29** Ex 20:16-17; Lv 6:2; 19:13-18; Pr 3:28-29; Mt 5:43; 19:19; Rm 13:9-10 **10:33** Mt 10:5; Lk 9:52; Ac 1:8 **10:33** Lk 7:13; 15:20 **10:34** Is 1:6; Jms 5:14 **10:37** Mt 23:23; Lk 1:72; Jms 2:13 **10:38** Jn 11:1,19-20; 12:2-3 **10:39** Lk 8:35; Ac 22:3 **10:40** Mk 4:38; 1Pt 5:7 **10:40** Rm 8:26 **10:41** Lk 12:22; 1Co 7:32; Php 4:6 **10:42** Ps 16:5; 27:4; Jn 6:27

10:11 See 9:5.

10:17-20 See "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

10:27 See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512*.

10:30 The road **from Jerusalem to Jericho** stretches approximately seventeen miles. At many points the path is quite narrow with numerous rocks behind which robbers could hide. Josephus, the Jewish historian, described it as "desolate and rocky" in his *Jewish Wars* (4.8.3).

10:33 After defeating the Jews in the northern kingdom (Israel) in 722 BC, the Assyrians repopulated the land with pagan immigrants from the east. Victorious nations sometimes repopulated areas in an effort to break down resistance from native inhabitants. The descendants of these particular Jews and immigrants came to be known as the Samaritans. Some Jews in the southern kingdom (Judah) had such disdain for the Samaritans that they regarded them as Gentiles, or apostates, due to their departure from traditional Judaism. There is great irony in the fact that a **Samaritan** is presented as a model for obeying God's word (10:27).

10:39 Mary's decision to sit **at the Lord's feet** to listen went against the social expectations of women in two ways. First, as a female and hostess, she was required by social custom to serve her guests. Second, few first-century Jews thought it appropriate for a woman to learn from a male teacher as Mary did.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

11 He was praying † in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." †

2 He said to them, "Whenever you pray, say, †

Father, † †
your name † be honored as holy. †
Your kingdom come. † †
3 Give us each day our daily bread. † †
4 And forgive us our sins, †
for we ourselves also forgive everyone

in debt to us. † †
And do not bring us into temptation." † †

ASK, SEARCH, KNOCK

5 He also said to them: "Suppose one of you † has a friend and goes to him at
midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 because a
friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I don't have anything to offer
him.' 7 Then he will answer from inside and say, 'Don't bother me! The door is
already locked, and my children and I have gone to bed. I can't get up to give
you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he won't get up and give him anything
because he is his friend, yet because of his friend's shameless boldness, † he
will get up and give him as much as he needs. †
9 "So † I say to you, ask, † and it will be given to you. Seek, † and you will
find. Knock, † and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks
receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will
be opened. 11 What father among you, if his son † asks for a fish, will give him
a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?
13 If you then, who are evil, † know how to give good gifts to your children,
how much more will the heavenly Father † give the Holy Spirit † to those who
ask him? "

A HOUSE DIVIDED

14 Now † he was driving out a demon † that was mute. † When the demon
came out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed.
15 But some of them said, "He drives out demons by Beelzebul, † the ruler † of
the demons." † 16 And others, as a test, † were demanding of him a sign †
from heaven.
17 Knowing their thoughts, † he told them, "Every kingdom divided † against
itself is headed for destruction, and a house divided against itself falls. 18 If
Satan † also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom † stand? For you
say I drive out demons by Beelzebul. 19 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul,
by whom do your sons † drive them out? For this reason they will be your

judges. [20] If I drive out demons by the finger of God, † then the kingdom of God † has come upon you. [21] When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. [22] But when one stronger than he attacks and overpowers † him, he takes from him all his weapons † † he trusted † in, and divides up his plunder. † [23] Anyone who is not with me is against me, † and anyone who does not gather with me scatters.

AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT'S RETURN

[24] "When † an unclean spirit † comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest, † and not finding rest, it then † says, 'I'll go back to my house that I came from.' [25] Returning, it finds the house swept and put in order. [26] Then it goes and brings seven other spirits † more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person's last condition is worse than the first." †

TRUE BLESSEDNESS

[27] As he was saying these things, a woman from the crowd † raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the one who nursed you! " †

[28] He said, "Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God † and keep it." †

THE SIGN OF JONAH

[29] As the crowds were increasing, he began saying: "This generation † is an evil generation. † It demands a sign, † but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. † † [30] For just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so also the Son of Man † will be to this generation. [31] The queen of the south † will rise up at the judgment † with the men of this generation and condemn † them, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, † and look — something greater than Solomon is here. [32] The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at Jonah's preaching, and look — something greater than Jonah is here.

THE LAMP OF THE BODY

33 “No † one lights a lamp † and puts it in the cellar or under a basket, † but on
a lampstand, so that those who come in may see its light. 34 Your eye is the
lamp of the body. † When your eye is healthy, your whole body is also full of
light. But when it is bad, † your body is also full of darkness. 35 Take care,
then, that the light in you is not darkness. 36 If, therefore, your whole body is
full of light, with no part of it in darkness, it will be entirely illuminated, as when
a lamp shines its light on you.”

RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY DENOUNCED

37 As he was speaking, a Pharisee † asked him to dine with him. So he went in
and reclined at the table. 38 When the Pharisee saw this, he was amazed that he
did not first perform the ritual washing † † before dinner. † 39 But the Lord
said to him, “Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside
you are full of greed † and evil. † 40 Fools! † Didn’t he who made the outside
make the inside too? 41 But give from what is within to the poor, † † and then
everything is clean † for you.

42 “But woe † to you Pharisees! You give a tenth † † of mint, rue, and every
kind of herb, and you bypass † justice † and love for God. † † These things
you should have done without neglecting the others.

43 “Woe to you Pharisees! You love the front seat † in the synagogues † and
greetings in the marketplaces.

44 “Woe to you! † You are like unmarked graves; † the people who walk over
them don’t know it.”

45 One of the experts in the law † answered him, “Teacher, when you say these
things you insult us too.”

46 Then he said: “Woe also to you experts in the law! You load people with
burdens † that are hard to carry, and yet you yourselves don’t touch these
burdens with one of your fingers. †

47 “Woe to you! You build tombs † for the prophets, † and your fathers
killed † them. 48 Therefore, you are witnesses † that you approve † † the

deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their monuments. †
49 Because of this, the wisdom of God † said, ‘I will send them prophets and
apostles, † and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ † 50 so that this
generation † may be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets shed since
the foundation of the world † † — 51 from the blood of Abel † to the blood of
Zechariah, † who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.
“Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible. †
52 “Woe to you experts in the law! You have taken away the key to
knowledge. † You didn’t go in yourselves, and you hindered † those who were
trying to go in.”
53 When he left there, † the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose † him
fiercely and to cross-examine him about many things; 54 they were lying in
wait † for him to trap him in something he said. † †

11:2 Other mss read *Our Father in heaven* **11:2** Other mss add *Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* **11:3** Or *our bread for tomorrow* **11:4** Or *everyone who wrongs us* **11:4** Other mss add *But deliver us from the evil one* **11:5** Lit *Who of you* **11:8** Or *persistence* **11:11** Other mss read *son asks for bread, would give him a stone? Or if he* **11:22** Gk panoplia, the armor and weapons of a foot soldier; Eph 6:11,13 **11:24** Other mss omit *then* **11:29** Other mss add *the prophet* **11:33** Other mss omit *or under a basket* **11:38** Lit *he did not first wash* **11:41** Or *But donate from the heart as charity* **11:42** Or *a tithe* **11:42** Or *neglect* **11:42** Lit *the justice and the love of God* **11:44** Other mss add *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!* **11:47** Or *graves* **11:48** Lit *witnesses and approve* **11:48** Other mss omit *their monuments* **11:50** Lit *so that the blood of all . . . world may be required of this generation,* **11:51** Lit *you, it will be required of this generation* **11:53** Other mss read *And as he was saying these things to them* **11:54** Other mss add *so that they might bring charges against him*

11:1 Lk 3:21 **11:1** Lk 5:33 **11:2-13** Mt 6:9-13 **11:2** Jn 20:17; 1Pt 1:17 **11:2** Ps 9:10; Jn 10:25; 17:6 **11:2** Is 29:23; Lk 1:49; 1Pt 3:15 **11:2** Mk 9:1 **11:3** Pr 30:8 **11:4** Lk 6:12; 7:48; 24:47 **11:4** Mt 18:23-35 **11:4** Mt 26:41; Lk 4:13; 22:40,46; 1Co 10:13 **11:8** Lk 18:1-6 **11:9-13** Mt 7:7-11; Jn 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:24 **11:9** Mt 18:19; 21:22; Mk 11:24; Jms 1:5-6,17; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14-15 **11:9** Dt 4:29; 1Ch 28:9; 2Ch 15:2; Pr 8:17; Is 55:6; Jr 29:13 **11:9** Lk 11:10; 12:36; 13:25; Ac 12:13,16; Rv 3:20 **11:13** Rm 12:17; 1Th 5:22; 2Tm 3:13 **11:13** Mt 5:48 **11:13** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4,38; Rm 8:9 **11:14-23** Mt 9:32-34; 12:22-30; Mk 3:22-27; Jn 7:20; 8:48,52; 10:20 **11:14** Mk 7:26 **11:14** Mk 7:37; 9:15-25; Lk 7:22 **11:15** 2Kg 1:2; Mt 10:25 **11:15** Lk 12:58 **11:15** Jn 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2 **11:16** Lk 10:25 **11:16** Jn 2:11; 8:6 **11:17** Lk 5:22; Php 2:6 **11:17** Dn 5:28; 11:4; Lk 12:52-53 **11:18** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **11:18** Lk 4:5 **11:19** Gl 3:7; 1Pt 5:13 **11:20** Ex 8:19; 31:18; Dt 9:10; Ps 8:3 **11:20** Mt 19:24; 21:31,43; Lk 17:21 **11:22** Jn 16:33; 1Jn 2:13 **11:22** Eph 6:11,13 **11:22** Ac 26:28 **11:22** Is 49:24-26 **11:23** Mk 9:40; Lk 9:50 **11:24-26** Mt 12:43-45 **11:24** Mk 1:23-27; Lk 8:29; 9:42; Rv 18:2 **11:24** Mt 11:29; Rv 4:8; 14:11 **11:26** Lv 26:18-28; Dt 7:1; Pr 6:31; 26:25; Lk 8:2 **11:26** Jn 5:14; 2Pt 2:20-22 **11:27** Lk 12:3 **11:27** Lk 1:48; 23:29 **11:28** Lk 5:1; 8:21; Ac 13:7 **11:28** Lv 22:31; Jn 13:17; Jms 1:22; Rv 1:3; 22:7 **11:29** Lk 7:31; 17:25; 21:32 **11:29-32** Mt 12:39-42; Mk 8:12 **11:29** Lk 11:16 **11:29** Jnh 1:1–4:9; Mt 16:4 **11:30** Mk 2:10; Lk 5:24 **11:31** 1Kg 10:1; 2Ch 9:1 **11:31** Lk 10:14 **11:31** Heb 11:7 **11:31** 1Kg 4:34; Pr 1:1 **11:33** Mt 5:15; Mk 4:21 **11:33** Lk 8:16 **11:34-36** Mt 6:22-23 **11:34** Jr 24:8; Mt 7:17 **11:37** Lk 7:36 **11:38** Heb 6:2 **11:38** Mt 15:2; Mk 7:2-5 **11:39** Mt 23:25; Lk 12:20; 16:14;

Heb 10:34 **11:39** Mk 7:22 **11:40** Mt 23:17; Lk 12:20 **11:41** Lk 12:33; Ac 24:17 **11:41** Ps 24:4; Ti 1:15 **11:42** Lk 10:13 **11:42** Dt 14:22; Lk 18:12 **11:42** Mc 6:8; Zch 7:9; Mt 12:18,20; Jn 7:24; Ac 8:33 **11:42** Dt 6:5; Lk 10:27; Jn 5:42; 2Th 3:5 **11:43** Mt 23:6; Mk 12:39; Lk 20:46 **11:43** Jms 2:2 **11:44** Mt 23:27 **11:45** Lk 7:30 **11:46** Mt 23:4; Ac 27:10; Gl 6:5 **11:46** Mt 11:28-30; Ac 15:10 **11:47** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52 **11:47** Lk 20:15 **11:48** Mt 23:31 **11:48** Ac 22:20; Rm 1:32 **11:49** Pr 1:20-33; 8:1-36; Mt 23:34 **11:49** Lk 11:27; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-10; Jn 13:16; Ac 1:2 **11:49** 1Th 2:15; 2Tm 3:12 **11:50** Lk 11:29 **11:50** Heb 9:26; Rv 18:24 **11:51** Gn 4:9-10; Heb 12:24; 1Jn 3:12 **11:51** 2Ch 24:20-22 **11:52** 1Co 14:6 **11:52** 1Co 14:39 **11:53** Mk 6:19; Gl 5:1 **11:54** Ac 23:21 **11:54** Is 29:21; Mt 22:15; Mk 3:2; 12:13; Lk 20:20; Jn 8:6

11:5-6 Ancient people felt great social pressure to show hospitality to both friends and strangers. Failing to show appropriate hospitality was regarded as shameful.

11:7 In Jesus's day, father, mother, and children often slept in a single room together, sometimes on a shared mat. They bolted the door with a heavy, long piece of wood or metal to keep out intruders. To grant the visitor's request, the owner of the home would have to disturb the entire household.

11:9 See "Prayer and Recovery from Illness," *p. 1551.*

11:14-15 A feature of Jesus's ministry was exorcising **demons** (Mt 17:14-20; Mk 1:23-27; 9:14-29). Pagans and Jews practiced exorcism in the first century, commonly employing rituals, incantations, and spells. In sharp contrast, Jesus exorcised unclean spirits simply by his authority (Mk 1:27) and God's power, with the intent of declaring that the kingdom had arrived (Lk 11:20). See the note on 8:26-39.

11:29-30 Jesus's generation demanded a sign to validate his ministry (Mt 12:38-42; Mk 8:11-12), but the only sign he will give them is the **sign of Jonah**. Here this seems to refer to Jonah's preaching of repentance (Jnh 1:2; 3:2-3; 3:4; Lk 5:32; 13:3,5; 15:7,10; see also Mt 4:17) or divine rescue (Jnh 1:17–2:10), which foreshadowed Jesus's resurrection (Lk 24:6-7).

11:30-31 Jesus's references to **the people of Nineveh** and **the queen of the south** underscore the irony of his situation. The Jews respond negatively to him while non-Israelites in former times responded positively to God's messengers. The enthusiasm of the mentioned queen, the Queen of Sheba, who likely lived in southern Arabia (1Kg 10:1-13), is highlighted in the fact that she **came from the ends of the earth.**

11:44 First-century **graves** were marked so that a Jew would not unwittingly defile himself by coming in contact with one (Nm 19:16). Lime plaster was sometimes used to mark a grave.

11:51 See "Creation: A Young Earth Perspective ," *p. 9.*

BEWARE OF RELIGIOUS HYPOCRISY

12 Meanwhile, a crowd of many thousands came together, so that they were trampling † on one another. He began to say to his disciples first, † "Be on your guard † against the leaven † † of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. † 2 There is nothing covered that won't be uncovered, † nothing hidden that won't be made known. †

NATURALISM AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

From the biblical writers to the church fathers to the Reformers until today, believers in the Judeo-Christian tradition have dealt with the question of how a believer should relate to the physical world. The Bible is clear from its first verse that God is the Creator (Gn 1:1). Not only is he the Creator, but he is also the Sustainer (Ac 17:28; Heb 1:3; Col 1:17); Governor (Pss 104:10,14,20; 135:7; Jr 31:35; 33:20); and Provider (Ps 104:27-28; Mt 6:26-30). Furthermore, Jesus stated that we observe the creation in order to understand it (Lk 12:54-56).

Today science is considered the best way to observe and understand the physical world. Modern science explains natural phenomena in terms of natural events and causes, but does not entertain supernatural phenomena. The principles of science are governed by methodological naturalism.

Unlike philosophical naturalism, which states that the physical universe is all that exists, methodological naturalism is not concerned with the ultimate limits of reality but with the best methods for studying nature. Methodological naturalism provides the framework within which to study nature.

Is methodological naturalism compatible with a Christian worldview? Yes, in the sense that all truth is God's truth. The challenge is at the interface of science and faith—where both science and faith make historical statements about the same events.

PROS AND CONS OF METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM

The methodological naturalistic approach to answering scientific questions has been very successful. By focusing on the physical aspects of the universe (the structure of matter, forces acting on matter, and energy changes), methodological naturalism provides effective ways of describing planetary motion, finding cures for diseases, and designing computers. Methodological naturalism has allowed science to function within all countries and worldviews and has greatly enhanced the standard of living of humankind—the dream of English Christian philosopher and scientific pioneer Francis Bacon (1561–1626), who hoped that science would relieve some of the effects of the fall.

On the other hand, methodological naturalism can lead to philosophical naturalism—though it does not have to. The naturalistic approach affects the outcomes of natural theology—the attempt to uncover the attributes of God from the findings of nature—so that supernatural phenomena are excluded from consideration. The use of naturalistic explanations can create a blind spot, only allowing naturalistic explanations to exist at the interface between science and faith. A crucial issue found at that interface is the historical death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Science, with its naturalistic outlook, can help us understand the resurrection events by providing a detailed description of the physiological changes that occur during a crucifixion and of what happens to a body within three days after death. But the resurrection is biochemically impossible; thus, naturalistic explanations regard the resurrection as scientifically, and therefore historically, unfounded.

METHODOLOGICAL VERSUS PHILOSOPHICAL NATURALISM

Methodological naturalism does not, however, have to lead to philosophical naturalism. A scientist who begins with the tenants of the faith, rather than the naturalistic assumptions of science, may indeed observe the actions of God in nature. Starting with the characteristics of God as revealed in Scripture, the eyes of faith may observe God refining this fallen world through what otherwise appears to be waste and suffering. Our worldview determines what we see—a personal God shepherding his creation, or an exclusively physical universe ruled by chance. As the author of Hebrews states, "By faith we understand that the

universe was created by the word of God" (Heb 11:3). If it takes faith to understand that the universe is God's creation, then it takes faith to see God in the everyday workings of this fallen world.

METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Are Christians who call for the abandonment of methodological naturalism right to do so? We ought not ignore the fact that methodological naturalism developed within a Christian worldview over centuries of thought. Augustine (AD 354–430) stated that all truth is God's truth—that secondary causes can be used to explain the natural world—though he was concerned that regularity in the natural order may lead to a loss of wonder. During the Middle Ages, Christian theologians and philosophers proposed that God's activities in nature follow the common course of nature—that he worked through secondary causes (physical causes and effects). Although this belief allowed the use of observation and experiment, in addition to reason, for studying nature, this belief put the visible activity of God outside the common course of nature. As such, one's faith decided whether an event, such as a strong wind, was produced by just another weather pattern or by God as he parted the Red Sea.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) reaffirmed that secondary causes can be used to study nature, but he emphasized that all events are directed by God. John Calvin (1509–1564) reaffirmed Augustine's notion that God is the source of all truth. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) proposed that God revealed himself in two books—the book of creation (Ps 19:1-6) and the book of revelation, the Bible (Ps 19:7-14). B. B. Warfield (1851–1921) reaffirmed Aquinas by stating that God chooses to govern the world by regular cause-and-effect relationships. As can be seen, modern science's commitment to the assumption of physical cause-and-effect (what we today call methodological naturalism) has a long history within Christian thought.

METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM AND SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY

Does a rejection of methodological naturalism cause science to grind to a stop for the premature appeal to God as causal agent? To evoke God as primary cause does not necessitate the rejection of natural cause-and-effect. Nevertheless, regarding God as a physical-like cause of every event can cause exploration to come to a halt. One reason that modern science did not develop in the classical Islamic world was a philosophical belief that God was indeed involved this way in every event. As Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), a leading philosopher of Islam's golden age, stated that fire does not cause cotton to burn; rather, God intervenes to produce such a result. Furthermore, since God is so different from us, we can never be sure that it will always be God's will that cotton should burn.

The belief that God is the primary cause acting though secondary causes does not mean that scientific inquiry should stop. The Christian worldview of a Creator provides the basis for believing that the universe really exists and is worthy of study. The worldview of the scientist influences what questions are asked and how results are interpreted. Historically, we see that faith did not stifle the acquisition of knowledge; instead, it provided the insight needed to advance understanding.

Believing that God created out of nothing, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630) was inspired to search for the harmony of God in the heavens and so discovered the laws of planetary motion. Believing in the "fixed kinds" of God's original creation did not limit the research of the Swedish naturalist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778); rather, it led him to search for a classification system for biological species. Because Louis Pasteur (1822–1895) believed that life was created by God and was not just a set of chemical reactions, he disproved the theory of spontaneous generation and made many discoveries in microbiology. The American agricultural scientist George Washington Carver's (1864–1943) belief that God gave the first humans "seed-bearing plant[s]" (Gn 1:29) for food led to his discovery of over three hundred products that could be made from peanuts. The Belgian priest and astronomer Georges Lemaître's (1894–1966) faith in a Creator God allowed him to propose what is today called the big Bang Model—espousing a dynamic universe with a beginning. In contrast, the German-American physicist Albert Einstein (1879–1955) at first refused to accept this model, even though it emerged from his own theory, because it clashed with the prevailing scientific view of a static, eternal universe.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the naturalistic methodology of science has been, and continues to be, a helpful tool for scientific endeavor. But we must be cautious of a possible reductionism that offers only naturalistic explanations of the physical universe.

JIMMY H. DAVIS

3 Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and
what you have whispered in an ear in private rooms † will be proclaimed on the
housetops. †

FEAR GOD

4 "I say to you, my friends, † don't fear † those who kill the body, and after
that can do nothing more. 5 But I will show you the one to fear: Fear † him who
has authority to throw people into hell † after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the
one to fear! 6 Aren't five sparrows sold for two pennies? † Yet not one of them
is forgotten in God's sight. † 7 Indeed, the hairs of your head are all counted.
Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

ACKNOWLEDGING CHRIST

8 "And I say to you, anyone who acknowledges † me before others, the Son of
Man † will also acknowledge him before the angels of God, † 9 but whoever
denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. † 10 Anyone
who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, † but the one who
blasphemes against the Holy Spirit † will not be forgiven. 11 Whenever † they
bring you before synagogues and rulers and authorities, † don't worry † about
how you should defend † yourselves or what you should say. 12 For the Holy
Spirit will teach you at that very hour what must be said." †

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

13 Someone from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, † tell my brother to divide
the inheritance with me."
14 "Friend," † he said to him, "who appointed me a judge or arbitrator over
you?" 15 He then told them, "Watch out and be on guard † against all greed, †

because one's life is not in the abundance of his possessions." †

16 Then he told them a parable: † "A rich † man's land was very productive.
17 He thought to himself, 'What should I do, since I don't have anywhere to
store my crops? 18 I will do this,' he said. 'I'll tear down my barns and build
bigger ones and store all my grain and my goods there. 19 Then I'll say to
myself, "You have many goods stored up for many years. Take it easy; † eat,
drink, and enjoy yourself." ' †

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! † This very night your life is demanded of
you. And the things you have prepared — whose will they be? ' †

21 "That's how it is with the one who stores up treasure † for himself and is not
rich toward God." †

THE CURE FOR ANXIETY

22 Then he said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, † don't worry about your
life, what you will eat; or about the body, what you will wear. † 23 For life is
more than food and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: †
They don't sow or reap; they don't have a storeroom or a barn; yet God feeds
them. † Aren't you worth much more than the birds? 25 Can any of you add one
moment to his life-span † by worrying? † 26 If then you're not able to do even
a little thing, why worry about the rest?

27 "Consider how the wildflowers grow: They don't labor or spin thread. Yet I
tell you, not even Solomon † in all his splendor was adorned like one of these.
28 If that's how God clothes the grass, which is in the field today and is thrown
into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will he do for you — you of little
faith? † 29 Don't strive for what you should eat and what you should drink, and
don't be anxious. 30 For the Gentile world eagerly seeks † all these things, and
your Father † knows that you need them.

31 "But seek his kingdom, † and these things will be provided for you. †
32 Don't be afraid, † little flock, † because your Father delights † to give you
the kingdom. † 33 Sell † your possessions and give to the poor. † Make
money-bags † for yourselves that won't grow old, an inexhaustible treasure † in

heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. †

READY FOR THE MASTER'S RETURN

35 "Be ready for service † and have your lamps lit. † 36 You are to be like people waiting for their master † to return from the wedding banquet † so that when he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. † 37 Blessed will be those servants the master finds alert † when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will get ready, † have them recline at the table, then come and serve them. † 38 If he comes in the middle of the night, or even near dawn, † and finds them alert, blessed are those servants. 39 But know this: If the homeowner had known at what hour the thief was coming, † he would not have let his house be broken into. 40 You also be ready, † because the Son of Man † is coming at an hour you do not expect." †

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT

41 "Lord," Peter asked, "are you telling this parable to us or to everyone?"

42 The Lord said: "Who then is the faithful and sensible manager † his master will put in charge of his household servants to give them their allotted food † at the proper time? 43 Blessed is that servant whom the master finds doing his job when he comes. 44 Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 45 But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' † and starts to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and get drunk, 46 that servant's master will come on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know. He will cut him to pieces † and assign him a place with the unfaithful. † 47 And that servant who knew his master's will and didn't prepare himself or do it † will be severely beaten. † 48 But the one who did not know and did what deserved † punishment will receive a light beating. From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, even more will be expected. † †

NOT PEACE BUT DIVISION

49 “I came † to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already set
ablaze! 50 But I have a baptism to undergo, † and how it consumes † me until it
is finished! † 51 Do you think that I came here to bring peace on the earth? †
No, I tell you, but rather division. 52 From now on, five in one household will be
divided: three against two, and two against three.
53 **They will be divided, father against son,**
son against father,
mother against daughter,
daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law,
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” † †

INTERPRETING THE TIME

54 He also said to the crowds: † “When you see a cloud rising in the west, right
away you say, ‘A storm is coming,’ and so it does. † 55 And when the south
wind is blowing, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. 56 Hypocrites! † You
know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but why don’t
you know how to interpret this present time? †

SETTLING ACCOUNTS

57 “Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right? † 58 As you are going
with your adversary † to the ruler, make an effort to settle with him on the way.
Then he won’t drag you before the judge, † the judge hand you over to the
bailiff, and the bailiff throw you into prison. † 59 I tell you, you will never get
out of there until you have paid the last cent.” † †

12:1 Or *yeast* **12:6** Lit *two assaria* ; a small copper coin **12:14** Lit *Man* **12:25** Or *add a cubit to his height* **12:35** Lit *“Let your loins be girded* ; an idiom for tying up loose outer clothing in preparation for action; Ex 12:11 **12:37** Lit *will gird himself* **12:38** Lit *even in the second or third watch* **12:46** Lit *him in two* **12:46** Or *unbelievers* **12:47** Lit *or do toward his will*, **12:48** Or *much* **12:59** Gk *lepton*, the smallest and least valuable copper coin in use

12:1 Lk 8:5 **12:1** Mt 16:5-6; Mk 8:14-15 **12:1** Jr 9:4; Lk 17:3; Ac 20:28 **12:1** Lk 13:21; Gl 5:9 **12:1** Mt 23:28; Mk 12:15; Gl 2:13; 1Pt 2:1 **12:2-9** Mt 10:26-33; Mk 4:22; Lk 8:17 **12:2** Lk 6:44 **12:3** Mt 6:6; 24:26; Lk 12:24 **12:3** Ac 10:9 **12:4** Ac 27:3 **12:4** Is 8:13; 51:12; Jr 1:8; Jn 6:20 **12:5** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Ac 10:2; Rv 14:7 **12:5** Mk 9:43; Jms 3:6 **12:6** Ps 50:11 **12:8** Mt 7:23; Jn 9:22 **12:8** Lk 5:24; 11:30 **12:8** Lk 15:10; Jn 1:51; Ac 10:3; Rm 10:9; Rv 3:5 **12:9** Lk 9:26 **12:10** Mt 12:31-32; Mk 3:28-30 **12:10** Lk 1:15,35; 2:25-26; 3:22 **12:11-12** Mt 10:19-20; Mk 13:11; Lk 21:14-15 **12:11** Lk 20:20; Eph 3:10; Col 2:15 **12:11** Php 4:6

12:11 Ac 26:24 **12:12** Pr 1:23; Jn 14:26 **12:13** Lk 11:45 **12:15** 1Tm 6:20; 2Tm 1:14; 4:15; 2Pt 3:17; 1Jn 5:21 **12:15** Eph 5:3 **12:15** Gn 12:5; Jb 20:20; 31:24; Ps 62:10 **12:16** Lk 5:36; 8:11 **12:16** Lk 6:24; 16:19; 18:23; 19:2; 21:1 **12:19** Mt 11:28; Mk 6:31; Rv 6:11; 14:13 **12:19** Ec 2:24 **12:20** Jr 17:11; Lk 11:40 **12:20** Ps 39:6; 49:10; Jr 17:11; Mt 16:26 **12:21** 2Pt 3:7 **12:21** Mt 6:19-20 **12:22-32** Mt 6:25-34 **12:22** Pr 31:25 **12:24** 1Kg 17:4,6; Jb 38:41; Ps 147:9; Pr 30:17 **12:24** Rv 12:6 **12:25** Php 4:6 **12:27** 1Kg 10:4-7 **12:28** Mt 8:26; 14:31; 16:8 **12:30** Heb 11:14; 13:14 **12:30** Mt 5:16; 6:1; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **12:31** Mt 5:6,20; Lk 11:2 **12:31** 1Kg 3:11-14; Mt 19:29; Mk 10:29-30 **12:32** Lk 12:4,7 **12:32** Is 40:11; Ac 20:28; 1Pt 5:2-3 **12:32** Mt 11:26; Lk 10:21; Eph 1:5,9; Php 2:13 **12:32** Mt 13:19; 25:34; Lk 22:29 **12:33-34** Mt 6:19-21 **12:33** Ac 24:17 **12:33** Lk 10:4 **12:33** Mk 10:21; 2Co 4:7 **12:34** 1Pt 1:4 **12:35-48** Mt 24:42-51; 25:1-13; Mk 13:33-37; Jn 13:4-5 **12:36** 2Pt 3:12 **12:36** Jn 2:1 **12:36** Rv 3:20 **12:37** Rm 13:11 **12:37** Lk 17:8; 22:27 **12:39** 1Th 5:2 **12:40** Lk 21:36 **12:40** Mk 2:10 **12:40** 1Th 5:2; 2Pt 3:10; Rv 3:3; 16:15 **12:42** Lk 16:1 **12:42** 1Tm 6:8 **12:45** 1Jn 2:28 **12:47** Dt 25:2; Jms 4:17 **12:48** Lv 5:17; Nm 15:29 **12:48** Lv 5:17; Mt 13:12; Rm 1:20; 2:14; 1Tm 1:13 **12:49-53** Mt 10:34-36; Mk 10:38 **12:50** Ac 22:16; Rm 6:3; Eph 4:5 **12:50** 2Co 5:14 **12:50** Jn 19:28; 19:30 **12:51** Lk 2:14 **12:53** Mc 7:6 **12:53** Mc 7:6 **12:54-56** Mt 16:2-3 **12:54** 1Kg 18:43-44 **12:56** Lk 6:42 **12:56** Lk 20:10; 21:8,30 **12:57-59** Mt 5:25-26 **12:58** 1Pt 5:8 **12:58** 2Tm 4:8 **12:58** Pr 25:8 **12:59** Lk 21:2

12:6 See “Animal Rights,” *p. 21*.

12:8-9 See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531*.

12:13 In Jesus’s day rabbis sometimes mediated disputes, especially those related to the Mosaic law. Some even traveled from town to town to settle disagreements.

12:36 Because the festivities associated with some elaborate Jewish weddings could last up to two weeks, slaves could not be certain when their master might return. Thus, they needed to be alert and prepared for his return at any time.

12:42 The **manager** to whom Jesus refers was likely a steward who managed other servants within a wealthy household. The wealthy depended on faithful managers to keep their estates running properly.

REPENT OR PERISH

13 At that time,† some people came and reported to him about the Galileans† whose blood Pilate† had mixed with their sacrifices.
2 And he† responded to them, “Do you think that these Galileans were more
sinful than all the other Galileans because they suffered these things?† 3 No, I
tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well. 4 Or those eighteen
that the tower in Siloam† fell on and killed — do you think they were more
sinful than all the other people who live in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but
unless you repent, you will all perish as well.”

THE PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG TREE

6 And he told this parable:† “A man had a fig tree that was planted in his
vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it and found none.† 7 He told the
vineyard worker, ‘Listen, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig

tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! † Why should it even waste the soil? ' †

8 "But he replied to him, 'Sir, † leave it this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. † 9 Perhaps it will produce fruit next year, but if not, you can cut it down.' "

HEALING A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM

10 As he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, † 11 a woman was there who had been disabled by a spirit † † for over eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. † 12 When Jesus saw her, he called out to her, † "Woman, you are free of your disability." 13 Then he laid his hands on her, † and instantly she was restored † and began to glorify God. †

14 But the leader of the synagogue, indignant † because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, responded by telling the crowd, "There are six days when work should be done; † therefore come on those days and be healed and not on the Sabbath day."

15 But the Lord answered him and said, "Hypocrites! † Doesn't each one of you untie his ox † or donkey from the feeding trough † on the Sabbath and lead it to water? † 16 Satan † has bound † this woman, a daughter of Abraham, † for eighteen years — shouldn't she be untied from this bondage † on the Sabbath day? "

17 When he had said these things, all his adversaries † were humiliated, † but the whole crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things he was doing. †

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND OF THE LEAVEN

18 He said, therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like, † and what can I compare it to? 19 It's like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the sky nested in its branches."

20 Again he said, "What can I compare the kingdom of God † to? 21 It's like leaven † † that a woman took and mixed into fifty pounds † of flour until all of it was leavened."

THE NARROW WAY

22 He went through one town and village after another, teaching and making his
way to Jerusalem. † 23 "Lord," someone asked him, "are only a few people
going to be saved? " †

He said to them, 24 "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, †
because I tell you, many will try to enter and won't be able 25 once the
homeowner gets up and shuts the door. † Then you will stand outside and knock
on the door, saying, 'Lord, open up for us! ' He will answer you, 'I don't know
you or where you're from.' 26 Then you will say, 'We ate and drank in your
presence, and you taught in our streets.' 27 But he will say, 'I tell you, I don't
know you or where you're from. Get away from me, † all you evildoers! '
28 There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth † in that place, † when you see
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, † but
yourselves thrown out. 29 They will come from east and west, from north and
south, to share the banquet † in the kingdom of God. 30 Note this: Some who
are last will be first, and some who are first will be last." †

JESUS AND HEROD ANTIPAS

31 At that time some Pharisees came and told him, "Go, get out of here. Herod †
wants to kill you." †

32 He said to them, "Go tell that fox, 'Look, I'm driving out demons and
performing healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will complete
my work.' † † 33 Yet it is necessary that I † travel today, tomorrow, and the
next day, because it is not possible for a prophet † to perish † outside of
Jerusalem.

JESUS'S LAMENTATION OVER JERUSALEM

34 "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, † who kills the prophets and stones † those who are
sent to her. † How often I wanted to gather your children † together, as a hen
gathers her chicks under her wings, † but you were not willing! † 35 See, your
house is abandoned to you. † I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes
when † you say, '**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**'! " † †

13:2 Other mss read *Jesus* **13:8** Or *Lord* **13:11** Lit *had a spirit of disability* **13:11** Or *straighten up completely* **13:12** Or *he summoned her* **13:16** Or *isn't it necessary that she be untied from this bondage* **13:21** Or *yeast* **13:21** Lit *three sata* ; about forty liters **13:29** Lit *recline at the table* **13:32** Lit *I will be finished* **13:35** Other mss omit *the time comes when*
13:1 Mt 21:18-19; Mk 11:12-14 **13:1** Jn 4:45 **13:1** Mt 27:2 **13:2** Jn 9:2 **13:4** Jn 9:7 **13:6** Lk 5:35; 12:16 **13:6** Mt 21:18-19; Mk 11:13 **13:7** Mt 7:19; Lk 3:9; Jn 15:2; Rm 11:22 **13:7** Is 5:2 **13:8** Lk 16:3 **13:10** Lk 4:31; 6:6 **13:11** Mt 8:17; Lk 4:33; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2,29; 9:39 **13:13** Mt 19:15; Mk 5:23; 6:2,5; 8:23; Lk 4:40 **13:13** Ac 15:16; Heb 12:12 **13:13** Jn 11:4 **13:14** Mt 20:24; 21:15; 26:8; Mk 10:14,41; 14:4 **13:14** Ex 20:9; Ezk 46:1 **13:15** Lk 6:42 **13:15** Lk 14:5,19; 1Co 9:9 **13:15** Lk 2:7,12,16 **13:15** Mt 12:11; Lk 14:5 **13:16** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **13:16** Mk 5:3; 15:1; 2Tm 2:9 **13:16** Gn 16:15; Jn 8:37; Heb 2:16 **13:17** Lk 21:5; 1Co 16:9; Php 1:28; 1Tm 5:14 **13:17** Ps 132:18; Is 45:16 LXX; 1Pt 3:16 **13:17** Is 12:5 **13:18-19** Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32 **13:20-21** Mt 13:33 **13:21** Mt 16:6,11-12; Mk 8:15; Lk 12:1; 1Co 5:6-8; Gl 5:9 **13:22** Lk 9:51 **13:23** Mt 22:14; Lk 18:26; Ac 2:21; Rm 9:27; Eph 2:8; 1Pt 3:20; Rv 3:4 **13:24** Mt 7:13-14 **13:25** Mt 7:22-23; 10:33; 25:12 **13:27** Ps 6:8; 2Tm 2:19; Heb 3:12 **13:28** Mt 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30 **13:28-29** Mt 8:11-12 **13:28** Mk 1:15; Lk 4:43 **13:30** Mt 19:30; 20:16; Mk 10:31 **13:31** Mt 14:1 **13:31** Mt 14:5; Mk 6:19; Jn 7:19-25; Ac 5:33 **13:32** Heb 2:10; 5:9; 7:28 **13:33** Ac 3:21; 17:3 **13:33** Mt 2:23; 21:11 **13:33** Mk 8:31 **13:34-35** Mt 23:37-39; Lk 19:41-44 **13:34** Heb 11:37 **13:34** 2Ch 24:20-22; Mt 21:35; Lk 20:15 **13:34** Ps 147:2; Is 62:1,4 **13:34** Dt 32:11; Ps 17:8; 36:7 **13:34** Jn 5:40 **13:35** Is 64:11; Jr 12:7; 22:1-8 **13:35** Ps 118:26; Mt 21:9; Lk 19:38; Jn 12:13 **13:35** Ps 118:26

13:1-5 Galileans had journeyed to the temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. For some unknown reason Pilate had them killed and later ordered their blood to be **mixed with their sacrifices.** Some Jews would have concluded that the Galileans suffered such a horrible fate because they were sinners under God's judgment. Jesus counters such thinking, declaring that the Galileans were not any worse than those listening to him. His listeners should therefore repent or face punishment themselves. Jesus illustrates the point with the **tower** that fell on eighteen people at Siloam (18:4-5). The pool of **Siloam** was a reservoir at the southern edge of Jerusalem. See "The Christian Worldview and the Overcoming of Evil," *p. 78.*

13:11,16 The woman's physical disability was tied to a Satanic **spirit.** The ancients believed that physical disability and sickness were linked in some way to Satan. But we should not conclude that every illness or sickness is due to demonic activity. See the note for 8:26-39.

13:32 The ancients viewed the **fox** in a variety of ways, so it is difficult to know the precise meaning intended by Jesus. Insignificance, ineptitude, cleverness, and deviousness were all concepts sometimes applied to a fox.

A SABBATH CONTROVERSY

14 One Sabbath, when he went in to eat † at the house of one of the leading Pharisees, † they were watching him closely. † 2 There in front of him was a man whose body was swollen with fluid. 3 In response, Jesus asked the law experts † and the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" † 4 But they kept silent. He took the man, healed him, and sent him away. 5 And to them, he said, "Which of you whose son or ox falls into a well, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" † 6 They could find no answer to these things.

TEACHINGS ON HUMILITY

7 He told a parable † to those who were invited, when he noticed how they would choose the best places † for themselves: 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, don't recline at the best place, because a more distinguished person † than you may have been invited by your host. 9 The one who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in humiliation, you will proceed to take the lowest place.

10 "But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when the one who invited you comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' You will then be honored † in the presence of all the other guests. † 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." †

12 He also said to the one who had invited him, "When you give a lunch or a dinner, don't invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors, because they might invite you back, and you would be repaid. 13 On the contrary, when you host a banquet, † invite those who are poor, maimed, lame, or blind. † 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid † at the resurrection of the righteous." †

THE PARABLE OF THE LARGE BANQUET

15 When † one of those who reclined at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! " †

16 Then he told him: "A man was giving a large banquet and invited many. 17 At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited, 'Come, because everything is now ready.'

18 "But without exception † they all began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. I ask you to excuse me.'

19 "Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm going to try them out. I ask you to excuse me.'

20 "And another said, 'I just got married, † and therefore I'm unable to come.'

21 “So the servant came back and reported these things to his master. Then in
anger, the master of the house told his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets
and alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.’ †
22 “ ‘Master,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, and there’s still
room.’
23 “Then the master told the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges and
make them come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, not one of
those people who were invited will enjoy my banquet.’ ”

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

25 Now † great crowds were traveling with him. So he turned and said to them:
26 “If anyone comes to me † and does not hate † his own father and mother,
wife and children, brothers and sisters — yes, and even his own life — he cannot
be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross † and come after me
cannot be my disciple.
28 “For which of you, wanting to build a tower, doesn’t first sit down and
calculate the cost † to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, after
he has laid the foundation and cannot finish it, all the onlookers will begin to
ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man started to build and wasn’t able to finish.’
31 “Or what king, going to war against another king, will not first sit down and
decide if he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him
with twenty thousand? 32 If not, while the other is still far off, he sends a
delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 In the same way, therefore, every one
of you who does not renounce † all his possessions † cannot be my disciple.
34 “Now, † salt † is good, but if salt should lose its taste, how will it be made
salty? 35 It isn’t fit for the soil or for the manure pile; they throw it out. Let
anyone who has ears to hear listen.” †

14:1 Lit *eat bread* **14:18** Lit *“And from one* (voice) **14:33** Or *leave*
14:1 Lk 7:36; 11:37 **14:1** Mk 3:2; Lk 6:7; 20:20 **14:3** Lk 7:30; 14:30 **14:3** Mt 12:2; Mk 3:4; Lk 6:2,9; 13:14; Jn 5:10 **14:5** Ex 21:33; Dt 22:4; Mt 12:11; Lk 13:15 **14:7** Lk 5:36; 13:6 **14:7** Lk 11:43 **14:8** Lk 7:2; Php 2:29; 1Pt 2:4 **14:10** Jn 5:44; 7:18; Rm 2:7 **14:10** Pr 25:6-7; 29:23 **14:11** Ezk 21:26; Mt 18:4; 23:12; Lk 1:51; 3:5; 18:14; Jms 4:10; 1Pt 5:5-6 **14:13** Lk 5:29 **14:13** Lv 22:22; Lk 14:21 **14:14** Rm 11:35; 12:19; 1Th 3:9; 2Th 1:6; Heb 10:30 **14:14** Ac 24:15 **14:15-24** Mt 22:1-14 **14:15** Lk 13:29; 22:16,30; Rv 19:9 **14:20** Dt 24:5 **14:21** Lk 14:13 **14:25-33** Mt 10:37-38 **14:26** Mt 11:28; Mk 10:14; Lk 6:47; Jn 5:40 **14:26** Dt 21:15; 22:13; 24:3; Lk 16:13 **14:27** Jn 19:17 **14:28** Pr 24:27 **14:33** Mt 19:21; Php 3:7; Heb 11:26 **14:34-35** Mt 5:13; Mk 9:49-50 **14:34** Jdg 9:45; Mk 9:50 **14:35** Mt 11:15; 13:9; Mk 4:9

14:16-17 When a person wanted to invite a guest to a formal **banquet** in Jesus's day, he contacted them twice. A host made initial contact far in advance to confirm his guest's attendance. Later, he contacted his guest to announce that the supper was at hand and that the guest should come immediately. The excuses of the invitees are less palatable in light of the fact that they had confirmed their reservation.

14:26 Jesus's reference to hating one's family members, even his own life, should be understood as hyperbole—a device sometimes employed by master teachers. His shocking statement emphasizes that love and devotion to him must be greater than love and devotion to all others.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SHEEP

15 All † the tax collectors † and sinners were approaching to listen to
him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes were complaining, "This man
welcomes sinners † and eats with them."
3 So he told them this parable: † 4 "What man among you, who has a hundred
sheep and loses one of them, † does not leave the ninety-nine in the open
field † and go after the lost one until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he
joyfully puts it on his shoulders, 6 and coming home, he calls his friends and
neighbors together, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, because I have found my
lost sheep! ' 7 I tell you, in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven †
over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who don't
need repentance.

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST COIN

8 "Or what woman who has ten silver coins, † † if she loses one coin, does not
light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 When
she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with
me, because I have found the silver coin I lost! ' 10 I tell you, in the same way,
there is joy in the presence of God's angels † over one sinner who repents."

THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

11 He also said: "A man had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father,
'Father, give me the share of the estate I have coming to me.' So he distributed
the assets † to them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered together
all he had and traveled to a distant country, where he squandered † his estate in
foolish living. † 14 After he had spent everything, a severe famine struck that
country, and he had nothing. † 15 Then he went to work for one of the citizens

of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. † 16 He longed to eat
his fill from † the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one would give him
anything. 17 When he came to his senses, † he said, ‘How many of my father’s
hired workers have more than enough food, and here I am dying of hunger! †
18 I’ll get up, go to my father, and say to him, “Father, I have sinned † against
heaven † and in your sight. 19 I’m no longer worthy † to be called your son.
Make me like one of your hired workers.” ’ 20 So he got up and went to his
father. But while the son was still a long way off, his father saw him and was
filled with compassion. † He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed †
him. 21 The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your
sight. I’m no longer worthy to be called your son.’
22 “But the father told his servants, ‘Quick! Bring out the best robe † and put it
on him; put a ring † on his finger and sandals † on his feet. 23 Then bring the
fattened calf † and slaughter it, and let’s celebrate with a feast, 24 because this
son of mine was dead and is alive again; † he was lost and is found! ’ So they
began to celebrate.
25 “Now his older son was in the field; as he came near the house, he heard
music and dancing. 26 So he summoned one of the servants, questioning what
these things meant. 27 ‘Your brother is here,’ he told him, ‘and your father has
slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ †
28 “Then he became angry and didn’t want to go in. So his father came out and
pleaded with him. 29 But he replied to his father, ‘Look, I have been slaving
many years for you, and I have never disobeyed your orders, yet you never gave
me a goat so that I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of
yours came, who has devoured your assets † with prostitutes, † you slaughtered
the fattened calf for him.’
31 “ ‘Son,’ † he said to him, ‘you are always with me, † and everything I have
is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours
was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ ”

15:4 Or *the wilderness* **15:8** Gk *ten drachmas* **15:8** A Gk drachma was equivalent to a Roman denarius = one day’s wage **15:12** Or *life*, or *livelihood*, also in v. 30 **15:14** Lit *and he began to be in need* **15:16** Other mss read *to fill his stomach with* **15:17** Lit *to himself* **15:17** Or *dying in the famine* ; v. 14 **15:27** Lit *him back healthy* **15:30** Or *life*, or *livelihood* **15:31** Lit *Child*

15:1-7 Mt 18:12-14 **15:1** Mt 11:19; Lk 5:29 **15:2** Lk 5:30; 7:39; Ac 11:3; Gl 2:12 **15:3** Mk 12:1 **15:4** Ps 119:176; Jr 50:6; Zch 11:16; Mt 10:6; 15:24 **15:7** Jr 51:48; Rv 18:20 **15:10** Lk 2:10 **15:13** Lk 16:1 **15:13** Rm 6:2; 8:12; Gl 2:14; Col 3:7 **15:15** Lv 11:7; Dt 14:8 **15:18** Ex 10:16 **15:18** Mt 21:25; Jn 3:27 **15:19** Lk 7:6-7 **15:20** Mt 9:36; Mk 1:41; Lk 7:13; 10:33 **15:20** Gn 29:13; 33:4; 45:15; 2Sm 14:33 **15:22** Zch 3:3-5 **15:22** Gn 41:42; Est 3:10; 8:2 **15:22** Ezk 16:10 **15:23** 1Sm 28:24 **15:24** Lk 15:32; Rm 11:15; 2Co 4:10; Col 2:13 **15:30** Pr 29:3 **15:31** Jn 8:35

15:3-32 This passage records three parables (The Lost Sheep, 15:3-7; The Lost Coin, 15:8-10; The Lost Son, 15:11-32) that Jesus uses to challenge the Pharisees' and scribes' complaint that he "welcomes sinners and eats with them" (v. 2). Like many ancient teachers, Jesus used parables to challenge and correct, especially the religious leaders (7:31-50; 10:25-37; 18:9-14). He also employed repetition to stress his point, as we see across the three parables here. The reaction of the older son to his father's celebration illustrates the behavior of the Pharisees and scribes.

15:10 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

15:12 An inheritance, the **assets** in view here, was not normally given until a father's death; to ask for it beforehand would constitute a grave insult: "I wish you were dead, but I can't wait until then!"

15:15 Jews regarded **pigs** unclean animals (Lv 11:7; Dt 14:8); to care for them would be deeply dishonorable.

15:20 Wealthy Middle Eastern men dressed in long, heavy robes did not run. Running was viewed as degrading. It would be necessary to gird the robes around one's waist like a diaper in order to run. Thus, for this father to race to his son indicates that he was willing to humiliate himself in order to greet and embrace his lost boy. Here Jesus demonstrates the extravagant love of God toward lost sinners who repent.

15:22 **The best robe**, **ring**, and **sandals** indicate full acceptance back into the family. Instead of being treated as a hired worker, the son is treated like a prince.

15:23 A **fattened calf** was kept for special occasions like wedding feasts. The use of such a calf here indicates a great celebration that perhaps includes the whole village.

15:25-28 For the **older son** to refuse to join in a banquet hosted by his father would have been viewed as a great public insult to the father. The son's confrontation with the father adds further disgrace, since his father's guests are still present.

THE PARABLE OF THE DISHONEST MANAGER

16 Now he said to the disciples: "There was a rich † man who received an
accusation that his manager † was squandering † his possessions. 2 So
he called the manager in and asked, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an
account of your management, † because you can no longer be my manager.'
3 "Then the manager said to himself, 'What will I do since my master is taking
the management away from me? I'm not strong enough to dig; I'm ashamed to
beg. 4 I know what I'll do so that when I'm removed from management, people
will welcome me into their homes.'
5 "So he summoned each one of his master's debtors. 'How much do you owe
my master? ' he asked the first one.

6 “ ‘A hundred measures of olive oil,’ he said.
“ ‘Take your invoice,’ he told him, ‘sit down quickly, and write fifty.’
7 “Next he asked another, ‘How much do you owe? ’
“ ‘A hundred measures of wheat,’ he said.
“ ‘Take your invoice,’ he told him, ‘and write eighty.’
8 “The master praised the unrighteous manager † because he had acted shrewdly. For the children of this age † are more shrewd than the children of light † in dealing with their own people. † 9 And I tell you, make friends † for yourselves by means of worldly wealth † † so that when it fails, † they may welcome you into eternal dwellings. 10 Whoever is faithful † in very little † is also faithful in much, and whoever is unrighteous in very little is also unrighteous in much. 11 So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will trust you with what is genuine? 12 And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to someone else, who will give you what is your own? 13 No † servant can serve two masters, since either he will hate † one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

KINGDOM VALUES

14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, † were listening to all these things and scoffing † at him. 15 And he told them, “You are the ones who justify † yourselves in the sight of others, but God knows your hearts. † For what is highly admired by people is revolting † in God’s sight.
16 “The † Law and the Prophets † were until John; since then, the good news of the kingdom of God † has been proclaimed, and everyone is urgently invited to enter it. † 17 But it is easier † for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter in the law to drop out.
18 “Everyone † who divorces † his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, † and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

19 “There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, † feasting
lavishly every day. 20 But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was
lying at his gate. † 21 He longed to be filled † with what fell from the rich
man’s table, † but instead the dogs † would come and lick his sores. 22 One day
the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side. † †
The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torment † in Hades, †
he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side.
24 ‘Father Abraham! ’ † he called out, ‘Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to
dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony †
in this flame! ’
25 “ ‘Son,’ † Abraham said, ‘remember that during your life you received your
good things, † just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted
here, † while you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed
between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you
cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’
27 “ ‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house —
28 because I have five brothers — to warn † them, so they won’t also come to
this place of torment.’
29 “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; † they should listen
to them.’
30 “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to them,
they will repent.’
31 “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not
be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ” †

16:8 Lit *own generation* **16:9** Lit *unrighteous money*, also in v. 11 **16:9** Other mss read *when you fail*, or *pass away* **16:16** Or *everyone is forcing his way into it* **16:22** Or *to Abraham’s bosom* ; lit *to the fold of Abraham’s robe* ; Jn 13:23 **16:25** Lit *Child*

16:1 Lk 16:19 **16:1** Lk 12:42 **16:1** Lk 15:13 **16:2** 1Tm 1:4 **16:8** Lk 18:6 **16:8** Mt 12:32; Lk 20:34 **16:8** Jn 12:46; Eph 5:8; 1Th 5:5 **16:9** Lk 11:41 **16:9** Mt 6:24; 1Tm 6:10 **16:10** Mt 25:21-23 **16:10** Lk 19:17 **16:13** Mt 6:24 **16:13** Lk 14:26 **16:14** 2Tm 3:2 **16:14** Lk 23:35 **16:15** Lk 10:29; 18:9 **16:15** 1Sm 16:7; Ps 17:3; Pr 21:2; Rm 8:27 **16:15** Dt 24:4 **16:16-17** Mt 5:18; 11:12-13; 24:35; Mk 13:31 **16:16** Mt 7:12; 22:40; Ac 13:15; Rm 3:21 **16:16** Mt 4:23 **16:17** Mt 5:18 **16:18** Mt 5:32; 19:9; Mk 10:11-12 **16:18** Mt 1:19; 19:9 **16:18** Ex 20:14; Lv 20:10; Pr 6:32; 2Pt 2:14 **16:19** Ex 28:6; 35:35; Est 8:15; Pr 31:22; Ezk 27:16; Rv 18:16 **16:20** Ac 3:2 **16:21** Lk 15:16 **16:21** Mt 15:27 **16:21** 1Kg 21:19 **16:22** Jn 13:23 **16:23** Is 50:11 **16:23** Mt 11:23 **16:24** Lk 3:8; 16:30; 19:9; Jn 8:33,39,53 **16:24** Is 66:24; Mt 25:41 **16:25** Lk 6:24 **16:25** Mt 11:28 **16:28** Ac 2:40; 8:25 **16:29** Lk 24:27,44; Jn 1:45; Ac 26:22; 28:23 **16:31** Mt 28:11-15; Jn 12:10-11

16:1-8 The **unrighteous manager** serves as a model for Jesus's listeners. Just as the clever **manager** made preparations in light of his impending crisis (unemployment and possible starvation), so should Jesus's listeners make preparations in light of the impending crisis of God's future judgment. Jesus did not commend every action performed in his parables; the manager's dishonesty is not approved.

16:18 The OT allowed divorce (Dt 24:1-4), though the legitimate grounds for it were debated among rabbis. The school of Shamai only allowed a man to divorce his wife for adultery, while the school of Hillel viewed almost any flaw perceived in a wife as a legitimate reason for divorce. Jesus rejects a casual attitude toward the law; to marry someone else when one's first spouse still lives constitutes adultery.

16:19-31 See "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

16:21 The **dogs** mentioned here are likely street **dogs.** Jews did not keep **dogs** as pets; rather, they regarded them as nasty, unclean animals. They were usually scavengers that harbored various diseases. The parable thus portrays Lazarus in a degraded, humiliating state.

WARNINGS FROM JESUS

17 He † said to his disciples, "Offenses will certainly come, † but woe †
to the one through whom they come! † 2 It would be better for him if a
millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for
him to cause one of these little ones to stumble. † 3 Be † on your guard. If your
brother sins, † rebuke † him, and if he repents, forgive † him. 4 And if he sins
against you seven times in a day, and comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I
repent,' you must forgive him."

FAITH AND DUTY

5 The † apostles † said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." †
6 "If you have faith the size of † a mustard seed," † the Lord said, "you can say
to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.
7 "Which one of you having a servant tending sheep or plowing will say to him
when he comes in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 Instead,
will he not tell him, 'Prepare something for me to eat, get ready, and serve me
while I eat and drink; later you can eat and drink'? † 9 Does he thank that
servant because he did what was commanded? † 10 In the same way, when you
have done all that you were commanded, you should say, 'We are worthless †
servants; we've only done our duty.' "

TEN MEN HEALED

11 While traveling to Jerusalem, † he passed between † Samaria and Galilee. †
12 As he entered a village, ten men with leprosy † † met him. They stood at a
distance 13 and raised their voices, saying, “Jesus, Master, † have mercy on
us! ”
14 When he saw them, he told them, “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” †
And while they were going, they were cleansed.
15 But one of them, seeing that he was healed, returned and, with a loud voice,
gave glory to God. † 16 He fell facedown † at his feet, thanking him. And he
was a Samaritan. †
17 Then Jesus said, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? 18 Didn’t any
return to give glory to God except this foreigner? ” 19 And he told him, “Get up
and go on your way. Your faith has saved you.” † †

THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

20 Being † asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, † he
answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming with something observable;
21 no one will say, † ‘See here! ’ or ‘There! ’ For you see, the kingdom of God
is in your midst.” †
22 Then he told the disciples: “The days are coming † when you will long to see
one of the days of the Son of Man, but you won’t see it. † 23 They will say to
you, † ‘See there! ’ or ‘See here! ’ Don’t follow or run after them. † 24 For as
the lightning flashes from horizon to horizon and lights up the sky, so the Son of
Man will be in his day. † 25 But first it is necessary that he suffer many things
and be rejected by this generation. †
26 “Just as it was in the days of Noah, † so it will be in the days of the Son of
Man: 27 People went on eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage †
until the day Noah boarded the ark, † and the flood came and destroyed them
all. 28 It will be the same as it was in the days of Lot: † People went on eating,
drinking, buying, selling, planting, building. 29 But on the day Lot left Sodom,
fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed † them all. 30 It † will be like
that on the day the Son of Man is revealed. † 31 On that day, a man on the

housetop, whose belongings are in the house, must not come down to get them. Likewise the man who is in the field must not turn back. 32 Remember Lot's wife! † 33 Whoever tries to make his life secure † † will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. † 34 I tell you, on that night † two will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." †

37 "Where, Lord?" † they asked him.

He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there also the vultures † will be gathered."

17:1 Lit *"It is impossible for offenses not to come* **17:3** Other mss add *against you* **17:6** Lit *faith like* **17:9** Other mss add *I don't think so* **17:11** Other mss read *through the middle of* **17:12** Gk *lepros* ; a term for various skin diseases; see Lv 13–14 **17:19** Or *faith has made you well* **17:21** Lit *they will not say* **17:21** Or *within you* **17:33** Other mss read *to save his life* **17:33** Or *tries to retain his life* **17:35** Some mss include v. 36: *"Two will be in a field: One will be taken, and the other will be left. "*

17:1-3 Mt 18:6-7; Mk 9:42; 1Co 11:19 **17:1** Lk 22:22 **17:1** Mt 13:41 **17:2** 1Co 8:9 **17:3-4** Mt 18:15,21-22 **17:3** Lv 19:17 **17:3** Mt 6:14 **17:5-6** Mt 17:19-20; Mk 9:28-29 **17:5** Lk 6:13 **17:5** Mk 9:24 **17:6** Mt 13:31; Mk 4:31; Lk 13:19 **17:8** Lk 12:35-37 **17:10** Jb 22:2-3; 35:7; Mt 25:30; Rm 11:35 **17:11** Lk 9:51 **17:11** Jn 4:3-4 **17:12** Lv 13:45-46 **17:13** Lk 5:5 **17:14** Lv 13:2–14:32; Mt 8:4; Lk 5:14 **17:15** Mt 9:8; Mk 2:12; Lk 2:14; 5:26; Jn 9:24; Ac 4:21; 12:23; Rm 4:20 **17:16** 1Sm 20:41; 2Sm 14:22; Mt 17:6; 1Co 14:25 **17:16** Mt 10:5; Jn 4:9 **17:19** Mt 9:22; Mk 10:52; Lk 5:20; 18:42 **17:20-21** Mt 24:23; Mk 13:21 **17:20** Lk 19:11; Ac 1:6 **17:22** Dt 32:35; Is 2:12; Jr 7:32; Am 4:2; Lk 5:35; 19:43; 21:6; 23:29 **17:22** Am 5:18 **17:23-24** Mt 24:23,27; Mk 13:21 **17:23** Lk 21:8 **17:24** 1Co 1:8 **17:25** Mt 16:21; Lk 9:22 **17:26-27** Mt 24:37-38 **17:27** Lk 20:34-35 **17:27** Gn 6:14 **17:28** Gn 19:1-26 **17:29** Gn 19:24-25 **17:30-35** Mt 24:17,39-41; Mk 13:15 **17:30** Mt 16:27; 24:44; 1Co 1:7; 2Th 1:7; 1Pt 1:7; 4:13 **17:32** Gn 19:26 **17:33** Mt 10:39; Jn 12:25 **17:34** Lk 1:78-79 **17:37** Lk 17:20 **17:37** Ezk 29:5; 32:4; 39:17-20

17:7-10 A servant, or bondservant or slave, was under the authority of his master and had specific duties. In that culture, masters felt no compulsion to commend a servant for fulfilling his duty. Jesus's disciples, likewise, should not expect special commendation simply for doing their duty.

17:14 The OT gave strict guidelines for the examination of leprosy (Lv 13–14). Priests were responsible for diagnosing it and also were to declare healed lepers clean.

THE PARABLE OF THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

18 Now he told them a parable on the need for them to pray † always and not give up. † 2 "There was a judge in a certain town who didn't fear God † or respect people. 3 And a widow † in that town kept coming to him, saying, 'Give me justice against my adversary.'

4 "For a while he was unwilling, but later he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or respect people, 5 yet because this widow keeps † pestering

me, † I will give her justice, so that she doesn't wear me out † by her persistent coming.' "

6 Then the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 Will not God grant justice † to his elect † who cry out to him day and night? † Will he delay † helping them? † 8 I tell you that he will swiftly grant them justice. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, † will he find faith on earth? "

THE PARABLE OF THE PHARISEE AND THE TAX COLLECTOR

9 He † also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves † that they were righteous † and looked down † on everyone else: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, † one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee was standing † and praying like this about himself: † 'God, I thank you that I'm not like other people — greedy, † unrighteous, † adulterers, † or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast † twice a week; I give a tenth † † of everything I get.'

13 "But the tax collector, standing far off, † would not even raise his eyes to heaven † but kept striking his chest † and saying, 'God, have mercy on me, † † a sinner! ' † 14 I tell you, this one went down to his house justified † rather than the other; because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." †

BLESSING THE CHILDREN

15 People † were bringing infants to him so he might touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 Jesus, however, invited them: "Let the little children come to me, † and don't stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 17 Truly I tell you, † whoever does not receive † the kingdom of God like a little child † will never enter it."

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

18 A † ruler † asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life? " †

19 "Why do you call me good? " Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: **Do not commit adultery; do not**

murder; do not steal; do not bear false witness; honor your father and mother.” † †

21 “I have kept all these from my youth,” he said.

22 When Jesus heard this, he told him, “You still lack one thing: Sell all you have and distribute it to the poor, † and you will have treasure in heaven. † Then come, follow me.” †

23 After he heard this, he became extremely sad, † because he was very rich.

POSSESSIONS AND THE KINGDOM

24 Seeing that he became sad, † Jesus said, “How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.”

26 Those who heard this asked, “Then who can be saved?” †

27 He replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” †

28 Then Peter said, “Look, we have left what we had and followed † you.”

29 So he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left a house, wife or brothers or sisters, parents or children because of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times more at this time, † and eternal life in the age to come.”

THE THIRD PREDICTION OF HIS DEATH

31 Then † he took the Twelve aside and told them, “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. † Everything that is written † through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. † 32 For he will be handed over to the Gentiles, † and he will be mocked, † insulted, spit † on; 33 and after they flog him, they will kill him, and he will rise on the third day.” †

34 They understood none of these things. † The meaning of the saying † † was hidden † from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

A BLIND MAN RECEIVES HIS SIGHT

35 As † he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging. 36 Hearing a crowd passing by, he inquired what was happening. 37 “Jesus of

Nazareth † is passing by," they told him.
38 So he called out, † "Jesus, Son of David, † have mercy † on me!" 39 Then those in front told him to keep quiet, † but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
40 Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to him. When he came closer, he asked him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?"
"Lord," he said, "I want to see."
42 "Receive your sight." † Jesus told him. "Your faith has saved you." †
43 Instantly he could see, and he began to follow him, glorifying God. † All the people, † when they saw it, gave praise to God.

18:5 Lit *widow causes me trouble* **18:5** Or *doesn't ruin my reputation* **18:7** Or *Will he put up with them?* **18:11** Or *by himself* **18:12** Or *give tithes* **18:13** Or *God, turn your wrath from me* **18:24** Other mss omit *he became sad* **18:34** Lit *This saying* **18:39** Or *those in front rebuked him*
18:1 Lk 11:5-13; 21:36; 1Th 5:17 **18:1** 2Co 4:1 **18:2** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Ac 10:2; Rv 14:7 **18:3** Lk 2:37; 4:26; 7:12; 21:2 **18:5** Lk 11:8 **18:7** Is 63:4; Rv 6:10 **18:7** Mt 24:22; Rm 8:33; 2Tm 2:10; Ti 1:1 **18:7** Ps 88:1 **18:7** 2Pt 3:9 **18:8** Dn 7:13; Lk 9:26; 12:40 **18:9-14** Mt 18:4; 23:12; Lk 14:11 **18:9** Mt 5:20; 2Co 1:9 **18:9** Lk 16:15 **18:9** Lk 23:11; Ac 4:11; Rm 14:3,10 **18:10** 1Kg 10:5; 2Kg 20:5,8; Ac 3:1 **18:11** Mt 6:5; Mk 11:25 **18:11** Mt 7:15; 1Co 5:10-11; 6:10 **18:11** Lk 16:10 **18:11** Ex 20:14; 1Co 6:9; Heb 13:4 **18:12** Lk 5:33-35; Ac 13:2-3 **18:12** Lk 11:42 **18:13** Lk 17:12 **18:13** Ezr 9:6 **18:13** Lk 23:48 **18:13** Heb 2:17 **18:13** 1Tm 1:15 **18:14** Lk 16:15; Php 3:8 **18:14** Is 2:11; Lk 1:52; 3:5; 14:11 **18:15-17** Mt 18:3; 19:13-15; Mk 10:13-16 **18:16** Lk 14:26 **18:17** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **18:17** Lk 8:13 **18:17** 1Co 14:20; 1Pt 2:2 **18:18-30** Mt 19:16-30; Mk 10:17-31; Lk 22:28-30 **18:18** Lk 8:41; 12:58 **18:18** Lk 10:25; Jn 3:15 **18:20** Ex 20:12-16; Dt 5:16-20 **18:20** Ex 20:12-16; Dt 5:16-20 **18:22** Lk 12:33; 19:8; Ac 2:45; 4:34 **18:22** Mt 6:19-20; Lk 5:11; 12:33 **18:22** Lk 5:27 **18:23** Mt 26:38; Mk 6:26; 14:34 **18:26** Lk 18:42; Eph 2:8 **18:27** Gn 18:14; Jb 42:2; Jr 32:17; Zch 8:6; Lk 1:37; Rm 4:21; 11:22 **18:28** Lk 5:11; Jn 8:12 **18:30** Jb 42:10; Mt 6:33; Lk 21:8 **18:31-34** Mt 20:17-19; Mk 10:32-34 **18:31** Lk 9:51 **18:31** Ps 22; Is 52:13–53:12; Mt 1:22; 26:24 **18:31** Lk 22:37; Jn 19:28 **18:32** Mt 27:2; Jn 18:30-31; Ac 3:13 **18:32** Mt 27:26-31 **18:32** Mt 26:67; Mk 14:65; 15:19 **18:33** Mt 16:21; Lk 9:22 **18:34** Mk 9:32; Lk 2:50; 9:45 **18:34** Lk 1:29 **18:34** Lk 24:16 **18:35-43** Mt 20:29-34; Mk 10:46-52 **18:37** Mt 2:23; Jn 18:5; 19:19; Ac 2:22 **18:38** Lk 18:7 **18:38** Mt 1:1; 9:27; Lk 1:32; Rm 1:3 **18:38** Lk 16:24 **18:42** Lk 7:22; Jn 9:11; Ac 9:12 **18:42** Mt 9:22; Lk 5:20; 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:26 **18:43** Lk 7:16; 13:13 **18:43** Lk 2:10

18:1 See "Prayer and Recovery from Illness," *p. 1551*.

18:3 Widows were very vulnerable members of a society. God expresses his concern for them throughout the Bible, which warns of his vengeance toward those who withhold justice from a **widow** (e.g., Dt 24:17; 27:19).

18:10 Tax collectors were despised for their complicity with the Roman oppressors of Israel as well as for their unashamed embezzlement and greed. Jews thought a house became unclean when a tax collector entered. The presence of a tax collector in the temple was seen as despicable.

18:13 Striking one's **chest** was an act of extreme grief, normally practiced by women in mourning. This male tax collector's actions indicate heartfelt repentance.

JESUS VISITS ZACCHAEUS

JESUS VISITS ZACCHAEUS

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 There was a man named
Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 He was
trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he
was a short man. 4 So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see
Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. 5 When Jesus came to the place, he
looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is
necessary for me to stay at your house."
6 So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. 7 All who saw it began
to complain, † "He's gone to stay with a sinful man."
8 But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my
possessions to the poor, † Lord. And if I have extorted † anything from anyone,
I'll pay back four times as much." †
9 "Today salvation † has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is
a son of Abraham. † 10 For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the
lost." †

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN MINAS

11 As † they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable because he was
near Jerusalem, † and they thought the kingdom of God was going to appear
right away. †
12 Therefore he said: "A nobleman traveled to a far country to receive for
himself authority to be king † and then to return. 13 He called ten of his
servants, gave them ten minas, † and told them, 'Engage in business until I
come back.'
14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We don't
want this man to rule over us.'
15 "At his return, having received the authority to be king, he summoned those
servants he had given the money to, so that he could find out how much they had
made in business. 16 The first came forward and said, 'Master, your mina has
earned ten more minas.'
17 " 'Well done, good † servant!' he told him. 'Because you have been
faithful † in a very small matter, have authority over ten towns.'

18 “The second came and said, ‘Master, your mina has made five minas.’
19 “So he said to him, ‘You will be over five towns.’
20 “And another came and said, ‘Master, here is your mina. I have kept it safe in
a cloth 21 because I was afraid of you since you’re a harsh man: you collect what
you didn’t deposit and reap what you didn’t sow.’ †
22 “He told him, ‘I will condemn you by what you have said, you evil servant! If
you knew I was a harsh man, collecting what I didn’t deposit and reaping what I
didn’t sow, 23 why, then, didn’t you put my money in the bank? And when I
returned, I would have collected it with interest.’ 24 So he said to those standing
there, ‘Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.’
25 “But they said to him, ‘Master, he has ten minas.’
26 “ ‘I tell you, that to everyone who has, more will be given; and from the one
who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away. † 27 But bring
here these enemies of mine, † who did not want me to rule over them, and
slaughter † them in my presence.’ ”

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

28 When † he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. †
29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of
Olives, † he sent two of the disciples 30 and said, “Go into the village ahead of
you. As you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there, on which no one
has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. 31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying
it? ’ say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’ ”
32 So those who were sent left and found it just as he had told them. † 33 As
they were untying the young donkey, its owners said to them, “Why are you
untying the donkey? ”
34 “The Lord needs it,” they said. 35 Then † they brought it to Jesus, and after
throwing their clothes on the donkey, they helped Jesus get on it. † 36 As he
was going along, they were spreading their clothes on the road. † 37 Now he
came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of the
disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they
had seen:
38 **Blessed is the King † who comes in the name of the Lord.** † †

Peace in heaven
and glory † in the highest heaven! †
39 Some of the Pharisees from the crowd told him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.”
40 He answered, “I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out.” †

JESUS’S LOVE FOR JERUSALEM

41 As he approached and saw the city, he wept † for it, 42 saying, “If you knew † this day what would bring peace — but now it is hidden † from your eyes. 43 For the days will come on you † when your enemies will build a barricade around you, surround you, and hem you in on every side. † 44 They will crush you and your children among you to the ground, † and they will not leave one stone on another † in your midst, because you did not recognize the time when God visited you.” †

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

45 He † went into the temple and began to throw out those who were selling, †
46 and he said, “It is written, **my house will be a house of prayer,** † but you have made it **a den of thieves**! ” † †
47 Every day he was teaching † in the temple. The chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people were looking for a way to kill † him, 48 but they could not find a way to do it, because all the people † were captivated by what they heard.

19:12 Lit *to receive for himself a kingdom*, or *sovereignty*, also in v. 15 **19:13** = Gk coin worth a hundred drachmas or about a hundred days’ wages **19:17** Or *capable* **19:27** Or *execute* **19:45** Other mss add *and buying in it*

19:7 Lk 15:2 **19:8** Lk 18:22 **19:8** Lk 3:14 **19:8** Ex 22:1; 2Sm 12:6 **19:9** Lk 1:77 **19:9** Lk 3:8; 13:16; Gl 3:7,29 **19:10** Ezk 34:16; Mt 9:13; 10:6; 15:24; 18:12; Lk 15:4 **19:11-27** Mt 25:14-30; Mk 13:34 **19:11** Lk 9:51 **19:11** Lk 17:20; Ac 1:6 **19:17** Lk 16:10; 1Co 4:2 **19:21** 2Co 8:12 **19:26** Mt 13:12; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18 **19:27** Lk 19:14 **19:28-44** Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11 **19:28** Lk 9:51 **19:29** 2Sm 15:30; Zch 14:4; Lk 21:37; 22:39 **19:32** Lk 22:13 **19:35-38** Jn 12:12-15 **19:35** Zch 9:9 **19:36** 2Kg 9:13 **19:38** Mt 2:2; 25:34 **19:38** Ps 118:26 **19:38** Ps 118:26; Lk 13:35 **19:38** Lk 2:14 **19:38** Jb 16:19; Ps 148:1; Mt 21:9; Mk 11:10; Lk 2:14 **19:40** Hab 2:11 **19:41** Lk 13:34-35; Jn 11:35; Heb 5:7 **19:42** Lk 23:34 **19:42** Lk 8:9-10; 10:21 **19:43** Lk 17:22 **19:43** Is 29:3; Jr 6:6; Ezk 4:2; Lk 21:20 **19:44** Mt 24:2; Mk 13:2 **19:44** Lk 21:6 **19:44** Ex 3:16; Lk 1:68; 7:16; 1Pt 2:12 **19:45-48** Mt 21:12-19; Mk 11:12-19; Jn 2:13-17; 8:1-2; 11:45-53 **19:46** Is 56:7 **19:46**

Is 56:7; Jr 7:11 **19:46** Jr 7:11 **19:47** Mt 26:55; Lk 20:1 **19:47** Lk 6:11; 11:53-54; 20:19 **19:48** Lk 18:43; 20:6

19:2 Zacchaeus was a **chief tax collector**, an official who oversaw collectors under his authority. The position could be financially lucrative as it included managing the sales and customs of subordinate tax collectors on such items as agriculture and crafts. Levi was probably a subordinate tax collector (5:27). Tax collectors were generally despised by Jews.

19:13 In the first century, a Greek **mina** was equivalent to three to four months' wages.

19:30 The use of a **donkey** recalls Zechariah 9:9: "Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

19:35-38 Riding a **donkey** into Jerusalem reveals Jesus's messiahship. The **spreading** of **clothes** on the road indicates homage to a person of high rank, and the citation of Psalm 118:26, "**Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord**," indicates that the crowd recognizes Jesus as the Messiah.

THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS CHALLENGED

20 One † day as he was teaching † the people in the temple and
proclaiming the good news, † the chief priests and the scribes, with the
elders, † 2 came and said to him: "Tell us, by what authority are you doing
these things? Who is it who gave you this authority?"
3 He answered them, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me, 4 was the baptism
of John from heaven or of human origin?"
5 They discussed it among themselves: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say,
'Why didn't you believe him?' 6 But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the
people † will stone us, because they are convinced that John was a prophet." †
7 So they answered that they did not know its origin.
8 And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these
things."

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD OWNER

9 Now † he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, †
leased it to tenant farmers, and went away for a long time. 10 At harvest time he
sent a servant to the farmers so that they might give him some fruit from the
vineyard. But the farmers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 He sent
yet another servant, but they beat that one too, treated him shamefully, and sent
him away empty-handed. 12 And he sent yet a third, but they wounded this one
too and threw him out.

13 “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What should I do? I will send my beloved † son. Perhaps † they will respect him.’
14 “But when the tenant farmers saw him, they discussed it among themselves and said, ‘This is the heir. Let’s kill him, so that the inheritance will be ours.’ †
15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.
“What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and kill † those farmers and give the vineyard to others.”
But when they heard this they said, “That must never happen! ” †
17 But he looked at them and said, “Then what is the meaning of this Scripture: † †
The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone? † †
18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him.” †
19 Then the scribes and the chief priests † looked for a way to get their hands on him † that very hour, because they knew he had told this parable against them, but they feared the people. †

GOD AND CAESAR

20 They † watched closely † and sent spies † who pretended to be righteous, † so that they could catch him in what he said, † to hand him † over to the governor’s † rule and authority. 21 They questioned him, “Teacher, we know that you speak and teach correctly, † and you don’t show partiality † † but teach truthfully the way of God. † 22 Is it lawful † for us to pay taxes † to Caesar † or not? ”
23 But detecting their craftiness, he said to them, † 24 “Show me a denarius. † Whose image and inscription does it have? ”
“Caesar’s,” they said.
25 “Well then,” he told them, “give to Caesar † the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

26 They were not able to catch him in what he said in public, and being amazed
at his answer, they became silent. †

THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

27 Some † of the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, † came up and
questioned him: 28 "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that **if a man's brother** has a
wife, and **dies childless, his brother should take the wife and produce
offspring for his brother.** † † 29 Now there were seven brothers. The first took
a wife and died without children. 30 Also the second † 31 and the third took her.
In the same way, all seven died and left no children. 32 Finally, the woman died
too. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For all
seven had married her."

34 Jesus told them, "The children of this age † marry and are given in
marriage. † 35 But those who are counted worthy † to take part in that age †
and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage.
36 For they can no longer die, † because they are like angels and are children of
God, † since they are children of the resurrection. 37 Moses even indicated in
the passage about the burning bush that the dead are raised, where he calls the
Lord **the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.** † †
38 He is not the God of the dead but of the living, because all are living to †
him." †

39 Some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." 40 And they
no longer dared to ask him anything.

THE QUESTION ABOUT THE CHRIST

41 Then † he said to them, "How can they say that the Christ is the son of
David? † 42 For David himself says in the Book of Psalms: †
The Lord declared to my Lord,
'Sit at my right hand
43 **until I make your enemies your footstool.'** † †
44 David calls him 'Lord'; how then can the Christ be his son? " †

WARNING AGAINST THE SCRIBES

45 While † all the people were listening, he said to his disciples, 46 "Beware †
of the scribes, who want to go around in long robes and who love greetings in
the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the places of honor at
banquets. † 47 They devour widows' houses and say long prayers just for show.
These will receive harsher judgment." †

20:13 Other mss add *when they see him* **20:17** Lit *"What then is this that is written* **20:20** Or *upright* **20:21** Lit *you don't receive a face* **20:23** Other mss add *"Why are you testing me?* **20:24** A denarius = one day's wage **20:30** Other mss add *took her as wife, and he died without children* **20:38** Or *with* **20:47** Or *judgment* **20:1-8** Mt 21:23-27; Mk 11:27-33 **20:1** Lk 19:47 **20:1** Lk 4:18; 8:1 **20:1** Lk 9:22; 22:66 **20:6** Lk 19:48 **20:6** Mt 11:9; Lk 7:29-30 **20:9-19** Mt 21:33-46; Mk 12:1-12 **20:9** Is 5:1-7 **20:13** Mt 17:5; Lk 3:22 **20:14** Lk 16:16 **20:16** Lk 19:27 **20:16** Rm 3:4; 1Co 6:15; Gl 2:17 **20:17** Lk 4:17; 18:31; 21:22,37; 24:44 **20:17** Ps 118:22; Ac 4:11; Eph 2:20; 1Pt 2:4-7 **20:17** Ps 118:22 **20:18** Is 8:14-15; Dn 2:34-35,44-45; Rm 9:32-33; 1Pt 2:8 **20:19** Mt 2:4; 20:18; 21:15; Lk 22:2; 23:10 **20:19** Lk 19:47; 21:12 **20:19** Lk 22:2 **20:20-26** Mt 20:15-22; Mk 12:13-17 **20:20** Lk 6:7; 14:1 **20:20** Mt 22:15-16 **20:20** Lk 11:54 **20:20** Lk 24:20; Ac 3:13; Rm 8:32 **20:20** Mt 27:2; Lk 21:12 **20:21** Jn 3:2 **20:21** Dt 1:17; 10:17; Mal 2:9; Mt 22:16 **20:21** Ac 13:10; 18:25-26 **20:22** Lk 6:9; 14:3 **20:22** Mt 17:25; Lk 23:2; Rm 13:6-7 **20:22** Lk 2:1; 3:1; 20:24-25; 23:2 **20:25** Mt 22:21 **20:26** Lk 9:36; 14:4 **20:27-40** Mt 22:23-33,46; Mk 12:18-27,34 **20:27** Ac 23:6 **20:28** Dt 25:5 **20:28** Dt 25:5 **20:34** Lk 16:8 **20:34** Lk 17:27 **20:35** Ac 5:41; 2Th 1:5 **20:35** Mk 10:30 **20:36** 1Co 15:54-55; Rv 21:4 **20:36** Ps 82:6; Mt 5:45; Rm 8:14,19; Gl 3:26 **20:37** Ex 3:6,15 **20:37** Ex 3:6,15-16; 4:5; Mt 1:2; Ac 3:13; 7:30-32 **20:38** Rm 6:10-11; 14:7-8; 2Co 5:14-15; Gl 2:19-20; 1Th 4:14; 5:10 **20:41-44** Mt 22:41-46; Mk 12:34-37 **20:41** Mt 1:1,17; Lk 1:27; Rm 1:3; Eph 5:2 **20:42** Lk 24:44; Ac 1:20 **20:42-43** Ps 110:1 **20:42-43** Ps 110:1; Ac 2:34-35; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13; 10:13 **20:44** Rm 1:3-4 **20:45-47** Mt 23:1-36; Mk 12:37-40 **20:46** Mt 16:6 **20:46** Lk 11:43

20:20-22 Spies seek to trap Jesus with the question, **Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?** Jews in Judea had been required to pay a poll tax since AD 6 when the Romans designated Judea a province under direct Roman rule. The tax was exceedingly unpopular among the Judeans. As a Galilean, Jesus was probably not required to pay it, for Galilee was not under direct Roman rule. He thus approaches the question as an outsider. Answering "no" could lead to his being labeled a revolutionary. Answering "yes" could lead to the accusation that he supports a pagan government that oppresses the Jews.

20:27-40 While the Sadducees viewed all of the OT as God's Word, they regarded only the Pentateuch as providing authoritative doctrine. Their reading of the Pentateuch did not acknowledge any reference to resurrection, hence their disbelief in it. Jesus's response to their question critiques their reading of the Pentateuch.

20:36 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

THE WIDOW'S GIFT

21 He † looked up and saw the rich dropping their offerings into the
temple treasury. † 2 He also saw a poor widow dropping in two tiny
coins. † † 3 "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than
all of them. † 4 For all these people have put in gifts out of their surplus, but she
out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on."

DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE PREDICTED

5 As † some were talking about the temple, how it was adorned with beautiful
stones and gifts dedicated to God, he said, 6 "These things that you see — the
days will come † when not one stone will be left on another that will not be
thrown down." †

SIGNS OF THE END OF THE AGE

7 "Teacher," they asked him, "so when will these things happen? And what will
be the sign when these things are about to take place?" †

8 Then he said, "Watch out that you are not deceived. † For many will come in
my name, † saying, 'I am he,' † and, 'The time is near.' Don't follow them. †
9 When you hear of wars and rebellions, † don't be alarmed. Indeed, it is
necessary that these things take place first, but the end won't come right away."
10 Then he told them: "Nation will be raised up against nation, and kingdom
against kingdom. † 11 There will be violent earthquakes, † and famines and
plagues † in various places, and there will be terrifying sights and great signs
from heaven. † 12 But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you †
and persecute † you. They will hand you over to the synagogues † and
prisons, † and you will be brought before kings and governors † because of my
name. 13 This will give you an opportunity to bear witness. † 14 Therefore
make up your minds † not to prepare your defense ahead of time, † 15 for I will
give you such words † and a wisdom † that none of your adversaries will be
able to resist or contradict. † 16 You will even be betrayed by parents, brothers,
relatives, and friends. † They will kill some of you. 17 You will be hated by
everyone because of my name, † 18 but not a hair of your head will be lost. †
19 By your endurance, gain † your lives. †

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

20 "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, † then recognize that its
desolation † has come near. 21 Then those in Judea must flee † to the
mountains. † Those inside the city must leave it, and those who are in the

country must not enter it, 22 because these are days of vengeance † to fulfill all the things that are written. 23 Woe to pregnant women and nursing mothers in those days, † for there will be great distress in the land † and wrath against this people. 24 They will be killed by the sword † † and be led captive into all the nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles † † until the times of the Gentiles † are fulfilled.

THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN

25 "Then there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars; † and there will be anguish on the earth among nations bewildered by the roaring of the sea and the waves. † 26 People will faint from fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the world, because the powers of the heavens will be shaken. † 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud † with power and great glory. † 28 But when these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is near." †

THE PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 As soon as they put out leaves you can see for yourselves and recognize that summer is already near. 31 In the same way, when you see these things happening, recognize † that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all things take place. † 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, † but my words will never pass away. †

THE NEED FOR WATCHFULNESS

34 "Be on your guard, † so that your minds are not dulled † from carousing, † drunkenness, † and worries of life, † or that day will come on you unexpectedly † 35 like a trap. For it will come on all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 But be alert at all times, † praying that you may have strength † to escape † all these things that are going to take place and to stand before the Son of Man."

37 During † the day, he was teaching in the temple, † but in the evening he would go out and spend the night on what is called the Mount of Olives. †
38 Then all the people would come early in the morning to hear him in the temple. †

21:2 Lit *two lepta* ; the *lepton* was the smallest and least valuable Gk coin in use. **21:9** Or *insurrections*, or *revolutions*, or *chaos* **21:14** Lit *Therefore place* (determine) *in your hearts* **21:19** Other mss read *endurance, you will gain* **21:23** Or *the earth* **21:24** Lit *will fall by the edge of the sword* **21:24** Or *nations* **21:31** Or *you know* **21:34** Lit *your hearts are not weighed down* **21:34** Or *hangovers* **21:36** Other mss read *you may be counted worthy*
21:1-4 Mk 12:41-44 **21:1** 2Kg 12:9; Mt 27:6; Jn 8:20 **21:2** Lk 12:59 **21:3** 2Co 8:2,12 **21:5-38** Mt 24:1-51; Mk 13:1-37 **21:6** Lk 17:22 **21:6** Lk 19:44 **21:7** Ac 1:6-7 **21:8** Jr 29:8; Eph 5:6; 2Th 2:3 **21:8** Jr 14:14; 1Jn 2:18 **21:8** Jn 8:24 **21:8** Lk 17:23 **21:10** 2Ch 15:6; Is 19:2 **21:11** Is 29:6; Zch 14:5; Rv 6:12 **21:11** Rv 6:8 **21:11** Lk 11:16; 12:33 **21:12-17** Mt 10:19-22; Mk 13:11-13 **21:12** Ps 119:84 **21:12** Ac 22:19; 26:11 **21:12** Ac 4:3; 5:18; 8:3; 12:4; 16:23 **21:12** Ac 17:6; 18:12; 24:1,27; 25:6; 27:24; 2Co 11:23 **21:13** Php 1:12-19 **21:14** Lk 12:11 **21:15** Ex 4:12 **21:15** Ac 6:10 **21:15** Ac 4:14 **21:16** Mt 10:35; Lk 12:53 **21:17** Lk 6:22; Jn 15:18-19 **21:18** 1Sm 14:45; Mt 10:30; Lk 12:7; Jn 10:28 **21:19** Mt 10:22; 24:13; Rm 2:7; 5:3; Heb 10:36; Jms 1:3 **21:20** Lk 19:43 **21:20** Dn 9:27 **21:21** Lk 17:31 **21:21** Mt 4:8 **21:22** Is 34:8; 63:4; Dn 9:24-27; Hs 9:7; Lk 18:7-8 **21:23** Lk 23:29 **21:24** Heb 11:34 **21:24** Ps 79:1; Is 63:18; Dn 8:13; Rv 11:2 **21:24** Dn 12:7; Rm 11:25 **21:25** Is 13:10; 24:23; Ezk 32:7; Jl 2:10; 3:15; Ac 2:20; Rv 6:12-13 **21:25** Ps 46:2-3; 65:7; Is 17:12; Jl 2:30-31 **21:26** Is 34:4; Hg 2:6 **21:27** Dn 7:13; Rv 1:7 **21:27** Mt 16:27; 26:64; Mk 9:1 **21:28** Lk 2:38; 24:21; Rm 8:23; 13:11 **21:32** Lk 9:27 **21:33** Ps 102:26; Is 51:6; 2Pt 3:10 **21:33** Ps 119:89; Is 40:8; Mt 5:18; Lk 16:17; 1Pt 1:23,25 **21:34** Lk 17:3 **21:34** Rm 13:13 **21:34** Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19; 1Th 5:6-7; 1Pt 4:7 **21:34** Lk 12:40; 1Th 5:3 **21:36** Mt 25:13; 26:41; Mk 14:34-38; Lk 12:37; Ac 20:31; 1Co 16:13; Eph 6:18; 1Th 5:6; 1Pt 5:8 **21:36** Rm 2:3; 1Th 5:3; Heb 2:3 **21:37-38** Jn 8:1-2 **21:37** Mt 26:55 **21:37** Mt 21:1; Lk 22:39; Jn 8:1; 18:2 **21:38** Jn 8:2

21:1-2 The Jerusalem **temple** contained thirteen horn-shaped receptacles into which worshipers could toss money. Offerings were used for the maintenance of temple worship and supporting the poor. The **widow** tosses two tiny coins (Gk *lepta*) into the receptacle. *Lepta* were made of copper and were the smallest coins in circulation in Palestine. One *lepton* was equivalent to one-hundredth of a denarius (or perhaps less).

21:5 The **temple** in Jerusalem was the symbol of religious and national unity. Around 20 BC Herod the Great decided to raze and enlarge the temple—by far his most lavish building project. When completed, the structure occupied one-sixth of Jerusalem and stood sixteen to twenty stories high. While much of the work was finished about a decade after building began (10 BC), the temple's ornamentation was not completed until AD 63 (see Jn 2:20). Herod's temple was regarded as one of the eight wonders of the ancient world; it was a tremendous source of pride for the Jewish people. The Roman military commander Titus (who later became emperor) destroyed the temple in AD 70.

21:9-11 Within Judaism **wars and rebellions** and natural disasters such as **earthquakes, and famines and plagues** were often associated with God's judgment. The apocalyptic literature of Judaism drew on such imagery (e.g., 2 Esdras). Jesus warns not to take such signs as indicating **the end**; they are typical of history in this fallen world.

21:20 Jewish historian Josephus recorded the AD 70 Roman siege of Jerusalem in detail (*Jewish War*, books 5–6).

21:25 Cosmic signs are often found in Jewish apocalyptic and prophetic literature and are associated with the judgment of God (Is 13:9-10; 34:4).

21:27 The Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory is an image from Daniel 7:13-14. In that passage, "one like a son of man" comes on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of Days and is given authority, glory, and an eternal kingdom, receiving worship from people of every nation and language.

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

22 The † Festival of Unleavened Bread, † which is called Passover, † was approaching. 2 The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put him to death, † because they were afraid of the people. †

3 Then † Satan entered Judas, † called Iscariot, † who was numbered among the Twelve. 4 He went away and discussed with the chief priests and temple police † how he could hand him over † to them. 5 They were glad and agreed to give him silver. † 6 So he accepted the offer and started looking for a good opportunity to betray him to them when the crowd was not present.

PREPARATION FOR PASSOVER

7 Then † the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. † 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, † saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

9 "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him.

10 "Listen," he said to them, "when you've entered the city, a man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. 11 Tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?"' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished room upstairs. † Make the preparations there."

13 So they went and found it just as he had told them, † and they prepared the Passover.

THE FIRST LORD'S SUPPER

14 When † the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 Then he said to them, "I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again † until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." † 17 Then he took a cup, † and after giving thanks, † he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 And he took bread, gave thanks, broke it, gave it to them, and said, “This is
my body, † which is given for you. Do this in remembrance † of me.”
20 In the same way he also took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the
new covenant † in my blood, † which is poured out for you. † 21 But † look,
the hand of the one betraying me is at the table with me. † 22 For the Son of
Man will go away as it has been determined, † but woe to that man by whom he
is betrayed! ”

23 So they began to argue † among themselves which of them it could be who
was going to do it.

THE DISPUTE OVER GREATNESS

24 Then a dispute also arose among them about who should be considered the
greatest. † 25 But he said to them, † “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over
them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called †
‘Benefactors.’ 26 It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is
greatest among you should become like the youngest, † and whoever leads, like
the one serving. 27 For who is greater, the one at the table or the one serving?
Isn’t it the one at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. †
28 You are those who stood by me in my trials. † 29 I bestow on you a
kingdom, † just as my Father bestowed one on me, 30 so that you may eat and
drink at my table in my kingdom. † And you will sit on thrones judging the
twelve tribes of Israel. †

PETER’S DENIAL PREDICTED

31 “Simon, Simon, † look out. Satan † has asked to sift you like wheat. †
32 But I have prayed † for you that your faith may not fail. And you, when you
have turned back, strengthen † your brothers.”

33 “Lord,” † he told him, “I’m ready to go with you both to prison and to
death.”

34 “I tell you, Peter,” he said, “the rooster will not crow today until † you deny
three times that you know me.”

BE READY FOR TROUBLE

35 He also said to them, “When I sent you out † without money-bag, traveling
bag, or sandals, did you lack anything? ”
“Not a thing,” they said.
36 Then he said to them, “But now, whoever has a money-bag should take it, and
also a traveling bag. And whoever doesn’t have a sword should sell his robe and
buy one. 37 For I tell you, what is written must be fulfilled in me: † **And he was
counted among the lawless.** † † Yes, what is written about me is coming to its
fulfillment.” †
38 “Lord,” they said, “look, here are two swords.”
“That is enough! ” he told them.

THE PRAYER IN THE GARDEN

39 He went out and made his way † as usual † to the Mount of Olives, † and
the disciples followed him. 40 When he reached the place, † he told them, “Pray
that you may not fall into temptation.” † 41 Then he withdrew from them about
a stone’s throw, knelt down, and began to pray, † 42 “Father, if you are willing,
take this cup † away from me — nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”
43 Then an angel from heaven † appeared to him, strengthening him. 44 Being
in anguish, † he prayed more fervently, and his sweat became like drops of
blood falling to the ground. † 45 When he got up from prayer and came to the
disciples, he found them sleeping, exhausted from their grief. 46 “Why are you
sleeping? ” he asked them. “Get up and pray, so that you won’t fall into
temptation.”

JUDAS’S BETRAYAL OF JESUS

47 While † he was still speaking, suddenly a mob came, and one of the Twelve
named Judas was leading them. He came near Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus
said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss? ”
49 When those around him saw what was going to happen, they asked, “Lord,
should we strike with the sword? ” 50 Then one of them struck the high priest’s
servant and cut off his right ear.
51 But Jesus responded, “No more of this! ” And touching his ear, he healed
him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests, temple police, and the elders who

had come for him, “Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal? † 53 Every day while I was with you in the temple, † you never laid a hand on me. But this is your hour † — and the dominion of darkness.” †

PETER DENIES HIS LORD

54 They seized him, led him away, and brought him into the high priest’s house. Meanwhile Peter † was following at a distance. 55 They † lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard † and sat down together, and Peter sat among them. 56 When a servant saw him sitting in the light, and looked closely at him, she said, “This man was with him too.”

57 But he denied it: “Woman, I don’t know him.”

58 After a little while, someone else saw him and said, “You’re one of them too.”

“Man, I am not! ” Peter said.

59 About an hour later, another kept insisting, “This man was certainly with him, since he’s also a Galilean.”

60 But Peter said, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about! ” Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 Then the Lord turned and looked at Peter. † So Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.” †

62 And he went outside and wept bitterly.

JESUS MOCKED AND BEATEN

63 The men who were holding Jesus started mocking and beating him. †

64 After blindfolding him, they kept † asking, “Prophesy! Who was it that hit you? ” 65 And they were saying many other blasphemous † things to him.

JESUS FACES THE SANHEDRIN

66 When daylight came, † the elders † of the people, both the chief priests and the scribes, † convened and brought him before their Sanhedrin. † 67 They said, † “If you are the Messiah, tell us.”

But he said to them, “If I do tell you, you will not believe. 68 And if I ask you, you will not answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the

right hand of the power of God." †

70 They all asked, "Are you, then, the Son of God?" †

And he said to them, "You say that I am." †

71 "Why do we need any more testimony," they said, "since we've heard it ourselves from his mouth?"

22:5 Or *money* **22:16** Other mss omit *again* **22:19-20** Other mss omit *which is given for you* (v. 19) through the end of v. 20 **22:25** Or *them call themselves* **22:31** Other mss read *Then the Lord said, "Simon, Simon* **22:34** Other mss read *before* **22:37** Or *it is necessary that what is written be fulfilled in me* **22:43-44** Other mss omit vv. 43-44 **22:52** Lit *as against a thief*, or *a bandit* **22:64** Other mss add *striking him on the face and* **22:66** Or *council of elders*

22:1-2 Mt 26:1-5; Mk 14:1-2 **22:1** Ex 23:15 **22:1** Ex 12:11; Jn 6:4; 11:55; 13:1 **22:2** Mt 12:14; 21:46 **22:2** Lk 19:47-48; 20:19 **22:3-6** Mt 26:14-16; Mk 14:10-11 **22:3** Jn 13:2,27; Ac 5:3 **22:3** Lk 6:16 **22:4** Lk 22:52; Ac 4:1; 5:24,26; 16:20,22,35-36,38 **22:4** Mk 9:31 **22:7-13** Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16 **22:7** Ex 12:21; 1Co 5:7 **22:8** Ac 3:1; 8:14 **22:12** Ac 1:13 **22:13** Lk 19:32 **22:14** Mt 26:20; Mk 14:17 **22:16** Lk 14:15; Rv 19:9 **22:17-20** Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; 1Co 11:23-25 **22:17** Mt 14:19; 15:36 **22:19** Jn 6:51-53 **22:19** Heb 10:3 **22:20** Ex 24:8; Jr 31:31; Zch 9:11; 1Co 11:25; 2Co 3:6; Heb 7:22; 8:8,13; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20 **22:20** 1Co 10:16 **22:21-23** Mt 26:21-24; Mk 14:18-21; Jn 13:18-26 **22:21** Ps 41:9 **22:22** Ac 2:23; 10:42; 17:26,31 **22:23** Mt 21:25; Mk 9:10; Lk 24:15 **22:24** Mk 9:34; Lk 1:32 **22:25-27** Mt 20:25-28; Mk 10:42-45 **22:26** Lk 9:48; 1Pt 5:3 **22:27** Mt 20:28; Jn 13:1-17 **22:28** Heb 2:18; 4:15 **22:29** Mt 25:34; 2Tm 2:12 **22:30** Lk 22:16 **22:30** Mt 19:28 **22:31** Mt 4:10 **22:31** Am 9:9 **22:32** Jn 17:9-15; Rm 8:34 **22:32** Jn 21:15-17; 1Co 1:9; Php 1:6; 1Th 5:24; 2Tm 2:13 **22:33-34** Mt 26:33-35; Mk 14:29-31; Jn 13:37-38 **22:35** Mt 10:9-10; Mk 6:8; Lk 9:3; 10:4 **22:37** Is 53:12 **22:37** Is 53:12 **22:37** Jn 17:4; 19:30 **22:39** Mt 26:30; Mk 14:26; Lk 4:30; Jn 18:1 **22:39** Lk 21:37 **22:39** Mt 21:1 **22:40-46** Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42 **22:40** Mt 6:13; Lk 4:13; 11:4 **22:41** Lk 18:11 **22:42** Jn 18:11 **22:43** Mt 4:11; Heb 1:14 **22:44** Heb 5:7 **22:47-53** Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-50; Jn 18:3-12 **22:53** Lk 2:46; Jn 18:20 **22:53** Jn 12:27; 16:4 **22:53** Ac 26:18; Eph 6:12; Col 1:13 **22:54** Mt 26:58; Mk 14:54; Jn 18:15 **22:55-62** Mt 26:69-75; Mk 14:66-72; Jn 18:16-18,25-27 **22:55** Mt 26:3 **22:61** Mk 10:21 **22:61** Lk 22:31-34; Ac 3:13-14 **22:63-65** Mt 26:67-68; Mk 14:65; Jn 18:22-23 **22:65** Mk 3:29 **22:66** Mt 27:1; Mk 15:1; Jn 18:28 **22:66** Lk 9:22; 20:1 **22:66** Mk 13:9 **22:67-71** Mt 26:63-66; Mk 14:61-64; Jn 18:19-21 **22:69** Ps 110:1; Mk 16:19; Ac 7:56; Heb 1:3 **22:70** Mt 4:3; Lk 1:32,35 **22:70** Mt 26:64; 27:11; Lk 23:3

22:1,7,15 Passover was the feast in which Israel commemorated God's rescue of his people from the judgment of death (Ex 12:1-28) and slavery in Egypt (12:29-42). The **Passover lamb** was killed on the fourteenth day of Nisan. After sunset, which marked the beginning of the next day according to Jewish timekeeping, the Passover meal was eaten.

22:17 The Passover meal involved four cups of wine. One was used for the opening benediction, one after the explanation of the Passover, one following the meal of unleavened bread and lamb, and one at the end of the celebration. Luke refers to two cups (vv. 17,20), but it is unclear which two.

22:20 In the OT, covenants were sealed with a **blood** sacrifice (Gn 15:9-10; Ex 24:8). Jesus's death ushers in the **new covenant** foretold in Jr 31:31-34.

22:25-26 To teach the true meaning of greatness, Jesus points his disciples to the pagan practice of seeking to dominate others and to be recognized as esteemed **benefactors** who bestow gifts (e.g., food during famines, protection during wars). In fact, "benefactor" was a formal title sought by the ambitious. In contrast, Jesus's disciples are not to seek to rule others or to gain recognition for good deeds performed. They are to serve others in humility.

22:31 Sifting **like wheat** refers to a farmer's task of separating wheat from its stalk and chaff. The pronoun, **you,** is plural, indicating that Satan requested to "sift" all the apostles, testing them as Job was tested (Jb 1:12; 2:6).

22:42 To drink from a **cup** was a metaphor often used for undergoing a distressing event, often one connected to God's wrath. As Jesus anticipates the trauma of the cross, he prays that the cup of wrath might be taken from him, but only if the Father wills it.

22:53 See also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

JESUS FACES PILATE

23 Then † their whole assembly rose up and brought him before Pilate.
2 They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man misleading
our nation, opposing payment of taxes † to Caesar, and saying that he himself is
the Messiah, a king."
3 So Pilate asked him, † "Are you the king of the Jews? " †
He answered him, "You say so." †
4 Pilate then told the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no grounds † for
charging this man."
5 But they kept insisting, "He stirs up the people, † teaching throughout all
Judea, from Galilee † where he started even to here."

JESUS FACES HEROD ANTIPAS

6 When Pilate † heard this, † he asked if the man was a Galilean. 7 Finding that
he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, † who was also in
Jerusalem during those days. 8 Herod was very glad to see Jesus; for a long time
he had wanted to see him because he had heard about him and was hoping to see
some miracle † performed by him. 9 So he kept asking him questions, but Jesus
did not answer him. † 10 The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently
accusing him. 11 Then Herod, with his soldiers, treated him with contempt,
mocked † him, dressed him in bright clothing, † and sent him back to Pilate.
12 That very day Herod and Pilate became friends. † † Previously, they had
been enemies.

JESUS OR BARABBAS

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, † 14 and said to them, “You have brought me this man as one who misleads the people. † But in fact, after examining him in your presence, I have found no grounds † to charge this man with those things you accuse him of. 15 Neither has Herod, because he sent him back to us. Clearly, he has done nothing to deserve death. 16 Therefore, I will have him whipped † † and then release him.” †

18 Then † they all cried out together, “Take this man away! † Release Barabbas to us! ” 19 (He had been thrown into prison for a rebellion that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) 20 Wanting to release Jesus, † Pilate addressed them again, 21 but they kept shouting, “Crucify! Crucify him! ”

22 A third time he said to them, “Why? What has this man done wrong? † I have found in him no grounds † for the death penalty. Therefore, I will have him whipped and then release him.”

23 But they kept up the pressure, demanding with loud voices that he be crucified, and their voices † won out. 24 So † Pilate decided to grant their demand † 25 and released the one they were asking for, who had been thrown into prison for rebellion and murder. But he handed Jesus over to their will. †

THE WAY TO THE CROSS

26 As † they led him away, they seized Simon, a Cyrenian, † who was coming in from the country, and laid the cross † on him to carry behind Jesus. 27 A large crowd of people followed him, including women who were mourning and lamenting him. † 28 But turning to them, Jesus said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, † do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and your children. 29 Look, the days are coming † when they will say, ‘Blessed are the women without children, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed! ’ † 30 Then they will begin **to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us! ’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us! ’** † † 31 For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry? ” †

CRUCIFIED BETWEEN TWO CRIMINALS

32 Two others — criminals † — were also led away to be executed with him.
33 When † they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him there,
along with the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. 34 Then Jesus said,
"Father, † forgive † them, because they do not know what they are doing." † †
And they divided his clothes and cast lots. †
35 The † people stood watching, and even the leaders were scoffing: † "He
saved others; let him save himself if this is God's Messiah, the Chosen One! " †
36 The soldiers also mocked him. They came offering him sour wine † 37 and
said, "If you are the King of the Jews, † save yourself! "
38 An inscription was above him: † THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
39 Then † one of the criminals hanging there began to yell insults at † him:
"Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us! "
40 But the other answered, rebuking him: "Don't you even fear God, † since
you are undergoing the same punishment? 41 We are punished justly, because
we're getting back what we deserve for the things we did, but this man has done
nothing wrong." † 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me † † when you come
into your kingdom." †
43 And he said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in
paradise." †

THE DEATH OF JESUS

44 It † was now about noon, † and darkness came over the whole land † until
three, † 45 because the sun's light failed. † The curtain † of the sanctuary was
split down the middle. 46 And Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, **into
your hands I entrust my spirit.**" † † Saying this, he breathed his last.
47 When the centurion saw what happened, he began to glorify † God, saying,
"This man really was righteous! " † 48 All the crowds that had gathered for this
spectacle, when they saw what had taken place, went home, striking their
chests. † 49 But † all who knew him, including the women who had followed
him from Galilee, stood at a distance, † watching these things.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

50 There † was a good and righteous man named Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, 51 who had not agreed with their plan † and action. He was from Arimathea, a Judean town, and was looking forward to the kingdom of God. †
52 He approached Pilate and asked for Jesus's body. 53 Taking it down, he wrapped it in fine linen and placed it in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever been placed. † † 54 It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. † 55 The women † who had come with him from Galilee followed along and observed the tomb and how his body was placed. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. † And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. †

23:3 Or *"That is true."* **23:6** Other mss read *heard "Galilee"* **23:8** Or *sign* **23:12** Lit *friends with one another* **23:16** Gk paideuo; to discipline or "teach a lesson" **23:16** Some mss include v. 17: *For according to the festival he had to release someone to them.* **23:23** Other mss add *and those of the chief priests* **23:34** Other mss omit *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing."* **23:38** Other mss add *written in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew letters* **23:39** Or *began to blaspheme* **23:42** Other mss add *Lord* **23:44** Lit *about the sixth hour* **23:44** Or *whole earth* **23:44** Lit *the ninth hour* **23:45** Other mss read *three, and the sun was darkened* **23:47** Or *innocent* **23:53** Or *interred*, or *laid* **23:54** Lit *was dawning*

23:1-5 Mt 27:1,11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Jn 18:28-38 **23:2** Lk 20:22-25 **23:3** Mt 27:11; Mk 15:2 **23:3** Mt 2:2; Lk 23:37-38; Jn 18:39; 19:3 **23:4** Mt 27:24; Lk 23:14,22; Jn 19:4,6; 1Pt 2:22 **23:5** Ac 17:5-8,13 **23:5** Mt 4:12,23; Lk 4:14; Jn 1:43; 2:11 **23:6** 1Tm 6:13 **23:7** Lk 3:1; 9:7-9; 13:31 **23:9** Is 53:7; Mt 27:12,14; Mk 15:4-5; Jn 19:9 **23:11** Is 53:3; Mk 9:12; Lk 18:32; Ac 4:11 **23:11** Mt 27:28; Mk 15:17 **23:12** Ps 2:2; Ac 4:27 **23:13** Lk 23:35; 24:20; Jn 7:26,48; 12:42 **23:14** Lk 23:2 **23:14** Lk 23:4 **23:16** Jn 19:1; Ac 5:40 **23:18-23** Mt 27:15-23; Mk 15:6-14; Jn 18:40 **23:18** Ac 21:36; 22:22 **23:20** Ac 3:13-14 **23:22** Jn 8:46 **23:22** Lk 23:4 **23:24-25** Mt 27:24-26; Mk 15:15; Jn 19:16 **23:24** Php 4:6 **23:25** Lk 24:20; Ac 4:24-28 **23:26-32** Mt 27:31-32; Mk 15:20-21; Jn 19:17 **23:26** Rm 16:3 **23:26** Lk 9:23; 14:27 **23:27** Lk 8:52; Ac 8:2; Rv 1:7; 18:9 **23:28** Sg 1:5; 2:7 **23:29** Lk 17:22 **23:29** Mt 24:19; Mk 13:17; Lk 11:27; 21:23 **23:30** Hs 10:8 **23:30** Hs 10:8 **23:31** Ezk 20:47; Lk 19:41 **23:32** Is 53:12; Mt 27:38; Mk 15:27; Lk 22:37; Jn 19:18 **23:33-34** Mt 27:33-38; Mk 15:22-27; Jn 19:17-24 **23:34** Mt 5:16; 6:1; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **23:34** Mt 11:25; Lk 6:29,35; 22:42 **23:34** Ac 3:17; 1Co 2:6-8 **23:34** Ps 22:18 **23:35-38** Mt 27:43,48; Mk 15:26,29-32; Jn 19:19,29 **23:35** Ps 22:7,17; Lk 16:14; 23:13 **23:35** Is 42:1; Mt 1:17; 12:18; Lk 9:20,35; 1Pt 2:4 **23:36** Ps 69:21 **23:37** Lk 23:3 **23:39-43** Mt 27:44; Mk 15:32 **23:40** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Ac 10:2; Rv 14:7 **23:41** Lk 23:4 **23:42** Jdg 16:28; 1Sm 25:31; Neh 5:19; Jb 14:13; Ps 106:4 **23:42** Mk 8:38; Ac 20:25 **23:43** 2Co 12:4; Rv 2:7 **23:44-49** Mt 27:45-56; Mk 15:33-41 **23:45** Ex 26:31-33; Heb 6:19 **23:46** Ps 31:5; Is 53:12; Jn 19:30; 1Co 15:55; 1Pt 4:19 **23:46** Ps 31:5 **23:47** Lk 13:13 **23:48** Lk 18:13 **23:49** Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40-41; Jn 19:25 **23:49** Ps 38:11; 88:8 **23:50-56** Mt 27:57-61; Mk 15:42-47; Jn 19:38-42 **23:51** Ac 2:23 **23:51** Lk 2:25,38 **23:53** Is 53:9; Mk 11:2 **23:55** Lk 1:42 **23:56** Mk 16:1; Lk 24:1 **23:56** Ex 20:10; Dt 5:14

23:6-7 Jesus was a **Galilean** and thus under the **jurisdiction** of Herod Antipas. Upon learning this fact, Pilate sends Jesus to Herod. Seeking the advice of others more familiar with the facts of a case was common practice among Roman officials engaged in legal proceedings. Alternatively, Pilate may have sought to attribute blame to Herod for the controversial decision.

23:19 Barabbas was guilty of **murder** and **rebellion** (insurrection), crimes common to the revolutionary climate of first-century Palestine. Some of the most deadly insurrectionists were the Sicarii, who would stab Roman sympathizers with small swords hidden under their clothing, while mingling with the crowds during festivals and gatherings. Barabbas is not identified as a Sicarii, but he fits their profile.

23:22 Three separate times Pilate declares that Jesus is innocent (vv. 15,20,22). These repeated affirmations of Jesus's innocence from a Roman official are striking since the Romans deeply valued justice. Luke also uses these affirmations as a literary technique to present Jesus as the innocent One who traded places with the guilty (Barabbas).

23:33 Crucifixion was a means of execution designed to expose its victims to shame and humiliation. It was a viciously cruel practice in which various positions were used to maximize torture. Death was caused by loss of blood, exposure, exhaustion, and suffocation. Victims often took days to die, leading ancient writers to regard crucifixion as the most barbaric punishment practiced by the Romans.

23:35,37,39 Ironically, each instance of mockery declares the truth about Jesus. He is **God's Messiah, the Chosen One**, who will not **save** himself precisely because he intends to save others. He is also the **King of the Jews**, but will not save himself so that his people might benefit. And he is the long-anticipated **Messiah.** Luke uses the mockery of Jesus to affirm his true identity, even though the mockers do not accept who he really is.

23:43 Paradise means "garden" and was used to refer to the garden of Eden in the Greek version of the OT. In Jewish apocalyptic literature, it also referred to an eternity of bliss for the righteous (2 Esdras 8:52). See also "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

23:44 The OT relates **darkness** to the judgment of the day of the Lord. Greco-Roman and Jewish literature also connected darkness to the death of great men.

23:48 The people struck their chests to express their mourning or, possibly, repentance (18:13).

23:54 The **preparation day** was the day prior to the **Sabbath**, beginning on Friday at sunset. Preparations were made early in order to avoid working on the Sabbath.

RESURRECTION MORNING

24 On † the first day of the week, † very early in the morning, they † came to the tomb, bringing the spices they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 They went in but did not find the body † of the Lord Jesus. † 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men stood by them in dazzling † clothes. 5 So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground.

"Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. 6 "He is not here, but he has risen! † Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, † 7 saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed † into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise † on the third day'?" 8 And they remembered his words.

9 Returning from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven † and to
all the rest. 10 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, † and the
other women with them were telling the apostles † these things. 11 But these
words seemed like nonsense to them, and they did not believe † the women.
12 Peter, † however, got up and ran to the tomb. When he stooped to look in, he
saw only the linen cloths. † † So he went away, amazed † at what had
happened.

THE EMMAUS DISCIPLES

13 Now † that same day two of them were on their way to a village called
Emmaus, which was about seven miles † † from Jerusalem. † 14 Together they
were discussing everything that had taken place. 15 And while they were
discussing and arguing, Jesus himself came near and began to walk along with
them. 16 But they † were prevented from recognizing him. † 17 Then he asked
them, "What is this dispute that you're having † with each other as you are
walking?" And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.
18 The one named Cleopas answered him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem
who doesn't know the things that happened there in these days?" †
19 "What things?" he asked them.
So they said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, † who was a
prophet † powerful in action and speech † before God and all the people, †
20 and how our chief priests and leaders † handed him over to be sentenced to
death, † and they crucified him. † 21 But we were hoping that he was the one
who was about to redeem † Israel. Besides all this, it's the third day † since
these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women from our group astounded us.
They arrived early at the tomb, 23 and when they didn't find his body, they came
and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive.
24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the
women had said, but they didn't see him." †
25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow † to believe all that the
prophets have spoken! † 26 Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer †

these things and enter into his glory?” † 27 Then beginning with Moses † and
all the Prophets, † he interpreted for them the things concerning himself in all
the Scriptures. †
28 They came near the village where they were going, and he gave the
impression that he was going farther. † 29 But they urged him, “Stay with us,
because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So he went in to
stay with them.
30 It was as he reclined at the table with them that he took the bread, blessed and
broke † it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, † and they
recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. † 32 They said to each
other, “Weren’t our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us on the
road and explaining the Scriptures † to us?” 33 That very hour they got up and
returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven † and those with them gathered
together, 34 who said, “The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to
Simon!” † 35 Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and
how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. †

THE REALITY OF THE RISEN JESUS

36 As † they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said
to them, “Peace † to you!” 37 But they were startled and terrified † and thought
they were seeing a ghost. † 38 “Why are you troubled?” † he asked them. “And
why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Look at my hands and my feet, that it is I
myself! † Touch me and see, † because a ghost does not have flesh and bones
as you can see I have.” 40 Having said this, he showed them his hands and feet.
41 But while they still were amazed and in disbelief because of their joy, he
asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” 42 So they gave him a piece of
a broiled fish, † 43 and he took it and ate in their presence.
44 He told them, “These are my words † that I spoke to you while I was still
with you — that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the
Prophets, † and the Psalms † must be fulfilled.” 45 Then he opened their
minds † to understand † the Scriptures. 46 He also said to them, “This is what is

written: † The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, †
47 and repentance for † forgiveness of sins † would be proclaimed in his name
to all the nations, † beginning at Jerusalem. † 48 You are witnesses † of these
things. 49 And look, I am sending you † what my Father promised. † As for
you, stay in the city † until you are empowered † † from on high."

THE ASCENSION OF JESUS

50 Then he led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, † and lifting up his hands †
he blessed them. 51 And while he was blessing them, he left them and was
carried up into heaven. † 52 After worshiping him, † they returned to Jerusalem
with great joy. † 53 And they were continually in the temple praising God. † †

24:1 Other mss add *and other women with them* **24:12** Other mss add *lying there* **24:13** Lit *about sixty stadia* ; one *stadion* = 600 feet **24:16** Lit *their eyes* **24:17** Lit *"What are these words that you are exchanging* **24:25** Lit *slow of heart* **24:42** Other mss add *and some honeycomb* **24:46** Other mss add *and thus it was necessary that* **24:47** Many mss read *repentance and* **24:49** Lit *upon you* **24:49** Other mss add *of Jerusalem* **24:49** Lit *clothed with power* **24:53** Other mss read *praising and blessing God. Amen.*
24:1-12 Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-11; Jn 20:1-18 **24:1** Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 **24:3** Lk 12:4 **24:3** Lk 7:13; Ac 1:21 **24:4** Lk 2:9; 17:24; Ac 12:7 **24:6** Mt 26:32; Mk 5:41; 9:27; Jn 2:19; 1Co 15:4 **24:6** Mt 17:22-23; Mk 9:30-31; Lk 9:22,44 **24:7** Lk 9:22,31,44; 18:32-33; 23:21 **24:7** Mt 17:9,23; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:34; Lk 18:33; 24:46 **24:9** Ac 1:15-26; 2:14 **24:10** Mk 15:40; 16:1; Lk 8:2-3 **24:10** Lk 6:13 **24:11** Mt 28:17; Lk 24:41; Jn 20:25,27 **24:12** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **24:12** Lk 23:53 **24:12** Lk 1:21,63; 2:18,33; 4:22; Ac 2:7; 3:12 **24:13** Mk 16:12-13 **24:13** Rv 21:16 **24:13** Mt 23:37; Ac 8:1 **24:16** Lk 9:45; 18:34; Jn 20:14-15; 21:4 **24:18** Ac 26:26 **24:19** Lk 4:34; 18:37; Ac 2:22 **24:19** Dt 18:15; Lk 4:24 **24:19** Lk 4:14; Ac 1:1; 2:22 **24:19** Lk 18:43 **24:20** Lk 23:13 **24:20** Lk 9:44; 18:32; Ac 3:13; 13:27-28 **24:20** Lk 23:21,25; Ac 5:30 **24:21** Lk 22:20; Ac 1:6 **24:21** Lk 9:22; 13:32; 18:33 **24:24** Lk 24:12; Jn 20:2-10 **24:25** Lk 16:31; 18:31; Ac 26:27; 2Pt 1:21 **24:26** Lk 24:44-48; 1Co 15:3-5 **24:26** Lk 9:26,32; 21:27; 22:69; Ac 2:33; 7:55; 22:11 **24:27** Gn 3:15; 12:3; 22:18; Nm 21:9; 24:17 **24:27** 2Sm 7:12-16; Is 7:14; 9:6; 52:13–53:12; Jr 23:5-6; Dn 7:13-14; Mc 5:2; Zch 9:9; 12:10 **24:27** Lk 16:16 **24:28** Mk 6:48 **24:30** Lk 9:16; 22:19 **24:31** 2Kg 6:17; Lk 24:16 **24:31** Jn 20:19,26 **24:32** Ac 17:3; 1Co 15:3-8 **24:33** Lk 24:9 **24:34** Lk 22:32; 1Co 15:4-5 **24:35** Ac 2:42 **24:36-44** Jn 20:19-20 **24:36** Lk 2:14; 7:50; 8:48; 10:5; 19:38; Ac 10:36 **24:37** Lk 24:5; Ac 10:4; 24:25 **24:37** Mt 14:26 **24:38** Jn 14:1,27 **24:39** Jn 20:25,27 **24:39** Mt 28:9; Ac 2:31; 17:18,31-32; 23:6-10; 24:15,21 **24:44** Lk 9:22,44; 17:25; 18:31-33; 22:37 **24:44** Ac 13:15; 28:23 **24:44** Ps 2:6-9; 16:10; 22:1-18; 34:20; 41:9; 69:1-9,20-21,26; 110:1-7; 118:22-26 **24:45** Lk 24:27,31 **24:45** Lk 9:45; 18:34 **24:46** Ps 16:10; Lk 9:22,44; 17:25; 18:32; Ac 8:26-40; 1Co 15:3-4 **24:47** Hs 14:2; Lk 3:3; Ac 2:38; 5:31; 8:22 **24:47** Gn 12:3; Ps 22:27; Is 2:2; 49:6; Hs 2:23; Mal 1:11; Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15 **24:47-49** Ac 1:4-8 **24:48** Ac 4:20,33 **24:49** Is 32:15; Jl 2:28-32; Jn 14:26; Ac 2:16-21; Eph 1:13 **24:49** Ac 4:33; Rm 15:13 **24:50** Lk 19:29; Ac 1:12 **24:50** Lv 9:22; 1Tm 2:8 **24:51** Mk 16:19; Jn 20:17; Ac 1:9-11 **24:52** Mt 28:17 **24:52** Lk 2:10 **24:53** Ac 2:46; 3:1; 5:42

24:7 The **third day** was calculated by the inclusion of any parts of three days; it does not refer to three twenty-four hour periods. It may also be an echo of Hosea 6:2, which looks forward to the restoration of Israel.

24:11 Not only was the women's testimony difficult to believe, but the first century view of women meant that they were often not trusted as witnesses. Josephus said, "From women let no evidence be accepted,

because of the levity and temerity of their sex." Philo claimed that women are "irrational" and untrustworthy. That the Gospels report that the first eyewitnesses to the empty tomb were women adds to the credibility of their accounts. No one would have invented a story in which women were the key witnesses.

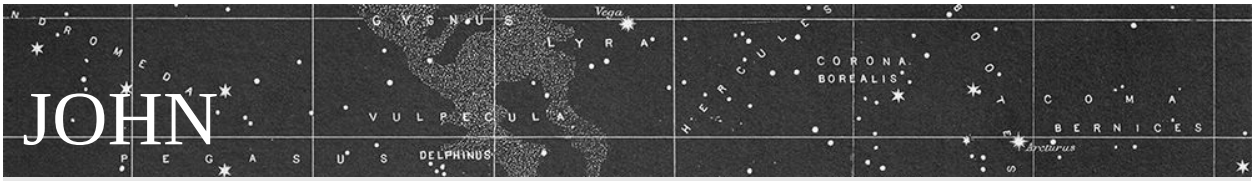
24:31 Greco-Roman and Jewish literature describes the miraculous disappearances of angelic and divine figures. Jesus fits the expectation of a divine figure, whose resurrection body is capable of unexplained phenomena.

24:37 The disciples thought they had seen a **ghost** (Gk *pneuma*). The belief that the dead sometimes return in spirit form, a notion popular in many ancient cultures, influenced the men's response to the resurrected Jesus, too.

24:45 See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

24:47 See Matthew 28:19 and "A Biblical View of the Nations," *p. 688.*

24:51 Elijah ascended to **heaven** in a whirlwind (2Kg 2:11), while Enoch was taken away by God (Gn 5:24). Later Jewish literature spoke of other OT figures that likewise ascended to heaven. Jesus's ascension is regarded by the NT authors as a sign of his exaltation to the Father's right hand in majesty (Ac 2:33).



JOHN

INTRODUCTION

The Gospel of John is different from the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—in that more than ninety percent of its material is unique. John's Gospel does not focus on the miracles, parables, and public speeches that are so prominent in the other accounts. Instead, the Gospel of John emphasizes the identity of Jesus as the Son of God and how we, as believers, should respond to his teachings.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: A close reading of the Gospel of John suggests that the author was an apostle (1:14; cp. 2:11; 19:35); one of the Twelve ("the disciple Jesus loved": 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20; cp. 21:24-25); and, still more specifically, John, the son of Zebedee (note the association of "the disciple Jesus loved" with Peter in 13:23-24; 18:15-16; 20:2-9; 21; and in Lk 22:8; Ac 1:13; 3–4; 8:14-25; Gl 2:9). The church fathers, too, attested to this identification (e.g., Irenaeus). Since the apostolic office was foundational in the history of the church (Ac 2:42; Eph 2:20), the apostolic authorship of John's Gospel invests it with special authority as firsthand eyewitness (Jn 15:27; 1Jn 1:1-4).

BACKGROUND: The most plausible date of writing is the period between AD 70 (the date of the destruction of the temple) and 100 (the end of John's lifetime), with a date in the 80s most likely. A date after 70 is suggested by the references to the Sea of Tiberias in 6:1 and 21:1 (a name widely used for the Sea of Galilee only toward the end of the first century); Thomas's confession of Jesus as "my Lord and my God" in 20:28 (possibly a statement against emperor worship in the time of Domitian); the reference to Peter's martyrdom, which occurred in 65 or 66 (21:19); the lack of reference to the Sadducees, who ceased to be a Jewish religious party after 70; and the comparative ease with which John equated Jesus with God (1:1,14,18; 10:30; 20:28).

The testimony of the early church also favors a date after AD 70. Clement of Alexandria (cited in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 6.14.7) stated, "Last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain [in the other canonical Gospels] . . . composed a spiritual gospel." The most likely place of writing is Ephesus (Irenaeus, *Haer.*, 3.1.2; cp. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 3.1.1), one of the most important urban centers of the Roman Empire at the time, though the envisioned readership of John's Gospel transcends any one historical setting.

John's original audience was probably composed of people in the larger Greco-Roman world in Ephesus and beyond toward the close of the first century AD. Hence John frequently explained Jewish customs and Palestinian geography and translated Aramaic terms into Greek.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Of all the Gospels and any of the NT books, the Gospel of John most clearly teaches the deity and preexistence of Christ (1:1-2,18; 8:58; 17:5,24; 20:28). Together with the Gospel of Matthew, it provides the most striking proofs of Jesus's messiahship. It does so by narrating seven messianic signs (see note at 2:11), by seven "I am" statements of Jesus (see note at 6:35,48), by specific fulfillment quotations, especially at Jesus's passion, and by showing how Jesus fulfilled the symbolism inherent in a variety of Jewish festivals and institutions. Jesus's messianic mission is shown to originate with God the Father, "the One who sent" Jesus (7:16,18,28,33; 8:26,29; 15:21), and to culminate in his commissioning of his new messianic community in the power of his Spirit (20:21-22). John's Trinitarian teaching is among the most

overt presentations of the triunity of the Godhead—Father, Son, and Spirit—in the entire NT and has provided much of the material for early Trinitarian and Christological formulations in the history of the church.

STRUCTURE

John is divided into two main parts. In the first section (chaps. 2–11) the focus is on both Jesus's ministry to "the world" and the signs he performed. Jesus performs seven signs that meet with varying responses. The second major section (chaps. 12–21) reveals Jesus's teaching to his disciples and the triumphant "hour" of his passion. John's record of the passion focuses on Jesus's control of the events. He had to instruct his adversaries on how to arrest him (18:4-8). Pilate struggled with his decision, but Jesus knew what would happen. Jesus died as the Lamb and was sacrificed at the very time lambs were being sacrificed for Passover (19:14).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

John emphasized the sovereignty and the love of God in sending Jesus. Jesus perfectly reveals God (1:18). In particular, Jesus's astounding proclamations that begin with "I am" are remarkable claims about both his person and his work. Jesus's teaching on the Spirit ("the Counselor") is more extensive than in any other Gospel (chaps. 14–16). This Gospel especially reveals the glory and the name of the Father and the Son.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Humans are sinners in need of a Savior. They are unable to save themselves but are wholly dependent on God's initiative through Jesus. Many individuals demonstrate this: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the man born blind.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This Gospel, more than the others, emphasizes strongly a personal relationship with Jesus that's built on faith in him and his sacrificial death. Faith in Jesus is salvation and eternal life. One such text is 10:27-28: "My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand." John affirms both God's sovereign election of some for eternal life (6:44) and the invitation to "everyone who believes" (3:16).

JOHN TIMELINE

AD 18–29

Caiaphas is high priest. **18–36**

Pontius Pilate is prefect of Judea. **26–36**

John the Baptist's ministry begins. **29**

Jesus's baptism **29**

Jesus's wilderness temptations **29**

Jesus's call of his first disciples **29**

AD 30–33

Jesus cleanses the temple at Passover. **30**

Jesus's ministry in Galilee **AUTUMN 30 TO SPRING 32**

Jesus's feeding of the 5,000 during Passover **32**

Jesus's teachings at the Festival of Shelters **AUTUMN 32**

Growing opposition to Jesus at the Festival of Dedication **WINTER 32/33**

AD 33

Jesus raises Lazarus from death. **WINTER 33**

Jesus's last journey to Jerusalem by way of Samaria and Galilee **LATE WINTER 33**

Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem **SUNDAY, NISAN 9, 33**

Jesus's second cleansing of the temple **MONDAY, NISAN 10, 33**

Jesus teaches in the temple and prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. **TUESDAY, NISAN 11, 33**

AD 33

Judas bargains with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus. **TUESDAY EVENING, NISAN 11, 33**

Jesus celebrates Passover with his disciples. **THURSDAY EVENING, NISAN 13, 33**

Jesus's trials and crucifixion **FRIDAY, NISAN 14, 33**

Jesus's resurrection **SUNDAY, NISAN 16, 33**

Jesus's ascension; forty days after his resurrection **33**

Day of Pentecost; seven weeks following Jesus's resurrection **MAY 24, 33**

PROLOGUE

1 In the beginning † was the Word, † and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. † 2 He was with God in the beginning. † 3 All things were created † through him, † and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 In him was life, † † and that life was the light † of men. 5 That light shines † in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome † it. †

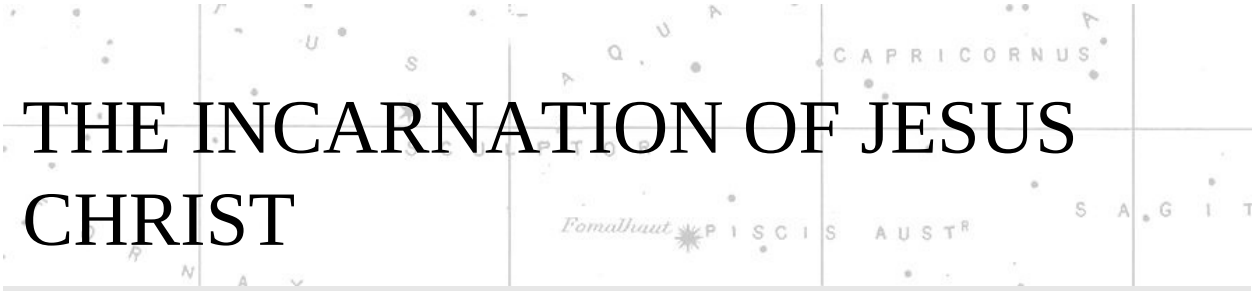
6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. † 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. † 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify † about the light. 9 The true light † that gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. † †

10 He was in the world, and the world was created † through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive † him, † he gave them the right † to be † children † of God, † to those who believe † in his name, † 13 who were born, † not of natural descent, † or of the will † of the flesh, † or of the will of man, † but of God. †

14 The Word † became flesh † and dwelt † among us. We observed his glory, † the glory as the one and only † Son † from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, “This was the one of whom I said, ‘The one coming after me † ranks ahead of me, † because he existed before me.’ ”) † 16 Indeed, we have all received grace † upon † grace from his fullness, 17 for the law was given through Moses; † grace and truth † came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. The one and only † Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s † side † —he has revealed him. †

JOHN THE BAPTIST’S TESTIMONY

19 This was John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem † sent priests †
and Levites † to ask him, "Who are you? "
20 He didn't deny it but confessed: "I am not the Messiah." †
21 "What then? " they asked him. "Are you Elijah? " †
"I am not," he said.
"Are you the Prophet? " †
"No," he answered.
22 "Who are you, then? " they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who
sent us. What can you tell us about yourself? "



THE INCARNATION OF JESUS CHRIST

The incarnation of the Son of God is at the heart of the Christian faith. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 1:14). Christ's first coming is essential for the reconciliation of God and humanity and for Jesus's ongoing mediation on our behalf.

While there is an element of mystery surrounding the incarnation—the person of Jesus Christ the God-man—there are some foundational nonnegotiables that we affirm to be true to biblical revelation and that honor the witness of the church throughout her history.

SIX NONNEGOTIABLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION

1. First, we hold to the true incarnation of the *Logos*, the Word (Jn 1:1,14,18), the Second Person of the Godhead. The Son of God, having been sent by the Father, truly assumed the whole of human nature. In this event, the Second Person of the Trinity invaded time and space, embracing humanity to himself. Therefore, any form of docetic theology—claiming that Christ only appeared to be human—must firmly be rejected (1Jn 4:2-3).

The humanity of Jesus is like that of Adam and Eve prior to the fall: it is a sinless humanity (2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15). The human nature that the Son took to himself was not tainted by sin. The most genuine expression of humanity—what it means to be human—is manifested in Jesus Christ.

2. There is a necessary distinction between the two natures of Jesus Christ and his person. He is a single person who possesses both divine and human natures. A "nature" assumes the powers and qualities that constitute a being, while a "person" is the self-conscious, self-asserting, and acting subject. This distinction is embedded in Scripture, particularly in the NT (see Php 2:5-8), and it was codified in the five great Christological councils (the First Council of Nicaea in AD 325, the First Council of Constantinople in AD 381, the First Council of Ephesus in AD 431, the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451, and the Second Council of Constantinople in AD 553). This human nature, possessing its full

integrity, is united to the divine nature, possessing its full integrity, both wedded in the one person, Jesus Christ. The result is a theoanthropic person—one who is both fully divine and truly human.

3. The God-man was made incarnate through the virgin birth—the means by which God chose to accomplish Christ's coming (Is 7:14; Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38). The result is that Jesus Christ is not a double being, a compound being, or some kind of hybrid. He is the one person, our Lord Jesus Christ, complete in his deity and perfect in his humanity.

Several observations suggest a connection between the virgin birth and Jesus's sinless life.

- Jesus is the only virgin-conceived person and the only sinless human.
- The activity of the Holy Spirit in the process of conception is key.
- The virgin conception "helps us understand how Christ can stand outside the guilt of Adam" (Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ*, p. 41).
- A sinless humanity is scarcely conceivable, if not impossible, without divine intervention.

4. In the incarnation there is no qualification or diminution of either Christ's deity or his humanity. Each nature retains its own integrity and genuineness. Whatever constitutes God as God, the Son is this in all its fullness (Col 2:9-10). Further, whatever constitutes man as man, Jesus of Nazareth is this in all its fullness. Sin is not needed for humans to be human. It is in Jesus that we see humanity perfectly expressed as God intended. Whereas fallen and sinful humanity lives on a subhuman plane, this is not true of Jesus.
5. There is a genuine hypostatic union in which the divine nature and the human nature come together and are present in the one person, Jesus Christ. This union is real, supernatural, personal, inseparable, and permanent (see 1Tm 2:5). There is today in heaven a God-man who is "at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb 1:3) and who "always lives to intercede for [us]" (Heb 7:25). The divine and human have been united truly in the one Lord Jesus Christ.
6. The whole of Christ's work is to be attributed to his whole person and not to one or the other nature exclusively. It is required that Christ be both God and man. As man, he identifies with humanity, enabling him to die in our place. As God, he is not an innocent third party; rather, through him God was "reconciling the world to himself" (2Co 5:19). Only a God-man is able to reconcile humans to God. Jesus Christ is that God-man, the Second Person of the triune God, who took to himself a human nature for this work of redemption.

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of the "two natures" is essential to any expression of biblical and historical Christology. Thus, to jettison the doctrine of the incarnation is to radically redefine Christianity. Jesus is coequal, coeternal, coexistent, and consubstantial (of the same substance) with the Father (Jn 1:1). Truly, in Christ God made his dwelling among us. Deity and humanity are perfectly and permanently joined together in Christ, with the fullness of his work attributed to his whole person. Any attempt to separate his natures or to ascribe certain actions or words to one nature or the other is wrongheaded and must be refuted. This truth is a foundational pillar on which the Christian faith rests.

DANIEL L. AKIN

23 He said, "I am a **voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord** † † — just as Isaiah † the prophet said."

24 Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. † 25 So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet? "

26 “I baptize with † water,” † John answered them. “Someone stands among
you, but you don’t know him. 27 He is the one coming after me, † † whose
sandal strap I’m not worthy to untie.” 28 All this happened in Bethany † across
the Jordan, † where John was baptizing.

THE LAMB OF GOD

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Here is the Lamb
of God, † who takes away the sin † of the world! 30 This is the one I told you
about: ‘After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before
me.’ 31 I didn’t know him, † but I came baptizing with water so he might be
revealed † to Israel.” 32 And John testified, “I saw the Spirit † descending from
heaven like a dove, and he rested on him. † 33 I didn’t know him, but he who
sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The one you see the Spirit descending
and resting on — he is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ † 34 I have
seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” † †

35 The next day, John was standing with two of his disciples. 36 When he saw
Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God! ”

37 The two disciples heard him say this and followed Jesus. 38 When Jesus
turned and noticed them following him, he asked them, “What are you looking
for? ”

They said to him, “Rabbi” † (which means “Teacher”), “where are you
staying? ”

39 “Come and you’ll see,” he replied. So they went and saw where he was
staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. †

40 Andrew, † Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John and
followed him. 41 He first found his own brother Simon and told him, “We have
found the Messiah” † † (which is translated “the Christ”), † 42 and he brought
Simon to Jesus.

When Jesus saw him, he said, “You are Simon, son of John. † You will be
called Cephas” † (which is translated “Peter” †).

PHILIP AND NATHANAEL

43 The next day Jesus † decided to leave for Galilee. He found Philip † and told
him, "Follow me."
44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, † the hometown of Andrew and Peter.
45 Philip found Nathanael † and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote
about in the law (and so did the prophets †): Jesus the son of Joseph, † from
Nazareth." †
46 "Can anything good † come out of Nazareth? " Nathanael asked him.
"Come and see," Philip answered.
47 Then Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him, "Here
truly is an Israelite † in whom there is no deceit."
48 "How do you know me? " Nathanael asked.
"Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you," Jesus
answered.
49 "Rabbi," † Nathanael replied, "You are the Son † of God; you are the King
of Israel! " †
50 Jesus responded to him, "Do you believe because I told you I saw you under
the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "Truly I tell
you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God † ascending and
descending † on the Son of Man." †

1:3-4 Other punctuation is possible: . . . *not one thing was created. What was created in him was life* **1:5** Or *grasp*, or *comprehend*, or *overtake* ; Jn 12:35 **1:7** Or *it (the light)* **1:9** Or *The true light who comes into the world gives light to everyone*, or *The true light enlightens everyone coming into the world.* **1:12** Or *become* **1:13** Lit *blood* **1:13** Or *not of human lineage, or of human capacity, or of human volition* **1:14** Or *and dwelt in a tent* ; lit *and tabernacled* **1:14** *Son* is implied from the reference to the Father and from Gk usage. **1:16** Or *in place of* **1:18** Other mss read *The one and only Son, who is at the Father's side* **1:26** Or *in*, also in vv. 31,33 **1:27** Other mss add *who came before me* **1:28** Other mss read *in Bethabara* **1:34** Other mss read *is the Chosen One of God* **1:39** Lit *about the tenth hour* **1:41** Both Hb *Messiah* and Gk *Christos* mean "anointed one" **1:42** Other mss read "*Simon, son of Jonah* **1:42** Both Aramaic *Cephas* and Gk *Petros* mean "rock" **1:43** Lit *he*

1:1 Gn 1:1; Col 1:18 **1:1** Jn 1:14; 1Jn 1:1; Rv 19:13 **1:1** Jn 20:28; Php 2:6 **1:2** Jn 8:38; 17:5; Ac 26:4 **1:3** Col 1:16; Heb 1:2 **1:3** Rm 11:36 **1:4** 1Jn 2:5 **1:4** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46 **1:5** 1Jn 2:8 **1:5** Php 3:12 **1:6** Mk 1:4 **1:8** Jn 15:26 **1:9** Jn 12:46 **1:9** Jn 18:37; 1Jn 2:8 **1:10** Jn 1:3 **1:12** 2Jn 10 **1:12** Jn 5:43 **1:12** Mk 1:22; Ac 9:14 **1:12** Lk 1:7 **1:12** Mt 5:9; Jn 11:52; Rm 8:16; 1Jn 3:1 **1:12** Jn 3:16 **1:12** Jn 10:25; 1Jn 3:23 **1:13** 1Pt 1:3 **1:13** 1Co 7:37; 16:12; Eph 2:3; 2Tm 2:26; 2Pt 1:21 **1:13** Php 3:3 **1:13** 1Pt 1:3; 1Jn 2:29 **1:14** Jn 1:1 **1:14** Php 2:7; 1Jn 4:2; 5:20 **1:14** Mk 10:37; Jn 17:24 **1:14** Heb 11:17; 1Jn 4:9 **1:15** Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Jn 1:27,30 **1:15** Col 1:19 **1:15** Jn 3:13; 8:58; 10:30; 14:7-9,23; Php 2:6 **1:16** Ac 15:11; 2Pt 3:18 **1:17** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **1:17** Ps 119:142; Jn 14:6; 2Th 2:10 **1:18** 1Jn 4:9 **1:18** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **1:18** Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22; 1Jn 2:24 **1:19** Mt 23:37 **1:19** Ac 4:1 **1:19** Ex 6:19; Lk 10:32 **1:20** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **1:21** Mal 4:5; Mt

11:14; 17:10-13; Mk 8:28; Lk 1:17 **1:21** Dt 18:15; Mt 2:23 **1:23** Is 40:3 **1:23** Is 40:3 **1:23** Mt 3:3; 4:14; 12:17 **1:24** Mk 7:3 **1:26** Mk 1:8 **1:27** Jn 1:15 **1:28** Mk 10:1; Lk 3:3 **1:29** Is 53:7; Ac 8:32; 1Pt 1:19; Rv 5:6 **1:29** Jn 15:22; 1Jn 3:5 **1:31** Jn 7:28 **1:31** 2Co 4:11; 1Jn 1:2 **1:32** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; 1Jn 5:8; Rv 3:22 **1:32** Jms 4:5 **1:33** Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Ac 11:16 **1:34** Mt 3:17; 4:3; Jn 1:49; 5:19; Heb 1:2 **1:38** Jn 11:8 **1:40-42** Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:2-11 **1:41** Mt 1:17 **1:41** Ex 29:29 **1:42** 1Co 1:12; 3:22; 9:5; 15:5; Gl 1:18; 2:9,11,14 **1:43** Mk 3:18 **1:44** Jn 12:21 **1:45** Jn 1:46-49; 21:2 **1:45** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52; Rm 3:21 **1:45** Mt 1:16; Lk 1:27; 2:4,16,33; 3:23; Jn 6:42 **1:45** Mk 1:9 **1:46** Gn 1:31 **1:47** 2Co 11:22 **1:49** Jn 11:8 **1:49** Jn 5:19 **1:49** Mt 27:42; Mk 15:32; Jn 12:13 **1:51** Lk 12:8-9; 15:10; Ac 10:3 **1:51** Gn 28:12 **1:51** Mk 2:10

1:1 The opening of John's Gospel is replete with allusions to the OT and to philosophy contemporary to John's day. **In the beginning** is a reference to Genesis 1:1. The phrase would immediately be recognized by anyone familiar with the Hebrew Bible, and it implies that John is offering an alternate account of creation. **Word** (Gk *logos*) is both a reference to the personification of God's word in the OT (e.g., Is 55:10-11) and a reference to contemporary philosophical ideas. "Logos" was a popular term in Stoic and other Greek philosophies, referring to the impersonal principle of Reason, which was believed to rule the universe. John's use of "the Word" therefore appeals both to Jewish and Gentile readers.

1:3 Just as God created through means of his powerful word ("Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light"; Gn 1:3), so here John states that **all things were created through** the Word, Jesus Christ.

1:5 The light shines in the darkness is an OT reference to the coming Messiah: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness" (Is 9:2).

1:9 The true light that gives light to everyone indicates that this light is not only for Israel as she awaits her Messiah. The light will also shine in the darkness of the Gentile world. John may intend a subtle contrast here with the false "light" of Hellenistic religions.

1:13 In Deuteronomy 32:18, God is said to have given birth to his people Israel.

1:14 Ancient Greeks believed the physical world was inherently evil. This notion, often called philosophical dualism, is entirely contrary to the biblical understanding of the world. Consequently, John wants his audience, who would be well versed in Greek ideas, to be completely clear that Jesus did not just appear human. He was more than God in human disguise. The Word, who is God (v. 1), actually **became flesh** in the person of Jesus. The Word **dwelt among us**, literally "tabernacled" among us. Just as God dwelt with his people Israel in the tabernacle (the portable tent predating the permanent temple), so Jesus is God dwelling among his people. His **glory** echoes the glory of God that dwelt in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

1:18 No one could see **God** and live (Ex 33:20) because his holiness is incompatible with humanity's sinfulness. But Jesus **has revealed** God, since he **is himself God and is at the Father's side.**

1:19 Only mentioned three times in the NT (Lk 10:31-32; Ac 4:36), the **Levites** were a group of religious experts associated with the temple. Some of their duties were separate from those of the **priests** (see Nm 3–4 for some OT examples of Levitical, but non-priestly, duties). Little is known about what precise role they played in the religious life of Jesus's day.

1:20-21 First-century Jews were eagerly awaiting the promised **Messiah**, God's anointed king, promised to King David (2Sm 7:11-16). Some also awaited **Elijah**, the great prophet of Israel who did not die (2Kg 2:11) and was expected to return (Mal 4:5). There was also an expectation of the coming of **the Prophet**, who was predicted by Moses (Dt 18:15,18). John answers all three questions negatively. Jesus, however, clarifies that John *is* indeed **Elijah.** He does not mean the actual person Elijah; rather, John is the fulfillment of the expected role of Elijah in Malachi 4:5.

1:26 Baptism—the use of water in religious rituals, frequently by immersion—was relatively common in

the ancient Jewish world. Since water often symbolized religious purity (e.g. Ps 51:1-2), immersion in it was used to mark religious revival, conversion to Judaism, or identification with a particular religious movement. John the Baptist—who was not the writer of John's Gospel—baptized Jewish people to identify them with the repentance of sins and the coming of the Messiah. Jesus participated in this baptism to demonstrate that he is the Messiah at the center of that movement (v. 31).

1:29 In calling Jesus **the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world,** John the Baptist identifies Jesus with the Passover lamb and the OT sacrificial system. Just as God allowed a lamb to die in place of the firstborn of every believing household in Egypt (Ex 12:1-28), so Jesus will die in the place of the whole world so they might be rescued from sin.

1:42 Jesus gives **Simon** the nickname Cephas, meaning "rock." The Gospels typically use the Greek form of the nickname: "Peter" (Gk *petros*). Here John uses the Aramaic form.

THE FIRST SIGN: TURNING WATER INTO WINE

2 On the third day a wedding took place in Cana † of Galilee. † Jesus's
mother † was there, and 2 Jesus and his disciples were invited to the
wedding as well. 3 When the wine ran out, Jesus's mother told him,
"They don't have any wine."

4 "What does that have to do with you and me, † † woman?" † Jesus asked.
"My hour has not yet come."

5 "Do whatever he tells you," his mother told the servants.

6 Now six stone water jars had been set there for Jewish purification. † Each
contained twenty or thirty gallons. †

7 "Fill the jars with water," Jesus told them. So they filled them to the brim.

8 Then he said to them, "Now draw some out and take it to the headwaiter." †
And they did.

9 When the headwaiter tasted the water (after it had become wine), he did not
know where it came from — though the servants who had drawn the water knew.
He called the groom 10 and told him, "Everyone sets out the fine wine first, then,
after people are drunk, the inferior. But you have kept the fine wine until now."

11 Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana † of Galilee. † He revealed † his
glory, † and his disciples believed in him.

12 After this, he went down to Capernaum, † together with his mother, his
brothers, † and his disciples, and they stayed there only a few days.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

13 The Jewish Passover † was near, and so Jesus went up to Jerusalem. † 14 In the temple † he found people selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and he also found the money changers sitting there. 15 After making a whip out of cords, † he drove everyone out of the temple with their sheep † and oxen. He also poured out the money changers' coins and overturned the tables. 16 He told those who were selling doves, "Get these things out of here! Stop turning my Father's † house † into a marketplace!" † †

17 And his disciples remembered that it is written: **Zeal † for your house will consume † me.** † †

18 So the Jews replied to him, "What sign will you show us for doing these things?"

19 Jesus answered, "Destroy this temple, † † and I will raise it up in three days." †

20 Therefore the Jews said, "This temple took forty-six years to build, † and will you raise it up in three days?" †

21 But he was speaking about the temple of his body. † 22 So when he was raised from the dead, † his disciples remembered that he had said this, † and they believed the Scripture † and the statement Jesus had made.

23 While he was in Jerusalem † during the Passover Festival, † many believed in his name † when they saw the signs he was doing. 24 Jesus, however, would not entrust himself to them, since he knew them all 25 and because he did not need anyone to testify about man; for he himself knew what was in man. †

2:4 Or *"You and I see things differently*; lit *"What to me and to you*; Mt 8:29; Mk 1:24; 5:7; Lk 8:28 **2:6** Lit *two or three measures* **2:8** Lit *ruler of the table* **2:16** Lit *a house of business* **2:19** Or *sanctuary*, also in vv. 20,21 **2:20** Or *was built forty-six years ago*

2:1 Jn 2:11; 4:46; 21:2 **2:1** Mt 17:22 **2:1** Mt 1:16 **2:4** 2Sm 16:10; 19:22 **2:4** Jn 19:26 **2:6** Lv 13–14; Heb 1:3 **2:11** Jn 2:1; 21:2 **2:11** Mt 17:22 **2:11** 2Co 4:11; 1Jn 1:2 **2:11** Mk 10:37; Jn 17:24 **2:12** Lk 10:15 **2:12** Mt 12:46-50; Mk 3:31-35; 6:3; Lk 8:19-21; Ac 1:14 **2:13** Ex 12:11 **2:13** Mt 23:37 **2:14-17** Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-17; Lk 19:45-46 **2:15** Ac 27:32 **2:15** Mt 7:15 **2:16** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **2:16** Lk 11:51; Jn 2:17 **2:16** Jr 7:11; Zch 14:21; Mal 3:1-3 **2:17** Nm 25:13 **2:17** Gl 5:15 **2:17** Ps 69:9 **2:17** Ps 69:9 **2:19** Lk 1:21 **2:19** Lk 9:22 **2:20** Mk 15:29 **2:21** Mt 26:26; 27:52,58; Mk 14:22; 15:43; Lk 12:4; 22:19; 23:52,55; Jn 19:31,38,40; 20:12; 1Co 10:16; 11:23-26; Heb 10:5,10; 1Pt 2:24 **2:22** Mt 17:9; Rv 20:12 **2:22** Jn 14:26 **2:22** Mt 26:54; 2Pt 1:20 **2:23** Mt 23:37 **2:23** Jn 5:1 **2:23** Jn 10:25; 1Jn 3:23 **2:25** Jr 17:10

2:1-12 It appears that Mary, Jesus's mother, is helping with the food and drink service at the **wedding**,

probably that of a family friend; thus, she notifies Jesus immediately when the wine runs out. At least one of the families in the wedding party is reasonably wealthy—they had multiple servants and a **headwaiter** (lit "ruler of the table" or "master of the banquet"). Running out of **wine** at such a lavish event would be a serious embarrassment to any family, especially a wealthy one. Jesus shows the family great kindness by turning the water into wine, and the miracle had a powerful impact on the faith of his disciples.

2:14-16 Worshipers traveling to the **temple** needed appropriate coinage to purchase animals or to pay the temple tax (Ex 30:11-16). Pagan coinage bearing graven images could not be used. Such coins were exchanged for imageless Tyrian (the closest coin to the old Hebrew shekel) or Jewish temple coins. Jesus **drove everyone out of the temple** because they conducted business in his **Father's house.**

2:20 The restoration of the **temple** most likely began in 20 BC under the reign of Herod the Great and was still underway in Jesus's day, **forty-six years** later. The restoration of the entire temple complex was not finished until AD 63, and the temple was completely destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

3 There was a man from the Pharisees † named Nicodemus, † a ruler †
of the Jews. 2 This man came to him at night and said, "Rabbi, † we
know that you are a teacher † who has come from God, † for no one
could perform these signs you do unless God were with him." †
3 Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born again, † † he cannot
see the kingdom of God." †
4 "How can anyone be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked him. "Can he
enter his mother's womb a second time and be born?"
5 Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, unless someone is born † of water and the
Spirit, † he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 Whatever is born of the flesh †
is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit † is spirit. 7 Do not be amazed that I
told you that you must be born † again. 8 The wind blows where it pleases, and
you hear its sound, but you don't know where it comes from or where it is
going. † So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." †
9 "How can these things be?" asked Nicodemus.
10 "Are you a teacher † of Israel and don't know these things?" Jesus replied.
11 "Truly I tell you, † we speak what we know and we testify to what we have
seen, but you do not accept our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly
things and you don't believe, how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly
things? 13 No one has ascended † into heaven † except the one who descended
from heaven † — the Son of Man. † †

14 “Just as Moses † lifted up the snake in the wilderness, † so the Son of Man
must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him may † have eternal
life. † 16 For God loved † the world in this way: † He gave † his one and
only † Son, † so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have
eternal life. † 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn † the
world, but to save the world through him. 18 Anyone who believes in him is not
condemned, but anyone who does not believe is already condemned, † because
he has not believed in the name † of the one and only Son † of God. 19 This is
the judgment: The light † has come into the world, † and people loved darkness
rather than the light because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does
evil hates † the light and avoids it, † so that his deeds † may not be exposed.
21 But anyone who lives by † the truth comes to the light, so that his works †
may be shown to be accomplished by God.”

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples went to the Judean countryside, where he
spent time with them and baptized.

23 John † also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of
water there. People were coming and being baptized, 24 since John had not yet
been thrown into prison. †

25 Then a dispute arose between John’s disciples † and a Jew † about
purification. † 26 So they came to John and told him, “Rabbi, † the one you
testified about, and who was with you across the Jordan, † is baptizing — and
everyone is going to him.” †

27 John responded, “No one can receive anything unless it has been given to him
from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, †
but I’ve been sent ahead of him.’ † 29 He who has the bride † is the groom. But
the groom’s friend, who stands by and listens for him, rejoices greatly † at the
groom’s voice. So this joy † of mine is complete. 30 He must increase, but I
must decrease.”

THE ONE FROM HEAVEN

31 The one who comes from above † is above all. The one who is from the earth
is earthly and speaks in earthly terms. † The one who comes from heaven is
above all. † 32 He testifies † to what he has seen and heard, and yet no one
accepts his testimony. 33 The one who has accepted his testimony has affirmed
that God is true. † 34 For the one whom God sent speaks God's words, since
he † gives the Spirit † without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son † and has
given all things into his hands. † 36 The one who believes in the Son has eternal
life, but the one who rejects the Son † will not see life; instead, the wrath of God
remains on him. †

3:3 Or *from above*, also in v. 7 **3:10** Or *the teacher* **3:13** Other mss add *who is in heaven* **3:15** Other mss add *not perish, but* **3:16** Or *this much* **3:16** Or *For in this way God loved the world, and so he gave,* or *For God so loved the world that he gave* **3:20** Lit *and does not come to the light* **3:21** Lit *who does* **3:25** Other mss read *and the Jews* **3:29** Lit *with joy rejoices* **3:31** Or *of earthly things* **3:34** Other mss read *since God* **3:36** Or *refuses to believe in the Son,* or *disobeys the Son*

3:1 Mk 7:3 **3:1** Jn 3:4,9; 7:50; 19:39 **3:1** Lk 8:41; 12:58 **3:2** Jn 11:8 **3:2** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **3:2** Mk 1:45 **3:2** Ex 3:12; Jn 15:24; Ac 10:38; Rv 21:3 **3:3** 1Pt 1:3; 1Jn 2:29 **3:3** Mk 1:15; 9:1 **3:5** Mk 9:43 **3:5** Ezk 36:25-27; Ac 22:16; Ti 3:5 **3:6** Php 3:3 **3:6** Jn 1:33 **3:7** 1Pt 1:3 **3:8** Jn 8:14 **3:8** 1Co 2:13-16 **3:11** Jn 1:51; Rv 22:21 **3:13** Jn 20:17 **3:13** Dt 30:12; Jn 6:62; Ac 2:34; Rm 10:6; 1Co 15:47; Eph 4:8-10; Rv 11:12 **3:13** Jn 6:38; 8:23 **3:13** Mk 2:10 **3:14** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **3:14** Nm 21:4-9 **3:15** Mk 10:17; Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **3:16** Jn 12:43; 1Co 13:1; Gl 2:20; Col 1:13; 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13,16; 1Jn 4:7-12; Jd 1 **3:16** 1Jn 4:9 **3:16** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **3:16** Jn 12:25; Rm 5:8; 1Jn 3:16; 4:9-10 **3:17** Jn 8:11 **3:18** Mt 12:41; Mk 16:16 **3:18** Jn 10:25; 1Jn 3:23 **3:18** Jn 5:19 **3:19** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46 **3:19** Jn 18:37; 1Jn 2:8 **3:20** Lk 6:27; 19:14 **3:20** Mk 14:6; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26 **3:21** Jn 5:36 **3:23** Mk 1:4 **3:24** Mk 1:14 **3:25** Mt 9:14; 11:2; 14:12; Mk 2:18; 6:29; Lk 5:33; 7:18-19; 11:1; Jn 1:35,37; 6:3 **3:25** Lv 13–14; Heb 1:3 **3:26** Jn 11:8 **3:26** Mk 10:1; Lk 3:3 **3:26** Mk 1:45 **3:28** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **3:28** Lk 1:17 **3:29** Rv 21:2 **3:29** Jn 15:11 **3:31** Jms 1:17 **3:31** Jn 8:23; 1Jn 4:5-6 **3:32** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **3:33** 1Jn 5:20 **3:34** Jn 1:33 **3:35** Jn 5:20; 10:17; 1Co 13:1 **3:35** Jn 5:19 **3:36** Mk 16:16

3:14 The phrase **lifted up** (Gk *hypsoō*) typically carries the connotation of *exalted*, but Jesus frequently uses this word to describe the nature of his death by crucifixion (e.g., Jn 8:28; 12:32,34).

3:16 See "God's Purposes in a Christian's Participation in Missions," *p. 1191*.

3:29 John the Baptist compares himself to a **groom's friend** who is waiting for the wedding processional of the **groom** (Jesus) to arrive so that the formal wedding celebration can begin. Just as a groom's friend is not jealous that the groom **has the bride**, and that the attention is not on him, so John is not jealous that the Messiah has arrived. Instead he **rejoices greatly.**

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

4 When Jesus † learned that the Pharisees † had heard he was making †
and baptizing more disciples than John † 2 (though Jesus himself was

not baptizing, but his disciples were), 3 he left Judea † and went again to Galilee. † 4 He had to travel through Samaria; † 5 so he came to a town of Samaria called Sychar near the property † that Jacob † had given his son Joseph. † 6 Jacob's well † was there, and Jesus, worn out from his journey, sat down at the well. It was about noon. †

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. †

"Give me a drink," Jesus said to her, 8 because his disciples had gone into town to buy food.

9 "How is it that you, a Jew, † ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan † woman? " she asked him. For Jews do not associate with † Samaritans. †

10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, † and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would ask him, and he would give you living water." †

11 "Sir," † said the woman, "you don't even have a bucket, and the well is deep. So where do you get this 'living water'? 12 You aren't greater than our father Jacob, † are you? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and livestock."

13 Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks from this water will get thirsty again. 14 But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. † In fact, the water I will give him will become a well † † of water springing up in him for eternal life." †

15 "Sir," the woman said to him, "give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and come here to draw water."

16 "Go call your husband," he told her, "and come back here."

17 "I don't have a husband," she answered.

"You have correctly said, 'I don't have a husband,' " Jesus said. 18 "For you've had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."

19 "Sir," the woman replied, "I see that you are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, † but you Jews say that the place to worship is in Jerusalem." †

21 Jesus told her, “Believe me, woman, an hour is coming when you will
worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans
worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know, because
salvation is from the Jews. † 23 But an hour is coming, and is now here, † when
the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. † Yes, the
Father wants such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, † and those who
worship him must worship in Spirit and in truth.” †

25 The woman said to him, “I know that the Messiah † is coming” (who is
called Christ †). “When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26 Jesus told her, “I, the one speaking to you, am he.” †

THE RIPENED HARVEST

27 Just then his disciples arrived, and they were amazed that he was talking with
a woman. Yet no one said, “What do you want? ” or “Why are you talking with
her? ”

28 Then the woman left her water jar, went into town, and told the people,
29 “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the
Messiah? ” † 30 They left the town and made their way to him. †

31 In the meantime the disciples kept urging him, “Rabbi, † eat something.”

32 But he said, “I have food to eat that you don’t know about.”

33 The disciples said to one another, “Could someone have brought him
something to eat? ”

34 “My food is to do the will of him † who sent me † and to finish his work,” †
Jesus told them. 35 “Don’t you say, ‘There are still four more months, and then
comes the harvest’? Listen to what I’m telling you: Open † your eyes and look
at the fields, because they are ready † for harvest. 36 The reaper is already
receiving pay and gathering fruit for eternal life, † so that the sower and reaper
can rejoice together. 37 For in this case the saying is true: ‘One sows and another
reaps.’ † 38 I sent you to reap what you didn’t labor for; others have labored,
and you have benefited from † their labor.”

THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

39 Now many Samaritans † from that town believed in him because of what the
woman said † when she testified, † "He told me everything I ever did." 40 So
when the Samaritans came to him, † they asked him to stay with them, and he
stayed there two days. 41 Many more believed because of what he said. †
42 And they told the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said,
since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior † of the
world." †

A GALILEAN WELCOME

43 After two days he left there for Galilee. † 44 (Jesus himself had testified †
that a prophet has no honor in his own country. †) 45 When † they entered
Galilee, the Galileans † welcomed him because they had seen everything he did
in Jerusalem † during the festival. † For they also had gone to the festival.

THE SECOND SIGN: HEALING AN OFFICIAL'S SON

46 He went again to Cana † of Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine.
There was a certain royal official whose son was ill at Capernaum. † 47 When
this man heard that Jesus had come from Judea † into Galilee, he went to him
and pleaded with him to come down and heal his son, since he was about to die.
48 Jesus told him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, † you will not
believe." †
49 "Sir," † the official said to him, "come down before my boy dies."
50 "Go," Jesus told him, "your son will live." The man believed what † Jesus
said to him and departed.
51 While he was still going down, his servants met him saying that his boy was
alive. 52 He asked them at what time he got better. "Yesterday at one in the
afternoon † the fever left him," they answered. 53 The father † realized this was
the very hour at which Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." So he himself
believed, along with his whole household.
54 Now this was also the second sign † Jesus performed after he came from
Judea to Galilee. †

4:1 Other mss read *the Lord* **4:5** Lit *piece of land* **4:6** Lit *about the sixth hour* **4:9** Or *do not share vessels*

with **4:9** Other mss omit *For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.* **4:14** Or *spring* **4:23** Or *in spirit and truth,* also in v. 24 **4:35** Lit *Raise* **4:35** Lit *white* **4:38** Lit *you have entered into* **4:39** Lit *because of the woman's word* **4:41** Lit *because of his word* **4:42** Other mss add *, the Messiah* **4:50** Lit *the word* **4:52** Lit *at the seventh hour*
4:1 Mk 7:3 **4:1** Mt 28:19-20 **4:1** Mk 1:4 **4:3** Lk 1:5 **4:3** Mt 17:22 **4:4** Ac 1:8 **4:5** Ps 22:23; Mt 1:2; Lk 1:33 **4:5** Gn 30:24; 33:19; 48:22; 49:22 **4:6** Jms 3:11 **4:7** Gn 24:11-17; 29:2-12 **4:9** Jn 11:36; Ac 14:1; Rv 2:9 **4:9** Lk 9:52; Ac 1:8 **4:10** Ac 8:20 **4:10** Gn 26:19; Ps 36:7-9; Is 49:10; 55:1; Jr 2:13; Zch 14:8; Jn 7:38; Rv 7:17; 21:6; 22:1,17 **4:11** Lk 10:1 **4:12** Mt 1:2; Lk 1:33 **4:14** Jn 6:35; 7:37; 1Co 4:11; Rv 7:16; 21:6; 22:17 **4:14** Jms 3:11 **4:14** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48; Rm 8:2; 1Jn 2:25 **4:20** Dt 11:29–12:14; 27:3; Jos 24:1 **4:20** Mt 23:37 **4:22** Gn 12:1-7; Is 2:3; Mal 1:11; Mt 15:24; Jn 11:36; Rm 3:1-2; 9:4-5; 15:8-9 **4:23** Jn 5:25-29; 16:32 **4:24** Jn 1:33; 2Th 2:10; Jd 20 **4:24** 2Th 2:10 **4:25** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **4:25** Ex 29:29; Jn 1:41 **4:26** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **4:29** Mt 1:17 **4:30** Mk 1:45 **4:31** Jn 11:8 **4:34** Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **4:34** Jn 5:30 **4:34** Jn 5:36 **4:36** Mk 10:17; Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **4:37** Lv 26:16; Dt 20:6; Jb 31:8; Mc 6:15; Mt 25:24; Lk 19:21 **4:39** Lk 9:52; Ac 1:8 **4:39** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **4:40** Mk 1:45 **4:42** 2Pt 3:18 **4:43** Is 9:1-2; Mt 17:22 **4:44** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **4:44** Mt 13:57; Mk 6:4; Lk 4:24 **4:45** Mt 4:17; Mk 1:14-15 **4:45** Mt 26:69; Mk 14:70; Lk 13:1-2; 22:59; 23:6; Ac 1:11; 2:7; 5:37 **4:45** Mt 23:37 **4:45** Jn 2:23; 5:1 **4:46** Jn 2:1,11; 21:2 **4:46** Lk 10:15 **4:47** Lk 1:5 **4:48** Ex 7:3-4; Mk 13:22; Jn 2:23-25; 6:26 **4:48** Jn 3:16; 6:64; 20:25 **4:49** Lk 10:1 **4:53** Lk 11:11; Col 3:21 **4:54** Jn 2:11 **4:54** Mt 17:22

4:4 Because of ongoing racial and political strife between Jews and Samaritans, Jews generally avoided the shorter route through **Samaria** when traveling from Judea to Galilee. Usually, they took the long way around on the east side of the Jordan River.

4:9 See "Equality of the Sexes," *p. 1434.*

4:10 Jesus's use of **living water** is a play on words. The phrase was frequently used in Greek to indicate a fresh spring or running water as opposed to a well or cistern. Jesus, however, clearly intends a spiritual meaning—new life in the Holy Spirit (vv. 13-14).

4:20 The Samaritans had their own version of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible); it differed significantly from the OT, especially in identifying Mount Gerizim in Samaria as the location where people were to worship God. The Samaritans had built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. The Samaritan woman mentions this ongoing dispute between Jews and Samaritans, apparently as a way to move the conversation away from the uncomfortable discussion of her marital situation (vv. 16-18).

4:39 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

4:45 The **festival** John refers to here is most likely the Passover celebration, during which Jesus cleansed the temple (2:13-25).

THE THIRD SIGN: HEALING THE SICK

5 After this, a Jewish festival took place, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. † 2 By the Sheep Gate † in Jerusalem there is a pool, called Bethesda † in Aramaic, which has five colonnades. 3 Within these lay a large number of the disabled — blind, lame, and paralyzed. †
5 One man was there who had been disabled for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and realized he had already been there a long time, † he said to him, "Do you want to get well? "

7 “Sir,” † the disabled man answered, “I have no one to put me into the pool
when the water is stirred up, but while I’m coming, someone goes down ahead
of me.”
8 “Get up,” Jesus told him, “pick up your mat and walk.” 9 Instantly the man got
well, picked up his mat, and started to walk.
Now that day was the Sabbath, † 10 and so the Jews † said to the man who had
been healed, “This is the Sabbath. † The law prohibits you from picking up your
mat.”
11 He replied, “The man who made me well † told me, ‘Pick up your mat and
walk.’ ”
12 “Who is this man who told you, ‘Pick up your mat and walk’?” they asked.
13 But the man who was healed did not know who it was, † because Jesus had
slipped away into the crowd that was there. †
14 After this, Jesus found him in the temple † and said to him, “See, you are
well. Do not sin anymore, so that something worse doesn’t happen to you.”
15 The man went and reported to the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him
well. † 16 Therefore, the Jews began persecuting † Jesus † because he was
doing these things on the Sabbath. †

HONORING THE FATHER AND THE SON

17 Jesus responded to them, “My Father † is still working, and I am working
also.” 18 This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: † Not only
was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father,
making himself equal to God.
19 Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own,
but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father † does, the Son
likewise does these things. † 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him
everything he is doing, and he will show him greater works † than these so that
you will be amazed. 21 And just as the Father raises † the dead and gives them
life, so the Son also gives life to whom he wants. † 22 The Father, † in fact,
judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all people may

honor the Son just as they honor the Father. † Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. †

LIFE AND JUDGMENT

24 "Truly I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life † and will not come under judgment but has passed from death to life.

25 "Truly I tell you, an hour is coming, and is now here, † when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. † 26 For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he has granted to the Son † to have life in himself. 27 And he has granted him the right to pass judgment, † because he is the Son of Man. † 28 Do not be amazed at this, because a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice 29 and come out — those who have done good things, to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked things, to the resurrection of condemnation.

30 "I can do nothing on my own. I judge only as I hear, and my judgment † is just, † because I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me. †

WITNESSES TO JESUS

31 "If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony he gives about me is true. † 33 You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. † 34 I don't receive human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 John † † was a burning and shining lamp, † and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. †

36 "But I have a greater testimony than John's because of the works that the Father has given me to accomplish. † These very works I am doing testify about me that the Father has sent † me. 37 The Father who sent me has himself testified † about me. You have not heard his voice at any time, and you haven't seen his form. † 38 You don't have his word residing in you, because you don't believe the one he sent. 39 You pore over the Scriptures † because you think

you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me. † 40 But you are not willing † to come to me † so that you may have life.
41 “I do not accept glory † from people, 42 but I know you — that you have no love for God † within you. 43 I have come in my Father’s name, † and yet you don’t accept me. † If someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.
44 How can you believe, since you accept glory from one another but don’t seek the glory that comes from the only † God? † 45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. Your accuser is Moses, † on whom you have set your hope.
46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. 47 But if you don’t believe what he wrote, † how will you believe my words? ” †

5:2 Some mss read *Bethzatha* ; other mss read *Bethsaida* **5:3** Some mss include vv. 3b-4: — *waiting for the moving of the water, 4because an angel would go down into the pool from time to time and stir up the water. Then the first one who got in after the water was stirred up recovered from whatever ailment he had.* **5:13** Lit *slipped away, there being a crowd in that place* **5:16** Other mss add *and trying to kill him* **5:19** Lit *whatever that one* **5:35** Lit *That man*

5:1 Mt 23:37 **5:2** Neh 3:1,32; 12:39 **5:6** Is 46:10; Zch 14:7; Jn 5:6; 6:6; 8:14; 9:3; 11:11-15; 13:1-3,11 **5:7** Lk 10:1 **5:9** Mk 2:23 **5:10** Jn 11:36 **5:10** Lk 14:3 **5:11** Ti 2:8 **5:13** Jn 7:28 **5:14** Ac 21:26 **5:15** Ti 2:8 **5:16** Lk 6:28; 2Tm 3:12 **5:16** Lk 13:10 **5:17** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **5:18** Mt 12:14; 26:4; 27:1; Mk 3:6; 14:1; Lk 6:11; Jn 7:1,19; 10:33; 11:53 **5:19** Jn 3:35; 6:38; 7:16,28; 8:26-42; 10:18,30,36-38; 12:49-50; 14:9,24,31; 15:9-10; 16:15; 17:9-10 **5:20** Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **5:21** Mk 9:27; Jn 2:19 **5:21** Jn 11:25-26 **5:22** Mt 11:27 **5:23** Jn 15:23 **5:23** Lk 10:16 **5:24** Jn 6:53; 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Jn 2:25 **5:25** Jn 4:23 **5:25** Php 1:21 **5:26** Jn 5:19; Col 1:19 **5:27** 2Th 1:5 **5:27** Mk 2:10; Heb 2:6; Rv 1:13; 14:14 **5:30** Mt 12:41; 2Th 1:5 **5:30** Mt 6:33; Jn 8:16 **5:30** Mt 26:39; Jn 4:34; 6:38; 7:16-18; 8:28; 14:10; Rm 8:27; Eph 1:9 **5:32** 1Jn 5:20 **5:33** Ps 119:142; Jn 14:6 **5:35** Mk 1:4 **5:35** 2Sm 21:17; Mt 5:14-15; Lk 12:35; 2Pt 1:19; Rv 21:23 **5:35** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46 **5:36** Jn 15:24 **5:36** Mk 9:37; Jn 1:6,33 **5:37** 1Jn 5:9 **5:37** Ex 33:11; Dt 4:12; Is 6:1; Lk 3:22; Jn 1:18; 6:46-47; 14:9; 1Tm 1:17 **5:39** Mt 26:54; 2Pt 1:20 **5:39** Lk 24:27,44; Ac 13:27 **5:40** Lk 13:34 **5:40** Lk 14:26 **5:41** Jn 17:24; Php 3:19; 1Pt 5:4 **5:42** Lk 10:27; 11:42; 1Jn 4:20 **5:43** Jn 10:25; 14:13; Ac 15:14; Rv 14:1 **5:43** Mk 4:16; Jn 1:12; 12:48; 13:20; 17:8 **5:44** Dt 6:4; Jn 17:3; Rm 3:30; 16:27; 1Tm 1:17; 6:15-16; Jd 25; Rv 15:4 **5:44** 1Th 2:4 **5:45** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **5:47** Mt 26:54; Rm 1:2 **5:47** Lk 16:29-31

5:3 The subsequent verse 4 text recorded in the footnote was probably not original to John; the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of the NT do not contain those words. More likely they represent the superstition of the day about healings that were believed to have happened at the pool of Bethesda. It is unknown what made the water in the pool stir occasionally (5:7), but Jesus does not give the superstition credence. He simply heals the man with his divine power.

5:16 Pharisees and other Jewish religious leaders had developed a wide variety of customs related to exactly what a person could and could not do without violating the law of Moses’s prohibition against working on the **Sabbath** (cp. Ex 20:10; 35:2). Jesus did not violate the law of Moses, but he did run afoul of the Pharisaic regulations.

5:17 See “A Biblical View of Work,” *p. 1478.*

5:18 When John records the Jewish religious leaders' objection that Jesus was **calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God**, he is summarizing the teaching of Jesus about himself. Jesus explains this more fully in vv. 19-23. Specifically, Jesus claims to have a unique relationship to God: he is the Son of God; he does the Lord's will (v. 19); he gives eternal life (v. 21); he judges all things (v. 22); and he raises the dead (vv. 25-29). Jewish religious leaders believed Jesus regarded himself equal with God —because he was.

5:28-29 Jesus apparently draws on the prophecy of Daniel 12:2, "Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, and some to disgrace and eternal contempt." He affirms the general resurrection of the dead, in which all people will be raised for the purpose of judgment. Additionally, Jesus sees himself as the One who will enact this resurrection, since the dead will rise when they **hear his voice.**

5:31 Jesus provides four witnesses to the truths he has just taught (vv. 19-30). Jewish legal tradition required multiple witnesses to establish any disputable fact. Jesus provided more than ample evidence that he was sent by God.

THE FOURTH SIGN: FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND

6 After † this, Jesus crossed the Sea of Galilee † (or Tiberias †). 2 A huge crowd was following him because they saw the signs that he was performing by healing the sick. 3 Jesus went up a mountain and sat down there with his disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a Jewish festival, was near. 5 So when Jesus looked up and noticed a huge crowd coming toward him, † he asked Philip, † "Where will we buy bread so that these people can eat?" 6 He asked this to test him, † for he himself knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii † † worth of bread wouldn't be enough for each of them to have a little."

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, † Simon † Peter's † brother, said to him, 9 "There's a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish — but what are they for so many?"

10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down."

There was plenty of grass in that place; so they sat down. The men numbered about five thousand. † 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, and after giving thanks he distributed them to those who were seated — so also with the fish, as much as they wanted. †

12 When they were full, he told his disciples, "Collect the leftovers so that nothing is wasted." † 13 So they collected them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces from the five barley loaves that were left over by those who had eaten.

14 When the people saw the sign † he had done, they said, “This truly is the
Prophet † who is to come † into the world.” †
15 Therefore, when Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by
force to make him king, † he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

THE FIFTH SIGN: WALKING ON WATER

16 When † evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat,
and started across the sea to Capernaum. † Darkness had already set in, but
Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 A high wind arose, and the sea began to
churn. 19 After they had rowed about three or four miles, † they saw Jesus
walking on the sea. He was coming near the boat, and they were afraid. 20 But
he said to them, “It is I. † † Don’t be afraid.” 21 Then they were willing to take
him on board, and at once the boat was at the shore where they were heading.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

22 The next day, the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw there
had been only one boat. † † They also saw that Jesus had not boarded the boat
with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone off alone. 23 Some boats from
Tiberias † came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord
had given thanks. 24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples
were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus.
25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, †
when did you get here? ”
26 Jesus answered, “Truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you
saw † the signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. 27 Don’t work
for the food that perishes † but for the food that lasts for eternal life, † which
the Son of Man † will give you, because God the Father † has set his seal of
approval on him.”
28 “What can we do to perform the works of God? ” they asked.
29 Jesus replied, “This is the work † of God — that you believe in the one he
has sent.” †

30 “What sign, then, are you going to do so we may see and believe you?” they
asked. “What are you going to perform? 31 Our ancestors ate the manna † in the
wilderness, † just as it is written: **He gave them bread from heaven to
eat.**” † †
32 Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, Moses † didn’t give you the bread from
heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of
God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”
34 Then they said, “Sir, give us this bread always.”
35 “I am † the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me † will
ever be hungry, † and no one who believes in me † will ever be thirsty † again.
36 But as I told you, you’ve seen me, † and yet you do not believe. 37 Everyone
the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never
cast out. † 38 For I have come down from heaven, † not to do my own will, but
the will of him † who sent me. 39 This is the will of him who sent me: that I
should lose none of those he has given me but should raise † them up on the last
day. 40 For this is the will of my Father: † that everyone who sees the Son †
and believes in him will have eternal life, and I will raise † him up on the last
day.”
41 Therefore the Jews started complaining about him because he said, “I am the
bread that came down from heaven.” 42 They were saying, “Isn’t this Jesus the
son of Joseph, † whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I
have come down from heaven’?”
43 Jesus answered them, “Stop complaining among yourselves. 44 No one can
come to me unless the Father who sent me draws † him, and I will raise him up
on the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: † **And they will all be taught by
God.** † † Everyone who has listened to and learned from the Father † comes to
me — 46 not that anyone has seen the Father † except the one who is from
God. † He has seen the Father. †
47 “Truly I tell you, anyone who believes † has eternal life. 48 I am the bread of
life. 49 Your ancestors ate the manna † in the wilderness, † and they died.

50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven so that anyone may eat of it
and not die. † 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone
eats of this bread he will live † forever. † The bread that I will give for the
life † of the world is my flesh." †
52 At that, the Jews argued † among themselves, † "How can this man give us
his flesh to eat? "
53 So Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of
Man † and drink his blood, † you do not have life in yourselves. 54 The one
who eats my flesh and drinks my blood † has eternal life, and I will raise † him
up on the last day, 55 because my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.
56 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in
him. † 57 Just as the living † Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so
the one who feeds on me will live † because of me. 58 This is the bread that
came down from heaven; it is not like the manna † your ancestors ate — and
they died. The one who eats this bread will live forever." †
59 He said these things while teaching in the synagogue † in Capernaum. †

MANY DISCIPLES DESERT JESUS

60 Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is
hard. Who can accept † it? "
61 Jesus, knowing in himself † that his disciples were complaining about this,
asked them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you were to observe the Son
of Man † ascending † to where he was before? 63 The Spirit † is the one who
gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are
spirit and are life. 64 But there are some among you who don't believe." (For
Jesus knew from the beginning † those who did not † believe and the one who
would betray † him.) 65 He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come
to me † unless it is granted to him by the Father."
66 From that moment † many of his disciples turned back and no longer
accompanied him. 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, † "You don't want to go
away too, do you? "

68 Simon Peter † answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” † †

70 Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? † Yet one of you is a devil.” † 71 He was referring to Judas, † Simon Iscariot’s son, † one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray † him.

6:7 A denarius = one day’s wage **6:14** Other mss read *signs* **6:19** Lit *twenty-five or thirty stadia* ; one *stadion* = 600 feet **6:20** Lit *“I am* **6:22** Other mss add *into which his disciples had entered* **6:26** Or *perceived* **6:36** Other mss omit *me* **6:44** Or *brings*, or *leads* **6:47** Other mss add *in me* **6:58** Other mss omit *the manna* **6:60** Lit *hear* **6:64** Other mss omit *not* **6:66** Or *Because of this* **6:69** Other mss read *you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God* **6:71** Or *Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son*

6:1-15 Mt 14:13-21; Mk 6:30-44; Lk 9:10-17 **6:1** Mk 1:16 **6:1** Jn 6:23; 21:1 **6:5** Mk 1:45 **6:5** Mk 3:18 **6:6** Ex 15:25 **6:7** Mt 18:28 **6:8** Mt 4:18; 10:2; Mk 1:16,29; 3:18; 13:3; Lk 6:14; Jn 1:40,44; 12:22; Ac 1:13 **6:8** Mt 16:17 **6:8** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **6:10** Mt 14:21 **6:11** 2Kg 4:42-44 **6:12** Lk 15:4 **6:14** Dt 18:15 **6:14** Mt 11:3; Lk 7:19-20; Rm 5:14; Heb 10:37 **6:14** Jn 18:37 **6:15** Jn 19:21 **6:16-21** Mt 14:22-36; Mk 6:45-56 **6:17** Lk 10:15 **6:20** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **6:22** Jn 21:8 **6:23** Jn 6:1; 21:1 **6:25** Jn 11:8 **6:27** Is 55:2 **6:27** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Jn 2:25 **6:27** Dn 7:13; Mk 2:10; Jn 6:53,62 **6:27** 1Co 8:6; 15:24; Eph 5:20 **6:29** Jn 5:36 **6:29** Mk 9:37; Jn 1:6 **6:31** Ex 16:31 **6:31** Rv 12:6 **6:31** Ex 16:4; Ps 78:24 **6:31** Ex 16:4,15; Ps 78:24 **6:32** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **6:35** Jn 8:24 **6:35** Lk 14:26 **6:35** Jn 4:14; Rv 7:16 **6:35** Mt 18:6; Mk 9:42; Jn 6:35; 7:38; 11:25-26; 12:44,46; 14:12; 16:9 **6:35** Jn 7:37 **6:37** Mt 24:22 **6:38** Ex 3:8; Pr 30:4; Dn 4:13,23; Mt 28:2; Jn 1:51; 3:13; Eph 4:10; Rv 10:1; 18:1; 20:1 **6:38** Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **6:39** Lk 18:33 **6:40** Mt 11:27 **6:40** Jn 5:19 **6:40** Mt 16:21 **6:42** Jn 1:45 **6:45** Mt 2:23; Ac 7:52 **6:45** Is 54:13 **6:45** Is 54:13 **6:45** 1Co 2:13; 1Th 4:9; 1Jn 2:20 **6:46** Ex 33:20; Jn 5:47 **6:46** Jn 16:27 **6:46** Lk 10:22; Jn 8:38; 14:9 **6:49** Ex 16:12-36 **6:49** Rv 12:6 **6:50** Jn 11:26 **6:51** Php 1:21 **6:51** Rv 4:9 **6:51** Jn 5:26; 6:53 **6:51** Php 3:3; Heb 10:10 **6:52** 2Tm 2:24 **6:52** Jn 9:16; 10:19 **6:53** Mk 2:10 **6:53** Heb 9:12 **6:54** Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:15-20; 1Co 11:23-25 **6:54** Mt 16:21 **6:56** Jn 15:4-5; 1Jn 3:24; 4:13-16 **6:57** Mt 25:31-46; Heb 10:31 **6:57** Php 1:21; 1Pt 1:18 **6:58** Rv 4:9 **6:59** Jms 2:2 **6:59** Lk 10:15 **6:61** Mk 10:32; Jn 1:47-48; 2:24-25; 4:17-18; 9:3; 11:4,11; 13:10-11,38 **6:62** Mk 2:10 **6:62** Jn 3:13; 20:17; Ac 1:9 **6:63** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **6:64** Jn 16:30; Ac 26:4 **6:64** Mt 10:4; Jn 13:21 **6:65** Lk 14:26 **6:67** Mk 11:11 **6:68** Lk 6:14 **6:69** Mk 1:24 **6:70** Jn 13:18 **6:70** Mt 4:1,10; Jn 13:2,27; Ac 13:10 **6:71** Mk 3:19 **6:71** Mt 10:4; Jn 13:21

6:4 Passover was the **festival** of Israel in which they commemorated God’s rescue of his people from the judgment of death (Ex 12:1-28) and the slavery of Egypt (12:29-42). Three different Passovers are mentioned in John’s Gospel: in John 2, in John 6, and then in John 11:5, the final Passover. The related feast was commonly celebrated with the breaking of bread, and John, by connecting Passover (v. 4) with the feeding of the five thousand (vv. 1-15), puts Jesus at the center of the celebration. Just as John the Baptist announced that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (2:29), so Jesus shed his body and blood as the Passover Lamb to rescue the world from sin and death (3:16).

6:35 This is the first of seven qualified **I am** statements of Jesus in this Gospel. Jesus uses these metaphors to describe who he is and what he has come to do. Jesus is **the bread of life** (6:35,45); the light of the world (8:12; 9:5); the door (to the sheep pen; 10:7,9); the good shepherd (10:11); the resurrection and the life (11:25); the way, the truth and the life (14:6); and the true vine (15:1; see the note at 8:58 for a discussion of the *unqualified* “I am” statements of Jesus). Jesus identifies himself as the bread of life because of the spiritual life that faith in the Messiah offers. Like the manna that came down from heaven in

Israel's ancient history (Ex 16:4), Jesus fulfills all the spiritual needs of God's people, including eternal life and the resurrection from the dead (v. 40).

6:60 The **disciples** found the **teaching** that Jesus the Messiah would be destroyed, broken, and consumed (like food; vv. 53-58) offensive and overwhelming. They were unfamiliar with this picture of a Messiah and did not want it, but Jesus was clear that the Messiah would die and leave them (v. 62). As a result of this teaching, many of Jesus's disciples abandoned him (v. 66).

THE UNBELIEF OF JESUS'S BROTHERS

7 After this, Jesus traveled in Galilee, † since he did not want to travel in
Judea † because the Jews † were trying to kill him. † 2 The Jewish
Festival of Shelters † † was near. 3 So his brothers † said to him,
"Leave here and go to Judea so your disciples can see your works † that you are
doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he's seeking public
recognition. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." 5 (For not even
his brothers believed in him.) 6 Jesus told them, "My time † has not yet arrived,
but your time is always at hand. 7 The world cannot hate † you, but it does hate
me because I testify about it — that its works are evil. 8 Go up to the festival
yourselves. I'm not going up to this festival, † because my time has not yet fully
come." 9 After he had said these things, he stayed in Galilee.

JESUS AT THE FESTIVAL OF SHELTERS

10 After his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up, not
openly but secretly. 11 The Jews were looking for him at the festival and saying,
"Where is he?" 12 And there was a lot of murmuring about him among the
crowds. Some were saying, "He's a good † man." Others were saying, "No, on
the contrary, he's deceiving † the people." 13 Still, nobody was talking publicly
about him for fear of the Jews.

14 When the festival was already half over, Jesus went up into the temple † and
began to teach. 15 Then the Jews were amazed and said, "How is this man so
learned, † since he hasn't been trained?"

16 Jesus answered them, "My teaching isn't mine but is from the one who sent
me. † 17 If anyone wants to do his will, † he will know whether the teaching is
from God or whether I am speaking on my own. 18 The one who speaks on his

own seeks his own glory; † but he who seeks the glory † of the one who sent him is true, † and there is no unrighteousness in him. † 19 Didn't Moses † give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law. † Why are you trying to kill me?"
20 "You have a demon!" the crowd responded. "Who is trying to kill you?"
21 "I performed one work, † and you are all amazed," Jesus answered. 22 "This is why Moses has given you circumcision † — not that it comes from Moses but from the fathers † — and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. † 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath † so that the law of Moses † won't be broken, are you angry at me because I made a man entirely well on the Sabbath? 24 Stop judging † according to outward appearances; rather judge according to righteous judgment."

THE IDENTITY OF THE MESSIAH

25 Some of the people of Jerusalem † were saying, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? 26 Yet, look, he's speaking publicly and they're saying nothing to him. Can it be true that the authorities † know he is the Messiah? † 27 But we know where this man is from. † When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he is from."
28 As he was teaching in the temple, † Jesus cried out, "You know me and you know where I am from. Yet I have not come on my own, but the one who sent me † is true. You don't know him; † 29 I know him because I am from him, and he sent me." †
30 Then they tried to seize him. Yet no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come. 31 However, many from the crowd believed in him and said, "When the Messiah comes, he won't perform more signs than this man has done, † will he?" 32 The Pharisees † heard the crowd murmuring these things about him, and so the chief priests † and the Pharisees sent servants † to arrest him.
33 Then Jesus said, "I am only with you for a short time. † Then I'm going to the one who sent me. † 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come." †

35 Then the Jews † said to one another, “Where does he intend to go so we
won’t find him? He doesn’t intend to go to the Jewish people dispersed † †
among the Greeks † and teach the Greeks, does he? 36 What is this remark he
made: ‘You will look for me, and you will not find me; and where I am, you
cannot come’ † ? ”

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

37 On the last and most important day of the festival, † Jesus stood up and cried
out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me † † and drink. † 38 The one who
believes in me, † as the Scripture † has said, will have streams of living
water † flow † from deep within him.” 39 He said this about the Spirit. † Those
who believed in Jesus were going to receive the Spirit, † for the Spirit † had not
yet been given † because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

THE PEOPLE ARE DIVIDED OVER JESUS

40 When some from the crowd heard these words, they said, “This truly is the
Prophet.” † 41 Others said, “This is the Messiah.” But some said, “Surely the
Messiah doesn’t come from Galilee, does he? 42 Doesn’t the Scripture † say
that the Messiah comes from David’s † offspring † and from the town of
Bethlehem, † where David lived? ” 43 So the crowd was divided † because of
him. 44 Some of them wanted to seize him, † but no one laid hands on him.

DEBATE OVER JESUS’S CLAIMS

45 Then the servants † came to the chief priests † and Pharisees, who asked
them, “Why didn’t you bring him? ”

46 The servants answered, “No man ever spoke like this! ” † †

47 Then the Pharisees responded to them: “Are you fooled † too? 48 Have any
of the rulers † or Pharisees believed in him? 49 But this crowd, which doesn’t
know the law, is accursed.”

50 Nicodemus † — the one who came to him previously and who was one of
them — said to them, 51 “Our law doesn’t judge a man before it hears from him
and knows what he’s doing, does it? ” †

52 “You aren’t from Galilee † too, are you?” they replied. “Investigate and you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee.” †

[The earliest mss do not include 7:53–8:11.] †

[53 Then each one went to his house.

7:2 Or *Tabernacles*, or *Booths* **7:8** Other mss add *yet* **7:32** Or *temple police*, or *officers*, also in vv. 45,46 **7:35** Gk *diaspora* ; Jewish people scattered throughout Gentile lands **7:37** Other mss omit *to me* **7:39** Other mss read *Holy Spirit* **7:39** Lit *the Spirit was not yet* **7:42** Lit *seed* **7:46** Other mss read *like this man* **7:53-8:11** Other mss include all or some of the passage after Jn 7:36,44,52; 21:25; or Lk 21:38.
7:1 Mt 17:22 **7:1** Lk 1:5 **7:1** Jn 11:36 **7:1** Jn 5:18 **7:2** Ex 23:16 **7:3** Mk 3:21,31-35; 6:3; Lk 8:19 **7:3** Mk 6:28; Jn 5:36; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **7:6** Ps 37:39; Lk 20:10; Jn 7:8 **7:7** Lk 6:27; 19:14 **7:12** Gn 1:31 **7:12** Rv 20:10 **7:14** Ac 21:26 **7:15** Mt 26:54 **7:16** Jn 5:19,30 **7:17** Rm 8:27; Eph 1:9 **7:18** Php 3:19 **7:18** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 1Pt 5:4; 2Pt 3:18 **7:18** Jn 8:14; 1Jn 5:20 **7:18** 1Jn 3:5 **7:19** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **7:19** Rm 2:12-29; 3:9-10,20-23,27-28 **7:21** Jn 5:36; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **7:22** Ac 15:1; Gl 6:15 **7:22** Gn 17:9-14; Lv 12:3 **7:22** Mk 2:23 **7:23** Lk 13:10 **7:23** Lk 2:22 **7:24** Lk 6:37; Heb 9:27 **7:25** Mt 23:37 **7:26** Lk 8:41; 12:58 **7:26** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **7:27** Mt 13:55; 21:11; Lk 4:22; Jn 6:42 **7:28** Ac 21:26 **7:28** Jn 5:19 **7:28** Jn 1:26-33; 5:13; 8:14,19,55; 9:29-30; 12:35; 13:7; 14:5; 15:15,21; 20:14; Gl 4:8; 1Th 4:5; 2Th 1:8; Ti 1:16 **7:29** Mk 9:37; Lk 10:22; Jn 1:6; 9:16 **7:31** Jn 15:24 **7:32** Mk 7:3 **7:32** Mt 2:4 **7:33** Jn 12:35; 14:19; 16:5,16 **7:33** Jn 14:12; 16:5,10,17,28 **7:34** Jn 8:21; 13:33 **7:35** Jn 11:36 **7:35** Jms 1:1; 1Pt 1:1 **7:35** Gl 2:3 **7:36** Jn 8:21 **7:37** Lv 23:34-36; Nm 29:35; Dt 16:13-14; Neh 8:18; Jn 5:1 **7:37** Lk 14:26 **7:37** Is 55:1; Rv 22:17 **7:38** Jn 6:35 **7:38** Mt 26:54 **7:38** Jn 4:10-14 **7:38** Ex 17:1-6; Ps 78:15-16; 105:40-41; Pr 18:4; Is 12:3; Ezk 47:1-11; Zch 14:8; Rv 22:1-2 **7:39** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; 8:15; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **7:39** Ac 2:33 **7:40** Jn 6:14 **7:42** 2Pt 1:20 **7:42** Lk 1:27 **7:42** Gn 35:19 **7:43** Jn 9:16; 1Co 1:10 **7:44** Jn 10:39 **7:45** Jn 18:18 **7:45** Mt 2:4 **7:46** Mt 7:28-29 **7:47** Rv 20:10 **7:48** Lk 8:41 **7:50** Jn 3:1; 19:39 **7:51** Dt 1:16; 17:6; 19:15 **7:52** Mt 17:22 **7:52** 2Kg 14:25

7:2,10 The **Festival of Shelters**, much like the Passover, celebrated God’s rescue of his people from slavery in Egypt. During this celebration, Jewish people lived in small huts or tents to remember the time when their forefathers wandered in the wilderness after the exodus. Jesus uses this opportunity to continue to argue that he is the Messiah and that the story of Israel in the OT is ultimately about him. The Jewish leadership clearly understands what Jesus means, because many of them want to kill him for his teaching (7:40-44).

7:27 Beyond some of the OT’s clearer teachings about the background of the Messiah (e.g., 8:42—family line, home town), there were many contemporary theories about how to identify the Messiah. **When the Messiah comes, nobody will know where he is from**, is a saying reflecting one of the many contradictory beliefs about how the Messiah could be identified (cp. 7:42).

7:32 Rome allowed the Jews to maintain a small military force to protect the temple and the area immediately around it. These **servants**, or temple police, most likely answered directly to the Sanhedrin.

7:35 Since the Babylonian exile, a large number of Jews lived outside Palestine, **dispersed among the Greeks** (Gentiles). This community was known as the diaspora; it was spread throughout the Roman Empire.

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. †

AN ADULTERESS FORGIVEN

2 At dawn he went to the temple † again, and all the people were coming to
him. † He sat down † and began to teach them.
3 Then the scribes and the Pharisees † brought a woman caught in adultery, †
making her stand in the center. 4 "Teacher," they said to him, "this woman was
caught in the act of committing adultery. † 5 In the law Moses † commanded us
to stone such women. † So what do you say?" 6 They asked this to trap him, †
in order that they might have evidence to accuse him.
Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with his finger. 7 When
they persisted in questioning him, he stood up and said to them, "The one
without sin † among you † should be the first to throw a stone at her." †
8 Then he stooped down again and continued writing on the ground. 9 When
they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only he was
left, with the woman in the center. 10 When Jesus stood up, he said to her,
"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"
11 "No one, Lord," † she answered.
"Neither do I condemn you," † said Jesus. "Go, and from now on do not sin
anymore."]

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

Living in the Information Age, with its ease of travel and communication, increasingly make the world a global village. We in the West today are far more likely to have Hindus and Muslims as neighbors or work colleagues than just a generation or two ago. With this exposure to different cultures and religions come "Coexist" bumper stickers and the message that "all religions are basically the same" or "that there isn't just one true religion."

Ironically, that's not what the founders of the world's leading religions themselves believed. They took quite seriously certain "make-or-break" doctrines—tenets central to salvation or liberation.

For example, Muhammad claimed to be the final prophet of God, and he repudiated polytheism (belief in many gods) in favor of monotheism (belief in one God). Buddha rejected the Hindu doctrine of the enduring soul (*atman*) in favor of the no-self doctrine (*anatman*), in which the soulless individual is more like a shifting, flickering candle, a stream of consciousness, a bundle of ever-changing properties. Moreover, Buddha insisted that suffering comes from attachment to a transient, unstable world (an enduring God, therefore, does not exist). To resolve the problem of suffering, he believed, our desires or cravings

must be extinguished. By contrast, Jesus of Nazareth did not deny desires (cp. Ps 42:2, where the psalmist "thirsts" for God); the human problem is not desiring, but desiring the wrong things. Moreover, Jesus insisted that he himself was the only way to the Father and the complete, final revelation of God (Jn 14:6-9; cp. Ac 4:12; 1Tm 2:5). He was not merely a "good moral teacher," as many religions outside Christianity suggest.

Because these faiths are not basically the same, they cannot all be true in what they affirm. They conflict at key points—the nature of reality (God or no god?), human nature (self or no self?), the human problem (ignorance, desire, sin?), the solution to this problem (enlightenment, extinction of desire, repentance and reconciliation with God?), and the afterlife (reincarnation, annihilation, union with or separation from God?).

CHRISTIANITY AND THEISTIC RELIGIONS

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Westerners started to hear not only that "Islam is a religion of peace," but many positive affirmations about the message of "the Abrahamic religions"—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These religions are monotheistic, and many assume there is no salvific (saving) difference among them. After all, the argument goes, our faiths are rooted in the same historical figure, Abraham, "the father of us all." And don't these religions hold in common that one personal, powerful, good, self-existent Creator exists, that he made a world distinct from himself, and that he created humans as uniquely endowed and capable of relating in some way to him? So aren't these theisms compatible and thus equally capable of saving us from our profoundly damaged condition?

Before responding directly to this question, we can readily affirm that a personal, intelligent, very powerful, good God exists—that the universe's beginning and fine-tuning as well as beauty, human consciousness, free will, rationality, and intrinsic human dignity make sense if a powerful, intelligent, imaginative, conscious, free, and good Being is behind them. Furthermore, we can affirm a number of overlapping beliefs among the Abrahamic faiths—the place of fasting; giving to the poor; prayer; belief in angels, prophets, an afterlife; and a final judgment. These three theistic religions affirm that God is one (e.g., Dt 6:4; 1Co 8:6; Jms 2:19; and the Muslim confession "there is no God but Allah"). Indeed, theists share more of a common worldview than they do with Buddhists, Confucians, or Hindus. So it would be wrong to think that if, say, the Christian faith is true, then all other religions are completely false. Instead, we should affirm that the Christian faith is true and that where other religions disagree on various tenets, then at that point they are in error.

When we say truth and error, let's not miss a fundamental point: we ought to believe something not because it makes us feel good, gives us a warm community, or fills our lives with purpose, but because it is true. Many people today treat religious beliefs as if they were in a metaphysical buffet line: "I like reincarnation. I don't like sin and judgment. I prefer to think of Jesus as a good moral teacher." Rather, we should ask: "which religion or philosophy of life is true? Which makes the best sense of the fundamental features of the universe and of our human experience?" Of course, with the truth of the Christian faith come power, purpose, community, hope, and much more.

Just as not all religions are equally capable of bringing salvation or liberation, so not all theistic religions are capable of bringing salvation either. Indeed, there is strong disagreement at fundamental points even here.

For example, many religious Jews in Jesus's day repudiated his messianic claims and ministry and his divine identity (Lk 5:21, Jn 1:11)—just as many in the Jewish community today would similarly reject Jesus. According to the NT, Jesus was put to death by, yes, monotheistic Jews who considered Abraham their father and Jesus an imposter and blasphemer. On the other hand, the earliest Christians were Jewish (see Ac 15), and many of them incorrectly believed that one could not be a Christian unless one was also a Jew.

As for Islam, a key tenet of the Muslim faith is that "Muhammad is [Allah's] messenger." The NT strongly affirms that Jesus is the final revelation of God and that nothing beyond Jesus is necessary (Heb

1:1-3). He is the Creator, Lord of all, and Savior of humankind. The very early Christians worshiped this risen Lord as One who shares in the identity of God (Jn 1:1-3; 1Co 8:6; 16:22; Php 2:9-11; Col 1:15-20; 1Jn 2:2). Jesus is more than a prophet—contrary to Islam's claims. Jesus is also the fulfillment of God's promises to the ancient nation of Israel (Lk 24:44); he is the faithful Israelite who lived out Israel's story and, through his death and resurrection, would bring salvation to the Gentiles to fulfill the promise to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3). For a Jew to reject Jesus as Messiah (the "anointed one") is to reject the very gift of God's salvation and hope for a new creation (cp. 2Co 5:17).

THE TRINITY AND THEISTIC RELIGIONS

Whereas traditional Judaism and Islam are unitarian, affirming that God is one person, the Christian faith is Trinitarian, affirming that there are three persons—Father, Son, and Spirit—who share the same divine nature and being. Islam expressly rejects the doctrine of the Trinity, which Muslims consider polytheism (a belief in multiple gods). As the Qur'an says, "Say not 'Trinity': desist . . . For God is One God" (4:171; cp. 5:76).

The problem, however, is that Islam itself misunderstands the doctrine of the Trinity. The Qur'an makes the mistaken claim that Christians worship three gods: the Father, Mary, and Jesus (5:116). No orthodox Christian would affirm that Mary is a person of the divine Trinity or that the Trinity consists of three gods. The Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—are equally divine and, like a triangle's three angles, are inseparable in being.

Furthermore, the Muslim misunderstands Jesus as the "Son of God," believing that this means that God literally had sex with Mary to produce Jesus: "They do blaspheme who say: God is Christ the son of Mary" (5:75). But again, orthodox Christians would repudiate this misrepresentation, stating that "Father" and "Son" are figurative and not literal (biological) categories.

Also, according to the Qur'an (4:157–8), Jesus was not crucified but was taken up to Allah. Yet the NT clearly affirms that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified under the Roman governor Pontius Pilate—a point confirmed by the non-Christian Jewish historian Josephus and other first-century writers.

Moreover, the Christian faith is founded on the historical fact of Jesus's bodily resurrection—a verifiable, historical event for which there is excellent evidence, as scholars such as William Lane Craig, Gary Habermas, and N. T. Wright make clear. Paul announces in 1 Corinthians 15 that if Christ has not been raised from the dead (which assumes his crucifixion and burial), there is no Christian faith and no salvation. That would mean that we Christians are still in our sins, and people ought to feel sorry for us who believe a delusion that happens to "give us purpose" just for this earthly life. Paul emphatically said we should reject such a foolish way of thinking (1Co 15:12-20,32). If Christ has not been raised, there is no Christian faith at all, and the promises to Abraham have not been fulfilled.

SUMMARY

Merely clinging to an Abrahamic religion devoid of Christ's centrality actually misses the point of the promises to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3). Clearly, not all "theisms" are created equal. They cannot all be true, and the pivotal consideration for each of them is the identity of Jesus of Nazareth.

PAUL COPAN

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

12 Jesus spoke to them again: "I am † the light † of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." †

13 So the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying about yourself. Your testimony is not valid.”
14 “Even if I testify about myself,” Jesus replied, “My testimony is true, because I know where I came from and where I’m going. But you don’t know where I come from or where I’m going. † 15 You judge † by human standards. † † I judge no one. † 16 And if I do judge, my judgment is true, because it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. † 17 Even in your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. † 18 I am the one who testifies † about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me.”
19 Then they asked him, “Where is your Father? ”
“You know neither me nor my Father,” † Jesus answered. “If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” † 20 He spoke these words by the treasury, † while teaching in the temple. But no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEPARTURE

21 Then he said to them again, “I’m going away; † you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. † Where I’m going, you cannot come.” †
22 So the Jews said again, “He won’t kill himself, will he, since he says, ‘Where I’m going, you cannot come’ † ? ”
23 “You are from below,” he told them, “I am from above. † You are of this world; † I am not of this world. † 24 Therefore I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins.”
25 “Who are you? ” they questioned.
“Exactly what I’ve been telling you from the very beginning,” Jesus told them.
26 “I have many things to say and to judge about you, but the one who sent me † is true, and what I have heard from him — these things I tell the world.” †
27 They did not know he was speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, † then you will know that I am † he, and that I do nothing on my own. † But just as the Father taught me, I say these things. 29 The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, † because I always do what pleases him.”

TRUTH AND FREEDOM

30 As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you continue in my word, † † you really are my disciples. 32 You will know the truth, † and the truth will set you free."

33 "We are descendants † of Abraham," † they answered him, "and we have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, 'You will become free'?"

34 Jesus responded, "Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. † 35 A slave does not remain in the household forever, † but a son does remain forever. † 36 So if the Son sets you free, you really will be free. 37 I know you are descendants of Abraham, † but you are trying to kill me because my word has no place among you. 38 I speak what I have seen † in the presence of the Father; † † so then, you do what you have heard from your father."

39 "Our father is Abraham," they replied.

"If you were Abraham's children," Jesus told them, "you would do what Abraham did. † 40 But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth † that I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You're doing what your father does." †

"We weren't born † of sexual immorality," † they said. "We have one Father — God." †

42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, † because I came from God † and I am here. For I didn't come on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why don't you understand what I say? Because you cannot listen to † my word. † 44 You are of your father the devil, † and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer † from the beginning † and does not stand in the truth, † because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, † because he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. 46 Who among you can convict me of sin? † If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 The one who is

from God listens to God's words. This is why you don't listen, because you are not from God."

JESUS AND ABRAHAM

48 The Jews responded to him, "Aren't we right in saying that you're a Samaritan † and have a demon?" †

49 "I do not have a demon," Jesus answered. "On the contrary, I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50 I do not seek my own glory; † there is one who seeks it and judges. 51 Truly I tell you, if anyone keeps my word, † he will never see death."

52 Then the Jews said, "Now we know you have a demon. Abraham died and so did the prophets. You say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death.' 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? And the prophets died. Who do you claim to be?"

54 "If I glorify myself," Jesus answered, "my glory is nothing. My Father — about whom you say, 'He is our God' — he is the one who glorifies me. 55 You do not know him, but I know him. If I were to say I don't know him, † I would be a liar like you. But I do know him, † and I keep his word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it † and was glad."

57 The Jews replied, "You aren't fifty years old yet, and you've seen Abraham?" †

58 Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am." †

59 So they picked up stones † to throw at him. † But Jesus was hidden † † and went out of the temple. † †

8:11 Or *Sir* ; Jn 4:15,49; 5:7; 6:34; 9:36 **8:15** Lit *You judge according to the flesh* **8:31** Or *my teaching*, or *my message*, also in v. 37 **8:33** Or *offspring* ; lit *seed*, also in v. 37; Jn 7:42 **8:38** Other mss read *of my Father* **8:43** Or *cannot hear* **8:44** Lit *from his own things* **8:57** Other mss read *and Abraham has seen you?* **8:59** Or *Jesus hid himself* **8:59** Other mss add *and having gone through their midst, he passed by*
8:1 Mt 21:1 **8:2** Ac 21:26 **8:2** Mk 1:45 **8:2** Mk 9:35 **8:3** Mk 7:3 **8:3** Nm 5:11 **8:4** Mt 5:27-28 **8:5** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **8:5** Lv 20:10; Dt 22:22-24; Ezk 16:38-41 **8:6** Lk 11:54 **8:7** Rm 3:23; 6:23 **8:7** Rm 2:1,22 **8:7** Dt 17:7 **8:11** Jn 3:17 **8:12** Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **8:12** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46; 1Jn 2:8 **8:12** Ex 13:21-22; 14:19-25; Is 42:6; 49:6; 60:19-22; Zch 14:5-8; Jn 9:5; 12:46 **8:14** Jn 3:8; 7:28; 9:29; 12:35; 13:3,36; 14:5; 16:5,28; 1Jn 2:11 **8:15** Lk 6:37; Rv 19:11 **8:15** Php 3:3 **8:15** Jn 3:17; 12:47 **8:16** Mt 12:41; Jn 16:32; 2Th 1:5 **8:17** Nm 35:30; Jn 8:14 **8:18** 1Jn 5:7,9 **8:19** Jn 7:28; 1Jn 2:23 **8:19** Lk 10:22; Jn 17:3; 1Jn 4:8 **8:20** Mk 12:41,43; Lk 21:1 **8:21** Jn 14:2; 16:5 **8:21** Dt 24:16; Ezk 3:18; 33:8; Jn 15:22; Rm 3:23; 6:23 **8:21** Jn 7:34,36; 8:22; 13:33 **8:22** Jn 8:21 **8:23** Jn 3:13,31; 18:36; Col 3:1-2 **8:23** 1Jn 4:5 **8:23** Jn 15:19; 17:14-16; 18:36 **8:26** Jn 5:19 **8:26** Jn 3:32; 15:15 **8:28** Mk 2:10 **8:28** Jn 8:24 **8:28** Mk 6:5; Jn 9:33; 15:5 **8:29** Jn 16:32; Ac 10:38

8:31 Jn 2:22; 18:32 **8:32** Ps 119:142; Jn 14:6; 2Th 2:10 **8:33** Gn 16:15; Jn 8:37; Heb 2:16 **8:34** Rm 6:17-20; 2Pt 2:19 **8:35** 1Jn 2:17 **8:35** Gn 21:10; Lk 15:31; Gl 4:30 **8:37** Lk 19:9; Jn 8:31-47; Ac 13:26; Rm 4:11,16; Gl 3:7 **8:38** Jn 3:32; 5:19; 6:46 **8:38** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42 **8:39** Gl 3:7,9 **8:40** Ps 119:142; Jn 14:6 **8:41** 2Jn 9 **8:41** 1Jn 2:29 **8:41** Hs 2:4; 1Th 4:3 **8:41** Dt 32:6 **8:42** Dt 6:5; Lk 10:27; 1Jn 5:1 **8:42** Jn 13:3; 16:27; 1Jn 5:20 **8:43** Lk 6:47; Jn 18:32 **8:44** Mt 4:1; Jn 13:2,27; Eph 2:1-3 **8:44** 1Jn 3:15 **8:44** Gn 3:1-4; 4:8-9; Ac 26:4; 2Co 11:3; 1Jn 3:8-15; Rv 12:9 **8:44** Jn 14:6; Rm 3:7 **8:46** Jn 15:22; 1Jn 3:5 **8:48** Lk 9:52; Ac 1:8 **8:48** Jn 7:20; 10:20; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **8:50** Jn 17:24; Php 3:19; 1Pt 5:4 **8:51** Jn 8:52,55; 14:23-24; 15:20; 17:6; 18:32; 1Jn 2:5; Rv 1:3; 3:8,10; 22:7,9 **8:55** Jn 7:28 **8:55** Mt 11:27 **8:56** Lk 10:24; Heb 11:13-19 **8:58** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 1:15; 8:24; 17:5; Col 1:17 **8:59** Jn 10:33 **8:59** Ex 17:4; Lv 24:16; 1Sm 30:6; 1Kg 21:10-13; Jn 10:31; 11:8 **8:59** Lk 4:30; Jn 12:36 **8:59** Ac 21:26

8:12 The lighting of lamps figured prominently in the celebration of the Festival of Shelters, providing the cultural backdrop for Jesus's statement, **I am the light of the world.** This is the second qualified "I am" statement in John. (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.) God is called **light** in the OT (Pss 27:1; 36:9), and the imagery of light is applied to the servant of the Lord (Is 49:6). Jesus draws on the contrast between light and darkness: following Jesus produces **the light of life.** To go without him is to walk in **darkness.** Throughout Jewish literature, living in the light is a metaphor for life in relationship with God (Pss 36:9; 56:13; Psalms of Solomon 3:12).

8:39 See "A Biblical View of Adoption," *p. 1367*.

8:41 Jesus confronts the religious leaders' hypocrisy by affirming that he does what his Father (God) wants (v. 38) while the religious leaders do what their father (the devil) desires (v. 44; see "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454*; "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*). The leaders respond with insults, claiming that Jesus was born of **sexual immorality.** Though there are no accounts of Jesus mentioning his own virgin birth, that story had likely circulated. Clearly these men did not believe the virgin birth account; thus, they regarded Jesus's conception as immoral.

8:48 Relations between the Jews and Samaritans were so bad that the religious leaders used the word **Samaritan** as an insult against other Jews. The insult may have implied heresy—a crime with which the religious leaders would certainly have accused Jesus, (See the note at 4:20 for an example of Samaritan heterodoxy.) **8:58 Before Abraham was, I am** is the most striking example of the unqualified "I am" statements in John (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.) These statements (e.g., 13:9; 18:5) explicitly relate to God's self-identification as he speaks to Moses from the burning bush (Ex 3:14). Jesus is not merely stating that he is older than Abraham; he is identifying himself with the God who spoke to Moses. The Jewish leadership understood and immediately sought to kill him for blasphemy (v. 59).

THE SIXTH SIGN: HEALING A MAN BORN BLIND

9 As he was passing by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him: "Rabbi, † who sinned, this man † or his parents, † that he was born blind? "

3 "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered. "This came about so that God's works † might be displayed in him. 4 We † must do the works † of him who sent me † while it is day. † Night is coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." †

6 After he said these things he spit on the ground, made some mud † from the saliva, and spread the mud on his eyes. 7 "Go," he told him, "wash in the pool of Siloam" † (which means "Sent"). So he left, washed, and came back seeing. †
8 His neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit begging?" 9 Some said, "He's the one." Others were saying, "No, but he looks like him."
He kept saying, "I'm the one."
10 So they asked him, "Then how were your eyes opened?"
11 He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and told me, 'Go to Siloam † and wash.' So when I went and washed I received my sight." †
12 "Where is he?" they asked.
"I don't know," he said.

THE HEALED MAN'S TESTIMONY

13 They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees. † 14 The day that Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes was a Sabbath. † 15 Then the Pharisees asked him again how he received his sight.
"He put mud on my eyes," he told them. "I washed and I can see."
16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, † because he doesn't keep the Sabbath." But others were saying, "How can a sinful man † perform such signs?" And there was a division † among them.
17 Again they asked the blind man, "What do you say about him, since he opened your eyes?"
"He's a prophet," † he said.
18 The Jews did not believe this about him — that he was blind and received sight — until they summoned the parents of the one who had received his sight.
19 They asked them, "Is this your son, the one you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"
20 "We know this is our son and that he was born blind," his parents answered.
21 "But we don't know how he now sees, and we don't know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he's of age. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these things because they were afraid of the Jews, since the Jews had already agreed

that if anyone confessed him as the Messiah, † he would be banned from the synagogue. 23 This is why his parents said, “He’s of age; ask him.”
24 So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, “Give glory † to God. † We know that this man is a sinner.”
25 He answered, “Whether or not he’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see! ”
26 Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? ”
27 “I already told you,” he said, “and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t want to become his disciples too, do you? ”
28 They ridiculed him: “You’re that man’s disciple, but we’re Moses’s † disciples. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses. But this man — we don’t know where he’s from.” †
30 “This is an amazing thing! ” the man told them. “You don’t know where he is from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, † but if anyone is God-fearing and does his will, † he listens to him. †
32 Throughout history † no one has ever heard of someone opening the eyes of a person born blind. † 33 If this man were not from God, he wouldn’t be able to do anything.” †
34 “You were born entirely in sin,” † they replied, “and are you trying to teach us? ” Then they threw him out. †

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and when he found him, he asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man? ” † †
36 “Who is he, Sir, † that I may believe in him? ” he asked.
37 Jesus answered, “You have seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.”
38 “I believe, Lord! ” he said, and he worshiped him.
39 Jesus said, “I came into this world † for judgment, † in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.” †
40 Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and asked him, “We aren’t blind too, are we? ”

41 “If you were blind,” Jesus told them, “you wouldn’t have sin. † But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

9:4 Other mss read *I* **9:4** Other mss read *us* **9:32** Lit *From the age* **9:35** Other mss read *the Son of God* **9:2** Jn 11:8 **9:2** Ezk 18:20 **9:2** Ex 20:5; Jb 21:19 **9:3** Jn 5:36; 6:28-29; Rm 14:20; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **9:4** Jn 5:17; 2Jn 8 **9:4** Jn 11:9; 12:35; Rm 13:12 **9:5** Mt 5:14; Jn 8:12; 12:46 **9:6** Gn 2:7 **9:7** Lk 13:4; Jn 9:11 **9:7** Is 35:5 **9:11** Jn 9:7 **9:11** Ac 9:12 **9:13** Mk 7:3 **9:14** Mk 2:23 **9:16** Jn 7:29 **9:16** Mt 26:45; Lk 24:7; Jn 9:24; Rm 5:19 **9:16** Jn 7:43; 10:19; 1Co 1:10 **9:17** Jn 6:14 **9:22** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **9:24** Jn 17:24 **9:24** Jos 7:19; 1Sm 6:5; Is 42:12; Jr 13:16; Lk 2:14; Rm 4:20 **9:28** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **9:29** Jn 7:27-28; 8:14 **9:31** Jb 27:9; Ps 66:18; Pr 28:9; Is 1:15; 1Jn 3:21 **9:31** Eph 1:9 **9:31** Ps 34:15,16; 145:19; Pr 15:20; Jms 5:16-18; 1Jn 5:14-15 **9:32** Jn 15:24 **9:33** Jn 8:28 **9:34** Ps 51:5 **9:34** Is 66:5 **9:35** Mk 2:10 **9:36** Lk 10:1 **9:39** Jn 18:37 **9:39** Mk 12:40; Jn 5:22-30 **9:39** Lk 4:18; Jn 3:19; 12:47-50 **9:41** Jn 15:22,24; 1Jn 1:8; 3:5

9:2 It was common to draw a direct correlation from personal sin to all kinds of suffering. Congenital suffering, however, posed a special problem to that line of thinking. Could a child sin in the womb? The unlikelihood of that is why Jesus’s disciples wonder whether it was this man’s parents who sinned. Jesus refutes the entire premise of their question by stating that the man’s blindness was not the result of personal sin. His blindness happened **so that God’s works might be displayed in him**, a clear reference to the miraculous sign Jesus was about to perform in healing the man (vv. 6-7). The fellow’s sight was repaired, but those who rejected Jesus remained spiritually blind (v. 41).

9:5 See the note at 8:12.

9:22 Being banned **from the synagogue** was a severe form of religious and civil punishment. It carried the same ramifications that permanently losing a passport, driver’s license, or citizenship might today.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

10 “Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the gate
but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. † 2 The one who
enters by the gate is the shepherd † of the sheep. † 3 The gatekeeper opens it
for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads
them out. 4 When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them.
The sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5 They will never follow a
stranger; instead they will run away from him, because they don’t know the
voice of strangers.” 6 Jesus gave them this figure of speech, but they did not
understand † what he was telling them.

7 Jesus said again, “Truly I tell you, I am † the gate for the sheep. † 8 All who
came before me † are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them.
9 I am the gate. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will come in and
go out and find pasture. 10 A thief comes only to steal † and kill and destroy. †
I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance.

11 “I am the good shepherd. † The good shepherd lays down his life for the
sheep. † 12 The hired hand, since he is not the shepherd and doesn’t own the
sheep, leaves them † and runs away when he sees a wolf † coming. The wolf
then snatches and scatters them. 13 This happens because he is a hired hand and
doesn’t care about the sheep.
14 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, 15 just as
the Father knows me, and I know the Father. † I lay down my life † for the
sheep. 16 But I have other sheep † that are not from this sheep pen; I must bring
them also, and they will listen to my voice. Then there will be one flock, one
shepherd. † 17 This is why the Father loves me, † because I lay down my life †
so that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on
my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I
have received this command from my Father.” †
19 Again the Jews were divided † because of these words. 20 Many of them
were saying, “He has a demon † and he’s crazy. Why do you listen to him?”
21 Others were saying, “These aren’t the words of someone who is demon-
possessed. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” †

JESUS AT THE FESTIVAL OF DEDICATION

22 Then the Festival of Dedication took place in Jerusalem, and it was winter.
23 Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon’s Colonnade. † 24 The Jews
surrounded him and asked, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? †
If you are the Messiah, † tell us plainly.” † †
25 “I did tell you and you don’t believe,” Jesus answered them. “The works †
that I do in my Father’s name testify about me. 26 But you don’t believe because
you are not of my sheep. † † 27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and
they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, † and they will never perish. † No
one will snatch † them out of my hand. 29 My Father, † who has given them to
me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.
30 I and the Father are one.” †

RENEWED EFFORTS TO STONE JESUS

31 Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone him. †

32 Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works † from the Father. For which of these works are you stoning me?"

33 "We aren't stoning † you for a good work," the Jews answered, "but for blasphemy, because you — being a man — make yourself God."

34 Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, † **I said, you are gods**? † † 35 If he called those whom the word † of God came to 'gods' — and the Scripture † cannot be broken — 36 do you say, 'You are blaspheming' to the one the Father set apart and sent into the world, because I said: I am the Son of God? † 37 If I am not doing my Father's works, † don't believe me. 38 But if I am doing them and you don't believe me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand † that the Father is in me and I in the Father." † 39 Then they were trying again to seize him, † but he eluded their grasp. †

MANY BEYOND THE JORDAN BELIEVE IN JESUS

40 So he departed again across the Jordan † to the place where John † had been baptizing earlier, and he remained there. 41 Many came to him † and said, "John never did a sign, but everything John said about this man was true." 42 And many believed in him there.

10:8 Other mss omit *before me* **10:12** Lit *leaves the sheep* **10:24** Lit *"How long are you taking away our life?* **10:24** Or *openly*, or *publicly* **10:26** Other mss add *just as I told you* **10:34** Other mss read *in the scripture* **10:38** Other mss read *know and believe*

10:1 Jr 7:11; Hs 6:9; 1Th 5:2,4; 2Pt 3:10; Rv 3:3; 16:15 **10:2** Gn 4:2; Ps 23:1 **10:2** Mt 7:15 **10:6** Mk 9:32; Lk 2:50; 9:45; 18:34; Jn 2:24; 12:16 **10:7** Ex 3:14; Ps 45:8; Jn 8:24 **10:7** Mt 7:15 **10:10** Eph 4:28 **10:10** Jn 6:27 **10:11** Ps 23; Is 40:11; Ezk 34:12,23; 37:24; Zch 13:7; Jn 21:15-17; Heb 13:20; 1Pt 2:25; 5:4; Rv 7:17 **10:11** Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; 2Co 5:21; Gl 3:13; 1Jn 3:16 **10:12** Lk 10:3 **10:15** Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22 **10:15** Mt 20:28 **10:16** Is 56:8; Ezk 34:11-13; Mt 8:11,12; Jn 12:32; Ac 10:34-35; 1Pt 2:25 **10:16** Ezk 34:23; 37:24; Jn 11:52; 17:11,20-22; Eph 2:11-19 **10:17** Jn 3:35; 5:20 **10:17** 1Jn 3:16 **10:18** Jn 5:19 **10:19** Jn 7:43; 9:16 **10:20** Jn 7:20; 8:48; Rv 9:20; 18:2 **10:21** Ex 4:11; Ps 146:8; Jn 9:32-33 **10:23** Ac 3:11; 5:12 **10:24** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **10:24** Mt 26:63; Lk 22:67; 2Co 3:12 **10:25** Jn 5:36; 6:28-29; Rm 14:20; Heb 3:9; 2Jn 8; Rv 15:3 **10:26** Jn 6:37; 8:47 **10:28** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Jn 2:25 **10:28** Mt 10:42; Mk 9:41; Lk 21:18; Jn 3:16; 6:27,39; 17:12; 18:9; 2Co 4:9; 2Jn 8 **10:28** 1Th 4:17 **10:29** Mt 11:27 **10:30** Jn 1:15; 14:10; 17:11; 1Jn 2:24 **10:31** Jn 11:8 **10:32** Jn 5:36; 15:24 **10:33** Lv 24:16; Mt 9:3; 26:62-66; Jn 5:18; 8:59 **10:34** Ps 82:6 **10:34** Ps 82:6 **10:35** Lk 8:21; Jn 2:22; 18:32 **10:35** Mt 26:54 **10:36** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **10:37** Jn 5:36; 15:24; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **10:38** Jn 14:10; 1Jn 5:20 **10:39** Jn 7:44 **10:39** Lk 4:30 **10:40** Mk 10:1; Lk 3:3 **10:40** Mk 1:4 **10:41** Mk 1:45

10:7,9 When Jesus identifies himself as **the gate for the sheep**, he continues the metaphor he began in verse 1. This is the third qualified "I am" statement in John. (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.)

The sheep pen represents the safety and security of eternal life in Christ; faith in him is the only entrance into that life.

10:11 The metaphor begun in verse 1 continues when Jesus says **I am the good shepherd.** This is the fourth qualified "I am" statement in John. (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.) **The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep** (vv. 11,15), knows his sheep (v. 14), and has other sheep in a different pen (v. 16). With these statements, Jesus looks ahead to his death for the sins for the whole world—Jews and Gentiles (cp. 3:16).

10:22 The **Festival of Dedication**, or Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights, celebrates the rededication of the temple in 164 BC, after its desecration in 167 BC by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

10:30 I and the Father are one recalls the central confession of Judaism: "The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (Dt 6:4). Jesus's claim identifies him with the God of Israel.

LAZARUS DIES AT BETHANY

11 Now a man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, † the village of Mary and
her sister Martha. † 2 Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with
perfume and wiped his feet with her hair, † and it was her brother Lazarus who
was sick. 3 So the sisters sent a message to him: "Lord, the one you love is
sick."
4 When Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness will not end in death but is for the
glory of God, † so that the Son of God † may be glorified through it." 5 Now
Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that he was
sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was. 7 Then after that, he
said to the disciples, "Let's go to Judea † again."
8 "Rabbi," † the disciples told him, "just now the Jews tried to stone you, † and
you're going there again?"
9 "Aren't there twelve hours in a day?" Jesus answered. "If anyone walks
during the day, he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world. †
10 But if anyone walks during the night, † he does stumble, because the light is
not in him."
11 He said this, and then he told them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, †
but I'm on my way to wake him up."
12 Then the disciples said to him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will get
well."
13 Jesus, however, was speaking about his death, but they thought he was
speaking about natural sleep. 14 So Jesus then told them plainly, "Lazarus has

died. 15 I'm glad for you that I wasn't there so that you may believe. But let's go to him."

16 Then Thomas † (called "Twin" †) said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go too so that we may die with him."

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb † four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem † (less than two miles † away). 19 Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

20 As soon as Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. 22 Yet even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you."

23 "Your brother will rise † again," Jesus told her.

24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." †

25 Jesus said to her, "I am † the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, † even if he dies, will live. † 26 Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. † Do you believe this? "

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah, † the Son † of God, who comes into the world." †

JESUS SHARES THE SORROW OF DEATH

28 Having said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you."

29 As soon as Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. † 30 Jesus had not yet come into the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 The Jews who were with her in the house consoling her saw that Mary got up quickly and went out. They followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb † to cry there.

32 As soon as Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet † and told him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died! "

33 When Jesus saw her crying, and the Jews who had come with her crying, he
was deeply moved † in his spirit † and troubled. 34 "Where have you put
him? " he asked.
"Lord," they told him, "come and see."
35 Jesus wept. †
36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved † him! " 37 But some of them said,
"Couldn't he who opened the blind man's eyes † also have kept this man from
dying? "

THE SEVENTH SIGN: RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone
was lying against it. † 39 "Remove the stone," Jesus said.
Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because
he has been dead four days."
40 Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the
glory † of God? " †
41 So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I
thank † you that you heard me. † 42 I know that you always hear me, but
because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you
sent † me." 43 After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come
out! " 44 The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with
his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go."

THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

45 Therefore, many of the Jews who came to Mary and saw what he did believed
in him. † 46 But some of them went to the Pharisees † and told them what Jesus
had done.
47 So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin † and were
saying, "What are we going to do since this man is doing many signs? 48 If we
let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans † will
come and take away both our place and our nation."
49 One of them, Caiaphas, † who was high priest † that year, said to them,
"You know nothing at all! 50 You're not considering that it is to your †

advantage that one man should die for the people rather than the whole nation perish.” † 51 He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was going to die † for the nation, 52 and not for the nation only, but also to unite the scattered children † of God. 53 So from that day on they plotted to kill him. †

54 Jesus therefore no longer walked openly † among the Jews but departed from there to the countryside near the wilderness, † to a town called Ephraim, and he stayed there with the disciples.

55 Now the Jewish Passover † was near, and many went up to Jerusalem † from the country to purify themselves before the Passover. 56 They were looking for Jesus and asking one another as they stood in the temple: † “What do you think? He won’t come to the festival, † will he?” 57 The chief priests † and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should report it so that they could arrest him.

11:16 Gk *Didymus* **11:18** Lit *fifteen stadia* ; one *stadion* = 600 feet **11:33** Or *angry*, also in v. 38 **11:50** Other mss read *to our*

11:1 Mk 11:1 **11:1** Lk 10:38-39,40-42 **11:2** Lk 7:38; Jn 12:3 **11:4** Lk 9:32; Jn 9:3; 10:38; 11:40; 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **11:4** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **11:7** Lk 1:5 **11:8** Mt 23:7-8; 26:25,49; Mk 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; Jn 1:38,49; 3:2,26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2 **11:8** Jn 10:31 **11:9** Mt 5:14; Jn 8:12 **11:10** Jn 9:4 **11:11** Ac 13:36; 1Co 11:30 **11:16** Mk 3:18 **11:17** Jn 5:28 **11:18** Mt 23:37 **11:23** Mk 9:27 **11:24** Jn 2:4; 6:39; 1Pt 1:5; 3:3; 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **11:25** Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **11:25** Jn 6:35 **11:25** Php 1:21 **11:26** Jn 6:50; 8:51 **11:27** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **11:27** Jn 5:19 **11:27** Jn 18:37 **11:29** Mk 1:45 **11:31** Jn 5:28 **11:32** Rv 19:10 **11:33** Ps 51:12 **11:35** Lk 19:41 **11:36** Mk 14:44; Jn 5:20 **11:37** Jn 9:6-7 **11:38** Mt 27:60; Mk 15:46; Lk 24:2; Jn 20:1 **11:40** Jn 17:24 **11:40** Mk 9:23; 1Jn 3:2 **11:41** Mk 8:6; Rm 1:8 **11:41** Jn 9:31 **11:42** Mk 9:37; Jn 1:6 **11:45** Jn 2:23; 12:11 **11:46** Mk 7:3 **11:47** Mk 13:9 **11:48** Ac 16:21 **11:49** Mt 26:3,57; Lk 3:2; Jn 18:13-14,24,28; Ac 4:6 **11:49** Lv 16:32 **11:50** Is 53:8; Jn 18:14 **11:51** 2Co 4:10 **11:52** Lk 1:7 **11:53** Jn 5:18 **11:54** Jn 7:1 **11:54** Mt 3:1; Rv 12:6 **11:55** Ex 12:11 **11:55** Mt 23:37 **11:56** Ac 21:26 **11:56** Jn 2:23 **11:57** Mt 2:4

11:23-25 Martha understood Jesus’s statement, **Your brother will rise again**, to refer to the future resurrection of the faithful dead. Such a resurrection was taught in the OT (e.g. Is 26:19) and was a common focus in the teaching of the rabbis and in the teaching of Jesus (e.g., Jn 6:39). Jesus, however, meant that Lazarus would be raised now. He said, **I am the resurrection and the life**, meaning that he himself is the source of resurrection and life. The Father has granted to the Son life in himself (5:26), and so “a time is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and come out” (5:28–29). Raising Lazarus is a sign of Jesus’s authority to raise the dead. Lazarus heard his voice and came out of his grave. This is the fifth qualified “I am” statement in John. (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.) **10:35** See “Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy,” *p. XXXI.*

11:35 See “The Christian Worldview and the Overcoming of Evil,” *p. 78.*

11:44 John provides a brief description of how Lazarus was adorned for burial—**bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth**—so that his readers would know that Lazarus

really was quite dead before Jesus called. The wrapping described is not attested elsewhere in Jewish texts. However, the cloth on the face was called *soudarion*; it was often worn around a living person's neck.

THE ANOINTING AT BETHANY

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany † where
Lazarus † was, the one Jesus had raised from the dead. † 2 So † they
gave a dinner for him there; Martha † was serving them, and Lazarus was one of
those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took a pound of perfume,
pure and expensive nard, anointed Jesus's feet, and wiped his feet with her
hair. † So the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 Then one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot † (who was about to betray him),
said, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred denarii † † and given
to the poor?" 6 He didn't say this because he cared about the poor but because
he was a thief. † He was in charge of the money-bag and would steal part of
what was put in it.

7 Jesus answered, "Leave her alone; she has kept it for the day of my burial. †
8 For you always have the poor with you, † but you do not always have me."

THE DECISION TO KILL LAZARUS

9 Then a large crowd of the Jews learned he was there. They came not only
because of Jesus but also to see Lazarus, the one he had raised from the dead. †
10 But the chief priests had decided to kill Lazarus also, 11 because he was the
reason many of the Jews were deserting them † and believing in Jesus.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

12 The † next day, when the large crowd that had come to the festival heard that
Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 they took palm branches † and went out to
meet him. They kept shouting:

"***Hosanna!*** †

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord † † —the King of
Israel!" †

14 Jesus found a young donkey † and sat on it, just as it is written:

15 **Do not be afraid, †**
Daughter Zion. Look, your King is coming,
sitting on a donkey's colt. † †
16 His disciples did not understand these things at first. However, when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him † and that they had done these things to him.
17 Meanwhile, the crowd, which had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb † and raised him from the dead, continued to testify. † 18 This is also why the crowd met him, because they heard he had done this sign. 19 Then the Pharisees said to one another, "You see? You've accomplished nothing. Look, the world has gone after him! " †

JESUS PREDICTS HIS CRUCIFIXION

20 Now some Greeks were among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21 So they came to Philip, † who was from Bethsaida † in Galilee, † and requested of him, "Sir, † we want to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; † then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.
23 Jesus replied to them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man † to be glorified. 24 Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat † falls to the ground and dies, it remains by itself. But if it dies, it produces much fruit. † 25 The one who loves his life will lose it, † and the one who hates † his life † in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me. Where I am, there my servant † also will be. † If anyone serves me, the Father will honor † him.
27 "Now my soul is troubled. What should I say — Father, save me † from this hour? But that is why I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name." † †
Then a voice † came from heaven: † "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." †
29 The crowd standing there heard it and said it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him."

30 Jesus responded, “This voice came, not for me, but for you. † 31 Now is the
judgment of this world. † Now the ruler of this world † will be cast out. †
32 As for me, if I am lifted up † from the earth I will draw all people to
myself.” † 33 He said this to indicate what kind of death he was about to die. †
34 Then the crowd replied to him, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah
will remain forever. † So how can you say, ‘The Son of Man † must be lifted
up’? Who is this Son of Man? ”
35 Jesus answered, “The light will be with you only a little longer. † Walk while
you have the light † so that darkness doesn’t overtake you. † The one who
walks in darkness doesn’t know where he’s going. † 36 While you have the
light, † believe in the light so that you may become children of light.” Jesus said
this, then went away and hid from them. †

ISAIAH’S PROPHECIES FULFILLED

37 Even though he had performed so many signs in their presence, they did not
believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill † the word of Isaiah † the prophet, who
said: †

Lord, who has believed our message?
And to whom has the arm † of the Lord been revealed? † †

39 This is why they were unable to believe, because Isaiah also said:

40 **He has blinded † their eyes and hardened their hearts, †**
so that they would not see with their eyes
or understand with their hearts,
and turn, †
and I would heal them. † †

41 Isaiah said these things because † he saw his glory † and spoke about him.
42 Nevertheless, many did believe in him even among the rulers, † but because
of the Pharisees they did not confess him, so that they would not be banned from
the synagogue. 43 For they loved human praise † more than praise from God. †

A SUMMARY OF JESUS’S MISSION

44 Jesus cried out, “The one who believes in me † believes not in me, but in him
who sent me. 45 And the one who sees me sees him † who sent me. 46 I have
come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not
remain in darkness. 47 If anyone hears my words and doesn’t keep † them, I do
not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world † but to save the world. †
48 The one who rejects me † and doesn’t receive my sayings has this as his
judge: † The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day. † 49 For I have
not spoken on my own, but the Father † himself who sent me has given me a
command to say everything I have said. 50 I know that his command is eternal
life. † So the things that I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me.” †

12:1 Other mss read *Lazarus who died* **12:5** A denarius = one day’s wage **12:11** Lit *going away* **12:17** Other mss read *Meanwhile the crowd, which had been with him, continued to testify that he had called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead.* **12:28** Other mss read *your Son* **12:32** Or *exalted*, also in v. 34 **12:38** Lit *which he said* **12:41** Other mss read *when* **12:48** Lit *has the one judging him*
12:1 Mk 11:1 **12:1** Jn 11:43-44 **12:2-8** Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9 **12:2** Jn 11:1 **12:3** Mk 14:3; Jn 11:2 **12:4** Mt 26:14; Mk 3:19 **12:5** Mt 18:28 **12:6** Jn 10:1 **12:7** Jn 19:40 **12:8** Dt 15:11 **12:9** Jn 21:14 **12:12-19** Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:28-44 **12:13** Lv 23:40; Rv 7:9 **12:13** Lk 1:42 **12:13** Ps 118:25-26 **12:13** Ps 118:25-26 **12:13** Jn 1:49 **12:14** Lk 13:15 **12:15** Jn 6:20 **12:15** Zch 9:9 **12:15** Zch 9:9 **12:16** Jn 2:22; 14:26 **12:17** Jn 5:28 **12:19** Mk 15:6-15; Lk 19:39-44; Jn 11:47-48; 12:36-43; 19:15 **12:21** Mk 3:18 **12:21** Mt 11:21; Mk 6:45; 8:22; Lk 9:10; 10:13; Jn 1:44 **12:21** Mt 17:22 **12:21** Col 3:22 **12:22** Jn 6:8 **12:23** Mk 2:10 **12:24** Lk 16:7 **12:24** 1Co 15:36 **12:25** Jn 10:28 **12:25** Lk 6:27; 19:14 **12:25** Mt 10:39 **12:26** 1Co 3:5 **12:26** Jn 14:3; 17:24; 2Co 5:8; Php 1:23; 1Th 4:17 **12:26** 1Tm 5:3 **12:27** Ps 3:7 **12:28** Jn 10:25; Ac 15:14; Rv 14:1 **12:28** Jn 5:37 **12:28** Rv 14:13 **12:28** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **12:30** Jn 11:42 **12:31** Lk 4:6 **12:31** Jn 3:16; 14:30; 16:11 **12:31** Col 2:15; 1Jn 3:8 **12:32** Jn 11:51 **12:33** Jn 18:32 **12:34** Ps 89:36; Jn 15:4; 1Jn 2:17 **12:34** Mk 2:10 **12:35** Ps 118:27; Jn 7:33; 9:4 **12:35** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46; 1Jn 2:8 **12:35** Php 3:12 **12:35** Jn 7:28; 8:14; 1Jn 2:11 **12:36** Jn 7:33; 1Th 5:5 **12:36** Lk 4:30 **12:38** Mt 1:22 **12:38** Mt 3:3; 4:14; 12:17 **12:38** Ex 15:16 **12:38** Is 53:1 **12:38** Is 53:1 **12:40** Jn 8:59 **12:40** Heb 3:8 **12:40** Is 56:3,6; Mt 18:3; 23:15; Ac 15:3; 28:27; Rm 16:5; 1Tm 3:6 **12:40** Is 6:10 **12:40** Is 6:10; 1Pt 2:24 **12:41** Mk 10:37; Jn 17:24 **12:42** Lk 8:41 **12:43** Php 3:19 **12:43** Lk 9:32; 2Co 3:18; 1Th 2:4; 2Pt 3:18 **12:44** Jn 6:35 **12:45** Jn 14:9 **12:47** Lk 11:28; 2Tm 1:14; 2Pt 3:17 **12:47** Lk 6:37; Jn 3:18; 8:15; Rv 6:10 **12:47** Jn 3:17; Ac 16:30; Eph 2:8 **12:48** Lk 10:16 **12:48** Jn 2:4; 6:39; 1Pt 1:5; 3:3; 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **12:49** Mt 11:27 **12:50** Jn 5:26; 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Jn 2:25 **12:50** Jn 5:19; 14:24

12:3-8 Nard is a fragrant oil from northern India and quite expensive. Mary had, apparently, purchased it to anoint Jesus’s corpse. Buying funeral-related items in advance was not uncommon, but because of Mary’s lavish devotion to Jesus, she decided to anoint him with the oil, and wipe his feet with her hair, while he still lived. There may be royal overtones in Mary’s anointing of Jesus as his triumphal entry into Jerusalem followed. During it he is proclaimed the King of Israel (v. 13).

12:12-15 Jesus’s public fulfillment of the messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9 sparks an outbreak of messianic fervor in Jerusalem. The crowds line the streets and shout ***Hosanna!***; this is an expression of praise and shows their regard for him as **the King of Israel.** They cite Psalm 118, which was often interpreted messianically.

12:20 Greeks commonly refers to non-Jews (e.g., Rm 1:16), rather than people from Greece. These people are Greek speaking Gentiles, perhaps converts to Judaism (v. 21).

12:42 Being **banned from the synagogue** was a severe form of religious and civil punishment. It carried the same ramifications that permanently losing a passport, driver's license, or even citizenship might today.

JESUS WASHES HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

13 Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that his hour had come to
depart from this world to the Father. † Having loved his own who were
in the world, † he loved them to the end.
2 Now when it was time for supper, the devil † had already put it into the heart
of Judas, † Simon Iscariot's son, † to betray † him. 3 Jesus knew that the
Father had given everything into his hands, † that he had come from God, † and
that he was going back to God. † 4 So he got up from supper, laid aside his
outer clothing, † took a towel, and tied it around himself. † 5 Next, he poured
water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to dry them with the
towel tied around him.
6 He came to Simon Peter, † who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my
feet? "
7 Jesus answered him, "What I'm doing you don't realize now, but afterward
you will understand." †
8 "You will never wash my feet," Peter said.
Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with me."
9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my
head."
10 "One who has bathed," Jesus told him, "doesn't need to wash anything except
his feet, but he is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you." 11 For he
knew who would betray him. This is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

THE MEANING OF FOOT WASHING

12 When Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer clothing, he reclined
again and said to them, "Do you know what I have done for you? 13 You call me
Teacher and Lord — and you are speaking rightly, since that is what I am. 14 So
if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one

another's feet. † 15 For I have given you an example, † that you also should do just as I have done for you.

16 "Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, † † and a messenger is not greater than the one who sent him. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. †

18 "I'm not speaking about all of you; I know those I have chosen. † But the Scripture † must be fulfilled: † **The one who eats my bread † has raised his heel against me.** † † 19 I am telling you now before it happens, † so that when it does happen you will believe † that I am he. † 20 Truly I tell you, whoever receives anyone I send receives me, and the one who receives † me receives him who sent me."

JUDAS'S BETRAYAL PREDICTED

21 When † Jesus had said this, he was troubled in his spirit † and testified, † "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

22 The disciples started looking at one another — uncertain which one he was speaking about. 23 One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, † was reclining close beside Jesus. † 24 Simon Peter motioned to him to find out who it was he was talking about. 25 So he leaned back against Jesus and asked him, "Lord, who is it? "

26 Jesus replied, "He's the one I give the piece of bread to after I have dipped it." † When he had dipped the bread, † he gave it to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son. † 27 After Judas ate the piece of bread, Satan † entered him. So Jesus told him, "What you're doing, do quickly."

28 None of those reclining at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Since Judas † kept the money-bag, some thought that Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival," † or that he should give something to the poor. 30 After receiving the piece of bread, he immediately left. And it was night. †

THE NEW COMMAND

31 When † he had left, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man † is glorified, and God is glorified † in him. † 32 If God is glorified in him, † God will also glorify

him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33 Children, I am with you a little while longer. † You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so now I tell you: 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' †

34 "I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love † one another."

PETER'S DENIALS PREDICTED

36 "Lord," Simon Peter said to him, "where are you going?"

Jesus answered, "Where I am going † you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later."

37 "Lord," Peter asked, "why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life † for you." †

38 Jesus replied, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly I tell you, a rooster will not crow until you have denied me three times.

13:2 Or *Judas Iscariot, Simon's son* **13:16** Or *lord* **13:18** Other mss read *eats bread with me* **13:23** Lit *reclining at Jesus's breast*; that is, on his right; Jn 1:18 **13:26** Or *Judas Iscariot, Simon's son* **13:32** Other mss omit *If God is glorified in him*

13:1 Jn 10:18; 12:23; 16:28 **13:1** Jn 1:11; 6:37 **13:2** Mt 4:1,10; Jn 8:44; Ac 13:10 **13:2** Mk 3:19 **13:2** Mt 10:4; Jn 12:4; 13:21 **13:3** Mt 11:27; 28:18; Jn 17:2 **13:3** Jn 8:42; 16:27; 17:8 **13:3** Jn 8:14; 14:12; 16:28; 17:11 **13:4** Lk 19:36 **13:4** Lk 12:37 **13:6** Mt 16:17 **13:7** Jn 3:11; 7:28; 12:16 **13:14** 1Tm 5:10; 1Pt 5:5 **13:15** 1Pt 2:21 **13:16** Jn 15:20 **13:17** Mt 7:24-25; Lk 6:47; 11:28; Jms 1:22-25 **13:18** Jn 6:70; Eph 1:4 **13:18** Mt 26:54 **13:18** Mt 1:22 **13:18** Ps 41:9 **13:18** Ps 41:9 **13:19** Jn 13:19 **13:19** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **13:19** Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **13:20** Jn 5:43; 2Jn 10 **13:21-30** Mt 26:20-25; Mk 14:17-21; Lk 22:21-23 **13:21** Ps 51:12 **13:21** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **13:23** Jn 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20 **13:26** Ps 41:9 **13:26** Mk 14:20 **13:27** Mt 4:1,10; Jn 8:44; Ac 13:10 **13:29** Mk 3:19 **13:29** Jn 2:23 **13:30** Jn 9:4 **13:31-38** Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31; Lk 22:31-38 **13:31** Mk 2:10 **13:31** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **13:31** 2Th 1:12; 1Jn 2:5 **13:33** Jn 7:33 **13:33** Jn 8:21-22; 14:2; 16:5 **13:35** 1Co 13:1 **13:36** Jn 14:2; 16:5 **13:37** 1Jn 3:16 **13:37** Mk 14:31

13:2,27 John records the role Satan played in Judas's betrayal of Jesus. Though Judas's heart was clearly far from Christ (e.g., 12:6), and he regretted his betrayal later (Mt 27:3), Satan was a driving force behind Judas's decisions. Satan **put it into the heart of Judas . . . to betray him** (Jesus) and **entered** Judas, presumably to aid him in performing the task. Though Judas was personally guilty of rejecting the Messiah, Satan clearly gave the disappointed and disbelieving disciple a plan and the power to see it through.

13:4-5 By laying **aside his outer clothing** and tying a **towel** around himself, Jesus takes on the position, posture, and appearance of a house slave. He then washes his disciples' feet and dries them. Peter's surprise and discomfort at Jesus's actions (13:6,8) is more than the discomfort modern people might have at such personal contact. Peter objects because of his assumptions about the Messiah. Contrary to popular belief, the Messiah came to serve the world by giving his life. Jesus expects his disciples to serve one another too (v. 14). See also "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p.1501*.

13:15-16 See “Biblical Models for Business,” *p.782*.

THE WAY TO THE FATHER

14 “Don’t let your heart be troubled. † Believe † in God; † believe also
in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if not, I would have told
you. I am going away † to prepare a place for you. 3 If I go away and prepare a
place for you, I will come again † and take you to myself, so that where I am
you may be also. † 4 You know the way to where I am going.” † †
5 “Lord,” Thomas † said, “we don’t know where you’re going. How can we
know the way? ”
6 Jesus told him, “I am † the way, † the truth, and the life. No one comes to the
Father except through me. 7 If you know me, you will also know † my
Father. † From now on you do know him † and have seen him.”

JESUS REVEALS THE FATHER

8 “Lord,” said Philip, † “show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.”
9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time and you do not know
me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. † How can you say,
‘Show us the Father’? 10 Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the
Father is in me? † The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. † The
Father who lives in me does his works. † 11 Believe me that I am in the Father
and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe † because of the works themselves. †

PRAYING IN JESUS’S NAME

12 “Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me † will also do the works that I
do. And he will do even greater works than these, † because I am going to the
Father. † 13 Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be
glorified † in the Son. † 14 If you ask me † anything in my name, † I will do
it. † †

ANOTHER COUNSELOR PROMISED

15 “If you love me, you will keep † my commands. † 16 And I will ask the
Father, and he will give you another Counselor † † to be with you forever.
17 He is the Spirit † of truth. † The world is unable to receive him because it
doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with
you and will be † in you. †

THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the
world will no longer see me, † but you will see me. † Because I live, you will
live † too. 20 On that day you will know that I am in my Father, † you are in
me, and I am in you. 21 The one who has my commands and keeps them is the
one who loves me. † And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. †
I also will love him and will reveal myself to him.”

22 Judas † (not Iscariot) said to him, “Lord, how is it you’re going to reveal
yourself to us and not to the world? ” †

23 Jesus answered, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will
love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. † 24 The one
who doesn’t love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not
mine but is from the Father who sent me. †

25 “I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. 26 But the
Counselor, the Holy Spirit, † whom the Father will send † in my name, will
teach you all things † and remind you of everything I have told you. †

JESUS’S GIFT OF PEACE

27 “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the
world gives. Don’t let your heart be troubled or fearful. † 28 You have heard me
tell you, ‘I am going away † and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you
would rejoice that I am going to the Father, † because the Father is greater than
I. † 29 I have told you now before it happens † so that when it does happen you
may believe. 30 I will not talk with you much longer, because the ruler of the
world † is coming. He has no power over me. † † 31 On the contrary, so that
the world may know that I love the Father, I do as the Father commanded me.

“Get up; let’s leave this place.

14:1 Or *You believe* **14:4** Other mss read this verse: *And you know where I am going, and you know the way* **14:7** Other mss read *If you had known me, you would have known* **14:11** Other mss read *believe me* **14:14** Other mss omit *me* **14:14** Other mss omit all of v. 14 **14:15** Other mss read *“If you love me, keep* (as a command) **14:16** Or *advocate*, or *comforter*, also in v. 26 **14:17** Other mss read *and is* **14:30** Lit *He has nothing in me*

14:1 Jn 14:27 **14:1** Ac 16:34; 27:25; Rm 4:3,17,24; Gl 3:6; Ti 3:8; Jms 2:23; 1Jn 5:10 **14:2** Jn 8:21-22; 13:33,36; 16:7 **14:3** Mk 8:38 **14:3** Jn 12:26 **14:4** Jn 7:28; 8:14; 16:5; 1Jn 2:11 **14:5** Mk 3:18 **14:6** Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **14:6** Heb 10:20 **14:7** Mt 11:27; 1Jn 2:23 **14:7** Jn 17:3; 1Jn 4:8 **14:8** Mk 3:18 **14:9** Jn 5:19,37; 12:45 **14:10** Jn 10:30; 14:11,20; 1Jn 2:24; 4:17 **14:10** Jn 5:30 **14:10** Jn 5:36; 6:28; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **14:11** Jn 10:38 **14:12** Jn 6:35 **14:12** Jn 5:20 **14:12** Jn 7:33; 13:1,3; 16:5,10,17,28; 17:11,13; 20:17 **14:13** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **14:13** Jn 5:19 **14:14** Jn 10:25 **14:14** Jn 11:22; 15:7,16; 16:23-24 **14:15** 1Jn 5:3 **14:16** Lk 24:49; Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1Jn 2:1; Ac 2:33 **14:17** Jn 1:33 **14:17** Ps 119:142; 2Th 2:10; 1Jn 4:6 **14:17** 1Jn 4:4 **14:19** Jn 7:33 **14:19** Jn 16:16 **14:19** Php 1:21 **14:20** Jn 14:10 **14:21** Jn 8:31; 1Jn 2:5 **14:21** Dt 7:12-13; Jn 16:27 **14:22** Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13 **14:22** Ac 10:40-41 **14:23** Jn 14:2; 1Jn 2:24 **14:24** Jn 5:19; 7:16; 8:28; 12:49-50 **14:26** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **14:26** Lk 24:49; Jn 14:16; 15:26; 16:7; Ac 2:33 **14:26** Jn 16:13; 1Co 2:10; 1Jn 2:27 **14:26** Jn 2:22; 2Pt 1:21 **14:27** 2Tm 1:7 **14:28** Jn 16:5 **14:28** Jn 16:10 **14:28** Jn 10:29; 1Jn 3:20; 4:4 **14:29** Jn 13:19; 16:4 **14:30** Mt 4:1; Jn 12:31 **14:30** Lk 4:6

14:6 See “Ethics of Global Missions,” *p. 1323.*

14:13 The disciples would have understood Jesus’s claim—**Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it**—in an OT context. Asking in God’s name was not a religious formula that guaranteed a response from God. To pray in God’s name was to seek God’s will, not one’s own. The one who prays in Jesus’s name submits to the will of God.

14:16 John describes the Holy Spirit as **Counselor** because, after Jesus departs the earth, the Spirit will remain with the disciples until Jesus’s return (v. 18). The indwelling Spirit (v. 17) will teach them all things and remind them of the teaching of Jesus (v. 26). Jesus describes the work of the Spirit in some detail in 16:5-15.

14:26 See 16:13 and “Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy,” *p. XXXI.*

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

15 “I am † the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 Every branch in
me that does not produce fruit he removes, † and he prunes every
branch that produces fruit so that it will produce more fruit. 3 You are already
clean † because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, and I in you.
Just as a branch is unable to produce fruit by itself unless it remains on the vine,
neither can you unless you remain in me. † 5 I am the vine; † you are the
branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, †
because you can do nothing without me. 6 If anyone does not remain in me, he is
thrown aside † like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into

the fire, † and they are burned. † 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. † 8 My Father is glorified † by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be † my disciples.

CHRISTLIKE LOVE

9 "As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you. Remain in my love. †
10 If you keep my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. †
11 "I have told you these things so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. †
12 "This is my command: Love one another as I have loved † you. 13 No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life † for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants anymore, because a servant doesn't know what his master † † is doing. I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you. † I appointed you to go and produce fruit and that your fruit should remain, so that whatever you ask † the Father in my name, † he will give you. †
17 "This is what I command you: Love one another.

PERSECUTIONS PREDICTED

18 "If the world hates † you, understand that it hated me before it hated you.
19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own. However, because you are not of the world, but I have chosen † you out of it, the world hates you. 20 Remember the word I spoke to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' † If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, † they will also keep yours. 21 But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, † because they don't know † the one who sent me.
22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin. † Now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 The one who hates me also hates my Father. † 24 If I had not done the works † among them that no one else has

done, † they would not have sin. † Now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. 25 But this happened so that the statement written in their law might be fulfilled: † **They hated me for no reason.** † †

THE COUNSELOR'S MINISTRY

26 "When the Counselor † comes, the one I will send to you from the Father † — the Spirit of truth † who proceeds from the Father — he will testify about me. 27 You also will testify, † because you have been with me from the beginning.

15:8 Or *and become* **15:15** Or *lord*
15:1 Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **15:2** Mt 3:10; 7:19; 15:13; Lk 3:9; 13:6-9; Jn 15:6; Rm 11:17,22 **15:3** Ps 24:4; Ti 1:15 **15:4** Jn 6:56; 8:28; 1Jn 2:5 **15:5** Jms 3:12 **15:5** Mk 4:8 **15:6** Jn 15:2 **15:6** 2Th 1:8 **15:6** 1Th 1:8; 2Pt 3:7 **15:7** Jn 14:14 **15:8** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **15:9** Col 1:13; 1Jn 5:20; Jd 21 **15:10** Jn 5:19 **15:11** 1Jn 1:4; 2Jn 12 **15:12** Jn 3:16 **15:13** Rm 5:8; 1Jn 3:16 **15:15** Col 3:22 **15:16** Mt 24:22 **15:16** Jn 10:25 **15:16** Jn 14:13 **15:16** Jn 11:22; 16:23 **15:18** Lk 6:27; 19:14 **15:19** Eph 1:4 **15:20** Jn 13:16 **15:20** Jn 8:51 **15:21** Mk 13:13; Jn 10:25 **15:21** Jn 3:11; 7:28; 20:9 **15:22** Ezk 2:5; 3:7; Jn 9:41; Rm 1:20; 2:1; 6:23 **15:23** Jn 5:23 **15:24** Jn 5:36; Heb 3:9; Rv 15:3 **15:24** Jn 3:2; 7:31; 9:32; 10:32,37 **15:24** Jn 9:41 **15:25** Jn 12:38; 13:18; 17:12; 18:9,32; 19:24,36 **15:25** Ps 69:4 **15:25** Ps 69:4 **15:26** Jn 14:16 **15:26** Jn 14:26 **15:26** Ps 119:142; Jn 1:33; 14:17; 16:13; Rm 3:7; 1Jn 4:6 **15:27** Ac 4:20

15:1-6 Jesus uses an agricultural metaphor to describe his relationship to his disciples: **I am the vine; you are the branches.** Vine imagery was common in the ancient world, with the vine or vineyard often symbolizing Israel. The image, however, normally stressed Israel's failure to produce fruit. Thus, Jesus's claim to be the *true* vine suggests he will produce the fruit Israel has not. This is the seventh qualified "I am" statement in John. (See the note at 6:35 for further discussion.) The branches will grow only when attached to the vine. Additionally, God the Father is the farmer (Gk *geōrgos*), who prunes the branches to make them more fruitful. The language of **fire** and burning, then, looks back to Ezekiel, where a fruitless vine is good for nothing but the fire (Ezk 15:1-8)—an image of divine judgment.

15:5 See "Do My Beliefs Fit a Christian Worldview?" *p. 1461.*

15:26 See the note at 14:15.

16 "I have told you these things to keep you from stumbling. 2 They will ban you from the synagogues. † In fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering service † to God. 3 They will do these things because they haven't known † the Father or me. 4 But I have told you these things so that when their time † comes you will remember † I told them to you. I didn't tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going away † to him who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' † 6 Yet, because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. † It is for

your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. † 8 When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: 9 About sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father † and you will no longer see me; 11 and about judgment, † because the ruler of this world † has been judged. †

12 "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. † 13 When the Spirit of truth † comes, he will guide you into all the truth. † For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. 15 Everything the Father † has is mine. † This is why I told you that he takes from what is mine and will declare it to you. †

SORROW TURNED TO JOY

16 "A little while † and you will no longer see me; † again a little while and you will see me." †

17 Then some of his disciples said to one another, "What is this he's telling us: 'A little while and you will not see me; again a little while and you will see me' and, 'because I am going to the Father' † ?" 18 They said, "What is this he is saying, † 'A little while'? We don't know what he's talking about."

19 Jesus knew they wanted to ask him, and so he said to them, "Are you asking one another about what I said, 'A little while and you will not see me; again a little while and you will see me'? 20 Truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn, † but the world will rejoice. You will become sorrowful, † but your sorrow will turn to joy. 21 When a woman is in labor, she has pain † because her time has come. But when she has given birth to a child, † she no longer remembers the suffering because of the joy that a person has been born into the world. 22 So you also have sorrow † now. But I will see you again. Your hearts will rejoice, † and no one will take away your joy from you. †

23 "In that day you will not ask me anything. Truly I tell you, anything you ask the Father in my name, he will give you. † 24 Until now you have asked for

nothing in my name. † Ask and you will receive, † so that your joy may be complete. †

JESUS THE VICTOR

25 "I have spoken these things to you in figures of speech. A time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but I will tell you plainly about the Father. 26 On that day you will ask † in my name, and † I am not telling you that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved † me and have believed that I came from God. † † 28 I came from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I am leaving the world and going to the Father." †

29 His disciples said, "Look, now you're speaking plainly and not using any figurative language. 30 Now we know that you know everything † and don't need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you came from God." †

31 Jesus responded to them, "Do you now believe? 32 Indeed, an hour is coming, and has come, † when each of you will be scattered to his own home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. † 33 I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace. You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world."

16:4 Other mss read *when the time* **16:16** Other mss add *because I am going to the Father* **16:18** Other mss omit *he is saying* **16:22** Other mss read *will have sorrow* **16:27** Other mss read *from the Father*
16:2 Jn 9:22; 12:42 **16:2** Ex 12:25 **16:3** Jn 7:28 **16:4** Jn 14:29; Rv 2:5 **16:5** Jn 7:33; 8:14,21-22; 13:3,33,36; 14:4-5,28; 16:10,17 **16:5** Jn 8:14 **16:7** Ps 119:142 **16:7** Jn 14:26 **16:10** Jn 14:12,28; 16:17 **16:11** Mt 12:41; Jn 5:22; 2Th 1:5; Rv 19:11 **16:11** Mt 4:1; Jn 12:31 **16:11** Col 2:15; Heb 2:14 **16:12** Mk 4:33 **16:13** Rm 3:7; 1Jn 4:6 **16:13** Jn 1:17; 14:6; 2Th 2:10 **16:15** Mt 11:27 **16:15** Jn 17:10 **16:15** Jn 5:19 **16:16** Jn 7:33 **16:16** Mk 2:20; 14:19 **16:17** Jn 14:12; 16:10 **16:20** Mt 11:17; Lk 7:32; 23:27 **16:20** Jn 16:6; 2Co 2:2 **16:21** Gl 4:19 **16:21** Lk 1:7 **16:22** Jn 20:20 **16:22** Jn 15:11 **16:23** Jn 11:22; 14:13-14; 15:16 **16:24** Jn 10:25 **16:24** Mt 7:8 **16:24** 1Jn 1:4; 2Jn 12 **16:26** Jn 14:16 **16:26** Jn 10:25 **16:27** Jn 14:21 **16:27** Jn 6:46; 8:42; 13:3; 16:30 **16:28** Jn 14:12 **16:30** Mk 2:8; Jn 1:48; 2:24-25; 6:64; 21:17 **16:30** Jn 16:27 **16:32** Jn 4:23 **16:32** Jn 8:16,29

16:2 See the note at 9:22 concerning the **ban . . . from the synagogues.** Some Jewish leaders believed killing heretics was an act of worship and **service to God.** Saul's zealous actions seem to reflect this attitude (Ac 9:1-2).

16:13 See "Sources for Ethics," *p. 1371.*

16:21 A woman in the **labor** of childbirth is an image used in the OT for the coming of salvation at the end times. This day of the Lord is "a time of distress" (Dn 12:1; Zph 1:14-15). The image evokes the idea that great **pain** will precede the arrival of **joy**, but once joy has arrived, the temporary **suffering** is quickly forgotten.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

17 Jesus spoke these things, looked up to heaven, and said: “Father, the
hour has come. Glorify your Son so that the Son † may glorify you, †
2 since you gave him authority over all flesh, † † so that he may give eternal
life † to everyone you have given him. †

EQUALITY OF THE RACES AND RACIAL RECONCILIATION

In civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson’s musical rendition, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” he states, “We have come over a way that with tears have been watered, we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last where the white gleam of our bright star is cast” (*Worship and Rejoice*, 729). Today talk of *race*, a word referring to ethnic distinctions associated with culture and skin color, is a treacherous matter. But in the beginning, it was out of one blood that God created all peoples to dwell on the face of the earth (Ac 17:26), and in the Bible we see his intentions for humanity: “A vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, [was] standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands” (Rv 7:9). All humans are descended from Adam and Eve (cp. Gn 3:20), and Jesus died so that *all* who would accept him by faith could spend eternity in his presence.

Yet in spite of these biblical realties, the enslavement of peoples from Africa survived the two great religious movements in American history—the first and second Great Awakenings. Western Christianity, in fact, still struggles with conscienceless power and powerless conscience as Christians sit around their Communion tables and worship in segregated church contexts. In adopting racist attitudes and remaining in separate camps as it were, humanity, who was made in the image of God and after God’s likeness (Gn 1:26) has not only attempted to make God in its own image (that is, prone to categorize by appearances) but has also tried to detheologize the divine DNA within mankind.

The establishment of racial hierarchy has led to apartheid, anti-Semitism, and rampant racism. History records educational exclusion and societal separation, resulting in bloodstained streets. The sacrificial blood of Christ shed at Calvary, however, was offered to cleanse humanity from sin, thus enabling us to move even beyond racial reconciliation to Christo-conciliation—fulfilling the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. He wanted his followers to “be one” (Jn 17:11). “As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,” he said (Jn 17:21).

Christo-conciliation, then, is better than mere racial reconciliation. Because of the death of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Christians from all backgrounds are not just members of one biological family; we are one spiritual family, coheirs with Christ. South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu places strong emphasis on forgiveness with regard to this matter: “Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin” (*No Future Without Forgiveness*, 219). African theologian Allan Aubrey Boesak contends that forgiveness is “taking the sting out of memory” (*Radical Reconciliation*, 138).

CHRIST-CENTERED RECONCILIATION

If we are to move beyond superficial conversation and onward to true healing with regard to this topic, three points must be considered. First, the evangelical church too often seems more influenced by sociology than by Scripture. Second, the evangelical church must take seriously the oneness of the human race. Third, that the gospel was intended for everyone is clearly understood, but the evangelical church tends to handle the gospel differently as it addresses different people groups. That needs to change.

In Dr. James Earl Massey's autobiography, *Aspects of my Pilgrimage*, he recounts being a delegate to the World Congress on Evangelism in 1966 in Berlin, Germany. The delegates represented nations from the farthest corners of the world. At that time, the Congress on evangelism was the largest ecumenical and evangelical gathering of the church since Pentecost in AD 33. The theme of the Congress was "One Race, One Gospel, One Task." But Dr. Massey and other African American delegates detected that there was an obvious omission in the dialogue—the topic of race. Dr. Carl F. H. Henry confessed to the African American delegates that the aspect of race, which was a part of the theme, had been taken for granted. He proceeded to apologize for this omission and asked the African American delegates to prepare a summary statement on "One Race."

Evangelicals must not merely assume the equality of the people groups; this truth must be embraced and proclaimed. Evangelicals must think seriously about the topic, drawing on Acts 17:26, and pointing toward the eschatological reality of the beloved community made up of different tribes and nations and tongues and peoples. We all descend from one couple and as Christians, we have been washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Dr. William Holmes Borders, an African American pastor of the Wheat Street Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, once told this story: [A Negro] had been denied an education, political and economic opportunity, and was forced to beg for food. He rang the front doorbell of a southern mansion and the owner of the house answered. "I'm hungry," the Negro said. "Go around to the back door," he was told. Food was prepared, and the owner of the house brought it to the Negro. "First we will bless the food," the white man said. "Now you repeat after me, Our Father . . ." The Negro said, "Your Father . . ." "Why do you insist upon saying, 'Your Father,' when I keep telling you to say, "'Our Father'?" the white man asked. The Negro beggar replied, "Well, boss, if I say, 'Our Father,' that would make you and me brothers, and I'm 'fraid the Lord wouldn't like it, you makin' your brother come to the back porch to get a piece of bread." (James W. English, *Handyman of the Lord*, pp. 33-34) CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul reminds us that all persons have come into being out of one blood. That one blood makes each individual equal within the human race. It is the blood of Christ shed for the forgiveness of the sins of humanity, however, that makes believing humanity brothers and sisters. May we move forward to embrace the divine design.

ROBERT SMITH JR.

3 This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only † true † God, and the
one you have sent † — Jesus Christ. † 4 I have glorified you on the earth by
completing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, † glorify me in your
presence with that glory † I had with you before the world existed. †

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

6 "I have revealed your name † to the people you gave me † from the world. †
They were yours, you gave them to me, † and they have kept your word. †

7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you, 8 because I
have given them the words you gave me. † They have received them and have
known for certain that I came from you. † They have believed that you sent me.
9 “I pray † for them. I am not praying for the world but for those you have
given me, † because they are yours. 10 Everything I have is yours, and
everything you have is mine, † and I am glorified in them. 11 I am no longer in
the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. † Holy † Father,
protect † them by your name † that you have given me, so that they may be
one † as we are † one. 12 While I was with them, I was protecting them by your
name that you have given me. I guarded † them and not one of them is lost,
except the son of destruction, † so that the Scripture † may be fulfilled. †
13 Now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they
may have my joy completed in them. 14 I have given them your word. The
world hated † them because they are not of the world, † just as I am not of the
world. † 15 I am not praying that you take them out of the world but that you
protect them from the evil one. † 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not
of the world. † 17 Sanctify † them by the truth; † your word is truth. 18 As you
sent me into the world, † I also have sent them into the world. 19 I sanctify
myself for them, so that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

20 “I pray not only for these, but also for those who believe in me through their
word. 21 May they all be one, † as you, Father, are in me and I am in you. †
May they also be † in us, so that the world may believe you sent me. 22 I have
given them the glory † you have given me, so that they may be one as we are
one. 23 I am in them and you are in me, † so that they may be made completely
one, that the world may know you have sent me and have loved † them as you
have loved me. †

24 “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, † so that
they will see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before

the world's foundation. 25 Righteous Father, the world has not known you.
However, I have known you, † and they have known that you sent me. 26 I
made your name † known to them and will continue to make it known, so that
the love you have loved me with may be in them and I may be in them." †

17:2 Or *people* **17:9** Lit *ask* (throughout this passage) **17:11** Lit *keep* (throughout this passage) **17:12** The one destined for destruction, loss, or perdition **17:21** Other mss add *one*

17:1 Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **17:1** Jn 12:28 **17:2** Php 3:3 **17:2** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Jn 2:25 **17:2** Mt 24:22 **17:3** Jn 5:44; Rm 16:27 **17:3** Jn 4:23; 1Jn 5:20 **17:3** Mk 9:37; Jn 1:6 **17:3** Jn 5:38; 6:29 **17:5** Mt 11:27 **17:5** Mk 10:37; Jn 17:24; 1Pt 5:1 **17:5** Pr 8:23; Jn 1:1-2; 8:58 **17:6** Jn 10:25; Ac 15:14; Rv 14:1 **17:6** Mt 24:22; Jn 6:37 **17:6** Jn 8:23; 13:1; 15:19; 17:14-16; 18:36; 1Co 5:10; 1Jn 2:16; 4:5 **17:6** Jn 18:9 **17:6** Jn 8:51 **17:8** Jn 14:24 **17:8** Jn 5:43; 13:3 **17:9** Rm 9:11 **17:10** Jn 16:15 **17:11** Jn 13:3; 14:12 **17:11** Ps 20:6; 1Co 7:14 **17:11** Pr 18:10 **17:11** Jn 11:52 **17:11** Jn 10:16,30; 17:22; Gl 3:28 **17:12** 2Tm 1:14 **17:12** Mt 26:54 **17:12** Ps 41:9; Jn 13:18; 15:25; 19:24,36 **17:14** Lk 6:22,27; 19:14 **17:14** Jn 15:19 **17:14** Jn 8:23; 18:36 **17:15** 2Th 3:3 **17:16** Jn 18:36; 1Jn 4:17 **17:17** Lk 11:2 **17:17** Ps 119:142; 2Th 2:10; 1Jn 5:20 **17:18** 1Jn 4:17 **17:21** Jn 11:52; 17:11 **17:21** 1Jn 2:24; 5:20 **17:22** Mk 10:37; Jn 17:24; 1Pt 5:1,4 **17:23** 1Jn 4:4 **17:23** Jn 3:16; 12:43; 1Co 13:1; 2Th 2:13 **17:23** Jn 15:9 **17:24** Jn 12:26 **17:25** Mt 11:27; Lk 10:22 **17:26** Jn 10:25 **17:26** 1Jn 4:4

17:3 Life after death is related to the knowledge of God (e.g., Jr 31:34). The future day to come is envisaged as a time when "the land will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is filled with water" (Is 11:9; cp. Hab 2:14). Thus, eternal life is not simply everlasting existence; it's an existence in relationship with God and Jesus Christ.

17:5 This is another claim of the eternal preexistence of Jesus (e.g., 1:1; 8:58). Jesus prays to the Father but speaks of his **glory** with him **before the world existed.**

17:6,11 As faithful Jews, the disciples had tremendous reverence for God's personal **name.** It represented God's nature, his covenants, his glory, and his honor (e.g., Ex 3:14-15; Is 42:8; 48:9-11). Jesus tells his disciples, however, that it is he who has revealed God's name to them.

JESUS BETRAYED

18 After † Jesus had said these things, he went out with his disciples
across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, and he and his
disciples went into it. 2 Judas, † who betrayed † him, also knew the place,
because Jesus often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas took a company of
soldiers and some officials † from the chief priests and the Pharisees † and
came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.

4 Then Jesus, knowing everything that was about to happen to him, † went out
and said to them, "Who is it that you're seeking? "

5 "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered.

"I am he," † Jesus told them.

Judas, who betrayed him, was also standing with them. 6 When Jesus told them, “I am he,” they stepped back and fell to the ground.
7 Then he asked them again, “Who is it that you’re seeking? ”
“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.
8 “I told you I am he,” Jesus replied. “So if you’re looking for me, let these men go.” 9 This was to fulfill † the words he had said: “I have not lost one of those you have given me.” †
10 Then Simon † Peter, † who had a sword, † drew it, struck the high priest’s † servant, and cut off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)
11 At that, Jesus said to Peter, “Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup † the Father has given me? ”

JESUS ARRESTED AND TAKEN TO ANNAS

12 Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus and tied him up. 13 First they led him to Annas, † since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, † who was high priest that year. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be better for one man to die for the people. †

PETER DENIES JESUS

15 Simon Peter † was following Jesus, as was another disciple. That disciple was an acquaintance of the high priest; so he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard. 16 But Peter remained standing outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the girl who was the doorkeeper and brought Peter in.
17 Then the servant girl who was the doorkeeper said to Peter, “You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you? ”
“I am not.” he said. 18 Now the servants and the officials had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold. They were standing there warming themselves, and Peter was standing with them, warming himself.

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS

19 The high priest † questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching.

20 “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus answered him. “I have always
taught in the synagogue † and in the temple, † where all the Jews congregate,
and I haven’t spoken anything in secret. 21 Why do you question me? Question
those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said.”
22 When he had said these things, one of the officials standing by slapped Jesus,
saying, “Is this the way you answer the high priest? ”
23 “If I have spoken wrongly,” Jesus answered him, “give evidence † about the
wrong; but if rightly, † why do you hit me? ” 24 Then † Annas † sent him
bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

PETER DENIES JESUS TWICE MORE

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said to him, “You
aren’t one of his disciples too, are you? ”
He denied it and said, “I am not.”
26 One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had
cut off, said, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden? ” 27 Peter denied it again.
Immediately a rooster crowed. †

JESUS BEFORE PILATE

28 Then † they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the governor’s headquarters. † It
was early morning. They did not enter the headquarters themselves; otherwise
they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover.
29 So Pilate † came out to them and said, “What charge † do you bring against
this man? ”
30 They answered him, “If this man weren’t a criminal, † we wouldn’t have
handed him over to you.”
31 Pilate told them, “You take him and judge him according to your law.”
“It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death,” the Jews declared. 32 They said this
so that Jesus’s words might be fulfilled indicating what kind of death he was
going to die. †
33 Then Pilate went back into the headquarters, summoned Jesus, and said to
him, “Are you the King of the Jews? ” †
34 Jesus answered, “Are you asking this on your own, or have others told you
about me? ”

35 “I’m not a Jew, am I? ” Pilate replied. “Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done? ”

36 “My kingdom † is not of this world,” said Jesus. “If my kingdom were of this world, † my servants † would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, † my kingdom is not from here.” †

37 “You are a king then? ” Pilate asked.

“You say that I’m a king,” Jesus replied. “I was born for this, and I have come into the world † for this: to testify † to the truth. † Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.”

38 “What is truth? ” said Pilate.

JESUS OR BARABBAS

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, “I find no grounds † for charging him. 39 You † have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at the Passover. So, do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews? ”

40 They shouted back, “Not this man, but Barabbas! ” † Now Barabbas was a revolutionary. † †

18:3 Or *temple police*, or *officers*, also in vv. 12,18,22 **18:23** Or *him*, “*testify* **18:30** Lit *an evil doer* **18:36** Or *But now* **18:40** Or *robber* ; see Jn 10:1,8 for the same Gk word used here
18:1-12 Mt 26:47-56; Mk 14:43-52; Lk 22:47-53 **18:2** Mk 3:19 **18:2** Mt 10:4; Mk 9:31; Jn 13:21 **18:3** Mk 7:3 **18:4** Jn 16:30 **18:5** Ex 3:14; Jn 8:24,58 **18:9** Mt 1:22 **18:9** Jn 17:6,12 **18:10** Mt 16:17 **18:10** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **18:10** Mk 14:47; Heb 4:12 **18:10** Lv 16:32 **18:11** Is 51:22; Jr 49:12; Mt 20:22; 26:39,42; Mk 14:36; Lk 22:42 **18:13** Lk 3:2; Jn 18:24; Ac 4:6 **18:13** Mt 26:3; Jn 11:49 **18:14** Jn 11:50 **18:15** Lk 6:14 **18:19** Mt 26:3 **18:20** Jms 2:2 **18:20** Ac 21:26 **18:23** Gn 1:31 **18:24-27** Mt 26:57-75; Mk 14:53-72; Lk 22:54,62-65 **18:24** Jn 18:13 **18:27** Jn 13:38 **18:28-38** Mt 27:2,11-14; Mk 15:1-5; Lk 23:25 **18:28** Mk 15:16 **18:29** 1Tm 6:13 **18:29** 1Tm 5:19; Ti 1:6 **18:32** Jn 12:32-33 **18:33** Jn 19:21 **18:36** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **18:36** Jn 17:6 **18:36** Lk 1:2; Jn 18:18; Ac 26:16; 1Co 4:1 **18:36** Jn 8:23; 17:14,16 **18:37** Jn 1:9; 3:19; 6:14; 9:39; 11:27; 12:46; 16:28; 1Tm 1:15 **18:37** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **18:37** Ps 119:142; 2Th 2:10 **18:38** Mt 27:37; Mk 15:26; Jn 19:4,6; Ac 13:28; 23:28; 25:18; 28:18 **18:39–19:6** Mt 27:15-26; Mk 15:6-15; Lk 23:13-25 **18:40** Mk 15:7 **18:40** Mk 14:48

18:6 Falling **to the ground** is a reaction to divine revelation. It indicates powerlessness in the presence of God.

18:10 Peter’s **sword** (Gk *macharia*) was probably one of the small swords, or long knives, the disciples carried during their travels for their utility (e.g., Lk 22:35-38). Jesus clearly disapproves of Peter’s rash and violent action (v. 11) and miraculously undoes the servant Malchus’s injury—even as he is being arrested (Lk 22:51).

18:13 Annas had been the high priest from AD 6 until 15 and was still consulted in important matters because of his age and experience.

18:38-40 The custom of releasing a prisoner on a holy day, or in the midst of a festival, was common in ancient Rome. Unlike modern governmental pardons, it had little to do with guilt or innocence. The practice was intended to placate the nations Rome had occupied. See also 8:31-32 and "Postmodernism," *p. 779.*

JESUS FLOGGED AND MOCKED

19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers also twisted
together a crown † of thorns, put it on his head, and clothed him in a
purple robe. 3 And they kept coming up to him † and saying, "Hail, King of the
Jews! " and were slapping his face.
4 Pilate went outside again and said to them, "Look, I'm bringing him out to you
to let you know I find no grounds † for charging him." 5 Then Jesus came out
wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. † Pilate said to them, "Here is
the man! " †

PILATE SENTENCES JESUS TO DEATH

6 When the chief priests and the temple servants † saw him, they shouted,
"Crucify! Crucify! "
Pilate responded, "Take him and crucify him yourselves, since I find no grounds
for charging him."
7 "We have a law," the Jews replied to him, "and according to that law he ought
to die, † because he made himself the Son of God." †
8 When Pilate heard this statement, he was more afraid than ever. 9 He went
back into the headquarters † and asked Jesus, "Where are you from? " But Jesus
did not give him an answer. † 10 So Pilate said to him, "Do you refuse to speak
to me? Don't you know that I have the authority to release you and the authority
to crucify you? "
11 "You would have no authority over me at all," Jesus answered him, "if it
hadn't been given you from above. This is why the one who handed me over to
you has the greater sin." †
12 From that moment Pilate kept trying † to release him. But the Jews shouted,
"If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Anyone who makes
himself a king opposes Caesar! "

13 When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge's seat in a place called the Stone Pavement (but in Aramaic, † *Gabbatha*).
14 It was the preparation day for the Passover, and it was about noon. † Then he told the Jews, "Here is your king! "
15 They shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him! "
Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your king? "
"We have no king but Caesar! " the chief priests answered.
16 Then he handed him over to be crucified.

THE CRUCIFIXION

Then they took Jesus away. † 17 Carrying † the cross by himself, † he went out to what is called Place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called *Golgotha*.
18 There they crucified him and two others with him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate also had a sign made and put on the cross. It said: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, † and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. 21 So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Don't write, 'The King of the Jews,' † but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews.' "
22 Pilate replied, "What I have written, I have written."
23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, a part for each soldier. They also took the tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. 24 So they said to one another, "Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see who gets it." This happened that the Scripture † might be fulfilled † that says: **They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing.** † † This is what the soldiers did.

JESUS'S PROVISION FOR HIS MOTHER

25 Standing † by the cross † of Jesus were his mother, † his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. † 26 When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved † standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." 27 Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

THE FINISHED WORK OF JESUS

28 After † this, when Jesus knew that everything was now finished † that the
Scripture might be fulfilled, he said, “I’m thirsty.” † 29 A jar full of sour wine
was sitting there; so they fixed a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch †
and held it up to his mouth.
30 When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished.” † Then
bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. †

JESUS’S SIDE PIERCED

31 Since it was the preparation day, † the Jews did not want the bodies † to
remain on the cross † on the Sabbath † (for that Sabbath was a special † day).
They requested that Pilate have the men’s legs broken and that their bodies be
taken away. † 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of
the other one who had been crucified with him. 33 When they came to Jesus,
they did not break his legs since they saw that he was already dead. † 34 But
one of the soldiers pierced † his side † with a spear, and at once blood and
water † came out. 35 He who saw this has testified † so that you also may
believe. His testimony is true, and he knows he is telling the truth. † 36 For
these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled: † **Not one of his
bones will be broken.** † † 37 Also, another Scripture says: **They will look at
the one they pierced.** † †

JESUS’S BURIAL

38 After † this, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus — but secretly
because of his fear of the Jews — asked Pilate that he might remove Jesus’s
body. † Pilate gave him permission; so he came and took his body away.
39 Nicodemus † (who had previously come to him at night) also came, bringing
a mixture of about seventy-five pounds † of myrrh and aloes. 40 They took
Jesus’s body † and wrapped it in linen cloths † with the fragrant spices,
according to the burial † custom of the Jews. 41 There was a garden in the place
where he was crucified. A new tomb was in the garden; no one had yet been

placed in it. 42 They placed Jesus there because of the Jewish day of preparation and since the tomb was nearby.

19:6 Or *temple police*, or *officers* **19:12** Lit *Pilate was trying* **19:13** Or *Hebrew*, also in vv. 17,20 **19:14** Lit *about the sixth hour* **19:16** Other mss add *and led him out* **19:31** Lit *great* **19:39** Lit *a hundred litrai* ; a Roman litrai = 12 ounces

19:2 Mk 15:17 **19:3** Mk 1:45 **19:4** Jn 18:38 **19:5** Lk 19:36 **19:5** Zch 6:12 **19:7** Lv 24:16; Jn 10:33,36 **19:7** Jn 5:18; 19:12; Heb 1:2 **19:9** Mk 15:16 **19:9** Mk 14:61 **19:11** Jn 15:22; 18:13-14,19-24,28 **19:17-24** Mt 27:33-37; Mk 15:22-26; Lk 23:32-34 **19:17** Lk 9:23; 23:26 **19:20** Heb 13:12 **19:21** Mt 2:2; 27:11,29,37; Mk 15:2,9,12,18,26; Lk 23:3,37-38; Jn 18:33,39; 19:3,19 **19:24** Mt 26:54 **19:24** Mt 1:22 **19:24** Ps 22:18 **19:24** Ps 22:18 **19:25-27** Mt 27:55-56; Mk 15:40-41; Lk 23:49 **19:25** Lk 23:26 **19:25** Mt 1:16 **19:25** Mk 15:40 **19:26** Jn 13:23; 21:7 **19:28-30** Mt 27:45-54; Mk 15:33-39; Lk 23:44-48 **19:28** Lk 12:50; 18:31; 22:37; Jn 19:30; Ac 13:29; Heb 10:14; 11:40 **19:28** Ps 22:15; 69:21 **19:29** Ex 12:22 **19:30** Lk 12:50; Jn 4:34; 17:4; 19:28 **19:30** 1Jn 5:8 **19:31** Jn 19:14 **19:31** Lk 12:4 **19:31** Lk 23:26 **19:31** Mk 2:23 **19:31** Dt 21:22-23; Jos 8:29; 10:26-27 **19:33** Ex 12:46; Nm 9:12; Ps 34:20 **19:34** Zch 12:10; Rv 1:7 **19:34** Jn 20:20 **19:34** 1Jn 5:6-9 **19:35** Jn 1:14-15,34 **19:35** Jn 21:24 **19:36** Jn 13:18; 17:12; 19:24 **19:36** Ex 12:46; Nm 9:12; Ps 34:20 **19:36** Ex 12:46; Nm 9:12; Ps 34:20 **19:37** Zch 12:10 **19:37** Zch 12:10 **19:38-42** Mt 27:57-60; Mk 15:42-46; Lk 23:50-54 **19:38** Lk 12:4; Jn 2:21 **19:39** Jn 3:1-9; 7:50 **19:40** Jn 2:21; 19:40 **19:40** Jn 20:5 **19:40** Mk 14:8

19:2-3 Roman soldiers in Jerusalem liked to mock condemned prisoners, especially revolutionaries, by dressing them as kings and offering them false homage. Since Jesus had been charged as **King of the Jews**, he was an easy target of such mockery.

19:8 Though it may have been due to superstition, Pilate's fear was most likely political. **Pilate** was quickly becoming trapped between Roman law, respecting the religious customs of the Jews, and keeping the peace. He questioned Jesus, apparently attempting to find some sort of solution to his conundrum (vv. 9-10). Pilate quickly determined that finding a way to release Jesus would be the most politically expedient course (v. 12). When that failed, he conceded and ordered his execution (v. 16).

19:19-22 It was not uncommon for a crucifixion victim's crime to be posted above his head. Roman historian Seutonius said the purpose of this practice was to discourage similar crimes. Pilate, however, words his judgment in a way that is sure to anger the Jewish leadership—probably since they forced his hand in executing Jesus.

19:31 The **preparation day** was the day prior to the Sabbath; it began on Friday at sunset. Preparations were made early in order to avoid work on the **Sabbath. The Jews** believed that the bodies of hanged or crucified criminals left on a tree overnight would defile the land (Dt 21:22-23).

THE EMPTY TOMB

20 On † the first day of the week † Mary Magdalene † came to the tomb † early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone † had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she went running to Simon Peter † and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, "They've taken the Lord out of the tomb, † and we don't know where they've put him! "

3 At that, Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb

first. [5] Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths † lying there, but he did not go in. [6] Then, following him, Simon Peter also came. He entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. [7] The wrapping † that had been on his head was not lying with the linen cloths † but was folded up in a separate place by itself. [8] The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed. [9] For they did not yet understand the Scripture † that he must rise † from the dead. † [10] Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

MARY MAGDALENE SEES THE RISEN LORD

[11] But † Mary stood outside the tomb, † crying. As she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. [12] She saw two angels † in white sitting where Jesus's body † had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. [13] They said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? "

"Because they've taken away my Lord," † she told them, "and I don't know where they've put him."

[14] Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. † [15] "Woman," Jesus said to her, "why are you crying? Who is it that you're seeking? "

Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where you've put him, and I will take him away."

[16] Jesus said to her, "Mary."

Turning around, she said to him in Aramaic, † "*Rabboni! "* — which means "Teacher." †

[17] "Don't cling to me," Jesus told her, "since I have not yet ascended † to the Father. † But go to my brothers † and tell them that I am ascending to my Father † and your Father, to my God † and your God."

[18] Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord! " † And she told them what † he had said to her.

THE DISCIPLES COMMISSIONED

19 When it was evening of that first day of the week, † the disciples were
gathered together with the doors locked because they feared the Jews. Jesus
came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you." †
20 Having said this, he showed them his hands and his side. † So the disciples
rejoiced when they saw the Lord.
21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you. As the Father has sent me, † I also
send you." † 22 After saying this, he breathed on them † and said, † "Receive
the Holy Spirit. † 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if
you retain the sins of any, they are retained." †

THOMAS SEES AND BELIEVES

24 But Thomas † (called "Twin" †), one of the Twelve, was not with them
when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples were telling him, "We've seen the
Lord! "
But he said to them, "If I don't see the mark of the nails in his hands, put my
finger into the mark of the nails, † and put my hand into his side, † I will never
believe." †
26 A week later his disciples were indoors again, and Thomas was with them.
Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said,
"Peace be with you."
27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Reach
out your hand and put it into my side. Don't be faithless, but believe." †
28 Thomas responded to him, "My Lord and my God! "
29 Jesus said, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. † Blessed are
those who have not seen and yet believe." †

THE PURPOSE OF THIS GOSPEL

30 Jesus performed many other signs † in the presence of his disciples that are
not written † in this book. † 31 But these are written so that you may believe
that Jesus is the Messiah, † the Son † of God, † † and that by believing you
may have life in his name. †

20:16 Or *Hebrew* **20:18** Lit *these things* **20:22** Lit *he breathed and said to them* **20:24** Gk *Didymus* **20:29** Or *have you believed?* **20:31** Or *that the Messiah, the Son of God, is Jesus*

20:1-2 Mt 28:5-8; Mk 16:5-8; Lk 24:3-8 **20:1** Lk 24:1; Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 **20:1** Mk 15:40 **20:1** Jn 5:28 **20:1** Mt 27:60,66; Mk 15:46 **20:2** Lk 6:14; Jn 21:7; Ac 10:32 **20:2** Jn 5:28 **20:5** Lk 24:12; Jn 19:40; 20:5-7 **20:7** Lk 19:20; Jn 11:44; Ac 19:12 **20:7** Jn 20:5 **20:9** Mt 26:54 **20:9** Lk 18:33; Ac 2:24 **20:9** Mk 9:9-10; 12:25; Lk 16:31; 24:46; Ac 10:41; 13:34; 17:3,31 **20:11-18** Mk 16:9-11 **20:11** Jn 5:28 **20:12** Gn 16:7; Mt 13:49; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **20:12** Lk 12:4; Jn 2:21 **20:13** Lk 10:1; 1Co 8:6 **20:14** Jn 21:4 **20:16** Mk 4:38; Eph 4:11 **20:17** Lk 24:51; Jn 3:13; 6:62; Ac 1:9-11; 2:33-34; Rm 10:6; Eph 1:20-21; 4:8; 1Pt 3:22 **20:17** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **20:17** Ac 9:30 **20:17** Jn 14:12 **20:17** Mt 27:46 **20:18** Mk 16:10 **20:19** Lk 24:1; Ac 20:7; 1Co 16:2 **20:19** Jn 14:27; 16:33 **20:20** Lk 24:39-40; Jn 19:34; 20:25-29 **20:21** Jn 3:17; 17:18; Heb 3:1 **20:21** Jn 13:20; Ac 1:2 **20:22** Gn 2:7; Ezk 37:9 **20:22** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; 14:17; 16:7; Ac 2:4; 8:15; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **20:23** Mt 16:19; 18:18; Jn 9:41 **20:24** Mk 3:18; Jn 11:16 **20:25** Ps 22:16 **20:25** Jn 20:20 **20:25** Dt 9:23; Mk 16:11; Lk 22:67; Jn 4:48; 6:64; Ac 13:41 **20:27** Nm 12:7 **20:29** 2Co 5:7; 1Pt 1:8 **20:30** Jn 2:11; 21:25 **20:30** 1Jn 1:4 **20:30** 2Tm 4:13 **20:31** Mt 1:17; Ac 18:5; 1Jn 2:22; 5:1 **20:31** Jn 5:19 **20:31** Heb 1:2 **20:31** Jn 10:27; 1Jn 3:23

20:17 See "Equality of the Sexes," *p. 1434.*

20:21 John's Great Commission is the shortest in the four Gospels, but it is no less clear (cp. Mt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:46-49). As the **Father . . . sent** Jesus into the world to save humanity from sin, so Jesus sends his disciples out to proclaim forgiveness of sins in Jesus's name.

20:22 Jesus most likely **breathed on** the disciples as a symbolic gesture pointing to the coming of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:1-4).

20:28 Thomas's declaration is a major proclamation of the deity of Jesus. It would take an extraordinary level of conviction for one Jewish man to declare another to be **Lord** and **God.** Strikingly, Jesus does not deny the identification.

JESUS'S THIRD APPEARANCE TO THE DISCIPLES

21 After this, Jesus revealed † himself again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. † He revealed himself in this way: 2 Simon Peter, † Thomas † (called "Twin" †), Nathanael † from Cana of Galilee, † Zebedee's † sons, and two others of his disciples were together.
3 "I'm going fishing," Simon Peter said to them.
"We're coming with you," they told him. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. †
4 When daybreak came, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus. † 5 "Friends," † Jesus called to them, "you don't have any fish, do you?"
"No," they answered.
6 "Cast the net on the right side of the boat," he told them, "and you'll find some." So they did, † and they were unable to haul it in because of the large

number of fish. [7] The disciple, the one Jesus loved, said to Peter, “It is the Lord! ” †
When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he tied his outer clothing around him (for he had taken it off) and plunged into the sea. [8] Since they were not far from land (about a hundred yards † † away), the other disciples came in the boat, † dragging the net full of fish.
[9] When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. [10] “Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,” Jesus told them. [11] So Simon Peter climbed up and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish — 153 of them. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn. †
[12] “Come and have breakfast,” Jesus told them. None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you? ” because they knew it was the Lord. [13] Jesus came, took the bread, and gave it to them. He did the same with the fish. [14] This was now the third time † Jesus appeared † † to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

JESUS’S THREEFOLD RESTORATION OF PETER

[15] When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, † do you love me more than these? ”
“Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.”
“Feed † my lambs,” † he told him. [16] A second time he asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love † me? ” †
“Yes, Lord,” he said to him, “you know that I love you.”
“Shepherd † my sheep,” † he told him.
[17] He asked him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love † me? ”
Peter was grieved † that he asked him the third time, “Do you love me? ” He said, “Lord, you know everything; † you know that I love you.”
“Feed † my sheep,” Jesus said. [18] “Truly I tell you, † when you were younger, you would tie your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will tie you and carry you where you don’t want to go.” [19] He said this to indicate by what kind of death † Peter would glorify God. † After saying this, he told him, “Follow me.” †

CORRECTING A FALSE REPORT

20 So Peter turned around and saw the disciple Jesus loved † following them,
the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and asked, “Lord, who
is the one that’s going to betray you?” † 21 When Peter saw him, he said to
Jesus, “Lord, what about him?”

22 “If I want him to remain until I come,” † Jesus answered, “what is that to
you? As for you, follow me.”

23 So this rumor † spread to the brothers and sisters † that this disciple would
not die. † Yet Jesus did not tell him that he would not die, but, “If I want him to
remain until I come, what is that to you?”

EPILOGUE

24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down.
We know that his testimony is true.

25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which, if every one of
them were written down, I suppose not even the world itself could contain the
books † that would be written. †

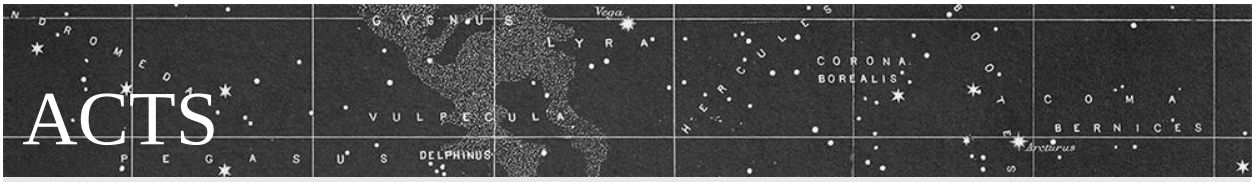
21:2 Gk *Didymus* **21:5** Lit *"Children"* **21:6** Lit *they cast* **21:8** Lit *about two hundred cubits* **21:14** Lit *was revealed* (v. 1) **21:15-17** Other mss read *"Simon, son of Jonah* ; Mt 16:17; Jn 1:42 **21:23** Lit *this word* **21:25** Lit *scroll*

21:1 Mk 16:12; Jn 21:14; 2Co 4:11; 5:10; 1Tm 3:16; Heb 9:26; 1Pt 1:10; 1Jn 1:2; 3:5,8 **21:1** Jn 6:1,23 **21:2** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **21:2** Mk 3:18 **21:2** Jn 1:45-49 **21:2** Mt 17:22 **21:2** Mt 4:21; 10:2; 20:20; 26:37; 27:56; Mk 1:19-20; 3:17; 10:35; Lk 5:10; Jn 21:7; Ac 12:2 **21:3** Lk 5:5 **21:4** Jn 20:14,19,26 **21:7** Lk 10:1; 1Co 8:6 **21:8** Lk 12:25 **21:8** Mk 3:9; Jn 6:22-24 **21:11** Lk 5:4-10 **21:14** Jn 20:19,26 **21:14** Jn 21:1; 2Co 4:11; 1Jn 1:2 **21:15** Mt 8:30,33; Mk 5:11,14; Lk 8:32,34; 15:15; Jn 21:17 **21:15** Rv 5:6 **21:16** Lk 6:35; Rv 12:11 **21:16** Lk 10:27 **21:16** 1Pt 5:2 **21:16** Mt 7:15; Jn 10:11 **21:17** Mk 14:44; Jn 5:20 **21:17** 2Co 2:2 **21:17** Jn 16:30 **21:17** Jn 21:15 **21:18** Jn 1:51; Rv 22:21 **21:19** 2Pt 1:14 **21:19** Jn 11:4; 17:1; 1Pt 2:12 **21:19** Jn 1:43; 8:12; 10:27 **21:20** Jn 21:7 **21:20** Jn 13:21,23-25 **21:22** Mk 8:38 **21:23** Ac 9:30 **21:23** Mk 9:1 **21:25** Jn 20:30

21:10 See "Animal Rights," *p. 21*.

21:15-17 The OT is full of **shepherd** imagery used to refer to the careful provision and protection with which a shepherd oversees his flock. God's people are sheep that need such shepherds (Is 44:28; Jr 3:15; Ezk 34; cp. 1Pt 5:1-4).

21:25 John concludes his Gospel by speaking directly to the reader (cp. 20:31). He employs hyperbole—**I suppose not even the world itself could contain the books**—to acknowledge that his biography of Jesus offers but a sample of the things that could have been recorded about him. Hyperbolic statements were an established literary convention in Greco-Roman and Jewish literature (cp. Ec 12:9-12).



ACTS

INTRODUCTION

The book of Acts provides a glimpse into the first three decades of the early church (ca. AD 30–63) as it spread and multiplied after the ascension of Jesus Christ. It is not a detailed or comprehensive history. Rather, it focuses on the role played by apostles such as Peter, who ministered primarily to Jews, and Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The book of Acts is formally anonymous. The traditional view is that the author was the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke—Luke the physician and traveling companion of Paul (Col 4:14; 2Tm 4:11; Phm 24). As early as the second century AD, church leaders such as Irenaeus wrote that Luke was the author of Acts. Irenaeus based his view on the "we" passages in Acts, five sections where the author changed from the third person ("he/she" and "they") to first-person plural ("we") as he narrated the action (16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-29; 28:1-16). Irenaeus and many scholars since his time have interpreted these passages to mean that the author of Acts was one of the eyewitness companions of Paul. Luke fits this description better than any other candidate, especially given the similar themes between the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts.

BACKGROUND: The date of composition of the book of Acts is to a large extent directly tied to the issue of authorship. A number of scholars have argued that Acts should be dated to the early 60s (at the time of Paul's imprisonment). Acts closes with Paul still in prison in Rome (28:30-31). Although it is possible that Luke wrote at a later date, a time when Paul had been released, it is more plausible to think that he completed this book while Paul was still in prison. Otherwise he would have ended the book by telling about Paul's release.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Acts ties the other books of the NT together. It does so by first providing "the rest of the story" to the Gospels. The gospel and the message of the kingdom of God did not end with Jesus's ascension to heaven forty days after his resurrection, but continued on in the lives of his followers. Acts shows us how the words and promises of Jesus were carried out by the apostles and other believers through the power of the Holy Spirit. Second, the book of Acts gives us the context for much of the rest of the NT, especially the letters Paul wrote to the churches he had helped establish during his missionary journeys.

STRUCTURE

So far as literary form is concerned, the book of Acts is an ancient biography that focuses on several central characters, especially Peter and Paul. Ancient biography was not concerned simply with narrating events but with displaying the character of the people involved, especially their ethical behavior. Other features included genealogies and rhetorical elements such as speeches. Ancient biographies also commonly drew from both written and oral sources for information.

Acts 1:8 provides the introduction and outline for the book. Once empowered by the Holy Spirit, the disciples proclaimed the gospel boldly in Jerusalem. As the book progresses, the gospel spread further into Judea and Samaria, and then finally into the outer reaches of the known world through the missionary work of Paul.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

The Father is in particular the Sender of the Holy Spirit. The book shows that from the beginning of Christianity Jesus has been the center of proclamation. His life, death, and resurrection were the essence of the good news. Above all, however, this book reveals the person and work of the Holy Spirit more extensively than any other book in the Bible.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Particularly by tracing the spread of Christianity from Jews to Samaritans and then to Gentiles, this book shows that all kinds of people are included in salvation. A Pharisee that persecuted Jesus's followers, an African official, a Roman centurion, and a slave girl in Philippi were all touched by the power of Jesus. On the other hand, some leading authorities (both Jewish and Gentile) rejected the proclamation about Jesus.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Over and over in this book, the basic Christian message is presented: Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture by his deeds and life; he was crucified; God raised him; the necessary human response is to repent of sins and believe in him; those who do so receive God's good gift of the Spirit. Salvation in Acts focuses on the Spirit's filling believers so that they live holy lives and do God's will.

ACTS TIMELINE

AD 33–37

Tiberius Caesar **14–37**

Jesus's trials, death, resurrection, and ascension **NISAN 14-16** or **APRIL 3-5, 33**

Lunar eclipse; moon turns blood red. **NISAN 15 OR APRIL 4, 33**

Pentecost **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Paul's years in Arabia **34–37**

Paul's first visit to Jerusalem following his conversion **37?**

AD 37–41

Paul returns to his native Tarsus. **SUMMER 37–40**

Caligula, Emperor of Rome **37–41**

Emperor Caligula removes Herod Antipas as Tetrarch of Galilee and replaces him with his nephew, Herod Agrippa, who had been a childhood companion of Caligula. **39**

Barnabas travels from Antioch of Syria to find Paul. **Summer 40**

Conversion of Cornelius and his family **40**

Barnabas and Saul serve together in Antioch. **41**

AD 41–49

Claudius, Emperor of Rome **41–54**

Believers respond to famine prophesied by Agabus. **44–47**

Martyrdom of James, son of Zebedee **44**

Death of Herod Agrippa **44**

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make first missionary journey. **47–49**

AD 49–68

Paul and Silas take second missionary journey. **49–52**

Paul’s third missionary journey **53–57**

Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem **(57)** and imprisonment at Caesarea **58–59**

Paul’s journey to Rome **LATE 59**

Paul’s house arrest in Rome **60–62**

Martyrdom of James, half brother of Jesus **62**

Martyrdom of Peter and Paul in Rome **67 or 68**

PROLOGUE

1 I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do
and teach † 2 until the day he was taken up, after he had given
instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. †
3 After he had suffered, he also presented himself alive to them by many
convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking
about the kingdom of God. †

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMISED

4 While he was † with them, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to
wait for the Father's promise. † "Which," he said, "you have heard me speak
about; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy
Spirit in a few days." †
6 So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, are you restoring the
kingdom to Israel at this time?"
7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or periods that the Father has
set by his own authority. † 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit
has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and
Samaria, and to the end of the earth." †

THE ASCENSION

9 After he had said this, he was taken up as they were watching, and a cloud
took him out of their sight. 10 While he was going, they were gazing into
heaven, and suddenly two men in white clothes stood by them. † 11 They said,
"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This same Jesus,
who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in the same way that you
have seen him going into heaven." †

UNITED IN PRAYER

12 Then they returned to Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives, which is near
Jerusalem — a Sabbath day's journey away. 13 When they arrived, they went to
the room † upstairs where they were staying: Peter, John, James, Andrew,
Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the

Zealot, and Judas the son of James. † 14 They all were continually united † in prayer, † along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers. †

MATTHIAS CHOSEN

15 In those days Peter stood up among the brothers and sisters † — the number of people who were together was about a hundred and twenty — and said: 16 "Brothers and sisters, it was necessary that the Scripture be fulfilled that the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David foretold about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. † 17 For he was one of our number and shared in this ministry." † 18 Now this man acquired a field with his unrighteous wages. He fell headfirst, his body burst open and his intestines spilled out. † 19 This became known to all the residents of Jerusalem, so that in their own language that field is called *Hakeldama* (that is, Field of Blood). 20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

Let his dwelling become desolate; let no one live in it; † and **Let someone else take his position.** † †

21 "Therefore, from among the men who have accompanied us during the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us — 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day he was taken up from us — from among these, it is necessary that one become a witness with us of his resurrection." †

23 So they proposed two: Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. † 24 Then they prayed, † "You, Lord, know everyone's hearts; show which of these two you have chosen † 25 to take the place † in this apostolic ministry † that Judas left to go where he belongs." 26 Then they cast lots † for them, and the lot fell to Matthias and he was added to the eleven apostles.

1:4 Or *he was eating,* or *he was lodging* **1:14** Other mss add *and petition* **1:15** Other mss read *disciples* **1:25** Other mss read *to share*

1:1 Lk 1:3; 24:19 **1:2** Mt 28:19-20; Lk 24:47; Jn 20:21 **1:3** Mt 28:17; Mk 16:14; Lk 24:34,36; Jn 20:19; 1Co 15:5-7 **1:4** Lk 24:49; Jn 14:1; Ac 2:33 **1:5** Jl 3:18; Mt 3:11; Ac 11:16 **1:7** Mt 24:36; Mk 13:32; 1Th 5:1 **1:8** Lk 24:48; Ac 2:1,4; 4:33; 8:1,14; 13:47 **1:10** Mt 28:13; Mk 16:5; Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12 **1:11** Mt 16:27; Ac 2:7; 1Th 1:10; 2Th 1:10 **1:13** Ac 9:37,39; 20:8 **1:13** Mt 10:2-4; Mk 3:16-19; Lk 6:14-16 **1:14** Ac 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Rm 15:6 **1:14** Mt 12:46; Lk 23:49,55; Rm 12:12; Col 4:2 **1:16** Lk 22:37,47; 24:44; Jn 13:18; 18:3 **1:17** Jn 6:71; Ac 20:24; 21:19 **1:18** Mt 26:14-15; 27:5,7-8 **1:20** Ps 69:25 **1:20** Ps 109:8 **1:20** Ps

69:25; 109:8 **1:22** Mk 1:4; Ac 2:31; 4:2; 17:18; 23:6; 24:15; 26:23 **1:23** Ac 15:22; 18:7 **1:24** Ac 6:6; 13:3 **1:24** 1Sm 16:7; Jr 17:10; Ac 15:8; Rv 2:23 **1:25** Rm 1:5; 1Co 9:2; Gl 2:8 **1:26** Mt 27:35; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:34; Jn 19:24; Ac 8:21; 26:18; Col 1:12; 1Pt 5:3

1:1-2 Luke begins by addressing his likely patron, **Theophilus** (Gk "loved by God" or "one who loves God"). In ancient times, publishing a literary work was expensive and required a financial sponsor. Acts is the second book in Luke's two-volume work. The first volume, Luke, records all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day he was taken up (Lk 1:1-2).

1:8 This passage introduces two important themes in the book. First is the role of the disciples as witnesses of Jesus. They will serve as Jesus's witnesses **in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.** The phrase, "end of the earth," refers either to Rome (Ac 28:14) or the farthest portions of the known world (e.g., Spain). Second is the work of the **Holy Spirit** to empower this activity. See also "God's Purposes in a Christian's Participation in Missions," *p. 1191;* "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

1:10 The **two men** are angels. Their **white clothes** would be understood to indicate their status as heavenly beings. Contrary to popular depictions today, the Bible does not describe angels as having wings (except in the case of the seraphim; cp. Is 6:2). Generally in the Bible, angels are described with human-like features.

1:12 The distance from the **Mount of Olives** to **Jerusalem** was **a Sabbath day's journey.** According to the Mishnah, this was a distance of about three-fourths of a mile. In other words, it was an acceptable distance to travel on the Sabbath.

1:13 In the firstcentury, people used upper-level rooms for study, prayer, and private meetings. Homeowners sometimes rented their upper room to others. People preferred upper-level rooms because they provided privacy from passers-by who might look in from the street.

1:15-22 Luke presents the first of many speeches in these verses. In fact, approximately one-third of Acts consists of some type of speech made by believers (e.g., Ac 7:2-56; 22:1-21) and nonbelievers (e.g., Ac 5:35-39; 19:35-40). Ancient writers often placed speeches strategically to communicate important ideas.

1:21 The phrase **went in and out among us** is a Semitic idiom denoting close and intimate association. Judas's replacement had to be a man who had walked closely with Jesus and his twelve disciples from the days of John the Baptist until the ascension. A second qualification included witnessing the resurrected Jesus.

1:23 Luke mentions two candidates to replace Judas: **Joseph** and **Matthias.** Joseph was also **called Barsabbas**, which means, "son of the Sabbath." He may have been called by this name because he was born on the Sabbath, or because he had great zeal for the day. We do not know if it was a formal name or a nickname. Joseph was also known as **Justus.** The second candidate was Matthias, a shortened form of Mattathias ("gift of God").

1:26 The disciples sought to discover God's choice by casting lots. Luke does not reveal precisely how they carried this out. A common method for casting lots, however, was to write each man's name on a rock or piece of wood and to place both items in a jar or bag before selecting one. Jews in the OT sometimes followed this procedure (Jos 18:6; 19:51; 1Sm 14:42; 1Ch 26:14-16; Pr 16:33; 18:18; Jnh 1:7). The soldiers **cast lots** for Jesus's grave clothes (Mt 27:35; Mk 15:24; Lk 23:34b; Jn 19:24). There are no biblical examples of believers engaging in this practice after the coming of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2).

PENTECOST

2 When the day of Pentecost had arrived, they were all together in one
place. † 2 Suddenly a sound like that of a violent rushing wind † came
from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were staying. †
3 They saw tongues like flames of fire that separated and rested on each one of
them. 4 Then they were all filled † with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in
different tongues, † as the Spirit enabled them. †
5 Now there were Jews staying in Jerusalem, devout people from every nation †
under heaven. 6 When this sound occurred, a crowd came together and was
confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. 7 They
were astounded and amazed, saying, † "Look, aren't all these who are speaking
Galileans? † 8 How is it that each of us can hear them in our own native
language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites; those who live in Mesopotamia, in
Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, † 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt
and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and
converts), † 11 Cretans and Arabs — we hear them declaring the magnificent
acts of God in our own tongues." 12 They were all astounded and perplexed,
saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But some sneered and said,
"They're drunk on new wine." †

PETER'S SERMON

14 Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and proclaimed to them:
"Fellow Jews and all you residents of Jerusalem, let me explain this to you and
pay attention to my words. 15 For these people are not drunk, as you suppose,
since it's only nine in the morning. † 16 On the contrary, this is what was
spoken through the prophet Joel:
17 **And it will be** in the last days, says God, that **I will pour out my Spirit
on all people; then your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young
men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams.** †
18 **I will even pour out my Spirit on my servants in those days, both men
and women** and they will prophesy. †
19 **I will display wonders in the heaven** above **and signs on the earth** below:
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.

20 **The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood †**
before the great and glorious day of the Lord † comes.
21 **Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. † †**
22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to these words: This Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did among you through him, just as you yourselves know. † 23 Though he was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used † lawless people to nail him to a cross and kill him. † 24 God raised him up, ending the pains of death, † because it was not possible for him to be held by death. 25 For David says of him:
I saw the Lord ever before me; because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
26 **Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices.**
Moreover, my flesh will rest in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me in Hades or allow your holy one to see decay. †
28 **You have revealed the paths of life to me; you will fill me with gladness in your presence. † †**
29 "Brothers and sisters, I can confidently speak to you about the patriarch David: He is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. †
30 Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn an oath to him to seat one of his descendants † on his throne. † 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke concerning the resurrection of the Messiah: **He † was not abandoned in Hades, and** his flesh **did not experience decay. † †**
32 "God has raised † this Jesus; we are all witnesses of this. 33 Therefore, since he has been exalted to the right hand of God † and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, † he has poured out † what you both see and hear.
34 For it was not David who ascended into the heavens, but he himself says:
The Lord declared to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand
35 **until I make your enemies your footstool.' † †**
36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." †

CALL TO REPENTANCE

37 When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: “Brothers, what should we do? ” †

38 Peter replied, “Repent † and be baptized, † each of you, in the name † of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, † as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt † generation! ” † 41 So those who accepted his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand people were added to them.

A GENEROUS AND GROWING CHURCH

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, † to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. †

43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and signs were being performed through the apostles. † 44 Now all the believers were together and held all things in common. † 45 They sold their possessions and property and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple, and broke bread from house to house. They ate their food with joyful and sincere hearts, † 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Every day the Lord added to their number † those who were being saved. †

2:4 languages, also in v. 11 **2:7** Other mss add *to one another* **2:15** Lit *it’s the third hour of the day* **2:23** Other mss read *you have taken* **2:30** Other mss add *according to the flesh to raise up the Messiah* **2:31** Other mss read *His soul* **2:40** Or *crooked*, or *twisted* **2:47** Other mss read *to the church*

2:1 Lv 23:15; Ac 1:14; 20:16 **2:2** 1Kg 19:11; Jb 38:1; Ezk 1:4 **2:2** Ac 4:31; 16:26 **2:4** Ac 4:31; 13:52 **2:4** Mk 16:17; 1Co 12:10 **2:5** Mt 28:19; Rm 1:5; Gl 1:16 **2:7** Ac 1:11; 2:12 **2:9** Gn 14:9; 2Kg 17:6 **2:10** Mt 23:15; Ac 13:13; 15:38; 16:6,21; 18:23 **2:13** Ac 17:32; 1Co 14:23 **2:17** Is 44:3; Jn 7:38; Ac 10:45; 21:9 **2:18** Ac 21:10; 1Co 12:10 **2:20** Mt 24:29; 1Th 5:2 **2:20** Is 58:13; Ezk 13:5; Am 5:18; Ob 15; Zph 1:14; Zch 14:1; Mal 4:5 **2:17-21** Jl 2:28-32 **2:17-21** Jl 2:28-32; Ac 16:31; Rm 10:13 **2:22** Jn 3:2; 4:48; Ac 10:38; Heb 2:4 **2:23** Mt 26:24; Lk 22:22; 24:20; Ac 3:18; 4:28; 5:30 **2:24** Rm 8:11; 1Co 6:14; 2Co 4:14; Eph 1:20; Col 2:12; 1Th 1:10; Heb 13:20 **2:27** Mt 11:23; Lk 2:26; Ac 13:35; Heb 7:26 **2:25-28** Ps 16:8-11 **2:25-28** Ps 16:8-11 **2:29** 1Kg 2:10; Neh 3:16; Ac 7:8-9; 13:36 **2:30** 2Sm 23:2; Ps 132:11; Mt 22:43; Lk 1:32; Ac 1:8; Heb 11:32 **2:31** Ps 16:10 **2:31** Ps 16:10; Ac 2:27 **2:32** Lk 18:33; Ac 2:24 **2:33** Php 2:9; Heb 10:12 **2:33** Jn 7:39; 14:26; 16:7,13 **2:33** Ac 2:17; 10:45 **2:34-35** Ps 110:1 **2:34-35** Ps 110:1; Mt 5:35; 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:42-43; Jn 3:13; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13 **2:36** Mt 28:18; Lk 2:11; Rm 14:9; 2Co 4:5 **2:37** Lk 3:10; Ac 16:30 **2:38** Lk 24:47; Ac 3:19; 26:20 **2:38** Ac 8:12; 22:16 **2:38** Ac 3:16; 15:14 **2:39** Is 44:3; Ac 3:25; Eph

2:13 **2:40** Dt 32:5; Mt 17:17; Php 2:15 **2:42** Ac 5:28; 13:12; 17:19; 1Co 14:6 **2:42** Ac 1:14; Heb 10:25 **2:43** Mk 16:17,20; Ac 5:12 **2:44** Mt 19:21; Ac 4:32 **2:46** Lk 24:53; Ac 5:42; 20:7 **2:47** Ac 5:14; 11:24; 16:5; Rm 14:18

2:1 Pentecost, the second of Judaism's three great festivals—Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles—was an annual agricultural and religious celebration occurring fifty days (Gk *Pentecoste*, "fiftieth") after Passover in May or June (Lv 23:15-21). It was known originally as the Feast of Weeks because it came after seven weeks of harvesting. Pentecost also served to commemorate the giving of the Mosaic Law at Sinai.

2:2-3 Luke describes the Spirit's coming with specific sounds and sights: **a sound like that of a violent rushing wind** . . . and **tongues like flames.** In the OT, wind and fire served to denote God's divine presence (e.g., breath/wind, Ezk 37:9-14; fire, Ex 3:2-5; 13:21; 24:17).

2:4 As vv. 5-11 make clear, **tongues** in this account refers to known, human languages rather than to unintelligible, heavenly ones.

2:5 Some understand the **Jews** referenced here as pilgrims who had come to the Pentecost festival. Others view them as residents of Jerusalem, i.e., Jews who had returned previously from the Diaspora to resettle in the city. The latter view is based on Luke's use of the verb "living" (Gk *katoikountes*) throughout his writing (e.g., Ac 1:20; 7:2,4,48; 9:22). It implies a more permanent residence.

2:7 At the time of Pentecost, most of Jesus's followers were **Galileans** incapable of speaking the diverse languages referenced in Acts 2:9-11.

2:9-11 Luke mentions places from which the Jewish listeners originated. The languages and dialects spoken would have included Aramaic, Parthian, Iranian, Hebrew, Phrygian, Pisidian, Lydian, Carian, Lycian, Celtic, Lycaonian, Coptic, Latin, Numidian, Greek, and Nabatean among others.

2:13 New wine refers to partially fermented wine that is sweet.

2:14-21 In his Pentecost sermon, **Peter** presents a view of history that sees God working through people and events to bring his divine salvation in Jesus, the Messiah. Key events include Jesus's death and resurrection (Ac 2:23-24,27,31-32) and the outpouring of the Spirit (Ac 2:17-18,38).

2:42 In the earliest days of the church's history, believers took the Lord's Supper as part of a regular meal rather than during a separate worship service. **The breaking of bread** may refer to people eating a regular meal together, partaking of the Lord's Supper, or both.

2:46 In the first few centuries of the church, believers met in one another's homes **(from house to house)**, especially in the homes of wealthy Christians, as they could accommodate more people.

2:47 Luke notes that **every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.** This is the first of many summary statements highlighting the expansion of the church (e.g., Ac 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20).

HEALING OF A LAME MAN

3 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple for the time of prayer † at three in the afternoon. † 2 A man who was lame from birth was being carried there. He was placed each day at the temple gate called Beautiful, so that he could beg from those entering the temple. † 3 When he saw Peter and John about to enter the temple, he asked for money. 4 Peter, along with John, looked straight at him and said, "Look at us." 5 So he turned to them,

expecting to get something from them. 6 But Peter said, “I don’t have silver or gold, but what I do have, I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!” † 7 Then, taking him by the right hand he raised him up, and at once his feet and ankles became strong. 8 So he jumped up and started to walk, and he entered the temple with them — walking, leaping, and praising God. † 9 All the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and they recognized that he was the one who used to sit and beg at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. So they were filled with awe and astonishment at what had happened to him. †

PREACHING IN SOLOMON’S COLONNADE

11 While he † was holding on to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astonished, ran toward them in what is called Solomon’s Colonnade. † 12 When Peter saw this, he addressed the people: “Fellow Israelites, why are you amazed at this? Why do you stare at us, as though we had made him walk by our own power or godliness? 13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our ancestors, † has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and denied before Pilate, † though he had decided to release him. 14 You denied the Holy and Righteous One † and asked to have a murderer released to you. † 15 You killed the source † of life, whom God raised from the dead; we are witnesses of this. † 16 By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, whom you see and know. So the faith that comes through Jesus has given him this perfect health in front of all of you.

17 “And now, brothers and sisters, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your leaders also did. † 18 In this way God fulfilled what he had predicted through all the prophets — that his Messiah would suffer. † 19 Therefore repent † and turn back, so that your sins may be wiped out, † 20 that seasons of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send Jesus, who has been appointed † for you as the Messiah. 21 Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things, which God spoke about through his holy prophets from the beginning. † 22 Moses said: † **The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers and sisters.**

You must listen to everything he tells you. 23 **And everyone who does not listen to that prophet will be completely cut off from the people.** † †
24 "In addition, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and those after him, have also foretold these days. 25 You are the sons † of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your ancestors, saying to Abraham, **And all the families of the earth will be blessed through your offspring.** † † 26 God raised up his servant † and sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your evil ways." †

3:1 Lit *at the ninth hour* **3:11** Other mss read *the lame man who was healed* **3:15** Or *the Prince*, or *the Ruler* **3:22** Other mss add *to the fathers* **3:25** = heirs **3:26** Other mss add *Jesus*
3:1 Ps 55:17; Mt 27:46; Ac 10:3,30 **3:2** Lk 16:20; Jn 9:8; Ac 14:8 **3:6** Ac 4:10; 2Co 6:10 **3:8** Is 35:4-6; Ac 14:10 **3:10** Jn 9:8; Ac 3:2 **3:11** Lk 22:8; Jn 10:23; Ac 5:12 **3:13** Ac 5:30; 7:32; 22:14 **3:13** Mt 27:2; Lk 23:4; Jn 19:15; Ac 13:28 **3:14** Mk 1:24; Ac 4:27; 7:52 **3:14** Mk 15:11; Lk 23:18,25 **3:15** Ac 2:24; 5:31 **3:17** Lk 23:34; Ac 13:27 **3:18** Lk 24:27; Ac 2:23; 17:3; 26:23 **3:19** Ac 2:38; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20 **3:19** Ps 51:1,9; Is 43:25; 44:22; Col 2:14 **3:20** Ac 22:14; 26:16 **3:21** Mt 17:10; Lk 1:70; Ac 1:11 **3:22-23** Dt 18:15-19 **3:22-23** Dt 18:15-19; Ac 7:37 **3:25** Gn 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4 **3:25** Gn 22:18; Ac 2:39; Rm 9:4 **3:26** Ac 2:24; 13:46; Rm 1:16

3:1 Priests in the Jerusalem temple offered a burnt offering at sunrise and at 3:00 pm. A **time of prayer** followed both rituals (Ex 29:38-42; Nm 28:3-8). Peter and John's visit to **the temple** at the time of prayer likely refers to the prayer time following the afternoon sacrifice.

3:2 Luke refers to a man **lame from birth . . . at the temple gate called Beautiful.** The lame man's positioning himself at the temple's entrance was strategic as he hoped those entering to worship would give him money. Judaism viewed giving to the needy a meritorious act. Two gates have been suggested as the one called Beautiful: the Nicanor Gate and the Shushan Gate. From the fifth century onward, people typically regarded the Beautiful gate as the Shushan Gate. More modern scholars suggest the Nicanor Gate. The choice depends on whether one assumes Josephus (Nicanor Gate) or rabbinic texts (Shushan Gate) more reliable.

3:11 Many magnificent colonnades surrounded the outer portion of the temple platform. The one on the eastern side was called **Solomon's Colonnade.**

3:12-26 Luke records an evangelistic speech by **Peter** consisting of only fifteen verses. Speeches given in ancient times were often quite lengthy, lasting up to two hours. Thus, in this speech and many others, Luke presents an accurate summary.

PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED

4 While they were speaking to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple police, and the Sadducees confronted them, † 2 because they were annoyed that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. † 3 So they seized them and took them into custody until the next day since it was already evening. 4 But many of those who

heard the message believed, and the number of the men † came to about five thousand.

PETER AND JOHN FACE THE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

5 The next day, their rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem 6 with Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and all the members of the high-priestly family. † 7 After they had Peter and John stand before them, they began to question them: "By what power or in what name have you done this? "
8 Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders: † † 9 If we are being examined today about a good deed done to a disabled man, by what means he was healed, 10 let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified and whom God raised from the dead — by him this man is standing here before you healthy. † 11 This Jesus is

the stone rejected by you builders, which has become the cornerstone. † †
12 There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved." †

THE BOLDNESS OF THE DISCIPLES

13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. † 14 And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, "What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign has been done through them, clear to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. † 17 But so that this does not spread any further among the people, let's threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again." 18 So they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.
19 Peter and John answered them, "Whether it's right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; † 20 for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." †
21 After threatening them further, they released them. They found no way to punish them because the people were all giving glory to God over what had been

done. † 22 For this sign of healing had been performed on a man over forty years old.

PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS

23 After they were released, they went to their own people and reported everything the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together to God and said, "Master, you are the one who made the heaven, the earth, and the sea, and everything in them. † 25 You said through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David your servant: †

Why do the Gentiles rage
and the peoples plot futile things?
26 **The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers assemble together against the Lord and against his Messiah.** † †

27 "For, in fact, in this city both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, assembled together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, † 28 to do whatever your hand and your will had predestined to take place. 29 And now, Lord, consider their threats, and grant that your servants may speak your word with all boldness, † 30 while you stretch out your hand for healing, and signs and wonders † are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus." 31 When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God boldly. †

ALL THINGS IN COMMON

32 Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. † 33 With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. † 34 For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, † 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need. †

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), † 37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. †

4:4 Or *people* **4:8** Other mss add *of Israel* **4:25** Other mss read *through the mouth of David your servant* **4:1** Mt 3:7; Lk 22:4; Ac 5:24 **4:2** Ac 3:15; 17:18 **4:6** Mt 26:3; Lk 3:2; Jn 18:13 **4:8** Lk 23:13; Ac 4:5 **4:10** Ac 2:24; 3:6 **4:11** Ps 118:22 **4:11** 1Pt 2:7 **4:12** Mt 1:21; Ac 10:43; 1Tm 2:5 **4:13** Mt 11:25; Lk 22:8; Jn 7:15 **4:16** Jn 11:47; Ac 3:9-10 **4:19** Ac 4:13; 5:28 **4:20** Ac 22:15; 1Co 9:16; 1Jn 1:1,3 **4:21** Mt 9:8; 21:26; Lk 20:6,19; 22:2; Ac 5:26 **4:24** Ex 20:11; 2Ch 2:12; Neh 9:6; Ps 102:25; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6; Is 37:16 **4:25-26** Ps 2:1-2 **4:25-26** Ps 2:1-2; Dn 9:24-25; Lk 4:18; Ac 1:16; 10:38; Heb 1:9 **4:27** Mt 14:1; 27:2; Lk 23:1,12 **4:29** Ac 9:27; 13:46; 14:3; 19:8; Php 1:14 **4:30** Jn 4:48; Ac 3:6 **4:31** Ac 2:2,4; 16:26; Php 1:14 **4:32** Ac 2:44; Php 1:27 **4:33** Lk 24:48; Ac 1:8,22 **4:34** Mt 19:21; Ac 2:45 **4:35** Ac 2:45; 4:37; 5:2; 6:1 **4:36** Ac 9:27; 1Co 9:6 **4:37** Ac 4:35; 5:2

4:1-2 The captain of the temple police was responsible for maintaining order in the temple area. Only the high priest was greater in rank. **The Sadducees** were the ruling aristocracy in Jerusalem. They allied themselves with the Romans and sought to keep the status quo politically in order to maintain their position in society. The Sadducees denied that people could be resurrected—hence their concern when the apostles **were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.**

4:5-6 Rulers, elders, and scribes refer to the Sanhedrin (see also v. 15). This body, composed of the **high priest** and seventy members (e.g., priests, experts on the law), was the Supreme Court of the nation. It exercised jurisdiction over less serious offenses. The Sanhedrin advised the Roman governor in capital cases. Though some Pharisees participated in this body, the Sadducees held the majority of seats. **Annas** served as high priest from AD 6–15. His son-in-law, **Caiaphas**, served in the same position from AD 18–36. Scholars do not know the identities of **John** and **Alexander.**

4:1-22 This section records the arrest, trial, and witness of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin. In Acts 5:17-40 the apostles face the Sanhedrin a second time and are subsequently flogged. Luke's portrayal of the apostles' two interactions with the group provides a window into the legal process of that day. In one's first appearance before the Sanhedrin, he received a warning. During one's second appearance, he was punished. Peter and John, in their first appearance, were warned not to speak Jesus's name to anyone (Ac 4:17). At their second appearance, they were reminded of the warning (5:28), flogged, and ordered again not to speak Jesus's name (5:40).

4:12 See "Ethics of Global Missions," *p. 1323.*

4:13 Luke's reference to **Peter and John** as **uneducated and untrained** refers to their assumed lack of formal rabbinic training, i.e., formal theological education. He is not implying that they were illiterate.

4:19-20 See "Ethics of Personal Evangelism," *p. 1234.*

4:20 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

4:36 Joseph, which means, "God gives the increase," was a common Jewish name in the first century. This would have been the name he used at home, in the synagogue, and among Jews in general. **Barnabas** (Hb "Son of Encouragement") was a nickname employed to distinguish him from other men named Joseph (Ac 1:23).

LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

5 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of
property. 2 However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife's
knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. †
3 "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart † to lie to the Holy
Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 Wasn't it yours while
you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that
you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God."
5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on
all who heard. † 6 The young men got up, wrapped his body, carried him out,
and buried him. †
7 About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.
8 "Tell me," Peter asked her, "did you sell the land for this price? "
"Yes," she said, "for that price."
9 Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord?
Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they
will carry you out." †
10 Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in, they
found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. 11 Then
great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these things.

APOSTOLIC SIGNS AND WONDERS

12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the
hands of the apostles. † They were all together in Solomon's Colonnade. †
13 No one else dared to join them, but the people spoke well of them. †
14 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers — multitudes of both
men and women. 15 As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and
lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow †
might fall on some of them. 16 In addition, a multitude came together from the
towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were tormented
by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

IN AND OUT OF PRISON

17 Then the high priest rose up. He and all who were with him, who belonged to
the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. † 18 So they arrested the
apostles and put them in the public jail. † 19 But an angel of the Lord opened
the doors of the jail during the night, brought them out, and said, † 20 "Go and
stand in the temple, and tell the people all about this life." † 21 Hearing this,
they entered the temple at daybreak and began to teach.

THE APOSTLES ON TRIAL AGAIN

When the high priest and those who were with him arrived, they convened the
Sanhedrin — the full council of the Israelites — and sent orders to the jail to
have them brought. † 22 But when the servants † got there, they did not find
them in the jail, so they returned and reported, 23 "We found the jail securely
locked, with the guards standing in front of the doors, but when we opened them,
we found no one inside." 24 As † the captain of the temple police and the chief
priests heard these things, they were baffled about them, wondering what would
come of this.
25 Someone came and reported to them, "Look! The men you put in jail are
standing in the temple and teaching the people." 26 Then the commander went
with the servants and brought them in without force, because they were afraid
the people might stone them. † 27 After they brought them in, they had them
stand before the Sanhedrin, and the high priest asked, 28 "Didn't we strictly
order you not to teach in this name? † Look, you have filled Jerusalem with
your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood." †
29 Peter and the apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than people. 30 The
God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, † whom you had murdered by hanging
him on a tree. † 31 God exalted this man to his right hand as ruler and Savior, to
give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. † 32 We are witnesses of these
things, and so is the Holy Spirit † whom God has given to those who obey him."

GAMALIEL'S ADVICE

33 When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. † 34 But a
Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the
people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered the men † to be taken outside for

a little while. † 35 He said to them, “Men of Israel, be careful about what you’re
about to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be
somebody, and a group of about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed,
and all his followers were dispersed and came to nothing. † 37 After this man,
Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and attracted a following. He
also perished, and all his followers were scattered. 38 So in the present case, I
tell you, stay away from these men and leave them alone. For if this plan or this
work is of human origin, it will fail; † 39 but if it is of God, you will not be able
to overthrow them. You may even be found fighting against God.” They were
persuaded by him. † 40 After they called in the apostles and had them flogged,
they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus and released them. †
41 Then they went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they
were counted worthy to be treated shamefully on behalf of the Name. † †
42 Every day in the temple, and in various homes, they continued teaching and
proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

5:22 Or *temple police*, or *officers*, also in v. 26 **5:24** Other mss add *the high priest and* **5:34** Other mss read *apostles* **5:41** Other mss add *of Jesus*, or *of Christ*

5:2 Ac 4:37; 5:3 **5:3** Mt 4:10; Lk 22:3; Jn 13:2,27 **5:5** Ezk 11:13; Ac 5:10-11 **5:6** Ezk 29:5; Jn 19:40; Ac 8:2 **5:9** Ac 5:3-4; 15:10; 1Co 10:9 **5:12** Ac 2:43; 14:3; 19:11; Rm 15:19; 2Co 12:12; Heb 2:4 **5:12** Jn 10:23; Ac 4:21,32 **5:13** Ac 2:47; 3:11 **5:15** Mt 14:36; Ac 19:12 **5:17** Ac 4:1; 15:5 **5:18** Lk 21:12; Ac 4:3 **5:19** Mt 1:20; Lk 1:11; Ac 8:26; 12:7; 16:26; 27:23 **5:20** Jn 6:63,68; Php 2:16 **5:21** Mt 5:22; Ac 4:6; 5:27,34,41 **5:26** Ac 4:21; 5:13 **5:28** Jn 14:13; Ac 3:16; 1Jn 3:23 **5:28** Mt 27:25; Ac 2:23,36; 3:15; 4:10; 7:52 **5:30** Ac 2:24; 3:13 **5:30** Ac 10:39; 13:29; Gl 3:13; 1Pt 2:24 **5:31** Ac 2:33; 3:15 **5:32** Lk 24:48; Jn 15:26; Ac 15:28; Heb 2:4 **5:33** Ac 2:37; 7:54 **5:34** Lk 2:46; 5:17; Ac 22:3 **5:36** Ac 8:9; Gl 2:6; 6:3 **5:38** Mt 15:17; Mk 11:30 **5:39** Pr 21:30; Ac 7:51; 11:17 **5:40** Mt 10:17; Mk 13:9; Ac 4:18 **5:41** Mt 5:12; Jn 15:21; 1Pt 4:13

5:1 Ananias (Hb “God is gracious”) was a common name among Palestinian Jews in the firstcentury. **Sapphira** is an Aramaic name meaning “the beautiful one.”

5:15 In ancient times, people believed that a **shadow** carried spiritual power that could result in blessing or harm, depending on who cast it. In Acts, Luke will attribute healing and miraculous acts ultimately to a divine source (Ac 3:6; 4:10; 5:19; 19:11-12).

5:18 The **public jail** may have been located at the praetorium on the western side of the city or in the temple.

5:29 See “Religious Freedom,” *p. 1521*; “The Bible and Government Models,” *p. 768;* “Church and State,” *p.1374.*

5:34 Gamaliel, the son (or grandson) of Hillel, was a well-respected Pharisaic teacher active in Jerusalem from AD 25–50. Scholars disagree as to whether he followed the more lenient tradition of Hillel or the strict tradition of Shammai. Gamaliel later served as Saul of Tarsus’s teacher (Ac 22:3).

5:36-37 Theudas led a rebellion of approximately four hundred men and was subsequently killed. He is mentioned only here in the NT. This Theudas should not be confused with a later revolutionary by the

same name, who led a revolt during the procuratorship of Cuspius Fadus (AD 44–46). **Judas the Galilean**, also known as Judas of Gamala, led a failed rebellion against the census conducted by Quirinius in AD 6.

5:40 The apostles are **flogged.** Luke does not identify the number of lashes administered or the specific instrument employed, but thirty-nine lashes was the maximum number allowed.

SEVEN CHOSEN TO SERVE

6 In those days, as the disciples † were increasing in number, there arose
a complaint by the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews that their
widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. † 2 The Twelve
summoned the whole company of the disciples and said, “It would not be right
for us to give up preaching the word of God to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and
sisters, select from among you seven men of good reputation, † full of the
Spirit † and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty. 4 But we will devote
ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 This proposal pleased the
whole company. So they chose Stephen, † a man full of faith and the Holy
Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a
convert from Antioch. † 6 They had them stand before the apostles, who
prayed † and laid their hands on † them.

7 So the word of God spread, the disciples in Jerusalem increased † greatly in
number, and a large group of priests became obedient to the faith.

STEPHEN ACCUSED OF BLASPHEMY

8 Now Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and
signs among the people. 9 Opposition arose, however, from some members of
the Freedmen’s Synagogue, composed of both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and
some from Cilicia and Asia, and they began to argue with Stephen. 10 But they
were unable to stand up against his wisdom and the Spirit by whom he was
speaking.

11 Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, “We heard him speaking
blasphemous words against Moses and God.” † 12 They stirred up the people,
the elders, and the scribes; so they came, seized him, and took him to the
Sanhedrin. 13 They also presented false witnesses who said, “This man never
stops speaking against this holy place and the law. † 14 For we heard him say
that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs that

Moses handed down to us.” † 15 And all who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at him and saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

6:1 Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 9:1,10,19,25-26; 21:4,16 **6:1** Ac 2:41; 4:4,35; 5:14; 9:29,39; 11:20 **6:3** Dt 1:13; 1Tm 3:7 **6:3** Lk 4:1; Ac 7:55; 11:19,24 **6:5** Ac 6:8-9; 11:19; 22:20 **6:5** Mt 23:15; Ac 8:5,26; 21:8 **6:6** Ac 1:24; 8:17; 13:3; 2Tm 1:6 **6:6** Nm 8:10; Ac 9:17; 1Tm 4:14 **6:7** Ac 12:24; 19:20; Col 1:6 **6:11** 1Kg 21:10,13; Mt 26:59-60 **6:13** Mt 24:15; Ac 7:58; 21:28; 25:8 **6:14** Dn 9:26; Ac 15:1; 21:21; 26:3; 28:17

6:1 The **Hellenistic Jews** were Jews who spoke Greek, probably due to being raised outside Palestine. **Hebraic Jews** were those raised in Palestine; they spoke Aramaic as their native language. **Widows** in ancient times were in an extremely difficult position as most had little means to support themselves. So precarious was their situation that marriage contracts often included promises of support for a woman after her husband’s death.

6:5 Seven men were chosen: **Stephen . . . Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus.** All seven had Greek names. It is impossible to know for certain if all were Hellenistic Jews or not. Still, it is interesting that men with Greek names were put in charge of caring for Hellenistic widows.

6:6 The apostles’ act of laying their hands is a type of commissioning (see also 9:15-17). The practice finds its origin in the OT (e.g., Nm 27:18).

6:9 Opposition arose against Stephen from some within the **Freedmen’s Synagogue.** The synagogue’s name, coupled with the origin of its members (Cyprus, Alexandria, Cilicia, and Asia), suggests that Stephen’s opposition came from emancipated Hellenistic Jews belonging to a single synagogue. While no specific reason is given as to why these Hellenistic Jews had been enslaved, war and debt may be factors. Inhabitants of defeated nations became slaves of victorious nations, and an inability to pay one’s debt also resulted in bondage. Slavery in ancient times was not based on ethnicity.

6:11-14 Stephen’s preaching resulted in charges of blasphemy. Among pious Jews, blasphemy was a serious offense. The OT mentions stoning as a punishment (Lv 24:11-16; see also Nm 15:30).

STEPHEN’S SERMON

7 “Are these things true? ” the high priest asked.

2 “Brothers and fathers,” he replied, “listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he settled in Haran, † 3 and said to him: **Leave your country and relatives, and come to the land that I will show you.** † †

4 “Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this land in which you are now living. †

5 He didn’t give him an inheritance in it — not even a foot of ground — but he promised to give it to him as a possession, and to his descendants after him, † even though he was childless. 6 God spoke in this way: His **descendants** would **be strangers in a foreign country, and they** would **enslave and oppress them for four hundred years.** 7 **I will judge the nation that they will serve as**

slaves, God said. **After this, they will come out and worship me in this place.** † † 8 And so he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. After this, he fathered Isaac and circumcised † him on the eighth day. Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs. †

THE PATRIARCHS IN EGYPT

9 "The patriarchs became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt, but God was with him † 10 and rescued him out of all his troubles. He gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who appointed him ruler over Egypt and over his whole household. † 11 Now a famine and great suffering came over all of Egypt and Canaan, † and our ancestors could find no food. 12 When Jacob heard there was grain in Egypt, he sent our ancestors there the first time. 13 The second time, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh. 14 Joseph invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five people in all, † 15 and Jacob went down to Egypt. He and our ancestors died there, † 16 were carried back to Shechem, and were placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver from the sons of Hamor in Shechem. †

MOSES, A REJECTED SAVIOR

17 "As the time was approaching to fulfill the promise that God had made to Abraham, the people flourished and multiplied in Egypt † 18 until a different king who did not know Joseph ruled over Egypt. † 19 He dealt deceitfully with our race and oppressed our ancestors by making them abandon their infants outside so that they wouldn't survive. † 20 At this time Moses was born, and he was beautiful in God's sight. He was cared for in his father's home for three months. 21 When he was put outside, Pharaoh's daughter adopted and raised him as her own son. † 22 So Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in his speech and actions. †

23 "When he was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. 24 When he saw one of them being mistreated, he came to his rescue and avenged the oppressed man by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He assumed his people would understand that God would give them deliverance through him,

but they did not understand. 26 The next day he showed up while they were fighting and tried to reconcile them peacefully, saying, ‘Men, you are brothers. Why are you mistreating each other? ’ †
27 “But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying: **Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?** 28 **Do you want to kill me, the same way you killed the Egyptian yesterday?** † †
29 “When he heard this, Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons. † 30 After forty years had passed, an angel † appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in the flame of a burning bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. As he was approaching to look at it, the voice of the Lord came: 32 **I am the God of your ancestors — the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.** † † Moses began to tremble and did not dare to look.
33 “The Lord said to him: **Take off the sandals from your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground.** 34 **I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. And now, come, I will send you to Egypt.** † †
35 “This Moses, whom they rejected when they said, **Who appointed you a ruler and a judge?** † — this one God sent as a ruler and a deliverer through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. † 36 This man led them out and performed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, † at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. †

ISRAEL’S REBELLION AGAINST GOD

37 “This is the Moses who said to the Israelites: **God † will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers and sisters.** † † 38 He is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors. † He received living oracles to give to us. † 39 Our ancestors were unwilling to obey him. Instead, they pushed him aside, and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. † 40 They told Aaron: **Make us gods who will go before us. As for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don’t know what’s happened to him.** † † 41 They even made a

calf in those days, offered sacrifice to the idol, and were celebrating what their hands had made. † 42 God turned away † and gave them up to worship † the stars of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets:

House of Israel, did you bring me offerings and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness?

43 **You took up the tent of Moloch and the star of your god Rephan, the images that you made to worship.**

So I will send you into exile beyond Babylon. † †

GOD'S REAL TABERNACLE

44 "Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, just as he who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern he had seen. † 45 Our ancestors in turn received it and with Joshua brought it in when they dispossessed the nations that God drove out before them, † until the days of David. 46 He found favor in God's sight and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God † of Jacob. † 47 It was Solomon, rather, who built him a house, † 48 but the Most High does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands, as the prophet says: †

49 **Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool.**
What sort of house will you build for me?
says the Lord,
or what will be my resting place?

50 **Did not my hand make all these things?** † †

RESISTING THE HOLY SPIRIT

51 "You stiff-necked † people with uncircumcised hearts and ears! † You are always resisting the Holy Spirit. As your ancestors did, you do also. 52 Which of the prophets did your ancestors not persecute? † They even killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers † you have now become. 53 You received the law under the direction of angels † and yet have not kept it."

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

54 When they heard these things, they were enraged † and gnashed their teeth at
him. 55 Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw the glory of
God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. † 56 He said, “Look, I see the
heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God! ” †
57 They yelled at the top of their voices, covered their ears, and together rushed
against him. 58 They dragged him out of the city and began to stone † him. And
the witnesses laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. †
59 While they were stoning Stephen, he called out: “Lord Jesus, receive my
spirit! ” † 60 He knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, † “Lord, do not
hold this sin against them! ” And after saying this, he died. † †

7:18 Other mss omit *over Egypt* **7:30** Other mss add *of the Lord* **7:37** Other mss read *The Lord your God* **7:46** Other mss read *house* **7:54** Or *were cut to the quick* **7:60** Lit *he fell asleep*

7:2 Gn 11:31; 15:7; Ps 29:3; Ac 22:1; 1Co 2:8 **7:3** Gn 12:1 **7:3** Gn 12:1 **7:4** Gn 11:31; 12:4-5 **7:5** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; Gl 3:16; Heb 8:8-9 **7:6-7** Gn 15:13-14 **7:6-7** Gn 15:13-14; Ex 3:12; 12:40 **7:8** Gn 17:9-11; 21:2-4 **7:8** Gn 25:26; 29:31; 30:5; 35:23 **7:9** Gn 37:11,28; 39:2,21; 45:4; Ps 105:17 **7:10** Gn 41:37-43; 42:6; Ps 105:21 **7:11** Gn 41:54; 42:5 **7:13-14** Gn 45:1-4,9-10,16,27; 46:26-27; Ex 1:5; Dt 10:22 **7:15** Gn 46:5; 49:33; Ex 1:6 **7:16** Gn 23:16; 33:19; 50:13; Ex 13:19; Jos 24:32 **7:17** Gn 15:13; Ex 1:7; Ps 105:24 **7:18-19** Ex 1:8-10,22; Ps 105:25 **7:20-21** Ex 2:2-10; Heb 11:23 **7:22** 1Kg 4:30; Is 19:11; Lk 24:19 **7:23-26** Ex 2:11-14; Heb 11:24-26 **7:27-28** Ex 2:14 **7:27-28** Ex 2:14; Lk 12:14; Ac 7:35 **7:29** Ex 2:15,22; 18:3-4 **7:32** Ex 3:6,15 **7:32** Ex 3:6; Mt 22:32; Mk 12:26; Lk 20:37 **7:33-34** Ex 3:5,7-8,10 **7:33-34** Ex 3:5,7-8,10 **7:35** Ex 2:14 **7:35** Ex 14:19; Nm 20:16 **7:36** Ex 12:41; 33:1; Heb 8:9 **7:36** Ex 14:21; 16:35; Nm 14:33; Ps 95:10; Ac 13:18 **7:37** Dt 18:15 **7:37** Dt 18:15; Ac 3:22 **7:38** Ex 19:17; Is 63:9; Ac 7:53 **7:38** Dt 5:27; 32:47; Jn 1:17; Rm 3:2; Heb 4:12; 5:12; 1Pt 4:11 **7:39** Ex 16:3; Nm 11:4; 14:3-4; Ezk 20:8,24 **7:40** Ex 32:1,23 **7:40** Ex 32:1,23 **7:41** Dt 9:16; Ps 106:19-20; Rv 9:20 **7:42** Jos 24:20; Is 63:10 **7:42** Dt 4:19; 2Kg 21:3; Jr 19:13; Zph 1:5 **7:42-43** Am 5:25-27 **7:42-43** 1Kg 11:7; Am 5:25-27; Ac 7:36 **7:44** Ex 25:8-9,40; 38:21; Heb 8:5 **7:45** Jos 3:14; 18:1; 23:9; 24:18; Ps 44:2 **7:46** 2Sm 7:1,8; 1Ch 22:7; Ps 89:19; 132:5 **7:47** 1Kg 6:1-2; 8:17-20; 2Ch 3:1 **7:48** 1Kg 8:27; 2Ch 2:6 **7:49-50** Is 66:1-2 **7:49-50** Is 66:1-2; Mt 5:34-35 **7:51** Ex 32:9; Dt 10:16; Heb 3:13 **7:51** Lv 26:41; Jr 4:4; 6:10; 9:26 **7:52** 2Ch 36:16; Mt 5:12; 21:35; 23:31,37; 1Th 2:15 **7:52** Ac 3:14; 5:28 **7:53** Ac 7:38; Gl 3:19; Heb 2:2 **7:55** Jn 12:41; Ac 6:5 **7:56** Mt 3:16; Jn 1:51 **7:58** Lv 24:14-16; Dt 13:9; Heb 13:12 **7:58** Ac 8:1; 22:20 **7:59** Ps 31:5; Lk 23:46; Ac 9:14 **7:60** Mt 5:44; Lk 22:41; 23:34; Ac 9:40 **7:60** Jn 11:11; 1Co 11:30; 1Th 4:13-15

7:2-50 In his speech, Stephen reviews the Hebrews’ history, focusing on three topics related to Judaism: **the land** (vv. 2-36), the law vv. 37-43), and the temple (vv. 44-50). At times, Jews venerated these institutions too strongly. Stephen suggests that they were not the most important features of Judaism.

7:22 See “Literature and a Christian Worldview,” *p.546.*

7:58 Luke introduces **a young man named Saul.** He will serve as a central character in Acts 13–28. Saul was likely born in the first decade of the firstcentury; he could have been anywhere between eighteen and thirty at the time of Stephen’s martyrdom. He will be called Paul for the first time in Acts 13:9, at the beginning of his first missionary journey to the Gentiles. Luke’s reference to **the witnesses** likely implies either that they removed **their garments** to avoid staining them or that they wished to free themselves for unhindered participation in the stoning.

SAUL THE PERSECUTOR

Saul agreed with putting him to death.

8 On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. † 2 Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. 3 Saul, † however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison. †

PHILIP IN SAMARIA

4 So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to a † city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. † 6 The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. † 8 So there was great joy in that city.

THE RESPONSE OF SIMON

9 A man named Simon had previously practiced sorcery in that city and amazed the Samaritan people, while claiming to be somebody great. † 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least of them to the greatest, and they said, "This man is called the Great Power of God." † † 11 They were attentive to him because he had amazed them with his sorceries for a long time. 12 But when they believed Philip, as he proclaimed the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. † 13 Even Simon himself believed. And after he was baptized, he followed Philip everywhere and was amazed as he observed the signs and great miracles † that were being performed.

SIMON'S SIN

14 When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. † 15 After they went down there, they prayed for them so the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit because he had not yet come down on any of them. 16 (They had only been

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. †) 17 Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit † was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter told him, "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! † 21 You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God. † 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, your heart's intent may be forgiven. 23 For I see you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by wickedness." †

24 "Pray to the Lord for me," Simon replied, "so that nothing you have said may happen to me." †

25 So, after they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they traveled back to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIAL

26 An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: "Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is the desert road. † †) 27 So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch † and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem † 28 and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud.

29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot." †

30 When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading? "

ARE MIRACLES AND SCIENCE COMPATIBLE?

One of the secular claims against Christianity is that the modern world's increasing knowledge of the natural world through science (principally chemistry, biology, and physics) has made belief in miracles unjustified at best and positively irrational at worst. Recently, biologist and atheist Richard Dawkins has led this charge, especially in his best-selling book, *The God Delusion* (2007). Before responding to this challenge, we need to define our two basic terms: *miracle* and *science*.

Biblically understood, a miracle is God's supernatural intervention in creation, which produces an effect otherwise not possible given the operation of natural laws. Since God as Creator and Sustainer of the universe is the One who has established so-called natural laws, he is also free to act outside such laws. After all, natural laws simply reflect God's design for the way things normally occur. If he decides to act outside this normal design, he is not breaking the laws of nature, since they are not "laws" for God; they are simply patterns that reflect his own will.

So why, then, do secularists think that science is incompatible with belief in miracles? There are three main reasons.

First, if one believes there is no God, then there is no divine agent (or conscience actor) to produce a miracle. In other words, if you begin with the presupposition that God does not exist, then you cannot believe in miracles.

Nevertheless, there are ample reasons drawn from science and philosophy to believe that a personal Creator and Designer does exist. Cosmology indicates that the universe began from nothing a finite time ago with a big bang. Such an event requires a cause outside the universe. The best explanation is that God caused this event. From one point of view, the creation of the universe from nothing is God's first supernatural action, since natural laws do not allow something to be made from nothing. Physics also reveals that the laws and proportions of the universe are finely tuned for the support of human life. Chance and mindless natural law do not explain this adequately. God's purpose and design provide the best explanation.

Science, in and of itself, does not preclude the work of God within nature. But if scientists presuppose that God does not exist, then such explanations are dismissed. Consequently, many secularists define science in such a way as to exclude miracles. Science is seen as offering only natural explanations for natural events.

Second, scientific endeavor is regarded as the only legitimate source for knowledge about the natural world. No supernatural explanations are allowed in principle. So, even if the universe began from nothing, science cannot even suggest a Creator's involvement in it. Neither can science speak to the existence of a Designer to explain the fine-tuning of the universe. Inevitably, the result is that no one can be intellectually justified in believing in miracles.

But this claim for science is neither grounded in the history of science—many leaders of the scientific revolution were theists—nor is it philosophically credible. Science becomes a knowledge blocker if, in fact, God has left recognizable signs of his existence in the cosmos. Whether or not we can find evidence for God in the natural world should be an open question up for rigorous investigation. Furthermore, when science is regarded the *only* source of rational knowledge, it logically refutes itself. This approach, known as scientism, claims that (1) science is limited to giving natural explanations for natural events based on logical reasoning; and that (2) science is the sole conduit for knowledge (or credible, true beliefs). These two statements rightly receive the following rebuttals. First, the claim that science is the only source of knowledge is not justified by any natural event or logical reasoning. Scientism is, rather, a philosophical claim. And therefore, second, since this materialistic view of science is not supported by its own understanding of science, scientism must be false. This destroys the argument for science as the one source of knowledge about reality. It cannot be the only means of acquiring genuine knowledge.

Third, some affirm that the development of technology, especially in the twentieth century, is incompatible with belief in miracles. It was a biblical scholar, and not a scientist, who put this starkly. Rudolph Bultmann (1884–1976) said that no one who uses a transistor radio can believe in the miraculous world presented in the NT.

But the development of technology is not incompatible with miracles, since these technologies depend on

scientific discoveries and methods which themselves do not refute miracles, as argued above. The claim is a classic non sequitur—however often we hear it.

Detecting a miracle in human experience is a matter of historical inquiry. No hard science such as chemistry, biology, or physics speaks directly to events that occur once within humanity. That is, we cannot know through the methods of science that Caesar crossed the Rubicon. But this does not mean we have no knowledge of historical matters, such as social change within cultures, the rise and fall of empires, or biography. One's method of acquiring knowledge must fit the subject of study. History consults written and unwritten items from the past to discern what happened. While many historians simply dismiss God and the supernatural from knowable history, ignoring the Bible's claims to record such, there is no good reason to do so. If it is possible that God exists, then miracles are possible. If they are possible, we may investigate miraculous claims to see if there are any actual miracles.

While many religions claim miracles, none are as well substantiated as NT miracles. This is especially true of Jesus's miracles, and his resurrection in particular. In fact, Christianity is the only religion that attributes miracles to its founder in its earliest and foundational documents—the books comprising the NT. For example, the historical resurrection of Jesus from the dead is affirmed in all four Gospels. It is also directly or indirectly affirmed throughout the rest of the NT. These documents were written by eyewitnesses (Jn 19:35) to the resurrected Christ or by those who consulted eyewitnesses (Lk 1:1-4).

Finally, there is sufficient evidence that miracles have not ceased to occur after the time of the NT. While they are not as plentiful as the signs and wonders of the apostolic period, many miracles performed in the name of Jesus have been documented. For a scholarly study of NT miracles and subsequent miracles, see Craig S. Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts*, two vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

Christians need not fear that the advancement of science somehow undermines the rationality of their belief in miracles. Miracles are not incompatible with science. Only an unhelpful understanding of science, or of miracles, or of both, generates this false impression. Both science and history corroborate the biblical teaching that God is a wonder-working God of space-time history—and eternity.

DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to
come up and sit with him. 32 Now the Scripture passage he was reading was
this:

He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb is silent
before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.
33 **In his humiliation justice was denied him.**
Who will describe his generation?
For his life is taken from the earth. † †

34 The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about —
himself or someone else?" 35 Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about
Jesus, beginning with that Scripture. †

36 As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch
said, "Look, there's water. What would keep me from being baptized?" † 38 So

he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord † carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip appeared in † Azotus, † and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea. †

8:5 Other mss read *the* **8:10** Or *"This is the power of God called Great* **8:18** Other mss add *Holy* **8:26** Or *is a desert place* **8:36** Some mss include v. 37: *Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* **8:40** Or *Philip was found at,* or *Philip found himself in* **8:40** Or *Ashdod*

8:1 Ac 9:31; 11:19 **8:3** Ac 7:58; 22:20 **8:3** Ac 22:4,19; 26:10; 1Co 15:9; Gl 1:13; Php 3:6; 1Tm 1:13 **8:4-5** Ac 6:5; 15:35 **8:7** Mt 4:24; Mk 16:17 **8:9** Ac 5:36; 13:6 **8:10** Ac 14:11; 28:6 **8:12** Ac 1:3; 2:38 **8:13** Ac 8:6; 19:11 **8:14** Lk 22:8; Ac 8:1 **8:16** Mt 28:19; Ac 2:38; 10:48; 19:2 **8:20** 2Kg 5:16; Is 55:1; Dn 5:17; Mt 10:8; Ac 2:38 **8:21** 2Kg 10:15; Ps 78:37 **8:22-23** Is 55:6-7; Dn 4:27; 2Tm 2:25; Heb 12:15 **8:24** Gn 20:7; Ex 8:8; Nm 21:7; Jms 5:16 **8:26** Ac 5:19; 8:29 **8:27** Ps 68:31; 87:4; Is 56:3; Zph 3:10 **8:27** 1Kg 8:41; Jn 12:20 **8:29** Ac 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 20:23; 21:11 **8:32-33** Is 53:7-8 **8:32-33** Is 53:7-8; Php 2:8 **8:35** Lk 24:27; Ac 17:2; 18:28 **8:39** 1Kg 18:12; 2Kg 2:16; Ezk 3:12,14; 8:3; 11:1,24; 43:5 **8:40** Ac 10:1,24; 12:19; 21:8,16; 23:23,33; 25:1,4,6,13

8:5 Philip, one of the seven mentioned in Acts 6, and a Hellenistic Jewish Christian, travels to a **city in Samaria** and proclaims the Messiah. Luke does not specify which city Philip visited, but suggestions include Samaria and Shechem. Samaria was the capital city of the province of Samaria. Herod the Great renamed the city "Sebaste" in honor of Caesar Augustus (Sebaste is the Gk equivalent of the Lat "Augustus"). Sebaste was a thoroughly pagan city at the time. Shechem was the religious headquarters of the Samaritans in Philip's day. That the gospel is taken to the Samarians shows the spread of Christianity outside Jewish circles (cp. Ac 1:8).

8:9 The term **sorcery** refers to magic, which was commonly used by pagans in ancient times to cast spells on someone to make him fall in love or to aid in conceiving a baby. Magic included the use of charms and incantations.

8:10 The name **Great Power of God** may reflect a belief in Simon's divinity or simply his access to supernatural power.

8:27 The **Ethiopian . . . eunuch** was an important governmental official who served the queen of Ethiopia, **Candace.** In the firstcentury, the kingdom of Ethiopia lay south of Egypt. In ancient times, eunuchs were castrated men who kept the royal harem (Est 2:3,14-15). This man served as a treasurer.

8:30 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

THE DAMASCUS ROAD

9 Now Saul was still breathing threats and murder against the disciples † of the Lord. He went to the high priest † 2 and requested letters † from him to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any men or women who belonged to the Way, † he might bring them as prisoners to

Jerusalem. 3 As † he traveled and was nearing Damascus, a light from heaven
suddenly flashed around him. 4 Falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to
him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? ”
5 “Who are you, Lord? ” Saul said.
“I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting,” he replied. 6 “But get up and go into
the city, and you will be told what you must do.”
7 The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the sound but
seeing no one. † 8 Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open,
he could see nothing. So they took him by the hand and led him into Damascus.
9 He was unable to see for three days and did not eat or drink.

SAUL’S BAPTISM

10 There was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias, and the Lord said to him
in a vision, “Ananias.”
“Here I am, Lord,” he replied. †
11 “Get up and go to the street called Straight,” the Lord said to him, “to the
house of Judas, and ask for a man from Tarsus † named Saul, since he is
praying there. 12 In a vision † he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and
placing his hands on him so that he may regain his sight.” †
13 “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard from many people about this man,
how much harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. † 14 And he has
authority here from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” †
15 But the Lord said to him, “Go, for this man is my chosen instrument † to take
my name to Gentiles, † kings, and Israelites. † 16 I will show him how much he
must suffer for my name.” †
17 Ananias went and entered the house. He placed his hands on him and said,
“Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road you were
traveling, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the
Holy Spirit.” †
18 At once something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight.
Then he got up and was baptized. 19 And after taking some food, he regained his
strength. †

SAUL PROCLAIMING THE MESSIAH

SAUL PROCLAIMING THE MESSIAH

Saul was with the disciples in Damascus for some time. 20 Immediately he began proclaiming Jesus in the synagogues: “He is the Son of God.” †
21 All who heard him were astounded and said, “Isn’t this the man in Jerusalem who was causing havoc for those who called on this name and came here for the purpose of taking them as prisoners to the chief priests? ” †
22 But Saul grew stronger and kept confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.
23 After many days had passed, the Jews conspired to kill him, 24 but Saul learned of their plot. So they were watching the gates day and night intending to kill him, † 25 but his disciples took him by night and lowered him in a large basket through an opening in the wall. †

SAUL IN JERUSALEM

26 When he arrived in Jerusalem, † he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, since they did not believe he was a disciple. 27 Barnabas, however, took him and brought him to the apostles and explained to them how Saul had seen the Lord on the road and that the Lord had talked to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly † in the name of Jesus. † 28 Saul was coming and going with them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29 He conversed and debated with the Hellenistic Jews, but they tried to kill him. † 30 When the brothers found out, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus. †

THE CHURCH’S GROWTH

31 So the church † throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

THE HEALING OF AENEAS

32 As Peter was traveling from place to place, he also came down to the saints † who lived in Lydda. † 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34 Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed,” † and immediately he got

up. † 35 So all who lived in Lydda and Sharon † saw him and turned to the Lord.

DORCAS RESTORED TO LIFE

36 In Joppa † there was a disciple named Tabitha (which is translated Dorcas). She was always doing good works † and acts of charity. 37 About that time she became sick and died. After washing her, they placed her in a room upstairs. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples heard that Peter was there and sent two men to him who urged him, “Don’t delay in coming with us.” 39 Peter got up and went with them. When he arrived, they led him to the room upstairs. And all the widows approached him, weeping and showing him the robes and clothes that Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, “Tabitha, get up.” She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. † 41 He gave her his hand and helped her stand up. He called the saints and widows and presented her alive. 42 This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 Peter stayed for some time in Joppa with Simon, † a leather tanner.

9:12 Other mss omit *In a vision* **9:34** Or *and get ready to eat*

9:1 Mt 9:10; Mk 10:10; Lk 6:1; Jn 6:3; Ac 6:1 **9:1** Ac 8:3; 9:13,21 **9:2** Ac 15:30; 22:5; 23:25,33 **9:2** Ac 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14,22 **9:3-8** Ac 22:6-11; 26:12-18; 1Co 15:8 **9:7** Dn 10:7; Jn 12:29; Ac 22:9 **9:10** Ac 10:3,17,19; 22:12 **9:11** Ac 9:30; 11:25; 21:39; 22:3 **9:12** Mk 5:23; Ac 9:17 **9:13** Ac 8:3; 9:32; Rm 1:7; 15:25-26,31; 16:2,15 **9:14** Ac 7:59; 1Co 1:2; 2Tm 2:22 **9:15** Ac 13:2; Rm 1:1; Gl 1:15 **9:15** Mt 28:19; Rm 1:5; Gl 1:16 **9:15** Ac 25:22; 26:1 **9:16** Ac 20:23; 21:4,11; 2Co 6:4-5; 11:23-27; 1Th 3:3 **9:17** Ac 6:6; 22:13 **9:19** Ac 11:26; 26:20 **9:20** Mt 4:3; Ac 13:5,14 **9:21** Ac 8:3; 9:13-14; Gl 1:13,23 **9:24** Ac 20:3,19; 23:12,30; 25:3; 2Co 11:26 **9:25** Jos 2:15; 1Sm 19:12; 2Co 11:33 **9:26** Ac 22:17; 26:20; Gl 1:17 **9:27** Ac 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26; Eph 6:20; 1Th 2:2 **9:27** Ac 4:36; 9:3-6,20,22 **9:29** Ac 6:1; 2Co 11:26 **9:30** Ac 8:40; Gl 1:21 **9:31** Mt 16:18; 1Co 14:4; Rv 1:4 **9:32** Rm 1:7; Eph 5:3; 6:18 **9:32** 1Ch 8:12; Ezr 2:23; Neh 7:37; 11:35 **9:34** Ac 3:6,16; 4:10 **9:35** 1Ch 5:16; 27:29; Sg 2:1; Is 33:9; 35:2; 65:10 **9:36** Jos 19:46; 2Ch 2:16; Ezr 3:7; Jnh 1:3; Ac 10:5 **9:36** 1Tm 2:10; Ti 3:8 **9:40** Mt 9:25; Mk 5:41; Lk 22:41; Jn 11:43; Ac 7:60 **9:43** Ac 10:6,17,32

9:1 The expression **breathing threats and murder** is an idiom denoting Saul’s violent intentions toward Christians. It does not necessarily mean that he personally killed them.

9:11 The street called Straight, located in the eastern part of the Old City in Damascus, was a major road (forty to fifty feet wide) running east to west. The road still exists today and is also known as Darb el-Mustaqim.

9:23-25 In 2 Corinthians 11:32-33, Paul refers to the attempt on his life and his subsequent escape from Damascus. The governor under King Aretas IV (9 BC–AD 40) guarded the city with the intent of capturing Paul. But he escaped **in a large basket through an opening in the wall.** Homes were built into city walls. Most likely, Saul escaped from the window of a home located on the wall.

CORNELIUS’S VISION

CORNELIUS'S VISION

10 There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what
was called the Italian Regiment. † 2 He was a devout man and feared
God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the
Jewish people and always prayed to God. † 3 About three in the afternoon † he
distinctly saw in a vision an angel of God who came in and said to him,
"Cornelius." †
4 Staring at him in awe, he said, "What is it, Lord? "
The angel told him, "Your prayers and your acts of charity have ascended as a
memorial offering before God. † 5 Now send men to Joppa and call for Simon,
who is also named Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is
by the sea." †
7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, he called two of his household
servants and a devout soldier, who was one of those who attended him. 8 After
explaining everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

PETER'S VISION

9 The † next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to
pray on the roof † about noon. † 10 He became hungry and wanted to eat, but
while they were preparing something, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven
opened † and an object that resembled a large sheet coming down, being
lowered by its four corners to the earth. 12 In it were all the four-footed animals
and reptiles of the earth, and the birds of the sky. 13 A voice said to him, "Get
up, Peter; kill and eat."
14 "No, Lord! " Peter said. "For I have never eaten anything impure and ritually
unclean." †
15 Again, a second time, the voice said to him, "What God has made clean, do
not call impure." † 16 This happened three times, and suddenly the object was
taken up into heaven.

PETER VISITS CORNELIUS

17 While Peter was deeply perplexed about what the vision he had seen might
mean, right away the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked

directions to Simon's house, stood at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon, who was also named Peter, was lodging there.
19 While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, "Three men are here looking for you. † 20 Get up, go downstairs, and go with them with no doubts at all, because I have sent them." †
21 Then Peter went down to the men and said, "Here I am, the one you're looking for. What is the reason you're here? "
22 They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who has a good reputation with the whole Jewish nation, was divinely directed by a holy angel to call you to his house and to hear a message from you." † 23 Peter then invited them in and gave them lodging.
The next day he got up and set out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went with him. † 24 The following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell at his feet, and worshiped him.
26 But Peter lifted him up and said, "Stand up. I myself am also a man." †
27 While talking with him, he went in and found a large gathering of people.
28 Peter said to them, "You know it's forbidden for a Jewish man to associate with or visit a foreigner, † but God has shown me that I must not call any person impure or unclean. † 29 That's why I came without any objection when I was sent for. So may I ask why you sent for me? "
30 Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, † I was † praying in my house. Just then a man in dazzling clothing stood before me † 31 and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your acts of charity have been remembered in God's sight. 32 Therefore send someone to Joppa and invite Simon here, who is also named Peter. He is lodging in Simon the tanner's house by the sea.' † 33 So I immediately sent for you, and it was good of you to come. So now we are all in the presence of God to hear everything you have been commanded by the Lord."

GOOD NEWS FOR GENTILES

34 Peter began to speak: “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show
favoritism, † 35 but in every nation the person who fears him and does what is
right is acceptable to him. 36 He sent the message to the Israelites, proclaiming
the good news of peace through Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all. † 37 You
know the events that took place throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee
after the baptism that John preached: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth
with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and
healing all who were under the tyranny of the devil, because God was with
him. † 39 We ourselves are witnesses of everything he did in both the Judean
country and in Jerusalem, and yet they killed him by hanging him on a tree. †
40 God raised up this man on the third day and caused him to be seen, 41 not by
all the people, but by us whom God appointed as witnesses, who ate and drank
with him after he rose from the dead. † 42 He commanded us to preach to the
people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be the judge of the
living and the dead. † 43 All the prophets testify † about him that through his
name † everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.” †

GENTILE CONVERSION AND BAPTISM

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down †
on all those who heard the message. 45 The circumcised believers who had come
with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out
even on the Gentiles. † 46 For they heard them speaking in other tongues †
and declaring the greatness of God.
Then Peter responded, 47 “Can anyone withhold water and prevent these people
from being baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” †
48 He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. † Then they
asked him to stay for a few days.

10:3 Lit *About the ninth hour* **10:9** Lit *about the sixth hour* **10:30** Lit *at the ninth hour* **10:30** Other mss add *fasting and* **10:32** Other mss add *When he arrives, he will speak to you.* **10:46** languages
10:1 Mt 27:27; Mk 15:16; Jn 18:3,12; Ac 8:40 **10:2** Ac 10:22,35; 13:16,26 **10:3** Ac 3:1; 5:19; 9:10; 10:17,19 **10:4** Ac 9:43; 11:14 **10:6** Lk 16:13; Rm 14:4; 1Pt 2:18 **10:9-32** Ac 11:5-14 **10:9** Ps 55:17; Jr 19:13; 32:29; Zph 1:5; Mt 24:17 **10:10-11** Jn 1:51; Ac 22:17 **10:14** Lv 11:4; 20:25; Dt 4:4-20; Ezk 4:14; Dn 1:8; Ac 9:5 **10:15** Mt 15:11; Mk 7:19; Rm 14:14; 1Co 10:25; 1Tm 4:4; Ti 1:15 **10:19** Ac 8:29; 10:3 **10:20** Ac 15:7-9 **10:22** Mk 8:38; Ac 10:2; 11:14 **10:23** Ac 10:45; 11:12 **10:26** Ac 14:15; Rv 19:10; 22:8 **10:28** Jn 4:9; 18:28; Ac 11:3 **10:28** Ac 10:14-15,35; 15:8-9 **10:30** Ac 1:10; 3:1 **10:34** Dt 10:17; 2Ch 19:7; Rm 2:11; Gl 2:6; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25; 1Pt 1:17 **10:36** Mt 28:18; Ac 2:36; 13:32; Rm 10:12; Eph 2:17; Rv 17:14 **10:38**

Mt 4:23; Lk 4:18; Jn 3:2; Ac 4:26 **10:39** Lk 24:48; Ac 2:32; 5:30 **10:41** Lk 24:43; Jn 14:17,22 **10:42** Jn 5:22; Ac 17:31; Rm 14:9; 2Co 5:10; 2Tm 4:1; 1Pt 4:5 **10:43** Is 53:11; Jr 31:34 **10:43** 1Jn 2:12; 3:23 **10:43** Lk 24:47; Ac 15:9; Rm 10:11; Gl 3:22 **10:44** Ac 11:15; 15:8 **10:45** Ac 2:33,38; 10:23; 11:18 **10:47** Ac 2:4; 8:36; 11:17; 15:8 **10:48** Ac 2:38; 8:16; 1Co 1:14-17

10:1-2 The Gentile **Cornelius** is described as **a devout man** who **feared God along with his whole household.** God-fearers were Gentiles with great sympathy for Judaism and its teaching. They did not, however, undergo full conversion to the faith. As a Roman **centurion**, Cornelius had authority over eighty to a hundred soldiers.

10:9-16 Peter experiences a vision in which the central message is to take the gospel to the Gentiles and have fellowship with them. The inclusion of multiple visions in Acts (e.g., Ac 7:31-32; 9:10-12; 11:5; 16:9-10; 18:9-10) shows early Christianity's belief that God sometimes communicates to his people in dramatic ways, especially in times of great salvation-historical importance.

10:25-26 Cornelius regards **Peter** as some type of heavenly being, perhaps an angel or divine figure. Peter rejects his worship, stressing that he is merely human.

10:28 Pious Jews did not associate with Gentiles for fear of becoming ceremonially **unclean**, but God had taught Peter otherwise in a vision (vv. 10:9-16).

10:34-43 Here Luke records one of many evangelistic speeches (2:14-40; 3:12-26; 13:16-41; 17:22-31; 28:23-38). This speech, and others like it, reveals that the church was strongly evangelistic in its first few decades, calling people to believe and turn to Christ.

GENTILE SALVATION DEFENDED

11 The apostles and the brothers and sisters who were throughout Judea
heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 When
Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, †
3 saying, "You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." †
4 Peter began to explain to them step by step: 5 "I † was in the town of Joppa
praying, and I saw, in a trance, an object that resembled a large sheet coming
down, being lowered by its four corners from heaven, and it came to me.
6 When I looked closely and considered it, I saw the four-footed animals of the
earth, the wild beasts, the reptiles, and the birds of the sky. 7 I also heard a voice
telling me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'
8 " 'No, Lord! ' I said. 'For nothing impure or ritually unclean has ever entered
my mouth.' 9 But a voice answered from heaven a second time, 'What God has
made clean, you must not call impure.'
10 "Now this happened three times, and everything was drawn up again into
heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men who had been sent to me from
Caesarea arrived at the house where we were. 12 The Spirit told me to
accompany them with no doubts at all. These six brothers also accompanied me,

and we went into the man's house. † 13 He reported to us how he had seen the
angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send † to Joppa, and call for Simon,
who is also named Peter. 14 He will speak a message to you by which you and
all your household † will be saved.'
15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the
beginning. † 16 I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized
with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' † 17 If, then, God
gave them the same gift that he also gave to us when we believed in the Lord
Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?" †
18 When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, "So
then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles." †

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

19 Now those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started
because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, †
speaking the word to no one except Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men
from Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the
Greeks † also, proclaiming the good news about the Lord Jesus. † 21 The
Lord's hand was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the
Lord. † 22 News about them reached † the church in Jerusalem, and they sent
out Barnabas to travel † as far as Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw the
grace of God, he was glad and encouraged all of them to remain true to the Lord
with devoted hearts, † 24 for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit † and
of faith. And large numbers of people were added † to the Lord.
25 Then he † went to Tarsus to search for Saul, 26 and when he found him he
brought him to Antioch. For a whole year they met with the church and taught
large numbers. The disciples † were first called Christians at Antioch. †

FAMINE RELIEF

27 In those days some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. †
28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there
would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. † This took place

during the reign of Claudius. † 29 Each of the disciples, according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brothers and sisters who lived in Judea. † 30 They did this, sending it to the elders † by means of Barnabas and Saul.

11:13 Other mss add *men* **11:20** Lit *Hellenists* **11:22** Lit *reached the ears of* **11:22** Other mss omit *to travel* **11:25** Other mss read *Barnabas* **11:28** Or *the whole world*

11:2 Ac 10:45; Col 4:11; 1Tm 1:10 **11:3** Ac 10:28; Gl 2:12 **11:5-14** Ac 10:9-32 **11:12** Ac 8:29; 10:23; 15:9 **11:14** Jn 4:53; Ac 10:2; 16:15,31-34; 18:8; 1Co 1:16 **11:15** Ac 2:4; 10:44 **11:16** Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33; Ac 1:5 **11:17** Ac 5:39; 10:45,47 **11:18** Rm 10:12-13; 2Co 7:10 **11:19** Ac 6:5; 13:1; 14:26; 15:22-23,30,35; 18:22; Gl 2:11 **11:20** Mt 27:32; Ac 4:36 **11:21** Lk 1:66; Ac 2:47; 9:35 **11:23** Ac 13:43; 14:26; 15:40; 20:24,32 **11:24** Lk 4:1; Ac 6:5; 7:55 **11:24** Ac 2:41,47; 5:14 **11:26** Ac 6:1; 9:1; 13:52; 14:20; 15:10; 16:1; 19:1 **11:26** Ac 26:28; 1Pt 4:16 **11:27** Ac 13:1; 15:32; 1Co 12:28; Eph 4:11 **11:28** Mt 24:14; Ac 18:2; 21:10; Gl 2:2 **11:29** Rm 15:26; 2Co 9:1-2; Gl 2:10 **11:30** Ac 14:23; 15:2; 16:4; 20:17; 21:18; 1Tm 5:17,19; Jms 5:14; 2Jn 1

11:2 The circumcision party refers to more conservative Jewish Christians who were hesitant to associate with Gentiles for fear of becoming unclean.

11:26 The first reference to Jesus's followers as **Christians** occurred at **Antioch.** In the NT, the term is consistently applied to believers by non-Christians (26:28; 1Pt 4:16). Christians did not use the name in reference to themselves until the second century. The application of this specific title reveals that believers were associated closely with one whom they regarded as the Christ, the Messiah.

11:27-28 Prophets came to Antioch from Jerusalem and predicted a **severe famine** during the reign of the Roman emperor, Claudius (AD 41–54). Jews believed that prophecy came to an end with the last of the writing prophets (e.g., Malachi). Early Christian believers regarded prophecy as active and present with the coming of the Messiah.

JAMES MARTYRED AND PETER JAILED

12 About that time King Herod violently attacked some who belonged to the church, 2 and he executed James, † John's brother, with the sword. 3 When he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter too, during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. † 4 After the arrest, he put him in prison and assigned four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. 5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was praying fervently to God for him.

PETER RESCUED

6 When Herod was about to bring him out for trial, that very night Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while the sentries in front of the door guarded the prison. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord † appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "Quick, get up! " And the chains fell off his wrists. † 8 "Get dressed," the angel

told him, “and put on your sandals.” And he did. “Wrap your cloak around you,” he told him, “and follow me.” 9 So he went out and followed, and he did not know that what the angel did was really happening, but he thought he was seeing a vision. † 10 After they passed the first and second guards, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened to them by itself. They went outside and passed one street, and suddenly the angel left him. †

11 When Peter came to himself, he said, “Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod’s grasp and from all that the Jewish people expected.” † 12 As soon as he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, † † where many had assembled and were praying. 13 He knocked at the door of the outer gate, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer. 14 She recognized Peter’s voice, and because of her joy, she did not open the gate but ran in and announced that Peter was standing at the outer gate.

15 “You’re out of your mind! ” they told her. But she kept insisting that it was true, and they said, “It’s his angel.” † 16 Peter, however, kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

17 Motioning to them with his hand † to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. “Tell these things to James † and the brothers,” he said, and he left and went to another place.

18 At daylight, there was a great commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19 After Herod had searched and did not find him, he interrogated the guards and ordered their execution. Then Herod went down from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. †

HEROD’S DEATH

20 Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon. Together they presented themselves before him. After winning over Blastus, who was in charge of the king’s bedroom, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied with food from the king’s country. † 21 On an appointed day, dressed in royal robes and seated on the throne, Herod delivered a speech to them. 22 The assembled people began to shout, “It’s the voice of a god and not of a man! ”

23 At once an angel of the Lord † struck him because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten by worms and died. †

24 But the word of God flourished and multiplied. † 25 After they had completed their relief mission, Barnabas and Saul returned to † Jerusalem, taking along John who was called Mark. †

12:12 Lit *John who was called Mark* **12:25** Other mss read *from*
12:2 Mt 4:21; 20:23 **12:3** Ex 12:15; 23:15; Ac 12:5; 20:6; 24:27; 25:9; 2Co 1:11; Eph 6:18 **12:7** Lk 1:11; Col 4:1; Jd 5 **12:7** Lk 2:9; 5:19; 16:26; 24:4 **12:9** Ps 126:1; Ac 9:10 **12:10** Ac 5:19; 16:26 **12:11** Ps 33:18-19; 34:7; Dn 3:28; 6:22; Lk 15:17; 2Co 1:10 **12:12** Ac 12:25; 15:37,39; Col 4:10; 2Tm 4:11; Phm 24; 1Pt 5:13 **12:13-15** Mt 18:10; Lk 24:21 **12:17** Ac 13:16; 19:33; 21:40 **12:17** Ac 15:13; 21:18; Gl 1:19; 2:9,12 **12:19** Ac 8:40; 16:27; 27:42 **12:20** 1Kg 5:11; Ezr 3:7; Ezk 27:17; Mt 11:21 **12:23** Lk 1:11; Col 4:1; Jd 5 **12:23** 1Sm 25:38; 2Sm 24:16-17; Ps 115:1 **12:24** Ac 6:7; 19:20 **12:25** Ac 4:36; 11:30; 12:12

12:1-2 Herod Agrippa I (ca. 9 BC–AD 44), grandson of Herod the Great, ruled over Judea from AD 41–44. The reference to execution **with the sword** probably denotes beheading.

12:4 Sixteen soldiers guarded Peter during his imprisonment because every three hours a new squad of four relieved the previous one. It appears that two soldiers were chained to Peter while two others guarded the door (v. 6).

12:12 Mary, **the mother of John Mark**, was likely a woman of means, since believers tended to gather in the larger homes of the wealthy.

12:19 Execution was the fate of guards who allowed prisoners to escape. Some captors would kill either themselves (16:27) or their prisoners to avoid it (27:42).

12:20 Luke mentions a certain **Blastus, who was in charge of the king's bedroom.** In this role, Blastus served as the king's personal chief of staff.

12:23 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

PREPARING FOR THE MISSION FIELD

13 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, † and Saul.

2 As they were worshiping † the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." †
3 Then after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off. †

THE MISSION TO CYPRUS

4 So being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. 5 Arriving in Salamis, they proclaimed the word of

God in the Jewish synagogues. They also had John as their assistant. † 6 When they had traveled the whole island as far as Paphos, they came across a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. † 7 He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and wanted to hear the word of God. † 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (that is the meaning of his name) opposed † them and tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith. † 9 But Saul — also called Paul — filled with the Holy Spirit, stared straight at Elymas 10 and said, "You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery, you son of the devil † and enemy of all that is right. Won't you ever stop perverting the straight paths † of the Lord? 11 Now, look, the Lord's hand is against you. † You are going to be blind, and will not see the sun for a time." Immediately a mist and darkness fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

ETHICS OF GLOBAL MISSIONS

Missions, best understood as proclaiming the good news of Jesus across cultures, marked the growth of the early church. From a group of 120 followers of Christ based in Jerusalem (Ac 1:15) grew a church that crossed boundaries to reach the center of the Roman Empire. Among others in the book of Acts, Samaritans (8:4-25), Ethiopians (8:26-40), and Gentiles (10:34-48) chose to follow Christ after they heard the Word. The church in Antioch sent out the first missionaries (13:1-3), and the rest of Acts is a missionary story.

WHY GLOBAL MISSIONS?

Some today argue that it is unethical to try to convert people of other cultures and religions to Christianity. Proclaiming a single way to God—that is, the biblical way—is religious arrogance, it is claimed. Such a viewpoint, however, is a denial of the gospel. It misses the point of the mandate to do global missions.

The basis on which Christ's followers do global missions is biblical teaching and the acts of God in history. God inspired his Word (2Tm 3:16) as his Spirit moved men to write (2Pt 1:21). God, who cannot lie (Ti 1:2), thus has given us a guide that is perfect, trustworthy, right, and radiant (Ps 19:7-8). It is that inspired Word that includes the Great Commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Mt 28:18-20).

Indeed, it was Jesus, the One in whom "the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily" (Col 2:9), who uttered this missions mandate (Mt 28:16-20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:45-49; Jn 20:19-23; Ac 1:6-8). His followers are to teach the Word and make disciples of all the peoples. The One who spoke these words had power to defeat the devil (Mt 4:1-11), to teach like no other (7:28-29), to calm the sea (8:23-27), to forgive sin (9:1-8), to heal the sick (9:27-31), and to raise the dead (9:23-26). When he proclaimed the command recorded in Matthew 28, Jesus was, in fact, the resurrected One before whom every knee will bow as every tongue confesses him as Lord (Php 2:9-11). To disobey his global missions mandate out of some misguided

concern to adhere to modern sensibilities would be to reject his authority as the One whom we proclaim as risen Lord over all.

The disciples, the original audience in Matthew 28, were not to wait for nonbelievers to come to them; rather, they were to take the initiative to tell others the good news. Such evangelism would model the heart of God, whose Son entered into the world, became flesh, and dwelt among us (Jn 1:11,14). He who died for us while we were yet sinners (Rm 5:8) demands that his followers take that gospel to the ends of the earth. Through that ministry, in fact, the church would see believers from the corners of the globe enter the kingdom according to God's plan (Mt 8:11; Rv 7:9). Even today, we are privileged to carry on this work through global missions. The work will continue until the end, when Jesus returns and makes all things new.

BIBLICAL THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

Biblical theology should drive us to do missions. There is only one true God (Is 45:5), the Trinitarian God of the Bible who exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19; Eph 4:4-6). He created humans in his image (Gn 1:27), but because of the sin Adam committed in the garden, we too are sinners who reject him by our very nature and by our actions (Rm 3:23; 5:12). The just judgment for our sin is death and ultimate separation from God in hell (Rm 6:23; Rv 20:15). On our own, we cannot fix this problem. All people around the world are spiritually lost apart from the grace of God.

However, God so loves us that he sent Jesus to die on our behalf (Jn 3:16). Jesus is the One through whom broken relationships with God are restored (Jn 14:6; Ac 4:12). Only through turning from our sin and trusting in him can we be saved (Mk 1:15); there simply is no salvation apart from placing personal faith in Jesus Christ. Indeed, the apostle Paul indicated that no one can believe unless he has first heard the gospel: "How can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? (Rm 10:14).

God calls us to go to the nations because he loves the world and does not want "any to perish" (2Pt 3:9). God's heart is for the lost to come to him (Lk 15:11-32). We tell the good news, some turn to God for forgiveness, and heaven rejoices when lost sheep are found (Lk 15:7). Those once held in the domain of darkness are transferred to the kingdom of God's Son (Col 1:13). Indeed, God is in the process of drawing to himself a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue (Rv 5:9; 7:9). From more than eleven thousand people groups around the world, God will draw unto himself worshipers. This message is the good news we get to announce.

Hence, ignoring God's call to global missions is not only disobedient toward God; it is also uncaring toward those who have not heard. If we genuinely believe that people who do not know Jesus will suffer God's judgment, why would we not seek to get the good news to those who need to hear it? While not all believers are called to be full-time missionaries in distant lands, none of us has permission to ignore the Great Commission. To do so is hardly a loving choice.

INTEGRITY IN GLOBAL MISSIONS

How we do global missions does matter, however. At its foundation, missions is an affirmation of the worth of all humans, including those who follow false belief systems. All people are created in the image of God and therefore matter to God. Jesus's death for "the whole world" (1Jn 2:2) further illustrates the value of each individual. Any approach to missions must—even while speaking difficult truths about lostness and salvation—reflect Christian concern, humility, and respect for others. Were it not for the grace of God, we too would still be unbelievers following false gods.

As God's forgiven instruments, we must strive to model Christian integrity in our own lives. The gospel is powerful on its own, but we are nevertheless called to be light in a dark world (Mt 5:16). Our good works glorify the Father and validate the life-transforming power of the gospel. Others should see in us forgiveness instead of bitterness, holiness rather than immorality, and love rather than hatred. If our lives instead reflect faithlessness and disobedience, our lack of integrity becomes an obstacle to the work of the Great Commission.

Further, the goal of Christian missions is proclamation of the gospel, but our efforts should not ignore issues of physical need and social justice. Feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, ministering to the sick and the stranger, and visiting the prisoner (Mt 25:31-46) reflect the character of God and open hearts to hear the gospel. Servanthood in a world that emphasizes self illustrates the transforming power of the good news.

Aside from the countless self-sacrificing efforts that have gone into spreading the gospel around the world, church history also includes tragic episodes in which believers have attempted to compel conversions by military might or legislative act. Such strategies, however, do not reflect a correct understanding of biblical missions. First, only God can change a heart; no external human force can do that miraculous work. Second, reaching the nations focuses on loving proclamation of the truth, not arrogant imposition of the message. Reasoned apologetics and persistent persuasion have a legitimate place in global missions, but both must be grounded in the power of the Spirit rather than in human reasoning or power of persuasion. Coerced conversions are seldom, if ever, genuine.

We need not rely on our power, however. God's Spirit is at work around the world, drawing people to him in response to his Word. Rarely has the church seen the opportunity we have today to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Ease of travel and access to the Internet make it possible to reach people who have yet to hear about Jesus. We need only continue to fulfill his commission to make disciples of all nations, reflecting God's heart for the lost.

CHARLES E. LAWLESS

12 Then, when he saw what happened, the proconsul believed, because he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. †

PAUL'S SERMON IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA

13 Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia, but John left them and went back to Jerusalem. † 14 They continued their journey from Perga and reached Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. † 15 After the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, you can speak." †

16 Paul stood up and motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites, and you who fear God, listen! † 17 The God of this people Israel chose our ancestors, made the people prosper during their stay in the land of Egypt, and led them out of it with a mighty † arm. † 18 And for about forty years he put up with them † in the wilderness; † 19 and after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, † he gave them their land as an inheritance. 20 This all took about 450 years. After this, he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. †

21 Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man

of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. † 22 After removing him, † he raised
up David as their king and testified about him: '**I have found David** the son of
Jesse to be **a man after my own heart**, † † who will carry out all my will.'
23 "From this man's descendants, as he promised, God brought to Israel † the
Savior, Jesus. † 24 Before his coming to public attention, John had previously
proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. † 25 Now as John
was completing his mission, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not the one.
But one is coming after me, and I am not worthy to untie the sandals on his
feet.' †
26 "Brothers and sisters, children of Abraham's race, and those among you who
fear God, it is to us that the word of this salvation has been sent. † 27 Since the
residents of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize him or the sayings of
the prophets that are read every Sabbath, they have fulfilled their words by
condemning him. † 28 Though they found no grounds for the death sentence,
they asked Pilate to have him killed. † 29 When they had carried out all that had
been written about him, they took him down from the tree and put him in a
tomb. † 30 But God raised him from the dead, † 31 and he appeared for many
days to those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his
witnesses to the people. † 32 And we ourselves proclaim to you the good news
of the promise that was made to our ancestors. † 33 God has fulfilled this for us,
their children, by raising up Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm:
You are my Son;
today I have become your Father. † † †
34 As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in
this way, **I will give you the holy and sure promises of David.** † †
35 Therefore he also says in another passage, **You will not let your Holy One
see decay.** † † 36 For David, after serving God's purpose in his own
generation, fell asleep, † was buried with his fathers, and decayed, † 37 but the
one God raised up did not decay. 38 Therefore, let it be known to you, brothers
and sisters, that through this man forgiveness of sins is being proclaimed to
you. † 39 Everyone who believes is justified † through him from everything

that you could not be justified from through the law of Moses. † 40 So beware
that what is said in the prophets does not happen to you:
41 **Look, you scoffers, marvel and vanish away,**
because I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will never believe,
even if someone were to explain it to you." † †

PAUL AND BARNABAS IN ANTIOCH

42 As they were leaving, the people † urged them to speak about these matters
the following Sabbath. 43 After the synagogue had been dismissed, many of the
Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who were
speaking with them and urging them to continue in the grace of God. †
44 The following Sabbath almost the whole town assembled to hear the word of
the Lord. † 45 But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy
and began to contradict what Paul was saying, insulting him. †
46 Paul and Barnabas boldly replied, "It was necessary that the word of God be
spoken to you first. Since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal
life, we are turning to the Gentiles. † 47 For this is what the Lord has
commanded us:
I have made you
a light for the Gentiles
to bring salvation
to the end of the earth." † †
48 When the Gentiles heard this, they rejoiced and honored the word of the Lord,
and all who had been appointed to eternal life believed. 49 The word of the Lord
spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jews incited the prominent God-
fearing women and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution
against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their district. † 51 But Paul
and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet † against them † and went to
Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. †

13:2 Or *were ministering to* **13:17** Lit *with an uplifted* **13:18** Other mss read *he cared for them* **13:23** Other mss read *brought salvation* **13:33** Or *I have begotten you* **13:39** Or *freed,* also later in verse **13:42** Other mss read *they were leaving the synagogue of the Jews, the Gentiles* **13:44** Other mss read *of God*
13:1 Mt 14:1; Ac 4:36; 11:19,22,27; 1Co 12:28 **13:2** Ac 8:29; 9:15; Rm 1:1; Gl 1:15 **13:3** Ac 6:6; 14:26 **13:5** Ac 9:20; 12:12 **13:6** Mt 7:15; Ac 8:9 **13:7** Ac 18:12; 19:38 **13:8** Ex 7:11; 2Tm 3:8 **13:8** Ac 6:7; 8:9 **13:10** Mt 13:38; Jn 8:44 **13:10** Hs 14:9; 2Pt 2:15 **13:11** Ex 9:3; 1Sm 5:6-7; Ps 32:4; Heb 10:31 **13:12** Ac

13:49; 15:35-36 **13:13** Ac 12:12; 13:6; 15:38 **13:14** Ac 9:20; 14:19,21; 16:3; 17:2; 18:4 **13:15** Mk 5:22; Ac 15:21 **13:16** Ac 10:2; 12:17 **13:17** Ex 1:6; 6:6; Dt 7:6-8; Ac 7:17 **13:18** Dt 1:31; Ac 7:36 **13:19** Dt 7:1; Jos 14:1; 19:51; Ps 78:55; Ac 7:45 **13:20** Jdg 2:16; 1Sm 3:20; Ac 3:24 **13:21** 1Sm 8:5; 9:1; 10:1 **13:22** 1Sm 15:23,26; 16:13 **13:22** 1Sm 13:14; Ps 89:20 **13:22** 1Sm 13:14; Ps 89:20 **13:23** Ps 132:1; Mt 1:1; Lk 2:11; Ac 13:32 **13:24** Mt 3:1; Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Ac 1:22; 19:4 **13:25** Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:20,27; Ac 20:24 **13:26** Ac 4:12; 5:20 **13:27** Lk 24:27; Ac 3:17 **13:28** Mt 27:22-23; Ac 3:14 **13:29** Mt 27:59; Lk 23:53; Ac 5:30 **13:30** Mt 28:6; Ac 2:24 **13:31** Mt 28:16; Lk 24:48; Ac 1:3 **13:32** Ac 5:42; 26:6; Rm 4:13; 9:4 **13:33** Ps 2:7 **13:33** Ps 2:7; Heb 1:5; 5:5 **13:34** Is 55:3 **13:34** Is 55:3; Ac 13:30,37 **13:35** Ps 16:10 **13:35** Ps 16:10; Ac 2:27 **13:36** Ac 7:60; 1Co 11:30; 15:6,18,20,51; 1Th 4:13-15 **13:36** 1Kg 2:10; Ac 2:29; 13:22; 20:27 **13:38** Lk 24:47; Ac 2:38 **13:39** Rm 3:28; 10:4 **13:41** Hab 1:5 **13:41** Is 29:14; Hab 1:5 **13:43** Ac 11:23; 14:22 **13:45** Ac 18:6; 1Th 2:16; 1Pt 4:4; Jd 10 **13:46** Mt 21:43; Ac 3:26; 18:6; 22:21; 28:28 **13:47** Is 49:6 **13:47** Is 42:6; 49:6; Lk 2:32 **13:50** Ac 14:2,19; 2Tm 3:11 **13:51** Mt 10:14; Mk 6:11; Lk 9:5; Ac 18:6 **13:51** Ac 14:1,19,21; 16:2; 2Tm 3:11 **13:52** Mt 5:12; Jn 16:22; Ac 2:4

13:1–14:28 This passage records the first major missionary journey taken by **Barnabas and Saul.** In regard to early Christian missions, no one participated in such a wide and extensive missionary effort as the apostle Paul (Saul). One scholar has estimated that Paul traveled by land and sea more than fifteen thousand miles in missionary service. By comparison, Alexander the Great traveled twenty thousand miles in military campaigns.

13:2 Acts records the Spirit's central role in the events of the early church (5:3,9; 8:29; 10:19; 13:4; 19:6). This is in line with Jesus's promise that he would send the **Holy Spirit** to empower the witness of the apostles (1:8).

13:5 Salamis, about 130 miles southwest of Seleucia, was the most significant city on the island of Cyprus. The island was inhabited mostly by Greeks, with some Jews living among them. The missionaries traveled throughout the island visiting Jewish **synagogues**, which would have served Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. Paul's normal practice when visiting a new city was to visit the local Jewish synagogue first, provided that one existed.

13:7 Lucius **Sergius Paulus** served as the **proconsul** of the Roman province, Cyprus (ca AD 45–46). Cyprus was a senatorial, as opposed to imperial, province. Rulers of senatorial provinces were appointed by the Roman senate for one year. Senatorial provinces were more politically stable than imperial ones. Incidentally, this gives us an approximate date for Paul's first missionary journey. Sergius Paulus's role as proconsul of Cyprus in AD 45–46 is confirmed in a Latin inscription found in Rome.

13:8 Elymas the sorcerer served as advisor to Sergius Paulus. Roman government officials sometimes took counsel from diviners.

13:13 Pamphylia was an imperial province. The Roman Empire was composed of two types of provinces, imperial provinces and senatorial ones. Imperial provinces were marked by a lack of political stability due to frequent internal rebellions or external threats like foreign invasion. These provinces usually contained one or more legions of soldiers. Imperial provinces were under the direct control of the Roman emperor who appointed a legate or prefect to govern. Examples include Cilicia, Syria, Egypt, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Judea (beginning in AD 6). See the note for Acts 13:7.

13:28-29 Paul's message of a crucified Messiah was unacceptable to many Jews, as it did not fit their conception of the Messiah (Dt 21:23, "anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse").

13:51 Jews returning to Israel from a Gentile territory sometimes **shook the dust off their feet** to symbolize leaving any and all pagan defilement behind them. Here the act symbolizes the missionaries' strong disassociation or separation from those Jews who rejected the gospel.

GROWTH AND PERSECUTION IN ICONIUM

14 In Iconium they entered the Jewish synagogue, as usual, and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. †
2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. † 3 So they stayed there a long time and spoke boldly for the Lord, who testified to the message of his grace by enabling them to do signs and wonders. † 4 But the people of the city were divided, some siding with the Jews and others with the apostles. † 5 When an attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat and stone them, 6 they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian towns of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding countryside. † 7 There they continued preaching the gospel. †

MISTAKEN FOR GODS IN LYSTRA

8 In Lystra a man was sitting who was without strength in his feet, had never walked, and had been lame from birth. 9 He listened as Paul spoke. After looking directly at him and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 Paul said in a loud voice, “Stand up on your feet!” And he jumped up and began to walk around. †
11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted, saying in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” †
12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the town, brought bulls and wreaths to the gates because he intended, with the crowds, to offer sacrifice.
14 The apostles Barnabas and Paul tore their robes when they heard this and rushed into the crowd, shouting: † 15 “People! Why are you doing these things? We are people also, just like you, and we are proclaiming good news to you, that you turn from these worthless things † to the living God, **who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them**. † † 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations † to go their own way, 17 although he did not leave himself without a witness, † since he did what is good by giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons † and filling you with food and your † hearts with

joy.” 18 Even though they said these things, they barely stopped the crowds from sacrificing to them.

19 Some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and when they won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, thinking he was dead. † 20 After the disciples gathered around him, he got up and went into the town. The next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe. †

CHURCH PLANTING

21 After they had preached the gospel in that town and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, to Iconium, and to Antioch, † 22 strengthening the † disciples by encouraging them to continue in the faith † and by telling them, “It is necessary to go through many hardships † to enter the kingdom of God.” 23 When they had appointed elders † for them in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

24 They passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 After they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed back to Antioch where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. † 27 After they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported everything God had done with them † and that he had opened the door † of faith to the Gentiles. 28 And they spent a considerable time with the disciples.

14:17 Other mss read *our* **14:22** Lit *the souls of the*

14:1 Ac 13:5,51; 14:19 **14:2** Jn 3:36; Ac 13:50 **14:3** Mk 16:20; Jn 4:48; Ac 4:29; 20:32; Heb 2:4 **14:4** Ac 17:4-5; 19:9; 28:24 **14:6** Mt 10:23; 2Tm 3:11 **14:7** Ac 14:15,21; 16:10 **14:8-10** Mk 6:56; Php 2:12 **14:11** Ac 8:10; 28:6 **14:14** Mt 26:65; Mk 14:63 **14:15** 1Sm 12:21; 1Co 8:4; 1Th 1:9 **14:15** Ex 20:11; Ps 146:6 **14:15** Gn 1:1; Ex 20:11; Ps 146:6; Jr 14:22; Rv 14:7 **14:16** Ps 81:2; Mc 4:5; Ac 17:30; 1Pt 4:3 **14:17** Ac 17:26-27; Rm 1:19-20 **14:17** Lv 26:4; Dt 11:14; 28:12; Jb 5:10; Ps 65:10; 147:8; Ezk 34:26; Jl 2:23 **14:19** Ac 13:45,51; 2Co 11:25; 2Tm 3:11 **14:20** Ac 11:26; 14:22,28 **14:21** Mt 28:19; Ac 13:51 **14:22** Ac 11:23; 13:43 **14:22** Lk 22:48; Jn 15:20; 16:33; Ac 9:16; Rm 8:17; 1Th 3:3; 2Tm 3:12 **14:23** Ac 11:30; 13:3; 20:32; Ti 1:5 **14:26** Ac 11:19; 13:3 **14:27** Ac 15:12; 21:19 **14:27** 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12; Col 4:3; Rv 3:8

14:11-12 The people of Lystra believed **the gods** were visiting them in the persons of Barnabas and Paul. **Zeus** was the chief god of the Greeks, and Hermes was the messenger of the gods. Luke does not explain why the people associated Zeus with Barnabas—it may be because Barnabas was the older of the two—but they regarded Paul as Hermes **because he was the chief speaker.**

14:13 Greco-Roman religion was marked by **sacrifice.** Offerings included animals, food, and drink. Sacrifices were given as offerings of thanksgiving for blessings bestowed on worshipers.

14:14-15 The tearing of one’s robes could express various ideas like mourning. Here, Paul and Barnabas

tear their robes to demonstrate that they are just normal people, not gods.

DISPUTE IN ANTIOCH

15 Some men † came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers:
"Unless you are circumcised † according to the custom prescribed by
Moses, † you cannot be saved." 2 After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in
serious argument and debate, Paul and Barnabas and some others were appointed
to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this issue. † 3 When they
had been sent on their way by the church, † they passed through both Phoenicia
and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they
brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters.
4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the
apostles, and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. †
5 But some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up
and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the
law of Moses."

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

6 The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this matter. 7 After there had
been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them: "Brothers and sisters, you
are aware that in the early days God made a choice among you, † that by my
mouth the Gentiles would hear the gospel message and believe. 8 And God, who
knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he
also did to us. † 9 He made no distinction between us and them, † cleansing
their hearts by faith. † 10 Now then, why are you testing God by putting a yoke
on the disciples' necks † that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to
bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace † of
the Lord Jesus in the same way they are."
12 The whole assembly became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describe
all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. †
13 After they stopped speaking, James responded: "Brothers and sisters, listen to
me. 14 Simeon † has reported how God first intervened to take from the

Gentiles a people for his name. † 15 And the words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written:

16 **After these things I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent.**
I will rebuild its ruins
and set it up again,
17 **so the rest of humanity may seek the Lord — even all the Gentiles**
who are called by my name — declares the Lord
who makes these things 18 **known from long ago.** † † †

19 Therefore, in my judgment, we should not cause difficulties for those among the Gentiles who turn to God, 20 but instead we should write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, † from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood. 21 For since ancient times, Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, and every Sabbath day he is read aloud in the synagogues." †

THE LETTER TO THE GENTILE BELIEVERS

22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, decided to select men who were among them and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas: Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, † both leading men among the brothers. 23 They wrote:

"From the apostles and the elders, your brothers, To the brothers and sisters among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: †
Greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some without our authorization went out from us †
and troubled you with their words and unsettled your hearts, † † 25 we have unanimously † decided to select men and send them to you along with our dearly loved Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives † for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will personally report the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it was the Holy Spirit's decision — and ours — not to place further burdens on you beyond these requirements: † 29 that you abstain from food offered to idols, from blood, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. † You will do well if you keep yourselves from these things.

Farewell.”

THE OUTCOME OF THE JERUSALEM LETTER

30 So they were sent off and went down to Antioch, and after gathering the assembly, they delivered the letter. 31 When they read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. 32 Both Judas and Silas, who were also prophets themselves, encouraged the brothers and sisters and strengthened them with a long message. † 33 After spending some time there, they were sent back in peace † by the brothers and sisters to those who had sent them. † † 35 But Paul and Barnabas, along with many others, remained in Antioch, teaching and proclaiming the word of the Lord. †

PAUL AND BARNABAS PART COMPANY

36 After some time had passed, Paul said to Barnabas, “Let’s go back and visit
the brothers and sisters in every town † where we have preached the word of the
Lord and see how they’re doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take along John
Mark. † 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take along this man who had
deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone on with them to the work. 39 They
had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company, and Barnabas took
Mark † with him and sailed off to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and departed,
after being commended by the brothers and sisters to the grace of the Lord. †
41 He traveled through Syria † and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

15:7 Other mss read *us* **15:14** Simon (Peter) **15:17-18** Other mss read *says the Lord who does all these things. Known to God from long ago are all his works.* **15:24** Other mss add *by saying, ‘Be circumcised and keep the law,’* **15:33** Other mss read *the brothers to the apostles* **15:33** Other mss add v. 34: *But Silas decided to stay there*. **15:37** Lit *John who was called Mark*

15:1 Ac 15:24; Gl 2:12 **15:1** Ac 15:5; 16:3; 21:21; 1Co 7:18; Gl 5:2 **15:1** Lv 12:3; Ac 6:14 **15:2** Ac 11:30; 16:4; Gl 2:1-2 **15:3** Ac 11:18; 21:5; Rm 15:24; 1Co 16:6,11; 2Co 1:16; Ti 3:13; 3Jn 6 **15:4** Ac 14:27; 15:12 **15:8** Ac 1:24; 10:44,47 **15:9** Ac 10:28,34; 11:12 **15:9** Ac 10:43; 1Pt 1:22 **15:10** Mt 23:4; Gl 5:1 **15:11** Rm 3:24; Eph 2:5-8; Ti 2:11 **15:12** Jn 4:48; Ac 14:27; 15:4 **15:13-14** Ac 12:17; 15:7 **15:16-18** Am 9:11-12; Is 45:21 **15:16-18** Is 45:21; Jr 14:9; Dn 9:19; Am 9:11-12 **15:20** 1Co 8:7,13; 10:7-8,14-28; Rv 2:14,20 **15:21** Ac 13:15; 2Co 3:14 **15:22** Ac 1:23; 15:2; 1Pt 5:12 **15:23** Ac 15:1; 23:26; Jms 1:1 **15:24** Gl 2:4; 5:12; Ti 1:10 **15:24** Gl 1:7; 5:10 **15:25** Ac 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 7:57; 8:6; 12:20; 18:12; 19:29 **15:26** Ac 9:23-25; 14:19 **15:28** Ac 5:32; 15:8 **15:29** Ac 15:20; 21:25; Rv 2:14,20 **15:32** Ac 14:22; 15:1 **15:33** Mk 5:34; Ac 16:36; 1Co 16:11; Heb 11:31 **15:35** Ac 8:4; 13:1 **15:36** Ac 13:4,13-14,51; 14:6,24 **15:37-39** Ac 12:12; 13:13; Col 4:10 **15:40** Ac 11:23; 14:26; 15:22 **15:41** Ac 6:9; 15:23; 16:5

15:1 The **men** who came **from Judea** were Jewish Christians who argued that Gentile believers must be **circumcised** and follow the Mosaic law in order to be saved. Leviticus 12:3 required newborn males to be circumcised on the eighth day; however, the practice could be traced even earlier in Jewish tradition to Abraham’s time (Gn 17:9-14). Peter (Ac 15:10-11), the Jerusalem Council (15:13-29), and later Paul (e.g., Gl 3:19-29; 6:15) argued against making adherence to Mosaic law a requirement of Jesus’s followers.

15:2 The Jerusalem Council (ca AD 49) was a major meeting of the early church in which the apostles discussed whether Gentiles should be required to keep the legal requirements of the OT before becoming Christians. Essentially the apostles addressed whether it was necessary to become a Jew prior to converting to Christianity.

15:20-21 While Gentiles are not required to become Jews, following the law of Moses, they are to turn completely from pagan ways. They should **abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything strangled, and from blood.** Not doing so would be offensive to Jewish believers, so the stipulations help Christians of both Gentile and Jewish backgrounds to get along.

15:36–18:22 This section records Paul’s second major missionary journey (ca AD 49–52). The mission included visiting the former churches he and Barnabas planted on their first missionary journey (13:1–14:28). It also included carrying the gospel into new lands. Paul’s first convert in what constitutes modern Europe was a businesswoman named **Lydia** (16:14).

PAUL SELECTS TIMOTHY

16 Paul went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named
Timothy, † the son of a believing Jewish woman, † but his father was a
Greek. 2 The brothers and sisters at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. †
3 Paul wanted Timothy to go with him; so he took him and circumcised † him
because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father
was a Greek. 4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions
reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for the people to observe. † 5 So
the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. †

EVANGELIZATION OF EUROPE

6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia; they had been forbidden
by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. † 7 When they came to Mysia,
they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus † did not allow them.
8 Passing by Mysia they went down to Troas. † 9 During the night Paul had a
vision in which a Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, "Cross
over to Macedonia and help us!" † 10 After † he had seen the vision, we
immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had
called us to preach the gospel to them.

LYDIA'S CONVERSION

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, the next day
to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, † a Roman colony and a leading city
of the district of Macedonia. We stayed in that city for several days. 13 On the
Sabbath day we went outside the city gate by the river, where we expected to
find a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women gathered there.
14 A God-fearing woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of
Thyatira, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was
saying. † 15 After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you
consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." † And she
persuaded us.

PAUL AND SILAS IN PRISON

16 Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit
by which she predicted the future. † She made a large profit for her owners by
fortune-telling. 17 As she followed Paul and us she cried out, “These men, who
are proclaiming to you † the way of salvation, are the servants of the Most High
God.” 18 She did this for many days.
Paul was greatly annoyed. Turning to the spirit, he said, “I command you in the
name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! ” And it came out right away. †
19 When her owners realized that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul
and Silas † and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.
20 Bringing them before the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are
seriously disturbing our city. They are Jews 21 and are promoting customs that
are not legal for us as Romans to adopt or practice.” † 22 The crowd joined in
the attack against them, and the chief magistrates stripped off their clothes and
ordered them to be beaten with rods. † 23 After they had severely flogged them,
they threw them in jail, ordering the jailer to guard them carefully. 24 Receiving
such an order, he put them into the inner prison and secured their feet in the
stocks. †

A MIDNIGHT DELIVERANCE

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and
the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent
earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the
doors were opened, and everyone’s chains came loose. † 27 When the jailer
woke up and saw the doors of the prison standing open, he drew his sword and
was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had escaped.
28 But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Don’t harm yourself, because we’re all
here! ”
29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and
Silas. 30 He escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ” †
31 They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your
household.” † 32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him along with
everyone in his house. 33 He took them the same hour of the night and washed
their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. 34 He brought

them into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had come to believe in God with his entire household. †

AN OFFICIAL APOLOGY

35 When daylight came, the chief magistrates sent the police to say, "Release those men."
36 The jailer reported these words to Paul: "The magistrates have sent orders for you to be released. So come out now and go in peace." †
37 But Paul said to them, "They beat us in public without a trial, although we are Roman citizens, and threw us in jail. And now are they going to send us away secretly? Certainly not! On the contrary, let them come themselves and escort us out." †
38 The police reported these words to the magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. 39 So they came to appease them, and escorting them from prison, they urged them to leave town. 40 After leaving the jail, they came to Lydia's house, where they saw and encouraged the brothers and sisters, and departed. †

16:17 Other mss read *us*

16:1 Ac 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rm 16:21; 1Co 4:17; Php 2:19; 1Th 3:2,6 **16:1** 2Tm 1:5; 3:15 **16:2** Ac 13:51; 16:40 **16:3** Gl 2:3 **16:4** Ac 11:30; 15:2,28 **16:5** Ac 2:47; 9:31; 15:41 **16:6** Ac 2:9; 18:23; Gl 1:2; 3:1 **16:7** Ac 8:29; Rm 8:9; Gl 4:6; Php 1:19; 1Pt 1:11 **16:8** Ac 16:11; 20:5-6; 2Co 2:12; 2Tm 4:13 **16:9** Ac 9:10; 20:1,3 **16:10-17** Ac 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1–28:16 **16:12** Ac 20:6; Php 1:1; 1Th 2:2 **16:14** Lk 24:45; Ac 18:7; Rv 1:11 **16:15** Gn 19:3; Lk 24:29; Ac 11:14 **16:16** Lv 19:31; Dt 18:11; 1Sm 28:3,7 **16:17-18** Mk 5:7; 16:17 **16:19** Mt 10:18; Ac 8:3; 15:22; 17:6-8; 19:25-26; 21:30; Jms 2:6 **16:21** Est 3:8; Ac 16:12 **16:22** 2Co 6:5; 11:25; 1Th 2:2 **16:24** Jb 13:27; 33:11; Jr 20:2-3; 29:26 **16:26** Ac 4:31; 5:19; 12:7,10 **16:30** Ac 2:37; 22:10 **16:31** Mk 16:16; Ac 11:14 **16:34** Ac 11:14; 16:15 **16:36** Ac 15:33; 16:27 **16:37** Ac 22:25-29 **16:39-40** Mt 8:34; Ac 16:14

16:1 Timothy was the son of a marriage between a Jewish mother and Greek father. Paul would later write of the sincere faith not only of Timothy's mother, Eunice, but also his grandmother, Lois (2Tm 3:15).

16:6 Asia refers to a Roman province located in what is now western Turkey. Established in 129 BC by the Romans, it contained key cities such as Ephesus, Miletus, Troas, Cos, and Rhodos.

16:10 This is noteworthy as it is the first "**we** passage" of Acts, in which Luke includes himself as a participant in the narrative (see also 20:5–21:18).

16:11-15 Upon arriving in **Philippi**, Paul journeys to a river where he meets several women worshiping God. Jewish tradition required ten males to form a synagogue. Believers lacking the required number of men were instructed to meet near a **river** for prayer. The river provided means for ceremonial washing. Likely Philippi did not contain a large Jewish population.

16:12 In 360 BC, the Athenian general and orator, Callistratos, led a group of Greek colonists to found a new city called Krenides, "Little Springs." Six years later, Philip of Macedon renamed the city **Philippi**

after himself. The Romans took control of Philippi in 168 BC and populated it with Roman veterans as a reward for their service.

16:16 Paul and his missionary companions encountered **a slave girl . . . who had a spirit by which she predicted the future.** Pagans highly esteemed those whom they believed could predict the future. The slave girl had made a great deal of money for her owners as a fortune-teller.

16:20-21 The specific charge against Paul and his associates was that they were upsetting the peace of the city by **promoting** unlawful **customs. Romans** greatly valued societal order and were suspicious of influences that threatened to disturb it—especially foreign influences. One should not overlook the anti-Jewish sentiment expressed by the slave girl's owners.

16:22-23 The normal Roman practice was to strip the accused of clothing prior to beating him. The men were **severely flogged.** As a Roman citizen, Paul should not have endured such punishment, but his captors were ignorant of his citizenship (vv. 37-39). He recalls this experience in 2 Corinthians 11:25.

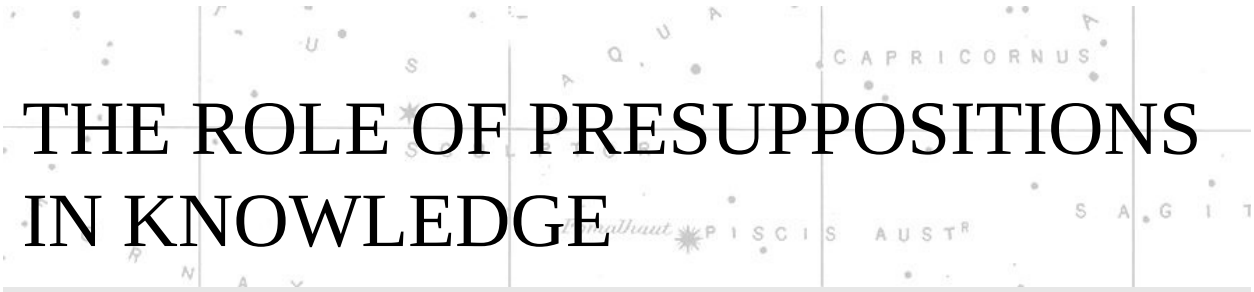
16:27 See the notes on Acts 12:19.

16:32-34 The jailer's behavior toward Paul and Silas was highly irregular. Roman guards did not care for the needs of prisoners, allow them to leave jail, or invite them over for a meal. The Philippian jailer's behavior strongly suggests that his conversion to Christianity was genuinely life-transforming.

16:37-39 Paul and Silas were **Roman citizens.** As such, they were entitled to due process and were exempt from certain forms of punishment (e.g., flogging, crucifixion).

A SHORT MINISTRY IN THESSALONICA

17 After they passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to
Thessalonica, † where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As usual, Paul
went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days reasoned with them from the
Scriptures, † 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to
suffer and rise from the dead: "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the
Messiah." † 4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas,
including a large number of God-fearing Greeks, as well as a number of the
leading women. †



THE ROLE OF PRESUPPOSITIONS IN KNOWLEDGE

During his second missionary journey, the apostle Paul explored Athens. While there, he debated some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and presented the good news about Jesus's resurrection. Some called him an ignorant showoff, a pseudo-intellectual. Some asked to know more, so that they might gain some understanding of his strange teaching.

Paul identified the unknown god to whom a nearby altar was dedicated with the One who made the world and everything in it, the Lord of heaven and earth. “In him we live and move and have our being” (Ac 17:29); he is the one true God, Paul taught. Then the apostle identified the resurrected Jesus with the one true God and called his hearers to repent so that God would judge them righteous. The author of Acts reports that some believed in the risen Christ, while others ridiculed Paul (17:15-32). So why did some believe while others did not?

What follows is a possible and partial answer, one that involves the role of presuppositions and competing worldviews like those at stake in Epicurean, Stoic, and Christian visions of life.

WHAT ARE PRESUPPOSITIONS?

Most basically, a presupposition is a belief assumed to be true. Presuppositions are ubiquitous. They are at work in ordinary conversations, in scientific and historical research, and in the explicit use of reasoning as exemplified in arguments. Some presuppositions have rather narrow implications. Some have quite broad ones.

Consider ordinary conversations. If I say, “Jo Anne left for the grocery store,” my words presuppose that some unique person, Jo Anne, exists and that there is a grocery store to which she is traveling. And even if it is false that Jo Anne left for the grocery story, the sentence still implies she exists and that there is a grocery store to which she could have gone.

Presuppositions are usually implicit. Critical thinking involves making them explicit and evaluating them and the larger view of which they are a part. Consider the following argument: All acts of killing of innocent persons are morally wrong acts.

All abortions are acts of killing innocent persons.

So, all abortions are morally wrong acts.

This argument presupposes that (1) a correct way to think about the killing of humans is by reference to a moral category called personhood, and (2) that an embryo or a fetus is correctly classified as a person.

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND WORLDVIEWS

A fully articulated worldview is a comprehensive, systematic, and integrated way of thinking, believing, and living. Succinctly stated, a worldview is the broadest set of presuppositions possible. While it is in an important sense subjective, it is not primarily a personal and private viewpoint. Rather it is a point of view that invites exploration, examination, and critique. Ideally it is characterized by internal coherence, consistency with external facts and theories, and an overall unity.

A worldview seeks to answer some basic, fundamental questions about life. What are humans? Why are we here? Why are we flawed? How can we overcome our flaws and act and live well? To whom are we responsible? What happens after death? What is the point or purpose of one’s life?

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

What are the primary parts of the Christian worldview? First, there are general beliefs about God and his relation to the world: God is spirit (Jn 4:24); he is omnipresent (Jr 23:23-24), eternal (Ps 90:1-4), the Creator and Sustainer of the universe; (Gn 1:1–2:3); he is perfectly good (Mk 10:18), omnipotent (Eph 1:19), and omniscient (1Jn 3:20). He is a necessary being (Ac 17:24-28), and he is worship-worthy (Heb 1:6); there is only one God (Eph 4:5).

Second, there are particular beliefs about God and his relation to the world: God covenanted with Abraham and the people of Israel to bless and redeem fallen humanity (Gn 12:1-3); God entered human history as Jesus of Nazareth, born of the virgin Mary (Lk 1:26-38); God is a triune community of persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (2Co 13:13); and as Jesus was resurrected from the dead after his crucifixion, so humans will be resurrected and reunited with God through placing faith in Christ (Jn 11:25). (Note that the last claim presupposes that the humans who are resurrected and reunited with Christ have an essential unity with their preresurrected selves.) There’s more. Humans are created in the image of God, and both

faith and reason are gifts of God. Their correct use by humans is essential to fulfilling God's creative purposes. Good and evil and beauty and ugliness are objective features of the universe.

CHRISTIANITY VERSUS OTHER WORLDVIEW PRESUPPOSITIONS

How does the Christian worldview compare to the worldview of the Epicureans and the Stoics that Paul met at Athens? Both of these groups were materialists in that they presupposed that only material objects can act or be acted upon. The Epicureans accepted that there were gods, who, though immortal, were material beings like humans. Living supremely happy lives, the gods were indifferent to the welfare of humans. Because the Epicureans presupposed humans were merely material, and that the gods were uninterested in humans, they denied the possibility of life after death. And since they assumed death is the annihilation of the body and involves no suffering beyond one's last breath, they argued that death is not to be feared.

In contrast, the Stoics spoke of a single God, but since they held that all of reality is material, they conceived God to be a material thing (a celestial "fire") that was immanent throughout the universe, rather than distinct from it. They identified God with reason (*logos* in Gk) and insisted that the world (all that is) is governed absolutely in every detail by reason. Because the Stoics assumed that reason determines absolutely what happens, they denied that humans act freely. Like the Epicureans, they argued that death was not to be feared, and took that notion a step further. Sometimes it is to be welcomed and hastened by suicide.

Given what we know about the Epicurean and Stoic worldviews, it is no surprise that Paul was ridiculed as an "ignorant showoff" (Ac 17:18,32). Given their presuppositions that reality is material, that one's physical death entails one's complete annihilation, and that the gods (or God) are indifferent to humans, Paul's claims that Jesus was resurrected—and that Jesus is also the Creator and Sustainer of the world—must have seemed utterly impossible, and thus, entirely unreasonable.

JUDGING BETWEEN WORLDVIEWS

So how does one adjudicate between competing worldviews? There are many acceptable answers to this question. Let me propose a familiar one.

Since a worldview, ideally, is a comprehensive and integrated explanation or account of all that one accepts as true, it is appropriate to test a worldview by comparing it to what one presupposes to be true. Doing so poses a difficulty for both the Epicurean and Stoic worldviews, as well as for contemporary versions of materialism. Most of us presuppose that we are agents and sometimes act on the basis of reasons, thus acting to some extent independently of the causal mechanisms that explain movement in the physical world. Moreover, this commonsense picture suggests that the "I" that acts persists through time and maintains personal identity, despite changes in one's physical constituents. Thus, we typically presuppose that we are more than our bodies, even if they are intimately connected to us.

In short, our commonsense view of humans presupposes that we are agents and are constituted by both material and nonmaterial stuff. Because of these beliefs, some humans find it reasonable to hope that our lives can have a purpose beyond one's physical existence, to believe that the moral and religious quality of our lives will have a bearing on the future state, to believe that while our own efforts matter, the moral and religious qualities of our lives are not merely a function of those efforts, and to believe that one's physical death is not one's annihilation.

Contemporary materialists understand perhaps more clearly than Epicurus did that a materialist worldview implies the elimination of psychological categories such as intention, beliefs, desires, preferences, consciousness, and reasons for action—or at least their reduction down to material properties. So, if some version of materialism is the correct worldview, then our commonsense views of ourselves and our relation to the world are at best, false, and at worst, a delusion.

By contrast, Christian theism as a worldview coheres with our commonsense view of ourselves and of the social world that we inhabit, a significant point in its favor. Indeed, Christian theism provides a more satisfactory explanation than materialism about the existence of the physical universe (that there is

something rather than nothing), about its pervasive order and regularity (scientific laws and predictable events), and about the existence of conscious creatures, some of whom possess a sense of right and wrong (humans). And while the resurrection of Jesus is rightly a wonder to be marveled at, it is consistent with a worldview that includes the existence of a nonmaterial being who is like a human person, who acts, is omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly free, and perfectly good. Ironically, it is the advocate of materialism as a worldview that is the ignorant showoff.

MICHAEL D. BEATY

RIOT IN THE CITY

5 But the Jews became jealous, and they brought together some wicked men
from the marketplace, formed a mob, and started a riot in the city. Attacking
Jason's house, they searched for them to bring them out to the public
assembly. † 6 When they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the
brothers before the city officials, shouting, "These men who have turned the
world upside down have come here too, 7 and Jason has welcomed them. They
are all acting contrary to Caesar's decrees, † saying that there is another king —
Jesus." † 8 The crowd and city officials who heard these things were upset.
9 After taking a security bond from Jason and the others, they released them.

THE BEREANS SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

10 As soon as it was night, the brothers and sisters sent Paul and Silas away to
Berea. † Upon arrival, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 The people
here were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, since they
received the word with eagerness and examined the Scriptures † daily to see if
these things were so. 12 Consequently, many of them believed, including a
number of the prominent Greek women as well as men. 13 But when the Jews
from Thessalonica found out that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul
at Berea, they came there too, agitating and upsetting † the crowds. 14 Then the
brothers and sisters immediately sent Paul away to go to the coast, but Silas and
Timothy † stayed on there. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him as far as
Athens, and after receiving instructions for Silas and Timothy to come to him as
quickly as possible, they departed. †

PAUL IN ATHENS

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed when he saw that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with those who worshiped God, as well as in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. † 18 Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also debated with him. Some said, “What is this ignorant showoff † trying to say? ”
Others replied, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign deities” — because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. †
19 They took him and brought him to the Areopagus, † and said, “May we learn about this new teaching you are presenting? † 20 Because what you say sounds strange to us, and we want to know what these things mean.” 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners residing there spent their time on nothing else but telling or hearing something new.

THE AREOPAGUS ADDRESS

22 Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that you are extremely religious in every respect. 23 For as I was passing through and observing the objects of your worship, I even found an altar on which was inscribed: ‘To an Unknown God.’ Therefore, what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it † — he is Lord of heaven and earth † — does not live in shrines made by hands. † 25 Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, † since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. † 26 From one man † he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. † 27 He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. † 28 For in him we live and move and have our being, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also his offspring.’ † 29 Since we are God’s offspring then, we shouldn’t think that the divine nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image fashioned by human art and imagination. †

30 “Therefore, having overlooked † the times of ignorance, God now commands
all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has set a day when he is going to
judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed. He has provided
proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.” †
32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some began to ridicule
him, but others said, “We’d like to hear from you again about this.” 33 So Paul
left their presence. 34 However, some people joined him and believed, including
Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

17:13 Other mss omit *and upsetting* **17:18** Lit *this seed picker* **17:19** Or *Mars Hill* **17:26** Other mss read *blood*

17:1 Ac 20:4; Php 4:16; 1Th 1:1; 2Tm 4:10 **17:2** Ac 8:35; 9:20; 13:13-14 **17:3** Lk 24:26; Jn 20:9; Ac 3:18; 9:22; 18:28 **17:4** Jn 7:35; Ac 14:4; 15:22 **17:5** Ac 17:13; Rm 16:21; 1Th 2:14-16 **17:7** Lk 2:1; Rm 1:32; Eph 2:15 **17:7** Lk 23:2; Jn 19:12 **17:10** Ac 17:13-14; 20:4 **17:11** Is 34:16; Lk 16:29; Jn 5:39 **17:14** Mt 10:23; Ac 15:22; 16:1 **17:15** Ac 18:1,5; 1Th 3:1 **17:16-17** Ac 9:20; 2Pt 2:8 **17:18** Ac 4:2; 17:31-32 **17:19** Mk 1:27; Ac 17:22 **17:24** Is 42:5; Ac 14:15 **17:24** Dt 10:14; Ps 115:16; Mt 11:25 **17:24** Ac 7:48 **17:25** Jb 22:2; Ps 50:10-12 **17:25** Gn 2:7; Jb 27:3; 33:4; Zch 12:1 **17:26** Dt 32:8; Jb 12:23; Mal 2:10 **17:27** Dt 4:7; Jr 23:23-24; Ac 14:17 **17:28** Jb 12:10; Dn 5:23; Ti 1:12 **17:29** Is 40:18-19; Rm 1:23 **17:30** Lk 24:47; Ac 14:16; Rm 3:25; Ti 2:11-12; 1Pt 1:14; 4:3 **17:31** Ps 9:8; 98:9; Mt 10:15; Ac 2:24; Rm 2:16

17:1 Thessalonica was the capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia. It was a busy seaport located on the Via Egnatia, which served as a major Roman road that connected the empire from east to west. The Via Egnatia was constructed about two hundred years before Christ.

17:1-5 As usual, Paul first visited the local Jewish synagogue where his audience included **God-fearing Greeks** and **Jews.** God-fearers were those who displayed deep interest in Judaism yet had not undergone the necessary requirements of conversion to Judaism, namely, circumcision and baptism. Luke’s reference to **the leading women** may indicate that they were the prominent wives of leading men.

17:6-7 See the notes on Acts 16:20-21.

17:16-34 See “How Can We Evaluate Competing Worldviews?” *p. 1423*.

17:16 Pagan cities were typically filled with **idols.** Such statues lined the streets and beautifully colored temples were visible for all to see. But Athens was especially dedicated to idol worship. It was said that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens.

17:18 Two prominent philosophical schools in ancient Athens were those of Epicureanism and Stoicism. The founder of Epicureanism, Epicurus (341–271 BC), argued that the goal of life was achieving peace and tranquility, that is, freedom from hardship and distress. He denied the gods’ intervention in the lives of people and the existence of an afterlife. Stoicism originated with Zeno of Cyprus (ca 334–262 BC). Stoics took a fatalistic view of life (in contrast to the Epicureans) and taught that the gods intervened in human affairs. In Athens, a number of those from both groups looked on Paul with disfavor. They called him a **showoff**, lit “seed-picker” (Gk *spermologos*), a metaphor used to describe a bird that hops about picking up scraps and debris in the marketplace. Paul’s detractors were essentially saying that he was a pseudo-intellectual presenting the scraps and debris he had gathered. Others found his teaching about the resurrection strange (v. 20; see also v. 32).

17:19-20 The Athenian Greeks take Paul to the **Areopagus**, “Hill of Ares.” The name “Areopagus” refers to Ares, the Greek god of war. The Roman name for this god was “Mars”, so the same location is

sometimes called Mars Hill. Paul appeared before a council that evaluated new religious and philosophical ideas that sought formal acceptance in the city. Members of the Areopagus functioned as the religious and philosophical gatekeepers of the city.

17:22-23 Paul sought to relate to the Greeks' worldview for the purpose of sharing the gospel of Christ with them. Nevertheless, while commending their pursuit for truth, he informed them that their search had been conducted in ignorance.

17:25-28 See "Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview," *p. 846.*

17:26 See "The Bible and Civil Rights," p. 1446; "Equality of the Races and Racial Reconciliation," *p. 1295.*

17:28 In an effort to connect to the worldview of the Athenians, Paul cited works by the Greek poet Epimenides (ca 600 BC)—**in him we live and move and have our being**—and by the Stoic philosopher Aratus of Soli (ca 315–240 BC)—**for we are also his offspring.** This speech serves as a model of how to connect to the worldview of one's hearers in order to introduce them to a different worldview. Also see "The Role of Presuppositions in Knowledge," *p. 1330;* "Agnosticism and Secularism," *p. 620;* "Literature and a Christian Worldview," *p. 546.*

17:32 Some openly ridiculed Paul when they heard him speak **about the resurrection of the dead.** Epicureans and Stoics denied not only the possibility of resurrection but also the eternal existence of the human soul.

17:34 Luke mentions two converts by name: a man called **Dionysius**, and a woman named **Damaris.** Dionysius was a member of the council of the Areopagus, and was thus of high social standing.

FOUNDING THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

18 After this, he † left Athens and went to Corinth, † 2 where he found a
Jew named Aquila, † a native of Pontus, who had recently come from
Italy with his wife Priscilla because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave
Rome. Paul came to them, 3 and since they were of the same occupation,
tentmakers by trade, † he stayed with them and worked. 4 He reasoned in the
synagogue every Sabbath and tried to persuade both Jews and Greeks. †
5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself to
preaching the word † and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. †
6 When they resisted and blasphemed, † he shook out his clothes † and told
them, "Your blood is on your own heads! † I am innocent. † From now on I
will go to the Gentiles." † 7 So he left there and went to the house of a man
named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next door to the
synagogue. 8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, along
with his whole household. † Many of the Corinthians, when they heard,
believed and were baptized.

9 The Lord said to Paul in a night vision, “Don’t be afraid, but keep on speaking
and don’t be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to
hurt you, because I have many people in this city.” † 11 He stayed there a year
and a half, teaching the word of God among them.
12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack against
Paul and brought him to the tribunal. † 13 “This man,” they said, “ is persuading
people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”
14 As Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a
matter of wrongdoing or of a serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to put
up with you Jews. 15 But if these are questions about words, names, and your
own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of such things.” † 16 So he
drove them from the tribunal. 17 And they all † seized Sosthenes, † the leader
of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal, but none of these things
mattered to Gallio.

THE RETURN TRIP TO ANTIOCH

18 After staying for some time, Paul said farewell to the brothers and sisters and
sailed away to Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. He shaved his head
at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. † 19 When they reached
Ephesus † he left them there, but he himself entered the synagogue and debated
with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he declined,
21 but he said farewell and added, † “I’ll come back to you again, if God
wills.” † Then he set sail from Ephesus.
22 On landing at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, then
went down to Antioch. †
23 After spending some time there, he set out, traveling through one place after
another in the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. †

THE ELOQUENT APOLLOS

24 Now a Jew named Apollos, † a native Alexandrian, an eloquent man who
was competent in the use of the Scriptures, arrived in Ephesus. 25 He had been
instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, † he was speaking
and teaching accurately about Jesus, although he knew only John’s baptism. †

26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. After Priscilla and Aquila heard
him, they took him aside † and explained the way of God to him more
accurately. † 27 When he wanted to cross over to Achaia, the brothers and
sisters wrote to the disciples to welcome him. After he arrived, he was a great
help to those who by grace had believed. † 28 For he vigorously refuted the
Jews in public, demonstrating through the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. †

18:1 Other mss read *Paul* **18:5** Other mss read *was urged by the Spirit* **18:6** Lit *clean* **18:17** Other mss read *Then all the Greeks* **18:21** Other mss add *"By all means it is necessary to keep the coming festival in Jerusalem. But* **18:25** Or *in the Spirit* **18:26** Lit *they received him*

18:1 Ac 17:15; 19:1; 1Co 1:2; 2Co 1:1,23; 2Tm 4:20 **18:2** Ac 18:18,26; Rm 16:3-5; 1Co 16:19; 2Tm 4:19 **18:3** Ac 20:34; 1Co 4:12; 9:15; 2Co 11:7; 12:13; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8 **18:4** Ac 9:20; 13:14; 14:1; 18:19 **18:5** Jb 32:18; Ac 15:22; 16:1,9; 17:3,14-15; 18:28; 1Th 3:6 **18:6** Ac 13:45; Rm 3:8; 1Co 4:13; Ti 3:2 **18:6** Neh 5:13; Mt 10:14; Ac 13:51 **18:6** 2Sm 1:16; Ezk 18:13; 33:4; Mt 27:25 **18:6** Ezk 3:18; Ac 13:46 **18:8** Mk 5:22; Ac 11:14; 1Co 1:14 **18:9-10** Mt 28:20; Ac 23:11 **18:12** Ac 13:7; 18:27 **18:15** Ac 23:29; 25:11,19 **18:17** 1Co 1:1 **18:18** Nm 6:2,5,9,18; Ac 21:24; Rm 16:1 **18:19** Ac 19:1; 20:16; 1Co 15:32; 1Tm 1:3; 2Tm 1:18 **18:21** Rm 1:10; 1Co 4:19; 16:7; Heb 6:3; Jms 4:15; 1Pt 3:17 **18:22** Ac 8:40; 11:19 **18:23** Ac 14:22; 16:6 **18:24** Ac 19:1; 1Co 1:12; 3:5; 4:6; 16:12; Ti 3:13 **18:25** Lk 7:29; Ac 9:2; 19:3; Rm 12:11 **18:26** Mt 2:8; Lk 1:3; Ac 18:25; 23:15,20; 24:22; Eph 5:15; 1Th 5:2 **18:27** Ac 18:12,18; 1Co 3:6 **18:28** Ac 9:22; 17:2-3; 18:5

18:1 The name **Corinth** derives from a small, seedless grape used in cooking that grew in the Mediterranean region. In 146 BC, General Lucius Mummius, the leading Roman commander in the Achaean War, completely destroyed the city. He killed all the men, sold the women and children into slavery, and shipped the city's many great works of art to Rome. Julius Caesar re-founded the city in 44 BC as a Roman colony, populating it with thousands of emancipated slaves and army veterans. From 29 BC onward, Corinth served as the capital of the province Achaia. It was a busy seaport and thriving commercial center.

18:2 Roman emperor **Claudius** expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 49. Roman historian Suetonius writes in his *Life of Claudius* (25.4) that Claudius expelled the Jews because of a disturbance instigated by a certain "Chrestus." Most historians regard "Chrestus" as a misspelling of "Christ." At that time the Roman authorities probably did not distinguish between Judaism and Christianity, hence the expulsion of all Jews.

18:4 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV*.

18:6 Paul's shaking out his clothes was a symbolic act of separation. The Jews' resistance to Paul's message relieved him of any evangelistic responsibility toward them. He would focus on the Gentiles instead.

18:9-10 Luke recounts one of several visionary experiences in Paul's life whereby the Lord provided encouragement to his servant (23:11; 27:23-24). According to Paul's own account (1Co 2:3), he arrived in Corinth in a dejected state, yet the Lord revealed himself and provided assurance of his divine presence.

18:12 An inscription at Delphi, a city in ancient Greece, provides archaeological affirmation that **Gallio** served as **proconsul of Achaia** from AD 51–52. Paul's encounter with him (vv. 12-17) took place during this timeframe, in Corinth.

18:18 At Cenchreae, Paul **shaved his head . . . because of a vow he had taken.** Perhaps Paul had taken a Nazarite vow while in Corinth to consecrate himself to the Lord and his work (Nm 6:1-21). Since God's

blessings in Corinth had come to pass, Paul needed to travel to Jerusalem for a thirty-day period during which he would present his hair as a thanksgiving sacrifice to God.

18:23–19:20 Paul's third major missionary journey is recorded in Acts 18:23–20:28. Paul begins the journey from Antioch. See the note for 13:1–14:28.

TWELVE DISCIPLES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

19 While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples † 2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed? " †

"No," they told him, "we haven't even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." †

3 "Into what then were you baptized? " he asked them.

"Into John's baptism," they replied. †

4 Paul said, "John baptized with a baptism of repentance, † telling the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in Jesus." †

5 When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands on † them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began to speak in other tongues † and to prophesy. † 7 Now there were about twelve men in all.

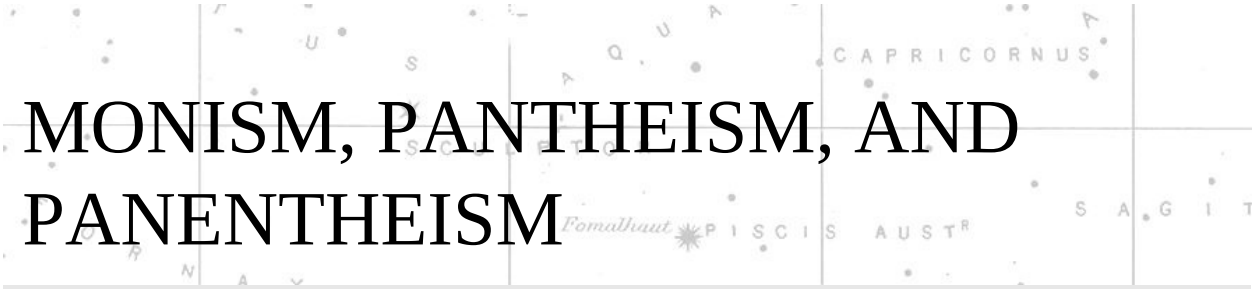
IN THE LECTURE HALL OF TYRANNUS

8 Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly over a period of three months, arguing and persuading them about the kingdom of God. † 9 But when some became hardened and would not believe, slandering the Way in front of the crowd, he withdrew from them, taking the disciples, and conducted discussions every day in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. † 10 This went on for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, † heard the word of the Lord. †

DEMONISM DEFEATED AT EPHESUS

11 God was performing extraordinary miracles by Paul's hands, 12 so that even facecloths or aprons † that had touched his skin were brought to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the evil spirits came out of them. †

13 Now some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists also attempted to pronounce the
name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I command you
by the Jesus that Paul preaches!” † 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish high
priest, were doing this. 15 The evil spirit answered them, “I know Jesus, and I
recognize Paul — but who are you?” 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit
jumped on them, overpowered them all, and prevailed against them, so that they
ran out of that house naked and wounded.



MONISM, PANTHEISM, AND PANENTHEISM

In 1983 actress Shirley MacLaine, a proponent of New Age spirituality, wrote this in her book titled *Out on a Limb*: “The tragedy of the human race was that we had forgotten that we were each Divine. You are everything. Everything you want to know is inside of you. You are the universe” (p. 347). This viewpoint is known as pantheism—the worldview claiming that all or everything (*pan*) is God (*theos*)—and God is everything. They are identical.

PANTHEISM AND MONISM

We should differentiate pantheism from monism (“one-ism”). Certain Hindus hold to monism—as do Zen Buddhists and philosophical and religious schools in other traditions.

For example, certain Hindu scriptures known as *The Upanishads* affirm that the soul (*atman*) is really God (*Brahman*). Importantly, Brahman isn’t some personal Creator, as theistic religions claim. Rather, Brahman is pure consciousness. Just imagine emptying your mind of all content and distinction. Let’s say it’s completely blank—that you make no distinctions between yourself and, for instance, the Empire State Building and that your thinking is without any impressions, moral judgments, emotions, or logical reasoning. That is the featureless, quality-less Brahman. This version of Hinduism (*Advaita Vedanta*) affirms that pure consciousness is the only reality there is; everything else—including a physical world—is an illusion. The Hindu philosopher Shakara, who died in AD 820, held this view.

Let’s imagine that monism is symbolized by a circle with nothing in it—a oneness without differentiation. By contrast, think of a circle with little clearly-defined circles or squares within it—oneness with differentiation. This symbolizes pantheism: differences exist within “God.” This view was held by the Hindu philosopher Ramanuja, who died in AD 1137.

ASSESSING MONISM

How do we begin to assess these viewpoints? Let’s consider monism first. This view is deeply problematic because it tells us to deny what seems so obvious to us—that a world of tables, chairs, trees, and stones exists outside our minds—and to accept what seems utterly contrary to our everyday experience. After all, we each have to deal with traffic jams, grumpy people, and finding a restroom—all experiences that assume a distinct reality outside of our minds. So why deny what seems so undeniable? Why embrace a worldview

that seems so counterintuitive?

Consider these questions, too: Don't monists read and write books? Aren't they trying to persuade other minds to believe what they do? And what gave rise to the illusion in the first place if all reality is undifferentiated oneness? And isn't the illusory belief in differences itself real? What are we to make of the psychotic, whose problem is being out of touch with the real world outside of his mind? Or what about AIDS, pollution, or crime? Surely these aren't just an illusion? It would be irresponsible and immoral not to do anything about them by claiming they don't exist. When pondered critically, monism seems more like an escapism that avoids the world's difficult problems. It just makes better sense to affirm the reality of a world outside the mind since there is no good reason to deny it.

Furthermore, monism must ultimately deny real differences between good and evil: were Adolf Hitler's concentration camps and Joseph Stalin's labor camps just an illusion, and is there no difference between these horrific tyrants and Mother Teresa? Monism also must reject logical thinking, which makes distinctions between logical error or fallacies and sound reasoning. One sixth-century Zen Buddhist poem is very telling: "If you want to get to the plain truth *Be not concerned with right and wrong.* The conflict between right and wrong / Is the sickness of the mind" (*Hsin-hsin Ming* by Seng-ts'an, quoted in *The Way of Zen* by Alan Watts). These considerations expose some of the deep problems of monism.

ASSESSING PANTHEISM

What about pantheism, to which Shirley MacLaine subscribes? While pantheism is right to emphasize real differences that exist, it suffers from the fact that evil really exists in the world. Pantheism, therefore, must acknowledge that evil is somehow part of "God."

But a further problem then emerges: if evil is part of God, why try to change anything about it since we can't truly improve on God, can we? And from a practical point of view, this would lead to fatalism—that there's nothing we ought to do to change things since everything is part of God and we just need to accept this.

PANENTHEISM

Pantheism differs from panentheism ("all in God"), in which the world and God exist in an eternal interdependent relationship. This view is sometimes called "process theology." (Noted process theologians include Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne, and John Cobb.) Some panentheists will compare God's relationship to the world as the soul's relationship to the body. God doesn't exist without the world, and the world doesn't exist without God. Rather than being sovereign over the world, God attempts to influence or direct the world. And unlike the biblical view of God who is faithful and unchanging in his nature, process theology emphasizes an ever-changing, ever-improving god. In panentheism, God does not create a universe out of nothing: the universe is eternal along with God.

Some philosophers of science adopting panentheism (Arthur Peacocke, Ian Barbour, Philip Clayton) have marginally attached themselves to biblical themes and doctrines. Yet they deny the fundamental importance of creation out of nothing. And many thinkers adopting this type of model of God's relationship to the world reject a God who is "sovereign" and who "rules over" creation. Why? Because this model of God can lead to oppressing others and to destroying creation.

ASSESSING PANENTHEISM

Think of the topic this way: if everything is changing—including God, as well as individual human persons—how can a person possess moral responsibility? After all, since "I" am not the same person "I" was twenty or thirty years ago, "I" can't be held responsible for anything "I" did back then.

But this idea of constant flux (much like Buddhism's doctrine of impermanence) is itself flawed. After all, the claim that everything is perpetually changing is itself a permanent, unchangeable doctrine. Also, change presupposes sameness since some thing is moving from one state to another (like a leaf's color changing from green to red in the fall).

Moreover, panentheism not only rejects the biblical doctrine of creation out of nothing (cp. Gn 1:1); it flies in the face of contemporary science, which indicates that matter, energy, space, and time came into existence with a big bang—in striking support of Genesis 1:1. In other words, if the universe began to exist, then God and the world could not be interdependent. Unlike the everlasting God, the universe is not eternal (Ps 102:25-26); rather, it is winding down after having been wound up in a sense, according to the second law of thermodynamics. No, the world is not God's body.

Further, panentheism diminishes God's transcendence (his distinction from the world) at the expense of God's immanence (his nearness to his creation). Panentheism presents God as a needy, dependent entity rather than the self-sufficient, all-powerful God of Scripture (Ps 50:12). The Bible affirms that God is both transcendent and immanent, and he needs nothing outside himself.

Finally, panentheism fails to take seriously a biblical understanding of the triune God, who is inherently relational and self-giving. Because God is relational by nature (as Father, Son, and Spirit—the "divine family"), he creates with relationship in mind. God engages with humans on the stage of history; he suffers with humans and even endures great suffering on the cross. The biblical God is not detached; rather, he gets his hands dirty, faces injustice and evil, and overcomes them by dying naked on the cross in weakness but rising from the dead in power.

PHILOSOPHY AND THE TRINITY

In large part, the history of philosophy has been an attempt to make sense of the relationship between "the one" and "the many." The pre-Socratic philosopher Parmenides argued for one unchanging reality (no plurality). By contrast, another pre-Socratic, Heraclitus, said that you can't step into the same river twice; everything is in flux, always changing. On the side of Parmenides, monism and pantheism express the one without the many—unity at the expense of significant distinction. In panentheism, we have continual flux in the world and in God, and there is nothing fixed and enduring that unites all of these changes—the many without the one.

By contrast, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity affirms both the many and the one—a robust unity and plurality: God is three persons sharing the same nature in one being. In God, we have an explanation for the universe—a coherent unity amidst diversity. This impacts everyday life as well. For example, the Christian can also affirm the place of the community (the body of Christ) and the significance of the individual (e.g., the Christian's spiritual gifts within that body) so that neither swallows up the other. Biblical theism brings together what pantheism, monism, and panentheism cannot.

PAUL COPAN

17 When this became known to everyone who lived in Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks, they became afraid, and the name of the Lord Jesus † was held in high esteem. †
18 And many who had become believers came confessing and disclosing their practices, 19 while many of those who had practiced magic † collected their books and burned them in front of everyone. So they calculated their value and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. 20 In this way the word of the Lord flourished and prevailed. †

THE RIOT IN EPHESUS

21 After these events, Paul resolved by the Spirit † to pass through Macedonia
and Achaia and go to Jerusalem. “After I’ve been there,” he said, “It is necessary
for me to see Rome as well.” † 22 After sending to Macedonia two of those who
assisted him, Timothy and Erastus, † he himself stayed in Asia for a while. †
23 About that time there was a major disturbance about the Way. † 24 For a
person named Demetrius, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Artemis,
provided a great deal of business for the craftsmen. 25 When he had assembled
them, as well as the workers engaged in this type of business, he said: “Men, you
know that our prosperity is derived from this business. 26 You see and hear that
not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this man Paul has persuaded and
misled a considerable number of people by saying that gods made by hand are
not gods. † 27 Not only do we run a risk that our business may be discredited,
but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be despised and her
magnificence come to the verge of ruin — the very one all of Asia and the world
worship.”
28 When they had heard this, they were filled with rage and began to cry out,
“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! ” 29 So the city was filled with confusion,
and they rushed all together into the amphitheater, dragging along Gaius †
and Aristarchus, † Macedonians who were Paul’s traveling companions.
30 Although Paul wanted to go in before the people, the disciples did not let him.
31 Even some of the provincial officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent word
to him, pleading with him not to venture † into the amphitheater. 32 Some were
shouting one thing and some another, † because the assembly was in confusion,
and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 Some Jews in
the crowd gave instructions to Alexander † after they pushed him to the front.
Motioning with his hand, Alexander wanted to make his defense to the people. †
34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for
about two hours: “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians! ”
35 When the city clerk had calmed the crowd down, he said, “People of
Ephesus! What person is there who doesn’t know that the city of the Ephesians
is the temple guardian of the great † Artemis, and of the image that fell from
heaven? 36 Therefore, since these things are undeniable, you must keep calm

and not do anything rash. 37 For you have brought these men here who are not
temple robbers or blasphemers of our † goddess. 38 So if Demetrius and the
craftsmen who are with him have a case against anyone, the courts are in
session, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. †
39 But if you seek anything further, it must be decided in a legal assembly. 40 In
fact, we run a risk of being charged with rioting † for what happened today,
since there is no justification that we can give as a reason for this disturbance."
41 After saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

19:6 languages **19:12** Or *sweat cloths* **19:21** Or *in his spirit* **19:31** Lit *not to give himself* **19:33** Or *thought it was about Alexander* **19:35** Other mss add *goddess* **19:37** Other mss read *your*

19:1 Ac 18:1,24; 1Co 1:12; 3:5-6 **19:2** Ac 8:15-17; 10:44-45 **19:2** Jn 7:39; Ac 8:16; 11:16 **19:3** Ac 18:25 **19:4** Lk 3:3; Ac 13:24 **19:4** Mt 3:11; Jn 1:7,27; Ac 13:24-25 **19:6** Ac 6:6; 8:17 **19:6** Mk 16:17; Ac 2:4; 10:46 **19:8** Ac 1:3; 9:20; 28:23 **19:9** Ac 9:2; 11:26; 14:4; 19:23,30 **19:10** Ac 14:1; 18:4; 19:17; 20:21; 1Co 1:24 **19:10** Ac 19:8,22,26-27; 20:31 **19:11-12** Ac 5:15; 8:13 **19:13** Mt 12:27; Mk 9:38; Lk 11:19 **19:17** Ac 8:16; 19:5,13; 21:13; 1Co 6:11; Col 3:17 **19:17** Ac 5:5,11; 18:19 **19:19** Is 3:3; Ezk 13:18-20 **19:20** Ac 6:6-7; 12:24 **19:21** Ac 16:9; 18:12; 20:16,22; Rm 15:24-25,28 **19:22** Rm 16:23; 2Tm 4:20 **19:22** Ac 13:5; 16:1,23; 19:10; 2Tm 4:20 **19:23** Ac 9:2; 2Co 1:8 **19:26** Dt 4:28; Ps 115:4; Is 44:10-20; Jr 10:3; Ac 17:29; 1Co 8:4; Rv 9:20 **19:29** Rm 16:23; 1Co 1:14 **19:29** Ac 20:4; 27:2; Col 4:10; Phm 24 **19:32** Ac 21:34 **19:32-33** Ac 12:17; 21:34 **19:37-38** Ac 13:7; Rm 2:22 **19:40** Mt 26:5; 27:24; Ac 17:5

19:1 Ephesus was a free city, one of two types of cities found in the Roman Empire. Inhabitants of free cities employed a democratic, or Greek system, of government (i.e., assembly) that allowed them to follow local traditions. They were also allowed to mint their own coins. Other examples include Smyrna, Tarsus, and Thessalonica. (See the note for 21:7). Ephesus was a center for magical practices in the Mediterranean world.

19:9 The **lecture hall of Tyrannus** was either a meeting hall or school. Tyrannus was either the owner or a teacher in the facility.

19:12-14 Some itinerant Jewish exorcists tried to use Jesus's name to remove **evil spirits.** Apparently they regarded his name as a magical incantation that would provide power, having seen the extraordinary miracles performed by Paul.

19:27 Artemis, whose Roman name was Diana, was the Greek goddess of fertility and childbirth. She was esteemed as the "mother goddess" believed to provide reproductive power to her worshipers. She was so significant that the calendar month Artemision was named after her. Her **temple** in Ephesus was considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. It also served as a banking center for Asia Minor.

PAUL IN MACEDONIA

20 After the uproar was over, Paul sent for the disciples, encouraged them,
and after saying farewell, departed to go to Macedonia. † 2 And when
he had passed through those areas and offered them many words of
encouragement, he came to Greece 3 and stayed three months. The Jews plotted

against him when he was about to set sail for Syria, and so he decided to go back through Macedonia. † 4 He was accompanied † by Sopater son of Pyrrhus † from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy, † and Tychicus † and Trophimus † from the province of Asia. 5 These men went on ahead and waited for us in Troas, † 6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread. † In five days we reached them at Troas, where we spent seven days.

EUTYCHUS REVIVED AT TROAS

7 On the first day of the week, we † assembled to break bread. † Paul spoke to them, and since he was about to depart the next day, he kept on talking until midnight. 8 There were many lamps in the room upstairs where we were assembled, 9 and a young man named Eutychus was sitting on a window sill and sank into a deep sleep as Paul kept on talking. When he was overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead. 10 But Paul went down, bent over him, embraced him, and said, “Don’t be alarmed, because he’s alive.” † 11 After going upstairs, breaking the bread, and eating, Paul talked a long time until dawn. Then he left. 12 They brought the boy home alive and were greatly comforted.

FROM TROAS TO MILETUS

13 We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul on board, because these were his instructions, since he himself was going by land. 14 When he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went on to Mitylene. 15 Sailing from there, the next day we arrived off Chios. The following day we crossed over to Samos, and † the day after, we came to Miletus. † 16 For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, because he was hurrying to be in Jerusalem, if possible, for the day of Pentecost. †

FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE EPHESIAN ELDERS

17 Now from Miletus, he sent to Ephesus and summoned the elders of the church. 18 When they came to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, † 19 serving the Lord

with all humility, with tears, and during the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews. † 20 You know that I did not avoid proclaiming to you anything that was profitable or from teaching you publicly and from house to house. 21 I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God † and faith in our Lord Jesus. †

22 "And now I am on my way to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit, † not knowing what I will encounter there, † 23 except that in every town the Holy Spirit warns me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me. † 24 But I consider my life of no value to myself; my purpose is to finish my course † and the ministry † I received from the Lord Jesus, † to testify to the gospel of God's grace.

25 "And now I know that none of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will ever see me again. 26 Therefore I declare to you this day that I am innocent † of the blood of all of you, † 27 because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God. † 28 Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock † of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, † to shepherd the church of God, † which he purchased with his own blood. † 29 I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Men will rise up even from your own number and distort the truth to lure the disciples into following them. † 31 Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for three years I never stopped warning each one of you with tears. †

32 "And now † I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, † which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance † among all who are sanctified. 33 I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. † 34 You yourselves know that I worked with my own hands to support myself and those who are with me. † 35 In every way I've shown you that it is necessary to help the weak by laboring like this and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, because he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them. † 37 There were many tears shed by everyone. They embraced Paul and kissed him,

38 grieving most of all over his statement that they would never see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship. †

20:4 Other mss add *to Asia* **20:4** Other mss omit *son of Pyrrhus* **20:7** Other mss read *the disciples* **20:15** Other mss add *after staying at Trogyllium* **20:22** Or *in my spirit* **20:24** Other mss add *with joy* **20:26** Lit *clean* **20:28** Some mss read *church of the Lord* ; other mss read *church of the Lord and God* **20:32** Other mss add *brothers and sisters*

20:1 Ac 11:26; 16:9; 19:21; 2Co 2:12-13 **20:3** Ac 9:23; 20:19; 23:12; 25:3; 2Co 11:26 **20:4** Ac 14:6; 16:1; 17:1; 19:29 **20:4** Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Tm 4:12; Ti 3:12 **20:4** Ac 21:29; 2Tm 4:20 **20:5** Ac 16:8,10; 20:6-8,13-15 **20:6** Ex 12:14-15; 23:15 **20:7** Ac 2:42; 1Co 10:16 **20:10** 1Kg 17:21; 2Kg 4:34; Mt 9:23-24; Mk 5:39 **20:15** Ac 20:17; 2Tm 4:20 **20:16** Ac 2:1; 18:19; 19:21; 1Co 16:8 **20:18** Ac 18:19; 19:1,10 **20:19-20** Ac 20:3,27 **20:21** Mk 1:15; Ac 2:38; 18:5 **20:21** Ac 24:24; 26:18; Eph 1:15; Col 2:5; Phm 5 **20:22** Ac 17:16; 20:16 **20:23** Ac 9:16; 21:4,11; 1Th 3:3 **20:24** Ac 1:17; 21:13; 2Co 4:1; 2Tm 4:7 **20:24** Gl 1:1; Ti 1:3 **20:25-26** Ac 18:6; 20:38; 28:31 **20:27** Lk 7:30; Ac 20:20; Eph 1:11 **20:28** Lk 12:32; Jn 10:16; 1Co 9:7; 1Pt 5:2-3 **20:28** Php 1:1; 1Tm 3:2; Ti 1:7; 1Pt 2:25 **20:28** Eph 1:7,14; Heb 9:12; 1Pt 1:19; Rv 5:9 **20:30** Ac 11:26; 1Tm 1:20; 1Jn 2:19 **20:31** Ac 19:10; 20:19 **20:32** Ac 14:23; Heb 13:9 **20:32** Ac 26:18; Eph 1:14; Col 1:12; 3:24; Heb 9:15; 1Pt 1:4 **20:33** 1Sm 12:3; 1Co 9:12; 2Co 7:2; 11:9; 12:17 **20:34** Ac 18:3; 19:22 **20:36** Lk 22:41; Ac 7:60; 21:5 **20:37-38** Ac 15:3; 20:25

20:4 The people mentioned in this verse knew Paul from his missionary journeys among the Gentiles.

20:7 The first day of the week indicates that Christians had already begun meeting on Sunday for worship, rather than on the Sabbath day (Saturday).

20:16 The day of Pentecost likely refers to the twenty-ninth of May in AD 57.

20:23 Paul firmly believes that **the Holy Spirit** provides guidance in his life (13:2,4,9; 16:6-7; 19:21). While he does not know the precise details, the Spirit revealed that he will be imprisoned and afflicted.

20:27 See "The Worship and Service of God," *p. 810.*

20:28 The role of **overseers** entailed serving as guardians and protectors of God's people. Paul tells the overseers that the Holy Spirit played an important role in their appointment (see also 21:1).

20:35 See "Personal Finances," *p. 758.*

WARNINGS ON THE JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

21 After † we tore ourselves away from them, we set sail straight for Cos, the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 Finding a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we boarded and set sail. 3 After we sighted Cyprus, passing to the south of it, † we sailed on to Syria and arrived at Tyre, since the ship was to unload its cargo there. 4 We sought out the disciples and stayed there seven days. Through the Spirit they told Paul not to go to Jerusalem. † 5 When our time had come to an end, we left to continue our journey, while all of them, with their wives and children, accompanied us out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach to pray, 6 we said farewell to one another and boarded the ship, and they returned home.

7 When we completed our voyage † from Tyre, we reached Ptolemais, where
we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. † 8 The next
day we left and came to Caesarea, where we entered the house of Philip † the
evangelist, † who was one of the Seven, and stayed with him. 9 This man had
four virgin daughters who prophesied. †
10 After we had been there for several days, a prophet named Agabus came
down from Judea. 11 He came to us, took Paul's belt, tied his own feet and
hands, and said, "This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews in
Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him over to the
Gentiles.' " † 12 When we heard this, both we and the local people pleaded with
him not to go up to Jerusalem.
13 Then Paul replied, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For
I am ready not only to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the
Lord Jesus." †
14 Since he would not be persuaded, we said no more except, "The Lord's will
be done." †

CONFLICT OVER THE GENTILE MISSION

15 After this we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. 16 Some of the disciples
from Caesarea also went with us and brought us to Mnason of Cyprus, an early
disciple, with whom we were to stay. †
17 When we reached Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters welcomed us warmly. †
18 The following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were
present. † 19 After greeting them, he reported in detail what God had done
among the Gentiles through his ministry. †
20 When they heard it, they glorified God and said, "You see, brother, how
many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous †
for the law. 21 But they have been informed about you — that you are teaching
all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to abandon Moses, telling them not to
circumcise their children or to live according to our customs. † 22 So what is to
be done? † They will certainly hear that you've come. 23 Therefore do what we
tell you: We have four men who have made a vow. 24 Take these men, purify

yourself along with them, and pay for them to get their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that what they were told about you amounts to nothing, but that you yourself are also careful about observing the law. † 25 With regard to the Gentiles who have believed, we have written a letter containing our decision that † they should keep themselves from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality."

THE RIOT IN THE TEMPLE

26 So the next day, Paul took the men, having purified himself along with them, and entered the temple, announcing the completion of the purification days when the offering would be made for each of them. † 27 When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd, and seized him, † 28 shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people, our law, and this place. What's more, he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." † 29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. †

30 The whole city was stirred up, and the people rushed together. They seized Paul, dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. †

31 As they were trying to kill him, word went up to the commander of the regiment that all Jerusalem was in chaos. 32 Taking along soldiers and centurions, he immediately ran down to them. Seeing the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the commander approached, took him into custody, and ordered him to be bound with two chains. † He asked who he was and what he had done. 34 Some in the crowd were shouting one thing and some another. Since he was not able to get reliable information because of the uproar, he ordered him to be taken into the barracks. † 35 When Paul got to the steps, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, 36 for the mass of people followed, yelling, "Get rid of him! " †

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE JERUSALEM MOB

37 As he was about to be brought into the barracks, Paul said to the commander, "Am I allowed to say something to you? "

He replied, “You know how to speak Greek? 38 Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt some time ago and led four thousand men of the Assassins into the wilderness? ” †

39 Paul said, “I am a Jewish man from Tarsus of Cilicia, † a citizen of an important city. Now I ask you, let me speak to the people.”

40 After he had given permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned with his hand to the people. When there was a great hush, he addressed them in Aramaic: † †

21:3 Lit *leaving it on the left* **21:7** Or *As we continued our voyage* **21:22** Other mss add *A multitude has to come together, since* **21:25** Other mss add *they should observe no such thing, except that* **21:40** Or *Hebrew*
21:1 Ac 16:10-11 **21:4** Ac 11:26; 20:23; 21:11 **21:7** Jn 21:23; Ac 12:20 **21:8** Ac 6:5; 8:5 **21:8** Eph 4:11; 2Tm 4:5 **21:9** Lk 2:36; Ac 2:7; 13:1; 1Co 11:5 **21:11** 1Kg 22:11; Jr 13:1-11; Mt 20:19; Ac 20:23; 21:33 **21:13** Ac 5:41; 9:16; 20:24 **21:14** Mt 6:10; Lk 22:42 **21:16** Ac 8:40; 21:3-4 **21:17** Ac 15:4; 21:7 **21:18** Ac 11:30; 12:17; 15:13 **21:19** Ac 1:17; 14:27; Rm 15:18-19 **21:20** Ac 22:3; Rm 10:12; Gl 1:14 **21:21** Ac 6:14; 15:19-20; 21:28; 1Co 7:18 **21:24** Jn 11:55; Ac 18:18; 21:26; 24:18 **21:26** Nm 6:13; Ac 24:18 **21:27** Ac 24:18; 26:21 **21:28** Mt 24:15; Ac 24:6 **21:29** Ac 18:19; 20:4 **21:30** 2Kg 11:15; Ac 16:19; 26:21 **21:33** Ac 12:6; 20:23; 21:11; Eph 6:20; 2Tm 1:16; 2:9 **21:34** Ac 19:32; 23:10 **21:36** Lk 23:18; Jn 19:15; Ac 22:22 **21:38** Mt 24:26; Ac 5:36 **21:39** Ac 9:11; 22:3 **21:40** Jn 5:2; Ac 12:17

21:7 Ptolemais was a Roman colony—a city colonized by Romans (e.g., veterans, freed slaves) that mirrored life in Rome in matters such as government. Many inhabitants of such a colony possessed Roman citizenship. Other Roman colonies included Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, Iconium, Troas, Philippi, and Corinth. See the note for Acts 19:1.

21:10-11 The prophet **Agabus** acts out what will happen to Paul. His behavior is similar to that of certain OT prophets (e.g., I1Kg 11:29-39; Is 20:2-4; Jr 27:1-22).

21:21-25 Rumors had been circulating that Paul taught Jews living among the Gentiles to disregard the law of **Moses.** To silence the rumors and demonstrate that Paul is not dismissive toward the law, the elders proposed that he **purify** himself (see the note on v. 26) and provide financial assistance to **four men** who had taken a Nazarite vow (Nm 6:2-21). People taking such a vow dedicated themselves to the Lord for a period (e.g., one month), during which time they refrained from drinking wine or cutting their hair. When the vow came to an end, they shaved their heads and offered the hair and other items (e.g., a lamb, ram, bread) to the Lord at the temple in Jerusalem. The many offerings required of a worshiper could be rather expensive, which is why the elders propose that Paul pay for the four men’s offerings. Nevertheless, the elders did not request that Paul take a Nazarite vow. They also did not request that he compromise the gospel—to behave in a manner that suggests keeping the law is necessary for salvation—a position that the Jerusalem Council and the elders rejected. They asked him to act in a manner that demonstrates respect for the law and Jewish tradition for the purpose of unity.

21:26 For **Paul** and the four **men**, the seven-day **purification** ritual likely involved immersion in one of the large pools in Jerusalem—either the Pool of Siloam or the Pool of Bethsaida. The act symbolized a rededication of oneself to God and personal repentance.

21:27-29 Paul is **seized** in **the temple** when **Jews from the province of Asia** accuse him of bringing **Trophimus the Ephesian** (a Gentile) into the temple, thus defiling it. Warning signs in both Latin and Greek were inscribed on a stone wall separating the court of the Gentiles from the inner courts of the temple. The inscriptions declared that Gentiles would be executed if they entered further.

21:37-38 The Roman **commander**, Claudius Lysias, was surprised that Paul spoke **Greek.** He also mistook Paul for an **Egyptian** false prophet and revolutionary. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.169–72; *J.W.* 2.261–63), when Felix was procurator of Judea (AD 52–59), a certain Egyptian led revolutionaries through the desert to the Mount of Olives. He promised that Jerusalem's walls would fall, and he would lead them into the city. The Romans put down the effort and killed many, but the Egyptian escaped. Claudius appears to have confused Paul with the revolutionary.

21:39 In order to correct the case of mistaken identity, Paul announced that he is a Jew and **a citizen** of **Tarsus**—a respected and important city in ancient times.

22 "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense before you." 2 When
they heard that he was addressing them in Aramaic, † they became
even quieter. † 3 He † continued, "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia but
brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel † according to the law
of our ancestors. I was zealous for God, just as all of you are today. † 4 I
persecuted this Way † to the death, arresting and putting both men and women
in jail, † 5 as both the high priest and the whole council of elders can testify
about me. After I received letters from them to the brothers, I traveled to
Damascus to arrest those who were there and bring them to Jerusalem to be
punished. †

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

6 "As † I was traveling and approaching Damascus, about noon an intense light
from heaven suddenly flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a
voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? '
8 "I answered, 'Who are you, Lord? '
"He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, the one you are persecuting.' 9 Now
those who were with me saw the light, † but they did not hear the voice of the
one who was speaking to me. †
10 "I said, 'What should I do, Lord? '
"The Lord told me, 'Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told
everything that you have been assigned to do.'
11 "Since I couldn't see because of the brightness of the light, † I was led by the
hand by those who were with me, and went into Damascus. † 12 Someone
named Ananias, a devout man according to the law, who had a good reputation
with all the Jews living there, † 13 came and stood by me and said, 'Brother

Saul, regain your sight.’ And in that very hour I looked up and saw him. 14 And
he said, ‘The God of our ancestors has appointed † you to know his will, to
see † the Righteous One, † and to hear the words from his mouth, 15 since you
will be a witness for him to all people of what you have seen and heard. †
16 And now, why are you delaying? Get up and be baptized, and wash away
your sins, † calling on his name.’ †
17 “After I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a
trance † 18 and saw him telling me, ‘Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly,
because they will not accept your testimony about me.’
19 “But I said, ‘Lord, they know that in synagogue after synagogue I had those
who believed in you imprisoned and beaten. † 20 And when the blood of your
witness Stephen was being shed, I stood there giving approval † and guarding
the clothes of those who killed him.’ †
21 “He said to me, ‘Go, because I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’ ” †

PAUL’S ROMAN PROTECTION

22 They listened to him up to this point. Then they raised their voices, shouting,
“Wipe this man off the face of the earth! He should not be allowed to live! ” †
23 As they were yelling and flinging aside their garments and throwing dust into
the air, † 24 the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks,
directing that he be interrogated with the scourge to discover the reason they
were shouting against him like this. 25 As they stretched him out for the lash,
Paul said to the centurion standing by, “Is it legal for you to scourge a man who
is a Roman citizen and is uncondemned? ” †
26 When the centurion heard this, he went and reported to the commander,
saying, “What are you going to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.”
27 The commander came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen? ”
“Yes,” he said.
28 The commander replied, “I bought this citizenship for a large amount of
money.”
“But I was born a citizen,” Paul said.
29 So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately.
The commander too was alarmed when he realized Paul was a Roman citizen

and he had bound him. †

PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

30 The next day, since he wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him † and instructed the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to convene. † He brought Paul down and placed him before them.

22:2 Or *Hebrew* **22:9** Other mss add *and were afraid* **22:11** Lit *the glory of that light* **22:20** Other mss add *of his murder* **22:30** Other mss add *from his chains*

22:1-2 Ac 7:2; 21:40 **22:3-16** Ac 9:1-22; 26:9-18 **22:3** Dt 33:3; Ac 5:34; 9:11; 21:39; 2Co 11:22; Php 3:5 **22:3** Ac 26:5; Rm 10:2; Php 3:6 **22:4** Ac 9:2; 24:14,22 **22:4** Ac 8:3; 22:19-20; 26:10 **22:5** Lk 22:66; Ac 13:26; 1Tm 4:14 **22:6-11** Ac 9:3-8; 26:12-18 **22:9** Dn 10:7; Ac 9:7; 26:13 **22:10-11** Ac 9:8; 16:30 **22:12** Ac 9:10,17; 10:22 **22:14** Ac 3:13; 9:15; 26:16 **22:14** 1Co 9:1; 15:8 **22:14** Ac 3:14; 7:52 **22:15** Ac 23:11; 26:16 **22:16** Ac 2:38; 1Co 6:11; Heb 10:22 **22:16** Ac 9:14; Rm 10:13 **22:17** Ac 9:26; 10:10 **22:19** Mt 10:17; Ac 8:3; 22:4 **22:20** Ac 7:58; 8:1; Rm 1:32 **22:21** Ac 9:15; 13:46 **22:22** Ac 21:36; 25:24 **22:23** 2Sm 16:13; Ac 7:58 **22:24-25** Ac 16:37; 21:34; 22:29 **22:29** Ac 16:38; 21:33 **22:30** Mt 5:22; Ac 23:3-8

22:3 At some point—it is impossible to know precisely when—Paul moved from **Tarsus** to Jerusalem and studied under the famed rabbi, **Gamaliel** (see 5:34-39). Under Gamaliel, Paul received an excellent education in the Pharisaic tradition **according to the law of** their **ancestors.**

22:25 Roman citizens held a privileged status not possessed by most inhabitants of the empire. Citizenship ensured the right to a fair trial, exemption from specific forms of punishment like scourging or crucifixion, and the right to have one's case heard before a higher court (e.g., the emperor or his representative). Most likely Paul received his citizenship at birth due to a noble deed performed by one of his ancestors. See also "Church and State," *p. 1374.*

22:28 While both men are Roman citizens, Paul is technically the Roman commander's social superior due to the fact that he was **born a citizen** while the commander bought his **citizenship for a large amount of money** (i.e., he bribed a Roman official). The commander may have hoped that Paul was a social inferior, which would have resulted in a lighter punishment should Paul have sought legal compensation. It is likely that Claudius, the commander, purchased his citizenship during the reign of the Roman emperor Claudius (AD 41–54) since people obtaining citizenship received the *nomen* (middle name) of the emperor.

23 Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience † to this day." 2 The high priest Ananias ordered those who were standing next to him to strike him on the mouth. † 3 Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! You are sitting there judging me according to the law, and yet in violation of the law are you ordering me to be struck? " †

4 Those standing nearby said, "Do you dare revile God's high priest? "

5 "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest," replied Paul. "For it is written, **You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.**" † † 6 When Paul realized that one part of them were Sadducees and the other part were Pharisees,

he cried out in the Sanhedrin, “Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. † I am being judged because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead! ” †
7 When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8 For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, † and neither angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees affirm them all.
9 The shouting grew loud, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees’ † party got up and argued vehemently: “We find nothing evil in this man. † What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him? ” † †
10 When the dispute became violent, the commander feared that Paul might be torn apart by them and ordered the troops to go down, take him away from them, and bring him into the barracks. † 11 The following night, the Lord stood by him and said, “Have courage! For as you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so it is necessary for you to testify in Rome.” †

THE PLOT AGAINST PAUL

12 When it was morning, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. † 13 There were more than forty who had formed this plot. 14 These men went to the chief priests and elders and said, “We have bound ourselves under a solemn curse that we won’t eat anything until we have killed Paul. 15 So now you, along with the Sanhedrin, make a request to the commander that he bring him down to you † as if you were going to investigate his case more thoroughly. But, before he gets near, we are ready to kill him.” †
16 But the son of Paul’s sister, hearing about their ambush, came and entered the barracks and reported it to Paul. 17 Paul called one of the centurions and said, “Take this young man to the commander, because he has something to report to him.”
18 So he took him, brought him to the commander, and said, “The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, because he has something to tell you.”
19 The commander took him by the hand, led him aside, and inquired privately, “What is it you have to report to me? ”

20 “The Jews,” he said, “have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the
Sanhedrin tomorrow, as though they are going to hold a somewhat more careful
inquiry about him. 21 Don’t let them persuade you, because there are more than
forty of them lying in ambush — men who have bound themselves under a curse
not to eat or drink until they have killed him. Now they are ready, waiting for
your consent.” †
22 So the commander dismissed the young man and instructed him, “Don’t tell
anyone that you have informed me about this.”

TO CAESAREA BY NIGHT

23 He summoned two of his centurions and said, “Get two hundred soldiers
ready with seventy cavalry and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine
tonight. † † 24 Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to
Felix the governor.”
25 He wrote the following letter: †
26 Claudius Lysias, To the most excellent governor Felix:
Greetings. †
27 When this man had been seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by
them, I arrived with my troops and rescued him because I learned that he is a
Roman citizen. † 28 Wanting to know the charge they were accusing him of, I
brought him down before their Sanhedrin. 29 I found out that the accusations
were concerning questions of their law, † and that there was no charge that
merited death or imprisonment. † 30 When I was informed that there was a plot
against the man, † † I sent him to you right away. I also ordered his accusers †
to state their case against him in your presence. †
31 So the soldiers took Paul during the night and brought him to Antipatris as
they were ordered. 32 The next day, they returned to the barracks, allowing the
cavalry to go on with him. 33 When these men entered Caesarea and delivered
the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. † 34 After he †
read it, he asked what province he was from. When he learned he was from Cilicia, †
35 he said, “I will give you a hearing whenever your accusers also get here.” He
ordered that he be kept under guard in Herod’s palace. † †

23:9 Other mss add *Let us not fight God.* **23:15** Other mss add *tomorrow* **23:23** Lit *at the third hour tonight*

23:25 Or *He wrote a letter to this effect:* **23:30** Other mss add *by the Jews* **23:30** Other mss add *Farewell* **23:34** Other mss read *the governor* **23:35** Or *headquarters*
23:1 Ac 24:16; 1Co 4:4; 1Tm 3:9; 2Tm 1:5; Heb 13:18; 1Pt 3:16 **23:2** 1Kg 22:24; Jn 18:22; Ac 24:1 **23:3** Lv 19:15; Dt 25:1-2; Mt 23:27; Jn 7:51 **23:5** Ex 22:28 **23:5** Ex 22:28; Ac 24:17 **23:6** Ac 26:5; Php 3:5 **23:6** Ac 24:15,21; 26:6-8; 28:20 **23:8** Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lk 20:27 **23:9** Mk 2:16; Lk 5:30 **23:9** Ac 23:29; 25:25; 26:31 **23:9** Jn 12:29; Ac 22:7,17-18 **23:10** Ac 21:34; 23:16,32 **23:11** Ac 18:9; 19:21; 27:23 **23:12** Ac 23:14,21,30; 25:3 **23:15** Ac 22:30; 23:1 **23:21** Lk 11:54; Ac 23:12,14 **23:23** Ac 8:40; 23:33 **23:26** Lk 1:3; Ac 15:23; 24:3; 26:25 **23:27** Ac 21:32-33; 22:25-29 **23:29** Ac 18:15; 25:19 **23:29** Ac 25:25; 26:31 **23:30** Ac 9:24; 23:12,20 **23:30** Ac 24:19; 25:16 **23:33** Ac 8:40; 23:23-24,26 **23:34** Ac 6:9; 21:39; 25:1 **23:35** Mt 27:27; Ac 24:27; 25:16

23:1 The Sanhedrin was the Jewish Supreme Court. Though Pharisees were included in this body, the Sadducees occupied the majority of seats. See also note on Ac 4:5-6.

23:6-8 Paul, trained in the Pharisaic tradition, sought to gain support from at least some members of the Sanhedrin by publicly identifying himself as a **Pharisee** and appealing to their belief in **the resurrection.** The Pharisees affirmed this teaching, while the **Sadducees** rejected it.

23:11 The Lord revealed himself to Paul in a vision to encourage him. He affirmed that Paul would **testify** about him **in Rome**, as **in Jerusalem.**

23:23-24 Taking great caution to keep Paul the Roman citizen safe, Claudius commissioned a large contingent of **soldiers**, cavalrymen, and spearmen (470 in total) to transport Paul from Jerusalem **to Caesarea** at night. Paul will be taken to **Felix the governor**, who served from AD 52–59. Prior to serving in that role, Felix had been a slave of Antonia, the mother of the Roman emperor, Claudius.

23:31-32 Paul and his Roman guard traveled about thirty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem to **Antipatris** and spent the night. Antipatris was named after the father of Herod the Great, Antipater. Paul and his guard completed the thirty-one mile journey to Caesarea the following day.

23:35 Felix imprisoned Paul in the **palace** built by **Herod** the Great sometime between 22–10 BC. It was located by the sea and included rooms in which prisoners were kept.

THE ACCUSATION AGAINST PAUL

24 Five days later Ananias † the high priest came down with some elders
and a lawyer named Tertullus. These men presented their case against
Paul to the governor. † 2 When Paul was called in, Tertullus began to accuse
him and said: “We enjoy great peace because of you, and reforms are taking
place for the benefit of this nation because of your foresight. 3 We acknowledge
this in every way and everywhere, most excellent † Felix, with utmost gratitude.
4 But, so that I will not burden you any further, I request that you would be kind
enough to give us a brief hearing. 5 For we have found this man to be a
plague, † an agitator † among all the Jews throughout the Roman world, and a
ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. † 6 He even tried to desecrate the
temple, and so we apprehended him. † By examining him yourself you will be

able to discern the truth about these charges we are bringing against him.” 9 The Jews also joined in the attack, alleging that these things were true.

PAUL’S DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX

10 When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “Because I know you have been a judge of this nation for many years, I am glad to offer my defense in what concerns me. † 11 You can verify for yourself that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem. † 12 They didn’t find me arguing with anyone or causing a disturbance among the crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or anywhere in the city. † 13 Neither can they prove the charges they are now making against me. 14 But I admit this to you: I worship the God of my ancestors according to the Way, † which they call a sect, believing everything that is in accordance with the law and written in the prophets. † 15 I have a hope in God, which these men themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection, † † both of the righteous and the unrighteous. † 16 I always strive to have a clear conscience † toward God and men. 17 After many years, I came to bring charitable gifts and offerings to my people. † 18 While I was doing this, some Jews from Asia found me ritually purified in the temple, without a crowd and without any uproar. † 19 It is they who ought to be here before you to bring charges, if they have anything against me. 20 Or let these men here state what wrongdoing they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin, 21 other than this one statement I shouted while standing among them, ‘Today I am on trial before you concerning the resurrection of the dead.’ ”

THE VERDICT POSTPONED

22 Since Felix was well informed about the Way, † he adjourned the hearing, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.” 23 He ordered that the centurion keep Paul under guard, though he could have some freedom, and that he should not prevent any of his friends from meeting † his needs. †

24 Several days later, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and listened to him on the subject of faith in Christ Jesus.

25 Now as he spoke about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, † Felix became afraid and replied, “Leave for now, but when I have an opportunity I’ll call for you.” 26 At the same time he was also hoping that Paul would offer him money. † So he sent for him quite often and conversed with him.

27 After two years had passed, Porcius Festus † succeeded Felix, and because Felix wanted to do the Jews a favor, † he left Paul in prison. †

24:6 Some mss include vv. 6b-8a: *and wanted to judge him according to our law.* 7*But Lysias the commander came and took him from our hands with great force,* 8*commanding his accusers to come to you.* **24:15** Other mss add *of the dead* **24:23** Other mss add *or visiting* **24:26** Other mss add *so that he might release him*

24:1 Ac 23:2 **24:1** Ac 21:27; 23:2,24,30 **24:3** Lk 1:3; Ac 23:26; 26:25 **24:5** Ac 16:20; 17:6 **24:5** Ac 21:28; 26:5; 28:22 **24:5** Mt 2:23; 26:71; Mk 1:24; 10:47; 16:6; Lk 18:37; 24:19; Jn 19:19; Ac 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 22:8 **24:9-10** Ac 23:24; 1Th 2:16 **24:11** Ac 21:27; 24:1 **24:12** Ac 25:8; 28:17 **24:14** Ac 9:2; 22:4; 24:22 **24:14** Ac 3:13; 26:22; 28:23 **24:15** Ac 23:6; 28:20 **24:15** Dn 12:2; Jn 5:28-29 **24:16** Ac 23:1; 1Co 4:4; 1Tm 3:9; 2Tm 1:5; Heb 13:18; 1Pt 3:16 **24:17** Ac 11:29; Rm 15:25-28; 1Co 16:1-3; 2Co 8:1-4; Gl 2:10 **24:18** Ac 21:26-27; 26:21 **24:22** Ac 9:2; 22:4; 24:14 **24:23** Ac 23:35; 27:3; 28:16 **24:25** Gl 5:23; Ti 2:12; 2Pt 1:6 **24:27** Ac 25:1,4,9; 26:24 **24:27** Ac 12:3; 25:9 **24:27** Ac 23:35; 25:14

24:1 The high priest, **Ananias**, along with Jewish **elders** and Tertullus, travelled from Jerusalem to Caesarea to make their case against Paul. **Tertullus** was a professional lawyer hired by the Jews. Paul would defend himself.

24:2-3 Like many professional attorneys of his day, **Tertullus** began his presentation by flattering the judge. In truth, **Felix** was a ruthless leader who hunted down and oppressed those who opposed him.

24:5 The Christian movement is here described as **the sect of the Nazarenes**, which draws on Jesus’s connection to Nazareth.

24:15 Several Jewish writings affirmed belief in a general **resurrection**, in which all people will be resurrected for the purpose of judgment (cp. Dn 12:2; Ezra 7:32-35; Jn 5:28-29).

24:22 Felix was familiar with Christianity, though Luke does not indicate how he became knowledgeable of **the Way**. Regardless, it is not surprising, since thousands had become Christians in Jerusalem, Caesarea, and throughout Palestine. Felix was married to a Jewish woman named Drusilla (v. 24).

24:25 Paul’s comments about **righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come** frightened **Felix**, for his personal life was marked by great immorality. Approximately five years prior to Paul’s trial, Felix, by means of a magician, persuaded Drusilla, the fourteen-year-old wife of Azizus, king of Emesa in Syria, to leave her husband to become his third wife. Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (see 12:19-23).

24:26 Felix hoped for a bribe from Paul in exchange for a more speedy and favorable verdict.

24:27 Felix left Paul in prison for **two years.** Due to poor leadership, Felix was replaced in AD 59 by **Porcius Festus.** The latter displayed good leadership ability and died in AD 62.

APPEAL TO CAESAR

25 Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went up to
Jerusalem from Caesarea. † 2 The chief priests and the leaders of the
Jews presented their case against Paul to him; and they appealed, † 3 asking for
a favor against Paul, that Festus summon him to Jerusalem. They were, in fact,
preparing an ambush along the road to kill him. 4 Festus, however, answered
that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was about to go there
shortly. † 5 "Therefore," he said, "let those of you who have authority go down
with me and accuse him, if he has done anything wrong."
6 When he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down
to Caesarea. The next day, seated at the tribunal, he commanded Paul to be
brought in. † 7 When he arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem
stood around him and brought many serious charges that they were not able to
prove. † 8 Then Paul made his defense: "Neither against the Jewish law, † nor
against the temple, nor against Caesar have I sinned in any way."
9 But Festus, wanting to do the Jews a favor, † replied to Paul, "Are you willing
to go up to Jerusalem to be tried before me there on these charges? "
10 Paul replied: "I am standing at Caesar's tribunal, where I ought to be tried. I
have done no wrong to the Jews, as even you yourself know very well. 11 If then
I did anything wrong and am deserving of death, I am not trying to escape death;
but if there is nothing to what these men accuse me of, no one can give me up to
them. I appeal to Caesar! " †
12 Then after Festus conferred with his council, he replied, "You have appealed
to Caesar; to Caesar you will go."

KING AGRIPPA AND BERNICE VISIT FESTUS

13 Several days later, King Agrippa and Bernice arrived in Caesarea and paid a
courtesy call on Festus. 14 Since they were staying there several days, Festus
presented Paul's case to the king, saying, "There's a man who was left as a
prisoner by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of
the Jews presented their case and asked that he be condemned. † 16 I answered
them that it is not the Roman custom to give someone up † before the accused
faces the accusers and has an opportunity for a defense against the charges. †

17 So when they had assembled here, I did not delay. The next day I took my seat at the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought in. 18 The accusers stood up but brought no charge against him of the evils I was expecting. 19 Instead they had some disagreements † with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, a dead man Paul claimed to be alive. 20 Since I was at a loss in a dispute over such things, I asked him if he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding these matters. 21 But when Paul appealed to be held for trial by the Emperor, † I ordered him to be kept in custody until I could send him to Caesar."

22 Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow you will hear him," he replied. †

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

23 So the next day, Agrippa and Bernice † came with great pomp and entered the auditorium with the military commanders and prominent men of the city. When Festus gave the command, Paul was brought in. 24 Then Festus said: "King Agrippa and all men present with us, you see this man. The whole Jewish community has appealed to me concerning him, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he should not live any longer. † 25 I found that he had not done anything deserving of death, but when he himself appealed to the Emperor, I decided to send him. † 26 I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore, I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after this examination is over, I may have something to write. 27 For it seems unreasonable to me to send a prisoner without indicating the charges against him."

25:16 Other mss add *to destruction* **25:21** Lit *his majesty*, also in v. 25
25:1 Ac 8:40; 23:34 **25:2** Ac 24:1; 25:15 **25:3-4** Ac 9:24; 24:23 **25:6** Mt 27:19; Ac 25:10,17 **25:7** Mk 15:3; Lk 23:2,10; Ac 24:5,13 **25:8** Ac 6:13; 24:12; 28:17 **25:9** Ac 24:27; 25:20 **25:11** Ac 25:21,25; 26:32; 28:19 **25:14-15** Ac 24:27; 25:2 **25:16** Ac 23:30; 24:4-5 **25:19** Ac 18:15; 23:29 **25:20-22** Ac 9:15; 25:9,11 **25:23** Ac 25:13; 26:30 **25:24** Ac 22:22; 25:2,7 **25:25** Ac 23:29; 25:11-12

25:11-12 Roman citizens accused of a crime were afforded the opportunity to have their cases heard by either the emperor or his representative. In Paul's case, this would have been Emperor Nero or Sextus Afranius Burrus, the prefect of the Praetorian Guard. Burris served as prefect from AD 51–62.

25:13 King Agrippa, also known as Herod Agrippa II (AD 27–100), was the son of Herod Agrippa I and grandson of Herod the Great. Agrippa ruled over various northern areas of Palestine as well as parts of Galilee, Perea, and the temple in Jerusalem. His authority over the temple, which included the authority to appoint the high priest, inclined him to take interest in Paul's case. Agrippa lived with **Bernice** for about

fifteen years. She was his sister and the older sister of Drusilla, who was married to Felix. Agrippa was criticized by some for the apparently incestuous relationship with Bernice. He was the last ruler in the Herodian line.

25:26 Festus does not know how to present Paul's case to Caesar. Paul is not guilty of sedition against the emperor, so Festus hopes this hearing will clarify the charges against him. Roman law required a report from Festus.

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE AGRIPPA

26 Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."
Then Paul stretched out his hand and began his defense: 2 "I consider
myself fortunate, that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am to make my
defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, 3 especially since you are
very knowledgeable about all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore I
beg you to listen to me patiently.
4 "All the Jews know my way of life from my youth, which was spent from the
beginning among my own people and in Jerusalem. † 5 They have known me
for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest sect of
our religion I lived as a Pharisee. † 6 And now I stand on trial because of the
hope † in what God promised † to our ancestors, 7 the promise our twelve
tribes hope to reach as they earnestly serve him night and day. King Agrippa, I
am being accused by the Jews because of this hope. † 8 Why do any of you
consider it incredible that God raises the dead? 9 In fact, I myself was convinced
that it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of
Nazareth. † 10 I actually did this in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the
saints in prison, since I had received authority for that from the chief priests.
When they were put to death, I was in agreement against them. † 11 In all the
synagogues I often punished them and tried to make them blaspheme. † Since I
was terribly enraged at them, I pursued them even to foreign cities.

PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CONVERSION AND COMMISSION

12 "I was traveling to Damascus under † these circumstances with authority and
a commission from the chief priests. 13 King Agrippa, while on the road at
midday, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun, shining around me and
those traveling with me. 14 We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice

speaking to me in Aramaic, † ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ †
15 “I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord? ’
“And the Lord replied: ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. 16 But get up and stand on your feet. For I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. † 17 I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them † 18 to open their eyes † so that they may turn † from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a share among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ †
19 “So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. 20 Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance. † 21 For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and were trying to kill me. 22 To this very day, I have had help from God, and I stand and testify to both small and great, saying nothing other than what the prophets and Moses said would take place † — 23 that the Messiah must suffer, and that, as the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles.” †

AGRIPPA NOT QUITE PERSUADED

24 As he was saying these things in his defense, Festus exclaimed in a loud voice, “You’re out of your mind, † Paul! Too much study is driving you mad.”
25 But Paul replied, “I’m not out of my mind, most excellent Festus. On the contrary, I’m speaking words of truth and good judgment. † 26 For the king knows about these matters, and I can speak boldly to him. For I am convinced that none of these things has escaped his notice, since this was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you believe.”
28 Agrippa said to Paul, “Are you going to persuade me to become a Christian so easily? ” †
29 “I wish before God,” replied Paul, “that whether easily or with difficulty, † not only you but all who listen to me today might become as I am — except for

these chains.” †
30 The king, the governor, Bernice, and those sitting with them got up, 31 and when they had left they talked with each other and said, “This man is not doing anything to deserve death or imprisonment.” †
32 Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.” †

26:14 Or *Hebrew* **26:18** Or *to turn them* **26:28** Or *so quickly* **26:29** Or *whether a short time or long* **26:3-4** Ac 6:14; 25:19; Gl 1:13 **26:5** Ac 22:3; 23:6; Php 3:5 **26:6** Ac 24:15; 28:20 **26:6** Ac 13:32; Rm 15:8 **26:7** Php 3:11; 1Th 3:10; 1Tm 5:5; Jms 1:1 **26:9** Jn 16:2; 1Tm 1:13 **26:10** Ac 8:3; 9:13-14,21; 22:5,20 **26:11** Ac 25:21,25; 26:32; 28:19 **26:12-18** Ac 9:3-8; 22:6-11 **26:14** Ac 9:7; 21:40 **26:16** Ezk 2:1; Dn 10:11; Ac 22:14-15 **26:17** 1Ch 16:35; Jr 1:8,19; Ac 9:15 **26:18** Is 35:5; 42:7 **26:18** Ac 20:32; Eph 5:8; Col 1:13; 1Pt 2:9 **26:20** Mt 3:8; Lk 3:8; Ac 9:19-20,22,26-29; 13:46; 22:17-20 **26:22** Lk 24:27; Ac 10:43; 24:14 **26:23** Lk 24:26; 1Co 15:20,23; Col 1:18; Rv 1:5 **26:24** 2Kg 9:11; Jn 10:20; 1Co 1:23; 2:14; 4:10 **26:25** Ac 23:26; 24:3 **26:28-29** Ac 11:26; 21:33; 1Co 7:7 **26:30-31** Ac 23:9,29; 25:23 **26:32** Ac 25:11; 28:18

26:3 See the note for 25:13. Agrippa would have been knowledgeable of **Jewish customs and controversies** due to the fact that Jerusalem fell under his authority.

26:14 A goad was a long stick with a pointed end. In ancient times, a farmer might jab a horse or ox with a goad to encourage it to move forward. The animal could react by kicking at the goad. Such a response was pointless, however. It was better for the creature to yield to the farmer’s will. Jesus’s word to Saul, **It is hard for you to kick against the goads**, is a proverbial statement suggesting it is futile for Saul to struggle against God’s plan for his church or—perhaps—Saul’s life.

26:24 Festus would have found Paul’s teaching about the Messiah incomprehensible. First, being familiar with Jewish messianic expectation, which was political in nature, he would not have understood how the Messiah could have suffered and died (26:23). Second, the idea of resurrection was ludicrous to Roman thought. It is little wonder that Festus charged Paul as being **out of** [his] **mind.**

26:26 The expression, **not done in a corner,** is a figure of speech meaning these events occurred in an open fashion and were well known.

SAILING FOR ROME

27 When it was decided that we were to sail to Italy, they handed over Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment. † † 2 When we had boarded a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, intending to sail to ports along the coast of Asia. Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. † 3 The next day we put in at Sidon, and Julius treated Paul kindly and allowed him to go to his friends to receive their care. † 4 When we had put out to sea from there, we sailed along the northern coast † of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5 After sailing through the open sea off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we reached Myra

in Lycia. † 6 There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and
put us on board. 7 Sailing slowly for many days, with difficulty we arrived off
Cnidus. Since the wind did not allow us to approach it, we sailed along the south
side of Crete off Salmone. 8 With still more difficulty we sailed along the coast
and came to a place called Fair Havens near the city of Lasea.

PAUL'S ADVICE IGNORED

9 By now much time had passed, and the voyage was already dangerous. Since
the Day of Atonement † † was already over, Paul gave his advice 10 and told
them, "Men, I can see that this voyage is headed toward disaster and heavy loss,
not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives." 11 But the centurion
paid attention to the captain and the owner of the ship rather than to what Paul
said. † 12 Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided to
set sail from there, hoping somehow to reach Phoenix, a harbor on Crete †
facing the southwest and northwest, and to winter there.

STORM-TOSSED SHIP

13 When a gentle south wind sprang up, they thought they had achieved their
purpose. They weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14 But before
long, a fierce wind called the "northeaster" rushed down from the island.
15 Since the ship was caught and unable to head into the wind, we gave way to it
and were driven along. 16 After running under the shelter of a little island called
Cauda, † we were barely able to get control of the skiff. 17 After hoisting it up,
they used ropes and tackle and girded the ship. Fearing they would run aground
on the Syrtis, they lowered the drift-anchor, and in this way they were driven
along. 18 Because we were being severely battered by the storm, they began to
jettison the cargo the next day. † 19 On the third day, they threw the ship's
tackle overboard with their own hands. 20 For many days neither sun nor stars
appeared, and the severe storm kept raging. Finally all hope was fading that we
would be saved.

21 Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul then stood up among
them and said, "You men should have followed my advice not to sail from Crete
and sustain this damage and loss. 22 Now I urge you to take courage, because
there will be no loss of any of your lives, but only of the ship. 23 For last night

an angel of the God I belong to and serve stood by me † 24 and said, ‘Don’t be
afraid, Paul. It is necessary for you to appear before Caesar. And indeed, God
has graciously given you all those who are sailing with you.’ 25 So take courage,
men, because I believe God that it will be just the way it was told to me. †
26 But we have to run aground on some island.” †
27 When the fourteenth night came, we were drifting in the Adriatic Sea, and
about midnight the sailors thought they were approaching land. 28 They took
soundings and found it to be a hundred and twenty feet † deep; when they had
sailed a little farther and sounded again, they found it to be ninety feet † deep.
29 Then, fearing we might run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors
from the stern and prayed for daylight to come. 30 Some sailors tried to escape
from the ship; they had let down the skiff into the sea, pretending that they were
going to put out anchors from the bow. 31 Paul said to the centurion and the
soldiers, “Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.” 32 Then the
soldiers cut the ropes holding the skiff and let it drop away.
33 When it was about daylight, Paul urged them all to take food, saying, “Today
is the fourteenth day that you have been waiting and going without food, having
eaten nothing. 34 So I urge you to take some food. For this is for your survival,
since none of you will lose a hair from your head.” † 35 After he said these
things and had taken some bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all of
them, and after he broke it, he began to eat. † 36 They all were encouraged and
took food themselves. 37 In all there were 276 of us on the ship. † 38 When they
had eaten enough, they began to lighten the ship by throwing the grain overboard
into the sea.

SHIPWRECK

39 When daylight came, they did not recognize the land but sighted a bay with a
beach. They planned to run the ship ashore if they could. † 40 After cutting
loose the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes
that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and headed for
the beach. 41 But they struck a sandbar and ran the ship aground. The bow
jammed fast and remained immovable, while the stern began to break up by the
pounding of the waves. 42 The soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners so that no

one could swim away and escape. [43] But the centurion kept them from carrying out their plan because he wanted to save Paul, and so he ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land. [44] The rest were to follow, some on planks and some on debris from the ship. In this way, everyone safely reached the shore. †

27:1 Or *Augustan Cohort* **27:4** Lit *sailed under the lee*, also in v. 7 **27:9** Lit *the Fast* **27:16** Or *Clauda* **27:28** Lit *twenty fathoms* **27:28** Lit *fifteen fathoms*

27:1 Ac 10:1; 16:10; 25:12,25 **27:2** Ac 17:1; 19:29; 20:4; Col 4:10; Phm 24 **27:3** Ac 24:23; 27:43; 28:16 **27:5** Ac 6:9; 13:13 **27:9** Lv 16:29-31; 23:27-29; Nm 29:7 **27:10-11** Ac 27:21; Rv 18:17 **27:12** Ac 2:11; Ti 1:5 **27:18** Jnh 1:5; Ac 27:38 **27:23** Dn 6:16; Ac 18:9; 23:11; Rm 1:9; 2Tm 4:17 **27:25** Ac 27:22,36; Rm 4:20-21 **27:26** Ac 27:17,29; 28:1 **27:34** 1Kg 1:52; Mt 10:30; Lk 21:18 **27:35** Mt 14:19; 15:36 **27:37** Ac 2:41; 7:14; Rm 13:1; 1Pt 3:20 **27:38-39** Ac 27:18; 28:1 **27:41-44** Ac 12:19; 27:3,22; 2Co 11:25

27:2 Paul began his journey to Rome on a ship arriving from **Adramyttium,** a port on the western side modern Turkey. The captain of the vessel planned to travel along the coast of Asia, stopping at various ports until finding a ship headed to Rome. This was normal practice for captains who sailed on the Mediterranean at that time.

27:3 The ship traveled from Caesarea to **Sidon** in Phoenicia, about seventy miles north of Caesarea. In an act of kindness, the centurion **Julius** allowed Paul to disembark and visit friends, most likely fellow Christians. Christian missionaries first settled in Phoenicia due to the persecution in Jerusalem—which, ironically, had been spearheaded by Saul (11:19).

27:7-8 The captain of the Alexandrian ship intended to sail north of **Crete**, but because of difficulty with winds from the northwest, he altered course and **sailed along the south side of Crete**, docking at the small port of **Fair Havens.** Most likely they traveled during mid-October. (See the note for 27:9.) **27:9** Many scholars contend that Paul's voyage took place in AD 59, which means that the Jewish **Day of Atonement** occurred on October 5. As Luke's comments suggest, sailing during this period was unsafe. It was risky from September 14 to November 11, and extremely dangerous from November 12 to March 10, as ancient sources indicate.

27:13-14 A **gentle south wind** persuaded the crew that it was safe to begin the thirty-six mile journey to Phoenix, but a fierce **northeaster** forced the ship from its course and out into the open sea. A northeaster could contain hurricane-force winds.

27:15-16 Ancient ships were unable to withstand strong winds. Rather than fight the wind, the crew **gave way to it**—they shortened the sail and attempted to move forward best they could. Nevertheless, they lacked real control, and the strong winds carried the ship to the south side of an island called **Cauda**, which offered some protection. **The skiff** refers to the ship's lifeboat, which was towed behind the ship.

27:17 After **hoisting . . . up** the skiff (or lifeboat), they attempted to keep the ship from breaking apart by girding it with **ropes and tackle.** They also **lowered the drift-anchor** for fear that the vessel **would run aground on the Syrtis.** The Syrtis, located 380 miles to the south of Cauda near the North African coast, contained numerous sandbars which had doomed many ships.

27:34 Paul says **none of you will lose a hair from your head** because an angel had told him that God would preserve the lives of those sailing with him (27:24; see also 1Sm 14:45; 2Sm 14:11).

27:42-43 Roman soldiers paid with their own lives if their **prisoners** escaped. These prisoners, however, were spared because the centurion wished to preserve Paul's life.

MALTA'S HOSPITALITY

MALTA'S HOSPITALITY

28 Once safely ashore, we † then learned that the island was called
Malta. † 2 The local people † showed us extraordinary kindness. They
lit a fire and took us all in, since it was raining and cold. 3 As Paul gathered a
bundle of brushwood and put it on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat
and fastened itself on his hand. 4 When the local people saw the snake hanging
from his hand, they said to one another, "This man, no doubt, is a murderer.
Even though he has escaped the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live." †
5 But he shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no harm. † 6 They
expected that he would begin to swell up or suddenly drop dead. After they
waited a long time and saw nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their
minds and said he was a god. †

MINISTRY IN MALTA

7 Now in the area around that place was an estate belonging to the leading man
of the island, named Publius, who welcomed us and entertained us hospitably for
three days. 8 Publius's father was in bed suffering from fever and dysentery.
Paul went to him, and praying and laying his hands on him, he healed him. †
9 After this, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were
healed. 10 So they heaped many honors on us, and when we sailed, they gave us
what we needed.

ROME AT LAST

11 After three months we set sail in an Alexandrian ship that had wintered at the
island, with the Twin Gods † as its figurehead. 12 Putting in at Syracuse, we
stayed three days.

THE EMERGENCE OF EVANGELICAL CENTERS

The emergence of evangelical centers around the world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is only the most recent of many shifts in Christian work since Pentecost (Ac 1). From its first

center in Jerusalem, Antioch emerged as a mission-sending center. Alexandria, Ephesus, and Rome became centers by the end of the first century. With the legalization of the Christian faith in the fourth century, Constantinople became a center of faith, too. As the Western Empire faded in the fifth century, Christianity spread into the Celtic spheres of Western Europe. By the end of the tenth century, however, Eastern Orthodox Christianity also had spread to Russia, which would become its new center in the second Christian millennium. Even so, Christianity had faded in the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa with the Islamic invasions of the eighth century.

As the gospel spread, different aspects of the gospel message addressed different local and regional spiritual issues and questions so that the local theologies reflected the aspect of the gospel that was most significant to that culture. The Eastern church, for instance, would orient its theology and worship around the resurrection of Christ who defeated death and sin, and around the Holy Spirit who brings regeneration and union with God. The Western church, both Roman and Protestant, would orient its theology around the sacrificial death of Jesus, while Protestants would add the authority of God's fulfilled Word, the Bible. For the African church during the Roman period, the coming of God in the flesh as Jesus Christ who demonstrated God's love and mediated our reconciliation took center stage in the affirmations of Athanasius. Thus, various local theologies arose even as Christians everywhere affirmed the same faith upon which these theologies are based.

The more modern emergence of evangelical centers around the world has its roots in the changing European situation five hundred years before it. Coinciding with the Protestant Reformation, European powers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries ventured forth in search of nautical trade routes to the Far East. These ventures began with voyages east around Africa before Columbus made his famous voyage in 1492. That same year, Ferdinand and Isabella consolidated their kingdoms and united Christian Spain by defeating the last Muslim kingdom on the Spanish peninsula.

Catholic Spain, Portugal, and France began a program not only of extending their trade, but also of extending their sovereignty over other lands. The new Protestant countries of England, Holland, Sweden, and Denmark also embarked on their own programs of expansion. The first wave of colonization resulted in communities of Catholics and Protestants in the Americas. The English, Dutch, and Swedish colonies in North America became early centers of evangelical faith out of which the First Great Awakening spread. By the mid-nineteenth century, the European powers had established global empires that controlled most of Africa, Australia, Central America, South America, and large portions of Asia.

The modern mission movement began in the context of growing British control over the subcontinent of India. William Carey went as a Baptist missionary from England. Adoniram Judson went as a Congregationalist missionary to India, but upon converting to Baptist convictions during the long voyage from New England, he went to Burma instead. Organized Baptist denominational life in the United States, known as the Triennial Convention, began as an effort to support the mission of Judson. In 1865, Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission as a conservative interdenominational mission society. By its nature, this society was broadly evangelical rather than denominational in its orientation. It adopted a policy of propagating an indigenous Christianity that identified with the Chinese people rather than an imperial European power. As Britain extended its control in Africa, from Egypt southward and from South Africa northward, the Anglican Church sent missionaries into every new region that came under British rule.

While the evangelization of Asia and Africa tended to follow the pattern of colonial expansion, the spread of evangelical Christianity in Latin America proceeded in a different manner. By agreement between Spain and Portugal negotiated by Pope Alexander VI in 1493, newly discovered territories and pagan territories in the Far East were divided between the two great Catholic powers. Thus, Spain had hegemony in America west of the leading edge of South America that became Brazil. These claims extended around the globe to the Spanish territory of the Philippines. Portugal's lands extended east from Brazil to include Africa and India. Evangelical mission work in Brazil came from the United States in the mid-1800s with Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists establishing work there once the old Spanish and Portuguese colonial power structure came to an end with the independence movement.

The gains of evangelical missions by 1900 could be called modest at best. With the dawn of the new

century, however, an increasing optimism marked the gospel enterprise. The Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions of the 1880s and 1890s emerged from an awakening among students at Cambridge University. John R. Mott coined the slogan of this movement: "The Evangelization of the World in this Generation." Mott organized the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 that brought together over twelve hundred missionaries from different evangelical mission societies around the world. Some declared the twentieth century to be "The Christian Century." A nondenominational evangelical gathering in Edinburgh 1910 was the last great transnational Christian gathering before the Great War of 1914. By the end of that war, most of the great imperial monarchies of the world (China, Russia, Ottoman Turk, Austria-Hungary, and Germany) had come to an end, or their empires stood on the verge of collapse (as in the case of France, Spain, Britain, and Netherlands).

Freed from colonial and imperial attachments, the gospel spread tenaciously across Asia, Africa, and Latin America during the twentieth century in the context of civil war, revolution, famine, economic depression, and global warfare. In the midst of the social, political, and economic turmoil of the twentieth century, however, a number of spiritual awakenings took place around the world in the midst of the chaos. Beginning with the Welsh Revival of 1905, which encouraged the international mission movement and the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles that launched the international Pentecostal Movement, awakenings also took place in Asia, Africa, and South America.

In China, the Shantung Revival prepared Chinese Christians for the horrors of World War II, the Communist Revolution, and the Cultural Revolution. A century after the Chinese Revolution of 1911 led by the Christian Dr. Sun Yat Sen, perhaps as many as a hundred million Chinese had converted to Christianity. An awakening in South Korea following the Korean War has led to approximately half the population of South Korea converting to Christianity.

An awakening in East Africa in the context of the new independence of former British colonies has led to a sudden and dramatic spread of the gospel in sub-Saharan Africa. An awakening among the evangelical and Pentecostal churches of Brazil has resulted in a significant spread of the gospel there.

The post-World War II global awakening saw a rise in local national Christian leaders around the globe who assumed the leadership role that had once belonged to the original missionaries. The gospel issues of Asia, Africa, and South America differed from the theologies of North America and Europe, rooted as they are in the traditions of the evangelization of the old Celtic peoples more than a thousand years ago. In Korea, an emphasis on prayer through the exalted Christ is prominent. In Africa and South America where the Pentecostal Movement has been particularly strong, an emphasis on the power of the Holy Spirit over all other spiritual forces and the authority of the exalted Christ over all spiritual realms has been prominent. In China, which has had a pluralistic religious tradition for thousands of years, including the practice of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism alongside traditional polytheism and ancestor worship, the reality of the one Creator God has been prominent.

The massive shift in the center of Christianity away from Europe and North America during the twentieth century after the colonial period is the kind of experience the church has not seen since the mass people movements of Celtic and Russian conversion over a thousand years ago. We watch with avid interest and rejoicing as another chapter of the gospel's spread unfolds.

HARRY L. POE

13 From there, after making a circuit along the coast, † we reached Rhegium.
After one day a south wind sprang up, and the second day we came to Puteoli.
14 There we found brothers and sisters † and were invited to stay a week with
them. And so we came to Rome. 15 Now the brothers and sisters from there had

heard the news about us and had come to meet us as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.
16 When we entered Rome, † Paul was allowed to live by himself with the soldier who guarded him. †

PAUL'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH ROMAN JEWS

17 After three days he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had gathered he said to them: "Brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our ancestors, I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. † 18 After they examined me, they wanted to release me, since there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. † 19 Because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar; † even though I had no charge to bring against my people. 20 For this reason I've asked to see you and speak to you. In fact, it is for the hope of Israel that I'm wearing this chain." †
21 Then they said to him, "We haven't received any letters about you from Judea. None of the brothers has come and reported or spoken anything evil about you. 22 But we want to hear what your views are, since we know that people everywhere are speaking against this sect." †

THE RESPONSE TO PAUL'S MESSAGE

23 After arranging a day with him, many came to him at his lodging. From dawn to dusk he expounded and testified about the kingdom of God. He tried to persuade them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. †
24 Some were persuaded by what he said, but others did not believe. †
25 Disagreeing among themselves, they began to leave after Paul made one statement: † "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your † ancestors through the prophet Isaiah 26 when he said,
Go to these people and say: You will always be listening, but never understanding;
and you will always be looking, but never perceiving.
27 **For the hearts of these people have grown callous,**
their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; otherwise they might see with their eyes and hear with their ears,

understand with their heart and turn,
and I would heal them. † †
28 Therefore, let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” †

PAUL’S MINISTRY UNHINDERED

30 Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house. And he welcomed all who visited him, 31 proclaiming the kingdom of God † and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness † and without hindrance.

28:11 Gk *Dioscuri*, twin sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollux **28:13** Other mss read *From there, casting off,* **28:16** Other mss add *the centurion turned the prisoners over to the military commander; but* **28:25** Or *after they began to leave, Paul made one statement* **28:25** Other mss read *our* **28:28** Some mss include v. 29: *After he said these things, the Jews departed, while engaging in a vigorous debate among themselves.*
28:1 Ac 16:10; 27:1 **28:1** Ac 27:26,39 **28:2** Rm 1:14; 1Co 14:11; Col 3:11 **28:4** Lk 13:2,4; Jn 9:2 **28:5** Mk 16:18; Lk 10:19 **28:6** Ac 8:10; 14:11 **28:8** Ac 9:40; Jms 5:14-15 **28:14** Jn 21:23; Ac 1:16 **28:16** Ac 24:23; 27:3 **28:17** Ac 6:14; 25:8 **28:18** Ac 22:24; 23:29; 26:31 **28:19** Ac 25:11; 26:32 **28:20** Ac 21:33; 26:6-7,29; Eph 6:20; 2Tm 1:16 **28:22** Lk 2:34; Ac 24:5; 1Pt 2:12; 4:14 **28:23** Ac 8:35; 17:3; 19:8; 26:22; Phm 22 **28:24** Ac 14:4; 19:9 **28:26-27** Is 6:9-10 **28:26-27** Ps 119:70; Is 6:9-10; Mt 13:14-15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10; Jn 12:40; Rm 11:8 **28:31** Mt 4:23; Ac 20:25; 28:23 **28:31** Ac 4:29,31; 2Tm 2:9

28:1 Malta is a small island approximately fifty-eight miles south of Sicily. It was inhabited by the ancestors of the Phoenicians and became part of the Roman Empire in 218 BC.

28:4-6 When the inhabitants of Malta **saw the snake hanging from** Paul’s hand, they initially believed that he was a murderer whom the Roman goddess, Dike **(Justice)**, had marked for punishment. She was the daughter of Zeus. Pagans believed she carried out judgment on people for their wrongdoing. When Paul did not die, their opinion quickly changed and they reasoned that **he was a god.**

28:11 The shipwrecked men probably spent November, December, and January (AD 59–60) on Malta. Sometime afterward, the crew set sail on a boat with a carving of Castor and Pollux on the bow. These **Twin Gods**, or twin sons of Zeus, were believed to rescue sailors in distress.

28:13-14 At the port of **Puteoli**, Paul and his companions encountered believers with whom they stayed for seven days. The journey from Puteoli **to Rome** was approximately 150 miles—about a six-day walk along the Via Appia.

28:15 On the journey along the Via Appia to Rome, Paul was met by two groups of believers, one from **the Forum of Appius**, a market town forty miles south of Rome, and another from **the Three Taverns**, a stop featuring inns that accommodated travellers, thirty-five miles south of Rome. The church in Rome may have begun when Jewish pilgrims from there were baptized after hearing Peter’s Pentecost speech in Jerusalem. Upon returning home, they began to their share beliefs about Jesus the Messiah. Alternatively, other Christians from Palestine or the Diaspora had spread the news to Rome while visiting there.

28:16 Rome was the greatest city in the Roman Empire in regard to wealth, influence, and power. When Paul arrived in AD 60, its population was approximately one million. Paul is given a degree of freedom, being allowed **to live by himself**, under the guard of a single **soldier.** This light form of custody may have been due to the centurion Julian’s assessment that Paul was not a flight risk. Through all their travels together, Paul had showed himself determined to appear before Caesar.

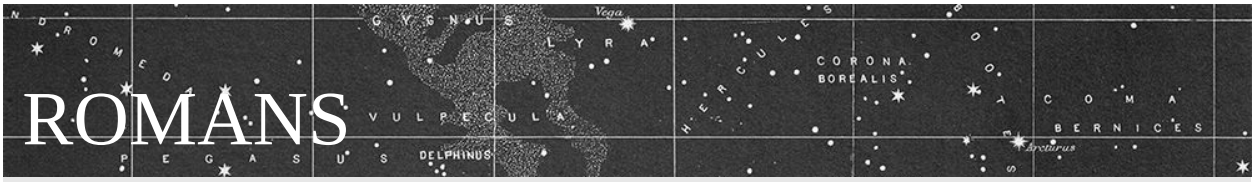
28:17-22 Paul's usual practice was to speak in the synagogue of every new city he visited. Since in Rome he was under house arrest, he had **the leaders of the Jews** come to him instead.

28:22 Likely the intense debate and rioting about Jesus led to Claudius's expulsion of the Jews from Rome in AD 49. If so, it is not surprising that since then **people everywhere are speaking against this sect.**

28:23 See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV*.

28:26-28 Paul cited Isaiah 6:9-10, speaking of Israel's hardness of heart and unresponsiveness to God's revelation. Paul applied this message to his hearers in Rome, declaring that this is why **this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles.** Unlike unresponsive Israel, the Gentiles **will listen.**

28:30-31 Paul remained in Rome for **two . . . years** (AD 60–62) in a **rented house.** It is unclear how Paul paid the rent, given that he had no income. Most likely he was supported by believers in Rome. Though Paul's house arrest was relatively comfortable, he was under military guard and forbidden to leave his house. He continued to receive visitors, taking the opportunity to proclaim **the kingdom of God** and teach **about the Lord Jesus Christ.** He most likely wrote Colossians, Philippians, Philemon, and Ephesians during this time. What happened next to Paul is somewhat of a mystery. We also do not know why Luke chose to end the story here. Paul was beheaded outside Rome, by order of Emperor Nero, sometime between AD 62–67. He either remained imprisoned until his death, or was granted a temporary release only to be arrested again. Tradition holds that Paul traveled to Spain, as he had long desired to do (1 Clem 5; Rm 16:23-24). If so, this must have occurred after his house arrest. Either way, Paul's relatively comfortable situation gave way to a more severe imprisonment in the Mamertine Prison, where Paul suffered barbaric conditions while awaiting execution.



ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Roman house churches has been preeminent among the NT writings for its theological and pastoral influence. It focuses on the doctrine of salvation, including the practical implications for believers as they live out the salvation given to them through Jesus Christ.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Paul the apostle is the stated and indisputable author of the book of Romans. From the book of Acts and statements in Romans, we learn that Paul wrote this letter while he was in Corinth and on his way to Jerusalem in the spring of AD 57, to deliver an offering from the Gentile churches to poor Jewish Christians (Ac 20:3; Rm 15:25-29).

BACKGROUND: All of Paul's writings grew out of his missionary/pastoral work and were about the problems and needs of local churches. The book of Romans is also of this genre, but it is the least "local" in the sense that Paul had not yet been to Rome. This letter was his opportunity to expound the good news message (the gospel). He could discuss the essence of sin, the salvation accomplished on the cross, the union of the believer with Christ, how the Spirit works in the Christian to promote holiness, the place of the Jewish people in God's plan, future things, and Christian living or ethics. Though Paul did not write Romans as a systematic theology, his somewhat orderly exposition has been the fountain for the development of that discipline.

The origin of the Roman house churches is unknown. The founding of the Roman church likely goes back to the "visitors from Rome," "both Jews and converts" who came to Jerusalem at Pentecost (Ac 2:10). Many of these visitors converted to Christianity (Ac 2:41), some of whom very likely hailed from Rome. In Acts 18:2 Luke mentioned Aquila and Priscilla, who left Rome because emperor Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave the city (AD 49). This exodus was caused by strife among Jews over "Chrestus" (Christ). The remaining Christians in Rome would be from a Gentile background. The Jewish-Gentile tensions in Rome had a long history. These tensions are somewhat reflected throughout the letter, most specifically in chapters 2, 11, and 14–15.

Rome was the primary destination of this letter. Yet some manuscripts lack the phrase "in Rome" (1:7), giving some support to the conclusion that Paul intended a wider audience for the book of Romans and sent copies to other churches.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

What is the gospel? The word *gospel* means "good news." The good news is about Jesus and what he did for us. Most Bible students would say that the gospel is outlined in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5. Romans fills in that outline and clarifies the gospel in relation to the OT promises and the Mosaic law, the role of good works, and the gift of God's righteousness. Paul emphasized righteousness and justification in this letter to a depth and detail not found elsewhere in the Bible. Sin is traced to its core in our union with Adam and the imputation of original sin. Paul also mapped out the spread of human sin and its results in both believers and nonbelievers.

There are three passages in the NT (each one long sentence in the Greek text) that contain the most important theology of the NT: John 1:14 on the incarnation; Ephesians 1:3-14 about the triune purpose and glory of God; and Romans 3:21-26 on justification, redemption, and propitiation. If a Christian understands

these three sentences, he has a solid foundation for faith.

Paul, in Romans 6–8, gave the most comprehensive development of our union with Christ and the Spirit's work in us. Romans 9–11 (on the role of Israel in God's plan) has been called the key to understanding the Bible. Romans 13 is the classic NT passage on the Christian's relation to and duties to the state. Romans 14–15 covers how Christians can relate to one another yet have different opinions and convictions on nonessential religious matters.

STRUCTURE

Paul wrote thirteen of the twenty-one letters (or "epistles") contained in the NT. The four Gospels, the book of Acts, and the book of Revelation are not classified as letters. Romans is the longest of Paul's letters, and it contains the elements found in a standard letter at that time: salutation (1:1-7); thanksgiving (1:8-17); the main body (1:18–16:18); and a farewell (16:19-24). Some scholars refer to Romans as a tractate (a formal treatise). But it bears all the marks of a real letter, although it is a finely tuned literary composition.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

In Romans God is supreme in all matters of salvation, which serves his glory and the good of his people. He is both the One who is righteous and the One who declares righteous "the one who has faith in Jesus" (3:26). There is no fuller presentation of the person and work of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the One by whose indwelling believers are enabled to live holy lives (chap. 8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

There are only two kinds of human beings: sinners who are condemned "in Adam" and believing sinners "in Christ" who are therefore declared righteous. Those who have been justified by faith are expected to live holy lives and to live in Christian community with one another by the power of the Spirit.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is a complex concept that includes past, present, and future. For individual believers, Christ has saved from the penalty of sin (justification, chaps. 4–5); he is saving from the power of sin (sanctification, chaps. 6–7); and he will save from the presence of sin (glorification, chap. 8). For the community of believers, salvation came first to Israel (chaps. 9–10), and in the present era it is coming to Gentiles (and some Jews) who make up the church (chap. 11).

ROMANS TIMELINE

800–450 BC

Mythical founding of Rome by Romulus and Remus **753**

Rome ruled by seven kings. **753–509**

King Tarquin the Proud ousted and the Roman Republic founded **509**

Plebian struggle with patricians results in greater voice in the governance of Rome. **494**

Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, farmer, general, and consul of Rome from **460–438**

450–250 BC

A *Decemviri*, committee of ten men, is commissioned to draw up Rome's first code of law, *The Twelve Tables*, binding on both patricians and plebeians. **451**

The Via Appia, first of an unparalleled system of roads in the ancient world, is begun by Appius Claudius Caecus running in a southwesterly direction out of Rome. **312**

Rome gains control of the entire Italian peninsula as a prelude to far greater expansion and a series of wars with other peoples. **275–272**

The Romans begin minting coins. **269**

The first recorded gladiatorial games in Rome during the funeral of Junius Brutus. Three pairs of gladiators fought to the death. **264**

100 BC–AD 33

Romans develop the hypocaust, a central heating system, used in large villas and public baths. **85 BC**

Julius Caesar is assassinated on **MARCH 15, 44 BC.**

Agrippina, Emperor Claudius's third wife, brings Seneca out of an eight-year exile on Corsica to be the tutor of her son Nero. **41**

Agrippina poisons her husband Claudius; her son Nero becomes emperor of Rome. **54**

Octavian (Augustus), Rome's first emperor **27 BC–AD 14**

The birth of Jesus of Nazareth **5 BC**

The reign of Tiberius Caesar **AD 14–37**

AD 33–80

Jesus's trials, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Paul's letter to the church at Rome written in Corinth **57**

Nero blames Christians for the great fire in Rome. **64**

Roman Colosseum under construction **70–80**

THE GOSPEL OF GOD FOR ROME

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle † † and set apart †
for the gospel of God † — 2 which he promised beforehand † through
his prophets † in the Holy Scriptures — 3 concerning his Son, Jesus
Christ our Lord, who was a descendant of David † † according to the flesh †
4 and was appointed to be the powerful † Son of God † according to the Spirit
of holiness † by the resurrection of the dead. 5 Through him we have received

grace and apostleship † to bring about † the obedience † of faith for the sake of his name among all the Gentiles, † † 6 including you who are also called by Jesus Christ. †

7 To all who are in Rome, loved by God, † called † as saints. †
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PAUL'S DESIRE TO VISIT ROME

8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you because the news of your faith † is being reported in all the world. † 9 God is my witness, † whom I serve with my spirit † in telling the good news about his Son — that I constantly mention you, † 10 always asking in my prayers that if it is somehow in God's will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you. † 11 For I want very much to see you, † so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, 12 that is, to be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine.

13 Now I don't want you to be unaware, † brothers and sisters, that I often planned to come to you (but was prevented until now †) in order that I might have a fruitful ministry † among you, † just as I have had among the rest of the Gentiles. 14 I am obligated both to Greeks and barbarians, † † both to the wise and the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel † to you also who are in Rome.

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL LIVE BY FAITH

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, † † because it is the power of God for salvation † to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, † and also to the Greek. † 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, † † just as it is written: **The righteous will live by faith.** † † †

THE GUILT OF THE GENTILE WORLD

18 For God's wrath † is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, †
19 since what can be known † about God is evident among them, † because

God has shown it to them. [20] For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, † being understood through what he has made. † As a result, people are without excuse. [21] For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. † [22] Claiming to be wise, they became fools †

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND NATURALISM

A common secular assumption is that natural laws displace and disallow the reality of divine providence. Natural laws are generally understood as the regularities identified in the hard sciences that govern the major areas of chemistry, biology, and physics. The law of gravity is a classic example of one such law in physics. Many hope for a "final theory" from physics that will unite all natural laws, but thus far no such theory has been identified. Things become more complex when it comes to identifying laws in quantum physics, and there is no consensus on the proper interpretation of this field.

Does the concept of natural law rule out divine providence? God's purposeful governance of all things in the visible and invisible world is his providence (Eph 1:11). Therefore, things in heaven and things on earth are under his jurisdiction and care—from the smallest particle to the most distant galaxy to the souls of men and the behavior of animals (Col 1:15-20). Nothing is excluded from God's providence. This providence is not the impersonal necessity of Stoicism or the materialistic determinism of some forms of naturalism. Nor is it some combination of chance coupled with impersonal natural laws that exist for no purpose. Unlike some Eastern religions, the Bible teaches that the space-time universe is objectively real. It is not an illusion nor an extension of God's essence. God exercises his providence over creation in accordance with his divine nature (as a perfect being) and according to the nature of what he has created. God is thus neither a tyrant nor a spectator; he is active in his creation, being especially concerned with humans since they bear his image (Gn 1:26; Mt 6:26).

The Westminster Confession explains how divine providence is to be understood: "God, in His ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at His pleasure" (V.III). In other words, God can use natural laws to do his bidding, causing the rain to fall on the righteous and the unrighteous alike (Mt 5:45; Ac 27:31). He also can bypass natural laws by directly speaking, as to Moses from a burning bush (Ex 3; also Hs 1:7). Moreover, he can go against the normal course of things by raising Jesus from the dead (1Co 15; see 1Kg 6:6; Dn 3:27).

How, then, does the secular account of natural law try to contradict the biblical view of divine providence? According to the philosophy of naturalism, God does not exist; therefore, the cosmos and human history have no divine origin, divine administration, or divine destiny. As atheist Bertrand Russell announced in his 1948 debate with Friedrich Copleston on the existence of God, "The universe is just there." In light of this, everything in the material universe (which is all that exists in this view) must be explained without a designing mind at work behind it. Divine providence is hence replaced by natural laws that are "just there." To use a philosophical term, they are "brute facts," having no explanation beyond their own existence.

Put another way, naturalism removes what Aristotle called "final causes" from the universe. While Aristotle did not possess a robust monotheism, he claimed that the First Cause endowed the world with teleology. Each thing, humans included, has a nature that moves toward an end or goal. Nothing is just there. This aligns to some extent with the biblical notion of the cosmos and history having a purpose. Each thing is created according to its kind and fulfills its role in God's personal governance of the universe.

Sadly, most of modern science is concerned only with what Aristotle called "efficient causes," or what makes something happen on the physical level. When a billiard ball hits another and causes it to move, we see efficient causation. The biblical view of divine providence requires the existence of efficient causes working on material things because the world of space, time, and matter is created and sustained by God (Gn 1:1; Jn 1:1-5; Heb 1:3). There is no good reason, however, to limit explanations to the efficient causation of material things. Such a limitation can be critiqued from four directions.

First, if the naturalistic account of natural law is correct, then the cosmos, humanity, and each human life are meaningless, lacking objective value or purpose. This is not a "purpose-driven" universe. All meaning is subjective, and it dies when the person dies. This worldview, known as nihilism, is counterintuitive and ultimately unlivable. We intuitively know that there is more to life than matter, chance, and brute natural laws. In part we know this because we make judgments based on objective value, such as, "Rape is always wrong." But if there is nothing but impersonal natural law governing the universe, no such judgment is possible. There is more to reality than merely physical interactions described by natural law.

Second, we have good scientific evidence from big bang cosmology that the cosmos began to exist a finite time ago. The agnostic scientist Robert Jastrow granted as much in *God and the Astronomers*: Consider the enormity of the problem. Science has proved that the universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks: What cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter or energy into the universe? And science cannot answer these questions, because, according to the astronomers, in the first moments of its existence the Universe was compressed to an extraordinary degree, and consumed by the heat of a fire beyond human imagination. The shock of that instant must have destroyed every particle of evidence that could have yielded a clue to the cause of the great explosion. . . . For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountain of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries (p. 106-7).

The origin of the universe cannot, in principle, be explained by natural laws. The universe, with its laws, was brought into being by a Being outside it. Furthermore, the Being that created the universe from nothing may have a plan for it.

Third, the intelligent design movement, led by William Dembski, Michael Behe, and Stephen Meyer, has argued cogently that particular living systems and the genetic code cannot be adequately explained on the basis of natural law, chance, and eons of purposeless time. For example, the genetic code is a complex language of life containing vast amounts of information. But all the other information about which we have knowledge comes from a mind, such as what you are now reading. Mere natural laws may explain the current operations of life, but they cannot explain its origin. This points to design and purpose.

Fourth, the greatest reason to believe in divine providence comes from God's dealings with human history and his revelation in Scripture. God has communicated knowable truth about himself, the universe, history, morality, and salvation through the books of the Bible (2Tm 3:15). These books form a coherent worldview rooted in history; they explain where we came from, what went wrong, how to make it right, and where we are going. In other words, we are taught the true, rational, and existentially-compelling doctrines of creation, fall, and redemption (Rm 1–8). God's mission to reach out to erring mortals is culminated in the matchless achievements of Jesus Christ, the crucified and resurrected Lord of the cosmos (Rm 1:3). Since he lived a perfect life, died an atoning death, and was raised immortal, we can know that life is not meaningless. The universe is not governed by impersonal natural laws, but by God's providence, which covers natural laws, teleology, revelation, miracle, and redemption through Jesus Christ, who "has revealed" God the Father (Jn 1:18). As the apostle Paul says, in light of the resurrection and God's past, present, and future providence, "Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always

excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain" (1Co 15:58).
DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS

23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles. †
24 Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts † to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, † and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. † Amen.

FROM IDOLATRY TO DEPRAVITY

26 For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. † Their women † exchanged natural sexual relations † for unnatural ones. 27 The men † in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men † and received in their own persons † the appropriate penalty of their error.
28 And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. 29 They are filled with all unrighteousness, † evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, † 30 slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, † inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, † 31 senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, † † and unmerciful. 32 Although they know God's just sentence — that those who practice such things deserve to die † † — they not only do them, but even applaud † † others who practice them.

1:1 Or *Jesus, a called apostle* **1:3** Lit *was of the seed of David* **1:4** Or *the spirit of holiness*, or *the Holy Spirit* **1:5** Or *him for* ; lit *him into* **1:5** Or *nations*, also in v. 13 **1:8** Or *because your faith* **1:13** Lit *have some fruit* **1:14** Or *non-Greeks* **1:16** Other mss add *of Christ* **1:17** Or *revealed out of faith into faith* **1:17** Or *The one who is righteous by faith will live* **1:19** Or *what is known* **1:26** Lit *females*, also in v. 27 **1:26** Lit *natural use*, also in v. 27 **1:27** Lit *males*, also later in v. **1:27** Or *in themselves* **1:29** Other mss add *sexual immorality* **1:31** Other mss add *unforgiving* **1:32** Lit *things are worthy of death* **1:32** Lit *even take pleasure in*
1:1 1Co 1:1; 9:1; 2Co 1:1 **1:1** Ac 9:15; 13:2; Gl 1:15 **1:1** Mk 1:14 **1:2** Ti 1:2 **1:2** Lk 1:70; Rm 3:21; 16:26 **1:3** Mt 1:1 **1:3** Jn 1:14; Rm 4:1; 9:3,5; 1Co 10:18 **1:4** Ac 10:38; 13:33; 17:31; 26:23 **1:4** Mt 4:3 **1:5** Ac

1:25; Gl 1:16 **1:5** Ac 6:7; Rm 16:26 **1:5** Ac 9:15 **1:6** Jd 1; Rv 17:14 **1:7** Rm 5:5; 8:39; 1Th 1:4 **1:7** Rm 8:28; 1Co 1:24 **1:7** 1Co 1:2-4 **1:8** Rm 16:19 **1:9** Rm 9:1; 2Co 1:23; 11:31; Php 1:8; 1Th 2:5,10 **1:9** 2Tm 1:3 **1:9** Eph 1:16; Php 1:3-5; 1Th 1:2; 2Tm 1:3; Phm 4 **1:10** Ac 18:21; Rm 15:32 **1:11** Ac 19:21; Rm 15:23 **1:13** 1Co 10:1; 11:3 **1:13** Ac 19:21 **1:13** Jn 4:36; Rm 15:16; Php 1:22; Col 1:6 **1:14** Ac 28:2 **1:15** Rm 15:20; 1Co 9:16 **1:16** 2Tm 1:8,12,16 **1:16** 1Co 1:18,24 **1:16** Ac 3:26; Rm 2:9 **1:16** Jn 7:35 **1:17** Rm 3:21; 9:30; Php 3:9 **1:17** Hab 2:4 **1:17** Hab 2:4; Gl 3:11; Heb 10:38 **1:18** Rm 5:9; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6 **1:18** 2Th 2:6-10 **1:19** Ac 14:17; 17:24-27 **1:20** Mk 10:6 **1:20** Jb 12:7-9; Ps 19:1-6; Jr 5:21-22 **1:21** 2Kg 17:15; Jr 2:5; Eph 4:17-20 **1:22** Jr 10:14; 1Co 1:20 **1:23** Ps 106:20; Jr 2:11; Ac 17:29 **1:24** Eph 2:3; 4:19 **1:25** Is 44:20; Jr 10:14; 13:25; 16:19 **1:25** Rm 9:5; 2Co 11:31 **1:26** 1Th 4:5 **1:27** Lv 18:22; 20:13; 1Co 6:9 **1:29** 2Co 12:20 **1:30** Ps 5:5 **1:30** 2Tm 3:2 **1:31** 2Tm 3:3 **1:32** Rm 6:21 **1:32** Lk 11:48; Ac 8:1; 22:20

1:1 Paul is **set apart for the gospel of God.** "The gospel" refers to the "good news" or "glad tidings" of God's actions to save humanity (cp. Is 40:9). The word was also used by the Romans, referring to the good news of the emperor's great deeds.

1:2 The NT is deeply grounded in the OT. The gospel is the fulfillment of the promises of God revealed in the OT.

1:3-4 Son of God here refers to the Messiah, the promised king of Israel, who would be **a descendant of David** (2Sm 7:12-13). The **resurrection** of Jesus seals his messianic status (Ac 2:22-36).

1:7 In the NT all believers are called **saints**, that is "holy ones." In Christ we are made holy—set apart to belong to God.

1:14 The ancient Greek-speaking world divided humanity into **Greeks** (those who could speak Greek and were thus considered civilized) and **barbarians** (everyone else).

1:16 Paul lived in a shame culture, in which honor was extremely important. The very idea of crucifixion was regarded as shameful, since a crucified person was thought to be under God's curse. Thus, the gospel that Paul preaches—about a crucified Savior—would be regarded as shameful. Nevertheless, Paul says he is **not ashamed of the gospel.** Paul uses the then typical Jewish way of categorizing people: **Jew** and **Greek** (anyone who is not a Jew). The gospel comes first to the people of the old covenant and then to the rest of the world.

1:17 The righteousness of God refers to God acting rightly, according to his nature (e.g., Pss 7:9; 145:17), or acting to put things right (e.g., Is 46:13; 51:5-8)—especially in the sense of vindicating his people (e.g., Dt 32:35,43; Ps 135:14). Scholars debate which sense is most likely here, but in the overall argument of Romans it is clear that both senses are appropriate. God does what is righteous, and he acts to put humanity in right relation with himself.

1:18 The first point of Paul's gospel explanation is the wrath of God against all sin. The good news must be understood in the context of the reality of evil.

1:19–21 See "General Revelation," *p. 626;* "Agnosticism and Secularism," *p. 620;* "Where Did Other Religions Come From?" *p. 55;* "Evolution and Intelligent Design," *p. 724;* "Polytheism in Biblical Times," *p. 653.*

1:21 See v. 28; "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

1:23 Forming **images** of created things for the purpose of worship is idolatry; it is worshiping the creation rather than the Creator (cp. v. 25). Idolatry was almost universal in the ancient world, and Israel engaged in it too, ultimately leading to their exile.

1:26-27 Unlike much of the Greek and Roman culture around him, Paul clearly denounces homosexual behavior as sinful. It goes against **natural sexual relations** and is thus against God's design for humanity

(cp. Gn 1:27). See “Engaging LGBT Advocates,” *p. 1392;* “Christian Worldview and Same-Sex Marriage,” *p. 1499.*

GOD’S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

2 Therefore, every one of you † † who judges is without excuse. † For when you judge another, † you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. 2 We know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. 3 Do you really think — anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same — that you will escape God’s judgment? 4 Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, † restraint, † and patience, † not recognizing † that God’s kindness † is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath † for yourself in the day of wrath, † when God’s righteous judgment is revealed. 6 **He will repay each one according to his works**: † † 7 eternal life † to those who by persistence in doing good † seek glory, honor, † and immortality; † 8 but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking † and disobey the truth † while obeying unrighteousness. 9 There will be affliction and distress † for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; † 10 but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no favoritism with God. †

12 All who sin without the law † will also perish without the law, and all who sin under † the law will be judged by the law. 13 For the hearers of the law † are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. † 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, † do † what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law † is written on their hearts. † Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them † 16 on the day when God judges † what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus. †

JEWISH VIOLATION OF THE LAW

17 Now if † you call yourself a Jew, and rely on the law, † and boast in God,
18 and know his will, and approve the things that are superior, † being
instructed from the law, 19 and if you are convinced that you are a guide for the
blind, a light to those in darkness, 20 an instructor of the ignorant, a teacher of
the immature, having the embodiment of knowledge and truth † in the law —
21 you then, who teach another, † don't you teach yourself? You who preach,
"You must not steal" — do you steal? 22 You who say, "You must not commit
adultery" — do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob their
temples? † 23 You who boast in the law, † do you dishonor God by breaking
the law? 24 For, as it is written: **The name of God is blasphemed among the
Gentiles because of you.** † †

CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART

25 Circumcision benefits you if you observe the law, but if you are a lawbreaker,
your circumcision has become uncircumcision. † 26 So if an uncircumcised †
man keeps the law's requirements, † will not his uncircumcision be counted as
circumcision? 27 A man who is physically uncircumcised, but who keeps the
law, will judge you † who are a lawbreaker in spite of having the letter of the
law and circumcision. 28 For a person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, †
and true circumcision is not something visible in the flesh. 29 On the contrary, a
person is a Jew who is one inwardly, † and circumcision is of the heart — by the
Spirit, not the letter. † † That person's praise is not from people but from
God. †

2:1 Lit *Therefore, O man, every one* **2:4** Or *patience, because you do not recognize* **2:12** Lit *in* **2:13** Or *acquitted* **2:14** Or *who do not have the law, instinctively do* **2:15** The code of conduct required by the law **2:15** Internal debate, either in a person or among the pagan moralists **2:17** Other mss read *Look* — **2:29** Or *heart — spiritually, not literally*

2:1 Lk 12:14; Rm 9:20 **2:1** Rm 1:20 **2:1** 2Sm 12:5-7; Mt 7:1; Rm 14:22 **2:4** Rm 11:22 **2:4** Rm 3:25 **2:4** Ex 34:6; Rm 9:22; 1Tm 1:16; 1Pt 3:20; 2Pt 3:15 **2:4** 2Pt 3:9 **2:5** Dt 32:34; Pr 1:18 **2:5** Ps 110:5; 2Co 5:10; 2Th 1:5; Jd 6 **2:6** Ps 62:12; Pr 24:12 **2:6** Ps 62:12; Pr 24:12; Mt 16:27 **2:7** 1Co 15:42,50,53 **2:7** Lk 8:15; Heb 10:36 **2:7** Heb 2:7; 1Pt 1:7 **2:7** Mt 25:46 **2:8** 2Co 12:20; Gl 5:20; Php 2:3; Jms 3:14,16 **2:8** 2Th 2:12 **2:9** Rm 8:35 **2:9** Ac 3:26; Rm 1:16; 1Pt 4:17 **2:11** Dt 10:17; Ac 10:34 **2:12** 1Co 9:21 **2:13** Mt 7:21,24; Jn 13:17; Jms 1:22 **2:14** Ac 10:35; Rm 1:19 **2:15** Rm 2:27 **2:16** Ac 10:42; 17:31; Rm 3:6; 14:10 **2:16** Rm 16:25; 1Co 15:1; Gl 1:11; 1Tm 1:11; 2Tm 2:8 **2:17** Mc 3:11; Jn 5:45; Rm 9:4 **2:18** Php 1:10 **2:20** Is 2:1-4; 42:6-7; 49:6 **2:21** Mt 23:3-7 **2:22** Ac 19:37 **2:23** Mc 3:11; Jn 5:45; Rm 9:4 **2:24** Is 52:5 **2:24** Is 52:5; Ezk 36:20-23; 2Pt 2:2 **2:25** Jr 4:4; 9:25 **2:26** Rm 3:30; 1Co 7:19; Eph 2:11 **2:26** Rm 8:4 **2:27** Mt 12:41 **2:28** Jn

8:39; Rm 9:6; Gl 6:15 **2:29** Php 3:3; Col 2:11 **2:29** Rm 7:6; 2Co 3:6 **2:29** Jn 5:44; 12:43; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 10:18

2:1-5 While Paul's Jewish readers would no doubt agree with the critique of Gentile idolatry (1:18-32), now Paul turns to include Jews as facing the same condemnation.

2:7-11 Paul is not teaching that people can earn salvation, as he makes clear in chapter 4. As elsewhere in the NT, salvation is connected with works as evidence of persevering in faith (Mt 25:31-46; 1Tm 4:16; Heb 10:36).

2:12-16 Whether or not one has heard God's law, all are responsible before God. People have an innate awareness of God's requirements, the **law** of God **is written on their hearts.** (see "General Revelation," *p. 626;* "Should We Legislate Morality?" *p. 215*).

2:15 See "The Existence of God," *p. 849.*

2:24 The OT makes clear that the Jewish people did not have a good record of obedience to the law they knew. Paul's quote of Isaiah 52:5 indicates that the Jews cannot claim right standing before God on their own merit.

2:25 Circumcision, beginning with Abraham (Gn 17:9-14), was the mark of belonging to God's covenant people, (Gn 17:9-14). Given that many Jews lived among pagans in Paul's day, such outward markers were emphasized in order to preserve Jewish identity. Many Jews had come to think that if one was circumcised, he would ultimately be saved. In the verses that follow, Paul refutes this popular idea.

2:27 This is a radical claim, since Jews believed that Gentiles had to be circumcised to be saved. Only circumcised Gentiles could be considered true converts to Judaism.

PAUL ANSWERS AN OBJECTION

3 So what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the benefit of
circumcision? 2 Considerable in every way. First, they were entrusted †
with the very words of God. † 3 What then? If some were unfaithful, †
will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? 4 Absolutely not! † Let God
be true, even though everyone is a liar, † as it is written:

That you may be justified in your words and triumph when you judge. † †

5 But if our unrighteousness highlights † God's righteousness, † what are we to
say? † I am using a human argument: † † Is God unrighteous to inflict wrath?
6 Absolutely not! Otherwise, how will God judge the world? † 7 But if by my
lie God's truth abounds to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a
sinner? † 8 And why not say, just as some people slanderously claim we say,
"Let us do what is evil so that good may come"? † Their condemnation is
deserved!

THE WHOLE WORLD GUILTY BEFORE GOD

9 What then? Are we any better off? † Not at all! For we have already charged
that both Jews † and Gentiles † † are all under sin, † † 10 as it is written:
There is no one righteous, not even one.
11 **There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.**
12 **All have turned away; all alike have become worthless.**
There is no one who does what is good, not even one. † †
13 **Their throat is an open grave; they deceive with their tongues.** † †
Vipers' venom is under their lips. † †
14 **Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.** † †
15 **Their feet are swift to shed blood;** 16 **ruin and wretchedness are in their paths,** 17 **and the path of peace they have not known.** † †
18 **There is no fear of God before their eyes.** † †
19 Now we know that whatever the law says, † it speaks to those who are subject to the law, † † so that every mouth may be shut and the whole world may become subject to God's judgment. † † 20 For no one will be justified † in his sight by the works of the law, † because the knowledge of sin comes through the law. †

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH

21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been revealed, †
attested by the Law and the Prophets. † † 22 The righteousness of God is through faith † in Jesus Christ † † to all who believe, † since there is no distinction. † 23 For all have sinned † and fall short of the † glory of God.
24 They are justified freely by his grace † through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. †

THE GOSPEL AND THE FORMATION OF A CHRISTIAN

WORLDVIEW

The gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus (see 1Co 15:1-11) is the core message regarding the climactic events central to a Christian worldview. To understand the Christian worldview, we must start with the word *worldview* itself.

A worldview is a way, a perspective, an outlook on the world, on all there is. While worldviews can certainly be described, analyzed, and compared to other worldviews—and thus debated—usually a worldview consists of the set of assumptions that govern how we view and understand all of reality. We don't ordinarily question our worldviews, unless we feel ultimate issues really need to be analyzed and debated. A worldview is the lens, the frame of reference, or, to change the metaphor, the scaffolding on which we build our living, our actions, our thinking, and our experiences. Thus, a worldview should not be limited merely to "seeing" or looking. It is our way of knowing and understanding, accomplished as we live and experience all that there is.

A biblical, Christian worldview begins with the assumption of the one true Creator God, who involves himself in history and seeks relationship with his creatures. It does not assume a deist god who is merely there, and certainly not a pantheistic god whose existence is mingled in with all that there is. The God of Scripture is the God who creates, who makes all things good, who is intimately involved with his creation, and who is faithful in all his interactions with it. From a biblical perspective, there can be no argument as to whether or not God does the "miraculous," because the whole of creation is his world; he is involved in it; and his presence in the world occurs both by routine and by things wondrous and strange. The Scriptures refer to God as having covenants not only with his human creatures, but also with the creation itself (cp. Gn 8:20-22; 9:8-17).

Most worldviews, whether secular or religious, have stories and narratives as part of their basic structure. In the case of a Christian worldview, the stories that lie at the heart of our perspective are essentially the narratives of what God has done in history. The God of Scripture is active in the world he made; thus, history witnesses to his presence both in creation and in his actions, particularly as these are revealed in the Bible. Thus, Scripture not only provides a worldview for those who accept its testimony, but it also reflects the worldview of its authors. Put another way, the writers of Scripture are themselves informed by the great truths that they teach—so that the biblical worldview provides a lens through which their writing should be understood—while they also establish the worldview that informs Christian theology.

The story of the Bible begins with the God who creates. But the narrative quickly moves to a crisis known as the fall. The rebellion of Adam and Eve provides the second fixed point in the narrative. The fall is the backdrop for the rest of the biblical story, in which God acts to redeem humanity and to restore the entire creation—to make a new heaven and a new earth. So, according to a biblical worldview, there is one Creator God who is involved in his creation. He acts to restore the world.

From the vantage point of creation and the fall, we then see the patterns of God's actions in history to redeem and rescue, as they unfold in Scripture. This has implications for a Christian understanding of history. A Christian worldview assumes that history does not inevitably decline. There is always the prospect of God's divine action, which at any moment may set a new course for history. God works through circumstances both good and evil (cp. Rm 9:14-17) to move history along to accomplish his faithful purposes.

We can be somewhat specific regarding God's movements in history to redeem, since he has unfolded a strategy whereby he chose a particular people, Israel, and through this nation he has acted to bring the whole world back to himself. God's choosing of Israel underlies the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through to Joseph and the enslavement of God's people in Egypt. Israel's exodus from Egypt through God's dramatic plagues upon the former led his chosen people to Canaan. But Israel's story has multiple twists, because, in the end, Israel herself was not faithful to God. Israel was sent into exile, but her prophets, who warned of her impending judgment, also reiterated God's promises that one day he would reign as King (cp.

Is 35:3-6; 40:3-5,9-10; 52:7-10; 60:1-2; Ezk 43:1-7; Zch 8:2-3; 14:1-17) and restore his people. Israel would be brought back from exile, and a son of the great King David (Is 9:6-7; 11:1-11; Jr 33:14-18), who would rule in the place of God, would be seated on a throne. He would not only rule Israel, but eventually all nations would pay him homage and worship the one Creator God.

But once again, the larger biblical narrative takes a surprising turn. The long-awaited King not only suffered for his people, Israel, in an act of propitiation and sacrifice that concluded their exile and redeemed them from sin. He also fulfilled Israel's unfinished work to be a light to the Gentiles and to bring the nations back to God. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the climactic moments in the larger biblical story.

Now the people of God are organized around Jesus—the true Israel of God, and the second Adam—and must preach the gospel, the message of the crucified and resurrected Jesus, to the ends of the earth. As the gospel of Jesus is preached in all the world, the final vindication of Jesus will come, and the glorious day of resurrection and restoration will occur (Mt 24:14). Then, the restoration of heaven and earth will take place (Rv 21:1-5; cp. Is 65:17; 66:22), and a final separation of all the peoples and nations of the earth will happen (Mt 25:31-46; 2Th 1:5-10; Rv 20:1-15). Those who embrace the one true God through Jesus will be raised to a glorious life, while those who have rejected God's Son are banished into outer darkness. Then God will be "all in all" (1Co 15:28).

This outline of the biblical narrative constitutes the lens through which Christians understand the world. Worldviews may be described, analyzed, and debated. But every worldview that claims to be Christian and biblical must start with the one true Creator God, who made man and woman in his image and who, despite the rebellion of his creatures and the consequent cursing of creation, longs to redeem his people—an action that he has accomplished through the coming of Jesus, the long-awaited son of David. Christ fulfills the work of Israel, drawing the nations back to God through his obedient death, resurrection, enthronement at the right hand of God, and final appearance as King of kings and Lord of lords.

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25 God presented him as an atoning sacrifice † † in his blood, † received through faith, to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his restraint God † passed over the sins previously committed. † 26 God presented him to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so that he would be righteous and declare righteous † the one who has faith in Jesus.

BOASTING EXCLUDED

27 Where, then, is boasting? † It is excluded. By what kind of law? † † By one of works? No, on the contrary, by a law † of faith. 28 For we conclude that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. † 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? † Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is one God † who will justify the circumcised by faith † and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! † On the contrary, we uphold the law. †

3:5 Or *shows*, or *demonstrates* **3:5** Lit *I speak as a man* **3:9** Are we Jews any better than the Gentiles? **3:9** Lit *Greeks* **3:9** Under sin's power or dominion **3:19** Lit *those in the law* **3:19** Or *become guilty before God*, or *may be accountable to God* **3:20** Or *will be declared righteous*, or *will be acquitted* **3:21** When capitalized, *the Law and the Prophets* = OT **3:22** Or *through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ* **3:23** Or *and lack the* **3:25** Or *a propitiation*, or *a place of atonement* **3:26** Or *and justify*, or *and acquit* **3:27** Or *what principle?* **3:27** Or *a principle*
3:2 Dt 4:8; Ps 147:19; Rm 9:4 **3:2** Ac 7:38 **3:3** Rm 10:16; Heb 4:2 **3:4** Lk 20:16; Rm 3:31 **3:4** Ps 116:11 **3:4** Ps 51:4 **3:4** Ps 51:4 **3:5** Rm 5:8; 2Co 6:4; Gl 2:18 **3:5** Rm 4:1; 7:7; 8:31; 9:14,30 **3:5** Rm 6:19; 1Co 9:8; 15:32; Gl 3:15 **3:6** Rm 2:16 **3:7** Rm 9:19 **3:8** Rm 6:1 **3:9** Rm 2:1-29 **3:9** Rm 1:18-32 **3:9** Rm 3:19,23; 11:32; Gl 3:22 **3:10-12** Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ec 7:20 **3:10-12** Ps 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ec 7:20 **3:13** Ps 5:9 **3:13** Ps 5:9 **3:13** Ps 140:3 **3:13** Ps 140:3 **3:14** Ps 10:7 **3:14** Ps 10:7 **3:15-17** Is 59:7-8 **3:15-17** Is 59:7-8 **3:18** Ps 36:1 **3:18** Ps 36:1 **3:19** Jn 10:34 **3:19** Rm 2:12 **3:19** Rm 2:9 **3:20** Ps 143:2; Ac 13:39; Gl 2:16 **3:20** Rm 4:15; 5:13,20; 7:7 **3:21** Rm 1:17; 9:30 **3:21** Ac 10:43; Rm 1:2 **3:22** Rm 4:5 **3:22** Ac 3:16; Gl 2:16,20; 3:22; Eph 3:12 **3:22** Rm 4:11,16; 10:4 **3:22** Rm 10:12; Gl 3:28; Col 3:11 **3:23** Rm 3:9 **3:24** Rm 4:4,16; Eph 2:8 **3:24** 1Co 1:30; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15 **3:25** 1Jn 2:2; 4:10 **3:25** 1Co 5:7; Heb 9:14,28; 1Pt 1:19; Rv 1:5 **3:25** Rm 2:4 **3:25** Ac 17:30; 14:16 **3:27** Rm 2:17,23; 4:2; 1Co 1:29-31 **3:27** Rm 9:31 **3:28** Ac 13:39; Rm 9:31; Eph 2:9; Jms 2:20,24,26 **3:29** Ac 10:34; Rm 9:24; 10:12; 15:9; Gl 3:28 **3:30** Rm 10:12 **3:30** Rm 4:11,16; Gl 3:8 **3:31** Lk 20:16; Rm 3:4 **3:31** Mt 5:17; Rm 4:3; 8:4

3:10-18 Paul collects a string of quotes from various parts of the OT to support his argument that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin. Later rabbis used such collections of verses, and the practice may have been common in the first century as well.

3:21-22 The righteousness of God does not come through obedience to the OT **law**, but **through faith in Jesus Christ** to whom the OT Scriptures (**the Law and the Prophets**) pointed. See the note on 1:17.

3:24 To be **justified** means to be put right with God. Justification is a legal declaration of right standing, and Paul argues that this status is granted **freely** by God's **grace**, meaning that right standing with him is not something deserved or achieved by people. Rather, it is God's gift. **Redemption** refers to the payment of a price in order to secure liberation. The central redemptive event in Israel's history was the exodus from Egypt, in which God delivered his people out of slavery. Redemption from sin occurs **in Christ Jesus.**

3:25 Paul describes Christ's death in terms of an OT **atoning sacrifice** (propitiation), in which the sacrifice turns away God's wrath against sin. While propitiation in pagan religious practice was understood to placate capricious and irascible gods, God's wrath is never capricious. Furthermore, he takes steps to propitiate *himself*—that is, the sacrifice of atonement is offered by God in Christ in order to deal with humanity's sin.

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

4 What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather † according to the flesh, has found? † 2 If Abraham was justified † by works, † he has something to boast about — but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.** † † 4 Now to the one who works, † pay is not credited as a gift, but as something owed. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes on him

who declares the ungodly to be righteous,† his faith is credited for righteousness.

DAVID CELEBRATING THE SAME TRUTH

6 Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the person to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

7 **Blessed are those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered.**

8 **Blessed is the person the Lord will never charge with sin.** † †

ABRAHAM JUSTIFIED BEFORE CIRCUMCISION

9 Is this blessing only for the circumcised,† then? Or is it also for the uncircumcised? For we say, **Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness.** † † 10 In what way then was it credited — while he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? It was not while he was circumcised, but uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision† as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith† † while still uncircumcised. This was to make him the father† of all who believe† but are not circumcised, so that righteousness may be credited to them also. 12 And he became the father of the circumcised, who are not only circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith our father Abraham had while he was still uncircumcised.

THE PROMISE GRANTED THROUGH FAITH

13 For the promise to Abraham† or to his descendants that he would inherit the world† was not through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 If those who are of the law are heirs,† faith is made empty and the promise nullified, 15 because the law produces wrath.† And where there is no law,† there is no transgression.

16 This is why the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to grace,† to guarantee it to all the descendants† — not only to those who are of the law† but also to those who are of Abraham's faith. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: **I have made you the father of many nations.** † † He is our father in God's sight, in whom Abraham believed — the God who gives life to the dead†

and calls † things into existence that do not exist. † 18 He believed, hoping against hope, so that he became **the father of many nations** † † according to what had been spoken: **So will your descendants be.** † † 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered † his own body to be already dead † (since he was about a hundred years old) † and also the deadness of Sarah's womb. † 20 He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, † 21 because he was fully convinced † that what God had promised, he was also able to do. † 22 Therefore, **it was credited to him for righteousness.** † † 23 Now **it was credited to him** † was not written for Abraham alone, † 24 but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in him † who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. † 25 He was delivered up for † our trespasses † and raised for our justification. †

4:1 Or *What then shall we say? Have we found Abraham to be our forefather according to the flesh?* or *What, then, shall we say that Abraham our forefather found according to the flesh?* **4:2** Or *was declared righteous*, or *was acquitted* **4:11** Lit *righteousness of faith*, also in v. 13 **4:16** Or *not to those who are of the law only* **4:19** Other mss read *He did not consider* **4:25** Or *because of*

4:1 Rm 1:3 **4:2** 1Co 1:31 **4:3** Gn 15:6 **4:3** Gn 15:6; Gl 3:6; Jms 2:23 **4:4** Rm 11:6 **4:5** Jn 3:33; Rm 3:22 **4:7-8** Ps 32:1-2 **4:7-8** Ps 32:1-2; 2Co 5:19 **4:9** Rm 3:30 **4:9** Gn 15:6 **4:9** Gn 15:6 **4:11** Gn 17:10-11 **4:11** Jn 3:33 **4:11** Lk 19:9 **4:11** Rm 3:22 **4:13** Rm 9:8; Gl 3:16; Heb 6:15,17; 7:6; 11:9,17 **4:13** Gn 17:4-6; 21:17-18 **4:14** Gl 3:18 **4:15** Rm 7:7,10-25; 1Co 15:56; Gl 3:10 **4:15** Rm 3:20 **4:16** Rm 3:24 **4:16** Rm 9:8; 15:8 **4:17** Gn 17:5 **4:17** Gn 17:5 **4:17** Jn 5:21 **4:17** Is 48:13; 51:2 **4:17** 1Co 1:28 **4:18** Gn 17:5 **4:18** Gn 17:5 **4:18** Gn 15:5 **4:18** Gn 15:5 **4:19** Heb 11:12 **4:19** Gn 17:17 **4:19** Gn 18:11 **4:20** Mt 9:8 **4:21** Rm 14:5 **4:21** Gn 18:14; Heb 11:19 **4:22** Gn 15:6 **4:22** Gn 15:6; Rm 4:3 **4:23** Gn 15:6 **4:23** Rm 15:4; 1Co 9:9; 10:11; 2Tm 3:16 **4:24** Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:21 **4:24** Ac 2:24 **4:25** Rm 5:6,8; 8:32; Gl 2:20; Eph 5:2 **4:25** Rm 5:18; 1Co 15:17; 2Co 5:15

4:1-13 Since **Abraham** was regarded the "father" of Israel (Is 51:2), how Abraham **was justified** is significant for the debate between Paul and those who say one must first become a Jew (and thus obey the OT law) to be saved. Abraham's faith is "credited . . . to him as righteousness" in Genesis 15:6, even though **circumcision** is not discussed until Genesis 17:10-14. Thus, **righteousness that comes by faith** precedes any outward markers or formal law.

4:15 Transgression means breaking a specific law, so transgression is not possible without law. Nonetheless, Paul is not saying there was no sin before the law was given (see 1:18-32).

4:17 See "Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview," *p. 846.*

4:25 Jesus was **delivered up for our trespasses**, which recalls the work of the Suffering Servant, who would be "handed over because of their sins" (Gk version of Is 53:12). Being **raised for our justification** indicates that justification is connected to resurrection. In keeping with the Jewish expectation of resurrection for the purpose of judgment (Dn 12:2; Jn 5:28-29), Paul regards Jesus's resurrection as having secured vindication (justification) in the judgment. Those who are raised with Christ are thereby justified with him (Rm 5:5; Eph 2:5-6; Col 2:13).

FAITH TRIUMPHS

FAITH TRIUMPHS

5 Therefore, since we have been declared righteous by faith, † we have peace † with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. † 2 We have also obtained access through him † by faith † into this grace in which we stand, † and we rejoice † in the hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only that, † but we also rejoice in our afflictions, † because we know that affliction produces endurance, † 4 endurance produces proven character, † and proven character produces hope. 5 This hope will not disappoint us, † because God's love has been poured out in our hearts † through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

THOSE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS ARE RECONCILED

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time, † Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For rarely will someone die for a just person — though for a good person perhaps someone might even dare to die. 8 But God proves † his own love for us † in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 How much more then, since we have now been declared righteous by his blood, † will we be saved through him from wrath. † 10 For if, while we were enemies, † we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, then how much more, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. † 11 And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this reconciliation. †

DEATH THROUGH ADAM AND LIFE THROUGH CHRIST

12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, † and death through sin, † in this way death spread to all people, † because all sinned. †
13 In fact, sin was in the world before the law, but sin is not charged to a person's account when there is no law. † 14 Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. † He is a type of the Coming One. †
15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if by the one man's trespass the many died, how much more have the grace of God and the gift which comes through

the grace of the one man † Jesus Christ overflowed to the many. 16 And the gift is not like the one man's sin, because from one sin came the judgment, † resulting in condemnation, but from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in justification. † 17 Since by the one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive the overflow of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life † through the one man, Jesus Christ.
18 So then, as through one trespass there is condemnation for everyone, so also through one righteous act there is justification leading to life † for everyone. 19 For just as through one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, † so also through the one man's obedience † the many will be made righteous. 20 The law came along to multiply the trespass. † But where sin multiplied, grace multiplied even more † 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, † so also grace will reign † through righteousness, resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5:1 Other mss read *faith, let us have peace*, which can also be translated *faith, let us grasp the fact that we have peace* **5:2** Other mss omit *by faith* **5:2** Lit *boast*, also in vv. 3,11 **5:12** Or *have sinned* **5:16** Or *acquittal*

5:1 Rm 3:28 **5:1** Rm 5:11 **5:2** Eph 2:18; 3:12; Heb 10:19-20; 1Pt 3:18 **5:2** 1Co 15:1 **5:3** Rm 5:11; 8:23; 9:10; 2Co 8:19 **5:3** Mt 5:12; Jms 1:2-3 **5:3** Lk 21:19 **5:4** Php 2:22; Jms 1:12 **5:5** Ps 119:116; Rm 9:33; Heb 6:18-20 **5:5** Ac 2:33; 10:45; Gl 4:6; Ti 3:6 **5:6** Gl 4:4 **5:8** Rm 3:5 **5:8** Jn 3:16; 15:13; Rm 8:39 **5:9** Rm 3:25 **5:9** Rm 1:18; 1Th 1:10 **5:10** Rm 11:28; 2Co 5:18-20; Eph 2:3; Col 1:21 **5:10** Rm 8:34; Heb 7:25 **5:11** Rm 11:15; 2Co 5:18-20 **5:12** Gn 2:17; 3:6,19; 1Co 15:21 **5:12** Rm 6:23; 1Co 15:56; Jms 1:15 **5:12** Rm 5:19,21; 1Co 15:22 **5:13** Rm 4:15 **5:14** Hs 6:7 **5:14** 1Co 15:45 **5:15** Ac 15:11 **5:16** 1Co 11:32 **5:17** 2Tm 2:12; Rv 22:5 **5:18** Rm 4:25 **5:19** Rm 11:32 **5:19** Php 2:8 **5:20** Rm 3:20; 7:7; Gl 3:19 **5:20** Rm 6:1; 1Tm 1:14 **5:21** Rm 5:12,14 **5:21** Jn 1:17; Rm 6:23

5:1 Peace with God is a strong contrast to being under God's wrath—which was the just penalty for all humans before Jesus's atonement for sin (1:18; 2:5; 5:9). The Hebrew notion of peace envisioned harmony and well-being in relationship with God, rather than simply the cessation of hostility.

5:3 See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580.*

5:7-8 The extravagance of God's love is seen in the giving of his Son to die for us **while we were still sinners.** God's love is contrasted with the rarity of self-sacrificial death on behalf of others, even for those considered **just** and **good.**

5:9 Jewish expectation held that justification (or the declaration of righteousness) would occur on the last day at the final judgment of God (e.g., Psalms of Solomon 17:26-29). Paul, however, claims that justification has already occurred for those with faith in Christ. This is because the believer is able to participation in Jesus's own vindication, evidenced by his resurrection from the dead (see the note on 4:25). The final judgment will ratify the righteous standing already **declared** for those in Christ.

5:12-14 See "Illness and a Christian Worldview," *p. 646.*

5:12 The word for **man** in Hebrew is also a name: *Adam*. Through this one man **death** and **sin entered the world** and **spread to all people** (Gn 3). See the essay "Fall and Redemption," *p. 12;* "Creation: A Young Earth Perspective ," *p. 9;* Creation: Why an Old Earth View Is Defensible," *p. 7*.

5:14 The Coming One is Jesus, as the following paragraph shows (5:17).

5:20 The coming of **the law** exposed more of sin, since it specifies the reality of sin once various commandments are broken.

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

6 What should we say then? † Should we continue in sin so that grace
may multiply? † 2 Absolutely not! † How can we who died to sin †
still live in it? 3 Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized †
into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? † 4 Therefore we were buried
with him by baptism into death, † in order that, just as Christ was raised from
the dead † by the glory of the Father, † so we too may walk in newness † of
life. † 5 For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, † we
will certainly also be † in the likeness of his resurrection. 6 For we know that
our old self † † was crucified with him † so that the body ruled by sin † might
be rendered powerless † so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, 7 since a
person who has died † is freed † from sin. 8 Now if we died with Christ, † we
believe that we will also live with him, 9 because we know that Christ, having
been raised from the dead, † will not die again. Death no longer rules over
him. † 10 For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he
lives, he lives to God. 11 So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin † and alive
to God in Christ Jesus. †
12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey † its
desires. 13 And do not offer any parts † of it to sin † as weapons for
unrighteousness. But as those who are alive from the dead, offer yourselves to
God, † and all the parts of yourselves to God as weapons for righteousness.
14 For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law † but under
grace. †

FROM SLAVES OF SIN TO SLAVES OF GOD

15 What then? Should we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? † Absolutely not! † 16 Don't you know that if you offer yourselves to someone † as obedient slaves, † you are slaves of that one you obey † — either of sin leading to death † or of obedience leading to righteousness? 17 But thank God that, although you used to be slaves of sin, † you obeyed from the heart that pattern of teaching to which you were handed † over, † 18 and having been set free from sin, † you became enslaved to righteousness. 19 I am using a human analogy † because of the weakness of your flesh. † For just as you offered the parts of yourselves as slaves to impurity, and to greater and greater lawlessness, so now offer them as slaves to righteousness, which results in sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free with regard to righteousness. † † 21 So what fruit was produced † then from the things you are now ashamed of? † The outcome of those things is death. † 22 But now, since you have been set free from sin and have become enslaved to God, † you have your fruit, which results in sanctification † — and the outcome is eternal life! † 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. †

6:4 Or *a new way* **6:5** Be joined with him **6:6** Lit *man* **6:6** Lit *that the body of sin* **6:7** Or *justified* ; lit *acquitted* **6:11** Other mss add *our Lord* **6:12** Other mss add *sin* (lit *it*) *in* **6:13** Or *members*, also in v. 19 **6:16** Lit *that to whom you offer yourselves* **6:17** Or *entrusted* **6:19** Or *your human nature* **6:20** Lit *free to righteousness* **6:21** Lit *what fruit do you have*

6:1 Rm 3:5 **6:1** Rm 3:8; 6:15 **6:2** Lk 20:16 **6:2** Rm 7:4,6; Gl 2:19; Col 2:20; 3:3; 1Pt 2:24 **6:3** Mt 28:19; 1Co 1:13-17; 12:13; Gl 3:27 **6:3** Ac 2:38; 8:16; 19:5 **6:4** Col 2:12 **6:4** Ac 2:24 **6:4** Jn 11:40; 2Co 13:4 **6:4** Rm 7:6; 2Co 5:17; Gl 6:15; Eph 4:23-24; Col 3:10 **6:5** 2Co 4:10; Php 3:10; Col 2:12; 3:1 **6:6** Eph 4:22; Col 3:9 **6:6** Gl 2:20; 5:24; 6:14 **6:6** Rm 7:24 **6:7** 1Pt 4:1 **6:8** 2Co 4:10; 2Tm 2:11 **6:9** Ac 2:24 **6:9** Rv 1:18 **6:11** Rm 7:4,6; Gl 2:19; Col 2:20; 3:3; 1Pt 2:24 **6:13** Rm 7:5; Col 3:5 **6:13** Rm 12:1; 2Co 5:14; 1Pt 2:24 **6:14** Rm 5:18; 7:4,6; Gl 4:21 **6:14** Rm 5:17,21 **6:15** Rm 6:1 **6:15** Lk 20:16 **6:16** Rm 11:2; 1Co 3:16; 5:6; 6:2-3,9,15-16,19; 9:13,24 **6:16** Jn 8:34; 2Pt 2:19 **6:16** Rm 6:23 **6:17** Rm 1:8; 2Co 2:14 **6:17** 2Tm 1:3 **6:18** Jn 8:32; Rm 8:2 **6:19** Rm 3:5 **6:20** Mt 6:24 **6:21** Jr 12:13; Ezk 16:63; Rm 7:5 **6:21** Rm 1:32; 5:12; 8:6,13; Gl 6:8 **6:22** 1Co 7:22; 1Pt 2:16 **6:22** Rm 7:4 **6:22** 1Pt 1:9 **6:23** Mt 25:46; Rm 5:21; 8:39

6:1-2 Paul anticipates the objection about his gospel of salvation by grace—why not continue in sin? The short answer to the objection is **absolutely not!** The longer answer occupies the remainder of the chapter.

6:3 The reference to baptism here may refer to physical, water baptism, or it may refer to "spiritual baptism," meaning conversion. The latter would mean that at the point of conversion to Christ, the believer was **baptized into his death** (see the note on vv. 5-7).

6:5-7 A key concept throughout this chapter is believers' union with Christ. **We have been united with him** in **his death** and **resurrection.** Union, or participation, with Christ refers to believers being connected

to the person and work of Jesus so that we participate in the benefits of his saving work. Paul is the chief theologian of union with Christ, though it can also be detected in the teaching of Jesus (e.g., Jn 14:20; 15:1-8; 17:21-23; cp. Ac 9:4). The idea does not find its conceptual background in pagan mysticism, but in the teaching of Jesus and in OT notions of corporate solidarity (cp. Rm 5:12-21). Being **crucified with** Christ means that believers have escaped slavery to sin, because death satisfied the demands of sin. **A person who has died is freed from sin.** Throughout this chapter **sin** is personified as a ruler, or slave-master. It is not individualized, personal acts of sin that are in view, but the tyrannical reign of sin over its slaves (vv. 12,14,16-17,20).

6:9 Christ's resurrection **from the dead** is unlike prior resurrections (e.g., Lazarus's; Jn 11), since Christ **will not die again.** This is because Christ's death conquered sin; once sin has been conquered, death has been conquered (see the note on 1Co 15:56).

6:10-11 If Christ's death is concerned with sin, his resurrection is concerned with eternal life in relation to God. This means that believers who have died with Christ are to **consider** themselves **dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus**, because they have participation in Christ's death to sin and his resurrection to eternal life.

6:12 Christians are no longer under the tyrannical reign of sin, having died to sin with Christ (v. 6). But here Paul acknowledges that believers may nonetheless put themselves back under obedience to sin's **desires.** This is to be avoided.

6:16-23 Throughout this section, Paul's dominate motif is the ancient institution of slavery. Part of the fabric of ancient Rome, the concept is immediately understood by his readers. Notably, Paul does not contrast slavery with freedom, but slavery to two different masters. Slavery is bad when the master is sin; but slavery is good when the master is God. Indeed, slavery to God is true freedom.

6:16 Christian freedom does not mean living outside of any authority, as this verse makes clear. Freedom is living under the appropriate authority, having been rescued from harmful authority. A person's conduct ultimately demonstrates allegiance: obedience to **sin** characterizes the slaves of sin, while obedience to **righteousness** characterizes the righteous person.

6:18 Believers have **been set free from sin** by being crucified with Christ (v. 6). Having escaped the tyrannical rule of the dominion of sin, believers are now **enslaved to righteousness.** Righteousness is the new governing principle to which believers are subject.

6:22 Humans will always be under authority—but to whom will we be subject? Being **set free from sin** means that believers are now **enslaved to God.** This is true freedom—not autonomy or self-rule, but obedience to God.

6:23 The wages of sin is death because death is the fruit of sin. This inextricable connection between sin and death goes back to Adam's sin in the garden, the penalty for which was death for all humanity (Gn 3). While sin earns death as its wages, eternal life is **the gift of God**, found **in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM MARRIAGE

7 Since I am speaking to those who know the law, brothers and sisters, † don't you know that the law rules over someone as long as he lives? 2 For example, a married woman is legally bound to her husband while he lives. † But if her husband dies, she is released from the law regarding the husband. 3 So then, if she is married to another man while her husband is living,

she will be called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law. Then, if she is married to another man, she is not an adulteress.

4 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you also were put to death † in relation to the law † through the body of Christ † so that you may belong to another. You belong to him who was raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, † the sinful passions aroused through the law were working in us † † to bear fruit for death. 6 But now we have been released from the law, since we have died to what held us, so that we may serve in the newness of the Spirit † and not in the old letter of the law.

SIN'S USE OF THE LAW

7 What should we say then? † Is the law sin? Absolutely not! † On the contrary, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. † For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, **Do not covet.** † † 8 And sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, † produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead. †
9 Once I was alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life again 10 and I died. The commandment that was meant for life † resulted in death for me. 11 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, † and through it killed me. 12 So then, the law is holy, † and the commandment is holy and just and good. 13 Therefore, did what is good become death to me? Absolutely not! † On the contrary, sin, in order to be recognized as sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that through the commandment, sin might become sinful beyond measure.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN IN US

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, † but I am of the flesh, † sold † as a slave to sin. † † 15 For I do not understand what I am doing, † because I do not practice what I want to do, † but I do what I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good. 17 So now I am no longer the one doing it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my flesh. † For the desire to do what is good is with me, but there is

no ability to do it. [19] For I do not do the good that I want to do, but I practice the evil that I do not want to do. [20] Now if I do what I do not want, I am no longer the one that does it, but it is the sin that lives in me. [21] So I discover this law: † † When I want to do what is good, † evil is present with me. [22] For in my inner self † I delight in God's law, † [23] but I see a different law in the parts of my body, † † waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. [24] What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? † [25] Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! † So then, with my mind I myself am serving the law of God, but with my flesh, the law of sin.

7:5 Lit *in our members* **7:14** Or *unspiritual* **7:14** Lit *under sin* **7:21** Or *principle* **7:21** Or *I find with respect to the law that when I want to do good* **7:22** Lit *inner man* **7:23** Lit *my members*

7:1 Rm 1:13 **7:2** 1Co 7:39 **7:4** Rm 6:2 **7:4** Rm 8:2; Gl 2:19; 5:18 **7:4** Col 1:22 **7:5** Rm 8:8-10; 2Co 10:3 **7:5** Rm 6:13,21,23 **7:6** Rm 2:29 **7:7** Rm 3:5 **7:7** Lk 20:16 **7:7** Rm 4:15; 5:20 **7:7** Ex 20:17 **7:7** Ex 20:17 **7:8** Rm 3:20 **7:8** 1Co 15:56 **7:10** Lv 18:5; Lk 10:28; Rm 10:5; Gl 3:12 **7:11** Gn 3:13 **7:12** 1Tm 1:8 **7:13** Lk 20:16 **7:14** 1Co 3:1 **7:14** 1Kg 21:20,25; 2Kg 17:17; Rm 6:6; Gl 4:3 **7:14** Rm 3:9 **7:15** Jn 15:15 **7:15** Gl 5:17 **7:18** Jn 3:6; Rm 8:3 **7:21** Rm 8:2 **7:22** 2Co 4:16; Eph 3:16; 1Pt 3:4 **7:23** Rm 6:19; Gl 5:17; Jms 4:1; 1Pt 2:11 **7:24** Rm 6:6; 8:2; Col 2:11 **7:25** 1Co 15:57

7:1-6 Paul draws on the universal image of marriage to illustrate believers' relationship to the law. **The law rules over someone as long as he lives**, just as a woman is **bound to her husband while he lives.** Similarly, a person is only released from the law through death.

7:4 Because believers have died with Christ (6:8), they no longer belong to the law since **death** brings to an end our obligation to the law (vv. 1–3).

7:5 To be **in the flesh** refers to being in a fallen human state, as opposed to having been renewed by the Spirit. The word *flesh* is used literally by Paul (see 1:3; 2:28; 3:20), and it is used metaphorically to refer to humanity's bondage to sin (see 7:18,25; 8:4-13). Some believe that this use of flesh shows that Paul is shaped by Greek thought in which the physical body was viewed as evil. However, it is more likely that the OT is Paul's primary background. There the Hebrew word *bāsār*, "flesh," refers to humans, particularly with reference to their tendency to sin (Gn 6:3,12; Ps 78:39).

7:6 While the **law** once functioned to provide guidance for God's people, the **Spirit** occupies the same role now for believers.

7:7 The **law** functioned to expose sin, naming it and causing us to recognize its wickedness. Because people are unable to fully obey the law, it has a ministry of condemnation (vv. 9-11). But the law is not bad. It is holy and just (v. 12), though lacking power to help us overcome sin.

7:12-13 Paul simultaneously defends the law as **holy**, **just**, and **good**, while also showing that it makes sin "more sinful" and produces death. This, however, is not the fault of the law; it is the fault of sinful humanity.

7:14-25 One of the most controversial passages in the NT, this section leads debate to swirl around whether Paul is describing his personal struggle with **sin** as a Christian believer, as a "pre-Christian" version of himself, as a generic Jewish person under law, or as a national Israel under law. Arguments that

Paul is describing his current experience include the general tone of the section, with the extensive use of "I" and the present tense. Also, he does elsewhere describe the phenomenon of ongoing struggle with sin (e.g., Gl 5:16-17). Arguments for an unconverted Jew (or Israel) under law include a number of statements that seem to contradict comments found in Romans 6 (cp. 7:14/6:22; 7:18/6:12; 7:19/6:14). That is, the descriptions found in 7:14-25 seem not to fit Paul's teaching regarding sin and the life of the Christian in the previous chapter. Instead, they seem to fit better the person who attempts to live under the law, but fails because of prevailing sin.

THE LIFE-GIVING SPIRIT

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation † for those in † Christ Jesus, † † 2 because the law of the Spirit of life † in Christ Jesus has set you † free from the law of sin and death. † 3 What the law could not do † since it was weakened by the flesh, † God did. He condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh † as a sin offering, † † 4 in order that the law's requirement would be fulfilled † in us who do not walk according to the flesh † but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on the things of the flesh, † but those who live according to the Spirit have their minds set on the things of the Spirit. 6 Now the mind-set of the flesh † is death, † but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace. 7 The mind-set of the flesh is hostile † to God because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so. 8 Those who are in the flesh † cannot please God. 9 You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. † If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, † he does not belong to him. 10 Now if Christ is in you, † the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit † gives life † because of righteousness. 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead † lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through † his Spirit who lives in you.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S MINISTRIES

12 So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, 13 because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, † you

will live. [14] For all those led by God's Spirit † are God's sons. † [15] For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. † Instead, you received the Spirit of adoption, † by whom we cry out, "*Abba*, † Father!" † [16] The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit † that we are God's children, [17] and if children, also heirs † — heirs of God and coheirs with Christ — if indeed we suffer with him † so that we may also be glorified with him.

FROM GROANS TO GLORY

[18] For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing † with the glory † that is going to be revealed to us. [19] For the creation eagerly waits with anticipation † for God's sons † to be revealed. [20] For the creation was subjected † to futility † — not willingly, but because of him who subjected it † — in the hope [21] that the creation itself † will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children. [22] For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains † until now. [23] Not only that, † but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits † — we also groan within ourselves, † eagerly waiting for adoption, † the redemption of our bodies. † [24] Now in this hope † we were saved, but hope † that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? [25] Now if we hope for what we do not see, † we eagerly wait for it with patience.

[26] In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, † but the Spirit himself intercedes for us † † with unspoken groanings. [27] And he who searches our hearts † knows the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

[28] We know that all things work together † for the good † of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. † [29] For those he foreknew he also predestined † to be conformed to the image of his Son, † so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. † [30] And those he

predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; † and those he justified, he also glorified. †

THE BELIEVER'S TRIUMPH

31 What then are we to say about these things? † If God is for us, who is against us? † 32 He did not even spare his own Son † but offered him up for us all. † How will he not also with him grant us everything? 33 Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? † God is the one who justifies. † 34 Who is the one who condemns? † Christ Jesus is the one who died, † but even more, has been raised; † he also is at the right hand of God † and intercedes for us. † 35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction † or distress or persecution † or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

Because of you
we are being put to death all day long; †
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered. † †

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors † through him who loved us. † 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, † nor angels nor rulers, † nor things present nor things to come, † nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God † that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. †

8:1 Other mss add *who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit* **8:2** Other mss read *me* **8:3** Or *for sin* **8:10** Or *spirit* **8:10** Or *your spirit is alive* **8:11** Other mss read *because of* **8:15** Aramaic for *father* **8:26** Some mss omit *for us* **8:28** Other mss read *that God works together in all things* **8:28** The ultimate good

8:1 Rm 5:16; 8:34 **8:1** Rm 8:9-10 **8:1** Rm 8:11,39; 16:3 **8:2** 1Co 15:45 **8:2** Jn 8:32,36; Rm 6:14,18; 7:4 **8:3** Ac 13:39; Heb 10:1-2 **8:3** Rm 7:18; Heb 7:18 **8:3** Php 2:7; Heb 2:14,17; 4:15 **8:3** Lv 5:6-7,11; 14:31; Is 53:10 **8:4** Lk 1:6; Rm 2:26 **8:4** Gl 5:16 **8:5** Gl 5:19-25 **8:6** Gl 6:8 **8:6** Rm 6:21 **8:7** Jms 4:4 **8:8** Rm 7:5 **8:9** Jn 14:23; 1Co 3:16; 6:19; 2Co 6:16; 2Tm 1:14 **8:9** Jn 14:17; Gl 4:6; Php 1:19; 1Jn 4:13 **8:10** Jn 17:23; Gl 2:20; Eph 3:17; Col 1:27 **8:11** Ac 2:24; Rm 6:4 **8:13** Col 3:5 **8:14** Gl 5:18 **8:14** Hs 1:10; Mt 5:9; Jn 1:12; Rm 9:8,26; 2Co 6:18; Gl 3:26; 1Jn 3:1; Rv 21:7 **8:15** 2Tm 1:7; Heb 2:15 **8:15** Gl 4:5 **8:15** Mk 14:36; Gl 4:6 **8:16** Ac 5:32 **8:17** Ac 20:32; Gl 3:29; 4:7; Eph 3:6; Ti 3:7; Heb 1:14; Rv 21:7 **8:17** 2Co 1:5,7; Php 3:10; Col 1:24; 2Tm 2:12 **8:18** 2Co 4:17; 1Pt 4:13 **8:18** Rm 1:5; Col 3:4; Ti 2:13; 1Pt 5:1 **8:19** Php 1:20 **8:19** 1Co 1:7; Col 3:4; 1Pt 1:7,13; 1Jn 3:2 **8:20** Gn 3:17-19 **8:20** Ps 39:5; Ec 1:2 **8:20** Gn 3:17; 5:29 **8:21** Ac 3:21; 2Pt 3:13; Rv 21:1 **8:22** Jr 12:4,11 **8:23** Rm 5:3 **8:23** Nm 15:17-21; 1Co 16:15; 2Co 1:22 **8:23** 2Co 5:2,4 **8:23** Gl 5:5 **8:23** Rm 7:24 **8:24** 1Th 5:8; Ti 3:7 **8:24** Rm 4:18; 2Co 5:7; Heb 11:1 **8:25** 1Th 1:3 **8:26** Mt 20:22; 2Co 12:8 **8:26** Jn 14:16; Rm 8:15-16; Eph 6:18 **8:27** Ps 139:1-5; Lk 16:15; Ac 1:24; Rv 2:23 **8:28** Rm 9:24; 11:29; 1Co 1:9; Gl 1:6,15; 5:8; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2Th 2:14; Heb 9:15; 1Pt 2:9; 3:9 **8:29** Rm

9:23; 1Co 2:7; Eph 1:5,11 **8:29** 1Co 15:49; Php 3:21; Col 3:10; 1Jn 3:2 **8:29** Col 1:18; Heb 1:6 **8:30** 1Co 6:11 **8:30** Jn 17:22; Rm 9:23; 1Co 2:7 **8:31** Rm 3:5; 4:1 **8:31** Ps 118:6; Mt 1:23 **8:32** Jn 3:16; Rm 5:8 **8:32** Rm 4:25 **8:33** Lk 18:7 **8:33** Is 50:8-9 **8:34** Rm 8:1 **8:34** Rm 5:6-8 **8:34** Ac 2:24 **8:34** Mk 16:19 **8:34** Heb 7:25; 9:24; 1Jn 2:1 **8:35** Rm 2:9; 2Co 4:8 **8:35** 1Co 4:11; 2Co 11:26-27 **8:36** Ac 20:24; 1Co 4:9; 15:30-31; 2Co 1:9; 6:9; 11:23 **8:36** Ps 44:22 **8:36** Is 53:7; Zch 11:4,7 **8:37** Jn 16:33; 1Co 15:57 **8:37** Gl 2:20; Eph 5:2; Rv 1:5 **8:38** 1Co 3:22 **8:38** 1Co 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1Pt 3:22 **8:38** 1Co 3:22 **8:39** Rm 5:8 **8:39** Rm 8:1

8:1 In descending from Adam (5:12-21) there is only death and condemnation, but **in Christ Jesus** there is forgiveness, life, and peace.

8:3 This verse summarizes the main arguments of chapters 6 and 7. Romans 8:3a focuses on the problem of the law (cp. Rm 7), while 8:3b focuses on sin (cp. Rm 6). The point is that God has dealt with both problems by sending Jesus.

8:4 On "flesh", see the note on 7:5. The contrast in 8:4-11 (flesh vs. Spirit) is not between material and immaterial substance, but between sinful humanity left to itself and humanity that has been renewed by the Spirit. The Hebrew metaphor of walking speaks of the character and direction of one's life; all people will walk **according to the flesh** or **according to the Spirit.**

8:7 Reason alone cannot persuade unbelievers since their **mind-set . . . is hostile to God** and is **unable to** submit to him. Considering Scripture logically is valuable, but we need the Spirit's work to open our eyes (see 2Co 4:1-6).

8:9 Though believers experience tension between the flesh and the Spirit (Gal 5:16-17), we are **not in the flesh**, that is under the flesh's dominion and control. Believers live in the dominion of the Spirit.

8:11 Paul draws on the Jewish expectation of the resurrection of the righteous (e.g., Dn 12:2; Ezk 37) and explains how this will happen: the Spirit **who raised Jesus from the dead** will also **bring your mortal bodies to life.** This is the *physical* counterpart of participation in Christ's resurrection, which is already a *spiritual* reality for believers (Rm 6:11; Eph 2:5).

8:13 The deeds of the body refer to sinful actions or thoughts. Paul calls believers to **put** these **to death**—that is, to wage war against our own sinful desires. The Christian must be in perpetual war against his own sin, holding out until full victory is found in Christ's presence either after death or at his coming.

8:14 This verse contradicts those who say one can become a Christian and only later receive the Holy Spirit (cp. 8:9).

8:15 Adoption was fairly common in the Roman world: Julius Caesar adopted Octavian, who became his heir and successor. Regardless of a lack of genetic connection, the adopted one became a legitimate heir and child on par with natural born offspring. Paul uses the practice of adoption to portray the full acceptance of Christians before God, their place as heirs, and to stress the graciousness of this act. ***Abba*** is an Aramaic term used by Jesus (Mk 14:36), which suggests close familial connection. The term is more reverential than "Daddy." It is more like "Father." See also "A Biblical View of Adoption," *p. 1367.*

8:19-22 Since the fall of humanity brought **futility** to creation, the resurrection of redeemed humanity (**God's children**) will bring renewal to **creation**. Both facts demonstrate that human sin has wider consequences than simply destroying humanity's relationship with God. It is part of a global and cosmic reality that involves the whole of the created order. See also "The Apocalyptic and the Environment," *p. 1565;* "The Bible and Creation Care," *p. 24.*

8:23 Firstfruits were the beginnings of the harvest as discussed in the law (Lv 23:10). Believers have the beginnings of redemption in the **Spirit** (redemption, 3:24; adoption, 8:15), but long for its completion at the resurrection **(the redemption of our bodies).**

8:28-30 See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580* "*Imago Dei* and the Distinctiveness of Humans," *p. 27.*

8:33-34 Assurance of salvation is grounded in a legal argument: God, as Judge, is the One who declares believers righteous—he **justifies** those in Christ. If the Judge has so determined this legal standing, who is left to condemn us? Moreover, Christ Jesus **intercedes** for believers at the right hand of God. Christ is our "Lawyer" and God is Judge—and both have already declared their acceptance of those in Christ. Thus, there can be no condemnation for them (v. 1).

8:36 Paul's quote of Psalm 44:22 reminds his readers that it is normal for God's people to face persecution. The believers in Rome will shortly experience fierce persecution under the tyrannical reign of Emperor Nero.

8:39 There is nothing in all creation—physical or spiritual, material or immaterial—that is able to separate believers from **the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.** This is the ultimate conclusion of the argument in Romans thus far. The law, sin, death, spiritual powers, and present or future realities are unable to compromise the standing that believers enjoy in Christ. The prevailing work of God in Jesus offers assurance of salvation and confidence in the face of any obstacle or doubt.

ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF CHRIST

9 I speak the truth in Christ † —I am not lying; my conscience testifies to
me through the Holy Spirit † — 2 that I have great sorrow and
unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish † that I myself were
cursed † and cut off † from Christ for the benefit of my brothers and sisters, my
own flesh and blood. 4 They are Israelites, † and to them belong the adoption, †
the glory, † the covenants, † the giving of the law, † the temple service, † and
the promises. † 5 The ancestors are theirs, † and from them, by physical
descent, † came the Christ, † who is God † over all, † praised forever. † †
Amen.

GOD'S GRACIOUS ELECTION OF ISRAEL

6 Now it is not as though the word of God has failed, † because not all who are
descended from Israel are Israel. † 7 Neither are all of Abraham's children his
descendants. † † On the contrary, **your offspring will be traced † through
Isaac.** † † 8 That is, it is not the children by physical descent † who are God's
children, † but the children of the promise † are considered to be the offspring.
9 For this is the statement of the promise: **At this time I will come, and Sarah
will have a son.** † † 10 And not only that, † but Rebekah conceived children †
through one man, our father Isaac. 11 For though her sons had not been born yet
or done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to election might

stand — † [12] not from works but from the one who calls — she was told, **The older will serve the younger.** † † [13] As it is written: **I have loved Jacob, but I have hated Esau.** † †

GOD'S SELECTION IS JUST

[14] What should we say then? † Is there injustice with God? † Absolutely not! †

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF ADOPTION

Adoption is sometimes a confusing topic, even to people who support it. Some think of adoption, implicitly, as a kind of "Plan B" infertility treatment for those who want, but can't have, children "of their own." And, some, without thinking much about it, make a wide distinction between adopted children and "real" children—as though the adjective *adopted* signifies a different, slightly lesser status within the family.

For Christians though, adoption ought to be one of the clearest and most evocative images in our vocabulary. This is because adoption is a biblical concept that explains a key aspect of what has happened to believers in the reconciling work of God in Christ Jesus. A biblical understanding of adoption unveils for us something about our identity in Christ, our inheritance in Christ, and our mission with Christ—all of which are grounded in the gospel.

One of the most important questions anyone can face is, "Who am I?" In Scripture, a key aspect of personal identity is found in one's place in a family line. In contrast to the modern pretense of an autonomous, self-creating individual, the Bible, like the ancient Near Eastern world in which it emerged, ties personal identity to that of the larger tribe. Thus, the question "who am I?" is really the question "where do I belong?" or "who are my people?"

This is the reason that biblical figures are identified, and identify themselves, in terms of their fathers and forefathers. Joshua is the "son of Nun," Saul is the "son of Kish," David is the "son of Jesse," James and John are the "sons of Zebedee," and so on. On an even broader level, the people of Israel are called by that phrase because they are "sons" of their father Jacob, who was renamed during his wrestling match with God. ("Your name will no longer be Jacob," he said. "It will be Israel because you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed," Gn 32:28). Moreover, they are "sons of Abraham," because they are rooted in the patriarch's line. (Gn 17:5).

But identity is not simply a matter of biological ancestry. God demonstrated this in the family line of Jesus by rooting Jesus in the line of Abraham and David (as per the prophetic promises, e.g., Gn 22:18 and 2Sm 7:11b-16) but also including in these lines those from outside the borders of Israel, such as Ruth the Moabitess who married into the Hebrew family. Moreover, Jesus's connection as heir to the Abrahamic and Davidic lines is established in the Bible not by his "natural" biology (through his mother) but through the line of his father Joseph, whose fatherhood comes about through adoption rather than by procreation since Joseph did not father Jesus (Lk 1:26-38).

Jesus asserted that biological connection to Israel alone couldn't establish identity. He said, for instance, that those who rejected him within the house of Israel demonstrate that they are not, in fact, "sons of Abraham" because they do not share in Abraham's faith (e.g., Mt 3:9; Jn 8:30-47). True admittance is by faith, not by genetic inheritance. Likewise, Paul says, "Not all who are descended from Israel are Israel.

Neither are all of Abraham's children his descendants" (Rm 9:6-7).

As the church advanced through the Roman Empire in the months and years after the ascension of Jesus, many Gentiles (those unconnected by birth to the promises of Abraham) responded in faith to the gospel message and were thus included in the gathered assembly of God's people. Paul says they have received "the Spirit of adoption" and are now sons of God (Rm 8:14-15). Through this adoption the Christian becomes a new person, one whose identity is no longer his own but is hidden in Christ, and Christ is henceforth his life (1Co 6:19-20; Col 3:3-4). The status as son (or daughter) is not earned or deserved by merit but is God's gift to his children (Eph 2:8).

The gospel theology of adoption means that everyone who is united to Christ through faith is a child of God. As Paul states in Rm 8:16-17, "The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ." The doctrine of adoption, then, means that all of those in Christ are predestined "to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself" (Eph 1:5). There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles and no division on the basis of any other category (Gl 3:26-29; Col 3:10-11) since our adoption is into Christ; he is our new identity.

This status as adopted children is not for Gentiles only, as though these newcomers were the "adopted" children standing off from the "real" children of God. The Israelites themselves, Paul affirms, had received adoption: "They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the temple service, and the promises" (Rm 9:4). Abraham, after all, was not "naturally born." He was initially Abram, a Gentile who was called into God's family while living in Haran; in fact, he was the basis for the creation of the Hebrew nation (Gn 12:1-3).

Moreover, our adoption into Christ is not merely a matter of relation, but of inheritance. Those who are children are also "heirs," the Scripture says, and not merely heirs but "coheirs with Christ" (Rm 8:17). This means that those in Christ share the same table and also the same inheritance as Jesus himself—an inheritance which includes not just the land promised to Abraham but the entire cosmos (Rm 4:13; Gl 3:16).

The Israelites of old were reminded to love the sojourners among them because they, too, were once aliens in a strange land. "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awe-inspiring God, showing no partiality and taking no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. You are also to love the resident alien, since you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt" (Dt 10:17-19).

The gospel—including the doctrine of adoption—makes a similar emphasis since the apostle Paul tells us to "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory of God" (Rm 15:7). And the mission of Jesus includes caring for those who have been orphaned, just as we were all once spiritually orphaned. James says that "pure and undefiled religion" means, in part, "to look after orphans and widows in their distress" (Jms 1:27). This is entirely consistent with the witness of the OT Law and Prophets, which constantly point out God's advocacy for the poor, the widowed, and the orphaned (Dt 14:28-29; 15:11; 27:19; Pss 68:5; 146:9; Jr 49:11; Mal 3:5).

The church must care for orphans through adoption, foster care, support for women in crisis, pro-life advocacy, and efforts to combat such root causes of the orphan crisis as poverty, disease, genocide, family dissolution, and war. In so doing, we are carrying out the mission of Christ, and we are reminding ourselves of the gospel truth that is good news for ex-orphans like us.

RUSSELL D. MOORE

15 For he tells Moses, **I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy, and I**
will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. † † 16 So then, it
does not depend on human will or effort † but on God who shows mercy. †
17 For the Scripture tells Pharaoh, **I raised you up for this reason so that I**

may display my power in you and that my name may be proclaimed in the whole earth. † † 18 So then, he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy and he hardens whom he wants to harden. †

19 You will say to me, † therefore, "Why then does he still find fault? † For who can resist his will?" † 20 But who are you, a mere man, to talk back to God? † Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, "Why did you make me like this?" † 21 Or has the potter no right over the clay, † to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honor and another for dishonor? 22 And what if God, wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience † objects of wrath prepared for destruction? † 23 And what if he did this to make known the riches of his glory † on objects of mercy † that he prepared beforehand for glory † — 24 on us, the ones he also called, † not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? † 25 As it † also says in Hosea,

I will call Not My People, My People, and she who is Unloved, Beloved. † †

26 **And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.** † †

27 But Isaiah cries out concerning Israel,

Though the number of Israelites is like the sand of the sea, †
only the remnant will be saved; †

28 **since the Lord will execute his sentence completely and decisively on the earth.** † † †

29 And just as Isaiah predicted:

If the Lord of Hosts † **had not left us offspring,** †
we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah. † †

ISRAEL'S PRESENT STATE

30 What should we say then? † Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness — namely the righteousness that comes from faith. † 31 But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, † has not achieved the righteousness of the law. † † 32 Why is that? Because they did not pursue it by

faith, but as if it were by works. † They stumbled over the stumbling stone. †
33 As it is written,
Look, I am putting a stone in Zion to stumble over and a rock to trip over,
and the one who believes on him †
will not be put to shame. † †

9:1 Or *testifying with me by the Holy Spirit* **9:3** Lit *to be anathema* **9:5** Lit *them, according to the flesh* **9:5** Or *the Messiah, the one who is over all, the God who is blessed forever*, or *Messiah. God, who is over all, be blessed forever* **9:7** Lit *seed* **9:7** Lit *called* **9:8** Lit *children of the flesh* **9:25** Or *he* **9:28** Or *land* **9:29** Gk *Sabaoth* ; or *the Lord of Armies* **9:31** Other mss read *the law for righteousness* **9:32** Other mss add *of the law*

9:1 Rm 1:9; 2Co 11:10; Gl 1:20; 1Tm 2:7 **9:3** Ex 32:32 **9:3** 1Co 12:3; 16:22; Gl 1:8,9 **9:4** Rm 8:6 **9:4** Ex 4:22; Rm 8:15 **9:4** Ex 40:34; 1Kg 8:11; Ezk 1:28; Heb 9:5 **9:4** Gn 17:2; Dt 29:14; Lk 1:72; Ac 3:25; Eph 2:12 **9:4** Dt 4:13-14; Ps 147:19 **9:4** Dt 7:6; 14:1; Heb 9:1,6 **9:4** Ac 2:39; 13:32; Eph 2:12 **9:5** Ac 3:13; Rm 11:28 **9:5** Mt 1:1-16; Rm 1:3 **9:5** Jn 1:1; Col 2:9 **9:5** Col 1:16-19 **9:5** Rm 1:25 **9:6** Nm 23:19 **9:6** Jn 1:47; Rm 2:28-29; Gl 6:16 **9:7** Jn 8:33,39; Gl 4:23 **9:7** Gn 21:12 **9:7** Gn 21:12; Heb 11:18 **9:8** Rm 8:14 **9:8** Rm 4:13,16; Gl 3:29; 4:28; Heb 11:11 **9:9** Gn 18:10,14 **9:9** Gn 18:10,14 **9:10** Rm 5:3 **9:10** Gn 25:21 **9:11** Rm 4:17; 8:28 **9:12** Gn 25:23 **9:12** Gn 25:23 **9:13** Mal 1:2-3 **9:13** Mal 1:2-3 **9:14** Rm 3:5 **9:14** 2Ch 19:7; Rm 2:11 **9:14** Lk 20:16 **9:15** Ex 33:19 **9:15** Ex 33:19 **9:16** Gl 2:2 **9:16** Eph 2:8 **9:17** Ex 9:16 **9:17** Ex 9:16 **9:18** Ex 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; 10:20,27; 11:10; 14:4,7; Dt 2:30; Jos 11:20; Jn 12:40; Rm 11:7,25 **9:19** Rm 11:19; 1Co 15:25; Jms 2:18 **9:19** Rm 3:7 **9:19** 2Ch 20:6; Jb 9:12; Dn 4:35 **9:20** Jb 33:13 **9:20** Is 29:16; 45:9; 64:8; Jr 18:6; 2Tm 2:20 **9:21** Is 64:8; Jr 18:6 **9:22** Rm 2:4 **9:22** Pr 16:4; 1Pt 2:8 **9:23** Rm 2:4; Eph 3:16 **9:23** Ac 9:15 **9:23** Rm 8:29 **9:24** Rm 8:28 **9:24** Rm 3:29 **9:25** Hs 2:23 **9:25** Hs 2:23; 1Pt 2:10 **9:26** Hs 1:10 **9:26** Hs 1:10; Mt 16:16 **9:27** Gn 22:17 **9:27** Rm 11:5 **9:27-28** Is 10:22-23; 28:22; Hs 1:10 **9:27-28** Is 10:22-23; 28:22 **9:29** Jms 5:4 **9:29** Is 1:9 **9:29** Dt 29:23; Is 1:9; 13:19; Jr 49:18; 50:40; Am 4:11 **9:30** Rm 9:14 **9:30** Rm 1:17; 3:21; 10:6; Gl 2:16; 3:24; Php 3:9; Heb 11:7 **9:31** Is 51:1; Rm 10:2,20; 11:7 **9:31** Gl 5:4 **9:32** 1Pt 2:6,8 **9:33** Rm 10:11 **9:33** Is 8:14; 28:16 **9:33** Is 8:14; 28:16; Rm 5:5

9:2 Paul's grief over unbelieving Israel recalls the despair of OT prophets like Jeremiah, who lamented the sin of and judgment on Israel in his own day (e.g., Jr 4:19-22).

9:3 Here Paul is referring to the Jewish people (cp. v. 4). Though some Jews, like Paul, the other apostles, and all the first disciples had believed in Jesus, the large majority rejected him. Paul's passion for his fellow Jews is seen in his willingness to face God's wrath, to be **cursed**, if that would bring them to faith. This attitude recalls that of Moses, who asked God to erase his name from "the book" if God would not forgive his people (Ex 32:30-32).

9:4 Israel received God's lavish grace in the form of his **adoption** of them as his special possession (Dt 14:1-2); their experience of his **glory** (Ex 16:7,10); the **covenants** issued to Noah, Abraham, Israel through Moses, and David; **the giving of the law** at Sinai (Ex 20), **temple service**, in which God chose to dwell among his people and receive their sacrifices for sin, and the various promises God issued to Israel.

9:6 The rejection of the Messiah by the majority of Jews does not mean that God's plan has **failed.** Paul demonstrates that throughout the Scriptures God has worked through a faithful remnant within **Israel**, and often the physical descendants of Abraham rejected God.

9:13 The verbs **loved** and **hated**, with the OT context (Mal 1:2-3), are covenantal terms referring not so much to God's emotions as to his actions. God chose Jacob and did not choose Esau. In any case, these names are not used in Malachi 1:2–3 to refer to individuals but to the nations founded by them: Israel and Edom.

9:14-29 Paul focuses on the freedom of God in election and why his freedom is just. The demonstration of **mercy** to some, and not all, is his free choice since mercy, by definition, is not required (vv. 15-18). As the Creator of all, God is free to do as he wills with his creation (vv. 20-21). He is free to create all for the sake of his glory (v. 23).

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH ALONE

10 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them † is for their salvation. 2 I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, † but not according to knowledge. 3 Since they are ignorant of the righteousness of God † and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God's righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end † of the law for righteousness † to everyone who believes, † 5 since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: **The one who does these things will live by them.** † † 6 But the righteousness that comes from faith † speaks like this: **Do not say in your heart, "Who will go up to heaven?"** † † that is, to bring Christ down 7 or, **"Who will go down into the abyss?"** † † that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. † 8 On the contrary, what does it say? **The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.** † † This is the message of faith that we proclaim: 9 If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," † and believe in your heart † that God raised him from the dead, † you will be saved. 10 One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, **Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame,** † † 12 since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, † because the same Lord † of all † richly blesses all who call on him. 13 For **everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.** † †

ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF THE MESSAGE

14 How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? † And how can they hear without a preacher? † 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: **How beautiful † are the feet of those who bring good news.** † † 16 But not

all obeyed the gospel. † For Isaiah says, **Lord, who has believed our message?** † † 17 So faith comes from what is heard, † and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. † † 18 But I ask, “Did they not hear? ” Yes, they did:

Their voice has gone out to the whole earth, and their words to the ends of the world. † †

19 But I ask, “Did Israel not understand? ” First, Moses said,

I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; †

I will make you angry by a nation that lacks understanding. † †

20 And Isaiah says boldly,

I was found
by those who were not looking for me; I revealed myself
to those who were not asking for me. † †

21 But to Israel he says, **All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and defiant people.** † †

10:1 Other mss read *God for Israel* **10:4** Or *goal* **10:15** Or *welcome*, or *timely* **10:17** Other mss read *God* **10:2** Ac 21:20 **10:3** Rm 1:17 **10:4** Rm 7:1-4; Gl 3:24; 4:5 **10:4** Rm 3:22 **10:5** Lv 18:5 **10:5** Lv 18:5; Neh 9:29; Ezk 20:11,13,21; Rm 7:10 **10:6** Rm 9:30 **10:6** Dt 9:4; 30:12 **10:6** Dt 9:4; 30:12 **10:7** Dt 30:13 **10:7** Dt 30:13; Lk 8:31 **10:7** Heb 13:20 **10:8** Dt 30:14 **10:8** Dt 30:14 **10:9** Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8; Rm 14:9; 1Co 12:3; Php 2:11 **10:9** Ac 16:31; Rm 4:24 **10:9** Ac 2:24 **10:11** Is 28:16 **10:11** Is 28:16 **10:12** Rm 3:22,29 **10:12** Ac 10:36 **10:12** Rm 3:29 **10:13** Jl 2:32 **10:13** Jl 2:32; Ac 2:21; 7:59 **10:14** Eph 2:17; 4:21 **10:14** Ac 8:31; Ti 1:3 **10:15** Is 52:7; Nah 1:15 **10:15** Is 52:7; Nah 1:15; Rm 1:15; 15:20 **10:16** Rm 3:3 **10:16** Is 53:1 **10:16** Is 53:1; Jn 12:38 **10:17** Gl 3:2,5 **10:17** Col 3:16 **10:18** Ps 19:4 **10:18** Ps 19:4; Rm 1:8; Col 1:16,23; 1Th 1:8 **10:19** Rm 11:11,14 **10:19** Dt 32:21 **10:19** Dt 32:21 **10:20** Is 65:1 **10:20** Is 65:1; Rm 9:30 **10:21** Is 65:2 **10:21** Is 65:2

10:2-3 In some respects, this statement resembles Paul’s own experience. He was zealous for God (Php 3:6), but was ignorant of God’s plans in Christ. Upon knowing Christ, Paul considered all his credentials in Judaism to be a loss (Php 3:8). **Zeal** had become especially commendable among Jews while internal and external forces threatened their faith. Mattathias, leader of the famed Jewish rebellion movement known as the Maccabees, appealed to such zeal: “Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me” (1 Macc 2:27).

10:4 As the **end**, or goal, **of the law**, Jesus is that to which the law pointed and is its fulfillment. Debate about this verse concerns what place the law now has in the lives of believers. Notwithstanding that issue, it is clear that Paul regards righteousness as no longer coming through adherence to the law. Rather, **righteousness** comes through faith in Christ (vv. 4-6).

10:9-10 Believing **in your heart** does not mean, “as opposed to in your head.” **Heart** and **mouth** are used here because they come from Deuteronomy 30:14, quoted in the previous verse.

10:12 It is extraordinary that Paul, having articulated the privileges and status of Israel (9:4-5), claims that

there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. But the gospel clearly affirms this reality. **All who call on** God are richly blessed.

10:13 To call on a deity in Greco-Roman culture, as well as in Judaism (Jl 2:32), meant to seek assistance or help.

10:14-21 Paul employs a series of OT texts to support his two key points throughout this section. First, Israel cannot be excused for rejecting God's righteousness through Christ; they have had ample opportunity to understand it through what has been promised in the Prophets. Second, that God's righteousness is now available to the Gentiles should come as no surprise. See also "Ethics of Global Missions," *p. 1323.*

10:16 To obey **the gospel** in this context means to believe in Christ and live according to his lordship, as the quote from Isaiah 53:1 shows (see Jn 6:29 for a similar connection of obedience and faith).

ISRAEL'S REJECTION NOT TOTAL

11 I ask, then, has God rejected his people? † Absolutely not! † For I too
am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, † from the tribe of
Benjamin. 2 God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. † Or don't you
know † what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he pleads
with God against Israel? 3 **Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn
down your altars. I am the only one left, and they are trying to take my life!**
† † 4 But what was God's answer to him? **I have left seven thousand for
myself who have not bowed down to Baal.** † † 5 In the same way, then, there
is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. † 6 Now if by grace, †
then it is not by works; otherwise grace ceases to be grace. †
7 What then? Israel did not find what it was looking for, † but the elect did find
it. The rest were hardened, † 8 as it is written,
God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that cannot see
and ears that cannot hear, to this day. † †
9 And David says,
**Let their table become a snare and a trap, a pitfall and a retribution
to them.**
10 **Let their eyes be darkened so that they cannot see, and their backs
be bent continually.** † †

ISRAEL'S REJECTION NOT FINAL

11 I ask, then, have they stumbled so as to fall? Absolutely not! On the contrary,
by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles † to make Israel
jealous. 12 Now if their transgression brings riches for the world, and their
failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fullness bring! †
13 Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Insofar as I am an apostle to the
Gentiles, † I magnify my ministry, 14 if I might somehow make my own
people † † jealous and save some of them. † 15 For if their rejection brings
reconciliation † to the world, what will their acceptance mean but life from the
dead? † 16 Now if the firstfruits are holy, † so is the whole batch. And if the
root is holy, so are the branches.
17 Now if some of the branches were broken off, † and you, though a wild olive
branch, were grafted in among them † and have come to share in the rich root †
of the cultivated olive tree, 18 do not boast that you are better than those
branches. But if you do boast — you do not sustain the root, but the root sustains
you. † 19 Then you will say, † "Branches were broken off so that I might be
grafted in." 20 True enough; they were broken off because of unbelief, but you
stand by faith. † Do not be arrogant, but beware, † † 21 because if God did not
spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. 22 Therefore, consider
God's kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God's
kindness † toward you — if you remain in his kindness. † Otherwise you too
will be cut off. † 23 And even they, if they do not remain in unbelief, † will be
grafted in, because God has the power to graft them in again. 24 For if you were
cut off from your native wild olive tree and against nature were grafted into a
cultivated olive tree, how much more will these — the natural branches — be
grafted into their own olive tree?
25 I don't want you to be ignorant † of this mystery, † brothers and sisters, so
that you will not be conceited: † A partial hardening has come upon Israel †
until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. † 26 And in this way all † Israel
will be saved, as it is written,

SOURCES FOR ETHICS

When we consider sources for ethics, we may distinguish first between an ontological aspect (the source of ethics itself) and an epistemological aspect (the source of knowledge of ethics), each of which has implications for ethical authority.

THE ONTOLOGICAL ASPECT

The ontological question has to do with the nature of morality.

One common view is that of moral relativism, which understands morality to be subjective and created by humans (to enable a civil society and avoid anarchy or tyranny, to establish and protect individual rights, and so on), though proponents sometimes present their views as objective and authoritative. Furthermore, even though morality is considered to be subjective, it is derived in part by reflection on the world, so that human reason engages something that exerts itself as objective.

In contrast to subjective perspectives, Christian ethics holds that morality is objective and revealed by God. The ultimate source of ethics is God, who created the universe with moral order—determined by his character, purposes, and will—and graciously reveals to humans the reality of that order, and how to live according to that reality. This perspective is one of moral realism.

THE SOURCES OF ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE

Christians affirm that the Bible is the primary source of knowledge for ethics, but there are a range of secondary sources, including reason, tradition, and experience. A key question concerns how these sources are coordinated or related. Some consider the appeal to *sola Scriptura* as a denial of other sources. A better understanding, however, is that other sources have validity, but must be tested by and subordinated to Scripture as the primary source (the "norming norm"). It would be naïve to ignore or deny other sources, for they are inescapable and will influence or determine moral judgments whether acknowledged or not. More importantly, Scripture affirms them, even if it qualifies them.

Tradition, understood here as the practices and teachings of the church, shapes us and our understanding of God and of Scripture. We must not affirm tradition uncritically, for sometimes it develops in ways that stand in opposition to God's commandments in Scripture (Mt 15:3). Yet the problem is not tradition itself, but unfaithful traditions. Jesus embraced the prophetic tradition that faithfully transmitted what was revealed by God, and Scripture instructs believers to pass on what we have received (Dt 6:1-9; Mt 28:18-20; Jd 3). The test of tradition is its fidelity to Scripture.

Reason is also necessary to understand and apply the truth of God's Word and to convey it to others (Ac 17:17; 1Pt 3:15). But the Bible warns that fallen human reason suppresses the truth so that human minds are darkened and foolish (Rm 1:18,21), unable to discern the things of the Spirit (1Co 2:14). Yet, God's will is accessible to Spirit-filled reason (Rm 12:1-2; Col 1:9-10). Thus, the mind must be renewed by God's Spirit, and human reason must submit to and be tested by Scripture.

NATURAL LAW

A word on natural law is appropriate here. Natural law is reason-based and affirms that there is a moral order that is revealed in creation. Creation stands alongside Scripture as a witness to God's goodness and glory (Ps 19), and it reveals something of God's divine nature and power so that humans are held accountable (Rm 1:18-20). Natural law asserts that morality is objective and accessible to all, for human reason is able to discern proper conduct in accordance with nature. It appeals to some Christians because it is consistent with a biblical perspective without requiring an appeal to revelation.

Nevertheless, its usefulness is limited. Paul's argument from nature in Romans 1 is not an appeal to the effectiveness of natural law. On the contrary, it highlights the depth of human sin and rebellion, which has corrupted human desires and our ability to reason. Apart from God's grace manifested in the gospel, humans are in a hopeless situation. Natural law is not for that reason useless, but it depends upon and must

be coordinated with revelation.

THE EXPERIENTIAL ASPECT

Experience is another source of knowledge, though it is viewed with great suspicion by many, and for good reason: humans are often self-deceived, and personal experience lacks moral accountability. Thus, appeals to it as a source of authority are dubious.

On the other hand, it would be a curious view of ethics to insist on its truth against all experience. Rather, we are invited to "taste and see that the LORD is good" (Ps 34:8); the faithful are able to confirm by their experience that God's Word is true and that his will is good (Rm 5:5; 12:2). Further, conscience is related to experience, and it may "accuse or even excuse" us (Rm 2:15), though it may be seared and untrustworthy (1Tm 4:1). Thus, conscience and experience must be tested by the Word of God.

CONCLUSION

In sum, tradition, reason, and experience can inform our ethics in a proper way, but they are often distorted by sin and so are not fully trustworthy. These sources should be recognized as important but secondary, to be tested by Scripture within the community of believers. The Bible itself is the only fully reliable source for understanding the nature and substance of ethics; thus, the Bible should not be made to conform to other sources. Rather, those sources must conform to its authority and teaching.

The task at hand is not to develop the content of Christian ethics, but we may specify briefly how the Bible functions as its primary source: • The whole of the Bible serves as a source for Christian ethics (2Tm 3:16-17), and not only its direct moral exhortation.

- The Bible defines the "moral field" for ethics, including God as Creator (and his character, purposes, and will), humans and the world in which we live, and the relationships between them. Specifically, the Bible presents a metanarrative that is essential for ethics, including the belief that the world was created to be good and was infused with moral order, yet it is disordered because of human sin, and yet again it is reordered by God, who by his steadfast love seeks to redeem and reconcile sinful humans and establish justice and peace. God gives a hope for a future that surpasses even the original goodness of creation. This metanarrative provides a worldview—a lens that sharpens our vision so that we can interpret and understand the world more clearly. This is important for ethics because our worldview (what we think about God, the world, and humans, etc.) shapes our ethics; it is contrasted with alternative worldviews and ethics.
- The Bible is also a source of moral exhortation, which operates within the larger framework described, and is focused on doing God's will. Ultimately, moral responsibility is not to a command or moral principle, but to a personal God, though there is no sharp line drawn between the two, since God reveals his will and character through his commands. We may delight in the commands of a gracious God, which light the path of life and keep us from destruction (Dt 30:11-20; Ps 119). Properly understood, the law is structured by love (Mt 22:37-40). Further, Jesus reveals that true morality and righteousness involves the whole self, not merely external conformity to the law (Mt 5–7). In addition, Jesus declares to his disciples that after his return to the Father, the Spirit will come and guide them into all truth (Jn 16:13). Indeed, within the community of believers, the Spirit brings to bear the truth of Scripture and knowledge of God's will, and gives believers the power to obey (Rm 12:1-2; Col 1:9-10).

In a text with great ethical significance, because it describes action within a larger vision of the world, Paul prays that new believers may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of

sins. (Col 1:9-14) KENNETH T. MAGNUSON

The Deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.

27 **And this will be my covenant with them** † †
when I take away their sins. † †

28 Regarding the gospel, they are enemies for your advantage, † but regarding election, they are loved because of the patriarchs, † 29 since God's gracious gifts and calling † are irrevocable. † † 30 As you once disobeyed God but now have received mercy through their disobedience, 31 so they too have now disobeyed, resulting in mercy to you, so that they also may now † receive mercy. 32 For God has imprisoned all in disobedience † so that he may have mercy on all.

A HYMN OF PRAISE

33 Oh, the depth of the riches †
both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! †
How unsearchable his judgments †
and untraceable his ways!

34 **For who has known the mind of the Lord?** †
Or who has been his counselor?

35 **And who has ever given to God, that he should be repaid?** † †

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. †
To him be the glory forever. Amen.

11:6 Other mss add *But if of works it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.* **11:14** Lit *flesh* **11:17** Other mss read *the root and the richness* **11:20** Lit *fear* **11:26** Or *And then all* **11:29** Or *are not taken back* **11:31** Other mss omit *now*

11:1 1Sm 12:22; Jr 33:24-26 **11:1** Lk 20:16 **11:1** 2Co 11:22; Php 3:5 **11:2** 1Sm 12:22; Ps 94:14; Rm 8:29; 1Pt 1:2 **11:2** Rm 6:16 **11:3** 1Kg 19:10,14 **11:3** 1Kg 19:10,14; 1Th 2:14 **11:4** 1Kg 19:18 **11:4** 1Kg 19:18 **11:5** 2Kg 19:4; Rm 9:27 **11:6** Rm 4:4 **11:7** Rm 9:31 **11:7** Mk 6:52; Rm 9:18; 11:25; 2Co 2:14 **11:8** Dt 29:4; Is 29:10 **11:8** Dt 29:4; Is 29:10; Mt 13:13-14 **11:9-10** Ps 69:22-23 **11:9-10** Ps 69:22-23 **11:11** Ac 28:28 **11:12** Rm 11:25 **11:13** Ac 9:15 **11:14** Gn 29:14; 2Sm 19:12-13; Rm 9:3 **11:14** 1Co 1:21; 7:16; 9:22; 1Tm 1:15; 2:4; 2Tm 1:9; Ti 3:5 **11:15** Rm 5:11 **11:15** Lk 15:24,32 **11:16** Nm 15:17-21; Neh 10:37; Ezk 44:30 **11:17** Jr 11:16; Jn 15:2 **11:17** Eph 2:12-13 **11:18** Jn 4:22 **11:19** Rm 9:19 **11:20** Rm 5:2; 1Co 10:12; 2Co 1:24 **11:20** Rm 12:16; 1Tm 6:17; 1Pt 1:17 **11:22** Rm 2:4 **11:22** 1Co 15:2; Heb 3:6,14 **11:22** Jn 15:2 **11:23** 2Co 3:16 **11:25** Rm 1:13 **11:25** Mt 13:11; Rm 16:25; 1Co 2:7-10; Eph 3:3-5,9 **11:25** Rm 12:16 **11:25** Rm 11:7 **11:25** Lk 21:24; Jn 10:16 **11:26-27** Is 59:20-21 **11:26-27** Is 59:20-21 **11:27** Jr 31:31-34 **11:27** Jr

31:31-34; Heb 8:10,12 **11:28** Rm 5:10 **11:28** Dt 7:8; 10:15; Rm 9:5 **11:29** Rm 8:28; 1Co 1:26; Eph 1:18; 4:1,4; Php 3:14; 2Th 1:11; 2Tm 1:9; Heb 3:1; 2Pt 1:10 **11:29** Heb 7:21 **11:32** Rm 3:9; Gl 3:22-23 **11:33** Rm 2:4; Eph 3:8 **11:33** Col 2:3; Eph 3:10 **11:33** Jb 5:9; 11:7; 15:8 **11:34** Is 40:13-14; 1Co 2:16 **11:34-35** Jb 41:11; Is 40:13; Jr 23:18 **11:34-35** Jb 35:7; 41:11; Is 40:13; Jr 23:18 **11:36** 1Co 8:6; 11:12; Col 1:16; Heb 2:10

11:1-10 Paul draws on several OT texts to demonstrate that God has not **rejected his people**, but has always preserved a faithful remnant from among the nation of Israel.

11:11 The idea of **the Gentiles** making **Israel jealous** is drawn from Deuteronomy 32:21: "I will provoke their jealousy with what is not a people; I will enrage them with a foolish nation."

11:17-18 Gentile Christians are encouraged in this letter to see they have a place in the promises given to Abraham. They are reminded, however, that they are supported by, and have been **grafted** into, the work that God did in and through the people of Israel. They should not be looked down upon, but neither should they look down upon their Jewish brothers.

11:17-24 Paul uses the image of an **olive tree** to represent the people of God. The **root** refers to the patriarchs (1:17; cp. Philo 279). The natural **branches** represent the Jewish people, their descendants. The **wild olive branch** refers to Gentile Christians, who have been **grafted** into the family tree by God's grace. The image powerfully underscores the unnatural privilege of Gentiles receiving the grace of God; they should not become complacent about it.

11:36 The notion of God as source, sustainer, and goal of all reality was common in Greco-Roman Stoicism. Jews of Paul's day picked up the notion and applied it to the God of Israel. Paul uses it within a fully Christianized worldview.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

12 Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge
you † to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, † holy and pleasing
to God; this is your true worship. † 2 Do not be conformed † to this age, † but
be transformed by the renewing of your mind, † so that you may discern what is
the good, pleasing, and perfect will † of God.

MANY GIFTS BUT ONE BODY

3 For by the grace † given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of
himself more highly than he should think. † Instead, think sensibly, as God has
distributed a measure of faith † to each one. 4 Now as we have many parts in
one body, † and all the parts do not have the same function, 5 in the same way
we who are many † are one body in Christ † and individually members of one
another. 6 According to the grace given to us, we have different gifts: † If
prophecy, † use it according to the proportion of one's † faith; 7 if service, †

use it in service; if teaching, † in teaching; 8 if exhorting, † in exhortation; giving, with generosity; † leading, † with diligence; showing mercy, with cheerfulness. †

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

9 Let love be without hypocrisy. † Detest evil; † cling to what is good. 10 Love one another deeply as brothers and sisters. † Outdo one another in showing honor. † 11 Do not lack diligence in zeal; be fervent in the Spirit; † † serve the Lord. † 12 Rejoice in hope; † be patient in affliction; † be persistent in prayer. † 13 Share with the saints in their needs; † pursue hospitality. † 14 Bless those who persecute you; † bless and do not curse.

CHURCH AND STATE

The phrase “church and state” generally refers to the ways in which Christian churches and other houses of worship relate to the governing political authorities in any given society. More specifically, “church and state” denotes the particular relationship between the two throughout the American religious and political tradition. This relationship is as important as it has been controversial, and Christians have been wrestling with the intersection of faith and politics for two millennia.

The relationship is important because both God’s church and the state are ordained by God for particular purposes. The church universal is the bride of Christ, being made ready to meet the Bridegroom and comprised of all orthodox Christians, living out their faith in local churches (Rv 17:7-9). God’s church is the new Israel, partaking in the new covenant under Christ and helping to fulfill our calling to live holy lives together (Heb 10:24-25). Christians also know that government is “God’s servant for [our] good,” wielding coercive force to “punish those who do what is evil.” (Rm 13:4; 1Pt 2:14). All is well when each institution does its job. The state restrains evil and promotes the good; the church worships God, raises the next generation, and meets the spiritual and physical needs of a lost world by sharing the gospel, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked (Mt 25:31-46; 28:19-20).

Yet it is rarely the case that all is well. Political leaders often see religious authority as a threat to their own power, or they wish to usurp the appeal of religion for their own purposes. Even Israel’s first king, Saul, confused the lines between God’s purposes by attempting as king to perform a sacrifice that God had reserved for his prophet, Samuel (1Sm 13).

Moreover, just as political leaders can abuse religion for political reasons, Christians have misused the reigns of coercive political power to enforce their particular religious beliefs and practices on others, including many fellow believers. Sadly, history is replete with the tragic and bloodstained consequences of political and ecclesial leaders violating the God-ordained purposes and boundaries of the church and the state.

Christian thinking about these matters falls into two broad categories. The first is how individual

Christians should understand their identities as citizens of heaven (Php 3:20), and citizens of their earthly polities (Ac 22:22-29). Scripture instructs us to obey, honor, and pray for our political leaders (Rm 13:1; 1Tm 2:2), pay our taxes (Mk 12:13-17, Rm 13:7), and seek to "live at peace with everyone" (Rm 12:18). At the same time, our political loyalties are secondary. We are to "seek first the kingdom of God," and if the kingdom of man interferes, "we must obey God rather than people" (Mt 6:33; Ac 5:29).

If this first category focuses on individual duties for Christians, the second way of thinking concerns how churches and governments should interact from a macro perspective. That is, how might political institutions be arranged such that political leaders can best achieve government's purpose while at the same time allowing the church the freedom to fulfill its purposes?

It is in response to this question that the American experience with politics and religion is instructive. From the earliest colonies to the present time, the balance and potential tension between church and state has been a perennial concern. Some figures, like the early Baptist Roger Williams, were primarily worried about the state's propensity to interfere with the freedom of the church and the consciences of believers. Others, like Thomas Jefferson, were more concerned with the possibility of church leaders interfering in the political sphere by claiming exclusive privileges for particular denominations. On the one hand, the role of faith in public life was seen as both an incredible good to be protected, and on the other a potential powder keg of controversy and faction to be worried about.

The importance of religion is further evidenced by the privileged place it holds in the governing document of the United States, the Constitution. The first priority of the First Amendment is to protect religion and religious exercise from the federal government: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

This language has led to the development of the establishment clause and free exercise jurisprudence. The former is concerned with whether the government favors religion in some manner; the latter addresses whether the religious beliefs and practices of citizens have been unduly infringed by the government. While originally the First Amendment only applied to the federal government, a subsequent legal development called "incorporation" means that states and local governments are subject to the religious clauses as well. The enormous challenge facing Christians and other citizens is how to interpret these ideas in the founding documents and apply them to contemporary situations and conflicts.

Opinions on what the American Founders meant by the religion clauses range from "strict separation" to "accommodation." Strict separationists follow Thomas Jefferson's language in his letter to a group of Danbury Baptists, in which he invokes a "wall of separation" between church and state. When it comes to the establishment clause, this view invests the government with a kind of watchdog role, such that the government will ensure that it will never appear to endorse religion. Strict separationists object to governmental support of religious schools, prayers at public events, and symbolic gestures like nativity scenes at city halls or "In God We Trust" on our coinage.

Accommodationists interpret the Constitution somewhat more broadly. The Founders' primary intention, they feel, was to prevent the establishment of a national church and to provide space for religious groups to flourish free from the intolerance that marked many European church-state arrangements. The Founders did not intend to erect a wall denying all cooperation between church and state, but envisioned a benign cooperation that would still protect religious liberty. Accommodationists would object to the government adopting a Presbyterian denomination as the official religion of the United States, but they would be more flexible about public prayers, the use of "In God We Trust," and similar matters.

Christians thinking about these matters should differentiate between historical debates about what the Founders meant and normative debates about what would be the best state of affairs for church and state. It is far too easy to read back into history the very views one presently holds and favors. The Founders themselves disagreed about these matters, though it is clear that faith was understood as intrinsically valuable and deserving of protection, and in some instances, promotion.

Fortunately, a Christian worldview rests on much more than the accomplishments of man—as admirable as some of those accomplishments may have been. Christians should continue to draw from Scripture in working and thinking together about how God's particular mandates for his church and for the state

intersect. Given the fall, Christian attempts to live out their identities as citizens of heaven and of earth will always fall short; nevertheless, such endeavors will contribute to their being "salt" and "light" until the true King returns and establishes his reign forever (Mt 5:13-14; Rv 21:1-6).

MICAH J. WATSON

15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; † weep with those who weep. 16 Live in harmony with one another. † Do not be proud; † instead, associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own estimation. † 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. † Give careful thought to do what is honorable † in everyone's eyes. 18 If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. † 19 Friends, do not avenge yourselves; instead, leave room for God's wrath, because it is written, **Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay,** † † says the Lord. 20 But

If your enemy is hungry, feed him. †
If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
For in so doing

you will be heaping fiery coals on his head. † †

21 Do not be conquered by evil, but conquer evil with good.

12:1 Or *your reasonable service* **12:6** Or *the*, also in v. 19 **12:11** Or *in spirit*

12:1 1Co 1:10; 2Co 10:2; Eph 4:1; 1Pt 2:11 **12:1** Rm 6:13,16,19; 1Co 6:20; Heb 13:15; 1Pt 2:5 **12:2** 1Pt 1:14 **12:2** Mt 13:22; Gl 1:4; 1Jn 2:15 **12:2** Eph 4:23; Ti 3:5 **12:2** Eph 5:10,17; Col 1:9 **12:3** Rm 1:5; 15:15; 1Co 3:10; 15:10; Gl 2:9; Eph 3:7-8 **12:3** Rm 11:20 **12:3** 1Co 7:17; 2Co 10:13; Eph 4:7; 1Pt 4:11 **12:4** 1Co 12:12-14; Eph 4:4,16 **12:5** 1Co 10:17,23 **12:5** 1Co 12:20,27; Eph 4:12,25 **12:6** 1Co 7:7; 12:4; 1Pt 4:10-11 **12:6** Ac 13:1; 1Co 12:10 **12:7** Ac 6:1; 1Co 12:28 **12:7** Ac 13:1; 1Co 14:26 **12:8** Ac 4:36; 11:23; 13:15 **12:8** 2Co 8:2; 9:11,13 **12:8** 1Co 12:28; 1Tm 5:17 **12:8** 2Co 9:7 **12:9** 2Co 6:6; 1Tm 1:5 **12:9** 1Th 5:21-22 **12:10** Jn 13:34; 1Th 4:9; Heb 13:1; 2Pt 1:7 **12:10** Rm 13:7; Php 2:3; 1Pt 2:17 **12:11** Ac 18:25 **12:11** Ac 20:19 **12:12** Rm 5:2 **12:12** Heb 10:32,36 **12:12** Ac 1:14 **12:13** Rm 15:25; 1Co 16:15; 2Co 9:1; Heb 6:10 **12:13** Mt 25:35; 1Tm 3:2 **12:14** Mt 5:44; Lk 6:22; 1Co 4:12 **12:15** Jb 30:25; Heb 13:3 **12:16** Rm 15:5; 2Co 13:11; Php 2:2; 4:2; 1Pt 3:8 **12:16** Rm 11:20 **12:16** Rm 11:25; Pr 3:7 **12:17** Pr 20:22; 24:29 **12:17** 2Co 8:21 **12:18** Mk 9:50; Rm 14:19 **12:19** Dt 32:35 **12:19** Dt 32:35; Ps 94:1; 1Th 4:6; Heb 10:30 **12:20** Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27 **12:20** Pr 25:21-22 **12:20** 2Kg 6:22; Pr 25:21-22

12:1 Using **sacrifice** language metaphorically was common in the OT and in the Greco-Roman world (see Pss 50:23; 51:16-17; 141:2). The striking aspect of Paul's statement is that our **bodies** are **living sacrifices**. In Judaism, animal sacrifices involved the death of the animal offered; thus, a *living* sacrifice is an oxymoron. Paul can refer to believers this way because they have died with Christ and also live with him (Rm 6:8). The term living sacrifice captures these theological realities and applies them to Christian living.

12:2 This is a key verse for living according to a Christian worldview (see "Christian Worldview, the Great Commandment, and the Christian Life," *p. 1181*). Believers are not to think in the same patterns as the world around them. Rather, with renewed minds, they are to think according to God's ways so that they

may **discern** the **will of God.** Clearly, faithful Christian living depends on right thinking; without the renewal of the mind, we are unable to discern what is pleasing to God. See "Christian Higher Education," *p. 1471;* "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

12:3 Strikingly, the first thing Paul addresses regarding renewed, Christian thinking is humility. Humility is pleasing to God, but he hates pride (Is 2:11; Dn 4:37; Am 6:8). See also "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p. 1501*.

12:9-21 The central theme of this section is **love** and its applications. While the passage finds several parallels in Jewish and Greek ethical wisdom, much of Paul's instruction specifically parallels the teaching of Jesus (esp. 12:14,17-18,21).

12:9 Love, introduced here, continues to play a large role throughout the discussion of proper Christian living in the following chapters (e.g., 13:8-10; 14:15). Love is the central Christian virtue, reflecting the nature of God himself (1Jn 4:16) and the essence of the law (Mt 22:37-40).

12:13 Hospitality in the first century often entailed housing traveling believers, particularly preachers and missionaries. In a day in which hotels were neither safe nor wholesome, providing such accommodations was a key way of supporting them (see 3Jn 5-8).

12:14 Paul's instruction to **bless those who persecute you** has obvious parallels in the teaching of Jesus (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27-28). Jesus's instruction to respond to persecution with love was unique in the ancient world. Most cultures and religions advocated recrimination and violence in response to harsh treatment.

12:15 To **rejoice with those who rejoice** and **weep with those who weep** is to identify with the experiences of others. This notion is found in Jewish sources prior to Paul: "Do not avoid those who weep, but mourn with those who mourn" (Sir 7:34).

A CHRISTIAN'S DUTIES TO THE STATE

13 Let everyone submit to the governing authorities, † since there is no
authority except from God, † and the authorities that exist are instituted
by God. 2 So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's
command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For
rulers are not a terror † to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid
of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have its approval. 4 For it is
God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not
carry the sword for no reason. For it is God's servant, an avenger † that brings
wrath on the one who does wrong. 5 Therefore, you must submit, not only
because of wrath but also because of your conscience. † 6 And for this reason
you pay taxes, since the authorities are God's servants, continually attending to
these tasks. † 7 Pay your obligations † to everyone: taxes to those you owe
taxes, † tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, † and
honor to those you owe honor.

LOVE, OUR PRIMARY DUTY

8 Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. † 9 The commandments, **Do not commit adultery; do not murder; do not steal;** † **do not covet;** † † and any other commandment, are summed up by this commandment: **Love your neighbor as yourself.** † † 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.

PUT ON CHRIST

11 Besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour † for you † to wake up from sleep, † because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. † 12 The night is nearly over, and the day is near; † so let us discard the deeds of darkness † and put on the armor of light. † 13 Let us walk with decency, † as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; † not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, † and don't make plans to gratify the desires of the flesh. †

13:6 Lit *to this very thing* **13:9** Other mss add *do not bear false witness* **13:11** Other mss read *for us*
13:1 Ti 3:1; 1Pt 2:13 **13:1** Dn 2:21; 4:17; Jn 19:1 **13:3** 1Pt 2:14 **13:4** 1Th 4:6 **13:5** 1Pt 2:13,19 **13:7** Mt 22:21 **13:7** Lk 20:22; 23:2 **13:7** Mt 17:25 **13:8** Mt 7:12; 22:39; Jn 13:34; Rm 12:10; Gl 5:14; Jms 2:8 **13:9** Ex 20:13-17; Dt 5:17-21 **13:9** Ex 20:13-17; Dt 5:17-21 **13:9** Lv 19:18 **13:9** Lv 19:18; Mt 19:19 **13:11** 1Co 7:29; 10:11; Jms 5:8; 1Pt 4:7; 2Pt 3:9,11; 1Jn 2:18; Rv 1:3; 22:10 **13:11** Mk 13:37; 1Co 15:34; Eph 5:14; 1Th 5:6 **13:11** Ac 19:2; 1Co 3:5; 15:2 **13:12** Heb 10:25; 1Jn 2:8; Rv 1:3; 22:10 **13:12** Eph 5:11 **13:12** 2Co 6:7; 10:4; Eph 6:11,13; 1Th 5:8 **13:13** 1Th 4:12 **13:13** Lk 21:34; Gl 5:21; Eph 5:18; 1Pt 4:3 **13:14** Jb 29:14; Gl 3:27; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10,12 **13:14** Gl 5:16; 1Pt 2:11

13:1-7 Submission to proper authority is significant in the Christian worldview (see "Biblical View of Crime and Punishment," *p. 105*). Paul explains that governments are ordained by God. Even when foreign powers oppressed Israel, the biblical teaching continued to affirm God's ordination of their leadership (Dn 4:17). Significantly, the government of Paul's day was the Roman Empire, under Emperor Nero. Of course, government, like the rest of this world, is fallen and can be corrupted. When governments command disobedience to God, then we must obey God rather than people (Ac 5:27-32; see also the article, "How Should Christians Relate to Government?," *p. 1213;* "The Bible and Government Models," *p. 768*).

13:1 Emperor Claudius had expelled all the Jews and Jewish Christians from Rome in AD 49 (Ac 18:2). They returned when Claudius died in AD 54. The church in Rome, therefore, may have harbored some anti-government sentiment at the time of Paul's writing.

13:4 Secular rulers are God's servants, even if they serve him unwittingly. The Persian king Cyrus is even referred to as God's "anointed" (Is 45:1).

13:7 The historian Tacitus records Roman resistance to paying taxes in the mid-50s. This culminated in a tax revolt in AD 58, shortly after Paul wrote Romans. Whether or not Paul had in mind such resistance to paying **taxes** in Rome, it is clear that his exhortation to **pay your obligations** was directly relevant.

13:8-10 The idea that **love** fulfills **the law** shows Paul's indebtedness to the teaching of Jesus (Mt 22:34-40; Mk 12:28-34; Lk 10:25-28; Jn 13:34-35).

13:8 See "Personal Finances," *p. 758.*

13:12 The imagery of **darkness** was universally associated with evil, since it hides sinful activities. The **day** of the Lord is an important concept for the OT Prophets (e.g., Is 27; Jl 2:32) and NT writers (e.g., 1Co 5:5; 2Pt 3:10; also adapting the phrase to "the day of Christ"; e.g., Php 1:10), who envisage a day when God will save his people and judge his enemies.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

14 Accept † anyone who is weak in faith, † but don't argue about
disputed matters. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, † while
one who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 One who eats must not look down on
one who does not eat, † and one who does not eat must not judge one who
does, † because God has accepted him. † 4 Who are you to judge † another's
household servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand,
because the Lord is able † to make him stand.
5 One person judges one day to be more important than another day. † Someone
else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own
mind. † 6 Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord. †
Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; † and whoever
does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, and he gives thanks to God.
7 For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. † 8 If we live,
we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we
live or die, we belong to the Lord. † 9 Christ died and returned to life † for this:
that he might be Lord over both the dead and the living. † 10 But you, why do
you judge your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or
sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. † † 11 For it is
written,

As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me, †
and every tongue will give praise to God. † †

EVANGELICALS AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The relationship of North American evangelicals to world Christianity is at once simple and complex. The simplicity concerns the character of the faith itself. All believers, in all times and places, are equal recipients of God's grace and his gifts, equal participants in the work of the Holy Spirit and as fellow heirs of Jesus Christ. In these terms, North American evangelicals merely display variations on common patterns of God's merciful dealings with humankind.

The clear message of Scripture is that all believers, wherever they are found, make up a universal entity. Believers present in one local expression of Christian faith are linked to all others in their local settings because all are joined to Christ. And this linkage is much more than just a jigsaw puzzle in which the pieces touch only those other pieces that are in closest proximity. Rather, the great image from Scripture is the body of Christ where circulation (meaning assistance), a unified nervous system (meaning communication), and coordinated muscular exertion (meaning common action) are essential for all. This body of Christ anticipates the eternal reality described in Revelation 7:9: "There was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white."

Yet the relationship between North American evangelicals and the Global South is also complicated because of the history of Christianity over the last three centuries. For much of that period, evangelicals in North America were active participants in the Western missionary efforts that sought to spread Christianity throughout the world. Through the nineteenth century, Americans and Canadians followed the lead of Britain. Pioneering missionaries like Adoniram and Ann Judson went out from Massachusetts to Burma only a few years after the English cobbler William Carey had pioneered British missionary work in India. Lottie Moon left Virginia as a Southern Baptist missionary to China less than twenty years after Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission as the English-speaking Protestant world's most extensive outreach in Far East Asia. Rufus Anderson of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions followed the lead of Henry Venn, leader of England's Church Missionary Society, in promoting the "three-self formula" as a missionary ideal: self-governing, self-financing, and self-reproducing.

From roughly the dawn of the twentieth century, the number of evangelical missionaries from the United States, having overtaken the number from Britain, took the lead in cross-cultural proclamation of the gospel. (As a comparative note, it is worth observing that Canada, with its smaller population, long contributed a larger proportion of that population to missionary service than did the United States.) North American missionary efforts have been especially significant in promoting Bible translation. At the forefront of those translating efforts has been the Wycliffe Bible Translators, with the Summer Institute of Linguistics as its academic arm. The Wycliffe organization was founded in 1942 by an American missionary to Central America, Cameron Townsend; thousands of North Americans subsequently contributed to the more than seven hundred completed, and many more in-process, Bible translations created since that time.

Beyond providing people and resources for Bible translations, American missionaries have planted new churches all over the world. They have trained disciples, provided immense quantities of Christian literature, founded schools to teach basic literacy, established universities for advanced learning, set up hospitals, assisted agricultural and industrial development, and—in general—tried to provide as many dimensions of the Christian faith to others as they have experienced themselves.

Within recent years, however, the relationship of North Americans to the rest of the Christian world has entered a new phase. It is suggested by the fact that Wycliffe workers now come from all parts of the globe.

Some formerly mission-receiving countries like South Korea have even contributed more personnel (as a proportion of their population) than the traditional mission-sending countries like the U.S.

Even more complications are introduced if we think of the United States as a country that receives missionaries from the Global South. In recent decades, Christian missions have in fact moved from "the West to the rest" to a pattern of believers going "from everywhere to everywhere" (an insightful exposition is Michael Nazir-Ali, *From Everywhere to Everywhere: A World View of Christian Witness*, 1991). And some of those believers are now evangelizing within North America.

For the most part, Christian missionaries to the United States work among immigrant populations. As an example, Mark Gornik has documented the presence of scores of mission works in New York City alone that are offshoots of Christian communities in Africa (*Word Made Global: Stories of African Christianity in New York City*, 2011). Missionary organizations like the El Shaddai movement from the Philippines (a lay charismatic organization) and the Christian Church Outreach Mission from Ghana (founded by Abraham Bediako) are among the larger groups that also sponsor missionaries in some American locations (as well as many in Europe). Increasingly, missionaries to the U.S. are also beginning to reach beyond immigrant communities to the general population.

The relationship between American evangelicals and the churches of the Global South involves one more complicating factor. This factor concerns the type of Christianity that has been spreading so rapidly in much of the non-Western world. That type increasingly resembles the type of Christianity that has flourished in the U.S.

The distinguished missiologist Andrew Walls has explained these parallels in several helpful works (esp. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*, 1996; and in *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, 2002). He first points to what happened with Christianity when it was successfully transmitted from Europe to North America. That successful transmission required giving up church-state establishments, hierarchical societies, and aristocratic or monarchical governments in favor of the separation of church and state, egalitarian society, and democratic government. European observers did not believe that Christianity could survive without its traditional forms. But it did survive. In fact, from the late 1700s to the late 1800s, the United States experienced one of the most dramatic expansions of Christianity that had ever taken place in the long history of the church.

For the most part, Americans turned to voluntary, self-directed organization as the primary means for carrying on the work of the church. They practiced the faith by forming their own churches and religious agencies, generating their own financial support, and taking personal responsibility for spreading and upholding the faith. Evangelicals led in setting up churches in this pattern, and then in forming missionary agencies on the same basis.

The new American pattern embodied a much more informal Christianity and pushed consistently for ever-more flexible institutions and ever-newer innovations in responding to spiritual challenges. It established an affinity between Christianity and the American social movements of the age. The connections grew strong between Christianity—based on conversion and voluntary organization—on the one hand, and fluid, rapidly-changing, commerce-driven, insecure, and ethnically pluralistic society on the other. But that kind of nineteenth-century American setting now describes many of the world societies that Christian faith—based on conversion and voluntary organization—is growing so rapidly.

These newer societies tend to be competitive and not deferential, open to Christian witness but not officially Christian, allowing space for entrepreneurial activity while not restricting religious expression too drastically. To the extent that these conditions have developed, it is not surprising that styles of Christianity that flourished in North America's competitive, market-oriented, rapidly changing, and initiative-rewarding environment would also flourish when other places begin to look more like nineteenth-century America than fifteenth-century Europe.

American evangelicals continue to influence the Global South through missions. But so also has the Global South begun to do missions in the U.S. Much of Christianity through the entire world now resembles American forms of Christianity—not primarily because of direct American influence, but because

Christianity meets humanity's greatest needs there in ways that it has done, and continues to do, here.
MARK A. NOLL

12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. †

THE LAW OF LOVE

13 Therefore, let us no longer judge one another. † Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in the way of your brother or sister. † 14 I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. † Still, to someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean. † 15 For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking according to love. † Do not destroy, by what you eat, someone for whom Christ died. † 16 Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, † 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, † but righteousness, peace, and joy † in the Holy Spirit. 18 Whoever serves Christ † in this way is acceptable to God and receives human approval. †

19 So then, let us pursue what promotes peace † and what builds up one another. † 20 Do not tear down God's work because of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong to make someone fall by what he eats. † 21 It is a good thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother or sister stumble. † 22 Whatever you believe about these things, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. † 23 But whoever doubts stands condemned if he eats, † because his eating is not from faith, † and everything that is not from faith is sin.

14:4 Other mss read *For God has the power* **14:6** Other mss add *but whoever does not observe the day, it is to the Lord that he does not observe it* **14:10** Other mss read *of Christ* **14:21** Other mss add *or offended or weakened* **14:23** Or *conviction*

14:1 Ac 28:2; Rm 11:15; 12:3; 15:7 **14:1** Rm 15:1; 1Co 8:9-11; 9:22 **14:2** Rm 14:14 **14:3** Lk 18:9 **14:3** Col 2:16 **14:3** Ac 28:2; Rm 11:15; 15:7 **14:4** Rm 9:20; Jms 4:12 **14:5** Gl 4:10 **14:5** Lk 1:1; Rm 4:21 **14:6** Mt 14:19; 1Co 10:30; 1Tm 4:3-4 **14:7** Rm 8:38; 2Co 5:15; Gl 2:20; Php 1:20 **14:8** Lk 20:38; Php 1:20; 1Th 5:10; Rv 14:13 **14:9** Rv 1:18; 2:8 **14:9** Mt 28:18; Jn 12:24; Php 2:11; 1Th 5:10 **14:10** Rm 2:16; 2Co 5:10 **14:11** Php 2:10-11 **14:11** Is 45:23; 49:18 **14:11** Is 45:23; 49:18 **14:12** Mt 12:36; 16:27; 1Pt 4:5 **14:13** Mt 7:1; Rm 14:3 **14:13** 1Co 8:13 **14:14** Ac 10:15; Rm 14:2,20 **14:14** 1Co 8:7 **14:15** Eph 5:2 **14:15** 1Co 8:11 **14:16** 1Co 10:30; Ti 2:5 **14:17** 1Co 8:8 **14:17** Rm 15:13; Gl 5:22 **14:18** Rm 16:18 **14:18** 2Co 8:21; Php 4:8; 1Pt 2:12 **14:19** Ps 34:14; Rm 12:18; 1Co 7:15; 2Tm 2:22; Heb 12:14 **14:19** Rm 15:2; 1Co 10:23; 14:3,26;

2Co 12:19; Eph 4:12,29 **14:20** 1Co 8:9-13 **14:22** 1Jn 3:21 **14:23** Rm 14:5

14:1-23 Paul affirms Christian freedom but urges graciousness among people who differ on such things. On the matter of eating meat and observing certain days as holy, the issue appears to concern Jewish Christians who still feel bound to observance of the OT law, with its special holy days and requirements concerning foods that led some Jews to avoid all meat in the Roman world.

14:1 Someone **weak in faith** in this context does not refer to immaturity of faith; it refers, rather, to someone who cannot yet accept the freedom to eat and drink outside the parameters of Jewish restrictions.

14:5 The observance of some days as **more important** than others refers to Jewish holy days, such as the Sabbath, days of fasting, and various festivals. The "weak" regarded such days to still hold significance for Christian living.

14:10-12 Paul refers to the final judgment in which all **will give an account . . . to God.** Though Christians will avoid condemnation at judgment because of the saving work of Christ (8:1), nevertheless we will be accountable to God for things done in this life. It is therefore not appropriate for Christians to **judge** and condemn another; it is to God that we answer.

14:14 Jesus declared all foods "clean" (Mk 7:15-23), meaning that OT dietary restrictions were no longer to be upheld among his followers. So, Paul says **nothing is unclean in itself** (also Rm 14:20).

14:15 Paul regards **love** for others as more important than being "right" about disputable matters. Believers should not exercise their freedom in a way that causes others to stumble (cp. 1Co 8:13).

14:22-23 Paul emphasizes the place of conscience in the Christian life. While there is clearly a "correct" position regarding food and drink (cp. vv. 14,20), Paul understands that some believers' consciences will nevertheless be influenced by their history in Judaism. As such, each one should do as they think is right before God. The one who doubts should not eat, **because his eating is not from faith.**

PLEASING OTHERS, NOT OURSELVES

15 Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of
those without strength, † and not to please ourselves. 2 Each one of us
is to please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. † 3 For even Christ did
not please himself. † On the contrary, as it is written, **The insults of those who
insult you have fallen on me.** † † 4 For whatever was written in the past was
written for our instruction, † so that we may have hope through endurance and
through the encouragement from the Scriptures. 5 Now may the God who
gives † endurance and encouragement † grant you to live in harmony with one
another, † according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that you may glorify the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ † with one mind and one voice.

GLORIFYING GOD TOGETHER

7 Therefore accept one another, † just as Christ also accepted you, to the glory
of God. 8 For I say that Christ became a servant of the circumcised † on behalf
of God's truth, † to confirm the promises to the fathers, † 9 and so that
Gentiles † may glorify God for his mercy. † As it is written,
Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praise to your name. † †
10 Again it says, **Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people!** † † 11 And again,
Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles; let all the peoples praise him! † †
12 And again, Isaiah says,
The root of Jesse † will appear, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; the Gentiles will hope in him. † †
13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe † so
that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. †

FROM JERUSALEM TO ILLYRICUM

14 My brothers and sisters, I myself am convinced about you that you also are
full of goodness, † filled with all knowledge, † and able to instruct one another.
15 Nevertheless, I have written to remind you more boldly on some points †
because of the grace given me by God †

GRACE-FILLED LEADERSHIP

We sing the great hymn "Amazing Grace" to proclaim the sweetness of God's divine favor. We experience grace as pardon, for it removes our guilt as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12); as acceptance, for we are embraced and welcomed in God's sight; as joy and peace, for it delivers us from the frantic quest for happiness; as power, for it transforms us; and as hope, for it gives us confidence in God's plan.

Grace is an overarching term for all of God's gifts to humanity and all the blessings of salvation—all of which are manifested through God's own self-giving. By grace, God freely moves toward us to offer reconciling forgiveness and sonship in the family of God. Leaders in a grace-filled community need to experience God's enabling and renewing grace on a regular basis. Moreover, leaders need to help others receive this grace, as well as to model it, share it, and extend it.

Grace opens Christians to the things of God and to the truth ultimately revealed in Jesus Christ (Jn

1:16,18). Grace-filled leaders work to develop contexts that stress confessional essentials related to the three persons of the Trinity, including the authority of God made known in and through Holy Scripture, the majesty of Jesus Christ manifested in and through the cross, and the lordship of the Holy Spirit illuminated in and through his manifold life-giving ministries. The convictions on which a grace-filled community is built will focus on the Word, the cross, and the Spirit. Grace-filled leaders understand their responsibility to help believing communities shape and form their convictions in this manner, seeking to avoid libertinism on the one hand and legalism on the other.

Grace-filled leadership, then, involves distinguishing between confessional essentials that cannot be compromised and secondary or tertiary matters. Learning when and how to give deference and freedom in these matters is important for building a grace-filled community. Yet, a grace-filled community involves more than an orthodox confession, as important and foundational as this may be. Leadership for and participation in a grace-filled community reaches beyond belief to behavior; it brings with it a multifaceted challenge to live accordingly.

In Galatians 5:22-23, the apostle Paul identifies the character qualities of the fruit of the Spirit as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control"; these are qualities to be emulated in a grace-filled community. Grace-filled leadership frees the Christian community to exercise its giftedness in behalf of one another. Grace releases and affirms, valuing the dignity of individuals. It also supports and encourages. Grace-filled leadership seeks to honor others through both words and actions, while rejoicing with those who rejoice, and mourning with those who mourn.

A grace-filled community, therefore, will seek to develop a context in which each person will experience the joy of making significant contributions in advancing shared goals, shared values, and a shared mission. All those who have received grace should seek to show and share grace with others. Grace enables us to offer forgiveness when we have been wronged and to claim responsibility and seek forgiveness when we have wronged others. Grace encourages believers to shun legalism and libertinism in order to work together in harmony and freedom.

Grace-filled communities, shaped and informed by a Christian worldview, offer a context in which we can learn from our mistakes, displaying respect for and open communication with one another. Ultimately, grace-filled leaders encourage all in the community of faith to evidence heartfelt thanksgiving for the grace that has been lavished on us in Christ, while pointing us toward a greater dependence on God.

PHILIP W. EATON
DAVID S. DOCKERY

16 to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles, † serving as a priest of the
gospel of God. † My purpose is that the Gentiles may be an acceptable
offering, † sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 Therefore I have reason to boast in
Christ Jesus † regarding what pertains to God. † 18 For I would not dare say
anything except what Christ has accomplished through me † by word and deed
for the obedience of the Gentiles, 19 by the power of miraculous signs and
wonders, † and by the power of God's Spirit. As a result, I have fully
proclaimed the gospel of Christ from Jerusalem † all the way around to
Illyricum. † † 20 My aim is to preach the gospel where Christ has not been

named, † so that I will not build on someone else's foundation, † 21 but, as it is written,

Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard will understand. † †

PAUL'S TRAVEL PLANS

22 That is why I have been prevented many times from coming to you. † 23 But now I no longer have any work to do in these regions, † and I have strongly desired for many years to come to you † 24 whenever I travel to Spain. † For I hope to see you when I pass through and to be assisted by you for my journey there, † once I have first enjoyed your company † for a while. 25 Right now I am traveling to Jerusalem † to serve the saints, † 26 because Macedonia † and Achaia † were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased, and indeed are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual benefits, † then they are obligated to minister to them in material needs. 28 So when I have finished this and safely delivered the funds † to them, † † I will visit you on the way to Spain. 29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fullness of the blessing † of Christ.

30 Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, † to strive together with me in fervent prayers to God on my behalf. † 31 Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea, † that my ministry to † Jerusalem † may be acceptable to the saints, † 32 and that, by God's will, † I may come to you with joy † and be refreshed together with you.

33 May the God of peace be with all of you. † Amen.

15:5 Lit *God of* **15:8** The Jews **15:15** Other mss add *brothers* **15:19** A Roman province northwest of Greece on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea **15:23** Lit *now, having no longer a place in these parts* **15:24** Other mss add *I will come to you.* **15:28** Lit *delivered this fruit* **15:28** Or *and placed my seal of approval on this fruit for them* **15:29** Other mss add *of the gospel* **15:31** Lit *that my service for*
15:1 Rm 14:1; Gl 6:2; 1Th 5:14 **15:2** 1Co 9:22; 10:24,33; 2Co 13:9 **15:3** 2Co 8:9 **15:3** Ps 69:9 **15:3** Ps 69:9 **15:4** Rm 4:23; 2Tm 3:16 **15:5** 2Co 1:3 **15:5** Rm 12:16 **15:6** Rv 1:6 **15:7** Rm 14:1 **15:8** Mt 15:24; Ac 3:26 **15:8** Rm 4:16; 2Co 1:20 **15:9** Rm 3:29; 11:30 **15:9** Mt 9:8 **15:9** 2Sm 22:50; Ps 18:49 **15:9** 2Sm 22:50; Ps 18:49 **15:10** Dt 32:43 **15:10** Dt 32:43 **15:11** Ps 117:1 **15:11** Ps 117:1 **15:12** Rv 5:5; 22:16 **15:12** Is 11:10 **15:12** Is 11:10; Mt 12:21 **15:13** Rm 14:17 **15:13** 1Co 2:4; 1Th 1:5 **15:14** Eph 5:9; 2Th 1:11 **15:14** 1Co 1:5;

8:1,7,10; 12:8; 13:2 **15:15** Rm 12:3 **15:16** Ac 9:15; Rm 11:13 **15:16** Rm 1:1 **15:16** Rm 12:1; Eph 5:2; Php 2:17 **15:17** Php 3:3 **15:17** Heb 2:17; 5:1 **15:18** Ac 15:12; 21:19; Rm 1:5; 2Co 3:5 **15:19** Jn 4:48 **15:19** Ac 22:17-21 **15:19** Ac 20:1 **15:20** Rm 1:15; 10:15 **15:20** 1Co 3:10; 2Co 10:15-16 **15:21** Is 52:15 **15:21** Is 52:15 **15:22** Rm 1:13; 1Th 2:18 **15:23** Ac 19:21; Rm 1:10 **15:24** Ac 15:3 **15:24** Rm 1:12 **15:25** Ac 19:21 **15:25** Ac 24:17 **15:26** Ac 16:9; 1Co 16:5; 2Co 1:16; 2:13; 7:5; 8:1; 9:2,4; 11:9; Php 4:15; 1Th 1:7; 4:10; 1Tm 1:3 **15:26** Ac 18:12; 19:21 **15:27** 1Co 9:11 **15:28** Jn 3:33 **15:30** Gl 5:22; Col 1:8 **15:30** 2Co 1:11; Col 4:12 **15:31** 2Co 1:10; 2Th 3:2; 2Tm 3:11; 4:17 **15:31** 2Co 8:4; 9:1 **15:31** Ac 9:13; Rm 15:15 **15:32** Ac 18:21; Rm 1:10 **15:32** Rm 15:23 **15:33** Rm 16:20; 2Co 13:11; Php 4:9; 1Th 5:23; 2Th 3:16; Heb 13:20

15:1-3 The **strong** are those who, like Paul, know they are not bound by the ceremonial requirements of the law of Moses (cp. 14:14,20). But the **obligation** of the strong is to love others, **not to please** self. The ultimate good is not simply to be "correct" in theological understanding, but to build up one another in love (cp. Eph 4:16). In this way, the strong will follow Christ, who **did not please himself.**

15:8-12 Paul has argued throughout Romans that in Christ, God has fulfilled the promises to Abraham to bless the nations (i.e., Gentiles; chap. 4), without negating the privileges and blessings of Israel (chaps. 9–11). Gathering a series of OT quotations here, Paul demonstrates that it has always been God's intention to gather **Gentiles** in order that they may worship him.

15:15-21 Paul reveals his self-understanding as apostle **to the Gentiles** and his **aim . . . to preach the gospel where Christ has not been named.** This is in fulfillment of Paul's commissioning from the Lord (Ac 9:15; 22:21; 26:17-18).

15:16 Paul transforms OT sacrificial language so that he, as a minister of the gospel, is a **priest**, and converted **Gentiles** are an **acceptable offering** presented to God. This is typical for the way the NT transforms the OT sacrificial system (12:1; Heb 13:15).

15:24,28 Spain was only fully organized as a Roman province during Paul's lifetime. We are never told why Paul had this area in view as his destination, nor if he made it there. An early Christian writing, *1 Clement* 5:7 (AD 96/97), suggests Paul went to Spain after the Roman imprisonment recorded in Acts 28. Since Clement was the bishop in Rome at the time of writing, his testimony must be taken seriously.

15:25-27 A practical outworking of Paul's understanding that the Gentiles are a "wild olive branch" grafted into the tree of God's people (11:17-24) is that they are willing to contribute to the financial needs of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. They **have shared in their spiritual benefits** and so are willing **to minister to them in material needs.**

PAUL'S COMMENDATION OF PHOEBE

16 I commend to you † our sister Phoebe, who is a servant † of the church in Cenchreae. † 2 So you should welcome her in the Lord † in a manner worthy of the saints and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many — and of me also.

GREETING TO ROMAN CHRISTIANS

3 Give my greetings to Prisca † and Aquila, † my coworkers in † Christ Jesus, † 4 who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches. 5 Greet also the church that meets in their

home. † Greet my dear friend Epaenetus, who is the first convert † † to Christ from Asia. † † 6 Greet Mary, † who has worked very hard for you. † 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews † † and fellow prisoners. † They are noteworthy in the eyes of the apostles, † and they were also in Christ before me. 8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our coworker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys. 10 Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. † 11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew. † Greet those who belong to the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. 12 Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, who has worked very hard in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, † chosen in the Lord; also his mother — and mine. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. † 16 Greet one another with a holy kiss. † All the churches of Christ send you greetings.

WARNING AGAINST DIVISIVE PEOPLE

17 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. † Avoid them, † 18 because such people do not serve our Lord Christ † but their own appetites. † † They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words. †

PAUL'S GRACIOUS CONCLUSION

19 The report of your obedience has reached everyone. † Therefore I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise about what is good, and yet innocent about what is evil. † 20 The God of peace † will soon crush Satan † under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you. †

21 Timothy, † my coworker, and Lucius, † Jason, † and Sosipater, † my fellow countrymen, greet you.

22 I Tertius, who wrote this letter, † greet you in the Lord. †

23 Gaius, † who is host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, †
the city treasurer, and our brother Quartus greet you. †

GLORY TO GOD

25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you † according to my gospel and the
proclamation about Jesus Christ, † according to the revelation of the mystery
kept silent † for long ages † 26 but now revealed and made known through the
prophetic Scriptures, † according to the command of the eternal God to advance
the obedience of faith † among all the Gentiles — 27 to the only wise God,
through Jesus Christ — to him be the glory forever! † † Amen.

16:1 Others interpret this term in a technical sense: *deacon*, or *deaconess*, or *minister*, or *courier* **16:3** Traditionally, *Priscilla*, as in Ac 18:2,18,26 **16:5** Lit *the firstfruits* **16:5** Other mss read *Achaia* **16:6** Or *Maria* **16:6** Other mss read *us* **16:7** Or *family members* **16:7** Or *They are noteworthy among the apostles* **16:11** Or *family member* **16:18** Lit *belly* **16:22** Or *letter in the Lord, greet you* **16:23** Some mss include v. 24: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.* **16:25-27** Other mss have these vv. at the end of chap. 14 or 15.

16:1 2Co 3:1 **16:1** Ac 18:18 **16:2** Php 2:29 **16:3** Ac 18:2 **16:3** Rm 8:11; 2Co 5:17; 12:2; Gl 1:22 **16:3** Rm 8:1 **16:5** 1Co 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 2 **16:5** 1Co 16:15 **16:5** Ac 16:6 **16:7** Rm 9:3; 16:21 **16:7** Col 4:10; Phm 23 **16:10** 1Co 1:11 **16:13** Mk 15:21 **16:15** Rm 16:2 **16:16** 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26; 1Pt 5:14 **16:17** 1Tm 1:3; 6:3 **16:17** Mt 7:15; Gl 1:8-9; 2Th 3:6,14; Ti 3:10; 2Jn 10 **16:18** Rm 14:18 **16:18** Php 3:19 **16:18** Col 2:4; 2Pt 2:3 **16:19** Rm 1:8 **16:19** Jr 4:22; Mt 10:16; 1Co 14:20 **16:20** Rm 15:33 **16:20** Mt 4:10 **16:20** 1Co 16:23; 2Co 13:13; Gl 6:18; Php 4:23; 1Th 5:28; 2Th 3:18; Rv 22:21 **16:21** Ac 16:1 **16:21** Ac 13:1 **16:21** Ac 17:5 **16:21** Ac 20:4 **16:22** 1Co 16:21; Gl 6:11; Col 4:18; 2Th 3:17; Phm 19 **16:23** Ac 20:4; 1Co 1:14 **16:23** Ac 19:22 **16:25** Eph 3:20; Jd 24 **16:25** Rm 2:16 **16:25** Mt 13:35; Rm 11:25; 1Co 2:1,7; 4:1; Eph 1:9; 3:3,9; 6:19; Col 1:26; 2:2; 4:3; 1Tm 3:16 **16:25** 2Tm 1:9; Ti 1:2 **16:26** Rm 1:2 **16:26** Rm 1:5 **16:27** Rm 11:36

16:1 Letters of commendation were important in the ancient world. They were stamps of approval given to someone traveling so that others within a letter writer's network might house and help them. Thus, Paul here commends Phoebe to the believers in Rome. **Cenchreae** was the port on one side of Corinth. The mention of this location has led most scholars to agree that the letter to the Romans was written while Paul was in Corinth during his third missionary journey (AD 56–57; Ac 20:1-3).

16:2 Benefactors or patrons played a significant role in the first-century world, using their wealth and status to help and fund specific people or groups. **Phoebe** was apparently a wealthy woman who had supported Paul.

16:5 The first Christian churches met in private homes. Paul mentions three home churches in this chapter, indicating multiple churches within Rome. Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila hosted one (vv. 3-5); believers within Narcissus's household hosted another (v. 11); and Asyncritus and others hosted the third (v. 14). Given the size of even wealthy Roman homes, these congregations would have consisted of no more than twenty to thirty people.

16:16 A **kiss** was a common greeting in the ancient world and particularly in Judaism. Such a greeting is mentioned often in the NT, and by the second century a "kiss of peace" was a standard part of Christian liturgy.

16:20 This verse echoes Genesis 3:15. It may seem odd for the **God of peace** to **crush** his adversary, but that is precisely the way in which peace will be achieved. See also “Satan and Demons,” *p. 1611*.

16:22 It was common in the ancient world to hire trained scribes, *amanuenses*, who would write down what an author dictated. **Tertius**, who is otherwise unknown to us, served in this role for the letter to the Romans.

1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

First Corinthians is the most literary of Paul's letters. With a variety of stylistic devices—irony, sarcasm, rhetorical questions, alliteration, antithesis, personification, framing devices, hyperbole, repetition, picturesque words (with local color), double meanings, and other wordplays—Paul attempted to persuade his readers. He wanted to communicate to the Corinthians the necessity of accepting the Lord's authority over their lives.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: First Corinthians ascribes Paul as its author (1:1; 16:21). Biblical scholars are almost unanimous that Paul wrote the letter. He wrote it during the last year of his three-year ministry at Ephesus, probably a few weeks before Pentecost in the spring of AD 56 (15:32; 16:8; Ac 20:31).

BACKGROUND: During Paul's second missionary journey, he had a vision at Troas; he heard a man call to him, "Cross over to Macedonia and help us!" (Ac 16:9). That change in plans led Paul to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and ultimately to Corinth (Ac 18:5). Paul ministered in Corinth for at least eighteen months (Ac 18:1-18). He left Corinth accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla (Ac 18:18), leaving them at Ephesus where they met and instructed "an eloquent man" named Apollos (Ac 18:24-26). Apollos then went to Corinth and had a powerful ministry there (Ac 18:27–19:1).

First Corinthians is the second letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthian church. He had written them an earlier letter that included an admonition not to mix with the sexually immoral (5:9). The writing of this second letter (1 Corinthians) was prompted by oral reports from Chloe's household about factional strife within the church (1:11). Paul had also received reports about an incestuous relationship among the membership (5:1), factions that arose during observance of the Lord's Supper (11:18), and confusion over the resurrection of the dead (15:12). As a result, Paul addressed these issues in 1 Corinthians. Apparently as he was writing the letter, he received a letter from the Corinthians asking his opinion on various issues (7:1,25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). Therefore, he included his replies within this letter to the Corinthian believers.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

First Corinthians contributes greatly to our understanding of the Christian life, ministry, and relationships by showing us how the members of the church—Christ's body—are to function together. Problems can arise in any church because the church is comprised of sinful people (redeemed certainly, but still prone to follow the tug of sin). Paul gave specific solutions to specific problems, but the underlying answer to all these problems is for the church and its members to live Christ-centered lives. It all comes down to living under the lordship and authority of Christ, the head of his body (the church).

STRUCTURE

Paul's writing is in the form of a letter, using the standard four parts of a first-century letter: salutation (1:1-3), thanksgiving (1:4-9), the main body (1:10–16:18), and a farewell (16:19-21). It is a pastoral letter, driven by the occasion and the present needs of the recipients.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the way Paul structured his letter was his use of the word "about" to introduce a subject. It is apparent that "about" signals that Paul was responding to items on a list of questions that he had received—perhaps by way of a committee of men (16:17). These questions dealt with

males and females in marriage (7:1); virgins (7:25); food offered to idols (8:1); spiritual gifts (12:1); the collection for the saints in Jerusalem (16:1); and Apollos (16:12).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God the Father is the supreme Lord, for whose glory all things are to be done (10:31). The theological centrality of Jesus's bodily resurrection is developed in the sustained argument of the "Resurrection Chapter" (chap. 15). His lordship over the church means that he has the right to order its life and worship. The Spirit's life-giving presence has brought the church into existence, has given each of its members "spiritual gifts" (chap. 12), and enables its members to live holy lives because he is the Holy Spirit.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Humanity in this book is seen mainly within the context of Christian community. Redeemed people have been transformed by Christ, are called and enabled to love one another, and are destined for resurrection. Such persons, however, still struggle with sins such as divisiveness, sexual immorality, and disorder in worship.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This letter contains what may be the first-composed written summary of the NT understanding of redemption: "For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (15:3). Further, this book emphasizes that God saves only those individuals who believe in Christ's death (1:21-22).

1 CORINTHIANS TIMELINE

1000–500 BC

Corinth is founded by Dorian Greeks. **1000**

Corinth is ruled by Cypselus **(657–627)** and his son Periander. **(627–585)** Periander mints Corinthian coins and constructs the *diolkos*, a five-foot-wide rock-cut path that ran four miles between two seaports, Lechaion on the Gulf of Corinth and Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf. **600**

The Isthmian games begin and are held every two years to honor Poseidon, the god of the sea. **582**

Temple of Apollo is constructed. **550**

500–50 BC

Corinth sides with Sparta and prevails against Athens in the Peloponnesian War. **430**

Population of Corinth reaches 100,000. **400**

Phillip II of Macedon conquers Corinth. **338**

After Phillip II's assassination, the Greeks at the Isthmian games choose Phillip's son, Alexander the

Great, to lead them in war with Persia. **336**

The Corinthians attempt to resist Roman expansion in Greece and are destroyed by the Roman general Lucius Mummius. **146**

50 BC–AD 50

Julius Caesar rebuilds Corinth as a colony of Rome naming it *Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis.* **44 bc** Augustus Caesar makes Corinth the capital of Achaia. **27 bc** Jesus's trials, death, resurrection, and ascension **Nisan 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, AD 33**

Pentecost **AD 33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER AD 34**

AD 50–100

Paul arrives in Corinth and spends eighteen months planting the church. **50–51**

Paul's hearing before Corinth's proconsul, Gallio, brother of the Roman philosopher Seneca **51**

Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus. **56**

Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Ephesus. **56**

Paul spends the winter in Corinth, from where he writes Romans. **57**

Clement of Rome, the earliest of the apostolic fathers, sends a letter from Rome to the church at Corinth. This is thought to be the earliest Christian document outside the books of the NT. **96**

FAITH AND REASON

There are points of tension in the Scriptures concerning the relation of faith and reason. Paul reminds us that Christ sent him to proclaim the gospel, but not by relying on worldly wisdom. Indeed, Paul insists that the wisdom of the wise will be destroyed and that nothing will come of their cleverness. Instead, those saved are saved by the "foolishness" of the gospel (1Co 1:17-24).

But Paul also suggests that, in their wickedness, people are stifling the truth even as knowledge of God lies plain before their eyes. Since the world began, God's invisible attributes, power, and deity have been accessible to human reason through the things God has made (Rm 1: 19-20). Additionally, Paul uses a series of arguments to support the resurrection of the dead (1Co 15:12-20).

What follows is an exploration of this tension; it offers one Christian account of faith and reason.

WHAT IS REASON AND WHAT IS FAITH?

In its broadest sense, the term *reason* means those natural human powers that enable access to a variety of truths. Such powers include sense perception, intuition of necessary truths, making inferences, deciding what to do, memory, and testimony. More narrowly, *reason* refers to reliable methods of inquiry about the world. Paradigmatic examples include the practices of the natural sciences. Even more narrowly, *reason* refers to forms of inference used to appropriately support one statement on the basis of other statements.

Christians generally agree that faith is the proper and primary response to God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). For a Christian, faith involves trusting Christ with one's whole life (Pr 3:5; Jn 20:31; Heb 12:2). Such trust requires embracing as true the testimony of the Scriptures and the church. Trusting in this way means accepting as true and binding certain understandings of what the Scriptures teach (2Tm 3:14-17; 2Th

2:15).

Taken together, full-orbed Christian faith thus has three aspects: affective (assurance, confidence—1Jn 5:14; Heb 10:22; 11:1-40), cognitive (knowledge or belief—Gn 15:6; Heb 11:3), and volitional (trust, obedience—Gn 12:1-4). Faith is both a state (e.g., assent or belief) and an activity (e.g., worship).

HOW DO FAITH AND REASON RELATE?

What is the relationship between faith and reason? Historically, three kinds of answers have been given.

1. THE CONFLICT MODEL

The conflict model contends that faith and reason are irreconcilably opposed to one another. Oxford biologist Richard Dawkins, who insists that faith and reason are enemies, provides a contemporary example. He endorses science as the paradigm of reason, contending that the claims essential to Christianity are unreasonable given the standards of science.

Have Christians endorsed the conflict model? The second-century church father Tertullian famously asked, "What indeed does Athens have to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians. . . . With our faith, we desire no further belief. For this is our palmary faith, that there is nothing which we ought to believe besides."

If Tertullian is suggesting that faith is genuine only if one knowingly embraces a statement that is against or contrary to the deliverances of mere reason, then he endorses a conflict model.

2. THE INDEPENDENCE MODEL

The independence model denies that faith and reason are necessarily antagonistic ventures. Instead, faith and reason are conceived as fundamentally independent. Evolutionary biologist Stephen Gould contended that science and faith occupy different, nonoverlapping magisterium (teaching authority). Science attends to facts and theories about the natural world (the what and how). Religion is about morality, the meaning and purpose of human life (the why). So, science and religion, reason and faith, are independent domains.

The earlier quote by Tertullian may be understood as emphasizing the independence of faith and reason, if Tertullian is suggesting that faith is merely indifferent to the deliverances of mere reason, that faith is about our response to what God has done for the sake of our salvation.

In his book *Credo*, Karl Barth, the twentieth-century theologian writes about the relation of dogmatics and philosophy. His claim "that Dogmatics runs counter to every philosophy" seems to underscore a fundamental opposition between faith and reason. But he elaborates that "no philosophy can deliver the key to us. . . . The question of the 'proper' language of theology is ultimately to be answered only with prayer and the life of faith." Barth may be suggesting that reason and faith are independent from, but not necessarily in opposition to, one another.

3. THE HARMONY MODEL

For some, the domains of faith and learning overlap much more than the independence model endorses. The harmony model holds that faith and reason have mutual aims and that the methods of each can interact with, and support, the other. Geneticist and director of the National Institutes of Health, Francis Collins, insists that there is no essential conflict between faith as expressed in Christianity, and reason, as exemplified in the physical or social sciences. Both have similar aims: discovering the truth about how things actually are and responding properly to what is true.

Thomas Aquinas insists that faith and learning relate, ideally, in harmony. He argues that grace, which enables faith, doesn't destroy but rather completes nature (including reason). He holds that reason can demonstrate the preambles of the faith (that God exists, God is one, God is necessary), but by faith we know the articles of faith (Trinity, incarnation, resurrection). The latter are above or beyond reason, but not contrary to it. Reason can help us understand the articles of faith and, also, help defeat objections to faith. In short, faith and reason work together to give us the full truth about God, the world, and ourselves.

HOW SHOULD CHRISTIANS THINK?

What should Christians think about the nature of faith and reason? First, both faith and reason are God's gifts. Christians should receive them graciously and use them well.

Second, reason enables one to make many true judgments about the nature of things in the world, other persons, and self. Faith, likewise, gives humans access to many profoundly significant truths. Since both reason and faith are means of accessing truth, they share a cognitive end.

Faith, however, provides access to some truths that reason alone cannot access. These include that God is Triune, Jesus Christ is God incarnate, Jesus died and was resurrected, and Jesus's death and resurrection are the means of our salvation. Additionally, faith's access to such truths comes through willingness to accept God's testimony, especially through the Scriptures and the church's witness. Central to orthodox Christian conviction is that faith offers access to truths otherwise unavailable to reason.

The difference here between faith and reason is material, not formal. Reason also provides humans access to truths the Christian faith does not. For example, ordinarily, it is reason—not God's revelation—that helps humans know, for example, that chewing or smoking tobacco is harmful to one's health.

Moreover, reason is like faith in that reliance on the testimony of others is one of the ways reason functions to help humans acquire truth. For example, that a financial adviser is a reliable source of truth about stock market fluctuations means that her judgment that one should sell rather than buy a certain company's shares provides one a good reason to sell. Selling, however, is an act of faith (in a sense analogous to that of faith in God) in the trustworthiness of one's financial adviser, albeit a quite reasonable one.

CHRISTIANS AND THE HARMONY MODEL

How should a Christian think about the three models of the relation of faith and reason? Christians should embrace the harmony model, because the goal of both faith and reason is grasping the truth. When reason functions well, we are able to access the truth about a wide range of things. Faith operates to allow another means of access to truths, some of which may also be accessible to reason, in its normal operations, while others are not.

Still, we are fallible, finite, and fallen creatures. There are limits to our knowledge. Even for things within the grasp of our reasoning powers, we make mistakes because our powers are not developed or deployed properly. Additionally, we are sinful creatures, having distorted passions and a misshapen will. Not surprisingly, then, faith and reason may sometimes appear to either be opposed or simply independent ventures. In practice, when conflict or independence models are advocated, it is because some distorted or defective version of either faith or reason is being employed. But faith and reason, rightly understood, are unified both by being gifts of, and having their ultimate source in, God. So, in principle there is no essential conflict between them.

Still, the independence and conflict models point to something important. The Christian faith demands that our fundamental posture toward God be utter reliance on him and not merely an assent to a set of propositions. Reason impedes faith when it is taken to be a rival to one's ultimate and unconditional reliance on God, as revealed in Christ.

MICHAEL D. BEATY

GREETING

1 Paul, † called as an apostle † of Christ Jesus by God's will, † and Sosthenes our brother: †

2 To the church of God at Corinth, † to those sanctified † in Christ Jesus, called † as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name † of Jesus Christ our Lord — both their Lord and ours.

3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father † and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THANKSGIVING

4 I always thank † my God for you because of the grace of God given to you in Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in him † in every way, in all speech and all knowledge. † 6 In this way, the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you, † 7 so that you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait † for the revelation † of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, † so that you will be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. † 9 God is faithful; † you were called by him † into fellowship with his Son, † Jesus Christ our Lord.

DIVISIONS AT CORINTH

10 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction. 11 For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers and sisters, by members of Chloe's people, that there is rivalry † among you. 12 What I am saying is this: One of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," † or "I belong to Cephas," † or "I belong to Christ." † 13 Is Christ divided? † Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in Paul's name? 14 I thank God † † that I baptized none of you except Crispus † and Gaius, † 15 so that no one can say you were baptized in my name. 16 I did, in fact, baptize the household † of Stephanas; † beyond that, I don't recall if I baptized anyone else. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel — not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross † of Christ will not be emptied of its effect.

CHRIST THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD

18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is
the power of God to us who are being saved. † 19 For it is written,
I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the intelligence
of the intelligent. † †
20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the teacher of the law? † Where is
the debater of this age? † Hasn't God made the world's wisdom foolish? 21 For
since, in God's wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was
pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of what is preached.
22 For the Jews ask for signs † and the Greeks seek wisdom, 23 but we preach
Christ crucified, † a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the
Gentiles. † 24 Yet to those who are called, † both Jews and Greeks, Christ is
the power of God and the wisdom of God, 25 because God's foolishness is wiser
than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

BOASTING ONLY IN THE LORD

26 Brothers and sisters, consider your calling: Not many were wise from a
human perspective, † not many powerful, † not many of noble birth. 27 Instead,
God has chosen † what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has
chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. 28 God has chosen what
is insignificant and despised in the world † — what is viewed as nothing — to
bring to nothing what is viewed as something, 29 so that no one † may boast in
his presence. † 30 It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became
wisdom from God for us — our righteousness, † sanctification, † and
redemption, † 31 in order that, as it is written: † **Let the one who boasts, boast**
in the Lord. † †

1:14 Other mss omit *God* **1:14** Or *I am thankful* **1:20** Or *scholar* **1:23** Other mss read *Greeks* **1:26** Lit *wise according to the flesh* **1:29** Lit *that not all flesh*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Rm 1:1 **1:1** 2Co 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2Tm 1:1 **1:1** Ac 18:17 **1:2** Ac 18:1; 19:1; 2Co 1:1,23; 2Tm 4:20 **1:2** Ac 20:32; 26:18; 1Co 6:11; Heb 10:10 **1:2** Rm 1:6-7 **1:2** Gn 4:26; Ps 79:6; Jn 10:25; Ac 9:14; 15:14; Rv 14:1 **1:3** Rm 1:7; 2Co 1:2; Gl 1:3; Eph 1:2; Php 1:2; 2Th 1:2; Ti 1:4 **1:4** Rm 1:8; Php 1:3; Col 1:3; 1Th 1:2; 2Th 1:3; 2Tm 1:3; Phm 4 **1:5** 2Co 8:9; 9:11 **1:5** Rm 15:14; 1Co 12:8; 2Co 8:7; 1Jn 2:20 **1:6** 2Th 1:10; 1Tm 2:6; 2Tm 1:8; Rv 1:2 **1:7** Lk 17:30; Rm 8:19; Php 3:20; Heb 9:28; 2Pt 3:12 **1:7** 1Pt 4:13 **1:8** Php 1:6; 1Th 3:13 **1:8** Lk 17:24; 1Co 5:5; 2Co 1:14; Php 2:16; Col 1:22 **1:9** Dt 7:9; Is 49:7; 1Co 10:13; 2Co 1:18 **1:9** Rm 8:28 **1:9** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2; 1Jn 1:3 **1:11** Ti 3:9 **1:12** Ti 3:13 **1:12** Jn 1:42 **1:12** Mt 23:9-10 **1:13** 1Co 12:5; 2Co 11:4; Eph 4:5 **1:14** Ac 18:8 **1:14** Rm 16:23 **1:16** Rm 16:5 **1:16** 1Co 16:15,17

1:17 Lk 23:26; Php 3:18 **1:18** Ac 19:11; Rm 1:16; 2Co 13:4 **1:19** Is 29:14 **1:19** Is 29:14 **1:20** Lk 16:8 **1:22** Mt 12:38 **1:23** Lk 23:26; 1Co 2:2; Gl 3:1; 5:11 **1:24** Rm 1:6 **1:26** Ac 25:5 **1:27** Mt 24:22; Eph 1:4 **1:28** Lk 18:9 **1:29** Ac 7:46 **1:30** Mt 6:33; Rm 1:17; 2Pt 1:1 **1:30** 1Th 4:3 **1:30** Eph 1:7 **1:31** Mk 1:2 **1:31** Jr 9:24 **1:31** Jr 9:23-24

1:1 Paul often mentions the co-senders of his letters. This **Sosthenes** could be the synagogue ruler who had been beaten in Corinth during Paul's visit (Ac 18:17).

1:5 Though their giftedness in **speech** and **knowledge** has caused problems within the Corinthian congregation (1Co 14), Paul nevertheless acknowledges that these are gifts from God.

1:6-9 Given the seriousness of the problems in the Corinthian congregation, the positive affirmation in these verses is striking. They underscore that God is the One who will **strengthen** these believers **to the end**; though the Corinthians have problems, God is **faithful.**

1:10 Christian unity is very important in the NT and must be central to a Christian worldview.

1:12-13 Apparently Christians in Corinth divided according to allegiances to their favorite teachers, a problem still common among believers today. That the teachers listed are all orthodox does not make things any better. Paul stresses that our loyalty is to **Christ**—not to any mere teacher. Only **Christ** was **crucified** for us.

1:18 That the **cross** seems like **foolishness** to outsiders, but **is the power of God** for salvation, is an apocalyptic theme. That Jesus died on a **cross** appears to be a weakness of Christianity in the eyes of the world, but God has revealed its **power** to those **being saved.**

1:20 The **one who is wise** refers to Greek philosophers. The **teacher of the law** probably has in view Jewish teachers (the same word is often translated "scribes" in the Gospels). The **debater of this age** refers to traveling orators who debated key ideas and became very popular in the NT era. None of these popular sources of wisdom could discover on their own God's way of accomplishing salvation.

1:22-25 Because hanging on a tree was a sign of God's curse (Dt 21:22–23), the idea of a crucified Messiah was **a stumbling block to the Jews—**it was scandalous. It was simply foolish to **Gentiles**, who regarded crucifixion as the just fate of serious criminals. Nevertheless, the gospel cannot be changed to accommodate the demands of culture. Rather, God's truth must be proclaimed no matter how foolish it may seem, for by this truth God will save those who believe.

1:27 Christianity does not advance by the popularity or impressiveness of its adherents.

PAUL'S PROCLAMATION

2 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, announcing the mystery † of
God to you, I did not come with brilliance † of speech † or wisdom. 2 I
decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him
crucified. † 3 I came to you in weakness, † in fear, † and in much trembling. †
4 My speech † and my preaching were not with persuasive † words of
wisdom † but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith
might not be based on human wisdom but on God's power. †

SPIRITUAL WISDOM

6 We do, however, speak a wisdom among the mature, † but not a wisdom of this age, or of the rulers † of this age, who are coming to nothing. † 7 On the contrary, we speak God's hidden wisdom in a mystery, a wisdom God predestined † before the ages for our glory. † 8 None of the rulers of this age knew this wisdom, because if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. † 9 But as it is written,

What no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived — God has prepared these things for those who love him. † †

10 Now God has revealed these things to us by the Spirit, since the Spirit searches everything, † even the depths of God. † 11 For who knows a person's thoughts † except his spirit † within him? In the same way, no one knows † the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. 13 We also speak these things, not in words † taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. † 14 But the person without the Spirit † does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated † spiritually. 15 The spiritual person, however, can evaluate † everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone. 16 For

who has known the Lord's mind, that he may instruct him? † †

But we have the mind of Christ. †

2:1 Other mss read *testimony* **2:4** Other mss read *human wisdom* **2:11** Or *things* **2:13** Or *things with spiritual words* **2:14** Lit *natural person* **2:14** Or *judged*, or *discerned*, also in v. 15 **2:15** Or *judge*, or *discern* **2:1** 1Tm 2:2 **2:1** Col 4:6 **2:2** 1Co 1:23-24; Gl 6:14 **2:3** 2Co 11:30 **2:3** Rv 11:11 **2:3** Php 2:12 **2:4** Mt 12:37 **2:4** Php 1:25 **2:5** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; 2Tm 1:7; Rv 11:17 **2:6** Mt 5:48 **2:6** Lk 12:58 **2:6** Heb 2:14 **2:7** Eph 1:5 **2:7** Lk 24:26; 1Pt 5:1,4 **2:8** Ps 24:7 **2:9** Is 52:15; 64:4 **2:9** Is 52:15; 64:4; Lk 10:27; 1Jn 4:20 **2:10** Ps 17:3; Jn 14:26 **2:10** Rm 8:39; 11:33; Eph 3:18 **2:11** Rm 1:9 **2:11** 1Jn 4:8 **2:13** Mt 12:37 **2:16** Is 40:13 **2:16** Is 40:13 **2:16** Col 2:2

2:1 Paul's preaching is contrasted with the public speeches made by the sophists and orators of his day. They would follow a certain protocol for speaking, praising the city and employing elaborate eloquence designed to win over an audience.

2:2-3 Not only is Paul's message focused on the cross of Christ, but his ministry is decidedly "cruciform." He plays down human impressiveness and preaches a "foolish" message in the eyes of the world. But the message of the cross is the power of God for salvation (1:18) in spite of its weak appearance. So, too,

Paul's ministry may have appeared weak, but it was accompanied by the Spirit's power (2:4). See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV*.

2:4-5 In the Greek world, popular speakers gained a following by impressive display of oratorical skill. Paul deliberately pursued ministry in a contrasting way because he did not want people to be persuaded by impressive arguments. Rather, he wanted their **faith** to rest on **God's power.** Even today crowds can be drawn in a variety of ways, but Christian ministry rests on clear gospel proclamation.

2:6-9 Paul makes clear that there is **wisdom** in the gospel, but it is often not what the world considers wisdom. Indeed, God's wisdom is **hidden**, in keeping with the apocalyptic theme begun in 1:18. See "Special Revelation in Scripture," *p. 705*.

2:13 Spiritual people are people indwelt by the Holy Spirit—that is, they are Christians, not an elite group of super-Christians.

THE PROBLEM OF IMMATURITY

3 For my part, brothers and sisters, I was not able to speak to you as
spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ. † 2 I gave
you milk to drink, not solid food, since you were not yet ready for it. In
fact, you are still not ready, 3 because you are still worldly. For since there is
envy † and strife † † among you, are you not worldly and behaving like mere
humans? 4 For whenever someone says, "I belong to Paul," and another, "I
belong to Apollos," † are you not acting like mere humans?

THE ROLE OF GOD'S SERVANTS

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? They are servants through whom you
believed, and each has the role the Lord has given. 6 I planted, † Apollos
watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So then neither the one who plants nor the
one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 Now he who
plants and he who waters are one, † and each will receive his own reward
according to his own labor. 9 For we are God's coworkers. † You are God's
field, God's building. †
10 According to God's grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a
skilled master builder, † and another builds on it. But each one is to be careful
how he builds on it. 11 For no one can lay any other foundation † than what has
been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on the
foundation with gold, silver, † costly stones, † wood, hay, or straw, 13 each
one's work will become obvious. For the day will disclose it, because it will be

revealed by fire; † the fire will test the quality of each one's work. † 14 If anyone's work that he has built survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will experience † loss, but he himself will be saved † — but only as through fire. †

16 Don't you yourselves know that you are God's temple † and that the Spirit of God lives in you? † 17 If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; † for God's temple is holy, † and that is what you are.

THE FOLLY OF HUMAN WISDOM

18 Let no one deceive † himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, † let him become a fool † so that he can become wise. † 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness † with God, since it is written, † **He catches the wise in their craftiness**; † † 20 and again, **The Lord knows that the reasonings † of the wise are futile.** † † 21 So let no one boast in human leaders, for everything is yours † — 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas † or the world or life † or death † or things present or things to come † — everything is yours, 23 and you belong to Christ, † and Christ belongs to God.

3:3 Other mss add *and divisions* **3:8** Or *of equal status,* or *united in purpose* **3:9** Or *are coworkers belonging to God* **3:10** Or *wise master builder* **3:15** Or *suffer*

3:1 1Co 14:20; Heb 5:13; 1Pt 2:2 **3:3** Jms 3:14,16 **3:3** Ti 3:9 **3:4** Ti 3:13 **3:6** Ac 18:4-11; 1Co 4:15; 9:1; 15:1 **3:9** 1Pt 2:5 **3:11** Is 28:16; Rm 15:20; 2Co 10:16; 11:4; Gl 1:6-9 **3:12** Jms 5:3 **3:12** Rv 17:4 **3:13** 2Th 1:8; 1Pt 1:7 **3:13** Ps 62:12; Pr 24:12; Mt 16:27; 2Co 5:10; 1Pt 1:17 **3:15** Mt 9:22; Ac 16:30; Eph 2:8 **3:15** Jd 23 **3:16** Lk 1:21 **3:16** Lv 26:11; Jms 4:5 **3:17** Heb 6:8 **3:17** Ps 20:6; 1Co 7:14 **3:18** 2Co 11:3 **3:18** Lk 16:8 **3:18** Mt 5:22 **3:18** Is 5:21; Jr 8:8-9; Gl 6:3 **3:19** 1Co 1:18 **3:19** Ac 15:15; Gl 4:22 **3:19** Jb 5:13 **3:19** Jb 5:13; Lk 20:23 **3:20** Mt 15:19; 1Tm 2:8 **3:20** Ps 94:11 **3:20** Ps 94:11 **3:21** Rm 8:32 **3:22** Jn 1:42 **3:22** 1Jn 5:12 **3:22** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **3:22** Rm 8:38 **3:23** Nm 3:12

3:1 While the Corinthians liked to think of themselves as **spiritual people**, they were, in fact, **people of the flesh.** Their values are all too influenced by the philosophy and culture of surrounding society, which means they are still **babies in Christ** and need to mature.

3:3-4 The behavior of the Corinthians shows their spiritual immaturity to the point that they look like unbelievers **(worldly)** rather than Christians.

3:6 Agricultural imagery would be immediately understood, since the area surrounding Corinth was rich for farming. While human factors, such as planting and watering, are indispensable and support the process, humans cannot make a crop grow. So too with the Corinthian congregation: Paul **planted**, **Apollos watered**, but only **God** can give **the growth.**

3:10 The agricultural imagery is now switched for that of an urban landscape. Since its inception in 44 BC, Corinth had been decorated with several new buildings. Of central significance for such building projects

was the laying of the **foundation.** If the foundation was not laid correctly, the entire edifice would be in jeopardy.

3:11 Jesus Christ is the **foundation** of the church (which is "God's building," 3:9). The true church cannot be built on any other foundation.

3:13-15 This describes God's judgment of various works of ministry and whether or not they were appropriately conducted (like Paul's) or inappropriately conducted (like those of the people Paul is critiquing).

3:16-17 To claim that the congregation in Corinth is **God's temple** is extraordinarily significant. While God chose to dwell among his people first in a tabernacle, then in the Jerusalem temple, God's dwelling—Paul asserts—is now among the people of Christ, since **the Spirit of God lives in** them. This is an extension of Jesus's teaching that he would replace the temple (Jn 2:19-22). Those in Christ are incorporated into the building of which Christ is the foundation. They have become members of the temple by virtue of being one with him.

THE FAITHFUL MANAGER

4 A person should think of us in this way: as servants † of Christ and
managers † of the mysteries of God. † 2 In this regard, it is required
that managers be found faithful. † 3 It is of little † importance to me
that I should be judged † by you or by any human court. † In fact, I don't even
judge myself. 4 For I am not conscious of anything against myself, but I am not
justified † by this. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 So don't judge † anything
prematurely, before the Lord comes, † who will both bring to light what is
hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts. And then praise will
come to each one from God. †

THE APOSTLES' EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY

6 Now, brothers and sisters, † I have applied these things to myself and
Apollos † for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the
saying: "Nothing beyond what is written." The purpose is that none of you will
be arrogant, favoring one person over another. 7 For who makes you so
superior? What do you have that you didn't receive? If, in fact, you did receive
it, why do you boast as if you hadn't received it? 8 You are already full! You are
already rich! You have begun to reign as kings without us — and I wish you did
reign, so that we could also reign with you! 9 For I think God has displayed us,
the apostles, in last place, like men condemned to die: We have become a
spectacle to the world, both to angels and to people. 10 We are fools for Christ,

but you are wise in Christ! † We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! 11 Up to the present hour we are both hungry and thirsty; we are poorly clothed, roughly treated, homeless; 12 we labor, working † with our own hands. † When we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; 13 when we are slandered, we respond graciously. Even now, we are like the scum of the earth, like everyone's garbage. †

PAUL'S FATHERLY CARE

14 I'm not writing this to shame you, but to warn you as my dear children. †
15 For you may have countless instructors in Christ, but you don't have many fathers. For I became your father † in Christ Jesus through the gospel.
16 Therefore I urge you to imitate me. 17 This is why I have sent † Timothy to you. He is my dearly loved and faithful † child in the Lord. He will remind you about my ways in Christ Jesus, just as I teach everywhere in every church.
18 Now some are arrogant, as though I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to you soon, † if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk, but the power of those who are arrogant. 20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. 21 What do you want? Should I come to you with a rod, † or in love and a spirit of gentleness? †

4:3 Lit *a human day*

4:1 Jn 18:36 **4:1** Lk 16:1 **4:1** 1Co 2:7 **4:2** Nm 12:7 **4:3** Mt 5:19 **4:3** 1Co 2:14 **4:4** Ac 13:39 **4:5** Lk 6:37 **4:5** Mk 8:38; 1Pt 5:6 **4:5** 2Co 10:18 **4:6** Ac 9:30 **4:6** Ti 3:13 **4:10** 1Pt 5:14 **4:12** 2Jn 8 **4:12** Ac 18:3 **4:13** Is 64:6; Lm 3:45 **4:14** 1Th 2:11; Phm 1 **4:15** Gl 4:19; Phm 10 **4:17** 2Co 9:3; Eph 6:21-22; Col 4:7-8; Phm 12 **4:17** Nm 12:7 **4:19** Ac 19:21; 1Co 16:5; 2Co 1:15-16 **4:21** 2Co 1:23; 2:1,3; 12:20-21; 13:2,10 **4:21** Jms 3:13

4:1 Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and all like them, are but **servants of Christ.** They are not to be venerated or esteemed. Moreover, they are **managers of the mysteries of God.** The manager of a household or estate held responsibility for its good order. Such a manager was often a slave. The manager did not possess the household as his own, but was its steward for the sake of its patriarch. Paul and others have responsibility for the administration of the mysteries of God, but they are simply serving their patriarch—God himself.

4:3-4 Paul's point is that the esteem or evaluation of people—even his esteem and evaluation of self—means nothing. **It is the Lord who judges.**

4:7 This is a valuable statement on the basis of Christian humility. Whatever gifts and abilities believers may possess, all come from God. There is no place for boasting among recipients of God's gifts.

4:8-13 Paul engages in biting satire in the first of these verses. It is a powerful condemnation of any

theology that suggests that Christians should expect glory and honor in this life. Prosperity theology, which claims that God will bless the faithful with earthly riches in this life, is flatly unbiblical.

4:9 In the Roman arena, criminals or prisoners of war were paraded as a **spectacle** before fighting to the death. The apostles are recipients of the world's shame and scorn; they do not enjoy positions of power and glory in this life. See also "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

4:10 While the Corinthians glory in earthly status and praise, the apostles are dishonored in the eyes of the world. This is an outworking of Paul's theology of the cross: the message of the cross is foolishness to the world, but it is the power of God for salvation (1:18). By the same token, true Christian ministry has the appearance of weakness and foolishness from the world's perspective.

4:16 Imitation is a basic aspect of discipleship. Mentors, including Paul, are not perfect, but they should provide an example of faithfully following Christ, as Paul did.

4:20 Greek culture was captivated by the eloquence of words, or **talk.** But **the kingdom of God** does not consist of empty talk. Rather, it is constituted by **power**—that is, the spiritual efficacy that changes lives—evidence of God leading people to faith and holiness. Paul's ministry was characterized by a demonstration of the Spirit's power, while faith is based on God's power (2:4-5). The message of the cross—which appears weak and foolish—is the power of God for salvation (1:18). Thus, the kingdom of God is built by the transformative power of the cross, not by eloquence of speech.

IMMORAL CHURCH MEMBERS

5 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality † among you, and the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated † among the Gentiles † — a man is sleeping with his father's wife. † 2 And you are arrogant! Shouldn't you be filled with grief † and remove from your congregation the one who did this? 3 Even though I am absent in the body, I am present in spirit. † As one who is present with you in this way, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who has been doing such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 hand that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, † so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. †

6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little leaven † † leavens the whole batch of dough? † 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as indeed you are. For Christ our Passover lamb † has been sacrificed. †

ENGAGING LGBT ADVOCATES

There are four key areas that together help us develop a Christian framework for responding well to LGBT advocates in the public square. Awareness consists of those things we should keep in mind as we engage LGBT advocates. Knowledge includes the facts and theory to which we may refer in conversation. Wisdom allows us to make important distinctions based on observation and reflection. Integrity involves our Christian character, informed by the Scriptures.

AWARENESS

Before we can discuss what it means for us to respond Christianly to any issue, we must first be aware of who God is. Remember the central statement about the character of God given to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34:6-7? He is the God who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. He is also a God of holy love, who by no means clears the guilty.

This God, the God of Sinai, is also the God embodied in our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we find that grace and mercy instantiated. As former Archbishop of Canterbury A. M. Ramsey phrased it, "In this God there is no unChristlikeness at all." This is important because we as individuals, as the church, are to be a people who mirror him on the face of the earth.

So, who ought we to be as the people of God? James calls Christians to be swift to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry (Jms 1:19-20). Yet sometimes when I hear evangelicals dealing with LGBT issues in the public square, it's as though James said that we should be swift to speak, swift to get angry, and slow to listen. The tone we use speaks volumes, but it may not reflect our God.

We also need to be conscious of who we are as creatures. We humans are creatures full of longings for connections—not only connection with God, but also connections with other humans. Our will to relate mirrors something in the very nature of God, who has made us in his likeness. God is Trinity, and the will to relate is found on the inside of the heart of reality.

But we also know that we are creatures who live outside Eden. We live on the other side of "the Rupture," as Jacques Ellul put it, or, as Augustine put it centuries earlier, "the Fall." There is disorder now in our will to relate. As Blaise Pascal said, "We are the glory and the garbage of the universe." There is a paradox in who we are.

We should additionally be aware that not all LGBT advocates are themselves LGBT and that LGBT people differ in their desires for public policy. For example, some LGBT individuals want the benefits and rights of a heterosexual marriage to apply to a homosexual one, but others reject that as a sellout to the straight world. We need to be aware of the beliefs and values of the *individuals* to whom we are relating.

We also ought to be aware that there is a scandal attached to following Christ. If we want to follow Jesus at any level in our world, we will experience the scandal of the cross of Christ. This means that we can't take responsibility if people take offense when we try to stand up Christianly in the public square. That, however, is a very different story from our giving offense because we are swift to speak, swift to get angry, slow to hear, and treat the LBGT community in a cookie-cutter way. Paul says, "Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God" (1Co 10:32).

Awareness, therefore, consists of those things that we keep in mind as we engage with others in the public square.

KNOWLEDGE

Second, we need to engage with knowledge— that is, with a store of fact and theory that we can retrieve when the occasion makes it appropriate. For instance, we should seek to inform ourselves on the history of the relevant issues, understanding that LGBT matters are not merely associated with the modern era (see S. Donald Fortson and Rollin G. Grams, *Unchanging Witness: The Consistent Christian Teaching on Homosexuality in Scripture and Tradition*, 2016). We also need to know the seven or eight key texts in Scripture that speak to same-sex behavior (Gn 19; Lv 18:22; 20:13; Jdg 19; Rm 1:18-32; 1Co 6:9-11; 1Tm

1:8-11; and possibly Jd 5-7).

But in addition to these, we must also know the biblical texts about one-flesh union and appropriate sexual expression as is celebrated, for example, in the Song of Songs. Very often we go into the public square armed with only the texts that deal with homosexuality, but there is another strand of verses related to sexuality that we see foundationally in Genesis 2. Our Lord reiterates them in the Gospels (Mt 19), and the Pauline mission to the Gentile world reinforces them (Eph 5). The latter passage, in fact, is particularly important because Christ and the church share a union in difference, not a union in sameness. We thus need to present not just the negative but also the positive context for sexual connection. It is important to develop a theology of sexuality so that we don't sound fixated on one particular area or single issue. God created sex, understands how it works best, and has given us helpful guidelines in his Word.

As we familiarize ourselves with these key texts, it can be beneficial to have some knowledge of the alternative readings, too. For example, according to some books advocating homosexuality, Ruth and Naomi were lesbians. David was fleeing from Saul because of a homosexual love triangle involving Jonathan. Some LGBT advocates are ordained and some work as Christian lay people, so they may bring these ideas up in discussion. Therefore, we need to be familiar with the arguments and prepared to explain why we think they do not stand.

We should also be familiar with the popular arguments. For example, the "silence of Jesus" argument says that because the Gospels do not mention Jesus condemning homosexual practice, we should not condemn it either. But the absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence. Just because the Gospels don't record Jesus speaking directly to this issue doesn't mean that he never did (cp. Jn 21:25).

Another argument used to suggest that there is nothing sinful about homosexuality is "God created me this way." As Christians, we know that this perspective does not consider the fact that relationships and the whole creation order are disrupted outside of Eden. There is disorder in our bodies and in our desires. We need a resurrection of the body; indeed, the whole created order needs to be transfigured in Christ (cp. Rm 8:19-22).

This claim also reflects a rather simplistic understanding of how God relates as Creator to creation. The classic theologians distinguished between God as the immediate cause of an event and God as the remote cause, who does things through other creatures that he's made. The way in which God relates to his creation is a lot more complex than our rhetoric often suggests. If I accepted the argument "God created me this way" as it stands, I wouldn't take my migraine medicine—but I do.

Others argue, "It's unfair to deny me what my body craves." This is the naturalistic fallacy—that an "is" brings an "ought" with it. The fact that most women can biologically bear children doesn't mean that every woman has an obligation to become pregnant at least once. Males can sire thousands of children, but that does not mean they ought to do so. Biology isn't destiny, morally speaking.

WISDOM

Third, let us engage others with wisdom. One part of wisdom is making distinctions based on observation and careful reflection. We may need to distinguish different sorts of values and their opposites. We have moral values (good versus evil), intellectual values (truth versus error), and aesthetic values (beautiful versus ugly). Sometimes, when I hear the intensity with which some Christians engage LGBT advocates in the public square, I wonder if we are combining moral values with an aesthetic distaste for some of the practices of LGBT sex and, therefore, overreact.

Wisdom also sees a moral difference between feeling attraction toward the same sex and sexual practices with the same sex. When feelings of attraction become lust—attraction indulged—then the moral problem emerges. Such disordered attraction may indeed be a consequence of the fall, but feeling an attraction itself is not the sin. Lust is sin, whether homosexual or heterosexual in direction.

Wisdom also discerns a difference between those who have same sex curiosity (e.g., the teen surfing the web), same sex attraction (e.g., some fantasies and desires are for those of the same sex), same sex orientation (e.g., most of a person's fantasies and desires are for those of the same sex), and same sex

identity (e.g., the person for whom LGBT defines how they see their core being). Wise pastoral responses will differ in each case.

Another part of wisdom is discerning where we're located in the stream of redemptive history. As far as I can see, the Western world is now post-Christendom, and I believe some of the intensity of the reaction in the public square from Christians seems based on the Christendom assumption. What drives our discussions? Is it the desire for biblical integrity, or is it a fear of the loss of cultural power? We need to ask ourselves questions like these. What are the biblical analogs for where we are placed by God? Are we like Israel in the land of promise, or are we people on pilgrimage? Do we look to Moses and the monarchy, or to Hebrews 11 and 1 Peter 1 and 2, seeking the city whose builder and maker is God? Our choice of analog will have significant implications for our practices.

If I am right that we are living post-Christendom and that we are a pilgrim people, then we may need to learn from the second-century Christians and those early apologists who had to reconnect with culture and explain Christian practices, particularly countercultural ones. Do you remember some of the criticisms of Christians in the second century? People said they were cannibals because they gathered together and ate someone's body and drank someone's blood. People called them incestuous, because "brothers" married "sisters." Apologists had to explain what the practices and language common to Christianity were about. Similarly, we may need a new order of apologists in the public square who cannot only articulate the Christian viewpoint on sexuality but who know how to defend it with grace and mercy.

SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY

Finally, we need to engage with spiritual and scriptural integrity. By "spiritual integrity" I mean an integrity of Christian character that's informed by the Scriptures. The mark of the believer in John 13:34-35 is loving other believers; the moral mandate of Matthew 22 is loving practice toward one's neighbor; and in his Sermon on the Mount our Lord taught us to love our enemies (Mt 5). I've met LGBT people in each of those categories—professing Christians, neighbors, and others who are ideologically driven, who see a threat to LGBT freedom in Christian teaching. Loving practice in all cases is really important—we are the body language of the invisible God.

In all of this, the practice of prayer is essential. If we're going to engage with LGBT advocates in the public square, do we really believe in the Holy Spirit? Do we believe in the God who can go before us as we seek to serve him? Do we believe in the reality of grace to change lives? Those things that we really pray about, that issue out of our character, show what our hearts are before God and toward others. Whatever we will bring into the public square will be shaped by the fact that we pray in reliance on the Spirit, and with trust in the transforming grace of God, before we even get there.

GRAHAM A. COLE

8 Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old leaven or with the leaven of malice and evil, † but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

9 I wrote to you in a letter not to associate † with sexually immoral people. †
10 I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy † and swindlers † or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. † 11 But actually, I wrote † you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother

or sister † and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard † or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. 12 For what business is it of mine to judge † outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside? 13 God judges outsiders. **Remove the evil person from among you.** † †

5:1 Other mss read *named* **5:6** Or *yeast*, also in vv. 7,8 **5:7** Other mss add *for us* **5:11** Or *But now I am writing*

5:1 1Th 4:3 **5:1** Gl 1:16 **5:1** Lv 18:8; Dt 22:30; 27:20 **5:2** Lk 6:25 **5:3** Col 2:5; 1Th 2:17 **5:5** 1Jn 5:16 **5:5** Mt 25:13; Ac 2:20; Php 1:6 **5:6** Lk 13:21; Gl 5:9 **5:6-8** Lk 13:21 **5:7** Ex 12 **5:8** Mk 7:22; Rm 1:29 **5:9** 2Th 3:14 **5:9** 1Co 6:9; Eph 5:5; 1Tm 1:10; Heb 12:16; 13:4; Rv 21:8; 22:15 **5:10** Eph 5:5 **5:10** Lk 18:11 **5:10** Jn 17:6 **5:11** 2Th 3:6 **5:11** 1Co 6:10 **5:12** Lk 6:37 **5:13** Dt 17:7 **5:13** Dt 17:7

5:1 Sexual immorality (Gk *porneia*) was characteristic of pagan cultures, while Jews regarded it a perversion of God's intention for sex because it was outside of the covenant of marriage. Abstinence from sexual immorality was one of the four requirements for Gentiles to join the Christian church, according to the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15:29). But the Corinthians have fallen well short of this standard, with a case existing among them that is worse than Gentile (in this context, pagan) standards. This man engages in sex with his stepmother, which is explicitly forbidden in Leviticus 18:8 *and* in Roman law. The *lex Iulia de adulteriis* banned it on threat of exile.

5:2 When Christians refuse to repent of their clear sin, they are denying the gospel and thus must be removed from the church. The church's aim in taking such action is to see the offender come to repentance and be saved (5:5). The congregation's arrogance toward this issue shows how far they have strayed from a godly perspective.

5:4-5 For the unrepentant sinner, Paul prescribes that the church should **hand that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.** This no doubt means that the church ought to expel such a person from their congregation (cp. 5:9-13; Mt 18:15-17). The contrast between being **assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus** and being handed over to Satan indicates a temporary exchange of lordship. If the sinner wants to continue in sin, he is choosing to live as the world lives, which is ruled by the evil one (2Co 4:4; Eph 2:1-2). Being given over to sinful desires and their consequences will ultimately demonstrate the futility and hopelessness of unrepentant living. Paul's hope is that this will lead to restoration of the sinner **so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.**

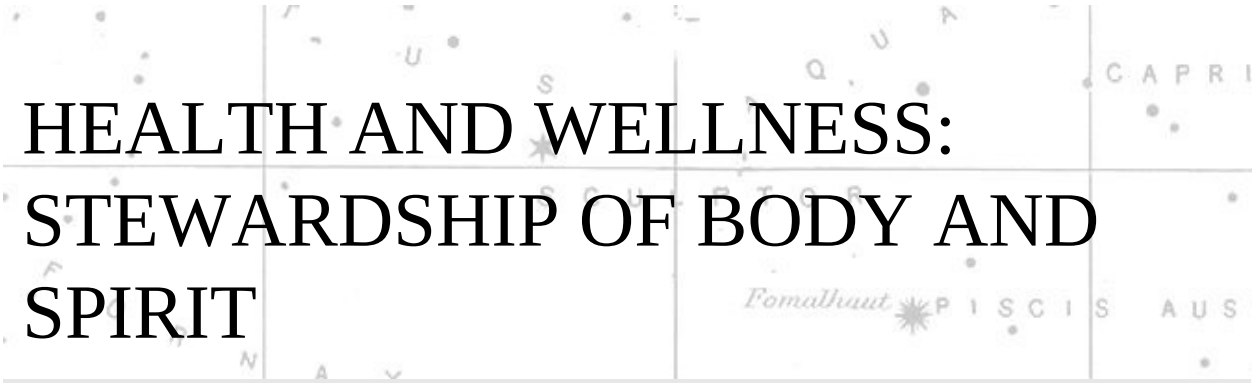
5:6-7 Leaven, or yeast, is commonly used as an illustration of sin. As leaven spreads through dough, so sin will spread through the church if it is not dealt with. Paul connects this with the **unleavened** bread of the **Passover**, stating that Jesus is the **lamb** that bears the sacrifice for sin, as celebrated in the Passover meal.

5:12-13 In our day, judging others is often considered the greatest evil. While the judgment of **outsiders** is to be left to **God**, there is a sense in which believers should **judge** those **inside** the church. This is not a "salvation-level" judgment, but one that discerns unrepentant sin and lovingly prescribes expulsion from the congregation (5:4-5).

LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

6 If any of you has a dispute against another, how dare you take it to court † before the unrighteous, † and not before the saints? 2 Or don't you know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the trivial cases? 3 Don't you know that we

will judge angels — how much more matters of this life? 4 So if you have such matters, do you appoint as your judges those who have no standing † in the church? 5 I say this to your shame! † Can it be that there is not one wise person among you who is able to arbitrate between fellow believers? † 6 Instead, brother goes to court against brother, and that before unbelievers! †
7 As it is, to have legal disputes against one another is already a defeat for you. † Why not rather be wronged? † Why not rather be cheated? † 8 Instead, you yourselves do wrong and cheat — and you do this to brothers and sisters!
9 Don’t you know that the unrighteous † will not inherit God’s kingdom? † Do not be deceived: No sexually immoral people, idolaters, † adulterers, † or males who have sex with males, † † 10 no thieves, † greedy † people, drunkards, verbally abusive people, † or swindlers † will inherit God’s kingdom.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS: STEWARDSHIP OF BODY AND SPIRIT

The importance of caring for the body and spirit seems hardly debatable from within a Christian framework of thought. Man did not become “a living being” until God “breathed” life into his body, which was created from “the dust from the ground” (Gn 2:7). Yet evidences of spiritual and bodily neglect abound in the world, and Christians are not exempt from the display. Generally, each of us can recite the list of activities that are suited to our own pursuit of wellness—a relative freedom from disorder and disease and also the experience of flourishing. We know a huge amount of information that, if actually heeded, would aid this pursuit. But we do not always heed it.

Some ask whether there is a connection between spiritual wellness and physical wellness. Multiple stories in Scripture give evidence that such a connection is present. The biblical narratives of Naaman the Syrian (2Kg 5), the woman with the issue of blood (Mt 9:20-26), and the man born blind (Jn 9) each connect spiritual and physical healing. “Have courage, daughter. . . Your faith has saved you,” said Christ to the bleeding woman, and she was immediately made well (Mt 9:22); this confirms that the whole human—spirit and body—responds to his touch. Conversely, Ananias and Sapphira died after lying to the Holy Spirit; this physical consequence arises out of their spiritual illness (Ac 5:1-10). And then there is Lazarus, friend to Jesus; he was dead for a corrupting four days before Jesus recalled his spirit to his body and he returned to life (Jn 11).

Thus, Scripture routinely connects spiritual and bodily wellness. In addition, medical and scientific

evidence point to an intricate connection between wellness of spirit and body. Growing scientific knowledge from various domains such as psychology, neuroscience, medicine, and nursing underscore the inextricable wholeness of the human person.

But what about those who are spiritually thriving, that is, living in relationship with Jesus, but either do not achieve physical wellness or are called to give up wellness for Christ's sake, to be persecuted and martyred? Remembering the true purpose of the embodied spirit proves helpful in this matter. Scripture could not be clearer: "You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body" (1Co 6:19b-20). Romans 12:1-2 says, "Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship." In other words, God is glorified when we care for our bodies and use them to carry out his work. And he can be glorified, too, in even our physical infirmities or deaths—sometimes using our challenges to draw us closer to him and sometimes working through our struggles to help others see their need for him.

Importantly, since we are to worship God with our bodies, we are not free to do whatever we like with them. We should treat them as temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells, thus avoiding indulging in sexual sin or any other activity—like drunkenness or gluttony—that would grieve him (1Co 6:19; Eph 4:30).

Some suggest that physical wellness is a window through which we may see glimpses of spiritual wellness; they cite passages such as Proverbs 14:30: "A tranquil heart is life to the body." But we must be cautious—the story of the man born blind teaches that often our understanding is blurry; our perspective is limited. In that narrative the disciples asked Jesus about the afflicted man: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither . . . This came about so that God's works might be displayed in him" (Jn 9:2-3). Only God, then, has the clarity to judge the linkage between our bodily and spiritual health rightly.

We humans are stewards tending households on behalf of the owner. A wise and faithful steward does what the owner would do if he were present. And everyone knows that neglect of a house—or a body—leads to decay. Healthcare providers, in fact, see a great deal of disease and disorder arising from what appears to be neglect.

Not only should Christians in particular take care of their physical bodies, but they should participate in thriving Christian community for the sake of their spirits and the building up of one another. Such community includes the local congregation, the family unit, one's marriage, and one's circle of friends. We are designed for congregational life. And without Christian community, we weaken and shrivel under a shadow of loneliness that gets between us and the light of God's grace. This inevitably leads to a failure to thrive.

Similarly, we should take care of our spiritual health, quickly confessing our sins to God lest they hinder our relationships with him or hurt our physical wellness. David said, "When I kept silent [about my sin], my bones became brittle from my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand [God,] was heavy on me; my strength was drained" (Ps 32:3-4). We see a similar principle at work in strained relationships. Everyone knows that interpersonal disunity can breed hostility. If sustained, such hostility can harm a physical heart. We must take our relational struggles to God.

Scripture teaches that when Christ returns, his followers will receive resurrection bodies that undoubtedly will share many similarities with his (1Co 15:35-55). Like the earth whose restoration is described in Revelation 22, we will be made new and will no longer live under the curse of sin and death. Until then, we must have a godly aim for our current bodies. We must take care of them. Glorify God in them. Then, even as we approach the end of our mortal lives, we shall be well.

JILL WEBB

11 And some of you used to be like this. † But you were washed, you were sanctified, † you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the

Spirit of our God.

GLORIFYING GOD IN BODY AND SPIRIT

12 “Everything is permissible † for me,” but not everything is beneficial.
“Everything is permissible for me,” but I will not be mastered by anything.
13 “Food † is for the stomach and the stomach for food,” and God will do away
with both of them. However, the body is not for sexual immorality † but for the
Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 God raised up the Lord and will also raise us
up by his power. † 15 Don’t you know that your bodies are a part of Christ’s
body? † So should I take a part of Christ’s body and make it part of a prostitute?
Absolutely not! 16 Don’t you know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body
with her? For Scripture says, **The two will become one flesh.** † † 17 But
anyone joined † to the Lord is one spirit † with him.
18 Flee † sexual immorality! Every other sin † a person commits is outside the
body, but the person who is sexually immoral † sins against his own body.
19 Don’t you know that your body is a temple † of the Holy Spirit † who is in
you, † whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were
bought † at a price. So glorify God with your body. †

6:1 Unbelievers; v. 6 **6:9** Both passive and active participants in homosexual acts **6:18** Lit *Every sin* **6:20** Other mss add *and in your spirit, which belong to God.*

6:1 Mt 18:15-17 **6:4** Lk 18:9 **6:5** 1Co 4:14 **6:5** Ac 9:30 **6:6** Lk 12:46 **6:7** Rm 11:12 **6:7** Rv 2:11 **6:7** Mk 10:19 **6:9** Lk 16:10 **6:9** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **6:9** Eph 5:5 **6:9** Lk 18:11 **6:9** Gn 19:5 **6:10** Jn 10:1 **6:10** Eph 5:5 **6:10** 1Co 5:11 **6:10** Lk 18:11 **6:11** Eph 2:2-3; 4:22; 5:8; Ti 3:3 **6:11** Lk 11:2 **6:12** Jn 18:31 **6:13** 1Tm 6:8 **6:13** 1Th 4:3 **6:14** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **6:15** Rm 12:5; 1Co 12:27; Eph 5:30 **6:16** Gn 2:24 **6:16** Gn 2:24 **6:17** Jn 11:52 **6:17** Ps 51:12 **6:18** Jms 4:7 **6:18** 1Co 10:8 **6:19** Lk 1:21 **6:19** Rm 8:9,23; 1Co 7:40; 2Co 4:13; Jd 19 **6:19** Jms 4:5; 1Jn 4:4 **6:20** 2Pt 2:1

6:1 It is possible that Paul’s reaction against believers taking their disputes to court is due to the **unrighteous** nature of the legal system in Corinth—later sources speak to its corruption. But there are also theological reasons for dealing with such disputes in house (6:2-6).

6:2-5 The primary reason that believers should not take other believers to court is not due to any particular corruption in the Roman court system; corruption is not unique to any time or setting. Instead it is grounded in the responsibility given to the church to **arbitrate** among itself. It is clear that Paul has in mind **trivial cases.** These are probably matters of civil law (cp. 6:7-8), rather than criminal. Christians should not use these verses to avoid prosecuting criminal matters.

6:6 Believers ought to be able to sort out trivial matters amongst themselves, and it is shameful to take such disputes to outsiders for arbitration. Paul regards this as a bad witness to the unbelieving world.

6:9-11 The sins listed will keep people from heaven if they continue in them, unrepentant. But with

repentance, all may be forgiven; some in the Corinthian congregation **used to be like this** but they **were washed**, **sanctified**, and **justified**. See "Christian Worldview and Same-Sex Marriage," *p. 1499.*

6:15-17 Paul draws on believers' union with Christ to argue against sexual immorality. What is done in the body is significant because **bodies are a part of Christ's body.** Since believers are **joined to the Lord**, they are not to become **one body** with a prostitute. Paul draws on the teaching of Genesis 2:24 regarding the **one flesh** union of marriage to undergird the purpose of sex as joining one person to another.

6:18-20 While all sin brings God's judgment, sexual sin brings particular trouble since it is sin against one's own body. Paul's theology of the body here rests on its housing of the **Holy Spirit. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit,** since the Spirit **is in you**. The Spirit's holiness contradicts the immorality of sexual sin, which is why the latter is seen as sin against the body. Furthermore, believers' bodies do not belong to them but to God, who **bought** us **at a price**, namely the death of the Lord Jesus. Having been redeemed by him, we are now to **glorify God** with our bodies. This is a particular challenge to the reigning worldview of western culture that esteems the freedom to pursue sexual desires without restraint. See also "The Mind-Body Problem," *p. 1175.*

PRINCIPLES OF MARRIAGE

7 Now in response to the matters you wrote † about: "It is good for a man
not to use † a woman for sex." 2 But because sexual immorality is so
common, † † each man should have sexual relations with his own
wife, † and each woman should have sexual relations with her own husband.
3 A husband should fulfill his marital duty † to his wife, and likewise a wife to
her husband. 4 A wife does not have the right over her own body, but her
husband does. In the same way, a husband does not have the right over his own
body, but his wife does. 5 Do not deprive † one another — except when you
agree for a time, to devote yourselves to † prayer. Then come together again;
otherwise, Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 I say this
as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all people were as I am. But
each has his own gift † from God, one person has this gift, another has that.

A WORD TO THE UNMARRIED

8 I say to the unmarried † and to widows: † It is good for them if they remain
as I am. 9 But if they do not have self-control, † they should marry, since it is
better to marry † than to burn with desire.

ABOUT MARRIED PEOPLE

10 To the married I give this command † — not I, but the Lord — a wife is not to leave † her husband.

PURPOSE AND PARAMETERS OF SEXUAL RELATIONS

In our "hook-up, shack-up, break-up" society, the purpose of sex has become distorted. Hollywood personalities, television sitcoms, and social media portray sex as a casual, noncommittal exchange that involves multiple partners. Following this approach, however, often results in selfish habits, destructive behavior, and broken relationships.

This is not God's intention for sex. Sex is a sacred gift designed by God to be enjoyed in the context of a marriage relationship between one man and one woman for as long as they both live. Look at what Scripture affirms about sex: • Sex is good (Gn 1:31).

- Sex brings life (Gn 1:28; Ps 127:3-5).
- Sex reveals the beauty of gender differences (Gn 1:27-28).
- Sex provides unity and intimacy (Gn 2:24).
- Sex brings companionship (Sg 3:1).
- Sex provides comfort (Gn 24:67).
- Sex offers pleasure (Sg 2:17).
- Sex is healthy and reflects the exclusive, covenantal love in marriage (Pr 5:15-19; 1Co 7:4).
- Sex is a celebration of the intimate nature of the union between Jesus Christ and his bride, the church (Eph 5:22-32).

After sin entered the world (Gn 3:15), the beautiful bond between humanity and divinity dissolved. Thereafter, humans abused the good gift of sex that God had created by engaging in a wide variety of sexual perversions, including voyeurism (2Sm 11:2), adultery (2Sm 11:4), prostitution (Jdg 11:1), rape (Jdg 19:25), incest (2Sm 13:11-14), polygamy (Gn 4:19), homosexuality (Gn 19:1-13), and bestiality (Ex 22:19). In some cases, sexual sins became so prevalent that "God delivered [people] over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves" (Rm 1:24).

When it comes to sex, humans tend to oscillate between two extremes. On the one hand, the temptation is to believe that sex is evil, or at least a necessary evil for the purpose of procreation. Influenced by the Greek philosophy of gnosticism—the belief that flesh is inherently evil—many living in the past two thousand years have succumbed to the view that sex is wrong. From great theologians like Augustine of Hippo to biblical exegetes like Origen of Alexandria (who castrated himself), the belief in the evilness of sex permeated a wide array of Christian traditions.

A genuinely biblical view of sex, however, cannot ascribe to this extreme. Sex is a good gift created by a great God. When practiced as God intended it, sex fosters mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical union within a marriage relationship. It is fun and deeply satisfying.

The other extreme is to believe that all sex is permissible. In the last century, our own culture has swung from sex as procreation to sex as recreation. The sexual revolution that surged in the Roaring Twenties and later manifested in the upheaval of social conventions in the fifties, sixties, and seventies accomplished much in glamorizing sexual prowess and creating an environment in which "free love" (sex without consequences) was valued highly while chastity was ridiculed as quaint and inhibited.

The effects of the sexual revolution have been catastrophic. Fueled by a bankruptcy of discretionary standards, a hostility toward traditional expressions of religion, and a groundswell in technological advancement, a permissible perception of sex has reached a historic summit in our society. Promiscuity is widely promoted through pop culture, and web-based personal media has instilled the $14 billion pornography industry into the consciousness of rising generations. Anyone anywhere can access sexually explicit content at almost any time—an unprecedented situation.

The bottom line is this: Sex is not the problem—we fallen humans are the problem. Thankfully, God has provided a way of redemption for us through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Not only did Jesus take our sins on himself, but he also became sin on our behalf (1Co 5:21). Every affair, every lustful look, the making and using of every explicit website, Jesus conquered on the cross. As Christians, our sins have been crucified with Christ, and because of his sacrificial love, we can live victoriously over sexual sins. Although the temptations of our sinful nature still assault born-again Christians, God has offered a way of escape. The Bible encourages us that "God is faithful; he will not allow [us] to be tempted beyond what [we] are able, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out" (1Co 10:13). God has provided his Holy Spirit to help us and his Holy Scripture to instruct us; we do not have to live as slaves to sin.

Here are some governing principles for keeping the practice of sex within its biblical parameters: • Keep sex sacred by not allowing the culture to dictate your perception or practice of it. Sex is a physical act that represents a sacred reality. Just as God is one (Dt 6:4), so the husband and wife "become one flesh" (Gn 2:24).

- Keep sex mutual. The husband is not superior over the wife, or vice versa. Reciprocal affection reflects the mutual submission Paul describes in Ephesians 5:22-33. Each spouse must pursue the needs of the other in humility and love (Php 2:3-5; 1Co 7:3).
- Keep sex within the context of marriage (1Co 7:2-3). Any sexual contact, whether premarital or extramarital, is a violation of God's design, and according to Jesus, it is equivalent to committing adultery (Mt 5:28; Heb 13:4).
- Aggressively flee sexual temptation (Gn 39:12; Eph 5:3). This includes accepting or making romantic overtures outside marriage, lustful intentions, flirting with someone other than your spouse, sexting, having "friends with benefits," hooking up, viewing pornography, reading erotica, visiting strip clubs, and watching adult television shows and movies. God demands purity and has equipped us for holiness. Because we have been "raised with Christ" (Col 3:1), we are free to "set [our] minds on things above" (Col 3:2).
- Know that sexual attraction is not a sin. When outside of marriage we act on that attraction—whether by thought, word, or deed—it becomes sinful.
- Those who are unmarried should "not stir up or awaken love until the appropriate time" (Sg 2:7). Think, dress, and act in a way that does not lead others to temptation (1Pt 3:3-4; 1Tm 2:9-10; 1Co 8:9).
- Celibacy is a beautiful expression of God's love. Jesus affirms that some are called to celibacy (Mt 19:11-12; see also 1Co 7:7-9).
- Celebrate and practice spiritual disciplines such as prayer (Php 4:6), fasting (Mt 6:16-18), meditation (Jos 1:8), and Scripture memorization (Ps 119:9) to combat sexual temptation. Make a vow to God (Ec 5:4-6) and a covenant with your eyes (Jb 31:1).
- Surround yourself with unmarried and married role models who embody holiness and who will challenge you to do the same (Pr 13:20). Set an example for others in purity (1Tm 4:12).
- Remember, God will forgive those who repent of sexual sin. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1Jn 1:9).
- Resist the temptation to elevate one sexual sin above another, and practice observable love—kindness and compassion—for those who live outside the biblical parameters of sex (Jn 8:7; 13:34-35; 1Co 13:4-7; Mk 12:30-31; 1Pt 4:8).

When sex occurs within the parameters of a biblical worldview, God receives glory and husbands and wives receive joy in their marriages. Ultimately, sex points to the chief end of God's people—to glorify God and enjoy him forever. Sex foreshadows the mystical union that takes place between Christ and his

church (Eph 5:30-32), and by practicing sex according to the original design of the Creator, we contribute to an attitude of worship that will change not only our hearts, our marriages, and our families, but that will also help us to be light and salt in our dark and bland society (Mt 5:13-14).

CHRISTIAN GEORGE

11 But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband — and a husband is not to divorce his wife. † 12 But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother † has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy † by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. † Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you † to live in peace. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife. †

VARIOUS SITUATIONS OF LIFE

17 Let each one live his life in the situation the Lord assigned when God called † him. † This is what I command in all the churches. 18 Was anyone already circumcised when he was called? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? He should not get circumcised. 19 Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. Keeping God's commands is what matters. 20 Let each of you remain in the situation † in which he was called. 21 Were you called while a slave? Don't let it concern you. But if you can become free, by all means take the opportunity. † 22 For he who is called by the Lord as a slave † is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called as a free man is Christ's slave. 23 You were bought † at a price; do not become slaves of people. 24 Brothers and sisters, each person is to remain with God in the situation in which he was called.

ABOUT THE UNMARRIED AND WIDOWS

25 Now about virgins: † I have no command from the Lord, but I do give an opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy † is faithful. † 26 Because of the present distress, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 However, if you do get married, † you have not sinned, and if a virgin † marries, she has not sinned. But such people will have trouble in this life, † and I am trying to spare you.

29 This is what I mean, brothers and sisters: The time is limited, † so from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice † as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they didn't own anything, 31 and those who use the world as though they did not make full use of it. For this world in its current form is passing away. †

32 I want you to be without concerns. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord — how he may please † the Lord. 33 But the married man is concerned about the things of the world — how he may please his wife — 34 and his interests are divided. The unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, † so that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world — how she may please her husband. 35 I am saying this for your own benefit, not to put a restraint on you, but to promote what is proper and so that you may be devoted to the Lord without distraction.

36 If any man thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, † if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage, and he feels he should marry — he can do what he wants. He is not sinning; they can get married. 37 But he who stands firm in his heart (who is under no compulsion, but has control over his own will †) and has decided in his heart to keep her as his fiancée, will do well. 38 So then he who marries † his fiancée does well, but he who does not marry † will do better.

39 A wife is bound † as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants — only in the Lord. 40 But she is

happier if she remains as she is, in my opinion. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

7:1 Other mss add *to me* **7:1** Lit *"It is good for a man not to touch a woman* **7:2** Lit *because of immoralities* **7:5** Other mss add *fasting and to* **7:8** Or *widowers* **7:10** Or *separate from*, or *divorce* **7:14** Lit *the brother* **7:15** Other mss read *us* **7:16** Or *Wife, how do you know that you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know that you will save your wife?* **7:17** Lit *called each* **7:20** Lit *in the calling* **7:21** Or *But even though you can become free, make the most of your position as a slave* **7:25** Or *betrothed*, or *those not yet married* **7:28** Or *betrothed woman* **7:28** Lit *in the flesh* **7:36** Or *toward his virgin daughter* **7:38** Or *marries off* **7:38** Or *marry her off* **7:39** Other mss add *by law*

7:2 1Th 4:3 **7:2** Mt 1:6; 1Pt 3:1 **7:3** Rm 13:7 **7:5** Mk 10:19 **7:7** 2Co 1:11 **7:8** Jms 1:27 **7:9** 1Co 9:25 **7:9** 1Tm 5:14 **7:10** 1Tm 5:14 **7:11** Dt 22:19 **7:12** Ac 9:30 **7:14** Lk 11:2 **7:17** Col 3:15 **7:22** Rm 1:1; 2Tm 2:24 **7:23** 2Pt 2:1 **7:25** Mt 5:7; Mk 5:19; Lk 1:50 **7:25** Nm 12:7 **7:28** 1Tm 5:14 **7:29** Rm 13:11 **7:30** Php 1:18 **7:31** Mk 13:7; 1Jn 2:8 **7:32** 1Th 4:1 **7:34** 1Tm 5:5 **7:37** Jn 1:13

7:4-5 To state that a **wife** has **the right over** her husband's **body** was countercultural in Paul's day. In Roman culture, the husband dominated his wife. Moreover, promiscuity of husbands was widely accepted, but promiscuity of wives was not. Paul clarifies that husband and wife belong to one another and that mutual fidelity is expected. See also "Career and Home Life," *p. 774.*

7:10,12 When Paul clarifies whether a statement is from him or from **the Lord**, he is not saying some of his statements are inspired but others are not. Rather, he is distinguishing between statements made by Jesus himself (see Mk 10:1-12) and statements that Paul is now making. He expects the Corinthians to obey both statements (also in 7:25).

7:10-11 In keeping with Jesus's teaching on marriage and **divorce** (Mk 10:1-12), the seriousness of the marriage covenant is to be respected by both partners. Neither husband nor wife is free to **leave** the other; or, if they do, they are not simply free to remarry (though note the concession in 7:15).

7:12-14 The first generation of the church saw many so-called mixed marriages, in which a husband or wife became a Christian while the spouse did not. Paul says this does not constitute grounds for divorce (unless the unbelieving partner wants to leave; 7:15). The believing partner is to respect the marriage covenant, which may even lead the unbelieving partner to faith (7:16). The mixed marriage is regarded as **holy**, so the believer need not worry that their marriage is not acceptable to God.

7:15 The one concession Paul acknowledges in this context (though see Mt 19:9) is if the unbelieving partner chooses to leave. In such a situation, the believer **is not bound.** It likely means that the believer is free to remarry.

7:17-24 New life in Christ makes earthly distinctions irrelevant. Each of the situations referred to (circumcision, uncircumcision, slavery, freedom) is related to social status in the Roman Empire. Circumcision divided Jews from pagans. Slavery was the lowest strata of society. While the slave may take the opportunity to become free if it presents itself, the point is that believers should not be concerned about social status. Their status in Christ is all that matters.

7:20-23 See "The Bible and Slavery," *p. 1527.*

7:26-27 Paul counsels single men and women to remain as they are **because of the present distress.** While it is difficult to know for certain what he has in mind, there is firm archeological and literary evidence indicating periods of severe famine in Corinth during this time. Modern western people rarely appreciate the crisis that famine represented in the ancient world, in which there were no supermarkets and limited capacity to preserve food. If famine is the cause of the distress in Corinth, Paul advises singles that it is not the best time to marry.

7:29-31 This apocalyptic section depicts a period of unsettled expectation. **The time is limited** is an

apocalyptic warning of the imminence of the end of the age, perhaps sparked by the “the present distress” (v. 26), since natural disasters were often taken as reminders of the judgment to come. The apocalyptic tone of this section means that Paul is making a rhetorical point; he is not suggesting that married men should pretend to be single.

7:32-35 The reality of **married** life is that much of the believer’s energy and time is devoted to the marriage. This is appropriate, but the point is that remaining unmarried has certain advantages with respect to serving the Lord.

7:39 While a believer ought to remain married to an unbelieving partner (7:12-14), a believer must choose someone **in the Lord** if wanting to remarry after the death of a spouse.

FOOD OFFERED TO IDOLS

8 Now about food sacrificed to idols: † We know that “we all have knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, † but love † builds up. 2 If anyone thinks he knows anything, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it. † 3 But if anyone loves God, † he is known † by him.

4 About eating food sacrificed to idols, then, we know that “an idol is nothing in the world,” † and that “there is no God but one.” † 5 For even if there are so-called gods, † whether in heaven or on earth — as there are many “gods” and many “lords” — 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father. † All things are from him, † and we exist for him. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things are through him, and we exist through him. †

7 However, not everyone has this knowledge. Some have been so used to idolatry up until now that when they eat food sacrificed to an idol, their conscience, being weak, is defiled. 8 Food will not bring us close to God. † We are not worse off if we don’t eat, and we are not better if we do eat. † 9 But be careful that this right of yours in no way becomes a stumbling block † to the weak. 10 For if someone sees you, the one who has knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, won’t his weak conscience be encouraged † to eat food offered to idols? 11 So the weak person, the brother or sister for whom Christ died, † is ruined † † by your knowledge. † 12 Now when you sin like this against brothers and sisters and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother or sister to fall, I will never again eat meat, † so that I won’t cause my brother or sister to fall.

8:4 Or *an idol has no real existence* **8:8** Or *bring us before* (the judgment seat of) *God* **8:10** Or *built up*

8:11 Or *destroyed*
8:1 Ac 15:29; 21:25; 1Co 10:19; Rv 2:14,20 **8:1** 1Co 4:6 **8:1** 1Co 13:1-13 **8:2** 1Co 3:18; 13:8-12; 1Tm 6:4 **8:3** Dt 6:5; Lk 10:27 **8:3** Pr 2:6 **8:4** Dt 6:4 **8:5** 2Th 2:4 **8:6** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42; Eph 5:20 **8:6** Ps 104:24; Col 1:16; Rv 3:14 **8:6** Jn 1:3 **8:8** Rm 14:17 **8:9** Ex 23:33; Rm 14:20 **8:11** Jn 11:51; Rm 5:6,8; 8:34; 14:9,15; 1Co 15:3; Gl 2:21; Eph 5:2; 1Th 5:10 **8:11** Heb 6:8 **8:11** Mt 25:45 **8:13** Dt 12:15

8:1 In Greco-Roman cities, much of the meat available at markets would have come from sacrifices to pagan **idols** in local temples. For this reason, Jews often had their own markets. This raised a serious social issue for converted Gentiles concerning to what degree they could associate with unbelievers. This cultural issue gives Paul the opportunity to address the priority of **love** over **knowledge.**

8:4 Paul acknowledges that **idols** are nothing and therefore cannot really taint meat. The phrase, **we know**, connects back to the "knowledge" referred to in 8:1. Corinthians who understand this truth ought not be puffed up against fellow believers who are concerned about the connection to idols (8:7). See "Polytheism in Biblical Times," *p. 653.*

8:5-6 See "What is Globalization?" *p. 1606.*

8:9-13 The principle is that love for fellow believers trumps personal freedom. Believers are free to eat or not to eat, and knowledge understands that idols are nothing, but this knowledge and freedom must not be exercised in an unloving way. It is better to forgo freedom than to cause a **brother or sister to fall.**

PAUL'S EXAMPLE AS AN APOSTLE

9 Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? 2 If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you, because you are the seal † of my apostleship in the Lord.
3 My defense to those who examine me is this: 4 Don't we have the right to eat and drink? † 5 Don't we have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife † like the other apostles, † the Lord's brothers, and Cephas? † 6 Or do only Barnabas † and I have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? † Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink the milk from the flock?
8 Am I saying this from a human perspective? Doesn't the law also say the same thing? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, **Do not muzzle an ox † while it treads out grain.** † † Is God really concerned about oxen? 10 Isn't he really saying it for our sake? Yes, this is written for our sake, † because he who plows ought to plow in hope, † and he who threshes should thresh in hope of sharing the crop. † 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it too much if we reap material benefits from you? 12 If others have this right to receive benefits from

you, don’t we even more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right; instead, we endure everything † so that we will not hinder the gospel of Christ.
13 Don’t you know that those who perform the temple services eat the food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar † share in the offerings of the altar?
14 In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should earn their living by the gospel. †
15 For my part I have used none of these rights, nor have I written these things that they may be applied in my case. For it would be better for me to die than for anyone to deprive me of my boast! 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason to boast, because I am compelled to preach † — and woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, I have a reward, but if unwillingly, I am entrusted † with a commission. 18 What then is my reward? To preach the gospel and offer it free of charge and not make full use of my rights in the gospel. †
19 Although I am free from all and not anyone’s slave, I have made myself a slave to everyone, in order to win † more people. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law — though I myself am not under the law † — to win those under the law. †

TECHNOLOGY AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Technology and the Christian worldview are mutually intertwined. *Technology* is a word that comes from the Greek term *tekne*, meaning “art” or “craft” and the word *logos*, meaning “word” or “pattern.” In its oldest form the ancient Greek word *technologia* meant the systematic treatment of grammar, but then it evolved to mean the study of the mechanical arts and sciences. Now, in standard usage it generally means the newest inventions themselves.

Interestingly, the Sanskrit word that later gave rise to the Indo-European word *tekne* originally meant “carpenter.” In Greek we see that Jesus Christ is referred to in Scripture as a *tekton*, which shares this root. Christ is also referred to as the Word, or *logos*, in John 1:1. Thus, it is not insignificant that the primordial linguistic pattern of all our modern technology is deeply entwined with our earliest understandings of Jesus Christ as Builder, as Craftsman, as divine Word, and as Creator. In this sense we can see how all our technologies are but attempts at righting the world since it went wrong at the fall. But we should also pay

attention to how much our technologies can unintentionally keep us distant, separated, and indifferent to one another.

TECHNOLOGY THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Today technology's chief benefit is to create efficiency in motion, labor, and communication. When we think of technology, we think of it as a laborsaving device.

But the history of technology is also the history of warfare, as the winners of wars write history and the winners of wars are always characterized by having technological superiority—otherwise they would not have won. Even in biblical cases where we perceive an exception to this rule—such as in the account of David versus Goliath, that of Pharaoh's army versus Moses and the Israelites at the Red Sea, or the narrative of Joshua and the battle for Jericho, we see the pattern revealed: what man thought was a better technology (bigger soldiers, larger armies, walled fortresses) led to a downfall. In each case, technological weakness gave God's people competitive advantage. For instance, • David's sling launched a stone that hit Goliath on his forehead, the one portion of his body that was not protected by armor; this was the original smart missile.

- Pharaoh's armies meant to crush the escaping Israelites along the banks of the sea, thinking them trapped there. But the God of the wind and tides gave Moses temporary command of these natural forces. Not only did Israel escape through the parted body of water, but also the enemy drowned as the water fell; this was the original weather warfare.
- Joshua obeyed God's command for his army to blow their trumpets around the walls of Jericho, and the fortress fell; this was the original use of sonic warfare.

Each of the above incidents involved the application of an incredibly efficient technology that required God's people to trust God in the face of what seemed impossible odds. And as that smart missile found its mark, as weather warfare overwhelmed Pharaoh, as sonic warfare toppled that wall, man was given new evidences that God is the Master Technologist, the Master Builder, the Master Designer, the Master Engineer, the Master Craftsman, and the Master Strategist. He is so capable, so completely knowledgeable about all things, that what looks impossible to us is always possible to him.

MODERN TECHNOLOGY

God's deployment of his technologies is always an act of love; by using them, he spares his people and saves their lives. By contrast, our technologies today are, often inadvertently, used in ways that have the opposite effect. They are primarily used to generate weapons of warfare or to harness oil, nuclear, hydro, or solar energy—substances that are themselves the cause of great wars. As of 2014, only eleven countries (out of the 194 countries in existence) were not engaged in some form of armed conflict that killed at least twenty-five of their own citizens.

This physical death toll fueled by new human technologies is perhaps paralleled by the unintended emotional toll associated with our modern communication technologies. Even though sending electronic messages over digital media has great advantages, messages received in this format often have the effect of making us feel insignificant and can lead to resentment. An e-mail wishing you well is nice, but not as nice as a card, not as nice as a phone call, and certainly not as nice as having a friend show up in person beside your hospital bed.

This disembodying effect of technology, in fact, encourages us to compensate for our loss by using mass media for twelve hours out of our sixteen-hour waking day. It appears that we actually overuse the technology to make us feel more connected—even as the greater use increases our feelings of loneliness. Today's Facebook user, for instance, has an average of 338 social media friends. That same user's "real friends," however, have gone down from five to two. Technology, though used as a compensation for the loss of the real thing in our lives, proves a poor substitute.

One strange thing about social media, for instance, is that it requires antisocial behavior for participation. It leads to a husband and wife sitting in the same room together, each engrossed in the screen rather than in

connecting with each other through conversation. It encourages teens to withdraw from family activities in order to keep up with what their friends are doing online. This problem may explain why so many people end up taking pictures of their food and posting them as contributions to their friends' social lives. But to paraphrase Romans 14:17, "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking" and taking beautiful selfies. Humans were created to live in face-to-face community.

If you've ever had a colleague ask you to email him when he could just as easily stop by your cubicle to chat, you know what depersonalization can feel like. Technology is convenient, it is efficient, and it is incredibly productive. But there is a price to pay for such convenience. Selfishness and thoughtlessness—such easy traps to fall into given our high-tech world—are the opposite of love.

TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

When humanity failed to listen to God's prophets, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, as the ultimate Messenger heralding his love for us. But just as the terrible tenants in the parable of the Vineyard killed the owner's son, we humans killed Jesus. When that act is viewed theologically, however, we see that this was precisely what was supposed to happen: our loving Creator God came to earth in human form in order to demonstrate that true love is willing to sacrifice self.

Technology can be an incredibly useful tool for solving immediate physical, practical, and technical problems. But as a mode of interaction between humans, it far too often sends a message of indifference rather than love. To correct the problem, and to truly love others as we love ourselves and as Christ both commanded and demonstrated, we must be willing to sacrifice the very convenience that the technology gives us. When, for instance, you receive the call that asks, "Are you sitting down?" you know you are about to hear information that takes your knees out from under you. When the sender of that message shows up in person to catch you as you fall—then you know you are loved. The burden somehow becomes a bit easier to bear. The intentional nonuse of technology could actually be the only way to really show someone that he is worth our time. That there is a God who really cares. It illustrates that we are willing to be inconvenienced on another's behalf, much as Jesus was willing to set aside all the ease and wonder of heaven for ours.

The ancient Israelites were called to be a people apart, worshiping God in the tabernacle and later the temple in Israel. The early Christians too were called to be a people set apart: worshiping God in spirit and in truth; replacing the ritual slaughter of animals on the altar with sharing Communion and fellowshiping together; and seeing to the needs of the poor and displaced among them. Modern followers of Jesus must pursue similar fellowship and charity, but we have a new task. The church is called to set herself apart from the surrounding culture by reembodying herself in all the ways that modern technology has disembodied her. Only by using our physical bodies to do small things with great love can we combat the silent spirit of the technological age and be the presence of the kingdom of God for the suffering world around us.

The Christian's call to imitate God in his self-giving sacrifice does not require each Christian to be a literal martyr, but our technological age does greatly increase our opportunity to martyr the small self—one's own ego, a love of convenience and ease—in order to demonstrate the physicality of the love that Christ first showed us. Christ's own description of such physical acts in Matthew 25:35-36 bears out their significance. "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat," Jesus said. "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me; I was in prison and you visited me." In our technological time of digital disembodiment, our new calling as a people set apart must be presence in the age of absence.

READ M. SCHUCHARDT

21 To those who are without the law, † like one without the law — though I am not without God's law but under the law of Christ — to win those without the

law. 22 To the weak I became weak, in order to win the weak. I have become all
things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. † 23 Now
I do all this because of the gospel, so that I may share in the blessings.
24 Don't you know that the runners in a stadium all race, † but only one
receives the prize? Run in such a way to win the prize. † 25 Now everyone who
competes exercises self-control † in everything. They do it to receive a
perishable crown, † but we an imperishable crown. 26 So I do not run like one
who runs aimlessly or box like one beating the air. 27 Instead, I discipline my
body and bring it under strict control, so that after preaching to others, I myself
will not be disqualified. †

9:5 Lit *a sister as a wife* **9:16** Lit *because necessity is laid upon me* **9:20** Other mss omit *though I myself am not under the law*

9:2 Rv 5:1 **9:4** 2Th 3:8-9 **9:5** Jd 17 **9:5** Jn 1:42 **9:6** Ac 4:36 **9:7** Lk 3:14 **9:9** Lk 13:15 **9:9** Dt 25:4 **9:9** Dt 25:4 **9:10** Rm 4:24 **9:10** Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3 **9:10** 2Tm 2:6 **9:12** Ac 20:33-35; 2Co 6:3-10; 11:7-12 **9:13** Lv 6:16,26; 7:6,31-32; Nm 5:9-10; 18:8-20,31; Dt 18:1 **9:14** Mt 10:8-10; Lk 10:7 **9:17** Lk 16:11 **9:18** 2Co 11:7; 12:13 **9:19** 1Pt 3:1 **9:20** Ac 16:3; 21:23-26 **9:21** Rm 2:12,14; Gl 2:3; 3:2 **9:22** Rm 11:14; 1Co 7:16 **9:24** Jd 3 **9:24** Col 2:18 **9:25** Gl 5:23 **9:25** 1Pt 1:18; 5:4 **9:27** Heb 6:8

9:1-18 Paul is an example of not demanding his **rights** but doing what is best for others.

9:20-21 Though Paul is not required to live under the law of Moses, Paul chooses to live **like one under law** in order to win Jews for Christ. Likewise, he is willing to live as a Gentile to win Gentiles. While some may accuse Paul of inconsistency, he is modeling what it means to use his freedom for the sake of others. See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV*.

9:24-27 Paul alludes to famous athletic events of the day—probably the Isthmian games, held close to Corinth in Isthmia. Athletes required **self-control** and **discipline** in order to win. Though free to do any number of things, they chose to do only what advanced their cause. Christians ought to choose to do what advances the kingdom, not just whatever they are free to do.

WARNINGS FROM ISRAEL'S PAST

10 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, that our
ancestors † were all under the cloud, † all passed through the sea, †
2 and all were baptized † into Moses † in the cloud and in the sea. 3 They all
ate the same spiritual food, † 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they
drank from the spiritual rock † that followed them, and that rock was Christ. †
5 Nevertheless God was not pleased with most of them, since they were struck
down in the wilderness. †

6 Now these things took place as examples for us, so that we will not desire † evil things as they did. † † 7 Don't become idolaters † as some of them were; as it is written, **The people sat down to eat and drink, and got up to party.** † † † 8 Let us not commit sexual immorality † as some of them did, † and in a single day twenty-three thousand people died. † 9 Let us not test Christ as some of them did † and were destroyed by snakes. † 10 And don't complain † as some of them did, † † and were killed by the destroyer. † †
11 These things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our instruction, † on whom the ends of the ages † † have come. † 12 So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall. † 13 No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity. But God is faithful; † he will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation he will also provide a way out † so that you may be able to bear it.

WARNING AGAINST IDOLATRY

14 So then, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I am speaking as to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I am saying. 16 The cup † of blessing † that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread † that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one † body, since all of us share the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel. † Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? †
19 What am I saying then? That food sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but I do say that what they † sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons!
21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot share in the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Or are we provoking the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? †

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

23 "Everything is permissible," † but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible," † but not everything builds up. 24 No one is to seek his own

good, but the good of the other person. †
25 Eat everything that is sold in the meat market, without raising questions for the sake of conscience, 26 since **the earth is the Lord's,** † **and all that is in it.** † † 27 If any of the unbelievers invites you over and you want to go, eat everything that is set before you, without raising questions for the sake of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This is food from a sacrifice," do not eat it, † out of consideration for the one who told you, and for the sake of conscience. † 29 I do not mean your own conscience, but the other person's. For why is my freedom judged † by another person's conscience? 30 If I partake with thanksgiving, † why am I criticized because of something for which I give thanks?
31 So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. † 32 Give no offense † to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, 33 just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, † so that they may be saved.

10:6 Lit *they desired* **10:7** Or *to dance* **10:8** Lit *them committed sexual immorality* **10:9** Lit *them tested* **10:10** Lit *them complained* **10:10** Or *the destroying angel* **10:11** Or *goals of the ages*, or *culmination of the ages* **10:18** Lit *Look at Israel according to the flesh* **10:20** Other mss read *Gentiles* **10:23** Other mss add *for me* **10:23** Other mss add *for me* **10:28** Other mss add *"For the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it."*
10:1 Ps 44:1; Ac 7:11 **10:1** Ex 13:21 **10:1** Ex 14:29 **10:2** Ac 22:16 **10:2** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **10:3** Ex 16:31 **10:4** Ex 17:6; Nm 20:7-13 **10:4** Jn 4:14; 6:30-35 **10:5** Jd 5 **10:6** Mt 27:23; Jms 4:2 **10:6** Nm 11:4,33-34; Ps 78:18; 106:14 **10:7** Eph 5:5 **10:7** Ex 32:6 **10:7** Ex 32:6 **10:8** 1Co 6:18; Rv 2:14,20; 17:2; 18:3,9 **10:8** Nm 25:1-18; Ps 106:29 **10:9** Nm 21:6 **10:10** Jn 6:41; Jd 16 **10:10** Nm 16:41-50 **10:10** Ex 12:23; 2Sm 24:16; 1Ch 21:15; Ps 78:49 **10:11** Ps 102:18 **10:11** Mk 13:7 **10:11** Mk 10:30 **10:12** Pr 24:16; Heb 6:8 **10:13** Nm 12:7 **10:13** 2Pt 2:9 **10:16** Mt 26:27; Mk 14:23; Lk 22:17,20; 1Co 11:25-26 **10:16** Mk 6:41; Gl 3:14 **10:16** Mt 26:26; Mk 14:22; Lk 22:19; Ac 2:42,46; 20:7 **10:17** Jn 11:52; Eph 4:4 **10:18** Gn 8:20; Lv 1:5; Nm 3:26; Dt 12:27; 1Sm 2:28; 1Ch 6:49; Ps 26:6; Ezk 8:15; Heb 7:13 **10:22** Ec 6:10 **10:24** Mk 10:45; Php 2:4 **10:26** Mk 13:19 **10:26** Ps 24:1 **10:26** Ps 24:1 **10:28** Lk 10:8 **10:29** Lk 6:37 **10:30** Mk 8:6; Rm 1:8 **10:31** Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **10:32** Ac 24:16; Php 1:10 **10:33** Mk 10:45

10:1-5 Paul draws a parallel between the rescue of Israel through the Red Sea and new covenant salvation with its baptism and Communion **(food** and **drink).** Even though all the Israelites participated in these experiences (as do the Corinthians, as the following chapters show), some of the Israelites proved themselves to be unbelievers. The Corinthians are warned that participation in the essential aspects of Christian worship does not in itself assure salvation. This passage is a call to persevere.

10:7-8 Paul refers to Exodus 32 where the Israelites worship the golden calf and engage in **sexual immorality.** The combination of idolatry and sexual sin makes this a particularly relevant example for the Corinthians. Pagan religion typically combined the two offenses.

10:13 It is common to excuse various sins on the basis that they are too hard to resist. But **no temptation has come** to the Corinthians **except what is common to humanity.** Indeed, God's faithfulness means that

he will **provide a way out** of temptation. This is both a comfort and challenge. There is comfort in the knowledge that it will always be possible to escape sin when tempted. It is a challenge because it means there is no excuse for indulging sinful nature.

10:14-22 Though idols are nothing, and food sacrificed to them is nothing (8:4; 10:19), believers should not participate in pagan sacrifices. Such is participation with **demons** that stand behind all false worship (v. 20). The parallel is drawn with the Lord's Supper (10:14-18): participation in the Supper is **a sharing in the blood of Christ** and **in the body of Christ.** And it is not possible to share in the **cup** and **table** of the Lord *and* those of demons.

10:31–11:1 The final conclusion of the matters addressed in 1 Corinthians 8–10 is that everything should be done **for the glory of God.** This involves seeking the **benefit** of others rather than self, as Paul who imitates Christ, illustrates. See "Biblical Models for Business," *p. 782.*

11 Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ. †

INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HEAD COVERINGS

2 Now I praise you † because you remember me in everything and hold fast to
the traditions † just as I delivered † them to you. 3 But I want you to know that
Christ is the head † of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, † †
and God is the head of Christ. † 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with
something on his head dishonors † his head. 5 Every woman who prays or
prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, since that is one and the
same as having her head shaved. † 6 For if a woman doesn't cover her head, she
should have her hair cut off. But if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair
cut off or her head shaved, let her head be covered.
7 A man should not cover his head, because he is the image † and glory of
God. † So too, woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from
woman, but woman came from man. † 9 Neither was man created for the sake
of woman, but woman for the sake of man. 10 This is why a woman should have
a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. 11 In the Lord,
however, woman is not independent of man, and man is not independent of
woman. 12 For just as woman came from man, so man comes through woman,
and all things come from God. †
13 Judge † for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head
uncovered? 14 Does not even nature itself teach † you that if a man has long
hair it is a disgrace † to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her

glory? † For her hair is given to her † as a covering. 16 If anyone wants to argue about this, we have no other † custom, nor do the churches of God.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

17 Now in giving this instruction I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For to begin with, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 Indeed, it is necessary that there be factions † among you, so that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 When you come together, then, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. † 21 For at the meal, each one eats his own supper. † So one person is hungry while another gets drunk! 22 Don't you have homes in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I do not praise you in this matter!

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: † On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, † "This is my body, which is † for you. Do this in remembrance of me." †

25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant † in my blood. † Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death † until he comes. †

SELF-EXAMINATION

27 So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sin against the body † and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself; in this way let him eat the bread and drink from the cup. 29 For whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body, † eats and drinks judgment † on himself. 30 This is why many are sick and ill among you, and many have fallen asleep. † 31 If we were properly judging ourselves, we would not be judged, 32 but when we are judged † by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned † with the world.

33 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, when you come together to eat, welcome one another. † 34 If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you gather together you will not come under judgment. I will give instructions about the other matters whenever I come. †

11:2 Other mss add *brothers,* **11:3** Or *the husband is the head of the wife* **11:15** Other mss omit *to her* **11:16** Or *no such* **11:21** Or *eats his own supper ahead of others* **11:24** Other mss add *"Take, eat.* **11:24** Other mss add *broken* **11:27** Lit *be guilty of the body* **11:29** Other mss read *drinks unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body* **11:33** Or *wait for one another*

11:1 Php 2:5; 1Pt 2:21 **11:2** 2Th 2:15; 3:6 **11:2** Jd 3 **11:3** Eph 1:22; 4:15; Col 1:18; 2:10,19 **11:3** Gn 3:16; Eph 5:23 **11:3** 1Co 3:23 **11:4** 1Pt 3:16 **11:5** Dt 21:11-12 **11:7** Gn 1:27 **11:7** Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **11:8** Gn 2:21-23; 1Tm 2:13 **11:12** Ps 104:24; Rv 3:14 **11:13** Jn 5:22-30 **11:14** Mt 28:20; Ac 4:2; 2Tm 4:11 **11:14** 2Co 6:8 **11:15** Php 3:19 **11:19** 2Pt 2:1 **11:20** Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-20; 1Co 10:14-22 **11:23** Jd 3 **11:24** Lk 22:19 **11:25** Lk 22:20 **11:25** Jn 6:54 **11:26** Php 2:8; 3:10 **11:26** Mk 8:38 **11:29** Mk 12:40; 1Jn 5:16 **11:30** Jn 11:11; Ac 7:60; 1Th 4:13-15 **11:32** Jn 5:22-30 **11:32** Mt 12:41; Jn 5:22 **11:34** 1Co 4:19

11:2 Traditions today, are typically thought of as negative. Here and elsewhere in the NT, however, they are regarded positively—referring to the teachings and practices handed down by Jesus and the apostles (see 2Th 2:15; 3:6). When Jesus rebuked adherence to traditions (for example, in Mk 7:1-13) he had human traditions in view; these had been made more important than God's instructions.

11:3 Considerable debate concerns the word **head**, with its normal use implying a kind of hierarchical authority, while some scholars have argued that it means "source" rather than "authority." Either way, Paul establishes an order involving God, Christ, man, and woman. A further complication is the fact that **man** and **woman** could mean "husband" and "wife." The order that Paul affirms has implications for the way corporate worship is to be conducted, as 11:4-16 expounds.

11:4 Covering a man's head was common in Roman religious cults. Possibly some Corinthian believers had adopted this pagan practice in their worship, which is why Paul forbids it. It dishonors Christ, **his head.**

11:5-6 Roman law prescribed shaving the head of women who committed adultery. Paul equates this with an uncovered head, which is why that practice dishonors **her head** (her husband).

11:7-9 Paul draws on the order of creation—man then woman (Gn 2:7,22)—to support the point that **woman is the glory of man.** See also "*Imago Dei* and the Distinctiveness of Humans," *p. 27.*

11:11-12 Though Paul establishes order between man and woman (11:3), he also affirms their mutual dependency.

11:14-15 Long hair was unusual for Roman men in the first century. It would be perceived as a man's pretending to be a woman. By the same token, it was normal for women to have **long hair.** Short hair on a **woman** would also be perceived as unnatural.

11:18 Paul's astonishment at divisions within the gathered church **(in part I believe it)** might sound naïve today. But it demonstrates how far from ideal this situation is, despite how common it seems today.

11:20-22 Although the Corinthians intend to celebrate **the Lord's Supper**, their carelessness toward one another negates the practice. It is possible some Corinthians were bringing their own food and drink to the gathering (**each one eats his own supper**), but it would be better for them to feast at home. This would at least prevent the humiliation of **those who have nothing.**

11:27-29 The problem is partaking in **an unworthy manner**, not the participation of unworthy people—no

one is worthy. Participants must examine themselves and avoid partaking **without recognizing the body**—that is, the gathered people of Christ. Division and selfishness constitutes unworthiness of the Supper. See "Illness and a Christian Worldview," *p. 646.*

11:30 Having **fallen asleep** is a euphemism for death. **Many** in Corinth had died because they had carelessly participated in the Lord's Supper. This underscores the seriousness of the situation.

DIVERSITY OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

12 Now concerning spiritual gifts: † brothers and sisters, I do not want
you to be unaware. 2 You know that when you were pagans, you used
to be enticed and led astray by mute † idols. † 3 Therefore I want you to know
that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can
say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.
4 Now there are different gifts, † but the same Spirit. 5 There are different
ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are different activities, but the same
God produces each gift in each person. 7 A manifestation of the Spirit is given to
each person † for the common good: 8 to one † is given a message of
wisdom † through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same
Spirit, 9 to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing † by the
one Spirit, 10 to another, the performing of miracles, † to another, prophecy, †
to another, distinguishing between spirits, † to another, different kinds of
tongues, † to another, interpretation of tongues. 11 One and the same Spirit is
active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.

UNITY YET DIVERSITY IN THE BODY

12 For just as the body is one † and has many parts, and all the parts of that
body, though many, are one body — so also is Christ. † 13 For we were all
baptized by † one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether
slaves or free — and we were all given one Spirit to drink. † 14 Indeed, the
body is not one part but many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I'm not a
hand, I don't belong to the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the
body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I'm not an eye, I don't belong to
the body," it is not for that reason any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole
body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were an ear,
where would the sense of smell be? 18 But as it is, God has arranged each one of

the parts in the body just as he wanted. † 19 And if they were all the same part,
where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The
eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you! ” Or again, the head can’t say to
the feet, “I don’t need you! ” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that are
weaker are indispensable. 23 And those parts of the body that we consider less
honorable, † we clothe these with greater honor, and our unrespectable parts are
treated with greater respect, 24 which our respectable parts do not need.
Instead, God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the less
honorable, 25 so that there would be no division † in the body, but that the
members would have the same concern for each other. 26 So if one member
suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the
members rejoice with it.
27 Now you are the body of Christ, † and individual members of it. 28 And God
has appointed these in the church: † first apostles, second prophets, third
teachers, † next miracles, † then gifts of healing, † helping, administrating,
various kinds of tongues. † 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all
teachers? Do all do miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in
other tongues? Do all interpret? † 31 But desire † the greater gifts. And I will
show you an even better way.

12:1 Or *spiritual things*, or *spiritual people* **12:10** languages **12:13** Or *with*, or *in* **12:28** languages, also in v. 30

12:2 Ac 8:32; 1Co 14:10; 2Pt 2:16 **12:2** 1Co 8:4 **12:4** Rm 12:6; 1Co 14:1; Eph 4:8; Heb 2:4; 1Pt 4:10 **12:7** Jms 4:5 **12:8-10** Rm 12:7-8; Eph 4:11; 1Pt 4:11 **12:8** 1Co 2:6-7 **12:9** Lk 13:32; Ac 4:22,30; 10:38 **12:10** Ac 19:11 **12:10** 1Co 13:2 **12:10** 1Jn 4:1-3 **12:12** Jn 11:52 **12:12** Eph 4:4 **12:13** Gl 3:28; Eph 2:13-18; Col 3:11 **12:18** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Jn 5:30; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **12:23** Mk 6:4; 1Pt 2:7 **12:25** 1Co 1:10 **12:27** Eph 1:23; Col 1:18 **12:28** Mt 16:18; 1Co 14:4; Rv 1:4 **12:28** Eph 4:11; Jms 3:1 **12:28** Mk 13:22 **12:28** 1Co 12:9 **12:30** Lk 24:27 **12:31** Nm 25:13; Jms 4:2

12:3 The primary mark of being spiritual, or being prompted by the Spirit, is the affirmation of the lordship of Christ.

12:4-10 This is not a list of all possible **gifts** (since it differs with the lists in Rm 12 and Eph 4), but a representative list that demonstrates that different gifts are given to different people for different purposes.

12:12-26 The imagery of a group of people functioning as **one body** was common in the ancient world. Paul uses it here to illustrate unity of purpose alongside diversity of gifting and our need for one another.

LOVE: THE SUPERIOR WAY

13 If I speak human or angelic tongues † but do not have love, † I am a
noisy gong † or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy †
and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so that I
can move mountains † but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give away
all my possessions, and if I give over my body in order to boast † but do not
have love, I gain nothing.
4 Love is patient, † love is kind. Love does not envy, † is not boastful, is not
arrogant, † 5 is not rude, is not self-seeking, † is not irritable, † and does not
keep a record of wrongs. 6 Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in
the truth. † 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures †
all things.
8 Love never ends. † But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for
tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. 9 For we
know in part, and we prophesy in part, 10 but when the perfect comes, the partial
will come to an end. 11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a
child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put aside childish things.
12 For now we see only a reflection † as in a mirror, but then face to face. †
Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, † as I am fully known. †
13 Now these three remain: faith, hope, † and love — but the greatest of these is
love.

13:1 languages, also in v. 8 **13:3** Other mss read *body to be burned* **13:12** Lit *we see indirectly*
13:1 Jn 13:35; 1Jn 4:7-12 **13:1** Mt 10:9 **13:2** 1Co 14:1,3-6,22-39; Eph 4:11; 1Th 5:20 **13:2** Mt 17:20 **13:4** 1Th 5:14 **13:4** Nm 25:13; Gl 4:17 **13:4** 1Co 4:6 **13:5** Mk 10:45; Php 2:4 **13:5** Ac 17:16 **13:6** Ps 119:142; Jn 8:14; 14:6 **13:7** Jms 1:12 **13:8** Mt 7:25,27; Lk 6:49; 11:17; 13:4; 16:17; Ac 15:16; Heb 11:30; Rv 11:13; 16:19 **13:12** 1Jn 3:2 **13:12** Pr 2:6; Jn 17:3; 1Jn 4:8 **13:12** 1Co 8:3; Gl 4:9 **13:13** 1Th 1:3

13:1-13 This discussion of **love** sits in the midst of the discussion of spiritual gifts, because Paul's point is that love is the central issue in the use of gifts. It is even the proper motivation for desiring other gifts.

13:13 Faith, hope, and love are the hallmark characteristics of the Christian life (Rm 5:1-5; Col 1:4-5; 1Th 1:3). These embody faithful living regardless of giftedness, status, or role. And without **love**, **the greatest of these**, such things are all for nought (13:1-3).

PROPHECY: A SUPERIOR GIFT

14 Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and especially that you may
prophesy. 2 For the person who speaks in another tongue † † is not
speaking to people but to God, since no one understands him; he speaks

mysteries in the Spirit. † 3 On the other hand, the person who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, † encouragement, and consolation. 4 The person who speaks in another tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 I wish all of you spoke in other tongues, † but even more that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may be built up.
6 So now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in other tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you with a revelation † or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? 7 Even lifeless instruments that produce sounds — whether flute or harp † — if they don't make a distinction in the notes, how will what is played on the flute or harp be recognized? 8 In fact, if the bugle makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle? † 9 In the same way, unless you use your tongue for intelligible speech, how will what is spoken be known? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, none is without meaning. 11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner † to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me. 12 So also you — since you are zealous † for spiritual gifts, † † seek to excel in building up the church.
13 Therefore the person who speaks in another tongue should pray that he can interpret. 14 For if I pray in another tongue, my spirit † prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. † 15 What then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing praise with the spirit, and I will also sing praise with my understanding. 16 Otherwise, if you praise with the spirit, † how will the outsider † say "Amen" † at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17 For you may very well be giving thanks, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank † God that I speak in other tongues more than all of you; 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words † with my understanding, in order to teach others also, than ten thousand words in another tongue.

20 Brothers and sisters, don't be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to evil and adult in your thinking. † 21 It is written in the law,

I will speak to this people by people of other tongues and by the lips of foreigners, and even then, they will not listen to me, † †

says the Lord. 22 Speaking in other tongues, then, is intended as a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church assembles together and all are speaking in other tongues and people who are outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24 But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is convicted by all and is called to account by all. 25 The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you." †

ORDER IN CHURCH MEETINGS

26 What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one † has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, another tongue, or an interpretation. † Everything is to be done for building up. 27 If anyone speaks in another tongue, there are to be only two, or at the most three, each in turn, and let someone interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, that person is to keep silent in the church and speak to himself and God. 29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should evaluate. † 30 But if something has been revealed to another person sitting there, the first prophet should be silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, so that everyone may learn and everyone may be encouraged. † 32 And the prophets' spirits are subject to the prophets, 33 since God is not a God of disorder but of peace.

As in all the churches of the saints, † 34 the women † should be silent in the churches, † for they are not permitted to speak, but are to submit themselves, as the law also says. 35 If they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands † at home, since it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. 36 Or did the word of God originate from you, or did it come to you only?

37 If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, he should recognize that what I write to you is the Lord's command. 38 If anyone ignores this, he will be ignored. † 39 So then, my brothers and sisters, be eager † to prophesy, and do

not forbid speaking in other tongues. 40 But everything is to be done decently † and in order.

14:2 language, also in vv. 4,13,14,19,26,27 **14:2** Or *in spirit*, or *in his spirit* **14:3** Lit *building up* **14:5** languages, also in vv. 6,18,21,22,23,39 **14:11** Gk barbaros, or *barbarian* **14:12** Lit *zealous of spirits* **14:16** Or *praise by the Spirit* **14:16** Lit *the one filling the place of the uninformed* **14:26** Other mss add *of you* **14:34** Other mss read *your women* **14:38** Other mss read *he should be ignored*

14:2 1Co 12:10 **14:6** 1Pt 4:13 **14:7** Rv 5:8; 14:2; 15:2 **14:8** Nm 10:9; Is 58:1; Jr 4:19; Ezk 33:3-6; Jl 2:1 **14:12** Nm 25:13; Gl 1:14 **14:12** Ps 51:11; Lk 11:34; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; 1Jn 4:1; Rv 3:22 **14:14** Ps 51:12 **14:14** Gl 5:22; Ti 3:14 **14:16** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **14:18** Rm 1:8 **14:19** Mt 12:37 **14:20** Ps 131:2; Is 28:9; Mt 18:3; Rm 16:19; Eph 4:14; Heb 5:12-13 **14:21** Is 28:11-12 **14:21** Is 28:11-12 **14:25** Is 45:14; Zch 8:23 **14:26** 1Co 12:10 **14:29** 1Jn 4:1 **14:31** Lk 16:25 **14:33** Eph 6:18 **14:34** 1Tm 2:11-12; 1Pt 3:1 **14:35** Mt 1:19; 1Pt 3:1 **14:39** Nm 25:13; Gl 4:17 **14:40** Rm 13:13

14:1-5 Prophecy is held up above speaking **in another tongue** precisely because prophecy benefits others and not just self. This desire to benefit others is the point of the admonition to **pursue love.**

14:2 There is debate as to whether Paul refers to an ability to speak other human languages (perhaps supernaturally, as in Pentecost; Ac 2:1-13), or "angelic" languages (13:1); that is, glossolalia. Much of the following discussion could fit either understanding.

14:34-36 These controversial verses need to be balanced by 1 Corinthians 11:5, in which it is clear that Paul expects women to pray and prophesy in the congregation. This means that the instruction, **the women should be silent**, does not indicate absolute silence but "quietness" with respect to the evaluation of prophecy. If her husband spoke the prophecy, she should **ask** him about it **at home.**

RESURRECTION ESSENTIAL TO THE GOSPEL

15 Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received, on which you have taken your stand † 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold to the message I preached to you — unless you believed in vain. † † 3 For I passed on to you † as most important what I also received: that Christ died † for our sins according to the Scriptures, † 4 that he was buried, † that he was raised on the third day † according to the Scriptures, †

HINDUISM

Hinduism is a religion with approximately 820 million adherents, constituting roughly 13.5 percent of the world's total population. All but 6 percent of Hindus live within India, a country with more than one billion people. India has twenty-two constitutionally recognized languages and is home to the cultural contributions of 2,234 unique people groups. India is truly a beautiful and diverse kaleidoscope.

HISTORY OF HINDUISM

The history of Hinduism falls into four successive eras. The first era, the Vedic Period, lasted from 1500 to 1000 BC. That roughly covers the time of the biblical exodus through the prophetic ministry of Samuel and the anointing of King Saul. It was in this period that a migrant group known as the Aryans, or "noble ones," absorbed an older Indus Valley civilization and spoke Sanskrit, which remains the liturgical language of Hinduism. Hindus believe ancient seers and prophets heard and orally transmitted timeless truths during this Vedic Period. These eternal incantations were recognized as *shruti*, or divinely revealed teachings; they were codified into the authoritative Vedas. The oldest and most important is the Rig-Veda, which contains more than a thousand hymns and forms the sacred body of belief and practice for all Hindus. The remaining three collections (the Samaveda, Yajur Veda, and Atharvaveda) are used by priests and other specialists during worship rituals.

Further development of the scriptural canon occurred during Classical Hinduism (ca 1000–400 BC), the second great historical era. To the conclusion of each Veda was added an Upanishad containing philosophical and dialogical speculation about the relationship between the soul and eternal reality and the process of soul liberation. Brahmanas were also attached to each Veda as ritual commentaries offering further instruction about the utilization of the Vedas in worship. The Hindu scripture is thus an anthology comprised of four Vedas (hymns and incantations) with corresponding and supplemental Upanishads (philosophical and theological reflections) and Brahmanas (ritual instructions).

The Epic Era (400 BC to AD 400) was the third great historical period. Notable developments from that time include (1) the advent of yoga with various practices seeking inward withdrawal and release from the outer world, (2) the establishment of proper order within society based on karma and caste, and (3) the emergence of multiple epics which are popular and sometimes mythological stories meant to convey religious meaning. One well-known example is the Mahabharata epic; it contains the famous passage Bhagavad Gita, "Song of the Lord," and teaches soul liberation in the form of *bhakti* or total devotion and self-surrender to one god. (This represents a loose approximation of monotheism in practice, though not in theology.) Continuing and Contemporary Transformation forms a fourth historical era. Since AD 400, Hinduism has undergone numerous developments. Partly as a response to the growth of British colonialism and Christian missionary activity within India, the nineteenth century sparked a major renewal of Hinduism that resulted in far greater systemization in terms of theology, religious practice, and worldview. The twentieth century witnessed meaningful popularization of Hinduism within Euro-American contexts largely because of immigration, the historical importance of Mahatma Gandhi, and an amorphous spirituality propagated by some Western gurus.

KEY BELIEFS OF HINDUISM

Similar to other Eastern faiths and in contrast to a more linear view of history found in areas influenced by the Abrahamic religions, Hindus believe the universe undergoes cyclical processes of creation and destruction that lead to innumerable universes. In this view, the current age, Kali Yuga, began around 3000 BC and is destined for destruction and replacement after 432,000 years.

The supreme reality beyond this cyclical process of never-ending birth and death is Brahman. To know and be absorbed into Brahman, which is eternal, transcendent, and without limitation, is the ultimate goal of Hinduism.

Brahman is sometimes described as *netti*, *netti* meaning "neither this, neither that" to indicate the inherent impossibility of either human language or any singular divine manifestation to express the full totality of the actual reality of Brahman. Hinduism can therefore be described as monotheistic polytheism. There is one supreme reality (monotheistic) revealed through multiple gods and divine manifestations (polytheism) in order to convey the various characteristics and nuances of this one reality. Though there are over three thousand gods within the Hindu corpus, each god is properly understood as a limited manifestation of Brahman. Several of the most important gods include Vishnu, the preserver of the cosmos; Shiva, the divine dancer of creation and destruction; *Durga* or Devi, the protector from evil; *Ganesha*, the elephant-headed

god presiding over obstacles; *Lakshmi*, the goddess of prosperity and good fortune; and Krishna, an avatar or human incarnation of Vishnu who established order in a time of chaos.

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Given theological emphases and narratives attached to each god, the pantheon can seem vague, confusing, and overlapping to the uninitiated. This amalgamation emerges from a Hindu concentration on eternal truths residing outside of time rather than on concrete historicity. This is a significant divergence from Christianity's claim in 1 John 1:1-4 that Jesus was not simply a spiritual manifestation but lived in a verified historical context as a full human who was heard, seen, observed, and physically touched. While Hinduism teaches that Brahman can only be known indirectly and in a nonpersonal manner, Christianity categorically confesses Jesus as the full and complete incarnation of God (Jn 1:1-18; 1Co 8:5-6; Col 1:15-20) with whom there can be a personal relationship (Jn 3:16; Rm 10:9-10; 1Jn 4:9-10).

Furthermore, Christianity has a rather high view of the physical body, declaring in 1Co 6:19-20 that one's "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" meant to "glorify God." Hinduism, on the other hand, understands the physical body as part of the bondage from which liberation is demanded. Each individual is comprised of an *atman*, or eternal soul, placed within the receptacle of a physical body that can be human, animal, or plant depending upon the soul's accrued karma. Karma is a neutral mechanism based on the actions one performed in previous lives. Inappropriate actions result in "hot" karma adversely affecting the future of each *atman*, while appropriate actions cause "cool" karma that ensures higher birth. The hope is to gain enough "cool" karma over many lifetimes in order to be born into a high enough state that gaining the liberating knowledge of Brahman is possible.

Thus, the main problem for Hinduism is not "hot" karma or sin per se, but ignorance—and in particular ignorance of Brahman as the one and supreme reality in which everything is in fact already encompassed. Liberation, called *moksha*, is attained through the absolute elimination of all desire, total inward withdrawal, and a deep experiential realization, or knowledge, that one's true self is already part of Brahman. Such knowledge can be gained through meditation that utilizes the sacred sound of Om, bodily renunciation and restraint, yoga and inward reflection, living according to the right dictates of one's caste, celebrating key festivals such as Diwali and *Holi*, participating in ritual worship at Hindu temples, engaging in personal and daily worship to an image of a god, and absolute love and self-surrender to a singular god (*bhakti*) in order to gain the knowledge of that particular aspect of Brahman. The path of salvation is therefore open to all individuals. But in reality, liberation from the painful and ongoing cycle of birth and death can only be achieved over many lifetimes and only by a few individuals at any particular historical moment.

The Hindu worldview can thus be summarized: the divinely revealed timeless truths of scripture (*shruti*) teach that knowledge of Brahman (the one supreme reality) brings liberation (*moksha*) for the individual, eternal soul (*atman*) from the painful cycle of samsara (a continuous and cyclical process of birth and death based on karma).

Against this Hindu worldview, Christianity offers a gospel of immediate salvation through a grace-filled personal relationship with Jesus, the unique fullness of God, and a salvation that does not deny the goodness of God's physical creation, but promises its ultimate redemption (Rm 8:18-25).

Given that less than 7 percent of India claims Christianity, multifaith dialogue remains essential—as does prayer for bold, humble, and protected public witness (Eph 6:19-20) in the midst of sporadic but regular Christian persecution emerging out of the close connection between Hinduism and Indian nationalism. According to Operation World, of the 639 worldwide unreached and unengaged people groups having a population of at least ten thousand, almost 75 percent are located within India.

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5 and that he appeared to Cephas, † then to the Twelve. † 6 Then he appeared to over five hundred brothers and sisters at one time; † most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, † then to all the apostles. † 8 Last of all, as to one born at the wrong time, † † he also appeared to me. †

9 For I am the least of the apostles, † not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted † the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. † 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, so we proclaim and so you have believed.

RESURRECTION ESSENTIAL TO THE FAITH

12 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, † how can some of you say, "There is no resurrection of the dead"? † 13 If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; 14 and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation is in vain, and so is your faith. † 15 Moreover, we are found to be false witnesses † about God, because we have testified † wrongly about God that he raised up Christ — whom he did not raise up, if in fact the dead are not raised. 16 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins. 18 Those, then, who have fallen asleep in Christ † have also perished. 19 If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be pitied more than anyone.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION GUARANTEES OURS

20 But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits † of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death † came through a man, † the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. † 22 For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. †

23 But each in his own order: † Christ, the firstfruits; afterward, at his coming, those who belong to Christ. 24 Then comes the end, † when he hands over the

kingdom to God the Father, † when he abolishes all rule and all authority and power. † 25 For he must reign † until he puts all his enemies under his feet. † 26 The last enemy to be abolished is death. † 27 For **God has put everything under his feet.** † † Now when it says “everything” is put under him, it is obvious that he who puts everything under him is the exception. 28 When everything is subject to Christ, then the Son † himself will also be subject to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all. †

RESURRECTION SUPPORTED BY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

29 Otherwise what will they do who are being baptized for the dead? † If the dead are not raised at all, then why are people baptized for them? † 30 Why are we in danger every hour? 31 I face death every day, † as surely as I may boast about you, brothers and sisters, in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32 If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus † as a mere man, what good did that do me? † If the dead are not raised, **Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.** † † 33 Do not be deceived: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” 34 Come to your senses † † and stop sinning; for some people are ignorant about God. I say this to your shame. †

THE NATURE OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

35 But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?” 36 You fool! What you sow does not come to life † unless it dies. 37 And as for what you sow — you are not sowing the body that will be, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he wants, † and to each of the seeds its own body. 39 Not all flesh † is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor † of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. 41 There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; † 43 sown in dishonor, † raised in glory; † sown in weakness, raised in power; † 44 sown

a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So it is written, **The first man Adam became a living being**; † † the last Adam † became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual.

47 The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; † the second man is † from heaven. 48 Like the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; like the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. † 49 And just as we have borne the image † of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven. †

VICTORIOUS RESURRECTION

50 What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh † and blood † cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. † For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this corruptible body must be clothed † with incorruptibility, † and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. 54 When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up † in victory. † †

55 **Where, death, is your victory?**

Where, death, is your sting? † †

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin † is the law. † 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory † through our Lord Jesus Christ!

58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, † because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

15:2 Or *believed without careful thought*, or *believed in vain* **15:8** Or *one whose birth was unusual* **15:14** Or *proclamation is useless, and your faith also is useless*, or *proclamation is empty, and your faith also is empty* **15:29** Or *baptized on account of the dead* **15:29** Other mss read *for the dead* **15:34** Lit *Sober up* **15:47** Other mss add *the Lord*

15:1 Pr 24:16 **15:2** Gl 4:11; Heb 6:8 **15:3** Jd 3 **15:3** 1Co 8:11 **15:3** Mt 26:54; 1Pt 1:20 **15:4** Mt 27:59-60; Mk 15:46; Lk 23:53; Jn 19:41-42 **15:4** 1Th 4:14 **15:4** Ps 16:10; Is 53:10; Hs 6:2; Mt 12:40; Jn 2:22; Ac 2:25-32; 13:33-35; 26:22-23 **15:5** Lk 24:34 **15:5** Mk 16:14; Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19,26; Ac 10:41 **15:6** Mt 28:10-20 **15:7** Jms 1:1 **15:7** Ac 1:3-11 **15:8** 1Tm 1:13-16 **15:8** Ac 9:1-8 **15:9** Eph 3:8; 1Tm 1:16-17 **15:9**

Php 3:6 **15:10** 2Co 3:5; Php 2:13; Col 1:29 **15:12** Mt 17:9 **15:12** Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lk 20:27; Ac 23:8; 2Tm 2:18 **15:15** Mt 26:60 **15:15** Jn 15:26 **15:18** 1Th 4:16; 1Pt 5:14 **15:20** Ex 23:19; Lv 2:12; Rm 8:23; Col 1:18 **15:21** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **15:21** Gn 3:1-7; Rm 5:12-14 **15:21** Mt 28:5-6; Mk 16:6; Lk 24:5-8,34; Jn 11:25; 20:9,15-18 **15:22** Rm 14:9 **15:23** 1Th 4:17 **15:24** Mt 24:6; Mk 13:7 **15:24** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42; Eph 5:20 **15:24** Ac 8:10; Eph 1:21; 1Pt 3:22 **15:25** Lk 1:33; Rv 11:15 **15:25** Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44; Eph 1:22 **15:26** 2Co 5:4 **15:27** Ps 8:6 **15:27** Ps 8:6 **15:28** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **15:28** Ps 104:24; Eph 1:23 **15:31** Rm 8:36 **15:32** Eph 1:1 **15:32** 1Th 2:19 **15:32** Is 22:13 **15:32** Is 22:13 **15:34** Ti 2:12 **15:34** 1Co 4:14 **15:36** Jn 12:24 **15:38** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Jn 5:30; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **15:39** Php 3:3 **15:40** Lk 9:31-32; Ac 22:11 **15:42** Rm 2:7; Eph 6:24; 2Tm 1:10 **15:43** 2Co 6:8 **15:43** 1Pt 5:4 **15:43** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **15:45** Gn 2:7 **15:45** Gn 2:7 **15:45** Rm 8:2 **15:47** Gn 2:7; 3:19; Ps 90:3 **15:48** Php 3:20-21 **15:49** Gn 1:27 **15:49** 1Jn 3:2 **15:50** Php 3:3 **15:50** Mt 16:17 **15:52** Mt 24:31; 1Pt 1:5 **15:53** Pr 31:25 **15:53** 1Pt 1:18 **15:54** Mt 23:24 **15:54** Is 25:8 **15:54** Is 25:8 **15:55** Hs 13:14 **15:55** Hs 13:14 **15:56** Rm 4:15 **15:56** Gl 5:4 **15:57** 1Jn 5:5 **15:58** Mk 14:6; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26

15:1-11 See "The Gospel and the Formation of a Christian Worldview," *p. 1359;* "Jehovah's Witnesses," *p. 1575.*

15:2 To believe **in vain** is similar to those who in some sense believed in Jesus but were clearly not converted (Jn 2:23-25).

15:3 The apostles saw Christ's death **for our sins** as fulfillment of Isaiah's Suffering Servant, who "was pierced because of our rebellion, crushed because of our iniquities" (Is 53:5; cp. 1Pt 2:21-25).

15:4 The resurrection of Jesus was likewise in fulfillment of the **Scriptures.** For example, Peter pointed to Psalm 16:10 in his Pentecost speech (Ac 2:27). Being raised **on the third day** may refer to Hs 6:2: "He will revive us after two days, and on the third day he will raise us up so we can live in his presence."

15:5-8 This impressive list of eyewitnesses to the resurrection of Jesus is difficult to account for apart from the historic reality of the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead. While the **five hundred brothers and sisters**' witness is recorded only here, the clear implication is that the Corinthians may scrutinize their testimony for themselves, since **most of them are still alive.**

15:12 That some Corinthians can say **there is no resurrection of the dead** implies the influence of Greek philosophical thought, such as Paul encountered at the Areopagus (Ac 17:32).

15:14 The resurrection of Jesus is so central to Paul's gospel that, without it, **our proclamation is in vain —**so is our **faith.**

15:17 Forgiveness of **sins** depends on Jesus's resurrection of the dead (cp. Rm 4:25). The reason for this will become evident later (see the note on 15:56).

15:19 Without the resurrection of Christ, Paul's entire life and ministry lacks sense. His sufferings and persecutions are only meaningful in the light of eternal life. Without the **hope** of resurrection, his suffering is pitiable.

15:20 Firstfruits demonstrated the quality of the harvest to come. Jesus's resurrection is but the first of those to follow. Paul assumes the Jewish and Christian expectation of the resurrection of the righteous on the day of judgment (cp. Dn 12:2; Jn 11:24).

15:21-22 Death entered the world through Adam's sin (Gn 3), but resurrection is made possible by Jesus's sinless life, death for sin, and final conquering of death (cp. Rm 5:12-21). See "The Christian Worldview and the Early Chapters of Genesis," *p. 32.*

15:29 This is the only reference in the NT to the practice of baptism **for the dead.** Some have argued that the Corinthians were performing baptisms on behalf of deceased relatives and friends so they might go to heaven. While Paul could not condone such a practice, he does not condemn it here but simply continues to

make his point about the need for resurrection. Also possible is the interpretation that this is a reference to the spiritually dead, so that Paul is asking what is the point of baptism at all if the **dead are not raised?**

15:30-32 If there is no resurrection, Paul's life and ministry does not make sense—see 15:19. He refers to fighting **wild beasts in Ephesus**, which may allude to the imperial cult that included wild beast shows. The metaphor points to the opposition he was experiencing in Ephesus—where he was writing this letter (16:8).

15:35-44 A possible criticism of resurrection was that people did not want to live in the same corrupted **body** for eternity. Paul argues that the current body is a **seed** that must die before it grows to become something else. It will be **sown in corruption, raised in incorruption.** While there will be some continuity with the **natural body**, the resurrection **body** will be fundamentally different.

15:45-49 Again Paul draws on the comparison between **Adam** and Christ (see 15:21-22; Rm 5:12-21), this time to contrast the **natural** body with the **spiritual** body. Being like Adam makes us fit for life on **earth**, but being like Christ makes us fit for **heaven.**

15:50 The transformation of our bodies is essential in order to **inherit the kingdom of God**, since our earthly bodies of **flesh and blood** are incompatible with it.

15:51-53 Whether alive or dead when Christ returns, all will be **changed.** Our **corruptible**, **mortal** bodies will be made **incorruptible** and immortal. See "Responses to Transhumanism," *p. 615.*

15:54-55 Death, the last enemy (v. 26), is finally overcome by the fact of resurrection. Without resurrection from the dead, there is no victory over this universal enemy of humanity. See "Illness and a Christian Worldview," *p. 646.*

15:56-57 The sting of death refers to a stinger, like that of a bee. **Sin** is the stinger for death; once a person is stung by sin, death in inevitable (Rm 6:23; Gn 3:17-19). **The power of sin is the law**, since the law makes sin truly sinful (Rm 7:13). But **victory** is ours **through our Lord Jesus Christ.** Jesus's death paid the penalty for sin, so that its consequences (death) would be nullified. By conquering sin, Jesus has conquered death.

15:58 The resurrection is the ground of perseverance. Our **labor in the Lord is not in vain** no matter how it appears on earth. Promise of resurrection offers purpose and confidence to do **the Lord's work** (16:10).

COLLECTION FOR THE JERUSALEM CHURCH

16 Now about the collection † for the saints: Do the same as I instructed
the Galatian † churches. 2 On the first day of the week, † each of you
is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he is prospering, so that
no collections will need to be made when I come. † 3 When I arrive, I will send
with letters † those you recommend to carry your gift to Jerusalem. † 4 If it is
suitable for me to go as well, they will travel with me.

PAUL'S TRAVEL PLANS

5 I will come to you after I pass through Macedonia † — for I will be traveling
through Macedonia — 6 and perhaps I will remain with you or even spend the
winter, so that you may send me on my way wherever I go. 7 I don't want to see
you now just in passing, since I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord

allows. † 8 But I will stay in Ephesus † until Pentecost, † 9 because a wide door † for effective ministry has opened for me † — yet many oppose me. 10 If Timothy comes, see that he has nothing to fear while with you, because he is doing the Lord's work, † just as I am. 11 So let no one look down † on him. Send him on his way in peace so that he can come to me, because I am expecting him with the brothers.

12 Now about our brother Apollos: † I strongly urged him to come to you with the brothers, but he was not at all willing to come now. However, he will come when he has an opportunity.

FINAL EXHORTATION

13 Be alert, stand firm in the faith, † be courageous, † be strong. 14 Do everything in love. †

15 Brothers and sisters, you know the household of Stephanas: They are the firstfruits † of Achaia † and have devoted themselves to serving the saints. I urge you 16 also to submit to such people, and to everyone who works and labors with them. 17 I am delighted to have Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus present, because these men have made up for your absence. 18 For they have refreshed my spirit † and yours. Therefore recognize † such people.

CONCLUSION

19 The churches of Asia † send you greetings. † Aquila and Priscilla † send you greetings warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home. † 20 All the brothers and sisters send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss. †

21 This greeting is in my own hand † — Paul. 22 If anyone does not love the Lord, a curse be on him. Our Lord, come! † 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. † 24 My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

16:9 Lit *door has opened to me, great and effective* **16:13** Lit *act like men* **16:22** Aramaic *Marana tha* **16:1** Ac 11:30; 2Co 8:4 **16:1** Gl 1:2 **16:2** Mt 28:1; Mk 16:9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1,19; Ac 20:7 **16:2** 2Co 9:1-5 **16:3** 2Co 8:16-22 **16:3** Mt 23:37; Ac 8:1 **16:5** Ac 16:9 **16:7** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Jn 5:30; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **16:8** Eph 1:1 **16:8** Ex 34:22 **16:9** Col 4:3 **16:10** Jn 5:17; 2Jn 8 **16:11** Lk 18:9 **16:12** Ti 3:13 **16:13** Jd 3 **16:14** 1Co 13:1 **16:15** Lv 2:12 **16:15** Ac 18:12 **16:18** Ps 51:12 **16:18** 1Th 5:12 **16:19** Ac 6:9 **16:19-20** Rm 16:3-23; 2Co 13:12; Php 4:21-22; Col 4:10-15; 1Th 5:26; Phm 23-24 **16:19** Ac 18:2 **16:19** Rm 16:5 **16:20** 2Co 13:12 **16:21** 2Th 3:17 **16:23-24** 2Co 13:13; Gl 6:18; Eph 6:23-24; Php 4:23; Col 4:18; 1Th 5:28;

2Th 3:18

16:1 Paul was gathering a **collection**, a monetary gift, from the Gentile churches to give to the Jewish church in Jerusalem, which was suffering in poverty. In addition to alleviating suffering, Paul intended this gift to demonstrate the unity between Gentile and Jewish believers.

16:2 Gathering the donations **on the first day of the week** suggests the Corinthian church is already meeting on Sunday rather than on the Jewish Sabbath (see also Ac 20:7). See “Personal Finances,” *p. 758.*

16:6 Winter was a dangerous time for sea travel, so people typically traveled less in that season. Thus, Paul plans to spend his winter in one place, perhaps Corinth.

16:14 Doing **everything in love** is a good summary of much of the letter. Whatever the issue, the Corinthians need to act in love toward one another (e.g., 8:1).

16:20 A **kiss** was a common greeting in the ancient world and particularly in Judaism. Such a greeting is mentioned often in the NT, and by the second century a “kiss of peace” was a standard part of Christian liturgy.

2 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION

Of all Paul's letters, none is more personally revealing of his heart than 2 Corinthians. At the same time, it is also the most defensive of any NT letter. In it Paul mounts a strong argument ("apology" in the positive sense) for his authority and ministry. A number of important doctrines are taught in the epistle, yet its greatest value may be that it reveals the heart and spirit of one of the most effective ministers of all time. We are thus shown that genuine ministry—although it may have to be guarded from attack—is commissioned by Christ and empowered by the Spirit.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: All biblical scholars agree that Paul wrote this letter (1:1; 10:1). It contains more personal information about him than any other letter, and its Greek style is especially like that of Romans and 1 Corinthians. Proposed chronologies of Paul's life and ministry include a number of variations. Yet for 2 Corinthians, the consensus is that the letter was written about AD 56 (from Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey).

BACKGROUND: Although Bible students have often disagreed about the sequence of events that led to the writing of 2 Corinthians, the following scenario seems likely.

First Corinthians was not well received by the church at Corinth. Timothy had returned to Paul in Ephesus (1Co 4:17; 16:10). He reported that the church was still greatly troubled. This was partly caused by the arrival in Corinth of "false apostles" (2Co 11:13-15). These were perhaps Judaizers, asking Corinthian believers of Gentile heritage to live according to Mosaic regulations (Gl 2:14).

Paul visited Corinth a second time, the first time being his church-planting visit. He described this visit as sorrowful or "painful" (2:1; 13:2). Apparently the false apostles agitated the Corinthians to disown Paul. This second visit, not mentioned in Acts 19, occurred sometime during the apostle's long ministry in Ephesus.

Paul then wrote a (now lost) severe letter of stinging rebuke to Corinth from Ephesus (2:3-4,9). He sent this letter by Titus.

Titus came to Paul with the news that most of the Corinthian church had repented. They now accepted Paul's authority (7:5-7).

Paul decided to write the Corinthians one more time, expressing his relief but still pleading with an unrepentant minority. He promised to come to Corinth a third time (12:14; 13:1). This was fulfilled when Paul stayed in Corinth while on his way to Jerusalem with the financial collection from many churches (Ac 20:2-3).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Second Corinthians contributes to our understanding of ministry. On this subject, we learn four key truths: (1) God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and has given to us a ministry of reconciliation; (2) true ministry in Christ's name involves both suffering and victory; (3) serving Christ means ministering in his name to every need of the people; and (4) leaders in ministry need support and trust from those to whom they minister.

STRUCTURE

This letter follows the standard format found in the other letters bearing Paul's name. The salutation (1:1-2) and thanksgiving (1:3-11) at the beginning are followed by the main body of the letter (1:12–13:10). A final greeting (13:11-13) stands as the conclusion.

The body of 2 Corinthians is the most disjointed of Paul's letters. It is hard to miss Paul's change of tone from chapters 1–9 (which are warm and encouraging) to chapters 10–13 (which are harsh and threatening). Whatever one decides about the original unity of the letter, no doubt the major turning point of 2 Corinthians occurs at 10:1.

Largely because of the change in tone between the first part of the letter and the last part, some interpreters have proposed a different understanding of the original form of 2 Corinthians. They propose that two separate letters of Paul have been joined to make up what is now known as 2 Corinthians. What if, it is asked, chapters 10–13 were in fact the missing severe letter (2:4,9) written after 1 Corinthians but before 2 Corinthians 1–9? The major differences in tone between these chapters would be more readily accounted for if this were true.

However, it seems much more plausible that the letter originated in the form in which we now have it. All the ancient Christian writers knew the letter only in its present form, which is to say unified as one single letter. Surely within a single letter an author may address two different sets of issues (a majority concern and a minority concern) and use two different tones (encouraging and threatening).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God, the Father of Jesus Christ (1:3; 11:31) sovereignly sent Jesus as the great "indescribable gift" (9:15). Jesus is the source of all comfort for his people. By his death and resurrection, Jesus is Lord of the new creation (5:16-17). The life-giving Spirit has come as the "down payment," guaranteeing the believer's future (5:5). "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (3:17).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

There were two kinds of people in the Corinthian church: those who submitted to genuine apostolic authority and those who did not. Paul sets forth a defense of his apostolic authority in light of the super-apostles' criticisms of him (chaps. 10–11). This book contains the most extensive teaching in Scripture about the status of redeemed humans between the death of the body and the resurrection. This is referred to as the intermediate state, when people are "with the Lord" in conscious bliss while waiting for the consummation (5:1-8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This letter contains Paul's most extensive discussion on the contrast between the "old covenant" and the "new covenant" (chap. 3). Although salvation was real in the Mosaic era, it came with fading glory, for the old covenant was meant to be temporary. The new covenant arrived with Jesus Christ, and its glory can never be surpassed. The benefit to the believer in the new covenant era is incomparable (3:18).

2 CORINTHIANS TIMELINE

AD 33–40

Jesus's trials, death, resurrection, and ascension **NISAN 14–16** or **April 3–5, 33**

Pentecost **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Paul returns to his native Tarsus. **SUMMER 37–40**

Barnabas travels from Antioch of Syria to find Paul. **Summer 40**

AD 45–50

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make the first missionary journey. **47–49**

Paul and Silas begin second missionary journey by land through Cilicia, Galatia, and Asia Minor to Troas. **49–50**

Paul, Silas, and Timothy sail from Troas to Macedonia and minister in the Macedonian cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. **50**

Paul preaches on Mars Hill in Athens. **50**

Paul arrives in Corinth and spends eighteen months planting the church. **50–51**

AD 50–56

Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, who had come to Corinth when Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome six years earlier. **51**

Paul writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians from Corinth. **51**

Paul's hearing before Corinth's proconsul, Gallio, brother of the Roman philosopher Seneca **51**

Paul begins his third missionary journey by land through Asia Minor to Ephesus. **53**

Paul spends three years in Ephesus. **54–56**

AD 56–70

Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus. **56**

Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Ephesus. **56**

Paul spends the winter in Corinth where he writes the letter to Romans. **57**

Paul returns to Jerusalem with funds he had collected from Gentile churches to support the poor in the Jerusalem church **57**

Shortly before his death, Emperor Nero brings six thousand slaves from Judea to build a canal across the Isthmus of Corinth. Following Nero's death the project is abandoned. **67**

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, † and Timothy † our † brother: To the church of God at Corinth, † with all the saints who are throughout Achaia. †

2 Grace to you and peace † from God our Father † and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE GOD OF COMFORT

3 Blessed be † the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies † and the God of all comfort. † 4 He comforts us in all our affliction, † so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any kind of affliction, through the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5 For just as the sufferings † of Christ † overflow to us, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. † 6 If we are afflicted, † it is for your comfort and salvation. If we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings that we suffer. † 7 And our hope † for you is firm, because we know that as you share † in the sufferings, so you will also share in the comfort.

8 We don't want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction that took place in Asia. † We were completely overwhelmed — beyond our strength † — so that we even despaired † of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death, so that we would not trust in ourselves but in God † who raises † the dead. 10 He has delivered † us from such a terrible death, † and he will deliver us. We have put our hope in him that he will deliver us again 11 while you join in helping us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our † behalf for the gift that came to us through the prayers of many.

A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

12 Indeed, this is our boast: The testimony † of our conscience † is that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with godly sincerity and purity, not by human wisdom † but by God's grace. † 13 For we are writing nothing to you other than what you can read and also understand. I hope you will understand completely — 14 just as you have partially understood us — that we are your reason for pride, † just as you also are ours † in the day of our † Lord Jesus. †

A VISIT POSTPONED

15 Because of this confidence, I planned to come to you first, † so that you could have a second benefit, † 16 and to visit you on my way to Macedonia, † and then come to you again from Macedonia and be helped by you † on my

journey † to Judea. † 17 Now when I planned this, was I of two minds? Or what I plan, do I plan in a purely human † † way so that I say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? 18 As God is faithful, † our message to you is not “Yes and no.” 19 For the Son of God, † Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you — Silvanus, † † Timothy, and I — did not become “Yes and no.” On the contrary, in him it is always “Yes.” † 20 For every one of God’s promises † is “Yes” in him. Therefore, through him we also say “Amen” † to the glory of God. † 21 Now it is God who strengthens us together with you in Christ, and who has anointed † us. 22 He has also put his seal on us and given us the Spirit in our hearts † as a down payment. †

23 I call on God as a witness, † on my life, that it was to spare you that I did not come to Corinth. † 24 I do not mean that we lord it over your faith, but we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in your † faith.

1:1 Lit *the* **1:4** Or *trouble*, or *tribulation*, or *trials*, or *oppression* **1:11** Other mss read *your* **1:14** Other mss omit *our* **1:15** Other mss read *a second joy* **1:17** Or *a worldly*, or *a fleshly*, or *a selfish* **1:19** Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16

1:1 1Co 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2Tm 1:1 **1:1** 1Th 3:2; 1Tm 1:2 **1:1** 1Co 1:2 **1:1** Ac 18:12; Php 1:1 **1:2** Lk 12:51; Rm 1:7; 2Tm 1:2; 3Jn 14 **1:2** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42; Eph 5:20 **1:3** Mk 14:61 **1:3** Heb 10:28 **1:3** Lk 2:25 **1:5** Gl 5:24; Php 3:10 **1:5** Rm 8:17; 2Co 4:10; Gl 6:17; Php 3:10; Col 1:24 **1:5** Php 1:29 **1:6** Heb 11:37 **1:6** Php 1:29 **1:7** 1Th 1:3 **1:7** Phm 17 **1:8** Ac 6:9 **1:8** Ac 8:10; 1Co 15:24; Eph 1:21; 1Pt 3:22 **1:8** 2Co 4:8 **1:9** Ps 25:2; 26:1; Jr 17:5-7; Lk 18:9 **1:9** Mk 9:27; Jn 2:19 **1:10** Mt 27:43 **1:10** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **1:12** 1Tm 2:6 **1:12** Heb 13:18 **1:12** Pr 3:19; 1Co 1:21 **1:12** Ac 23:1; 2Co 4:2; 5:12; 1Th 2:10 **1:14** Rm 2:17; Gl 6:4 **1:14** 2Co 9:3; Php 2:16; 4:1; 1Th 2:19-20 **1:14** Php 1:6 **1:15** Ac 18:1-18; 1Co 4:19 **1:16** Ac 16:9 **1:16** Ac 20:38 **1:16** Ac 19:21; 1Co 16:5-7 **1:16** Lk 1:5 **1:17** Php 3:3; Col 3:22 **1:18** Nm 23:19 **1:19** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **1:19** 1Th 1:1 **1:19** Heb 13:8 **1:20** Gn 12:7 **1:20** Ps 72:19; Rv 22:21 **1:20** Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **1:21** Lk 4:18; 1Jn 2:20 **1:22** Jms 4:5 **1:22** Eph 1:14 **1:23** Rm 1:9; Php 1:8; Heb 12:1 **1:23** 1Co 4:21; 2Co 13:2,10 **1:24** Pr 24:16

1:3-5 See Issues in Medical Ethics,” *p. 1507;* “Illness and a Christian Worldview,” *p. 646.*

1:7 Despite those who claim that faithful living always leads to prosperity in this life, Paul expects that following Christ will include suffering. See “Christians and Suffering,” *p. 580.*

1:8 We do not know what specific **affliction** Paul references here. Much of Paul’s ministry occurred in the province of **Asia**, located in modern Turkey.

1:12 Paul’s ministry is powered **by God’s grace**, **not by human wisdom** (1Co 1:18); it is characterized by **sincerity and purity.**

1:15-18 Paul had to change his plans concerning a return trip to Corinth, and some of the Corinthian believers had apparently been offended. Paul defends his behavior, stressing that the change in plans was not due to fickleness.

1:19-20 Paul's decisiveness is theologically grounded in the assurance of **God's promises.** What God has promised is **"yes"** in Christ, showing God to be trustworthy. Paul, likewise, seeks to keep his word.

2 In fact, I made up my mind about this: I would not come to you on another painful visit. † 2 For if I cause you pain, then who will cheer me other than the one being hurt by me? † 3 I wrote this very thing so that when I came I wouldn't have pain from those who ought to give me joy, because I am confident † about all of you that my joy will also be yours. 4 For I wrote to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart — not to cause you pain, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.

A SINNER FORGIVEN

5 If anyone has caused pain, he has caused pain not so much to me but to some degree — not to exaggerate † — to all of you. 6 This punishment by the majority is sufficient for that person. 7 As a result, you should instead forgive † and comfort him. Otherwise, he may be overwhelmed by excessive grief. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him. 9 I wrote for this purpose: to test your character † to see if you are obedient † in everything. 10 Anyone you forgive, I do too. For what I have forgiven — if I have forgiven anything — it is for your benefit in the presence of Christ, 11 so that we may not be taken advantage † of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes.

A TRIP TO MACEDONIA

12 When I came to Troas † to preach the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord opened a door † for me, 13 I had no rest † in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. † Instead, I said good-bye to them and left for Macedonia. †

A MINISTRY OF LIFE OR DEATH

14 But thanks be to God, † who always leads us in Christ's triumphal procession and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of him in every place. † 15 For to God we are the fragrance † of Christ among those who are being saved † and among those who are perishing. † 16 To some we are an aroma of death † leading to death, but to others, an aroma of life † leading to life. Who is adequate for these things? 17 For we do not market the word of God † for profit

like so many. † On the contrary, we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God.

2:1 Lit *not again in sorrow to come to you* **2:2** Lit *the one pained* **2:17** Other mss read *like the rest*
2:3 Php 1:25 **2:5** 2Th 3:8 **2:7** Mt 6:12 **2:9** Rm 5:4 **2:9** Php 2:8 **2:11** 2Co 12:17 **2:12** Ac 16:8 **2:12** Col 4:3 **2:13** 2Th 1:7 **2:13** Ti 1:4 **2:13** Ac 16:9 **2:14** 1Co 15:57 **2:14** Jn 17:3; 1Jn 4:8 **2:15** Eph 5:2; Php 4:18 **2:15** Mt 9:22; Ac 16:30; Eph 2:8 **2:15** Jn 6:27 **2:16** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **2:16** 1Jn 5:12 **2:17** Mt 12:36; Mk 4:14; Lk 6:47; 8:21; Jn 1:1; 2:22; 18:32; Ac 17:11; 2Tm 2:15; Heb 4:12

2:1-4 Since the writing of 1 Corinthians, the situation in the church seems to have worsened. Paul made another, **painful**, visit (see also 2:5). He then, **with many tears**, wrote them another letter, which has not been preserved.

2:5-10 The majority of the church punished the offender—most likely someone who made Paul's intervening visit "painful." But the goal of church discipline is always restoration. Forgiveness is always extended when there is genuine repentance.

2:11 The Bible is clear that **Satan** is real and personal and that he looks for ways to disrupt God's people.

2:14-17 Paul alluded to Rome's **triumphal procession**—one of the most spectacular celebrations in the ancient world. A conquering general would march through Rome displaying captives and plunder as evidence of his victories. Paul pictures himself, and those laboring with him, as ones captured by the victorious Christ. Incense was a common element of such events, and some of the conquered would be executed while others would be allowed to live. Paul compares gospel preaching to this **aroma** as it goes out proclaiming **death** to some (those who refuse to believe) and **life** to others (those who repent and believe).

LIVING LETTERS

3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. † 3 You show that you are Christ's letter, † delivered † by us, not written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God † — not on tablets of stone † but on tablets of human hearts. † †

PAUL'S COMPETENCE

4 Such is the confidence we have through Christ before God. 5 It is not that we are competent in † ourselves to claim anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God. † 6 He has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, † not of the letter, † but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

NEW COVENANT MINISTRY

7 Now if the ministry that brought death, chiseled in letters on stones, came with glory, † so that the Israelites were not able to gaze steadily at Moses's face because of its glory, which was set aside, 8 how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry that brought condemnation had glory, the ministry that brings righteousness overflows with even more glory. 10 In fact, what had been glorious is not glorious now by comparison because of the glory that surpasses it. 11 For if what was set aside † was glorious, what endures will be even more glorious.

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, † we act with great boldness. 13 We are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face † to prevent the Israelites from gazing steadily until the end † of the glory of what was being set aside, 14 but their minds were hardened. † For to this day, at the reading of the old covenant, † the same veil remains; it is not lifted, because it is set aside only in Christ. † 15 Yet still today, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts, 16 but whenever a person turns † to the Lord, the veil is removed. † 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at † † the glory of the Lord † and are being transformed † into the same image † from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. †

3:3 Lit *ministered to* **3:3** Lit *fleshly hearts* **3:5** Lit *from* **3:13** Or *at the outcome* **3:18** Or *are reflecting* **3:18** Or *from the Spirit of the Lord*, or *from the Lord, the Spirit*

3:2 1Co 9:2 **3:3** Phm 13 **3:3** Dt 5:26 **3:3** Ex 24:12 **3:3** Pr 3:3; 7:3; Jr 17:1; 31:33; Ezk 11:19; 36:26; Heb 8:10 **3:5** 1Co 15:10 **3:6** Lk 22:20; Heb 7:22 **3:6** Rm 7:6 **3:7** Ex 34:29-35; Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **3:11** Heb 2:14 **3:12** 1Th 1:3 **3:13** Ex 34:33 **3:14** Mk 8:17; Heb 3:13 **3:14** Ac 13:15; 15:21; Heb 7:22 **3:14** Rm 16:7; 1Pt 5:14 **3:16** 1Pt 2:25 **3:16** Ex 34:34 **3:18** 1Co 13:12 **3:18** Jn 17:24; 2Co 1:20; 4:4-6; 1Tm 1:11,17 **3:18** Mk 9:2 **3:18** Gn 1:27; 1Jn 3:2

3:1-3 Letters of recommendation played an important role in the ancient world, enabling people to receive housing and aid from others as they travelled, since a mutual friend vouched for them. Paul says the commendation, or proof of his ministry, is simply the Corinthian believers—the evidence of God at work in their lives. Unlike many traveling teachers of the time, Paul is not interested in their goods or their praise, but simply in their progress in Christ.

3:6 New covenant ministry is characterized by **the Spirit**, not by **the letter**, which refers to the law of Moses (3:7). **The letter kills**, because the law condemns all people of sin (Rm 7:13), while **the Spirit gives life.** The new covenant is therefore life-giving, while the old sentences people to death.

3:7-11 Paul draws on Exodus 34:29-32 to contrast the old and new covenants. When Moses descended

from Mount Sinai, with the Ten Commandments **chiseled in letters on stones**, his face shone with the reflected **glory** of God. The glory of the old covenant, however, has been surpassed by that of the new.

3:7 Paul calls the old covenant **the ministry that brought death** because, as he said in the previous verse, the law cannot bring life. The law of Moses remains useful, however, since it convicts people of sin and points to the forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

3:12-16 Moses used a **veil** to conceal the fading **glory** of his face (Ex 34:33-35). Paul uses this veil imagery to suggest that the glory of God is hidden to unbelieving Jews in his day; **it is set aside only in Christ.**

3:18 The glory of the Lord is not hidden to those in Christ. Being witnesses to the glory of God causes believers to be **transformed** in the likeness of God's glory, by the power of **the Spirit.** See also "*Imago Dei* and the Distinctiveness of Humans," *p. 27.*

THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry because we were shown mercy, † we do not give up. † 2 Instead, we have renounced secret and shameful things, not acting † deceitfully or distorting the word of God, † but commending ourselves before God to everyone's conscience by an open display of the truth. † 3 But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case, the god of this age † has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, † † who is the image of God. † 5 For we are not proclaiming ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord, † and ourselves as your servants for Jesus's sake. 6 For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," † has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge † of God's glory † in the face of Jesus Christ.

TREASURE IN CLAY JARS

7 Now we have this treasure in clay jars, so that this extraordinary power † may be from God and not from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; we are perplexed but not in despair; 9 we are persecuted but not abandoned; we are struck down but not destroyed. 10 We always carry the death of Jesus † in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be displayed in our body. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death † for Jesus's sake, so that Jesus's life may also be displayed in our mortal flesh. 12 So then, death is at work in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith in keeping with what is written, **I believed, therefore I spoke,** † † we also believe, and

therefore speak. 14 For we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus † and present us with you. 15 Indeed, everything is for your benefit so that, as grace extends through more and more people, it may cause thanksgiving † to increase to the glory of God.

16 Therefore we do not give up. † Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person † is being renewed day by day. 17 For our momentary light affliction † is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. † 18 So we do not focus on what is seen, † but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

4:4 Or *the gospel of the glorious Christ*, or *the glorious gospel of Christ*
4:1 Mt 5:7; Mk 5:19; Lk 1:50 **4:1** 2Th 3:13 **4:2** 2Jn 6 **4:2** 2Co 2:17; 2Tm 2:15; Heb 4:12 **4:2** 2Co 5:11-12; 6:7; 7:14 **4:4** Lk 16:8 **4:4** Mk 10:37 **4:4** Gn 1:27 **4:5** Php 2:11 **4:6** Gn 1:3; Mt 6:23 **4:6** Php 3:8; 1Jn 4:8 **4:6** Mk 10:37; Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **4:7** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **4:10** Lk 9:23; Rm 5:6-8; 6:5-8; 8:34-36; Gl 6:17 **4:11** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **4:13** Ps 116:10 LXX **4:13** Ps 116:10 LXX **4:14** 1Th 4:14 **4:15** 2Co 9:11 **4:16** 2Th 3:13 **4:16** Rm 7:22 **4:17** Gl 6:2 **4:17** Lk 24:26; 1Pt 5:1,4 **4:18** Rm 8:24

4:2 Sophists and philosophers were regularly accused of employing trickery and deceit. Paul distinguishes himself from such traveling teachers.

4:4-6 The **god of this age** is Satan, the one who seeks to exalt himself as god. He blinds **the minds of the unbelievers**, but **God** is able to cause light to shine in the **darkness,** just as he did at creation, so that people will see the truth of the gospel. See also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611;* "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

4:7 Clay jars were common and quite fragile. This imagery provides a clear contrast between the frailty of the human body and the enduring power of the gospel. We do not make the gospel glorious. Rather, human weakness provides the setting in which the glory of the gospel can be seen.

4:14 The promise of the resurrection animates and enables perseverance through suffering and affliction.

4:16-17 The human body is subjected to decay, but the inner person is renewed by God's Spirit daily. The **affliction** suffered in the body is **momentary** because this body is temporary, but resurrection brings **eternal . . . glory.** See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580.*

OUR FUTURE AFTER DEATH

5 For we know that if our earthly tent we live in † is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal dwelling in the heavens, † not made with hands. † 2 Indeed, we groan in this tent, desiring † to put on our heavenly dwelling, 3 since, when we have taken it off, † we will not be found naked. † 4 Indeed, we groan while we are in this tent, burdened as we are,

because we do not want to be unclothed but clothed, so that mortality † may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now the one who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a down payment.

6 So we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, † not by sight. † 8 In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. † 9 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be pleasing † to him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat † of Christ, † so that each may be repaid † for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

11 Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, † we try to persuade people. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your consciences. 12 We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to be proud of us, so that you may have a reply for those who take pride in outward appearance rather than in the heart. 13 For if we are out of our mind, † it is for God; if we are in our right mind, † it is for you. 14 For the love of Christ compels us, since we have reached this conclusion: If one died for all, † then all died. 15 And he died for all † so that those who live should no longer live for themselves, † but for the one † who died for them and was raised.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

16 From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. † Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, † yet now we no longer know him in this way. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; † the old has passed away, and see, † the new has † come! †

18 Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. † 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world † to himself, † not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors † for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: † "Be reconciled to God." 21 He made

the one who did not know sin † to be sin † for us, † so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

5:3 Other mss read *when we have put on* **5:16** Lit *anyone according to the flesh* **5:16** Lit *Christ according to the flesh* **5:17** Other mss read *look, all new things have* **5:21** Or *be a sin offering*

5:1 2Pt 1:13 **5:1** Eph 6:9; Php 2:10 **5:1** Col 2:11 **5:2** 1Pt 2:2 **5:3** Mt 25:36; Lk 10:30 **5:4** Rm 7:24; 8:23; 1Co 15:26 **5:7** Mt 8:10; Ac 3:16; Rm 1:8; 1Co 2:5; Gl 2:16; 1Tm 1:2; Heb 4:2 **5:7** Lk 3:22 **5:8** Php 1:23 **5:9** Heb 13:21 **5:10** Jn 5:22-30 **5:10** Mt 25:31-46; Php 1:6; Heb 10:31 **5:10** Mt 16:27 **5:11** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; 1Pt 1:17; Rv 14:7 **5:13** Ac 10:45 **5:13** 1Pt 4:7 **5:14** Jn 11:51; 2Co 4:10 **5:15** Lk 20:38; Heb 2:9 **5:15** Rm 14:7 **5:15** Lk 20:38 **5:17** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **5:17** Rm 8:24 **5:17** Is 43:19; 65:17; Rm 6:4; Eph 4:24; Rv 21:5 **5:18** Rm 5:11 **5:19** 2Pt 2:20 **5:19** Ti 2:11 **5:20** Eph 6:20 **5:20** 2Co 12:10; Php 1:29 **5:21** 1Jn 3:5 **5:21** Rm 8:3; Gl 3:13; 1Pt 2:24

5:1-5 The **earthly tent** refers to our earthly bodies. Paul is not denigrating our bodies but longing for the resurrected state, the **eternal dwelling**.

5:4 Greek philosophy looked down on the physical body, regarding it a prison of the soul—in death, the soul is set free from the shackles of the body. But in keeping with Hebrew thought, Paul regards the body as an essential element of human life—even after death, which is why Jews expected a bodily resurrection of the dead. So, Paul does not want **to be unclothed but clothed**—he does not want to be left without a body, but longs for the resurrection.

5:10 Though there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus (Rm 8:1), **all** will **appear before the judgment seat of Christ.** Even believers will face consequences for things **done in the body.** When in Corinth, Paul faced the Roman governor Gallio, who sat on Corinth's impressive judgment seat (Gk *bema*). But Paul sees the judgment seat of Christ as being of far greater significance. He implies that Christ is the true Judge of all, not whichever mere mortal has temporary authority in the earthly town of Corinth.

5:13 The word translated **out of our mind** was used to refer to an orator who failed to persuade because of unpolished delivery. The Corinthians were unimpressed by Paul's inattention to popular, flashy rhetoric, but Paul is concerned for substance over style.

5:14-15 The death and resurrection of Jesus motivates Paul's ministry. His death spells the spiritual death of **all** who belong to him, while his resurrection achieves their spiritual life. So, **those who live should no longer live for themselves**, but for Christ **who died for them and was raised.**

5:16 Unlike the Corinthians, who judge Paul and others according to worldly standards of impressiveness, status, and glory, Paul's group does **not know anyone from a worldly perspective.** Worldly appearance is irrelevant; instead, Paul is concerned for the spiritual life and destiny of each individual. In the same way, it is possible to misjudge **Christ** by his earthly appearance.

5:19 Christ may not have seemed impressive from a worldly perspective, but it was **in Christ** that God reconciled **the world to himself.** See "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," *p. 1271*.

5:20 Paul employs the imagery of Greco-Roman diplomacy to explain that he and his coworkers are **ambassadors for Christ.** An ambassadorial position was a high honor in Roman society, and Corinth was a prestigious city, so ambassador of Corinth was an elite position. But being an ambassador of Christ is a far greater honor and responsibility. The message Paul presents **on Christ's behalf** is **"Be reconciled to God."**

5:21 The ground for reconciliation with God (cp. 5:20) is the great exchange in which the sinless Christ became **sin for us, so that in him** believers **become the righteousness of God.** Jesus, even though he was righteous, suffered the penalty for sin so that believers would share in his righteousness following his vindication in resurrection (cp. Rm 4:25).

6 Working together with him, we also appeal to you, “Don’t receive the grace of God in vain.” 2 For he says:

At an acceptable time I listened to you, and in the day of salvation I helped you. † †

See, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation! †

THE CHARACTER OF PAUL’S MINISTRY

3 We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed. 4 Instead, as God’s ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardships, by difficulties, 5 by beatings, by imprisonments, † by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, 6 by purity, † by knowledge, † by patience, † by kindness, † by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, † 7 by the word of truth, † † by the power of God; † through weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, 8 through glory † and dishonor, through slander and good report; regarded as deceivers, yet true; 9 as unknown, yet recognized; as dying, yet see — we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed; 10 as grieving, yet always rejoicing; † as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything. 11 We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide. 12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13 I speak as to my children; as a proper response, open your heart to us.

SEPARATION TO GOD

14 Don’t become partners with those who do not believe. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? † Or what fellowship does light † have with darkness? † 15 What agreement does Christ have with Belial? † Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement does the temple of God have with idols? † For we † are the temple of the living God, as God said:

I will dwell †
and walk among them, and I will be their God, †
and they will be my people. † †

17 Therefore, **come out from among them** and **be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you.** † †
18 And **I will be a Father** † to you, **and** you will be **sons** † and daughters **to me, says the Lord Almighty.** † †

6:7 Or *by truthful speech* **6:15** Or *Beliar* **6:16** Other mss read *you*
6:2 Is 49:8 **6:2** Is 49:8 **6:2** Is 49:8; 55:6; Lk 4:19; Heb 3:13 **6:5** Jdg 16:21 **6:6** 2Co 11:3 **6:6** Php 3:8; 1Jn 4:8 **6:6** Ex 34:6; 2Tm 3:10 **6:6** Rm 2:4; 3:12; 11:22; Gl 5:22; Eph 2:7; Col 3:12; Ti 3:4 **6:6** 1Co 13:1 **6:7** 2Th 2:10 **6:7** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **6:8** 1Pt 5:4 **6:10** Mt 5:4; Jn 16:22; 2Co 7:4; Php 1:4,25; 2:17-18; 3:1; 4:1,4; Col 1:24; 1Th 1:6; 1Pt 1:6-8 **6:14** Mt 13:41 **6:14** Jn 12:46 **6:14** Mt 6:23 **6:16** Gn 31:19; 1Co 8:4 **6:16** Jms 4:5 **6:16** Heb 3:6 **6:16** Lv 26:12; Jr 31:33; 32:38; Ezk 37:26 **6:16** Lv 26:12 **6:17** Is 52:11 **6:17** Is 52:11 **6:18** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42; Eph 5:20 **6:18** Mt 5:9 **6:18** 2Sm 7:14; Is 43:6; 49:22; 60:4; Hs 1:10 **6:18** 2Sm 7:14; Rv 1:8

6:3-10 Paul's hardship catalog is similar in certain respects to Stoic and Cynic discourse, in which teachers sought to exemplify the virtues of fortitude, self-sufficiency, and indifference to external circumstances. But in contrast to these virtues, Paul exemplifies weakness, dependence on God, and suffering through afflictions. The contrast with Stoicism demonstrates a lack of confidence in human "clay jars" in preference for God's power (4:7).

6:14–7:1 The instruction to not **become partners with those who do not believe** most likely refers to engaging in pagan worship. This becomes clear through the series of contrasts between **righteousness and lawlessness**, **light** and **darkness**, **Christ** and **Belial** (Satan), the **believer** and **unbeliever**, **the temple of God** and **idols.** Engagement with pagan religious practices was a serious issue for the Corinthians and is addressed at length in 1 Corinthians 8–10. Rather than become defiled by participation in pagan religion, believers are to cleanse **ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit**.

7 So then, dear friends, since we have these promises, † let us cleanse ourselves from every impurity of the flesh and spirit, † bringing holiness to completion † in the fear of God. †

JOY AND REPENTANCE

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, corrupted † no one, taken advantage of no one. 3 I don't say this to condemn you, since I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I am very frank with you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy in all our afflictions.
5 In fact, when we came into Macedonia, † we † had no rest. Instead, we were troubled in every way: conflicts † on the outside, fears † within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, † comforted us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his arrival but also by the comfort he received from you. He told us

about your deep longing, your sorrow, and your zeal † for me, so that I rejoiced even more. 8 For even if I grieved you with my letter, † I don't regret it. And if I regretted it — since I saw that the letter grieved you, yet only for a while — 9 I now rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. † 11 For consider how much diligence this very thing — this grieving as God wills — has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure † in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did wrong, or because of the one who was wronged, but in order that your devotion to us might be made plain to you in the sight of God. 13 For this reason we have been comforted.

In addition to our own comfort, we rejoiced even more over the joy Titus † had, because his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 14 For if I have made any boast to him about you, I have not been disappointed; but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, † so our boasting to Titus has also turned out to be the truth. 15 And his affection toward you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that I have complete confidence in you.

7:1 Or *spirit, perfecting holiness* **7:5** Lit *our flesh*
7:1 Gn 12:7 **7:1** Ps 51:12 **7:1** Ps 147:11; Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **7:2** 1Co 3:17; 15:33; 2Co 11:3; Eph 4:22; 2Pt 2:12; Jd 10; Rv 19:2 **7:5** Ac 16:9 **7:5** Jms 4:1; Ti 3:9 **7:5** Jn 7:13; Ac 27:29 **7:6** Mt 11:29 **7:7** Nm 25:13 **7:8** 2Co 2:2,4 **7:10** Mt 10:21; Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **7:11** Php 4:8 **7:13** Ti 1:4 **7:14** Ps 119:142; Jn 8:14; 14:6; 2Co 11:10; 1Jn 5:20; 3Jn 3

7:8-9 The **letter** mentioned here is the tearful "letter" of 2:1-4. The purpose of helpful rebuke is **repentance** and growth. **Grief** is not the goal, but is often the path that leads to repentance.

APPEAL TO COMPLETE THE COLLECTION

8 We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that was given to the churches † of Macedonia: † 2 During a severe trial brought about by affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. † 3 I can testify that, according to their ability and even beyond their ability, of their own accord,

4 they begged us earnestly for the privilege of sharing † in the ministry to the saints, 5 and not just as we had hoped. Instead, they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us by God's will. † 6 So we urged Titus that just as he had begun, so he should also complete among you this act of grace.

7 Now as you excel in everything — in faith, speech, knowledge, † and in all diligence, and in your love for us † — excel also in this act of grace. 8 I am not saying this as a command. Rather, by means of the diligence of others, I am testing the genuineness of your love. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though he was rich, † for your sake he became poor, † so that by his poverty you might become rich. 10 And in this matter I am giving advice because it is profitable for you, who began last year not only to do something but also to want to do it. † 11 Now also finish the task, so that just as there was an eager desire, there may also be a completion, according to what you have. 12 For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. † 13 It is not that there should be relief for others and hardship for you, but it is a question of equality. † 14 At the present time your surplus is available for their need, so that their abundance may in turn meet your need, in order that there may be equality. 15 As it is written: **The person who had much did not have too much, and the person who had little did not have too little.** † †

ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLLECTION

16 Thanks be to God, who put the same concern for you into the heart of Titus. 17 For he welcomed our appeal and, being very diligent, went out to you by his own choice. 18 We have sent with him the brother † who is praised among all the churches for his gospel ministry. † 19 And not only that, but he was also appointed by the churches to accompany us with this gracious gift that we are administering for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20 We are taking this precaution so that no one will criticize us about this large sum that we are administering. 21 Indeed, we are giving careful thought † to do what is right, † not only before the Lord but also before people. 22 We have also sent with them our brother. We have often tested him in many circumstances and found him to be diligent — and now even more diligent

because of his great confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is my partner † and coworker † for you; as for our brothers, they are the messengers † of the churches, the glory of Christ. † 24 Therefore, show them proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting † about you.

8:7 Other mss read *in our love for you* **8:13** Lit *but from equality* **8:18** Lit *churches, in the gospel*
8:1 Mt 16:18; 1Co 14:4; Rv 1:4 **8:1** Ac 16:9 **8:2** Php 4:10 **8:4** Ac 24:17; Rm 15:26,31; 2Co 8:19-20; 9:1,12-13 **8:5** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Jn 5:30; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9; 1Jn 2:17 **8:7** Php 3:8; 1Jn 4:8 **8:9** Mt 20:28; 2Co 6:10; Php 2:6-7 **8:9** Php 2:7 **8:10** 1Co 16:1-4; 2Co 9:1-2 **8:12** Lk 21:3 **8:15** Ex 16:18 **8:15** Ex 16:18 **8:18** 2Co 12:18 **8:21** 1Tm 5:8 **8:21** 1Pt 2:12 **8:23** Phm 17 **8:23** 1Co 3:9 **8:23** Jn 13:16 **8:23** Mk 10:37 **8:24** 2Co 12:5; Jms 4:16

8:1-5 A wonderful portrait of Christian generosity is depicted here. The Macedonians' giving is not forced or manipulated but overflows from **extreme poverty**, as people in **affliction** gave **beyond their ability**, having begged for **the privilege of sharing in the ministry to the saints.** This confounds worldly expectation, testifying to Christian love and the gospel of Christ.

8:9 As typical for Paul, his exhortations are grounded in the grace of God in Christ. Christ's self-giving is the model for giving, and Paul translates the atonement into economic categories for the sake of illustration: **Christ . . . became poor** to make the Corinthians **rich.**

8:12 Eagerness to give is more important than how much is given. **The gift is acceptable** in measure with one's wealth, not his lack. This idea finds resonance in Jesus's commendation of the widow who gave "out of her poverty" (Mk 12:41-44). Jewish thought reflected the same sentiment (*Tobit* 4:8: "Measure your alms by what you have"), as did some Greek thinkers (Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 7.93: "No gift is inadequate which is prompted by affection").

8:19-22 Paul took extra precautions to make sure people knew that all the gathered money was handled appropriately, and would be faithfully delivered to the Jerusalem church as promised. Integrity in ministry, especially in money matters, requires doing **what is right, not only before the Lord but . . . before people.** See also "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p. 1501*.

MOTIVATIONS FOR GIVING

9 Now concerning the ministry to the saints, it is unnecessary for me to write to you. 2 For I know your eagerness, and I boast about you to the Macedonians: † "Achaia † has been ready since last year," and your zeal † has stirred up most of them. † 3 But I am sending the brothers so that our boasting about you in this matter would not prove empty, and so that you would be ready just as I said. 4 Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we, not to mention you, would be put to shame in that situation. † 5 Therefore I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and arrange in advance the generous gift † you promised, so that it will be ready as a gift and not as an extortion. †

6 The point is this: † The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly,
and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each person
should do as he has decided in his heart — not reluctantly or out of compulsion,
since God loves † a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able † to make every grace
overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you
may excel in every good work. 9 As it is written:

He distributed freely; †

he gave to the poor; his righteousness endures forever. † †

10 Now the one who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will also
provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. †
11 You will be enriched † in every way for all generosity, which produces
thanksgiving to God through us. 12 For the ministry of this service † is not only
supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many expressions of
thanks to God. 13 Because of the proof provided by this ministry, they will
glorify God for your obedient confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your
generosity † in sharing with them and with everyone. 14 And as they pray on
your behalf, they will have deep affection for you because of the surpassing
grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

9:4 Or *in this confidence* **9:6** Lit *And this*
9:2 Ac 16:9 **9:2** Ac 18:12 **9:2** Nm 25:13 **9:2** 2Co 8:18; 12:18 **9:5** Ac 11:30 **9:5** Eph 5:3 **9:7** Lk 6:35; Jn 3:16; 12:43; 2Th 2:13; Rv 12:11 **9:8** Eph 3:20 **9:9** Jn 16:32 **9:9** Ps 112:9 **9:9** Ps 112:9; 1Jn 2:17 **9:10** Is 55:10-11; Hs 10:12 **9:11** 1Co 1:5; 2Co 6:10 **9:12** Heb 8:6 **9:13** Php 4:10

9:1 The ministry to the saints is the offering being gathered for the impoverished Christians in Jerusalem (8:4).

9:7-8 God loves a cheerful giver because God gives out of love and grace, not obligation. Generosity should flow out of hearts shaped after God's own heart. God's generosity means that the Corinthians will have **everything** they **need.**

9:11 The giver **will be enriched** in their **generosity**, as Jesus taught: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Ac 20:35).

PAUL'S APOSTOLIC AUTHORITY

10 Now I Paul, myself, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of
Christ — I who am humble among you in person but bold toward you
when absent. 2 I beg you that when I am present I will not need to be
bold with the confidence by which I plan to challenge certain people who think

we are behaving according to the flesh. † 3 For although we live in the flesh, we
do not wage war according to the flesh, 4 since the weapons of our warfare †
are not of the flesh, but are powerful † through God for the demolition of
strongholds. We demolish arguments 5 and every proud thing that is raised up
against the knowledge † of God, and we take every thought captive to obey
Christ. 6 And we are ready to punish any disobedience, once your obedience is
complete.
7 Look at what is obvious. † If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, †
let him remind himself of this: Just as he belongs to Christ, so do we. 8 For if I
boast a little too much about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you
up † and not for tearing you down, I will not be put to shame. 9 I don't want to
seem as though I am trying to terrify you with my letters. 10 For it is said, "His
letters are weighty and powerful, but his physical presence is weak and his
public speaking amounts to nothing." 11 Let such a person consider this: What
we are in our letters, when we are absent, we will also be in our actions when we
are present.
12 For we don't dare classify or compare ourselves with some who commend †
themselves. But in measuring themselves by themselves and comparing
themselves to themselves, † they lack understanding. † 13 We, however, will
not boast beyond measure but according to the measure of the area of ministry
that God has assigned † to us, which reaches even to you. 14 For we are not
overextending ourselves, as if we had not reached you, since we have come to
you with the gospel of Christ.

HOW CAN WE EVALUATE COMPETING WORLDVIEWS?

When dealing with the subject of worldviews in conflict, it is imperative to frame the discussion in light of the teaching of Scripture. Perhaps the most relevant biblical passage is found in Paul's defense of his ministry in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5: "Although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but are powerful through God

for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ."

The text of Scripture is suffused with military metaphors like these. Indeed, Christians are called to be faithful soldiers, even donning armor and wielding swords and shields (cp. Eph 6:10-17). Nevertheless, it is important to remember who the enemies are and where the battle lines are drawn.

By the time Paul wrote 2 Corinthians, enemies of the gospel of Christ had determined that the best means of attacking it was to undermine the authority of God's spokesmen. Paul's letter to the Corinthians, therefore, is a rebuttal to his opponents' arguments. Yet, in this text, the apostle points out that the true enemies at work are not other persons, but their arguments.

Consequently, the right way to do battle is shaped by understanding the real enemy. Because the battle was not a fleshly battle, but a spiritual one, Paul trusted only spiritual weapons. Rather than appealing to the shallow desire of the Corinthians for persuasive rhetoric (1Co 1:18-25) or outward appearances (2Co 4:16-18), the apostle preferred the efficacy of divine power. As Paul explained earlier in 2 Corinthians 3, believers are those whose understanding is no longer darkened as if by a veil; they are "ministers of a new covenant" (v. 6). Miraculously, through the Lord who "is the Spirit," they see the world clearly—in stark contrast to the situation of "unbelievers" whose minds have been "blinded" by the god of this age (2Co 3:15-18; 4:3-4). If such people are going to be reached, it will require a power beyond earthly devices. Consequently, the Spirit goes to war on the Christian's behalf.

THE BATTLE OF IDEAS

Paul's call for spiritual warfare was no retreat from sound thinking, however. He spoke of arguments to be undermined and destroyed—those that oppose the knowledge of God. Paul faced a multitude of erroneous assertions—including that he was not a true apostle and was only passing himself off as one to build his sense of self-importance. Thus, his strategy involved using Word-empowered reasoning to tear down barriers erected against the truth (cp. Ac 17:16-34; 18:4; 19:8-10). But Paul did not stop with the task of demolishing falsehood; his goal was to "take every thought captive to obey Christ" (2Co 10:5). This remarkable phrase can be rendered "to take as prisoner of war." Every thought that is in rebellion to God must be made a prisoner and be made to submit to the authority of God in Christ Jesus as Lord.

The battle for hearts and minds will be won on the battlefield of ideas. Bad arguments must be tracked down and brought into captivity to the lordship of Christ, because ideas capture minds and create worldviews. Mindless Christianity will be heartless Christianity. And heartless Christianity is deadly.

Being a Christian in the world means not doing battle the way the world does. By giving true spiritual wisdom, God helps the believer to love his enemy even as he is deconstructing sinful ways of thinking. Since every thought is to be brought into captivity to Christ, believers are called to capture every arena of human endeavor for him. Christians should bring everything from architecture to zoology under his lordship. This means that urban planning, environmental science, politics, and international relations are worthy callings alongside church leadership, evangelism training, or seminary teaching. Every domain of thought represents important territory to be occupied for Christ. Faithful soldiers of Jesus engage the enemy with confidence and courage, remembering that ultimately the battle is the Lord's, and he is already victorious.

HOW TO EVALUATE WORLDVIEWS

Once we understand the stakes involved, we must turn our attention toward how to evaluate worldviews. When Pontius Pilate interrogated Jesus, he asked the most poignant of all questions that the human can ask: "*Quid est veritas?*", "What is truth?" Truth *still* matters, despite the pervasive cultural mood of pessimism and cynicism. This is why we continue to need investigative journalism. As the documentary filmmaker Errol Morris has concluded, it really does still matter who pulled the trigger. Whenever a crime occurs, we immediately want to know if there were surveillance cameras rolling as the incident unfolded.

The most important matter to bring up in this connection are three so-called tests for truth that are

recognized by philosophers. They are, variously, the coherence test, the pragmatic test, and the correspondence test. The coherence test demands that any worldview be internally consistent; its beliefs must hold together in a rational manner. If a man wants to be an absurdist, that certainly is his own business, and there is little use in talking with him—except to show him where he is cheating against his own reliance on irrational behavior and thought. The coherence test for truth queries the internal logic of a set of claims. Every worldview contains propositions: statements of fact about the way things are.

But simply because a worldview is not absurd does not by itself make it true. The pragmatic test for truth asks what sort of outcomes result from a set of beliefs; what sort of prudential practices flow from a perspective? We are familiar with this test of truth when it comes to teaching young people about the dangers of promiscuity. Abstinence starts looking pretty sensible when you talk about the realities of unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, and even heartbreak. In other words, we should expect that if something is true, embracing it should contribute to human flourishing. We live in an age of big data, sociological findings, and polls. All of these are indicators that people understand the importance of real world application from their worldview. Just as is the case with the coherence test, the pragmatic test by itself cannot fully account for what we expect from a truth claim. Indeed, the notion that "it's true because it works," is a dangerous idea because truth becomes limited to what "works" for individuals, which is subjective.

What we really want to say is that something works because it is true. Practical utility points to something beyond itself, which points us to the third test for truth that unites the first two and ties them together: the correspondence theory of truth. Any true utterance should refer beyond the mere words that are spoken, or the ever-changing nature of human experience, to something greater, something transcendent, something that remains solid whether or not humans acknowledge it. Francis Schaeffer used to call this "True Truth." It's not just what is true for me, or true for you, or even a group, but what is true for all people, at all times, and in all places. This is indistinguishable from the deep, abiding sense of "oughtness" that humans possess. In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis refers to this as the Tao—the universal sense that people are not free to simply do whatever they please; there is a court of final appeal, a real category to which we refer as "justice."

Today we live in an age of relativism, the idea that each person or group sets their own criterion of truth. All beliefs are as true as any other belief, the relativist surmises. As Friedrich Nietzsche once wrote, "There are no facts, only interpretations." But think about that statement for a second—anyone who says that is, in essence, asking you not to believe his proposals. So don't. Relativism states that all views are true, which is itself an absolute statement of fact, which is self-refuting. Not all beliefs can be true because each worldview contains truth claims that are irreconcilable with other worldviews. Everybody, therefore, can't be right. Logicians call this insight the law of the excluded middle. Any given proposition must be either true or false. Finding out what is true is the task not only of the philosopher or apologist, but of every Christian.

GREGORY A. THORNBURY

15 We are not boasting beyond measure about other people's labors. On the contrary, we have the hope † that as your faith increases, our area of ministry will be greatly enlarged, 16 so that we may preach the gospel to the regions beyond you † without boasting about what has already been done in someone else's area of ministry. † 17 So **let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.** † †

18 For it is not the one commending himself who is approved, but the one the Lord commends. †

10:7 Or *You are looking at things outwardly*
10:2 Php 3:3 **10:4** 1Tm 1:18 **10:4** Ac 25:5 **10:5** Jn 17:3; 1Jn 4:8 **10:7** 1Co 3:23; Gl 5:24 **10:8** 1Co 14:3 **10:12** Gl 2:18 **10:12** Pr 26:12; 27:2 **10:12** Mt 13:13 **10:13** Rm 12:3; 1Co 7:17; Heb 7:2 **10:15** 1Th 1:3 **10:16** Ac 19:21 **10:16** Rm 15:20 **10:17** Jr 9:24 **10:17** Jr 9:24 **10:18** 1Th 2:4

10:1-2 In this last portion of the letter Paul more directly confronts his opponents. The last part of 10:1 contains their charge against him (see also v. 10). Paul's opponents viewed his humility negatively since it was expected that people would show their importance by aggressive self-assertion. Paul's gentleness was seen as timidity. Nevertheless, when he comes, he is willing to be **bold** with those who are unrepentant—though he prefers not to be.

10:3-4 Paul adopts **warfare** imagery to stress the nature of his ministry. **War** is not waged **according to the flesh**; that is by the mechanics of worldly disputes. He refers instead to a spiritual battle (cp. Eph 6:10-17), in which their **weapons** are **powerful through God.** The imagery of **strongholds** refers to bulwarks built to protect cities from invasion. The word also appears in the Greek version of Proverbs 21:22, suggesting that Paul is the wise man described in the proverb, who brings down the fortresses of a city of warriors with the weapon of wisdom. See "The Crisis of the Christian Mind," *p. XXV.*

10:5 Warfare imagery continues as **every thought** is taken **captive to obey Christ.** The imagery suggests that Paul is a general, who presents people's thoughts as captives to the Lord of the army.

10:10 Paul's critics in Corinth drew attention to his weak **physical presence** and the unimpressive quality of **his public speaking.** The only physical description of Paul from antiquity comes from the second-century fictional work, *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*: "small of stature, with a bald head and crooked legs, in a good state of body, with eyebrows meeting and nose somewhat hooked." However accurate this description, any judgment on the basis of appearance fails to understand the wisdom of the cross, in which apparent weakness is actually the power of God (1Co 1:18). As for Paul's public speaking, the Corinthians compared Paul to the trained orators who engaged in various rhetorical techniques in order to impress and persuade (see the note on 5:13). Such a comparison fails to grasp that genuine preaching is based on God's power rather than technique (1Co 2:1-5).

PAUL AND THE FALSE APOSTLES

11 I wish you would put up with a little foolishness † from me. Yes, do put up with me! † 2 For I am jealous † for you with a godly jealousy, † because I have promised you in marriage to one husband — to present a pure † virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear that, as the serpent † deceived † Eve † by his cunning, your minds may be seduced from a sincere and pure † devotion to Christ. † 4 For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, † whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, † which you had not received, or a different gospel, † which you had not accepted, you put up with it splendidly!

5 Now I consider myself in no way inferior to those “super-apostles.” † 6 Even if I am untrained in public speaking, † I am certainly not untrained in knowledge. † Indeed, we have in every way made that clear to you in everything. 7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling † myself so that you might be exalted, † because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? † 8 I robbed other churches by taking pay from them to minister to you. 9 When I was present with you and in need, I did not burden anyone, since the brothers who came from Macedonia † supplied my needs. † I have kept myself, and will keep myself, from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped † in the regions of Achaia. † 11 Why? Because I don’t love you? God knows I do!

12 But I will continue to do what I am doing, in order to deny † an opportunity to those who want to be regarded as our equals in what they boast about. 13 For such people are false apostles, † deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will be according to their works. †

PAUL’S SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST

16 I repeat: Let no one consider me a fool. But if you do, at least accept me as a fool so that I can also boast a little. 17 What I am saying in this matter † of boasting, I don’t speak as the Lord would, but as it were, foolishly. 18 Since many boast according to the flesh, I will also boast. 19 For you, being so wise, gladly put up with fools! † 20 In fact, you put up with it if someone enslaves you, if someone exploits † you, if someone takes advantage of you, if someone is arrogant toward you, if someone slaps † you in the face. 21 I say this to our shame: We have been too weak for that!

But in whatever anyone dares to boast — I am talking foolishly — I also dare: 22 Are they Hebrews? † So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the descendants of Abraham? † So am I. 23 Are they servants of Christ? I’m talking like a madman — I’m a better one: with far more labors, many more imprisonments, far worse beatings, many times near death.

24 Five times I received the forty lashes minus one from the Jews. † 25 Three times I was beaten with rods. † Once I received a stoning. † Three times I was shipwrecked. † I have spent a night and a day in the open sea. 26 On frequent journeys, I faced dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, † dangers from my own people, † dangers from Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers at sea, and dangers among false brothers; 27 toil and hardship, many sleepless nights, hunger and thirst, often without food, cold, and without clothing. † 28 Not to mention † other things, there is the daily pressure on me: my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, † and I do not burn with indignation?
30 If boasting is necessary, I will boast about my weaknesses. 31 The God and Father † of the Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows I am not lying. 32 In Damascus, † a ruler † under King Aretas guarded the city of Damascus in order to arrest me. 33 So I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped from his hands. †

11:1 Or *Yes, you are putting up with me* **11:3** Other mss omit *and pure* **11:10** Or *silenced* **11:12** Lit *cut off* **11:17** Or *business*, or *confidence* **11:28** Lit *Apart from* **11:32** Gk *ethnarches* ; a leader of an ethnic community

11:1 Mk 7:22; 2Co 11:17,21 **11:2** Jms 3:16 **11:2** Nm 25:13; Gl 4:17 **11:2** Php 4:8 **11:3** Gn 3:1; Lk 10:19 **11:3** Rm 7:11; 16:18; 1Co 3:18; 2Th 2:3; 1Tm 2:14 **11:3** Gn 3:20 **11:3** 1Th 3:5 **11:4** 1Co 3:11 **11:4** 1Jn 4:1 **11:4** Gl 1:6 **11:5** Jd 17 **11:6** 1Co 1:17 **11:6** Php 3:8; 1Jn 4:8 **11:7** Lk 14:11 **11:7** Lk 1:52 **11:7** Ac 18:3 **11:9** Ac 16:9 **11:9** Php 4:10 **11:10** Ac 18:12 **11:13** Rv 2:2 **11:15** Gl 3:10 **11:19** Pr 3:7 **11:20** Gl 5:15 **11:20** Mt 5:39 **11:22** Php 3:5 **11:22** Gn 16:15; Gl 3:29 **11:24** Dt 25:3 **11:25** Ac 16:22 **11:25** Ac 14:19 **11:25** Ac 27:1-44; 1Tm 1:19 **11:26** Mk 14:48 **11:26** Ac 9:23; 13:50; 14:5; 17:5; 18:12; 20:3,19; 21:27; 23:10-12; 25:3 **11:27** Rm 8:35 **11:29** Jn 16:1 **11:31** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42; Eph 5:20 **11:32** 2Sm 8:5 **11:33** Ac 9:19-25

11:2 As in Ephesians 5:22-33, Paul sees the church as the bride of Christ, just as Israel was pictured as God's bride in the OT (e.g., Ezk 16). Furthermore, the church is currently living between the betrothal and the actual wedding feast (Rv 19:6-9). Unlike modern engagements, a Jewish betrothal was legally binding and required a divorce for termination (Mt 1:18-20). Purity within the betrothal period was taken seriously, and the father of the bride was responsible for his daughter's chastity. Paul views himself like a father of the Corinthian church and is **jealous** for its purity.

11:3-4 Paul draws a parallel between the deception of **Eve** by **the serpent** (Gn 3:1-6) and the Corinthians' acceptance of **another Jesus**, **a different spirit**, **or a different gospel.** Such falsehoods are inspired by the evil one and will seduce the Corinthians away **from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.** See "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454;* "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

11:5-9 "Super-apostles" is an ironic, even sarcastic, term for those who oppose Paul with a high view of themselves. Paul did not prove his importance in the way that traveling preachers of the day did—with

impressive rhetoric, charging high fees, and self-exaltation. As a result, some said he was **untrained** (1Co 2:1-4).

11:13-15 Their reliance on rhetorical technique, self-confidence, and human glory reveals these "super-apostles" (v. 5) to be, in fact, **false apostles.** Just as **Satan disguises himself as an angel of light**, so they present themselves as **servants of righteousness**. They are not (see also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*). In keeping with Jewish and Christian expectation, their judgment **will be according to their works** (Ps 62:12; Rm 2:6-8).

11:16-21 Paul is in the difficult situation of needing to defend his apostleship (and thus the gospel he has preached), without exalting himself as his opponents have done. Thus, he says he will engage in foolish **boasting** since they seem to **put up with fools** (the false teachers) so well.

11:22-33 When Paul goes to "boast" he turns quickly to his sufferings and weaknesses rather than his accomplishments. These constitute his credentials as a preacher of the wisdom of the cross, in which apparent weakness is in fact the power of God for salvation (1Co 1:18).

SUFFICIENT GRACE

12 Boasting is necessary. It is not profitable, but I will move on to visions † and revelations † of the Lord.

THE HOLY TRINITY

The word *trinity* (from the Latin term *trinitas*) is mentioned nowhere in the Bible, but the doctrine of the Trinity is thoroughly biblical. The Christian church confesses with the people of Israel, "The LORD our God, the LORD is One" (Dt 6:4), the famous *Shema* Israel affirmed that was quoted by Jesus himself (see Mk 12:29-39). Jesus believed and taught the oneness of God as foundational to his own messianic vocation. And in the NT the one, eternal, and living God of the Bible, the only real God, is further revealed as three personal agents: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Together these agents plan, provide, and perform the salvation of sinners.

To be sure, the doctrine of the Trinity is foreshadowed in the OT. Genesis opens on a triadic note: "In the beginning God created . . . and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (Gn 1:1-3). Even the plural form of God's name, *Elohim*, sometimes coupled with a singular verb, while not a proof of the Trinity as such, does "point indirectly," as Tom Oden wrote, "to some mysterious plurality in the intra-subjectivity of God."

If the doctrine of the Trinity is budding in the OT, it bursts into full flower in the New. Here, self-differentiation in God is presented with unmistakable clarity through the incarnation. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in the baptism of Jesus. There the voice of the Father from heaven identified the One being baptized by John in the Jordan as his beloved Son, while the Spirit of God descended like a dove, attesting to the unique Sonship of Christ and inaugurating his public ministry (Mt 3:13-17). Subsequently, Jesus commanded his disciples to be baptized in the one name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19-20). John Chrysostom put it well in writing that the NT teaches that the Father is God, the Son is God, the Spirit is God, and God is One.

The mature doctrine of the Trinity that came to full expression in the classic creeds of the fourth century was a necessary implication of Christian conversion in the first. Just as the Father sent his Son into the

world, so too he has sent into our hearts his Spirit—who is the Spirit of the Son no less than the Spirit of the Father (Gl 4:4-6). It is the Spirit who places the believer in Christ, and it is the Spirit who cries out to the Father, on behalf of the believer, that special word of familial intimacy Jesus used when addressing God: "*Abba*" (Rm 8:15-17). In other words, through believing in Jesus, being baptized in God's triune name, and communing with the risen Christ in the Lord's Supper, the early Christians came to know and love increasingly the one eternal God—the Father who had sent his Spirit-conceived Son to die on the cross for their sins. This is the same Father who also sent the Spirit of his risen Son into their hearts, giving them a new life fit for eternity.

The doctrine of the Trinity is the necessary theological framework for understanding the story of Jesus as the story of God. The church's teaching about the Trinity bears witness to both the OT affirmation, "God is One," and the NT confession, "Jesus is Lord." It is not surprising, however, given the complex nature of the doctrine of the three-in-one God, that both God's oneness and his triune-ness have been doubted and denied and debated throughout the history of the church. Modalism teaches that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are simply names or roles taken by one person at different moments in time, as if our Maker is an actor who plays three parts in a multi-act drama. Tritheism goes to another extreme, positing three deities working together in a cluster. Neither view is faithful to the Bible's teaching about God.

The doctrine of the Trinity was forged on the anvil of the church's encounters with heresy. In the second century, Marcion proposed that the entire OT be expunged from the Bible as the antiquated revelation of a Jewish deity made irrelevant by the coming of Jesus. The church of that time responded wisely, claiming the OT as Christian Scripture and by declaring that the Father of Jesus was none other than the God of Israel. In doing so, the church affirmed a fundamental connection between creation and redemption.

Several centuries later, a man named Arius denied both the lordship and deity of Jesus Christ. In AD 325 the church responded at the Council of Nicaea that the One Christians adored and loved in their worship—Jesus the Redeemer—was of the same essence (*homoousios*) as the Father.

Later, there arose others known as the Pneumatomachi, "the Spirit-fighters," who understood the Holy Spirit as a force, an energy, a power—but not God. Against those who thus denied the deity of the Holy Spirit, the church declared that God is one in essence and three in persons. The Holy Spirit is a person in eternal relationship with the Father and the Son—one God forever and ever. Edward Cooper put it this way in his 1805 hymn, "Father of Heaven, Whose Love Profound": Jehovah! Father, Spirit, Son, mysterious Godhead, Three in One, Before Thy throne we sinners bend; grace, pardon, life, to us extend.

One of the most serious challenges to the doctrine of the Trinity came with the rise of Islam. In Islam, the principle of *tawhid*, which means "unity," is defined as a kind of oneness marked by the solitary character of the being of God—that is, Unitarianism. But the unity of God cannot be reduced to a unit.

On the contrary, in the biblical view, relationship is constitutive for God himself: the Father gives, the Son obediently receives, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from both of them. John of Damascus used the beautiful Greek word *perichoresis* to describe the personality and mutuality of the three divine persons. In the eternal and blessed intercommunion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the one true God is united without confusion and divided without separation. The doctrine of the Trinity is crucial for understanding the biblical God of holiness and love.

The Holy Trinity is not a puzzle to be solved; it is a mystery to be adored. The doctrine of the Trinity, though infinitely complex, is not a matter for philosophical speculation but rather an essential teaching of the faith that evokes wonder, love, and praise. The doctrine should not only be believed, but also taught, preached, and made central in every act of public worship.

We can never fully fathom or comprehend completely the reality of the God who is one-in-three and three-in-one; nevertheless, we can confess our Trinitarian faith joyfully, reverently, and with a sense of humility. To sing, pray, and worship the one triune God of holiness and love is to bridge heaven and earth. The white-robed throng of saints and martyrs gathered around the throne of God join their voices with other heavenly beings to sing, day and night: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come" (Rv 4:8; 7:9-17). Those of us still in this world are invited to join their chorus and to add our voices to theirs, proclaiming the truths shared by Reginald Heber in his famous hymn of 1826: Holy,

Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity.

TIMOTHY GEORGE

2 I know a man in Christ who was caught up † to the third heaven fourteen
years ago. Whether he was in the body or out of the body, I don't know; God
knows. 3 I know that this man — whether in the body or out of the body I don't
know; God knows — 4 was caught up into paradise † and heard inexpressible
words, which a human being is not allowed to speak. 5 I will boast about this
person, but not about myself, except of my weaknesses.
6 For if I want to boast, I wouldn't be a fool, because I would be telling the
truth. † But I will spare you, so that no one can credit me with something
beyond what he sees in me or hears from me, 7 especially because of the
extraordinary revelations. Therefore, so that I would not exalt myself, a thorn in
the flesh † was given to me, a messenger of Satan † to torment me so that I
would not exalt myself. 8 Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times
that it would leave me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for
my power † is perfected in weakness." †
Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that
Christ's power may reside in me. 10 So I take pleasure in weaknesses, insults,
hardships, persecutions, and in difficulties, for the sake of Christ. † For when I
am weak, then I am strong. †

SIGNS OF AN APOSTLE

11 I have been a fool; you forced it on me. You ought to have commended me,
since I am not in any way inferior to those "super-apostles," even though I am
nothing. † 12 The signs † of an apostle † were performed with unfailing
endurance among you, including signs and wonders † and miracles. † 13 So in
what way are you worse off than the other churches, except that I personally did
not burden you? Forgive me for this wrong!

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE CORINTHIANS

14 Look, I am ready to come to you this third time. † I will not burden you,
since I am not seeking what is yours, but you. For children ought not save up for
their parents, but parents for their children. 15 I will most gladly spend and be
spent for you. † † If I love you more, am I to be loved less? 16 Now granted, I
did not burden † you; yet sly as I am, I took you in by deceit! † 17 Did I take
advantage of you by any of those I sent you? 18 I urged Titus † to go, and I sent
the brother with him. Titus didn't take advantage of you, did he? Didn't we walk
in the same spirit † and in the same footsteps?
19 Have you been thinking all along that we were defending ourselves to you?
No, in the sight of God we are speaking in Christ, and everything, dear friends,
is for building you up. † 20 For I fear that perhaps when I come I will not find
you to be what I want, and you may not find me to be what you want. Perhaps
there will be quarreling, † jealousy, † angry outbursts, selfish ambitions, †
slander, † gossip, arrogance, and disorder. † 21 I fear that when I come my God
will again † humiliate me in your presence, and I will grieve for many who
sinned before and have not repented † of the moral impurity, sexual
immorality, † and sensuality † they practiced.

12:15 Lit *for your souls*, or *for your lives* **12:21** Or *come again my God will*
12:1 Lk 1:22 **12:1** 1Pt 4:13 **12:2** 1Th 4:17 **12:4** Lk 23:43 **12:6** Ps 119:142; Jn 8:14; 14:6; 2Co 11:10; 1Jn 5:20; 3Jn 3 **12:7** Nm 33:55; Ezk 28:24; Php 3:3 **12:7** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **12:9** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **12:9** Is 40:29-31; 1Co 2:5; Php 4:13 **12:10** Mt 5:11-12; Rm 5:3; 2Co 13:4 **12:10** Eph 6:10 **12:11** Gl 6:3 **12:12** Heb 2:4 **12:12** Ac 1:2; Jd 17 **12:12** Mk 13:22 **12:12** Ac 19:11 **12:14** Ac 18; 2Co 2:1; 13:1 **12:15** 2Co 1:6; Php 2:17; Col 1:24; 1Th 2:8; 2Tm 2:10 **12:16** 1Th 2:7 **12:16** Ps 10:7 **12:18** Ti 1:4 **12:18** Ps 51:12 **12:19** 1Co 14:3-4 **12:20** Ti 3:9 **12:20** Jms 3:14 **12:20** Rm 2:8 **12:20** 1Pt 2:1 **12:20** 1Co 14:33,40 **12:21** Ac 3:19 **12:21** 1Th 4:3 **12:21** Mk 7:21-22

12:1 Boasting is necessary in this situation because Paul is forced to provide his credentials against those of the false teachers, who are leading people away from the true gospel.

12:2-4 The **third heaven**, or **paradise**, was a Jewish way of referring to the highest heaven—the abode of God. Paul had some sort of special, spiritual experience. He mentions it only here, in the third person, and it occurred fourteen years previously. Such experiences are not normal, nor essential. Paul mentions it only because he is pressed to prove his status.

12:4 Similar visionary accounts in Judaism focused on heavenly secrets being revealed to an individual, but Paul's experience involved **inexpressible**, non-human, **words.** This further underscores the uniqueness of the event.

12:7-9 We do not know exactly what this **thorn in the flesh** was. The reference to flesh has led some to posit a physical ailment. While the **messenger of Satan** has led others to point to the persecution Paul endured. Then again, both phrases could refer to a struggle with some kind of sin. Regardless, the point is

that this suffering was allowed to keep Paul humble—and to remind him to trust in God rather than in himself. See “Christians and Suffering,” *p. 580*.

12:10 This verse articulates the central point of 2 Corinthians 10–13: it is in weakness that Christ’s power is mediated. Paul’s entire ministry has adopted a cruciform character, causing him to reject the symbols of success that the world values, and, sadly, that the Corinthians have valued.

12:11-12 Paul finally speaks plainly about the matter at hand. He is **not in any way inferior to those “super-apostles”** and the Corinthians’ assessment of Paul is completely off. They have valued worldly markers of strength and success, while Paul has exhibited the power of Christ through weakness.

FINAL WARNINGS AND EXHORTATIONS

13 This is the third time I am coming to you. † **Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.** † † 2 I gave a warning when I was present the second time, and now I give a warning † while I am absent to those who sinned before and to all the rest: If I come again, I will not be lenient, 3 since you seek proof of Christ speaking in me. † He is not weak in dealing with you, but powerful among you. 4 For he was crucified † in weakness, but he lives † by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, † but in dealing with you we will live † with him by God’s power.

5 Test † yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless you fail the test. † 6 And I hope you will recognize that we ourselves do not fail the test. 7 But we pray to God that you do nothing wrong — not that we may appear to pass the test, but that you may do what is right, † even though we may appear to fail. 8 For we can’t do anything against the truth, † but only for the truth. 9 We rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. † We also pray that you become fully mature. † 10 This is why I am writing these things while absent, so that when I am there I may not have to deal harshly with you, in keeping with the authority the Lord gave me for building up † and not for tearing down. †

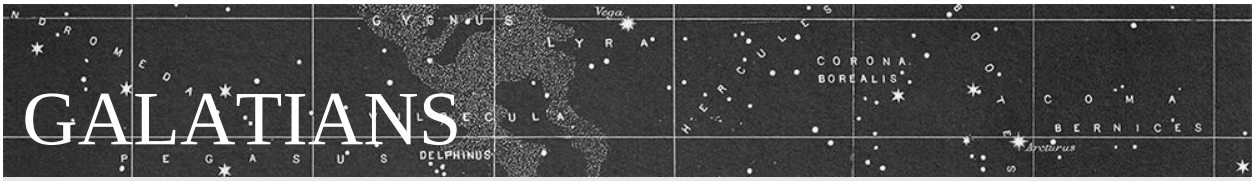
11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice. † Become mature, be encouraged, † be of the same mind, † be at peace, † and the God of love † and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. † All the saints send you greetings.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love † of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. † †

13:5 Or *you are disqualified*, or *you are counterfeit* **13:9** Or *become complete*, or *be restored* **13:11** Or *farewell* **13:11** Or *listen to my appeal* **13:12-13** Some translations divide these two vv. into three vv. so that v. 13 begins with *All the saints . . .* and v. 14 begins with *The grace of . . .*
13:1 2Co 12:14 **13:1** Dt 17:6; 19:15 **13:1** Dt 17:6; 19:15 **13:2** Gl 5:21; 1Th 3:4 **13:3** Mt 10:20; 1Co 5:4 **13:4** Mt 27:22; Php 2:7-8 **13:4** Rm 14:9; Php 1:21; 1Pt 3:18 **13:4** 2Co 12:10 **13:4** Rm 6:4,8 **13:5** Jms 1:13 **13:7** 1Pt 2:12 **13:8** 2Th 2:10 **13:9** Ac 25:5 **13:10** 1Co 14:3 **13:10** 2Co 10:4,8 **13:11** Rm 12:16; Php 1:7 **13:11** Mk 9:50; Rm 16:20; 2Tm 1:2 **13:11** 1Jn 4:16 **13:12** Rm 16:16; 1Co 16:20; 1Th 5:26; 1Pt 5:14 **13:13** 1Co 13:1; 1Jn 4:16 **13:13** 2Th 3:16

13:1-4 In his previous visit to Corinth, Paul was gentle toward those in rebellion and this was seen as weakness. Since they have now been warned twice, Paul is prepared to act powerfully by rebuking them and applying discipline on his return visit.

13:5 While the Corinthians have been happy to assess Paul, they need to **examine** themselves. Self-scrutiny was a popular tool among Greek philosophers, used to improve conduct. Clearly there is room for improvement in the conduct of the Corinthians, but here Paul is concerned with whether or not they are **in the faith**—whether **Jesus Christ is in** them. Conduct hardly matters if they do not really have Christ.



GALATIANS

INTRODUCTION

Galatians, which may be the earliest of Paul's letters, is also his most intense. It gives us a strong presentation of the truth that sinners are justified and live godly lives by trusting in Jesus alone.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author's name is "Paul," and he claims to be "an apostle" of Christ (Gl 1:1). The autobiographical information in the letter is consistent with what is known about the apostle Paul from Acts and his other letters. Theologically, everything in Galatians agrees with Paul's views elsewhere, notably in Romans.

BACKGROUND: It is not certain where the Galatian churches were located or when Paul wrote Galatians. The reason is that, during the NT era, the term *Galatians* was used both ethnically and politically. If "Galatians" is understood ethnically, the founding of the Galatian churches is only implied in the NT. On Paul's second missionary journey, he "went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" (Ac 16:6) in north central Asia Minor (near the modern capital of Turkey—Ankara). His later visit to the same general area is recorded in Acts 18:23 and 19:1. This is where a group from Gaul (modern France) invaded in the third century BC, and it became known as Galatia.

Understood politically, "Galatians" can refer to those living in the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia. That region included the cities of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, where Paul worked to plant churches, as recorded in Acts 13:14–14:23.

The view that Galatians was written to the area where the ethnic Galatians lived is called the "North Galatian" theory. The possible dates of writing related to this understanding range from AD 52 or 53, if shortly after the second missionary journey, to AD 56, if written about the same time as Romans, to which it is similar theologically.

The view that Galatians was sent to churches in the southern portion of the Roman province of Galatia is known as the "South Galatian" theory. Some holding this view date Galatians in the early 50s, but others as early as AD 48 or 49, before the Jerusalem Council, which is usually dated to about AD 49. If the earlier date here is correct, Galatians is among the earliest of the NT books.

Another key consideration is comparing the basis of contention in Galatians to the topic of debate at the Jerusalem Council. The problem addressed in Galatians is that "the works of the law" of Moses (2:16-17; 3:2; cp. 5:4), notably circumcision (5:2; 6:12-13), were added by some teachers to what was required in being justified before God. This is the same issue that Acts records as the reason why the Jerusalem Council met (Ac 15:1,5), supporting the idea that the existing problem in the Galatian churches was part of the reason for the Jerusalem Council.

If Galatians was written after the Jerusalem Council, it is inconceivable that Paul would not have cited the conclusions of the council, which supported his works-free view of the gospel. This strongly implies that the Jerusalem Council had not yet occurred when Paul wrote Galatians.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

There is much about the life and movements of the apostle Paul that is only known—or filled in significantly—from Galatians 1:13–2:14 (and the personal glimpse in 4:13-14). Among these factors are Paul's sojourn in "Arabia" (1:17) and descriptions of two trips to Jerusalem (1:18-19; 2:1-10). Paul

described a confrontation with Peter (2:11-14) that is mentioned nowhere else in the NT.

In the middle third of Galatians, certain aspects of the gospel's OT background are explained in unique ways. Notable are: (1) the curse related to Jesus being crucified, as cited from Deuteronomy 21:23 (Gl 3:13); (2) Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of the singular physical "seed" of Abraham (3:16; see Gn 22:18); (3) the roles of the law as prison (3:22-23) and guardian (3:24-25) until Christ; and (4) the extended allegory of the slave and free sons of Abraham (4:21-31).

Galatians tells us much about the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Christian life. After the Spirit's role in the ministry of adoption (4:5-6), believers are commanded to "walk by the Spirit" (5:16), be "led by the Spirit" (5:18) and "keep in step with the Spirit" (5:25), as well as "sow to the Spirit" and "reap" the related eternal harvest (6:8). The moment-by-moment outcome of that kind of sensitivity to the ministry of the Holy Spirit is what is meant by "the fruit of the Spirit" (5:22-23).

STRUCTURE

The book of Galatians follows the typical pattern for a first-century letter, with the exception of the element of thanksgiving: salutation (1:1-5), the main body (1:6–6:15), and a farewell (6:16-18). Contrasting concepts are prominent in the letter: divine revelation vs. human insight, grace vs. law, justification vs. condemnation, Jerusalem vs. Mount Sinai, sonship vs. slavery, the fruit of the Spirit vs. the works of the flesh, and liberty vs. bondage.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father of Jesus who brings about all things related to salvation (including setting apostles apart for service, 1:15). Jesus is the Son of God by whose death righteousness is provided (2:21). The Holy Spirit is given to all believers, enabling them to subdue "the flesh" and to grow in Christian character—"the fruit of the Spirit" (chap. 5).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Galatians contrasts two kinds of people in the world. First, there are those under God's curse (3:10). This includes persons who suppose that they can attain salvation by doing good works. They are doomed to live according to the evil works of the flesh and will not be part of God's kingdom. Second, there are those who, by God's grace, have been set free from the curse by faith in Christ who bore the curse by his death (3:13). Such persons live according to the Spirit's power and will "reap eternal life" (6:8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Galatians stands as Paul's passionate testimony that salvation is a gift of God's grace. It is unearned and undeserved and must be received by faith alone. Paul is careful not to turn faith into a work, for he argues that "faith came" (3:23-25) to those who were helpless slaves (see also Eph 2:8; Php 1:29). This view of salvation so strongly gripped the apostle that if someone offered a different doctrine, let "a curse be on him" (1:8).

GALATIANS TIMELINE

300 BC–AD 33

The Galatians, Celts of European origins, invade Asia Minor. **278 BC**

Mark Antony and Pompey reward the Galatians with additional territory for supporting Rome in its wars against the Mithridates. **63–36 BC**

Amyntas, king of Galatia, wills his kingdom to Rome at his death. **25 BC**

Jesus's trials, death, resurrection, and ascension **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, AD 33**

AD 34–46

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Paul returns to his native Tarsus. **37–40**

Barnabas travels from Antioch of Syria to find Paul. **SUMMER 40**

Barnabas and Saul serve together in Antioch. **41**

Emperor Caligula is murdered by members of his Praetorian Guard. Claudius succeeds him as emperor. **41**

Judea experiences severe famine. **46**

AD 41–49

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make their first missionary journey. **47–49**

From Syrian Antioch, Paul writes his letter to the Galatians, assuming the destination of the letter was the churches of southern Galatia: Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. **49**

Barnabas and Paul travel from Antioch to Jerusalem for the conference dealing with the question of whether Gentiles had to be circumcised in order to be saved. **49**

Paul and Barnabas part ways over the question of whether John Mark should be allowed to join them on a second missionary journey. **49**

AD 49–51

Paul and Silas team up for an overland journey to revisit cities of south Galatia as the first segment of Paul's second missionary journey. **49**

Timothy joins Paul and Silas as they travel through north Galatia to Troas. **49**

Paul, Silas, and Timothy sail from Troas to Macedonia, planting the church in Philippi. **50**

Paul and his companions move from Philippi to Thessalonica and Berea. **50**

As a result of much persecution, Paul and his companions split up, with Paul going to Corinth by way of Athens. **50–51**

GREETING

1 Paul, † an apostle — not from men or by man, but by Jesus Christ and
God the Father † who raised him from the dead † — 2 and all the
brothers who are with me: To the churches of Galatia. †

3 Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord † Jesus Christ,
4 who gave himself for our sins † to rescue us from this present evil age, †
according to the will of our God and Father. † 5 To him be the glory forever and
ever. Amen.

NO OTHER GOSPEL

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly turning away from him who called † you
by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel — 7 not that there is
another gospel, † but there are some † who are troubling you and want to
distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel † from heaven should
preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, † a curse be
on him! † 9 As we have said before, I now say again: If anyone is preaching to
you a gospel contrary to what you received, † a curse be on him!
10 For am I now trying to persuade people, † or God? † Or am I striving to
please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of
Christ.

PAUL DEFENDS HIS APOSTLESHIP

11 For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel preached by me
is not of human origin. 12 For I did not receive it from a human source and I was
not taught it, but it came by a revelation † of Jesus Christ. †
13 For you have heard about my former way of life † in Judaism: † I intensely
persecuted † God's church and tried to destroy it. 14 I advanced in Judaism
beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely
zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. † 15 But when God, who from my
mother's womb set me apart and called † me by his grace, was pleased 16 to
reveal his Son † in me, so that I could preach him among the Gentiles, I did not
immediately consult with anyone. † 17 I did not go up to Jerusalem † to those
who had become apostles † before me; instead I went to Arabia † and came
back to Damascus. †

18 Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem † to get to know Cephas, † † and I stayed with him fifteen days. 19 But I didn't see any of the other apostles except James, † the Lord's brother. 20 I declare in the sight of God: I am not lying in what I write to you.

21 Afterward, I went to the regions of Syria † and Cilicia. † 22 I remained personally unknown to the Judean churches that are in Christ. 23 They simply kept hearing: "He who formerly persecuted † us now preaches the faith † he once tried to destroy." 24 And they glorified God because of me. †

1:3 Other mss read *God our Father and the Lord* **1:8** Or *you, let him be condemned*, or *you, let him be condemned to hell* ; Gk *anathema* **1:10** Or *win the approval of people* **1:16** Lit *flesh and blood* **1:18** Other mss read *Peter* **1:24** Or *in me*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Mt 5:16; 6:1; 11:27; Jn 8:42 **1:1** Ac 9:6; 20:24; 22:10-21; 26:16 **1:2** Ac 16:6; 18:23; 1Co 16:1; 2Tm 4:10; 1Pt 1:1 **1:4** Rm 6:23; Ti 2:14 **1:4** Mt 20:28; Rm 4:25; 1Co 15:3; Gl 2:20 **1:4** Php 4:20; 1Th 1:3; 3:11,13; Heb 10:7; 1Pt 3:17; Rv 10:7 **1:6** Col 3:15; 1Pt 1:15 **1:7** Ac 4:12; 1Co 3:11 **1:7** Jd 4 **1:8** Gn 16:7; Mt 13:49; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **1:8** Rm 15:20 **1:9** Jd 3 **1:10** 1Th 2:4 **1:12** 1Pt 4:13 **1:12** 1Co 11:23; 15:3 **1:13** 2Pt 3:11 **1:13** Ac 8:1–9:2; 26:4; Php 3:5-6 **1:13** Php 3:6; 2Tm 3:12 **1:14** Mk 7:3 **1:15** Mt 24:22; Col 3:15 **1:16** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **1:17** Mt 23:37; Ac 8:1 **1:17** Jd 17 **1:17** Is 21:13; Jr 25:24; Ezk 27:21; Gl 4:25 **1:17** 2Sm 8:5 **1:18** Ac 9:26 **1:18** Jn 1:42 **1:19** Jd 1 **1:21** Nm 23:7; Lk 2:2 **1:21** Ac 9:30; 11:25-26 **1:23** Ac 8:1-3 **1:23** Jd 3

1:4 Paul refers to the current time as **this present evil age** because Satan has ascendancy in this fallen world. **Jesus** has come to **rescue us** and to inaugurate the coming age in which evil will be destroyed and the rule of Christ will be complete.

1:6 From Paul's other letters we would expect a thanksgiving here. Instead this letter begins with rebuke, indicating the seriousness of the situation—the Galatians **are turning to a different gospel.**

1:8-9 It is a serious matter to change or distort the gospel. Paul's gospel came by "a revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12), meaning it is not a human invention. The authority of the gospel does not rest with Paul—if he, or even **an angel from heaven should preach a** different **gospel**, they are not to be believed. The **curse** to which Paul refers is the final judgment of God producing damnation.

1:11–2:10 This entire section is intended to support the claim of 1:11-12—that Paul's gospel **is not of human origin** but **came by a revelation of Jesus Christ.** After his encounter with the risen Christ (Acts 9,22,26), Paul **did not immediately consult with anyone** (1:16), and only met the **apostles** years later (1:18; 2:1). His gospel was not derived from others or taught to him; it came directly from Christ.

1:11-12 The authority of Paul's message does not rest on his credentials (cp. 1:8), even though he is an apostle appointed by Jesus Christ (1:1). Even the apostle Peter could be mistaken (2:11), so apostleship is not the final authority. Christ is the One who has authorized the gospel that Paul preached.

1:15 Like the prophets Isaiah (Is 49:1) and Jeremiah (Jr 1:5), Paul was appointed a spokesman for God before he was born.

1:17 This period was not simply a time of meditation. Paul immediately began preaching in **Damascus** (Ac 9:20), and the mention of **Arabia** refers to the incident recorded in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33, indicating that Paul's preaching had led to persecution.

1:18 Cephas is the Aramaic name for Peter. In this letter Paul switches back and forth between these two

names for the same person.

PAUL DEFENDS HIS GOSPEL AT JERUSALEM

2 Then after fourteen years I went up again † to Jerusalem with Barnabas, † taking Titus † along also. 2 I went up according to a revelation † and presented to them the gospel I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those recognized as leaders. I wanted to be sure I was not running, and had not been running, in vain. 3 But not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4 This matter arose because some false brothers † had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus in order to enslave us. 5 But we did not give up and submit to these people for even a moment, so that the truth † of the gospel would be preserved for you.

6 Now from those recognized as important (what they † once were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism † †) — they added nothing to me. 7 On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, † just as Peter † was for the circumcised, 8 since the one at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles. 9 When James, † Cephas, † † and John † — those recognized as pillars † — acknowledged the grace that had been given to me, they gave the right hand of fellowship to me and Barnabas, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 They asked only that we would remember the poor, † which I had made every effort to do.

FREEDOM FROM THE LAW

11 But when Cephas † came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he stood condemned. † 12 For he regularly ate with the Gentiles before certain men came from James. However, when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, because he feared those from the circumcision party. 13 Then the rest of the Jews † joined his hypocrisy, † so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were deviating from the truth of the gospel, I told Cephas † in front of everyone, “If you, who are a Jew, live like a

Gentile † and not like a Jew, † how can you compel Gentiles to live † like Jews? " †

15 We are Jews by birth and not "Gentile sinners," 16 and yet because we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law † but by faith in Jesus Christ, † even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ † and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will † be justified. 17 But if we ourselves are also found to be "sinners" while seeking to be justified by Christ, † is Christ then a promoter † † of sin? Absolutely not! † 18 If I rebuild † those things that I tore down, I show myself to be a lawbreaker. †

19 For through the law I died to the law, † so that I might live for God. † 20 I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. † The life I now live in the body, † I live by faith in the Son of God, † who loved † me † and gave himself † for me. † 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, † then Christ died † for nothing.

2:6 Lit *the recognized ones* **2:6** Or *God is not a respecter of persons* ; lit *God does not receive the face of man* **2:9** Other mss read *Peter* **2:11** Other mss read *Peter* **2:11** Or *he was in the wrong* **2:14** Other mss read *Peter* **2:14** Some translations continue the quotation through v. 16 or v. 21. **2:16** Or *by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ* **2:16** Or *by the faithfulness of Christ* **2:16** Lit *law all flesh will not* **2:17** Or *servant* **2:20** Lit *flesh*

2:1 Ac 15:2-30 **2:1** Ac 4:36 **2:1** Ti 1:4 **2:2** 1Pt 4:13 **2:4** 2Pt 2:1 **2:5** 2Th 2:10 **2:6** Dt 16:19 **2:7** Col 3:11 **2:7** Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **2:9** Jd 1 **2:9** Jn 1:42 **2:9** Jn 21:7 **2:9** 1Tm 3:15; Rv 3:12; 10:1 **2:10** Mk 14:7; Rm 15:26 **2:13** Rm 2:28-29 **2:13** Mk 12:15 **2:14** Rm 1:13 **2:14** Rm 14:2 **2:14** Rm 6:2 **2:16** Rm 3:20; Gl 3:2,5,10 **2:17** Rm 6:23; 1Tm 1:15 **2:17** 1Co 3:5 **2:17** Lk 20:16 **2:18** Ac 20:32 **2:18** Rm 2:25,27; Jms 2:9,11 **2:19** Rm 7:4; 1Pt 2:24 **2:19** Php 1:21 **2:20** Mk 10:38; 2Co 13:5 **2:20** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **2:20** Jn 3:16 **2:20** 2Th 2:13 **2:20** Ti 2:14 **2:20** Lk 20:38; Rm 14:8 **2:21** Rm 7:5; 9:31; Gl 5:4; Php 3:6 **2:21** 1Co 8:11; Php 3:10

2:3 Paul has been preaching that salvation comes by faith alone, and thus Gentiles need not be circumcised. The apostles in Jerusalem affirmed this since **Titus**, a **Greek** (or Gentile), was not required **to be circumcised.**

2:7 Paul's primary task was taking the gospel to **the uncircumcised** Gentiles, while Peter's was primarily to **the circumcised** Jews. Nevertheless, Paul did preach to Jews (Ac 13:13-43) and Peter also preached to Gentiles (Ac 10). This was a primary focus, but not an exclusive one.

2:9 Pillars was a term used by the Jews for leading teachers. These pillars supported the church, or temple of God, by their apostolic teaching.

2:10 Care for the **poor** is a significant concern throughout Scripture. Paul brought funds for poverty

stricken Christians in Jerusalem (Ac 11:27-30) and continued to gather a collection for these believers (Rm 15:22-29; 1Co 16:1-4; 2Co 8:1–9:15).

2:11-14 It is extraordinary that Paul so sharply criticizes **Cephas** (Peter**)**, but the heart of the matter is the integrity of the gospel. The presenting situation was the matter of table fellowship between **Jews** and **Gentiles.** That is, should Jewish and Gentile Christians eat together? Jews typically did not associate with Gentiles in order to preserve their ethnic and religious purity, and eating together was a sign of close fellowship (That is why Jesus was criticized for eating with sinners; Lk 15:2). Paul will go on to argue that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by faith, not by works or ethnic heritage. The gospel, therefore, eliminates the barriers between Jews and Gentiles, and Cephas should not hesitate to eat with anyone in Christ.

2:15 Paul is not saying that Jews have not sinned (see 2:17). Jews commonly referred to non-Jews as **Gentile sinners.**

2:16 The crux of Paul's message in this letter is that no one, Jew or Gentile, is **justified by the works of the law.** All are **justified by faith in Christ.** In this way, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (3:28).

2:18 Those things that I tore down likely refers to the law of Moses. Paul razed the law by preaching that it is no longer binding, having been fulfilled by Christ. Salvation comes by faith in Christ alone.

2:19 Paul **died to the law** because he has been **crucified with Christ.** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by his crucifixion (3:13), paying the penalty that the law demanded for sin. By Paul's participation with Christ, he can say he has also died (with Christ) to the law.

2:20 Because Paul has been crucified with Christ, the "old Paul" no longer lives. His new life is powered by **Christ** in him and is lived **by faith.**

JUSTIFICATION THROUGH FAITH

3 You foolish † Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, † before whose
eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed † as crucified? † 2 I only want
to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law
or by believing what you heard? † 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by the
Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? 4 Did you experience † † so much
for nothing — if in fact it was for nothing?

EQUALITY OF THE SEXES

In the biblical account of creation there is a complete equality between men and women; neither sex is given prominence over the other, a truth related to the fact that male and female are both created in God's image. Further, Scripture teaches that in the redeemed state of those who are "in Christ" there is neither male nor female (Gl 3:28), another nod to the equality of the sexes. We cannot, however, bypass the teaching that a distinction between the roles or functions carried out by women and men is addressed in

Genesis 2:18-25.

We must acknowledge that women have at times been regarded as second-class members of the human race—not by God's design but as a result of the fall. Beginning with the creation narrative, there are indications that women and men are equal in God's sight. In Genesis 1:26-27 we find clear teaching that women, as well as men, possess the image of God. This passage declares that mankind who was created in the divine image is both male and female, for both sexes bear the image of their Creator. But both women and men have sinned, falling short of the glory of God (Gn 3; Rm 3:23).

The attitude of Jesus toward women is quite telling. Mary and Martha were members of Jesus's circle of friends. Jesus demonstrated care and concern for the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4). He commended the faith of a woman suffering from hemorrhage (Mt 9:20-22), as well as the devotion of the woman who anointed him at Bethany (Mt 26:6-13). Following his resurrection, Jesus first appeared to women and commissioned them to tell the disciples the good news that he was risen (Jn 20:14-18).

As we previously noted, women are equal with men in redemption. It should be observed that the Galatians 3 passage is a reference to equality in salvation, in the righteous standing individuals enjoy before God when they place saving faith in Christ; it was not intended to address matters of service within the church. All who are in union with Christ, who have been baptized in Christ, have put on Christ (Gl 3:27). Women, like men, are recipients of the gifts of God's Spirit (Rm 12; 1Co 12–14). The Spirit came on women and men at Pentecost (Ac 2), and brought salvation to women like Lydia (Ac 16), as well as the daughters of Philip (Ac 21).

Questions related to service and leadership are raised by passages that restrict women in certain roles (1Co 11:3-16; 14:33-38; 1Tm 2:8-15). Still, in both the OT and the NT, there are examples of women in key roles. These persons include Deborah, (Jdg 4–5), Esther, Mary (Ac 1), Priscilla (Ac 18), Phoebe (Rm 16), and Chloe (1Co 1), to name a few.

Men and women are granted a position of unusual dignity and significance throughout Scripture. The roles of wife, mother, and educator, which are often given to women in the Bible, are seen as honorable roles. The woman in Proverbs 31 is praised for active service outside of the home as well as within it. Women, as well as men, have a glorious place and destiny in God's plan and purpose. Symbolically, the church, which includes the redeemed women and men throughout the ages, is represented in the concluding book of the Bible as a woman, the bride of Christ. We celebrate the wonderful news that men and women have been redeemed in Christ and that men and women have been gifted for service for the glory of God.

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5 So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles † among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard — 6 just like Abraham who **believed God, † and it was credited to him for righteousness**? † †

7 You know, then, that those who have faith, these are Abraham's sons. †
8 Now the Scripture saw in advance that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and proclaimed the gospel ahead of time to Abraham, † saying, **All the**

nations † **will be blessed through you.** † † 9 Consequently those who have faith are blessed with Abraham, † who had faith. †

LAW AND PROMISE

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, † because it is written, † **Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed.** † † 11 Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because **the righteous will live** † **by faith.** † † 12 But the law is not based on faith; instead, **the one who does these things will live by them.** † † 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, † because it is written, **Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.** † † 14 The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith. †

15 Brothers and sisters, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will. † 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, **and to your seed,** † † who is Christ. 17 My point is this: The law, which came 430 years later, † does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God † and thus cancel the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise; but God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

19 Why then was the law given? † It was added for the sake of transgressions † until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was put into effect through angels † by means of a mediator. † 20 Now a mediator is not just for one person alone, but God is one. † 21 Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if the law had been granted with the ability to give life, then righteousness would certainly be on the basis of the law. 22 But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin's power, † † so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith † in Jesus Christ to those who believe. †

23 Before this faith † came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until

the coming faith was revealed. † 24 The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, † so that we could be justified by faith. 25 But since that faith † has come, we are no longer under a guardian, 26 for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.

SONS AND HEIRS

27 For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. † 28 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, † male and female; † since you are all one † in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs † according to the promise. †

3:1 Other mss add *not to obey the truth* **3:1** Other mss add *among you* **3:2** Lit *hearing with faith*, also in v. 5 **3:4** Or *suffer* **3:8** Or *Gentiles* **3:9** Or *with believing Abraham* **3:15** Or *a human covenant that has been ratified* **3:17** Other mss add *in Christ* **3:19** Or *because of transgressions* **3:22** Lit *under sin*
3:1 Rm 1:14 **3:1** Mt 27:22 **3:4** Php 1:29 **3:5** Mk 13:22 **3:6** Jn 14:1 **3:6** Gn 15:6 **3:6** Gn 15:6 **3:7** Jn 8:37,39 **3:8** Gn 16:15; Jn 8:37; Heb 2:16 **3:8** Gn 12:3; 18:18 **3:8** Gn 12:3; 18:18 **3:9** Jn 8:39 **3:10** Jms 3:10 **3:10** Ac 15:15 **3:10** Dt 27:26 **3:10** Dt 27:26; Rm 4:15 **3:11** Php 1:21 **3:11** Hab 2:4 **3:11** Hab 2:4 **3:12** Lv 18:5 **3:12** Lv 18:5 **3:13** 1Pt 2:24 **3:13** Dt 21:23 **3:13** Dt 21:23; Ac 5:30 **3:14** Rm 4:16 **3:16** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 24:7 **3:16** Gn 12:7; 13:15; 17:8; 24:7 **3:17** Gn 15:13; Ex 12:40; Ac 7:6 **3:19** Rm 4:15; 5:20 **3:19** Gn 16:7; Mt 13:49; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; Rv 14:6 **3:19** Heb 8:6 **3:20** Dt 6:4 **3:22** Rm 6:23 **3:22** Rm 3:22 **3:22** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **3:23** Jd 3 **3:23** Lk 10:21 **3:24** Mt 5:17; Col 2:17; Heb 9:10 **3:25** Jd 3 **3:27** Pr 31:25 **3:28** Jn 8:33 **3:28** Rm 10:12; 1Co 12:13; Gl 5:6 **3:28** Jn 17:11 **3:29** Rm 4:14; 8:17 **3:29** Rm 4:13

3:1 Paul asks **who has cast a spell on** the Galatians, referring to the influence of evil spells. Paul is speaking metaphorically to say that the Galatians are acting as though they have been bewitched, causing them to miss the significance of Christ's work.

3:2-6 Paul's questions are intended to show that the Galatians' own effort, or **works of the law**, has achieved nothing. The **Spirit** was received by faith; miracles were performed by God not by **works of the law**; and Abraham **was credited** with **righteousness** by faith (not by effort).

3:7-9 Paul undermines Jewish ethnic privilege by declaring that **those who have faith . . . are Abraham's sons**. This realigns the heritage of the patriarch so that Jews would not simply trust in their biological relation to Abraham as guaranteeing their status before God. Rather, Paul draws on Genesis 12:3 to argue that God always intended to **justify the Gentiles by faith**. Just as Abraham had faith and it was credited to him as righteousness (3:6; Gn 15:6), so Gentiles with faith **are blessed with Abraham.**

3:10-14 Paul draws on Scripture to show that the law condemns, since no one keeps it perfectly, but faith brings life (Dt 27:26; Hab 2:4). Christ has dealt with the penalty for sin that the law demands **by becoming a curse for us** (Dt 21:23). Because of his sin sacrifice, Gentiles may receive **the blessing of Abraham** and the **Spirit through faith** in Christ.

3:16 Paul draws on the promises made **to Abraham and to his seed** (Gn 12:7)—"To your offspring (seed) I will give this land"—and interprets the seed to refer to **Christ.** He will go on to argue that those in Christ are the true inheritors of the promises to Abraham, rather than his physical descendants.

3:17 The promises to Abraham are not superseded by **the law, which came 430 years later.** In other words, the law does not overshadow **the promise**, just as the works of the law do not supplant faith.

3:19 The law was given **for the sake of transgressions**, meaning that its primary purpose was to convict humanity of sin **until the Seed** (Christ) . . . **would come** (3:21-23; cp. Rm 3:19-20). The **mediator** refers to Moses, while the reference to **angels** reflects Jewish traditions associating angels with the giving of the law.

3:24-25 The law . . . was our guardian until Christ. The word *guardian* refers to a "boy-leader"—usually a slave who had responsibility to conduct a boy to and from school, and for his general behavior. Once the boy became of age, the guardian was no longer needed. Paul likens the law to such a guardian. It is the baby-sitter of God's people until they come of age with the coming of Christ. In this way **faith** takes the place of the law.

3:26 To be a son was to enjoy the status of privilege. The son was the inheritor of his father's estate, and unlike a slave, the son was an honored member of the family. **In Christ Jesus**, even Gentiles become heirs of God through the promises to Abraham. See also "A Biblical View of Adoption," *p. 1367.*

3:28 Believers are united as one in Christ. Social distinctions and status no longer separate them. Gender and ethnicity are not eradicated, but they do not divide the body of Christ.

4 Now I say that as long as the heir † is a child, he differs in no way from
a slave, though he is the owner † of everything. 2 Instead, he is under
guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 In the same way
we also, when we were children, were in slavery under the elements † of the
world. † 4 When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, † born of a
woman, † born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might
receive adoption as sons. † 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of
his Son † into our † hearts, crying, "*Abba*, † Father!" † 7 So you are no
longer a slave † but a son, † and if a son, then God has made you an heir. †

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE GALATIANS

8 But in the past, since you didn't know God, † you were enslaved to things †
that by nature are not gods. 9 But now, since you know God, † or rather have
become known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and
worthless † elements? † Do you want to be enslaved to them all over again?
10 You are observing special days, months, seasons, and years. † 11 I am fearful
for you, that perhaps my labor for you has been wasted.
12 I beg you, brothers and sisters: Become like me, for I also became like you.
You have not wronged me; 13 you know † that previously I preached the gospel
to you because of a weakness of the flesh. 14 You did not despise or reject me

though my physical condition was a trial for you. † On the contrary, you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus himself.
15 Where, then, is your blessing? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16 So then, have I become your enemy because I told you the truth? † 17 They court you eagerly, but not for good. They want to exclude you from me, so that you would pursue them. 18 But it is always good to be pursued † in a good manner — and not just when I am with you. 19 My children, † I am again suffering labor pains † for you until Christ is formed in you. 20 I would like to be with you right now and change my tone of voice, because I don't know what to do about you.

SARAH AND HAGAR: TWO COVENANTS

21 Tell me, you who want to be under the law, don't you hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham † had two sons, one by a slave † and the other by a free woman. 23 But the one by the slave was born as a result of the flesh, while the one by the free woman was born through promise. 24 These things are being taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai † and bears children into slavery — this is Hagar. † 25 Now Hagar represents Mount Sinai in Arabia † and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, † for she is in slavery with her children. 26 But the Jerusalem above † is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written, †

Rejoice, childless woman, †
unable to give birth.
Burst into song and shout, you who are not in labor, for the children of the desolate woman will be many, more numerous than those of the woman who has a husband. † †

28 Now you too, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, † are children of promise. †
29 But just as then the child born as a result of the flesh persecuted the one born as a result of the Spirit, † so also now. † 30 But what does the Scripture say? **"Drive out the slave and her son, for the son of the slave will never be a coheir with the son of the free woman." † †** 31 Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of a slave but of the free woman. †

4:3 Or *spirits*, or *principles* **4:6** Other mss read *your* **4:6** Aramaic for *father* **4:8** Or *beings* **4:12-13** Or 12 *Become like I am, because I — inasmuch as you are brothers and sisters — am not requesting anything of you. You wronged me.* 13 *You know* **4:14** Other mss read *me* **4:18** Lit *zealously courted*
4:1 Nm 26:52-62 **4:1** Col 3:22 **4:3** Rm 7:6; 2Pt 2:20 **4:4** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **4:4** Gn 3:15; Lk 2:7; Php 2:7 **4:5** Dt 14:1; Mt 5:9 **4:6** Ac 16:7; Rm 5:5,20; 8:9,16; 2Co 3:17 **4:6** Mk 14:36; Rm 8:15 **4:7** Mt 10:24; Rv 1:1 **4:7** Dt 14:1; Mt 5:9 **4:7** Nm 26:52-62; Rm 4:14; 8:17 **4:8** Jn 7:28; Php 3:8 **4:9** Pr 2:6; Php 3:8 **4:9** Mk 14:17; Rm 15:26 **4:9** Col 2:8 **4:10** Rm 14:5; Col 2:16 **4:16** Eph 4:15 **4:19** 1Th 2:11 **4:19** 1Co 4:15; Jms 1:18 **4:22** Gn 16:15; Jn 8:37; Heb 2:16 **4:22** Rm 8:15,21; Heb 2:15 **4:24** Ex 16:1 **4:24** Gn 16:1 **4:25** Is 21:13; Jr 25:24; Ezk 27:21; Gl 1:17 **4:25** Mt 23:37; Ac 8:1 **4:26** Heb 12:22; Rv 3:12; 21:2,10 **4:27** Ac 15:15 **4:27** Gn 11:30; Lk 1:7 **4:27** Is 54:1 **4:27** Is 54:1 **4:28** Ps 105:9; Jms 2:21 **4:28** Gn 12:7; Rm 9:8; Gl 3:29 **4:29** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **4:29** Gn 21:9 **4:30** Gn 21:10 **4:30** Gn 21:10 **4:31** 1Pt 3:6

4:2 See the note on 3:24.

4:3 On **elements**, see the note on Colossians 2:8.

4:5-7 In the ancient world, typically only **sons** were heirs (see the note on 3:26). Paul states that all believers, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, have become sons of God in Christ Jesus; we are thus heirs.

4:10 Special days, months, seasons, and years refer to observances of the Jewish calendar. The Galatians' keeping of these observances suggests that they consider themselves still under law.

4:21-31 Paul engages in an extended typology, extracting a theological principle from the history of Abraham's two sons and applying it to his argument. Though Paul uses the word *allegory* (translated **figuratively** in v. 24), this is not an allegory of the type made famous by the Jewish philosopher, Philo of Alexandria, which downplayed the historical nature of the OT. The key point of the typology is that one of Abraham's sons was birthed **by the free woman** . . . **born through promise** (Isaac; 2:22; Gn 21:2), while the other was born of the slave woman Hagar **as a result of the flesh** (Ishmael; 2:23; Gn 16:5). The two women therefore represent **two covenants**—the old covenant that keeps people enslaved to sin under the law, and the new covenant that gives people freedom and sonship by faith in Christ. **Children of** the **promise** are therefore free and live by faith in the promise, while children **of the flesh** are slaves and live according to the law.

FREEDOM OF THE CHRISTIAN

5 For freedom, Christ set us free. Stand firm † then and don't submit
again to a yoke of slavery. † 2 Take note! I, Paul, am telling you that if
you get yourselves circumcised, Christ will not benefit you at all.
3 Again I testify to every man who gets himself circumcised that he is obligated
to do the entire law. 4 You who are trying to be justified by the law are alienated
from Christ; you have fallen from grace. † 5 For we eagerly await † through the
Spirit, by faith, the hope † of righteousness. 6 For in Christ Jesus neither
circumcision nor uncircumcision accomplishes anything; what matters is faith †
working through love. †

7 You were running well. Who prevented you from being persuaded regarding
the truth? † † 8 This persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. †
9 A little leaven † leavens the whole batch of dough. 10 I myself am persuaded
in the Lord you will not accept any other view. But whoever it is that is
confusing you will pay the penalty. † 11 Now brothers and sisters, if I still
preach circumcision, why am I still persecuted? In that case the offense of the
cross † has been abolished. 12 I wish those who are disturbing you might also
let themselves be mutilated!
13 For you were called † to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this
freedom as an opportunity † for the flesh, but serve one another through love.
14 For the whole law is fulfilled † in one statement: **Love your neighbor as
yourself.** † † 15 But if you bite and devour † one another, watch out, or you
will be consumed by one another.

THE SPIRIT VERSUS THE FLESH

16 I say then, walk by the Spirit † and you will certainly not carry out the desire
of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires † what is against the Spirit, and the Spirit
desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you
don't do what you want. † 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under
the law.
19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: † sexual immorality, † moral
impurity, † promiscuity, † 20 idolatry, † sorcery, † hatreds, † strife, †
jealousy, † outbursts of anger, † selfish ambitions, † dissensions, † factions, †
21 envy, † † drunkenness, carousing, † and anything similar. I am warning you
about these things — as I warned you before — that those who practice such
things will not inherit the kingdom of God. †
22 But the fruit of the Spirit † is love, † joy, † peace, patience, † kindness, †
goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, † and self-control. † The law is not
against such things. † 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus † have
crucified the flesh † with its passions and desires. † 25 If we live † by the

Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. [26] Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. †

5:7 Or *obeying the truth* **5:9** Or *yeast* **5:13** Lit *a pretext* ; a military term for abuse of position **5:19** Other mss add *adultery*, **5:21** Other mss add *murders*, **5:23** Or *Against such things there is no law*
4:21–5:1 Gl 4:22 **5:1** Rm 14:4; Php 1:27 **5:4** 2Pt 3:18 **5:5** Jd 21 **5:5** Rm 8:23-25; 1Th 1:3 **5:6** 1Th 1:3 **5:6** 1Co 13:1; Jms 2:18-22 **5:7** Jn 8:14; 1Jn 5:20 **5:8** Col 3:15; 1Pt 1:15 **5:10** Mk 12:40 **5:11** Lk 9:23 **5:13** Col 3:15 **5:14** Mt 1:22 **5:14** Lv 19:18 **5:14** Lv 19:18; Mt 7:12; 19:19; 22:37-40; Jn 13:34 **5:15** Gl 5:20; Php 3:2,20 **5:16** Rm 8:4; 1Tm 3:16; 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **5:17** 1Pt 2:11 **5:17** Rm 7:15,23; Php 2:13 **5:19** Mk 7:21; 1Th 4:3 **5:19** 1Th 4:7 **5:19** Mk 7:22 **5:20** Col 3:5; 1Pt 4:3 **5:20** Rv 18:23 **5:20** Rm 8:7 **5:20** Ti 3:9 **5:20** Jms 3:4 **5:20** Rv 14:19 **5:20** Rm 2:8 **5:20** Rm 16:17 **5:20** 2Pt 2:1 **5:21** Rm 1:29 **5:21** Rm 13:13; 1Pt 4:3 **5:21** 1Co 6:10; 15:50 **5:22** Mt 7:16-20; Rm 6:21; 7:4; 8:5; Eph 5:9 **5:22** 1Co 13:1; Phm 5 **5:22** Jn 15:11; 2Co 6:10 **5:22** Ex 34:6; 2Tm 3:10 **5:22** Ps 25:6; 2Co 6:6 **5:23** Jms 3:13 **5:23** 2Pt 1:6 **5:24** Nm 3:12 **5:24** Rm 8:12 **5:24** 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **5:25** Php 1:21; 3:16 **5:26** Php 2:3

5:1 Political freedom is not in view here; freedom from the regulations of the law is. For instance, circumcision, though commanded in the law, now does no spiritual good (5:2).

5:3 There is no provision to keep only part of the **law.** The **man who gets himself circumcised** for the sake of keeping the law, therefore, is under **the entire law.** That means he will be a lawbreaker, since no one can keep the law (3:10).

5:9 Leaven (yeast) was commonly used as an illustration of sin in Jewish thought. As leaven permeates dough, this law-based thinking can easily infiltrate the church.

5:13 For freedom, Christ set us free (5:1), but this **freedom** is not a license for indulging the desires of **the flesh.** Instead, freedom should be harnessed for the exercise of **love** in service of **one another.**

5:14 Somewhat ironically, given the anti-law polemic of the letter, Paul appeals to Leviticus 19:18 to undergird his exhortation to **love.** As Jesus taught, love fulfills the **law** (Mt 22:34-40).

5:16 Walking **by the Spirit** means living according to the direction of the Spirit. Rather than living according to the instructions of the law, believers are indwelt by God himself. If we live in step with him, **the desire of the flesh** will not be followed.

5:17 Paul acknowledges that all believers will continue to experience tension between **the flesh** and **the Spirit.** This is caused by the overlap of the ages: the flesh belongs to this present evil age (1:4), while the Spirit belongs to the age to come (Eph 1:13-14). Until the resurrection of our bodies, believers will continue to experience this tension. Nevertheless, Paul exhorts Christians to follow the Spirit, not the flesh (6:8). See also “Do My Beliefs Fit a Christian Worldview?” *p. 1461*.

5:19-21 This vice list resembles several such lists found in the ancient world. It is representative of **the works of the flesh**, and is not meant to be comprehensive. For example, murder is absent from the list. Though believers are justified by faith, not works (2:16), those who persist in such sins without repentance **will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

5:22-23 Opposite to the vice list of 5:19-21 is this virtue list of **the fruit of the Spirit.** The word *fruit* emphasizes that the Spirit produces these characteristics in the life of the believer. This is not a checklist of things to do; rather, it is representative of the character of someone who walks by the Spirit (5:16). See “Biblical Models for Business,” *p. 782*.

CARRY ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS

6 Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle † spirit, † † watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. †
2 Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. †
3 For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, † he deceives himself. 4 Let each person examine his own work, † and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. 5 For each person will have to carry his own load.
6 Let the one who is taught the word share † all his good things with the teacher. 7 Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a person sows he will also reap, 8 because the one who sows to his flesh will reap destruction from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit † will reap eternal life † from the Spirit. 9 Let us not get tired † of doing good, † for we will reap at the proper time if we don't give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work † for the good † of all, especially for those who belong to the household † of faith. †

CONCLUDING EXHORTATION

11 Look at what large letters I use as I write to you in my own handwriting.
12 Those who want to make a good impression in the flesh † are the ones who would compel you to be circumcised † — but only to avoid being persecuted † for the cross † of Christ. 13 For even the circumcised don't keep † the law themselves, and yet they want you to be circumcised in order to boast about your flesh. 14 But as for me, I will never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The world has been crucified to me through the cross, and I to the world. 15 For † both circumcision and uncircumcision † mean nothing; what matters instead is a new creation. † 16 May peace come to all those who follow this standard, and mercy even to the Israel † of God! †
17 From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. † 18 Brothers and sisters, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. † Amen.

6:1 Or *with the Spirit of gentleness* **6:15** Other mss add *in Christ Jesus* **6:16** Or *And for those who follow*

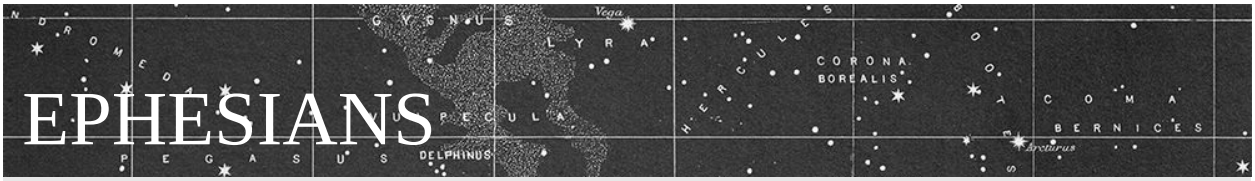
this standard, may peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God, or *And as many who will follow this standard, peace be upon them and mercy even upon the Israel of God.*
6:1 Jms 3:13 **6:1** Ps 51:12 **6:1** Jms 1:13 **6:2** 1Co 9:21 **6:3** 1Co 3:18; 2Co 12:11; Gl 2:6 **6:4** Mk 14:6; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26 **6:6** Rm 15:27; 1Pt 5:2 **6:8** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **6:8** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **6:9** 2Th 3:13 **6:9** Lk 18:18; Jms 4:17 **6:10** 2Jn 8 **6:10** Gn 1:31; 3Jn 11 **6:10** 1Tm 5:8 **6:10** Jd 3 **6:12** Php 3:3 **6:12** Ac 15:1 **6:12** 2Tm 3:12 **6:12** Php 3:18 **6:13** Lk 11:28 **6:15** Col 3:11 **6:15** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **6:16** Lk 3:8 **6:17** Php 3:10 **6:18** Ps 51:12

6:1 The **spiritual** ones are not a special group within the church. They are those who have received the Spirit (3:14; 4:6-7) and are thus led by the Spirit (5:18,25). They are to gently **restore** someone who has been **overtaken in any wrongdoing.** Rather than using harsh condemnation, the church is to discipline and restore by the principle of love.

6:2 Since love fulfills the law (5:14), carrying **one another's burdens** fulfills **the law of Christ**—the law of love.

6:9 The **proper time** refers to the final judgment. Throughout the NT, perseverance in obedience is tied to the confidence that God will sort all things out on the final day.

6:14 Paul will only **boast** in **the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ**, which is to boast in the appearance of weakness (cp. 1Co 1:18). The priorities, strength, and glories of this **world** are no longer relevant to him because it **has been crucified** to him, and he to it. His old self, belonging to the world, has died; his new self is alive to God (2:19-20).



EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the Ephesians is an anthem to the sovereign grace of God displayed toward sinners in Christ. It contains some of the worst news ("you were dead in your trespasses and sins") and best news ("but God . . . made us alive with Christ") in all of Scripture. In view of this grace, Paul calls believers to "live worthy of the calling" we have received.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Paul referred to himself by name as the author of the book of Ephesians in two places (1:1; 3:1). Many regard this book as the crown of all of Paul's writings. Today some scholars think the book contains a writing style, vocabulary, and even some teachings that are not typical of the apostle. If that is the case, then it would mean a disciple of Paul had surpassed him in theological insight and spiritual perception. Of such an erudite disciple the early church has no record. Furthermore, pseudonymity (a writer writing under someone else's name) probably was not practiced by early Christians. We can conclude, in line with the undisputable acceptance of Pauline authorship in the early church, that there is no reason to dispute the Pauline authorship of Ephesians.

BACKGROUND: Paul penned the letter while in prison (3:1; 4:1; 6:20). Disagreement exists concerning whether Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (Ac 24:22) around AD 57–59 or in Rome (Ac 28:30) in about 60–62 when he wrote this letter. Paul most likely wrote Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians during the same imprisonment. Tradition suggests that Paul wrote the letter from Rome around 60–61, which would have transpired while Paul was under house arrest in guarded rental quarters (Ac 28:30).

Relatively little is known about the recipients of the letter called Ephesians. Some important and early manuscripts do not contain the words "at Ephesus" (1:1). The letter was carried to its destination by Tychicus, who in Ephesians 6:21 and Colossians 4:7 is identified as Paul's emissary. The Ephesian and Colossian letters probably were delivered at the same time since in both letters the apostle noted that Tychicus would inform the churches concerning Paul's situation.

We can suggest the following possible scenario. While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, the need arose to respond to new religious philosophies influencing the Asia Minor area. The impetus to write the letters came to Paul from Epaphras, who informed him of the threats to Christianity in the Lycus Valley. In response, Paul wrote a letter to the church at Colossae. About the same time (either shortly before or shortly thereafter), he penned a more expansive and general letter intended for churches in Asia Minor, including Laodicea (see Col 4:16) and Ephesus.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The letter to the Ephesians was probably a circular letter, with Ephesus being the primary church addressed. Paul stayed at Ephesus, the capital city of the province of Asia, for almost three years (see Ac 20:31). The fact that it was a circular letter helps explain the absence of personal names of Ephesian believers. From its inception Paul intended for the letter to gain a wider audience than that which would be found in Ephesus alone. After the Ephesians read it, the letter would have been routed to Colossae, Laodicea, and other churches in the area. Known to be a letter of the apostle Paul, the letter was readily accepted as Scripture by the recipients.

STRUCTURE

The salutation and structure of Ephesians are quite similar to Colossians. Many topics are commonly treated in both letters. The message is strikingly similar. Of the 155 verses in Ephesians, over half contain identical expressions with those in Colossians. Colossians, however, is abrupt, argumentative, and seemingly compressed. Ephesians presents a bigger, finished picture that is meditative, instructive, and expansive.

Though Ephesians and Colossians contain many similarities, it is important to observe the distinctives of Ephesians. When the content of Ephesians that is common to Colossians is removed, there remain at least seven units of material unique to Ephesians.

1:3-14	An expanded benediction
2:1-10	A confessional statement on the new life
3:14-21	A prayer to understand the mystery of Christ
4:1-16	An extended exhortation to Christian unity
5:8-14	A section on walking in the light
5:23-32	A theological expansion on the household roles
6:10-17	A unique picture of the Christian's spiritual warfare

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Ephesians is filled with texts that contribute to a fully orbed doctrine of the Trinity. God the Father is the One whose eternal plan for the church has now been revealed. Jesus the Son is the exalted Head of the body, the church, and the One for whose glory the church exists. The church is a house or temple in which God's Spirit lives, yet the Spirit fills each believer individually.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Ephesians shows the dreadful condition of all who are still in their natural condition: "dead in your trespasses and sins" (2:1). Paul summarizes this as "without hope and without God" (2:12). The alternate group is those whom God has changed and who are in a supernatural state: "made alive with Christ" (2:5). Old distinctions between Jew and Gentile used to count for something, but now in the church they no longer apply.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The best-known and most-loved NT summary of the gospel is Ephesians 2:8-9, with its emphasis on grace and faith. Ephesians also notes God's delight in electing persons to salvation. The language of predestination to eternal life is pronounced (1:5,11), as is Paul's notion that "Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (5:25). (The long-standing theological dispute about divine election—predestination—is a matter of discerning the basis of God's choice. All students who take the Bible seriously affirm divine predestination; the debate is simply over its basis.)

EPHESIANS TIMELINE

1400–450 BC

Ephesus is first occupied. **1400–1300**

Greeks cross the Aegean Sea and settle in Ephesus. **1000**

Croesus, king of Lydia, captures Ephesus. **561**

Temple of the moon goddess, Artemis, is funded and built by Croesus. **560**

Heraclitus of Ephesus, an early philosopher **540–480**

450–85 BC

Herostratus burns the temple of Artemis to establish his place in history. **JULY 21, 356**

A 25,000-seat stadium is built in Ephesus during the reign of Lysimachus. **323–281**

Ephesus is under the control of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. **280–133**

Ephesus comes under Roman control when King Attalus III of Pergamos wills his kingdom to Rome and the Roman province of Asia is created. **133**

The Ephesians rebel against Roman taxation, looking to Mithridates VI Eupathor, king of Pontus, as liberator. A large number of Italians are killed in the rebellion. **89**

50 BC–AD 54

Mark Antony and Cleopatra reside in Ephesus. **33–32 BC**

Ephesus experiences a destructive earthquake. **AD 17**

Paul travels through Ephesus toward the end of his second missionary journey. **AD 52**

Apollos comes to Ephesus and is mentored by Aquila and Priscilla. **AD 52**

Paul returns to Ephesus for a 2 ½ year ministry. **AD 54**

AD 55–110

Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus. **56**

Paul writes letter to the Ephesians. **61**

Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, receives his first letter from Paul. **62**

Timothy receives second letter from Paul. **67**

Paul's death in Rome **67?**

Ignatius of Antioch sends one of his seven letters to the church at Ephesus. **110**

GREETING

1 Paul, † an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will: †
To the faithful saints † in Christ Jesus † at Ephesus. † †

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD'S RICH BLESSINGS

3 Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. † 4 For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. † † 5 He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace † that he lavished on us in the Beloved One. †

7 In him we have redemption † through his blood, the forgiveness † of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace 8 that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. † 9 He made known to us the mystery of his will, † according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ † 10 as a plan for the right time † — to bring everything together in Christ, † both things in heaven and things on earth † in him. †

11 In him we have also received an inheritance, † because we were predestined † according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, 12 so that we who had already put our hope † in Christ might bring praise to his glory. †

13 In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit † when you heard the word of truth, † the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment † of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

15 This is why, since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. 17 I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, † would give you the Spirit † † of wisdom and revelation † in the knowledge of him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope † of his calling, † what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power † toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.

GOD'S POWER IN CHRIST

20 He exercised this power in Christ by raising him from the dead and seating
him at his right hand † in the heavens † —

PREACHING AND TEACHING A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen define *worldview* as "an articulation of the basic beliefs embedded in a shared grand story that are rooted in a faith commitment and that give shape and direction to the whole of our individual and corporate lives" *(The Drama of Scripture)* Worldviews answer perennial human questions like these: Where did we come from? What's gone wrong with the world, and how do we fix it? How should we live our lives?

The shaping of a Christian worldview is a lengthy process that blends a host of influences, from one's family background and education to cultural and media influences and most importantly, to the work of Scripture and the Holy Spirit in the individual heart. Worldviews are not overnight creations. So how, then, do we go about preaching and teaching the Christian worldview to others?

BE ROOTED IN SCRIPTURE

The Christian worldview is rooted in the Word of God. To "think Christianly" requires that one have a grasp of and commitment to biblical truth. Thus, it is essential that any preaching and teaching which seeks to communicate a Christian worldview must be solidly based on the teachings of Scripture.

This practice requires not only a dedication to biblical truth but also an understanding of valid hermeneutical principles so that we can be sure that what is being taught is itself faithful to the authentic meaning of Scripture. We want to teach and preach what God is actually saying to us in his Word, and that means we must be able to "rightly [divide] the word of truth" (2Tm 2:15, KJV).

This means that the effective biblical preacher and teacher will have an understanding of various biblical genres and how they will require varying interpretive approaches. For example, teaching principles that emerge from Pauline texts will typically require a more literal approach, while preaching from poetic texts will require an understanding of the more symbolic and image-filled nature of those texts. We can create great distress and confusion when we seek to turn a metaphor into a doctrine.

The effective interpreter will also need to be a faithful exegete so that he is accurately presenting the truth of God's Word. This involves some awareness of biblical languages and historical background. For example, in 1 Corinthians 8 Paul warns believers about eating meat that has been sacrificed to idols, lest doing so lead new believers astray. If one interprets this as simply a prescription about the use of meat sacrificed to idols, then it has little relationship to twenty-first century believers in the West, where we are unlikely to find such a section in the meat department at the local grocery store. If, however, this text is dealing with a more significant principle—that of conscience and how to relate to other believers who abstain from certain practices because of conscience—then this is a text that has an important message for contemporary Christians.

BE AWARE OF CULTURE

The effective teaching of a Christian worldview requires a solid foundation in Scripture, but that is only part

of the story. To use John Stott's image of preaching, we must also be able to build a bridge that connects the biblical world to the contemporary one. Such a bridge requires that we understand the world in which our listeners live, so that we can engage them within their own context.

Thus, preaching and teaching a Christian worldview not only requires a grasp of the biblical truth that shapes such a worldview, but an awareness of the contemporary culture in which our listeners live and work. That does not mean simply attacking popular culture; it means understanding the trends and events that contribute to shaping that culture. In a sense, we must learn the language of a culture if we are to communicate with those who reside within it.

Christian leaders need not immerse themselves in the negative elements of contemporary culture in order to address that world. For example, we need not watch pornography in order to understand its dangers. But those who wish to engage culture must at least be conversant with that culture, through reading, study, and observation. In addition to reading the secular press, the Christian should also take advantage of excellent faith-based resources in the form of websites, periodicals, and books in order that he might better understand and interpret contemporary cultural influences from a Christ-centered perspective.

BE FOCUSED ON APPLICATION

Haddon Robinson explains that "in application, we attempt to take what we believe is the truth of the eternal God, given in a particular time, place and situation, and apply it to people in the modern world, who live in another time, another place, and a very different situation." Through providing practical and godly counsel, we teach others to apply God's Word to daily life.

Making such application often will involve drawing general principles from the specific details of biblical texts, and that requires identifying the timeless truth that connects the ancient text with the contemporary situation. It is easy to connect "then" and "now" with certain texts, but many other texts require additional work if we are to find a point of connection between the biblical context and the world in which our listeners live. For these, we work with a ladder of abstraction that connects the two worlds. Visualize a ladder that has several spans, going to different places depending on what level you step on. We will select the level that will connect our text with the reality of our own time and culture. As we climb that ladder we want to make sure that the biblical and contemporary situations are truly similar, or comparable, at the points at which we are connecting them.

Though making application often involves offering real-life examples of putting a text into practice, there is danger at this point. It is possible for us, in the process of offering such application, to give the impression that our specific suggestions about ways to live out a text carry the force of Scripture. They do not, and we must be careful to avoid falling into the trap of legalism when we do application.

It is important to remember to keep the theological and practical elements linked. We want to share vital theological truths with listeners, but we don't want to leave them thinking that such truths are abstract ideas with no practical application; therefore, we must show them the implications of such theological ideas for their lives. Likewise, even as we talk about the practical acts of obedience and service that God requires, we should work to keep that linked to theological truth—we serve and obey because of who God is and because of what he has already done for us. It is his grace that saves us, not our acts of obedience.

If we don't keep the practical solidly linked to the theological, the result may foster a self-righteousness that depends on actions rather than God's grace. This is a danger when our sermons become so lifestyle-oriented ("don't smoke, drink, chew, or go with girls that do"), that listeners lose sight of the fact that we are saved by grace—a message that must be front and center. Nevertheless, since grace does not make obedience optional, we must find a balance in our preaching and teaching to properly present both elements of biblical truth.

As we apply biblical truth in conversations and from the pulpit, we give our listeners handles by which they can grasp the implications of those truths and see how to put them into action as they live out their Christian lives in their work, family, and worship.

MICHAEL DUDUIT

21 far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, † † not only in this age but also in the one to come. † 22 And **he subjected everything under his feet** † † and appointed him † as head † over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, † the fullness † of the one who fills all things † in every way.

1:1 Or *to the saints, the believers in Christ Jesus* **1:1** Other mss omit *at Ephesus* **1:4** Or *in his sight. In love* **1:8** Or *on us. With all wisdom and understanding* **1:10** Or *the fulfillment of times* **1:11** Or *In him we are also an inheritance,* **1:17** Or *the Father of glory* **1:17** Or *a spirit* **1:21** Lit *every name named* **1:22** Lit *gave him*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Eph 1:9 **1:1** Eph 5:2 **1:1** Ac 18:19-21; 19:9-10; 20:3,17; 1Co 15:32; Rv 2:1 **1:3** Eph 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12 **1:4** Jd 24 **1:6** Jn 1:14; Rm 5:2; 2Co 4:15 **1:6** Mt 3:17; Jn 3:35; 10:17; Col 1:13 **1:7** Heb 9:12 **1:7** Ps 25:11; Mt 9:2; Mk 2:5; Lk 24:47 **1:9** Rm 11:25; 16:25; Eph 3:3; Col 1:27 **1:9** Rm 9:11 **1:10** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **1:10** Php 2:10 **1:10** Col 1:16 **1:11** Pr 19:21 **1:12** 1Th 1:3 **1:12** Mk 10:37 **1:13** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **1:13** Col 1:5; 2Th 2:10 **1:14** Gn 38:17-18,20; 2Co 1:22; 5:5 **1:17** Ps 51:12 **1:17** 1Pt 4:13 **1:18** 1Th 1:3 **1:18** Col 3:15 **1:19** Ac 4:33 **1:20** Php 2:9 **1:20** Jn 20:17; Eph 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; Php 2:10; 1Pt 3:22 **1:21** 2Tm 2:19 **1:21** Mk 10:30 **1:22** Ps 8:6 **1:22** Ps 8:6; Rm 13:1; 1Co 15:27; 1Pt 3:22 **1:22** Col 2:10 **1:23** Eph 4:4 **1:23** Jn 1:16 **1:23** Col 3:11

1:3-10 Though these verses are broken up for clarity in translation, they are all one sentence in the original Greek—a powerful expression of praise to God for his saving grace (see **praise**, 1:6,12,14).

1:3 This verse serves as a summary statement for the section to follow (1:3-14): **in Christ**, God **has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.** The following verses articulate several of these spiritual blessings. The "in Christ" (also "in him," "through him") language permeates the entire section.

1:4 For he chose us in him refers to the election of God's people, chosen **before the foundation of the world.** There is considerable debate as to whether this election refers to all individuals in Christ or simply to a people in Christ—with individuals not necessarily predestined. The purpose of this election is to make a people **holy and blameless in love before** God.

1:5 Adoption in the Roman world meant that a child received all the legal rights of a natural born offspring, including the family name and status. Believers therefore receive full status as children of God, **through Jesus Christ.** See also "A Biblical View of Adoption," *p. 1367.*

1:7 Redemption recalls the major saving event of Israel's history, namely the exodus out of slavery in Egypt. Redemption in Christ refers to **the forgiveness of . . . trespasses** through his blood.

1:9 Mystery, as typical in Paul's writings, refers to the unveiling of the **will** of God through the work of Christ. The content of the mystery is stated in v. 10.

1:10 The mystery revealed in Christ is that God intends to **bring everything together in Christ** in a cosmic reconciliation.

1:11 To receive an **inheritance** was the right of sons. As adopted sons of God (1:5), believers will inherit his riches. Inheritance language also has a background in the OT, with the promised land of Canaan promised to God's people as their "inheritance." In Christ, however, our inheritance is one of heavenly glory. See "Divine Providence and Naturalism," *p. 1355;* "Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview," *p. 846.*

1:13 In the first century, people commonly marked their significant possessions with a seal. Thus, the **Holy Spirit** marks God's people as his own.

1:14 As in today's world, a **down payment** was paid to secure a legal claim. Thus, God has given his Holy Spirit to believers as a guarantee of their **inheritance** to come (1:11).

1:17 God of our Lord Jesus Christ recalls the description of God in 1:3. While fully God, Jesus could still say, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (Jn 20:17). When Paul prays they might receive **the Spirit of wisdom and revelation**, he is not praying that they receive new insights on par with Scripture. Rather, he is praying that the Holy Spirit will lead them into greater knowledge of God **(in the knowledge of him).**

1:20 The **right hand** was the position of power in relation to a king, as well as an expression of messianic expectation (Ps 110). Thus, Jesus is not only raised from the dead but enthroned, as described in 1:21-22.

1:21-22 Paul describes the cosmic and comprehensive sweep of Jesus's authority. Christ's work has consequences beyond simply the human realm—he is Lord over the entire spiritual realm, with its rulers, authorities, powers, and dominions. Ephesus was part of a region with a strong interest in spiritual forces, so Christ's supremacy over the heavens has great significance for their understanding of reality. Paul's description of the spiritual realm is in keeping with Jewish cosmology, in which the heavens are occupied with good and bad spiritual forces (see "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454*; "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*). Jesus is seated above them with absolute authority **in this age but also in the one to come.** The age to come is the time when, according to Jewish theology, God will restore King David's kingdom on earth.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

2 And you were dead † in your trespasses and sins 2 in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world, † according to the ruler of the power of the air, † the spirit † now working in the disobedient. † 3 We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly † desires, carrying out the inclinations † of our flesh and thoughts, and we were by nature children under wrath † as the others were also. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, † because of his great love † that he had for us, † 5 made us alive † with Christ even though we were dead † in trespasses. You are saved by grace! 6 He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus, † 7 so that in the coming ages † he might display the immeasurable riches † of his grace through his kindness † to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For you are saved by grace † through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — 9 not from works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created † in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time † for us to do.

UNITY IN CHRIST

11 So then, remember that at one time you were Gentiles in the flesh — called
“the uncircumcised” by those called “the circumcised,” † which is done in the
flesh by human hands. † 12 At that time you were without Christ, excluded from
the citizenship of Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of promise, † without
hope † and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus, you who were
far away have been brought near by the blood † of Christ. 14 For he is our
peace, who made both groups one † and tore down the dividing wall of hostility.
In his flesh, 15 he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and
expressed in regulations, so that he might create † in himself one † new man
from the two, resulting in peace. 16 He did this so that he might reconcile both to
God in one body † through the cross by which he put the hostility to death. †
17 He came and proclaimed the good news † of peace to you who were far away
and peace to those who were near. † 18 For through him we both have access †
in one spirit to the Father. † 19 So then you are no longer foreigners and
strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household,
20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, † with Christ Jesus
himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building, being put together, †
grows into a holy temple in the Lord. † 22 In him you are also being built
together † for God’s dwelling † in the Spirit.

2:2 Lit *sons of disobedience* **2:4** Lit *love with which he loved us* **2:16** Or *death in himself*
2:1 Jn 5:25 **2:2** 2Pt 2:20 **2:2** 2Pt 2:10; Jd 8 **2:2** 1Co 2:12; 1Tm 4:1 **2:3** Php 3:3 **2:3** Mt 21:31; Lk 12:47; 23:25; Jn 1:13; 1Co 7:37; 2Pt 1:21 **2:3** Rm 2:5; Rv 6:16 **2:4** Lk 1:50 **2:4** 1Co 13:1; 1Jn 4:16 **2:5** Col 2:13; 1Tm 5:6 **2:5** Jn 5:25 **2:6** Eph 1:3,20; 3:10; 6:12; Php 2:10; 1Pt 3:22 **2:7** Mk 10:30 **2:7** Lk 8:14; 2Co 8:9 **2:7** Ps 25:6 **2:8** Rm 3:24; 6:14; 11:6; Gl 2:21; 2Tm 1:9 **2:10** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **2:10** Rm 9:23 **2:11** Gl 6:15 **2:11** Php 3:3 **2:12** Gn 12:7 **2:12** 1Th 1:3; 4:13 **2:13** Heb 9:12 **2:14** Rm 10:12; Gl 3:28 **2:15** Rv 3:14 **2:15** Jn 11:52 **2:16** Eph 4:4 **2:17** Lk 4:18; 1Pt 1:12 **2:17** Is 57:19 **2:18** Jn 10:7-9; Rm 5:2; Eph 3:12 **2:18** Jn 4:23; 1Co 12:13; Eph 4:4; Col 1:12 **2:20** 1Co 12:28; Eph 3:5 **2:21** Eph 4:16 **2:21** 1Pt 2:5 **2:22** Rm 11:18 **2:22** 1Pt 2:5

2:1-6 Salvation is pictured as resurrection with Christ. Apart from Jesus, all people are spiritually **dead**, living **according to the ways of this world** and under the influence of **the spirit now working in the disobedient** (Satan). Only God can alter the situation—he **made** those of us who trust in Jesus **alive**, **raised us up**, and **seated us with** Christ. See “Fall and Redemption,” *p. 12*.

2:2 The ruler of the power of the air is Satan (see also 2Co 4:4). He is a usurper who seized authority with the fall of Adam. Everyone outside of Christ is under the influence of the devil. Even though we carry out our own **inclinations** (2:3), we do so under his sway. The spiritual realm is in constant interaction with the realm of humanity.

2:3 All people are **by nature children under** the **wrath** of God because of sin and rebellion. We are this way by our own deeds and because, as descendants of Adam, we inherit a sinful nature.

2:4 God is the only one able to reverse the situation of sinful humanity, which finds itself spiritually dead, under the authority of the evil one, and subject to God's wrath (2:1-3). God is motivated by his rich **mercy** and **great love.**

2:5 Salvation **by grace** is grounded on God's making **alive** the spiritually **dead.** "Dead" people cannot reach out to God to alter their standing with him. Thus, God's grace is the only means of salvation.

2:6 Seated . . . in the heavens is the spiritual location of all believers. This is because, by faith, believers are so connected to Christ that where he is, there we are too—spiritually.

2:7 In 1:3-14, Paul stressed that God's gracious saving work leads to the praise of his grace. Here again God's saved people will, for all eternity, **display the immeasurable riches of his grace . . . in Christ Jesus.**

2:8-9 These verses state the inevitable conclusion of the argument of 2:1-7. Given humanity's spiritual death, the only recourse for salvation is by the **grace** of God. Human achievement could not contribute, and there is no room for boasting.

2:10 Rather than boasting in our performance, we must realize **we are his workmanship**—God's product, **created in Christ Jesus.** We are saved by God's works, not our own. Once Paul has established that salvation can only be by God's grace, he then addresses the importance of **good works**—they are not a part of human salvation, but believers are to be engaged in them once they have been saved. But even here there is no room for boasting, since such good works were **prepared ahead of time for us to do.**

2:11 Jewish people divided the world into Jews (the **circumcised**) and Gentiles (the **uncircumcised**). Since circumcision was the mark of the covenant, it indicated who belonged to the people of God and who did not.

2:12 Before Christ, Gentiles were in the bleak situation of not belonging to **the citizenship of Israel** (i.e., God's people). They did not have access to **the covenants** God made with Abraham, Moses, and David; therefore, they were **without hope** and **without God.**

2:14 In the Jerusalem temple a four-and-a-half-foot **wall** divided the outer Court of the Gentiles from the inner court. Only Jews could enter the inner court, and Gentiles were threatened with death if they crossed the barrier. In fact, the imprisonment from which Paul writes this letter began because he was falsely accused of taking a Gentile past the barrier (Ac 21:28-29). Paul uses this image to say that in Christ there is no longer any such **dividing wall of hostility.** In Christ, Jew and Gentile are reconciled as God's people.

2:16 Just as the work of Jesus brought peace between Jew and Gentile, so in the church today there is no basis for hostility or superiority between people groups.

2:21-22 The church, composed of Jew and Gentile, is **being put together** by God as the new **temple in the Lord.** While the temple once stood as a sign of Israel's privilege, and the lack of Gentile access to God, now Jews and Gentiles have been built together to *become* the temple in which God dwells **in the Spirit.**

PAUL'S MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES

3 For this reason, I, Paul, the prisoner † of Christ Jesus on behalf of you Gentiles — 2 you have heard, haven't you, about the administration of God's grace that he gave to me for you? 3 The mystery was made known to me by revelation, † as I have briefly written above. 4 By reading this you are

able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ. † 5 This was not made known to people † in other generations as it is now revealed to his holy apostles and prophets † by the Spirit: 6 The Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and partners in the promise † in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

THE BIBLE AND CIVIL RIGHTS

The Bible was central to the thought, rhetoric, and development of the Civil Rights Movement. This was influenced by the essential role of black churches and preachers in the organization of the movement. Not only was the movement characterized by meetings in churches and the singing of Negro spirituals, it was also marked by biblical themes and language. Although many non-Christians participated in and supported the aims of the Civil Rights Movement, the underlying truth claims about the nature of all humanity, regardless of ethnicity, were grounded in the Scriptures.

The central intellectual strain behind the movement focused on the issue of the equality of all humans, since they were "created . . . in the image of God" (Gn 1:27), no matter the color of their skin. Throughout the black freedom struggle in American history, the biblical teachings on creation and human dignity were foundational to the arguments being put forth both by scholars and by everyday people. Even those who were illiterate knew from the rhetoric of the movement that God had created all people from one man (Ac 17:26). This distinguishes the Civil Rights Movement from other revolutions that may have been rooted in political, economic, philosophical, or other ideas. This unique biblical foundation provided a basis for the invocation of the God revealed in the Bible to be a participant in the movement—just as he had empowered the exodus.

In his famous "Letter from Birmingham Jail" written April 16, 1963, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. used biblical examples as a defense when he was accused of being an interloper and an extremist for participating in demonstrations, sit-ins, and boycotts. When justifying his presence in Birmingham, Dr. King noted that he was invited by local organizers, as well as noting the example of OT prophets leaving their villages to proclaim "thus saith the Lord" wherever God would send them. Additionally, he applauded the apostle Paul's travels in response to the call for help from the believers in Macedonia.

Grounding the movement morally in the Bible, King said, "A just law is a manmade code that squares with the moral law or the law of God." Therefore, the movement was able to attack laws that supported segregation and discrimination as laws that were ungodly, unjust, and against the clear teaching of Scripture. Certainly, America's founding documents—the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution—were an important part of the discourse, but the moral motivation and spiritual energy of the movement were grounded in the Bible. King even identified segregation as "sin" and called its proponents "sinful." He grounded his understanding of civil disobedience in the biblical example of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who refused to bow to the laws of Nebuchadnezzar because of their loyalty to a higher law—God's law. This was a vital part of his argument against passive or indifferent clergy, who sometimes grounded their opposition to King's actions in the rhetoric of "law and order." Many of the preachers involved in the movement would cite OT prophets, especially Hosea and Amos, when "prophesying" against corrupt officials—especially sheriffs and other law enforcement officers that would attack protestors and demonstrators.

In a provocative section of his letter, King responds to charges that his activities will bring about negative

consequences—conflict, possibly violent, between demonstrators and local law enforcement. The Baptist preacher chastised his critics by likening them to those that would say that the teachings, actions, and devotions of Jesus the Christ "precipitated the evil act of crucifixion." This thinking was flawed and unethical in King's mind. In contrast to the violence that was brought to bear on protestors, King noted that the non-violent approach of the Civil Rights Movement was grounded in "the Negro church" and its biblical understanding of loving one's neighbor and praying for one's enemies.

Some of the clergy that refused to support King's efforts suggested that the church should not get involved in "secular" affairs. Additionally, they retorted that the church's business was the saving of souls, not political concerns. The letter responds that such a neglect of social concerns is not logical, ethical, or biblical. In fact, King finds it a strange understanding of Christian ethics, saying, "I have watched many churches commit themselves to a completely otherworldly religion which makes a strange, un-Biblical distinction between body and soul, between the sacred and the secular."

Finally, the Bible and its sweeping story are on display in an extended passage where King cites biblical leaders and figures from church history in defense against the assertion that he was an extremist.

> Though I was initially disappointed at being categorized as an extremist, as I continued to think about the matter I gradually gained a measure of satisfaction from the label. Was not Jesus an extremist for love: "Love you enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." Was not Amos an extremist for justice: "Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream." Was not Paul an extremist for the Christian gospel: "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Was not Martin Luther an extremist: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God." And John Bunyan: "I will stay in jail until the end of my days before I make a butchery of my conscience." And Abraham Lincoln: "This nation cannot survive half slave and half free." And Thomas Jefferson: "We hold these truths to be selfevident, that all men are created equal . . ." So the question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be. Will we be extremists for hate or for love? Will we be extremists for the preservation of injustice or for the extension of justice? In that dramatic scene on Calvary's hill three men were crucified. We must never forget that all three were crucified for the same crime—the crime of extremism. Two were extremists for immorality, and thus fell below their environment. The other, Jesus Christ, was an extremist for love, truth, and goodness, and thereby rose above his environment. Perhaps the South, the nation, and the world are in dire need of creative extremists.

Martin Luther King, Jr. served many roles in the Civil Rights Movement: he was its face, an ethicist, a theologian, an organizer, and a public relations agent. In all of these roles, his thinking and rhetoric was shaped and influenced by the Bible. Thus, so was the larger movement.

KEVIN SMITH

7 I was made a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace that was given to
me by the working of his power. †
8 This grace was given to me — the least of all the saints — to proclaim to the
Gentiles the incalculable riches † of Christ, 9 and to shed light for all about the
administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created † all things.
10 This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom † may now be made known
through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. † 11 This is

according to his eternal purpose † accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. 12 In him we have boldness and confident access † through faith in him. † 13 So then I ask you not to be discouraged † over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory. †

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL POWER

14 For this reason I kneel † before the Father † 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. 16 I pray that he may grant you, according to the riches † of his glory, † to be strengthened with power † in your inner being † through his Spirit, 17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and firmly established in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the length and width, height and depth of God's love, † 19 and to know Christ's love that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able † to do above and beyond all that we ask or think † according to the power † that works in us — 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. †

3:5 Lit *to the sons of men* **3:12** Or *through his faithfulness* **3:14** Other mss add *of our Lord Jesus Christ*
3:1 2Tm 1:8 **3:3** 1Pt 4:13 **3:4** Col 4:3 **3:5** 1Co 12:28-29; Eph 2:20 **3:6** Gn 12:7 **3:7** Mk 5:30; Lk 1:35; 6:19; Ac 19:11; 2Co 13:4; Rv 11:17 **3:8** Rm 1:15; 10:12; 11:12; 1Pt 1:12 **3:9** Mk 13:19 **3:10** Pr 3:19; Rm 11:33; 1Co 1:21,24; Rv 7:12 **3:10** Eph 1:3,20; 2:6; 6:12; Php 2:10 **3:11** Pr 19:21 **3:12** Rm 5:2 **3:13** 2Th 3:13 **3:13** Jn 5:44; 7:18; Rm 2:7; 1Pt 5:4 **3:14** Php 2:10 **3:16** Lk 8:14; 2Co 8:9 **3:16** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **3:16** 2Tm 1:7 **3:16** Rm 7:22; Php 4:13 **3:18** Jb 11:7-9; Ps 103:11-14 **3:20** Rm 16:25; 2Co 9:8; Jd 24 **3:20** Mk 14:36 **3:20** Rm 15:13; 16:25; 2Tm 1:7; Jd 24 **3:21** Php 4:20

3:2 The wording here assumes the readers know about Paul's ministry to the Gentiles. Some would, of course, have known his ministry in person. But since he has been away several years from Ephesus, others may have only heard about it.

3:3 Mystery, as typically in Paul, refers to the unveiling of the will of God through the work of Christ. The content of the mystery is stated in 1:10, but more details are offered in 3:6-7.

3:5-6 The mystery, or riddle, once hidden to previous **generations**, has now been revealed: **the Gentiles are coheirs** and share **in the promise in Christ Jesus.** The mystery left unresolved through the OT was how God would fulfill his promise to Abraham that all people would be blessed through him (Gn 12:3). Now, in Christ, that mystery has been solved: through **the gospel**, Gentiles are included in the blessings to Abraham. See also "God's Purposes in a Christian's Participation in Missions," *p. 1191*.

3:10 The **rulers and authorities in the heavens** are malevolent supernatural powers (cp. 1:20-22). The existence of the church through the work of Christ declares **God's multi-faceted wisdom** to such powers.

3:14-15 Human fatherhood is derived from God's own Fatherhood. It is not the case, as is sometimes

argued, that God's Fatherhood is an anthropomorphism—an attribution of human characteristics to God—but, rather, it is the other way around.

3:17 Paul prays that **Christ** might **dwell** in their **hearts**; this is not a prayer for conversion, but for maturity, as these believers begin to look more and more like the dwelling place of Jesus—**rooted and firmly established in love.**

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

4 Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, † urge you to live worthy of the calling you have received, 2 with all humility † and gentleness, with patience, † bearing † with one another in love, † 3 making every effort to keep the unity † of the Spirit † through the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit † — just as you were called to one hope † † at your calling — 5 one Lord, † one faith, † one baptism, 6 one God † and Father † of all, who is above all and through all and in all. †

7 Now grace was given to each one of us † according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 For it says:

When he ascended † on high, he took the captives captive; he gave gifts to people. † †

9 But what does "he ascended" mean except that he † also descended to the lower parts of the earth? † † 10 The one who descended is also the one who ascended far above all the heavens, † to fill all things. † 11 And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, † 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, † growing into maturity with a stature † measured by Christ's fullness. 14 Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, † by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. 15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head † — Christ. 16 From him the whole body, fitted and knit together † by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth † of the body for building up itself in love by the proper working of each individual part.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

17 Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: You should no longer live as the Gentiles live, in the futility of their thoughts. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them and because † of the hardness of their hearts. 19 They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity † with a desire for more and more. †

20 But that is not how you came to know Christ, 21 assuming you heard about him and were taught by him, as the truth † is in Jesus, 22 to take off † † your former way of life, † the old self † that is corrupted by deceitful desires, 23 to be renewed † in the spirit † of your minds, 24 and to put on † † the new self, the one created † according to God's likeness † in righteousness and purity of the truth.

25 Therefore, putting away † lying, **speak the truth, each one to his neighbor,** † † because we are members of one another.

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF MARRIAGE

God loves marriage. The Bible, after all, begins with a marriage as lonely Adam receives his bride, Eve, and celebrates with the world's first love song (Gn 2:22-25). The Bible ends with a marriage as Jesus, the Lamb of God, receives his bride, the church, at the great marriage supper of the Lamb (Rv 19:7). And Jesus, anticipating that final marriage supper, performed his first miracle at a wedding celebration (Jn 2:1-11).

The Bible presents marriage as the sacred, foundational institution designed by God for human flourishing, the well-being of children, and the advancement of his kingdom.

Marriage is a gift to all humanity. Dr. Robert George of Princeton University puts it this way: In all observed societies some form of marriage exists, as the means whereby the work of one generation is dedicated to the well-being of the next. Marriage does not merely protect and nurture children; it is the shield against sexual jealousy and a unique form of social and economic cooperation, with a mutually supportive division of roles that more than doubles the effectiveness of each partner in their shared bid for security. (*The Meaning of Marriage*) While culture today exerts a significant influence on our attitudes and behavior surrounding marriage, Christians should desire to know what God thinks about this most sacred of institutions that he designed and loves. If God left us no instructions about marriage, we could go about it according to our personal or societal whims. But he hasn't left us uninformed. His revelation in Scripture guides us to his design for marriage, and through embracing it we will see his human creatures flourish.

PEOPLE NEED COMPANIONSHIP

After God created the heavens and the earth and all that lives therein, he created man in his own image to rule and manage his creation. He did not create us all the same, but "he created them male and female" (Gn 1:27). In the process of creation, God repeatedly declared his creation good (Gn 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). But there was one exception. God stated that it was not good for man to be alone, to exist as a solitary being (Gn 2:18). Without human companionship, creation was incomplete. If man was alone there could be no procreation and, more importantly, no possibility for man to experience the kind of intimate relationship that exists within the Godhead. And so God created woman to complement the man and thus complete the good design he had for humanity.

In his delight with Eve, Adam calls her "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called 'woman,' for she was taken from man" (Gn 2:23). In the next verse we read, "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh" (v. 24).

As seventeenth-century Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote, "Eve was not taken from Adam's head that she should rule over him, nor from his feet, to be trampled under foot, but she was taken from his side that she might be his equal, from under his arm that she might be protected by him, near his heart, that he might cherish and love her."

In this way men and women provide companionship for each other in laboring together interdependently in God's kingdom work and in having children and nurturing families to populate God's creation.

ONE MAN AND ONE WOMAN

At creation God established marriage as the union of one man and one woman. Since then, our fallen state has created all kinds of distortions in God's design for marriage, including the moral confusion of our day. But God clearly demonstrates his design for one man and one woman to come together in this sacred union.

It is critical to understand that while God made man and woman as equals, he also created them to be different from one another. Men and women are not interchangeable; they are complementary. In marriage they become one flesh (Gn 2:24), one functioning unit, especially in procreation. H. C. Leupold explains that becoming one flesh "involves the complete identification of one personality with the other in community of interests and pursuits, a union consummated in intercourse" (*Exposition of Genesis*, vol. 1, p. 137).

In our culture it is vital to remind ourselves that in addition to the joy of husband and wife, sexual intercourse is designed for procreation. Marriage, sex, and children go together. The family, which is central to God's design for his kingdom, is made possible through the procreative act that brings together one man and one woman and defines the one-flesh unity of marriage. "Reproductive technologies" aside, only a man and a woman, complementing one another, can create another human person.

MARRIAGE IS A COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP

Just as God and his bride, the church, are bound together by the new covenant of Christ crucified (Lk 22:19-20; Heb 9:15; 12:22-24), so husband and wife are bound together by the covenant of marriage (Mal 2:14).

While some talk about marriage as a contract, marriage is not a contract. It is a covenant. Contracts are agreements of "consideration given for consideration received." They are fifty-fifty arrangements in which one partner puts something in expecting to get something out. And contracts are over once they are fulfilled or when both parties agree to break them. Covenants, then, are radically different. In covenants, both parties are expected to give one hundred percent, offering consideration even when none is received in return. Covenants are established by solemn vows invoking the name of God. And covenants are never fulfilled, can never change, and there is no point short of death at which the account can be closed. Those bound together by the covenant of marriage in the name of God through solemn vows witnessed by family and friends are sealed with God's divine blessing in a permanent relationship. "Therefore," as Jesus said, "what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mk 10:9).

Since marriage is a life-long commitment, the Christian's goal should not be just to have a "good" marriage, but to have a godly one. And while our fallen nature does not provide for marital bliss all the

time, we must remember that where sin abounds, grace abounds (Rm 5:20) and where grace abounds, so does the potential for life-long, loving marriage. While the Bible acknowledges the concession of divorce under certain circumstances, this falls short of God's ideal for marriage (Mt 19:1-9; 1Co 7:10-16).

DEATH TO SELF

A wedding day marks an end of a single man and a single woman who have been working on their own. Once the vows are said and the marriage sealed, the two become one. As Peter J. Leithart puts it, The wedding day is only the beginning of death. A man and a woman who go through a ceremony and then live as they have always lived have not really understood what marriage requires. Death at a wedding is a call to continual dying. At their wedding, a man and woman die to singleness, to the old relation with parents, to old habits and plans, and that death has to be worked out throughout the course of the marriage. ("When Marriage is Dying," *Touchstone Magazine*) WITNESS TO THE WORLD

In their complementarity, married couples represent to the world the beauty and mystery of the love relationship God has with his people. Beginning in the OT, God referred to his people as his bride, bound to him by covenant (Is 54:5-8; Ezk 16:8; Hs 2:19-20). He calls Israel's breaking of the covenant "adultery" and "prostitution" (Ezk 23; Hs 2:2-13). At the same time, he promises that a day will come when "as a groom rejoices over his bride, so your God will rejoice over [Israel]" (Is 62:5b).

That same promise carries over into the NT. Paul concludes his instructions about Christian marriage with this statement: "This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church" (Eph 5:32). Christian marriages demonstrate the love of God to a world in need of that love, and every wedding day anticipates the day Jesus will return to glorify and honor his bride, the church, and be with her forever (Rv 19:7-9; 21:2,9).

ALAN B. TERWILLEGER

26 **Be angry and do not sin.** † † Don't let the sun go down on your anger,
27 and don't give the devil an opportunity. 28 Let the thief no longer steal.
Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to
share † with anyone in need. 29 No foul language should come from your
mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, † so that it gives
grace to those who hear. 30 And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. † You were
sealed by him † for the day of redemption. † 31 Let all bitterness, anger and
wrath, shouting and slander be removed from you, along with all malice. 32 And
be kind † and compassionate † to one another, forgiving † one another, just as
God also forgave you † in Christ.

4:4 Lit *called in one hope* **4:9** Other mss add *first* **4:9** Or *the lower parts, namely, the earth* **4:18** Or *in them because* **4:19** Lit *with greediness* **4:21-22** Or *Jesus. This means: take off* (as a command) **4:22-23** Or *desires; renew* (as a command) **4:23-24** Or *minds; and put on* (as a command) **4:29** Lit *for the building up of the need* **4:30** Or *Spirit, by whom you were sealed* **4:32** Other mss read *us*

4:1 2Tm 1:8 **4:2** Col 3:12 **4:2** Ex 34:6; 2Tm 3:10 **4:2** Heb 13:22 **4:2** 1Co 13:1 **4:3** Eph 4:13 **4:3** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **4:4** Rm 12:4-5; 1Co 10:17; 12:9,12-13; Eph 2:16,18; Col 3:15 **4:4** Ac 26:6-7; 28:20; Rm 5:2; 8:23-25; Eph 1:18; Col 1:5; 1Th 1:3 **4:5** 1Co 1:13; 8:6 **4:5** Jd 3 **4:6** Dt

6:4 **4:6** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42 **4:6** Ps 104:24 **4:7** 1Co 12:7-11 **4:8** Jn 20:17 **4:8** Ps 68:18 **4:8** Ps 68:18 **4:9** Jn 3:13; 6:62; Rm 10:6-7; Php 2:6-11 **4:10** Jn 3:13; 6:38 **4:10** Eph 1:23; Heb 4:14; 7:26; 9:24 **4:12** Rm 7:4; 1Co 10:16; 12:27; Col 2:17 **4:13** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **4:13** Lk 2:52 **4:14** Rm 15:4; Heb 13:9 **4:15** Col 2:10 **4:16** Col 2:2 **4:16** Col 2:19 **4:19** 1Th 4:17 **4:21** 2Th 2:10 **4:22** Rm 13:12 **4:22** 2Pt 3:11 **4:22** Rm 6:6; 7:6; 1Co 5:7-8; 2Co 3:14; Col 3:9 **4:23** Ps 51:12 **4:24** Rm 13:12 **4:24** Mk 13:19; Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **4:24** Col 3:10; 2Pt 1:4 **4:25** Pr 31:25 **4:25** Zch 8:16 **4:25** Zch 8:16 **4:26** Ps 4:4 **4:26** Ps 4:4; 37:8; Mt 18:21; Jms 1:19-20 **4:28** 1Th 2:8; 1Tm 6:18 **4:30** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **4:30** Php 1:6 **4:32** Mt 11:30; Lk 5:39; 6:35; Rm 2:4; 1Co 15:33; 1Pt 2:3 **4:32** 1Pt 3:8 **4:32** Ps 25:11; Mt 9:2; Mk 2:5; Lk 24:47; Col 3:12-13

4:2 For the sake of unity, Paul exhorts virtues that enhance harmonious relationships—**humility**, **gentleness**, **patience**, **bearing with one another in love.** Greek philosophers occasionally spoke of the value of gentleness, but never humility and patience. These qualities are distinctly Christian, reflecting God's desire for his people to embody a spirit of brokenness and meekness (Ps 34:18; Is 66:2; Mt 5:3-5).

4:4-6 The word **one** occurs seven times in these verses, stressing the theological unity of the church. Even if believers must work at keeping relational unity, unity is already a fact of the church due to these common factors.

4:7 While the unity of the church has already been strongly asserted in 4:1-3, the diversity of the church is grounded in the gifting of grace to each individual. As explored below, differing gifts to the church provide a healthy diversity for its growth and maturity (4:11-13).

4:8 Psalm 68 celebrates God's victory over his enemies and the deliverance of his people through his king. Paul uses the psalm to present Jesus as the King who has overthrown his enemies. As triumphant King, he now extends gifts to his people (cp. Ac 2:33).

4:9 The phrase he **descended to the lower parts of the earth** is often understood to refer to Christ's incarnation. More likely it refers to Christ's proclamation of victory over the evil spiritual forces of darkness, following his death (1Pt 3:19).

4:11-13 See "The Worship and Service of God," *p. 810*.

4:11 While it is common to think of gifts (or abilities) being given to individuals (as in 4:7), here people *are* the gifts given to the church: **apostles**, **prophets**, **evangelists**, and **pastors and teachers.** The fact that *some*—not all**—**are to occupy these roles indicates the need for diversity within the church.

4:12 These gifts to the church (see 4:11) are not to do the entire ministry within the church, but they are to equip others **for the work of ministry.** This indicates ministry is the work of all the members—not simply those with special responsibilities and roles.

4:13 While diversity within the church is essential, the goal of diversity is to help God's people work toward **unity**, which is a mark of **maturity.**

4:14 Sea travel in the first century was often perilous, and Paul had just experienced shipwreck on his trip to Rome (Ac 27). Thus, the image of being **tossed by the waves** was a particularly compelling way to communicate instability and danger.

4:16 The **body** is an excellent metaphor for the church since the importance of its unity is assumed, but it also demonstrates the essential importance of diversity (cp. 1Co 12:12-31).

4:17 Though most believers in Ephesus are **Gentiles** (not Jewish), the term "Gentiles" here refers to unbelievers, in keeping with its OT usage.

4:23 As in Romans 12:1, renewal takes place in the mind. **Spirit** here could refer to the human spirit being renewed, or to the Holy Spirit who is doing the renewing. See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512*.

4:25-32 The commands in this section all promote healthy relationships within the body of the church. Moreover, most involve a "new for old" ethic. That is, the negative behavior is to be replaced by a positive one. The **thief** should not only cease stealing; he should provide for others' needs. **Foul language** is to be replaced by words that are **building up** others. **Anger and wrath** should be replaced with kindness and compassion. See also "Christian Worldview, the Great Commandment, and the Christian Life," *p. 1181.*

4:28 See "A Biblical View of Work," *p. 1478.*

Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children,

5

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF CHILD REARING

In the Bible, parenting involves demonstrating a godly life, living according to a biblical worldview, and educating children in the truths of Scripture. Children learn passively by watching parents model a consistent connection with God's Word and a kingdom outlook. Children learn actively as parents lead them in cherishing and memorizing Scripture, and as the family participates in a local body of believers.

GODLY PARENTS

Christian parents are to be examples of godliness so that children can imitate them. When God promised Abraham a son (Gn 18:19), God stated that he chose Abraham because he expected him to lead his children and household to keep the ways of the Lord.

Similarly, Paul told Timothy (2Tm 3:14-15) to practice the faith that he had learned because Timothy knew the lives of those who taught him (his grandmother and mother, 2Tm 1:5). Children are to watch their parents' lives and, because of godly parents, imitate their faith.

LIVING ACCORDING TO A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW

Living according to a biblical worldview means we must look both at personal life experience and at the world in light of God's purposes. Parents need to show children how both past history and current events unfold under the sovereignty of God and the lordship of Christ. Jesus is Lord of the past, present, and future. He is to rule over all relationships.

A biblical worldview should give the child a sense of security and purpose. Each child is part of God's great story. History moves toward God's glory, and God is controlling its destiny.

Parenting from a biblical worldview also involves sharing personal victories and answered prayer. Parents must talk about God's goodness with their children. (It is not enough to practice godliness and have real victories. It is a parent's responsibility to share the victory and answered prayer with his children.) Children need to hear how God works in their world and in their parents' lives. In Bible times, children did not have books to read, television programs, and computer games; instead, they heard the stories of faith from their parents and grandparents. At religious celebrations such as Passover, they not only experienced the celebration, but also heard the stories and participated in the celebratory and commemorative rituals. Holy days reminded them of their salvation and the promises of God.

The OT reveals that God intends for people to celebrate the events that demonstrate his working in history. God spoke to the people of Israel at Mount Horeb (Dt 4:9-10) so that they would fear the Lord. They were to remember what they saw and heard so they could pass it on to their children and grandchildren. God instructs fathers to explain Passover to their sons (Ex 13:14) so their sons will

understand that God brought them out of the slavery of Egypt.

Because God is a God of discipline and order, children should be taught to submit to authority. First Peter 5:5-6 tells the young men to submit to the authority of elders and that we all are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. It is the parent's responsibility to teach children not only that they have significant value (being made in the image of God—Gn 1:27), but also that they have a responsibility for their attitudes and actions. A biblical worldview acknowledges God's authority and his order. Children learn to submit to their parents in order to learn to submit to God's authority. Parents treat their children with the same love and respect with which God treats us (Eph 6:1-4). God is not punitive or harsh, but he guides our lives through formative discipline, shaping us toward godliness as we submit to him. Children submit to parental authority as parents use formative discipline to teach them self-control and order.

TEACHING AND MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE

In the OT, the fathers taught the boys to obey the Torah. Israelite children in OT times would see the father daily tie the phylacteries to his arm and to his head while teaching his son Deuteronomy 6:5. At twelve years of age, the boy's observations turned to personal experience. He felt the sensation of this reality as his father tied the phylacteries to his arm and forehead. The daily ritual and tradition reinforced Scripture. The child learned by using his senses: sight, sound, speech, and touch.

In the early NT era, it was the parents' responsibility to take sons to the synagogue for five years of half-day religious instruction, beginning at age five. When a son came home at noon, the parents provided an opportunity for him to learn a trade. Learning Scripture was so important that the child began his day with religious instruction.

In both Old and NT times, mothers taught daughters from their Scriptures. They learned how to be wives and mothers, how to carry on the traditions of holy days, and how to comply with the dietary laws that were part of their faith.

FAMILY DEVOTIONS

Psalm 78:3-8 instructs us to tell the stories of our Christian heritage to our children. This involves the practice of family worship. Family worship is a time to lead children in hearing, understanding, and memorizing God's Word. This is one occasion in which parents can teach their offspring to pray, or share about a personal victory and answered prayer. It is a time to pray and praise God as a family and to be an example of God's love in action. It is a time for the family to say together, "How can we serve the Lord so that we contribute to God's purposes?" Family involvement in missions (providing food, cleaning a home, sharing clothing, purchasing toys, visiting the elderly, going on a mission trip) broadens a child's perspective and helps to create a global Christian worldview.

FAMILY SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Christian parents are to teach spiritual truth to their children in age-appropriate ways, utilizing various means of instruction. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 inscructs parents to teach God's truths when they sit at home, when they walk along the road, when they lie down, and when they get up. They are to put God's truth on their doorposts. Christian parents, then, should fill their homes and life experiences with opportunities to share Scripture. Children grow spiritually through memorizing Scripture, singing Scripture, and seeing it applied in their parents' lives.

PARTICIPATE IN CHURCH

In both the Old and NT, children learned to value interconnectedness within a body of believers. OT life revolved around friends with shared faith. Trips to the temple were a joyous occasion for friendship and community. NT churches were bonded by a mutual purpose. Christian friends were cherished and times of worship were precious. Parents today need to teach children the value of belonging to a local body of believers (1Co 12:12-26). Children, through the church, see many different Christians working out their

salvation—and as a result learn unity and love (Php 2:2).

CONCLUSION

Parenting is intensely personal. Guiding young individuals to maturity requires creativity. Like adults, children have individual personalities, gifts, and talents. A child should never doubt parental love. Through each stage of life, godly parents can find that God's grace is sufficient.

SHERA MELICK

2 and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, † a
sacrificial and fragrant offering to God. 3 But sexual immorality † and any
impurity † or greed † should not even be heard of † among you, as is proper
for saints. 4 Obscene and foolish talking or crude joking are not suitable, but
rather giving thanks. 5 For know and recognize this: Every sexually immoral †
or impure † or greedy † person, who is an idolater, does not have an inheritance
in the kingdom † of Christ and of God.

LIGHT VERSUS DARKNESS

6 Let no one deceive you with empty arguments, for God's wrath † is coming
on the disobedient † because of these things. 7 Therefore, do not become their
partners. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light † in the Lord.
Live as children of light † — 9 for the fruit of the light † consists of all
goodness, righteousness, and truth † — 10 testing † what is pleasing † to the
Lord. 11 Don't participate in the fruitless † works of darkness, but instead
expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in
secret. 13 Everything exposed by the light is made visible, † 14 for what makes
everything visible is light. Therefore it is said:

Get up, sleeper, † and rise up from the dead, †
and Christ will shine on you. †

CONSISTENCY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

15 Pay careful attention, then, to how you live — not as unwise people but as
wise — 16 making the most of the time, † † because the days are evil. 17 So
don't be foolish, but understand † what the Lord's will † is. 18 And don't get
drunk † with wine, † which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the

Spirit: † 19 speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music with your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of Christ. †

WIVES AND HUSBANDS

22 Wives, † submit † † to your husbands † as to the Lord, 23 because the husband is the head of the wife † as Christ is the head † of the church. He is the Savior of the body. † 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, † just as Christ loved † the church and gave himself † for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing † her with the washing of water by the word. 27 He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. † 28 In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, 30 since we are members of his body. † 31 **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, † and the two will become one flesh.** † † 32 This mystery † is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

5:3 Or *be named* **5:6** Lit *sons of disobedience* **5:9** Other mss read *fruit of the Spirit* **5:16** Lit *buying back the time* **5:22** Other mss omit *submit* **5:26** Or *having cleansed* **5:30** Other mss add *and of his flesh and of his bones*

5:2 2Th 2:13; Ti 2:14 **5:3** 1Th 4:3 **5:3** 1Th 4:7 **5:3** Lk 12:15; Rm 1:29; Eph 4:19; Col 3:5; 1Th 2:5; 2Pt 2:3,14 **5:5** 1Co 5:9 **5:5** 2Co 6:17 **5:5** 1Co 5:10-11; 6:10 **5:5** Mk 1:15 **5:6** Rm 2:5; Rv 6:16 **5:8** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46 **5:8** Is 2:5; Lk 16:8; Jn 12:35-36 **5:9** Eph 5:17 **5:10** Rm 12:2 **5:10** Lk 18:18 **5:11** Gl 5:22; Ti 3:14 **5:13** 1Jn 1:2 **5:14** Pr 6:4 **5:14** Jn 5:25 **5:14** Is 26:19; 51:17; 52:1; 60:1; Mal 4:2; Lk 1:78-79; Rm 13:11 **5:16** Col 4:5 **5:17** Jr 31:31-34; Ezk 36:26-27; Rm 12:2; Php 1:9-10; 1Th 5:21 **5:17** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9 **5:18** Lk 12:45; Jn 2:10; 1Th 5:7; Rv 17:2 **5:18** Gn 9:21; Dt 7:13; Ps 4:7; Pr 3:10; Lk 5:37 **5:18** Lk 1:15; Ac 13:52 **5:18-21** Col 3:16-17; 1Pt 1:17 **5:22** 1Pt 3:1 **5:22** Gn 3:16; 1Co 11:3,7-9,11-12; Col 3:18; Ti 2:4-5; 1Pt 3:1-6 **5:22** 1Pt 3:1 **5:23** 1Co 11:3 **5:23** Col 2:10 **5:23** Col 3:18–4:1 **5:25** Col 3:19; 1Pt 3:7 **5:25** Jn 3:16; 1Co 13:1; 2Th 2:13 **5:25** Ti 2:14 **5:27** Jd 24 **5:31** 1Pt 3:1 **5:31** Gn 2:24 **5:31** Gn 2:24 **5:32** 1Co 2:7

5:1 The imitation **of God** is explained in the surrounding verses—God loved us in the work of Christ (4:32; 5:2).

5:5 Sexual immorality (Gk *porneia*) was a pervasive problem among the Gentiles; all kinds of inappropriate sexual relations were a part of life in the Gentile world. People guilty of such sins can be

forgiven (5:8; 1Co 6:11). The point is that people who continue in these ways without repentance demonstrate that they have not been converted. See “Purpose and Parameters of Sexual Relations,” *p. 1397*.

5:14 This quotation is not from the OT, which is unusual for Paul, who normally cites the Hebrew Bible. This is probably an oral tradition passed on in the early church. In the context of resisting sin (5:6-12), the citation encourages believers to embrace their resurrected status in Christ (cp. 2:5) and to live accordingly.

5:17 Understanding **the Lord’s will** refers, in particular, to living in the way described in this passage, and understanding what such living would look like in other settings.

5:18 In the worship of Dionysius (or Bacchus), drunkenness was the means to being filled with the spirit of this god. The filling of the Holy **Spirit** leads instead to proper living, including corporate worship, thankfulness, and healthy relationships (5:19-21). See also “A Biblical View of Music,” *p. 727*.

5:19 Corporate worship involves **speaking to one another** in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Our engagement with God is enhanced by engagement with one another.

5:21 In the first century, submission referred to a voluntary yielding to someone with authority, whether in a military context, within the church (1Pt 3:5), or with regard to governing authorities (Rm 13:1). While many understand this verse to endorse a reciprocal “mutual submission,” it is more likely referring to submission as appropriate within the various relationships found within a church, such as those included in the household code to follow (5:22–6:9).

5:22-24 The submission of a wife to her husband is grounded in Christ’s headship of the church, rather than in cultural, patriarchal expectations of the ancient world.

5:25 Husbands are to lead by **love.** This is a sacrificial love in which a man puts the benefit of his wife ahead of his own. Christ modeled such love toward **the church**, giving **himself for her.** This kind of leadership was counter-cultural in the ancient world, in which husbands often treated their wives in a domineering and demeaning fashion.

5:26-27 The OT prophet Ezekiel pictures the relationship between Jerusalem and God as a marriage covenant, in which God “washed [her] with water, rinsed off [her] blood, and anointed [her] with oil” (Ezk 16:9). Christ has so washed the church **with the washing of water by the word**, indicating that the OT marriage between God and his people has been transfigured to Christ and the church.

5:31-32 Citing an essential text about marriage (Gn 2:24), Paul indicates that the husband-wife relationship was intended from the beginning to be a symbol of **Christ and the church.**

CHILDREN AND PARENTS

6 Children, obey † your parents in the Lord, because this is right.
2 **Honor your father and mother**, which is the first commandment with
a promise, 3 **so that it may go well with you and that you may have a long life in the land.** † † † 4 Fathers, don’t stir up anger † in your children, but bring them up in the training † and instruction of the Lord.

SLAVES AND MASTERS

5 Slaves, obey your human † masters † with fear and trembling, † in the sincerity † of your heart, as you would Christ. 6 Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, do God's will † from your heart. 7 Serve with a good attitude, as to the Lord and not to people, † 8 knowing that whatever good each one does, slave or free, he will receive this back from the Lord.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

S piritual warfare is a reality. From Genesis to Revelation, the Scriptures paint a picture of a cosmic battle that is largely unseen. Satan is, in fact, the "roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour" (1Pt 5:8). Our enemy is an accuser (Rv 12:10), a deceiver (Rv 20:10), a murderer and a liar (Jn 8:44). He is the "ruler of this world" (Jn 12:31), the "dragon" who dares to fight against the angels of God (Rv 12:7).

As believers, we wrestle against principalities and powers (Eph 6:12) that work to lure us into sin. The powers disguise themselves as "angels of light," seeking to infiltrate the church through false teachings (2Co 11:1-15). The enemy seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (Jn 10:10). Satan is not, however, the focus of the Bible—God is.

Indeed, it was God who put in place the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent that would lead to the enemy's defeat at Christ's cross (Gn 3:15). God is the warrior who led his people across the Red Sea (Ex 15:3). David fought the Philistine giant, not with a sword and a javelin, but in the name of the Lord whose battle it was (1Sm 17:45-47). Jahaziel likewise assured Jehoshaphat of God's presence in the midst of battle by saying, "Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast number, for the battle is not yours, but God's" (2Ch 20:15).

Moreover, Paul challenged believers to put on God's armor, not human armor (Eph 6:11). God is our shield (Gn 15:1; Ps 28:7), and it is he who wears righteousness as body armor and the helmet of salvation (Is 59:17). This sovereign God even allows spiritual battles to take place in our lives in order to accomplish the greater good of his will (see Jb 1–2).

Because the Bible's story is about the One who will ultimately cast the devil into the lake of fire (Rv 20:10), our task as spiritual warriors is not to know Satan well—it is to know God so intimately that Satan's counterfeit becomes obvious by comparison. To know God and to recognize his sovereignty is to understand that we gain spiritual victory only through Christ, who has been raised above every power and authority (Eph 1:20-23).

VICTORY IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Believers need not fear the enemy, for we have the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, as a primary weapon in battle (Eph 6:17). It is the Word that reminds us that Satan has been disarmed by the cross of Christ (Col 2:15), his power is limited by the will of Almighty God (Jb 1:10-12), and he will ultimately be bound (Rv 20:10). Like Jesus in the wilderness temptations, we can defeat our enemy through confidence in the Word (Mt 4:1-11).

Our victory is anchored in the central story of the Scriptures: the event of the cross. Jesus took on himself the sin of the world, paid the penalty for that sin, and conquered death (2Co 5:21; 1Jn 2:2). He ultimately

broke Satan's power by his obedience "to the point of death—even to death on a cross" (Php 2:8). Through his shed blood, Christ has redeemed us (Eph 1:7) and placed us on the winning side of this spiritual battle. Indeed, we are on the offensive, daily living out the triumph of the cross.

The world sees our victory in spiritual warfare not by our strategies and techniques, but by our walking in truth and righteousness. The defeat of the enemy is consequently evident by how we live. And, for many believers who face persecution today, the enemy's defeat will also be seen by how they die. What surely seems a loss from a human perspective will instead be an announcement of mighty victory in heaven.

CAUTIONS IN SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Interest in the topic of spiritual warfare today has, however, often resulted in faulty understandings of warfare strategies. For example, some "warfare" writers and practitioners emphasize demonic exorcism as a primary tactic. Scholars debate whether or not demon possession occurs today, but it is difficult to prove that possession never occurs—especially when considering frontier mission fields in animistic cultures. Nevertheless, the Bible does not present exorcism as a chief ministry strategy. Jesus exorcised demons, yet he did so in the context of preaching and teaching ministry (see, e.g., Mk 1:21-28). He did not adopt elaborate exorcism rituals common in his day, nor did he go demon-hunting.

Jesus's approaches to exorcism were, in fact, varied. Often he spoke to the demon (e.g., Lk 8:29), but not always (Lk 13:10-17). He was not always physically present with the demon-possessed person (Mt 15:22-28). Only once is there evidence that he asked the name of a demon (Mk 5:9), and that was not to gain authority over the evil spirit. "Rebuking" language is common (e.g., Lk 4:35; 9:42), but not universal. Nowhere in the Bible is there a clear, reproducible exorcism ritual; thus, teaching such a pattern is biblically unwarranted.

Equally problematic are the implications that there are particular symptoms of possession and specific steps in exorcisms—again, such conclusions are not evident in Scripture. Demonic manifestations included, among other things, physical symptoms (e.g., Mt 9:32-33; 12:22), self-inflicted wounds (Mk 5:5), falling (Mk 9:18), and supernatural strength (Mk 5:3-4). Such diverse descriptions, however, are just that: descriptions rather than expectations.

Further, some "exorcists" assert that demons can possess believers. This conclusion is biblically indefensible. The Scriptures teach that believers are indwelt by and sealed by the Spirit of God (2Co 1:22; Eph 1:14), and the One in us is more powerful than the one that rules the world (1Jn 4:4). The Scriptures contain no example of a demon-possessed believer.

Others affirm the existence of "territorial spirits," or demonic beings that inhabit or reside over a region. Some warfare practitioners teach that we must cast down these demons before effectively doing evangelism in an area. The biblical evidence for such demons is weak at best (e.g., Dn 10:1-14), and nowhere is there a mandate for identifying or "praying down" these powers. A process of aggressively attacking territorial demons implies that the air must be cleared before the gospel can be effective. The implication is thus that the word of the cross as "the power of God" (1Co 1:18) apparently needs help in some situations. Such an implication demeans the power of the Word.

CHRISTIANS AND THE ARMOR OF GOD

How, then, should we respond to the issue of spiritual warfare? We must first recognize its reality. Even those who believe that exorcisms are unwarranted cannot deny the continued reality of spiritual warfare. The enemy still seeks to destroy God's people, and to deny that is to invite defeat.

Second, we must proclaim the Word of God. Potent and life changing, the message of the cross frees the blinded minds of the unbelieving (2Co 4:3-4) and equips believers for good works (2Tm 3:16-17). The proclamation of the Word is, in fact, an act of warfare against Satan's kingdom. It is no wonder, then, that the enemy so viciously strikes those who stand on the Scriptures—the very Word that promises us victory even in death (Heb 2:14-15).

Third, we must teach believers how to put on the full armor of God and resist the enemy (Eph 6:11; Jms

4:7). Putting on the armor is about learning to walk in truth, righteousness, and faith. It is about reading and proclaiming the Word of God while standing firmly on the gospel. When our strategies for discipleship—a fundamental element of spiritual warfare preparation—are weak, we send new believers into a lethal context unarmed. Defeat is then almost inevitable.

As followers of Christ, we are to wear the full armor of God, proclaim the gospel to unbelievers, and disciple believers. Taking on the enemy is not about a formula or a technique. It is about a lifestyle—a Bible-saturated, God-centered, Jesus-glorifying, Spirit-filled, prayer-driven lifestyle.

CHARLES E. LAWLESS

9 And masters, treat your slaves the same way, without threatening † them, because you know that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism † with him. †

CHRISTIAN WARFARE

10 Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by his vast strength. † 11 Put on † the full armor † of God so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh † and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, † against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, † spiritual forces in the heavens. † 13 For this reason take up the full armor † of God, so that you may be able to resist † in the evil day, and having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, † therefore, with truth † like a belt around your waist, righteousness † like armor on your chest, † 15 and your feet sandaled with readiness for the gospel of peace. 16 In every situation take up the shield † of faith † with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. † 17 Take the helmet † of salvation and the sword † of the Spirit † — which is the word of God. 18 Pray † at all times in the Spirit † with every prayer and request, and stay alert † with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints. 19 Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness † the mystery of the gospel. 20 For this I am an ambassador † in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough to speak about it as I should.

PAUL'S FAREWELL

21 Tychicus, † our dearly loved brother and faithful servant † in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me so that you may be informed. 22 I am sending him to you for this very reason, to let you know how we are and to encourage † your hearts. †

23 Peace to the brothers and sisters, and love with faith, from God the Father † and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24 Grace be with all who have undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ. † †

6:3 Or *life on the earth* **6:5** Lit *according to the flesh* **6:21** Or *deacon* **6:24** Other mss add *Amen.* **6:24** Lit *all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption*

6:1 Pr 1:8; 6:20; 23:22; Col 3:20 **6:2-3** Ex 20:12 **6:2-3** Ex 20:12 **6:4** Rm 10:19 **6:4** Heb 12:5 **6:5** Col 3:22; 1Pt 2:18 **6:5** Php 2:12 **6:5** 2Co 9:11 **6:6** Ps 143:10; Pr 16:9; Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9 **6:7** Col 3:23 **6:9** Ac 4:29; 9:1 **6:9** Col 3:25 **6:9** Col 4:1 **6:10** Ac 4:33 **6:11** Pr 31:25 **6:11** Eph 6:11-17 **6:12** Php 3:3 **6:12** 1Pt 3:22 **6:12** Mt 6:13; Jn 17:15 **6:12** Eph 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; Php 2:10 **6:13** 1Th 5:8 **6:13** 2Tm 4:15; 1Pt 5:9 **6:14** Pr 24:16; Php 1:27 **6:14** Jn 14:6; 1Jn 5:20 **6:14** Mt 6:33; Rm 1:17; 2Pt 1:1 **6:14** 1Th 5:8 **6:16** Gn 15:1 **6:16** Mt 8:10; Ac 3:16; Rm 1:8; 1Co 2:5; Gl 2:16; 1Tm 1:2; Heb 4:2 **6:16** 2Th 3:3 **6:17** 1Th 5:8 **6:17** Mk 14:47 **6:17** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **6:18** Mt 5:44; Ac 12:12 **6:18** Jd 20 **6:18** Pr 6:4 **6:19** 2Co 3:12 **6:20** 2Co 5:20 **6:21** Ti 3:12 **6:22** Lk 16:25 **6:22** Col 4:8 **6:23** Mt 5:16; 11:27; Lk 11:13; Jn 8:42

6:2 See "Elderly Care," *p. 100.*

6:4 As the head of the household, the father bears the ultimate responsibility for raising **children . . . in the training and instruction of the Lord.** But this should be done gently, without stirring **children** to **anger.** See "Christian Perspectives on Children's Education," *p. 225*; "Career and Home Life," *p. 774.*

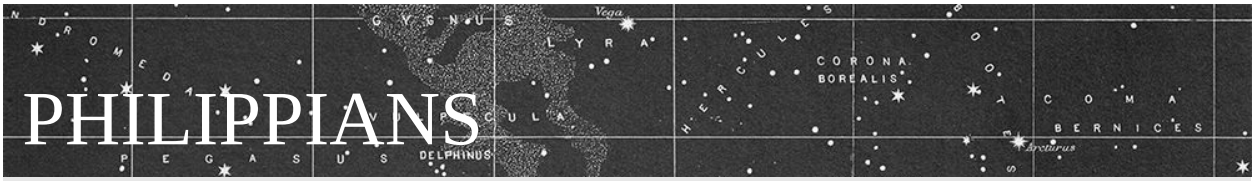
6:5-8 Slavery in the Roman Empire was significantly different from the kind of slavery typified in North America in the nineteenth century. Constituting one third of society, Roman slavery was not ethnicity-based, and people under considerable debt would put themselves into slavery until debt was repaid. Moreover, slaves could rise to significant positions of authority within a household, and even within civic government. Nevertheless, slaves were regarded as the property of their owners. Paul does not explicitly challenge the institution of slavery; he instructs believers as to how they should conduct themselves within it. See also "The Bible and Slavery," *p. 1527.*

6:9 Slave **masters** are reminded that they too have a **Master . . . in heaven**; thus, they ought not to domineer or mistreat their slaves. Again, the institution of slavery is not challenged: the focus here is that believers must occupy their respective roles in a manner befitting Christ.

6:11-12 Ephesus was a center for magic and the demonic (Ac 19:11-20), and such powers are in view here (see also "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*). Unlike typical ideas of the time, security against such forces does not come from magical incantations but from holding fast to God's truth as 6:14-17 indicates. Christians **put on** this armor by believing the gospel, resting in its truths, and trusting in the Word of God.

6:14-17 The items of armor listed here picture that of the typical Roman soldier, but they are also drawn from OT descriptions of the armor that God, or his Messiah, wears in battle against his enemies (e.g., Is 11:5; 21:5; 52:7; 49:2; 59:17). Though Christ is already victorious over the spiritual forces of darkness (1:20-22), believers must still face them in spiritual warfare. Until Christ returns, spiritual warfare will remain a threat for which believers must be prepared. By sharing in the armor of the Lord, Christians are able to take their stand.

6:18-20 Prayer is central in the spiritual struggle; it involves praying for **all the saints** and for those proclaiming the gospel that they might do so with clarity and **boldness.** Paul does not hesitate to ask other believers to pray for him. See “Prayer and Recovery from Illness,” *p. 1551.*



PHILIPPIANS

INTRODUCTION

Philippians is Paul's most warmly personal letter. After initial difficulties in the city of Philippi (Ac 16), a strong bond developed between Paul and the converts there. Paul wrote to thank the church for a gift it had recently sent him in prison and to inform them of his circumstances.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Paul the apostle wrote this short letter, a fact that no scholar seriously questions.

BACKGROUND: The traditional date for the writing of Philippians is during Paul's first Roman imprisonment (AD 60–62); few have challenged this conclusion.

Paul planted the church at Philippi during his second missionary journey (AD 51) in response to his "Macedonian vision" (Ac 16:9-10). This was the first church in Europe (Ac 16).

The text of this letter from Paul suggests several characteristics of the church at Philippi. First, Gentiles predominated. Few Jews lived in Philippi, and, apparently, the church had few. Second, women had a significant role (Ac 16:11-15; Php 4:1-2). Third, the church was generous. Fourth, they remained deeply loyal to Paul.

Philippi, the ancient city of Krenides, had a military significance. It was the capital of Alexander the Great, who renamed it for his father Philip of Macedon, and it became the capital of the Greek Empire (332 BC). The Romans conquered Greece, and in the civil war after Julius Caesar's death (44 BC), Antony and Octavius repopulated Philippi by allowing the defeated armies (Brutus and Cassius) to settle there (eight hundred miles from Rome). They declared the city a Roman colony. It flourished, proud of its history and entrenched in Roman political and social life. In his epistle to the Philippians, Paul alluded to military and political structures as metaphors for the church.

Paul wanted to thank the church for their financial support (4:10-20). He also addressed disunity and the threat of heresy. Disunity threatened the church, spawned by personal conflicts (4:2) and disagreements over theology (3:1-16). The heresy came from radical Jewish teachers. Paul addressed both issues personally and warmly.

The church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to help Paul in Rome. While there he became ill (2:25-28). The church learned of Epaphroditus's illness, and Paul wished to ease their concern for him. Some people possibly blamed Epaphroditus for failing his commission, but Paul commended him and sent him home. Perhaps Epaphroditus carried this letter with him.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Paul's letter to the Philippians teaches us much about genuine Christianity. While most of its themes may be found elsewhere in Scripture, it is within this letter that we can see how those themes and messages impact life. Within the NT, Philippians contributes to our understanding of Christian commitment and what it means to be Christlike.

STRUCTURE

Philippians can be divided into four primary sections. Paul had definite concerns that he wanted to express, and he also wrote to warn about false teachers who threatened the church. Many of Paul's letters can be divided into theological and practical sections, but Philippians does not follow that pattern. Paul's

theological instruction is woven throughout the fabric of a highly personal letter.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

For his glory, God the Father has both exalted Jesus Christ and called a people to know him. Jesus, by very nature God, humbled himself by death on a cross but thereby has been exalted with the greatest name. The Spirit of God enables all true worship and provides help for God's people.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

In Philippians there are two essential categories of human beings: enemies of the cross of Christ and those who know him (3:18-20). The former are destined for destruction, the latter for resurrection. Among those who know him, however, some proclaim him purely, but others do so from false motives (1:15-18).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is presented from the viewpoint of knowing Christ. Knowing Christ, more than just the remedy for sins, is a valuable treasure for which everything else in life is to be happily cast aside. This applies not only to whatever good things one was and did before, but it also means that Jesus's followers will joyfully suffer (as he did). They will ultimately share in his resurrection.

PHILIPPIANS TIMELINE

500–31 BC

Settlers from Thasos occupy what would later be called Philippi and named it Krenides. **500**

Philip II of Macedon invests in the development of the area and so the city was named in his honor. **358**

The Romans win an overwhelming victory over the Macedonians at the battle of Pydna, after which Philippi came under Roman control. **168**

The Battle of Philippi, a strategic turning point in Roman history, is fought between the army of Cassius and Brutus against that of Octavius and Mark Antony. **42**

31 BC–AD 49

A decade later Octavius (Augustus) prevails against Mark Antony in the Battle of Actium, after which Philippi became a colony where veterans of the Roman civil war were settled and enjoyed the privileges of those who lived in Rome. **31 BC**

Jesus's trials, death, resurrection **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, AD 33**

Pentecost **AD 33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER AD 34**

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make first missionary journey. **AD 47–49**

Paul and Silas begin second missionary journey overland through Cilicia to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch. **AD 49**

AD 49–52

Paul, Silas, and Timothy continue through North Galatia to Troas. **49**

Paul and his companions arrive in Philippi and plant the first Christian church in Europe. **50**

Paul's ministry in the Macedonia cities of Thessalonica and Berea **50**

Paul plants the church at Corinth. **50–51**

Paul concludes second missionary journey, returning to Antioch of Syria. **52**

AD 54–140

Paul's third missionary journey takes him to Ephesus. **54**

Paul's extended ministry in Ephesus **54–56**

Paul likely revisits Philippi collecting funds for the church at Jerusalem. **57**

Paul's first imprisonment in Rome **60–62**

Paul writes his letter to the church at Philippi. **62**

Polycarp's letter to the Philippians **110-140**

GREETING

1 Paul † and Timothy, † servants of Christ Jesus: To all the saints in
Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, † including the overseers † and
deacons. †
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER

3 I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, † 4 always praying
with joy for all of you in my every prayer, 5 because of your partnership in the
gospel from the first day † until now. † 6 I am sure of this, that he who started a
good work † in you † will carry it on to completion † until the day of Christ
Jesus. 7 Indeed, it is right † for me to think this way about all of you, because I
have you in my heart, † and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my
imprisonment † and in the defense † and confirmation of the gospel. 8 For God
is my witness, † how deeply I miss all of you † with the affection of Christ
Jesus. 9 And I pray this: that your love † will keep on growing † in knowledge
and every kind of discernment, † 10 so that you may approve the things that are

superior † and may be pure † and blameless † in the day of Christ, † 11 filled with the fruit † of righteousness † that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory † and praise of God.

ADVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

12 Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually advanced the gospel, † 13 so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard, and to everyone else, that my imprisonment is because I am in Christ. 14 Most of the brothers have gained confidence in the Lord from my imprisonment and dare even more to speak the word † † fearlessly. 15 To be sure, some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, † but others out of good will. 16 These preach out of love, † knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; 17 the others proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, † not sincerely, thinking that they will cause me trouble in my imprisonment. 18 What does it matter? Only that in every way, whether from false motives † or true, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice 19 because I know this will lead to my salvation † † through your prayers and help from the Spirit † of Jesus Christ. † 20 My eager expectation and hope † is that I will not be ashamed about anything, but that now as always, with all courage, Christ will be highly honored in my body, whether by life † or by death. †

LIVING IS CHRIST

21 For me, to live is Christ † and to die is gain. † 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful † work † for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ † — which is far better † — 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 25 Since I am persuaded of this, I know that I will remain and continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, † 26 so that, because of my coming to you again, your boasting † in Christ Jesus † may abound.

27 Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life † worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or am absent, I will hear about you that you are standing firm † in one † spirit, in one accord, † contending together for the faith † of the gospel,

DO MY BELIEFS FIT A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW?

A worldview is a set of beliefs we hold about reality that help us make sense of the world. In *Kingdom Triangle*, J. P. Moreland focuses on intellectually analyzing our worldviews and how we should live in light of them. He suggests we ask the following questions when seeking to understand how any given worldview sees the world: (1) What is real?

(2) What are the nature and limits of knowledge?

(3) Who is well-off? What is the good life?

(4) Who is a really good person?

(5) How does one become a really good person?

Sometimes people compare a worldview to a set of eyeglasses through which we see reality. It is true that a worldview helps provide an interpretive grid by which we can understand. However, as with glasses, our experiences always are mediated (filtered) by the lenses. We cannot experience or access reality directly if our worldviews are like glasses. And if we cannot access reality directly, what can we be interpreting? It seems that we could not even get started. Also, there are many things that we can experience directly.

For example, when she was very young, my daughter could see an apple before she had any beliefs about apples. She formed a concept of apples from seeing them many times, and then after that could form a belief that something she sees is an apple. She could see the thing as it is, compare it with her concept, realize it is an apple, and then form a belief that it is an apple. Our ability to experience reality directly (though not perfectly or exhaustively) is crucial for understanding many other beliefs, and it provides a way to test them.

So, in terms of seeing reality, a worldview is not merely like a set of glasses, but instead is "a habituated way of directing our attention (or inattention)" to aspects of reality (Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle*, 33). How well we learn to direct our attention to the various aspects of reality is crucial to developing beliefs that fit well with it. Once we have discovered good reasons to trust the Bible as God's revelation, then we can see that our learning about any aspect of reality needs to conform to what God has made known through general revelation (creation) and special revelation (Scripture). We can know much about reality through studying creation (e.g., Rm 1), yet our understanding of it needs to be brought under Christ's lordship and his written Word, the Scriptures.

This surfaces another crucial aspect, the "worldview fit" of our beliefs. In Jesus are found all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3), and he is the truth (Jn 14:6). He knows all truth and should be accepted as Lord over everything, including all of our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs. All of our beliefs need to be submitted to him for his direction and wisdom. As his disciples (learners), we must go to him if we are to grow in grace and knowledge (2Pt 3:18). That means we must go to him through the Scriptures. We also must go to him prayerfully, listening in complete dependence on his Spirit to lead and guide us into all truth in all subjects—even in our jobs.

Why? First, we were made to be in an intimate heart-and-mind unity with God, but sin has disrupted that and separated our hearts and minds from him. Apart from the lordship of Christ, our default heart attitude is to usurp God and define for ourselves what is good, evil, and real (Gn 3:5). Even though believers have the Spirit, we easily can underestimate the pull of our flesh to war against the Spirit (Gl 5:17).

Second, often we do not take seriously that apart from God, we can do nothing (Jn 15:5; Zch 4:6). Even if we know the Scriptures well, it is easy to have lofty hearts that subtly seek to rule over the Spirit. Our thoughts are not God's thoughts (Is 55:9), so to the extent that we do not come before him with humble, dependent hearts and minds, we will live out of our flesh, which will yield all manner of beliefs that are off the mark.

Third, it is no accident that God's greatest command is to love him with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Lk 10:27; cp. Mk 7:20-23), so we can be in a deep heart-and-mind unity with him (cp. 2Co 10:5). We must cling devotedly and reverently to God (Pr 1:7). If we stress loving God with our hearts but not our minds, we can indulge sentimental, fleshly desires. Conversely, if we overemphasize knowledge at the expense of love, we'll be arrogant and fleshly (1Co 8:1b). Consider Solomon, who loved God and was gifted beyond all others in wisdom and knowledge (1Kg 3), yet at best he had half a heart devoted to God (vv. 1-2) and eventually corrupted both himself and Israel.

In light of all of this, here are some further tests that will help identify the fit of your beliefs with the Christian worldview: (1) Are you seeking God in a given matter for fullness of truth, thereby being teachable (Pr 3:5-6)? Or, are you dogmatic, declaring what you think is right according to how you have granted authority to your own interpretations?

(2) To what extent does a given belief fit with God's kingdom perspective? Does it fit well with the reality, presence, and priority of his kingdom (Mt 6:33)?

(3) To what extent does a given belief promote or encourage your fleshly desires or the movement of God's Spirit in your life?

(4) Does the belief in question exalt you, or does it exalt the Lord?

Finally, here are five considerations in light of our present times that will help us ensure that our beliefs accord with the Christian worldview. First, since the Lord knows all truth, our beliefs should correspond to and be grounded in what reality is like, regardless of subject matter. This means we must have broad interests and learning if we wish to develop a good comprehension of the Christian worldview. One who chooses not to do the difficult work of probing, reading, and dialoguing with others will inevitably adopt beliefs that do not actually correspond with reality.

Second, our beliefs should cohere together. They should not be internally contradictory since God is not a God of confusion (1Co 14:33).

Third, some Christians today suggest postmodern approaches to truth and Christian faith. That view needlessly separates us from direct apprehension of reality and leads to us defining God and reality for ourselves, which is exactly what Satan wants (cp. Gn 3:5).

Fourth, others are advocating "Christian physicalism," which does away with the immaterial aspect of the human and thus may seem to fit better with strong materialist themes in modern science, but that leads to many troubles.

Fifth, Christianity claims to be the truth, yet in Western societies people often think religion gives us only opinions, which leads to religious relativism (pluralism). If we adopt relativism, it will undermine all attempts to be disciples and to develop a Christian worldview, for Scripture claims to give us knowledge of reality, not just opinions about it. The Christian worldview never has been just about mere opinion or blind faith; it is about knowledge given by God. To obtain that knowledge, we must love God and continually compare our beliefs to reality as God has revealed it.

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28 not being frightened in any way by your opponents. † This is a sign of destruction for them, † but of your salvation † — and this is from God. 29 For

it has been granted to you on Christ's behalf not only to believe † in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are engaged in the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I have.

1:3 Or *for your every remembrance of me* **1:6** Or *work among you* **1:7** Or *because you have me in your heart* **1:14** Other mss add *of God* **1:19** Or *vindication* **1:27** Lit *soul*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **1:1** Ac 16:12-40; 20:3-6; 1Th 2:2 **1:1** Ac 20:28; Ti 1:7 **1:1** 1Co 3:5 **1:5** Ac 16:12-40 **1:5** 1Co 9:15-18; 2Co 11:7-9; Php 4:10,16,18 **1:6** 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10 **1:6** 2Co 7:1 **1:7** Rm 1:17 **1:7** Php 1:13-14,17-20,25,30; 2:17,24; 4:22 **1:7** Ac 22:1 **1:8** Rm 1:9 **1:8** 1Th 3:6 **1:9** 1Co 13:1 **1:9** 1Co 15:58 **1:9** Eph 5:17 **1:9-10** Rm 12:2 **1:10** 2Pt 3:1 **1:10** Ac 24:16; 1Co 10:32 **1:10** Php 1:6,15 **1:11** Mt 3:8; Gl 5:22 **1:11** Rm 1:17 **1:11** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **1:12** Mk 13:9; Ac 21–26 **1:14** Lk 8:21; Jn 18:32; Ac 17:11; Heb 4:12 **1:15** Rm 1:29; Ti 3:9 **1:16** 1Co 13:1 **1:17** Rm 2:8 **1:18** 1Th 2:5 **1:19** Jb 13:16-18 **1:19** Gl 5:25 **1:19** Ac 16:7; Rm 8:9; 1Pt 1:11 **1:20** Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3 **1:20** 1Jn 5:12 **1:20** Jn 8:51 **1:21** Rm 14:7-9; Gl 2:19-20; Php 1:11,15; Col 2:6–3:11 **1:21** Rm 8:38-39; Php 3:7 **1:22** Mt 3:8; Rm 1:13; Gl 5:22 **1:22** Mk 14:6; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26 **1:23** Rm 6:8; 2Co 4:14; 13:4-5; 1Th 4:14; 5:9-10 **1:23** Jn 12:26 **1:25** Mt 8:10; Ac 3:16; Rm 1:8; 1Co 2:5; Gl 2:16; 1Tm 1:2; Heb 4:2; Jd 3 **1:26** 1Co 15:58 **1:26** Rm 16:7; Eph 2:6; 1Pt 5:14 **1:27** Ac 23:1 **1:27** 1Co 16:13; Gl 5:1; Eph 6:13-17; Php 4:1; 2Th 2:15 **1:27** Jn 11:52 **1:27** 1Tm 3:9; 4:1,6; 5:8; 6:10,21 **1:28** 1Co 16:9 **1:28** Mt 7:13; Rm 9:22 **1:28** Ac 4:12; 2Co 7:10; Heb 5:9 **1:29** Mk 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10

1:1 Some have said that the early church had no clear structure or leadership, but already here we see the presence of recognized **overseers** (or elders, or pastors) and **deacons.**

1:3-11 Paul's thanksgiving for the Philippians is rooted in their **partnership in the gospel** and his deep affection for them. This is arguably Paul's most joyous letter, as he regards the Philippians as his genuine partners in the cause of Christ (4:10-19).

1:6,10 The day of Christ Jesus refers to Christ's return and draws on the OT concept of "the day of the Lord" (e.g., Is 13:6-9), a day of judgment. But here "the day" has been adapted to refer to Christ, the promised Messiah, who will reign with justice and righteousness (Is 9:7).

1:12-13 What has happened to me refers to Paul's imprisonment (probably) in Rome. But his suffering has **advanced the gospel** (Rm 8:28), having given Paul a higher profile along with opportunities to speak before significant Roman authorities.

1:17 The only known reference to **selfish ambition** before the NT is in Aristotle's *Politics* (5.3), in which it describes aspiration for power through unjust means. Likewise, Paul refers to those who **proclaim Christ** for their own gain.

1:21 Death is an enemy (1Co 15:26). It is only **gain** because Christ has conquered it, and it leads believers into God's presence.

1:23 See "The Eternal State," *p. 1622.*

1:27 The Philippians are described as **citizens of heaven**—a striking designation for those belonging to Philippi, a privileged Roman colony. Christians would be seen as bad citizens of Philippi, refusing to engage in worship of the Roman emperor and other such pagan practices. But as citizens of heaven, they are to live in a manner **worthy of the gospel.**

1:29 Suffering for Christ is an essential aspect of discipleship (see also Jn 16:33; 2Tm 3:12; 1Pt 2:21), and is even described as a gift—**it has been granted to you . . . to suffer for him.**

CHRISTIAN HUMILITY

2 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, † if any fellowship with the Spirit, † if any affection and mercy, †
2 make my joy complete by thinking the same way, † having the same love, † united in spirit, intent on one † purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition † or conceit, † but in humility † consider others as more important † than yourselves. 4 Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, † but also for the interests of others. †

CHRIST'S HUMILITY AND EXALTATION

5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God †
as something to be exploited. †
7 Instead he emptied himself †
by assuming the form of a servant, †
taking on the likeness of humanity. †
And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient
to the point of death — even to death on a cross. †
9 For this reason God highly exalted him †
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow † — in heaven †
and on earth and under the earth † — 11 and every tongue † will confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory † of God the Father.

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

12 Therefore, my dear friends, † just as you have always obeyed, † so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose. 14 Do everything without grumbling † and arguing, † 15 so that you may be blameless † and pure, † children of God

who are faultless † in a crooked † and perverted † generation, † among whom you shine like stars in the world, 16 by holding firm to the word † of life. Then I can boast † in the day of Christ † that I didn't run or labor for nothing. 17 But even if I am poured out † as a drink offering † on the sacrificial service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 In the same way you should also be glad and rejoice with me.

TIMOTHY AND EPAPHRODITUS

19 Now I hope in the Lord Jesus † to send Timothy † to you soon so that I too may be encouraged by news about you. 20 For I have no one else like-minded who will genuinely care about your interests; 21 all seek their own interests, † not those of Jesus Christ. † 22 But you know his proven character, because he has served with me in the gospel ministry like a son with a father. 23 Therefore, I hope to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon. †

25 But I considered it necessary to send you Epaphroditus † — my brother, coworker, and fellow soldier, as well as your messenger and minister to my need † — 26 since he has been longing for all of you and was distressed because you heard that he was sick. 27 Indeed, he was so sick that he nearly died. However, God had mercy on him, and not only on him but also on me, so that I would not have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 For this reason, I am very eager to send him so that you may rejoice again when you see him and I may be less anxious. 29 Therefore, welcome him in the Lord with great joy and hold people like him in honor, 30 because he came close to death for the work † of Christ, risking his life to make up what was lacking in your ministry to me.

2:6 Or *to be grasped*, or *to be held on to*
2:1 Rm 5:8; 15:30; 2Th 2:16; 1Jn 3:16; 4:9-10,16 **2:1** 1Co 12:13; 2Co 13:13; Eph 4:3 **2:1** Col 3:12 **2:2** Rm 12:16; 15:5; 2Co 13:11; Php 4:2 **2:2** 2Th 1:3; 1Jn 3:16 **2:2** Jn 11:52 **2:3** Rm 2:8 **2:3** Gl 5:26 **2:3** Col 3:12 **2:3** Rm 13:1; Php 3:8; 4:7; 1Pt 2:13 **2:4** Rm 15:1 **2:4** Lv 19:18; Mk 10:45; 12:31; 1Co 10:24; 13:5; Php 2:21 **2:6** Is 9:6; Jn 1:1,14; 20:28; Rm 9:5; Col 1:15-16; Ti 2:13; Heb 1:2-13; 2Pt 1:1; 1Jn 4:14-15 **2:7** Mk 9:12; 2Co 8:9; 13:4 **2:7** Is 42:1; 53:12; Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45 **2:7** Jn 1:14; Rm 8:3; Gl 4:4; 1Tm 2:5; Heb 2:17 **2:8** Lk 23:26; Php 3:10 **2:9** Is 52:13; 53:12; Dn 7:14; Ac 2:32-33; 5:30-31; Eph 1:20-21; Heb 2:9 **2:10** Is 45:23 **2:10** 2Co 5:1; Eph 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12; Heb 3:1; 12:22 **2:10** Mt 28:18; Eph 1:10; Rv 5:13 **2:11** Is 45:23; Rm 10:9; 14:11; 1Co 12:3 **2:11** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **2:12** Phm 1 **2:12** Mk 1:27; Ac 16:14,32-33; Rm 6:12 **2:14** Jn 7:12; Ac 6:1; 1Pt 4:9 **2:14** 1Tm 2:8 **2:15** Lk 1:6 **2:15** Mt 10:16; Rm 16:19 **2:15** Jd 24 **2:15** Lk 3:5; Ac 2:40; 1Pt 2:18 **2:15** Mt 17:17 **2:15** Dt 32:5 **2:16** Lk 8:21; Jn 18:32; Ac 17:11;

Heb 4:12 **2:16** Rm 2:17; Gl 6:4; Php 1:26 **2:16** Php 1:6,15 **2:17** Php 1:7 **2:17** Ex 25:29; Nm 28:7 **2:19** Lk 24:3 **2:19** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **2:21** Rm 15:1; 2Tm 3:2 **2:21** 1Co 10:24; Php 1:15 **2:24** Php 1:7 **2:25** Php 4:18 **2:25** Mt 6:8 **2:30** Mk 14:6; 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26

2:2 Thinking the same way refers to unity in thinking about the gospel, not to an artificial uniformity in all areas of life.

2:3 Genuine **humility** is seen in considering others **as more important than** self, and looking to the interests of others (2:4). Such humility is modeled on Christ, rather than on any notion of false humility that plays down one's gifts or abilities. On **selfish ambition**, see the note on 1:17.

2:5-11 As elsewhere in Paul, the example of Christ, particularly at the **cross**, is the basis of ethics. See also "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p. 1501*.

2:6 Jesus exists **in the form of God** and yet is distinct from God the Father. Statements such as this form the basis for the doctrine of the Trinity (see "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," *p. 1271*).

2:7 Jesus **emptied himself** not by disowning his deity, but by humbling himself as the verse describes. He voluntarily veiled his glory. Some take the phrase **likeness of humanity** to suggest that Jesus did not truly become human but merely "appeared" to be human (as in the early Christological heresy Docetism). The verse, however, also says that Jesus came **as a man.**

2:8 The stress, **even to death on a cross**, demonstrates the horror of crucifixion in the ancient world. Even in brutal times, the cross was ghastly.

2:9 Jesus taught that "the one who humbles himself will be exalted" (Lk 18:14). Leaving the side of the Father, and humbling himself to the point of death on a cross, is the greatest personal lowering possible. It is fitting, then, that **God highly exalted** Jesus, giving **him the name that is above every name.**

2:10 The ancients understood the universe to consists of three spheres: **heaven**, **earth,** and **under the earth.** Thus, there will be universal cosmic acknowledgment—including angels, demons, humans, and all of creation—of the lordship of Christ.

2:15 As Israel was to be a "light for the nations" (Is 49:6), so the church is to shine the light of Christ **like stars in the world.**

2:17 The **drink offering** alludes to OT libation sacrifices (e.g., Nm 15:10). Paul imagines his life poured out as a sacrifice to God.

2:19-30 Timothy and **Epaphroditus** are servants who have adopted the same attitude as Christ Jesus (2:5). They are more concerned for the Philippians than for their own welfare.

KNOWING CHRIST

3 In addition, my brothers and sisters, rejoice † in the Lord. To write to
you again about this is no trouble for me and is a safeguard for you.

2 Watch out for the dogs, watch out for the evil † workers, watch out for
those who mutilate the flesh. 3 For we are the circumcision, † the ones who
worship by the Spirit † of God, boast in Christ Jesus, † and do not put
confidence in the flesh — 4 although I have reasons for confidence in the flesh.
If anyone else thinks he has grounds for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

CHIEF PURPOSE OF HUMANITY

The perennial question in philosophy is this: what is the meaning of human life? Another way to express the question is this: what is the end or purpose for which God created the world and the humans who inhabit it? Is there any objective meaning to life, or is every investment a matter of personal preference with no deeper meaning to be found?

GOD THE CREATOR

It is important to recognize that God did not create humans to satisfy anything that was lacking in him. As Acts 17:24-25 says, “The God who made the world and everything in it—he is Lord of heaven and earth—does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives everyone life and breath and all things.”

Orthodox Christianity affirms that God is triune, eternally enjoying fellowship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. Though God did not create anything to satisfy a deficiency within himself, we glean from the doctrine of the Trinity that just as God is inherently relational, so we are made as beings to live in community with one another, and ultimately to enjoy fellowship and unity with God and every facet of his creation. We see this relational aspect of creation in Scripture, for the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him” (Gn 2:18). Accordingly, God fashions the woman from the rib of Adam and presents her as a suitable helper to him (Gn 2:23). Most importantly, God created us to walk and have fellowship with him (Gn 3:8).

FOUNDATION FOR MEANING FROM THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

A theistic framework provides a rational account for the existence of an objectively meaningful and subjectively satisfying foundation for meaning in our lives. In his article, “Religion Gives Meaning to Life,” Louis Pojman notes that if theism is true and there is a benevolent supreme being governing the universe, then other things result.

1. THEISM OFFERS A SATISFYING EXPLANATION OF THE ORIGINS AND SUSTENANCE OF THE UNIVERSE.

Humans are not the product of chance or an impersonal big bang, nor are we merely a blind collocation of particles in motion. Rather, we are endowed with God-like properties that make us unique in creation, but also accountable as to how we exercise dominion over and relate to other parts of it (Gn 1:26). As divine image-bearers we are rational, emotional, and volitional.

That being said, we are more than rational creatures; we are also created for love. Jesus teaches that we are to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, strength, and minds, and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Lk 10:27). By cooperating with God in his creation plan, we fulfill the purpose for which he created us and find satisfaction and meaning in life. We cooperate by knowing the gifts God has given us, and by using them in such a way that God receives the praise (Mt 5:16; 1Co 13:1-13; Eph 4:7-16). Since each individual is endowed with spiritual gifts, his personal meaning is found in utilizing these gifts for Christ and his kingdom. Moreover since God interacts in history, and history is directed toward the union of Christ and his church, each investment of these spiritual gifts is bound up in a larger story—one that spills over into the afterlife.

2. THEISM CAN EXPLAIN HOW THE UNIVERSE IS SUFFUSED IN GOODNESS AND THAT GOD WILL WIN OUT OVER ALL THE EVIL WE SEE IN THE WORLD

WE SEE IN THE WORLD.

Scripture affirms that God is perfectly good (1Ch 16:34; Pss 100:5; 136:1; 145:9). God looked on his creation and proclaimed it good (Gn 1:31). Unfortunately, Adam and Eve did not honor the end for which they were created. Instead of choosing fellowship and communion with God, they sought their own destiny independent from him. Thus begins the story of broken relationships and suffering that results from evil. Jesus, however, takes the broken world and recreates it, restoring what was lost in Adam's rebellion (2Co 5:17). Ultimately evil and death are defeated at the resurrection (1Co 15), and in the end God makes a new heaven and new earth (Rv 22:1-5).

3. GOD LOVES AND CARES FOR US, AND AS A RESULT OF HIS LOVE WE HAVE A DEEPER MOTIVE FOR MORALLY GOOD ACTIONS, INCLUDING ACTS OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

4. THEISTS HAVE AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "WHY BE MORAL?"

As noted above, God is the source of all that is good. But what is more, the existence of God best explains why we have moral duties. A duty is an obligation we have to perform, or a certain action we must refrain from performing. For example, we have a duty to fulfill the great commission and the Great Commandments. We have a duty not to envy, gossip, malign, slander, or hate. Duties come from persons in authority, and there is no higher moral authority than God himself.

God provides a rich account of where our moral actions find both their value and our obligations. Moral decision making is significant for one's life. As John Cottingham explains, "Without an overarching structure that confers meaning on life, and without a normative pattern or model to which the meaningful life must conform, then a meaningful life reduces to little more than an engaged life in which the agent is systematically committed to certain projects he makes his own, irrespective of their moral status." Accordingly, Fulfillment and meaning pursued in ways that involve deceiving or hurting others, or making use of them as mere instrumental fodder for one's own success, closing one's heart and mind to the voice of one's fellow creatures—these are modes of activity that make one less human. To put the matter somewhat grandly, a meaningful life will be oriented as far as possible toward truth and beauty and goodness, or at least by striving toward those ideals.

5. ALL PERSONS ARE OF EQUAL WORTH.

Since every person is crafted in the image of God, each is intrinsically valuable—and not simply valuable as a means to an end. God loves each person, for all are created in him and for him. Paul affirms the equal worth of persons, for Christ died as a sacrifice for all persons (Gl 3:28).

6. LIFE AFTER DEATH ALSO GUARANTEES THAT THERE WILL BE NO UNACCOUNTED-FOR INJUSTICES.

As the teacher concludes Ecclesiastes, "Fear God and keep his commands, because this is for all humanity. For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil" (12:13-14).

In essence, the chief purpose of humanity is to claim every endeavor and institution in life for Christ. But what is more, when justice is brought to bear and all relationships are made whole, then God's original plan for all creation will be realized—each aspect of the good creation is at peace (*shalom*; Gn 1:26-27); that is, there is *shalom* in all of creation, all relationships, and all stewardship.

JEREMY A. EVANS

5 circumcised the eighth day; † of the nation of Israel, † of the tribe of Benjamin, † a Hebrew born of Hebrews; regarding the law, † a Pharisee; 6 regarding zeal, † persecuting † the church; regarding the righteousness that is in the law, † blameless. †

7 But everything that was a gain to me, I have considered to be a loss because of Christ. 8 More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value † of knowing Christ † Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ † 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own from the law, † but one that is through faith in Christ † — the righteousness from God based on faith. † 10 My goal is to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, † being conformed to his death, † 11 assuming that I will somehow reach the resurrection from among the dead.

REACHING FORWARD TO GOD'S GOAL

12 Not that I have already reached the goal or am already perfect, but I make every effort to take hold † of it because I also have been taken hold of by Christ Jesus. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not † consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind † and reaching forward to what is ahead, 14 I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly † call in Christ Jesus. † 15 Therefore, let all of us who are mature think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal † this also to you. 16 In any case, we should live up to whatever truth we have attained. 17 Join in imitating me, brothers and sisters, and pay careful attention to those who live according to the example you have in us. 18 For I have often told you, and now say again with tears, that many live as enemies of the cross † of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory † is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, 20 but our citizenship is in heaven, and we eagerly wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. 21 He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious † body, † by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

3:9 Or *through the faithfulness of Christ* **3:13** Other mss read *not yet* **3:14** Or *upward*
3:1 Rm 12:12; 2Co 6:10; Php 1:18 **3:2** 2Co 13:7 **3:3** Gl 6:15 **3:3** Rm 8:4; Gl 5:25; 1Tm 3:16 **3:3** Rm 16:7; Eph 2:6; Php 1:1,15; 1Pt 5:14 **3:5** Gn 17:12,25; 21:4; Lv 12:3; Lk 1:59; 2:21 **3:5** Rm 9:6 **3:5** Ps 68:27 **3:5** Ac 5:34; 22:3; Gl 1:14; 5:4 **3:6** Rm 10:2 **3:6** Ac 22:2-5; 26:9-11; 1Co 15:9; Gl 1:13; 1Tm 1:13; 2Tm 3:12 **3:6** Rm 3:21; 9:31; 10:4-5; Gl 2:21; 3:21 **3:6** Lk 1:6; Rm 7:9-10 **3:8** Php 2:3 **3:8** Jn 17:3; 2Co 4:6; Gl 4:8-9; Php 1:15; Col 2:2; 1Jn 4:8 **3:8** 1Pt 3:1 **3:9** Rm 10:5 **3:9** Rm 3:22; 10:4; Gl 2:21; Heb 11:7 **3:10** Rm 8:17; 2Co 1:5-7; Col 1:24; 1Pt 4:13; 5:1,9 **3:10** Rm 6:5; 8:36; 2Co 4:7-12; 12:9-10; Gl 6:17 **3:12** Jn 1:5; 12:35; Rm 9:30; 1Co 9:24; Eph 3:18 **3:13** Lk 9:62; 17:31 **3:14** Rm 16:7; Eph 2:6; Php 1:1,15; 1Pt 5:14 **3:15** Lk 10:21 **3:18** Lk 23:26; 1Co 1:17; Gl 6:12 **3:19** Lk 14:10; Jn 5:41,44; 8:50,54; 12:43; Rm 9:4; 1Co 11:15; 2Co 6:8; 1Th 2:6 **3:21** 1Pt 5:4 **3:21** 1Co 6:13; 1Jn 3:2

3:2 This strong warning has in view Jewish-Christian teachers who say that in addition to believing in Jesus one must also be circumcised and follow OT purity regulations in order to be saved. **Dogs** were considered unclean because they would eat anything. This is, therefore, a stinging term to use for those overly concerned with purity regulations.

3:3 Circumcision was the mark of belonging to the old covenant. Paul says believers in Jesus are now **the** true **circumcision**, meaning the true people of God. But the mark of the new covenant is the **Spirit of God** rather than a change to **the flesh.**

3:5 Paul has impeccable Jewish credentials. He was **circumcised** on the right day according to the law of Moses (Gn 17:12; Lv 12:3). And while some Jews grew up with Greek customs and language, a **Hebrew born of Hebrews** grew up speaking Aramaic, immersed in Jewish culture. To be a **Pharisee** was to belong to the most zealous Jewish sect regarding obedience to the **law.**

3:8 The term translated **dung** can refer to food scraps, garbage, manure, or human dung. This is Paul's assessment of his claims to righteousness apart from Christ (see Is 64:6).

3:10-11 Paul views his life and ministry in conformity with Christ's **death**, as sharing in **his sufferings.** But he also knows **the power of** Christ's **resurrection**, believing he will also **reach the resurrection from among the dead.**

3:17 Imitating godly examples, and living so as to be such an example to others, is a key aspect of Christian discipleship.

3:19 Stomach refers metaphorically to "desires." These people simply obey their own desires; they worship their appetites. As a result they **glory**, or boast in, things that are actually **their shame.**

3:20 On heavenly **citizenship**, see the note on 1:27. In the Roman world, rulers—especially Roman emperors—were often regarded as a "savior." Since our citizenship **is in heaven**, we **wait for a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.** The Philippians' ultimate allegiance is to this Lord, who governs their true home. See also "Church and State," *p. 1374.*

3:21 The transformation of the body **into the likeness of his glorious body** refers to the bodily resurrection of the faithful. Elsewhere Paul teaches that our resurrected bodies will be like the glorious body of Jesus (1Co 15:42-49). See also "The Mind-Body Problem," *p. 1175.*

4 So then, my dearly loved and longed for brothers and sisters, my joy and crown, † in this manner stand firm † in the Lord, dear friends.

PRACTICAL COUNSEL

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to agree in the Lord. 3 Yes, I also ask you, true partner, † to help these women who have contended for the gospel at my side, along with Clement and the rest of my coworkers whose names are in the book of life. 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your graciousness † be known to everyone. The Lord is near. † 6 Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses † all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. †

8 Finally † brothers and sisters, whatever is true, † whatever is honorable, † whatever is just, † whatever is pure, † whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable — if there is any moral excellence † and if there is anything praiseworthy — dwell on these things. 9 Do what you have learned and received † and heard from me, and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

APPRECIATION OF SUPPORT

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly because once again † you renewed your care for me. † You were, in fact, concerned about me but lacked the opportunity to show it. 11 I don't say this out of need, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I find myself. 12 I know both how to make do with little, and I know how to make do with a lot. † In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being content — whether well fed or hungry, whether in abundance or in need. 13 I am able to do all things through him † who strengthens me. †

14 Still, you did well by partnering with me in my hardship.

15 And you Philippians † know that in the early days of the gospel, † when I left Macedonia, † no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone. 16 For even in Thessalonica † you sent gifts for my need † several times. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit † † that is increasing to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full, † and I have an abundance. I am fully supplied, † having received from Epaphroditus † what you provided — a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing † to

God. [19] And my God † will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. [20] Now to our God and Father † be glory forever and ever. † Amen. †

FINAL GREETINGS

[21] Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me send you greetings. [22] All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's † household. † [23] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. † †

4:3 Or *true Syzygus*, possibly a person's name **4:5** Or *gentleness* **4:8** Or *In addition* **4:13** Other mss read *Christ* **4:17** Lit *fruit* **4:18** Or *Here, then, is my receipt for everything, I have an abundance, for I am fully supplied* **4:23** Other mss add *Amen.*

4:1 Rv 12:1 **4:1** Rm 14:4; 1Co 16:13; Php 1:27; 2:2 **4:5** 1Co 16:22; Php 1:6; Heb 10:24-25; Jms 5:8; Rv 1:7; 3:11; 22:20 **4:7** Php 2:3 **4:7** Rm 16:7; Eph 2:6; Php 1:1,15; 1Pt 5:14 **4:8** Jn 8:14 **4:8** 1Tm 3:8,11; Ti 2:2 **4:8** Rm 1:17 **4:8** 2Co 7:11; 11:2; 1Tm 5:22; Ti 2:5; Jms 3:17; 1Pt 3:2; 1Jn 3:3 **4:8** 1Pt 2:9; 2Pt 1:3,5 **4:9** Jd 3 **4:10** Php 1:5 **4:10** 2Co 8:1-2; 11:9 **4:12** 1Co 15:58 **4:13** 2Co 12:9; Eph 3:16; Col 1:11; 1Tm 1:12; 2Tm 4:17 **4:15** Php 1:1 **4:15** Ac 16:6-40; Php 1:5 **4:15** Ac 16:9 **4:16** Ac 17:1 **4:16** Mt 6:8 **4:17** Mt 3:8; Rm 1:13; Gl 5:22 **4:18** Php 1:5 **4:18** Php 2:25 **4:18** Heb 13:21 **4:19** Mt 27:46; Rm 1:8; Php 1:8 **4:20** Gl 1:4; 1Th 1:3; 3:11,13 **4:20** Gl 1:5; 1Tm 1:17; 2Tm 4:18; Heb 13:21 **4:20** Rm 11:36; Rv 22:21 **4:22** Mt 22:17; Lk 20:22 **4:22** Php 1:7 **4:23** Rm 1:9

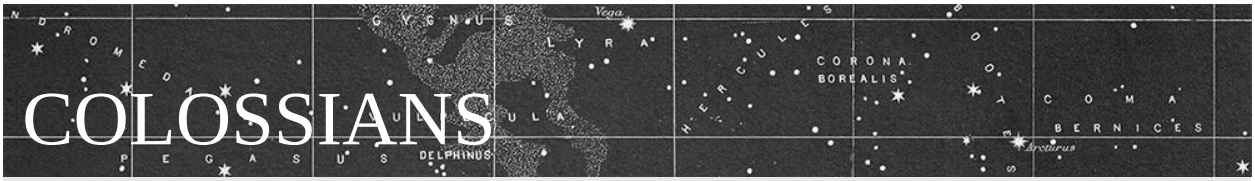
4:3 The book of life refers to a record of the names of people who belong to God. Moses preferred his own name to be deleted for the benefit of the whole generation of rebellious Israelites (Ex 32:32-33), and Isaiah looked forward to a time when blessings would be showered on those whose names are recorded in it (Is 4:3).

4:5 The Lord is near. Christian ethics is shaped by the reality of the return of Christ.

4:11 Paul has **learned to be content** through his dependence on God's strength (4:13). This is not the kind of contentment Stoicism advocated, which depended on self-sufficiency rather than on God.

4:17 Not that I seek the gift. Paul wants to thank the Philippians for their partnership, but also to make it clear that he is not seeking further gifts. Primarily, he desires their spiritual growth.

4:19 This verse is not a promise that we will have whatever we want. Instead it is a promise that when we are generous, God will provide for our **needs.** Generosity depends on trusting God for his provision.



COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul's letter to the church at Colossae is one of the Prison Letters (along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon). Paul's desire with this letter was to correct the false teachings that were cropping up in the church. In doing so, Paul presented a clear picture of Jesus Christ as supreme Lord of the universe, head of the church, and the only one through whom forgiveness is possible.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Colossians retains its place among the epistles of Paul, who identified himself as the author (1:1; 4:18). The church fathers unreservedly endorsed Pauline authorship (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.*, 3.14.1; Tertullian, *De Praescr. Haer*., 7; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.*, 1.1; cp. Justin, *Dialogue*, 85.2; 138.2). A close reading of Colossians reveals a considerable number of lexical, grammatical, and theological similarities with the other Pauline writings (1:9,26; 2:11-14,16,20-21; 3:1,3,5-17). Also favoring the authenticity of Colossians as a letter of Paul is its close connection with Philemon, an epistle widely regarded as Pauline.

BACKGROUND: During his ministry in Ephesus (Ac 19:10), Paul sent Epaphras to spread the gospel in the Lycus Valley. Epaphras subsequently established the church at Colossae (1:7; 4:12-13). The city's population consisted mostly of Phrygians and Greeks, but it also included a significant number of Jews. The church, likewise, was mostly composed of Gentiles (1:21,27; 2:13), but it also had Jewish members (2:11,16,18,21; 3:11). When Epaphras (Phm 23) informed Paul of certain heretical teachings that had spread there, Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians as a theological antidote.

Paul wrote Colossians during his first Roman imprisonment (4:3,10,18; cp. Ac 28:30-31; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, 2.22.1) in the early AD 60s. Together with Philemon, Philippians, and Ephesians, Colossians is commonly classified as a "prison letter." All four letters share several personal links that warrant this conclusion (Col 1:7; 4:7-8,17; Eph 6:21-22; Phm 2,12,23).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Colossians provides one of the Bible's fullest expressions of the deity and supremacy of Christ. This is most evident in the magnificent hymn of praise (1:15-20) that sets forth Christ as the image of the invisible God, the Creator and sustainer of the universe, and the head of his body, the church. In Christ are all the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (2:3), because in him "the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily" (2:9). The supremacy of Christ also has implication for believers' salvation (2:10,13,20; 3:1,11-12,17) and conduct (3:5–4:6). Colossians contributes to Scripture a high Christology and a presentation of its implications for the believer's conduct.

STRUCTURE

Colossians may be divided into two main parts. The first (1:3–2:23) is a polemic against false teachings. The second (3:1–4:17) is made up of exhortations to proper Christian living. This is typical of Paul's approach, presenting a theology position first, a position on which the practical exhortations are built. The introduction (1:1-2) is in the form of a Hellenistic, personal letter.

Notable in the final section are the mention of Onesimus (4:9), which links this letter with Philemon; the mention of a letter at Laodicea (4:16) that may have been Ephesians; and Paul's concluding signature which

indicates that the letter was prepared by an amanuensis (secretary; see 4:18).

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father of Jesus, and his fullness is in his Son (1:19; 2:9). Jesus is especially the "firstborn" (1:15,18). Colossians 1:15-18 is the most elevated passage in Paul's letters presenting the identity of Christ. When Jesus returns, his people will appear with him in glory (3:4). The Spirit is mentioned only once (1:8), as the source of love.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Because Colossians was first written to stop false teachings, it shows just how easy it is for people to be led astray from truth, particularly in matters of eternal destiny. In every age, powerful enemies of truth oppose genuine understanding of God and the human condition. Apart from Christ, all are "dead in trespasses" (2:13). Christ brings new life and transformation of relationships, particularly within the home (3:18–4:1).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Any understanding of salvation that is "Jesus plus . . ." is defective. Good works, keeping Jewish law, accepting certain philosophical principles, and other positive human accomplishments cannot add anything to what Jesus has already achieved. Therefore salvation is a matter of being rightly related to him by faith and refusing to trust anything else, no matter how valuable. Christ allows nothing to rival him in redeeming sinners.

COLOSSIANS TIMELINE

430–190 BC

Herodotus describes Colossae as "a great city of Phrygia" strategically located on the main road from Ephesus and Sardis eastward to the Euphrates. **430**

Xenophon describes Colossae as a "populus" city, wealthy and large. **400**

Cyrus and his army spend seven days in Colossae as he moves from Sardis east to take the throne of Persia. **400**

Laodicea founded by Antiochus II who named it for his wife, Laodice **262–246**

The regions of Colossae, Hieropolis, and Laodicea become subject to the Pergamenes after the battle of Magnesia. **190**

130 BC–AD 18

Hieropolis comes under Roman rule after being established earlier in the second century. **129 BC**

A sizeable Jewish population lives in the region of Colossae, Hieropolis, and Laodicea. **62 BC**

Laodicea receives from Rome the title of a free city. **10 BC**

In his *Geography*, Strabo describes Colossae as a small town. Laodicea was then the growing city in the Lycus Valley because of its location, its banking, and its trade of black sheep wool. **AD 7–18**

A destructive earthquake in the region of Colossae, Hieropolis, and Laodicea **ad 17**

AD 33–52

Jesus's trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, 33**

Pentecost **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make first missionary journey. **47–49**

Paul and Silas take second missionary journey. **49–52**

AD 53–62

Paul's third missionary journey **53–57**

Paul's ministry in Ephesus becomes the nucleus of church planting throughout Asia Minor. **54–56**

Paul arrives in Rome. **60**

Paul encounters Onesimus, a runaway slave from Colossae. **61**

Paul's letter to the Colossians **61**

Paul sends a letter to Philemon, Onesimus's master. **61**

Colossae, Laodicea, and Hieropolis experience a devastating earthquake. **60** or **64**

GREETING

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, † and Timothy † our
brother: 2 To the saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers
and sisters.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father. †

THANKSGIVING

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for
you, 4 for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have
for all the saints 5 because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have
already heard about this hope in the word of truth, † the gospel 6 that has come
to you. It is bearing fruit † and growing all over the world, † just as it has
among you since the day you heard it and came to truly appreciate † God's
grace. † † 7 You learned this from Epaphras, † our dearly loved fellow servant.
He is a faithful minister of Christ † on your † behalf, 8 and he has told us about
your love in the Spirit. †

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying
for you. We are asking † that you may be filled with the knowledge † of his
will † in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, † 10 so that you may walk
worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work †
and growing in the knowledge of God, † 11 being strengthened † with all
power, † according to his glorious † might, so that you may have great
endurance and patience, joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled
you † to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. † 13 He has rescued † us
from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom † of the Son †
he loves. † 14 In him we have redemption, † the forgiveness of sins.

THE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The notion that colleges and universities can be deeply Christian in their mission is hardly a modern concept. Many of today's Christian institutions of higher learning were founded in the middle 1800s, while many European and North American schools were established centuries earlier and have deep roots in Christianity.

Over time, the leaders of many of these institutions untethered their decision making from the convictions of their forebears. As a result, these schools today do not resemble the Christian intent of their founders. Several reasons account for the drift away from Christ-centeredness and biblical authority. One is that over time faculty no longer were expected to teach from a perspective that all learning is connected to all truth—truth authored and ordered by God, truth that transcends all of life and all disciplines.

KNOWLEDGE AND THE GOD OF TRUTH

Christians who see life from a biblical worldview understand learning differently. They do not believe that scholarship and faith are incompatible. Rather than education disconnected from faith, Christian thinkers believe that all knowledge falls within the realm of God's sovereignty and should be studied with that in mind. They believe that all matters related to the arts and sciences—in fact, the entirety of life—were created by God as good and contain truth that ultimately points back to him.

In Colossians 1, Paul summarizes Christ's dominion over all of life. It's a passage often cited in advocating for the great Christian intellectual tradition. Notice the repetition of the phrase "all things" in verses 16 and 17, strengthening the biblical argument that a Trinitarian God is the Creator of all things, the object of all things, and the connector of all things. Of Jesus the Son the passage says, "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been

created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together" (1:15-17).

INTEGRATIVE TEACHING

Christian colleges and universities teach from the perspective that God is the Creator of all things and that God holds all things together. Teaching this way is often referred to as "integrative teaching." In the ideal Christian higher education setting, God's created and connecting truth ought to be evident throughout the entire curriculum and community. Christian higher education is not "Christian" because faculty members sign a faith statement or students are required to attend chapel. Christian higher education is "Christian" when the understanding throughout the institution is that the entirety of knowledge and wisdom comes from God and points toward God.

Being part of a Christian college or university, therefore, means students grapple with the truths within each academic discipline and among all academic disciplines by seeing them as under God's sovereignty. This is what the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper meant when he said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, 'Mine!'" The same is argued by Christian scholars John Henry Newman, Arthur Holmes, Mark Noll, George Marsden, and others, who say that learning separated from faith is woefully incomplete.

This approach to learning is what characterizes Christian higher education, and it must stay as a distinguishing mark of an exemplary Christian university. In the world's marketplace of ideas, the person and work of Jesus Christ and the implications of a biblical worldview currently hold little sway, yet they are vitally important to the Christian's assessments of and responses to dominant cultural ideologies. The role of Christian higher education is to preserve and advance the Christian intellectual tradition and to glorify God.

CHRISTIANITY FOR ALL OF LIFE

As Christian higher education enables Christians to think from the center of all knowledge—knowing that God is the Author of all truth—students begin asking new questions.

"How do faith and reason intersect in all of life and not run on separate tracks?"

"How should I live in a way that honors Christ and brings glory to God in the world of finance or law, medicine or politics, art or media?"

"What does it mean to think Christianly about the big questions of our times?"

"How does a biblical worldview influence the way I run my business or give away my money, nurture my family, or serve my community?"

Both the curricular programs in Christian higher education as well as cocurricular activities create a community in which students explore the answers to these and other worldview questions within a theological framework. Christian higher education is far more than sprinkling Christian flavorings on a college degree. Instead, it is an intellectually robust and academically holistic way of thinking.

To get there, scholars at the university need to be intentional about integrative thinking—the idea that academic disciplines are not disconnected from each other but are held together, since all truth is within the realm of God's ordered creation. An integrated faculty in Christian higher education allows professors to set aside time for discussing what God's revealed Word brings to bear on their respective disciplines and on the educational mission of the institution. This notion of integration brings together faculty from the social sciences, theology, the arts, the physical sciences, the humanities, business, education, and so forth, into a community with a shared approach to the connectedness of all things. If most of what is taught in the classrooms of a self-identified Christian college is indistinguishable from what is taught in non-Christian schools, then integration is evidently not a priority, and a full understanding of a Christian worldview is being short-changed.

EDUCATION AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Since a Christian college or university provides a foundation for intellectual development, academic

competence will accompany thought leadership in church and society. Much happens within the life of a university to cultivate this discipline of the mind and soul together. It is the idea Paul writes about to the church in Rome, explaining that spiritual transformation takes place "by the renewing of [the] mind" (Rm 12:2).

Colleges or universities that appoint faculty who are first-rate scholars, have a deep love for Christ, and who are well-articulated integrators of scholarship and faith will impact generations of students. Such Christian thought leaders shape communities, congregations, and cultures for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

Because God's Word bears witness to the truth of Christ at the core of all things, a Christ-centered university must be biblically grounded. The cornerstone of the evangelical movement from its starting point was an ineradicable belief in the authority of the Bible, alongside serious scholarship. Such commitment to the revealed Word of God is at the core of exemplary Christian universities. Being a Christian college or university means that the Christian Scriptures—as originally intended and as understood through the ages—have a central role in all programs.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AS WORSHIP

Christian higher education is an act of worship, built on the lordship of Christ over all things—including our lives. Scholarship separated from loving God is a type of idolatry. By seeing all of life and vocation as a holy calling, graduates of Christian higher education should be alive in a way that encourages others to see Christ's redemptive work and to receive God's grace.

Learning this way is not an act of self-enrichment. It is an act of worshiping Creator God. This is what Jesus meant when he called his followers to love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, strength, and minds (Mt 22:37; Lk 10:27). The purpose of theology is not mere intellectual exercise, but doxology, an expression of praise to God. We study all of God's truths so that we may love God more.

BARRY H. COREY

15 He is the image of the invisible God, †
the firstborn over all creation. †
16 For everything was created by him, †
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities —
all things have been created through him and for him. †
17 He is before all things, †
and by him all things † hold together.
18 He is also the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, †
the firstborn from the dead, †
so that he might come to have
first place in everything.

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness † dwell in him, †
20 and through him to reconcile everything to himself,
whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace †
through his blood, † shed on the cross. † †

21 Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds expressed in your evil actions. 22 But now he has reconciled you by his physical body through his death, † to present you holy, faultless, † and blameless before him † —

GREEK PHILOSOPHY AND ITS INFLUENCE ON CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Twenty-four centuries after he lived in Athens, Plato's legacy looms large, for as A.N. Whitehead famously quipped, Western thought is "a series of footnotes to Plato." Given Plato's repute, his influence within Christian theology is unsurprising. Indeed, Christians have long grappled with Platonism, generally finding it useful for biblically grounded theology. C. S. Lewis validates Plato's theological worth in *The Last Battle* when Professor Digory Kirke exclaims, "It's all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what do they teach them in these schools?"

EARLY CHRISTIAN VIEWS

Whether the Bible's authors knew Plato's dialogues or Platonist philosophers is debatable. We know, however, that the NT's authors lived in an age shaped by Platonic philosophy. We also know that the early church fathers studied and wrote about Platonism. Their interpretation of Scripture emerged in light of Greek philosophy, especially Platonism.

Tertullian (AD 160–220) questioned Platonism's value. He cited Colossians 2:8: "Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ." He recalled Paul's missionary encounter with the Athenian philosophers, and posed some memorable questions: "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? What between heretics and Christians? . . . Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! . . . With our faith, we desire no further belief."

On a fideistic understanding of Tertullian, faith in Christ and philosophical reflection are irrelevant or even opposed. Fideism—from the Latin word *fides*, meaning "faith"—views faith and reason as separate, perhaps even contradictory endeavors.

Context matters, however, for rightly interpreting Paul's teaching and Tertullian's instruction. In the church's first centuries, various philosophies might easily have co-opted Christianity for their own purposes. Paul and Tertullian demonstrate appropriate concern for the preeminence of Christ and caution

against heresy. Yet they do not reject philosophy. They confidently reason, address complex ideas, and adopt concepts coined by philosophers, even while unstintingly putting Christ first. By testing Greek philosophy "according to Christ," they show how faithful Christians can discern truth and refute error.

Many church fathers accordingly used Platonism to aid biblical understanding, including Justin Martyr (AD 100–165), Clement of Alexandria (AD 150–215), Origin (AD 182–254), Basil of Caesarea (AD 330–379), Gregory of Nyssa (AD 335–394), and Augustine of Hippo (AD 354–430). Justin Martyr wrote, "Whatever things were rightly said . . . are the property of us Christians. For next to God, we worship and love the Word . . . [and] all the writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted word that was in them." Clement speculated that philosophy was God's gift, "a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind—as the law, the Hebrews—to Christ." Philosophy was "a preparation . . . for him who is perfected in Christ." Augustine praised God for a providential encounter with "some books of the Platonists," whereby he discerned Christianity's intellectually fulfilling possibilities. He invoked a biblical metaphor: "I fixed my mind upon the gold which you willed that your people should bring with them from Egypt: for it was yours, wherever it was." God let the Israelites plunder Egyptian gold in their exodus for the promised land. Similarly, God invites us to exploit Plato's philosophical "gold" in our pilgrimage.

CHRISTIAN USES OF PLATONISM

Platonism provides rich resources for expressing biblical instruction about (1) God's being, (2) the nature of evil, and (3) humanity's highest hopes.

The Bible teaches of God's perfection (Mt 5:48), eternality (Dt 33:27), and unfathomable wisdom, power, and goodness (Jb 38–42). Yet Scripture does not explain how the divine attributes relate to each other. Platonism can help. Plato developed a philosophy—a metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics—in which perfect being, knowledge, and goodness are inextricably interconnected. Platonism thereby offers philosophical categories that enrich biblical understanding and undergird Christian doctrine.

For example, Platonists perceive that perfection entails eternality, for what is perfect is necessarily changeless (since changing the perfect would mar it), and what never changes is necessarily eternal (since it cannot cease to be unless it changes). What is perfect and eternal also outshines everything in truth, beauty, and goodness (since otherwise it would lack perfection). Plato could not conceive that something so described could be an impersonal force or property of matter. He envisioned it rather as a Being—a suprapersonal, superrational Mind, the "Maker and Father" of all, who desires that "all things should be good." Plato's conception of God, in short, binds together major biblical teachings about God's nature, making sense of the inseparable unity of perfectly divine being and perfectly divine essence.

The same philosophical framework clarifies the nature of evil. Because ultimate being—God himself—is identical with perfect goodness, anything lacking goodness also in some way lacks being. Evil is a privation not only of goodness, but of existence. A good thing's corruption mars its very being. Evil is therefore always lesser than, weaker than, good. Where evil seems to prevail, it succeeds only in a parasitic parody of good. The theological upshot is crucial. Through both biblical faith and philosophical reason we can speak confidently about evil's limits. Wickedness shall not abide and evil will not stand (Ps 1), for God's superabundant being and goodness ensure what Augustine confessed: "evil utterly is not." C. S. Lewis offers a fine literary illustration. In *The Great Divorce*, his fabulous "dream" of heaven and hell, he encounters "Bright People" possessed of a grace-filled goodness that gives them a readily apparent solidity, a "weight of glory." He also meets "Ghosts," whose insubstantial presence reflects their manifold sins. Sin has deprived them of being. Evil has literally unmade them.

Platonism proves helpful in a final area. We know the Father's loving adoption brings hope of eternal life through Christ (Jn 3:16; 1Pt 1:3), and we wait in the Spirit to gather in God's light (Rv 22:5). Plato helps little with the substance of our highest hopes. Nevertheless, he offers an alluring account of the form of our heavenly sight of God. Our hearts' desire finds rest atop a metaphorical "ladder of love," which we ascend to behold divine Beauty itself. Tracing the lineaments of Plato's dramatization of human longing, theologians write of contemplative wonder at the sight of God, whereby we see God in effortless, endlessly

delightful, intellectual vision. And in what theologians call *theosis*, our adoration of God transforms us, making us more like God as our participation in the divine life grows. Loving ascent, contemplative wonder, intellectual vision, participatory understanding, mimetic transformation—such theologically rich conceptions of heavenly life are indebted to Platonism. Plato has aided Augustine, Bonaventure, Aquinas, Dante, Milton, Bunyan, Tolkien, and Lewis in writing of our hoped-for sight of God.

PLATONISM'S SHORTCOMINGS

Lucy Beckett says Plato's acknowledgement "of the unity in God of truth, goodness and beauty, fitfully intelligible but not yet visible in the Word made flesh, [is] unique in the pre-Christian world." From the church's early life to now, Platonic concepts and arguments have enriched biblical theology. Key elements of our doctrine of God, evil's limits, and Christian beatitudes are indebted to Platonism. Yet Plato was not a Christian and his dialogues are not in the Bible.

Two major shortcomings arise. First, Plato denigrates the material world and the body instead of honoring God's good creation. Plato thus embraces a body-soul dualism, privileges the soul over the body, and does not countenance bodily resurrection. Second, Plato cannot fathom the self-emptying love of the incarnate Son of God. It is not only that he lived before Jesus. That God could become a man is altogether beyond Plato's imagination. Because he lacks Trinitarian theology and devalues matter, the idea of the Word become flesh (Jn 1:14) could not occur to him.

Recently so-called open theists have questioned traditional doctrines supposedly distorted by Platonism. God's simplicity (the unity of his existence and essence), aseity (absolute independence and self-existence), and omniscience are allegedly defective doctrines supported by Platonism but not the Bible. However, we should be wary of abandoning centuries-old Christian teaching. Church fathers, medieval scholastics, reformation leaders, and modern theologians formulated doctrine "according to Christ," realizing that Platonism offers subordinate assistance. Again, Beckett says it well: "It is not the case that Plato's philosophy makes sense of the revelation of God in Christ, but that the revelation of God in Christ, the Incarnation and Resurrection that healed Plato's soul-body dualism, makes sense of Plato's philosophy, the sense that Plato himself could not make."

DOUGLAS V. HENRY

23 if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith † and are not shifted
away from the hope † of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been
proclaimed in all creation † under heaven, † and I, Paul, † have become a
servant of it.

PAUL'S MINISTRY

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings † for you, and I am completing in my flesh
what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for his body, † that is, the church. 25 I
have become its servant, according to God's commission that was given to me
for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages
and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 God wanted to make known
among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ † in
you, the hope † of glory. 28 We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone

with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. [29] I labor for this, striving † with his strength that works powerfully in me. †

1:2 Other mss add *and the Lord Jesus Christ* **1:6** Or *and truly recognized God's grace* **1:7** Other mss read *our* **1:9** Or *all spiritual wisdom and understanding* **1:12** Other mss read *us* **1:14** Other mss add *through his blood* **1:20** Other mss add *through him*

1:1 1Co 1:1; 2Co 1:1; Eph 1:1; 2Tm 1:1 **1:1** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **1:5** Ps 119:142; Jn 14:6; 2Co 11:10; Eph 1:13; 2Tm 2:15; 3Jn 3 **1:6** Mk 4:8 **1:6** Mt 13:38; 24:14; Rm 3:6; 2Pt 2:20 **1:6** 2Th 2:10 **1:6** 2Pt 3:18 **1:7** Col 4:12; Phm 23 **1:7** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **1:8** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Ti 3:5; Rv 1:10; 3:22 **1:9** Jn 14:13; Jms 1:5 **1:9** Pr 2:6; Col 3:10 **1:9** Eph 1:9 **1:10** 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10 **1:10** Pr 2:6; Jn 17:3; 2Pt 1:2; 1Jn 4:8 **1:11** Php 4:13 **1:11** Ac 4:33; 2Co 13:4 **1:11** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **1:12** Ps 36:9; Jn 12:46 **1:13** Mt 27:43 **1:13** Mt 3:2; Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **1:13** Jn 5:19; Heb 1:2 **1:13** Mt 3:17; Jn 3:16; 15:10; 17:26; 1Jn 4:16 **1:15** Php 2:6 **1:15** Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **1:16** Gn 1:1; Mk 13:19 **1:16** Jn 1:3; Rm 11:36; 1Co 8:6; Eph 1:10,21 **1:17** Jn 1:1-2; 8:58; Heb 1:2-3 **1:17** Ps 104:24 **1:18** Gn 1:1; Mk 1:1; Jn 1:1; Ac 26:4 **1:18** Ac 26:23; 1Co 15:20,23; Rv 1:5 **1:19** Ps 72:19; Is 6:3; Jr 23:24; Ezk 43:5; 44:4; Jn 1:14,16; Eph 3:19; Php 2:6; Col 2:9 **1:19** Dt 12:5 **1:20** Ac 7:26; Eph 2:14 **1:20** Heb 9:12 **1:20** Lk 9:23; 23:26 **1:22** Php 2:8 **1:22** Jd 24 **1:22** 2Co 4:14 **1:23** Gl 2:16; Jd 3 **1:23** 1Th 1:3 **1:23** Rv 3:14 **1:23** Rm 10:18; Eph 6:9 **1:23** Ac 13:9 **1:24** 2Co 1:4; Php 1:29; 3:10 **1:24** Eph 4:4 **1:27** Col 2:2 **1:27** 1Th 1:3 **1:29** Jd 3 **1:29** 1Co 15:10

1:1 Paul's ministry does not spring simply from his desires, but from obedience to **God's will.**

1:2 In the NT, all Christians are **saints** because they have been made holy **in Christ** and set apart for God (which is the basic meaning of the word).

1:3 Thanksgivings are common in Paul's letters. In addition to the role they play in the letters as a whole, they underscore the importance of giving thanks, which is a fundamental aspect of life before God in both Testaments (see for example Pss 7:17; 9:1; 30:4; Eph 5:4, 20). See also Colossians 2:7; 3:15,17; 4:2.

1:5 The **hope reserved for** the Colossians **in heaven** is the cause of their love for fellow believers (v. 4). Christian living is radically focused on eternity, and the certain hope in God's promises in the **gospel** animates living today. Furthermore, this gospel is **the word of truth.** God is the source of truth and has revealed it in his gospel (also vv. 6,12).

1:7 Epaphras is **dearly loved** by Paul. Terms of affection are used freely and often (cp. 4:7,9), demonstrating the type of community experienced by early Christians.

1:9-10 Unceasing prayer for the churches is a common refrain in Paul's letters. Prayer for one another is a basic Christian practice. See also "Sources for Ethics," *p. 1371.*

1:11 Strikingly, all God's strength and might is required for **endurance and patience.** These hallmarks of the Christian life are to shape our existence in this world.

1:12 The **inheritance** recalls Israel's possession of the promised land of Canaan (Nm 18:20; Dt 10:19), but this is an inheritance **in the light**—it's not a physical place on earth, but a share in heavenly glory.

1:13 Just as God rescued Israel from Egypt's rule and brought them to the promised land, so the Father has **rescued us** from the rule and tyranny of **darkness** (the opposite of light; v. 12), brought under the rule of Christ.

1:15 The OT forbids any image of God, but Jesus is the proper **image** of God—the One who reveals to us what **the invisible God** is like (cp. Jn 1:18; 14:9). He is **the firstborn over all creation**, meaning he is the descendent of David who reigns as King: "I will also make him my firstborn, greatest of the kings of the earth" (Ps 89:27). The term "firstborn" does not imply that Jesus is a created being (cp. Col 1:16). See also "Hinduism," *p. 1408.*

1:16 Jesus is the Creator of **everything . . . in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible.** The Bible is clear that there is only one Creator God, and Paul identifies Jesus with him. He did not create by shaping preexistent material (Heb 11:3), and his creations are not limited to the visible realm. On the biblical view, the spiritual realm—including angels and heaven—are as real as any material aspect of creation. See also "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531.*

1:17 See "Divine Providence and Naturalism," *p. 1355.*

1:18 As **the firstborn from the dead**, Jesus's resurrection is the guarantee of the resurrection of the righteous that will occur on the day of judgment.

1:19 This is an important verse concerning the incarnation and deity of Jesus. **All** the **fullness** of God was in him (see also 2:9), so in Jesus we encounter the true God in all his fullness. See "Jehovah's Witnesses," *p. 1575.*

1:20 At the **cross** God reconciles **everything to himself**, **whether things on earth or things in heaven.** The cross has cosmic implications and cannot be reduced to merely personal terms. God is at work setting all things right, and individual salvation is a part of that work. See also "The Bible and Creation Care," *p. 24.*

1:21 See "The Bible and Intellectual Pursuit," *p. 1512.*

1:23 If indeed you remain . . . steadfast in the faith. The NT consistently holds out the necessity of perseverance in the faith (e.g., Mt 24:12-13; Jn 15:6; Heb 3:12; Jms 5:19-20; 1Jn 2:19). Such perseverance is nevertheless the result of God's grace (Php 2:13). That the **gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven** probably refers to the cosmic scope of the gospel; Christ's work has been made known to the spiritual and earthly realms.

1:24 What is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Paul is not saying that Christ's sufferings are inadequate for salvation. That would contradict what he says in 1:19-20 and 2:15 (and in other letters). Rather, he is referring to further suffering required of Christ's servants for the sake of **the church** (see 2Co 1:5-6; 4:10-12). The work of Christ must be made known in order for the church to grow (Col 1:25).

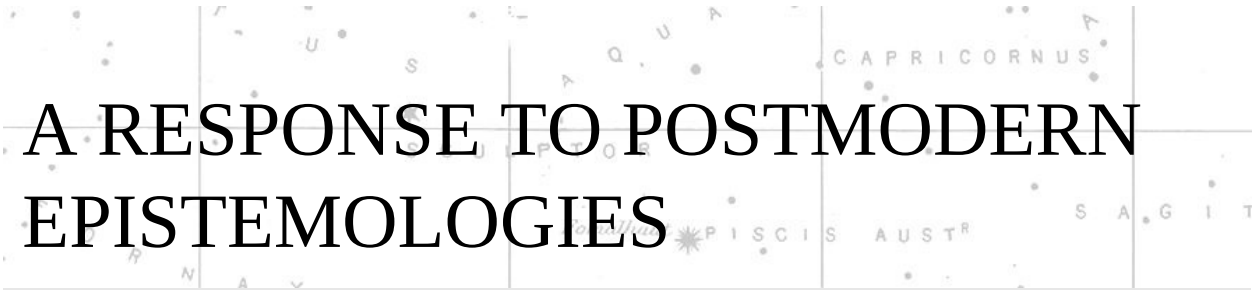
1:26-27 For various religions in the first century, **mystery** referred to special knowledge reserved for certain people. In Paul's usage it refers to the secret of how all peoples would be blessed through Abraham (Gn 12:3). This mystery has now been made clear—it is **Christ in you.** Christ enables the Gentiles to participate in the blessings promised to Abraham.

1:29 Divine sovereignty and human responsibility work together, rather than negating one another. Paul labors, knowing that his striving is possible because it is God's **strength that works powerfully in** him.

2 For I want you to know how greatly I am struggling † for you, for those in Laodicea, † and for all who have not seen me in person. 2 I want their hearts to be encouraged † and joined together in love, so that they may have all the riches of complete understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery † — Christ. † † 3 In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom † and knowledge. †

CHRIST VERSUS THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

4 I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with arguments that sound reasonable. 5 For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, †
rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ.
6 So then, just as you have received † Christ Jesus as Lord, † continue to live in
him, 7 being rooted and built up in him † and established in the faith, just as you
were taught, † and overflowing with gratitude.
8 Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit
based on human tradition, † based on the elements of the world, rather than
Christ. † 9 For the entire fullness † of God's nature dwells bodily † in Christ,
10 and you have been filled by him, who is the head † over every ruler and
authority. 11 You were also circumcised in him with a circumcision not done
with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, † in the circumcision of Christ, †
12 when you were buried with him † in baptism, in which you were also raised
with him † through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the
dead. † 13 And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of
your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. 14 He
erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and
opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. †



A RESPONSE TO POSTMODERN EPISTEMOLOGIES

P*ostmodernism* is a term that has numerous, sometimes contradictory meanings. As the expression suggests, it signifies a reaction against, or a stage after modernism. While the notion of the modern itself carries several meanings, the one intended by advocates of the postmodern turn is no doubt the one favored in the Enlightenment and beyond: the belief in improvement; in a more satisfactory, more efficient approach to thought and life than that embraced before modernity.

René Descartes is regarded the father of modern thought because of his affirmation that human rationality is a "rock of indubitability." This view is sometimes known as foundationalism. According to advocates of postmodernism, this modern ethos has led to an oppressive use of rationality. The essence of the postmodern approach is thus anti-foundationalist. According to Jean-François Lyotard, the postmodern condition centers on "incredulity toward metanarratives." As he explains, "The narrative function is losing

its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language." And then he raises this question: "Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?" His own answer is that it must lie in "mini-narratives."

The major root of postmodernism is the exhaustion of the modern belief in objective truth. Realism gave way to anti-realism. In a world that was becoming increasingly global and overloaded with information, postmodernism seemed to face such confusion with a philosophy of relativism. As culture critic Terry Eagleton puts it, "Postmodernism gets off the ground when it is no longer a matter of having information about the world, but a matter of the world as information." And, he adds, instead of the disciplined method of the modern we have the rather "cynical openness" of the postmodern.

POSTMODERNISM AND LATE MODERNITY

One of the more obvious self-defeating aspects of postmodernism is its near relativism. Lyotard's claim that there are no metanarratives, for example, seems close to becoming a narrative of its own. Declaring that there are no absolute truths is dangerously close to stating an absolute truth. Here is the struggle, felt by postmodernist Stanley Fish: Moreover, not only is there no one who could spot a transcendent truth if it happened to pass through the neighborhood, but it is difficult even to say what one would be like. Of course we would know what it would not be like; it would not speak to any particular condition, or be identified with any historical production, or be formulated in the terms of any national, ethnic, racial, economic, or class traditions. (*There's No Such Thing as Free Speech: And It's a Good Thing, Too*, 1994, p. 8) It is difficult to imagine that someone with professor Fish's acumen could miss the irony here. His dictum that transcendent truth cannot be manifested sounds strangely like a transcendent truth.

This has led commentators like Henri Blocher to affirm that we are not, nor can be, truly postmodern, but we are perhaps in "modernity-post," or late, "hyper-modernity." That is, we may be in the death throes of the modern ethos but we have not left it. In this he follows Craig M. Gay who affirms that the expression "postmodern" is "increasingly used to suggest that we have entered into an entirely new cultural situation in which none of the old 'modern' rules and habits of mind need be taken seriously anymore. All such suggestions are mistaken and misleading." He goes on to say, "the essential features of 'postmodernism'—however this term is defined—are demonstrably modern in origin. Indeed, I would contend that 'postmodernity' represents only a kind of extension of modernity, a kind of 'hyper-modernity.'"

Does such a logical impossibility mean we are no longer postmodern? Some have contended that we now are in a phase of post-postmodernism. But that is rather difficult to grasp. Jacques Derrida was once asked whether deconstruction was dead. "Of course it is," he answered, "and yet it is all around us." Perhaps this is one of the conundrums of our times. By rights postmodernism ought to have died under the weight of its own claims. Yet it lingers on in the atmosphere. One finds it present in some sectors more than others. For example, in literary criticism, there is still a strong postmodern partiality. Popular culture, and expressions of it such as MTV, will carry some of the pastiche, sound-bite mentality of the postmodern. Other sectors, such as science and technology, are less inclined to the postmodern. Most of us would not like our airplane pilot or surgeon to be postmodern!

THE CHRISTIAN ALTERNATIVE

What is the Christian and biblical alternative to postmodernism? It certainly is not a return to the Enlightenment, foundationalist view of truth. Based as it was on Cartesian rationalism, it leaves us with no real "rock of indubitability," because human reason is not connected with anything beyond it, anything transcendental. Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) tried to remain modern by rescuing the possibility of valid human knowledge from skepticism, connecting human experience to ideals. But this only leaves us without any warrant for the authority of such ideals. At the same time, we cannot embrace the pure relativism to which postmodernism can lead.

Various thinkers have offered the worldview of "critical realism" as an alternative to both the modern and the postmodern approach. According to this view a connection can be made between some of our sense data

and real objects, but other sense data cannot be so connected. The difficulty with this approach is that one has not truly objective nor transcendental warrant for making *any* connection.

A better way is to ground all knowledge in God himself, the Creator. We may know truly (though never exhaustively) because God has condescended to reveal himself to his creatures. That connection is sure, because God has the power and authority to make it. Thus, we need be neither postmodern nor modern. Instead we are dependent on divine revelation.

WILLIAM EDGAR

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him. † †

16 Therefore, don't let anyone judge † you in regard to food and drink † or in the matter of a festival or a new moon † or a Sabbath day. † 17 These are a shadow † of what was to come; † the substance is † Christ. † 18 Let no one condemn † you † by delighting in ascetic practices † and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm. Such people are inflated † by empty notions of their unspiritual † mind. 19 He doesn't hold on to the head, from whom the whole body, † nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, grows with growth from God.

20 If you died with Christ † to the elements of this world, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations: 21 "Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch"? 22 All these regulations refer to what is destined to perish by being used up; they are human commands and doctrines. 23 Although these have a reputation for wisdom † by promoting self-made religion, false humility, and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value in curbing self-indulgence. † †

2:2 Other mss read *mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ* ; other ms variations exist on this v. **2:9** Or *nature lives in a human body* **2:15** Or *them through it* **2:16** Or *or sabbaths* **2:17** Or *substance belongs to* **2:18** Or *disqualify* **2:18** Lit *fleshly* **2:23** Lit *value against indulgence of the flesh*

2:1 2Tm 4:7 **2:1** Col 4:13-16; Rv 1:11; 3:14 **2:2** Lk 16:25; Col 4:8 **2:2** Php 3:8 **2:2** Col 1:27 **2:3** Pr 3:19; Is 11:2; 45:3; Jr 23:5; Ac 7:22; 1Co 1:21 **2:3** 1Co 14:6 **2:5** Ps 51:12; 1Th 2:17 **2:6** Jd 3 **2:6** Eph 3:11 **2:7** Eph 2:20 **2:7** Eph 4:21; Heb 13:9 **2:8** Mk 7:3 **2:8** 1Tm 6:20 **2:9** Php 2:6; Col 1:19 **2:10** 1Co 11:3; Eph 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 **2:11** Col 1:22; 3:9 **2:11** Mt 1:17; Eph 5:2 **2:12** Rm 6:4 **2:12** Eph 2:6; Col 3:1 **2:12** Mt 17:9; Jn 5:25; 20:9; 21:14; Ac 2:24 **2:14** Lk 9:23; 23:26 **2:15** Lk 10:18; Jn 12:31; 16:11; Eph 6:12; Heb 2:14 **2:16** Lk 6:37 **2:16** Jn 6:55; Rm 14:3,17; 1Co 8:4; Heb 9:10 **2:16** Ps 81:3 **2:17** Heb 8:5; 10:1 **2:17** Rm 8:38 **2:17** Gl 3:24; 5:2 **2:18** 1Co 9:24; Php 3:14 **2:18** Col 3:12 **2:18** 1Co 4:6 **2:19** 1Co 6:13; Eph 4:4 **2:20** Rm 6:8; 1Pt 2:24 **2:23** Ac 7:22 **2:23** 1Tm 4:8

2:3 In contrast to the so-called "Colossian heresy" (see the note on 2:16-18), Christ is the source of all

wisdom and knowledge. Believers need not seek such things through other means, apart from Christ.

2:6-7 The Colossians are exhorted to continue in the way they began—by receiving **Christ Jesus as Lord.** They are to continue **in him** in order to grow and become **established in the faith.** There is no need to look elsewhere for the attainment of spiritual maturity.

2:8 The concern here is not the discipline of **philosophy** per se, but any approach to understanding life that ignores God's revelation based in Christ and instead relies merely on human understanding. **Elements of the world** (also in v. 20) most likely refer to the fundamental building blocks of creation—the basic components of reality. Human thinking is based on observable elements of the world, but this cannot reveal the whole truth about God's creation.

2:9-10 The **fullness** of God **dwells bodily in Christ**, and believers **have been filled by** Christ (see "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," p. 1271). This means that true spiritual fullness is attained through our union with Jesus, not through the so-called "Colossian heresy" (see the note on vv. 16-18). **Every ruler and authority** includes demonic forces of darkness. Since Christ is **the head over** even those powers, Christians need not fear them. More broadly (since every authority is in view), Christians must be obedient to Christ before any other authority (see Ac 5:29). These two verses affirm the supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus. He is head over all other powers (he is supreme), and in him the fullness of God is attained (he is sufficient).

2:11 Physical **circumcision** was the mark of membership in the old covenant. In the new covenant, God's people are no longer marked by this physical sign but by being spiritually united to Christ (**a circumcision not done with hands**).

2:12 Being **buried with him** and **raised with him** refers to our participation with Christ. By **faith**, believers are connected to Christ so that his death becomes our spiritual death. His resurrection is our spiritual resurrection.

2:14 A **certificate of debt** was a common means of tracking indebtedness in the ancient world. Whatever their level of debt to God, following their many trespasses (v. 13), God has canceled the debt by **nailing it to the cross.**

2:15 Rulers and authorities refer to forces of evil in the spiritual realm. By Christ's work on the cross (v. 14), God has **disarmed** and **disgraced** these rulers. His triumph over them draws on the image of a Roman triumph, in which the conquering Roman army would celebrate its success with a triumphal procession through Rome. The defeated king and his warriors were humiliated by being shackled at the back of the parade, turned into a spectacle for mockery and insult. The irony is that in going to a cross, Jesus was likewise shamed and mocked. But in this apparent weakness, God was overpowering the rulers of darkness. This demonstrates the cosmic scope of the work of Christ; it is not limited to the atonement of human sin. Rather, by dealing with human sin, Christ has overcome the evil powers that work in concert with it (cp. Eph 2:1-3; see also "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454;* "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*).

2:16-18 These verses describe what scholars have dubbed "the Colossian heresy," which is a mishmash of Jewish and pagan religious practices followed to attain spiritual fulfillment. Since it is known only from this letter, some scholars have doubted that Paul describes a formal spiritual movement, but rather a collection of practices known in the region at this time. See also "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531.*

2:16 Food and drink, a festival, a new moon, and **a Sabbath** all refer to Jewish religious practices and observances.

2:18 Ascetic practices refer to different forms of self-denial, which were thought to attract God's favor (see also 2:23). The **worship of angels** and **visionary** experiences reflect pagan spiritual practices.

2:20-23 The elements of this world—see the note on v. 8—come with regulations—**Don't handle, don't**

taste, don't touch. But **these regulations** are **human commands and doctrines**, having no **value** in dealing with inner spiritual realities.

THE LIFE OF THE NEW MAN

3 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. † 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. † 3 For you died, † and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your † life, appears, † then you also will appear with him in glory. †

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF WORK

Work is central to human life. Between work in the home, on the job, in schools, and in neighborhoods, the overwhelming majority of our waking hours is taken up by it. How we work, and how we view work, is a major factor determining the shape of our whole lives. And a culture's understanding of work is one of its most important defining elements, as important to its identity and functioning as its understanding of sexuality, justice, or worship.

When the Holy Spirit changes the way we work, he changes the way we live—all day, every day. This is why, throughout history, a biblical view of work has been central to Christian spiritual and cultural revival. From Gregory the Great and the scholars of the High Middle Ages to Martin Luther and John Calvin to the Wesleyan movement and twentieth-century heroes like Martin Luther King Jr., it's always the same story: if you look at Christian reformers who had a huge impact on our lives, you always find they had a lot to say about work.

Work presents one of the most central and far-reaching contrasts between the Bible's teaching and the way human cultures naturally tend to think. In the ancient world, a common element among pagan religions was the teaching that the gods don't work; they made people to work so they wouldn't have to. Work is mere toil and drudgery in this view, a curse. In the modern world, as the influence of Christianity on our worldview has receded, we increasingly view work either in similar terms—as a curse, mere toil, and drudgery—or else as an idol, an obsession, what we trust in to provide money, power, status, security, and self-expression.

We certainly do experience pain, frustration, and injustice in our work. Most people aren't going to pay attention to any view of work if it doesn't begin from our lived experience of suffering. Moreover, those who idolize work are right that human work is one of the world's most powerful forces: it can take a pile of sand, a puddle of oil, and a few other basic elements, and transform them into a smartphone capable of recording video and beaming it around the world.

GOD AS A WORKER

The Bible makes a shocking and outrageous claim that transforms both the suffering of work and the power of work. It makes this claim boldly right on its first page (Gn 1:26-30; 2:15) and again on its last (Rv 21:24-26; 22:5). In the OT, this claim has a central place in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:9), the Mosaic law (Lv 19:9-18; Dt 25:13-16), the Wisdom books (Pr 12:11-14; 16:3; 18:9; 22:29; 24:27; 31:1,13-31; Ec 3:22;

5:6; 9:10), the prophetic witness against injustice to the poor (1Sm 8:14; 1Kg 21:1-19; Is 3:13-15; 5:8-10; 10:1-2; Hs 5:10; Mc 2:1-4,8-9), and much more. In the NT it has a central place in the parables (forty-five of the fifty-two parables draw on work and business as images of spiritual life). It also appears in the teachings of Jesus (Mk 10:42-45; Jn 13:1-20), the conflict between Jesus and his enemies (Mt 12:1-8; Mk 2:23–3:6; Lk 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6; Jn 5:1-18; 7:23; 9:14-41), and the ethics of the letters (Eph 4:28; Col 3:23-24; 1Th 4:11; 2Th 3:10-12; 1Tm 5:8; 2Tm 2:6; 1Pt 2:18-25).

The Bible claims that God is a Worker, and work is a primary reason he created humanity, because when we work rightly, we glorify God by loving him and neighbor. Because he is love, God works (Gn 2:2-3; Jn 5:17), and so do we. God also rests, appreciating the beauty of the divine work (Gn 1:31–2:3), and so do we. Through our work we exercise stewardship over the world God created. When we work faithfully as God's stewards, we manifest the glory of the holy love of God, and we make the world under our care manifest it as well.

WORK AS STEWARDSHIP

We serve God as stewards of his world individually, and also collectively, as we labor together in households and businesses and trade our work with each other through economic exchange. Thus we were made as an image of the holy love that is the triune God, unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

This claim is shocking and outrageous to our natural sensibilities because it transforms the suffering of work. We experience toil, frustration, and injustice in our work not because work is bad, but because we are bad (Rm 3:23). Work is not a curse, but our work is one of the main places where we experience the curse on our sin that God, in his holy love, has ordained (Gn 3:17-19).

This is also a reason why the Bible's shocking claim is necessary if we are to have any hope for joy, peace, and righteousness. If Jesus is in us through our faith in the gospel, we can take comfort that God is using our perseverance through the suffering of our work to transform us (cp. Jms 1:2-4; Rm 8:28). Worldly people working in worldly ways are shaping themselves, all day every day, into ever more worldly people. But we, as we make the difficult choice to keep on working faithfully, day in and day out, are shaped into Christlikeness by King Jesus.

THE POWER OF WORK

The Bible's claim about work is also shocking and outrageous to our natural sensibilities because it transforms the power of work. The enormous power of our work is indeed breathtaking; even God himself seems amazed at it (Gn 11:6). But this power was given to us to glorify the holy love of God by serving God and neighbor. When we trust in our work rather than in God for identity, security, and provision, we fall into a monstrous evil that will enslave us, turn us against each other, make us miserable, and bring us to ruin.

Doing our daily work with ethical integrity for the love of God and neighbor in Jesus is a high and difficult calling. Moreover, a special responsibility rests on business leaders to order work ethically, as an expression of voluntary stewardship and mutual love. Another responsibility falls on political leaders to protect this ordering of work. The complex challenge of extending the opportunity of gainful work to the poor and the oppressed also weighs on us.

But this too is a reason why the Bible's shocking claim is necessary if we are to have any hope for joy, peace, and righteousness. Those who follow God's calling in their work discover a new kind of life. For them, glorifying God by loving God and neighbor as a citizen of God's kingdom is not a special activity they squeeze into a few hours a week, or an add-on they are constantly straining to shoehorn into their daily routine. It is their daily routine. Our work, done in this way, is the main way we give God a return on his investment in us (Mt 25:14-30). It allows us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick (Mt 25:31-46) These are among the good works we were saved to do (Eph 2:10), which force even the enemies of God to give him glory (Mt 5:16; 1Pt 2:15).

This is not just one more biblical truth among thousands of others. It is a central pattern in the narrative of

Scripture. It is one of the deep, defining elements of the biblical testimony. That only makes sense. Work takes up the overwhelming majority of our lives and is central to our understanding of who we are as individuals and as cultures. Why are we surprised that the Bible says God designed us with work at the center? Or that Holy Spirit transformation of our work has always been—and continues to be today—one of the most important paths to spiritual and cultural reformation?

GREGORY B. FORSTER

5 Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, † lust, † evil desire, and greed, † which is idolatry. † 6 Because of these, God's wrath † is coming upon the disobedient, † 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living † in them. 8 But now, put away † all the following: anger, † wrath, † malice, † slander, † and filthy language from your mouth. † 9 Do not lie † to one another, since you have put off † the old self † with its practices 10 and have put on † the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your † Creator. † 11 In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all. †

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

12 Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, † put on compassion, kindness, † humility, † gentleness, † and patience, † 13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. † 14 Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called † in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, † singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name † of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

CHRIST IN YOUR HOME

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. †
19 Husbands, † love your wives † and don't be bitter † toward them.
20 Children, † obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
21 Fathers, † do not exasperate † your children, so that they won't become discouraged. 22 Slaves, obey your human † masters in everything. Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. † 23 Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, † 24 knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer † will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

3:4 Other mss read *our* **3:6** Other mss omit *upon the disobedient* **3:10** Lit *his* **3:16** Or *and songs prompted by the Spirit*

3:1 Heb 10:12 **3:2** Php 3:19 **3:3** Rm 6:8 **3:4** 2Co 4:11; 1Jn 1:2; 2:28 **3:4** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **3:5** 1Th 4:3,7 **3:5** Rm 1:26; 1Th 4:5 **3:5** Eph 5:3 **3:5** 1Co 10:14; Gl 5:20; 1Pt 4:3 **3:6** Jms 1:19; Rv 6:16 **3:7** Lk 15:13; Rm 6:2 **3:8** Rm 13:12 **3:8** Jms 1:19 **3:8** Rv 14:19 **3:8** 1Co 14:20 **3:8** Jn 10:33; Rv 13:6 **3:8** Eph 4:22-31 **3:9** Lv 19:11; 1Tm 2:7 **3:9** Col 2:15 **3:9** Eph 4:22 **3:10** Pr 31:25 **3:10** Mk 13:19; Jn 1:3; Rv 3:14 **3:11** Eph 1:23 **3:12** Jn 3:16; 2Th 2:13; Rv 12:11 **3:12** 2Co 6:6 **3:12** Ac 20:19; Eph 4:2; Php 2:3; Col 2:18,23; 1Pt 5:5 **3:12** Jms 3:13 **3:12** 2Tm 3:10 **3:13** 2Co 2:7,10; 12:13; Eph 4:32 **3:15** Jn 14:27; 1Co 7:15; Php 4:7 **3:17** Jn 14:13; Php 2:10 **3:18–4:1** Eph 5:22–6:9 **3:19** 1Pt 3:1 **3:19** Eph 5:25; 1Pt 3:1 **3:19** Rv 8:11; 10:9-10 **3:20** Gn 3:16; Lv 10:14; Dt 31:12; Ps 37:25; Pr 20:7; Lk 1:7; Ac 2:39; Heb 2:13 **3:21** Ps 103:13; Eph 6:4; Heb 11:23 **3:21** 2Co 9:2 **3:22** Rm 1:3; 4:1; 8:4-5,12-13; 9:3,5; 1Co 1:26; 10:18; 2Co 1:17; 5:16; 10:2-3; 11:18; Gl 4:23,29; Eph 6:5 **3:22** Pr 1:7; Rv 14:7 **3:23** Eph 6:7 **3:25** Rv 2:11

3:1 Participation in the resurrection of Christ has ethical implications; believers are to **seek the things above.**

3:2 Earthly things must not be understood as everyday life, while **things above** refers to spiritual—as opposed to physical—realities. The biblical worldview does not divide life into the categories of sacred and secular. Rather, "earthly things" refers to sin—the same Greek phrase occurs in 3:5, where it is translated "what belongs to your earthly nature" and is clearly identified with sin.

3:3-4 The old lives we knew prior to placing faith in Jesus have already **died**, and our new lives are **hidden with Christ.** This refers to the invisibility of the spiritual reality of being with Christ. However, **when Christ . . . appears**, believers **will appear with him in glory.** The reality, now hidden, will one day be revealed for all to see.

3:5 We must not toy with sin or seek merely to contain it. It must be **put to death** (see also Rm 6:11; 8:13). Believers have already died with Christ (Col 2:20), so this instruction involves putting into practice what is already a spiritual reality. **Sexual immorality** refers to any kind of sexual practice outside marriage. **Greed** is singled out as **idolatry**, indicating that the love of money and love of God are incompatible (Mt 6:24).

3:9-10 Putting **off the old self** and putting **on the new** draws on the metaphor of clothing, which was common in the ancient world. Clothing was seen to define a person's status. Removing the old self means that believers will no longer live in their former ways. The new self is **being renewed . . . according to** Christ.

3:11 The gospel overcomes all cultural barriers, uniting believers in Christ. Greeks typically divided the world into two groups, **Greek** and **barbarian** (with **Scythian**s being an even lower level of barbarians). Jews divided the world into **Jew** and Gentile **(circumcision** and **uncircumcision).** In the church, no such distinctions stand.

3:12-14 Believers are to be "clothed" with these characteristics (see note on vv. 9-10), with **love** being the garment placed over the top of all others.

3:13 Christian ethics are always grounded in Christ, as here we are to forgive because Christ **has forgiven** us.

3:16-17 The importance of thankfulness in the Christian life is stressed as the **word of Christ** leads to **gratitude**, and we are to give **thanks to God** in all that we do.

3:16 The church as a whole, and thus believers individually, are to be saturated with the gospel (**the word of Christ**). The singing of **psalms**, **hymns**, **and spiritual songs** are to be a vehicle for **teaching and admonishing one another**, as well as an opportunity for expressing **gratitude in your hearts**. See "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727.*

3:17 That everything we **do** can and should be done **in the name of the Lord Jesus** shows that all of life matters to God. We must not think of certain activities as spiritual and others as unspiritual. All appropriate activities are spiritual when done in his name.

3:18–4:1 This section expands on the idea of doing everything in the name of the Lord, emphasizing family life. The gospel shapes every area of life. Thus, the exhortations given here are not merely cultural ideas but flow out of the gospel (3:16). A number of first-century writings address family responsibilities in a format similar to this, but they do not typically address the responsibility of the one in leadership (husbands, parents, masters). The gospel shapes leadership as well as submission.

3:22–4:1 The instructions to **slaves** and **masters** is not an endorsement of slavery (see "The Bible and Slavery," *p. 1527*). Slavery in the Roman Empire was significantly different from the kind of slavery typified in North America in the nineteenth century, which constituted one third of society. Slavery was not ethnicity-based, and people under considerable debt would put themselves into slavery until their debt was repaid. Moreover, slaves could rise to significant positions of authority within a household, and even within civic government. Nevertheless, slaves were regarded as the property of their owners. Paul does not challenge the institution of slavery; rather, he instructs believers as to how they should conduct themselves within it. See also "Biblical Models for Business," *p. 782.*

4 Masters, † deal with your slaves justly and fairly, since you know that you too have a Master in heaven.

SPEAKING TO GOD AND OTHERS

2 Devote yourselves † to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. 3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door † to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, † for which I am in chains, † 4 so that I may make it known as I should. 5 Act wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. † 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, † so that you may know how you should answer each person. †

FINAL GREETINGS

FINAL GREETINGS

7 Tychicus, † our dearly loved brother, faithful † minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are † and so that he may encourage † your hearts. † 9 He is coming with Onesimus, † a faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, † Barnabas's † cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and so does Jesus who is called Justus. These alone of the circumcised are my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, † who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always wrestling † for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured † in everything God wills. † 13 For I testify about him that he works hard † † for you, for those in Laodicea, † and for those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas † send you greetings. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her home. † 16 After this letter has been read at your gathering, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. 17 And tell Archippus, † "Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it." †

18 I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. † Grace be with you. † †

4:8 Other mss read *that he may know how you are* **4:12** Other mss read *and complete* **4:13** Other mss read *he has a great zeal* **4:18** Other mss add *Amen.*

4:1 Col 3:22 **4:2** Rm 12:12 **4:3** Ac 14:27; 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12 **4:3** 1Co 2:7; Eph 3:4; 5:2 **4:3** Ac 27:2; 28:16,30; Eph 6:18-20 **4:5** Eph 5:15-17 **4:6** Mk 9:50; Lk 14:34 **4:6** 1Pt 3:15 **4:7** Ac 20:4; Ti 3:12 **4:7** Nm 23:19 **4:8** Lk 16:25 **4:8** Eph 6:21-22; Col 2:2 **4:9** Phm 10,16 **4:10** Phm 24 **4:10** Ac 4:36 **4:12** Col 1:7; Phm 23 **4:12** Jd 3 **4:12** Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9 **4:13** Jd 3 **4:13** Col 2:1 **4:14** 2Tm 4:10 **4:15** Ac 12:12; Rm 16:5 **4:17** Phm 2 **4:17** 2Tm 4:5 **4:18** Php 1:7 **4:18** 1Tm 6:21; 2Tm 4:22; Ti 3:15

4:5 Making the most of the time in this context refers to taking every opportunity to explain the gospel ("the mystery of Christ;" v. 3) to **outsiders**, i.e., unbelievers. Here the concern has moved from behavior within the church to engagement with those outside it. See also "A Biblical View of Retirement," *p. 175.*

4:6 Speech that is **seasoned with salt** may draw on the use of salt for flavoring or possibly its use as a preservative. Either way, believers' speech is to be of benefit to others.

4:9 Onesimus is the subject of Paul's letter to Philemon. He was a runaway slave who become a Christian through Paul's ministry.

4:10 Mark (also known as John Mark) abandoned Paul during his first missionary journey (Ac 13:13), but here we see that he has been reconciled to Paul. Mark is the author of the Gospel bearing his name.

4:12 The prayer of **Epaphras** for the Colossians mirrors Paul's prayer in 1:9-14.

4:16 The letter from Laodicea refers to a nonextant letter Paul wrote to the church in that city. Paul's instruction reflects the early church practice of sharing Paul's letters with other churches. By the end of the first century, multiple churches had their own collections of Paul's letters.

1 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

Paul spent a very short time in the city of Thessalonica, but he was able to establish a church during his stay. There may have been little time for instruction of the new converts, so it is not surprising that Paul wrote a letter to address some questions.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: No serious objections have been made to dispute that Paul was the author of 1 Thessalonians (1:1). The greeting also mentions Silvanus and Timothy. Sometimes Paul wrote from the team perspective, but he was the primary author (2:18; 3:2).

BACKGROUND: About AD 50 the missionary team led by Paul and Silas left Philippi and traveled westward on the Roman road known as the *Via Egnatia*. They proceeded toward the strategic capital city of the Roman province of Macedonia—Thessalonica.

Thessalonica was a large port city on the Aegean Sea in modern-day Greece, with a population of about two hundred thousand. The city was filled with pagan worshipers of idols, the full pantheon of Greek and Roman gods, and was well known for its emperor worship. Thessalonica was loyal to Caesar, and he had granted its citizens many privileges.

As was his custom, Paul found the local Jewish synagogue and started teaching there. For three Sabbaths he reasoned with the Jews from the Scriptures. He explained and demonstrated that the promised Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. After explaining the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he then stated boldly, “This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah” (Ac 17:3). Some of the Jews were persuaded, along with some of the devout Greeks who were worshipers at the synagogue, and some of the prominent women. They joined Paul and Silas, and the church in Thessalonica was born.

There were Jews in the city who were not persuaded, and they became jealous of what Paul and Silas had done. They incited the people into an uproar and attacked Jason’s house where the missionary team had been staying. Wanting to drag Paul and Silas out before the crowd, they found only Jason and some new believers. They dragged these out before the city authorities. The rulers, not wanting more unrest, forced Jason and the rest of the brothers to make a financial payment of security to ensure that there would not be a repeat of such a disturbance. That very night the Thessalonian believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea, where they could continue their ministry (Ac 17:1-9).

From Berea Paul went to Athens. He wanted to see the Thessalonians again. When he could endure the separation no longer, he sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonian believers (1Th 3:2). Timothy came back with an encouraging report about the Thessalonian church (3:6). Paul wrote to them from Corinth in response to Timothy’s report. Based on the archaeological evidence of a dated inscription mentioning Gallio, proconsul of Achaia, by name (Ac 18:12) and correlating this with Paul’s visit to Corinth when Gallio was there, 1 Thessalonians can be reliably dated at AD 50 or 51. This would make 1 Thessalonians the earliest of Paul’s letters with the probable exception of the book of Galatians.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

First Thessalonians contributes to our understanding of the second coming of Christ. Paul wrote to correct some misunderstandings of this doctrine, and in the process he showed us that Christ’s return gives us true hope. First Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians (chap. 15) are the only books that explicitly mention that

Christians who are alive at Christ's return will be changed and will meet Christ in the air without dying.

STRUCTURE

First Thessalonians follows the standard form for a first-century letter: greeting (1:1), thanksgiving (1:2-4), body (1:5–5:22), and farewell (5:23-28). The body of the letter does not follow Paul's typical structure of presenting doctrine first, followed by practical exhortation based on that doctrine. Instead, 1 Thessalonians moves back and forth between the doctrinal and the practical.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father who actively works to bring about salvation. He is presently working holiness into his children. Jesus died and rose again at his first coming, and he will return in glory at his second coming. The Spirit, the active agent by whom God makes the gospel alive, is God's gift, enabling his people to have great joy (1:5-6; 4:8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

There are only two kinds of people: those who have received the word of God and those who have rejected it (2:13-16). The destiny of the one group is the experience of the wrath of God, leading to their destruction. The destiny of the other group is to be with the Lord forever. This latter group is called on to live a holy life that pleases God.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The basis of salvation is Jesus's death and resurrection (4:14; 5:10). The letter summarizes salvation as past, present, and future in this way: "You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath" (1:9-10).

1 THESSALONIANS TIMELINE

2300–150 BC

Prehistoric settlement on the site of Thessalonica **2300**

Founding of Therme at the head of the Thermaic Gulf **600**

Cassander, king of Macedon, establishes Thessalonica at the site where Therme had existed, naming the new city in honor of his wife. **316**

The Romans gain control of Thessalonica when Perseus, king of Macedonia, is defeated at Pydna. **168**

First Jewish community in Thessalonica—emigrants from Alexandria **168–103**

149–42 BC

Construction of the Macedonian leg of the Egnatian Way, a Roman military road connecting Thessalonica with the Adriatic Sea in the west and with Neapolis in the east **147–120**

Thessalonica becomes the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia and is referred to as "the Mother of Macedonia." **146**

The Roman statesman Cicero spends six months of his self–imposed exile in Thessalonica. **58**

Many Roman officials flee Rome and take up residence in Thessalonica during the Roman civil war. **49–48**

Augustus declares Thessalonica a free city following the battle of Philippi. **42**

AD 33–44

Tiberius Caesar takes away Thessalonica's status as a free city when her citizens protest increased taxation. **15**

Jesus's trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, 33**

Pentecost **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Claudius Caesar restores Thessalonica's status as a free city. **44**

AD 47–53

Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark make their first missionary journey. **47–49**

Paul and Silas begin their second missionary journey. **49**

Paul, Silas, and Timothy preach in Thessalonica. **50**

Paul writes 1 Thessalonians several months after his ministry among the Thessalonians. **51**

Paul concludes his second missionary journey and arrives in Antioch of Syria. **52**

GREETING

1 Paul, Silvanus, † † and Timothy: †
To the church of the Thessalonians † in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace to you and peace. †

THANKSGIVING

2 We always thank God for all of you, making mention of you constantly in our prayers. 3 We recall, in the presence of our God and Father, † your work produced by faith, † your labor motivated by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. † 4 For we know, brothers and sisters loved † by God, † that he has chosen you, † 5 because our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Spirit, † and with full assurance.

You know how we lived among you † for your benefit, 6 and you yourselves
became imitators of us and of the Lord when, in spite of severe persecution, you
welcomed the message † with joy from the Holy Spirit. 7 As a result, you
became an example to all the believers in Macedonia † and Achaia. † 8 For the
word of the Lord rang out from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in
every place that your faith † † in God has gone out. Therefore, we don't need to
say anything, 9 for they themselves report † what kind of reception † we had
from you: how you turned † to God from idols † to serve the living † and
true † God 10 and to wait † for his Son † from heaven, whom he raised from
the dead † — Jesus, who rescues us † from the coming wrath. †

1:1 Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16 **1:1** Other mss add *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ* **1:8** Or *in every place news of your faith* **1:9** Lit *report about us*

1:1 Ac 15:22; 2Co 1:19; 2Th 1:1; 1Pt 5:12 **1:1** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **1:1** Ac 17:1 **1:3** Php 4:20 **1:3** Rm 3:28; 9:32; Gl 2:16; 5:6; 2Th 1:11; Heb 6:1; Jms 2:14-26; Rv 2:19 **1:3** Ac 15:26 **1:4** Jn 3:16; Rv 12:11 **1:4** Dt 33:12; 2Th 2:13 **1:4** Mt 24:22; Eph 1:4 **1:5** Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; 1Co 2:4; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; Rv 3:22 **1:5** Ac 20:18; 1Th 2:10 **1:6** Heb 4:12 **1:7** Ac 16:9 **1:7** Ac 18:12 **1:8** Gl 2:16 **1:9** Ac 17:1-9 **1:9** 1Pt 2:25 **1:9** Gn 31:19; 1Co 8:4 **1:9** Dt 5:26 **1:9** Jn 4:23; 1Jn 5:20 **1:10** Jd 21 **1:10** Heb 1:2 **1:10** Mt 17:9; Jn 5:25 **1:10** Mt 27:43 **1:10** Rm 2:5; 1Th 5:9; Rv 6:16

1:3 The Thessalonian believers are marked by the central characteristics of **faith**, **love**, and **hope.** Their **work**, **labor**, and **endurance** flow out of these.

1:4-5 Paul is confident of their salvation because of how their lives had been impacted by the gospel (1:3,6-7; 2:13). **Power** may refer to miraculous deed, but just as likely it refers to the powerful changes in the lives of those who heard (see 1:9-10).

1:6-7 The typical pattern of discipleship is seen here: the Thessalonians imitated Paul, who was following the Lord; thus, the Thessalonians became a pattern for others to follow. The **severe persecution** they suffered most likely refers to social harassment rather than physical violence. At the time of writing (in the 50s), Christians were not yet suffering the physical persecution that would rise in the following decades.

1:9 As Gentiles, the Thessalonians once worshiped false gods and **idols**, as was universal within the Gentile world. Their conversion to Christianity meant turning away from false worship and all it entailed, in order **to serve the living and true God.**

1:10 Waiting for Jesus's return **from heaven** is a fundamental element of the Christian life. The expectation of the coming of Christ ought to shape Christian belief and behavior (cp. 4:13-18; 5:1-11). Part of that expectation involves rescue from **the coming wrath.** Jesus **rescues us** from the Father's righteous anger toward sin.

PAUL'S CONDUCT

2 For you yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our visit † with you
was not without result. 2 On the contrary, after we had previously

suffered † and were treated outrageously in Philippi, † as you know, we were emboldened by our God to speak the gospel of God to you in spite of great opposition. 3 For our exhortation didn't come from error or impurity † or an intent to deceive. † 4 Instead, just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted † with the gospel, † so we speak, not to please people, but rather God, † who examines our hearts. † 5 For we never used flattering speech, as you know, or had greedy † motives † — God is our witness † — 6 and we didn't seek glory † from people, either from you or from others. 7 Although we could have been a burden as Christ's apostles, † instead we were gentle † among you, as a nurse † nurtures her own children. 8 We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember our labor and hardship, brothers and sisters. Working † night and day so that we would not burden any of you, we preached God's gospel to you. 10 You are witnesses, † and so is God, of how devoutly, righteously, † and blamelessly † we conducted ourselves with you believers. 11 As you know, like a father with his own children, † 12 we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you to live worthy of God, † who calls you into his own kingdom † and glory. †

RECEPTION AND OPPOSITION TO THE MESSAGE

13 This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, † the word of God, † which also works effectively in you who believe. 14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of God's churches in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, † since you have also suffered † the same things from people of your own country, † just as they did from the Jews 15 who killed the Lord Jesus † and the prophets and persecuted us. † They displease God and are hostile to everyone, 16 by keeping us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. As a result, they are constantly filling up their sins to the limit, † and wrath has overtaken them at last. †

PAUL'S DESIRE TO SEE THEM

17 But as for us, brothers and sisters, after we were forced to leave you † for a short time (in person, not in heart †), we greatly desired and made every effort to return † and see you face to face. 18 So we wanted to come to you — even I, Paul, time and again — but Satan † hindered us. 19 For who is our hope or joy † or crown † of boasting † in the presence of our Lord † Jesus at his coming? † Is it not you? † 20 Indeed you are our glory † and joy!

2:7 Many mss read *infants* **2:7** Or *nursing mother* **2:16** Or *to the end* **2:17** Lit *orphaned from you*
2:1 Ac 17:1-9 **2:2** Ac 16:19-24 **2:2** Php 1:1 **2:3** 1Th 4:7 **2:3** Ps 10:7 **2:4** Lk 16:11 **2:4** Ac 15:7; Gl 2:7; 1Tm 1:11 **2:4** Jn 5:44; 12:43; 1Co 4:5; 2Co 10:18; Gl 1:10; Php 3:19; 1Th 2:15; 1Pt 3:4 **2:4** Ps 17:3; Pr 21:2; Rm 8:27 **2:5** Eph 5:3 **2:5** Mk 12:40; Lk 20:47; Jn 15:22; Ac 27:30; Php 1:18 **2:5** Rm 1:9 **2:6** Php 3:19 **2:7** Ac 1:2; Jd 17 **2:9** 2Jn 8 **2:10** Rm 1:9 **2:10** Ti 2:12 **2:10** 1Th 5:23 **2:11** 1Co 4:14; Gl 4:19; 1Tm 1:2; Phm 10 **2:12** 3Jn 6 **2:12** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **2:12** Lk 9:32; 24:26; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 1Pt 5:1; 2Pt 3:18 **2:13** 2Th 3:1 **2:13** Lk 8:21 **2:14** Lk 1:5 **2:14** Php 1:29 **2:14** Ac 17:5 **2:15** Lk 24:20 **2:15** Rm 11:3 **2:16** Mt 23:30-32 **2:17** Col 2:5 **2:17** 1Th 3:10 **2:18** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **2:19** Jn 15:11; 2Co 6:10 **2:19** Rv 12:1 **2:19** 2Co 12:5; Jms 4:16 **2:19** Rv 11:8 **2:19** 1Th 1:10; 1Jn 2:28 **2:19** 1Co 15:31; 2Co 1:14; Php 4:1; 2Th 1:4 **2:20** Jn 12:43; Php 3:19

2:5-8 In the ancient world, traveling teachers often showed their importance by being demanding and pushy. Some would use various methods of deception to gain followers and financial benefit. Paul's behavior was a stark contrast to this.

2:16 Completing or **filling up** a certain amount of **sins** is common biblical imagery (e.g., Gn 15:16; Dn 8:23-25). Paul is saying that certain Jewish people opposed to the message of Jesus have continued the pattern of rejecting God's ways, leading to final judgment.

2:18 We do not know exactly how **Satan hindered** Paul from returning to Thessalonica, but the apostle clearly recognizes demonic influence in the hindering of his plans.

ANXIETY IN ATHENS

3 Therefore, when we could no longer stand it, we thought it was better to be left alone in Athens. † 2 And we sent Timothy, † our brother and God's coworker † in the gospel of Christ, † to strengthen and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 so that no one will be shaken by these afflictions. For you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you in advance that we were going to experience affliction, and as you know, it happened. 5 For this reason, when I could no longer stand it, I also sent him to find out about your faith, fearing that the tempter had tempted you and that our labor might be for nothing.

ENCOURAGED BY TIMOTHY

6 But now Timothy has come to us † from you and brought us good news about your faith and love. He reported that you always have good memories of us and that you long to see us, as we also long to see you. † 7 Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and affliction, we were encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For now we live, if you stand firm † in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God for you in return for all the joy † we experience before our God because of you, 10 as we pray very earnestly night and day to see you face to face † and to complete what is lacking in your faith? †

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

11 Now may our God and Father † himself, and our Lord Jesus, † direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord cause you to increase and overflow with love † for one another † and for everyone, just as we do for you. 13 May he make your hearts blameless † in holiness † before our God and Father at the coming † of our Lord † Jesus with all his saints. Amen. †

3:2 Other mss read *servant* **3:13** Other mss omit *Amen.*

3:1 Ac 17:15 **3:2** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **3:2** Php 1:27 **3:6** Ac 18:5 **3:6** 1Co 11:2; Php 1:8 **3:8** Rm 14:4; 1Co 16:13; Php 1:27 **3:9** Jn 15:11; 2Co 6:10; Php 1:18 **3:10** 1Th 2:17 **3:10** Col 1:24 **3:11** Jn 8:42; Php 4:20 **3:11** Ac 20:21 **3:12** Lk 7:42 **3:12** Rm 13:8 **3:13** Lk 1:6 **3:13** Rm 1:4; 1Co 7:14; 2Co 7:1 **3:13** 1Th 1:10; 1Jn 2:28 **3:13** Rv 11:8

3:3-4 Affliction and persecution are to be expected in the Christian life (2Tm 3:12; 1Pt 2:21).

3:13 The coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints is explained at greater length in 4:13-18.

THE CALL TO SANCTIFICATION

4 Additionally then, brothers and sisters, we ask and encourage you in the Lord Jesus, that as you have received instruction from us on how you should live and please God — as you are doing † — do this even more. 2 For you know what commands we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is God's will, † your sanctification: † that you keep away † from sexual immorality, 4 that each of you knows how to control his own body † in holiness and honor, 5 not with lustful passions, † like the Gentiles, who don't know God. 6 This means one must not transgress against and take advantage † of a brother or sister in this manner, because the Lord is an avenger of all these offenses, as we also previously told and warned you. 7 For God has not called us

to impurity † but to live in holiness. 8 Consequently, anyone who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit. †

LOVING AND WORKING

9 About brotherly love: You don't need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God † to love one another. † 10 In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. † But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more, 11 to seek to lead a quiet life, † to mind your own business, † and to work † with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 so that you may behave properly † in the presence of outsiders and not be dependent on anyone. † †

THE COMFORT OF CHRIST'S COMING

13 We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve like the rest, who have no hope. † 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose † again, † in the same way, through Jesus, † God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. 15 For we say this to you by a word from the Lord: † We who are still alive at the Lord's coming † will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. † 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, † † with the archangel's † voice, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ † will rise first. 17 Then † we who are still alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds † to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore encourage † one another with these words.

4:1 Lit *walking* **4:4** Or *to acquire his own wife* ; lit *to possess his own vessel* **4:11** Lit *to practice one's own things* **4:12** Or *not need anything*, or *not be in need* **4:16** Or *command* **4:18** Or *comfort*

4:3 1Th 5:18 **4:3** Rm 6:19,22; 1Co 1:30; 2Th 2:13; 1Tm 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1Pt 1:2 **4:3** 1Tm 4:3 **4:5** 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **4:6** 2Co 12:17 **4:7** Mt 23:27; 2Co 12:21; Gl 5:19; Eph 4:19; 5:3; Col 3:5; 1Th 2:3 **4:8** Ps 51:11; Jn 1:33; Ac 2:4; Rm 8:9; Gl 5:25; Ti 3:5; 1Jn 5:8; Rv 3:22 **4:9** Jn 6:45 **4:9** 1Jn 3:11 **4:10** Ac 16:9 **4:11** Lk 14:4; 23:56; Ac 11:18; 21:14 **4:11** 2Th 3:12; 2Jn 8 **4:12** Rm 13:13; 1Co 14:40 **4:12** Eph 4:28 **4:13** Jr 14:19; Eph 2:12; 1Th 1:3 **4:14** Lk 18:33 **4:14** Rm 14:9,15; 1Co 8:11; 15:3-4; 2Co 5:15 **4:14** Jn 14:19; Rm 8:11; 1Co 6:14; 15:18-20; 2Co 4:14; Php 1:23 **4:15** 2Pt 1:21; Rv 11:8 **4:15** 1Jn 2:28 **4:15** 1Co 15:51 **4:16** Jn 5:25 **4:16** Jd 9 **4:16** Rm 16:7; 1Co 15:18; 1Pt 5:14; Rv 14:13; 20:5 **4:17** 1Co 15:23,51-52 **4:17** Mt 26:64

4:3 In the NT, **God's will** typically refers to specific things he has revealed, such as growing in holiness **(sanctification)** and avoiding sexual sin.

4:5 Sexual immorality was rampant in the ancient Gentile world as in ours. Some religious movements even encouraged it. The rejection of such behavior, and the pursuit of holiness, is fundamental for Christian ethics because this call to purity comes from God himself (4:8).

4:7-8 The rejection of God's call to **holiness** is a rejection of **God.**

4:11-12 Work and personal responsibility are basic aspects of the Christian life. Working **with your own hands** does not mean that manual labor is the only appropriate labor for Christians. It refers to doing meaningful work rather than being idle. See "A Biblical View of Work," *p. 1478.*

4:13 Using sleep as a symbol for death was common in the ancient world in general, and in the Bible in particular (e.g., Dt 31:16; 1Kg 2:10; Jn 11:11-13; Ac 13:36). In biblical usage, the euphemism **those who are asleep** expresses hope that the dead will one day rise, as though they have only been napping.

4:14 Jesus's own death and resurrection is the ground of hope for the dead in Christ. Those **who have fallen asleep** will be brought with Jesus when he comes.

4:16 The dead in Christ will rise first when the Lord comes. And this coming will not occur in secret, but will be publicly known, **with a shout, with the archangel's voice, and with the trumpet of God.**

4:17 The Latin translation of the phrase **caught up** is where we get the term *rapture*. But contrary to some popular notions, this event will not occur in secret (cp. 4:16). The word translated **to meet** was used in the ancient world for a delegation of citizens who would meet a dignitary outside their city before escorting him in. Christians, then, are caught up **together** with the dead in Christ to meet the Lord as he returns in triumph.

4:18 The resurrection of the dead in Christ is typically a basis for comfort and perseverance (1Co 15:58). It is the reason that, though we mourn, we do not do so as those who have no hope (4:13).

THE DAY OF THE LORD

5 About the times and the seasons: † Brothers and sisters, you do not
need anything to be written to you. 2 For you yourselves know very well
that the day of the Lord † will come just like a thief † in the night.
3 When they say, "Peace and security," then sudden destruction † will come
upon them, like labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.
4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in the dark, for this day to surprise you
like a thief. † 5 For you are all children of light and children of the day. We do
not belong to the night or the darkness. † 6 So then, let us not sleep, like the
rest, but let us stay awake and be self-controlled. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at
night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the
day, let us be self-controlled † and put on the armor † of faith and love, and a
helmet † of the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to

obtain salvation through our Lord † Jesus Christ, † 10 who died for us, † so that whether we are awake or asleep, † we may live together with him. †
11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

EXHORTATIONS AND BLESSINGS

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to give recognition † to those who labor among you and lead you † in the Lord and admonish you, 13 and to regard them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace † among yourselves. 14 And we exhort you, brothers and sisters: † warn those who are idle, † comfort the discouraged, help the weak, be patient † with everyone. 15 See to it that no one repays evil for evil † to anyone, † but always pursue what is good for one another and for all. † 16 Rejoice † always, 17 pray constantly, 18 give thanks in everything; for this is God's will † for you in Christ Jesus. 19 Don't stifle the Spirit. 20 Don't despise prophecies, 21 but test all things. † Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay away † from every kind of evil.
23 Now may the God of peace † himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit, † soul, and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming † of our Lord † Jesus Christ. † 24 He who calls † you † is faithful; he will do it. 25 Brothers and sisters, pray for us also. 26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss. 27 I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brothers and sisters. † 28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

5:12 Or *care for you* **5:14** Or *who are disorderly*, or *who are undisciplined*
5:1 Dn 2:21; Ac 1:7 **5:2** Jl 2:1; Mt 25:13; Ac 2:20; Php 1:6 **5:2** Jn 10:1 **5:3** 2Th 1:9 **5:4** Jb 24:13-17 **5:5** Col 1:13 **5:8** 1Pt 5:8 **5:8** Eph 6:14; Rv 9:9,17 **5:8** 1Sm 17:5,38; Ps 60:7; 108:8; Is 59:17; Eph 6:17 **5:9** Rv 11:8 **5:9** Ac 15:26 **5:10** Jn 11:51; Rm 14:9; 1Co 8:11; Gl 1:4 **5:10** 1Th 5:6 **5:10** Lk 20:38; Php 1:23 **5:12** 1Co 16:18; Php 2:29 **5:13** Mk 9:50 **5:14** 2Th 3:15 **5:14** Mt 18:26,29; Lk 18:7; 1Co 13:4; Heb 6:15; Jms 5:7-8; 2Pt 3:9 **5:15** Mt 5:44; Rm 12:17; 1Pt 3:9 **5:15** Lk 7:47 **5:15** Rm 12:9; Gl 6:10; 1Th 5:21 **5:16** 2Co 6:10; Php 1:18 **5:18** Eph 6:6; 1Th 4:3; 1Pt 2:15; 4:2; 1Jn 2:17 **5:21** Eph 5:17 **5:22** 1Tm 4:3 **5:23** Rm 15:33 **5:23** Ps 51:12 **5:23** 1Th 1:10 **5:23** Rv 11:8 **5:23** 1Jn 2:28 **5:24** Col 3:15 **5:24** 1Pt 1:15 **5:27** Col 4:16

5:1 Times and the seasons is a phrase typically used to refer to events at the end times (Ac 1:7; 3:20-21).

5:2 The **day of the Lord** is a common OT expression referring to the time when God will break into world history in order to judge his enemies and rescue his people (Ob 15; Jl 2:31-32; Zch 14:1-21). This will **come just like a thief in the night**—an image originating in the teaching of Jesus (Mt 24:43; Lk 12:39). The day will come at an unpredicted time, and most people will be found unprepared for it (5:3).

5:5 The phrase **children of light** (used by Jesus in Lk 16:8) occurs frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls to describe the members of their community, who are in conflict with the "children of darkness." Being children of light means that Christians will not be caught unprepared by the "thief in the night" (5:2,4), because **we do not belong to the night.**

5:6 To **sleep** here means to be spiritually dull—unaware of God's work, and indulgent of sin.

5:8 The imagery of **armor** is found in Isaiah 59:17, where God "put on righteousness as body armor, and a helmet of salvation." Easily relatable in the Roman world, the armor metaphor is expanded in Ephesians 6:10-17 to refer to the battle of Spiritual Warfare. Here it is used to convey the central Christian characteristics of faith, hope, and love (cp. 1:3).

5:9 God's people are not appointed for **wrath**, but for **salvation through . . . Christ.** There is hope for the day of judgment for those chosen by God (1:4; 2:12; 3:3).

5:14 Helping the **weak** goes against Roman practice, since they believed the weak were being punished by the gods. Believers in Jesus are to reflect God's compassion for the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

5:17 See "Prayer and Recovery from Illness," *p. 1551*.

5:19-21 Many of the Thessalonians would have been familiar with the prophecies and similar activities of the pagan mystery cults in which they once participated. But they are not to **despise prophecies**; instead, they should **test** them and accept **what is good.**

5:23 See "The Mind-Body Problem," *p. 1175*.

5:26 Greeting friends or family with a **kiss** was a common and longstanding practice in the ancient world (Gn 33:4; 45:15; Lk 15:20). It was not a casual greeting, but indicated deep friendship and often reconciliation.

2 THESSALONIANS

INTRODUCTION

Following up on his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote to give further clarification on how to live the Christian life in light of the coming return of Christ. The Thessalonians were called to stand firm and live useful lives, because the return of Christ might be in the distant future.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Paul is stated to be the author of 2 Thessalonians (1:1). The greeting also mentions Silvanus and Timothy, but Paul was the primary author (3:17).

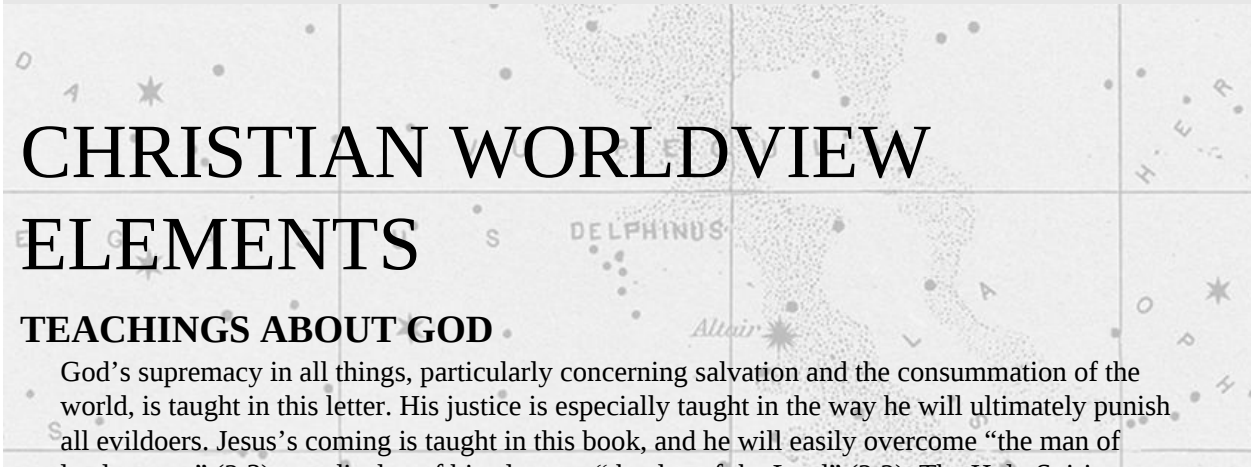
BACKGROUND: See discussion under introduction to 1 Thessalonians. While there are few indicators of the date and place of writing of 2 Thessalonians, it was probably written from Corinth around AD 50–51 shortly after 1 Thessalonians. The mention of Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy together in the salutation, as was the case with 1 Thessalonians (1Th 1:1), supports this conclusion. An additional support for this view is the mention of a previous letter, which was probably 1 Thessalonians (2Th 2:15).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Second Thessalonians continues and further amplifies some of the same themes as 1 Thessalonians: persecution, sanctification, and end-time events associated with the second coming of Christ. One important difference is that 2 Thessalonians describes the “man of lawlessness” who will be revealed in the end times and what restrains him from being revealed (2:1-12). The book also contains a lengthy discourse on the need for believers to have a proper work ethic to provide for their own needs (3:6-15).

STRUCTURE

The tone of Paul’s second letter to the Thessalonians is markedly “cooler” than his first letter. In his first letter, Paul was enthusiastic about the Thessalonians’ progress in the gospel, and he offered calm advice about congregational life (1Th 5:12-22). In this second letter, though, Paul expressed grave concern about the spiritual state of the Thessalonian believers. He gave them a sharp rebuke about congregational life (2Th 3:6-15). His style is typical of his other letters—a doctrinal section followed by practical exhortation.



CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God’s supremacy in all things, particularly concerning salvation and the consummation of the world, is taught in this letter. His justice is especially taught in the way he will ultimately punish all evildoers. Jesus’s coming is taught in this book, and he will easily overcome “the man of

lawlessness" (2:3) as a display of his glory on "the day of the Lord" (2:2). The Holy Spirit, mentioned only at 2:13, sanctifies (makes holy) those God has chosen to save.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This letter shows two sharply opposed groups of humanity. On one hand are those who know God and have come to obey the gospel. On the other hand are all others, who will "pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence" (1:9).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

In 2 Thessalonians, salvation is seen from the future perspective of deliverance from judgment and destruction on the day of the Lord. In the end those who perish do so "because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved" (2:10).

2 THESSALONIANS TIMELINE

2300–150 BC

Prehistoric settlement on the site of Thessalonica **2300**

Founding of Therme at the head of the Thermaic Gulf **600**

Cassander, king of Macedon, establishes Thessalonica at the site where Therme had existed, naming the new city in honor of his wife. **316**

The Romans gain control of Thessalonica when Perseus, king of Macedonia, is defeated at Pydna. **168**

First Jewish community in Thessalonica, emigrants from Alexandria **168–103**

149–42 BC

Construction of the Macedonian leg of the Egnatian Way, a Roman military road connecting Thessalonica with the Adriatic Sea in the west and with Neapolis in the east **147–120**

Thessalonica becomes the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia and is referred to as "the Mother of Macedonia." **146**

The Roman statesman Cicero spends six months of his self–imposed exile in Thessalonica. **58**

Many Roman officials flee Rome and take up residence in Thessalonica during the Roman civil war. **49–48**

Augustus declares Thessalonica a free city following the battle of Philippi. **42**

5 BC–AD 33

Jesus's birth **5 BC**

Paul born in Tarsus of Cilicia **AD 5**

Paul studies with Gamaliel in Jerusalem. **AD 15–20**

Tiberius takes away Thessalonica's status as a free city when opposition to increased taxation is expressed. **AD 15**

Jesus's trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, AD 33**

Pentecost **AD 33**

AD 34–56

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER, 34**

Paul, Timothy, and Silas minister in Thessalonica, one of the earliest churches planted in Europe. **50**

Paul writes 1 Thessalonians a few months after being forced to leave Thessalonica. **51**
Paul soon follows up with a second letter to the Thessalonian believers. **51**
Paul likely revisits the Thessalonian Christians as he visits the churches planted in Macedonia. **56**

GREETING

1 Paul, Silvanus, † † and Timothy: †
To the church of the Thessalonians † in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD'S JUDGMENT AND GLORY

3 We ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters, and rightly so, since your faith is flourishing and the love † each one of you has for one another † is increasing. † 4 Therefore, we ourselves boast † about you among God's churches — about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and afflictions that you are enduring. 5 It is clear evidence of God's righteous † judgment † that you will be counted worthy of God's kingdom, for which you also are suffering, † 6 since it is just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted, along with us. This will take place at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels, 8 when he takes vengeance with flaming fire † on those who don't know God † and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. † 9 They will pay the penalty of eternal destruction † from the Lord's presence † and from his glorious strength † 10 on that day when he comes † to be glorified † by his saints † and to be marveled at by all those who have believed, because our testimony among you was believed. 11 In view of this, we always pray for you that our God will make you worthy of his calling, † and by his power fulfill your every desire to do good † and your work produced by faith, † 12 so that the name † of our Lord Jesus will be glorified † by you, and you by him, † according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:1 Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16 **1:11** Or *power bring to fruition your desire to do good*
1:1 Ac 15:22; 2Co 1:19; 1Th 1:1; 1Pt 5:12 **1:1** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **1:1** Ac 17:1 **1:3** 1Co 13:1; 1Jn 4:16 **1:3**

Php 2:2 **1:3** 1Th 4:10 **1:4** 2Co 12:5 **1:5** 1Jn 1:9 **1:5** Mt 12:41; Jn 5:22,27,30; 8:16; 16:11; Heb 9:27; Jms 2:13; 2Pt 3:7; Rv 14:7; 16:7; 19:2 **1:5** Php 1:29 **1:8** 1Co 3:13; Heb 10:27; 12:29; 2Pt 3:7; Rv 14:10 **1:8** Ps 79:6; Is 66:15; Jr 10:25 **1:8** 1Pt 4:17 **1:9** 1Tm 6:9 **1:9** Gn 4:14 **1:9** Is 2:10,19,21 **1:10** Mk 8:38 **1:10** Jn 17:10; Rm 8:17 **1:10** Eph 5:3; 6:18 **1:11** Eph 4:1; Col 3:15 **1:11** Gl 2:16; 1Th 1:3 **1:12** Jn 14:13; Ac 3:16; 15:14; Php 2:10 **1:12** Is 24:15; 49:3; 66:5; Mal 1:11; 2Co 8:23 **1:12** Jn 13:31

1:4 The **persecutions and afflictions** suffered by the Thessalonians most likely involve social harassment rather than physical violence, since the latter developed in later decades (see the note on 1Th 1:6).

1:6 Throughout Scripture, God vindicates his people. Believers are to entrust all judgment to him.

1:7 The revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven refers to his coming (see 1Th 4:13-18; 5:1-10). His coming marks the day of judgment (see 2Th 1:8-9). See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531*.

1:8-9 The Bible is clear about the final judgment for **those who don’t know God** and **who don’t obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus** (Mt 13:40,49-50; 18:8; 2Pt 3:7; Jd 7; Rv 20:15).

1:9-10 The **day** of Christ’s coming will be one of terrible judgment, but also of glorification and wonder.

THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS

2 Now concerning the coming † of our Lord † Jesus Christ and our being
gathered to him: We ask you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be easily
upset or troubled, either by a prophecy † † or by a message or by a
letter supposedly from us, alleging that the day of the Lord † † has come. †
3 Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way. For that day will not come unless
the apostasy † comes first and the man of lawlessness † is revealed, the man
doomed to destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called
god † or object of worship, † so that he sits † in God’s temple, proclaiming
that he himself is God.
5 Don’t you remember that when I was still with you I used to tell you about
this? 6 And you know what currently restrains him, so that he will be revealed in
his time. † 7 For the mystery of lawlessness † is already at work, but the one
now restraining will do so until he is out of the way, 8 and then the lawless one
will be revealed. The Lord Jesus will destroy him with the breath of his mouth †
and will bring him to nothing at the appearance of his coming. 9 The coming of
the lawless one is based on Satan’s working, with all kinds of false miracles,
signs, and wonders, † 10 and with every wicked deception among those who are
perishing. They perish because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be
saved. † 11 For this reason God sends them a strong delusion so that they will

believe the lie, [12] so that all will be condemned † — those who did not believe † the truth but delighted in unrighteousness.

THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

"I'm spiritual, but not religious."

"I believe in the power of positive thinking."

"I follow my heart."

Claims like these reflect the popular influence of New Age spirituality. New Age movement(s) (hereafter "NAM" or "NAMs") represent an eclectic blend of elements from ancient paganism, astrology, the occult, Eastern religions, and some Judeo-Christian themes aimed at self-actualization through personal healing practices like yoga, meditation, crystal therapy, and spirit channeling.

The NAM grew out of the countercultural shifts of the 1970s and the pop psychology of more recent self-help fads. Celebrity advocates include Deepak Chopra, Eckhart Tolle, and even Oprah Winfrey. The self-spirituality of NAMs holds a pluralistic view of religious authority and emphasizes what religions from various places and cultures seemingly share rather than their important distinctives. What is most valued, however, are ancient or secret truths. NAMs rely on the arcane, the esoteric, or hidden wisdom, a habit that closely resembles the Greco-Roman gnosticism that was fervently critiqued in the NT.

But those associated with NAMs are nothing if not hopeful and optimistic, embracing a profoundly utopian vision for the so-called Age of Aquarius, a time characterized by international peace, ecological sensitivity, and social enlightenment. Thus, NAMs anticipate that things will begin getting better as more people come together and seek mutual harmony with nature and each other. Unfortunately, these hopes are a thin parody of the biblical hope of Christ's eschatological kingdom—the "age to come" described in the NT Gospels.

BASIC TENETS OF THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

Due to their pluralistic orientation, NAMs are inherently difficult to study as a coherent worldview. Nevertheless, they adhere to the basic tenets of pantheism. Pantheism comes from two Greek words, *pan* meaning "all" and *theos* meaning "god." Pantheism equates God with nature and everything in it. God is the universe and the universe is God.

Thus, NAMs differ from Christianity on several important points.

(1) Denying reality. NAMs seek to transcend this world and contact a separate level of existence beyond the visible world. This is either an age to come, another dimension of this universe, or a parallel universe.

(2) Escaping reality. NAMs seek to access a higher plane of existence by connecting with an eternal spirit or universal consciousness that transcends space and time, thereby escaping the illusion of physical death.

(3) New morality. Since the New Age is void of evil, all actions are good, and codes of morality are no longer relevant. This moral relativism erodes an objective account of truth, and individuals are invited to create their own truth.

(4) Cyclical history. Time becomes a gradual process of trial and error that repeats itself until humanity graduates to a higher form of consciousness.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The Christian worldview rejects the NAM on each point: (1) Reality is God's creation, and therefore

deserves our attention and care (Gn 1–2; Nm 35:33; Ps 24:1).

(2) Humanity has not been rejected by the world but instead has rejected God's order for this world. In choosing to rebel against the Creator's design, all humanity has fallen from the grace of God. Salvation from this fallen state depends on God's initiative in Jesus Christ to save the world (Rm 8:22-24; Eph 1:3-14; Gl 3:11).

(3) Truth is found in God's revelation of himself to humanity and is absolute and eternal (Ps 86:11; Jn 14:6; 17:17; 2Tm 3:16). Morality thus flows from this unchanging Word (Mt 5:17-19; Col 3:1-17; Jms 3:13; 1Jn 3:18).

(4) Finally, history is ultimately meaningful because of God's involvement in the world; namely, his act of creation, the act of initiating redemption by Christ's work on the cross, and the promise of a complete restoration for creation on Christ's return (1Jn 3:16; 2Pt 3:1-6; Rv 21:5).

Although contemporary Christians should be as suspicious of the NAM as the early church was about gnosticism, NAMs illustrate some important aspects of our postmodern age that can help Christians better understand the culture in which they live. In particular, NAMs seek to recover a spiritual element that is absent in a world dominated by scientific naturalism and disdain for the supernatural. NAMs also recognize that meeting spiritual needs belongs to basic human flourishing.

Further, NAMs maintain hope in a comprehensive or holistic peace between God, humans, and nature. Indeed, everything is spiritual by God's design, but how we experience it is a result of his gracious gifts and not human effort or manipulation.

NAMs fundamentally err in their account of human agency (i.e., what an individual can accomplish on his or her own) for the spiritual life. More often than not, spiritual power is sought to extend personal experience or knowledge and is not used in service to the one true God (as with Gn 3:5; Rm 1:21-23).

NAMs elevate humanity to a divine status, and individuals thus become masters of their own spiritual destinies. Nothing could be further from the biblical account of spiritual renewal offered by God the Father, accomplished by Christ the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit.

The NAM denies God's sovereignty over our lives, inflates human participation beyond the parameters of Scripture, and ultimately substitutes an impersonal world spirit for the Holy Spirit. The Bible makes clear that God is sovereign over the human soul, and unless he acts in grace toward humanity, no change results (Is 46:10; Rm 9:19-24; Eph 3:14-21). In light of God's sovereignty, humans are responsible for responding to his grace, and human participation in the work of individual spiritual renewal is always in cooperation with God's grace (Rm 10:9-10; Php 2:12-13; 1Jn 2:3-6). For the NAM, divinity is subjectless and impersonal. According to Chuck Colson, it is more akin to electricity than deity. Scripture attests, however, to the supremacy and power of the Holy Spirit as the One who convicts the world of its sin, reveals the truth of the gospel, and leads us in following God's Word (Jn 14:15-27; 16:5-15; Rm 7:4-6; Eph 1:13-14).

While some adherents of the NAM may be well intentioned in their hopes, New Age spirituality cannot ultimately be reconciled to the Christian worldview or the life of a biblical disciple. In light of that inescapable truth, we should seize each opportunity to share the biblical gospel of Jesus Christ. He did not call us to escape this world but instead stepped into our shoes, paid the price for our sin, and is even now working through the church to bring about the redemption and restoration of the world. In his *Miracles*, C. S. Lewis warns that pantheism is Christianity's most formidable and most perennial threat. It is the worldview alternative that humans naturally want to believe; we foolishly hope that by our own efforts we might save ourselves. For this reason, NAMs must be consistently resisted and carefully refuted.

TAYLOR B. WORLEY

STAND FIRM

13 But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because from the beginning † God has chosen † you for salvation through sanctification † by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 He called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory † of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm † and hold to the traditions you were taught, † whether by what we said or what we wrote.

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who has loved † us and given us eternal encouragement and good hope by grace, 17 encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good work and word.

2:2 Or *spiritual utterance* **2:2** Other mss read *Christ* **2:3** Or *rebellion* **2:3** Other mss read *man of sin* **2:4** Other mss add *as God* **2:13** Other mss read *because as a firstfruit*

2:1 1Th 1:10; 1Jn 2:28 **2:1** Rv 11:8 **2:2** 1Jn 4:1 **2:2** Mt 25:13; Ac 2:20; Php 1:6 **2:2** 2Tm 2:18; 1Jn 2:28 **2:4** 1Co 8:5 **2:4** Is 14:12-15; Ezk 28:2; Ac 17:23 **2:6** Lk 21:8 **2:7** Mt 13:41 **2:8** Is 11:4; 30:28 **2:9** Mt 24:24; Mk 13:22; Rv 13:13 **2:10** Ac 16:30; Eph 2:8 **2:12** Jn 5:22-30 **2:12** Jn 6:64 **2:13** Rm 9:11; 11:5; Eph 1:4; 1Th 1:4 **2:13** Rm 6:19; 1Co 1:30; 1Th 4:3; 1Tm 2:15; Heb 12:14; 1Pt 1:2 **2:14** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 1Pt 5:1,4; 2Pt 3:18 **2:15** Rm 14:4; 1Co 16:13; Php 1:27 **2:15** Mk 7:3; 1Tm 4:11; Jd 3 **2:16** Jn 3:16; Rv 12:11

2:1 The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him is discussed at length in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

2:2 Paul warns of false prophecies or messages that claim that **the day of the Lord has come.** On "the day," see note on 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Though this day will come like a thief in the night, it will be marked by a shout and the trumpet of God (1Th 4:16).

2:3-4 Paul, alluding to the teaching of Jesus, who drew on the words of Daniel (Mt 24; Mk 13; Dn 7:25; 8:11; 9:26-27; 11:31,36), reminds them of a future turning away by professing believers (**apostasy**) accompanied with the rise of **the man of lawlessness** (cp. 2:9). Rather than a certain individual, this figure may refer to a type of person, like a number of pagan kings described in the OT. Roman Emperor Caligula also tried to set up a statue of himself in the Jewish **temple** in AD 40, asserting his claim to divinity.

2:8 The imagery of **the breath of his mouth** comes from the Greek version of Isaiah 11:4, in which the Messiah "will strike the land with a scepter from his mouth, and he will kill the wicked with a command from his lips."

2:9-10 Satan's schemes depend on falsehood and **deception**. He employs **false miracles, signs, and wonders**, giving the appearance of divine origin.

2:15 Paul speaks of **traditions** to refer to the apostolic teaching that has been handed down (as the rest of the verse makes clear; see also 2:6). See also "Worldview Thinking, the Christian Intellectual Tradition, and the Pattern of Christian Truth," *p. 1593.*

PRAY FOR US

3 In addition, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you, † 2 and that

we may be delivered † from wicked and evil people, for not all have faith. †
3 But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen and guard you from the evil one. †
4 We have confidence in the Lord about you, that you are doing and will
continue to do what we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to God's
love and Christ's endurance. †

WARNING AGAINST IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR

6 Now we command you, brothers and sisters, in the name † of our Lord Jesus
Christ, to keep away from every brother or sister † who is idle and does not live
according to the tradition † received † from us. 7 For you yourselves know how
you should imitate † us: We were not idle among you;

A RESPONSE TO EASTERN AND NEW AGE VIEWS OF HISTORY

According to the Bible and Christian tradition, history is linear and purposeful. History began at a particular moment sometime in the past. At some unknown point in the future, history as we presently understand it will come to an end. Historical events are not matters of chance, accident, or fate. The Lord who created the heavens and the earth is sovereign over history. He providentially guides it along from beginning to end, according to his own sovereign purposes. History has a point: to glorify the Lord.

The Christian view of history, when understood as an expansion of the Jewish approach, is the oldest philosophy of interpreting the past. The Judeo-Christian tradition of historical understanding, however, has many competitors. One of its oldest competitors is often referred to as the Eastern view of history, so-called because of its association with ancient India and China. It remains popular today in parts of East Asia. It has also influenced the so-called New Age movement in North America and parts of Europe.

EASTERN VIEWS OF HISTORY

The distinguishing feature of the Eastern view is that history is understood to be cyclical rather than linear. In the Eastern interpretation, history is a series of endlessly repeating cycles. The past is repeated in the present, and the present will be repeated in the future. History has no ultimate purpose or goal—it simply happens again and again. History had no starting point, and it will have no climax. Thus, each individual cycle of history is irrelevant except insofar as it represents a particular example of repeatable patterns that have always occurred and will continue to do so forever. Because history is not linear, it has no "meta-narrative," no comprehensive meaning that transcends all of history and brings together all the individual moments in time. A revolving wheel is often the image used to visually depict this philosophy of history.

Various versions of the Eastern philosophy of history have been popular in cultures that blur the lines between myths and reality. There are at least two related explanations for the origins of Eastern understandings of history. First, each cycle of history in some respects parallels the normal pattern of a

human life. Individuals grow in understanding and physical maturity from childhood to adulthood, only to experience a gradual return to physical and frequently intellectual feebleness during their final years. In Eastern historical interpretation, the individual experience was projected onto the world's historical process and incorporated into a never-ending cycle.

The second explanation for the Eastern view is related to the agrarian milieu of many ancient civilizations. History was understood to be part of natural processes. In an agricultural context, people regularly observe the yearly cycle of seasons and how they affect sowing and reaping. Year in and year out, the seasons changed and agrarian families repeated the process of planting and harvesting, understanding that their very existence depended on their participation in this cycle. In the Eastern view of history, the rhythm of nature was projected onto the larger historical process; the latter, in fact, was understood to be the source of the former.

THREE TYPES OF EASTERN VIEWS

Historians point to at least three different versions of the Eastern view that have prevailed in various cultures. In ancient India, the focus was on the entire earth. All of creation participates in a birth-to-death cycle, which in turn gives way to a new cycle. This has always happened, and the pattern will continue forever. This view remains popular in Southeast Asia and is the version of the Eastern view to which this article has given most of its attention.

In ancient China, the tendency was to focus more on particular dynasties of rulers and the civilizations they governed. Each dynasty was seen as a particular expression of the wider cycle of growth-maturity-decay. This view is not widely held today.

In the third version, popular in ancient Greco-Roman and Middle Eastern cultures, the past was seen as a golden age that needed to be reclaimed. Cultures that traditionally affirmed this third option have often been quicker to embrace a Christian view of history or some other linear understanding of the historical process. For example, in the Greco-Roman world, the Christian view became popular after the legalization of Christianity in the fourth century AD. In the Middle East and North Africa, an alternative linear approach (that borrows from the Judeo-Christian tradition) became dominant after the advent of Islam in the seventh century.

THE IMPACT OF EASTERN VIEWS OF HISTORY

It is difficult to find any real personal significance in the Eastern view of history, since this approach attributes little wider meaning to history itself. For this reason, belief in reincarnation is popular among adherents to a cyclical interpretation of history, especially in the Far East. Because of the endless historical cycles, the best a person can hope for is to be reborn after death, hopefully with better prospects in the next life than those experienced in this current life. Reincarnation plays a prominent role in Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism.

In the past, many cultures that embraced the Eastern view also affirmed some form of fatalism. This was especially true in the Greco-Roman and Middle Eastern worlds. Fatalism holds that the future is irrevocably fixed by forces beyond human control. In Eastern fatalism, this historical inevitability is attributed to divine spiritual powers. Our actions do not matter in and of themselves; rather, we are acting out a predetermined plan in which we have no real freedom.

Many Buddhists affirm a form of fatalism, though Buddhist fatalism is tied to karma rather than to a god or gods. Taoism is also fatalistic. Fatalism was mostly eliminated in Europe with the rise of Christianity, though some understandings of God's providence may border on fatalism. A form of fatalism persists in Islam, even though Muslims affirm a linear view of history.

EASTERN VIEWS IN THE NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The Eastern view of history has long been rejected in Western culture, largely due to the influence of the Judeo-Christian tradition in Europe and North America. Nevertheless, elements of the worldview on which

Eastern historical interpretation depends became popular in North America during the 1960s.

The so-called New Age movement embraces a hodgepodge of Eastern beliefs such as pantheism, karma, and reincarnation. But these views have been combined with an evolutionary approach to history that interprets the world as becoming increasingly advanced as humanity moves toward spiritual perfection as defined by New Age proponents. Many New Agers have also been influenced by a Marxist interpretation of history that overemphasizes social upheaval and class tensions to the exclusion of intellectual trends.

In part because of their philosophy of history, many New Age adherents are interested in retrieving marginal spiritual practices from other places besides the Far East. They believe these allegedly lost spiritual practices were suppressed by power-hungry mainstream religious traditions. Goddess worship, nature worship, gnosticism, and various forms of Native American mysticism are examples of lost spiritualities that have been recovered by New Age proponents. New Agers consider their suppressed spiritual traditions, some of which are heretical corruptions of Christianity, to be superior to traditional religions.

Many New Agers are also influenced by postmodern views of tolerance. They are in theory open to any spiritual tradition except those systems that claim to be the one true path to God. Conservative versions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are rejected because of their exclusive truth claims.

CHRISTIANITY AND EASTERN VIEWS OF HISTORY

Eastern and New Age understandings of history are incompatible with the Christian worldview. Believers must look to God's Word, which has been called "the true story of the whole world," to accurately understand history's scope and purpose.

History is the staging ground for the Lord of all creation to make himself known through his mighty acts in creation, promise, redemption, and consummation. The central figure in history is Jesus Christ, and the central acts of history are his incarnation, perfect obedience, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection. History will climax with his return to the earth to complete his work of salvation and reverse the effects of sin in the created order "as far as the curse is found."

NATHAN A. FINN

8 we did not eat † anyone's food free of charge; † instead, we labored † and
toiled, † working † night and day, so that we would not be a burden † to any of
you. 9 It is not that we don't have the right † to support, but we did it to make
ourselves an example to you so that you would imitate † us. 10 In fact, when we
were with you, this is what we commanded you: "If anyone isn't willing to
work, he should not eat." † 11 For we hear that there are some among you who
are idle. They are not busy but busybodies. † 12 Now we command and exhort
such people by the Lord Jesus Christ to work quietly and provide for
themselves. † 13 But as for you, brothers and sisters, do not grow weary † in
doing good.
14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take note of that person;
don't associate with him, so that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet don't consider him
as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

FINAL GREETINGS

16 May the Lord of peace † himself give you peace always in every way. † The Lord be with all of you. † 17 I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand, † which is an authenticating mark in every letter; this is how I write. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

3:2 Or *for the faith is not in everyone* **3:12** Lit *they may eat their own bread*

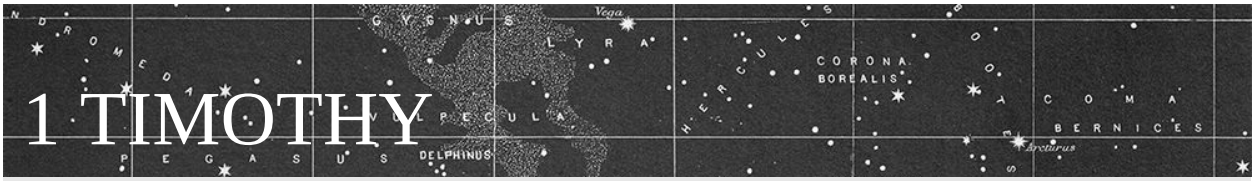
3:1 1Th 2:13 **3:2** Mt 27:43; Rm 15:31 **3:3** Mt 5:37; 6:13; 13:19,38; Jn 17:15; Eph 6:16; 1Jn 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18-19 **3:5** Rm 15:5; Rv 13:10 **3:6** Jn 14:13; Ac 3:16; 15:14; Php 2:10 **3:6** Mt 18:17; 1Co 5:11; 2Tm 3:5; 2Jn 10 **3:6** Mk 7:3 **3:6** Jd 3 **3:7** 3Jn 11 **3:8** 1Co 10:25 **3:8** 1Th 2:7 **3:8** Rv 14:13 **3:8** 2Co 11:27; 1Th 2:9 **3:8** Ac 18:3; Eph 4:28; 2Jn 8 **3:8** 2Co 2:5; 1Th 2:9 **3:9** Mk 1:22; Ac 9:14; Rm 13:1; 1Co 9:4-14 **3:9** Heb 8:5 **3:10** 1Th 4:11 **3:11** 1Tm 5:13 **3:13** Lk 18:1; 2Co 4:1,16; Gl 6:9; Eph 3:13 **3:16** 1Th 5:23 **3:16** Nm 6:26; Eph 6:23 **3:16** Rm 15:33; 1Co 16:24; 2Co 13:13; Ti 3:15; Heb 13:25 **3:17** 1Co 16:21

3:6 Keep away from refers to removing fellowship from professing believers who do not live according to apostolic teaching; it is a form of discipline. Laziness seems to be the particular sin in view here (3:8-15; cp. 1Th 4:11).

3:8-9 Hard work and providing for oneself is a basic aspect of the Christian life.

3:10 Laziness, not incapacity brought on by illness or disability, is strongly condemned. See “A Biblical View of Work,” *p. 1478.*

3:14-15 Temporary exclusion from fellowship is a means of discipline for the sake of restoration (Mt 18:15-17; 1Co 5:11). It is a warning for **a brother**, not **an enemy.**



1 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

First Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus have been referred to as the "Pastoral Letters" since the eighteenth century. It is reasonable to consider these letters together since they have striking similarities in style, vocabulary, and setting. These letters stand apart from the other Pauline letters in that they were the only ones written to Paul's gospel coworkers. The Pastoral Letters deal with church structure issues and, unlike Paul's other letters, were addressed to men serving in pastoral roles rather than to churches. But we must also recognize that these are separate letters with their own distinctives. They were not written primarily to describe church structure or pastoral ministry (contrary to popular opinion), but to teach Christian living in response to the gospel.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: As stated in the opening of each letter, these letters were written by Paul (1Tm 1:1; 2Tm 1:1; Ti 1:1). However, many scholars today assume that Paul did not write them. This opinion is based on the differences from his other letters in vocabulary and style, alleged differences in theology, and uncertainties about where these letters fit chronologically in the life of the apostle. But the differences in style and vocabulary are not troublesome when one considers that authors often use different vocabulary when addressing different groups and situations. Rather than addressing churches in these letters, Paul was writing to coworkers who were in unique ministry settings. Hence we would expect different vocabulary. Also, the traditional view of the historical situation in which Paul wrote these letters is reasonable and defensible. Therefore, in spite of significant opposition by some scholars, there is a solid basis for accepting the Pastoral Epistles as Pauline.

BACKGROUND: Paul most likely wrote these letters after the time covered in the book of Acts. Acts closes with Paul in prison. Traditionally it has been believed that Paul was released from this imprisonment, then continued his work around the Mediterranean, perhaps even reaching Spain (Rm 15:22-29). During this time, he visited Crete and other places. First Timothy and Titus were written during this period of further mission work. Timothy had been left in Ephesus to handle some problems with false teaching there (1Tm 1:3-4). Titus had been left in Crete after the initial work to set up the church there (Ti 1:5). Eventually Paul was imprisoned again, and this led to his execution. During this final imprisonment, Paul wrote 2 Timothy to request another visit from Timothy and to give final exhortations as he anticipated his martyrdom.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

These letters are rich theologically and ethically. One of their key contributions is the clear way they show the connection between doctrine and ethics, belief and behavior.

While these letters were not intended to provide a detailed account of church government, they do provide some significant insights on this topic. The lists of characteristics for overseers (1Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:5-9) and deacons (1Tm 3:8-13) are the only such lists in the NT.

STRUCTURE

All three letters follow the typical pattern of a Greek letter. While there are some lexical differences with many of Paul's other letters, keep in mind that these letters were written to specific individuals. One thing

unique to the structure of these letters is the focus on church leadership.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

This letter contains the classic biblical summary of God's attributes: "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God" (1:17). He is also "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (6:15). Jesus is the only "mediator between God and humanity" (2:5). The Holy Spirit's person is clearly affirmed (3:16; 4:1).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

As one of the six NT letters first written to a single individual (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, 2 and 3 John), this book shows the importance of what one person can be and do. The individuals addressed in these books (Timothy, Titus, Philemon, "the elect lady" (2Jn 1), and Gaius) were all redeemed sinners working for the kingdom of God in one way or another. They all benefited from the advice and encouragement offered by the letter they received. These individuals stand as examples of living out one's life for the glory of God and in the hope of eternal life.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation in this letter, as everywhere in Paul's writings, focuses on Jesus Christ. Paul summarized his understanding by reminding Timothy of "the mystery of godliness" (1Tm 4:16), evidently an early Christian hymn or poem: "He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory" (3:16).

1 TIMOTHY TIMELINE

AD 5–50

Paul is born in Tarsus of Cilicia. **5**

Paul's conversion to Christ as he travels to Damascus **34**

Paul takes Titus and Barnabas from Antioch to Jerusalem for the Jerusalem Council. **49**

Paul and Silas return to Lystra and take Timothy with them as they travel through Asia Minor to Troas. **50**

Timothy ministers with Paul and Silas in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. **50**

AD 51–56

Paul has to flee Berea; he leaves Timothy and Silas to continue the work. **51**

Timothy rejoins Paul in Athens and brings word of the work in Macedonia. **51**

Timothy returns to Thessalonica to encourage the new believers. **51–52**

Timothy joins Paul in his ministry in Corinth, bringing word of progress in Thessalonica. **52**

Timothy comes to Ephesus to work with Paul during Paul's three-year ministry. **54–56**

AD 56–62

Paul sends Timothy with the 1 Corinthians letter to the troubled church in Corinth. **56**

While ministering in Ephesus, Paul sends Titus to mediate the conflict between Paul and the church at Corinth. **56**

Paul comes to Corinth in person and from there he writes the letter to the Romans. **57**

Upon his release from his first imprisonment, Paul goes to Ephesus and appoints Timothy as chief pastor. **62**

AD 62–67

Paul writes 1 Timothy and Titus. **62–64**

Paul commissions Titus to train leaders for the young Christian congregations on Crete. **62–64**

Major persecution of the Christians in Rome begins following the great fire. **JULY 18–24, 64**

Paul returns to Rome, is arrested, and writes 2 Timothy from the Mamertine Prison. **67?**

Paul's martyrdom in Rome. **67?**

GREETING

1 Paul, † an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command † of God our
Savior † and of Christ Jesus our hope: †
2 To Timothy, † my true son in the faith.
Grace, mercy, and peace from God the † Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

FALSE DOCTRINE AND MISUSE OF THE LAW

3 As I urged you when I went to Macedonia, † remain in Ephesus † so that you
may instruct certain people † not to teach false doctrine 4 or to pay attention to
myths † and endless genealogies. These promote empty speculations rather than
God's plan, † which operates by faith. 5 Now the goal of our instruction is
love † that comes from a pure heart, † a good conscience, † and a sincere
faith. † 6 Some have departed from these and turned aside to fruitless
discussion. 7 They want to be teachers of the law, although they don't
understand what they are saying or what they are insisting on. 8 But we know
that the law is good, † provided one uses it legitimately. 9 We know that the law
is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, † for the
ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers

and mothers, for murderers, [10] for the sexually immoral † and homosexuals, † for slave traders, liars, † perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching † [11] that conforms to the gospel † concerning the glory of the blessed God, † which was entrusted to me. †

PAUL'S TESTIMONY

[12] I give thanks to Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened † me, because he considered me faithful, appointing me to the ministry — [13] even though I was formerly a blasphemer, † a persecutor, † and an arrogant man. † But I received mercy because I acted out of ignorance in unbelief, [14] and the grace of our Lord overflowed, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. [15] This saying is trustworthy † and deserving of full acceptance: "Christ Jesus came into the world † to save sinners" † — and I am the worst of them. † [16] But I received mercy † for this reason, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate his extraordinary patience † as an example to those who would believe in him for eternal life. † [17] Now to the King † eternal, † immortal, † invisible, the only † God, † be honor † and glory † forever and ever. Amen. †

ENGAGE IN BATTLE

[18] Timothy, my son, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies † previously made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the good fight, [19] having faith † and a good conscience. † Some † have rejected these and have shipwrecked their faith. [20] Among them are Hymenaeus † and Alexander, † whom I have delivered to Satan, † so that they may be taught not to blaspheme.

1:2 Other mss read *our* **1:17** Other mss add *wise*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Rm 16:26; Ti 1:3 **1:1** 1Tm 2:3; Ti 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jd 25 **1:1** 1Co 15:19; Col 1:27; 1Th 1:3; 1Pt 1:3,13 **1:2** Ac 16:1; 20:4; 1Co 4:17; 16:10 **1:3** Ac 16:9 **1:3** Eph 1:1 **1:3** Jd 4 **1:4** 1Tm 4:7; 2Tm 4:4; Ti 1:14; 2Pt 1:16 **1:4** Eph 1:10; 3:2,9; Col 1:25 **1:5** Rm 13:10 **1:5** Ps 24:4; 2Tm 2:22; 1Pt 1:22 **1:5** Ac 23:1; 24:16; Rm 9:1; 2Co 1:12; 1Tm 1:19; 3:9; Heb 10:22; 1Pt 3:21 **1:5** 2Tm 1:5 **1:8** Rm 7:12,16 **1:9** Ti 1:6,10; Heb 2:8 **1:10** 1Co 5:9 **1:10** Gn 19:5; Rm 1:27; 1Co 6:9 **1:10** Jn 8:44 **1:10** 1Tm 6:3; 2Tm 1:13; Ti 1:9; 2:1 **1:11** 2Co 4:4 **1:11** 1Tm 6:15 **1:11** Lv 6:4; Lk 12:48; 1Co 9:17; Gl 2:7; 1Th 2:4; 1Tm 1:11; 6:20; 2Tm 1:12,14; Ti 1:3 **1:12** Ac 9:22; Php 4:13 **1:13** Ac 6:11; 2Tm 3:2; 2Pt 2:11 **1:13** Php 3:6 **1:13** 1Co 15:8 **1:15** 1Tm 3:1; 4:9; 2Tm 2:11; Ti 3:8 **1:15** Jn 3:17; 12:46; 18:37; 1Jn 4:9 **1:15** Mk 2:17; Lk 19:10; Rm 11:4 **1:15** 1Co 15:9 **1:16** Lk 1:50 **1:16** Ex 34:6; Rm 2:4 **1:16** Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48 **1:17** Ps 47:7 **1:17** Ps 90:2 **1:17** 1Co 9:25 **1:17** Jn 5:44; 1Co 8:6; Eph 4:6; 1Tm 2:5; 6:15; Jd 25 **1:17** 2Pt 1:17; Rv 5:12 **1:17** Mk 10:37 **1:17** Php

4:20; 1Tm 6:16; Rv 22:21 **1:18** 1Co 13:2; 1Tm 4:14; 2Tm 1:6 **1:19** Eph 3:12; 6:16; Col 1:23; 2:5; 1Th 5:8; 1Tm 3:13; 6:12; 2Tm 4:7; 1Jn 5:4 **1:19** Heb 10:22 **1:19** 2Tm 2:18; Jd 4 **1:20** 2Tm 2:17 **1:20** 2Tm 4:14 **1:20** 1Co 5:5

1:2 By calling Timothy his **true son**, Paul is saying that Timothy is his legitimate heir in the ministry. Timothy accurately represents his message in contrast to false teachers, who are mentioned later.

1:4 Myths refer to mythological stories concerning the history of the world. With the later reference to misuse of the law (1:7-10), **genealogies** seems to refer to speculative use of OT accounts of biblical characters or family trees. The historian Polybius (second-century BC) refers to storytellers who dealt with "matters concerning genealogies and myths." But such was not regarded as serious history.

1:9-10 This list of sins relates to the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1-17). Paul's point is that the law convicts people of their sins (cp. Rm 7:13), so it is **for the lawless and rebellious.** See also "Engaging LGBT Advocates," *p. 1392.*

1:16 Paul's former way of life, as a blasphemer, persecutor, and arrogant man (1:13), demonstrates the extent of Christ's mercy. If even Paul, who persecuted Christ's people, can receive mercy, no one is beyond its reach.

1:18 God had spoken through others in **prophecies** to clearly set Timothy apart for the task of this ministry. This assurance of divine call is to strengthen Timothy for the work.

1:19 Faith being **shipwrecked** is an evocative image that no doubt recalls Paul's own experiences (2Co 11:25), most recently his shipwreck on Malta (Ac 27:39–28:6).

1:20 Delivering someone **to Satan** means to put them out of the church, thus making them vulnerable in a greater way to Satan's attacks. The ultimate purpose of this discipline is restoration (1Co 5:5).

INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER

2 First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, 2 for kings and all those who are in authority, † so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness † and dignity. † 3 This is good, and it pleases God our Savior, †

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW AND SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Same-sex marriage presents a great cultural challenge to the Christian worldview. As it becomes increasingly normalized throughout Western culture, Christians will face a great temptation to grow indifferent toward biblical teaching on marriage, to fear culture's disapproval of Christian teaching about it, or to reluctantly accept same-sex marriage as a reality of civil life. But because the Bible's teaching on marriage is connected to the gospel and to God's vision for human flourishing, Christians committed to the authority of the Bible must reject these temptations and remain committed to the biblical teaching that

defines marriage as a union of two opposite-sexed persons.

MARRIAGE AND GENDER IN THE BIBLE

Marriage is a gendered institution in the Bible. The early chapters of Genesis offer a blueprint for God's design for marriage. Being made male and female, Adam and Eve are sexually differentiated, but made for one another. Because God has knit their distinction down to the deepest levels of their being, a male husband and a female wife are designed for one another emotionally, physically, and even anatomically. The complementarity of Adam and Eve is what makes their marriage union achievable and procreation possible (Gn 1:27-28; 2:24). Genesis paints a picture of marriage that is complementary (that is, relating between the two sexes), exclusive between two opposite-sexed persons, and meant to be permanent for the duration of their lives.

The most basic element of marriage, however, is the physical difference that exists between men and women, which manifests itself in sexual union. Together man and woman possess a design oriented toward procreation, but each requires the other in order to realize or fulfill reproduction. Marriage is a comprehensive union, as authors Robert P. George, Ryan T. Anderson, and Sherif Girgis note in *What is Marriage?*: "Marriage is ordered to family life because the act by which spouses make love also makes new life; one and the same act both seals a marriage and brings forth children. That is why marriage alone is the loving union of mind and body fulfilled by the procreation—and rearing—of whole new humans."

This pattern set forth in Genesis is a pattern that Jesus Christ reaffirms as authoritative in the NT (Mt 19:4-6). The Bible always bundles these aspects of marriage together. Without complementarity and all that follows from it, it is difficult to explain why an institution like marriage would exist at all and why marriage ought to be both permanent and exclusive between only two persons. Marriage is what the Bible says it is, or else marriage does not exist. Christians have disagreed on many things throughout history, but they have always been united around basic truths that the Bible makes very clear, and the biblical definition of marriage as between one man and one woman is one matter on which Christians have spoken clearly and uniformly heretofore.

THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

The biblical picture of marriage presented above is why same-sex marriage is not only a violation of God's moral law governing sexual relations between men and women (Rm 1:18-32; 1Co 6:9-11), but also why same-sex marriage cannot ever truly exist. Governments may create a legal entity that two persons of the same sex consider a marriage; but government does not have the authority to redefine God's moral law. According to the Bible, marriage can never exist between two persons of the same sex because marriage is designed, exclusively, for two persons of the opposite sex. This is an unpopular teaching in the eyes of the world, but faithfulness to Scripture demands our obedience on all matters—even those that are controversial.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF REVISIONIST DEFINITIONS OF MARRIAGE

Same-sex marriage is a bad path for society. It puts into principle very troubling patterns that can hinder human flourishing. First, children need moms and dads. Same-sex marriage denies this truth altogether by insisting that there is no difference between mothers and fathers. Our consciences know this is false. Each of us recognizes that a mother's love and a father's love are different and yet necessary and vital for children. In reality, there is no such thing as "parenting"; there is only mothering and fathering. Therefore, it is in the best interest of government and society to promote the ideal place for children to be raised: in a married household with a mom and dad.

Redefining marriage hands immense power to the state, essentially allowing it to redefine the family. By cutting off biological connection to the definition of marriage and family life, natural foundations and natural rights that follow from family life are called into question. This is a dangerous precedent.

Redefining marriage does not simply expand who can marry; it fundamentally alters what marriage is and what the foundation of a stable social order consists of. Marriage is not something that the state creates; rather, the state recognizes marriage as something that exists prior to the state and thus the state acknowledges it has no control over it.

Same-sex marriage is based on incoherent premises that lead to the further erosion of marriage. By denying the truth that marriage is based on the physical differences of men and women, same-sex marriage is based on the premise that what makes marriage achievable is the emotional union and physical attraction that exists between two persons, regardless of sexual difference. But this is not a solid foundation. Indeed, same-sex marriage is an historical anomaly not found anywhere through human history. Why is this? Because all societies have understood that the basis of society hinges on the union of man and woman joined together in marriage. Were it not for the procreative potential between men and women, the institution of marriage would have little reason to exist in the first place. Society has no need for an institution like marriage if marriage is simply about licensing physical attraction between two persons who exchange legal benefits.

A CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

So what is marriage? Marriage is the union of a man and a woman who come together as husband and wife to be father and mother to any children their union produces. Notice that the progression of roles in this definition relies centrally on the truth that men and women are distinct. Marriage is based on the anthropological truth that men and women are different, the biological fact that reproduction requires one man and one woman, and the sociological reality that children need moms and dads. Based on the definition above, same-sex marriage fundamentally rejects and thwarts these central truths about marriage.

The most consequential concern surrounding same-sex marriage is the message we who hold a Christian worldview send to our neighbors. The Bible condemns sexual relations between persons of the same sex. While some revisionists depict the Bible as condemning only certain forms of homosexual practice seen in ancient times, these flawed arguments overlook the Bible's broad and sweeping condemnation of homosexuality. Homosexuality violates the physical boundaries that God placed between men and women. In the NT, homosexuality is listed as an offense that provokes God's wrath and denies entry into the kingdom of God to those who choose indulging in it over submission to Christ (1Co 6:9-11). Therefore, if Christians are to love their neighbors, they can never support an institution based on sexual activities and disordered desires prohibited in Scripture. First Corinthians 13:6 declares, "Love finds no joy in unrighteousness but rejoices in the truth." We must tell the truth about marriage to our neighbors, work to uphold it in our laws, and seek to share it with all of society. Christians can never accommodate or accept same-sex marriage.

It is common to hear proponents of the issue saying something like this to those of us holding biblical convictions: "Same-sex marriage doesn't harm you, so why should you care?" This is demonstrably false. Same-sex marriage harms society by casting uncertainty onto marriage's role as the basic unit of society. It harms children by denying them their right to a mom and dad, and it evokes great challenges for religious liberty. Moreover, it harms individuals by putting them on a path that rejects God's design for marriage and sexual morality. While these truths are understandably challenging to uphold in a time like ours, God has given his people a wonderful opportunity to learn afresh his vision for marriage. It is meant not only to bring about flourishing to society. Marriage is, ultimately, a picture of the gospel itself (Eph 5:22-33; Rv 19:6-9).

ANDREW T. WALKER

LEADERSHIP AND BIBLICAL

LEADERSHIP AND BIBLICAL ETHICS

Leadership always has a moral component. Everyone knows leaders should get things done. They should be efficient and effective in their ability to accomplish tasks with and through other people. Leaders carry influence for good or ill, and effective leaders should ask good questions to set and implement their vision. This does not mean, however, that they always ask the rudimentary moral question, what ought we to do? The Christian vision for life, rooted in the gospel, infuses a life-giving ethical framework into the heart and mind of the leader.

A LEADER'S ETHICAL FOUNDATION: SCRIPTURE

How should we ground ethical judgments in an ever-changing realm of moral opinion? The Christian leader relies on the Bible as the Word of God and the only sufficient and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. God alone determines and judges what is good or evil (Rm 2:1-5). Leaders will be tempted to judge God, the Creator of everything, by a standard of morality they conceive to fit their particular situations. Instead, Christian leaders should be reminded that God at Sinai gave the Israelites his gracious words in the Ten Commandments and placed them in the book of the covenant (Ex 19–24). God's leader Moses reported the words of the Lord, and he preserved two tablets of testimony inscribed by the finger of God (Ex 31:18). God's word, delivered to his people, led to life and flourishing. This set a pattern. God's full instruction revealed in the Scriptures is the unchanging ethical foundation for Christian leaders.

A LEADER'S ETHICAL TASK: LEADERSHIP

A Christian leader's task is to lead in the sphere of influence God has given him. Leadership is a gift granted to some believers according to the grace God has given different members of the body (Rm 12:8). Those called to lead ought to steward the gift they have received. When stewardship becomes the guiding perspective on leadership, the conversation is framed as delegated authority and not as earned authority. This buoys those in authority from the common abuses of coercive rule on the one hand and abdication on the other. Furthermore, it reinforces Paul's admonition in the preceding verses not to think too highly of oneself (Rm 12:3). The result is a servant's posture of outdoing one another in showing honor (Rm 12:10) that is fueled by a drive to lead because God has entrusted his people with the gifts to lead.

A LEADER'S ETHICAL FRAMEWORK: WORLDVIEW

It is simple to say that a leader should follow the Bible, but it is far from simple to implement a unified biblical approach to all of life's ultimate questions. The Bible provides a Christian worldview that helps us to construct a framework for distilling the specific ethical challenges that people and organizations face (Rm 12:2), but no good leader does this on his own. The Bible calls for wisdom to be formed amidst an abundance of counselors (Pr 11:14; Rm 12:4-9). Leaders should read widely from the Christian intellectual tradition as well as from current authors who address modern moral dilemmas. The Christian worldview is a community project, but the community has boundaries (Ti 1:10-16).

Christian leaders must do the hard work to identify the worldviews influencing their own assumptions. For example, power and might have determined what is ethically "right" in some cultures. Social hierarchy or tradition have also guided leaders to set direction and policy. In other cultures, the chief values tend to be aesthetic or creative considerations, and moral behaviors submit to so-called progressive ideas. Additionally, efficiency is a chief value in many capitalistic cultures, but it is not the only determinative question—and certainly not the fundamental question—for the Christian. Christian leaders are called to

filter society's ethical norms through the grid of a Christian worldview in both the church and the marketplace. They should understand the stewardship to lead in accordance with divine revelation and help shape the moral fabric of society by affecting their realms of influence (Mt 5:13-16), whether in a small business, a large church, or an international corporation.

A LEADER'S ETHICAL DILEMMA: WISDOM

Christian leaders are rarely asked to make moral judgments on issues about which there is already a consensus. Instead, they get involved in decisions when those they lead get stuck in the decision-making process or when something has gone considerably wrong. Thus, leadership can be a burden demanding tough decisions. Furthermore, many amoral decisions or strategies—such as whether to have two or three sales divisions—have unintended moral consequences that also require ethical leadership. When complexities arise, Christians with the best intentions can make the mistake of applying their worldview analysis too hastily. Often, the best way to begin untying the Gordian knot is by admitting, "I don't know." As Proverbs 9:10 states, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." Wisdom does not find its genesis in the thoughts of any man. God gives Christian leaders wisdom and graciously invites them to pray. He invites them to pray for more wisdom because he has unlimited resources and is not stingy (Jms 1:5-8). No leader will get it right every time, but James is clear that humility is the way through dilemmas, for God gives grace to the humble but resists the proud (Jms 4:6).

A LEADER'S PERSONAL ETHIC: VIRTUE

A pattern of wise and humble decision making, rooted in a biblical worldview, produces virtuous leaders. The Bible is not interested in an ethic that only applies to decisions outside the leader; instead, it implicates the leader's whole life. The Christian worldview leaves no room for exceptions when it comes to a leader's personal integrity (Pr 10:9; 2Co 8:21; Php 4:8-9). Leaders don't get a pass or a moral exemption, even to accomplish a good outcome. Instead, the leaders of God's church are qualified primarily on the type of people they become (1Tm 3:1-13; Ti 1:6-9; 1Pt 5:1-8). Since leaders are often forced into instantaneous decision making and judgments, their reactions will stem from who they are when there is no time for deliberation or consultation. Leaders should daily seek to be transformed by putting off the old self and constantly being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of Christ (Col 3:1-11). When the world, the flesh, and the devil attack, a Christian leader's true virtue is revealed. His ethic must operate from the virtues birthed from a new heart, mind, and new desires.

A LEADER'S ETHICAL LEADER: JESUS CHRIST

A Christian worldview of leadership ethics must be centered on Christ. There is no other name by which we are reconciled to God and no other name by which Christian leaders lead. Jesus, not a moralistic or therapeutic deity, is the unapologetic banner over, under, and around the Christian leader. Christian leaders must seek to become great by obeying Jesus's call to serve, by becoming first by being last. "Last" does not seem like the position of a leader, but a servant's basin and towel do not seem like the tools of a leader either (Jn 13:1-5); nevertheless, Christ used them effectively. Jesus gave us a way of leading that descends, not climbs, to greatness. When answering the question—How ought we to lead?—Jesus provides a picture of leaving the comfort of heaven instead of gaining the comforts of earth (Jn 6:38). He calls Christians to lose their lives to save them (Lk 9:24). He demonstrated his teaching by loving those he led enough to make himself nothing and to lay down his life (Php 2:5-11).

CONCLUSION

When surveying the confusing cultural milieu of the twenty-first century, we must remember that the Christ of the Christian worldview still demands a leader's soul, life, and all. Even the best Christian leaders will make blunders, but leaders still lead. They lead on the foundation of Scripture, through a worldview that aims to produce wise and virtuous people committed to the cruciform way of their leader, King Jesus.

4 who wants everyone † to be saved † and to come to the knowledge of the truth. †
5 For there is one God † and one mediator † between God and humanity, the man † Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, † a testimony at the proper time.
7 For this I was appointed a herald, an apostle † (I am telling the truth; † I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles † in faith and truth.

INSTRUCTIONS TO MEN AND WOMEN

8 Therefore, I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument. † 9 Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, † with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, † pearls, or expensive apparel, 10 but with good works, † as is proper for women who profess to worship God. 11 A woman is to learn quietly with full submission. † 12 I do not allow a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; instead, she is to remain quiet. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. † 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and transgressed. † 15 But she will be saved through childbearing, if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, † with good sense.

2:7 Other mss add *in Christ*
2:2 Ezr 6:10; Rm 13:1; 1Co 2:1 **2:2** 2Pt 1:3 **2:2** 1Tm 3:4; Ti 2:7 **2:3** 1Tm 1:1 **2:4** Ti 2:11 **2:4** Ezk 18:23,32; Jn 3:17; 1Tm 4:10; Ti 2:11; 2Pt 3:9 **2:4** Jn 14:6,17 **2:5** Dt 6:4; Gl 3:20 **2:5** Heb 8:6 **2:5** Jn 1:14; Php 2:7; 3:3; 1Jn 4:2; 5:20 **2:6** Mt 20:28; Gl 1:4 **2:7** Eph 3:7-8; 1Tm 1:11; 2Tm 1:11 **2:7** Ac 9:15 **2:8** Mk 7:21; Lk 9:46-47; 24:38; Rm 14:1; Php 2:14 **2:9** 1Pt 3:3 **2:9** Rv 3:18 **2:10** 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10 **2:11** 1Co 14:34; Ti 2:5 **2:13** Gn 2:7,22; 3:16; 1Co 11:8-12 **2:14** Gn 3:6,13; 2Co 11:3 **2:15** 1Th 3:12–4:10

2:2 Christians are to pray for governmental leaders (see Rm 13:1-7) and to seek to lead proper lives. Paul has been directly subjected to the authority of kings (e.g., King Agrippa; Ac 25:23–26:32), and is under arrest waiting to appear before Caesar at the time of this writing. Still, he urges prayer for all such leaders. See also “The Bible and Government Models,” *p. 768;* “Church and State,” *p. 1374;* “How Should Christians Relate to Government?” *p. 1213.*

2:4 God’s desire for **everyone to be saved** is sometimes understood to support universalism—the belief that in the end, all humanity will be saved, regardless of their relationship with God (see also 2:6). This statement, however, must be balanced by the clear indications that not all will be saved in the end (e.g., 2Th 1:7-9).

2:5 The affirmation that **there is one God** echoes Deuteronomy 6:4, known as the *Shema*, which served as a summary of the Jewish faith. As elsewhere in Paul's writings, the fact that there is only one God proves the need for all people—Jews and Gentiles—to hear the saving message of this God (e.g. Rm 3:29-30). The striking addition to this reference to the *Shema* is that there is also **one mediator between God and humanity, the man Christ Jesus.** This implies Christ's equal footing alongside God the Father (see "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," *p. 1271*).

2:6 A ransom is a redemption price. The great redemption event of the OT is the exodus, by which God saved his people from the slavery of Egypt. Christ's **ransom for all** indicates that the price has been paid for all people to be freed from slavery to sin—if they are willing to accept it by faith (Rm 3:23-24).

2:7 A **herald** was one who publicly announced news or an important message. This was the most common way for news to be announced in the ancient world.

2:8 The typical posture for prayer in the OT included **lifting up** . . . **hands** (e.g., Neh 8:6; Pss 28:2; 141:2).

2:9 Modesty is a significant value in Christian living (see also 1Pt 3:3-4). It was common for women in Greek cities to dress elaborately for worship festivals, but Paul instructs women not to put confidence in their appearances. See also "Purpose and Parameters of Sexual Relations," *p. 1397*.

2:11-12 Going against some expectations in the ancient world, Paul affirms the propriety of women learning. He does, however, restrict teaching and exercising **authority** over the whole church to men. In the following section (3:1-7), pastors, whose office it is to teach and lead, are assumed to be male. Some have argued that here Paul is addressing a feminist problem in Ephesus (and thus his instruction is not to be understood universally), but this assumption lacks historical evidence.

2:13-14 Paul grounds his teaching in creation and the fall, demonstrating how important both of these events are for a Christian worldview. The link also makes it more difficult to dismiss the instructions of 2:12 as relating to a particular cultural situation.

2:14 That **the woman was deceived** is not meant to imply that women are more gullible than men. Rather, Paul's point appears to be that one of the problems of the fall (Gn 3) is that the created order between the man and woman was overturned. Adam, not Eve, remains responsible for human sin (Rm 5:12-21).

QUALIFICATIONS FOR OVERSEERS AND DEACONS

3 This saying is trustworthy: † "If anyone aspires to be an overseer, † † he desires a noble work." 2 An overseer, † therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, † respectable, hospitable, † able to teach, 3 not an excessive drinker, not a bully but gentle, not quarrelsome, not greedy. † 4 He must manage his own household competently and have his children under control with all dignity. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be a new convert, or he might become conceited and incur the same condemnation as the devil. † 7 Furthermore, he must have a good reputation among outsiders, so that he does not fall into disgrace and the devil's † trap.

8 Deacons, † likewise, should be worthy of respect, not hypocritical, not drinking a lot of wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the mystery of the faith † with a clear conscience. † 10 They must also be tested first; if they prove blameless, then they can serve as deacons. 11 Wives, † † too, must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, † faithful in everything. 12 Deacons are to be husbands of one wife, managing their children and their own households competently. 13 For those who have served well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

14 I write these things to you, hoping to come † to you soon. 15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, † which is the church of the living God, † the pillar and foundation of the truth. † 16 And most certainly, the mystery of godliness † is great:

He † was manifested in the flesh, †
vindicated in the Spirit, †
seen by angels,
preached among the nations,
believed † on in the world, taken up in glory. †

3:1 Or *bishop, pastor* **3:11** Or *The women* **3:16** Other mss read *God*
3:1 1Tm 1:15; 4:9 **3:1** Ac 20:28; Php 1:1; Ti 1:7 **3:2-4** Ti 1:6-8 **3:2** Ti 2:2,5 **3:2** Lv 19:34; 1Pt 4:9; 2Jn 10 **3:3** 1Tm 6:10 **3:6** 1Tm 5:12; 2Pt 2:3; Rv 20:1-15 **3:7** Ac 13:10 **3:8** Php 1:1 **3:9** Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2,19; Jd 3 **3:9** Heb 13:18 **3:11** 1Pt 3:1-6 **3:11** Ti 2:2 **3:14** 1Tm 4:13 **3:15** 1Co 3:16; 2Co 6:16; Eph 2:21-22; 1Pt 2:5; 4:17 **3:15** Mt 16:16; 1Tm 4:10 **3:15** Ps 119:142; 2Co 11:10; 2Th 2:10 **3:16** 2Pt 1:3 **3:16** Jn 1:14; Php 2:7; 1Jn 4:2; 5:20 **3:16** Rm 1:3-4; 2:28-29; 7:5-6; 8:4; 1Co 5:5; 6:16-17; Gl 3:3; 4:29; 5:16-24; 6:8; Php 3:3; Col 2:5; Rv 1:10 **3:16** Mt 11:24; Jn 3:16; Ac 10:43; Rm 10:9; 1Pt 1:8-10 **3:16** Mk 16:19; Jn 20:17; 1Pt 3:22

3:1 The NT uses the words **overseer**, elder, and pastor interchangeably (see Ac 20:28; Ti 1:5,7; 1Pt 5:1-4).

3:1-13 Christian leadership must be grounded in character. These lists say little about duties. Instead they focus on character, demonstrating that those leading the church must have lives significantly shaped by the gospel. The prominence of family in these lists implies that the home is the proving ground of Christian character.

3:2 That **an overseer** must be **the husband of one wife** might mean that he should not be divorced and

remarried. Or, it may mean that an overseer should not have any concubines or mistresses, in contrast to the practice of many Greek men of the ancient world. (See Ti 1:6 and note there also).

3:4-5 See "Career and Home Life," *p. 774.*

3:8-13 The qualifications for **deacons** is parallel to that of overseers, with the exception that the overseer is to be able to teach (3:2).

3:11 Wives (lit, "women") could refer to female deacons rather than the wives of deacons (cp. the absence of any mention of the overseer's wife; 3:1-7). The office of female deacon does not contradict Paul's instructions of 2:12, since deacons are not required to teach (see the note on 3:8-13).

3:15 A central concern of this letter is that Christians know how they should behave as God's children **(how . . . to conduct themselves in God's household).** The correlation between the **church** and God's household may also shed light on why Paul requires an overseer to be a man (2:12; 3:1-7), just as the husband is head of his home (cp. Eph 5:23).

DEMONIC INFLUENCE

4 Now the Spirit † explicitly says that in later times † some will depart from the faith, † paying attention to deceitful spirits † and the teachings of demons, †

BIBLICAL FORMATION

Scripture repeatedly emphasizes the spiritual status of the human heart. As the prophet Nathan observed, "Humans see what is visible, but the LORD sees the heart" (1Sm 16:7). Jesus likened the Pharisees to whitewashed tombs, "which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of impurity" (Mt 23:27). He also rebuked the church at Ephesus because their love—or hearts—had grown cold (Rv 2:1-7).

Every authentic conversion to Christ entails a change of heart, leading to a change of life. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, calls the individual to Christ, orchestrates the new birth, and indwells the new believer. From that point onward, the Holy Spirit empowers the believer, facilitating maturity in Christ.

Though conversion and sanctification result only by God's grace, humans are responsible to believe in Christ and pursue Christlikeness. Moreover, the Christian is absolutely responsible for his growth in Christ, yet entirely dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit to foster such growth. This duality, one of the great paradoxes of the Christian life, is captured in Paul's exhortation to "work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who is working in [us] both to will and to work according to his good purpose" (Php 2:12-13).

Thankfully, Holy Scripture reveals the key component, humanly speaking, for Christian growth: "train yourself in godliness" (1Tm 4:7). This admonition is one of the most overlooked, yet profound, verses in the entire Bible. It encapsulates the key ingredient for a vibrant, joy-filled Christian life—practicing the spiritual disciplines.

The word *discipline* is commonly associated with punitive action or a laborious, unpleasant task, yet Paul commends it to be practiced. The term itself implies the Christian life is not a passive experience. Growth in

Christ is an active endeavor—carried out on an active, dynamic footing. To this end, believers throughout the centuries have practiced the spiritual disciplines to facilitate godliness and engender Christian growth.

In *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, Donald Whitney defines *spiritual disciplines* as "those personal and congregational exercises, habits or practices that promote spiritual growth. They are the habits of devotion and experiential Christianity that have been practiced by Christians since biblical times" (*Spiritual Disciplines*, 17). Such spiritual disciplines include Bible intake, prayer, worship, fasting, evangelism, giving, serving, and silence and solitude.

While all the spiritual disciplines are commended, Bible intake is the most foundational and most urgent. It is the indispensable discipline because it informs, fosters, and enables the other disciplines. For example, the Bible teaches one how to intercede, thus informing the discipline of prayer. The Bible presents the person and work of Christ, thus informing evangelism. The Bible is the Word of God, thus enabling worship through the reading and preaching of it. Likewise, the Bible similarly informs, fosters, and enables each of the spiritual disciplines, giving it a singular status.

The preeminence of Bible intake is rooted in the nature and status of Scripture itself. God chose to reveal himself to his people through his Word. God likens his Word to "a hammer that pulverizes rock" (Jr 23:29); it "will not return to [him] empty" (Is 55:11). Moreover, the Bible makes binding, theological claims of itself, declaring, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness" (2Tm 3:16).

Evangelical Christians embrace the verbal, plenary inspiration of Scripture. The word *plenary* emphasizes the totality of Scripture, and *verbal* underscores that the words themselves—not merely the authors' words or their thoughts—are inspired by God. Since all of Scripture is inspired of God, Scripture is true, trustworthy, and authoritative. As the Reformers reasoned, the voice of Scripture is the voice of God.

Bible intake, though singular in importance, is received through multiple conduits. Hearing the Bible is the most basic and common form of Scripture intake. It occurs when one sits under the ministry of the Word, whether preached or taught, received in person or through other mediums. Jesus pronounced blessing on those who hear the Word of God and obey it (Lk 11:28), and Paul assigned the "public reading" of Scripture as an indispensable part of public worship to ensure God's people heard God's Word (1Tm 4:13).

Reading the Bible, at the personal level, is perhaps the most essential form of Bible intake. For the Christian, nothing should displace daily Bible reading. This includes both the macro-level of reading through books of the Bible, and the micro-level of reading passages and verses repeatedly for greater familiarization, deeper reflection, and specific application.

Studying the Bible gives the Christian depth and strengthens his knowledge of God, thus enabling him to more ably teach and defend the faith. Every believer is called to be like the Bereans, searching the Scriptures and weighing teachers and doctrines by them (Ac 17:10-12). Such is expected of a disciple—or learner—of Christ, and the most faithful disciple will "be diligent to present [himself] to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth" (2Tm 2:15).

Memorizing the Bible is another proven method of Scripture intake. In so doing, one hides God's Word in his heart, so as not to sin against him (Ps 119:11). Moreover, it follows the pattern of the Bible itself. Whether it is Jesus quoting the Scriptures to Satan, or Paul reasoning from the OT to his Jewish interlocutors, the Bible prioritizes treasuring God's Word in our hearts so that we may not sin against him.

Meditating on the Bible sounds like a mystic practice to some, but it is a biblical concept and a distinctly Christian activity. In fact, God links meditating on his Word with obedience and blessing (Jos 1:8; Ps 1:1-3). Meditating on God's Word is as simple as intentionally reflecting on a passage of Scripture, directly applying its truth to your life, and letting it settle in your heart. Time devoted to lingering over Scripture is time well spent, as it fosters the knowledge of God and enables the living and active Word of God to convict of sin and inform the conscience (Heb 4:12).

Praying through the Bible flows naturally from Scripture meditation. Giants of the faith, such as Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, and especially George Mueller, made a habit of praying through Scripture. The Psalms especially lend themselves to prayer. In the Psalter, one finds the full range of human emotion, gaining a panoramic view of God's work, and encountering the full pallet of biblical truth. Additionally,

praying the Scriptures helps to assure that one's prayers are biblically sound and pleasing to God.

Though the Western world is largely Bible saturated, many professing Christians in the West live Bible-depleted lives. This is a tragic irony, though it is not perplexing. The answer to the problem is not hidden, neither is it difficult to understand. Christians are called to be people of the book—the Bible—and therefore must prioritize the spiritual discipline of Bible intake. Failing to do this leads to diminished spiritual maturity.

Not everyone can preach a sermon, lead a Bible study, or persuasively advocate for biblical truth, but every believer can engage in Bible intake. In fact, never in the history of Christendom has Bible intake been more accessible. Proliferating translations, electronic and print versions of the Bible, media ministries, podcasts, and the incalculable power of the Internet have all brought God's Word nearer.

Why practice the spiritual disciplines? They facilitate abiding in Christ, leading to joy and spiritual growth. They help guard the believer against pharisaical attitudes, the condition of patent hypocrisy that Jesus condemned. They engender fruit bearing, which glorifies God, strengthens one's assurance of salvation, and radiates the gospel of Christ. Therefore, practice the spiritual disciplines—especially Bible intake—and fulfill Paul's charge to "train yourself in godliness"(1Tm 4:7).

JASON K. ALLEN

2 through the hypocrisy † of liars whose consciences † are seared. 3 They
forbid marriage † and demand abstinence † from foods that God created † to
be received with gratitude by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For
everything created by God is good, † and nothing is to be rejected if it is
received with thanksgiving, † 5 since it is sanctified by the word of God † and
by prayer.

A GOOD SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST

6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good
servant of Christ Jesus, nourished by the words of the faith † and the good
teaching that you have followed. † 7 But have nothing to do with pointless and
silly myths. † Rather, train yourself in godliness. † 8 For the training of the
body has limited benefit, † but godliness is beneficial in every way, since it
holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. † 9 This saying
is trustworthy and deserves full acceptance. † 10 For this reason we labor and
strive, † because we have put our hope in the living God, † who is the Savior †
of all people, † especially of those who believe.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MINISTRY

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Don’t let anyone despise your youth, but
set an example for the believers in speech, † in conduct, † in love, † † in faith,
and in purity. † 13 Until I come, † give your attention to public reading,
exhortation, and teaching. 14 Don’t neglect the gift that is in you; it was given to
you through prophecy, † with the laying on of hands † by the council of elders.
15 Practice these things; be committed to them, so that your progress may be
evident to all. 16 Pay close attention to your life and your teaching; persevere in
these things, for in doing this you will save † both yourself and your hearers. †

4:10 Other mss read *and suffer reproach* **4:12** Other mss add *in spirit,*
4:1 Jn 14:17; 16:13; Ac 20:23; 21:11; 1Co 2:10-11 **4:1** 2Th 2:3-9; 2Tm 3:1; 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **4:1** Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2; Jd 3 **4:1** Mt 7:15; 1Jn 4:6 **4:1** Jms 3:15 **4:2** Mk 12:15 **4:2** Heb 13:18 **4:3** 1Tm 5:14; Heb 13:4 **4:3** Rm 14:6; Col 2:16,23; 1Th 4:3; 5:22; 1Pt 2:11 **4:3** Gn 1:29; 9:3 **4:4** Gn 1:31 **4:4** Ac 10:15 **4:5** Lk 8:21; 1Tm 2:1; Heb 4:12 **4:6** Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2; Jd 3 **4:6** 2Tm 3:10-15 **4:7** 1Tm 1:4; 2Tm 4:4; Ti 1:14; 2Pt 1:16 **4:7** 2Pt 1:3 **4:8** Col 2:23 **4:8** Ps 37:9,11; Pr 19:23; 22:4; Mt 6:33; Mk 10:30; Jn 12:25; Ac 13:48; 1Pt 3:9 **4:9** 1Tm 1:15; 3:1; 2Tm 2:11 **4:10** Dt 5:26; Jos 3:10; 1Sm 17:26; Ps 42:2; Jr 10:10; Dn 6:20; Ac 14:15; 1Tm 3:15 **4:10** 1Tm 1:1 **4:10** 1Tm 2:4; Ti 2:11 **4:12** Pr 12:6 **4:12** 2Pt 3:11 **4:12** 1Co 13:1 **4:12** 1Tm 5:2 **4:13** 1Tm 3:14 **4:14** 1Co 13:2; 1Tm 1:18; 2Tm 1:6 **4:14** 1Tm 5:22 **4:16** Eph 2:8; Jd 23 **4:16** Ezk 33:9; Ac 20:28; Rm 11:14

4:1 Later times refers to the time of writing (cp. 1Jn 2:18). This turning away to false teaching **(the teachings of demons)** had been predicted and was now occurring.

4:3-4 The gifts of creation, such as **marriage** and **foods**, are not to be rejected for religious purposes. Christian self-denial does not mean refusing to enjoy God’s good blessings. It means living with the good of others in view. See also “Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview,” *p. 846.*

4:7 On **myths**, see the note at 1:4.

4:10 Similar to 2:4, the claim that God **is the Savior of all people** is sometimes understood to support universalism—the belief that in the end, all humanity will be saved, regardless of their relationship with God (see also 2:6). The Greek word translated **especially**, however, has the sense of “particularly.” The point is not that Jesus saves everybody and then saves believers even more. Rather, Jesus is the Savior for all who believe.

4:12 This is not a license for Timothy to flaunt his youthfulness. It is a call to maturity so that his youthfulness will not be a hindrance to anyone. If Timothy lives maturely, others will follow him despite his youth.

4:13 Public reading refers to the reading of Scripture, as was practiced widely in Jewish synagogues. **Exhortation and teaching** would follow on the basis of the text. Timothy is to **give** his **attention** to these tasks, indicating the priority of the Word of God in ministry.

4:14 Timothy is not to neglect **the gift that is in** him, which probably refers to his responsibility and ability to teach Scripture (4:12). He was charged with this task through **the laying on of hands by the council of elders**, indicating some form of ordination for his role.

4:16 Both Timothy’s **teaching** and the character of his **life** should reflect faithfulness. Both elements have consequences for Timothy and for his **hearers.**

5 Don’t rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, younger men as
brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and the younger women as sisters
with all purity.

THE SUPPORT OF WIDOWS

3 Support † widows † who are genuinely in need. 4 But if any widow has
children or grandchildren, let them learn to practice godliness toward their own
family first and to repay their parents, for this pleases God. 5 The widow who is
truly in need and left all alone has put her hope in God † and continues night
and day in her petitions and prayers; 6 however, she who is self-indulgent is
dead even while she lives. † 7 Command this also, so that they will be above
reproach. 8 But if anyone does not provide † for his own family, especially for
his own household, he has denied the faith † and is worse than an unbeliever.
9 No widow is to be enrolled on the list for support unless she is at least sixty
years old, has been the wife of one husband, 10 and is well known for good
works † — that is, if she has brought up children, shown hospitality, † washed
the saints’ feet, † helped the afflicted, † and devoted herself to every good
work. † 11 But refuse to enroll younger widows, for when they are drawn away
from Christ by desire, they want to marry † 12 and will therefore receive
condemnation † because they have renounced their original pledge. 13 At the
same time, they also learn to be idle, going from house to house; they are not
only idle, but are also gossips † and busybodies, saying things they shouldn’t
say. 14 Therefore, I want younger women to marry, † have children, manage
their households, and give the adversary no opportunity to accuse us. † 15 For
some have already turned away † to follow Satan. 16 If any † believing woman
has widows in her family, let her help them. Let the church not be burdened, so
that it can help widows in genuine need.

HONORING THE ELDERS

17 The elders who are good leaders are to be considered worthy of double
honor, † especially those who work hard † at preaching and teaching. 18 For

the Scripture says: **Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,** † † and the worker is worthy of his wages. †

19 Don't accept an accusation against an elder unless it is supported by two or three witnesses. †

ISSUES IN MEDICAL ETHICS

Jesus said, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick" (Mt 9:12). While Jesus's statement had to do with spiritual illness, it expresses a truism about the role of the medical profession. Though issues in the twenty-first century differ from those of the first, people who are ill still need a physician; treatments have a cost; and not all treatments are successful (Mk 5:25-26).

For centuries, physicians have been influenced by the Hippocratic oath that forbade them to take actions that would cause abortion or the death of their patients, while also calling them to other standard behaviors and virtues. In recent decades, however, the oath has been repeatedly rewritten, and the physician-patient relationship has undergone transformation from a primarily covenantal to an essentially contractual one (William F. May, *The Physician's Covenant*). This has resulted in less trust in and greater demands on the medical community.

CHRISTIANITY AND MEDICAL CARE

How should Christian physicians respond to people who are ill or suffering, in the face of treatments that are often costly but not always successful?

First and foremost, the physician must recognize the *imago Dei*, the image of God, that each patient bears. Only when the medical professional understands another person as a fellow human can he offer appropriate treatment. The realization that all people, including physicians, are beloved creations of God establishes a vertical relationship that grounds all other relationships. The physician's equality with the patient establishes the proper horizontal plane of relationship. It is in this context of vertical and horizontal relationships that right actions can be taken (Nigel M. de S. Cameron, *The New Medicine*).

Second, physicians must be competent in their care of patients. While mere technique cannot a physician make, lack of competence is battery to some, and a disservice to all.

Third, a physician must be compassionate—but this term needs explanation. Compassion is not simply feeling sorry for someone, or feeling what the sufferer is feeling. To exhibit compassion, one "suffers with" another. The compassionate physician, therefore, sees the suffering of the patient and identifies with it: to suffer is to experience at some level the finitude of this life—indeed, it is a common experience for all people (Daniel P. Sulmasy, *The Healer's Calling: A Spirituality for Physicians and Other Health Care Professionals*). Moreover, the Christian recognizes the reality of suffering that is shared with Christ, along with the comfort and redemption that comes from him (2Co 1:3-7; Heb 4:13-16).

QUESTIONS TO ASK REGARDING DIFFICULT ISSUES

How, then, does the competent, compassionate physician, who recognizes the *imago Dei* in his patients, face the issues of abortion, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, stem cell therapies, or a myriad of other controversial issues related to the medical field? When patients are suffering from various maladies that seemingly could benefit from the well-placed suction or curette (abortion), the use of medications to end

their pain (euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide), or the use of other humans as therapies (embryonic or fetal stem cells or parts), how does the physician show compassion? Is compassion simply giving someone —who images God and who is one's equal—what he or she desires? Is it always compassionate to relieve suffering?

Several tests may be applied in answering these questions. The physician should ask the following: 1. AM I RECOGNIZING THE HUMANITY OF THE PERSON(S) INVOLVED?

Do I see the patient, or any individual involved in this situation, as fully human, and as my moral peer? Does my definition of *human* depend on qualities expressed, the location of the person, or merely legal terms? These queries particularly apply to persons unborn, as well as to those considered incompetent by law or "nondecisional" by health care professionals.

2. WILL MY ACTIONS ENSURE THAT ANOTHER HUMAN, OF WHATEVER AGE, UNBORN OR LIVING EX UTERO, DOES NOT COME TO HARM?

Embryos used for research, including embryonic stem cell research, are inevitably destroyed.

3. IF SOMEONE HAS ALREADY COME TO HARM IN ORDER TO PRODUCE THAT WHICH I WOULD NEED TO USE TO HELP SOMEONE ELSE, AM I COMPLICIT IN THAT HARM?

This question is an appropriate one for the development of vaccines, as well as for any other process that uses embryonic or fetal cells.

4. WILL TAKING AN ACTION MAINTAIN THE HORIZONTAL POSITION BETWEEN THE PATIENT AND MYSELF AS A PHYSICIAN, OR WOULD IT ELEVATE ME TO A VERTICAL (AND THEREFORE, INAPPROPRIATE) POSITION IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE PATIENT?

Examples would include physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia.

5. IS THE PATIENT SEEN AS SOMEONE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD OR AS A COMMODITY TO BE BOUGHT OR SOLD IN THIS SITUATION?

This is applicable to the use of sperm, eggs, embryos, or organ donors, as well as to surrogacy.

6. AM I DEVALUING OR OVERVALUING THE LIFE OF ONE PERSON COMPARED TO ANOTHER?

Such inappropriate valuation of human life occurs in abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and the selling of organs or other body parts.

7. DO I PARTICIPATE IN PROTOCOLS OR ACTIVITIES THAT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER RIGHTLY RESPECTING HUMAN LIFE?

Examples would be the use of embryonic stem cells in research or treatment; allowing patients to be evaluated as potential organ donors before being evaluated for treatment as patients themselves; failing to provide full disclosure for a proposed treatment; and financial affiliations with manufacturers or treatment facilities.

8. AM I TREATING OTHERS AS A PROJECT, OR A MEANS TO AN END, AS OPPOSED TO ENDS IN THEMSELVES?

AS OPPOSED TO ENDS IN THEMSELVES?

Viewing others as a means to an end can occur at various times: seeking eggs, sperm, or womb donors (usually at a cost); forming in vitro embryos for research or treatment; prematurely declaring “dead” people whose organs could be used for transplantation.

9. IS A PROPOSED ACTION CONSISTENT WITH A STANCE OF PROTECTING LIFE?

Abortion, the procurement of embryonic stem cells through the disruption and subsequent destruction of an embryo, physician-assisted suicide, and euthanasia all contravene the protection of living humans. Performing any of these actions is antithetical to a physician’s training as a healer.

CONCLUSION

There are untold numbers of ways in which we, who are called to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, souls, and minds, and our neighbors as ourselves (Mt 22:37-40), can fail to do both. It is prudent to examine ourselves, and to invite our Creator to examine our hearts, to see if there is any wicked way in us. He can lead us in the everlasting way (Ps 139:23-24).

JOY RILEY

20 Publicly rebuke those who sin, so that the rest will be afraid. 21 I solemnly
charge you before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels to observe † these
things without prejudice, doing nothing out of favoritism. 22 Don’t be too quick
to appoint † † anyone as an elder, and don’t share in the sins of others. Keep
yourself pure. † 23 Don’t continue drinking only water, but use a little wine
because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses. 24 Some people’s sins are
obvious, preceding them to judgment, † but the sins of others surface † later.
25 Likewise, good works are obvious, and those that are not obvious cannot
remain hidden.

5:3 Lit *Honor* **5:16** Other mss add *believing man or* **5:17** Or *of respect and remuneration* **5:22** Lit *to lay hands on* **5:24** Lit *follow*

5:3 Ex 22:22; Jms 1:27 **5:5** 1Co 7:34 **5:6** Lk 15:24; Eph 2:1,5; 5:14; Rv 3:1 **5:8** Rm 12:17; 2Co 8:21 **5:8** Mt 10:33; Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2; 2Pt 2:1; Jd 4; Rv 2:13 **5:10** Mk 14:6; 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26 **5:10** 2Jn 10 **5:10** Lk 7:44; Jn 13:5-14 **5:10** Heb 11:37 **5:10** 2Co 9:8 **5:11** 1Tm 5:14 **5:12** Mk 12:40 **5:13** Pr 17:9; 3Jn 10 **5:14** Gn 2:18-25; 1Co 7:9-10; 1Tm 4:3; 5:11 **5:14** Ti 2:4-5 **5:15** Heb 12:13 **5:17** 1Th 5:12 **5:18** Dt 25:4 **5:18** Dt 25:4; 1Co 9:9 **5:18** Lv 19:13; Dt 24:14-15; Mt 10:10; Lk 10:7; 1Co 9:4-14; 2Pt 2:13 **5:19** Dt 19:15 **5:21** Lk 11:28 **5:22** Ex 29:10; Lv 4:15; Lk 4:40; Ac 6:6; 28:8; 1Tm 4:14; Heb 6:2 **5:22** Php 4:8 **5:24** Mt 12:41; Jn 5:22-30; Heb 9:27

5:1-2 Timothy is to treat the members of his congregation as he would members of his own family. Indeed, the church is the household of God (3:15).

5:3 Widows were often severely disadvantaged in Roman society, since they usually did not inherit their husband’s possessions. If a widow’s son(s) did not care for her, she could become destitute.

5:4 Godliness involves meeting the needs of one’s family. To fail to do so is tantamount to denying the

faith (5:8). The family is the first line of care, followed by the church. See also “Elderly Care,” *p. 100.*

5:9-10 The care of widows is somewhat formalized, involving a **list of support.** But widows are to display the characteristics of genuine faith in order to be included on this list.

5:18 Paul cites Deuteronomy 25:4 and a saying of Jesus found in Luke 10:7 as **Scripture.** From the earliest days, Christians regarded Jesus’s teachings as Scripture on par with the OT.

5:19 Elders are to be protected from false **accusation.** Any charge of wrongdoing, therefore, must be brought by multiple **witnesses.** This is not intended to shield elders from the consequences of wrongdoing, as the following verses demonstrate (5:20-22). It protects the congregation from damaging its leadership without cause.

5:23 The Bible nowhere commands abstinence from alcohol. Drunkenness is forbidden, but enjoying wine is not. Some Christians choose abstinence to avoid the possibility of addiction or of causing a brother to stumble (Rm 14:21). Timothy is instructed to **use a little wine** for medicinal purposes.

5:24-25 Paul reflects the biblical expectation that the final **judgment** will reveal all. Secret sins will be uncovered, but so will secret **good works** (Lk 12:2-4; Rm 2:16; 1Co 4:5).

HONORING MASTERS

6 All who are under the yoke as slaves should regard their own masters † as worthy of all respect, so that God’s name † and his teaching will not be blasphemed. 2 Let those who have believing masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brothers, but serve them even better, since those who benefit from their service are believers and dearly loved. † †

FALSE DOCTRINE AND HUMAN GREED

Teach and encourage these things. 3 If anyone teaches false doctrine and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord † Jesus Christ and with the teaching that promotes godliness, † 4 he is conceited and understands nothing, but has an unhealthy interest in disputes and arguments over words. † From these come envy, † quarreling, † slander, † evil suspicions, 5 and constant disagreement among people whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain. † † 6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. † 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and † we can take nothing out. † 8 If we have food and clothing, † we will be content with these. 9 But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root † of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith † and pierced themselves with many griefs.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

11 But you, man of God, flee from these things, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, † endurance, † and gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight † of the faith. Take hold of eternal life † to which you were called and about which you have made a good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 In the presence of God, who gives life to all, † and of Christ Jesus, who gave a good confession before Pontius Pilate, † I charge you 14 to keep this command without fault or failure until the appearing † of our Lord † Jesus Christ. 15 God will bring this about in his own time. † He is the blessed and only † Sovereign, the King of kings, † and the Lord of lords, † 16 who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, † whom no one has seen or can see, † to him be honor and eternal power. † Amen. †

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RICH

17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant † or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, † who richly provides us with all things † to enjoy. 18 Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, † to be generous and willing to share, † 19 storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the coming age, † so that they may take hold of what is truly life.

GUARD THE HERITAGE

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, † avoiding † irreverent and empty speech and contradictions from what is falsely called knowledge. † 21 By professing it, some † people have departed from the faith. †

Grace be with you all.

6:1 Or *owners* **6:2** Or *because, as believers who are dearly loved, they are devoted to others' welfare* **6:5** Other mss add *From such people withdraw yourself.* **6:7** Other mss add *it is clear that* **6:8** Or *food and shelter* **6:10** Or *is the root* **6:17** Other mss read *on the living God*

6:1 Jn 10:25; Ac 15:14; Rv 14:1 **6:2** 2Th 2:12; 1Jn 4:16 **6:3** Rv 11:8 **6:3** 2Pt 1:3 **6:4** 2Tm 2:14,23; Ti 3:9 **6:4** Ps 37:1 **6:4** Ti 3:9 **6:4** Rv 13:6 **6:5** Eph 4:22; 2Tm 3:8; Ti 1:11,15 **6:6** Ps 37:16; Pr 15:16; 16:8; Php

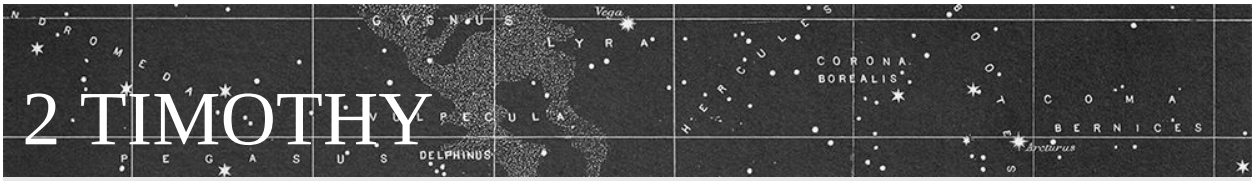
4:11; Heb 13:5 **6:7** Jb 1:21; Ps 49:17; Ec 5:15 **6:10** Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2; Jd 3 **6:11** 1Co 13:1 **6:11** Rv 13:10 **6:12** 2Tm 4:7; Jd 3 **6:12** 1Jn 5:12 **6:13** Mk 13:19; Rm 1:25 **6:13** Mt 27:11-14 **6:14** Ti 2:13; 1Jn 2:28 **6:14** Rv 11:8 **6:15** Lk 21:8 **6:15** Rm 16:27 **6:15** Rv 17:14 **6:15** Dt 10:17; Ps 136:2-3; Rv 17:14; 19:16 **6:16** Ps 36:9; 104:2; Jn 12:46 **6:16** Ex 33:20; Jn 1:18 **6:16** Jd 25 **6:16** 1Tm 1:17; Rv 22:21 **6:17** 1Sm 2:3; Ec 7:8; Rm 11:20; 12:16 **6:17** Ac 17:25 **6:18** Mk 14:6; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26; 1Pt 2:12 **6:18** Rm 12:8,13; Eph 4:28 **6:19** Mt 6:20 **6:20** 1Tm 1:11; 2Tm 1:12,14; Ti 1:3 **6:20** Heb 12:13 **6:20** Col 2:8; 2Tm 2:16; 4:4; Ti 1:14 **6:21** 2Tm 2:18 **6:21** Php 1:27; 1Tm 1:2

6:1-2 See the notes on the similar text in Colossians 3:22–4:1.

6:5-6 The attempt to use religion for **material gain** is not new. Paul counters that true faith and **godliness** leads to **contentment**, which is true gain.

6:17-19 Being **rich** is not sinful. But the heart of the rich person must not trust in **wealth** but in God. The wealthy man’s deeds ought to reflect his godly attitude.

6:20-21 False teaching claims to be **knowledge**, but that claim proves untrue. Some offer advanced insight, but teaching that runs counter to Scripture will only cause believers to deviate from the faith.



2 TIMOTHY

INTRODUCTION

See the Introduction to the Pastoral Letters before 1 Timothy.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the powerful Father who has graciously gifted his servants for ministry. Scripture is itself "God-breathed" (Gk, *theopneustos*; "inspired by God," 3:16). Jesus is both God and human: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead and descended from David" (2:8). The Holy Spirit is the powerful presence of God indwelling believers and enabling them to continue their ministry (1:14).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

See Teachings about Humanity for 1 Timothy.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is both sovereignly determined by God and the divine gift to all who believe. Paul summarized the evangelistic aspect of his ministry with a statement combining both emphases: "I endure all things for the elect: so that they also may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory" (2:10).

GREETING

1 Paul, † an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, † for the sake of the
promise of life † in Christ Jesus: 2 To Timothy, my dearly loved son.
Grace, mercy, and peace † from God the Father and Christ Jesus our
Lord.

THANKSGIVING

3 I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience † as my ancestors did,
when I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. †
4 Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. 5 I
recall your sincere faith † that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your
mother Eunice † and now, I am convinced, is in you also.
6 Therefore, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is in you through the
laying on of my hands. † 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, † but one
of power, † † love, † and sound judgment.

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

8 So don't be ashamed † of the testimony about our Lord, † or of me his
prisoner. † Instead, share in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power † of
God. 9 He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, † not according to
our works, † but according to his own purpose † and grace, which was given to
us in Christ Jesus before time began. 10 This has now been made evident
through the appearing † of our Savior Christ Jesus, who has abolished death †
and has brought life † and immortality to light through the gospel. 11 For this
gospel I was appointed † a herald, apostle, and teacher, † 12 and that is why I
suffer † these things. But I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have
believed and am persuaded that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to
me † † until that day. †

BE LOYAL TO THE FAITH

13 Hold on to the pattern of sound teaching † that you have heard from me, †
in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 Guard the good deposit through the
Holy Spirit who lives in us. 15 You know that all those in the province of Asia †
have deserted me, † including Phygelus and Hermogenes. 16 May the Lord
grant mercy † to the household of Onesiphorus, † because he often refreshed
me † and was not ashamed of my chains. † 17 On the contrary, when he was in
Rome, † he diligently searched for me and found me. 18 May the Lord grant

that he obtain mercy † from him on that day. You know very well how much he ministered at Ephesus. †

1:7 Or *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us fearful, but gives us power* **1:11** Other mss add *of the Gentiles* **1:12** Or *guard what I have entrusted to him*, or *guard my deposit*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** 1Co 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1 **1:1** 1Jn 2:25; 5:12 **1:2** 1Tm 1:2; 2Jn 3 **1:3** Ac 23:1; 24:16; Rm 9:1; 2Co 1:12; 1Tm 1:19; 3:9; Heb 10:22; 1Pt 3:21 **1:3** Eph 1:6 **1:5** 1Tm 1:5 **1:5** Ac 16:1 **1:6** 1Tm 4:14; 5:22 **1:7** Jn 7:13; 14:27; Rm 8:15 **1:7** Lk 1:35; 4:14; 24:49; Ac 1:8; 4:33; Rm 15:13,19; 1Co 2:4; Eph 3:16,20; 1Th 1:5 **1:7** 1Co 13:1 **1:8** Mk 8:38; Rm 1:16; 2Tm 1:12,16 **1:8** Ac 4:33; 1Co 1:6; Rv 1:2,9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4 **1:8** Eph 3:1; 4:1; Phm 1,9 **1:8** Lk 1:35; 2Co 13:4 **1:9** Rm 8:28; 11:14,29; Heb 3:1 **1:9** Eph 2:9 **1:9** Pr 19:21; Is 42:6; 46:10; Ac 2:23; 4:28; 26:16; Rm 8:28; 9:11; Eph 1:11; Php 2:13 **1:10** Lk 21:8; 2Tm 4:1; 1Jn 2:28 **1:10** Jn 8:51; Php 3:10 **1:10** 1Jn 5:12 **1:11** 1Tm 2:7 **1:12** Php 1:29; 2Tm 2:9 **1:12** 1Tm 1:11; 6:20; Ti 1:3 **1:12** Php 1:6; 2Tm 4:8 **1:13** 1Tm 1:10; 6:3; Ti 1:9; 2:1 **1:13** 2Tm 2:2; 3:14 **1:15** Ac 6:9; 16:6 **1:15** 2Tm 4:10-16 **1:16** Lk 1:50 **1:16** 2Tm 4:19 **1:16** Phm 7,20 **1:16** Ac 16:26; 20:23; 21:33; 23:29; 26:29; Eph 6:20; Phm 10 **1:17** Rm 1:7 **1:18** Lk 1:50 **1:18** Eph 1:1

1:3 Paul stands in a line of faith since his **ancestors** believed in and served the Lord as well. In this he is similar to Timothy (1:5).

1:5 Timothy's **mother Eunice** was a believing Jew, while his father was a Greek (Ac 16:1). See "A Biblical View of Child Rearing," *p. 1451*.

1:6 Most likely this **gift of God** in Timothy **through the laying on of** Paul's **hands** refers to his ordination for ministry in Ephesus (1Tm 4:14).

1:7 The word translated **fear** can also be translated "cowardice" and is used in military settings for men who desert their posts in battle. As Paul calls Timothy to stand resolutely despite suffering, he reminds him that boldness—not cowardice—is a mark of the Spirit (see Pr 28:1; Ac 4:31).

1:10 Christ . . . has abolished death and now offers **life and immortality.** But this offer is brought **to light through the gospel.** What has been accomplished by Christ is made known through the gospel message.

1:11 Paul's role is to proclaim **this gospel** that brings to light what Christ has accomplished. On **herald**, see 1 Timothy 2:7.

1:12 Paul is **not ashamed** of the gospel nor of his suffering for it, though both things appeared shameful in Roman culture. The message of cross is foolishness to the world (1Co 1:18), and suffering was seen as punishment from the gods for sinful behavior. But Paul is not ashamed, regardless of what others think, **because** he knows that God is faithful. God is able to guard **what has been entrusted to** him; that is, the gospel message.

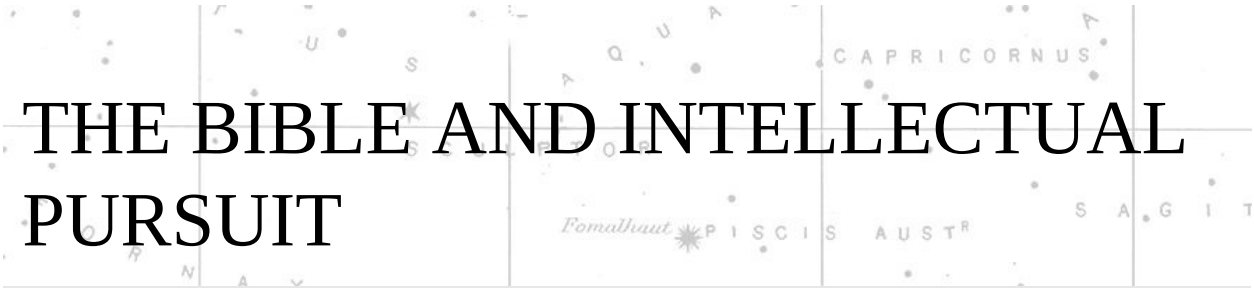
1:13 See also "Worldview Thinking, the Christian Intellectual Tradition, and the Pattern of Christian Truth," *p. 1593.*

1:14 Just as Paul was entrusted with the gospel, so Timothy is to **guard** that same **good deposit through the Holy Spirit.**

1:15-18 Paul provides examples of those who turned away from him when suffering came. One did not.

BE STRONG IN GRACE

2 You, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace † that is in Christ Jesus.
2 What you have heard from me † in the presence of many witnesses,
commit to faithful † men † who will be able to teach others also.
3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. † 4 No one serving as a
soldier gets entangled in the concerns of civilian life; he seeks to please the
commanding officer.



THE BIBLE AND INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Some presume Christianity is anti-intellectual. But does the Bible actually promote anti-intellectualism? On the contrary, the Bible promotes the life of the mind. Indeed, the Christian worldview values learning, and it grounds, fosters, and clarifies such intellectual pursuit.

Note, for example, how the nature of God does so. God's infinity clarifies that he alone possesses full knowledge—past, present, and future. God's graciousness initiates all learning as all knowledge of him and life flows from his generous self-revelation. God's truthfulness shows that his self-disclosure communicates truth and does so coherently. God's personal nature means that knowledge is also relational, pointing us to a covenant relationship with him.

God's self-revelation reflects God and is likewise instructive about intellectual pursuit.

1. God's self-revelation is gracious: God freely initiates it and blesses through it.
2. It is truthful, faithfully representing who God is, what God does, and how God relates to humans.
3. It is a unity: though coming in a variety of forms (see below), God's communication about himself, humanity, and life coheres.
4. It is personal, as it communicates who God is and his ways.
5. It is propositional, disclosing truth about God, humanity, life, history, and salvation.
6. Since humans are the recipients of God's self-revelation, it is analogical, as God uses human contexts, cultures, and languages to communicate.
7. It is partial, since the infinite God can only reveal limited information to finite humans.
8. It is historical, as God communicates with humans in space and time.
9. It is progressive within Scripture, since God relates to multiple generations of humans and gradually expands his self-disclosure over time.

As such, God's self-revelation clarifies the educational pursuit: it is only possible through divine initiative, rests on the content and unity of revealed truth, has objective and subjective components, requires insight into human culture, cannot be exhaustive, is linked to all of life, and is a perennial process.

Further, God's gracious self-disclosure has been given in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts, yet with striking unity.

- God has revealed himself to all people at all times in all places through creation, which witnesses to him as its Creator and Lord (Ps 19:1-6; Rm 1:18-32). He has also done so through creating humans in his image (addressed below) who have a conscience, the moral law written on the heart (Rm 2:12-16).

- God has also revealed himself to particular people at particular times and places, gradually and more clearly communicating himself and his covenant relations. He has displayed himself through historical actions (e.g., the exodus), through divine speech (e.g., the Ten Commandments), and through his covenant people, whose holiness, love, and justice are to reflect God's own character (Ex 19:5-6; Lv 19:1-18).
- God has revealed himself most fully in Jesus and his incarnation, sinless life, teaching, proclamation of the kingdom, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, reign, and return (Jn 1:1-18; Heb 1:1-4).
- God has also revealed himself through the inspired prophetic-apostolic Holy Scriptures, which accurately record and interpret God's self-revelation. Even more, the Scriptures are called God's Word and are themselves a significant form of God's self-revelation (Pss 19:7-14; 119; Mt 5:17-20; Jn 10:35; 2Tm 3:15–4:5; 1Pt 1:22-25; 2Pt 1:16-21; 3:15-16).

Because of this, proper human intellectual pursuit begins with the fear of the Lord (Pr 1:1-7) and requires the standpoint of creatures seeking to know the Creator and his world through dependence on his self-revelation.

CREATION AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Creation likewise grounds, fosters, and clarifies intellectual pursuit. The infinite, self-existent, sovereign, personal, holy, and good Lord powerfully speaks and creates a good cosmos, evidenced by the steady refrain, "God saw that [it] was good" (Gn 1:4,10,12,18,21,25). This goodness was accentuated on the sixth day: "It was very good indeed" (1:31).

God's generous provisions of light, land, vegetation, and animals are blessings given for humanity's benefit, as are the abilities to know God, work, marry, and procreate. In the first chapters of Genesis God blesses man with the Sabbath, places him in the delightful garden of Eden, gives him a helper, and establishes only one prohibition—given not to stifle him but to promote his welfare. Thus, the good God created a good world for the good of humanity. Truth, goodness, beauty, and peace abound. As a result, it is fitting that humans seek to understand all of creation, all of life, in light of God's revelation.

HUMANITY AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Humanity is also instructive with respect to intellectual pursuit. As creatures, humans naturally bear all of the marks of finitude. All human knowledge is therefore limited, reflective of the Creator-creature distinction.

Even more, humans are created in God's image to love God, reflect his character, and serve his mission. As such, knowledge is not merely a nice additive to pursue, but relates to God's original and fundamental purposes for humanity—to love and serve God, others, and the creation (Gn 1:26-28). Such love and service require knowledge of God, self, culture, and creation. Humans are therefore created to learn and rightly pursue truth, goodness, beauty, and peace as noble ends in themselves and as ways of glorifying God by knowing, reflecting, and serving him.

SIN AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Unfortunately, the reality of human sin distorts this intellectual pursuit. Humans rebelled against God, disrupting their relationship to him, themselves, others, and creation (Gn 3; Rm 5:12-21). Humans are now characterized both by the image of God and sin. They appropriately long for justice, peace, and beauty, but tend to distort it or seek it for self-interest rather than for the glory of God and the good of others. Indeed, sin affects and infects the mind, affections, attitudes, will, actions, and even inactions.

Scripture explains this corruption in various ways, using metaphors such as spiritual death, darkness, hardness, bondage, and blindness (Mk 7:20-23; Rm 1:18-32; 3:9-20; 2Co 4:3-4; Eph 2:1-3; 4:17-19). As such, the human intellectual pursuit is too often marked by finitude, bias, and cultural myopia and driven by selfishness, pride, prestige, greed, and thirst for power.

SALVATION AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Thankfully, Christ is greater than sin and sheds light on the intellectual pursuit. Jesus is the Word, the fullest and clearest revelation of God (Jn 1:1-18; Heb 1:1-4). Jesus is the Light and the Truth in a world darkened by sin (Mt 5:13-16; Jn 1:4-18; 8:12; 14:6). Jesus is the Lord, the preeminent authority who deserves and demands allegiance and submission in all of life, including thinking (Php 2:5-11). He is also a teacher who molds disciples and invests in them, teaching them about the kingdom of God and building a messianic community.

Further, Jesus proclaims that true worship is in spirit and in truth, urges people to search the Scriptures which testify of him, expects them to examine his miracles and teachings to gauge whether he is from God, links himself to the truth, corrects error, sends the Holy Spirit as One who will guide the disciples in the truth, relates eternal life to knowing God, and prays that God will make his people holy by the Word, which he characterizes as truth (Mt 5-7; Jn 1:15-18; 4:20-24; 5:19-47; 6:32-33; 7:18; 8:14-18; 14:6; 15:26; 16:13; 17:3,17).

THE CHURCH AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Indeed, through his life, death, and resurrection, the Lord of truth redeems a people for himself. The church is marked by truth as she is shaped by the apostles' teaching, shares life together as a community of the Word, refutes error, and through union with Christ even displays the goodness of God—particularly his oneness, holiness, love, and truth (Ac 2:41-47; Eph 2:4-10; 4:1-24).

The people of God worship him by yielding themselves to him as living, holy, and acceptable sacrifices, in part through being transformed by the renewing of their minds and the discernment of God's will (Rm 12:1-2; Eph 4:17-24). As such, the intellectual pursuit is not merely an individualistic endeavor but is integrated into the whole of life and pursued in community with the people of God under the authoritative Word of God. It requires humility, faith, dependence on grace, respect for others, patience, carefulness, and persistence.

ETERNITY AND THE INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

God's ultimate purposes for history are also instructive for the life of the mind. Jesus's return, triumph, and judgment declare his lordship, vindicate his people, and permanently establish cosmic justice and peace (2Th 1:5-10; Rv 20:10-15). The new heavens and the new earth will be characterized by God's personal presence, glory, holiness, unity, love, goodness, and truth. All falsehood is overthrown, and all who practice falsehood are banished (Rv 21–22). History is eschatological, linear, purposeful, for our good, and preeminently for God's glory (Rm 8:18-39; Eph 1:3-14); and learning is a worthy process that seeks to understand goodness, love, justice, and peace. It allows humans to serve one another and to glorify God.

Christians rightly value learning, reading, knowing, and teaching. Such pursuits glorify God and naturally grow out of the Christian worldview. Indeed, the nature of God, his self-revelation, creation, humanity as his image-bearers, Jesus's saving work, the church, and eschatology call for and crystalize such education.

CHRISTOPHER W. MORGAN

5 Also, if anyone competes as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer ought to be the first to get a share of the crops. † 7 Consider what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead † and descended from David, according to my gospel, 9 for which I suffer to the point of being bound like a

criminal. But the word of God is not bound. [10] This is why I endure † all things for the elect: † so that they also may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. † [11] This saying is trustworthy: †

For if we died with him, †
we will also live with him;
[12] if we endure, we will also reign † with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; [13] if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself.

AN APPROVED WORKER

[14] Remind them of these things, and charge them before God † not to fight about words. † This is useless and leads to the ruin of those who listen. [15] Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn't need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth. † [16] Avoid irreverent and empty speech, since those who engage in it will produce even more godlessness, † [17] and their teaching will spread like gangrene. Hymenaeus † and Philetus are among them. [18] They have departed from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, † and are ruining the faith of some. † [19] Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, bearing this inscription: † **The Lord knows those who are his,** † † and let everyone who calls on the name † of † the Lord turn away from wickedness. †

[20] Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, † but also those of wood and clay; some for honorable † use and some for dishonorable. † † [21] So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonorable, † he will be a special † instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work. †

[22] Flee † from youthful passions, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, † along with those who call on the Lord † from a pure heart. [23] But reject foolish and ignorant disputes, because you know that they breed quarrels. [24] The Lord's † servant must not quarrel, † but must be gentle to everyone,

able to teach, † and patient, 25 instructing his opponents with gentleness. †
Perhaps God will grant them repentance † leading them to the knowledge of the
truth. 26 Then they may come to their senses and escape the trap of the devil, †
who has taken them captive to do his will. †

2:2 Or *faithful people* **2:14** Other mss read *before the Lord* **2:19** Lit *everyone who names the name of* **2:20** Or *special* **2:20** Or *ordinary* **2:21** Lit *from these* **2:21** Or *an honorable* **2:24** Or *everyone, skillful in teaching*

2:1 Gl 1:6; 2Pt 3:18 **2:2** 2Tm 1:13 **2:2** Nm 12:7 **2:3** 1Tm 1:18 **2:6** 1Co 9:10 **2:8** Mt 17:9; Jn 21:14 **2:10** Jms 1:12 **2:10** Mt 24:22 **2:10** Lk 9:32; 24:26; Jn 17:24; 2Co 3:18; 1Pt 5:1,4; 2Pt 3:18 **2:11** 1Tm 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Ti 3:8 **2:11** Jn 8:51 **2:12** Rv 20:4 **2:14** 1Tm 6:4 **2:15** Eph 1:13; Col 1:5; Jms 1:18 **2:16** Jd 18 **2:17** 1Tm 1:20 **2:18** Ac 17:32; 1Co 15:12-17; 2Th 2:1-2 **2:18** 1Tm 1:19; 6:21 **2:19** Jos 23:7; Est 9:4; Is 26:13; Rm 15:20; Eph 1:21 **2:19** Nm 16:5 **2:19** Nm 16:5; Pr 2:6; Jn 10:14,27; 1Co 8:3 **2:19** Ac 15:14 **2:19** Lv 24:11,16; Nm 16:26-27; Jos 23:7; Ps 6:9; 33:15; Pr 3:7; Is 26:13; 52:11; Jr 20:9 **2:20** Rm 9:21 **2:20** Rm 9:21 **2:21** 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10; 1Tm 5:10 **2:22** 1Tm 4:12; 6:11; Jms 4:7 **2:22** Lk 12:51; 2Tm 1:2; Heb 12:14; 3Jn 14 **2:22** Gn 13:4 **2:24** Rv 11:8 **2:24** Jn 6:52; Ac 7:26; Jms 4:2 **2:25** Jms 3:13 **2:25** Ac 26:20; Rm 2:4; 2Co 7:9-10 **2:26** 1Tm 3:7 **2:26** Jn 1:13

2:1-2 Part of Timothy's responsibility as a leader in the church is the preservation of the gospel by faithfully handing it down to others who will pass it on to still others. Paul has four generations of leaders in view.

2:3 In the ancient world, **suffering** was expected of soldiers. A **good soldier** is one who, despite suffering, remains faithful (2:4).

2:4 Though **a soldier** may well engage in the normal activities of life, he does not get **entangled in the concerns of civilian life.** His priority is **to please the commanding officer.** So Timothy must remain focused on serving Christ through all circumstances.

2:5 Athletic games were popular in the Roman world. Nero even competed in some and had himself declared the winner despite not finishing them. People recognized the wrongfulness of this. They understood that the prize should only go to one who **competes according to the rules.**

2:6 While farmers today only constitute a minority of workers in the western world, the ancient world saw 85 to 90 percent of the population involved in farming. Often such laborers had to give their crops to absentee landlords, rather than sharing in the fruit of their labor.

2:14 Bickering about minor things is counter to harmonious Christian living. It is often associated with false teachers, as it is here (2:16-18).

2:15 See "Biblical Interpretation," *p. XXIX*.

2:18 Apparently a feature of the false teaching of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2:17) is an over-realized eschatology, claiming that the future **resurrection** of the dead has already occurred.

2:20 A **large house** would be a wealthy one, with fine plates and bowls as well as cheap ones. Bowls for **dishonorable** use would include chamber pots—receptacles for human waste.

2:21 Paul's point is that believers may purify themselves to be put to the noble use of **the Master.**

2:22 It is central to Christian understanding that rejection of evil must be combined with the pursuit of good, and this effort is not merely individual but must be done alongside other believers. While Paul does not define **youthful passions**, the context suggests immature quarrelling is in view (2:23-25).

2:25 Though a soldier of Christ (2:3), the Lord's servant (2:24) is to instruct **his opponents with gentleness.** The aim of engaging opposition is not their destruction, but their **repentance** and restoration, that they may "escape the trap of the devil" (2:26).

DIFFICULT TIMES AHEAD

3 But know this: Hard times will come in the last days. † 2 For people will be lovers of self, † lovers of money, † boastful, proud, † demeaning, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, † 3 unloving, irreconcilable, slanderers, † without self-control, brutal, without love for what is good, † 4 traitors, † reckless, † conceited, † lovers of pleasure † rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the form of godliness but denying its power. † Avoid these people. †
6 For among them are those who worm their way into households and deceive gullible women overwhelmed by sins and led astray by a variety of passions, †
7 always learning and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. † 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres † resisted Moses, † so these also resist the truth. They are men who are corrupt in mind † and worthless † in regard to the faith. 9 But they will not make further progress, for their foolishness will be clear to all, as was the foolishness of Jannes and Jambres.

STRUGGLES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

10 But you have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, † faith, patience, love, † and endurance, 11 along with the persecutions and sufferings † that came to me in Antioch, † Iconium, † and Lystra. † What persecutions I endured — and yet the Lord rescued me from them all. 12 In fact, all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. † 13 Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving † and being deceived. 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, † 15 and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures, † which are able to give you wisdom for salvation † through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God † † and is profitable

for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, [17] so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. †

3:16 Lit *breathed out by God*

3:1 Jn 6:39; Php 1:6; 1Pt 1:5; 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **3:2** Php 2:21; 1Tm 6:4 **3:2** Lk 16:14; 1Tm 3:3; 6:10 **3:2** Pr 16:18; Lk 1:51; Rm 1:30 **3:2** 1Tm 1:9 **3:3** Jn 14:6 **3:3** Ti 1:8 **3:4** Lk 6:16; Ac 7:52 **3:4** Ac 19:36 **3:4** 1Tm 3:6; 6:4 **3:4** Php 3:19 **3:5** 1Co 4:20; 2Co 13:4; Ti 1:16 **3:5** Mt 7:15; 2Th 3:6 **3:6** 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **3:7** 2Co 11:10; 1Tm 2:4; 2Tm 2:25; Ti 1:1 **3:8** Ex 7:11-12; 8:18; 9:11 **3:8** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **3:8** 1Co 14:14; Php 4:7 **3:8** 2Co 13:5-7 **3:10** Pr 19:21; Ac 11:23 **3:10** 1Co 13:1; 1Jn 4:16 **3:11** Gl 5:24; Php 3:10 **3:11** Ac 13:14; 14:19,21 **3:11** Ac 13:51; 16:2 **3:11** Ac 14:6,8; 27:5 **3:12** Jn 15:20; Ac 14:22; 2Co 4:9-10 **3:13** Rv 20:10 **3:14** 2Tm 1:13 **3:15** Mt 26:54; 2Pt 1:20-21 **3:15** Ac 4:12; 2Co 7:10; Heb 5:9 **3:16** 2Pt 1:20-21 **3:17** 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10; 1Tm 5:10; 2Tm 2:21

3:1 In NT terms the **last days** began after the ascension of Jesus. Paul sees what is described here as happening in Timothy's time. That is why Timothy is urged to avoid such people (3:5). See also "The Apocalyptic and the Environment," *p. 1565.*

3:2-5 Though this list could describe much of the unbelieving world in general, it actually refers to false teachers, as revealed by the phrase **holding to the form of godliness but denying its power** (3:6-9).

3:8 Jannes and Jambres are the names given in early Jewish writings to the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses in Exodus 7:8-13. These men became symbols of opposition to God's truth. Though their names do not appear in the OT, they were familiar to Timothy and other Jews.

3:11 Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra are cities Paul visited on his first missionary journey (Ac 13:13–14:28). Lystra is also Timothy's hometown (Ac 16:1). Paul refers to **sufferings** of which Timothy had been aware from the beginning of their association.

3:12 Contrary to the belief that God will abundantly bless his people with wealth, health, and success in this life, the promise of persecution lies ahead for **all who want to live a godly life in Christ Jesus.**

3:14-15 See "A Biblical View of Child Rearing," *p. 1451*.

3:15-17 The **Scriptures** are central to the Christian faith, having the power to convert **(give you wisdom for salvation)**, correct, train, and equip us for all the **good work** God has for us to do. (see "Biblical Formation," *p. 1504;* "Special Revelation in Scripture," *p. 705;* "Sources for Ethics," *p. 1371;* "Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy," *p. XXXI;* "Biblical Authority," *p. 709*).

FULFILL YOUR MINISTRY

4 I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge † the living and the dead, † and because of his appearing and his kingdom: † [2] Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching. [3] For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine, † but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear what they want to hear. [4] They will turn away from hearing the truth and

will turn aside to myths. † 5 But as for you, exercise self-control in everything, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, † fulfill your ministry.

6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, † and the time for my departure is close. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8 There is reserved for me the crown † of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, † will give me on that day, and not only to me, but to all those who have loved his appearing. † †

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS

9 Make every effort to come to me soon, † 10 because Demas † has deserted me, † since he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica. † Crescens has gone to Galatia, † Titus † to Dalmatia. 11 Only Luke † is with me. Bring Mark † with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry. 12 I have sent Tychicus † to Ephesus. 13 When you come, bring the cloak I left in Troas † with Carpus, as well as the scrolls, especially the parchments. 14 Alexander † the coppersmith did great harm to me. The Lord will repay him according to his works. 15 Watch out † for him yourself because he strongly opposed our words.

16 At my first defense, no one stood by me, but everyone deserted me. † May it not be counted against them. 17 But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that I might fully preach the word and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. 18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil work and will bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. † To him be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

BENEDICTION

19 Greet Prisca and Aquila, † and the household of Onesiphorus. †

20 Erastus † has remained at Corinth; I left Trophimus † sick at Miletus. †

21 Make every effort to come before winter. Eubulus greets you, as do Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers and sisters.

22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you all.

4:8 Or *have longed for his appearing*

4:1 Jn 5:22-30; Rm 5:18; 1Pt 4:5 **4:1** Jn 5:25; Rm 14:9; 1Pt 4:5; Rv 18:8; 19:11 **4:1** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **4:3** Rm 15:4 **4:4** 1Tm 1:4; 4:7; Ti 1:14; 2Pt 1:16 **4:5** Ac 21:8; Eph 4:11 **4:6** Gn 35:14; Php 2:17 **4:8** Jn 15:17;

Rv 12:1 **4:8** Lk 18:2,6; Jn 5:22-30; Ac 10:42; Heb 12:23 **4:8** Ti 2:13; 1Jn 2:28 **4:9** Ti 3:12 **4:10** Col 4:14; Phm 24 **4:10** 2Tm 1:15 **4:10** Ac 17:1 **4:10** Gl 1:2 **4:10** Ti 1:4 **4:11** Col 4:14; Phm 24 **4:11** Ac 15:37-39 **4:12** Ac 20:4; Ti 3:12 **4:13** Ac 16:8 **4:14** 1Tm 1:20 **4:15** 2Tm 1:14; 2Pt 3:17 **4:16** 2Tm 1:15 **4:18** Mk 1:15; Ac 20:25 **4:19** Ac 18:2 **4:19** 2Tm 1:16 **4:20** Ac 19:22; Rm 16:23 **4:20** Ac 20:4; 21:29 **4:20** Ac 20:15,17

4:1 This solemn **charge** uses language of the court with **God and Christ Jesus** as witnesses and **judge.** There is hardly a more serious way for Paul to exhort Timothy to "preach the word" (4:2).

4:4 Regarding **myths**, see the note on 1 Timothy 1:4. In their effort to resist the gospel, some people will commit intellectual suicide, looking for any alternate explanation of life.

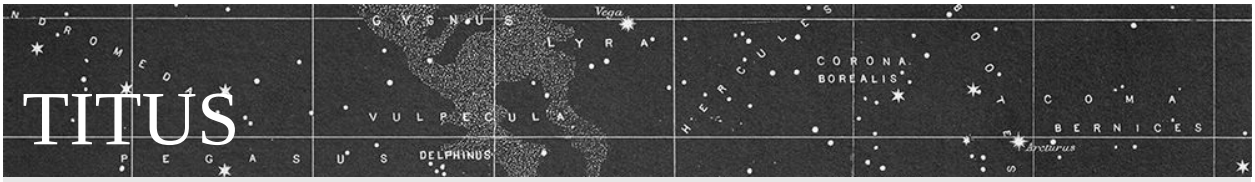
4:6 A drink offering was common in Greek and Roman religions, but the background here is found in the OT sacrificial system (Nm 4:7). As in Philippians 2:17, Paul envisions his life **poured out** as a sacrifice offered to God.

4:8 In the Greek world, a **crown** were commonly given as rewards for athletic and military success. Paul uses this idea to portray the Lord's reward for those who hold fast and love **his appearing.**

4:11 Though Paul says he has "finished the race" (4:7), it is clear he is still active in **ministry.** And he will remain so until the end.

4:13 See "Textual Criticism," *p. 1221.*

4:17 It is unclear what Paul means by being **rescued from the lion's mouth.** It is probably a metaphor, drawing on the Roman amphitheater where criminals (and later, Christians) were killed by lions. It is possibly a reference to being released from house arrest by Caesar.



TITUS

INTRODUCTION

See Introduction to the Pastoral Letters before 1 Timothy.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

"God our Savior" promised us the hope of eternal life, which he revealed through "Christ Jesus our Savior" (1:2-4). God regenerated and renewed us through the work of the Holy Spirit (3:5). He poured out the Holy Spirit on us abundantly, again through Jesus Christ our Savior (3:6).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

See Teachings about Humanity for 1 Timothy.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is sovereignly determined by God for the "elect" (1:1), by grace (2:11), through God's kindness and love (3:4). It is offered to "all people" (2:11). Those who believe God should respond in good works, which are "good and profitable for everyone" (3:8).

GREETING

1 Paul, † a servant of God † and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for † the
faith of God's elect † and their knowledge of the truth † that leads † to
godliness, † 2 in the hope of eternal life † that God, who cannot lie, †
promised before time began. † 3 In his own time he has revealed † his word †
in the preaching with which I was entrusted † by the command † of God our
Savior: †

4 To Titus, † my true son † in our common faith.
Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. †

TITUS'S MINISTRY IN CRETE

5 The reason I left you in Crete † was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders † in every town. 6 An elder † must be blameless: † the husband of one wife, with faithful † children who are not accused of wildness or rebellion. 7 As an overseer † of God's household, he must be blameless: not arrogant, not hot-tempered, not an excessive drinker, not a bully, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, righteous, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding to the faithful message as taught, † so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching † and to refute those who contradict it.
10 For there are many rebellious people, full of empty talk and deception, especially those from the circumcision party. 11 It is necessary to silence them; they are ruining entire households by teaching what they shouldn't in order to get money dishonestly. 12 One of their very own prophets said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. † For this reason, rebuke them sharply, † so that they may be sound in the faith 14 and may not pay attention to Jewish myths † and the commands of people who reject the truth. †
15 To the pure, everything is pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; in fact, both their mind and conscience † are defiled. 16 They claim to know God, † but they deny him by their works. † They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for any good work. †

1:1 Or *according to* **1:1** Or *corresponds* **1:6** Or *believing*
1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** Ac 16:17; Rm 1:1; Eph 6:6; Jms 1:1; 1Pt 2:16; Rv 1:1 **1:1** Mt 22:14; 24:22; Lk 18:7; Rm 8:33; Col 3:12; 1Co 1:27-28; 1Th 1:4; Jms 2:5 **1:1** 1Tm 2:4; 2Tm 3:7 **1:1** 1Tm 6:3 **1:2** 1Co 15:19; Ti 3:7; Heb 9:15 **1:2** Nm 23:19; Heb 6:18 **1:2** Rm 1:2; 2Tm 1:9 **1:3** Jn 21:1; 2Co 4:11; 1Pt 5:4; 1Jn 1:2 **1:3** Jn 1:1; 2:22; 2Tm 2:15; Heb 4:12 **1:3** 1Tm 1:11; 6:20; 2Tm 1:12,14 **1:3** 1Tm 1:1 **1:3** 1Tm 1:1; 2:3; Ti 2:10; 3:4; Jd 25 **1:4** 2Co 2:13; 7:6,13-14; 8:6,16,23; 12:18; Gl 2:1,3; 2Tm 4:10 **1:4** 1Tm 1:2 **1:4** Rm 1:7; 1Co 1:3 **1:5** Ac 27:7,12-13 **1:5** 1Tm 3:1-7; 5:17 **1:6-8** 1Tm 3:2-4 **1:6** Col 1:22 **1:7** Ac 20:28; Php 1:1; 1Pt 2:25 **1:9** Ac 2:42 **1:9** 1Tm 1:10; 6:3; 2Tm 1:13; Ti 2:1 **1:13** Jn 8:14 **1:13** 2Co 13:10 **1:14** 1Tm 1:4; 4:7; 2Tm 4:4; 2Pt 1:16 **1:14** 2Tm 4:4 **1:15** Heb 13:18 **1:16** Jn 7:28 **1:16** Mk 14:6; 2Co 9:8; Gl 3:10; Jms 2:14-26 **1:16** 2Co 9:8

1:1 Knowledge of the truth necessarily **leads to godliness**—not perfection in this life, but a growing maturity of faith.

1:2 The fact that **God . . . cannot lie** stands in stark contrast to the conniving, deceptive character of Greek gods.

1:5 The terms **elders** and "overseers" (1:7) are used interchangeably. "Elder" was the term used for leaders in Jewish synagogues, and Christians borrowed the term from that setting. It does not refer to a specific age range, but to maturity.

1:6 That **an elder** must be **the husband of one wife** might mean that he should not be divorced and remarried. Or, it may mean that an elder should not have any concubines or mistresses, in contrast to the practice of many Greek men of the ancient world (see also 1Tm 3:2).

1:9 In ancient virtue lists, it was common to emphasize one point in the list by placing it first or last, and by giving it more description than the other items. The last item in this list concerns **faithful** teaching, and it is much more developed than the other items. This makes sense because false teaching was a serious problem in Crete (1:10-16).

1:10 The circumcision party refers to Jewish Christians who taught that Gentile believers must be circumcised in order to belong to God's covenant people. This idea was refuted strongly in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

1:12 The wickedness of the Cretans was legendary. Various ancient writers referred to Cretans as the worst of people, and Crete was a place where villainy was celebrated. The quotation here is attributed to Epimenides of Crete (seventh or sixth c. BC). Gospel proclamation does not avoid such places.

SOUND TEACHING AND CHRISTIAN LIVING

2 But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching. †
2 Older men † are to be self-controlled, worthy of respect, sensible, and
sound in faith, love, † and endurance. 3 In the same way, older
women † are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive
drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the
young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-
controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission † to their husbands,
so that God's word † will not be slandered.
6 In the same way, encourage the young men † to be self-controlled 7 in
everything. Make yourself an example of good works with integrity and
dignity † in your teaching. 8 Your message is to be sound beyond reproach, †
so that any opponent will be ashamed, because he doesn't have anything bad to
say about us.

9 Slaves are to submit to their masters † in everything, and to be well-
pleasing, † not talking back 10 or stealing, but demonstrating utter faithfulness,
so that they may adorn the teaching of God our Savior † in everything.
11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation † for all people, †

LEADERSHIP AND A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

The leadership crisis in America is without precedent." These words, penned by Robert Greenleaf more than twenty-five years ago, speak to the challenges we face ethically, culturally, and communally. At the heart of our society lies a basic collapse of any guiding worldview.

As early as 1966, Thomas Kuhn identified and articulated the importance of a worldview. He spoke about the central importance and guiding power of "plausibility structures," which he defined as the structures of meaning that provide our life experiences with context and understanding. When these come up short or run into barriers or impediments, we realize the need to expand our plausibility structures to make sense of all our experiences in the world.

As much as worldviews guide our lives, they also guide our leadership. What we believe about life, our responsibilities, and our ultimate destiny fundamentally influences the way we lead, what we are motivated to achieve, and how we treat our people. How, then, do we understand the importance of constructing a redemptive worldview and the way in which it influences our leadership?

Of all the elements that comprise a worldview, six primary considerations are essential: 1. How we view human nature, 2. What we believe about the human condition, 3. What we believe about God, 4. What we believe about our need for redemption, 5. What keeps us from the life God intended (sin), and 6. What outcome results for our lives.

HOW WE VIEW HUMAN NATURE

As Christians, we believe that humans are made in the image of God, but are now fallen. The *imago Dei*, the image of God within each person, identifies our inherent dignity and capacity for greatness. Humanity's fall into sin (Gn 3) reveals our enormous vulnerabilities to wretchedness. Of all the philosophies of life, there is no better or more compelling understanding of human nature than this Christian concept of our greatness and wretchedness and the fact that we can't reconcile both realities without the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. This view of human nature helps us recognize the possibility of self-directed work and ethical outlooks while realizing the necessity of employee handbooks and policy manuals.

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN CONDITION

Apart from God, humans are given to boredom, anxiety, and endless activity. We are all born with a God-shaped vacuum, and when we fail to fill it with God, we end up substituting every alternative to him. The result is an endless array of compulsive activity. Evagrius of Pontus (AD 345–399) once identified eight deadly thoughts (gluttony, anger, greed, envy, pride, lust, indifference, and melancholy) that Gregory the Great (AD 540–604) eventually codified as the seven deadly sins. Whatever list you choose, the end result

is a catalog of vices reflecting a life lived apart from God.

The parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15) is a stunning portrayal of this perspective. As long as the wayward son can sustain his life apart from God, he avoids confronting the true nature of his condition. But when his resources run out, the reality of who he is and the groundlessness of his existence crash in on him.

THE NATURE OF ULTIMATE REALITY

Every philosophy of life takes a position on ultimate reality. Even philosophies of life like Marxism and Fascism define the ultimate reality (the classless society; the appetites and desires of the dictator and state) that guides them. As Christians, we believe that ultimate reality is not a matter of blind natural law, but God. As Christians and as leaders, our belief about God as the ultimate reality determines how we work, our optimism in the face of crisis, our hope in the future, and our trust in the goodness and ultimate destiny of lives invested in purposes that will outlive us.

OUR NEED FOR REDEMPTION

In the Christian worldview, emphasis is placed on humanity's need for redemption. But for redemption to occur, we must repent and believe. Repentance means to turn back after going in the wrong direction. Redemption occurs when we, instead of continuing in a trajectory away from God, turn back to him through placing faith in Christ.

WHAT KEEPS US FROM THE LIFE GOD INTENDED?

Sin, the fifth category or element that determines our worldview, is directly related to the fourth. Sin (Gk *hamartia*) is what leads us away from the path God intended. *Hamartia* is a term derived from archery, which means "to miss the mark." Sin is to miss the mark God intended for our lives.

The direct correlation to leadership involves the fate of leaders who end up imploding or sabotaging themselves. The rate at which leaders have collapsed in recent times illustrates the vulnerability and visibility that come with increasing levels of responsibility. Classic problems, such as hubris, believing oneself above the law, and refusing to limit one's self to the principles of ethical leadership are destructive tendencies that bring about a leader's demise.

WHAT KIND OF OUTCOME RESULTS FROM OUR WORLDVIEW?

The Christian worldview produces a capacity for self-awareness that is accurate and authentic. It also offers the capacity for self-discipline, self-regulation, and self-correction. Recent scholarship has demonstrated the importance of prayer and self-reflection for rechanneling the brain, carving new neuro-channels, and providing the growth and discipline for executive function that is critical for effective leadership.

SUMMARY

These six core facets of a Christian worldview help us to understand human nature, to craft strategies that can shape an organization, and to develop a culture of integrity, care, and respect that can sustain the human spirit while individuals seek to maximize their God-given abilities. A Christian worldview recognizes the inherently human need for influence, affiliation, and accomplishment. These qualities motivate us to contribute to purposes that will outlive us.

GAYLE D. BEEBE

12 instructing us to deny godlessness † and worldly lusts † and to live in a sensible, righteous, † and godly † way in the present age, 13 while we wait for

the blessed hope, † the appearing of the glory † of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14 He gave himself for us † to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, † eager to do good works.

15 Proclaim these things; encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard † you.

2:7 Other mss add *and incorruptibility* **2:11** Or *appeared with saving power* **2:15** Or *despise*
2:1 Ti 1:9 **2:2** 1Tm 5:1 **2:2** 1Co 13:1; 1Jn 4:16 **2:3** 1Tm 5:2 **2:5** Lk 10:17; Eph 5:22 **2:5** Lk 8:21; 2Tm 2:15; Heb 4:12 **2:6** 1Tm 5:1; 1Pt 5:5; 1Jn 2:13-14 **2:8** 1Tm 2:2 **2:9** Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22; 1Tm 6:1; 1Pt 2:18; Jd 4 **2:9** Heb 13:21 **2:10** 1Tm 1:1; 2:3; Ti 1:3; 3:4; Jd 25 **2:11** Ac 1:8; Rm 10:14; 2Co 5:18-21; 1Tm 2:4; 4:10; 2Pt 3:9 **2:12** Jd 18 **2:12** 2Tm 4:10; 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **2:12** Lk 23:41; 1Co 15:34; 1Th 2:10; 1Pt 2:24 **2:12** 2Tm 3:12 **2:13** Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3 **2:13** Lk 9:32; Jn 17:1,24; 2Co 3:18; 2Pt 3:18 **2:14** Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45; Rm 8:32; Gl 1:4; 2:20; Eph 5:2,25; 1Tm 2:6 **2:14** Ex 19:5; Lk 1:68

2:1 A fundamental point in Christian teaching is that a godly way of life is **consistent with sound teaching.** In 2:2-10, Paul pictures the sort of lifestyle that contrasts the false teachers who are "unfit for any good work" (1:16).

2:5,8 When believers fail to live in a way consistent with sound teaching (2:10), we open **God's word** to slander.

2:11-12 While **salvation** comes by **the grace of God** (Eph 2:8-9), this grace also instructs believers for godly living.

2:13 Though some critics claim that the NT writers do not explicitly call Jesus God, here Paul clearly refers to our **God and Savior, Jesus Christ.**

2:14 The reference to redemption recalls the exodus event in which God rescued his people from slavery in Egypt to create a people for himself. The redemption that comes through Christ has the same ultimate purpose—to create **a people for his own possession.** Such people have been cleansed and are **eager to do good works.**

CHRISTIAN LIVING AMONG OUTSIDERS

3 Remind them to submit † to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, 2 to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness † to all people. 3 For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions † and pleasures, † living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, † 5 he saved us † —not by works of righteousness that we had done, † but according to his mercy † — through the washing of regeneration † and renewal by the Holy Spirit. † 6 He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly †

through Jesus Christ our Savior [7] so that, having been justified by his grace, †
we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life. † [8] This saying is
trustworthy. † I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have
believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are
good and profitable for everyone. [9] But avoid foolish debates, † genealogies, †
quarrels, † and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and
worthless. [10] Reject a divisive † person after a first and second warning. †

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Religious freedom" is a political principle that affirms the right for individuals and communities of faith to believe, worship, and live out their religion as they see fit.

The origins of religious freedom can be traced to the fourth century AD when the Roman emperor Constantine abolished those laws that proscribed Christian faith and practice, giving Christians the "freedom" to worship without fear of imprisonment or persecution. Religious freedom as a formal concept, however, only comes to fruition in the early modern period after the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. John Locke's "Letter Concerning Toleration" (1689) is often recognized as a foundational document for the notion of religious freedom.

Religious freedom is affirmed in the Bill of Rights to the United States Constitution (1791), and the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) asserts that religious freedom in all nations is necessary for justice. The most important Christian reflection on religious freedom is found in *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom (1965).

Despite this long substantial heritage, in today's religiously pluralistic world it is not uncommon to find religious believers of many faiths who face discrimination, persecution, or even death because of their belief and practice. Against such injustice, religious freedom allows one to practice one's religion without fear of coercion from political, cultural, or religious authorities.

While religious freedom is an important concept for modern political thought, it must be noted that there is no explicit defense or robust account of religious freedom in either the OT or the NT. Moreover, religious freedom is not a doctrine of Christian theology that can be inferred explicitly from the teachings of Scripture, the tradition of the church, or the vast majority of its most prominent theologians and teachers.

The Bible does not set forth specific political principles for perpetuating religious pluralism. Quite to the contrary, in the OT the defeated Canaanites—adults, children, and livestock—are to be killed at God's command (Dt 20:16-18). Similarly, the people of Nineveh face utter destruction if they do not repent (Jnh 3). Nowhere in the Bible is true religious belief optional. The people of God and nonbelievers alike are called to repentance, faithfulness, and sanctification.

The Bible does consistently affirm the legitimacy (but not the infallibility) of conscience, and religious freedom can be understood as following from the principle of conscience. An acknowledgment of conscience is integral to a respect for human dignity, and at its best, religious freedom is the political principle that attempts to insure that the nation state does not infringe on the exercise of conscience. Even so, religious freedom embraced as a political principle can be used for good or ill; it thus requires careful

consideration by Christians.

In the modern religiously pluralistic world, for instance, religious believers face a variety of challenges. In recent non-Western history, certain atheist nation states have sought to abolish religious belief entirely, while others, particularly those practicing Islamic Sharia law, have outlawed rival religious traditions altogether. In Western countries as well, geographical regions with a dominant Christian tradition have sometimes made the practice of minority Christian traditions difficult (e.g., Protestantism in the American South or Catholicism in certain urban, immigrant neighborhoods of the American North). In all of these contexts, there is a need for the permissive sense of religious freedom that insures that minority religious traditions are free to practice their various faiths.

If religious freedom in the permissive sense seeks to protect religious practice from the authority of the dominant culture or nation state, religious freedom in the restrictive sense seeks to protect the nation state from the demands of religious belief and practice. Implicitly this occurs when these are domesticated, trivialized, and relegated to the margins of "respectable" society, so that religion becomes inward and private rather than communal and public.

The restrictive sense occurs explicitly when litigation and public policy disallow individuals and communities from exercising their beliefs in the many and diverse areas of their public and private lives. From the outlawing of polygamy in the American West to the prosecution of businesses that refuse to recognize sexual orientation as a civil right, the reach of the restrictive sense of religious freedom is broad, deep, and complex. The dilemmas presented by the double-edged sword of religious freedom cannot ultimately be resolved by case law.

Some might suggest that the restrictive sense is not an authentic manifestation of religious freedom. On the contrary, the permissive and the restrictive sense necessarily require each other for political coherence. What one community sees as permissive another may find to be restrictive. Moreover, it is always the case that when religious believers follow the dictates of conscience rather than those ordained by the state, they place themselves in potential conflict with the state. Unfortunately, to appeal to the nation state to protect religious freedom means that this freedom itself is beholden to the very entity from which it seeks protection. The state will only protect religious freedom so long as the state does not deem the religious practice as a challenge to its own hegemony.

Religious freedom cannot be entrusted to the modern nation state. While the biblical record does not address the question of religious freedom directly, it is abundantly clear on the question of to whom the Christian must pledge allegiance: we must "give . . . to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21) and "we must obey God rather than people" (Ac 5:29).

SCOTT H. MOORE

11 For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned.

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND CLOSING

12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, † make every effort to come to me † in Nicopolis, because I have decided to spend the winter there.
13 Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos † on their journey, so that they will lack † nothing.

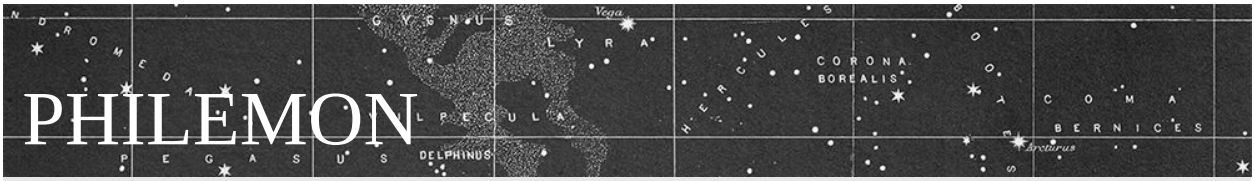
14 Let our people learn to devote themselves to good works for pressing needs,
so that they will not be unfruitful. † 15 All those who are with me send you
greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you. †

3:1 Rm 13:1-7; 1Pt 2:13-14 **3:2** Jms 3:13 **3:3** 2Pt 1:4; 2:10 **3:3** Jms 4:1 **3:4** 1Tm 1:1; 2:3; Ti 1:3; 2:10; Jd 25 **3:5** Rm 11:14; 2Tm 1:9 **3:5** Eph 2:9 **3:5** Eph 2:4; 1Pt 1:3 **3:5** Jn 3:5; Eph 5:26; 1Pt 3:21 **3:5** Rm 12:2 **3:6** Jl 2:28; Ac 2:33; 10:45; Rm 5:5 **3:7** Ac 13:43; 15:11; 1Co 8:1; Gl 1:6; 1Pt 4:10 **3:7** Ti 1:2 **3:8** 1Tm 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2Tm 2:11 **3:9** 1Tm 6:4 **3:9** 1Tm 1:4 **3:9** Rm 1:29; 13:13; 1Co 1:11; 3:3; 2Co 12:20; Gl 5:20; Php 1:15; 1Tm 6:4 **3:10** 1Tm 1:9 **3:10** Mt 18:15; 2Th 3:15 **3:12** Ac 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2Tm 4:12 **3:12** Lk 14:26; 2Tm 4:9 **3:13** Ac 18:24; 19:1; 1Co 1:12; 3:4-6,22; 4:6; 16:12 **3:13** Jms 2:15 **3:14** Mt 13:22; Mk 4:19; 1Co 14:14; Gl 5:22; Eph 5:11; 2Pt 1:8; Jd 12 **3:15** Col 4:18; 2Th 3:16

3:1 Submission to the proper **authorities** is an essential element of the Christian life (see also Rm 13:1-7). See “How Should Christians Relate to Government?” *p. 1213.*

3:8 Devotion to **good works** is an important element of the Christian life (see also 3:14), but Paul is clear that we are not saved by works (3:5). Rather, believers are justified by God’s grace (3:7).

3:9-11 While there is a place for defending truth, Christian are not to engage in **foolish debates** and petty **quarrels.** Divisiveness is cause for excommunication.



PHILEMON

INTRODUCTION

Philemon is Paul's only letter of a private nature. It concerns a runaway slave, Onesimus, who had robbed his master, Philemon, and escaped from Colossae to Rome. There Onesimus met the imprisoned apostle Paul. Paul wrote to Philemon concerning Onesimus. Paul sent both the letter and Onesimus back to Colossae. By comparison to Paul's other letters, Philemon is little more than a postcard, but it comes from the tender heart of a friend writing as a friend rather than as an apostle exercising his authority.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: During Paul's two-year imprisonment in Rome (Ac 28:30), probably during AD 60–61, he wrote four "prison letters," one of which was Philemon (the others were Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians).

BACKGROUND: References to Paul's being in prison at the time of writing are found in verses 1,9-10,13, and perhaps 23. Paul was kept under house arrest—what the Romans called "free custody"—in his own rented house as he awaited trial (Ac 28:30).

Although Paul addresses the letter to Apphia, Archippus, and the church that meets in Philemon's house (v v. 1-2), the main addressee is Philemon himself, for "you" or "your" (v v. 2,4-21,23) is singular and refers to Philemon. Apparently he was a prosperous businessman living in Colossae (implied in Col 4:9) whose household included several slaves and whose house was large enough to accommodate meetings of the young church. He had been converted through Paul's ministry, perhaps by Paul himself (v v. 10,19), and had become Paul's "dear friend and coworker" (v. 1) and "partner" (v. 17) in the gospel service. Although the letter is basically Paul's personal appeal to Philemon, the plural "you" (v v. 3,22) and "your" (v v. 22,25) indicate that the whole church would have listened to its reading and thus been witnesses of Philemon's response to Paul's requests.

Onesimus had apparently run away and taken with him some of his master's money or possessions (v v. 15,18). Perhaps attracted by the anonymity of a large, distant city, he traveled to Rome seeking a life of freedom. His path crossed Paul's, and he became a Christian (v v. 10,16) and a useful helper to Paul (v. 11).

An alternative view denies that Onesimus was a runaway looking for freedom. It instead suggests that he left Philemon and looked for Paul so that Paul could become his advocate regarding some serious loss Philemon had experienced. All along Onesimus had intended to return to his master's household. Paul was therefore not guilty of harboring a fugitive slave. But on this view we would expect Paul to reassure Philemon that Onesimus had always intended to return.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Although it is the shortest and most personal of Paul's letters, Philemon was included in the New Testament canon for several reasons.

First, it illustrates the breaking down of social and cultural barriers that occurred between Christians (see Gl 3:28). Paul, a highly educated Roman citizen, takes up the cause of a poor runaway slave whose life was in danger because of his theft and flight (Phm 18). Social and cultural barriers are eliminated in Christian fellowship.

Second, it reflects early Christian attitudes towards slavery. Although Paul accepts (but does not endorse)

slavery as an existing social condition and as a legal fact (see v. 12), he emphasizes Onesimus's higher identity as a Christian brother and sets the master-slave relationship on a new footing (v. 16) and so ultimately undermines the institution of slavery. This contrasts with dominant views of the ancient world. For instance, Aristotle defined a slave as "a living tool, just as a tool is an inanimate slave" (*Nicomachean Ethics* viii. 11. 6).

Third, it shows a skillful pastor at work: Paul gives up his apostolic right to issue commands (v v. 8-9) and prefers to appeal to Philemon's free choice (v v. 10,14) to follow his Christian conscience in deciding how his love should be expressed (v v. 5,7); he identifies with Onesimus, his spiritual son (v. 10), calling him "my very own heart" (v. 12) and guaranteeing to repay his debts (v v. 18-19); and he gives his requests to Philemon in the hearing of the whole local church (v v. 1-3,22-25).

Fourth, it pictures the heart of the gospel (v v. 16-19). When we come to God in repentance and faith, he gives us a new status and welcomes us as if we were Christ. What we owe God, he has debited to Christ's account. Christ assumed personal responsibility for the full repayment of our debt to God.

STRUCTURE

Paul's letter to Philemon follows the form of a standard first-century Greek letter: address and greeting (vv. 1-3), body (vv. 8-20), and closing/farewell (vv. 21-25). Moreover, Paul includes a section of thanksgiving after the greeting (vv. 4-7), a typical feature found in his letters.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

In this letters God the Father is the source of grace and peace and the one to whom Christians pray (vv. 3-4). Jesus is the center of faith, on whose account Paul was in prison (vv. 5,9). The Holy Spirit is not specifically mentioned.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Philemon addresses slavery, a widely accepted social arrangement in the ancient world. Paul does not attack the institution of slavery head-on. Such a challenge could not have gained a hearing in the first century. Instead, Paul's teaching that in Christ both master and slave are to consider each other as brothers and equals undermines the concept of slavery and lays the foundation for eliminating slavery as an institution. The fact that in the twenty-first century slavery still exists in parts of the world is evidence of the power of sin in human lives and societies.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is seen through the perspective of two individuals, the master (Philemon) and the slave (Onesimus). Philemon was indebted to the apostle because Paul had brought the message of salvation to him (v. 19). Onesimus is a classic example of transformation because of the message of salvation: "Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me" (v. 11).

PREHISTORY–1500 BC
Slavery comes with the development of agriculture in Mesopotamia. **10,000**
1500–132 BC
References to slavery in the Code of Hammurabi **1750**
Egyptians make slaves of the Israelites. **1600**
Hittite Code of Nesilim provides for the humane treatment of slaves. **1650–1500**
Hebrew laws contain provisions pertaining to slaves and slavery. **1445**
References to slavery during China's Shang Dynasty **1500–1066**
Economies of the Greek city states are dependent on slavery. **500–400**
The Greek city–state of Athens has some 70,000 slaves. **430**
In his *Politics*, Aristotle writes on the nature of the master–slave relationship. **330**
First Roman slave revolt in Sicily **134–132**
104 BC–AD 54
Second Roman slave revolt in Sicily **104–101 BC**
Third Roman slave revolt led by the gladiator Spartacus **73–71 BC**
By the time Augustus becomes Roman emperor, there are some 3 million slaves of a total population of 7.5 million Romans. **AD 63**
In his *Geographia*, Strabo says there are more than 1,000 temple slaves—prostitutes—in the temple of Aphrodite in 6th-century **BC** Corinth. **AD 20**
Roman Emperor Claudius rules that a slave who was old or sick and abandoned by his master should be considered free. **AD 41–54**
AD 60–407
Paul arrives in Rome. **60**
Paul encounters Onesimus, a runaway slave from Colossae. **61**
Paul writes his letter to Philemon and sends it and the Letter to the Colossians, by Tychicus and Onesimus. **61**
During Nero's rule, slaves gain the right to complain against their masters in court. **54–68**
Gregory of Nyssa **(D. 395)** and Chrysostom **(347–407)** oppose slavery based on Christian theology.

GREETING

1 Paul, † a prisoner † of Christ Jesus, † and Timothy † our brother: To
Philemon our dear friend and coworker, 2 to Apphia our sister, † to
Archippus † our fellow soldier, † and to the church that meets in your
home. †
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

PHILEMON'S LOVE AND FAITH

4 I always thank my God when I mention you in my prayers, 5 because I hear of your love † for all the saints and the faith that you have in the Lord Jesus. 6 I pray that your participation in the faith may become effective † through knowing every good thing † that is in us † for the glory of Christ. 7 For I have great joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed † through you, brother.

AN APPEAL FOR ONESIMUS

8 For this reason, although I have great boldness in Christ to command you to do what is right, 9 I appeal to you, instead, on the basis of love. I, Paul, as an elderly man † and now also as a prisoner † of Christ Jesus, 10 appeal to you for my son, † Onesimus. † † I became his father † while I was in chains. 11 Once he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me. 12 I am sending him back to you — I am sending my very own heart. † † 13 I wanted to keep him with me, so that in my imprisonment for the gospel he might serve me in your place. 14 But I didn't want to do anything without your consent, so that your good deed might not be out of obligation, but of your own free will. 15 For perhaps this is why he was separated from you for a brief time, so that you might get him back permanently, 16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave — as a dearly loved brother. He is especially so to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh † and in the Lord. †

17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome † him as you would me. 18 And if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. † 19 I, Paul, write this with my own hand: † I will repay it — not to mention to you that you owe me even your very self. 20 Yes, brother, may I benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Since I am confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 Meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, since I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you.

FINAL GREETINGS

23 Epaphras, † my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings, and so do 24 Mark, † Aristarchus, † Demas, and Luke, † my coworkers.

THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY

As one reads the OT and the NT, it is clear that slavery is part and parcel of the whole ancient economic system. Throughout the ancient Near East (and everywhere else for that matter), slavery was a common solution to many problems. Bible readers are often confused with how we can reconcile such an evil as slavery with the Christian worldview. To do so, there are a number of things that we have to take into account.

The first thing that we as Bible believers must recognize is that we live in a fallen, sin-sick world. With the fall of man, many things came into existence that should not be. Murder, rape, warfare, and crime are just a few of many things that are distortions of the social order God desires. Slavery must first be understood as a corruption or distortion of the social order that results from the fall. The Bible does not endorse slavery; it merely realizes it as a state of affairs with which believers must contend.

Throughout the OT, we find that the term *ebed*, meaning "slave" or "servant," is used over eight hundred times. In more than a fifth of those instances it designates a household servant. Unfortunately, we also find that the number of slaves is often listed with animals to demonstrate the wealth of a patriarch. Throughout the ancient world, slaves were considered as part of a household, and as such, those people lost their own individual identities. They could be beaten, bought, sold, and inherited—even within ancient Israel.

Though the OT record makes it clear that slavery was practiced within ancient Israel, it should be noted that the Hebrews practiced slavery in a way that differed from the practices of surrounding cultures. While other nations viewed slaves as nothing more than tools to be used, the Hebrews never lost sight of the fact that slaves are humans made in the image of God. As such, men retain a certain dignity that was not to be violated. Consequently, we find all kinds of laws in the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy) regarding how slaves can and cannot be treated. In fact, in ancient Israel, slaves even had the rights of citizens. All of this is because the Hebrews were constantly reminded that God brought them out of the land of slavery (Ex 20:2). One way that the Hebrews differed in their approach to slavery was the Sabbath release after six years. Slavery was not intended to be a perpetual state of affairs for the enslaved, unless they chose to stay.

In the NT, the most common word for slave is *doulos* (Gk), which is used 124 times. Aristotle argued that all things seek to achieve autonomy and self-sufficiency. Hence, slavery is the worst of all situations for the Greek citizen. The *doulos* may have some degree of autonomy, but not self-sufficiency. In the ancient Greek world, it was sometimes better to be a slave and part of a household than to be free and separate from a household. At the time of the NT, 50 percent or more of humans served in some type of slavery. Slavery was often cruel and there was little regard for human life. The *Patri Protempis* (Law of the Father) gave the *paterfamilias* (father, head of the household) power over punishments and rewards, as well as the life and death of slaves.

In the NT, slavery was neither condemned nor was it affirmed. In 1 Corinthians 7:20-23 the apostle Paul tells his readers that if they are slaves, they should not seek to be free. He emphasizes in Galatians that we are all equal in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 6:5-10 and Colossians 3:22-25 he reminds masters not to be oppressive. In these sections of Scripture, Paul also reminds slaves to be obedient, aiming to please Christ rather than men.

The concept of slavery in the American context often complicates the issue because of the way that the Bible was used to justify slavery and its abuses in times past. Slavery in the United States was as cruel as it was in the ancient world. While some slave owners recognized the need of salvation for their slaves, others did not. The major difference between slavery in the United States and slavery in the ancient world is that in America people were enslaved solely based on of their ethnicity. This made for a more sinful institution.

CRAIG MITCHELL

25 The grace of the Lord † † Jesus Christ be with your spirit. †

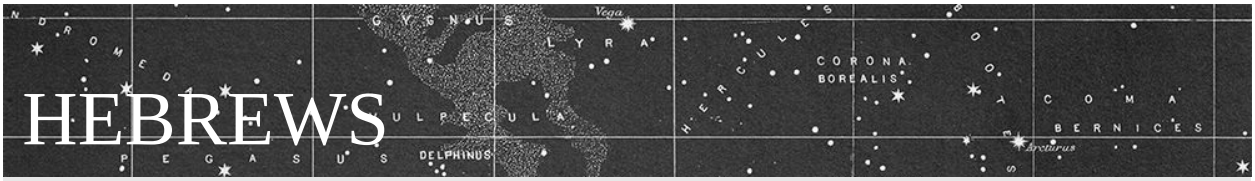
1:2 Other mss read *our beloved* **1:6** Other mss read *in you* **1:9** Or *an ambassador* **1:10** In Gk, *Onesimus* means “useful” **1:12** Other mss read *him back. Receive him, my own heart.* **1:12** Lit *you — that is, my own heart* **1:25** Other mss read *our Lord*

1:1 Ac 13:9 **1:1** 2Tm 1:8; Heb 13:3 **1:1** Rm 1:1 **1:1** Ac 16:1; 1Tm 1:2 **1:2** Col 4:17 **1:2** Php 2:25 **1:2** Ac 12:12; Rm 16:5 **1:5** Dt 6:5; Mt 22:37; Gl 5:6,22; Eph 6:23; 1Th 1:3; 3:6; 5:8; 1Tm 1:14; 1Jn 4:20 **1:6** Gl 5:6 **1:6** Gn 1:31; 18:18; 3Jn 11 **1:7** Lk 12:19; 2Tm 1:16 **1:9** 2Tm 1:8; Heb 13:3 **1:10** 1Th 2:11 **1:10** Col 4:9 **1:10** 1Co 4:15 **1:16** Php 3:3 **1:16** 1Co 16:19; Rv 11:8 **1:17** Rm 14:1 **1:18** Rm 5:13 **1:19** 1Co 16:21 **1:23** Col 1:7; 4:12 **1:24** Ac 12:12,25; 15:37,39; Col 4:10; 2Tm 4:11; 1Pt 5:13 **1:24** Ac 19:29 **1:24** Col 4:14; 2Tm 4:10-11 **1:25** 2Th 3:18; Rv 11:8 **1:25** Ps 51:12

1:8 The Bible affirms the proper use of authority. Yet those in authority need not always wield the full extent of the power given them. Here an appeal is made when a command would also be appropriate.

1:10 By saying he **became** the **father** of **Onesimus**, Paul means he led him to Christ, bringing Onesimus to spiritual birth. Onesimus is called “a faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you” in Paul’s letter to the Colossians (4:9). We thus conclude that Onesimus and Philemon lived in Colossae. Onesimus was a slave belonging to Philemon. He had apparently run away before he met Paul (vv. 15-16).

1:16 The NT writers accept the reality of slavery in the world of their day. Nevertheless, the gospel radically impacts how Christians can think of this issue since fellow believers are brothers and sisters in Christ.



HEBREWS

INTRODUCTION

The epistle to the Hebrews is a tribute to the incomparable Son of God and an encouragement to the author's persecuted fellow believers. The author feared that his Christian readers were wavering in their endurance. The writer had a twofold approach: (1) He exalted Jesus Christ, who is addressed as both "God" and "the Son of Man," and is thus the only one who can serve as mediator between God and man; and (2) he exhorted his fellow Christians "go on to maturity" and live "by faith."

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The text of Hebrews does not identify its author. What we do know is that the author was a second-generation Christian, for he said he received the confirmed message of Christ from "those who heard" Jesus himself (2:3). Because Paul claimed his gospel was revealed directly by the Lord (1Co 15:8; Gl 1:12), it is doubtful that he was the author of Hebrews. The author was familiar with Timothy, but he referred to him as "our brother" (13:23), rather than as "my true son in the faith," as Paul did (1Tm 1:2).

Scholars have also proposed the following persons as authors: Luke, Clement of Rome, Barnabas, Apollos, Timothy, Philip, Peter, Silas, Jude, and Aristion. Ultimately it does not matter that the identity of the author is now lost. We should be satisfied with the fact that early Christians received the letter as inspired and authoritative Scripture and that its value for Christian discipleship is unquestioned.

BACKGROUND: The author of Hebrews knew his recipients well since he called them "brothers and sisters" (3:12; 7:5; 10:19; 13:22) and "dearly loved friends" (6:9). Like the writer, they were converts who had heard the gospel through the earliest followers of Christ (2:3). Scholars have speculated that those to whom the book was written were a breakaway group such as a house church that had separated from the main church. Another theory holds that the recipients were former Jewish priests who had converted to Christianity, and that they were considering a return to Judaism (at least in conformity to certain practices) in order to avoid persecution from fellow Jews. Another theory holds that the group was not necessarily Jewish since Gentile Christians also revered the OT as Scripture.

Regarding when the book was written, it is clear that the fall of Jerusalem (AD 70) had not yet occurred. The destruction of the temple would have been mentioned if it had already occurred, for it would have strengthened the letter's argument about Christ's sacrifice spelling the end of the temple sacrificial system. The public persecution mentioned in 10:32-34 implies one of two possibilities for dating the book. We know that the Roman emperors Nero and Domitian in (AD 64–68 and 81–82 respectively) persecuted Christians. Most likely Hebrews was written during the persecution under Nero, perhaps just before the destruction of the temple.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

No other book in the NT ties together OT history and practices with the life of Jesus Christ as thoroughly as the book of Hebrews. Just as Jesus Christ taught that the OT was fulfilled in himself (Mt 5:17-18; Lk 24:27), so the author of Hebrews taught that the old covenant was brought to completion in the new covenant (7:20–8:13). Hebrews also shows that because the old covenant has been fulfilled in the new covenant, the new covenant is actually "better" (7:22). The new covenant was made superior by the ministry of Jesus Christ.

STRUCTURE

In concluding the book of Hebrews, the author wrote, “I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly” (13:22). If the literary style of Hebrews indicates anything, it is that it is a written theological sermon. It is not so much a letter—although it certainly ends like one—because it has no opening subscription, as was the norm with ancient letters. Hebrews instead begins with an introductory essay about the superiority of Jesus Christ (1:1-4). However, its capacity to encounter the reader’s soul indicates it is more than just a literary essay. Indeed, it has a definite sermonic character since it expounds the Scriptures at length in order to challenge the reader to faith and faithfulness. The sustained development of a complex, holistic theology of covenant indicates that Hebrews is a written theological sermon that discloses the broad sweep of God’s grand redemptive plan for humanity.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father of Jesus Christ. He is wholly other and is to be approached with reverence and fear, “for our God is a consuming fire” (12:29). The superiority of Jesus to all possible rivals is the theme of the entire book. The full deity and complete humanity of Jesus is explicitly taught. The Holy Spirit in Hebrews is both the One who speaks in Scripture (3:7; 10:15) and the One alive among believers in the present age (6:4; 10:29).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

A number of prominent OT people are mentioned in Hebrews, and the “roll call of faith” in chapter 11 is an impressive reminder of what believing humans can do. The emphasis in Hebrews, however, is that Jesus has the glory and honor of being humanity at its best. In Psalm 8 God declared “man” as the crown of creation; Hebrews 2 declares that this man is none other than Jesus Christ.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Jesus is a better high priest than the high priests of the old covenant. Further, Jesus’s death was a superior sacrifice to any that had been made before, “For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” (10:4). At the same time, however, Hebrews affirms that the human response to God’s redemptive actions, faith, has always and forever been the single way that pleases God. This Bible book, more clearly than any other, shows the permanence of the new covenant state of affairs and the impermanence of the old covenant.

HEBREWS TIMELINE

PREHISTORY–1900 BC

Abel offers a better sacrifice than Cain.

Abram moves from Haran to Canaan. **2091**

Sarah conceives at age ninety. **2066**

Abraham offers up Isaac in obedience to God's command. **2046?**

Isaac blesses Jacob and Esau. **1930?**

1900–1445 BC

Jacob blesses Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. **1859**

Birth of Moses **1526**

Exodus from Egypt and defeat of Pharaoh at the Red Sea **1446**

God's awesome manifestation and covenant with Israel at Sinai **1446**

Tabernacle is built and dedicated. **1445**

1445–1125 BC

Israel wanders in the wilderness. **1445–1407**

Rahab supports the conquest of Jericho. **1406**

Deborah and Barak defeat the Canaanites. **1320?**

Gideon **1250–1175?**

Jephthah **1200–1150?**

1125 BC–AD 95

Samson **1120–1060 BC?**

Samuel **1105–1025 BC?**

David **1050–970 BC**

Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension **AD 33**

Hebrews is first quoted by Clement of Rome in his letter to the Corinthians. **AD 96**

THE NATURE OF THE SON

1 Long ago God spoke † to the fathers by the prophets † at different
times and in different ways. † 2 In these last days, † he has spoken to us
by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things † and made the
universe † † through him. 3 The Son is the radiance † of God's glory and the
exact expression † of his nature, † sustaining all things by his powerful word. †
After making purification for sins, † he sat down at the right hand of the
Majesty on high. † † 4 So he became superior to the angels, just as the name he
inherited is more excellent than theirs. †

THE SON SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

5 For to which of the angels did he ever say,
You are my Son;

today I have become your Father, † †
or again,
I will be his Father, and he will be my Son? † †
6 Again, when he † brings his firstborn into the world, † he says,
And let all God's angels worship him. † †
7 And about the angels he says:
He makes his angels winds, †
and his servants † **a fiery flame,** † †
8 but to † the Son:
Your throne, O God,
is forever and ever,
and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice. †
9 **You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; this is why God, your God, has anointed you**
with the oil of joy †
beyond your companions. † †
10 And:
In the beginning, Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands; †
11 **they will perish, but you remain.**
They will all wear out like clothing; †
12 **you will roll them up like a cloak,** †
and they will be changed like clothing.
But you are the same, and your years will never end. † †
13 Now to which of the angels has he ever said:
Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool? † †
14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve those who are going to inherit salvation? †

1:2 Lit *ages* **1:3** Or *reflection* **1:3** Or *representation*, or *copy*, or *reproduction* **1:3** Other mss read *for our sins by himself* **1:3** Or *he sat down on high at the right hand of the Majesty* **1:5** Or *have begotten you* **1:6** Or *When he again* **1:7** Or *spirits* **1:7** Or *ministers* **1:8** Or *about* **1:9** Or *associates* **1:12** Other mss omit *like a cloak*

1:1 Jn 9:29; Heb 2:2-3 **1:1** 2Kg 17:13; 21:10; 24:2; Jr 7:25; 26:5; 29:19; 35:15; 44:4; Ezk 38:17; Dn 9:6; Hs 12:10; Zch 1:6; 8:9; Mt 2:23; Lk 1:70; 24:44; Ac 2:30; 3:21,24 **1:1** Nm 12:6,8; Jl 2:28 **1:2** Ac 2:17; Gl 4:4; 2Tm 3:1; 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **1:2** Jr 3:19; 10:16; Zch 8:12 **1:2** Ps 2:8; Jn 1:3; Col 1:16; Rv 4:11 **1:3** 2Co 4:4 **1:3** Ps 33:6 **1:3** Mt 22:44; Mk 16:19; Col 1:17 **1:4** Eph 1:21; Php 2:9 **1:5** Ps 2:7 **1:5** 2Sm 7:14; 1Ch 17:13 **1:5** 2Sm 7:14; Ps 2:7; Ac 13:33 **1:6** Col 1:15,18; Rv 1:5 **1:6** Dt 32:43 LXX; Ps 97:7 **1:6** Dt 32:43; Ps 97:7 **1:7** Ps 104:4 **1:7** Ps 104:4 **1:8** Ps 45:6-7 **1:9** Is 61:1,3; Php 2:9 **1:8-9** Ps 45:6-7 **1:10** Ps 102:25 **1:11** Is 50:9; 51:6 **1:10-12** Ps 102:25-27 **1:12** Ps 102:26-27; Heb 13:8 **1:13** Ps 110:1 **1:13** Jos 10:24; Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Ac 2:34-35; Heb 10:13 **1:14** Ps 103:20; Mt 18:10; Heb 5:9

1:1 Fathers refers to Jewish ancestors to whom God spoke through **the prophets.** See "Christianity and the Abrahamic Religions," *p. 1282.*

1:2-3 Jesus, the **Son**, is the final revelation of God **(In these last days)** as he is the **exact expression** of God's **nature** (see "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," *p. 1271*). He is the agent of creation and holds all creation together **by his powerful word** (see "Ultimate Origins and the Christian Worldview," *p. 846*). He has also made **purification for sins**, and is seated **at the right hand of** God, since he is the expected Messiah (Ps 110).

1:4 Jesus's superiority **to the angels** is the subject of the following section (1:5-14). **The name** was a way to refer to God among pious Jews. Thus, Jesus's inherited name is a title that once referred to God alone.

1:5-13 The authority and reliability of Scripture is foundational to a Christian worldview. This paragraph is the first of several in Hebrews in which the author fully depends on OT revelations. His argument assumes the trustworthiness of Scripture.

1:5 God's **Son** here refers to the expected Messiah (Ps 2:7; 2Sm 7:14).

1:6 In the OT, the **firstborn** shared the authority of the father, and he inherited the larger share of his property. Of Christ, the title expresses his preeminence in the church and over all creation (Col 1:15,18).

1:9 Anointing with **oil** was used for the installation of Israelite kings, priests, and prophets (Ps 45:6-7). In this context it refers to the Son's installation as God's King over all creation.

WARNING AGAINST NEGLECT

2 For this reason, we must pay attention all the more to what we have heard, so that we will not drift away. † 2 For if the message spoken through angels was legally binding † † and every transgression and disobedience received a just punishment, † 3 how will we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? † This salvation had its beginning when it was spoken of by the Lord, and it was confirmed to us by those who heard him. †

A BIBLICAL VIEW OF ANGELS

Angels are created spirit beings. Some of them are holy and some are evil. The OT term for angel is *mal'ak*, and the NT term is *angelos*; both terms refer to one sent with a message or one acting as a messenger. The biblical terms for "angel" are used of human messengers in some instances (e.g., 1Sm 23:27; 1Kg 19:2; Lk 7:24; 9:52) and often in the OT apply particularly to the angel of the Lord (e.g., Gn 16:7-14; Jdg 6:11-14; 2Sm 24:16; Zch 1:12-13). Most often, however, *mal'ak* and *angelos* are used for these created spiritual beings called angels or messengers (e.g., Ex 23:20; Mt 1:20; 4:11; 25:31,41).

THE ORIGIN OF ANGELS

Because all that God creates and does is wholly good (Gn 1:31; Jms 1:17), we must understand angels, in their entire class, as created by God as good. Psalm 148:1-6 expresses praise to God for his creation of all things, and among those things specified are "all his angels" and "all his heavenly armies" (Ps 148:2). Furthermore, Colossians 1:16 makes clear that by Christ all things were created, including things "in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible" (cp. Rm 8:38-39). Also relevant is God's statement to Job (Jb 38:4-7) indicating that angels ("sons of God") were present and shouted for joy at the creation of the heavens and earth. Angels, then, derive their existence from God, and their creation evidently precedes the subsequent creation of the universe.

A difficult question concerns how some of the good angels God created have become evil. First, we must understand all fallen angels, in their originally-created form, to have been wholly good. This was a goodness they forfeited, presumably, because of their rebellion against God. Two passages in particular lead us to think this is the case. Jude 6, and particularly 2 Peter 2:4, both speak of angels who departed from God's purposes and hence received God's judgment and condemnation. The text in 2 Peter is clear that the reason for this judgment was their sin against God. And when one adds to this the clear implication from Matthew 25:41 and Revelation 12:9 that demons are the followers of Satan, it seems obvious that these evil spirits, though created good, became evil as they followed their leader's enticement to sin against their Creator.

THE CHARACTER OF HOLY ANGELS

Less is said in the Bible about the character of unfallen angels than about their activities, but some aspects of their character are evident.

1. They are personal beings, with intelligence, emotions, and volition. We receive insights about their intelligence in 1 Peter 1:12, where they long to know more of God's salvation plan; in Revelation 17:1-18, where they know and communicate God's plans; and in Matthew 24:36, where they know much, but not everything (e.g., not the timing of the second coming). Witness to their emotions is seen in Job 38:7, where they rejoice over God's creation; in Isaiah 6:1-4, where with awe and wonder they cry out "Holy, holy, holy" before God; in Luke 15:10, where they rejoice when sinners repent; and in Revelation 5:11-14, where they marvel at the Lamb who was slain and worship him. The idea that they have their own will is tied to passages such as Hebrews 1:6, where God appeals to their will to worship the Son and 2 Peter 2:4, with its implication of some angels sinning in their choice to rebel against God.

2. They are spirit beings. Hebrews 1:14 calls angels "ministering spirits." In Luke 8:2 and 11:24 we see that demons are sometimes referred to as "evil spirits" or "unclean spirits," so presumably they are spirits by virtue of their being angels. But they can, for specific purposes, take on human form. We see this in Genesis 19:1, when the angels visit Sodom and in Hebrews 13:2, which notes that one might unknowingly entertain angels.

3. They apparently are not sexual in that they do not marry and hence do not procreate. According to Matthew 22:30, in heaven people, like angels, will not marry or be given in marriage.

4. They exist forever. Luke 20:36 states that angels cannot die.

5. They have great power. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7, angels are referred to as being "powerful." In 2 Kings 19:35 one angel sent by God destroyed one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrian soldiers. In Daniel 6:22 an angel "shut the lions' mouths."

6. They are holy. In Job 5:1 and Psalm 89:7 angels are called “holy ones.” Mark 8:38 refers to them as “holy angels.”

7. They are elected by God. In 1 Timothy 5:21 they are referred to as his “elect angels,” which may refer to God’s choice of them not to rebel against him when Satan and the other, non-elect angels who followed Satan rebelled and were cast from God’s presence.

8. Although wondrous beings, they are not to be worshiped. In Colossians 2:18 the “worship of angels” is rejected. In Revelation 19:10 and 22:8-9, John fell down to worship the angel, but the angel said to worship God.

THE FUNCTIONS AND MINISTRY OF UNFALLEN ANGELS

Angels are servants of God who surround his presence (Dn 7:9-10; Rv 5:11-14) and carry out his will in various ways on earth (e.g., Gn 32:1; 2Sm 24:16-17). Hebrews 1:14 calls them “ministering spirits.” Beyond this general description, specific functions of angels are spoken of throughout the Scriptures.

1. They worship God, as seen in Isaiah 6:1-3; Luke 2:13-14; and Revelation 5:11-14.

2. They ministered with regard to Jesus during his earthly life. This is seen in Luke 1:11-20, where an angel appeared to Zacharias predicting John’s birth; in Luke 2:26-38, where Gabriel appeared to Mary; in Matthew 1:20, where an angel appeared to Joseph saying to take Mary as his wife; in Luke 2:8-15, where an angel appeared to the shepherds; in Matthew 2:13,19, where an angel told Joseph to go to Egypt and then back to Israel; in Matthew 4:11, when angels ministered to Jesus at his temptation; in Luke 22:43, when an angel strengthened Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; in Matthew 28:2-8, when an angel rolled away the stone and told the women of Jesus’s resurrection; and in Acts 1:10-11, when two angels told the disciples of Jesus’s return.

3. They proclaim God’s word and ordain the law. Evidence of their proclamation is in Luke 1:26-38 and Acts 27:23-24. Their work of ordaining appears in Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; and Hebrews 2:2.

4. They protect and deliver God’s people as he directs. In Exodus 23:20-23 an angel was sent to protect Israel on entering the land. In 2 Kings 19:35 an angel struck one hundred eighty-five thousand Assyrians dead. In Daniel 3:28 an angel delivers three Hebrew men in the furnace. In Daniel 6:22 an angel closed the lions’ mouths. In Psalm 34:7 the angel of the Lord is said to encamp around those who fear him. In Acts 5:19 and 12:7 an angel delivered the apostles from prison.

5. They bear witness to and long to know more of God’s salvific purposes. This is apparent in 1 Corinthians 4:9; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 1:12; and possibly also in 1 Corinthians 11:10.

6. They will bear witness to Christ’s confession of those who are and are not his, according to Luke 12:8-9, when Christ will confess or deny people “before the angels of God.”

7. They play a role in God’s reward of the righteous and punishment of the wicked before the final judgment. In Luke 16:22 angels take the poor man to Abraham’s bosom. In Acts 12:23 an angel struck Herod dead for not giving glory to God.

8. They come with Christ in his return. According to Matthew 16:27, the Son of Man comes in glory with his angels. Matthew 24:30-31 states that the Son of Man will appear with his angels who carry out his will. Matthew 25:31 notes that the Son of Man will appear with all the angels with him. And in 2 Thessalonians 1:7, it’s said that Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.

9. They gather the elect when Christ returns—as is evidenced by Matthew 24:30-31.

10. They dispense God’s judgment on the wicked when Christ returns—as seen in Matthew 13:39-42,49-50. Angels will take the wicked from among the righteous and cast them into hell.

11. They are used by God to defeat evil powers and nations. This is evidenced in Daniel 10 (the message to Daniel of Michael’s intervention to defeat ungodly forces). It also appears in Daniel 12:1 (Michael will rescue God’s people from great distress), and in Revelation 12:7-9 (Michael and his angels defeat the dragon and his angels).

12. An angel binds Satan during the millennium, according to Revelation 20:1-3.

13. They are stationed at the twelve gates of the New Jerusalem, according to Revelation 21:12.

THE DESTINY OF UNFALLEN ANGELS

In light of their continuous biblical role of ascribing praise to God, it stands to reason that angels will be among the great heavenly choir singing praises to God forevermore. They are present in the New Jerusalem, still ministering on God's behalf (Rv 21:12).

BRUCE A. WARE

4 At the same time, God also testified by signs and wonders, various miracles, and distributions of gifts from the Holy Spirit according to his will. †

JESUS AND HUMANITY

5 For he has not subjected to angels the world to come that we are talking about.
6 But someone somewhere has testified:
What is man that you remember him, or the son of man that you care for him?
7 **You made him lower than the angels for a short time;**
you crowned him with glory and honor †
8 **and subjected everything under his feet.** †
For in **subjecting everything** to him, he left nothing that is not subject to him. As it is, we do not yet see **everything subjected** to him. † 9 But we do see Jesus — **made lower than the angels for a short time** so that by God's grace he might taste death † for everyone — **crowned with glory and honor** † because he suffered death. †
10 For in bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was entirely appropriate that God — for whom and through whom all things exist — should make the source † of their salvation perfect through sufferings. † 11 For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. † That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, † 12 saying:
I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; I will sing hymns to you in the congregation. † †
13 Again, **I will trust in him.** † And again, **Here I am with the children God gave me.** † †
14 Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of

death — that is, the devil † — 15 and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death. † 16 For it is clear that he does not reach out to help angels, but to help Abraham's offspring. † 17 Therefore, he had to be like his brothers and sisters in every way, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in matters † pertaining to God, to make atonement † † for the sins of the people. † 18 For since he himself has suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

2:2 Or *valid*, or *reliable* **2:7** Other mss add *and set him over the works of your hands* **2:10** Or *pioneer*, or *leader* **2:11** Or *father*, or *origin*; lit *all are of one* **2:17** Lit *things* **2:17** Or *propitiation*

2:1 Jos 24:27; Mc 5:13; 1Co 9:27; 10:6; 11:34; Ti 3:14 **2:2** Dt 33:2; Ac 7:53; Heb 1:1 **2:2** Nm 15:30; Heb 10:28 **2:3** Is 45:17 **2:3** Lk 1:2; Heb 1:2; 10:29 **2:4** Jn 4:48; Ac 2:22,43; 5:12; 8:13; 14:3; 15:12; Rm 12:3-8; 15:19; 1Co 12:4; 2Co 12:12; Eph 1:5; 4:8 **2:6-8** Ps 8:5-7 LXX **2:6-8** Jb 7:17; Ps 8:4-6; Mt 22:44; Ac 2:35; 1Co 15:25-27; Eph 1:22; Heb 10:13 **2:9** Jn 8:52; 1Co 15:54-56; Php 2:8; Col 1:22; Heb 9:15; 1Pt 3:18 **2:9** Ac 2:33; 3:13 **2:9** Jn 3:16; 2Co 5:15; Php 2:9 **2:10** Lk 13:32; 24:26; Rm 11:36; Heb 7:28 **2:11** Mt 28:10; Jn 20:17; Ac 17:28; Heb 10:10 **2:12** Ps 22:22 **2:12** Ps 22:22; Heb 12:23 **2:13** 2Sm 22:3 LXX; Is 8:17 LXX; 12:2 LXX **2:13** Is 8:18 LXX **2:13** Ps 18:2; Is 8:17-18; 12:2; Jn 10:29; 17:6 **2:14** Jn 1:14; 1Co 15:54-56; Col 2:15; 2Tm 1:10; 1Jn 3:8 **2:15** Rm 8:15; 2Tm 1:7 **2:16** Lk 19:9; Jn 8:39; Rm 4:16; Gl 3:7-9,29 **2:17** 2Co 5:21 **2:17** Lk 18:13; Rm 3:25; Php 2:7; Heb 4:15; 5:1-2; 7:26-28; 1Jn 2:2; 4:10

2:2 Many first-century Jews believed that **angels** participated in the giving of the law at Sinai, though this is not explicitly mentioned in the OT.

2:4 The testimony of **signs and wonders** accompanies highly significant moments within salvation history, such as God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Dt 4:34). Here such testimony accompanied the ministry of Jesus and the apostles.

2:5 Some Jews, based on their interpretation of the Greek version of Deuteronomy 32:8, believed that **angels** had authority over the nations. But the NT affirms that authority over all rulers has been given to Christ (Eph 1:20-23).

2:6-9 The author expounds Psalm 8:5-7 in order to demonstrate the superiority of Jesus over the angels (2:5).

2:8 The author affirms that while everything has already been subjected to Jesus, **we do not yet see everything subjected to him**, indicating that this reality is currently hidden from view.

2:12 The use of Psalm 22:22 here portrays Jesus as a worship leader, who joins his brothers and sisters (2:11) in the singing of **hymns.** See "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727.*

2:14-18 Jesus . . . shared in the full extent of our humanity (without sin) in order to redeem us.

2:14 The author makes it clear that Jesus's death is not limited to dealing with human sin (cp. 2:17). It also destroys the devil, **the one holding the power of death** over people.

2:15 Abraham's offspring refers to all those with faith, not simply his biological descendants (cp. Gl 3:29–4:7).

2:17 Jesus's death made **atonement for the sins of the people.** The word translated "atonement" refers to the redirection of God's righteousness anger away from people (*propitiation*; Rm 3:25; 1Jn 2:2).

OUR APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST

3 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in a heavenly calling,
consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. † 2 He was
faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was in all God's
household. 3 For Jesus is considered worthy of more glory than Moses, just as
the builder has more honor than the house. 4 Now every house is built by
someone, but the one who built everything is God. † 5 Moses was faithful as a
servant † in all God's household, as a testimony to what would be said in the
future. 6 But Christ was faithful as a Son over his household. And we are that
household if we hold on to our confidence and the hope in which we boast. † †

WARNING AGAINST UNBELIEF

7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
on the day of testing in the wilderness, 9 where your fathers tested me,
tried me, and saw my works 10 for forty years.
Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation and said, "They
always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways."
11 **So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter my rest."** † †

12 Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil,
unbelieving heart that turns away † from the living God. 13 But encourage each
other daily, † while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened † by
sin's deception. † 14 For we have become participants in Christ if we hold
firmly until the end the reality † that we had at the start. † 15 As it is said:

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts
as in the rebellion. † †

16 For who heard and rebelled? Wasn't it all who came out of Egypt under
Moses? † 17 With whom was God angry for forty years? Wasn't it with those
who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? † 18 And to whom did he
swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed? 19 So we
see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

3:6 Other mss add *firm to the end* **3:14** Or *confidence*
3:1 Rm 15:8; Php 3:14; Heb 2:11,17; 4:14-15 **3:4** Eph 2:10; 3:9 **3:5** Ex 14:31; Nm 12:7-8; Dt 18:19; 34:5;
Jos 1:2,7,13,15; 11:12,15; 12:6; 1Kg 8:53,56; Mal 4:4 **3:6** Mt 10:22; Rm 5:2; 11:22; 1Co 3:16; Heb 1:2 **3:7-**

11 Ps 95:7-11 **3:7-11** Ps 95:7-11; Ac 7:36; Heb 4:3,5 **3:12** Lk 8:13; Ac 15:38; 1Tm 4:1 **3:13** 1Th 2:12; 2Th 3:12; Heb 10:25 **3:13** Ac 19:9; Rm 9:18; Heb 3:8,15; 4:7 **3:13** Eph 4:22; Heb 10:24 **3:14** 1Co 15:2; Heb 3:6; 10:23; 11:1 **3:15** Ps 95:7-8 **3:15** Ps 95:7-8 **3:16** Nm 14:2; Dt 1:35-38 **3:17** Nm 14:29; Ps 106:26

3:1 An **apostle** was a commissioned messenger, and Jesus is the ultimate messenger from the Father. He is also the ultimate **high priest**—the One to whom the old covenant high priesthood pointed. This is a role higher than Moses's (3:3).

3:5-6 The contrast between **Moses** the **servant** and **Christ** the **Son** is one of ownership. A servant does not own the house, but the **Son** inherits all from his Father.

3:6 The author describes the church as the **household** of God, in keeping with similar statements made by Paul (1Co 3:16-17; Eph 2:19).

3:12-13 Christians share a responsibility to **watch out** for one another. The command is addressed to all believers **(brothers and sisters)**, not just to pastors or leaders of the congregation.

3:15–4:11 Drawing on Psalm 95:7-11 (cited in 3:7-11), the author points to the rebellion of Israel after the exodus as a warning for Christians. The major point is that people who were part of the community, but did not continue in faith, were ultimately judged. So also today, some who identify with the people of God will show themselves to be unbelievers by not continuing in faith. Thus, we need to watch over and "encourage each other" (3:13) to continue in the faith.

THE PROMISED REST

4 Therefore, since the promise to enter his rest remains, let us beware † that none of you be found to have fallen short. † 2 For we also have received the good news just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith. † † 3 For we who have believed enter the rest, in keeping with what † he has said,

So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter my rest," † †

even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world. 4 For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: **And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.** † † 5 Again, in that passage he says, **They will never enter my rest.** † 6 Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience, † 7 he again specifies a certain day — **today**. He specified this speaking through David after such a long time:

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. † †

8 For if Joshua † had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people. 10 For the

person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his. † 11 Let us then make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

12 For the word of God is living and effective † and sharper than any double-edged sword, † penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. † 13 No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom † we must give an account.

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens — Jesus the Son of God — let us hold fast to our confession. † 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way as we are, † yet without sin. †
16 Therefore, let us approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need.

4:1 Lit *fear* **4:1** Or *that any of you might seem to have missed it* **4:2** Other mss read *since it was not united by faith in those who heard* **4:3** Or *rest, just as*
4:1-2 1Th 2:13; Heb 12:15 **4:3** Ps 95:11 **4:3** Ps 95:11; Heb 3:11 **4:4** Gn 2:2 **4:4** Gn 2:2; Ex 20:11 **4:5** Ps 95:11 **4:5-6** Ps 95:11; Heb 3:19 **4:7** Ps 95:7-8 **4:7** Ps 95:7-8; Heb 3:7 **4:8** Jos 22:4 **4:10** Heb 4:4; Rv 14:13 **4:12** Jr 23:29; 1Pt 1:23 **4:12** Is 49:2; Eph 6:17; Rv 1:16; 2:12 **4:12** 1Co 14:24-25 **4:13** 2Ch 16:9; Jb 26:6; 34:21; Ps 33:13-15 **4:14** Heb 3:1; 6:20; 10:23 **4:15** Is 53:3; Heb 2:18 **4:15** 2Co 5:21; 1Pt 2:22

4:11 While the **rest** mentioned in Psalm 95:11 refers to the promised land of Canaan, the author refers to eternal rest with God at the end of life. Jewish literature, such as the *Testament of Daniel*, speaks of the rest found in the New Jerusalem (5.12; see also *4 Ezra* 8:52).

4:12 The convicting power of the Scripture is a central aid for our perseverance. One way that we persevere is by continuing to submit ourselves to the Scriptures so that we do not harbor sin (see "Biblical Formation," *p. 1504*).

4:14-16 Jesus's role as **high priest** is another help for perseverance. Because he intercedes for us, we can approach the Father **with boldness** in order to receive the help we need.

4:14 Passed through the heavens means that Jesus has entered God's presence.

CHRIST, A HIGH PRIEST

5 For every high priest taken from among men is appointed in matters pertaining to God for the people, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he is also clothed with weakness. † 3 Because of this, he

must make an offering for his own sins as well as for the people. † 4 No one takes this honor on himself; instead, a person is called by God, just as Aaron was. † 5 In the same way, Christ did not exalt himself to become a high priest, but God who said to him,

You are my Son;

today I have become your Father, † † †

6 also says in another place,

You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. † †

7 During his earthly life, † he offered prayers and appeals † with loud cries and tears † to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. 8 Although he was the Son, he learned obedience from what he suffered. † 9 After he was perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, 10 and he was declared by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

THE PROBLEM OF IMMATURITY

11 We have a great deal to say about this, and it is difficult to explain, since you have become too lazy to understand. 12 Although by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the basic principles of God's revelation again. You need milk, not solid food. † 13 Now everyone who lives on milk is inexperienced with the message about righteousness, because he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature — for those whose senses have been trained to distinguish between good and evil. †

5:5 Lit *I have begotten you* **5:7** Lit *In the days of his flesh*

5:2 Heb 2:18; 4:15; 7:28 **5:3** Lv 4:3; 9:7; Heb 9:7 **5:4** Ex 28:1; 1Ch 23:18 **5:5** Ps 2:7 **5:5** Ps 2:7; Jn 8:54; Heb 1:1 **5:6** Gn 14:18-20; Ps 110:4 **5:6** Ps 110:4; Heb 7:17 **5:7** Mt 26:39; Mk 14:36 **5:7** Ps 22:1; Mt 27:46,50; Mk 15:34,37; Lk 23:46 **5:8** Php 2:7-8; Heb 1:2 **5:12** 1Co 3:2; Heb 6:1; 1Pt 2:21 **5:14** Is 7:15; 1Co 2:6

5:6 This quote from Psalm 110:4 refers back to Genesis 14:17-20, in which Abram met **Melchizedek**, a king and priest (see also 5:10). Psalm 110 shows that the messianic king would be a priest, but not from the Levitical line. This is important since Jesus, like David, is from the tribe of Judah, not Levi.

5:8 That **the Son . . . learned obedience** does not imply he was previously disobedient. Rather, it means that he obediently followed the path laid out for him, through suffering and the cross.

5:10 See the note on 5:6.

5:11-14 This is a strong rebuke for all who fail to give serious thought to the Word of God in order to learn and grow (see 2Tm 2:15).

5:12 In the ancient world, **milk** and **solid food** was a common metaphor for the difference between basic and advanced teachings.

WARNING AGAINST FALLING AWAY

6 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God, † 2 teaching about ritual washings, † laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. † 3 And we will do this if God permits.

4 For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit, † 5 who tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, 6 and who have fallen away. This is because, † to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding him up to contempt. † 7 For the ground that drinks the rain that often falls on it and that produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and at the end will be burned. †

9 Even though we are speaking this way, dearly loved friends, in your case we are confident of things that are better and that pertain to salvation. 10 For God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love † you demonstrated for his name by serving the saints — and by continuing to serve them. † 11 Now we desire each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the full assurance of your hope until the end, 12 so that you won't become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance. †

INHERITING THE PROMISE

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself: 14 **I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply you.** † † 15 And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham obtained the promise. 16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a confirming oath ends every dispute. 17 Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath, † 18 so that through two unchangeable things, in

which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. † 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. † 20 Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner, † because he has become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. †

6:2 Or *about baptisms* **6:6** Or *while* **6:10** Other mss read *labor of love*

6:1 Php 3:13; Heb 5:12; 9:14 **6:2** Jn 3:25; Ac 6:6; 17:31-32; 19:4-6 **6:4** Gl 3:3; Eph 2:8; Heb 10:32 **6:6** Heb 10:29; 2Pt 2:21; 1Jn 5:16 **6:7-8** Gn 3:17-18; Ps 65:10; Is 5:6 **6:10** Pr 19:17; Mt 10:42; 25:40; 2Co 8:4; 1Th 1:3; 2Tm 1:18 **6:12** Heb 10:36; 13:7 **6:14** Gn 22:17 **6:13-15** Gn 21:5; 22:16-17; Lk 1:73 **6:16-17** Ex 22:11; Heb 11:9 **6:18** Ti 1:2; Heb 12:1 **6:19** Lv 16:2,15; Heb 9:7 **6:20** Heb 4:14; 8:1; 9:24 **6:20** Heb 5:6,10; 7:17

6:1 By exhorting his readers to **leave the elementary teaching about Christ**, he does not mean abandoning such teaching (cp. Col 2:19). Rather, the point is that these believers should be building on this **foundation** instead of remaining stagnant in their understanding.

6:2 Ritual washings refers to baptisms. **Laying on of hands** is associated with blessing (e.g., Mt 19:13,15), healing the sick (e.g., Mk 5:22-23), and ordination for ministry (1Tm 4:14).

6:4-6 Here in some of the most controversial verses in the book, the author warns of falling away. Controversy swirls around whether he describes genuine believers (**who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit**) who fall away, or only people who once appeared to believe. The problem is that reception of the Holy Spirit is regarded as a sign of conversion in the NT. Possibly the author means that some have experienced God's graces (including the influence of the Spirit) through participation in the congregation, but have then fallen away.

6:6 The notion of **recrucifying the Son of God** most likely refers to bringing shame on him through public rejection. That is why it is regarded as **holding him up to contempt.**

6:13,16 In a legal situation, an **oath** is made by appeal to a superior. But since there is **no one greater** than God, he **swore by himself.**

6:18 The **two unchangeable things** are probably the two elements of Psalm 110:4: "You are a priest forever according to the pattern of Melchizedek."

6:19 The **anchor** imagery underscores spiritual security. **The inner sanctuary behind the curtain** refers to the most holy place of the Jewish temple, which was concealed behind a huge curtain (9:3). Only the high priest could enter the inner sanctuary (Lv 16), as it represented the holiest presence of God.

6:20 As **high priest**, **Jesus has entered** the inner sanctuary **on our behalf**, thus providing us permanent access to God's presence.

THE GREATNESS OF MELCHIZEDEK

7 For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, met Abraham and blessed him as he returned from defeating the kings, 2 and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means king of righteousness, then also, king of Salem, meaning king of peace. 3 Without father, mother, or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God, † he remains a priest forever.

4 Now consider how great this man was: even Abraham the patriarch † gave a
tenth of the plunder to him. 5 The sons of Levi who receive the priestly office
have a command according to the law to collect a tenth from the people † —
that is, from their brothers and sisters — though they have also descended from
Abraham. 6 But one without this † lineage collected a tenth from Abraham and
blessed the one who had the promises. † 7 Without a doubt, the inferior is
blessed by the superior. 8 In the one case, men who will die receive a tenth, but
in the other case, Scripture testifies that he lives. † 9 And in a sense Levi
himself, who receives a tenth, has paid a tenth through Abraham, 10 for he was
still within his ancestor † when Melchizedek met him.

A SUPERIOR PRIESTHOOD

11 Now if perfection came through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it
the people received the law †), what further need was there for another priest to
appear, said to be according to the order of Melchizedek and not according to the
order of Aaron? † 12 For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must be
a change of law as well. 13 For the one these things are spoken about belonged
to a different tribe. No one from it has served at the altar. 14 Now it is evident
that our Lord came from Judah, † and Moses said nothing about that tribe
concerning priests.
15 And this becomes clearer if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16 who
did not become a priest based on a legal regulation about physical † descent but
based on the power of an indestructible life. 17 For it has been testified:
You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. † †
18 So the previous command is annulled because it was weak and unprofitable †
19 (for the law perfected † nothing), but a better hope is introduced, through
which we draw near to God. †
20 None of this happened without an oath. For others became priests without an
oath, 21 but he became a priest with an oath made by the one who said to him:
The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind, “You are a priest forever.” † †

22 Because of this oath, Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant. †
23 Now many have become Levitical priests, since they are prevented by death from remaining in office. 24 But because he remains forever, he holds his priesthood permanently. 25 Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede † for them.
26 For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. † 27 He doesn't need to offer sacrifices every day, as high priests do — first for their own sins, then for those of the people. He did this once for all time when he offered himself. †
28 For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak, but the promise of the oath, which came after the law, appoints a Son, † who has been perfected † forever.

7:6 Lit *their* **7:10** Lit *still in his father's loins* **7:16** Or *fleshly*
7:1-3 Gn 14:18-20; Mt 4:3; Mk 5:7; Heb 7:6 **7:4** Gn 14:20; Ac 2:29; 7:8-9 **7:5** Nm 18:21,26; 2Ch 31:4-5 **7:6** Gn 14:19; Rm 4:13 **7:8** Heb 5:6; 6:20 **7:11** Gl 2:21; Heb 7:18-19; 8:7 **7:11** Heb 7:17; 10:1 **7:14** Is 11:1; Mc 5:2; Mt 1:3; Lk 3:33; Rv 5:5 **7:17** Ps 110:4 **7:17** Ps 110:4; Heb 5:6; 6:20; 7:21 **7:18** Rm 8:3; Gl 4:9 **7:19** Ac 13:39; Rm 3:20; Heb 9:9 **7:19** Heb 4:16; 6:18 **7:21** Ps 110:4 **7:21** 1Sm 15:29; Ps 110:4 **7:22** Heb 8:6-10; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20 **7:25** Rm 8:34; Heb 9:24 **7:26** 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15 **7:27** Eph 5:2; Heb 5:1,3; 9:12,28 **7:28** Heb 1:2; 2:10; 5:2,9 **7:28** Php 3:12; Heb 10:14; 11:40

7:1-28 This chapter offers further discussion of the priesthood of Melchizedek (see also 5:6; 7:20; Gn 14:17-20). The main point is that he was superior to Levi (7:4-10); thus, Jesus is a priest superior to those of the old covenant.

7:3 That Melchizedek was **without father** or **mother** means his **genealogy** is not given in Genesis 14.

7:6-10 In the ancient world, a tithe—here **a tenth**—was offered to a superior, or the gods, especially after victory in war. The point here is that **Levi**, a descendent of **Abraham**, paid a tithe through **Abraham** to Melchizedek. Again the author asserts the superiority of Melchizedek over the Levitical priesthood.

7:16 Melchizedek was not a priest through membership in the tribe of Levi; that is, not through the **legal regulation about physical descent.**

7:20-21 Regarding **an oath**, the author cites Psalm 110:4: "The LORD has sworn an oath and will not take it back."

A HEAVENLY PRIESTHOOD

8 Now the main point of what is being said is this: We have this kind of high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, † 2 a minister of the sanctuary and the true tabernacle that was set up by the Lord and not man. † 3 For every high priest is appointed

to offer gifts † and sacrifices; therefore, it was necessary for this priest also to have something to offer. 4 Now if he were on earth, he wouldn't be a priest, since there are those † offering the gifts prescribed by the law. 5 These serve as a copy and shadow † of the heavenly things, as Moses was warned when he was about to complete the tabernacle. For God said, **Be careful that you make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain.** † † 6 But Jesus has now obtained a superior ministry, and to that degree he is the mediator † of a better covenant, † which has been established on better promises. †

A SUPERIOR COVENANT

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one. 8 But finding fault with his people, † he says: †

See, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — 9 **not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.**
I showed no concern for them, says the Lord, because they did not continue in my covenant.
10 **For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds and write them on their hearts.**
I will be their God,
and they will be my people. †
11 **And each person will not teach his fellow citizen,** †
and each his brother or sister, saying, "Know the Lord,"
because they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them. †
12 **For I will forgive their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins.** † † †
13 By saying **a new covenant**, he has declared that the first is obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to pass away. †

8:4 Other mss read *priests* **8:8** Lit *with them* **8:8** Other mss read *finding fault, he says to them* **8:11** Other mss read *neighbor* **8:12** Other mss add *and their lawless deeds*
8:1 Col 3:1; Heb 2:17 **8:2** Ex 33:7; Heb 9:11,24 **8:3** Eph 5:2; Heb 5:1; 9:14 **8:5** Col 2:17; Heb 9:23; 10:1

8:5 Ex 25:40 **8:5** Ex 25:40; Heb 11:7; 12:25 **8:6** Jb 33:23; Is 29:1; Gl 3:19-20; 1Tm 2:5; Heb 9:15; 12:24 **8:6** Heb 7:22; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20 **8:6** Lk 22:20; 2Co 3:6,8 **8:10** Zch 8:8; 2Co 3:3; Heb 10:16 **8:11** Is 54:13; Jn 6:45; 1Jn 2:27 **8:8-12** Jr 31:31-34 **8:12** Jr 31:31-34; Rm 11:27; Heb 10:17 **8:13** 2Co 5:17

8:1 Alluding to Psalm 110:1, a messianic psalm, the author again connects Jesus's kingship to his high priestly activity, in the pattern of Melchizedek (see on 5:6).

8:2 The **tabernacle** was the portable center of old covenant worship where God chose to dwell with his people. It preceded Solomon's temple, a more permanent structure. The **true** tabernacle refers to the heavenly dwelling place of God (8:1,5).

8:5 The **tabernacle** was a type pointing to the heavenly reality it represents. It therefore helps us to understand the nature of God's heavenly dwelling place, while also underscoring the superiority of the **heavenly things**—including the heavenly ministry of Jesus (8:6).

8:8-12 The citation of Jeremiah 31:31-34 demonstrates that the new covenant has long been a part of the plan of God. It was promised within the old covenant itself.

OLD COVENANT MINISTRY

9 Now the first covenant also had regulations for ministry and an earthly
sanctuary. 2 For a tabernacle was set up, and in the first room, which is
called the holy place, were the lampstand, the table, and the presentation
loaves. † 3 Behind the second curtain was a tent called the most holy place. †
4 It had the gold altar of incense and the ark of the covenant, covered with gold
on all sides, in which was a gold jar containing the manna, Aaron's staff that
budded, and the tablets of the covenant. † 5 The cherubim of glory were above
the ark overshadowing the mercy seat. It is not possible to speak about these
things in detail right now. †
6 With these things prepared like this, the priests enter the first room repeatedly,
performing their ministry. † 7 But the high priest alone enters the second room,
and he does that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offers for
himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. † 8 The Holy
Spirit was making it clear that the way into the most holy place had not yet been
disclosed while the first tabernacle was still standing. † 9 This is a symbol for
the present time, during which gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect
the worshiper's conscience. † 10 They are physical regulations and only deal
with food, drink, and various washings imposed until the time of the new
order. †

NEW COVENANT MINISTRY

11 But Christ has appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come. †
In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of
this creation †), 12 he entered the most holy place once for all time, not by the
blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal
redemption. † 13 For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young
cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the
flesh, † 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal
Spirit † offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our † consciences
from dead works so that we can serve the living God? †
15 Therefore, he is the mediator † of a new covenant, † † so that those who are
called might receive the promise † of the eternal inheritance, because a death
has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first
covenant. † 16 Where a will exists, the death of the one who made it must be
established. 17 For a will is valid only when people die, since it is never in effect
while the one who made it is living. 18 That is why even the first covenant was
inaugurated with blood. 19 For when every command had been proclaimed by
Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and
goats, † along with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll
itself and all the people, † 20 saying, **This is the blood of the covenant that
God has ordained for you.** † † 21 In the same way, he sprinkled the tabernacle
and all the articles of worship with blood. † 22 According to the law almost
everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no
forgiveness. †
23 Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be
purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves to be purified
with better sacrifices than these. † 24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made
with hands (only a model † of the true one) but into heaven itself, so that he
might now appear in the presence of God for us. † 25 He did not do this to offer
himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood
of another. † 26 Otherwise, he would have had to suffer many times since the
foundation of the world. But now he has appeared one time, at the end of the

ages, † for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of himself. † 27 And just as it is appointed for people to die once — and after this, judgment † — 28 so also Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, † will appear a second time, † not to bear sin, but † to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. †

9:11 Other mss read *that are to come* **9:14** Other mss read *your* **9:15** The Gk word used here can be translated covenant, will, or testament, also in vv. 16,17,18. **9:19** Some mss omit *and goats* **9:24** Or *antitype*, or *figure* **9:28** Lit *time, apart from sin,*
9:2 Ex 25:8-9,23-39; 26:1; Lv 24:5-8 **9:3** Ex 26:31-33; 40:3 **9:4** Ex 16:33; 25:10,16; 30:1-5; Nm 17:10; Dt 10:2 **9:5** Ex 25:18-19; Lv 16:2 **9:6** Nm 28:3 **9:7** Ex 30:10; Lv 16:15,34; Heb 5:3 **9:8** Jn 14:6; Heb 10:19-20 **9:9** Heb 5:1; 7:19 **9:10** Lv 11:2-3; Col 2:16 **9:11** Heb 2:17; 8:2; 10:1 **9:12** Dn 9:24; Heb 7:27; 10:4 **9:13** Lv 16:14-15; Nm 19:2,9,17-18 **9:14** 1Pt 3:18; 1Jn 1:7 **9:14** Ti 2:14; Heb 6:1; 10:2,22 **9:15** 1Tm 2:5; Heb 8:6; 12:24 **9:15** Jr 31:31-34; 1Co 11:25; 2Co 3:6; Heb 7:22; 8:8; 13:20 **9:15** Gn 12:7; Rm 8:28; Gl 3:19; Heb 4:1 **9:15** Rm 3:25; 5:6 **9:19** Ex 24:6-8; Lv 14:4-6 **9:20** Ex 24:8 **9:20** Ex 24:8; Mt 26:28 **9:21** Ex 29:12; Lv 8:15 **9:22** Lv 17:11 **9:23** Heb 8:5 **9:24** Rm 8:34; Heb 7:25; 8:2 **9:25** Heb 9:7; 10:19 **9:26** Mt 24:3; 28:20; 1Co 10:11 **9:26** Heb 4:3; 7:27 **9:27** Gn 3:19; 2Co 5:10 **9:28** Is 53:12; 1Pt 2:24 **9:28** Mk 8:38; 1Th 4:16 **9:28** Mt 26:28; 1Co 1:7; Ti 2:13

9:3-4 The ark of the covenant was the most important item in the tabernacle, representing the presence of God. It was a wooden chest, overlaid with **gold** inside and out, and contained the two **tablets of the covenant** inscribed with the Ten Commandments.

9:7 This description summarizes the instructions of Leviticus 16 concerning the Day of Atonement.

9:10 The old covenant regulations were never intended to be permanent, but served **until the time of the new order**—the time of the new covenant enacted by Jesus, as the following verses explain (9:11-28).

9:12-14 Just as the author has asserted the superiority of Jesus over the angels, the Levitical priesthood, and old covenant ministry, so **his** . . . **blood** is superior to that of **goats and calves.**

9:25-28 Christ's sacrificial death was a onetime event that need not and cannot be repeated, unlike the ministry of Israel's high priests and the sacrifices they offered for sin.

THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

10 Since the law has only a shadow of the good things † to come, and not the reality itself of those things, it can never perfect the worshipers by the same sacrifices they continually offer year after year. 2 Otherwise, wouldn't they have stopped being offered, since the worshipers, purified once and for all, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in the sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year. 4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

5 Therefore, as he was coming into the world, he said:

You did not desire sacrifice and offering, but you prepared a body for me.

6 **You did not delight in whole burnt offerings and sin offerings.**
7 **Then I said, "See — it is written about me in the scroll — I have come to do your will, O God."** † †
8 After he says above, **You did not desire or delight in sacrifices and offerings, whole burnt offerings and sin offerings** (which are offered according to the law †), 9 he then says, **See, I have come to do your will.** † He takes away the first to establish the second. 10 By this will, we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time. †
11 Every priest stands day after day ministering and offering the same sacrifices time after time, which can never take away sins. † 12 But this man, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. † †
13 He is now waiting until his enemies are made his footstool. † 14 For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified. 15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. For after he says:
16 **This is the covenant I will make with them after those days,**
the Lord says,
I will put my laws on their hearts and write them on their minds, 17 and **I will never again remember their sins** and their lawless acts. † †
18 Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

EXHORTATIONS TO GODLINESS

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus † — 20 he has inaugurated † for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through his flesh †) — 21 and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, † 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. † 23 Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. † 24 And let us watch out for one another to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, † and all the more as you see the day approaching.

WARNING AGAINST DELIBERATE SIN

26 For if we deliberately go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, † 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire about to consume the adversaries. † 28 Anyone who disregarded the law of Moses died without mercy, based on the testimony of two or three witnesses. † 29 How much worse punishment do you think one will deserve who has trampled on the Son of God, who has regarded as profane † the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? † 30 For we know the one who has said,

Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, † †
and again,

The Lord will judge his people. † †

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. †

32 Remember the earlier days when, after you had been enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings. † 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to taunts and afflictions, and at other times you were companions of those who were treated that way. † 34 For you sympathized with the prisoners † and accepted with joy the confiscation of your possessions, because you know that you yourselves have a better and enduring possession. † † 35 So don't throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. † 36 For you need endurance, so that after you have done God's will, you may receive what was promised. †

37 For yet in **a very little while, the Coming One will come and not delay.**

38 **But my righteous one † will live by faith; and if he draws back, I have no pleasure † in him.** † †

39 But we are not those who draw back and are destroyed, but those who have faith and are saved.

10:9 Other mss add *God* **10:12** Or *offering one sacrifice for sins, sat down forever at the right hand of God* **10:20** Or *opened* **10:29** Or *ordinary* **10:30** Other mss add *says the Lord* **10:34** Other mss read *sympathized with my imprisonment* **10:34** Other mss add *in heaven* **10:38** Other mss read *the righteous one* **10:38** Lit *my soul has no pleasure*

10:1 Col 2:17; Heb 8:5; 9:11 **10:5-7** Ps 40:6-8 **10:5-7** Ps 40:6-8; Jr 36:2; Heb 1:6 **10:8** Mk 12:33; Heb 10:5-6 **10:10** Jn 17:19; Heb 7:27; 9:12 **10:11** Nm 28:3; Heb 5:1 **10:12** Rm 8:34; Eph 1:20; Col 3:1; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 12:2; 1Pt 3:22 **10:13** Ps 110:1; Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Lk 20:43; Ac 2:34-35; 1Co 15:25; Heb 1:13 **10:16-17**

Jr 31:33-34 **10:16-17** Jr 31:33-34: Heb 8:10,12 **10:19** Eph 2:18; Heb 9:25 **10:20** Jn 10:9; Heb 9:3,8 **10:21** Heb 2:17; 4:14 **10:22** Ezk 36:25; Heb 9:14 **10:23** 1Co 1:9; Heb 3:6 **10:25** Ac 2:42; Rm 13:11; Heb 3:13 **10:26** Nm 15:30; Dt 17:12; Heb 6:4; 2Pt 2:20-21; 1Jn 5:16 **10:27** Is 26:11; Zph 1:18; 2Th 1:8 **10:28** Dt 17:6; Heb 2:2 **10:29** Mt 12:31-32; Eph 4:30; Heb 6:6 **10:30** Dt 32:35 **10:30** Dt 32:36 **10:30** Dt 32:35-36; Ps 135:14; Rm 12:19 **10:31** Mt 16:16; Lk 12:5 **10:32** Php 1:29-30; Heb 6:4 **10:33** 1Co 4:9; Php 4:14; 1Th 2:14 **10:34** Mt 5:12; 1Pt 1:4-5 **10:35** Heb 2:2; 11:26 **10:36** Lk 21:19; Heb 12:1 **10:37-38** Is 26:20 LXX; Hab 2:3-4 **10:37-38** Hab 2:3-4; Lk 18:8; Rm 1:17; Gl 3:11; Rv 22:20

10:12 Psalm 110:1-4 is the background here, since Jesus offered **one sacrifice for sins** as high priest and then **sat down at the right hand of God**—a messianic reference. Thus, the priesthood of Melchizedek is again invoked, since Jesus is both priest and king (see the notes on 5:6).

10:19 The **sanctuary** is the most holy place, the abode of God's presence. The OT tabernacle was but a shadow of a reality in heaven (9:24; 10:1). The point is that Jesus's blood provides access to God's holy presence.

10:20 As the high priest passed through a **curtain** into the most holy place once a year (Lv 16), so now believers enter God's presence through the **flesh** of Jesus (see also 6:19).

10:22 Sprinkling and washing refer to old covenant purification rituals. In 9:13-14,19-23, the author has already indicated that Christ cleanses our consciences through his blood.

10:24 The term translated **to provoke** can be used positively or negatively. Believers are to stir each other up, to prod one another on to **love and good works.**

10:25 The regular, faithful gathering of believers is foundational to Christian living. In this paragraph it is both a proper response to the great blessings of the gospel (10:19-21) and an antidote to being lured by the world (10:26-31).

10:26-31 The author reminds his readers that there is no salvation to be found in the old covenant system now that **the Son of God** has come. To turn away from Christ is to turn away from salvation.

10:26 Deliberately . . . sinning most likely refers to a settled state of apostasy, in which a person publicly denounces Christ (probably in a context of persecution; 10:32-34). Having rejected Christ, no other **sacrifice for sins** may be found.

10:28 According to Deuteronomy 17:2-7, any who worships other gods must be put to death. Shunning **the law of Moses** is tantamount to rejecting the God of the covenant.

10:29 In Greek and Jewish literature, trampling was an image used to convey utter contempt.

10:32-34 These verses indicate the context for the author's exhortation to persevere: his readers had been **exposed to taunts and afflictions**, suffering persecution for Christ.

LIVING BY FAITH

11 Now faith is the reality † of what is hoped for, the proof † of what is
not seen. † 2 For by it our ancestors won God's approval.
3 By faith we understand that the universe was † created by the word of God, †
so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible. †
4 By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was
approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts, and even though

he is dead, he still speaks through his faith. †
5 By faith Enoch was taken away, and so he did not experience death. **He was not to be found because God took him away.** † For before he was taken away, he was approved as one who pleased God. † 6 Now without faith it is impossible to please God, since the one who draws near to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
7 By faith Noah, after he was warned about what was not yet seen and motivated by godly fear, built an ark to deliver his family. By faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. †
8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed and set out for a place that he was going to receive as an inheritance. He went out, even though he did not know where he was going. † 9 By faith he stayed as a foreigner in the land of promise, living in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, coheirs of the same promise. †
10 For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. †
11 By faith even Sarah herself, when she was unable to have children, received power to conceive offspring, even though she was past the age, since she † considered that the one who had promised was faithful. † 12 Therefore, from one man — in fact, from one as good as dead — came offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and as innumerable as the grains of sand along the seashore. †
13 These all died in faith, although they had not received the things that were promised. But they saw them from a distance, † greeted them, and confessed that they were foreigners and temporary residents on the earth. † 14 Now those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. 15 If they were thinking about where they came from, they would have had an opportunity to return. 16 But they now desire a better place — a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. †
17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. † He received the promises and yet he was offering his one and only son, 18 the one to whom it had been said, **Your offspring † will be traced through Isaac.** † † 19 He

considered God to be able even to raise someone from the dead; † therefore, he received him back, figuratively speaking. †
20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau † concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and **he worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff.** † † 22 By faith Joseph, as he was nearing the end of his life, mentioned † the exodus of the Israelites and gave instructions concerning his bones. †
23 By faith Moses, after he was born, was hidden by his parents for three months, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they didn't fear the king's edict. † 24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter 25 and chose to suffer with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin. † 26 For he considered reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, since he was looking ahead to the reward. †
27 By faith he left Egypt behind, not being afraid of the king's anger, for Moses persevered as one who sees him who is invisible. † 28 By faith he instituted the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn might not touch the Israelites. 29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as though they were on dry land. When the Egyptians attempted to do this, they were drowned. †
30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after being marched around by the Israelites for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the prostitute welcomed the spies in peace and didn't perish with those who disobeyed. †
32 And what more can I say? Time is too short for me to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, † David, Samuel, and the prophets, † 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, † administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, † 34 quenched the raging of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, and put foreign armies to flight. † 35 Women received their dead, raised to life again. Other people were tortured, not accepting release, so that they might gain a better resurrection. 36 Others experienced mockings and scourgings, as well as bonds

and imprisonment. † 37 They were stoned, † † they were sawed in two, they died by the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, † destitute, afflicted, and mistreated. 38 The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and on mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground.
39 All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us. †

11:1 Or *assurance* **11:1** Or *conviction* **11:3** Or *the worlds were*, or *the ages were* **11:3** Or *so that what is seen was made out of what was not visible* **11:11** Or *By faith Abraham, even though he was past age — and Sarah herself was barren — received the ability to procreate since he* **11:18** Lit *seed* **11:19** Or *back, as a foreshadowing*, or *as a type* **11:22** Or *remembered* **11:37** Other mss add *they were tempted,*
11:1 Rm 8:24; 2Co 4:18 **11:3** Gn 1:1; Jn 1:3; 2Pt 3:5 **11:4** Gn 4:4; 1Jn 3:12 **11:5** Gn 5:21-24 **11:5** Gn 5:21-24; 2Kg 2:11 **11:7** Gn 6:13-22; 1Pt 3:20 **11:8** Gn 12:1-4,7; Ac 7:2-4 **11:9** Gn 12:8; 18:1; Ac 7:5; Heb 6:17 **11:10** Heb 12:22; 13:14; Rv 21:2,10,14 **11:11** Gn 17:19; 18:11-14; 21:2 **11:12** Gn 22:17; Rm 4:19 **11:13** Mt 13:17; Jn 8:56; Heb 11:39 **11:13** Gn 23:4; 1Ch 29:15; Ps 39:12; 1Pt 1:17 **11:16** Ex 3:6,15; Mk 8:38; 2Tm 4:18; Heb 13:14 **11:17** Gn 22:1-10; Jms 2:21 **11:18** Gn 21:12 **11:18** Gn 21:12; Rm 9:7 **11:19** Rm 4:17 **11:20** Gn 25:25; 27:26-40 **11:21** Gn 47:31 **11:21** Gn 47:31; 48:1,5,16,20 **11:22** Gn 50:24-25; Ex 13:19 **11:23** Ex 1:16,22; 2:2 **11:24-25** Ex 2:10-11; Ps 84:10 **11:26** Heb 10:35; 13:13 **11:27** Rm 1:20; Col 1:15-16; 1Tm 1:17 **11:29** Ex 14:22-30 **11:31** Jos 2:1; 6:23 **11:32** Jdg 4:6; 11:1; 13:24 **11:32** 1Sm 1:20; 16:1,13 **11:33** 2Sm 7:11; 8:1-3 **11:33** Jdg 14:5-6; 1Sm 17:34-37; Dn 6:22 **11:34** Jdg 15:8; 2Kg 20:7; Dn 3:25 **11:36** Gn 39:20; Jr 20:2 **11:37** 1Kg 21:13; 2Ch 24:20-21 **11:37** 1Kg 19:10; 2Kg 1:8 **11:40** Heb 11:16; Rv 6:11

11:3 This verse is significant for contemporary discussions of creation. It is **by faith** that **we understand** that God created all things. See also "Faith and Reason," *p. 1387;* "A Biblical Basis for Science," *p. 601;* "Methodological Naturalism and the Christian Worldview," *p. 1247.*

11:4 Adam and Eve's son, **Abel**, was murdered by his brother **Cain** (Gn 4:4-12).

11:5 Enoch was transposed from this life without experiencing **death** (Gn 5:24).

11:6 Faith includes belief that God **exists** but also that he **rewards those who seek him.** Faith grasps that serving God is worthwhile. See also "The New Atheism," *p. 656.*

11:7 Noah acted to prepare for the flood (Gn 6:1–9:17), though it **was not yet seen** (11:1).

11:8 Abraham left his country by faith, pursuing God's call to the promised land of Canaan (Gn 12:1-9).

11:13 Being **foreigners and temporary residents on the earth** is a concept found in passages such as Genesis 23:4; 1 Chronicles 29:15; and Psalm 39:12. Since believers live in expectation of their heavenly home, they regard themselves as merely passing through this world.

11:17-19 In faith, **Abraham** obediently offered up **his one and only son** Isaac (Gn 22:1-8). God had promised Abraham many descendants, so his willingness to sacrifice **Isaac** required trust that God could **raise** him **from the dead.**

11:23-29 Moses was especially loved by first-century Jews, many of whom thought him the greatest figure of history. These verses summarize his activities in the narrative of Exodus 2:1–15:27.

11:33-35 Shutting **the mouths of lions** is a reference to the miraculous preservation of Daniel in the lions' den (Dn 6). Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are probably meant as those who **quenched the raging of**

fire (Dn 3:16-30). Prophets such as Elijah, Elisha, and Jeremiah **escaped the edge of the sword.** Women like the widow of Zarephath and the woman of Shunem had sons **raised to life again.**

11:37 Tradition states that the prophet Jeremiah was **stoned** and Isaiah was **sawed in two.**

THE CALL TO ENDURANCE

12 Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses † surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance † the race that lies before us,
2 keeping our eyes on Jesus, † the source and perfecter † of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, † he endured the cross, despising the shame, † and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

FATHERLY DISCIPLINE

3 For consider him who endured such hostility from sinners against himself, so that you won't grow weary and give up. † 4 In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons:

My son, do not take the Lord's discipline lightly or lose heart when you are reproved by him, 6 **for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and punishes every son he receives.** † †

7 Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline — which all receive † — then you are illegitimate children and not sons. †
9 Furthermore, we had human fathers discipline us, and we respected them. Shouldn't we submit even more to the Father of spirits and live? † 10 For they disciplined us for a short time based on what seemed good to them, but he does it for our benefit, so that we can share his holiness. † 11 No discipline seems enjoyable at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it yields the peaceful fruit † of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. †

12 Therefore, strengthen your tired hands and weakened knees, † 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated † but healed instead. †

WARNING AGAINST REJECTING GOD'S GRACE

14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness † — without it no one will see the
Lord. † 15 Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no root
of bitterness springs up, causing trouble and defiling many. † 16 And make sure
that there isn't any immoral † or irreverent † person like Esau, who sold his
birthright in exchange for a single meal. † 17 For you know that later, when he
wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, even though he sought it with
tears, because he didn't find any opportunity for repentance. †
18 For you have not come to what could be touched, to a blazing fire, to
darkness, gloom, and storm, 19 to the blast of a trumpet, and the sound of words.
Those who heard it begged that not another word be spoken to them, 20 for they
could not bear what was commanded: **If even an animal touches the mountain,
it must be stoned.** † † 21 The appearance was so terrifying that Moses said, **I
am trembling with fear.** † † 22 Instead, you have come to Mount Zion, to the
city of the living God (the heavenly Jerusalem), to myriads of angels, a festive
gathering, † 23 to the assembly of the firstborn whose names have been
written † in heaven, to a Judge, who is God of all, to the spirits of righteous
people made perfect, † 24 and to Jesus, the mediator † of a new covenant, †
and to the sprinkled blood, which says better things than the blood of Abel. †
25 See to it that you do not reject the one who speaks. For if they did not escape
when they rejected him who warned them on earth, even less will we if we turn
away from him who warns us from heaven. † 26 His voice shook the earth at
that time, but now he has promised, **Yet once more I will shake not only the
earth but also the heavens.** † † 27 This expression, "Yet once more," indicates
the removal of what can be shaken † — that is, created things — so that what is
not shaken might remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that
cannot be shaken, let us be thankful. By it, we may serve God acceptably, with
reverence and awe, † 29 for our God is a consuming fire. †

12:2 Or *us, looking to Jesus* **12:2** Or *the founder and completer,* or *pioneer and perfecter* **12:2** Or *who instead of the joy lying before him* **12:8** Lit *discipline, of which all have become participants* **12:13** Or *so that the lame will not be turned aside* **12:16** Or *sexually immoral* **12:23** Or *registered*

12:1 Heb 11:2,4-5,39 **12:1** 1Co 9:24; Heb 10:36 **12:2** Lk 24:26; Php 2:8-9; Heb 13:13 **12:3** Mt 10:24; Gl 6:9 **12:6** Pr 3:11-12 **12:5-6** Jb 5:17; Ps 94:12; Pr 3:11-12; Rv 3:16 **12:7-8** Dt 8:5; 1Pt 5:9 **12:9** Nm 16:22; Is 38:16 **12:10** Lv 11:44; 2Pt 1:4 **12:11** Is 32:17; Jms 3:17-18 **12:11** 1Pt 1:6 **12:12** Jb 4:3-4; Is 35:3 **12:13** Pr

4:26; Gl 6:1 **12:14** Rm 6:22; 14:19 **12:14** Mt 5:8; 2Co 7:1 **12:15** 2Co 6:1; Gl 5:4; Heb 3:12; 10:39 **12:16** 1Tm 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; 2Tm 2:16 **12:16** Gn 25:33 **12:17** Gn 27:34-38 **12:20** Ex 19:12 **12:18-20** Ex 19:12-13,18; 20:18-21; Dt 4:11; 5:5,25 **12:21** Dt 9:19 **12:21** Dt 9:19 **12:22** Gl 4:26; Heb 11:10 **12:23** Ps 94:2; Lk 10:20; Php 3:12 **12:24** 1Tm 2:5; Heb 7:22; 8:6; 9:15 **12:24** 1Co 11:25; 2Co 3:6; Heb 13:20 **12:24** Gn 4:10; Heb 11:4 **12:25** Heb 2:2-4; 8:5; 11:7 **12:26** Hg 2:6 **12:26** Ex 19:18; Hg 2:6 **12:27** 1Co 7:31; 2Pt 3:10 **12:28** Dn 2:44; Heb 13:15 **12:29** Dt 4:24; 2Th 1:8

12:1 The **cloud of witnesses** is the list of OT saints just mentioned. Cloud imagery is used in classical literature to refer to a large group of people. In light of their faithfulness when they had seen only the shadows, how can we, who have seen the fulfillment, not press on in faith as well?

12:2 Crucifixion, with its mix of humiliation, mockery, and torture, was a shameful form of capital punishment in the Roman world. **Despising the shame** means that Jesus thought little of the shame he suffered on the cross, looking beyond it to **the joy that lay before him.**

12:7 The perspective on **suffering** seen here (and throughout 12:1-11) runs entirely counter to the so-called prosperity gospel. Believers are told to expect suffering and to trust that God will use it for our good (cp. Rm 8:28). See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580.*

12:9-10 The use of fatherly **discipline** as an analogy for divine discipline offers insight into our relationship with the **Father of spirits**, God. While human discipline can fail or be misguided, done well it lays a foundation for understanding God as Father.

12:14-17 As in chapters 3–4, this is an exhortation to believers to help one another to persevere. Faithfulness is a community project, and believers are not expected to be able to make it alone.

12:18-21 Though not mentioned by name, Mount Sinai is clearly in view. Its description comes from Exodus 19–20 and Deuteronomy 4–5. Mount Sinai symbolizes the old covenant, contrasted with the new covenant, which is symbolized by Mount Zion (12:22).

12:22 Mount Zion and the **city** of **Jerusalem** are closely associated in the OT.

12:24 After he was killed by Cain, Abel's blood "cried out" to God from the ground for justice (Gn 4:10). While Abel's blood sought justice, the **blood** of **Jesus** declares that sin has been justly dealt with.

FINAL EXHORTATIONS

13 Let brotherly love † continue. 2 Don't neglect to show hospitality, for
by doing this some have welcomed angels as guests without knowing
it. † 3 Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them, and
the mistreated, † as though you yourselves were suffering bodily. † 4 Marriage
is to be honored by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will
judge the sexually immoral and adulterers. † 5 Keep your life free from the love
of money. Be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, **I will never leave you or abandon you.** † † 6 Therefore, we may boldly say,
The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me? † †

7 Remember your leaders who have spoken God’s word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. † 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. † 9 Don’t be led astray by various kinds of strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be established by grace and not by food regulations, since those who observe them have not benefited. † 10 We have an altar from which those who worship at the tabernacle do not have a right to eat. † 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high priest † as a sin offering are burned outside the camp. † 12 Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, † so that he might sanctify † the people by his own blood. 13 Let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing his disgrace. † 14 For we do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come. † 15 Therefore, through him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. † 16 Don’t neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices. † 17 Obey your leaders † and submit to them, since they keep watch † over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. 18 Pray for us, for we are convinced that we have a clear conscience, wanting to conduct ourselves honorably in everything. † 19 And I urge you all the more to pray † that I may be restored to you very soon.

BENEDICTION AND FAREWELL

20 Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead our Lord Jesus — the great Shepherd of the sheep † — through the blood of the everlasting covenant, † 21 equip † you with everything good to do his will, working in us what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. † † Amen.

22 Brothers and sisters, I urge you to receive this message of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. 23 Be aware that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon enough, he will be with me when I see you. 24 Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who are from Italy send you greetings. 25 Grace be with you all. †

13:3 Or *tortured* **13:3** Or *mistreated, since you are also in a body* **13:12** Or *set apart,* or *consecrate* **13:17** Or *rulers* **13:19** Lit *to do this* **13:21** Or *perfect* **13:21** Other mss omit *and ever*
13:1 Rm 12:10; 1Pt 1:22 **13:2** Gn 18:3; Mt 25:35 **13:3-4** Mt 25:36; 1Co 6:9 **13:5** Dt 31:6 **13:5** Dt 31:6,8; Jos 1:5; Php 4:11 **13:6** Ps 118:6 **13:6** Ps 27:1; 56:4,11; 118:6 **13:7** Heb 6:12; 13:17,24 **13:8** Jn 8:58; Heb 1:12 **13:9** Eph 4:14; Col 2:16 **13:10** 1Co 9:13; 10:18 **13:11** 1Co 9:13; 10:18 **13:11** Ex 29:14; Lv 16:27 **13:12** Jn 19:17; Ac 7:58 **13:13** Heb 11:26; 1Pt 4:14 **13:14** Mc 3:10; Heb 12:22 **13:15** Lv 7:12; Hs 14:2; Eph 5:20 **13:16** Rm 12:13; Php 4:18 **13:17** Is 62:6; Ezk 3:17; Ac 20:28 **13:18** Ac 23:1; 1Th 5:25 **13:20** Jn 10:11; Ac 2:24; Rm 15:33 **13:20** Zch 9:11; Heb 7:22; 8:6-10; 9:15; 12:24 **13:21** Rm 11:36; Php 2:13; 1Pt 5:10 **13:22-25** Ac 16:1; Col 4:18; 1Th 3:2; Heb 13:7,17; 1Pt 5:12

13:2 In the ancient world, **hospitality** typically involved inviting strangers into one's home, caring for them, and meeting their needs. Ancient inns, full of prostitutes and thieves, were often unsuitable lodging for believers. In Christian contexts, hospitality often meant caring for traveling preachers (see 3Jn 5–8). Hospitality was highly valued by Jewish and Greco-Roman society. See also "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

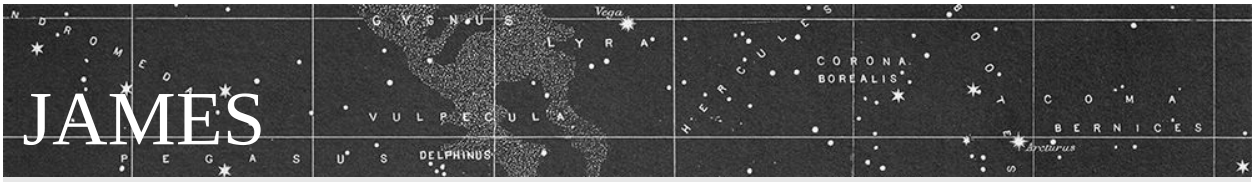
13:4 The Greek term translated **the sexually immoral** refers to anyone engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage. In the pagan world, men were expected to take mistresses, and faithfulness to one's spouse was regarded as unreasonable. See also "Purpose and Parameters of Sexual Relations," *p. 1397*.

13:5 The danger of **the love of money** is a prevalent biblical theme (see, e.g., 1Tm 6:10). The antidote is contentment in Christ.

13:7 The consistent NT pattern is that leadership in the church involves both the teaching of Scripture and the practical modeling of faithfulness.

13:9-16 Here we see another warning not to be drawn back into the observance of ceremonies linked to old covenant Judaism. All things are now seen through the lens of Christ, who is the substance to which all the former things pointed.

13:17 The task of **leaders** is to **watch over** the souls of their people—guarding and caring for them. For this task they will be held accountable before God.



JAMES

INTRODUCTION

The book of James is a wonderful companion piece to the teachings of Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels. James has a strong ethical emphasis that is consistent with the moral teachings Jesus gave to his disciples. James also mirrors the sometimes harsh denunciations that Jesus spoke against religious hypocrisy. Like Jesus's teachings, the book of James is both a source of exhortation and comfort, reproof and encouragement. Finally, James is known for being extremely practical, yet it contains some of the most profound theological truths of the New Testament.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: James is named as the author in 1:1. A number of NT personalities were named James, but only three are candidates for the authorship of this book. James the son of Zebedee died in AD 44, too early to have been the author. No tradition names James the son of Alphaeus (Mk 3:18) as the author. This leaves James the brother of Jesus, also called James the Just (Mk 6:3; Ac 1:14; 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1Co 15:7; Gl 2:9,12), as the most likely candidate.

This James is identified as the brother of Jesus in Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; and Galatians 1:19. Though he was not a follower of Christ during his earthly ministry (Jn 7:3-5), a post-resurrection appearance convinced James that Jesus is indeed the Christ (Ac 1:14; 1Co 15:7). James later led the Jerusalem church (Gl 2:9,12), exercising great influence there (Ac 1:14; 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; 1Co 15:7; Gl 2:9,12).

BACKGROUND: James was probably written between AD 48 and 52, though nothing in the epistle suggests a more precise date. James's death in AD 62 or 66 means the epistle was written before this time. Similarities to Gospel traditions and Pauline themes are suggestive. If Mark was written around AD 65 and time is allowed for the events of Acts 15 and 21 to have occurred between Paul's first and second missionary journeys, a date between AD 48 and 52 seems most likely.

James led the Jerusalem church. The reference to "the twelve tribes dispersed abroad" (1:1) suggests the letter was written to Jewish Christians living outside of Israel. The reference to a synagogue in 2:2 also suggests that his audience were Jewish Christians. References to their circumstances (e.g., oppression by wealthy landowners; 5:1-6) could refer to congregations anywhere in the Roman Empire. However, Semitic word order, quotations from the Septuagint, and the overall dependence of the letter on the Jewish wisdom tradition suggest a specifically Jewish Christian audience.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

James continually called for obedience to the law of God. He never referred to the ceremonial law, but to the moral law. While some people think James is at odds with Paul about the Christian's relationship to the law, both authors actually combine to give us a solid understanding of the OT law. Paul showed believers that Christ met the demands of the law and, thus, brings us to salvation. James showed believers that their obedience to God's moral standards is an indication of a living faith, which is a life lived in step with the one who met the demands of the law. Some choose to oversimplify the distinctions between the OT and the NT and say the OT is grounded in works and the NT is grounded in faith, but James brings both testaments together to show that faith and works are integrally related in both the old and new covenants.

STRUCTURE

The book of James is a letter (an epistle), though only the greeting conforms to the ancient Greek form exemplified in Paul's letters, especially Galatians. The greeting identifies the author as James, includes a title demonstrating the source of his authority ("a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"), names the recipients ("the twelve tribes dispersed abroad"), and conveys "Greetings" (1:1). Letters were often used as a means of spurring the recipients to a change in behavior or belief based on the authoritative word and guidance of the sender.

The book of James has been compared to OT Wisdom literature. While there are wisdom elements in James, such as comparing the wisdom of the world with the wisdom that comes from God, it also contains exhortations and prophetic elements not common to Wisdom literature.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is good and the Father of his redeemed children. James often calls him "the Lord," evidently parallel to the OT usage of "the Lord" (Yahweh), in particular calling him "the Lord of Hosts" (5:4). Jesus is mentioned only twice (1:1; 2:1), which contributes to the distinctive OT feel to this book. The indwelling Spirit is described as yearning jealously (4:5).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

James had a realistic—some would say pessimistic—view of the effects of sin in human life. The rich oppress the poor; temptation is a constant danger; all persons are possessed by an evil tongue. Even believers can be called "adulterous" (4:4) for being too friendly with the evil world, like the people of Israel who "prostituted themselves with other gods" (Jdg 2:17). The advice James offered was to submit to God's sovereign goodness, to seek to live a life of true religion, and to do good deeds.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

God saves through the action of "the implanted word" (1:21), bringing the response of faith. While Paul emphasized that faith alone saves, James emphasized that saving faith is never alone. For Paul, justification is a legal declaration of righteousness before God. James, however, used justification in the sense of being righteous before people. Thus he can say, "You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone" (2:24). Good works are open to observation by others, faith is not; therefore, good works make faith visible. Good works are never the root cause of salvation, but they are always the fruit (result) of salvation.

JAMES TIMELINE

2100–900 BC

Job **2100–1900?**

Abraham **2166–1991**

The Mosaic Law at Sinai **1446**
Rahab supports the conquest of Jericho. **1406**
Much of Proverbs is written. **970–931**

900 BC–AD 33

Elijah's ministry **862–852 BC**
The Book of Wisdom **220–50 BC?**
The deuterocanonical book of Ecclesiasticus **180 BC**
Jesus's trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14–16** or **APRIL 3–5, AD 33**
Following his resurrection, Jesus appears to James his brother. **AD 33**

AD 33–44

Pentecost **33**
Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER, 34**
Paul meets with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem following his conversion. **37?**
James becomes leader of the church at Jerusalem. **44**
Execution of James, son of Zebedee, by Herod Agrippa **44**

AD 44-330

The Letter of James **48–52**
Martyrdom of James half brother of Jesus **62**
Destruction of Jerusalem **70**
Origen quotes James in his commentary on the Gospel of John. **230**
Eusebius refers to the Letter of James as Scripture. **330**

GREETING

1 James, † a servant of God † and of the Lord Jesus Christ: To the twelve tribes † dispersed abroad. † †
Greetings. †

TRIALS AND MATURITY

2 Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, † 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.

5 Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God — who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly — and it will be given to him. † 6 But let him ask in faith without doubting. † For the doubter is like the surging sea, driven and

tossed by the wind. [7] That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord, [8] being double-minded and unstable in all his ways. † †

[9] Let the brother of humble circumstances boast in his exaltation, [10] but let the rich boast in his humiliation because he will pass away like a flower of the field. † [11] For the sun rises and, together with the scorching wind, dries up the grass; its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way, the rich person will wither away while pursuing his activities. †

[12] Blessed is the one who endures trials, because when he has stood the test he will receive the crown † of life that God † has promised to those who love him. †

[13] No one undergoing a trial should say, "I am being tempted by God," since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn't tempt anyone. [14] But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. †

[15] Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death. †

[16] Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. † [17] Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. † [18] By his own choice, he gave us birth by the word of truth so that we would be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. †

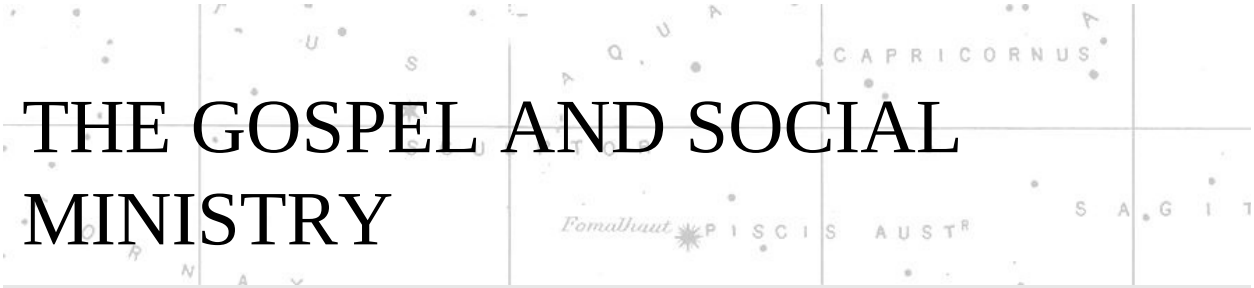
HEARING AND DOING THE WORD

[19] My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, † [20] for human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness. [21] Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, † humbly receive the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. †

[22] But † be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. [23] Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face † in a mirror. [24] For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. [25] But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a

forgetful hearer but a doer who works — this person will be blessed in what he does. †

26 If anyone † thinks he is religious without controlling his tongue, † his religion is useless and he deceives himself.



THE GOSPEL AND SOCIAL MINISTRY

Social ministry is generally defined by its aim to provide assistance to those with physical or social needs, whether in the form of food, shelter, emotional or mental health care, family life support, and advocacy for social justice. The Scriptures and church tradition point to the centrality of social ministry as evidence of the power of the gospel at work in human lives. While the church throughout its history has debated about and vacillated between an emphasis on social ministry or an emphasis on preaching and evangelism, Jesus's teaching and his works of service suggest that both preaching and social ministries are central to the gospel. What Jesus taught, what Jesus did, and the tradition of the church attest to what has become known as the integral mission of the church.

JESUS AND SOCIAL MINISTRY

The bookends of Jesus's teaching frame the importance and centrality of social ministry in the gospel. Jesus announced his mission at the inauguration of his public ministry in the synagogue through a reading from the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Lk 4:18-19).

By using this text, Jesus asserted that God's purpose through Christ is wholeness and healing in body, soul, and spirit through the coming kingdom of God. Jesus announced that because of his coming the poor will be blessed, the blind will see, the lame will walk, and relationships will be restored. The worldwide impact of Jesus's coming was not only the promise of a future spiritual kingdom but an effect on the present realities of the broken human condition. Jesus said that if his followers would believe in him, even greater things would be done (Jn 14:12).

At the conclusion of Jesus's earthly ministry and just prior to ascending into heaven, Jesus instructed the disciples about what their mission, and the mission of all future disciples, was to be: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20).

Being a follower of Christ means that we should do what Jesus did, commit to his purpose, and invite others to join us in observing what he taught. Following Jesus is costly and strenuous. His teaching was unambiguous as he drew a distinction between true discipleship and simple assent to a religious teaching. The gospel that Jesus proclaimed from beginning to end addressed the concrete realities of the present world as well as the spiritual hope for all eternity.

Jesus teaches us to pay careful attention to all aspects of our social relationships. The Sermon on the Mount speaks to a wide range of social issues: forgiveness, anger, broken relationships, divorce, truthfulness, responses to evil, love for friends and enemies, almsgiving, use of wealth, anxiety, and social

justice. All of these issues can be addressed through social ministries offered through the church or other faith-based organizations.

Much of Jesus's teaching came in the form of stories or parables that direct our attention to the fact that God cares about the everyday matters of human existence. They speak to spiritual wholeness and faithfulness, but they also concern themselves with various challenges of human relationships in the present world. Jesus describes his kingdom as a place where justice and righteousness prevail: good seed bears fruit; lost sheep, coins, and sons are restored; faithful stewardship is compensated; issues of wealth and poverty are explored; labor practices are examined; and helping the downtrodden is rewarded. The examples that Jesus gave of what the kingdom would be like are not mere abstractions but concrete ways he is calling us to live. Social ministries help the church to address the concerns of human relationships in practical and tangible ways.

The example of Jesus's life and ministry reinforces the teachings of Jesus and demonstrates the significance of social ministry as a central aspect of the gospel. What Jesus did with his time and energy emphasized engagement with people, especially those who lived on the margins of society. Jesus experienced the hardships of homelessness, alienation, hunger, betrayal, and physical pain. This allowed him to be a sympathetic Savior (Heb 4:15).

The first-century world was amazed by what Jesus did. His public ministry focused on healing the sick, feeding the hungry, reconciling outcasts to the community, loving the poor, challenging the wealthy, touching the leprous, condemning religious hypocrites, eating with prostitutes and tax collectors, confronting the powerful, and restoring mental health. He defied societal and cultural structures and belief systems that created oppressive conditions. Simple conversations with people, such as the Samaritan woman, tax collectors, those with leprosy, and children violated cultural norms and aroused the antipathy of those who would keep oppressive systems in place.

Clearly, Jesus's expectations for his followers included acts of kindness, advocacy for social justice, and demolition of social barriers that marginalized groups of people. His invitation to the disciples was to do what he did, to follow him, in demonstrating the love and mercy of God—especially to people who might not otherwise experience a compassionate and hospitable world. His miraculous works served to show the consistency with his character and message confirming his teachings by meeting concrete human needs as well as bearing witness to his deity. Jesus taught that those who will be invited to inherit the kingdom are those who have demonstrated the same character and message by engaging in social ministries like feeding the hungry, visiting the prisoners, and offering hospitality to strangers (Mt 25:31-46).

THE EARLY CHURCH AND SOCIAL MINISTRY

The church was notable from its inception for the radical nature of her social relationships and ministry. In Acts 2 and 4, Luke, with a sense of awe, highlights the nature of the church as a place of continual fellowship, teaching, and prayer. Participants were inspired to sell property and possessions and share with all so no one had need of anything. The resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the church allowed the work and ministry of Jesus to continue through the lives of those who believed. The social ministry of the church in the early centuries drew attention to the transformative power of the gospel to shape relationships among people. Rather than an entirely spiritualized, other-worldly religion, the Christian faith promised eternal life that changed how people lived in the present.

The church in its earliest history became known for its array of social ministries to care for the poor, the ill, and outcasts. The Cappadocian Fathers established the first institutions of social ministry. Hospitals and other refuges provided care for those who suffered while simultaneously offering the presence and power of God for all eternity through their teaching and preaching. In the centuries following, Christians have been noted for establishing orphanages, schools, hospitals, and refuges as well as advocating for social justice for those who are oppressed.

In the twentieth century, Dietrich Bonhoeffer asserted that one cannot understand and preach the gospel concretely enough. He gave his life in the battle against the oppression of the Nazi regime much like other

Christians in other times and places have done to advance the cause of the gospel in the face of social injustice. Present-day followers of Christ continue to provide leadership in all kinds of social ministry as churches and faith-based organizations around the world fight poverty and injustice in myriad ways as part of the compelling mission and message of the gospel.

CONCLUSION

Social ministry is not an addendum to the traditional evangelistic mission of the church. It reflects the character and purpose of God to establish justice and righteousness. Jesus considered the concrete, physical realities of this world so important that he entered into it and spent his time healing the suffering. Physical conditions did matter to Jesus—the purpose of the gospel was to break the power of suffering and to bring healing and reconciliation to all aspects of human brokenness. Jesus came for those who need help. Social ministry affords an opportunity to embrace the whole gospel and the mission of Jesus himself as announced in Luke 4.

MARY ANNE POE

27 Pure and undefiled religion before God the Father is this: to look after orphans and widows † in their distress and to keep oneself unstained from the world. †

1:1 Gk *diaspora* ; Jewish people scattered throughout Gentile lands **1:6** Or *without divided loyalties* **1:8** Or *in all his conduct* **1:12** Other mss read *that the Lord* **1:21** Or *the abundance of evil* **1:23** Or *at his natural face* **1:26** Other mss add *among you*

1:1 Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Ac 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; Gl 1:19; 2:9,12; Jd 1 **1:1** Ac 16:17; Rm 1:1; Eph 6:6; Jms 1:1; 1Pt 2:16; Rv 1:1 **1:1** Gn 49:28; Ex 24:4; Ezk 47:13; Mt 19:28; Ac 26:7; Rv 21:12 **1:1** Jn 7:35; 1Pt 1:1 **1:1** Ti 1:1 **1:2** Mt 5:12; 1Pt 1:6 **1:5** 1Kg 3:9; Pr 2:3-6; Mt 7:7 **1:8** Jms 4:8; 2Pt 2:14 **1:10** 1Co 7:31; 1Pt 1:24 **1:11** Ps 102:4,11; Is 40:7 **1:12** 1Co 9:25; 2Tm 4:8; 1Pt 5:4; Rv 2:10; 3:11 **1:12** Mt 10:22; Jms 2:5 **1:14** Pr 7:6-23 **1:15** Jb 15:35; Ps 7:14; Is 59:4; Rm 6:23 **1:16** 1Co 6:9; Jms 1:19 **1:17** Nm 23:19; Mal 3:6; Jn 3:27; 1Jn 1:5 **1:18** Jn 1:13; Eph 1:12 **1:19** Pr 10:19; 17:27; Ec 5:1-2 **1:21** Eph 1:13; 4:22; Col 3:8 **1:22-25** Mt 7:24-27; Rm 2:13; Jms 2:14-20 **1:25** Jn 13:17; Jms 2:12 **1:26** Ps 34:13; 39:1; 141:3; Jms 3:2-3; 1Pt 3:10 **1:27** Jb 31:17; Is 1:17,23; Mt 25:36 **1:27** Rm 12:2; 1Jn 5:18

1:2-4 These verses directly contradict the assumptions of popular teachers today who claim that nothing bad will happen when we obey God. See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580;* "Illness and a Christian Worldview," *p 646.*

1:5 Wisdom is the ability to understand life according to the fear of God (Pr 1:7). King Solomon famously asked God for wisdom, and it was granted to him (2Ch 1:7-12).

1:6 Believers can **ask** for wisdom **in faith without doubting** because the Scriptures tell us God will give us wisdom. We cannot ask with such certainty for things that God has not promised. We must trust God's love and wisdom to do what is best. Doubt refers to a conflict of loyalties.

1:12 The **crown of life** draws on the image of a crown awarded to victorious athletes (1Co 9:25). James points to the reward of everlasting life **promised to those who love** God.

1:13 While God does put people under trial, or a period of testing (Gn 22:1), he never tempts anyone to sin.

1:14 James affirms personal responsibility for sin rather than blaming others, even God, for it.

1:17 God is **the Father of lights**, meaning the Creator of the heavens, including the sun, moon, planets,

and stars (Gn 1:16; Ps 136:7-9; Jr 31:35).

1:18 Birth refers to spiritual conversion, and it was an essential element of Jesus's teaching (Jn 3:3). Peter, as James does here, connects spiritual birth to the **word** of God (1Pt 1:23).

1:21-22 If the **word** is indeed received and planted in us, it will result in action: obedience. If such action does not result, then we are **deceiving** ourselves, assuming we have received **the word** though we have not.

1:23-24 The analogy of a **mirror** implies that the word reflects back to us **what kind of** people we are. That is, the word reveals our true selves as we encounter its truth.

1:26 Today the adjective **religious** is often regarded negatively. Here it refers to the visible lifestyle of one who knows God.

1:27 Orphans and widows were particularly vulnerable in the ancient world since they lacked family support and there was no social safety net to help them. Caring for those in particular need is a consistent biblical ethic. An ancient Jewish writing, *Sirach*, stated, "Be a father to orphans, and be like a husband to their mother; you will then be like a son of the Most High" (4:10). See also "Christian Worldview, the Great Commandment, and the Christian Life," *p. 1181*.

THE SIN OF FAVORITISM

2 My brothers and sisters, do not show favoritism as you hold on to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. † 2 For if someone comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and a poor person dressed in filthy clothes also comes in, 3 if you look with favor on the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here in a good place," and yet you say to the poor person, "Stand over there," or "Sit here on the floor by my footstool," 4 haven't you made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Didn't God choose the poor in this world † to be rich in faith † and heirs † of the kingdom that he has promised to those who love him? 6 Yet you have dishonored the poor. † Don't the rich oppress you and drag † you into court? 7 Don't they blaspheme the good name that was invoked over you? †

8 Indeed, if you fulfill the royal law prescribed in the Scripture, **Love your neighbor as yourself**, † † you are doing well. 9 If, however, you show favoritism, † you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the entire law, and yet stumbles at one point, is guilty of breaking it all. † 11 For he who said, **Do not commit adultery**, † also said, **Do**

not murder. † † So if you do not commit adultery, but you murder, you are a lawbreaker.

12 Speak and act as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom. † 13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has not shown mercy. † Mercy triumphs over judgment.

FAITH AND WORKS

14 What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can such faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed," but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it? † 17 In the same way faith, if it doesn't have works, is dead by itself.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." † Show me your faith without works, and I will show you faith by my works. † 19 You believe that God is one. Good! Even the demons believe — and they shudder. †

20 Senseless person! Are you willing to learn that faith without works is useless? 21 Wasn't Abraham our father justified by works in offering Isaac his son on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was made complete, † 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, **Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness**, † † and he was called God's friend. † 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 In the same way, wasn't Rahab the prostitute also justified by works in receiving the messengers and sending them out by a different route? † 26 For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

2:18 The quotation may end here or after v. 18b or v. 19.
2:1 Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17; Ac 10:34; Rm 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25 **2:5** Jb 34:19; 1Co 1:27 **2:5** Lk 12:21; Rv 2:9 **2:5** Rm 4:13-14; 8:17; Gl 3:29; 4:7; Ti 3:7; Heb 1:2; 11:7 **2:6** 1Co 11:22 **2:6** Ac 8:3; 17:6; 18:12 **2:7** Is 63:19; 65:1; Am 9:12; Ac 15:17 **2:8** Lv 19:18 **2:8** Lv 19:18; Mt 22:39 **2:9** Lv 19:15; Dt 1:17; Ac 10:34; Rm 2:11; Eph 6:9; Col 3:25 **2:10** Mt 5:10; Gl 3:10 **2:11** Ex 20:14; Dt 5:18 **2:11** Ex 20:13; Dt 5:17 **2:11** Ex 20:13-14; Dt 5:17-18 **2:12** Mt 7:12,24-29; 19:17-21; 22:36-40; 28:20 **2:13** Jb 22:6; Pr 21:13; Mt 5:7; 18:32-35 **2:14-16** Mt 25:35-36; Lk 3:11; 1Jn 3:16-18 **2:18** Rm 3:28; Heb 11:33; Jms 3:13 **2:19** Dt 6:4; Mt 8:29; Lk 4:34 **2:21-22** Gn 22:9; 1Th 1:3; Heb 11:17 **2:23** Gn 15:6 **2:23** Gn 15:6; Rm 4:3; Gl 3:6 **2:23** 2Ch 20:7; Is 41:8 **2:25** Jos 2:4,6,15; Heb 11:31

2:5 The OT clearly reveals God's heart for **the poor.** Those without material wealth often show great faith, since they cannot rely on their own resources but must trust God. Conversely, the rich are tempted to trust in their own security.

2:6 In the first century the wealthy took advantage of **the poor** by suppressing wages and other unjust tactics.

2:8-9 As elsewhere in the NT, the fundamental Christian ethic is **love.** James shows that love forbids **favoritism.** The passage does not denigrate wealth, but criticizes any show of favoritism to the wealthy.

2:14-19 James argues that real **faith** produces **works.** Thus, if works are absent, true faith is absent and genuine conversion has not occurred.

2:20-26 Paul uses the same OT text (Gn 15:6) to argue that we are saved by faith, not works (Rm 4:1-5). Paul and James are arguing different points. Paul insists we cannot earn our salvation by good works. James is arguing that salvation will always impact how we live, with true faith generating good works. Without works, faith is proved ungenuine.

CONTROLLING THE TONGUE

3 Not many should become teachers, my brothers, † because you know
that we will receive a stricter judgment. † 2 For we all stumble in many
ways. † If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is mature, able
also to control the whole body. † 3 Now if we put bits into the mouths of horses
so that they obey us, † we direct their whole bodies. 4 And consider ships:
Though very large and driven by fierce winds, they are guided by a very small
rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. 5 So too, though the tongue is a
small part of the body, it boasts great things. † Consider how a small fire sets
ablaze a large forest. 6 And the tongue is a fire. The tongue, a world of
unrighteousness, is placed † among our members. It stains the whole body, †
sets the course of life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. 7 Every kind of
animal, bird, reptile, and fish is tamed and has been tamed by humankind, 8 but
no one can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. † 9 With
the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are
made in God's likeness. † 10 Blessing and cursing come out of the same mouth.
My brothers and sisters, these things should not be this way. 11 Does a spring
pour out sweet and bitter water from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree
produce olives, my brothers and sisters, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can
a saltwater spring yield fresh water.

THE WISDOM FROM ABOVE

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? By his good conduct he should
show that his works are done in the gentleness that comes from wisdom. †
14 But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and
deny the truth. † 15 Such wisdom does not come down from above but is
earthly, unspiritual, demonic. † 16 For where there is envy and selfish ambition,
there is disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first
pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits,
unwavering, without pretense. † 18 And the fruit of righteousness † is sown in
peace by those who cultivate peace.

3:1 Or *brothers and sisters* **3:6** Or *places itself*, or *appoints itself*

3:1 Mt 23:8; Rm 2:20-21; 1Tm 1:7 **3:2** 1Kg 8:46; Pr 20:9; Jms 2:10 **3:2** Mt 12:37; Jms 1:26; 1Pt 3:10 **3:3** Ps 32:9; 39:1 **3:5** Ps 12:3-4; 73:8-9 **3:6** Ps 120:2-3; Pr 16:27; Mt 15:11,18 **3:8** Ps 140:3; Ec 10:11; Rm 3:13 **3:9** Gn 1:26; 1Co 11:7 **3:13** Jms 1:21; 2:18 **3:14** Rm 2:8; 13:13; 2Co 12:20 **3:15** 2Th 2:9; 1Tm 4:1; Jms 1:17; Rv 2:24 **3:17** Lk 6:36; Rm 12:9; 1Co 2:6; Heb 12:11; Jms 2:4 **3:18** Pr 11:18; Is 32:17; Hs 10:12; Am 6:12; Gl 6:8; Php 1:11

3:1 An occupational hazard for **teachers** is that they must talk often, and humans struggle to be consistently careful and appropriate with their words (Pr 10:19).

3:2 Avoiding sins of speech is a difficulty acknowledged by Jewish authors such as Sirach and Philo: "Who has never sinned with his tongue?" (Sir 19:16). James, under inspiration, may have been responding to and enhancing their insights.

3:9 See "*Imago Dei* and the Distinctiveness of Humans," *p. 27.*

3:13 Wisdom is shown by our actions, as is faith (2:14-26).

PROUD OR HUMBLE

4 What is the source of wars and fights among you? Don't they come
from your passions † that wage war within you? † 2 You desire and do
not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and wage
war. † You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and don't receive
because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your
pleasures. †

4 You adulterous people! † Don't you know that friendship with the world is
hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the friend of the world becomes
the enemy of God. † 5 Or do you think it's without reason that the Scripture
says: The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely? † †

6 But he gives greater grace. Therefore he says:

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. † †

7 Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. †
8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. † 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. †
10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.
11 Don't criticize one another, brothers and sisters. Anyone who defames or judges a fellow believer † defames and judges the law. If you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. † 12 There is one lawgiver and judge † who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you to judge your neighbor? †

OUR WILL AND GOD'S WILL

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit." † 14 Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring — what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. †
15 Instead, you should say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."
16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. † 17 So it is sin to know the good and yet not do it. †

4:1 Or *war in your members* **4:2** Or *You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and wage war.* **4:4** Lit *Adulteresses* **4:5** Or *Scripture says: He jealously yearns for the spirit he made to live in us?*, or *Scripture says: The Spirit he made to dwell in us longs jealously?* **4:11** Or *his brother or sister* **4:12** Other mss omit *and judge*
4:1 Rm 7:23; Ti 3:9 **4:3** Ps 18:41; 1Jn 3:22; 5:14 **4:4** Jn 15:19; Jms 1:27; 1Jn 2:15 **4:5** 1Co 6:19; 2Co 6:16 **4:6** Pr 3:34 **4:6** Ps 138:6; Pr 3:34; Mt 23:12 **4:7** Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1Pt 5:8-9 **4:8** 2Ch 15:2; Is 1:16; Jms 1:8 **4:9** Mt 5:4; Lk 6:25 **4:11** Mt 7:1; Jms 1:22; 1Pt 2:1 **4:12** Mt 10:28; Rm 14:4 **4:13** Pr 27:1; Lk 12:18-20 **4:14** Jb 7:7; Ps 102:3 **4:15-16** Ac 18:21; 1Co 5:6 **4:17** Lk 12:47-48; Jn 9:41; 2Pt 2:21

4:1-3 The book of James is known for its emphasis on practical behavior. But this paragraph shows that James is also concerned about the heart. Behavior arises from the condition of the heart, as Jesus taught (Mt 5:21-30).

4:4 The OT often depicts God's relationship with his people as a marriage (e.g., Is 54:4-6), so their worship of other gods is seen as spiritual adultery (Jr 3:20). For James, **friendship with the world** is a similar type of idolatry.

4:6 See "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p. 1501*.

4:7 To **resist the devil** does not involve an elaborate activity or special ceremony. It simply means to refuse his temptations. See also "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454*.

4:8 Cleansing **hands** and purifying **hearts** looks to OT purity requirements for worship. The point is that worship—drawing **near to God**—requires putting away sin.

4:9 Mourning and weeping are images used by the OT prophets to depict radical and genuine repentance from sin (e.g., Jl 2:12).

4:13-17 James warns against presumption. We cannot control our lives, and we cannot even be sure we will have a **tomorrow.** We need to remember how much we depend on God.

4:15 The OT and other Jewish literature often refer to the fleeting nature of human life. Life is but a "breath" (Jb 7:7,9; Ps 39:5-6).

WARNING TO THE RICH

5 Come now, you rich † people, weep and wail over the miseries that are coming on you.

PRAYER AND RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS

Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect" (Jms 5:14-16).

Throughout God's Word, we find the words "pray" or "prayer" many times; in fact, there are over six hundred prayers recorded in the Bible. God's Word tells us to "pray constantly" (1Th 5:17). Jesus told his disciples they should always pray "and not give up" (Lk 18:1). We often define prayer as the way we communicate with God, but when we take a closer look at the Scriptures, we find that the word has a much deeper meaning.

The Greek word most often used for prayer is *proseuche*, and it denotes an encounter with God through intimate relationship. It implies a person coming to God in an act of sacrificial surrender. Prayer, then, is not just asking God to give you what you desire. Prayer is one way we have communion with God. It draws us closer to God and brings us strength.

In Ephesians 6:18 we are told, "Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."

Traditionally, Christian prayer has been seen primarily as petitionary. When we pray, we come to God with a request. As followers of Christ, we believe there is value in petitioning God to intervene in our circumstances. We know from Scripture that nothing is impossible with God (Lk 1:37). We believe God listens to our prayers, and he is faithful to give us what we need (Mt 7:7; Lk 11:9). The Psalms are rich with prayers and praise affirming that the ears of our mighty God are attentive to our cries for help (Pss 34:15,17; 116:1). We read countless stories in God's Word about healing and the power of prayer.

In the life of an effective Christian, then, prayer is essential. But why do our prayers sometimes fail to work? Why does God choose to heal one person, while another person for whom we pray dies? Was there

something wrong with our prayers? Did we not pray the right way? People have pondered questions such as these for millennia.

As we lift up intercessory prayers for people who need healing, these questions arise: Does prayer make a difference in patient recovery? Is there concrete, scientific evidence that prayer is effective? If I pray for a friend and my friend gets well, did the healing happen because I prayed? Would her health have improved even if I had abstained from praying? Can we accurately answer these questions using scientific tools?

The effectiveness of prayer in patient recovery is gaining interest in the research community. In the last ten years, in fact, research focused on the effectiveness of prayer in recovery has nearly doubled. Most experts agree that prayer offers comfort and spiritual support to patients, but many are skeptical of the role of prayer in patient care. While some research has shown a positive association between improved health and prayer, other studies have shown a negative association. When we examine the scientific research, there is no reliable evidence to support the notion that people who receive intercessory prayer recover more than those who do not.

Researchers have conducted a variety of clinical trials seeking to prove or disprove the effectiveness of prayer. Attempting to accurately conduct a clinical trial involving the effects of prayer invites questions that are difficult to measure. Do the outcomes of prayer depend on the spiritual state of the person who is praying? Will prayer be more effective if a large number of people pray instead of an individual? It is impossible to measure all of the variables that are important in such research, including how to measure a person's faith or level of spirituality. Moreover, such research is clouded with contradictions, challenges, and assumptions that make researching prayer and recovery a "scientific and religious minefield" (Andrade and Radhakrishnan).

There is no scientific formula to prayer. Prayer exists around a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Prayer is intimate. Prayer is supernatural. Scientific methods cannot measure the supernatural. There is no consistent scientific proof that prayer affects patient recovery, but that does not mean that prayer is ineffective.

As Christians, we must be careful not to equate prayer with magic. God is not a magic genie who appears out of a golden lamp ready to grant our wishes. God's decision to grant some requests while refusing others does not prove nor disprove his existence. It demonstrates that he is sovereign. His thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are his ways our ways. His thoughts and ways are higher than ours (Is 55:8-9). He bends his listening ear to his people, but his will is far better than ours and his ways are perfect. Sometimes he chooses to grant our requests; sometimes he does not. We do not always know the will of God, but we know that God desires to do more in our lives than simply bring healing to our bodies when we are sick. He often uses our physical sufferings for a higher purpose. We can be certain that as we pray, God hears our prayers and he answers in accordance to his perfect will.

Our Savior, Jesus, was fully God and fully man. His purpose for entering this world was to save us. His death was a requirement in order for us to have salvation. The night before his crucifixion, Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Mt 26:39). Jesus knew the sins of the world would be on him. This cup was much to bear. Jesus prayed that this cup might pass from him. It did not. God's perfect will was accomplished.

JOY GREENE

2 Your wealth has rotted and your clothes are moth-eaten. † 3 Your gold and
silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat
your flesh like fire. You have stored up treasure in the last days. † 4 Look! The
pay that you withheld from the workers † who mowed your fields cries out, and

the outcry of the harvesters has reached the ears of the Lord of Hosts. † †
5 You have lived luxuriously on the earth and have indulged yourselves. You have fattened your hearts † in a day of slaughter. † 6 You have condemned, you have murdered the righteous, who does not resist you. †

WAITING FOR THE LORD

7 Therefore, brothers and sisters, be patient until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth and is patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. † 8 You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, because the Lord's coming is near. †
9 Brothers and sisters, do not complain about one another, so that you will not be judged. Look, the judge stands at the door! †
10 Brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the Lord's name as an example of suffering and patience. 11 See, we count as blessed those who have endured. † You have heard of Job's endurance † and have seen the outcome that the Lord brought about — the Lord is compassionate and merciful. †

TRUTHFUL SPEECH

12 Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. † But let your "yes" mean "yes," and your "no" mean "no," so that you won't fall under judgment. †

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

13 Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises. † 14 Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. † 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. †
16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect. † 17 Elijah was a human being as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it

would not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the land. †
18 Then he prayed again, and the sky gave rain and the land produced its fruit. †
19 My brothers and sisters, if any among you strays from the truth, † and someone turns him back, † 20 let that person know that whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. †

5:4 Gk *Sabaoth* ; or *the Lord of Armies* **5:11** Or *persevered* **5:12** Other mss read *fall into hypocrisy*
5:1 Pr 11:28; Lk 6:24 **5:2** Jb 13:28; Is 50:9; Mt 6:19-20 **5:3** Rm 2:5; Jms 5:8 **5:4** Lv 19:13; Jb 24:10-11; Jr 22:13; Mal 3:5 **5:4** Dt 24:15; Rm 9:29 **5:5** Jb 21:13; Am 6:1 **5:5** Jr 12:3; 25:34 **5:6** Heb 10:38; Jms 4:2 **5:7** Dt 11:14; Jr 5:24; Hs 6:3 **5:8** Rm 13:11; Php 4:5; 1Pt 4:7 **5:9** Mt 24:33; 1Co 4:5; Jms 4:12; 1Pt 4:5 **5:11** Jb 1:21-22; 2:10; 42:10-12 **5:11** Ex 34:6; Nm 14:18; Mt 5:10 **5:12** Mt 5:33-37; 23:16-22; Mk 7:9-13 **5:13** Ps 50:15; Col 3:16 **5:14** Mk 6:13; 16:18 **5:15** Is 33:24; Mt 9:2; Mk 2:5; Lk 24:47 **5:16** Nm 11:2; Mt 3:6; Jn 9:31; 1Pt 2:24 **5:17** 1Kg 17:1; 18:1; Lk 4:25; Ac 14:15 **5:18** 1Kg 18:41-45; Jms 3:17-18 **5:19** Mt 18:15; Gl 6:1; Jms 3:14 **5:19** Ps 51:13; Dn 12:3; Mal 2:6; Lk 1:16 **5:20** Pr 10:12; Rm 11:14; 1Pt 4:8

5:1-6 The **rich** addressed here are wicked people who have cheated others. Biblical and Jewish tradition regularly associated the rich with the wicked (e.g., Pr 10:15-16).

5:12 The people of God should be marked by truthfulness in speech. They need not rely on oaths to assert their faithfulness (cp. Mt 5:34-37).

5:13 See “A Biblical View of Music,” *p. 727.*

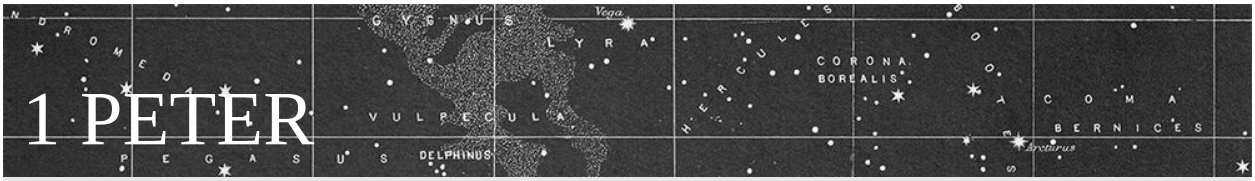
5:14-16 God is pleased to work through prayer to bring healing and forgiveness. In the OT, **anointing . . . with oil** symbolized the setting apart of someone for God’s special attention. That is probably the idea here.

5:14 Elders of the early **church** were modeled on the elders of the synagogue. They were the spiritual leaders of the congregation, characterized by their maturity (not necessarily their age).

5:15-16 Saving **the sick person** does not necessarily mean that the ailing will be physically cured of illness. The mention of **sins** and forgiveness implies that the sick person’s spiritual salvation is in view. If the illness leads to death, **the Lord will raise him up** in the life to come.

5:17-18 Elijah is offered as an example of the effectiveness of the prayer of a righteousness person (5:16; 1Kg 17–18).

5:19-20 In a message similar to Hebrews 3–4, believers have a responsibility to watch over one another, to keep each other from sin, and to help one another to persevere.



1 PETER

INTRODUCTION

First Peter is considered one of the General Letters. This letter provided encouragement to suffering believers living in northern Asia Minor who faced intense persecution. The letter encourages faithfulness while under oppression. Specifically, God's holy people should lead distinctive lifestyles as temporary residents in a foreign land. Although they will suffer for Christ while in this non-Christian world, they should remember that heaven is their future homeland.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author of 1 Peter identified himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). He viewed himself as a divinely ordained, directly commissioned, authoritative representative of the Lord Jesus himself. Several statements in the letter indicate that the Peter who plays a prominent role in the Gospels is the author. For example, he called himself an "elder and witness" to Christ's sufferings (5:1). Further, he described Christ's crucifixion with an intimate knowledge that only a disciple would have of that event (2:21-24).

Several expressions in 1 Peter reflect Peter's experiences with Jesus. For example, the exhortation for elders to "shepherd God's flock" (5:2) evokes the charge that Jesus gave Peter in John 21:15-17. Moreover, the command to "clothe yourselves with humility" (5:5) may recall the episode in John 13:2-17 where Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

Several themes in 1 Peter can also be found in Peter's sermons in the book of Acts. For example, God is "the Father who judges impartially" (1:17; cp. Ac 10:34) and who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory (1:21; cp. Ac 2:32-36). Christ is "the stone that the builders rejected" (2:7-8; cp. Ac 4:10-11).

Objections to the letter's authorship by Peter are inconclusive and cannot be proven. The claim that someone wrote this letter using the apostle's name as a pseudonym cannot be sustained. A number of early church leaders— e.g., Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria—accepted the letter as authentic. Further, the early church soundly rejected the practice of writing under an apostolic pseudonym as forgery. In light of the above, the epistle should be accepted as genuinely written by the apostle Peter. Silvanus may have in some fashion helped Peter write the letter while serving as his secretary (Gk *amanuensis*), but more likely he was merely the letter carrier (5:12).

BACKGROUND: The recipients of 1 Peter are identified in 1:1. Peter wrote to the "exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." These were Roman provinces located in the northern part of what is now modern Turkey, unless Galatia includes the Galatia in the southern region of Asia Minor. These people were likely persecuted Gentile Christians. They had earlier been involved in idolatry (4:3), were ignorant (1:14) and "empty" (1:18) before they came to Christ, and formerly were "not a people" but now were "God's people" (2:9-10).

The reference in 1 Peter 5:13—"She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you greetings"—suggests Rome as the place of the letter's origin. "Babylon" was used cryptically to refer to a place of exile, but specifically for Rome. Other possibilities for Babylon include the cities of Babylon in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but these places are highly unlikely because we have no record of Peter ever being in those places.

First Peter was probably written sometime between AD 62–64. While Paul was under house arrest from AD 60–62, he did not refer to Peter in Rome. Peter likewise did not mention Paul as being in Rome; only Silvanus and Mark were his companions (5:12-13). These facts suggest that Peter wrote 1 Peter some time after AD 62 and before the writing of 2 Peter.

The theme of suffering appears throughout 1 Peter. The recipients of the letter are the sufferers in four of its five chapters. Given a composition date of about AD 62–64, 1 Peter was written during the persecution of Christians under Nero's reign. The persecution arose in Rome and was spreading into Asia Minor.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Peter's intent in writing was to strengthen believers in the midst of the suffering and persecution they were facing. His message to them continues to speak to modern believers, reminding us of our heavenly hope and eternal inheritance in the midst of our sufferings. We are called to holiness and a life of love. We are also called to glorify God in our daily lives and to imitate Christ.

STRUCTURE

The structure of 1 Peter has been the subject of discussion from the earliest history of the church. The diversity of outlines illustrates that the task of exegesis is not merely a science but also an art. Peter wrote this letter with a typical opening for a letter (1:1-2) and then began the next major section (1:3–2:10) with a blessing (1:3). The two succeeding sections are marked by "dear friends" (2:11; 4:12), and as noted earlier the segment from 2:11–4:11 concludes with a doxology and "amen." The fourth section of the letter also ends with a doxology and "amen" (5:11) before the closing.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

This book notes many attributes of God, from his foreknowledge (1:2) to his grace (5:12). The glory of God is the goal of all things (4:11). Jesus's suffering and death for sinners is strongly emphasized, as is his resurrection and return in glory. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the prophets of old, has now been sent to God's people (1:11; 4:14). First Peter 1:2 is an important text for understanding the Trinity.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

First Peter dignifies all classes of human life by showing that living by the gospel makes a great difference in relationships. Christians submit both to government and to masters to the glory of God. In the Christian family, husbands and wives have a mutual responsibility to respect each other. In the congregation, spiritual leaders ("elders," 5:1) lead their flocks by being humble servants, creating a context of mutual submission.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation in this book is past, present, and future. The past aspect involves God's sovereign election as well as Jesus's suffering and death to purchase salvation (2:9; 3:18). The present aspect involves the regeneration and the ongoing faith of God's people (1:3,21; 5:9). At Christ's return those who "are being guarded by God's power through faith" will receive the "salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time" (1:5).

1 PETER TIMELINE

AD 1–29

Simon Peter is born in Galilee, probably in the village of Bethsaida. **1?**

Simon, a fisherman by trade, moves to Capernaum. **20?**

Simon's brother, Andrew, introduces him to Jesus. **29**

Jesus calls Simon Peter "the rock." **29**

Jesus calls Peter to be one of his twelve disciples. **29**

AD 30–33

Jesus heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law. **30**

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah **32**

Peter, James, and John witness Jesus's transfiguration. **32**

Peter vows to die with Jesus. **33**

Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard of Annas. **33**

AD 33–40

Following his resurrection, Jesus appears to Peter and recommissions him. **33**

Three thousand persons respond to Peter's sermon at the feast of Pentecost. **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER, 34**

Paul meets with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem following his conversion. **37?**

AD 40–114

Peter, James, John, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus meet in Jerusalem to deal with the question of whether Gentiles had to be circumcised to become Christians. **49**

At Antioch, Paul confronts Peter's refusal to share meals with Gentile believers. **49**

Peter's martyrdom in Rome during Nero's persecution of Christians **66**

Destruction of Jerusalem **70**

Polycarp's *Letter to Philippians* shows dependence on 1 Peter. **112–114**

GREETING

1 Peter, † an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as exiles † dispersed † abroad † in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, † 2 chosen † according to the foreknowledge † of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, † to be obedient † and to be sprinkled with the blood † of Jesus Christ.
May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

A LIVING HOPE

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. † Because of his great mercy † he has given us new birth † into a living hope † through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead † 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, † undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven † for you. 5 You are being guarded by God's power † through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. † 6 You rejoice in this, † even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials † 7 so that the proven character of your faith † — more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire † — may result † in praise, glory, and honor † at the revelation of Jesus Christ. † 8 Though you have not seen † him, you love him; † though not seeing him now, you believe in him, and you rejoice † with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, † who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. 11 They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ † within them was indicating when he testified in advance † to the sufferings of Christ † and the glories † that would follow. † 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you † by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven † — angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.

A CALL TO HOLY LIVING

13 Therefore, with your minds ready for action, † be sober-minded † and set your hope † completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation † of Jesus Christ. 14 As obedient children, † do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you † is holy, † you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, **Be holy, because I am holy.** † † 17 If you appeal to the Father who judges impartially † according to each one's work, † you are to conduct yourselves in reverence † during your

time living as strangers. [18] For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life † inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things like silver or gold, † [19] but with the precious blood of Christ, † like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb. † [20] He was foreknown † before the foundation of the world but was revealed in these last times † for you. [21] Through him you believe in God, † who raised him from the dead † and gave him glory, † so that your faith and hope are in God.

[22] Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, † so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, † from a pure † heart love one another constantly, † † [23] because you have been born again † — not of perishable seed † but of imperishable — through the living and enduring word of God. † [24] For

All flesh is like grass, and all its glory † like a flower of the grass.
The grass withers, and the flower falls, [25] but the word of the Lord endures forever. † †

And this word is the gospel that was proclaimed to you.

1:1 Gk *diaspora* ; Jewish people scattered throughout Gentile lands **1:6** Or *In this fact rejoice* **1:11** Or *the glories after that* **1:22** Other mss add *through the Spirit* **1:22** Other mss omit *pure* **1:22** Or *fervently*
1:1 Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32 **1:1** Gn 23:4; Ps 39:12; Heb 11:9,13; 1Pt 2:11 **1:1** Jn 7:35; Jms 1:1 **1:1** Ac 2:9; 6:9; 16:6-7; Gl 1:2 **1:1** Mt 22:14; 24:22; Ti 1:1 **1:2** Rm 8:29; 1Pt 1:20 **1:2** 2Th 2:13 **1:2** 1Pt 1:14,22 **1:2** Heb 9:12; 10:22; 12:24 **1:3** 2Co 1:3; Eph 1:3 **1:3** Gl 6:16; Ti 3:5 **1:3** Jn 1:13; 3:3,7; Jms 1:18; 1Pt 1:23 **1:3** Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3 **1:3** 1Co 15:20; 1Pt 3:21 **1:4** Ac 20:32; Rm 8:17; Col 3:24 **1:4** 2Tm 4:8 **1:5** Jn 10:28; Php 4:7 **1:5** Rm 8:18; 2Co 4:17; Heb 12:11; 1Pt 4:13; 5:1,10; Rv 15:1; 21:9 **1:6** Jms 1:2; 1Pt 4:12 **1:7** Jms 1:3 **1:7** Is 48:10; Zch 13:9; Mal 3:3; 1Co 3:13 **1:7** 2Co 5:3; Php 3:9; Rv 14:5 **1:7** Rm 2:7,10,29; 1Co 4:5 **1:7** Lk 17:30 **1:8** Ex 33:20; Rm 8:24 **1:8** 1Jn 4:20 **1:8** Jn 15:11; 2Co 6:10 **1:10** Lk 1:70; 10:24; 16:16,29; 18:31; 24:25,27,44 **1:11** Rm 8:9 **1:11** Mt 26:24 **1:11** Mk 8:31; Lk 24:26; Php 3:10 **1:11** Lk 24:26 **1:12** Mk 16:15; 1Co 9:14; 2Co 10:16 **1:12** Jn 14:26; 15:26; Ac 1:8; 2:2-4; 13:4 **1:13** Ex 12:11 **1:13** 1Pt 5:8 **1:13** Mt 12:21; Rm 8:24; 1Th 1:3 **1:13** 1Pt 4:13; 5:4 **1:14** Heb 2:13 **1:15** Gl 1:6; 5:8; 1Th 2:12; 5:24; 1Pt 5:10 **1:15** Lk 1:49; 1Co 7:14 **1:16** Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7 **1:16** Lv 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7 **1:17** Ac 10:34; Rm 2:11; Gl 2:6; Eph 6:9 **1:17** 1Co 3:12 **1:17** Ac 9:31; Rm 3:18; 2Co 5:11; 7:1; Eph 5:21; Php 2:12 **1:18** 2Pt 3:11 **1:18** Is 52:3; 1Co 6:20; Ti 2:14; Heb 9:12 **1:19** Jn 6:53; Ac 20:28; 1Co 10:16; Eph 2:13; Heb 10:19 **1:19** Ex 12:5; Lv 4:32; Is 53:7; Jn 1:29 **1:20** Ac 2:23; Eph 1:4; 1Pt 1:2; Rv 13:8 **1:20** 2Pt 3:3; Jd 18 **1:21** Ac 10:45; Rm 4:24; 10:9; Eph 1:1; 1Tm 4:12; 6:2 **1:21** Ac 2:24; Rm 10:9 **1:21** Jn 17:5,24; 1Tm 3:16; Heb 2:9 **1:22** Zch 7:9; Jn 13:34; Rm 12:10; 1Th 4:9; 1Jn 4:7 **1:22** 1Tm 1:5 **1:23** 1Pt 1:3 **1:23** 1Jn 3:9 **1:23** Lk 8:21; Heb 4:12 **1:24** 1Pt 5:4 **1:24-25** Is 40:6-8 **1:24-25** Is 40:6-8; Lk 21:33; Jms 1:10-11; 1Jn 2:17

1:1-2 Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia are all in Asia Minor, modern Turkey. Peter refers to the believers there as **exiles**, or temporary residents, because they are alienated from their societies due to their allegiance to Christ. Although the culture may shun them, they are **chosen** by **God**—a status of

extraordinary privilege. **The sanctifying work of the Spirit** refers to the Spirit's role in setting apart believers from the world in order that they may belong to God.

1:3 New birth recalls Jesus's teaching to Nicodemus, that one must be born again (Jn 3:3). It is a dramatic image of renewal, such that the former way of life has given way to a new life with God. This new birth is accomplished **through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.** Christ's new resurrection life makes spiritual resurrection possible for believers.

1:4 New birth implies membership in God's family (1:14), and therefore a share **into an inheritance.** In the OT, the inheritance of God's people was the promised land of Canaan (Gn 12:7). But unlike an inheritance that could be spoiled through sin, this heavenly inheritance **is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading**.

1:5 While the inheritance is kept in heaven for believers (1:4), so believers are kept for it, **being guarded by God's power** for the **salvation** to come.

1:6-7 In spite of those who claim that faithful Christians will never suffer, Peter expects suffering and anticipates that God will use it for our good. **Gold** was **refined by fire**, meaning that impurities were burned away by a hot flame. In the same way, **faith** is refined through suffering. **The revelation of Jesus Christ** here refers to his return (1:13). See "Christians and Suffering," *p. 580.*

1:8-9 Christianity is not simply an idea or philosophy, but is rooted in a love for Jesus Christ.

1:10-12 The OT prophets spoke of **the sufferings** and **glories** of Christ. Peter asserts that their words were ultimately intended for us, not for **themselves.** See "Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy," *p. XXXI.*

1:12 Angels were important in Jewish writings such as 1 Enoch. See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531.*

1:15-16 The call to holiness is not rooted in shifting cultural ideas or values, but in the character of God (Lv 19:2). Since believers are his obedient children (1:14), they are to imitate their heavenly Father.

1:18 The **empty way of life inherited from your fathers** refers to the readers' Gentile background. While the audience of 1 Peter is debated, this verse indicates a Gentile audience, since it is difficult to imagine Peter would say this of Jewish readers.

1:19 Being redeemed **with the precious blood of Christ** points to Christ's fulfillment of the OT sacrificial system. Like that of the **spotless lamb** required for the Passover sacrifice (Ex 12), Christ's blood is the means by which redemption from sin is accomplished.

1:23-25 Peter returns to the concept of being **born again** (1:3), but this time it occurs through the **word of God.** Since **this word is the gospel**, Peter means that through the **gospel that was proclaimed**, believers came to faith in Christ, who brought about their new birth through his resurrection from the dead (1:3).

THE LIVING STONE AND A HOLY PEOPLE

2 Therefore, rid yourselves of † all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. † 2 Like newborn infants, desire the pure milk of the word, † † so that you may grow up into your salvation, † 3 if **you have tasted** † **that the Lord is good.** † † 4 As you come to him, a living stone — rejected by people but chosen and honored by † God — 5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood † to offer

spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God † through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture:

See, I lay a stone in Zion, †

a chosen and honored † cornerstone, †

and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame. † †

7 So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving,

The stone that the builders rejected — this one has become the cornerstone, † †

8 and

A stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. † †

They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined † for this.

9 But you are **a chosen race, † † † a royal priesthood, † † a holy nation, † † a people for his possession, † † so that you may proclaim the praises † † †** of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. † 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, † but now you have received mercy.

A CALL TO GOOD WORKS

11 Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles † to abstain † from sinful † desires that wage war against the soul. † 12 Conduct † yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, † so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits. †

13 Submit † to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor † as the supreme authority † 14 or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. 15 For it is God's will † that you silence the ignorance † of foolish people by doing good. 16 Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, † but as God's slaves. † 17 Honor everyone. Love † the brothers and sisters. † Fear God. † Honor the emperor.

SUBMISSION OF SLAVES TO MASTERS

18 Household slaves, submit to your masters † with all reverence † not only to
the good and gentle ones but also to the cruel. † 19 For it brings favor if,
because of a consciousness of God, someone endures grief from suffering
unjustly. 20 For what credit is there if when you do wrong and are beaten, you
endure it? But when you do what is good and suffer, † if you endure it, this
brings favor with God.
21 For you were called to this, because Christ also suffered † for you, leaving
you an example, † that you should follow † in his steps. 22 He did not commit
sin, † **and no deceit † was found in his mouth;** † † 23 when he was insulted,
he did not insult in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten but entrusted
himself to the one who judges † justly. 24 He himself bore our sins † in his
body † on the tree; † so that, having died to sins, † we might live for
righteousness. † **By his wounds † † you have been healed.** 25 For you **were
like sheep going astray,** † † but you have now returned to the Shepherd † and
Overseer † of your souls.

2:2 Or *desire pure spiritual milk* **2:2** Other mss omit *for your salvation* **2:4** Or *precious to* **2:5** Or *you yourselves, as living stones, are being built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood* **2:6** Or *precious* **2:9** Or *generation*, or *nation* **2:9** Or *the mighty deeds* **2:12** Or *among the nations*, or *among the pagans* **2:13** Or *king* **2:25** Or *Guardian*

2:1 Rm 13:12 **2:1** 2Co 12:20 **2:2** 1Co 3:2; 9:7; Heb 5:12-13 **2:3** Heb 6:4-5 **2:3** Ps 34:8 **2:3** Ps 34:8; Ti 3:4 **2:5** Rm 12:1; Heb 13:15 **2:6** Ps 9:11; Heb 12:22 **2:6** Eph 2:20 **2:6** Is 28:16 LXX **2:6** Is 28:16; Rm 9:33; 10:11 **2:7** Ps 118:22 **2:7** Ps 118:22; Mt 21:42; Lk 20:17; Ac 4:11 **2:8** Is 8:14 **2:8** Is 8:14; Rm 9:33; 14:20 **2:8** Ac 2:23; 4:27-28; Rm 9:22; 11:7; Jd 4 **2:9** Dt 7:6; 10:15; Is 43:20 LXX **2:9** Dt 7:6; 10:15; Is 43:20 **2:9** Ex 19:6; 23:22 LXX; Is 61:6 **2:9** Is 61:6; Rv 1:6; 5:10; 20:6 **2:9** Ex 19:6; 23:22 LXX **2:9** Ex 19:6 **2:9** Ex 19:5; 23:22 LXX; Dt 4:20; 7:6; Is 43:21 LXX **2:9** Ex 34:9; Dt 7:6; Ps 33:12; Is 43:21; Ti 2:14 **2:9** Is 42:12; 43:21 **2:9** Is 42:12; 43:21 **2:9** Is 9:2; Ac 26:18; Eph 5:8; Col 1:12-13 **2:10** Mt 5:7; Mk 5:19; Lk 1:50 **2:11** 1Pt 1:1 **2:11** 1Tm 4:3 **2:11** Rm 7:23; Php 3:3 **2:11** Gl 5:17; Jms 4:1 **2:12** 2Pt 3:11 **2:12** Is 10:3; Jr 6:15; 8:12; 10:15; Lk 1:68; 7:16; 19:44 **2:13-14** Rm 13:1-7; Ti 3:1 **2:13** Rm 13:1 **2:15** Gl 1:4; Eph 1:9 **2:15** 1Pt 3:16 **2:16** 1Co 14:20 **2:16** Rm 1:1; Ti 1:1; Rv 2:20 **2:17** Rv 12:11 **2:17** Heb 13:1; 1Pt 5:9 **2:17** Pr 1:7; 24:21; Ac 10:2; Rv 14:7 **2:18** Eph 6:5; Col 3:22; Ti 2:9; Jd 4 **2:18** Rm 13:3,7 **2:18** Php 2:15 **2:20** 1Pt 4:14 **2:21** Mk 8:31; 1Pt 3:18; 1Jn 3:16 **2:21** Jn 13:15 **2:21** Jn 8:12 **2:22** 1Pt 4:1; 1Jn 3:5 **2:22** 2Pt 2:1 **2:22** Is 53:9 **2:22** Is 53:9 **2:23** Rv 18:8; 19:11 **2:24** Heb 7:27-28; 9:27-28 **2:24** Is 53:4-5,12; Jn 2:21 **2:24** Ac 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gl 3:13 **2:24** Rm 6:2,8-11; 7:6; Gl 2:19; Col 2:20; 3:3 **2:24** Rm 6:2,11; Ti 2:12 **2:24** Is 53:5 **2:24** Is 53:5; Mt 13:15; Jn 12:40; Ac 28:27 **2:25** Is 53:6 **2:25** Ps 119:176; Is 53:6 **2:25** Gn 48:15; 49:24; Ps 23:1; Jr 31:10

2:2 Newborn infants connects with the image of new birth (1:3,23). **The pure milk of the word** is obviously a positive description here, though milk is used negatively elsewhere (1Co 3:2; Heb 5:12-13). Here it is the appropriate food of infants and provides nourishing benefits.

2:4-8 This section is dominated by the image of the temple. Christ is the **living stone**, while believers are

also stones forming **a spiritual house** together with Christ. Believers also occupy the temple practices of **priesthood** and the offering of **spiritual sacrifices.** Peter relies on Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 to contrast positive and negative responses to Christ. Some believe **in him**, while others reject him.

2:9 Peter's readers are described as **a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession**—all once used to describe the privileges enjoyed by Israel. If Peter's readers are Gentiles (see on 1:18; 2:10), it is striking that they now share in Israel's privileges too.

2:11 Believers are **strangers and exiles** in this world; their real home is heaven. In the ancient world, foreigners held a low status, just above that of slaves.

2:12 Since believing Gentiles are now included in the privileges of Israel (2:9), unbelievers are called **Gentiles.** Believers are to live **honorably** in the context of persecution (**they slander you as evildoers**), which **will glorify God. The day he visits** refers to judgment day, when he brings judgment and salvation (Jr 15:15).

2:13-14 This text emphasizes the importance of obedience to the proper human authorities (cp. Rm 13:1-7). Submission to these authorities is **because of the Lord**; allegiance to Christ does not undermine obedience to human authorities. See also "The Bible and Government Models," *p.768*; "Church and State," *p. 1374.*

2:18 Submission to an unjust master is jarring by today's standards, but the point is that believers are to **submit** to whatever authority they are under (2:13), regardless of how they are treated. Such an attitude embodies that of Christ (2:21-25).

2:21-25 As elsewhere in the NT, the example of **Christ**, particularly at the cross, serves as a model for Christian behavior. Peter offers a sustained reflection on the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 in describing the sufferings of Christ. Christ **bore our sins in his body on the tree**, indicating the penal and substitutionary nature of Christ's death on our behalf.

WIVES AND HUSBANDS

3 In the same way, wives, † submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, even if some disobey the word, † they may be won over † without a word by the way their wives live † 2 when they observe your pure, reverent lives. † 3 Don't let your beauty consist of outward things like elaborate hairstyles and wearing gold jewelry or fine clothes, † 4 but rather what is inside the heart † † — the imperishable quality of a gentle † and quiet † spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. 5 For in the past, the holy † women who put their hope † in God also adorned themselves in this way, submitting to their own husbands, 6 just as Sarah † obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. You have become her children when you do what is good and do not fear any intimidation. †

7 Husbands, † in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker partner, † showing them honor as coheirs of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

DO NO EVIL

8 Finally, all of you be like-minded and sympathetic, love one another, † and be compassionate † and humble, † 9 not paying back evil for evil † or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, † since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing.

10 For **the † one who wants to love life and to see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil †**

and his lips from speaking deceit, †

11 **and let him turn away † from evil and do what is good.**

Let him seek peace † and pursue it, 12 **because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are open to their prayer.**

But the face of the Lord is against those who do what is evil. †

UNDESERVED SUFFERING

13 Who then will harm you if you are devoted to what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness, † you are blessed. **Do not fear what they fear † † or be intimidated,** † † 15 but in your hearts regard † Christ † the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. † 16 Yet do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, † so that when you are accused, † those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer † for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered † for sins once for all, † the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring you to God. † He was put to death in the flesh † † but made alive by the Spirit, † 19 in which † he also went and made proclamation to the spirits † in prison 20 who in the past were disobedient, when God patiently waited in the days of Noah † while the ark was being prepared. In

it a few — that is, eight people † † — were saved through water. 21 Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, † but the pledge † of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, † 22 who has gone into heaven † and is at the right hand of God † with angels, authorities, and powers subject to him. †

3:4 Or *rather, the hidden person of the heart* **3:8** Other mss read *courteous* **3:14** Or *Do not fear them* **3:15** Or *sanctify*, or *set apart* **3:15** Other mss read *set God* **3:16** Other mss read *when they speak against you as evildoers* **3:18** Or *by the flesh*, or *in the fleshly realm* **3:18** Or *in the spirit*, or *in the Spirit*, or *in the spiritual realm* **3:19** Or *by whom*, or *in whom*, or *at that time* **3:20** Or *souls* **3:21** Or *the appeal*

3:1 Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19; 1Tm 3:11 **3:1** 1Co 7:16; 1Pt 1:24-25 **3:1** 1Co 9:19-22; Php 3:8 **3:1** 2Pt 3:11 **3:2** Ti 2:5 **3:3** Is 3:18-24; 1Tm 2:9 **3:4** Rm 2:29; 7:22 **3:4** Mt 5:5 **3:4** 1Tm 2:2 **3:5** Ps 20:6; 1Co 7:14 **3:5** 1Tm 5:5; 1Pt 1:3 **3:6** Gn 17:15-21; 18:6-15; Heb 11:11 **3:6** Pr 3:25 **3:7** Mt 1:19; 1Co 14:35; Eph 5:22-28; Col 3:18-19; Ti 2:4-5 **3:7** 1Th 4:4 **3:8** Heb 13:1 **3:8** Eph 4:32 **3:9** Rm 12:17 **3:9** Lk 6:28; Rm 12:14; 1Co 4:12 **3:10-12** Ps 34:12-16 **3:10** Jms 1:26 **3:10** Rm 3:13; Jms 3:5-8 **3:11** Ps 37:27 **3:11** Lk 12:51; 2Tm 1:2; Heb 12:14; 3Jn 14 **3:10-12** Ps 34:12-16 **3:14** Mt 6:33; Rm 1:17; 2Pt 1:1 **3:14** Jn 6:20; 7:13 **3:14** Is 8:12 **3:14-15** Is 8:12-13 **3:15** 1Jn 4:4 **3:16** Ac 23:1; 24:16; Rm 9:1; 2Co 1:12; 1Tm 1:5,19; 3:9; Heb 10:22; 1Pt 3:21 **3:17** Php 1:29; 1Pt 2:19 **3:18** Mk 8:31; Rm 5:8 **3:18** Rm 6:10; Heb 9:28; 10:10; 1Pt 2:21; 4:1 **3:18** Rm 5:2 **3:18** Eph 2:14 **3:19** 1Jn 4:1 **3:20** Gn 5:29 **3:20** Gn 5:32; 6:18; 7:7,13; 8:16,18 **3:21** Heb 9:14; 10:22 **3:21** 1Pt 1:3 **3:22** Ac 1:10,12; 1Tm 3:16; Heb 4:14; 6:20 **3:22** Ps 110:1; Mk 16:19; Ac 2:33-34; Rm 8:34; Heb 10:12 **3:22** Eph 1:20-22

3:1-2 Continuing the theme of submission (1:13,18), a wife's submission to her husband (see also Eph 5:22-24) along with a **pure** life, can win over an unbelieving husband. In the Roman Empire, wives were expected to adopt the religions of their husbands. Christianity was therefore viewed as subversive in encouraging women to follow Christ even if their husbands did not.

3:3-5 This text counters a culture that objectifies women and is consumed with physical appearance. Believers should aspire to and value what is **of great worth in God's sight** (cp. 1Tm 2:9).

3:7 The instruction for wives to submit to their husbands (3:1) does not allow for **husbands** to abuse their authority. Men are to live with their wives **in an understanding way**, probably referring to women's typically **weaker** physical strength. Unlike in pagan expectations, a Christian man's wife is a **partner** and coheir. Believing husband and wife are equal in Christ. See also "Career and Home Life," *p. 774.*

3:9 Blessing in face of **insult** recalls Matthew 5:10: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness."

3:14-16 Fear of people will keep believers from standing against cultural pressure. The fear of God, however, allows believers to stand fast and give an answer **for the hope that is in** them.

3:18 The example of Christ having suffered for others again undergirds Peter's exhortation to endure suffering (cp. 2:21-25).

3:19-20 Peter alludes to Genesis 6:1-2 and to Jewish tradition surrounding that text, such as is found in 1 Enoch. **The spirits** are angelic beings who rebelled against God and are thus imprisoned. Jesus, after his resurrection (3:18), proclaimed to these beings his triumph over them. These spirits had conspired against God's people in the past (**in the days of Noah**), just as the forces of evil conspired against Peter's readers. Jesus's triumph over these beings reminds Peter's readers that Jesus will lead them to victory as well. They may suffer, and even die, as Jesus did. But in the resurrection, they will share in the victory of Christ, who is at the right hand of God with powers subjected to him (3:22).

3:21 Peter compares Noah's ark to **baptism.** As Noah and his family were rescued from God's wrath through the water (3:20), so baptism uses water to symbolize that believers have been rescued from God's wrath. The verse carefully states that the physical act does not accomplish salvation.

FOLLOWING CHRIST

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered † in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same understanding † — because the one who suffers in the flesh is finished † with sin † — 2 in order to live the remaining time in the flesh no longer for human desires, but for God's will. † 3 For there has already been enough time spent in doing what the Gentiles choose to do: carrying on in unrestrained behavior, evil desires, † drunkenness, orgies, † carousing, and lawless idolatry. 4 They are surprised that you don't join them in the same flood of wild living — and they slander † you. 5 They will give an account to the one who stands ready to judge the living and the dead. † 6 For this reason the gospel was also preached to those who are now dead, † † so that, although they might be judged in the flesh according to human standards, † they might live † in the spirit according to God's standards.

END-TIME ETHICS

7 The end of all things is near; † therefore, be alert and sober-minded † for prayer. 8 Above all, maintain constant love † for one another, since **love covers a multitude of sins.** † † 9 Be hospitable † to one another without complaining. 10 Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, † as good stewards of the varied grace of God. 11 If anyone speaks, let it be as one who speaks God's words; if anyone serves, let it be from the strength God provides, † so that God may be glorified through Jesus Christ in everything. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.

CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

12 Dear friends, don't be surprised when the fiery ordeal comes among you to test you as if something unusual were happening to you. † 13 Instead, rejoice as you share in the sufferings of Christ, † so that you may also rejoice with great joy when his glory is revealed. † 14 If you are ridiculed for the name of

Christ, † you are blessed, because the Spirit † of glory and of God † rests on you. 15 Let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or a meddler. † 16 But if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but let him glorify God in having that name. † 17 For the time has come for judgment † to begin with God's household, † and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

18 And **if a righteous person is saved with difficulty, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?** † †

19 So then, let those who suffer according to God's will entrust themselves † to a faithful Creator while doing what is good.

4:1 Other mss read *suffered for us* **4:1** Or *perspective,* or *attitude* **4:1** Or *the one who suffered in the flesh has finished with sin* **4:4** Or *blaspheme* **4:6** Or *those who are dead* **4:14** Or *God's glorious Spirit* **4:15** Or *as one who defrauds others* **4:16** Other mss read *in that case*

4:1 Rm 6:10; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 9:28 **4:2** Mk 3:35; Rm 6:11; 12:2 **4:3** Mk 7:22 **4:3** Rm 13:13; Gl 5:21 **4:5** Ac 10:42; Rm 14:9; 2Tm 4:1 **4:6** Jn 5:25 **4:6** 1Pt 3:18 **4:6** Php 1:21 **4:7** Rm 13:11-12; Heb 9:26; Jms 5:8; 1Jn 2:18; Rv 1:3 **4:7** 1Pt 5:8 **4:8** 1Pt 1:22 **4:8** Pr 10:12 **4:8** Pr 10:12; Jms 5:20 **4:9** 1Tm 3:2; Ti 1:8 **4:10** 1Co 12:7 **4:11** Rm 12:6-8; 1Co 15:58 **4:12** 1Pt 1:6-7 **4:13** Gl 5:24; Php 3:10 **4:13** 1Co 1:7; Eph 1:17; 2Th 1:7; 1Pt 1:7,13 **4:14** Ps 89:50-51; Ac 5:41; 1Pt 2:20 **4:14** Ac 4:33; Rv 3:22 **4:17** Mk 12:40; Jn 5:22; Heb 10:27; 13:4 **4:17** Gl 6:10; Eph 2:19; 1Tm 3:15; Heb 3:2 **4:18** Pr 11:31 LXX **4:18** Pr 11:31 **4:19** Ps 10:14; 2Co 1:9

4:3-4 This is a list of common sins from the Greco-Roman world. As modern culture increasingly pursues these things, believers must remember that they are nothing new for the church. We cannot accommodate such behavior any more that the first century Christians did. Believers must be prepared to be slandered for not living like the world around them.

4:6 This verse refers to Christians who heard and believed the **gospel** and have since died. They were **judged . . . according to human standards** during this life, meaning they were criticized and mocked, but they **live in the Spirit.**

4:9 Hospitality means providing food and accommodation to traveling Christians. Inns in the ancient world were often not safe, and were morally compromised, so believers depended on the hospitality of others.

4:12-14 In contrast to those who teach that faithful Christians will not suffer in this life, Peter warns believers not to be **surprised** when suffering comes. In fact, when believers are **ridiculed for the name of Christ**, we are **blessed.**

4:17 The **judgment** of **God's household** refers to the current suffering believers are undergoing (4:16). Jews believed God would judge his children: "For the Lord first judges Israel for the wrong she has committed and then he shall do the same for all the nation" (T. Benj. 100:8–9).

ABOUT THE ELDERS

5 I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder and witness † to the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory about to be revealed: † 2 Shepherd God's flock among you, † not overseeing † out

of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you; † not out of greed for money but eagerly; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd † appears, you will receive the unfading crown † of glory. 5 In the same way, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. All of you clothe yourselves with † humility toward one another, because

God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. † †

CONCLUSION

6 Humble † yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand † of God, so that he may exalt you at the proper time, 7 casting all your cares on him, because he cares about you. † 8 Be sober-minded, † be alert. † Your adversary the devil † is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. 9 Resist him, † firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

10 The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory † in Christ, † will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while. † 11 To him be dominion † forever. † Amen.

12 Through Silvanus, † † a faithful brother (as I consider him), I have written to you briefly in order to encourage you and to testify that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it! 13 She who is in Babylon, † chosen together with you, sends you greetings, as does Mark, my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love. † Peace † to all of you who are in Christ. †

5:2 Other mss omit *overseeing* **5:2** Other mss omit *as God would have you* **5:5** Or *you tie around yourselves* **5:10** Other mss read *in Christ Jesus* **5:10** Or *to a small extent* **5:11** Some mss read *dominion and glory* ; other mss read *glory and dominion* **5:11** Other mss read *forever and ever* **5:12** Or *Silas* ; Ac 15:22-32; 16:19-40; 17:1-16 **5:14** Other mss read *Christ Jesus. Amen.*

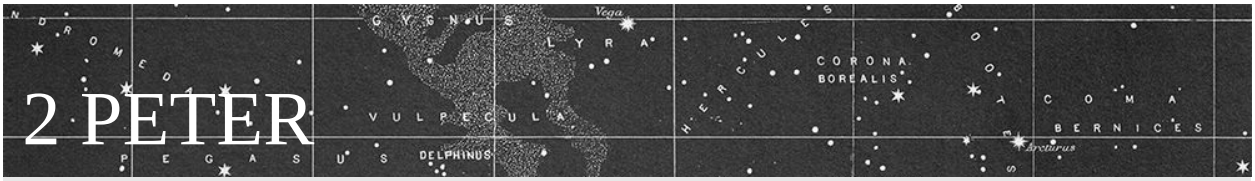
5:1 Ac 4:20 **5:1** Rm 8:18; Col 3:4 **5:2** Jr 3:15; 23:1; Jn 21:16; Ac 20:28 **5:4** Jn 10:11,14; 21:15-17; Heb 13:20; 1Pt 2:25 **5:4** 1Co 9:25; Rv 12:1 **5:5** Pr 3:34 LXX **5:5** Pr 3:34; Jms 4:6 **5:6** Lk 14:11 **5:6** 1Kg 8:42; 2Ch 6:32; Dn 9:15 **5:7** Ps 55:22 **5:8** 1Th 5:6,8; 2Tm 4:5; 1Pt 1:13; 4:7 **5:8** Rv 16:15 **5:8** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **5:9** Eph 6:13-14; Jms 4:7 **5:10** 1Pt 5:1,4; 2Pt 3:18 **5:12** Ac 15:22; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1 **5:13** Rv 14:8; 16:19; 17:5,18; 18:2,10,21 **5:14** Rm 16:16; 1Co 16:20; 2Co 13:12; 1Th 5:26 **5:14** Eph 6:23

5:1-4 Elders are to **shepherd** and watch over **God's flock**, the church, caring for it and being **examples.** While having significant authority, they are not to lord this over the people and are to serve willingly. **The chief Shepherd** himself, Jesus Christ, will reward elders for this. While crowns awarded to athletes were

made of leaves, and so would fade and perish, elders **will receive the unfading crown of glory.** See also "Leadership and Biblical Ethics," *p. 1501*.

5:8-9 Throughout the Bible **the devil** is taken seriously as a real being who seeks the harm of God's people. While some today discount the existence of a spiritual realm, others treat the devil as if he were equal to God. Believers should recognize the seriousness of evil in the spiritual realm while remembering that God has triumphed over it in Christ. Though the devil is a serious threat to believers (**a roaring lion**), he can be resisted. See "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454;* "Satan and Demons," *p. 1611*.

5:13 Babylon refers to Rome (Rv 17:5,9). The former represents a kingdom set against God and his people (cp. the book of Daniel), as was Rome in the first century.



2 PETER

INTRODUCTION

Second Peter, one of the General Letters, emphasizes practical Christian living. Peter wrote to warn against false teachers and the negative influence they can have on moral living.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The author of 2 Peter plainly identified himself as the apostle Peter (1:1). He called himself "Simeon Peter" (1:1), a name not generally used of the apostle (elsewhere only in Ac 15:14). The spelling is Semitic and lends a sense of authenticity to Peter's letter. Peter designated himself as "a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ." He viewed himself as a servant submitted to Christ's lordship and as a divinely ordained, directly commissioned, authoritative representative of the Lord Jesus himself.

The letter contains several personal allusions to Peter's life. He mentioned that his death was close (1:14), described himself as an eyewitness of the transfiguration of Jesus (1:16-18), quoted the words of the voice from heaven at this event (1:17), indicated that he had previously written to the letter's recipients (whom he called "dear friends" in 3:1), and also called Paul "our dear brother" (3:15). Such references point to Peter as the author.

Many scholars reject Peter as the author of this letter. They argue that (1) the personal references to Peter's life are a literary device used by someone who wrote under the apostle's name in order to create the appearance of authenticity; (2) the style of Greek in 2 Peter is different from that of 1 Peter; (3) the reference to Paul's letters as a collection (3:15-16) points to a date later than Peter's lifetime; and (4) 2 Peter was dependent upon Jude. If this is true, Peter's authorship is problematic.

In response to these objections, one should consider that (1) the early church soundly rejected the practice of writing under an apostolic pseudonym, regarding it as outright forgery; (2) Peter may have had help in writing 1 Peter (1Pt 5:12) and not in writing 2 Peter, which would lead to different styles in his Greek; (3) rather than the whole collection, Peter may have referred only to those Pauline letters that were known at the time of writing; and (4) Peter may have borrowed some from Jude, or both may have used a common source. All of these evidences suggest that 2 Peter should be accepted as authentic.

BACKGROUND: Unlike 1 Peter, 2 Peter does not mention specific recipients or refer to an exact destination. The apostle referred to his epistle as the "second letter" he had written to his readers (3:1). If the letter written prior to 2 Peter is 1 Peter, then he wrote to the same recipients ("exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia"; 1Pt 1:1). But if the previous letter is a reference to some other epistle that is now unknown, we cannot determine with certainty to whom or to where 2 Peter was written.

Peter likely wrote 2 Peter from Rome, where church tradition placed the apostle in his latter days. Because he mentioned that his death was near (1:14), it seems the letter was written just before his death. Tradition places the date of Peter's martyrdom at about AD 67 during Nero's reign (ruled AD 54–68).

Second Peter's literary relationship with Jude is debated. What one decides about this issue inevitably affects the authorship and date of each letter. Both epistles are strikingly similar in content. Thus, if 2 Peter borrowed from Jude and the latter book was written somewhere between AD 65 and 80, the apostle Peter could not have been the author of 2 Peter. The use of 2 Peter by Jude, however, poses no problem for authorship or dating. Jude may have borrowed from 2 Peter, or both authors may have used a common source.

Peter wrote this letter to Christian friends confronted with the threat of false teachers who were denying

Christ's saving work and second coming. As an eyewitness of Jesus's life (1:16-18), Peter sought to affirm for his readers the reality of Christ's return and to remind them of truths they might otherwise forget (3:1).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Peter made strong connections with the OT and challenged his audience to live authentic Christian lives. Peter had been with Jesus when Jesus first spoke of his return (Mt 24–25), and he gave emphasis to the surety of the Second Coming.

It is the word of God that holds the forefront of this short letter. Peter does this in chapter 1 by emphasizing knowledge (vv. 3,5-6,8,12,20-21) and its divine origin; in chapter 2 by showing its historicity (v v. 4-8); and in chapter 3 by indicating Paul's letters are equal with "the rest of the Scriptures" (vv. 15-16).

STRUCTURE

Second Peter features of salutation, main body, and farewell. What is missing is an expression of thanksgiving. Its style is that of a pastoral letter, driven by the needs of the recipients, rather than some type of formal treatise.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father of Jesus, and he glorified his Son (1:17). God is the judge of all beings, human and superhuman (2:4). This is the only Bible book that uses the full title of "Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2:20; 3:18), a magnificent confession by one who knew him face to face during his earthly life. The single reference to the Holy Spirit mentions his role in the inspiration of Scripture (1:21).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Second Peter shows the great evil of those who are enslaved by error and sin: "like irrational animals—creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed—slander what they do not understand, and in their destruction they too will be destroyed" (2:12). On the other hand, redeemed humanity can grow in every virtue (1:5-8).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

This book provides an important definition of heresy as "denying the Master who bought them" (2:1). A heresy is a serious error about the person or work of Christ, in particular a denial that his death involved the purchase of salvation. There is little that the letter develops about Christ's work, but God's people are described as those "who have received a faith equal" to the apostle's (1:1). The future dimension of salvation will be revealed on "the day of the Lord" and the coming of "new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells" (3:10,13).

PREHISTORY–AD 29

Noah, his family, and the animal kingdom are spared in the great flood.

God rescues Lot from the complete destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. **2085 BC?**

Israel kills every male, including Balaam, in their war against Midian. **1407 BC**

Jesus calls Simon Peter "the Rock." **AD 29**

Jesus calls Peter to be one of his twelve disciples. **AD 29**

AD 30–33

Jesus heals Simon Peter's mother-in-law. **30**

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi that Jesus is the Messiah. **32**

Peter, James, and John witness Jesus's transfiguration. **32**

Peter vows to die with Jesus. **33**

Peter denies Jesus in the courtyard of Annas. **33**

AD 33–40

Following his resurrection, Jesus appears to Peter and recommissions him. **33**

Three thousand persons respond to Peter's sermon at the feast of Pentecost. **33**

Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER, 34**

Paul meets with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem following his conversion. **37?**

Peter bears witness to and baptizes Cornelius and his family at Caesarea Maritima. **40**

AD 50–SECOND COMPANY

Peter, James, John, Paul, Barnabas, and Titus meet in Jerusalem to deal with the question of whether Gentiles had to be circumcised to become Christians. **49**

At Antioch, Paul confronts Peter's refusal to share meals with Gentile believers. **49**

Peter's martyrdom in Rome during Nero's persecution of Christians **66**

Destruction of Jerusalem **70**

Allusions to 2 Peter may exist in a number of second-century documents, including *1, 2 Clement*, *Barnabas*, *Shepherd of Hermas*, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*.

GREETING

1 Simeon † Peter, † a servant and an apostle † of Jesus Christ: To those
who have received a faith equal to ours through the righteousness † of
our God and Savior † Jesus Christ.

2 May grace and peace be multiplied to you through the knowledge of God †
and of Jesus our Lord.

GROWTH IN THE FAITH

3 His † divine power † has given us everything required for life and godliness
through the knowledge † of him who called † us by † his own glory and
goodness. 4 By these he has given us very great and precious promises, † so that
through them you may share in the divine nature, † escaping the corruption that
is in the world because of evil desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort
to supplement your faith with goodness, goodness with knowledge, 6 knowledge
with self-control, † self-control with endurance, endurance with godliness,
7 godliness with brotherly affection, † and brotherly affection with love. 8 For
if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from
being useless † or unfruitful † in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 The
person who lacks these things is blind and shortsighted and has forgotten the
cleansing from his past sins. 10 Therefore, brothers and sisters, make every effort
to confirm your calling and election, † because if you do these things you will
never stumble. 11 For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom † of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.
12 Therefore I will always remind you about these things, even though you know
them and are established in the truth † you now have. 13 I think it is right, as
long as I am in this bodily tent, † to wake you up with a reminder, 14 since I
know that I will soon lay aside my tent, as our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed
made clear to me. † 15 And I will also make every effort so that you are able to
recall these things at any time after my departure. †

THE TRUSTWORTHY PROPHETIC WORD

16 For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you
the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; † instead, we were
eyewitnesses of his majesty. † 17 For he received honor and glory from God the
Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying “This is my
beloved Son, † with whom I am well-pleased! ” † 18 We ourselves heard this
voice when it came from heaven while we were with him on the holy
mountain. † 19 We also have the prophetic word strongly confirmed, and you
will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, † until the

day dawns † and the morning star † rises in your hearts. 20 Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, 21 because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; † instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. †

1:1 Other mss read *Simon* **1:3** Lit *As his* **1:3** Or *to* **1:15** Or *death* **1:17** Other mss read *my Son, my beloved* **1:1** Mt 16:17; Lk 6:14; Ac 10:32; 15:14 **1:1** Rm 1:1; Ti 1:1 **1:1** Rm 5:17,21; Php 1:11 **1:1** Ti 2:13 **1:2** Jn 17:3; Php 3:8; 2Pt 1:3,8; 2:20; 3:18 **1:3** 1Pt 1:5 **1:3** Jn 17:3; Php 3:8; 2Pt 1:2,8; 2:20; 3:18 **1:3** 1Th 2:12; 2Th 2:14; 1Pt 5:10 **1:4** Jos 21:45; 1Kg 8:56; Is 38:16; Jr 33:14; Rm 9:4; 15:8; 2Co 7:1 **1:4** Eph 4:24; Heb 12:10; 1Jn 3:2 **1:6** Ac 24:25; Gl 5:23 **1:7** Rm 12:10; Heb 13:1; 1Pt 1:22 **1:8** Jms 2:20 **1:8** Mt 7:16-21; Gl 5:22; Ti 3:14 **1:10** Mt 22:14; Rm 11:29; 2Pt 1:3 **1:11** Col 1:13; 2Tm 4:18 **1:12** 2Co 11:10; Col 1:5-6; 2Jn 2; 3Jn 3-4 **1:13** 2Co 5:1-4 **1:14** Jn 21:18-23 **1:16** Mk 13:26; 14:62; 1Th 2:19 **1:16** Mt 17:1-6 **1:17** Is 42:1; Mt 3:17; 17:5; Mk 1:11; 9:7; Lk 3:22 **1:18** Ps 2:6; Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28 **1:19** Ps 119:105 **1:19** Mal 4:2; Rm 13:12; 2Pt 3:18 **1:19** Nm 24:17; Rv 22:16 **1:21** Jr 23:26; 2Tm 3:16 **1:21** 2Sm 23:2; Lk 1:70; Ac 1:16; 3:18; 1Pt 1:11

1:3 Believers have all we need **for life and godliness** in Christ. The resources are available, coming **through the knowledge of** God.

1:4 Peter borrows language from the pantheistic, mystical ideas of his day. Some religions then, and now, speak of being absorbed into a god or even becoming a god. For Peter, however, sharing **in the divine nature** refers to union with Christ, and being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore growing in holiness (see the list of virtues in the following verses).

1:9 Forgetting that we have been forgiven is particularly destructive for Christians. Dwelling on the reality of our forgiveness in Christ is fundamental to Christian growth and perseverance.

1:10 Peter balances the **election**, or choosing, of God with human responsibility. **To confirm your calling and election** means that believers' lives will demonstrate the reality of belonging to God.

1:13 Peter refers to his physical body as a **tent** because it's a temporary dwelling for his soul or spirit (cp. 2Co 5:1,4). But this tent will be replaced by a house—a permanent, immortal body (1Co 15:35-46).

1:16 Myths were invented stories used by Greeks to teach religious "truths." The Christian faith does not rest on contrived stories; it is rooted in historical events for which there were ample **eyewitnesses.**

1:17-18 As an eyewitness of Christ's majesty (1:16), Peter recalls the transfiguration event that he witnessed (Mt 17:1-13; Lk 9:28-36). On a mountain, Jesus appeared in glorious light, talking with Moses and Elijah. From heaven, the Father's voice declared Jesus to be his **beloved Son.**

1:19 The ancients saw Venus as the **morning star** since it often appears just before daybreak. In a similar way, the coming of Christ is the harbinger of the new day. Peter might also be alluding to the star language in Numbers 24:17, which, in some Dead Sea Scrolls, was seen as a messianic text.

1:20-21 Scripture is not based on human ideas or **interpretation** but is the very Word of God. **Men** wrote it down in their own languages and styles, but **God** superintended the process. He directed them, so that they accurately communicated God's truths (1Pt 1:10-12). See "Biblical Authority," *p. 709.*

THE JUDGMENT OF FALSE TEACHERS

2 There were indeed false prophets † among the people, just as there will be false teachers † among you. They will bring in destructive heresies,

even denying the Master who bought † them, and will bring swift destruction on themselves.

THE APOCALYPTIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Widely quoted is this quip, often attributed to J. Vernon McGee: “You don’t polish the brass on a sinking ship.” This statement succinctly summarizes the view that since in the final judgment the earth will be consumed by fire, to support conservation and environmental causes is to oppose the will of God. According to this view, Christians should devote their attention to preaching the gospel and avoid working to care for the creation.

D. L. Moody famously said, I have felt like working three times as hard ever since I came to understand that my Lord was coming back again. I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me, ‘Moody, save all you can.’ God will come in judgment and burn up this world, but the children of God don’t belong to this world; they are in it, but not of it, like a ship in the water. The world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is coming nearer and nearer. If you have any friends on this wreck unsaved, you had better lose no time in getting them off. (*New Sermons, Addresses, and Prayers* [New York: Henry S. Goodspeed, 1877], 535) Several key convictions characterize this apocalyptic worldview, for which its advocates believe they have biblical support. First, the world is declining, going from bad to worse (cp. 2Tm 3:1-5). Second, this age ends with destruction by fire (2Pt 3:7,12). When that judgment comes, the earth will be annihilated and replaced by “a new earth” (Rv 21:1). Third, the gospel is the promise of escape from the world, either through death or by deliverance from the earth before final judgment is unleashed on it (Jn 14:1-4). Finally, to care for this world would be to pour one’s efforts into a lost cause, into caring for a world that will soon pass away. It would be much better to spend limited time and resources storing up treasures in heaven (Mt 6:19-21).

WILL GOD DESTROY THE WORLD?

But are such antienvironmental attitudes really biblical? When God sent judgment on the earth in the flood (Gn 6–8), he destroyed all living creatures except those who were in the ark with Noah—and the aquatic life that survived the onslaught in the waters. When the flood receded, Noah and the rest of the inhabitants of the ark resettled the earth. Then God made a covenant with all living things in which he promised never again to destroy all life with a flood: “I establish my covenant with you that never again will every creature be wiped out by floodwaters; there will never again be a flood to destroy the earth” (Gn 9:11). Those who believe in a coming apocalyptic conflagration understand this as a promise that God will never again destroy the earth in a flood but believe that he will destroy it—completely—by fire.

Yet, when he continues, God describes the rainbow as “the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all future generations. . . . I will remember my covenant between me and you and all the living creatures: water will never again become a flood to destroy every living creature” (Gn 9:12,15). This everlasting covenant implies that God has promised the earth that she will endure, that the earth will not be destroyed totally in the future. Further, since the flood did not annihilate the earth—for after the flood the earth remained—the fire of the eschatological judgment need not consume the earth entirely.

The apostle Peter responds to scoffers who reject the promise of the Lord's return, rebuking them for their willful ignorance of the doctrine of creation and the judgment in the flood: "By the word of God the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water. Through these the world of that time perished when it was flooded. By the same word, the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly" (2Pt 3:5-7).

Since the earth itself did not perish in the flood, the comparison might be that the future judgment by fire will destroy wicked people and the effects of the curse, not the earth itself. Peter is comparing the destruction of the earth in the flood to the destruction of ungodly men in the final judgment. In both cases, the earth is the locus of the judgment, not its focus. The wicked inhabitants of the earth are destroyed, not the whole planet itself.

Peter uses apocalyptic language to describe this day of judgment: "The heavens will pass away with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed" (2Pt 3:10). But rather than destroying the earth, the fire will be purifying and revelatory. It results in the works of humans being disclosed or made visible, not in the annihilation of the planet. Later, he says that "the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat" (3:12). The fire of judgment will be destructive, but that does not mean that the earth will be annihilated.

THE NEW EARTH

When the apostle John sees the heavenly city come down to earth at the end of the age, he exclaims that "the first heaven and the first earth had passed away" (Rv 21:1). This might mean that the earth will cease to exist and will be replaced by another. But, as Richard Bauckham explains, the terms "first" and "new" indicate the "qualitatively quite different life of the eternal age to come. The discontinuity is parallel, on a cosmic scale, to the discontinuity, in the case of human persons, between this moral life and the eschatologically new life of resurrection" (*New Testament Theology: The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 49).

In short, in the same way that there is continuity between the human body that is buried in the ground and the body that is raised in the day of resurrection, there will be continuity between the first earth and the redeemed or recreated one. When Thomas saw the risen Lord, he recognized him (Jn 20:27-29); there was continuity between the body that died and the one that was raised. And so believers look forward to the resurrection of their bodies (1Co 15:51-57).

HOPE FOR CREATION

Finally, it is difficult to reconcile annihilation of the earth with Paul's personification of creation's hope. He writes, "Creation eagerly waits with anticipation . . . in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children" (Rm 8:19-21). Annihilation could hardly be expressed as the hope of liberation. In short, the recreation of heaven and earth fits this language better than annihilation, and it fits better with the pattern of God's redemptive work. When God redeems, he does not destroy but regenerates and recreates.

But even if the earth will be annihilated, that still does not mean that Christians should oppose environmental and conservationist efforts. Preaching the gospel is not antithetical to care of the creation. In the first place, stewardship of creation is a divine mandate that was not revoked (Gn 1:26-28; 2:5,7). In the second, since no one knows when the Lord will return (Mt 24:36-41), it makes sense to act in the knowledge that providing clean water and air preserves and extends human life. And third, since no one knows when his life will end, everyone has a vested interest in caring for the environment. In a similar way that exercise is profitable for the body, saving for retirement is wise, and caring for our earthly possessions is good stewardship, caring for the environment is wise.

GLENN R. KREIDER

2 Many will follow their depraved ways, and the way of truth will be maligned because of them. † 3 They will exploit † you in their greed † with made-up stories. Their condemnation, † pronounced long ago, is not idle, and their destruction does not sleep.

4 For if God didn't spare † the angels who sinned but cast them into hell † † and delivered them in chains † of utter darkness to be kept for judgment; † 5 and if he didn't spare the ancient world, but protected Noah, † a preacher of righteousness, and seven others, † † when he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and if he reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah † to ashes and condemned them to extinction, † making them an example of what is coming to the ungodly; † † 7 and if he rescued righteous Lot, † distressed by the depraved behavior of the immoral 8 (for as that righteous man lived among them day by day, his righteous soul was tormented by the lawless deeds he saw and heard †) — 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue † the godly from trials and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, † 10 especially those who follow the polluting desires of the flesh and despise authority. †

Bold, arrogant people! They are not afraid to slander the glorious ones; 11 however, angels, who are greater in might and power, do not bring a slanderous charge against them before the Lord. † 12 But these people, like irrational animals — creatures of instinct born to be caught and destroyed — slander what they do not understand, and in their destruction they too will be destroyed. 13 They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. They consider it a pleasure to carouse in broad daylight. They are spots and blemishes, delighting in their deceptions † while they feast with you. 14 They have eyes full of adultery † that never stop looking for sin. They seduce unstable people and have hearts trained in greed. Children under a curse! † 15 They have gone astray by abandoning the straight path † and have followed the path of Balaam, † the son of Bosor, † who loved the wages of wickedness † 16 but received a rebuke for his lawlessness: A speechless donkey spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness. †

17 These people are springs without water, mists driven by a storm. The gloom
of darkness has been reserved for them. † 18 For by uttering boastful, empty
words, † they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have
barely escaped † from those who live in error. 19 They promise them freedom,
but they themselves are slaves of corruption, since people are enslaved to
whatever defeats them. † 20 For if, having escaped the world's impurity through
the knowledge of the Lord † and Savior Jesus Christ, † they are again entangled
in these things and defeated, the last state is worse for them than the first. †
21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of
righteousness † than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy command †
delivered † to them. † 22 It has happened to them according to the true proverb:
A dog returns to its own vomit, † † and, "a washed sow returns to wallowing
in the mud."

2:4 Gk *Tartarus* **2:4** Other mss read *in pits* **2:5** Lit *Noah, the eighth, a preacher of righteousness* **2:6** Other mss omit *to extinction* **2:6** Other mss read *an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly* **2:11** Other mss read *them from the Lord* **2:13** Other mss read *delighting in the love feasts* **2:15** Other mss read *Beor* **2:18** Or *people who are actually escaping* **2:20** Other mss read *our Lord*

2:1 Dt 13:1-5; Mt 7:15 **2:1** Ac 20:29; 2Co 11:13-15; Gl 2:4; 1Tm 4:1; 2Tm 4:3 **2:1** 1Co 6:20; 7:23 **2:2** Rm 2:24 **2:3** Jms 4:13 **2:3** Eph 5:3 **2:3** Mt 12:41; 23:33; Rm 3:8 **2:4** Rm 8:32; Jd 6 **2:4** Rv 20:2-3,10 **2:4** Mt 25:41 **2:5** Gn 5:29 **2:5** 1Pt 3:20 **2:6** Gn 19:24; Jd 7 **2:6** Is 1:9; Jd 15 **2:7** Gn 19:16 **2:8** Ps 119:136,158; Ezk 9:4 **2:9** 1Co 10:13 **2:9** Mt 10:15; Jd 6 **2:10-13** Jd 8-12 **2:14** Mt 5:27-28 **2:14** Jr 23:14; Hs 4:2; Eph 2:3; Heb 2:13 **2:15** Ac 13:10 **2:15** Nm 22:5-7; Dt 23:4; Neh 13:2; Jd 11; Rv 2:14 **2:15** Hs 9:1; Mc 1:7; Ac 1:18 **2:16** Nm 22:22-35 **2:17** Jd 13 **2:18** Jd 16 **2:19** Jn 8:34; Rm 6:16; 7:5 **2:20** 2Pt 1:2 **2:20** Mt 12:45; Lk 11:26 **2:21** Pr 8:20; 12:28; 16:31; 21:21; Mt 21:32 **2:21** Rm 7:12; 1Tm 6:14 **2:21** Jd 3 **2:21** Ezk 18:1-32; Heb 6:4-6; 10:26-27 **2:22** Pr 26:11 **2:22** Pr 26:11

2:1-3 Throughout the NT, there is an inherent connection between false teaching and ungodly living (2Tm 3:1-9).

2:4 The **angels** here are most likely the "sons of God" referred to in Genesis 6:1-4 (see "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*). **Hell** translates a word, *Tartarus*, that Jewish writers had begun using to communicate a place for punishment of sin. It was a temporary holding place, not the place of final judgment. Thus, Peter says they are held here **for judgment.** The angels being **in chains** is another way of describing the spirits in prison in 1 Peter 3:19.

2:5 Noah is not called **a preacher** in the OT, but Jewish traditions regarded him so.

2:11 In the Jewish text of 1 Enoch (chap. 9), good **angels** do not directly intervene when humans are harmed by evil angels. Instead they present the matter to the Lord. So here, they **do not bring a slanderous charge against** false teachers.

2:15-16 Balaam (Nm 22–24) is a prophet who agrees to take money in order to curse God's people. Although God prevents Balaam from doing this, the man became an example of corruption and greed.

2:19 People are enslaved by **whatever defeats them** refers to the enslaving power of sin. Whatever

fleshly desires (2:18) are indulged, in the end those desires become the masters of people indulging in them.

2:20 Peter may be alluding to Jesus's story about an evil spirit in Matthew 12:43-45.

THE DAY OF THE LORD

3 Dear friends, this is now the second letter † I have written to you; in both letters, I want to stir up your sincere † understanding by way of reminder, 2 so that you recall the words previously spoken by the holy prophets and the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles.
3 Above all, be aware of this: Scoffers will come in the last days † scoffing and following their own evil desires, 4 saying, "Where is his 'coming' that he promised? † Ever since our ancestors fell asleep, † all things continue as they have been since the beginning of creation." 5 They deliberately overlook this: By the word of God † the heavens came into being long ago and the earth was brought about from water and through water. † 6 Through these the world of that time perished when it was flooded. † 7 By the same word, † the present heavens and earth are stored up for fire, being kept for the day of judgment † and destruction of the ungodly.
8 Dear friends, don't overlook this one fact: With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. † 9 The Lord does not delay his promise, † as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any † to perish † but all to come to repentance. †
10 But the day of the Lord † will come like a thief; † † on that day the heavens will pass away † with a loud noise, the elements will burn and be dissolved, † and the earth and the works on it will be disclosed. † † 11 Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, it is clear what sort of people you should be in holy conduct and godliness 12 as you wait for the day of God and hasten its coming. † † Because of that day, the heavens will be dissolved with fire and the elements will melt with heat. 13 But based on his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, † where righteousness dwells. †

CONCLUSION

14 Therefore, dear friends, while you wait for these things, make every effort to be found without spot or blemish in his sight, at peace. † 15 Also, regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our dear brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him. † 16 He speaks about these things in all his letters. There are some matters that are hard to understand. The untaught and unstable will twist them to their own destruction, † as they also do with the rest of the Scriptures.

17 Therefore, dear friends, since you know this in advance, be on your guard, † so that you are not led away by the error of lawless people and fall from your own stable position. 18 But grow in the grace and knowledge † of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. † †

3:10 Other mss add *in the night* **3:10** Other mss read *will be burned up* **3:10** Some Syriac and Coptic mss read *will not be found* **3:12** Or *and speed the coming* **3:18** Other mss add *Amen.*
3:1 1Pt 1:1 **3:1** Php 1:10 **3:3** 2Tm 3:1; Heb 1:2; Jms 5:3; 1Pt 1:20 **3:4** 1Th 2:19; 2Pt 3:12 **3:4** Ac 7:60 **3:5** Gn 1:3-30; Ps 148:5; Jn 1:1-3; Heb 4:12; 11:3 **3:5** Ps 24:1-2; 33:6-7; 136:5-6; Pr 8:24-29 **3:6** 2Pt 2:5 **3:7** Is 66:15-16; Ezk 38:22; Am 7:4; Zph 1:18; Mal 4:1 **3:7** Php 1:6; 2Th 1:5; 1Jn 4:17 **3:8** Ps 90:4 **3:9** Hab 2:3 **3:9** Ti 2:11 **3:9** Ezk 18:23,32; 33:11; 1Tm 2:4 **3:9** Jl 2:12-13; Jnh 3:10; 4:2; Ac 17:31; Rm 2:4 **3:10** Php 1:6 **3:10** Mt 24:43; Lk 12:39; 1Th 5:2 **3:10** Mt 5:18; 24:35; Rv 21:1 **3:10** Is 24:19; Mc 1:4 **3:12** Lk 12:36; 1Co 1:7; 1Th 1:10; Ti 2:13; Jd 21 **3:13** Is 65:17; 66:22; Mt 19:28; Rm 8:21; Rv 21:1 **3:13** Is 32:16; Rm 14:17 **3:14** Php 2:15; 1Th 5:23; 1Tm 6:14; Jms 1:27 **3:15** Ac 9:17; 15:25; 2Pt 3:2 **3:16** Heb 5:11; 2Pt 2:14 **3:17** Lk 12:15; 2Tm 1:14; 4:15 **3:18** 2Pt 1:2 **3:18** Rm 11:36; 2Tm 4:18; Rv 1:6

3:2 Peter puts in parallel the OT **(the holy prophets)** and the beginnings of the NT **(the command** of Jesus **through** the **apostles).** Peter reminds his readers of both of these sources of authoritative teaching, laying the groundwork for our understanding both testaments as Scripture.

3:5 The reference to **water** as an agent of creation recalls Genesis 1:2 in which the Spirit was hovering above the waters. God separated the waters to form the heavens and the earth; he gathered the waters to form dry land (Gn 1:6-10).

3:8 Peter is not giving an equation for biblical time, in which one substitutes **a thousand years** anytime he sees **one day** mentioned in a prophecy. Rather, he is alluding to Psalm 90:4, which says that since God is eternal, the duration of time is different for him than it is for humans.

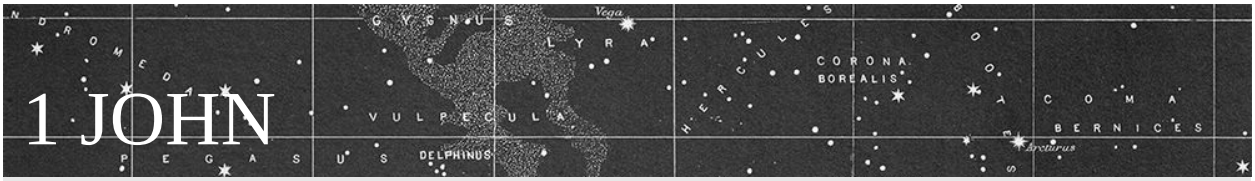
3:9 The long wait for Christ's return should not cause us to doubt that he will come. Rather, it should be seen as evidence of God's desire to give time for people to repent. This is in keeping with Jewish apocalyptic tradition, which viewed God as delaying his judgment for the sake of mercy.

3:10 Peter draws on Jesus's teaching that he **will come like a thief** in the night (Mt 24:42-43; 1Th 5:2). The descriptions of what will happen on **that day** are apocalyptic in tone, indicating the grave seriousness of **the day of the Lord.**

3:12 The elements melting **with heat** recalls OT language depicting the cosmic disasters that will accompany the day of the Lord (Mc 1:3-4; Is 63:19–64:1).

3:13 The expectation of **new heavens and a new earth** is grounded on Isaiah 65–66, which envisages a recreation and renewal of the universe.

3:16 Peter includes the letters of Paul in the category **of the Scriptures**, demonstrating that the apostolic writings were seen as Scripture even in the days of the apostles. See also “Biblical Inspiration and Inerrancy,” *p. XXXI.*



1 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

John's first letter addresses a setting in which some people in the local church had departed the fellowship (2:19), apparently because their doctrine, ethics, devotion, or some combination of these conflicted with those of the church. John wrote in part to stabilize the situation. He reaffirmed and enlarged on key theological truths, particularly the doctrine of Christ. He extolled love and emphasized the necessity for belief to be matched by action. A personal relationship with Christ is the foundation of the Christian life, and out from this grows obedience to divine commands. True faith, proactive ethics, fervent love for God and people—most of the epistle revolves around one or more of these three emphases as the author instructed, admonished, and encouraged his readers.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Ancient manuscripts are unanimous in naming "John" as the author of 1 John. This was understood to be John the son of Zebedee, the "beloved disciple" who was also the author of the Fourth Gospel. The style and vocabulary of 1, 2, and 3 John are so close to that of John's Gospel that they beg to be understood as arising from the same person. Some contemporary scholars theorize that an "elder John" (see 2Jn 1; 3Jn 1), not the apostle, may have written the letters. Others speak of a "Johannine school" or "circle" as the originators of the epistles of John (and perhaps Revelation too). But the view with the best support is that Jesus's disciple John was the author.

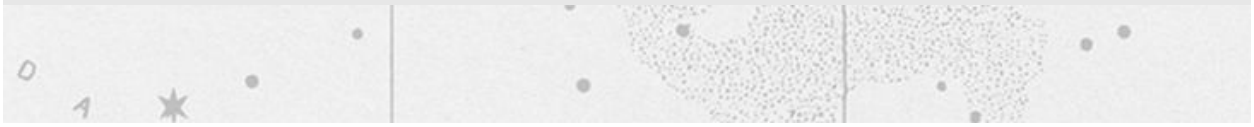
BACKGROUND: Second-century sources reported that around AD 70, the year the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, John left Jerusalem where he was a church leader and relocated to Ephesus. He continued his pastoral work in that region and lived until nearly AD 100. Ephesus is probably the place where John wrote the three NT letters that bear his name. They could have been composed at any time in the last quarter of the first century.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

First John maps out the three main components of saving knowledge of God: (1) faith in Jesus Christ, (2) obedient response to God's commands, and (3) love for God and others from the heart. This epistle shows how Jesus expects his followers to honor him in practical church life and wherever God calls his people to go and serve.

STRUCTURE

It is widely agreed that 1 John does not logically, methodically, or rigorously set forth and develop its arguments. For this reason scholars are divided on the best way to structurally outline the letter. It is the least letter-like of the three Johannine letters because of its lack of identification of the sender and the recipient. It is more like an unsystematic treatise. It often makes assertions along thematic lines, moves to related or contrasting themes, and then returns to the earlier topic, or perhaps takes up a different subject altogether.



CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is seen especially in his relationship to Jesus Christ. Thus he is "the Father." Jesus Christ is, in perfect complement, "his Son" (1:3). He is as well "the Christ" (Messiah) (2:22) who came "in the flesh" (4:2-3). The Holy Spirit has been given to believers (3:24; 4:13), and he enables believers to recognize and reject every false spirit (4:1-6).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

First John recognizes only two categories of human beings: those who believe in Jesus Christ and all others (who belong to the spirit of the antichrist). Believers confess their sins, but their lives are not characterized by sin (1:7-9; 5:16-18). They live in fellowship with God and with one another. Those who continue to live in sin are giving evidence that they have never known God (3:6).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

One of the great texts about salvation is 1 John 2:2: "He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world." The term "propitiation" (KJV) or "atoning sacrifice" refers to removal of divine wrath because of sin, as also in Romans 3:25. Christ's death propitiated God's wrath not only for "our sins," referring to the people to whom John was writing, but also for persons from all ethnic, economic, and social groups (Gl 3:28; Rv 7:9-10). The benefits of Christ's death come only to those who believe (5:13).

1 JOHN TIMELINE

AD 4–33

John the apostle, son of Zebedee and Salome is born. **8?**

John and his brother James are part of their father's fishing business in Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee. **25**

Jesus calls James and John to be two of his twelve disciples. **29**

AD 33–44

Peter, James, and John witness Jesus's transfiguration. **32**

John and Peter are asked to prepare the Passover meal Jesus shares with his disciples. **33**

Peter, James, and John are with Jesus as he prays in Gethsemane. **33**

As he dies, Jesus gives the care of his mother, Mary, to John. **33**

John may be the first of the twelve disciples to believe that Jesus rose from death. **33**

Following Pentecost, John and Peter show great courage in Jerusalem by bearing witness to Jesus's acts. **33**

John's brother, James, is the first of the twelve disciples to die a martyr's death. **44**

AD 45–65

John is among the pillars of the Jerusalem church who meet with Paul, Barnabas, and Titus in

Jerusalem to deal with the question of whether Gentiles had to be circumcised to become Christians. **49**

Paul travels through Ephesus toward the end of his second missionary journey. **52**

Apollos comes to Ephesus and is mentored by Aquila and Priscilla. **52**

Paul returns to Ephesus for a 2 ½ year ministry. **54**

Timothy, elder of Ephesus, receives the first letter from Paul. **62**

AD 60–LATE SECOND CENTURY

The Jewish War is started by zealots who drive the Romans out of Jerusalem temporarily. **66**

John leaves Jerusalem for Ephesus. **66–70?**

The Romans crush the Jewish rebellion and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. **70**

John is spiritual leader of the church at Ephesus. **70–100**

Irenaeus **(140–202)** affirms that the body of John's writings were composed in Ephesus.

PROLOGUE: OUR DECLARATION

1 What was from the beginning, † what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have observed and have touched with our hands, concerning the word † of life — 2 that life was revealed, † and we have seen it and we testify and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us † — 3 what we have seen and heard we also declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship † with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father † and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things † so that our † joy † may be complete.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light, † and there is absolutely no darkness in him. † 6 If we say, "We have fellowship † with him," and yet we walk in darkness, † we are lying and are not practicing the truth. † 7 If we walk in the light † as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus † his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say, "We have no sin," † we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive † us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word † is not in us. †

1:4 Other mss add *to you* **1:4** Other mss read *your*
1:1 Jn 1:1; 1Jn 2:13-14 **1:1** Ps 119:25; Jn 1:1,4; 5:24; Php 2:16 **1:2** Jn 1:31; 21:1,14; Col 3:4; 1Pt 5:4; 1Jn 2:28; 3:5,8 **1:2** 1Jn 5:20 **1:3** Php 3:10 **1:3** Mt 11:27 **1:4** 2Co 2:3; Php 1:4,25; 2:18 **1:5** Ps 27:1; 36:9; Jn 12:46; 1Tm 6:16 **1:5** 1Jn 2:5 **1:6** 2Co 8:4 **1:6** Pr 2:13; Is 9:2; 50:10; Jn 8:12; 12:35; 1Jn 2:11 **1:6** Jn 14:6; 2Co 11:10; 3Jn 3 **1:7** Eph 5:8-14; Php 2:15; Col 1:12-14; 1Th 5:5 **1:7** Heb 10:19; 12:24; 1Pt 1:2,19; Rv 1:5 **1:8** Pr 20:9; Jr 2:35; Rm 3:9-23; Jms 3:2 **1:9** Ps 103:3; Jr 31:34; Mt 9:6; 26:28; Col 1:14; Jms 5:15 **1:10** Lk 8:21; Heb 4:12 **1:10** Jn 8:37

1:1-3 John stresses the historical reality of Jesus and the veracity of his report. In the ancient world, it was common for religious stories to be invented for the sake of instruction. The teaching about Jesus is radically different from such stories. Having **seen with our eyes**, **observed**, and **touched** refers to the historical reality of the incarnation and bodily resurrection of Jesus. See also "Hinduism," *p. 1408*.

1:1 This verse recalls John 1:1 and, with its reference to **the beginning**, alludes to Genesis 1:1. As in John 1:1, the subject is ambiguous until it is revealed that Jesus is the One being spoken of (1:3).

1:5-7 Light represents purity and holiness while **darkness** represents sin. The images of light and darkness are drawn from OT passages such as Micah 7:8 and Isaiah 5:20.

1:8,10 A basic biblical truth is that all have sinned (cp. Rm 3:23). If we ignore or hide our struggle with sin, we cannot be spiritually healthy and cannot find forgiveness.

1:9 Rather than hiding sin, believers ought to **confess** their **sins.** God's faithfulness guarantees forgiveness and cleansing.

2 My little children, I am writing you these things so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate † with the Father — Jesus Christ the righteous one. 2 He himself is the atoning sacrifice † † for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world. †

GOD'S COMMANDS

3 This is how we know † that we know him: if we keep his commands. † 4 The one who says, "I have come to know him," and yet doesn't keep his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps his word, † truly in him the love of God is made complete. This is how we know we are in him: † 6 The one who says he remains in him † should walk just as he walked.

7 Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command † but an old command that you have had from the beginning. The old command is the word † you have heard. 8 Yet I am writing you a new command, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away † and the true light † is already shining. † 9 The one who says he is in the light but hates his brother or sister † is in the darkness until now. 10 The one who loves his brother or sister †

remains in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. † 11 But the one who hates his brother or sister † is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, † and doesn't know where he's going, † because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

REASONS FOR WRITING

12 I am writing to you, little children, since your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. †

13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you have come to know
the one who is from the beginning. †
I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one. †

14 I have written to you, children, because you have come to know the Father.
I have written to you, fathers, because you have come to know
the one who is from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men, because you are strong,
God's word † remains in you, and you have conquered the evil one.

A WARNING ABOUT THE WORLD

15 Do not love the world † or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, † the lust of the eyes, † and the pride † in one's possessions — is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world with its lust is passing away, † but the one who does the will of God † remains forever. †

THE LAST HOUR

18 Children, it is the last hour. † And as you have heard that antichrist † is coming, even now many antichrists have come. By this we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us.

20 But you have an anointing † from the Holy One, † and all of you know the truth. † 21 I have not written to you because you don't know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the

liar, if not the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? † This one is the antichrist: the one who denies the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; † he who confesses the Son has the Father as well. †

REMAINING WITH GOD

24 What you have heard from the beginning is to remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son † and in the Father. † 25 And this is the promise that he himself made to us: eternal life. †

26 I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things † and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, † remain in him. †

GOD'S CHILDREN

28 So now, little children, remain in him so that when he appears † we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming. † 29 If you know that he is righteous, you know this as well: Everyone who does what is right † has been born of him. †

2:2 Or *the propitiation* **2:10** Or *it* **2:20** Other mss read *and you know all things* **2:27** Or *as he has taught you*

2:1 Jn 14:26 **2:2** Rm 3:25; 2Co 5:21; Heb 2:17; 1Jn 4:10 **2:2** Mt 26:13; 28:19-20; Mk 14:9; Rm 1:8 **2:3** Jn 13:35; 1Jn 2:5; 3:19,24; 4:2,6,13; 5:2 **2:3** Jn 14:15; 15:10 **2:5** Jn 14:23 **2:5** Jn 6:56; 14:20; 15:1-7; Rm 8:1; 2Co 5:17; Eph 2:10; Php 1:1 **2:6** Jn 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:24,27-28; 3:6,24; 4:13,15-16 **2:7** Mk 7:8; Jn 13:34; 2Jn 5 **2:7** Lk 6:47; Jn 1:1 **2:8** Rm 13:12; 1Co 7:31; 1Jn 2:17 **2:8** Jn 1:9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 12:46 **2:8** Jn 1:5; 12:35-36; Rv 22:5 **2:9** 1Jn 2:11; 3:15; 4:20 **2:10** Rm 12:10; 1Th 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1Pt 1:22; 1Jn 3:10,14-17; 4:20-21 **2:11** Lv 19:17; 1Jn 3:15; 4:20 **2:11** 1Jn 1:6 **2:11** Jn 14:6 **2:12** Ps 25:11; Lk 24:47; Ac 2:38; 10:43 **2:13** 1Jn 1:1 **2:13** Jn 16:33; 17:15; Eph 6:10; 1Jn 2:14; 4:4; 5:4-5; Rv 2:7 **2:14** 1Jn 1:10 **2:15** Jn 15:19; 17:16; Rm 12:2; Jms 1:27; 4:4 **2:16** Rm 13:14; Eph 2:3; 1Pt 4:2; 2Pt 2:18 **2:16** Gn 3:6; Pr 27:20 **2:16** Jms 4:16 **2:17** 1Jn 2:8 **2:17** Mk 3:35; Eph 6:6; 1Th 4:3; 1Pt 2:15 **2:17** Jn 8:35; 12:34; 2Co 9:9; 1Pt 1:25 **2:18** Jn 2:4; 1Pt 4:7 **2:18** Mt 24:5,24; 1Jn 2:22; 4:3; 2Jn 7 **2:20** 2Co 1:21 **2:20** Ps 89:18; Mk 1:24; Ac 10:38 **2:22** Jn 20:31; Ac 18:5; Eph 5:2; 1Jn 5:1 **2:23** Jn 5:23 **2:23** Jn 8:19; 16:3; 17:3; 1Jn 4:15; 5:1; 2Jn 9 **2:24** Jn 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:6,27-28; 3:6,24; 4:13,15-16 **2:24** Jn 10:38; Col 3:3; 1Th 1:1; 1Jn 4:15-16 **2:25** Jn 4:14; 1Tm 4:8; 2Tm 1:1; Ti 1:2 **2:27** Jn 14:26 **2:27** Jn 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:6; 3:6,24; 4:13,15-16 **2:28** Lk 17:30; Col 3:4; 1Jn 3:2 **2:28** 1Th 2:19 **2:29** Gn 18:19; Dt 6:18; 1Jn 3:7,10 **2:29** Jn 1:12-13; 3:3-7; 8:41; 1Jn 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18

2:2 The meaning of the word translated **atoning sacrifice** (Gk *hilasmos*) has been the subject of much debate. In some contexts it refers to the removal of sin (or expiation; cp. 1:9). In other contexts, it refers to the diversion of God's wrath away from the guilty party, which is most likely here (in keeping with Jesus's advocacy; 2:1). This atoning sacrifice is **for those of the whole world.** The meaning of this phrase is also

debated, but it likely means that Jesus's sacrifice is sufficient to deal with the sins of all people—even if only some will accept its benefits. See also "Ethics of Global Missions," *p. 1323.*

2:7-8 The **old command** is the command to love one another (Jn 13:34), which is rooted in the OT law. Jesus summarized the law as love for God and love for neighbor (Mt 22:34-40). This command is also **new** because it takes on new significance through the life and work of Jesus.

2:9-11 The absence of love indicates that a believer does not ultimately belong to the **light.** Hate belongs to **the darkness.**

2:15-17 The **world** refers to humanity in opposition to Christ. Allegiance to human rebellion against God spells a lack of allegiance to **the Father.**

2:18 Throughout the NT, the last days or the **last hour** is viewed as already here. The death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ has ushered in the end of the age, in which we glimpse the reality of the new age and await the coming of its fullness. The **antichrist** in this passage is not some future person, but people in the first century who opposed the orthodox teaching about Jesus (see 2:19,22).

2:20,27 Believers have received **an anointing**, the Holy Spirit, and knowledge of **the truth.** This does not mean they no longer need teaching, since John has written this letter to instruct them (2:21).

3 See what great love † the Father has given us that we should be called
God's children — and we are! The reason the world does not know us is
that it didn't know him. 2 Dear friends, we are God's children now, and
what we will be has not yet been revealed. † We know that when he appears, †
we will be like him † because we will see him as he is. † 3 And everyone who
has this hope † in him purifies himself just as he is pure. †
4 Everyone who commits sin practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.
5 You know that he was revealed so that he might take away sins, † † and there
is no sin in him. † 6 Everyone who remains in him † does not sin; † †
everyone who sins † has not seen him or known him.
7 Children, let no one deceive you. The one who does what is right is righteous,
just as he is righteous. 8 The one who commits † sin is of the devil, for the devil
has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God † was revealed † for this
purpose: to destroy the devil's works. 9 Everyone who has been born of God †
does not sin, † because his seed † remains in him; he is not able to sin, †
because he has been born of God. 10 This is how God's children and the devil's
children become obvious. Whoever does not do what is right is not of God,
especially the one who does not love his brother or sister. †

LOVE IN ACTION

11 For this is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love
one another, 12 unlike Cain, † who was of the evil one † and murdered his
brother. And why did he murder him? Because his deeds were evil, and his
brother's were righteous.
13 Do not be surprised, brothers and sisters, if the world hates † you. 14 We
know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers and
sisters. The one who does not love remains in death. † 15 Everyone who hates
his brother or sister † is a murderer, † and you know that no murderer has
eternal life residing in him. 16 This is how we have come to know love: He laid
down his life † for us. † We should also lay down our lives for our brothers and
sisters. † 17 If anyone has this world's goods † and sees a fellow believer † in
need † but withholds compassion † from him — how does God's love reside in
him? † 18 Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in
truth. †
19 This is how we will know that we belong to the truth † and will reassure our
hearts before him 20 whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than
our hearts, and he knows all things. †
21 Dear friends, if our hearts don't condemn us, we have confidence before God
22 and receive whatever we ask from him because we keep his commands †
and do what is pleasing in his sight. 23 Now this is his command: that we believe in
the name † of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he commanded us.
24 The one who keeps his commands remains in him, † and he in him. And the
way we know that he remains in us † is from the Spirit † he has given us.

3:1 Or *what sort of love* **3:2** Or *when it appears* **3:5** Other mss read *our sins* **3:6** Or *not keep on sinning* **3:6** Or *who keeps on sinning* **3:8** Or *practices* **3:9** Or *not practice sin* **3:9** Or *to keep on sinning* **3:17** Lit *sees his brother or sister*

3:2 2Co 4:11; 1Pt 5:4; 1Jn 2:28 **3:2** Rm 8:29; 1Co 15:49; 2Co 3:18; Php 3:21; 2Pt 1:4 **3:2** 1Co 13:12; Heb 12:14; Rv 22:4 **3:3** Ac 23:6; 1Th 1:3 **3:3** Php 4:8 **3:5** Jn 1:29; 1Co 15:3; Heb 10:4; 1Pt 2:24 **3:5** 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Pt 2:21-22; 3:18; 1Jn 2:29 **3:6** Jn 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:6,24,27-28; 3:24; 4:13,15-16 **3:6** Rm 6:11-12; 1Jn 2:29; 5:18 **3:8** Mk 1:11 **3:8** Jn 21:1; 2Co 4:11; 1Pt 5:4; 1Jn 5:20 **3:9** 1Jn 2:29 **3:9** 1Pt 1:23 **3:10** 1Jn 2:10; 3:14-17; 4:20-21 **3:12** Gn 4:1; Jd 11 **3:12** 2Th 3:3 **3:13** Jn 17:14 **3:14** Jn 8:51 **3:15** 1Jn 2:9,11; 4:20 **3:15** Mt 5:21-22; Jn 8:44 **3:16** Jn 10:11,14,17-18; 13:37-38; 15:13 **3:16** Is 53:10; Mk 10:45 **3:16** Mk 8:34-35; 1Co 11:1; Php 2:5-8 **3:17** Mk 12:44; Lk 15:12; 1Jn 2:16 **3:17** Ac 2:45 **3:17** 2Co 7:15 **3:17** Jms 2:15-16; 1Jn 2:5 **3:18** Mt 7:21; Jn 13:34-35; 15:12-17; Jms 1:22-25; 2:14-17 **3:19** Jn 14:6; 2Co 11:10; 3Jn 3 **3:20** Ps 139:6; Pr 2:6; Jn 14:28 **3:22** Mk 7:8; Jn 14:15; 1Jn 2:3; 5:2 **3:23** Ps 33:21; Is 50:10; Jn 1:12; 3:18; 1Jn 5:13

3:24 Lk 11:13; Jn 15:4-7; Ac 5:32; 15:8 **3:24** Jn 6:56 **3:24** Rm 8:9-16

3:2 Dear friends is literally "beloved." Throughout his letters, John uses such terms of endearment toward his readers. This is in contrast to Stoics, and other teachers of the time, who desired to keep their distance from others, avoiding attachment to anyone that they might remain undisturbed.

3:6,8-9 John is not saying Christians will reach sinless perfection in this life. Otherwise, his comments in 1:8–2:2 would not make sense. Instead, he is speaking of turning away from the truth of Christ, as some in the community have recently done (2:19).

3:12 It is perhaps strange that the only OT figure mentioned in this letter is the murderer, **Cain** (Gn 4:1-16). But the reference is appropriate since the author is concerned with love for brothers and sisters in Christ. Cain murdered his brother, and is thus an appropriate negative example.

3:16 The ultimate example of **love** is Jesus's death for sinful humans (4:9-10; Rm 5:7-8; Eph 5:2). Believers are to show the same love for **our brothers and sisters.**

3:17 This comment recalls Jesus's parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). The connection between the two passages is tightened by the word **compassion** (Lk 10:33).

3:20 That **God is greater than our hearts** offers reassurance to believers who suffer from a burden of guilt. Regardless of how one feels, God loves us. He already **knows all things**: he is fully aware of the depth of our sin, and loves us anyway.

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

4 Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits † to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.
2 This is how you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh † is from God, † 3 but every spirit that does not confess Jesus † is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, † which you have heard is coming; even now it is already in the world.
4 You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them, because the one who is in you † is greater than the one who is in the world. † 5 They are from the world. † Therefore what they say is from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us; † anyone who is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception. †

KNOWING GOD THROUGH LOVE

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God † and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among

us † in this way: God sent † his one and only Son † into the world so that we might live † through him. 10 Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us † and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice † † for our sins. 11 Dear friends, if God loved us in this way, we also must love one another. † 12 No one has ever seen God. † If we love one another, God remains in † us and his love is made complete in us.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, also known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, was founded in 1879 by Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916). More than 7.5 million active members attend Kingdom Halls, the Jehovah's Witnesses version of local churches. Today there are approximately twelve thousand such congregations scattered throughout 239 countries and territories.

Dedicated members meet three days a week. One evening is devoted to a public lecture on a subject of general interest, followed by a Bible study that uses *The Watchtower* magazine as its resource material. On another night the Witnesses assemble for the Theocratic Ministry School where they are trained to present Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine. This is followed by a service meeting in which they discuss their witnessing efforts in the neighborhood. The next gathering is set aside for a small group Bible study based on lessons published in *Awake!* magazine; such groups meet in homes or at a Kingdom Hall.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT

The roots of the Jehovah's Witnesses can be traced to the burgeoning Adventist movement of the late 1800s, when a seventeen-year-old Charles Russell embraced the Adventist doctrines of soul sleep (a rejection of life after death) and annihilation (a rejection of eternal hell). Within a year he was teaching these same ideas to others in a community Bible class he started.

In 1876, Russell came under the influence of *The Herald of the Morning*, an Adventist magazine published in Rochester, NY, and edited by the controversial Nelson Barbour, who two years earlier had incorrectly predicted Christ's return to earth. To justify his failed prophecy, Barbour claimed that Christ had indeed returned, but he did so invisibly. *The Herald* soon found itself on the verge of bankruptcy. Russell, a budding businessman, came to the rescue, infusing the magazine with needed funds in exchange for the position of assistant editor.

In 1878 Russell and Barbour clashed over doctrine, which resulted in Russell departing to begin his own magazine, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* that he mailed to all his former subscribers. He also organized thirty new Bible classes, called *ecclesias*, in the northeast and throughout the Ohio Valley, serving as pastor of the movement. He wed one of his students, Maria Ackley, that same year; the marriage eventually ended in divorce.

Over the next four years Russell wrote and distributed over a million booklets and tracts, and he sent two missionaries to England with the materials. In 1882, Russell wrote an article rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity. Many of his followers abandoned him, but many more embraced his views.

Russell officially incorporated the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society as a for profit entity in the state of Pennsylvania in 1884. Two years later he launched an eighteen-year, six-volume writing project—The

Millennial Dawn series (now called Studies in the Scriptures)—in which he laid out his understanding of the Scriptures.

By 1888, Russell prophesied that the "time of the Gentiles" would come to an end in October 1914, leading to the battle of Armageddon and followed by Christ's earthly kingdom. He claimed his followers—the 144,000 elect of Revelation 7 and 14—would inherit the earth. Motivated by the announcement, the faithful took on the task of spreading Russell's gospel to as many people as possible before the date's arrival. In the interim, a new headquarters was built in Pittsburgh (1889); the first Watch Tower national assembly was held in Chicago in conjunction with the World's Fair (1893); a branch office was opened in London (1904) and another in Australia (1906); a world headquarters was established in Brooklyn, New York (1909); and Russell's weekly sermons were syndicated in three thousand newspapers nationwide.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, it looked like the end was near. When 1914 gave way to 1915 and then 1916, the faithful did not seem too concerned. In their view, the war was still raging and the kingdom was imminent.

Then on October 31, 1916, Russell died unexpectedly in Pampa, TX, on his way back to New York from a speaking engagement. His followers, the Russellites, were confused and conflicted.

Joseph Rutherford (1869–1942), legal counsel for the Society, stepped forward to fill the leadership void, despite Russell's specific instructions that upon his death the governance of the movement should be shared by a Board of Directors, which he had appointed for life. Rutherford made major changes to the organization. He appointed directors in each congregation, who were answerable to headquarters. This was a major paradigm shift, since under Russell each congregation elected its own officers. Rutherford also wrote most of the Society's new literature, publishing several new booklets and at least one new book each year. He required all members to distribute the literature door to door. Through these efforts, the ranks swelled.

In 1931, Rutherford changed the name of the organization to Jehovah's Witnesses. He declared the sect to be a theocratic organization under God with the Governing Body serving as his earthly representatives. Thus, the Jehovah's Witnesses became the repository of truth and God's channel of revelation on earth. Joseph Rutherford died on January 8, 1942.

Nathan Knorr (1905–1977) served as the next president and built the Jehovah's Witnesses into a wealthy financial empire. He commissioned the publishing of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, which uses the word *Jehovah* in place of *Lord*. Knorr also banned the use of images and religious pictures, forbade the celebration of birthdays, announced Christmas and Easter to be pagan, deemed the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the National Anthem to be idolatrous, and declared that no Jehovah's Witness should run for public office, vote in elections, or serve on a jury.

When Knorr prophesied that the battle of Armageddon would begin in 1975 to be followed by the reign of Christ on earth, membership increased from one hundred thousand to nearly five million as the faithful waited for the end of the age. At the failure of the forecast, however, many became disillusioned and left the Society.

With the death of Nathan Knorr in 1977, the Board named Frederick Franz (1893–1992) as its new president, but limited his powers. He served until his death on December 22, 1992, at ninety-nine years of age. Under his leadership an effort was made to rid the organization of dissenters and to take more authoritarian control of the Society.

Franz was known best for two particular doctrinal revelations. The first, based on Leviticus 17:12-14, prohibited Jehovah's Witnesses from getting blood transfusions. The second amplified Russell's teaching about the 144,000 elect. Knorr claimed that all Jehovah's Witnesses fit into one of two categories: (1) The "Bride of Christ," a born-again class, consisting of the first 144,000 members who were chosen to reign with Christ from heaven during the millennium; and (2) The "other sheep," consisting of the remainder of the members who will inherit the earth as a result of their faithful service to God's appointed organization.

Milton G. Henschel (1920–2003) was named the fifth Jehovah's Witnesses president in 1992. Under his leadership, the organization reevaluated its public image. Seeking to appeal to a new generation of potential converts, the Society made several concessions. First, it admitted that many of Russell's ideas came out of

the Adventist movement and not directly from God. Second, it stopped attacking mainline churches. Third, it ended the practice of predicting end-time events. Fourth, it no longer condemned holidays as being pagan. Fifth, it softened its stance against blood transfusions. Donald Adams (1925–) took leadership in 2000.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND ORTHODOX FAITH

Besides its many unique doctrines mentioned above, the Jehovah's Witnesses differ from Orthodox faith in the following areas.

The Godhead. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the Father alone is God. The Holy Spirit is considered an impersonal force emanating from the Father. The Son is the first created being in the universe. In his preincarnate state the Son was Michael the archangel. Hence, the Son is inferior to God, but superior to man. This belief, known as Arianism, was prevalent in the second and third century. The Council of Nicaea (AD 325) condemned Arianism as a heresy, stating that Jesus was fully God and fully man.

The Atonement. Whereas orthodox Christianity believes that Jesus Christ atoned for all sins, Jehovah's Witnesses propose that Jesus died on a stake and atoned only for Adam's sin. Those who wish to escape death and find eternal life must work out their own salvation through dedication to Jehovah and his authorized organization.

The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to the Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus was raised from the dead as an immortal spirit being, but not in bodily form. His body remained in the tomb. Yet the apostle Paul clearly teaches that without the bodily resurrection of Jesus there is no gospel, no hope for eternal life, and no meaning in the present life (1Co 15:1-8,14-19).

Eternal Judgment. According to Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine, the words *hell*, *Sheol*, and *Hades* do not refer to a place of conscious suffering, but to the grave where the dead are laid to rest. They reject the concept of eternal hell in which people are punished. Rather, they posit that the unrighteous eventually will be raised from the dead, judged by God, and cast into the lake of fire, in which they will be annihilated.

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13 This is how we know that we remain in him † and he in us: He has given us
of his Spirit. † 14 And we have seen and we testify that the Father has sent his
Son † as the world's Savior. 15 Whoever confesses † that Jesus is the Son of
God — God remains in him and he in God. 16 And we have come to know and
to believe the love that God has for us.
God is love, and the one who remains in love remains in God, and God remains
in him. 17 In this, love is made complete with us so that we may have confidence
in the day of judgment, † because as he is, so also are we in this world. †
18 There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, † because fear
involves punishment. † So the one who fears is not complete in love. † 19 We
love † because he first loved us. † 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and yet
hates his brother or sister, † he is a liar. † For the person who does not love his
brother or sister † whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. †

21 And we have this command from him: The one who loves God must also love his brother and sister.

4:3 Other mss read *confess that Jesus has come in the flesh* **4:9** Or *in us* **4:10** Or *the propitiation* **4:12** Or *remains among* **4:18** Or *fear has its own punishment* or *torment* **4:19** Other mss add *him* **4:20** Other mss read *has seen, how is he able to love . . . seen?* (as a question)
4:1 1Th 5:21 **4:2** Jn 1:14; Php 2:7; 3:3 **4:2** 1Co 12:3 **4:3** 1Jn 2:18,22; 2Jn 7 **4:4** Rm 8:31; Col 1:27; 1Jn 3:20 **4:4** Jn 12:31 **4:5** Jn 17:6; 2Pt 2:20 **4:6** Jn 8:47 **4:6** Mk 13:5-6; 1Co 2:12; 1Tm 4:1 **4:7** 1Jn 2:29 **4:9** Mk 9:37 **4:9** Jn 1:14,18; 3:16,18 **4:9** Jn 10:28 **4:10** Jn 3:16 **4:10** 2Co 5:21; 1Jn 2:2 **4:11** Jn 13:14; 15:12; Rm 13:8; 1Th 4:9; 1Pt 1:22 **4:12** Ex 33:20 **4:13** Jn 15:4-7; 1Jn 2:6,24,27-28; 3:6,24; 4:15-16 **4:13** Rv 3:22 **4:14** Rm 1:3 **4:15** Jn 9:22; Php 2:6 **4:17** Mt 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; 2Pt 2:9; 3:7; Jd 6 **4:17** Jn 14:10-11; 15:9-10; 17:11,15,18 **4:18** Rm 8:15 **4:18** Eph 4:11-16 **4:19** 2Th 2:13 **4:20** 1Jn 2:9,11; 3:15 **4:20** 1Jn 1:10 **4:20** 1Jn 2:10; 3:10,14-17

4:1-2 John has in view people who would speak to the community, claiming to be prompted by **the Spirit** (4:6). However, various spirits might prompt such speakers, so discernment is required. We must not believe everyone who claims to speak for God, but we must weigh what is said in comparison with Scriptural truth. The Spirit of God leads believers to confess **that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.** This confession is relevant against an early heresy that denied that Christ was fully human (Docetism; see "The Incarnation of Jesus Christ," *p. 1271*).

4:3-4 A person is **antichrist** if he denies the truth about Jesus (2:18-19; 4:2 see also "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454*).

4:9-10 The ultimate expression of **God's love** is his sending of **his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins** (3:16). On the word translated "atoning sacrifice," see the note on 2:2.

4:12 Though **no one has ever seen God** (Jn 1:18), his presence is assured among those who **love one another.**

5 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, † and everyone who loves the Father † also loves the one born of him. 2 This is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God and obey † his commands. 3 For this is what love for God is: to keep his commands. And his commands are not a burden, † 4 because everyone who has been born of God conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.

THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S TESTIMONY

5 Who is the one who conquers the world † but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? † 6 Jesus Christ — he is the one who came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water † and by blood. † And the Spirit is the one who testifies, † because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: † † 8 the Spirit, † the water, and the blood † — and these three are in

agreement. 9 If we accept human testimony, God's testimony † is greater, because it is God's testimony that he has given about his Son. 10 The one who believes in the Son of God has this testimony within himself. The one who does not believe God has made him a liar, † because he has not believed in the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 The one who has the Son has life. † The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I have written these things to you who believe in the name † of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

14 This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask † anything according to his will, he hears us. † 15 And if we know that he hears whatever we ask, † we know that we have what we have asked of him. †

16 If anyone sees a fellow believer † committing a sin that doesn't lead to death, he should ask, and God will give life to him — to those who commit sin that doesn't lead to death. There is sin † that leads to death. I am not saying he should pray about that. 17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin that doesn't lead to death.

CONCLUSION

18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not sin, but the one who is born of God keeps him, † † and the evil one does not touch him. 19 We know that we are of God, and the whole world is under the sway of the evil one. 20 And we know that the Son of God has come † and has given us understanding so that we may know the true one. † We are in the true one — that is, in his Son Jesus Christ. † He is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

5:1 Or *loves the one who has given birth* **5:2** Other mss read *keep* **5:7-8** A few late Gk mss and some late Vg mss add *testify in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.* 8*And there are three who bear witness on earth:* **5:16** Lit *sees his brother or sister* **5:16** Or *is a sin* **5:18** Other mss read *himself* **5:20** Other mss read *the true God*

5:1 1Jn 2:29 **5:3** Dt 30:11; Mt 11:30; 23:4,23 **5:5** 1Co 15:57; 2Pt 2:20 **5:5** Jn 5:19; 14:1; Heb 1:2 **5:6** Mk 1:11; Jn 1:34 **5:6** Jn 17:1; 1Jn 1:7; 4:10 **5:6** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **5:7** Dt 19:15; Mt 18:16; Jn 8:17-18 **5:8** Jn 1:32; 19:30; 20:22 **5:8** Jn 19:34 **5:9** Jn 5:36-37; 8:18 **5:10** Gn 3:4 **5:12** Jn 3:15,36; 5:24; 6:40,47 **5:13** 1Jn

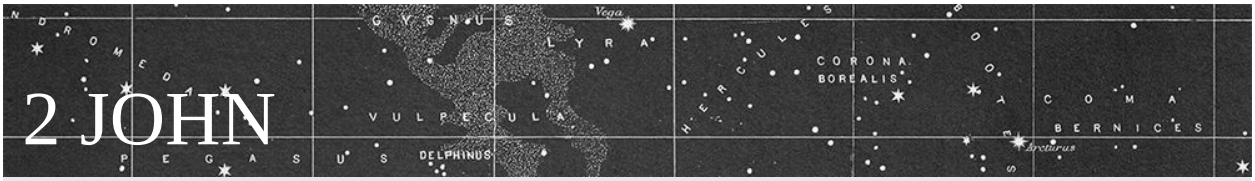
3:23 **5:14** Mt 7:7; Jn 14:13; 1Jn 3:22 **5:14** Mt 7:8; Jn 9:31; 11:22 **5:15** Jms 1:5 **5:15** Jn 11:22; 16:24 **5:18** Jn 17:12; 1Pt 1:5; Jd 24; Rv 3:10 **5:20** Jn 1:14; 8:42; 1Jn 1:2; 3:5,8 **5:20** Jn 10:38; 15:9; 17:21; 1Th 1:1; 1Jn 2:23-24

5:3 In a Christian worldview, **love** and obeying God cannot be divided, or set at odds with one another. God's **commands** do not refer to the law of Moses, but to the commands to believe in Jesus and to love one another (4:23).

5:6 There has been much discussion about the meaning of **water and blood.** The terms may refer to Jesus's baptism by water and his crucifixion.

5:13 The author's ultimate goal in writing is to encourage genuine belief in Christ so that people may have assurance of **eternal life** in him.

5:16-17 Christians have a responsibility to intercede for one another. The **sin that leads to death** in this context is a rejection of Christ, as described in the preceding verses (5:10-13).



2 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

The second letter of John advises “the elect lady” (either a reference to a congregation or to a woman who owned a house where the congregation met) to be fervent in Christian love (v. 5) and watchful of deceivers (vv. 7-8). The writer planned to visit the congregation soon (v. 12).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: “The elder” (v. 1) is a title that the apostle John applied to himself late in life. (The apostle Peter referred to himself the same way; 1Pt 5:1.) No one other than the apostle John was ever suggested by the early church as the writer of 1 John. Since there are so many similarities between 1 and 2 John, it is generally accepted that John also wrote the second letter.

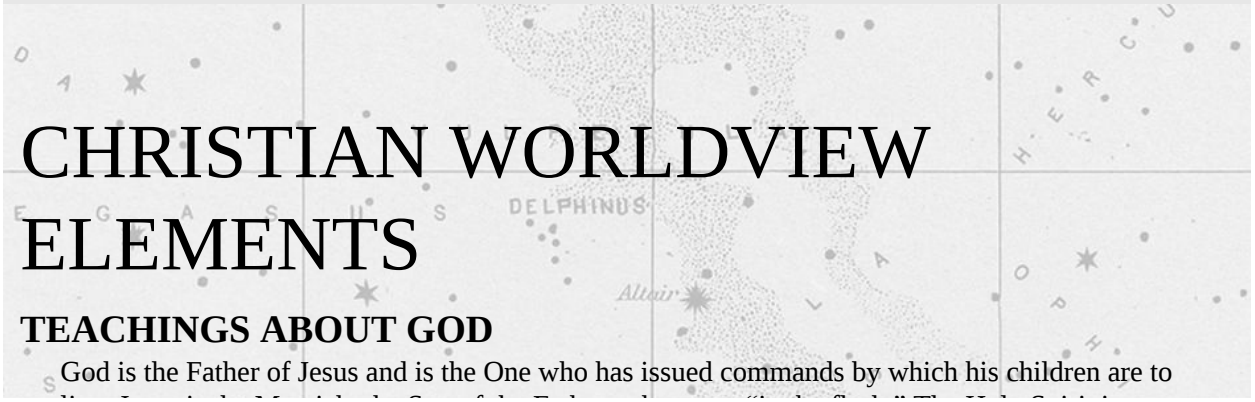
BACKGROUND: Second John likely was written during the last two decades of the first century. During this era, John gave pastoral leadership to churches in the area of Ephesus. We have no way of precisely dating 2 John, but it is reasonable that it was written around the same time as 1 John or slightly afterwards. Its tone reveals it to be a highly personal letter that reflects John’s affection for these believers and his deep concern for their welfare.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

It is easy for congregations to get off track. Second John reminds readers of the high priority of the most basic Christian outlook and activity—mutual love. Yet another priority is no less critical—true Christian teaching. This epistle strikes a short but strong blow for steadfastness, assuring that attentive readers would take the right steps to “receive a full reward” (v. 8).

STRUCTURE

Second John is an excellent example of hortatory or exhortation discourse, which has the intent of moving readers to action. It follows the normal NT pattern for a letter with an opening, main body, and closing. There are only two commands in this short letter: a call to “watch yourselves” (v. 8) and the command, “do not receive” those who plant false teaching (v. 10). There is the reminder to “love one another” in verse 5. This bears the force of an imperative, in part because of the close proximity of the word “command,” which occurs four times in verses 4-6.



CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is the Father of Jesus and is the One who has issued commands by which his children are to

live. Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the Father, who came "in the flesh." The Holy Spirit is not mentioned.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This book shows (negatively) that many deceivers and antichrists are out to oppose God's people. It also shows (positively) the great good that one Christian or one congregation ("the elect lady") can accomplish. (See also "Teachings About Humanity" in 1Tm, p. 1497.) TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

The only teaching directly related to salvation is the crucial importance of the incarnation of the Son of God. Those who deny this doctrine are cut off from salvation (v. 7). Redeemed people "walk in love" and "remain in Christ's teaching" as a way of living.

2 JOHN TIMELINE

AD 17–61

Ephesus experiences a destructive earthquake. **17**

Paul travels through Ephesus toward the end of his second missionary journey. **52**

Apollos comes to Ephesus and is mentored by Aquila and Priscilla. **52**

Paul returns to Ephesus for a 21/2 year ministry. **54**

Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians. **61**

AD 62–67

Timothy, elder of Ephesus, receives first letter from Paul, 1 Timothy. **62**

Peter's first letter from Rome to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia **64**

Peter's second letter from Rome **66**

The Jewish War is started by zealots who drive the Romans out of Jerusalem temporarily. **66**

Timothy receives second letter from Paul, 2 Timothy. **67?**

AD 67–70S

Peter and Paul's death in Rome **64–67?**

John leaves Jerusalem for Ephesus. **66–70?**

The Romans crush the Jewish rebellion and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. **70**

John is spiritual leader of the church at Ephesus. **70–100**

John's Gospel written **70**s AD 80S–100

John's first letter (1 John) to the churches of Asia Minor **80**s John's letter to the elect lady (2 John) **80**s John's letter to Gaius (3 John) **80**s John is exiled to Patmos and writes the book of Revelation. **95**

Ephesus becomes one of the largest cities in the Roman province of Asia after Sardis and Alexandria Troas. **100**

GREETING

1 The elder: To the elect † lady and her children, whom I love in the truth
— and not only I, but also all who know the truth † — 2 because of the
truth that remains in us † and will be with us forever.
3 Grace, mercy, and peace † will be with us from God the Father and from
Jesus Christ, the Son † of the Father, in truth and love. †

TRUTH AND DECEPTION

4 I was very glad to find some of your children walking in truth, † in keeping
with a command we have received from the Father. 5 So now I ask you, dear
lady — not as if I were writing you a new command, but one we have had from
the beginning — that we love one another. † 6 This is love: † that we walk
according to his commands. † This is the command as you have heard it from
the beginning: that you walk in love. †
7 Many deceivers have gone out into the world; they do not confess the coming
of Jesus Christ in the flesh. † This is the deceiver and the antichrist. † 8 Watch
yourselves so you don't lose what we † have worked for, but that you may
receive a full reward. † 9 Anyone who does not remain in Christ's teaching †
but goes beyond it does not have God. † The one who remains † in that
teaching, this one has both the Father † and the Son. † 10 If anyone comes to
you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive † him into your home, and
don't greet him; 11 for the one who greets him shares † in his evil works. †

FAREWELL

12 Though I have many things to write to you, † I don't want to use paper and
ink. Instead, I hope to come to you and talk face to face so that our joy †
may be
complete.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

The Church of Christ, Scientist, also known as Christian Science, is an American-born religion that promotes divine healing and esoteric Christianity. Founded in 1879 by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), the church has grown into a worldwide movement, attracting members mainly from the middle and upper classes.

HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MOVEMENT

Mary Ann Morse Baker was born in New Hampshire in 1821 into a Congregationalist family with Calvinistic leanings. At an early age she rebelled against their theology and eventually abandoned orthodox Christianity. From childhood Mary was frail, often ill, and suffered bouts of hysteria. Whether her ailments were primarily organic or psychosomatic is debated. She missed school for prolonged periods and depended on her brother for much of her education. Confined to home, she spent her time writing poems. Many of the lyrics were later expanded into the first hymns of the Christian Science movement.

In 1843, at the age of twenty-two, she married Colonel George Washington Glover, a wealthy businessman, who died six months later while on a mission to aid victims of the yellow fever epidemic in South Carolina. Mary was pregnant at the time and became so distraught over his death that when her son George was born she gave him up to her sister Abigail to rear as her own.

The next decade was difficult. Mary received a proposal of marriage, but before the wedding date her fiancé died. Then her mother passed away unexpectedly in 1849. Mary went to live with Abigail and five-year-old George. The reunion was bittersweet.

In 1853, Mary wedded Dr. Daniel Patterson, an itinerant dentist whose fidelity was questionable. By mutual consent, the couple lived apart from each other for protracted periods of time. During one of these cycles in 1862, Mary traveled to Portland, Maine to seek pain relief from Dr. Phineas Quimby, a magnetic healer and follower of Franz Mesmer, the controversial Austrian physician and hypnotist. Among Quimby's other clients were Julius and Annetta Dresser, who later founded New Thought. Quimby placed Mary into a hypnotic trance, massaged her aching body, and commanded her pain to depart. Upon awakening, she found the discomfort was gone.

Mary became enamored with Quimby and moved into his house as a live-in patient from 1862 to 1864. During this stint, she embraced Quimby's pantheistic worldview that focused on two key principles: (1) A belief that all is God. Since God is spirit, everything that exists is spirit. Matter is an illusion. People wrongly perceive things to be material. They need to be enlightened to the truth of reality. (2) A belief that God is good. Since all is God, all is good. Sin, sickness, evil, and death are illusions or projections of an unenlightened mind. Correct thinking will cause these things to disappear. For the next two years a rejuvenated Mary Baker Glover Patterson traveled up and down the east coast lecturing on Quimby's principles.

The year 1866 was a turning point for Mary. First, Quimby died suddenly of stomach ulcers, leaving Mary as the preeminent teacher of his arcane doctrine. Second, Mary fell and severely injured herself on an icy sidewalk; the accident caused both physical and psychological side effects. Fearing her illness was incurable, she became deeply despondent. Third, she opened her Bible to Matthew 9:2-8 and read the account of Jesus telling the paralytic to "take up [his] bed and walk" (KJV). She suddenly realized that disease is an illusion that can be overcome by correct thinking. She said the fear and illness left her immediately. Fourth, Mary came to understand, in a moment of revelation, that union with the universal Mind (God) allows no room for sickness.

Between 1867–1874 Mary gave herself to "Christianizing" Quimby's philosophy. With the assistance of J. H. Wiggin, a retired Unitarian minister and ghostwriter, Mary published in 1875, *Science and Health With Key to the Scriptures*. Julius and Annetta Dresser accused her of lifting long sections from an unpublished work by Quimby that just so happened to bear the title *Science and Health*. Others suggested that she may have borrowed heavily from Francis Lieber's *The Metaphysical Religion of Hegel*.

With the death of Dr. Patterson, Mary's unstable marriage of twenty years ended. She soon found herself courted by Asa Gilbert Eddy, a wealthy businessman and a faithful disciple of her views, who underwrote

the printing costs of *Science and Health*. They were married in 1877.

At the urging of her new husband and fifteen loyal followers, Baker-Eddy convened a meeting in Boston in 1879 to form and incorporate the First Church of Christ, Scientist. Two years later, she opened the Massachusetts Metaphysical College, whose graduates became Christian Science practitioners or healers. Asa Gilbert Eddy was the first of the movement's practitioners.

In 1883, Asa suffered a fatal heart attack, leaving Mary a widow. She sought relief from grief by pouring herself into work. Over the next decade, she started *The Christian Science Journal*, reorganized the church, and wrote the church's manual on polity. Despite success, she faced many challenges. Opponents accused her of being a witch, occultist, and plagiarist. Some of her former college students sued for fraud, claiming she offered higher levels of secret knowledge to her inner circle.

Despite setbacks, Mary forged ahead. In 1908 she founded the *Christian Science Monitor*, a newspaper that soon gained a national reputation. When she died on December 3, 1910, at the age of eighty-eight, The Church of Christ, Scientist had grown to include 100,000 members.

DOCTRINAL BELIEFS

- The Bible is the basis for all Christian Science beliefs. However, the Bible cannot be properly understood apart from Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which offers an allegorical interpretation of Scripture. The "Key to the Scriptures" portion includes a glossary of terms with their spiritual meanings.
- God is the supreme impersonal Mind, Spirit, or Life Principle that permeates the universe.
- Christ is the Divine Idea that expels ignorance and produces correct thinking about the spiritual nature of the universe. To think correctly is to receive Christ.
- The Holy Spirit is Christian Science.
- Jesus was an historical person on whom the Divine Idea (Christ) took root. Hence, Jesus shows humankind the way of salvation through right thinking.
- Since everything is a reflection of God, sin, Satan, evil, sickness, death, judgment, heaven, and hell are illusions of an unenlightened mind. Salvation is deliverance from ignorance through correct thinking.
- Health and healing are likewise the results of right thinking. Prayer is an act of calling disease by its right name (an illusion), causing it to disappear. When illness strikes, medical assistance is discouraged. Rather, the faithful are urged to call a Christian Science practitioner to help them replace erroneous thoughts with correct thoughts.
- Worship is led by a First Reader, who reads a designated portion of the KJV Bible, and a Second reader, who reads the corresponding commentary from *Science and Health*. Worship also includes music, meditation, recitation of the Lord's Prayer (in which God is addressed as "Our Father-Mother"), and reading a lesson from a quarterly. No sermon is preached.
- There are no ordained or paid clergy. Mary Baker Eddy declared the movement to have only two pastors: the Bible and *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures.*

STATISTICS: THE RISE AND DECLINE OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

The "Mother Church" of Christian Science, located in Boston, serves as the group's headquarters. It grants charters to branch churches who submit to the authority of a board of directors and follow the polity of *The Manual of the Mother Church*. Each branch operates a reading room, which is a combined library-bookstore, where outsiders and members alike can relax, read an authorized text, or purchase Christian Science materials. Over nine million copies of *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* have been sold through the reading rooms and commercial outlets.

Today there are approximately 1,700 Christian Science churches (down from a high of 3,000 in 1988), located in seventy countries. Membership stands at 175,000 (a decline from a million at the movement's apex). During the past twenty years over a hundred storefront reading rooms have closed their doors,

Christian Science practitioners are down in number by 300 percent, and the prestigious *Christian Science Monitor*, after losing five to six million dollars per year, went completely digital in 2009. The Mother Church is supported by a $1.00 per year per capita tax levied on all members worldwide. Its total assets exceed $135 million.

R. ALAN STREETT

13 The children of your elect sister send you greetings.

1:6 Or *in it* **1:8** Other mss read *you*
1:1 Rm 16:13; 1Pt 5:13; 2Jn 13 **1:1** Jn 8:32; 14:6; 1Tm 2:4 **1:2** 1Jn 1:8 **1:3** 1Tm 1:2; 2Tm 1:2 **1:3** Heb 1:2 **1:3** 1Jn 4:12 **1:4** 3Jn 3-4 **1:5** 1Jn 3:11 **1:6** 1Jn 2:5; 5:3 **1:6** Ps 103:18; Mk 7:8; Jn 14:15,21,23; 15:10 **1:7** Php 3:3 **1:7** 1Jn 2:18,22; 4:3 **1:8** 2Pt 2:13 **1:9** Jn 8:31-32; 1Jn 2:21-23,27 **1:9** Jn 5:12; 8:41; 1Jn 2:23 **1:9** Jn 15:4-16 **1:9** Mt 11:27 **1:9** Heb 1:2; 1Jn 2:23 **1:10** Jn 1:12; 6:21; 13:20 **1:11** 1Tm 5:22 **1:11** Eph 5:11; 1Tm 5:22; Jd 23 **1:12** 3Jn 13 **1:12** Jn 15:11

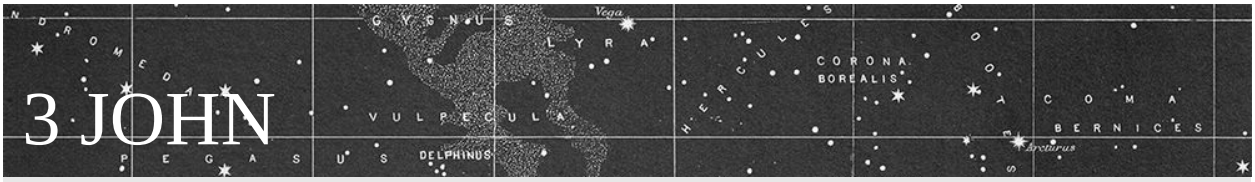
1 Elder is another term for pastor, and the apostles used it of themselves when serving in such a role (see 1Pt 5:1). **Elect lady** most likely refers to a local church (in the area of Ephesus). If so, **her children** are the members.

6 The **command** of God is to **walk in love.** The theme of command and love is explored in 1Jn 2:8-9; 4:23.

7 Antichrist here refers to anyone who denies a proper biblical understanding of who Jesus is. An early heresy was to deny that Jesus was fully human—denying that **Jesus** came **in the flesh.**

10-11 These verses are not instructing believers to be rude to false teachers; they are a warning not to support ministries that undermine the gospel. To **receive** people **into your home** in the first century meant providing them with a place to stay while engaged in their work. Since most inns at the time were neither safe nor reputable, a lack of hospitality would hinder traveling teachers from continuing their efforts.

13 The **elect sister** is another congregation, and her **children** are its members. This is likely another congregation in the area of Ephesus.



3 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

The shortest book in the NT, 3 John is a letter with a kind but businesslike tone. “The Elder” sought to encourage Gaius, who was perhaps a pastor under his oversight. The letter gives mostly positive counsel but also warns against a power-hungry leader named Diotrephes. Truth, love, and the goodness of God are predominate themes.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Same as the author of 1 and 2 John (see Introductions there).

BACKGROUND: Same as 2 John (see Introduction there). The two short letters of 2 and 3 John are often described as “twin letters,” though they should be viewed as fraternal and not identical. There are some significant similarities worth noting. In both letters the author described himself as “the Elder” (2Jn 1; 3Jn 1), and the recipients were those whom he loved “in truth” (2Jn 1; 3Jn 1). The recipients were a cause for great rejoicing by John (2Jn 4; 3Jn 3). They were “walking in the truth” (2Jn 4; 3Jn 3), and the elder has received good reports about them (2Jn 4; 3Jn 3,5). Both letters contain a warning (2Jn 8; 3Jn 9-11), and the Elder desired to see the recipients face-to-face (2Jn 12; 3Jn 14). Finally, both letters convey greetings from others (2Jn 13; 3Jn 14).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

This brief letter of apostolic instruction underscores certain central Christian convictions: love, truth, faithfulness, the church, and witness. It also testifies to the God-centeredness of apostolic faith (v v. 7,11). Jesus and the Spirit are not mentioned specifically (unless “the truth itself” in v. 12 refers to Jesus; see Jn 14:6; 1Jn 5:20). But in the writer’s view, Jesus and the Spirit were undoubtedly included in the reference to “God” whose “truth” this letter appeals to so frequently (3Jn 1,3,4,8,12).

STRUCTURE

The letter follows the basic epistolary pattern with an introduction (v v. 1-4), body (v v. 5-12), and a conclusion (v v. 13-14). Though verses 1-4 clearly function as the salutation, it is also possible to outline the letter around the four personalities of the book. Verses 1-8 contain a multifold commendation of Gaius. Verses 9-10 condemn the highhanded and malicious autocracy of Diotrephes. Verses 11-12, taken as a unit, praise the godly Demetrius. Verses 13-14 close with a glimpse into the heart of the Elder. Four men and their reputations (growing out of their behavior) are the sum and substance of 3 John’s subject matter. John constructed this letter with the building blocks of key-word repetition: “dear friend” (v v. 1,2,5,11); “truth” or “true” (v v. 1,3,4,8,12). Third John provides insight into a personality conflict that arose at the end of the first century and the strategy adopted by the Elder to resolve it.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is mentioned three times (vv. 6,11) as the source of good, not evil, who expects his people to live lives worthy of him. The essence of God's glory is summarized by calling him "the Name" (v. 7).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

This letter is full of contrasts. On one hand, there are several shining examples of what people committed to the truth can accomplish (Gaius, Demetrius, John himself, the traveling ministers). On the other hand, Diotrephes is a negative example of someone who obstructs the truth. (See also "Teachings About Humanity" in 1Tm, p. 1497.)

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation is addressed indirectly in John's constant use of "the truth" (vv. 1,3,4,8,12). "The truth" is evidently his paraphrase for "the gospel of Jesus Christ," thought of in broad terms. This truth is nowhere defined, but its importance is evident.

3 JOHN TIMELINE

AD 17–61

Ephesus experiences a destructive earthquake. **17**

Paul travels through Ephesus toward the end of his second missionary journey. **52**

Apollos comes to Ephesus and is mentored by Aquila and Priscilla. **52**

Paul returns to Ephesus for a 21/2 year ministry. **54**

Paul writes the letter to the Ephesians. **61**

AD 62–67

Timothy, elder of Ephesus, receives first letter from Paul, 1 Timothy. **62**

Peter's first letter from Rome to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia **64**

Peter's second letter from Rome **66**

The Jewish War is started by zealots who drive the Romans out of Jerusalem temporarily. **66**

Timothy receives second letter from Paul, 2 Timothy. **67?**

AD 67–70S

Peter and Paul's death in Rome **64–67?**

John leaves Jerusalem for Ephesus. **66–70?**

The Romans crush the Jewish rebellion and destroy Jerusalem and the temple. **70**

John is spiritual leader of the church at Ephesus. **70–100**

John's Gospel written **70**s

AD 80S–100

John's first letter (1 John) to churches of Asia Minor **80**s

John's letter to the elect lady (2 John) **80**s

John's letter to Gaius (3 John) **80**s

John is exiled to Patmos and writes the book of Revelation. **95**

Ephesus becomes the third largest city in the Roman province of Asia after Sardis and Alexandria Troas. **100**

GREETING

1 The elder: †
To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth. †
2 Dear friend, I pray that you are prospering in every way and are in
good health, † just as your whole life is going well. † 3 For I was very glad
when fellow believers came and testified † to your fidelity to the truth — how
you are walking in truth. † 4 I have no greater joy † than this: to hear that my
children † are walking in truth.

GAIUS COMMENDED

5 Dear friend, you are acting faithfully in whatever you do for the brothers and
sisters, especially when they are strangers. 6 They have testified to your love
before the church. † You will do well to send them on their journey † in a
manner worthy of God, † 7 since they set out for the sake of the Name, †
accepting nothing from pagans. † † 8 Therefore, we ought to support such
people so that we can be coworkers with the truth.

DIOTREPHES AND DEMETRIUS

9 I wrote something to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have first place
among them, † does not receive our authority. † 10 This is why, if I come, I
will remind him of the works he is doing, slandering † us with malicious words.
And he is not satisfied with that! He not only refuses to welcome fellow
believers, but he even stops those who want to do so and expels them from the
church.

11 Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil, † but what is good. The one who
does good is of God; † the one who does evil has not seen God. † 12 Everyone
speaks well of Demetrius — even the truth itself. And we also speak well of
him, and you know † that our testimony is true. †

FAREWELL

FAREWELL

13 I have many things to write you, but I don't want to write to you with pen and ink. 14 I hope to see you soon, and we will talk face to face.

MORMONISM

Joseph Smith, founder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), or Mormonism, was born in Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805. Smith spent much of his teenage years attempting to convince gullible people that he could uncover Captain Kidd's legendary treasure through the use of peep stones and divining rods. When the Smith family fell on hard times in 1816, they moved to a farm in Manchester, just south of Palmyra, New York.

THE ORIGINS OF MORMONISM

Joseph Smith claimed that at the age of fifteen he had entered the woods to pray for guidance about joining a local church, when he suddenly encountered two angels. They informed him that all churches were in error, and God had chosen him to restore pure Christianity to the world.

Smith had another angelic visitation in 1823 when the angel Moroni showed him the location of a set of golden plates containing the true word of God written in Reformed Egyptian. On September 22, 1827, Moroni appeared again and told him to translate the text into English. Using a set of magical stones called "Urim" and "Thummim" Smith was able to read and translate with the assistance of a friend, Oliver Cowdery. The result was *The Book of Mormon*.

On May 15, 1829, John the Baptist appeared to Smith and ordered him and Cowdery to baptize and ordain each other into the Aaronic Priesthood. This was followed by another visitation from the apostles Peter, James, and John on April 6, 1830. They instructed Smith and Cowdery to ordain each other into the new order called the Melchizedek Priesthood. This date marks the official birth of Mormonism. Soon others joined the new sect.

In order to escape persecution, Smith and his followers moved to Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831 and built the first Mormon temple. When word spread that Smith had received a revelation for Mormons to engage in polygamy, he was tarred and feathered and run out of town.

Smith settled in Independence, Missouri, which he declared to be the site of the original garden of Eden and the place where Christ would return to set up his kingdom. As the Mormon population grew, townspeople became suspicious of Smith and his cohorts. Hostilities soon erupted and Smith was again accused of practicing polygamy and his followers were charged with committing burglary, larceny, perjury, arson, and even murder. By order of the governor, a militia arrested the Mormon leadership. In 1839, they were ordered to surrender all land and leave the state.

Smith led his faithful followers to Commerce, Illinois, for which he sought a charter of incorporation. When that was granted, he promptly renamed the town Nauvoo and assumed the office of mayor. Mormonism prospered financially as its numbers swelled. By 1841, Smith was boldly teaching "The Principle" or doctrine of plural marriage to his most trusted members, but required that they keep it under wraps. He took multiple wives for himself, unbeknownst to his first wife Emma. In defending his actions, he said polygamy was part of God's eternal plan of salvation.

In February of 1844, Smith announced his candidacy for president of the United States. Nevertheless, his political career was short lived. When the *Nauvoo Expositor* reported the widespread polygamy among Mormon leadership, Smith's followers torched the newspaper office and destroyed the presses. An irate

posse arrested Smith and his brother Hyrum, locking them in the Carthage Jail. An anonymous disciple somehow smuggled weapons into the jail. On June 27, 1844, a mob stormed the jail and a shootout ensued. The Smith brothers were shot dead, becoming the movement's first martyrs.

THE POST-SMITH YEARS

With Smith gone, Brigham Young, one of Smith's twelve apostles, emerged as leader. In February of 1846, Young led fifteen thousand Mormons on a fifteen-month trek westward to the valley of the Great Salt Lake, where they settled. Salt Lake City, Utah, stills serves as the international headquarters for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Under Young, polygamy became an official dogma of the church in 1852, when "The Principle" was included in Section 132 of *Doctrine and Covenants*, considered sacred writ among Mormons.

As the population grew, Utah applied for statehood on numerous occasions between 1849 and 1887, but was denied because of the Mormon practice of polygamy. LDS President Wilford Woodruff announced in 1890 that he received by revelation that polygamy was no longer sanctioned by the church. Six years later Utah was granted statehood.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Mormon hierarchy consists of several levels beginning with the so-called Aaronic Priesthood. At ages twelve, fourteen, and sixteen, males assume the office of deacon, teacher, and priest, respectively. In these capacities they serve in practical ministries and assist their seniors by ushering, visiting the elderly, preparing the Lord's Supper, and the like. They perform their duties within the confines of a ward, the Mormon equivalent of a local church. A bishop serves as leader of the ward and supervises their priestly duties.

The so-called Melchizedek Priesthood is responsible for spiritual matters and is open to all males upon their eighteenth birthday. It consists of two offices: elders and high priests. Most adult Mormon men in good standing become elders. Their responsibilities include ordaining, baptizing, teaching, conducting sacrament services, and anointing the sick with oil. High priests are chosen from among the most active and faithful elders. They carry out most of their duties at the stake level, which is a larger geographical area composed of several wards. Jobs include serving as stake president, mission president (who supervises missionaries assigned to a particular stake), and bishop of a ward, among others.

Some men are chosen to serve at a translocal level. The first presidency, consisting of three apostles, is the highest office in the church. Today Mormon membership stands at 14.5 million worldwide.

WHAT MORMONS BELIEVE

The Scriptures. Mormons believe four standard works bear the marks of inspiration: a) The Bible, b) *The Book of Mormon*, c) *The Pearl of Great Price*, and d) *Doctrine and Covenants*.

God. Mormons believe a plurality of gods rule the various galaxies. Elohim is the god of our solar system, ruling from the distant planet Kolob. He is called the Father. He was once a physical man in another galaxy, but he worked his way up to godhood. Jehovah (Jesus) is the first spirit son of Elohim and a heavenly wife. Jesus, too, is considered a god. The Holy Ghost, an undefined ethereal entity, is also divine.

Humanity. Mormons believe that humans preexisted as spirit-beings on the planet Kolob before coming to earth. Like Jesus, they are the offspring of Elohim and his multiple wives, thus making them spirit brothers and sisters of Jehovah (Jesus). This preexistence was called the "first estate."

To attain exaltation or ultimate salvation humans need resurrected bodies like their heavenly Father's. Two spirit children (Adam and Eve) were sent to earth to start the process. They were changed from pure spirit beings into physical beings by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In this "second estate," they were able to reproduce and form physical bodies for other premortal spirits to inhabit.

Satan. Lucifer, a rebellious spirit child of Elohim, gathered one-third of the preincarnate spirit beings and waged a war against their Father. They were defeated and cast to earth without the hope of ever obtaining

physical bodies. As disembodied spirits, they are doomed forever.

The Incarnation. A relationship between Elohim and the Virgin Mary created a body in which the spirit child Jesus could reside. For thirty-three years Jesus walked the earth, teaching about his heavenly Father.

The Work of Christ. Mormons believe that Jesus came to earth to rescue humankind from the stain of sin and the influence of Satan. Through his death, resurrection, and ascension Christ makes immortality possible for all living beings. To attain exaltation, one must believe on the Mormon Jesus, repent, be baptized for the remission of sins, receive the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands (called the First Principles of the Gospel), be sealed in marriage in a Mormon Temple ceremony, and keep all the statutes of Mormonism.

Eschatology. Upon death, Mormons go to Paradise awaiting Christ's second coming, the first resurrection, and the millennium of which they will partake. After the millennium, all faithful Mormons will be judged and rewarded.

Upon death, non-Mormons are consigned to spirit prison where they will be purged of sins and presented with the Mormon gospel. Those who respond positively will be transferred to paradise to await the millennium. All others must remain in spirit prison until the second resurrection that takes place at the end of the millennium, when they will be judged and rewarded accordingly.

After the millennium, three eternal states await the resurrected:

1. The telestial is reserved for the wicked of the world (liars, sorcerers, adulterers, and other sinful people) who have suffered sufficiently for their sins during their stay in spirit prison.

2. The terrestrial is reserved for inactive Mormons and honorable people who did not accept Mormonism while living on earth.

3. The celestial is reserved for Mormons only and consists of these gradations:

a.) The lowest level will be inhabited by Mormons who obeyed the First Principles of the Gospel, but were lax in other practices, such as abstaining from caffeine.

b.) The second level is reserved for good Mormons that observed the First Principles, gave 10 percent of their gross income to the LDS, observed the Word of Wisdom, and obeyed all the laws of Mormonism.

c.) The highest level is exaltation, reserved for Mormons in good standing whose marriages were eternally sealed. As exalted beings, they will be raised to godhood, inherit their own planet, produce new spirit beings, and populate a new galaxy like their Father before them.

Satan, his angels, and Mormon apostates, called Sons of Perdition, will experience the second death and be cast into outer darkness forever.

R. ALAN STREETT

15 Peace to you. The friends send you greetings. Greet the friends by name.

1:2 Or *as your soul prospers* **1:7** Or *Gentiles*

1:1 2Jn 1 **1:1** Jn 14:6; 1Jn 5:20 **1:2** 1Tm 1:10 **1:3** Jn 15:26; Ac 26:5 **1:3** 2Jn 4 **1:4** Jn 15:11 **1:4** 1Co 4:14; Gl 4:19; Php 2:22 **1:6** Mt 16:18; 1Co 14:4; Rv 1:4 **1:6** Ac 15:3; 20:38; 21:5; Rm 15:24; 1Co 16:6; 2Co 1:16; Ti 3:13 **1:6** 1Co 10:31; 1Th 2:12 **1:7** Jn 10:25; Ac 15:14; Rv 14:1 **1:7** 1Co 9:15-18 **1:9** Mt 20:25-28; 23:5-12; Col 1:18; 1Pt 5:2-3; 2Jn 9 **1:9** Ac 18:27; Rm 16:1-2; 2Co 3:1 **1:10** 1Tm 5:13 **1:11** 1Pt 3:17 **1:11** 1Jn 4:4 **1:11** Ex 33:20 **1:12** 1Jn 2:20-21 **1:12** Jn 21:24

1 See the note at 2Jn 1.

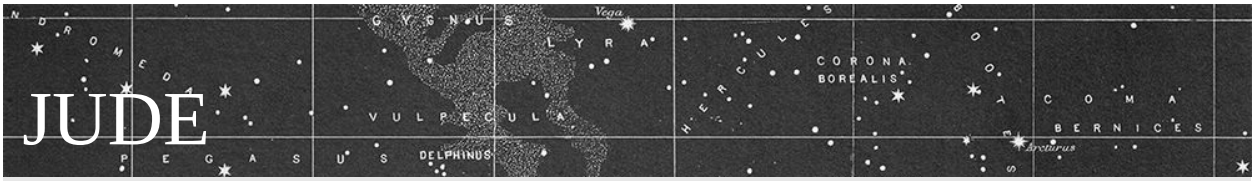
2 It is appropriate to pray for physical and spiritual **health.** Both are valuable.

4 Children here, as elsewhere in John's letters, refers to believers whom John has pastored and mentored. To see such people living in accord with **truth** is one of the chief joys of his ministry.

5-8 The **brothers and sisters** are those who have gone out to take the gospel to other places. In modern terminology, they are missionaries. In the first century, hospitality was an essential element of support for

missionary work, since inns were neither safe nor reputable. Support of such gospel ministers is a faithful work; it allows other believers to participate in missions.

9 Pride, loving **to have first place** in this instance, is deadly for Christian living and leadership. Here it leads **Diotrephes** even to reject the apostle John.



JUDE

INTRODUCTION

The letter of Jude, one of the General Letters, is very short. Until recently scholars neglected it more than any other NT book. Jude sought to protect Christian truth and strongly opposed heretics who threatened the faith. The letter's message is relevant to any age because believers should defend the gospel vigorously. Jude bears an obvious similarity in content with 2 Peter, a book that also deals firmly with false teachers who were infiltrating the church.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: Jude called himself "a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James" (v. 1). The James to whom Jude referred is not the son of Zebedee. He can be ruled out of consideration because he was martyred at an early date (Ac 12:1-2). The James to whom Jude refers is surely the well-known leader of the Jerusalem church (Ac 15:13-21; Gl 2:9). This is significant, for this James was the brother of Jesus (Mk 6:3). If Jude was a brother of James, then he was also a brother of Jesus. Rather than call himself Jesus's brother outright, Jude chose humbly to designate himself as Christ's servant.

BACKGROUND: Jude wrote to those who are "the called, loved by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ" (v. 1). This designation is general enough to apply to Christian believers anywhere. But Jude clearly had a specific group in mind because he called them "dear friends" (vv. 3,17,20) and addressed a situation that affected them. The readers were probably Jewish Christians because of Jude's several references to Hebrew history. Beyond this information we do not know exactly who the recipients of the letter were.

Jude is difficult to date precisely. If Jude the brother of Jesus was the author, the letter must be dated sometime within his lifetime. Any date for the letter's writing must also allow time for the false teachings to have developed. Jude may be dated reasonably somewhere between AD 65 to 80. Nothing in the letter points to a date of writing beyond this time. A date within Jude's lifetime rules out the viewpoint that the false teaching in question was second-century gnosticism.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

Jude is often overlooked because of its brevity. The book is also neglected because of unexpected features such as its quotation of *1 Enoch* and its allusion to the *Assumption of Moses*. Some readers wonder how a canonical book could cite noninspired, nonbiblical writings. Furthermore, the message of Jude is alien to many in today's world because Jude emphasized that the Lord will judge evil intruders who are attempting to corrupt the church. The message of judgment strikes many people today as intolerant, unloving, and contrary to the message of love proclaimed elsewhere in the NT.

Nevertheless, some of the Bible's most beautiful statements about God's sustaining grace are found in Jude (vv. 1,24-25), and they shine with a greater brilliance when contrasted with the false teachers who had departed from the Christian faith.

The message of judgment is especially relevant to people today. Jude's letter reminds us that errant teaching and promiscuous living have dire consequences. Jude was written so believers would contend for the faith that was transmitted to them (v. 3) and so they would not abandon God's love at a crucial time in the life of the church.

Jude's connection with 2 Peter is debated. What one decides about this issue inevitably affects one's beliefs about the authorship and dating of each letter. They are strikingly similar in content. Thus, if 2 Peter

used Jude and the latter book was written somewhere between AD 65 and 80, the apostle Peter could not have been the author of 2 Peter. But the use of 2 Peter by Jude poses no such problem, allowing 2 Peter to fit within Peter's lifetime. It seems best to conclude that Jude borrowed from 2 Peter or that both used a common source.

STRUCTURE

The epistle of Jude is a vigorous and pointed piece of writing. Scholars have often remarked that its Greek is quite good and that Jude used imagery effectively. The letter bears the marks of a careful and disciplined structure and was directed to specific circumstances in the life of the church. Jude was steeped in the OT and Jewish tradition, and he regularly applied OT types and texts to the false teachers who had invaded the church (vv. 8,12,16).

Pseudepigraphal writings are noncanonical books not written by their purported authors. Jude cited from the pseudepigraphal book of *1 Enoch* (1:9) in Jude 14-15. He likely also referred to an event found in the *Assumption of Moses* (Jd 9). But this does not mean that Jude viewed these noncanonical books as authoritative Scripture. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he simply used them as illustrations.

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

God is referred to as Father, Savior, and Lord (vv. 1,9,25). The grace of God is the attribute that comes to the fore in this book (v. 4). Jesus is also called Lord, and he is the One who keeps his people and brings them to eternal life (vv. 1,21,25). The Spirit, never given to those who reject the truth, enables the prayers of the saints (vv. 19-20).

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Jude shows the great evil of those who are enslaved by falsehood: "wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameful deeds; wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness is reserved forever" (v. 13). On the other hand, redeemed humanity looks forward to everlasting joy: "Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy" (v. 24).

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Jude had intended to write about the "the salvation we share," but he wrote instead about false teachers (v. 3). He refers to God as "Savior" (v. 25). Verse 24 makes clear that salvation is God's doing from start to finish (see also v. 1).

JUDE TIMELINE

2085–1406 BC

Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah **2085?**

The Exodus **1446**
Korah's Rebellion **1420?**
Balaam's error **1409?**
Moses's death **1406**

250 BC–AD 50

Pseudepigraphal books of Enoch written **250 BC–AD 50**
The Assumption of Moses written **4 BC–AD 30**
Jesus's birth **WINTER, 5 BC**
Birth of Jude, half-brother of Jesus **AD 5**
Jesus's trials, death, resurrection **NISAN 14-16** or **APRIL 3-5, AD 33**

AD 33–62

Pentecost **33**
Saul's conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**
James becomes leader of the church at Jerusalem. **44**
The letter of James written **48–52**
James is stoned to death. **62**

AD 62–180

The letter of Jude written **66**
Jewish War **66–70**
Destruction of Jerusalem **70**
Jude's grandsons appear before Emperor Domitian. **96**
Muratorian Canon includes Jude as Scripture. **180**

GREETING

1 Jude, † a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James: To those who are the called, † loved † † by God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ. †

2 May mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. †

JUDE'S PURPOSE IN WRITING

3 Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about the salvation we share, † I found it necessary to write, appealing to you to contend for the faith † that was delivered † to the saints once for all. 4 For some people, who were designated for this judgment long ago, † † have come in by stealth; † they are ungodly, †

turning the grace of our God into sensuality and denying † Jesus Christ, our only Master and Lord.

APOSTATES: PAST AND PRESENT

5 Now I want to remind you, although you came to know all these things once and for all, that Jesus † saved a people out of Egypt and later destroyed those who did not believe; † 6 and the angels † who did not keep their own position but abandoned their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains in deep darkness for the judgment on the great day. 7 Likewise, Sodom and Gomorrah † and the surrounding towns committed sexual immorality and perversions, † and serve as an example by undergoing the punishment of eternal fire. †

8 In the same way these people — relying on their dreams — defile their flesh, reject authority, and slander glorious ones. † 9 Yet when Michael † the archangel † was disputing with the devil † in an argument about Moses's † body, he did not dare utter a slanderous condemnation against him but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" 10 But these people blaspheme anything they do not understand. And what they do understand by instinct — like irrational animals — by these things they are destroyed. 11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, † have plunged into Balaam's error † for profit, and have perished in Korah's rebellion. †

THE APOSTATES' DOOM

12 These people are dangerous reefs † at your love feasts † as they eat with you without reverence. They are shepherds who only look after themselves. They are waterless clouds carried along by winds; † trees in late autumn — fruitless, twice dead and uprooted. 13 They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shameful deeds; wandering stars † for whom the blackness of darkness † is reserved forever. †

14 It was about these that Enoch, † in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied: "Look! The Lord comes with tens of thousands of his holy ones † 15 to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly † concerning all the

ungodly acts that they have done in an ungodly way, and concerning all the harsh things ungodly sinners have said against him."

WORLDVIEW THINKING, THE CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION, AND THE PATTERN OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

The Christian intellectual tradition serves as a valuable resource for Christ-followers, helping them understand the way that Christians through the years have read the Bible, formulated doctrine, provided education, and engaged the culture. The apostle Paul, writing to the church at Thessalonica, urged the followers of Jesus Christ to "stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught" (2Th 2:15). Similarly, the apostle exhorted Timothy, his apostolic legate, to "hold on to the pattern of sound teaching" (2Tm 1:13). The history of Christianity is best understood as a chain of memory.

THE CHRISTIAN INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Wherever the Christian faith has been found, there has been a close association with the written Word of God, with books, education, and learning. Studying and interpreting the Bible became natural for members of the early Christian community; it inherited the practice from late Judaism. The Christian intellectual tradition has its roots in the interpretation of Holy Scripture. From the church's earliest days, Christians inherited the approaches to biblical interpretation found in the writings of both intertestamental Judaism and the contemporary Greco-Roman world. From this dual heritage, there is an observable continuity with the hermeneutical methods of the rabbis and Philo as well as the followers of Plato and Aristotle. Yet, a discontinuity is also clearly evident as early Christianity established its own uniqueness by separating itself from Judaism and the surrounding Greco-Roman religions.

Since the earliest days of Christian history, Christians have drawn on the Bible in various ways. The rich heritage has shaped the Christian tradition in both individual and corporate practices. In order to recover this valuable resource for our contemporary context, we must seek to learn from interpreters of Scripture, from theologians, and from educators, as well as from other Christian leaders. We can learn to think deeply about the things of God from representatives of this tradition who have gone before us and on whose shoulders we now stand. Justin Martyr and Irenaeus were probably among the first in post-apostolic times to articulate the importance of thinking in Christian categories. In Alexandria in the third century, both Clement and Origen instructed their converts not only in doctrine, but also in science, literature, and philosophy. Augustine in the fifth century, in *On Christian Doctrine*, penned the thought that every true and good Christian should understand that wherever we find truth, it is the Lord's.

Similar patterns may be found throughout history, for wherever the gospel has been received, educational entities and Christian literacy have generally followed. This legacy can be traced not only though Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas, but also Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, and Melanchthon. We learn much from post-Reformation philosophers, scientists, theologians, and literary scholars like Pascal, Kepler,

Edwards, Washington, Lewis, Sayers, and numerous others. This pattern of Christian truth lies at the heart of the Christian intellectual tradition; it is a pattern that is both shaped and informed by our confession of the Christian faith. As we learn from the tradition, we will see our faith strengthened and will experience a renewal of our orthodox commitments to the divine nature and authority of God's written Word, to the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, to a heartfelt confession regarding the holy Trinity, to the uniqueness of the gospel message and the enabling work of God's Holy Spirit, to salvation by grace through faith, to the global church, to the hope of the coming kingdom, and to the sacredness of life and family.

Thoughtful Christians will work to develop a model of dynamic orthodoxy in conversation with Nicaea, Chalcedon, Augustine, Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, the Pietists, and the influential global Christian leaders of the twenty-first century in order to reclaim and build upon the great Christian intellectual tradition. The great tradition of Christian thinking not only helps to shape our biblical and theological understanding, but also provides a vast resource for philosophy, art, music, literature, drama, architecture, law, political and social thought, and other forms of cultural and academic engagement. Interestingly, Christian reflection and devotional practices were influenced by the work of this significant heritage. It is our hope that as we wrestle with the many challenges facing Christ-followers in our day, the great tradition of Christian thinking will provide valuable resources and examples to encourage our faith and shape significant ecclesiastical, educational, and cultural pursuits—even as we grow in our appreciation for and commitment to thinking Christianly for the glory of God.

THE PATTERN OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

The gospel, the Christian faith, becomes the interpretive framework with which to make sense of all other knowledge and experience. This interpretive framework, which guides the Christian in worldview thinking, —in thinking Christianly— is shaped by primary Christian doctrines, what H. E. W. Turner has referred to as "the pattern of Christian truth," those key doctrines believed consistently and in consensus by Christians throughout the centuries, which have informed and shaped the best of the Christian intellectual tradition. We now turn our attention to these important doctrines that significantly inform all aspects of Christian thinking.

1. CREATION: THE WORK OF THE CREATOR GOD

Christian thinking recognizes two broad dimensions of reality: God, the Creator, and the world, his creation. Scripture teaches that God, without the use of any preexisting material, brought into being everything that is. Both the opening verse of the Bible and the initial sentence of the Apostles' Creed confess God as Creator. The doctrine of creation contains truth of utmost importance: everything that is, was created by God. The world, which was created by him, has been made for the good of men and women, who have been created in God's image (Gn 1:26-28).

This world is distinct from its Creator, the Triune God. The significance of the Trinitarian understanding of creation recognizes that it is not just any god who created the world; it is the Triune God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The great thinkers of the early church wrote numerous commentaries on the creation story of Genesis 1–3, more so than any other part of the Bible, because they understood that it contradicted the fundamental beliefs of their inherited pagan culture and challenged them to replace it with something that was true to reality.

2. HUMANITY AND THE FALL

Men and women are the highest form of God's creation. The primary reason for stressing the importance of humans in God's plan for creation, over against the rest of God's creation, relates to the distinctive description regarding humanity in God's image (Gn 1:26-27). Because they are created in the image of God, men and women have dignity, rationality, morality, spirituality, and personality.

Even though men and women are created in God's image, the entrance of sin into the world has resulted in negative influences on God's creation, especially humans. As a result of sin, they are separated from God,

having fallen short of his glory (Rm 3:23). Nevertheless, the image of God, even though tainted, tarnished, and marred by sin, has not been lost (Gn 9:6; Jms 3:9). The role of exercising stewardship over the earth (Gn 1:28) has been drastically disturbed by the effects of sin on humans. The ability to live in right relationship with God, with others, with nature, and with our own selves has now been corrupted.

The impact of sin is significant when reflecting on the matters of our relationship to God. Because of the entrance of sin into the world and our inheritance of Adam's sinful nature (Rm 5:12-19), we are by nature hostile to God and estranged from him (Rm 8:7; Eph 2:1-3). We thus have wills that do not obey, eyes that do not see, and ears that do not hear because spiritually we are dead to our Creator. Because of sin, all dimensions of humans, including our thinking, have been distorted. The effects of sin, brokenness, and depravity, involve our total, willful rejection of the will and glory of God.

3. SALVATION IN CHRIST

Because of sin, all in this world are estranged from God, but the biblical answer for that problem is that Jesus Christ has regained what was lost in Adam (Rm 5:12-21). The grace of God has provided our restoration and brought about a right relationship with God, with one another, with nature, and with ourselves. Grace declares that salvation is not the culmination of humanity's quest for God but that it resides in the initiative of God toward men and women (Eph 1:4-7). Grace comes to us while we are still in our sins and brings spiritual transformation based on the accomplished cross-work of Jesus Christ. Grace is, as B. B. Warfield observed, God's "free sovereign favor to the ill-deserving." God does not graciously accept us because he sees our change for the better, as if conversion were the basis for receiving God's grace. Instead the Bible pictures God's coming into our lives and taking us just as we are because he is abundantly merciful (Eph 2:1-10).

As a result of God's grace, believers experience salvation from sin, which involves conversion to God. All of salvation is of God, yet we respond in faith and commitment. The Bible expresses these truths in various pictures, underscoring throughout that God is the author and finisher of our salvation (Heb 12:2). These various themes of regeneration, justification, adoption, and forgiveness are presented as the new sphere of union with Christ for all who have placed their faith in him (Jn 15; Rm 6:1-11; Eph 1-3-14). Our union with Christ presents us in a new position before God. Experientially, the union of believers with Christ is one of the most beautiful and tender concepts expressed in Scripture.

We recognize that this gift of salvation rests in what Jesus Christ has done for fallen people. Christ's life and death exemplified the love of God and exerted an influence for good by providing a model of servanthood and sacrifice. More importantly, Christ's death provided for sinners a sinless substitutionary sacrifice that satisfies divine justice, an incomprehensibly valuable redemption delivering sinners from estrangement to full fellowship and inheritance in the household of God.

We trustingly confess and affirm that Jesus Christ as the God-Man has fully revealed God to men and women. Having lived a sinless life, Christ died in our place for our sins. He now sits exalted at God's right hand, a position of honor and exaltation, exercising his rule and dominion. Those who have placed their trust in Jesus Christ for salvation gladly acknowledge Jesus as Lord; he is our Prophet, Priest, and King, who has completely revealed God, reconciled humankind with God, and who sits enthroned as Ruler of God's kingdom and head of his church. In him, we place our trust and hope, offering our thanksgiving for the salvation he has provided for us.

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT: RENEWAL AND COMMUNITY

With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Ac 2), there was a universalizing of the ministry and mission of Jesus. Jesus was God's final Word to humanity, and the Spirit's role was not to bring some new revelation of his own, but to bear witness to Jesus and to interpret and explicate the full implications of God's final Word. The Spirit came in order to enable and unite believers in an unparalleled manner. The ultimate purpose of the Spirit was to bring life and renewal to Christ-followers, drawing them together into the new community, the church of Jesus Christ, and to empower this community for mission, which was the

spreading of good news and exalting the name of Christ. Life in the Spirit energizes and enables the new community of faith.

The basis for life in the Spirit must never be forgotten. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Spirit applies justification, regeneration, sanctification, and ultimate glorification to the lives of believers. Life in the Spirit is living out, by the Spirit's empowerment, what believers are because of Christ, exalting him in the expansion of the church's worship, ministry and mission, which includes conversion, evangelism, fellowship, renewal, and holiness.

5. ESCHATOLOGY: GOD'S RULE AND REIGN

God's final rule and reign will bring victory when Christ returns to establish and consummate his kingdom. Regardless of the diligent and industrious attempts by men and women to bring about righteousness and peace to earth, true peace and righteousness will take place only when Jesus Christ comes again. The agelong quest of the nations can only be fulfilled by the work of Christ. Sincere believers differ over their understanding of the nature and chronology of Christ's return as well as their expectations for the kingdom itself. Yet all orthodox Christians believe that following Christ's return, the dead will be raised, both the righteous and the wicked, leading to judgment and then to the eternal state.

The eternal climax of redemptive history is seen in the description of the new Jerusalem (Rv 21–22). The general image of a future Jerusalem symbolizes the fulfillment of many of God's promises to his people (Is 2:1-5; 49:14-18; 52; 54; 60–62; 65:17-25; Jr 31:38-40; Mc 4:1-4; Zch 14). As is true of Christ's return and other features of his rule and reign, the trustworthiness of Scripture underscores our confidence that these prophecies are indeed true. The picture of the new Jerusalem emphasizes that the people of God will be a universal community of redeemed individuals living together in love.

For all eternity the redeemed of the Lord will worship the triune God supremely without impurity. We will enjoy fellowship with him without conflict. We will serve the living God forever. Worldview Christians, with eagerness and expectancy, hope for that day.

DAVID S. DOCKERY

16 These people are discontented grumblers, living according to their desires; †
their mouths utter arrogant words, flattering † people for their own advantage.
17 But you, dear friends, remember what was predicted by the apostles of our
Lord Jesus Christ. 18 They told you, "In the end time † there will be scoffers †
living according to their own ungodly desires." 19 These people create divisions
and are worldly, † not having the Spirit.

EXHORTATION AND BENEDICTION

20 But you, dear friends, as you build yourselves up in your most holy faith,
praying in the Holy Spirit, † 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, † waiting
expectantly for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life. 22 Have
mercy on those who waver; 23 save others by snatching them from the fire; †

have mercy on others but with fear, † hating † even the garment † defiled by the flesh.

24 Now to him † who is able to protect you from stumbling † and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish † and with great joy, 25 to the only † God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, † be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, † now and forever. Amen.

1:1 Other mss read *sanctified* **1:4** Or *whose judgment was written about long ago* **1:5** Other mss read *the Lord,* or *God* **1:7** Or *and went after other flesh* **1:12** Other mss read *are like blemishes* **1:25** Other mss omit *through Jesus Christ our Lord* **1:25** Other mss omit *before all time*

1:1 Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3 **1:1** Rm 1:7; 1Co 1:24 **1:1** 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13 **1:1** Jn 17:11, 15; 1Th 5:23; 1Pt 1:5 **1:2** 1Pt 1:2; 2Pt 1:2 **1:3** Ti 1:4 **1:3** 1Tm 6:12; 2Tm 4:7 **1:3** 2Pt 2:21 **1:4** 1Pt 2:8 **1:4** Gl 2:4; 2Tm 3:6 **1:4** Mk 7:22; Rm 5:6 **1:4** Ti 1:16; 2Pt 2:1; 1Jn 2:22 **1:5** 1Co 10:1-11 **1:6** Gn 6:1-4; 2Pt 2:4 **1:7** 2Pt 2:6 **1:7** 2Th 1:8 **1:8** 2Pt 2:10 **1:9** Dn 10:13,21; 12:1; Rv 12:7 **1:9** Lk 1:19; 1Th 4:16 **1:9** Mt 4:1,10; Ac 13:10 **1:9** Ps 77:20; Mt 8:4; Heb 3:2 **1:11** Gn 4:1-17,24-25; Heb 11:4; 1Jn 3:12 **1:11** Nm 22:5; 2Pt 2:15 **1:11** Nm 16:1 **1:12** 1Co 11:17-22; 2Pt 2:13 **1:12** Pr 25:14 **1:13** Is 14:12-15; Rv 1:16; 8:10; 9:1 **1:13** Mt 6:23; Jd 6 **1:13** 2Pt 2:17 **1:14** Gn 5:18 **1:14** Dt 33:2; Dn 7:10; Mk 8:38; 1Th 3:13; 2Th 1:7; Heb 12:22 **1:15** 2Pt 2:5-6 **1:16** 2Pt 2:10 **1:16** Lv 19:15; Dt 10:17; 2Ch 19:7; Pr 28:21 **1:18** 1Tm 4:1; 2Tm 3:1; 1Pt 1:5,20 **1:18** 2Pt 3:3 **1:19** Rm 8:9; Php 3:3 **1:20** Rm 8:15-16,26-27; Eph 6:18 **1:21** Jn 15:9-10; 1Jn 4:16 **1:23** 1Co 3:15; 2Th 1:8 **1:23** Rv 11:11 **1:23** Pr 6:16-19 **1:23** Zch 3:3-4 **1:24** Rm 16:25; Eph 3:20 **1:24** Jn 17:12 **1:24** Eph 1:4; 5:27; Php 2:15; Col 1:22 **1:25** Jn 5:44; Rm 16:27

1 Jude was **a brother of James**—the same James who was a half brother of Jesus. Referring to himself in this way, rather than as a brother of Jesus, is probably a mark of humility. His brotherly relationship with Jesus is only biological; it does not in itself give Jude special status.

3 The faith that was delivered to the saints once for all indicates that the apostolic message about Christ is the final authoritative message. It should not to be changed over time.

4 People . . . designated for this judgment long ago suggests that false teachers were assigned their fate, just as those called were (v. 1). To **have come in by stealth** means that they dwelt among the fellowship of believers, but did not truly belong to the church. Their problem is that they turn **the grace of our God into sensuality.** That is, they treat God's grace as an excuse for indulging in immoral behavior.

5 God's rescue of his **people out of Egypt** recalls the great salvation event of the OT—the exodus (Ex 6–14). It is striking that Jude regards this salvation as performed by **Jesus**, indicating his participation in the actions of God in times past.

6 Jude refers to Genesis 6:1-4, in which the "sons of God" are the **angels** mentioned here (See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*). Jude seems to be alluding to a discussion of this text in *1 Enoch*, an ancient Jewish writing. It too uses the imagery of **chains** and **deep darkness** to indicate the angels' captivity while awaiting God's final **judgment.**

7 The cities of **Sodom and Gomorrah** are commonly used as **an example** of extreme ungodliness that received God's just judgment (Gn 19). **Eternal fire** is the judgment that awaits those who deny Jesus Christ (v. 4).

8 The **slander** of **glorious ones** most likely refers to the rejection of angels. It is unclear what this means, but one possibility is that in Jewish tradition, angels were seen as participating in God's final judgment of humanity. By rejecting angels, the false teachers mock final judgment.

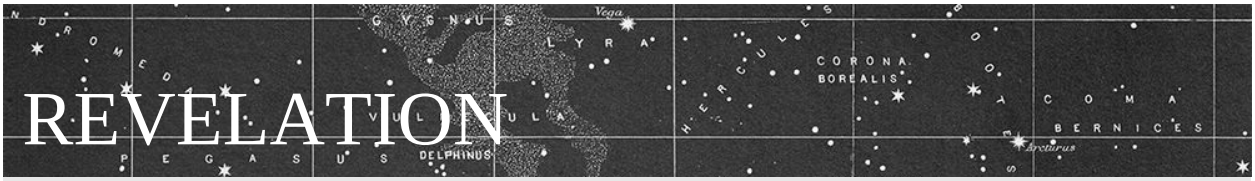
9 Michael the archangel is mentioned in Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1 and Revelation 12:7. The story about a dispute over Moses's body does not occur in the OT or elsewhere in the NT. Several early church fathers claimed it was contained in a book titled *The Assumption of Moses*. It is unclear whether Jude considers this story factual or is simply alluding to a well-known fable to make a point.

11 In Jewish literature, **Cain** and **Balaam** had become chief examples of wickedness. **Korah** led a rebellion against Moses (Nm 16); he was thus an example of rebellion against proper authority and subsequent judgment.

14-15 Enoch was an early descendant of Adam who did not die, but was translated directly to heaven (Gn 5:18-24). He became the focus of much interest in Jewish literature. Jude quotes from *1 Enoch* 1:9, it's a book ascribed to this Enoch.

18 Consistent with the rest of the NT, Jude regards the current period as **the end time.** The presence of **scoffers** and false teachers in this period ought not be surprising since it was predicted by the apostles (v. 17).

22-23 Christians in the community of faith are expected to watch over, care for, and protect one another's spiritual health. **Mercy** for **those who waver** requires compassion for believers who experience doubt. Doubt is not to be treated harshly, or with judgment, but as a normal struggle believers will face.



REVELATION

INTRODUCTION

The resurrected, glorified Son of Man (Jesus Christ) revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned "on the island called Patmos" (1:9). Christ's twofold purpose was (1) to "unveil" a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2–3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4–22).

CIRCUMSTANCES OF WRITING

AUTHOR: The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include: (1) the writer referred to himself as "John" (1:4,9; 22:8); (2) he had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4,11; chaps. 2–3); (3) his circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD); and (4) the saturation of the book with OT imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

BACKGROUND: The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; chaps. 2–3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9-10,13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian. Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6,13-15,20-23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10,14,24; 3:9).

Though some scholars have dated the book later and a few have dated it earlier, commonly held dates of Revelation among evangelical scholars are the mid-90s and the late 60s of the first century AD. The mid-90s view is the stronger view, and it is held by majority opinion. Each view gives a different account of the persecution portrayed in the letters to the churches (2:9-10,13). Substantial historical evidence shows that some of the churches were persecuted intensely by Nero in the late 60s. But the reference in 17:10 to seven kings, five of whom have fallen, supports a date in the mid-90s, during the reign of Domitian.

While a case can be made for a late-60s date based on the Nero-related inferences and a possible reference to the Jerusalem temple in 11:1-2 (which may imply that the temple had not yet been destroyed, as it was by the Romans in AD 70), all other factors favor a date of about AD 95. Most notable among these factors is the tradition that John the apostle was exiled to Patmos during a period of intensifying local persecution of Christians by the Emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81–96).

CONTRIBUTION TO THE BIBLE

The book of Revelation provides an almost complete overview of theology. There is much in this book about Christ, mankind and sin, the people of God (both the church and Israel), holy angels, and Satan and the demons. There is important material on God's power and tri-unity (i.e., Trinity), plus aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit and the nature of Scripture.

STRUCTURE

The book of Revelation previews its sequential structure in 1:19: "Therefore write what you have seen, what is, and what will take place after this." From the apostle John's vantage point in being commanded to "write," he had already seen the vision of the exalted Son of Man (chap. 1). Next, he was told to "write"

letters to the seven churches, telling each the state of their spiritual health (chaps. 2–3). Lastly comes the body of the book (4:1–22:5), which covers all the events that would "take place after this."

CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW ELEMENTS

TEACHINGS ABOUT GOD

Revelation teaches the supremacy and glory of God in all things. God is the primary mover who will bring about the return of Christ and the end of the world. The righteous wrath of a holy God is fully displayed in Revelation. The book teaches about the Trinity and contributes greatly to an understanding of the deity of Christ.

TEACHINGS ABOUT HUMANITY

Revelation shows the sinfulness of humans in stark terms. There are only two kinds of people in Revelation: those who follow the Lamb (and bear his special mark) and those who follow the beast (and bear his mark). Those who follow the Lamb are given unimaginably great blessings, but they are a minority. The majority that follows evil is destined for eternal damnation.

TEACHINGS ABOUT SALVATION

Salvation from sin in Revelation is presented mainly in terms of something God purchased through the death of the Lamb (the first coming of Christ). Those who are saved oppose evil "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; for they did not love their lives to the point of death" (12:11). Final salvation after the resurrection is presented mainly in terms of "the holy city, the new Jerusalem" (21:2).

REVELATION TIMELINE

PREHISTORY

Creation

The Fall

Noah

Tower of Babylon

2200–550 BC

Abraham **2166–1991**

Moses **1526–1406**

David **1050?–970**

Divided kingdom **931**

Israel is defeated and taken into exile by the Assyrians. **722**

Judah is destroyed and taken into exile by the Babylonians. **586**

550-5 BC

Persian hegemony **539–331**

Exiles return to Jerusalem **538**

Greek hegemony **331–63**

Roman hegemony **63 BC–AD 476**

Jesus’s birth **5 BC**

AD 30–100

Jesus’s trials, death, and resurrection **NISAN 14-16** or **APRIL 3-5, 33**

Pentecost **33**

Saul’s conversion on the Damascus Road **OCTOBER 34**

Fall of Jerusalem to the Romans **70**

John is spiritual leader of the church at Ephesus. **70–100**

PROLOGUE

1 The revelation of † Jesus Christ that God gave him to show his servants † what must soon take place. † He made it known by sending his angel † to his servant John, † 2 who testified to the word of God and to the testimony † of Jesus Christ, † whatever he saw. † 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, † and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep † what is written in it, because the time is near.

4 John: To the seven churches in Asia. Grace and peace † to you from † the one who is, who was, and who is to come, † and from the seven spirits † † before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, † the firstborn from the dead † and the ruler of the kings of the earth. †

To him who loves us and has set us free † from our sins by his blood, † 6 and made us a kingdom, † priests † † to his God and Father — to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. †

7 **Look, he is coming with the clouds,** †
and **every eye will see him, even those who pierced him.**
And all the tribes † of the earth † †
will mourn over him. † † †
So it is to be. Amen.

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," † says the Lord God, "the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

JOHN'S VISION OF THE RISEN LORD

9 I, John, your brother and partner in the affliction, † kingdom, † and endurance † that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. † 10 I was in the Spirit † † on the Lord's day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet † 11 saying, "Write † on a scroll † what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see whose voice † it was that spoke to me. When I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, † 13 and among the lampstands was one like the Son of Man, † † dressed in a robe † and with a golden sash wrapped around his chest. † 14 The hair of his head was white as wool — white as snow † — and his eyes like a fiery flame. † 15 His feet were like fine bronze as it is fired in a furnace, † and his voice like the sound of cascading † waters. † 16 He had seven stars in his right hand; a sharp double-edged sword came from his mouth, † and his face was shining like the sun at full strength. †

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man. † He laid his right hand on me and said, "Don't be afraid. I am the First and the Last, † 18 and the Living One. † I was dead, but look — I am alive forever and ever, † and I hold the keys † of death and Hades. 19 Therefore write what you have seen, † what is, and what will take place after this. 20 The mystery † of the seven stars you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels † of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands † are the seven churches. †

The Letters to the Seven Churches

1:1 Or *Revelation of*, or *A revelation of* **1:2** Or *witness* **1:2** Or *as many as he saw* **1:3** Or *follow*, or *obey* **1:4** Other mss add *God* **1:4** Or *the sevenfold Spirit* **1:5** Other mss read *has washed us* **1:6** Other mss read *kings and* **1:6** Or *made us into* (or *to be*) *a kingdom of priests* ; Ex 19:6 **1:7** Or *peoples* **1:7** Or *will wail because of him* **1:10** Or *in spirit* ; lit *I became in the Spirit* **1:11** Or *book* **1:13** Or *like a son of man* **1:15** Lit *many* **1:20** Or *messengers* **1:20** Other mss add *that you saw*

1:1 Ac 2:18; Rm 6:19; 1Pt 2:16; Rv 22:6 **1:1** Dn 2:28-29,45; Rv 22:6 **1:1** Gn 24:7; Mt 1:24; Ac 12:11 **1:1** Jn 21:7; Rv 22:8 **1:2** 1Co 1:6; Rv 12:17; 19:10; 20:4 **1:3** Rv 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14 **1:4** Ti 1:4 **1:4** Rv 1:8,17; 4:8; 16:5 **1:4** Rv 3:1; 4:5; 5:6 **1:5** Ps 89:37; Jn 18:37; Rv 2:13; 3:14 **1:5** Ps 89:27; Ac 26:23; Rm 8:29; 1Co 15:20-23; Col 1:18 **1:5** Ps 89:27; Rv 17:14; 19:16 **1:5** Dt 7:8; Rm 8:2 **1:6** Ex 19:6; 1Pt 2:9; Rv 5:10; 20:6 **1:6** Rm 11:36; 1Pt 4:11; Jd 25; Rv 7:12 **1:7** Is 19:1; Zch 12:10; Jn 19:34-37 **1:7** Gn 12:3; 28:14; Zch 14:17 **1:7** Gn 12:3; 28:14; Zch 14:17 **1:7** Dn 7:13; Zch 12:10 **1:7** Dn 7:13; Zch 12:10 **1:8** Is 44:6; Rv 21:6; 22:13 **1:9** Jn 16:33; Ac 14:22; Rm 5:3; 2Tm 2:12; Rv 2:9 **1:9** Mt 25:34; Jms 2:5 **1:9** Rm 5:3-4; 8:25; 15:4; Col 1:11; 2Th 1:4; Heb 10:36; 12:1; Jms 1:3-4; Rv 2:3; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12 **1:9** Rv 1:2; 6:9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4 **1:10** 1Kg 18:12; Ezk 3:12; 2Co 12:2; Rv 4:2; 17:3; 21:10 **1:10** Ex 19:16,19; 20:18; Ps 47:5 **1:11** Ex 34:27; Dt 31:19; Is 8:1; 30:8; Jr 30:2; 36:2,28; Hab 2:2; Rv 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14; 14:3; 19:9; 21:5 **1:12** Ex 20:18 **1:12** Ex 25:37; 37:23; 2Ch 4:20; Zch 4:2 **1:13** Dn 7:13; 10:16; Rv 14:14 **1:13** Dn 10:5 **1:13** Rv 15:6 **1:14** Is 1:18; Dn 7:9 **1:14** Dn 10:6; Rv 2:18; 19:12 **1:15** Ezk 1:7; Dn 10:6; Rv 2:18 **1:15** Ezk 1:24; 43:2; Rv 14:2; 19:6 **1:16** Is 49:2; Heb 4:12; Rv 2:12,16; 19:15 **1:16** Mt 17:2; Rv 10:1 **1:17** Gn 17:3; Jdg 6:22-23; 13:20; Jb 42:5-6; Is 6:5; Ezk 1:28; Dn 8:17; Mt 17:6; Lk 1:12; 5:8 **1:17** Is 41:4; 44:6; 48:12; Rv 2:8; 22:13 **1:18** Mt 16:16; 26:63; Jn 6:57; Rv 4:10; 10:6 **1:18** Rm 6:9; 14:9; Rv 2:8; 10:6 **1:18** Mt 16:19 **1:19** Ex 17:14; 34:27; Dt 31:19; Jr 30:2; Hab 2:2 **1:20** Mt 13:35; Rm 16:25 **1:20** Mt 5:14-15

1:1 The mediation of angels is often found in prophetic and apocalyptic literature (Ezk 40–48; Dn 7–12; Zch 1–6). Since the first century, it has been debated which **John** authored the book. The earliest tradition is that this John is the same as the author of the Gospel of John and 1, 2, and 3 John. He is the apostle known as John the son of Zebedee and brother of James (Mt 4:21).

1:4 The region of **Asia** is modern Turkey. The seven churches and their cities are listed at 1:11 (and in chaps. 2–3). That the phrase **seven spirits** (or "sevenfold spirit") is placed between God the Father and Jesus Christ suggests that it refers to the Holy Spirit.

1:7 The language of this verse is drawn from Daniel 7:13 and Zechariah 12:10. John uses these images to depict the nature of Jesus's return, or second coming—a major theme of the book.

1:8 Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and **Omega** is the last letter. Thus, the phrase is used to indicate that **the Lord God** is "the First and the Last" (1:17) or "the beginning and the end" (21:6). This title will later be assumed by Jesus (22:13).

1:9 Patmos is an **island** in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Asia Minor (Turkey). Banishment to such islands was a common Roman punishment.

1:10 Being **in the Spirit** is mentioned four times in the book, each in relation to seeing a vision (1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10). This is the first recorded use of **the Lord's day** to refer to Sunday. The usage became more common in later writings.

1:17 In the Scriptures, falling to the ground is a typical response to an encounter with God (see Is 6).

1:18 Death and **Hades** are near synonyms for the place of the dead. To **hold the keys** of a place is to have authority over it. In contrast to Greek religious ideas, Jesus—not some other deity like the god named Hades—rules over death. In Jewish thought, God held this authority, so here Jesus is identified with God.

1:20 The presence of **angels** at congregations was assumed by the early church (1Co 11:10). The lampstand (menorah) was an important feature in the tabernacle and temple. The symbolism of **the seven golden lampstands** conveys that the seven churches are vessels of spiritual light.

THE LETTER TO EPHESUS

2 "Write to the angel † of the church in Ephesus: Thus says the one who
holds the seven stars in his right hand and who walks among the seven
golden lampstands: † 2 I know your works, your labor, and your
endurance, † and that you cannot tolerate evil people. You have tested those
who call themselves apostles and are not, † and you have found them to be
liars. † 3 I know that you have persevered and endured hardships for the sake of
my name, † and have not grown weary. 4 But I have this against you: You have
abandoned the love you had at first. † 5 Remember then how far you have
fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. † Otherwise, I will come to
you † and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. 6 Yet you
do have this: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches.
To the one who conquers, I will give † the right to eat from the tree of life,
which is in † the paradise of God. †

THE LETTER TO SMYRNA

8 “Write to the angel of the church in Smyrna: Thus says the First and the
Last, † the one who was dead and came to life: 9 I know your † affliction and
poverty, but you are rich. I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and
are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. † 10 Don’t be afraid of what you are
about to suffer. Look, the devil † is about to throw some of you into prison to
test you, and you will experience affliction for ten days. † Be faithful to the
point of death, † and I will give you the crown † of life. †
11 “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches. The one who conquers will never be harmed by the second death. †

THE LETTER TO PERGAMUM

12 “Write to the angel of the church in Pergamum: Thus says the one who has
the sharp, double-edged sword: † 13 I know † where you live — where Satan’s
throne is. Yet you are holding on to my name and did not deny your faith in
me, † † even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness † who was put to
death among you, where Satan lives. 14 But I have a few things against you. You
have some there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, † who taught Balak to
place a stumbling block † in front of the Israelites: to eat meat sacrificed to
idols † and to commit sexual immorality. † 15 In the same way, you also have
those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. † 16 So repent! Otherwise, I
will come to you quickly † and fight against them with the sword of my
mouth. †
17 “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches. To the one who conquers, I will give some of the hidden manna. † † I
will also give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name † is inscribed that
no one knows except the one who receives it.

THE LETTER TO THYATIRA

18 “Write to the angel of the church in Thyatira: Thus says the Son of God, †
the one whose eyes are like a fiery flame and whose feet are like fine bronze: †
19 I know your works — your love, faithfulness, † service, and endurance. † I
know that your last works are greater than the first. 20 But I have this against
you: You tolerate the woman Jezebel, † who calls herself a prophetess and
teaches and deceives my servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat meat
sacrificed to idols. † 21 I gave her time to repent, † but she does not want to
repent of her sexual immorality. † 22 Look, I will throw her into a sickbed †
and those who commit adultery with her † into great affliction. † Unless they
repent of her † works, 23 I will strike her children dead. † † Then all the
churches will know that I am the one who examines minds and hearts, † and I
will give to each of you according to your works. † 24 I say to the rest of you in
Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who haven’t known “the so-called
secrets † † of Satan” † — as they say — I am not putting any other burden on
you. † 25 Only hold on to what you have until I come. † 26 The one who
conquers and who keeps my works to the end: I will give him authority over the
nations —
27 **and he will rule † † them with an iron scepter;**
he will shatter them like pottery † † —
28 just as I have received this from my Father. I will also give him the morning
star. †
29 “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches.

2:1 Or *messenger*, also in vv. 8,12,18 **2:5** Other mss add *quickly* **2:7** Other mss read *in the midst of* **2:9** Other mss add *works and* **2:10** Or *wreath* **2:13** Other mss add *your works and* **2:13** Or *deny my faith* **2:14** Or *to place a trap* **2:15** Other mss add *which I hate* **2:17** Other mss add *to eat* **2:19** Or *faith* **2:22** Other mss read *their* **2:23** Or *with a plague* **2:24** Or *the secret things* **2:27** Or *shepherd*

2:1 Ac 21:11; Rv 1:16,20 **2:2** Rv 2:19; 3:1,8,15 **2:2** 2Co 11:13 **2:2** 1Jn 4:1 **2:3** Mt 24:9 **2:4** Jr 2:2 **2:5** Heb 10:32 **2:7** 1Jn 5:4-5 **2:7** Gn 2:8-9; Lk 23:43; 2Co 12:4; Rv 22:2,14,19 **2:8** Rv 1:17 **2:9** Rv 3:9-10 **2:10** Mt 4:1; Eph 4:27; 6:11; 1Tm 3:6; Jms 4:7; 1Pt 5:8; Rv 12:9,12; 20:2 **2:10** Dn 1:12,14 **2:10** Mt 10:22; 24:13; Rv 12:11 **2:10** 1Co 9:25; Jms 1:12; Rv 3:11 **2:11** Rv 20:6,14; 21:8 **2:12** Is 49:2; Heb 4:12; Rv 1:16; 2:16; 19:15 **2:13** 1Tm 5:8 **2:13** Ac 22:20 **2:14** 2Pt 2:15 **2:14** Ac 15:29; 1Co 8:10; 10:19 **2:14** Nm 25:1; 31:16; 1Co 10:8 **2:16** Rv 22:7 **2:16** 2Th 2:8 **2:17** Ex 16:32-34 **2:17** Is 55:13; 56:5; 62:2 **2:18** Ps 2:7-9 **2:18** Rv 1:14-15 **2:19** 1Th 1:3; Rv 2:2 **2:20** 1Kg 16:30-33; 21:25; 2Kg 9:7,30-37 **2:20** 2Kg 9:22; Ac 15:29; 1Co 10:20 **2:21** Rm 2:4; 2Pt 3:9 **2:21** Rv 9:20-21; 16:9,11 **2:22** 2Kg 9:22 **2:22** Rv 17:2; 18:9 **2:22** Mt 24:21; Ac

7:11 **2:23** Ezk 33:27 **2:23** Ps 7:9; 26:2; 139:1; Jr 11:20; 17:10; Mt 16:27; Lk 16:15; Ac 1:24; Rm 8:27 **2:23** Rm 2:6; 2Co 11:15; 2Tm 4:14; Rv 18:6; 20:12-13 **2:24** 2Co 2:10 **2:24** Rv 2:9 **2:24** Mt 11:30; Ac 15:28; 24:4; 1Jn 5:3 **2:25** Rv 3:11 **2:27** Rv 19:15 **2:27** Ps 2:9 **2:27** Ps 2:9 **2:28** Is 14:12; 2Pt 1:19; Rv 22:1

2:4 Love, for God and others, is essential to Christianity. Even vigilance for orthodoxy and perseverance under persecution cannot make up for its lack (see also 1Co 13).

2:5 Since the **lampstand** represents the church, what is threatened is the removal of the church.

2:6-7 Little is known about the **Nicolaitans.** From the mention of them in 2:15, it seems they encouraged accommodation to pagan society by eating meat sacrificed to idols and engaging in sexual immorality. The **tree of life** in **paradise** brings to mind Eden (Gn 2–3). The Lord promises eternal life to those who overcome.

2:9 Though the **Jews** in Smyrna claimed to worship God in the synagogue, they became in fact a **synagogue of Satan** when they rejected Jesus and persecuted his followers. This is not anti-Semitism, as it is not a denunciation of all Jews as Jews (Jesus and John were both Jews). Rather, it is a rebuke of those who think they are serving God by persecuting his people.

2:10 The crown of life is promised for those who endure persecution unto **death.** Reward for faithfulness is therefore eschatological, not received in this life.

2:11 The second death is defined in chapter 20.

2:13 The identity of **Satan's throne** is debated. Some have suggested the altar of Zeus or temples in Pergamum. The primary earthly enemy of the church in Revelation, however, is Rome. The first temple dedicated to emperor worship was in Pergamum in 29 BC.

2:14 Balaam is the prophet who told **Balak**, the Moabite king, the way to overcome the Israelites. He suggested seducing them to idolatry and sexual immorality, which would lead to God's wrath falling on them (Nm 23–25).

2:17 Hidden manna probably refers to the manna that had been preserved in the ark of the covenant but was lost when the temple was destroyed. This is a symbolic promise of eternal life. **White stone[s]** were used for a variety of things, including admission. Receiving a **new name** is often associated with a new life.

2:18 Eyes like a fiery flame and . . . feet like fine bronze apparently recalls the local deity, Helius Pythius Tyrimnaeus Apollo, a sun god.

2:20 Jezebel was the wicked queen of Israel who promoted immorality and the worship of Baal (1Kg 16–23). This name is applied to a woman in Thyatira, who similarly encouraged the people of God to compromise with the world by engaging in idolatry and sexual immorality.

2:24 The so-called secrets of Satan are apparently "divine mysteries" promoted by Jezebel and her followers.

2:28 The morning star probably alludes to Numbers 24:17: "A star will come from Jacob." In second temple Judaism, this image was associated with the coming Messiah (1Pt 1:19).

THE LETTER TO SARDIS

3 "Write to the angel † of the church in Sardis: Thus says the one who has the seven spirits of God † and the seven stars: † I know your works; † you have a reputation † for being alive, but you are dead. †

2 Be alert † and strengthen † what remains, which is about to die, † for I have
not found your works complete before my God. 3 Remember, then, what you
have received and heard; keep it, and repent. If you are not alert, I will come †
like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come upon you. † 4 But
you have a few people † in Sardis who have not defiled † their clothes, † and
they will walk with me in white, because they are worthy.
5 "In the same way, the one who conquers † will be dressed in white clothes, †
and I will never erase his name from the book of life † but will acknowledge his
name before my Father and before his angels. †
6 "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen † to what the Spirit says † to the
churches.

THE LETTER TO PHILADELPHIA

7 "Write to the angel of the church in Philadelphia: Thus says the Holy One, the
true one, † the one who has the key of David, who opens and no one will close,
and who closes and no one opens: † 8 I know your works. Look, I have placed
before you an open door that no one can close because you have but little power;
yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. † 9 Note this: I will
make those from the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews and are not, but
are lying — I will make them come and bow down at your feet, † and they will
know that I have loved you. † 10 Because you have kept my command to
endure, I will also keep you from the hour of testing † that is going to come on
the whole world to test those who live on the earth. † 11 I am coming soon. †
Hold on to what you have, † so that no one takes your crown. †
12 "The one who conquers I will make a pillar † in the temple of my God, and
he will never go out again. I will write on him the name of my God and the name
of the city of my God — the new Jerusalem, † which comes down out of heaven
from my God — and my new name. †
13 "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches.

THE LETTER TO LAODICEA

14 “Write to the angel of the church in Laodicea: Thus says the Amen, † the
faithful and true witness, the originator † † of God’s creation: 15 I know your
works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were cold or hot. 16 So,
because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit † you
out of my mouth. 17 For you say, ‘I’m rich; I have become wealthy and need
nothing,’ † and you don’t realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and
naked. 18 I advise you to buy from me gold refined in the fire so that you may be
rich, † white clothes so that you may be dressed and your shameful nakedness
not be exposed, † and ointment to spread on your eyes so that you may see.
19 As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. † So be zealous and repent.
20 See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the
door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. †
21 “To the one who conquers I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, †
just as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.
22 “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen to what the Spirit says to the
churches.”

3:1 Or *messenger*, also in vv. 7,14 **3:1** Or *have a name* **3:2** Other mss read *guard* **3:2** Or *strengthen who remain, who are about to die* **3:3** Other mss add *upon you* **3:4** Lit *few names* **3:4** Or *soiled* **3:14** Or *beginning of God’s creation*, or *ruler of God’s creation* **3:16** Or *spit*

3:1 Rv 1:4; 4:5; 5:6 **3:1** Rv 1:16,20; 2:1 **3:1** Rv 2:2,19; 3:8,15 **3:1** Rm 6:11 **3:2** Mt 25:13; 26:40-41; Ac 20:31; 1Co 16:13; 1Pt 5:8; 2Pt 3:10 **3:3** Mt 24:42-44; Mk 13:32-37; Lk 12:35-40; 1Th 5:1-11; Rv 16:15 **3:4** Zch 3:3-4; 2Co 7:1; Rv 14:4 **3:5** 1Jn 2:13-14; 4:4; 5:4-5; Rv 2:7,11,17,26; 3:12,21 **3:5** Mt 17:2; Rv 3:18; 4:4 **3:5** Dt 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1; Rv 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27 **3:5** Mt 10:32; Lk 12:8 **3:6** Mt 11:15; 13:9,43; Lk 8:8; 14:35 **3:6** Ac 8:29; 10:19; 11:12; 13:2; 21:11; 28:25; 1Tm 4:1; Heb 3:7; 10:15; Rv 14:13; 22:17 **3:7** 1Jn 5:20; Rv 6:10; 19:11 **3:7** Is 22:22; Mt 16:19 **3:8** Ac 14:27; 1Co 16:9; 2Co 2:12; Col 4:3 **3:9** Is 45:14; 49:23; 60:14; 1Co 14:25 **3:9** Is 43:4 **3:10** Lk 8:13; Heb 3:8; 1Pt 4:12 **3:10** Rv 6:10; 8:13; 11:10; 13:8,14; 17:8 **3:11** Rv 22:7,12,20 **3:11** Rv 2:25 **3:11** 1Co 9:25; 1Th 2:19; 2Tm 4:8; Jms 1:12; 1Pt 5:4 **3:12** 1Kg 7:21; 2Ch 3:17; Jr 1:18; Gl 2:9 **3:12** Ezk 48:35; Gl 4:26; Heb 12:22; Rv 21:2 **3:12** Rv 2:17; 7:3; 14:1; 22:4 **3:14** 2Co 1:20 **3:14** Mk 10:6; 13:19; Jn 1:1-5; Col 1:18; 2Pt 3:4 **3:17** Hs 12:8; Zch 11:5; 1Co 4:8 **3:18** Zch 13:9; 1Pt 1:7 **3:18** Gn 2:25; Is 20:4; Ezk 23:29; Rv 16:15 **3:19** Heb 12:26 **3:20** Lk 24:29-30 **3:21** Mt 19:28; 2Tm 2:12; Rv 20:4

3:1 On **the seven spirits of God**, see the note on 1:4.

3:3 The imagery of **a thief** who will come at an unexpected hour recalls the teaching of Jesus (Mt 24:42-44; also 1Th 5:2; 2Pt 3:10).

3:4-5 In this book, the imagery of **white** clothing is used to depict moral purity (Dn 7:9; 10:5).

3:5 The book of life is a record of God’s covenant people (Ex 32:32-33; Is 4:3; Dn 12:1). To be erased from it means losing covenant status.

3:7 The key of David is a symbol of authority, drawn from Isaiah 22:15-22.

3:9 On **the synagogue of Satan**, see the note on 2:9.

3:15-16 Laodicea had a problem with its water supply. Nearby Hierapolis had soothing **hot** springs, while neighboring Colossae had refreshing **cold** water. Laodicea had to pipe in its water, and it arrived **lukewarm** and nauseating. Jesus alludes to this, saying that the church in Laodicea—like its water supply—was useless and sickening.

3:17-18 Laodicea was known for being **rich**, for its high quality clothing industry, and for its medical school, recognized particularly for treating ailments involving the **eyes.** Jesus alludes to these sources of pride, turning them upside down in his rebuke of the church.

3:20 The imagery of standing at the **door** and knocking recalls Jesus's parable of watchfulness (Lk 12:35-40).

THE THRONE ROOM OF HEAVEN

4 After this I looked, and there in heaven was an open door. The first
voice that I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet † said, "Come up
here, † and I will show you what must take place after this." †
2 Immediately I was in the Spirit, † and there was a throne in heaven † and
someone was seated on it. 3 The one seated † there had the appearance of jasper
and carnelian stone. † A rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald
surrounded the throne. †
4 Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones sat twenty-
four elders † dressed in white clothes, † with golden crowns on their heads. †
5 Flashes of lightning and rumblings and peals of thunder came from the
throne. † Seven fiery torches were burning before the throne, which are the
seven spirits of God. † 6 Something like a sea of glass, similar to crystal, was
also before the throne. †
Four living creatures covered with eyes in front and in back were around the
throne on each side. 7 The first living creature was like a lion; the second living
creature was like an ox; the third living creature had a face like a man; and the
fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. † 8 Each of the four living
creatures had six wings; † they were covered with eyes around and inside. Day
and night † they never stop, † saying,

Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God, the Almighty,

who was, who is, and who is to come. †

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor, and thanks to the one seated
on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, † 10 the twenty-four elders
fall down before the one seated on the throne † and worship the one who lives
forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne and say,

11 Our Lord and God, †
you are worthy † to receive glory and honor and power, †
because you have created all things, †
and by your will
they exist and were created.

4:3 Other mss omit *The one seated* **4:8** Or *rest* **4:11** Some mss add *the Holy One* ; other mss read *Lord* **4:1** Ex 19:19; 20:18; Ps 47:5; Zch 9:14; Rv 1:10 **4:1** Rv 11:12 **4:1** Gn 12:1; Zch 1:9; Rv 17:1; 21:9 **4:2** Ac 19:21; Rm 8:9; 14:17; Eph 2:18,22; 3:5; 6:18; Rv 1:10; 17:3; 21:10 **4:2** 1Kg 22:19; Ps 11:4; 103:19; Is 66:1; Mt 5:34; 23:22; Dn 7:9 **4:3** Ex 28:17,20; 39:10,13; Ezk 28:13; Rv 21:11,18-20 **4:3** Gn 9:13-17; Ezk 1:28; Rv 10:1 **4:4** Mt 19:28; Rv 11:16; 5:8; 19:4; 20:4 **4:4** Rv 3:4,18 **4:4** Zch 6:11; Rv 9:7 **4:5** Ex 19:16; 20:18; Ps 77:18; Rv 8:5; 11:19; 16:18 **4:5** Rv 1:4; 3:1; 5:6 **4:6** Rv 15:2; 21:18,21 **4:7** Ezk 1:5-28; 10:9-14 **4:8** Is 6:2 **4:8** Rv 7:15 **4:8** Is 6:3 **4:9** Rv 10:6; 15:7 **4:10** 2Ch 20:18; Mk 5:33; Rv 5:8 **4:11** 2Sm 22:4; Ps 18:3; Heb 3:3; Rv 5:2,9,12 **4:11** Rv 5:12; 7:12 **4:11** Gn 1:1; Ac 14:15; Rv 10:6; 14:7

4:2 See the note on 1:10.

4:4 The number **twenty-four** may allude to the orders of priests in the OT (1Ch 24–25), or to the combination of the twelve tribes and the twelve apostles, representing the people of God from the old and new covenants (see Rv 21:12-14).

4:5 On the **seven spirits of God**, see the note on 1:4.

4:6-8 The **four living creatures** are drawn from Ezekiel 1:10 and 10:12, and their speech is from Isaiah 6:3. They represent God's created order—humankind is head of all creation; the lion is the king of wild animals; the ox is the strongest of domesticated animals; and the eagle dominates birds of the air.

THE LAMB TAKES THE SCROLL

5 Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll with
writing on both sides, sealed with seven seals. † 2 I also saw a mighty
angel † proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the
scroll and break its seals? " 3 But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth
was able to open the scroll or even to look in it. 4 I wept and wept because no
one was found worthy to open † the scroll or even to look in it. 5 Then one of

the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Look, the Lion from the tribe of Judah, †
the Root of David, † has conquered † so that he is able to open the scroll and †
its seven seals.”
6 Then I saw one like a slaughtered lamb † standing in the midst of the throne
and the four living creatures and among the elders. He had seven horns and
seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God † sent into all the earth. 7 He
went and took the scroll out of the right hand of the one seated on the throne.

THE LAMB IS WORTHY

8 When he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders
fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp † and golden bowls † filled
with incense, † which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new
song: †

You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slaughtered,
and you purchased † people †
for God by your blood
from every tribe and language
and people and nation. †
10 You made them a kingdom †
and priests to our God, †
and they will reign on the earth.

11 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels around the throne, and also
of the living creatures and of the elders. Their number was countless thousands,
plus thousands of thousands. † 12 They said with a loud voice,

Worthy is the Lamb who was slaughtered
to receive power and riches
and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and blessing!

13 I heard every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, † on the sea, and everything in them say, †

Blessing and honor and glory and power
be to the one seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb, forever and ever!

14 The four living creatures said, “Amen,” and the elders fell down and worshiped.

5:4 Other mss add *and read* **5:5** Other mss add *loose* **5:9** Or *redeemed* **5:9** Other mss read *us* **5:10** Other mss read *them kings*

5:1 Is 29:11; Ezk 2:9-10; Dn 12:4 **5:1** Rv 10:1 **5:5** Gn 49:9 **5:5** Is 11:1,10; Rm 15:12; Rv 22:16 **5:5** Jn 16:33 **5:6** Rv 5:12; 13:8 **5:6** Rv 1:4 **5:8** Ps 33:2; 71:22; 150:3; Dn 3:5 **5:8** Rv 15:7 **5:8** Ps 141:2; Lk 1:10; Rv 8:3-4 **5:9** Ps 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; Is 42:10; Rv 14:3 **5:9** Ex 19:5; Rv 7:9; 11:9; 14:6 **5:10** Ex 19:6; Rv 1:5-6 **5:11** Dn 7:10; Heb 12:22 **5:13** Php 2:10 **5:13** Ps 69:34; 96:11; 145:21; Rv 12:12

5:1 Ezekiel saw a two-sided **scroll** that spoke of lament and mourning (Ezk 2:9-10). A **sealed** scroll could not be read unless opened by someone with appropriate authority.

5:5 The Lion from the tribe of Judah recalls Jacob’s blessing of his son Judah (Gn 49:9). The lion became a symbol of messianic hope in Jewish literature.

5:6 A **lamb** is the most common image used of Jesus in Revelation; it appears twenty-eight times. It recalls the Passover lamb slaughtered for each captive Israelite household in Egypt (Ex 12:21). **Horns** symbolize power (Ps 75:10). The number **seven** conveys completion or perfection.

5:8-9 See “A Biblical View of Music,” *p. 727.*

5:9 Because Jesus has **purchased** (redeemed) **people** from **every tribe and language and people and nation**, the church cannot be limited to any certain group. The gospel must go to the ends of the earth (see also 7:9). See “God’s Purposes in a Christian’s Participation in Missions,” *p. 1191;* “Ethics of Global Missions,” *p. 1323.*

5:11 See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531.*

THE FIRST SEAL ON THE SCROLL

6 Then I saw the Lamb open one of the seven † seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, † “Come!” 2 I looked, and there was a white horse. † Its rider held a bow; † a crown † was given to him, and he went out as a conqueror in order to conquer. †

THE SECOND SEAL

3 When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, “Come!” 4 Then another horse went out, a fiery red one, † and its rider was

allowed to take peace from the earth, so that people would slaughter one another. And a large sword was given to him. †

THE THIRD SEAL

5 When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, “Come! ” And I looked, and there was a black horse. † Its rider held a set of scales in his hand. † 6 Then I heard something like a voice among the four living creatures say, “A quart of wheat for a denarius, † and three quarts of barley for a denarius, † but do not harm the oil and the wine.” †

THE FOURTH SEAL

7 When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, “Come! ” 8 And I looked, and there was a pale green † horse. Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following after him. † They were † given authority † over a fourth of the earth, to kill by the sword, by famine, by plague, and by the wild animals of the earth. †

THE FIFTH SEAL

9 When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slaughtered because of the word of God and the testimony they had given. † † 10 They cried out with a loud voice: “Lord, † the one who is holy and true, † how long until you judge those who live on the earth and avenge our blood? † ” 11 So they were each given a white robe, and they were told to rest a little while longer until the number would be completed of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters, who were going to be killed just as they had been.

THE SIXTH SEAL

12 Then I saw him open † the sixth seal. A violent earthquake occurred; † the sun turned black like sackcloth † made of hair; the entire moon † became like blood; † 13 the stars † of heaven fell to the earth as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a high wind; 14 the sky was split apart like a scroll being rolled up; † and every mountain and island was moved from its place. †

15 Then the kings of the earth, the nobles, the generals, the rich, the powerful,
and every slave and free person hid in the caves and among the rocks of the
mountains. † 16 And they said to the mountains and to the rocks, “Fall on us
and hide us † from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath
of the Lamb, 17 because the great day of their † wrath has come! And who is
able to stand? ” †

6:1 Other mss omit *seven* **6:2** Or *went out conquering and in order to conquer* **6:6** A denarius = one day’s wage **6:8** Or *a greenish gray* **6:8** Other mss read *He was* **6:9** Other mss add *about the Lamb* **6:10** Or *“Master* **6:12** Or *I saw when he opened* **6:12** Or *the full moon* **6:13** Perhaps meteors **6:17** Other mss read *his*

6:1 Rv 14:2; 19:6 **6:2** Zch 6:1-3; Rv 19:11 **6:2** Zch 9:13-14 **6:2** Rv 14:14 **6:4** Zch 1:8; 6:2 **6:4** Mt 10:34 **6:5** Zch 6:2,6 **6:5** 1Sm 2:3; Jb 6:2; 31:6; Ps 62:9; Pr 16:2 **6:6** 2Kg 6:25; 7:1 **6:6** Rv 7:3; 9:4 **6:8** Hs 13:14; Rv 1:18; 20:13 **6:8** Mt 10:1; 28:18; Rv 9:3 **6:8** Jr 14:12; 15:2-3; 24:10; 29:17-18; Ezk 5:12,17; 14:21; 29:5 **6:9** Rv 1:2,9; 12:17; 19:10; 20:4 **6:10** Rv 3:7 **6:10** Dt 32:43; Ps 79:10; 119:84; Rv 19:2 **6:12** Rv 11:13; 16:18 **6:12** Is 13:10; 50:3; Jl 2:10; 3:15; Mt 24:29 **6:12** Jl 2:31; Ac 2:20 **6:14** Is 34:4 **6:14** Ezk 38:20; Nah 1:5; Rv 16:20 **6:15** Jdg 6:2; 1Sm 13:6; Is 2:10,19,21; Heb 11:38 **6:16** Hs 10:8; Lk 23:30 **6:17** 1Sm 6:20; Ezr 9:15; Ps 1:5; 24:3; 76:7; 130:3; Jl 2:11; Mal 3:2

6:1-8 These four horsemen are portraits of divine judgment, recalling Zechariah’s riders on colored horses sent into the earth (Zch 1:8-11). Each color is symbolic of the actions of each rider: **white** is for victory; **red** for blood; **black** for famine; and **pale green** for death.

6:9 Since the blood of sacrifices was poured out at the base of **the altar**, the martyrs are presented as sacrificial offerings.

6:11 The message of this seal is that more believers will be martyred, but God will ultimately avenge them.

6:12-17 With allusions to various OT prophecies (consult the cross-references), **the sixth seal** portrays the coming of the end of the age (e.g., Is 13:10; Jl 2:10-11,31).

THE SEALED OF ISRAEL

7 After this I saw four angels † standing at the four corners of the earth,
restraining the four winds of the earth † so that no wind could blow on
the earth or on the sea or on any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel rising
up from the east, † who had the seal of the living God. † He cried out in a loud
voice to the four angels who were allowed to harm the earth and the sea:
3 “Don’t harm the earth or the sea or the trees † until we seal the servants of our
God on their foreheads.” † 4 And I heard the number of the sealed:

144,000 sealed from every tribe of the Israelites: †

5 12,000 sealed from the tribe of Judah,
12,000 † from the tribe of Reuben,
12,000 from the tribe of Gad,
6 12,000 from the tribe of Asher,
12,000 from the tribe of Naphtali,
12,000 from the tribe of Manasseh,
7 12,000 from the tribe of Simeon,
12,000 from the tribe of Levi,
12,000 from the tribe of Issachar,
8 12,000 from the tribe of Zebulun,
12,000 from the tribe of Joseph,
12,000 sealed from the tribe of Benjamin.

A MULTITUDE FROM THE GREAT TRIBULATION

9 After this I looked, and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, † which no one could number, † standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands. † 10 And they cried out in a loud voice:

Salvation belongs to our God, †
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!

11 All the angels stood around the throne, and along with the elders and the four living creatures they fell facedown before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying,

Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom
and thanksgiving and honor
and power and strength
be to our God forever and ever. † Amen.

13 Then one of the elders asked me, “Who are these people in white robes, and where did they come from? ”

WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION?

Globalization is not merely an abstract notion used by economic and political analysts to make hypothetical claims about the world today. It has profound effects on the man in the street. Consider these examples from everyday life: • An American restaurant chain has become more popular (and profitable) outside the US.

- The latest *American Idol* winner is a global phenomenon, as is the top UK boy band, as is the most popular K-pop star.
- When you get on a subway train, you regularly hear languages that you cannot identify. You learn later that these languages originate from halfway around the world.
- Your child’s classmates come from many different cultural or ethnic heritages; and they are not international students.
- When you have an Internet problem and you call your service provider, the call is attended to by someone at a call center in India or the Philippines. The call is either free or charged based on your local rates.

We are regularly reminded that the physical distances that separate people have shrunk, as though the world has been compressed. We also sense that changes are taking place much faster than before. Twenty years ago, the media spoke of a globalizing world. Today we speak of a globalized world.

WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION?

Globalization is a continuing movement in which economic, technological, political, and cultural trends interpenetrate on a worldwide scale, moving the world toward the reality of becoming connected at every level. It is not an entirely new phenomenon. In the past, people living under a far-reaching governing authority such as the Roman Empire quickly developed a transnational mindset and traded with people who lived far beyond their borders. What is new today is the scale and speed of globalization.

The acceleration of globalizing tendencies became evident in the 1980s when several phenomena happened concurrently: the burgeoning of international trade, mass migration of people from poorer to richer nations, and rapid improvements in communication technology—especially the beginning of the widespread use of the Internet. These soon converged with other worldwide trends such as the deregulation of international trade and developmental efforts aimed at reducing the inequality gap between rich and poor nations.

These powerful movements have created a world in which political or geographical borders have much less impact on how people live and think. Traditional boundaries that separate countries and continents are becoming less meaningful. Although immigration authorities can still prevent a person from crossing into another country, the exchange of ideas and technologies are freed from past constraints of state control.

TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION

We can speak of technological, economic, ideological, cultural, and religious globalizations. Technological globalization involves universal access to communication technology. Easier access to new means of communication has flattened traditional economic inequalities. Developing nations can access such technologies, reducing the advantage of developed nations in the global economy.

Economic globalization involves the movement of capital, production, and labor across borders. Often the main players in such movements are large companies or conglomerates, rather than governments. Although there is no consensus on whether or not economic globalization has helped to reduce the wealth gap between developed and developing nations, most economists agree that globalization has helped to reduce the poverty level of many populations.

On the other hand, economic globalization is viewed by many as a threat because it is sometimes experienced as "global capitalism." This happens when those with better access to financial resources exploit the benefits of globalization, resulting in power being concentrated in the hands of large corporations.

GLOBALIZATION'S IMPACT ON CULTURE AND THE CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

Although the effects of technological and economic globalizations are far-reaching, ideological, cultural, and religious globalizing can change our lives in even more profound ways. For the first time, all the major ideologies of the world are experiencing a kind of "ideological tsunami," an overpowering wave of global trends that do not originate from any single location. While Christianity has long been assaulted by secularizing influences, the current scale of assault is unprecedented.

In the various strands of globalization we can discern the emergence of a new public ethos that could surpass all previous ideological, ethnic, or nationalistic codes. This new ethos is sometimes called "global hyperculture," a powerful homogenizing influence that is capable of eroding local cultures, while replacing communities with individualistic consumers. This hyperculture can impact our worldview in several ways. It can lead to the fragmentation of communities, since it pays scant attention to issues of ethnicity, and does not promote moral responsibility for one's place of belonging. It can produce a globalized spirituality in which everything is indiscriminately accepted and ethics is attempted without absolutes. Not least, it can propagate a utopian vision that celebrates human accomplishment—a vision at odds with the Christian view of the future.

Although the concept of globalization is descriptive rather than prescriptive, it must be assessed in light of the biblical worldview. We must avoid the denunciation of globalization as immoral, capitalist exploitation, but also not embrace its full acceptance that may confuse it with the promised Christian future.

RESPONDING POSITIVELY TO THE TIMES

While we are cautious about the homogenizing tendencies of globalization, we can also respond positively to the opportunities that it presents. Just as missionaries in the Age of Discovery took advantage of the infectious spirit of exploration that took hold of Europe from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, boarding the ships that were heading to Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania, Christians can find new ministry opportunities in the twenty-first century.

First, as we enjoy the benefits of local, regional, and global connectedness, we can gain a sense of human solidarity. The (re)discovery that we are one global family leads us to ponder our basic humanity under the lordship of the one God and Father from whom and for whom all things exist (1Co 8:5-6).

Second, we can engage with the exciting challenge of understanding old truths in new ways. For instance, what does the word "neighbor" mean in globalized living (Lk 10:25-29)? What does it mean when we pray for our debts to be forgiven as we forgive our debtors (Mt 6:12)?

Third, globalization weakens the cultural and social domination of the West, since it exposes the consumer to many different cultures. For instance, informed comparison can help African or Asian Christians to become less enamored of Americanized or Europeanized Christianity, which can pave the way for a more indigenized, but globally integrated, Christianity.

Finally, global culture can complement a worldwide view of missions. Unprecedented cross-cultural contact and instantaneous communication have made it possible for Christians to share the gospel and to equip workers for the spiritual harvest in new and innovative ways. We can engage in missions from

everywhere to everywhere. Urban missions and ministry can gain fresh impetus, as the massive global migration of peoples presents new opportunities to do missions at your doorstep.

CONCLUSION

A rapidly changing world is not a runaway world that is no longer in the hands of the sovereign God. He continues to sit enthroned above the earth and has the power to reduce princes to nothing (Is 40:22-23). What is more, the Christian faith is well suited to a globalized world because of its global missionary vision.

CHOON SAM FONG

14 I said to him, "Sir, † you know."
Then he told me: These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. † They
washed their robes and made them white † in the blood of the Lamb.

15 For this reason they are before the throne of God, and they serve him
day and night † in his temple. †
The one seated on the throne will shelter † them: †
16 They will no longer hunger; they will no longer thirst;
the sun will no longer strike them,
nor will any scorching heat. †
17 For the Lamb who is at the center of the throne will shepherd them; †
he will guide them to springs of the waters of life, †
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. †

7:5-8 Other mss add *sealed* after each number **7:14** Or *"My lord* **7:15** Or *will spread his tent over*
7:1 Rv 9:14 **7:1** Is 11:12; Jr 49:36; Ezk 7:2; Dn 7:2; Zch 6:5; Mt 24:31; Rv 20:7-8 **7:2** Is 41:2 **7:2** Rv 7:3; 9:4 **7:3** Rv 3:12; 6:6; 9:4 **7:3** Ezk 9:4,6; Rv 13:16; 14:1,9; 20:4; 22:4 **7:4** Gn 35:23-26 **7:9** Rv 5:9; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6 **7:9** Gn 15:5; 32:12 **7:9** Lv 23:40; Jn 12:13 **7:10** Ex 15:2; 2Ch 20:17; Ps 3:8; 67:2; Is 12:2; 49:6; 51:6,8; 52:10; Jnh 2:9; Ac 4:12; Rm 1:6; 1Pt 1:5; Rv 12:10; 19:1 **7:12** Rv 4:11 **7:14** Dn 12:1; Mk 13:19; Rv 3:10; 6:11 **7:14** Ps 51:7; Is 1:18; 43:25; 44:22; Heb 9:24; 1Jn 1:7 **7:15** Rv 4:8 **7:15** Rv 3:12; 11:1,2,19; 14:15,17; 15:5-6,8; 16:1,17; 21:22 **7:15** Ps 27:5; 31:20; 61:4; Is 25:4; Rv 21:3 **7:16** Dt 28:22; Is 49:10; Jn 6:35 **7:17** Ps 23:1; Ezk 34:23 **7:17** Ps 23:2; Is 49:10; Jr 2:13 **7:17** Is 25:8; Rv 21:4

7:3 The **seal** for **servants** finds its background in Ezekiel 9, functioning to separate God's servants from the faithless to protect them from the coming judgment.

7:4-8 The number **144,000,** with multiples of twelve and multiples of ten (completeness), is symbolic of the entire people of God. That the tribe of Dan is missing while Joseph as well as Manasseh (Joseph's son) are listed further supports the symbolic nature of the list (see 7:9).

7:9 See the note at 5:9. **Palm branches** were symbolic of victory, used by Greeks and Romans as awards at athletic games. See also "A Biblical View of the Nations," *p. 688.*

7:14 Daniel warned of a **great tribulation** to be endured when the end comes (Dn 12:1), as did Jesus (Mt 24:21).

THE SEVENTH SEAL

8 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence † in heaven for
about half an hour. 2 Then I saw the seven angels who stand in the
presence of God; † seven trumpets were given to them. † 3 Another
angel, with a golden incense burner, came and stood at the altar. He was given a large amount of incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar in front of the throne. † 4 The smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up in the presence of God from the angel's hand. 5 The angel took the incense burner, filled it with fire from the altar, † and hurled it to the earth; there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. †

THE SEVEN TRUMPETS

6 And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

THE FIRST TRUMPET

7 The first angel blew his trumpet, and hail and fire, mixed with blood, were hurled to the earth. † So a third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up. †

THE SECOND TRUMPET

8 The second angel blew his trumpet, and something like a great mountain ablaze with fire was hurled into the sea. † So a third of the sea became blood, †
9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

THE THIRD TRUMPET

10 The third angel blew his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from heaven. † It fell on a third of the rivers and springs of water. 11 The name of the star is Wormwood, † and a third of the waters became wormwood. So, many of the people died from the waters, because they had been made bitter.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET

12 The fourth angel blew his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of
the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third
of the day was without light and also a third of the night. †
13 I looked and heard an eagle † flying high overhead, crying out in a loud
voice, "Woe! † Woe! Woe to those who live on the earth, because of the
remaining trumpet blasts that the three angels are about to sound! "
8:13 Other mss read *angel*
8:1 Hab 2:20; Zph 1:7; Zch 2:13 **8:2** Lk 1:19; Rv 15:1,6-8; 16:1; 17:1; 21:9 **8:2** Jos 6:6; Zph 1:14-16 **8:3** Rv 5:8 **8:5** Lv 6:12-13; Nm 16:46 **8:5** Rv 4:5 **8:7** Ex 9:13-35; Jl 2:30-31 **8:7** Ezk 5:12; 38:22; Zch 13:8-9; Lk 21:25-26; Rv 9:15,18; 12:4 **8:8** Jr 51:25; Mk 11:23 **8:8** Ex 7:20-21 **8:10** Is 14:12; Rv 9:1 **8:11** Pr 5:3-4; Jr 9:15; Lm 3:19 **8:12** Ex 10:21-23; Is 13:10; Jl 2:2; Am 5:18; 8:9; Mk 13:24 **8:13** Rv 9:12; 11:14; 12:12

8:3-5 OT sacrificial imagery is used to portray the **prayers of all the saints** as a sacrifice to God (consult cross-references).

8:6 Trumpets played various roles in the life of Israel. The Jewish New Year began with the Feast of Trumpets (Lv 23:23-25), and they were used in warfare for signaling (Nm 10:8-9). **Seven** trumpets were used in the destruction of Jericho (Jos 6:4-20).

8:7-12 These incidents echo the plagues on Egypt during the exodus (Ex 7:14–10:29) and portray God's judgment on the earth. **Wormwood**, a poison or embittering agent, is used in the OT to portray judgment (Jr 9:15; 23:15; Lm 3:19) as well as the harmful effects of adultery (Pr 5:4).

THE FIFTH TRUMPET

9 The fifth angel blew his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from
heaven to earth. † The key for the shaft to the abyss † was given to him.
2 He opened the shaft to the abyss, and smoke came up out of the shaft
like smoke from a great † furnace † so that the sun and the air were darkened
by the smoke from the shaft. † 3 Then locusts came out of the smoke on to the
earth, † and power † was given to them † like the power that scorpions have on
the earth. † 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth, or any green
plant, or any tree, † but only those people who do not have God's seal on their
foreheads. † 5 They were not permitted to kill them but were to torment them
for five months; their torment is like the torment caused by a scorpion when it
stings someone. 6 In those days people will seek death and will not find it; they
will long to die, but death will flee from them. †
7 The appearance of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. †
Something like golden crowns was on their heads; their faces were like human

faces; [8] they had hair like women's hair; their teeth were like lions' teeth; †
[9] they had chests like iron breastplates; the sound of their wings was like the
sound of many chariots with horses rushing into battle; [10] and they had tails with
stingers like scorpions, so that with their tails they had the power to harm people
for five months. [11] They had as their king † the angel of the abyss; his name in
Hebrew is Abaddon, † † and in Greek he has the name Apollyon. †
[12] The first woe has passed. There are still two more woes to come after this. †

THE SIXTH TRUMPET

[13] The sixth angel blew his trumpet. From the four † horns of the golden altar †
that is before God, I heard a voice [14] say to the sixth angel who had the trumpet,
"Release the four angels † bound at the great river Euphrates." † [15] So the four
angels who were prepared for the hour, day, month, and year † were released to
kill a third † of the human race. [16] The number of mounted troops was two
hundred million; † I heard their number. [17] This is how I saw the horses and
their riders in the vision: They had breastplates that were fiery red, hyacinth
blue, and sulfur yellow. The heads of the horses were like the heads of lions, and
from their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur. † [18] A third of the human race
was killed by these three plagues — by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur that
came from their mouths. [19] For the power of the horses is in their mouths and in
their tails, because their tails, which resemble snakes, have heads that inflict
injury.
[20] The rest of the people, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of
the works of their hands † to stop worshiping demons † and idols of gold,
silver, bronze, stone, and wood, † which cannot see, hear, or walk. † [21] And
they did not repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or
their thefts.

9:2 Other mss omit *great* **9:3** Or *authority*, also in v. 10 **9:11** Or *as king over them* **9:11** Or *Destruction* **9:11** Or *Destroyer* **9:13** Other mss omit *four* **9:16** Other mss read *a hundred million*

9:1 Is 14:12; Lk 10:18; Rv 8:10 **9:1** Lk 8:31; Rm 10:7; Rv 9:11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1-3 **9:2** Gn 19:28; Ex 19:18 **9:2** Jl 2:2,10 **9:3** Ex 10:1-20; Dt 28:42; 1Kg 8:37; Ps 78:46 **9:3** Mt 10:1; 28:18; Rv 6:8 **9:3** Dt 8:15; Ezk 2:6; Lk 10:19 **9:4** Rv 6:6; 7:3 **9:4** Rv 7:3 **9:6** Jb 3:20-22; Rv 6:16 **9:7** Jl 2:4-5 **9:8** Jl 1:6 **9:11** Jb 26:6; 28:22; 31:12; Ps 88:11; Pr 15:11; 27:20 **9:12** Rv 8:13; 11:14 **9:13** Ex 39:38; 40:5 **9:14** Rv 7:1-2 **9:14** Rv 16:12 **9:15** Gn 7:11; 2Kg 25:1; Jr 39:2; 52:4,12,31 **9:15** Rv 8:7-12 **9:17** Gn 19:24; Dt 29:23; Jb 18:15; Ps 11:6; Is 34:9; Lk 17:29; Rv 14:10; 19:20; 20:10; 21:8 **9:20** 1Kg 13:33; 2Ch 34:25; Ps 7:12; Jr 1:16; Rv 16:9,11 **9:20** 1Co 10:20 **9:20** Dt 29:17; Dn 2:32,35,45; Hab 2:19; Ac 17:29 **9:20** Dt 4:28; Ps 115:4-7; 135:15-17; Dn

5:23

9:1-2 The **star** is an angel (see 20:1). The **abyss** was thought of as the prison of evil spirits.

9:7-12 These images draw from the most feared ideas of the time in order to evoke horror of the coming judgment. **Locusts** were used as an image for invading warhorses (Jr 51:14,27; similarly Jl 2:4). The feared Barbarians, like the Parthians, on the edges of the Roman Empire were known for their long **hair.** The sting of **scorpions** was among the most intense pains known. **Abaddon** is a Hebrew name for the realm of the dead, and **Apollyon** means "destruction" in Greek.

9:14-17 The **river Euphrates** was commonly regarded as the boundary between Roman territory and that of the Parthians—the most feared enemy of Rome at this time. The Parthians were well known for their horse **riders.**

THE MIGHTY ANGEL AND THE SMALL SCROLL

10 Then I saw another mighty angel † coming down from heaven,
wrapped in a cloud, with a rainbow † over his head. † His face was
like the sun, his legs † were like pillars of fire, † 2 and he held a little scroll
opened in his hand. He put his right foot on the sea, his left on the land, 3 and he
called out with a loud voice like a roaring lion. When he cried out, the seven
thunders raised their voices. 4 And when the seven thunders spoke, I was about
to write, but I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Seal up what the seven
thunders said, † and do not write it down! "
5 Then the angel that I had seen standing on the sea and on the land raised his
right hand to heaven. 6 He swore by the one who lives forever and ever, † who
created heaven and what is in it, the earth and what is in it, and the sea and what
is in it: "There will no longer be a delay, 7 but in the days when the seventh
angel † will blow his trumpet, then the mystery of God † will be completed, as
he announced to his servants the prophets." †
8 Then the voice that I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take
the scroll that lies open in the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and
on the land."
9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me,
"Take and eat it; it will be bitter in your stomach, but it will be as sweet as honey
in your mouth." †
10 Then I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It was as sweet as
honey in my mouth, but when I ate it, my stomach became bitter. † 11 And they

said to me, “You must prophesy again about † many peoples, nations, languages, and kings.” †

10:1 Or *a halo on his head* **10:1** Or *feet* **10:11** Or *prophesy again against*
10:1 Rv 5:2; 18:21 **10:1** Rv 4:3 **10:1** Rv 3:12 **10:4** Dn 8:26; 12:4,9 **10:6** Dn 12:7 **10:7** Rv 11:15; 16:17 **10:7** Rv 1:20; 17:5,7 **10:7** 2Kg 9:7; 17:23; Ezk 38:17; Am 3:7; Zch 1:6; 1Pt 2:10-12 **10:9** Ps 119:103; Jr 15:16; Ezk 2:8–3:3 **10:10** Nm 5:24; Ezk 3:1-3 **10:11** Dn 3:4,7; 4:1; 5:19; 7:14; Rv 5:9; 7:9; 11:9

10:2 The position of the angel is one **foot on the sea** and the other **on the land,** suggesting his representation of the Creator of both.

10:4 While John has been permitted to record the contents of his visions, he is not allowed to **write** down what the **seven thunders said.** Not everything can be revealed yet.

10:8-11 This draws largely from Ezekiel 2:8–3:3, in which Ezekiel is also called to eat a scroll with similar results. John’s message is **bitter** because it is about judgment.

THE TWO WITNESSES

11 Then I was given a measuring reed † like a rod, † with these words: “Go † and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count those who worship there. 2 But exclude the courtyard outside the temple. † Don’t measure it, because it is given to the nations, † † and they will trample the holy city † for forty-two months. † 3 I will grant † my two witnesses authority to prophesy for 1,260 days, dressed in sackcloth.” † 4 These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before the Lord † of the earth. † 5 If anyone wants to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and consumes their enemies; † if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. 6 They have authority to close up the sky so that it does not rain during the days of their prophecy. † They also have power over the waters to turn them into blood † and to strike the earth with every plague whenever they want. †

THE WITNESSES MARTYRED

7 When they finish their testimony, the beast † that comes up out of the abyss † will make war on them, conquer them, and kill them. 8 Their dead bodies † † will lie in the main street † of the great city, † which figuratively † is called Sodom † and Egypt, † where also their Lord was crucified. 9 And some of † the peoples, tribes, languages, and nations † will view their bodies for three and

a half days and not permit their bodies to be put into a tomb. † 10 Those who live on the earth will gloat † over them and celebrate and send gifts to one another because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

THE WITNESSES RESURRECTED

11 But after three and a half days, the breath † of life † from God entered them, and they stood on their feet. Great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 Then they heard † a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." They went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies watched them. † 13 At that moment a violent earthquake took place, † a tenth of the city fell, and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake. The survivors were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe † has passed. Take note: The third woe is coming soon!

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET

15 The seventh angel blew his trumpet, † and there were loud voices in heaven saying,

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord
and of his Christ,
and he will reign forever and ever. †

16 The twenty-four elders, who were seated before God on their thrones, fell facedown and worshiped God, 17 saying,

We give you thanks, Lord God, the Almighty, who is and who was, † †
because you have taken your great power
and have begun to reign. †

18 The nations were angry, †
but your wrath has come.
The time has come
for the dead to be judged
and to give the reward
to your servants the prophets, †

to the saints, and to those who fear your name, both small and great, †
and the time has come to destroy
those who destroy the earth.

19 Then the temple of God in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant †
appeared in his temple. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of
thunder, † an earthquake, † and severe hail.

11:1 Other mss add *and the angel stood up* **11:1** Lit *"Arise* **11:2** Or *Gentiles* **11:3** Or *I will give to* **11:4** Other mss read *God* **11:8** Or *Their corpse* **11:8** Or *lie on the broad street* **11:8** Or *spiritually* **11:9** Lit *And from* **11:11** Or *spirit* **11:12** Other mss read *Then I heard* **11:17** Other mss add *and who is to come* **11:19** Other mss read *ark of the covenant of the Lord* **11:19** Other mss omit *an earthquake*
11:1 Ezk 40:3,5; 42:15-19; Rv 21:15 **11:2** Ezk 40:17,20; 42:14 **11:2** Lk 21:24 **11:2** Rv 21:1 **11:2** Dn 7:25; 12:7,11; Rv 12:6,14; 13:5 **11:3** Gn 37:34; 2Sm 3:31; 1Kg 20:31-32; 21:25-29; 2Kg 19:1-2; 1Ch 21:16; Is 3:24; 20:2; Jr 6:26 **11:4** Zch 4:3,11-14 **11:5** 2Kg 1:10-12; Jr 5:14; Rv 9:17 **11:6** Gn 8:2; Dt 11:17; 1Kg 8:35; 17:1; 2Ch 6:26; 7:13; Lk 4:25 **11:6** Ex 4:9; 7:17-21; Rv 16:4 **11:6** Ex 5:3; 9:15; Jr 21:6; Ezk 28:23; Zch 14:12,15 **11:7** Dn 7:11; Rv 13:1-18; 17:8 **11:7** Ps 140:10; Lk 8:31; Rm 10:7; Rv 9:1,11; 17:8; 20:1-3 **11:8** Is 66:24 **11:8** Rv 16:19; 17:18; 18:10,16-21,24 **11:8** Is 1:9,10; 3:9; Jr 23:14; Ezk 16:46,49 **11:8** Ezk 23:3,8,19,27 **11:9** Rv 5:9; 7:9; 10:11 **11:9** Lv 26:30; 2Sm 4:12; Is 66:24 **11:10** Ps 25:2; 94:3; Pr 24:17; Ob 12-13 **11:11** Gn 2:7; 6:17; 7:15,22; Ezk 37:5 **11:12** 2Kg 2:1; Mk 16:19; Lk 24:51; Ac 1:9-10 **11:13** Is 29:6; Ezk 38:19 **11:14** Rv 8:13; 9:12 **11:15** Is 27:13 **11:15** 2Sm 7:16; Is 37:16; Dn 7:14,18; Lk 1:32-33 **11:17** Rv 1:4,8; 4:8; 16:5 **11:17** Lk 1:33; 1Co 15:25; Rv 19:6 **11:18** Ps 2:1 **11:18** Rv 10:7 **11:18** 2Kg 23:2; Ps 115:13; Rv 19:5 **11:19** Rv 4:5; 8:5

11:1 In biblical times, **a reed** was used as a measuring rod. Like Ezekiel, John sees a vision of the temple (Ezk 8:1–11:25) and is instructed to **measure** it.

11:4 This imagery is drawn from Zechariah 4:2–3, in which the prophet saw **two lampstands** and **two olive trees** which here represent two who **stand before the Lord.** The identity of these two is debated, but in Zechariah they are the two anointed to serve (Zch 4:14): the Davidic descendent Zerubbabel and the priest Joshua. These two figures are probably meant to symbolize the kingship and priesthood themes of the NT.

11:6 The powers mentioned here recall Elijah, who called down drought (1Kg 17:1), and Moses, who turned the waters of Egypt to blood (Ex 17:14-25). The Messiah was expected to be like both of these figures (Dt 18:15-18; Mal 4:5).

11:8-9 The great city refers to the home of the ungodly, in contrast to the holy city (11:2). It **figuratively is called Sodom and Egypt**—a city of great wickedness (Gn 19:24) and the place of Israel's oppressive slavery (Ex 3:7–9). In the ancient mind, refusing to bury the dead was one of the greatest cruelties.

11:11 God breathed **the breath of life** into humanity (Gn 2:7), and Ezekiel looks to the resurrection of Israel in the valley of dry bones when God will put breath in them (Ezk 37:6).

11:17-18 The certainty of a final judgment in which the people of God are vindicated, and the wicked are punished, is foundational to Christian belief. One implication of this judgment is to call Christians to faithfulness despite current persecution and suffering. See also "The Bible and Creation Care," *p. 24.*

THE WOMAN, THE CHILD, AND THE DRAGON

12 A great sign † appeared in heaven: † a woman clothed with the sun,
with the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head. †
2 She was pregnant and cried out in labor and agony as she was about to give
birth. † 3 Then another sign † appeared in heaven: There was a great fiery red
dragon † having seven heads and ten horns, † and on its heads were seven
crowns. †

SATAN AND DEMONS

One of the most elucidating passages regarding Satan and demons is Revelation 12:9, which speaks of war in heaven and the ejection of the fallen angels: “The great dragon was thrown out—the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world. He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him.” This text comprehensively informs us from a biblical perspective of, first, who Satan and his demons are, second, what he is currently doing, and third, it foreshadows their ultimate end. This article will summarize a biblical view of Satan and demons from that threefold structure.

WHO ARE THEY?

It must be clearly and categorically affirmed that Satan is a creature, as are all demons. He is an angelic creature, a spiritual being with great power like other angels, but he is not to be confused in any way with God himself. While Job 1:6 and 2:1 refer to Satan as coming into the heavenly throne room among “the sons of God,” the phrase indicates not filial generation but fashioned subservience. To speak of the sons of God is to speak of the “heavenly army” (1Kg 22:19), who are also referred to as “angels” (Gn 32:1-2; Ps 103:20) and “spirits” (1Kg 22:21-23). The qualitative distinction between an angelic “spirit” and “the Spirit of the Lord” is both moral and dynamic (1Kg 22:24-25).

These angels are, on the one hand, “servants” (Ps 103:21), and, on the other, powerful beings (Ps 82:1; Is 14:12; Ezk 28:14). Yet, in spite of being included in the “divine assembly” (Ps 82:1) or the “assembly of the holy ones” (Ps 89:5), and thus being able to appear in his presence, the distance between God and these “sons” is infinitely qualitative. They cannot even compare to the Lord (Ps 89:6), a fact that evokes great fearfulness within them. The Lord is “more awe-inspiring than all who surround him” (Ps 89:7), exceeding them in strength as well as moral virtue (Ps 89:8). The angels are limited, so any power they have is what God has given to them (Jb 1:12; 2:6-7). The angels, as invisible creatures, are created through Jesus Christ, and given their powers by him (Col 2:16). Of course, the use or the abuse of such grants of authority to intelligent, willing creatures are two different matters, and all authorities shall one day be corrected by Jesus Christ (1Co 15:24-28).

The angels in God’s heaven are included within the “everything” that he has created (Ps 89:11). They are among his works over which he rules. Satan, under the type of the king of Tyre, himself is described as having been “created” by God (Ezk 28:15), and the term used here is *bara’*, which is also used in Genesis 1 to describe God’s original creative activity. The “sons of God,” among whom appears Satan, are specifically instructed to ascribe glory to God and worship him (Ps 29:1-2). Their desire to obtain such glory for themselves is at the root of the fallen angels’ expulsion from heaven. It was such arrogant pretense

to worship that prompted the final break between Satan, this rebellious one among the created servile "sons of God," and Jesus Christ, the eternally generated and subsequently incarnate Son of God (Mt 3:8-11). In falling from heaven, Satan took many angels with him. They are known under the general terminology of "demons" (Gk *daimonioi*) and are subject to the power of Jesus Christ, who in turn granted such authority to his disciples (Lk 10:17-20).

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

The apostle John identified the apocalyptic "dragon" with the "ancient serpent" and "Satan" and "the devil" (Rv 12:9; 20:2). With a study of the occurrence of these names in Scripture alongside the apostles' overarching description of his activity as "the one who deceives the whole world," it becomes clear what Satan and his demons have been doing and continue to do.

The first appearance of this evil one in Scripture is in the garden of Eden, where he takes on the form of a serpent (Gn 3:1). His deceptive character is immediately displayed during his conversation with the woman. He first casts doubt on the word of God (Gn 3:1), then he outright denies it (Gn 3:4), and finally he does what he can to tempt humanity to rebel against God's word (Gn 3:5). While God allowed humanity to choose to succumb to Satan's deception, he promised that the seed of the woman would crush the head of the seed of the serpent (Gn 3:15). Based on NT allusions (Rm 16:20; Rv 12:9; 20:2), this promise has often been called the *protoevangelium*, the first gospel promise foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah, who would overcome the serpent and sin and death, thereby providing redemption to fallen humanity (e.g., Derek Kidner, *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* [IVP, 1967], 70-71).

The Hebrew noun, *satan*, indicates an adversary. The verb means "to accuse." In Job 1–2, Satan adopts the role of an adversary in the heavenly court to accuse Job of following God only because God had blessed Job richly. God allows Satan power, within limits, to harm Job, in order to vindicate God's claim about Job. In Zechariah 3:1-2, Satan appears again in the courtroom of God, this time in order to accuse the high priest, Joshua, of being unfit to represent the people of God.

However, in a messianic vein, the Lord calls on the Lord's own name to rebuke Satan and remove Joshua's guilt in order to give human priests a place in the heavenly court. In 1 Chronicles 21:1, Satan incited David to take a census and prompt God's anger, while 2 Samuel 24:1 says that God was behind the event. This demonstrates that although Satan and demons are responsible for their own evil, God may sovereignly use them for his own holy purposes (cp. 1Kg 22:19-25).

The Septuagint, the Greek version of the OT, often translates the Hebrew *satan* with *diabolos*, which means "slanderer, accuser." The NT, in almost equal numbers, either transliterates the Hebrew *satan* or uses the Greek *diabolos*, which has been translated into English as "devil." Sixteen other terms for Satan have also been discovered in the NT, including Beelzebul (e.g. Mt 12:24), Belial (2Co 6:15), and Apollyon (Rv 9:11). Among the terms used to identify Satan are those that imply some authority: "ruler of the power of air" (Eph 2:2), "dominion of darkness" (Lk 22:53), and "god of this age" (2Co 4:4) (D. P. Fuller, "Satan," in *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* [Eerdmans, 1988], vol. 4, 342).

Jesus Christ taught that Satan ruled this world with his demons through his deception of humanity, comparing Satan and the demons to a kingdom (Mt 12:25). The devil's falsehoods were even embraced by the Israelites. Jesus divided humanity into those who believe in him as the Word of God and those who reject him. The latter are children of "[their] father the devil" who is a "murderer" and the "father of lies," because they reject the truth of Jesus as the One who is from God the Father (Jn 8:42-47). The kingdom of God as ruled by Christ is directly opposed to the kingdom of this world as ruled by the devil.

The proper identification of each kingdom is a matter fraught with eternal importance. The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, an unforgiveable sin, is to ascribe the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ to the devil (Mt 12:24-32). Jesus, therefore, repeatedly manifested his affinity with God and his opposition to the devil through casting out demons and healing the blind among other things (e.g., Mt 12:22-23; Jn 10:19-21). Until a person is born again, he is ruled by the spirit of Satan and remains within the kingdom of the devil (Eph 2:2). Nevertheless, the devil and his kingdom of death and Hades cannot stand against the church's

assault as it proclaims to people the liberating gospel that Jesus is the Son of God who has brought God's kingdom (Mt 16:16-19).

Jesus Christ demonstrated his power over Satan and demons through his earthly ministry, but it was on the cross that he won the ultimate victory. At the cross, even while we were bound to death and ruled by Satan, Jesus paid the debt that was ours. God now delivers us into life through faith (Col 2:12-14). At the cross, Christ took away the power of the demonic authorities and disgraced them publicly, having won the victory over them on our behalf (Col 2:15; Eph 1:21-22), as permanently demonstrated in his resurrection (1Tm 3:16).

Although decisively defeated, Satan continues his work through deception, "prowling around like a roaring lion" (1Pt 5:8) and disguising himself as "an angel of light" (2Co 11:14). Even now, Satan is trying his hardest to keep people from hearing and receiving the Word of God (Mt 13:19). Moreover, Satan schemes to keep Christians from living victoriously in Christ, but God equips us to withstand demonic assaults (Eph 6:11-17) and we are called to resist the devil and stand firm in the faith (1Pt 5:9).

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THEM?

Although Satan and his demons have been decisively conquered by Jesus Christ, they will still do all they possibly can to persecute the church and to conquer the world, even into the last day. The book of Revelation prophesies a vivid series of apocalyptic battles that will result in the overthrow of the dragon and his imprisonment in the abyss for a thousand years (Rv 20:1-3). At the end of the millennium, Satan will be let loose for a short time to deceive the nations again, but he will be fully and completely defeated (Rv 20:7-9). His end is presented verbally as an accomplished fact: "The devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rv 20:10). The hurtful deception of humanity that began in Genesis with a denial of the word of God will end with the eternal punishment of that false demonic trinity led by Satan. And the One who has accomplished that victory over Satan and his demons is Jesus Christ.

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4 Its tail swept away a third of the stars in heaven and hurled them to the earth. † And the dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she did give birth it might devour her child. † 5 She gave birth to a Son, a male who is going to rule † all nations with an iron rod. † Her child was caught up to God and to his throne. 6 The woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared by God, † to be nourished there † for 1,260 days. †

THE DRAGON THROWN OUT OF HEAVEN

7 Then war broke out in heaven: Michael † and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels also fought, 8 but he could not prevail, † and there was no place for them in heaven any longer. † 9 So the great dragon was thrown out — the ancient serpent, † who is called the devil and Satan, † the one

who deceives the whole world. † He was thrown to earth, and his angels with him. † 10 Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say,

The salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ
have now come, †
because the accuser † of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them
before our God day and night,
has been thrown down.
11 They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb †
and by the word of their testimony; †
for they did not love their lives
to the point of death. †
12 Therefore rejoice, you heavens, and you who dwell in them! †
Woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has come down to you
with great fury,
because he knows his time is short.

THE WOMAN PERSECUTED

13 When the dragon saw that he had been thrown down to the earth, he persecuted † the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14 The woman was given two wings of a great eagle, † so that she could fly from the serpent's presence to her place in the wilderness, where she was nourished for a time, times, and half a time. † 15 From his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river flowing after the woman, to sweep her away with a flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon had spewed from his mouth. 17 So the dragon was furious with the woman and went off to wage war † against the rest of her offspring † † — those who keep the commands of God † and hold firmly to the testimony about Jesus. †

THE BEAST FROM THE SEA

18 The dragon † stood on the sand of the sea. †

12:1 Or *great symbolic display* ; see Rv 12:3 **12:3** Or *another symbolic display* **12:3** Or *diadems* **12:5** Or *shepherd* **12:6** Or *God, that they might feed her there* **12:13** Or *pursued* **12:17** Or *seed* **12:18** Or *he* ; other mss read *I* **12:18** Some translations put Rv 12:18 either in Rv 12:17 or Rv 13:1.
12:1 Mt 24:30 **12:1** Gn 37:9-10 **12:2** Ps 48:6; Is 13:8; Jr 22:23 **12:3** Rv 13:2,4,11; 20:2 **12:3** Dn 7:7,20,24; Rv 13:1; 17:3-18 **12:4** Dn 8:10; Rv 8:7,12 **12:4** Mt 2:16 **12:5** Ps 2:7-9; Rv 2:27; 19:15 **12:6** Ex 16:4; 1Kg 19:3-8; Hs 2:14 **12:6** Dt 1:31; 2:7; Dn 12:11; Rv 11:2-3; 12:14; 13:5 **12:7** Dn 10:13,21; 12:1; Jd 9 **12:8** 1Sm 2:9; Ps 21:11; Jr 20:11 **12:8** Jb 2:1 **12:9** Gn 3:1 **12:9** Lk 10:18; Rm 16:20; Rv 2:9; 3:9; 20:2,7 **12:9** Rv 13:14; 20:3,8,10 **12:9** Mt 25:41; Lk 10:18; Jn 12:31 **12:10** Rv 11:17; 19:1 **12:10** Jb 1:6-12; 2:1-5; Zch 3:1; Rm 8:33-34 **12:11** 1Pt 1:19; Rv 5:9; 7:14 **12:11** Rv 6:9 **12:11** Lk 14:26; Jn 12:25; Heb 11:32-37; Rv 2:10 **12:12** Ps 96:11; Is 49:13 **12:14** Ex 19:4; Dt 32:10-11; Is 40:31 **12:14** Dn 7:25; 12:7; Rv 11:2; 13:5 **12:17** Rv 11:7; 13:7 **12:17** Gn 3:15 **12:17** 1Co 7:19 **12:17** Rv 1:2,9; 19:10; 20:4

12:1-6 Greek, Roman, and Egyptian mythologies contained stories about **a woman** giving birth to a god and a dragon opposing them. Thus, this picture would be familiar in its basic outline. This story, however, draws directly from the OT. Israel is represented by the woman who gives birth to the Messiah, while the devil seeks to destroy the Messiah.

12:1 Being **clothed with the sun** represents the woman's heavenly nature (1:16; 10:1). The **crown of twelve stars** represents the twelve tribes of Israel.

12:3 The imagery of the **red dragon** recalls Daniel's vision of the fourth beast (Dn 7:7), and is often understood to represent the Roman Empire. The dragon's **ten horns** represent satanic power, since only God's enemies are associated with the number ten.

12:4 This image seems to parody a Greek myth about the dragon Python, who chased the goddess Leto, pregnant with Apollo. Four days after his birth, Apollo slayed the dragon.

12:5 Psalm 2:7-9 looks to the anointed Son (the Messiah) who will **rule** the **nations with an iron rod.**

12:7 See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531.*

12:9 Satan is introduced (though already mentioned in 2:9-10,24; 3:9), revealing the identity of **the great dragon.** The imagery of **the ancient serpent** comes from Genesis 3, in which the serpent **deceives** Eve.

12:10 The name Satan means "adversary," and he is depicted as a prosecuting attorney in several OT scenes (e.g., Jb 1:6-12). He is **the accuser** of believers.

12:11 Victory over the accuser is achieved since Satan can no longer accuse those who have been washed clean **by the blood of the Lamb** (7:14). **The word of their testimony** confirms that they belong to the Lamb, Jesus Christ. See "Speaking to a Non-Christian about Jesus," *p. XXXV.*

12:14 The woman's escape to **the wilderness** recalls Israel's exodus from Egypt on eagles' wings (Ex 19:4). **Time, times, and half a time** is a phrase taken from Daniel 12:7. It is an unspecified period.

12:17 This verse shows that **the woman** represents Israel, since her other children (in addition to the Messiah) are **those who** believe in the Messiah, **Jesus.**

13 And I saw a beast coming up out of the sea. † It had ten horns and seven heads. On its horns were ten crowns, † † and on its heads were blasphemous names. † † 2 The beast I saw was like a leopard, its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. † The dragon gave the beast his

power, his throne, and great authority. 3 One of its heads appeared to be fatally wounded, but its fatal wound was healed.

The whole earth was amazed and followed the beast. † 4 They worshiped the dragon † because he gave authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast? † Who is able to wage war against it? ”

5 The beast was given a mouth to utter boasts and blasphemies. † It was allowed to exercise authority † † for forty-two months. † 6 It began to speak † blasphemies against God: to blaspheme his name and his dwelling — those who dwell in heaven. 7 And it was permitted to wage war against the saints and to conquer them. † It was also given authority † over every tribe, people, language, and nation. † 8 All those who live on the earth will worship it, everyone whose name was not written from the foundation of the world in the book † of life † of the Lamb who was slaughtered. † †

9 If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen. †

10 If anyone is to be taken captive, into captivity he goes.
If anyone is to be killed † with a sword, with a sword he will be killed. †

This calls for endurance † and faithfulness from the saints. †

THE BEAST FROM THE EARTH

11 Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; it had two horns like a lamb, † † but it spoke like a dragon. 12 It exercises all the authority of the first beast on its behalf and compels the earth and those who live on it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 It also performs great signs, † even causing fire to come down from heaven to earth in front of people. † 14 It deceives those who live on the earth † because of the signs that it is permitted to perform in the presence of the beast, † telling those who live on the earth to make an image † of the beast who was wounded by the sword and yet lived. 15 It was permitted to give breath † to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast could both speak and cause whoever would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. † 16 And it makes everyone — small and great, rich and

poor, free and slave — to receive a mark on his right hand or on his forehead, †
17 so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark: the beast's name or the
number of its name.
18 This calls for wisdom: † † Let the one who has understanding calculate †
the number of the beast, because it is the number of a person. Its number is
666. †

13:1 Or *diadems* **13:1** Other mss read *heads was a blasphemous name* **13:5** Other mss read *to wage war* **13:5** Or *to rule* **13:6** Or *He opened his mouth in* **13:8** Or *scroll* **13:8** Or *written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slaughtered from the foundation of the world* **13:10** Other mss read *anyone kills* **13:10** Or *Here is the perseverance* **13:11** Or *ram* **13:14** Or *a statue,* or *a likeness* **13:15** Or *a spirit,* or *life* **13:18** Or *Here is wisdom* **13:18** Or *count,* or *figure out* **13:18** Other Gk mss read *616*
13:1 Dn 7:3 **13:1** Rv 12:3 **13:1** Rv 17:3 **13:2** Dn 7:4-6 **13:3** Rv 17:8 **13:4** Rv 12:3 **13:4** Ex 15:11; Is 46:5 **13:5** Dn 7:8,11,20 **13:5** Rv 11:2 **13:7** Rv 12:17 **13:7** Jr 27:6; Dn 7:6,14; Lk 4:6; Jn 19:11 **13:7** Rv 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 14:6 **13:8** Ex 32:32-33; Ps 69:28; Php 4:3; Rv 3:5; 17:8; 20:12,15; 21:27 **13:8** 1Pt 1:19-20; Rv 5:6,12; 7:14 **13:9** Mt 11:15; Rv 2:7,11,17,19; 3:6,13,22 **13:10** Jr 15:2; 43:11 **13:10** Rv 14:12 **13:11** Dn 8:3 **13:13** Dt 13:1-3; Mk 13:22; 2Th 2:9-11 **13:13** 1Kg 18:38; 2Kg 1:10; Lk 9:54 **13:14** Rv 12:9 **13:14** 2Th 2:9-12; Rv 19:20 **13:15** Dn 3:5-6; Rv 20:4 **13:16** Rv 14:1,9,11; 16:2; 19:20; 20:4 **13:18** Rv 17:9

13:1-3 The description of this **beast** draws from the four beasts described in Daniel 7:3-8. Its **blasphemous names** would have evoked the image of the Roman Empire for John's readers, since Roman emperors such as Domitian demanded to be called "Lord and God." Its **seven heads** represent rulers of the beast's kingdom. The head with the **fatal wound** that had **healed** parodies the Lamb (5:6). Also, many at that time expected Nero, who had died earlier, to return. In fact, several imposters arose claiming to be Nero.

13:5-8 The beast is described in terms that point to the complete **authority** and false **worship** of the Roman Empire.

13:11-12 If the first beast refers to Roman power (13:5-8), this second **beast** represents the imperial cult that called for the worship of the emperor. It **compels** all people **to worship the first beast.**

13:14-15 The **image of the beast** recalls Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship an image he established in Babylon (Dn 3:1-7). As with Nebuchadnezzar's image, **whoever would not worship the image of the beast** would **be killed.**

13:16-17 A **mark** commonly indicated ownership of a slave or devotion to a religion. Participation in the imperial cult was required in order to do business in various parts of Asia Minor.

13:18 Various ideas have been suggested for the meaning of **666**, but it is difficult to be certain. The number could be a parody of the use of seven in this book for the things of God, or it could allude to the common first-century practice of calculating numeric values for words or names (*gematria*). In the latter case, the number could refer to Nero.

THE LAMB AND THE 144,000

14 Then I looked, and there was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion, †
and with him were 144,000 who had his name and his Father's name
written on their foreheads. † 2 I heard a sound † from heaven like the sound of

cascading waters † and like the rumbling of loud thunder. The sound I heard was like harpists playing on their harps. † 3 They sang † a new song † before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders, † but no one could learn the song except the 144,000 who had been redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who have not defiled themselves with women, since they remained virgins. † These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were redeemed † from humanity as the firstfruits † for God and the Lamb. 5 No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless. †

THE PROCLAMATION OF THREE ANGELS

6 Then I saw another angel † flying high overhead, † with the eternal gospel to announce to the inhabitants of the earth — to every nation, tribe, language, and people. † 7 He spoke with a loud voice: † "Fear God † and give him glory, † because the hour of his judgment has come. † Worship the one who made heaven and earth, † the sea and the springs of water."

8 And another, a second angel, followed, saying, "It has fallen, Babylon the Great † has fallen. † She made all the nations drink the wine of her sexual immorality, † which brings wrath." †

9 And another, a third angel, followed them and spoke with a loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he will also drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured full strength into the cup of his anger. † He will be tormented with fire and sulfur † in the sight of the holy angels and in the sight of the Lamb, 11 and the smoke of their torment will go up forever and ever. † There is no rest † † day or night for those who worship the beast and its image, or anyone who receives the mark † of its name. 12 This calls for endurance from the saints, † who keep God's commands and their faith in Jesus." †

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." †

"Yes," says the Spirit, "so they will rest from their labors, since their works follow them."

REAPING THE EARTH'S HARVEST

REAPING THE EARTH'S HARVEST

14 Then I looked, and there was a white cloud, and one like the Son of Man † †
was seated on the cloud, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in
his hand. 15 Another angel came out of the temple, crying out in a loud voice to
the one who was seated on the cloud, "Use your sickle and reap, for the time to
reap has come, since the harvest of the earth is ripe." † 16 So the one seated on
the cloud swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth was harvested.
17 Then another angel who also had a sharp sickle came out of the temple in
heaven. 18 Yet another angel, who had authority over fire, came from the altar,
and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Use your
sharp sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from the vineyard of the earth,
because its grapes have ripened." 19 So the angel swung his sickle at the earth
and gathered the grapes from the vineyard of the earth, and he threw them into
the great winepress of God's wrath. † 20 Then the press was trampled outside
the city, and blood flowed out of the press up to the horses' bridles for about 180
miles. † †

14:2 Or *voice* **14:3** Other mss add *as it were* **14:4** Other mss add *by Jesus* **14:8** Other mss omit the second *has fallen* **14:8** Or *wine of her passionate immorality* **14:11** Or *They have no rest* **14:12** Or *and the faith of Jesus*, or *and faithfulness to Jesus* **14:14** Or *like a son of man* **14:20** Lit *1,600 stadia*
14:1 Is 18:7; 24:23; Mc 4:7 **14:1** Dt 6:8; Ezk 9:4; Rv 3:12; 7:3; 9:4; 13:16; 22:4 **14:2** Ezk 1:24; 43:2; Rv 1:15; 19:6 **14:2** Rv 5:8 **14:3** Rv 5:9 **14:3** Rv 4:4,6 **14:4** 1Sm 21:4-5 **14:4** Dt 21:17; Jr 2:3; Jms 1:18 **14:5** Zph 3:13; Jn 1:47 **14:6** Rv 7:2; 8:3; 14:15,17-18; 18:1 **14:6** Rv 8:13 **14:6** Rv 5:9; 7:9; 11:9; 13:7 **14:7** Rv 1:10; 8:13; 10:3 **14:7** Gn 22:12; 42:18; Ps 66:16; Ec 5:7; 12:13; Ac 13:16,26; 1Pt 2:17 **14:7** Jos 7:19; 1Sm 6:5; Jr 13:16; Lk 17:18; Rv 4:9; 16:9; 19:7 **14:7** Rv 18:10 **14:7** Ps 115:15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6 **14:8** Dn 4:30; Rv 16:19; 17:5; 18:2 **14:8** Is 21:9; Jr 51:7-8,49; Rv 17:2,4; 18:2-3 **14:10** Ps 75:8; Is 51:17; Jr 25:15-17; Rv 17:2,4; 18:2-3 **14:10** Lk 17:29; Rv 20:10; 21:8 **14:11** Is 1:31; 34:10; 66:24; Rv 19:3 **14:11** Ps 22:2; Is 23:12; 62:6; Jr 45:3; Lm 2:18 **14:11** Gn 4:15; Ex 12:13; Ezk 9:4,6; Rv 13:16; 16:2; 19:20 **14:12** Rv 13:10 **14:13** Rv 1:3; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14 **14:14** Dn 7:13; Lk 21:27; Rv 1:13 **14:15** Jl 3:13 **14:19** Rv 16:19; 19:15 **14:20** Is 63:1-6

14:1 Mount Zion is the temple mount. On the **144,000,** see the note on 7:4-8. These people have the **name** of the **Lamb** and **his Father's name** on **their foreheads**, in contrast to those who have the mark of the beast on their foreheads (13:16; 14:9).

14:2-3 See "A Biblical View of Music," *p. 727.*

14:4 According to Deuteronomy 23:9-10 and 1 Samuel 21:5, Israelite soldiers were instructed to maintain ritual purity before going into battle, which included abstaining from sex. Those who **follow the Lamb** are pure for spiritual holy war. It does not mean that the followers of the Lamb are literally **virgins.**

14:8 Babylon was the capital of the Persian Empire that overthrew Jerusalem in 586 BC. The city symbolizes rebellion against God at the level of political institutions, i.e., the empire. Here the symbol points to Rome (cp. 1Pt 5:13). The fall of **Babylon the Great** occurs in chapter 18, making this statement a forecast of its demise.

14:14-16 The **one like the Son of Man** clearly refers to Jesus (1:13; Dn 7:13). The **harvest** imagery is used in the OT as a symbol for judgment (Jl 3:13; Jr 51:33).

PREPARATION FOR THE BOWL JUDGMENTS

15 Then I saw another great and awe-inspiring sign † in heaven: † seven
angels with the seven last plagues; for with them God's wrath will be
completed. † 2 I also saw something like a sea of glass † mixed with fire, and
those who had won the victory over the beast, its image, † and the number of its
name, were standing on the sea of glass with harps from God. † 3 They sang the
song of God's servant Moses † and the song of the Lamb:

Great and awe-inspiring are your works,
Lord God, the Almighty;
just and true † are your ways, King of the nations. † †
4 Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name?
For you alone are holy. †
All the nations will come
and worship before you †
because your righteous acts
have been revealed.

5 After this I looked, and the heavenly temple — the tabernacle of testimony †
— was opened. † 6 Out of the temple came the seven angels with the seven
plagues, dressed in pure, bright linen, with golden sashes wrapped around their
chests. 7 One of the four living creatures gave the seven angels seven golden
bowls filled with the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. † 8 Then the
temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power, † and
no one could enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were
completed.

15:1 Or *and awesome symbolic display* **15:2** Other mss add *his mark* **15:3** Other mss read *ages*
15:1 Mt 16:1; 24:30; Lk 21:11; Ac 2:19; Rv 12:1,3; 13:13 **15:1** Jn 19:30; Rv 10:7; 16:17; 17:17 **15:2** Rv 4:6 **15:2** Rv 5:8; 14:2 **15:3** Ex 15:1; Dt 31:22 **15:3** Rv 16:7; 19:2 **15:3** Dn 2:37; Lk 22:25; 1Tm 6:15; Rv 17:14; 19:16 **15:4** Is 8:13 **15:4** Ps 86:9; 113:4; Is 52:10; 61:11; Jr 3:17; 33:9 **15:5** Ex 38:21; Nm 17:7; 18:2 **15:5** Rv 11:19 **15:7** Ex 15:18; Ps 10:16; 45:6; 48:14; Gl 1:5; Eph 3:21; Php 4:20; 1Tm 1:17; 2Tm 4:18; Heb 1:8; 13:21; 1Pt 4:11; Rv 1:6,18; 4:9-10; 5:13; 7:12; 10:6; 11:15 **15:8** Ex 19:18; 20:18; Is 4:5; 6:4

15:3 Two songs of **Moses** are known in the OT (Ex 15:1-18; Dt 32:1-43). This song is described as **the song of God's servant Moses and the song of the Lamb**, indicating the unity of old and new covenants.

15:6 The **seven angels** are described as wearing priestly attire in the heavenly **temple.**

15:8 In the OT, the tabernacle and **the temple** were filled with **the glory of God** in the form of a cloud, such that people could not enter (Ex 40:34-35; 1Kg 8:10-11).

THE FIRST BOWL

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, † "Go and pour out the seven † bowls † of God's wrath on the earth." 2 The first went and poured out his bowl on the earth, and severely painful sores † broke out on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped its image.

THE SECOND BOWL

3 The second † poured out his bowl into the sea. It turned to blood like that of a dead person, and all life in the sea died. †

THE THIRD BOWL

4 The third † poured out his bowl into the rivers and the springs of water, and they became blood. † 5 I heard the angel of the waters say,

You are just,
the Holy One, † who is and who was, †
because you have passed judgment on these things.
6 Because they poured out the blood of the saints and the prophets, †
you have given them blood to drink;
they deserve it! †

7 I heard the altar say,

Yes, Lord God, the Almighty,
true and just are your judgments. †

THE FOURTH BOWL

8 The fourth † poured out his bowl on the sun. It was allowed to scorch people
with fire, 9 and people were scorched by the intense heat. So they blasphemed
the name of God, † who has the power † over these plagues, and they did not
repent and give him glory. †

THE FIFTH BOWL

10 The fifth † poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, † and its kingdom
was plunged into darkness. † People † gnawed their tongues because of their
pain 11 and blasphemed the God of heaven † because of their pains and their
sores, but they did not repent of their works.

THE SIXTH BOWL

12 The sixth † poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, † and its water
was dried up † to prepare the way for the kings from the east. 13 Then I saw
three unclean spirits like frogs † coming from the dragon's mouth, † from the
beast's mouth, † and from the mouth of the false prophet. † 14 For they are
demonic spirits performing signs, † who travel to the kings of the whole world
to assemble them † for the battle on the great day of God, the Almighty. †
15 "Look, I am coming like a thief. Blessed † is the one who is alert and
remains clothed † † so that he may not go around naked and people see his
shame." † 16 So they assembled the kings at the place called in Hebrew,
Armageddon. † †

THE SEVENTH BOWL

17 Then the seventh † poured out his bowl into the air, † and a loud voice came
out of the temple † † from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 There were
flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder. And a severe earthquake
occurred like no other since people have been on the earth, so great was the
quake. † 19 The great city † split into three parts, and the cities of the nations †
fell. Babylon the Great was remembered in God's presence; he gave her the cup
filled with the wine of his fierce anger. † 20 Every island fled, and the
mountains disappeared. † 21 Enormous hailstones, each weighing about a

hundred pounds, † fell from the sky on people, and they blasphemed God † for the plague of hail because that plague was extremely severe. †

16:1 Other mss omit *seven* **16:3** Other mss add *angel* **16:4** Other mss add *angel* **16:8** Other mss add *angel* **16:9** Or *authority* **16:10** Other mss add *angel* **16:10** Lit *They* **16:12** Other mss add *angel* **16:15** Or *and guards his clothes* **16:16** Some mss read *Armagedon* ; other mss read *Harmegedon* ; other mss read *Mageddon* ; other mss read *Magedon* **16:17** Other mss add *angel* **16:17** Or *bowl on the air* **16:17** Other mss add *of heaven* **16:19** Or *the Gentile cities* **16:21** Lit *about a talent* ; talents varied in weight upwards from 75 pounds

16:1 Rv 8:2,6; 15:1,6-8 **16:1** Rv 17:1; 21:9 **16:2** Ex 9:9-11; Dt 28:27,35; Jb 2:7; Is 1:6; Jr 30:12-17 **16:3** Rv 8:8-9 **16:4** Ex 7:17-21 **16:5** Is 5:19; 41:20; 45:11 **16:5** Rv 11:17 **16:6** 2Kg 9:7; Mt 23:30; Lk 11:50; Rv 17:6; 18:24 **16:6** Is 49:26 **16:7** Ps 19:9; Rv 19:2 **16:9** Lv 24:11; Is 52:5; Rm 2:24; 1Tm 6:1; Rv 13:6 **16:9** Rv 9:20-21 **16:10** Rv 2:13; 13:2 **16:10** Ex 10:21 **16:11** Rv 13:6 **16:12** Gn 2:14; 15:18; Dt 11:24; 1Kg 4:21; Rv 9:14 **16:12** Ex 14:21-22,29; 15:19; Jos 2:10; 4:23; 5:1; 2Kg 2:8; Neh 9:11; Is 51:10 **16:13** Ex 8:2-14; Lv 11:9-12,41-47 **16:13** Rv 12:9 **16:13** Rv 13:1 **16:13** Rv 13:11-17 **16:14** 2Th 2:9-10 **16:14** 1Kg 22:20-23; Mt 24:24; 2Th 2:10 **16:14** Ezk 38–39; Jl 2:11; 3:2; Zch 14:2; Rv 19:11-21 **16:15** Rv 1:3; 14:13; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7,14 **16:15** Lk 12:35-40; 1Th 5:2,6-8 **16:15** Rv 3:18 **16:16** Jdg 5:19; 2Kg 9:27; Ezk 38:8 **16:17** Is 66:6 **16:18** Ex 19:16-19; Rv 4:5; 8:5; 11:19 **16:19** Rv 18:10,16,18-19,21 **16:19** Rv 14:19; 19:15 **16:20** Ezk 38:20; Rv 6:14 **16:21** Rv 16:9,11 **16:21** Jos 10:11; Ezk 38:22

16:2 Like the trumpet plagues, the bowl plagues borrow imagery from the plagues inflicted on Egypt during the exodus. **Painful sores** recalls the sixth Egyptian plague (Ex 9:8-11).

16:3-4 The **sea** turning **to blood** recalls the first Egyptian plague (Ex 7:17-21).

16:10-11 Darkness recalls the ninth Egyptian plague (Ex 10:21-23). It was also an eschatological image used by Jesus (Mt 25:30).

16:12 For John's readers, **the kings from the east** would naturally refer to the Parthians, the greatly feared people who lived just beyond the **Euphrates.**

16:13 Frogs recall the second Egyptian plague, which the Egyptian magicians were able to replicate through occult practices (Ex 8:1-14). The **three unclean spirits** are a false trinity **coming from** the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and **the false prophet.**

16:15 On the **thief** imagery, see the note on 3:3.

16:16 The gathering of the nations against God is a common OT theme (see Ps 2). The referent of **Armageddon** is debated, but most likely it refers to the valley of Megiddo, a key crossing point in northern Israel and the location of several significant OT battles.

16:21 Hailstones recall the seventh Egyptian plague (Ex 9:22-26).

THE WOMAN AND THE SCARLET BEAST

17 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls † came and spoke with me: "Come, I will show you the judgment of the notorious prostitute † † who is seated on many † waters. † 2 The kings of the earth † committed sexual immorality with her, and those who live on the earth became

drunk on the wine of her sexual immorality.” † 3 Then he carried me away in
the Spirit † † to a wilderness.
I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered † with blasphemous
names and had seven heads and ten horns. † 4 The woman was dressed in
purple and scarlet, adorned with gold, jewels, and pearls. † She had a golden
cup in her hand filled with everything detestable † and with the impurities of
her † prostitution. 5 On her forehead was written a name, a mystery: †
Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and of the Detestable Things of the
Earth. 6 Then I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and
with the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. † When I saw her, I was greatly
astonished.

THE MEANING OF THE WOMAN AND OF THE BEAST

7 Then the angel said to me, “Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the
mystery of the woman and of the beast, with the seven heads and the ten horns,
that carries her. 8 The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come
up from the abyss † and go to destruction. † Those who live on the earth whose
names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the
world † will be astonished when they see the beast that was, and is not, and is to
come. † 9 This calls for a mind that has wisdom. † †
“The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated. They are
also seven kings: 10 Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and
when he comes, he must remain for only a little while. 11 The beast that was and
is not, is itself an eighth king, but it belongs to the seven and is going to
destruction. 12 The ten horns you saw are ten kings † who have not yet received
a kingdom, but they will receive authority as kings with the beast for one
hour. † 13 These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to
the beast. 14 These will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer
them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings. † Those with him are
called, chosen, and faithful.” †
15 He also said to me, “The waters you saw, † where the prostitute was seated,
are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages. † 16 The ten horns you saw,

and the beast, will hate the prostitute. † They will make her desolate and naked,
devour her flesh, and burn her up with fire. † 17 For God has put it into their
hearts to carry out his plan by having one purpose † and to give their
kingdom † to the beast until the words of God are fulfilled. † 18 And the
woman you saw is the great city that has royal power over the kings of the
earth."

17:1 Traditionally translated *the great whore* **17:1** Or *by many* **17:3** Or *in spirit* **17:3** Or *was filled* **17:4** Other mss read *earth's* **17:9** Or *Here is the mind of wisdom* **17:17** Or *sovereignty*
17:1 Rv 15:7; 16:1; 21:9 **17:1** Rv 19:2 **17:1** Jr 51:13; Rv 17:15 **17:2** Ps 2:2; 76:12; Is 24:21; Ezk 27:33; Rv 1:5; 6:15; 18:9; 19:19; 21:24 **17:2** Is 23:16-17; Nah 3:4; Rv 14:8; 18:3 **17:3** Ezk 8:3; 11:24; Lk 4:1,14; Rv 1:10; 4:2; 21:10 **17:3** Rv 12:3,6; 13:1 **17:4** Ezk 28:13; Rv 18:16 **17:4** Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14; Lk 16:15; Rv 21:27 **17:5** Rv 14:1 **17:6** Dt 32:42; Is 49:26; 63:6; Ezk 39:19 **17:8** Ps 140:10; Lk 8:31; Rm 10:7; Rv 9:1,11; 11:7; 20:1-3 **17:8** Mt 7:13; Jn 17:12; Rm 9:22; Php 3:19; 2Th 2:3; 2Pt 3:7; Rv 1:18; 2:8 **17:8** Ps 69:28; Is 4:3; Mt 25:34; Eph 1:4; Php 4:3; 1Pt 1:20; Rv 3:5; 13:8; 20:12,15; 21:27 **17:8** Ps 48:5; Rv 13:3,12,14 **17:9** Rv 13:18 **17:12** Dn 7:24; Rv 13:1 **17:12** Rv 18:10,17,19 **17:14** Dt 10:17; Ps 136:2-3; Dn 2:47; 1Tm 6:15; Rv 1:5; 19:11-21 **17:14** Rv 12:11; 13:8 **17:15** Jr 51:13 **17:15** Is 17:12; Jr 51:58; Dn 5:19; Hab 2:8; Rv 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 13:7; 14:6 **17:16** 2Sm 13:15-20; Ezk 23:22-35 **17:16** Lv 20:14; 21:9 **17:17** Gn 50:20 **17:17** Jr 51:12; Rv 10:7

17:1-6 The OT used the image of a **prostitute** for powerful, rich pagan nations that oppressed people (Is 23:17-18; Nah 3:4). John's readers would understand this as Rome, though it can apply to other oppressive regimes throughout history.

17:4 Being **dressed in** bright, expensive clothes and precious **jewels** is a standard expectation of a prostitute in the ancient world.

17:5 Babylon was the capital of the Persian Empire, which captured Jerusalem in 586 BC. It became a symbol of institutional rebellion against God, and here the word is understood to point to Rome (14:8; cp. 1Pt 5:13).

17:8 That **the beast . . . was, and is not, and is about to come** parodies the eternal God who is and was and is to come (1:4,8).

17:9 It was well known that Rome had been founded on **seven** hills **(mountains)**. The identity of the **seven kings** is problematic, and it may be symbolic. The number seven is frequently used symbolically in the book.

17:10 See the note on 17:8.

17:18 In John's day, **the great city** would clearly refer to Rome.

THE FALL OF BABYLON THE GREAT

18 After this I saw another angel with great authority coming down from
heaven, † and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2 He called
out in a mighty voice:

It has fallen, †

Babylon the Great has fallen! †
She has become a home for demons,
a haunt for every unclean spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
and a haunt † for every unclean and despicable beast. † †
3 For all the nations have drunk †
the wine of her sexual immorality,
which brings wrath. †
The kings of the earth
have committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth
have grown wealthy from her sensuality and excess. †

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven:

Come out of her, my people,
so that you will not share in her sins †
or receive any of her plagues.
5 For her sins are piled up † to heaven, †
and God has remembered her crimes. †
6 Pay her back the way she also paid, †
and double it according to her works. †
In the cup in which she mixed, †
mix a double portion for her.
7 As much as she glorified herself and indulged her sensual and excessive ways,
give her that much torment and grief.
For she says in her heart,
“I sit as a queen;
I am not a widow,
and I will never see grief.” †
8 For this reason her plagues will come in just one day — death and grief
and famine. †
She will be burned up with fire, †
because the Lord God who judges † her is mighty. †

THE WORLD MOURNS BABYLON'S FALL

9 The kings of the earth who have committed sexual immorality and shared her
sensual and excessive ways will weep and mourn over her when they see the
smoke from her burning. 10 They will stand far off in fear of her torment, †
saying,

Woe, woe, the great city, †
Babylon, the mighty city!
For in a single hour
your judgment has come.

11 The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, because no one
buys their cargo any longer — 12 cargo of gold, silver, jewels, and pearls; fine
linen, purple, silk, and scarlet; all kinds of fragrant wood products; objects of
ivory; objects of expensive wood, brass, † iron, and marble; 13 cinnamon,
spice, † incense, myrrh, † and frankincense; wine, olive oil, fine flour, and
grain; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and slaves — human lives. †

14 The fruit you craved has left you.
All your splendid and glamorous things are gone; they will never
find them again.

15 The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand far off in
fear of her torment, weeping and mourning, 16 saying,

Woe, woe, the great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, adorned with gold, jewels, and pearls; †
17 for in a single hour such fabulous wealth was destroyed!

And every shipmaster, seafarer, the sailors, and all who do business by sea,
stood far off 18 as they watched the smoke from her burning and kept crying out:
"Who was like the great city?" † 19 They threw dust on their heads and kept
crying out, weeping, and mourning, †

Woe, woe, the great city, †

where all those who have ships on the sea became rich from her wealth;
for in a single hour she was destroyed.
20 Rejoice over her, heaven, and you saints, apostles, and prophets, †
because God has pronounced on her the judgment † she passed on you!

THE FINALITY OF BABYLON'S FALL

21 Then a mighty angel † picked up a stone like a large millstone and threw it into the sea, saying,

In this way, Babylon the great city
will be thrown down violently †
and never be found again. †
22 The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters
will never be heard in you again; †
no craftsman of any trade
will ever be found in you again;
the sound of a mill
will never be heard in you again;
23 the light of a lamp will never shine in you again;
and the voice of a groom and bride
will never be heard in you again. †
All this will happen
because your merchants
were the nobility of the earth,
because all the nations were deceived
by your sorcery.
24 In her was found the blood of prophets and saints, †
and of all those slaughtered on the earth. †

18:2 Other mss omit *It has fallen* **18:2** Or *prison* **18:2** Other mss omit the words *and a haunt for every unclean beast.* The words *and despicable* then refer to the *bird* of the previous line. **18:3** Some mss read *collapsed* ; other mss read *fallen* **18:5** Or *sins have reached up* **18:12** Or *bronze*, or *copper* **18:13** Other mss omit *spice* **18:13** Or *perfume*
18:1 Dn 4:13,23; Rv 10:1; 20:1 **18:2** Is 21:9; Dn 4:30; Rv 14:8; 16:19; 17:5 **18:2** Is 13:20-22; Mal 1:3 **18:3** Rv 14:8; 17:2 **18:3** Ezk 16:29 **18:4** Is 52:11; Jr 50:8; 51:6,9,45; 2Co 6:17 **18:5** Jr 51:9 **18:5** 2Sm 19:19; Neh 6:14; Ps 74:22; Is 64:9; Jr 14:10; 31:34; Hs 8:13 **18:6** Jr 50:29 **18:6** Ex 22:4,7,9; Is 40:2; Jr 16:18; 17:18 **18:6** Rv 14:8 **18:7** Is 47:7-8; Ezk 28:2-8; Zph 2:15 **18:8** Is 47:9 **18:8** Ps 21:9; 97:3; Is 33:12; 47:14; Rv

16:8; 17:16 **18:8** Ps 7:8; 58:11; 96:10 **18:8** Dt 10:17; Jos 4:24; Ps 24:8; Is 1:24 **18:10** Ezk 26:16-18 **18:10** Rv 11:8; 16:19; 17:18 **18:13** Gn 36:6; Nm 31:32-35; 1Ch 5:21; Ezk 27:12-22 **18:16** Rv 17:4 **18:18** Ex 15:11; Dt 33:29; 2Sm 7:23; Ezk 27:32; Rv 13:4 **18:19** Ezk 27:30 **18:19** Rv 18:10,16 **18:20** Rv 12:12 **18:20** Ps 48:11; 97:8 **18:21** Rv 5:2; 10:1 **18:21** Jr 51:59-64 **18:21** Rv 16:20; 18:11,14,22-23 **18:22** Is 24:8 **18:23** Jr 25:10 **18:24** Rv 16:6 **18:24** Rv 6:10; 16:6

18:3 Sexual immorality is here associated with wealth and excess, drawing a connection between luxury and sensuality (18:7,9). It was well known that many Caesars indulged in luxury and debauchery, for which Nero was especially notorious.

18:4-8 Though institutions of rebellion against God may seem stable and triumphant at certain times, judgment will come for those who flaunt God's ways. The current illusion of success must not tempt God's **people** to **share in her sins.**

18:13 Rome was the center of slave trafficking in the first century.

18:16-17 All of Rome's **wealth** will not help on the day judgment comes. So will it be for all who rise up against God, who trust in earthly security and treasure.

18:19-24 In many ways, Rome represented the height of human accomplishment by that point in history. Yet, like the tower of Babylon (Gn 11:1-9), it stood in opposition to God and was brought low. Human might and achievement is fleeting; it cannot thrive in opposition to God.

CELEBRATION IN HEAVEN

19 After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude † in heaven, saying,

Hallelujah! †
Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God, †
2 because his judgments are true † and righteous, †
because he has judged the notorious prostitute †
who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality; and he has avenged the
blood of his servants that was on her hands. †

3 A second time they said,

Hallelujah!
Her smoke ascends forever and ever! †

4 Then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, † who is seated on the throne, saying,

Amen! Hallelujah! †

5 A voice came from the throne, saying,

Praise our God,
all his servants, and the ones who fear him, both small and great! †

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, † and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying,

Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty, reigns! †
7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory, †
because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has prepared herself. †
8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure. †

For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints. †
9 Then he † said to me, † "Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast † of the Lamb!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true." †
10 Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! † I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers and sisters who hold firmly to the testimony of Jesus. † Worship God, because the testimony of Jesus is the spirit † of prophecy."

THE RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE

11 Then I saw heaven opened, † and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, † and he judges and makes war with justice. † 12 His eyes were like a fiery flame, † and many crowns † were on his head. † He had a name written that no one knows except himself. † 13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, † and his name is called the Word of God. † 14 The armies that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. 15 A sharp † sword † came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. † He will rule † them with an iron rod. † He will also trample the winepress of the

fierce anger of God, † the Almighty. 16 And he has a name written on his robe
and on his thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. †

THE BEAST AND ITS ARMIES DEFEATED

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice,
saying to all the birds flying high overhead, "Come, gather together for the great
supper of God, 18 so that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of military
commanders, the flesh of the mighty, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and
the flesh of everyone, both free and slave, small and great." †

19 Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies † gathered
together to wage war † against the rider on the horse and against his army.
20 But the beast was taken prisoner, and along with it the false prophet, who had
performed the signs in its presence. He deceived those who accepted the mark of
the beast and those who worshiped its image with these signs. † Both of them
were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. † 21 The rest were
killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all
the birds ate their fill of their flesh.

19:2 Valid; Jn 8:16; 19:35 **19:9** Probably an angel; Rv 17:1; 22:8-9 **19:10** Or *the Spirit* **19:12** Or *diadems* **19:15** Other mss add *double-edged* **19:15** Or *shepherd*

19:1 Rv 7:9 **19:1** Ps 104:35; 106:1,48; 146:10; 148:14; 150:1 **19:1** Jb 12:13; Dn 9:9; Rv 7:10 **19:2** Jn 8:16; 19:35; Rv 15:3; 16:7 **19:2** Rv 17:1 **19:2** Dt 32:43; 2Kg 9:7; Rv 6:10; 16:6; 17:6; 18:24 **19:3** Is 34:8-10; Rv 14:11 **19:4** Rv 4:8-10; 5:6-14; 7:11; 11:16 **19:4** Ps 106:48 **19:5** Dt 1:17; 2Ch 18:30; 34:30; Jb 3:19; Ps 115:13; Rv 11:18 **19:6** Ezk 1:24; 43:2; Rv 1:15; 14:2 **19:6** Ex 15:18; Ps 93:1; 96:10; 97:1; 99:1; 146:10; Is 24:23; Lk 1:33; 1Co 15:25; Rv 11:15,17 **19:7** Mt 5:12; Rm 1:21; 4:20 **19:7** Is 54:5-7; Hs 2:19; Mt 22:2-14; Eph 5:27,32; Rv 21:2 **19:8** Gn 41:42; Ezk 16:10,13; Mt 27:59; Lk 16:19; Rv 15:6; 19:14 **19:8** Eph 2:10 **19:9** Rv 17:1; 22:8-9 **19:9** Is 25:6-8; Lk 13:29 **19:9** Rv 21:5; 22:6 **19:10** Ac 10:25; Rv 22:9 **19:10** Rv 1:2,9; 12:17; 20:4 **19:11** Jn 1:51; Rv 4:1; 11:19; 15:5 **19:11** Rv 3:14 **19:11** Ps 9:8; 96:13; Rv 16:7; 19:2 **19:12** Rv 1:14; 2:18 **19:12** Rv 12:3; 13:1 **19:12** Rv 2:17; 3:12 **19:13** Is 63:1-6; Rv 14:14-20 **19:13** Jn 1:1-5; Heb 4:12 **19:15** Is 49:2; Heb 4:12; Rv 1:16; 2:12,16 **19:15** Is 11:4; 2Th 2:8; Rv 1:16; 2:12 **19:15** Ps 2:9; Rv 12:5 **19:15** Jr 25:15; Rv 14:8,10,19-20; 16:19; 18:3 **19:16** Dt 10:17; Dn 2:47; 1Tm 6:15; Rv 17:14 **19:18** Ezk 32:4; 39:17-20 **19:19** Rv 16:13-14; 17:2; 18:3,9 **19:19** Nm 27:3; Jdg 6:33; Is 13:4; Hs 1:11 **19:20** Rv 13:13-17 **19:20** Mt 5:22; Mk 9:43; Rv 20:10,14; 21:8

19:1-5 The people of God rejoice in the vindication of God's judgment because wickedness is finally brought to an end. **Hallelujah** is a Hebrew word found in the Psalms, meaning "praise the Lord."

19:3 The **smoke** that **ascends forever and ever** indicates the eternal nature of Babylon's judgment.

19:7-8 The purity of the bride **of the Lamb** stands in direct contrast to the immorality of the prostitute in chapter 18. Those who hoped in the prostitute mourned, while those who hope in the Lamb celebrate as the Lamb now receives his bride. The image of marriage commonly refers to God's relationship with his people (Is 49:18; Jr 2:2). This image is transfigured in the NT with Jesus as the groom and the church as his bride (Eph 5:23). See also "A Biblical View of Marriage," *p. 1449.*

19:10 Angelic beings throughout Scripture are careful not to receive **worship.** This makes Jesus's willingness to receive worship all the more significant (1:17; Jn 20:28-29). See "A Biblical View of Angels," *p. 1531*.

19:11-16 This is the final invasion, for which the other battles are precursors. The **KING OF KINGS** now appears to bring all to its proper conclusion.

19:11 A **white horse** represented victory in the ancient world.

19:13 The name **Word of God** recalls the personified Word in John 1:1,14.

19:15 Isaiah 11:4 depicts the Messiah killing the wicked with a scepter **from his mouth**, while Psalm 2:9 says that God's Son will break **the nations** with an **iron** scepter.

19:17-18 The great supper of God involves carnivorous birds that will **eat the flesh** of God's conquered enemies.

19:21 The rider's **sword** slays his enemies, resembling the slaughter of Gog's destruction, after which God invited carnivorous birds to eat their fill of riders and soldiers (Ezk 39:20).

SATAN BOUND

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven holding the key to the abyss † and a great chain † in his hand. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent who is the devil and Satan, † † and bound † him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the abyss, closed it, and put a seal on it † so that he would no longer deceive the nations † until the thousand years were completed. After that, he must be released for a short time.

THE SAINTS REIGN WITH CHRIST

4 Then I saw thrones, and people seated on them who were given authority to judge. † I also saw the souls of those † who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus † and because of the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and who had not accepted the mark on their foreheads or their hands. † They came to life † and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. † 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.

This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed † and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! The second death † has no power † over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years. †

SATANIC REBELLION CRUSHED

7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison
8 and will go out to deceive the nations † at the four corners of the earth, † Gog
and Magog, to gather them for battle. † Their number is like the sand of the
sea. † 9 They came up across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the
encampment of the saints, the beloved city. † Then fire came down from
heaven † and consumed them. † 10 The devil who deceived them was thrown
into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet are, † and
they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. †

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

11 Then I saw a great white throne and one seated on it. Earth and heaven fled
from his presence, and no place was found for them. † 12 I also saw the dead,
the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. †
Another book was opened, which is the book of life, † and the dead were judged
according to their works † by what was written in the books. 13 Then the sea
gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades † gave up the dead that
were in them; each one was judged according to their works. 14 Death and
Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. † This is the second death, the lake of
fire. † 15 And anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was
thrown into the lake of fire.

20:2 Other mss add *who deceives the whole world* **20:6** Or *authority* **20:9** Other mss add *from God* **20:14** Other mss omit *the lake of fire*

20:1 Ps 140:10; Lk 8:31; Rm 10:7; Rv 9:1,11; 11:7; 17:8 **20:1** Ps 107:10; 149:8; Jr 39:7; Ezk 7:23 **20:2** Rv 12:9 **20:2** Is 24:22 **20:3** Dn 6:17; Mt 27:66 **20:3** Rv 12:9 **20:4** Dn 7:22; Mt 19:28; 1Co 6:2-3; Rv 3:21; 6:9 **20:4** Rv 6:9 **20:4** Rv 1:2,9; 12:11,17; 19:10 **20:4** Rv 7:3; 9:4; 13:12-16; 14:1; 22:4 **20:4** Is 25:6-8; Mt 9:18; 26:29; Lk 13:29; Rv 2:8; 13:14 **20:4** 2Tm 2:12 **20:6** Rv 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 22:7,14 **20:6** Rv 2:11; 20:14; 21:8 **20:6** Rv 1:6; 5:10 **20:8** Gn 3:13; 2Co 11:3; 1Tm 2:14; 2Jn 7; Rv 12:9; 18:23; 19:20 **20:8** Is 11:12; Ezk 7:2; Rv 7:1 **20:8** Ezk 38–39 **20:8** Gn 32:12; Is 10:22; Jr 33:22; Hs 1:10 **20:9** Ezk 38:16; Jl 3:2,11-12; Zch 14:2 **20:9** 2Kg 1:10,12; Ezk 38:22; 39:6; Lk 9:54 **20:10** Rv 19:20 **20:10** Mt 25:41 **20:11** Is 51:6; Mt 24:35; 2Pt 3:10; Rv 18:21 **20:12** Dn 7:10 **20:12** Is 4:3; 34:16; Dn 12:1; Rv 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27 **20:12** Ps 62:12; Jr 17:10; Rm 2:6; 1Pt 1:17 **20:13** Rv 1:18; 6:8 **20:14** Is 25:7-8; 1Co 15:26

20:1-3 See “A Biblical View of Angels,” *p. 1531*.

20:2 The imprisoning of rebellious angelic beings was commonly described in Jewish literature (e.g., 1 Enoch). On the **ancient serpent**, see the note on 12:9. The interpretation of the **thousand years** has been debated since the early centuries of the church. It may be symbolic for the final period of divine activity. See also “Satan and Demons,” *p. 1611*.

20:4-5 Those **who had not worshiped the beast** are raised **with Christ** and reign with him **for a thousand years.** Described as **the first resurrection**, this is the resurrection of the righteous. A second resurrection is thereby implied, which will see the unrighteous raised for the purpose of judgment (Jn 5:28-29).

20:6 The **reign** of the righteous was seen by Daniel: "The kingdom, dominion, and greatness of the kingdoms under all of heaven will be given to the people, the holy ones of the Most High" (Dn 7:27).

20:8 Gog, the prince of **Magog**, appears in Ezekiel 38–39 as the final enemy of Israel. Thus, Gog and Magog appear in many Jewish texts. It is not certain who John has in mind here; perhaps it is simply an image for the last enemy.

20:9-10 No uncertainty surrounds the final outcome of the rebellion against God. The finality of God's victory, and the destruction and torment of the **devil** and those who follow him, offers hope to oppressed people to persevere. Isaiah states that the wicked will burn, and no one can quench the fire (Is 1:31; 66:24; cp. Mk 9:48). See also "Spiritual Warfare," *p. 1454.*

20:11 This judgment scene recalls Daniel 7:9-10, in which the Ancient of Days executes judgment as the heavenly books are opened.

20:12 The idea of records of human deeds was common in Jewish literature (e.g., Dn 7:10). Daniel speaks of **the book of life**, which records the names of those who will be delivered (Dn 12:1). The opening of the **books** means that all will be revealed, as judgment is executed **according to their works by what was written in the books.**

20:14 Death and Hades themselves will be destroyed (cp. 1Co 15:26). **The second death** is an eternal **lake of fire** and is the fate of the wicked (Jn 5:28-29).

20:15 The Bible is clear about the reality of hell. Its **lake of fire** is a sobering reminder of the necessity of evangelism and a reminder of what believers have been rescued from.

THE NEW CREATION

21 Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; † for the first heaven and
the first earth had passed away, † and the sea was no more. † 2 I also
saw the holy city, † the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from
God, † prepared like a bride adorned for her husband. †
3 Then I heard a loud voice † from the throne: † † Look, God's dwelling † is
with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, † † and
God himself will be with them and will be their God. † 4 He will wipe away
every tear from their eyes. † Death will be no more; † grief, crying, and pain
will be no more, † because the previous things † have passed away. †
5 Then the one seated on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new."
He also said, "Write, because these words † are faithful and true." † 6 Then he
said to me, "It is done! † I am the Alpha and the Omega, † the beginning and

the end. † I will freely give to the thirsty † from the spring of the water of life. † 7 The one who conquers † will inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son. † 8 But the cowards, faithless, † detestable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars † — their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, † which is the second death." †

THE NEW JERUSALEM

9 Then one of the seven angels, who had held the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues, † came and spoke with me: "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." 10 He then carried me away in the Spirit † † to a great, high mountain † and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 arrayed with God's glory. † Her radiance was like a precious jewel, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 The city had a massive high wall, with twelve gates. Twelve angels were at the gates; the names of the twelve tribes of Israel's sons were inscribed on the gates. 13 There were three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west. † 14 The city wall had twelve foundations, and the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb were on the foundations.

15 The one who spoke with me had a golden measuring rod † to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. † 16 The city is laid out in a square; its length and width are the same. He measured the city with the rod at 12,000 *stadia*. † Its length, width, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall, 144 cubits according to human measurement, which the angel used. 18 The building material of its wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold clear as glass. 19 The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every kind of jewel: † the first foundation is jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates are twelve pearls; each individual gate was made of a single pearl. The main street † of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass.

THE ETERNAL STATE

The reigning worldview of contemporary secularism—rooted in Darwinian naturalism—assumes that death is itself natural and that it is a final end. The biblical perspective is startlingly different, revealing that death is an unnatural enemy, a predator stalking a human race meant to live forever. In the crucified and resurrected Jesus of Nazareth, death is undone and the cosmos redeemed.

The biblical story tells us that God imposed the curse of death as a result of the insurrection of the primal human pair, Adam and Eve (Gn 3:8). God had instructed Adam not to partake of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gn 2:17), so when Adam and Eve rejected this prohibition and ate, God exiled them from his presence. He placed a fiery sword at the entrance of the garden precisely so that the sinful human race would no longer have access to the tree of life and thus be consigned forever to their devil-imaging, walking death (Gn 3:22-24).

After the fall, the entire universe revolted at its created kings and queens, no longer obediently heeding the reign of humanity. Disease, natural disaster, animal attack, and the like seem normal to us now; such is the only reality we've known, but the Bible says this reign of death is not natural, and it is not permanent. What seems to be normal is not actually how things are supposed to be.

Some religions have asserted that humans are reincarnated in a cycle of lives. Some have taught that the final goal of human existence is a personality-nullifying absorption into the cosmos itself. Others have envisioned a shadowy, otherworldly existence beyond the grave. Atheistic systems see human consciousness ending, like that of an animal, with the cessation of bodily life. The gospel of Jesus Christ, however, teaches that every human will end up in one of two possible eternal states: that of blessing or that of curse (Mt 13:41-43).

HELL

The Bible speaks of hell as a reality of indescribable torment. This place was not created initially for humanity, but instead, as Jesus puts it, for the devil and his angels (Mt 25:41). Those who choose the headship of Satan as their god and who share in his nature will join the devil in his inheritance. The Bible says that this is the fate of all of us if we are left to ourselves (Eph 2:1-3). It is not possible for us to earn salvation through good works (Gl 2:16).

The Bible uses various images to convey the horror of hell. In his Patmos vision, John sees it as a "lake of fire" (Rv 20:14). Jesus called hell a place of "outer darkness" filled with "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:12). He also compared it to a Middle Eastern trash heap, a place where there is no end to the torment of the damned, for "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mk 9:48).

Those outside of Christ find themselves in punishment immediately upon death, as pictured in Jesus's account of the rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). This intermediate state of torment, awful as it is, is not the final accounting, however. At the end of the age, the damned are resurrected and face trial before the great white throne of Christ himself (Rv 20:11-15). The sinner will give an account for every idle word, thought, and deed, as well as his or her response to Jesus himself (e.g., Mt 12:36). Sinners are then sentenced to the judgment they have already pronounced on themselves—exile from the presence of God and into the lake of fire. This eternal curse means suffering that is corporeal as well as spiritual, emotional, and psychological. Hell is not something that humans create for themselves on this earth. Hell is the reality of God's justice and wrath, and it reflects the dignity of the human: each person must be held accountable for decisions made.

HEAVEN

The distinction between those who inherit damnation and those who, as the Bible puts it, "inherit the earth," is found in obedience to the will of God, summed up in loving the Lord and loving neighbor (Mk 12:28-31). Nevertheless, the depravity of humanity is such that every human, with the exception of Jesus, is found guilty as a lawbreaker, and is thus deserving of hell (Rm 3:10-18). Unlike the rest of us, Jesus of Nazareth lived a life of obedience to the law of God. He did this for our sake and died under the curse of the law for our sins, so that the punishment that was due to us fell on him instead, securing salvation for all who place their faith in him. At his resurrection and ascension, Jesus was crowned the rightful King of the universe. Those who approach God, hidden in Jesus by faith, are already judged righteous; thus, their sentence to hell is cancelled and God's justice is reconciled to his mercy. Those in Christ also now share in his life, in his resurrection, and in his inheritance.

Immediately after death, believers find themselves in the presence of God, a present reality known by Christians as "heaven" (see Jesus's words to the repentant thief on the cross in Lk 23:43 and Paul's comments about his desires in Php 1:23). This disembodied existence of blessedness is not, however, the eternal state of those in Christ. God did not send Christ into the world to condemn the world, but to save it (Jn 3:17). The final state of redeemed humanity is life in a renewed cosmos, free from the curse and under the reign of Christ and his joint-heirs (Rv 21).

THE NEW EARTH

At the resurrection from the dead, believers join Jesus in his resurrection life—including the restoration of their bodies. This doctrine was doubted by the Sadducees in Jesus's era, and he refuted their stance in a memorable encounter (Mk 12:18-27). At the end times heaven and earth are joined in a new earth that is transfigured by the presence and glory of God in Christ. This eternal reality is not merely a restoration of Eden, but a glorious civilization with a city in which the glory of the nations redeemed are brought into it. This presumably means that every aspect of culture will be present there. We reasonably may imagine this means music, painting, literature, architecture, commerce, agriculture, and any other worthy aspect of human endeavor will be practiced there and freed from sin, made holy in undiluted service to God.

While the Bible keeps much of the future from us, presumably because our minds at this point could not comprehend it, we know that the eternal state of those in Christ is one that includes work and labor (though freed from the frustration of the curse), personal relationships, worship, and ruling and reigning with Christ. The Bible uses the imagery of a wedding feast to signify the feasting and celebrating of the age to come (Rv 19:6-9).

In this everlasting age, God's covenants will be seen to have come to a climax in the identity and mission of Christ Jesus, and his reign will be all encompassing. The kingdoms of this world, as the apostle John was shown in the Revelation vision, will become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forevermore (Rv 11:15).

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22 I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb
are its temple. 23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it,
because the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb. † 24 The
nations † will walk by its light, † and the kings of the earth will bring their
glory into it. † † 25 Its gates will never close by day because it will never be
night there. † 26 They will bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. † †

27 Nothing unclean will ever enter it, † nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those written in the Lamb's book of life. †

21:3 Other mss read *from heaven* **21:3** Or *tent*, or *tabernacle* **21:3** Other mss read *people* **21:3** Other mss omit *and will be their God* **21:4** Or *the first things* **21:5** Other mss add *of God* **21:8** Other mss add *the sinful,* **21:10** Or *in spirit* **21:16** A *stadion* (sg) = about 600 feet; 12,000 *stadia* = 1,400 miles. **21:21** Or *The public square* **21:24** Other mss add *of those who are saved* **21:24** Other mss read *will bring to him the nations' glory and honor* **21:26** Other mss add *in order that they might go in*
21:1 Is 65:17; 66:22; 2Pt 3:13 **21:1** Lk 21:33; 1Co 7:31; 2Pt 3:10 **21:1** Is 57:20; Rv 13:1,6-7 **21:2** Neh 11:1; Is 48:2; 52:1; Dn 9:24; Mt 4:5; 27:53; Rv 11:2; 22:19 **21:2** Gl 4:26; Php 3:20; Heb 11:10; 12:22; 13:14; Rv 3:12 **21:2** Is 61:10; Rv 19:7 **21:3** Dt 5:22; Ezk 9:1; Mt 27:46,50; Jn 11:43; Rv 1:10; 11:12; 16:1 **21:3** Mt 19:28 **21:3** Lv 26:11-12; Jr 7:23; 30:22; 31:33; Ezk 37:27; Hs 2:23; Zch 8:8 **21:4** Is 25:8; 30:19; 35:10; 51:11; 65:19; Rv 7:16-17 **21:4** Hs 13:14; 1Co 15:54 **21:4** Is 60:20 **21:4** Is 42:9; 2Co 5:17 **21:5** Rv 3:14; 19:11; 22:6 **21:6** Rv 16:17 **21:6** Rv 1:8; 22:13 **21:6** Is 44:6; 48:12 **21:6** Ps 42:1-2; Is 41:17; 44:3; 55:1; Jn 4:14; 7:37 **21:6** Ps 36:9; Jr 2:13; Jn 4:14 **21:7** Rv 2:7 **21:7** 2Sm 7:14 **21:8** Rm 1:28-32; 1Co 6:9-10; Rv 22:15 **21:8** Rv 19:20 **21:8** Rv 20:6 **21:9** Rv 16:1 **21:10** Rv 1:10; 4:2; 17:3 **21:10** Ezk 40:2 **21:11** Is 60:1-2 **21:13** Ezk 48:30-34 **21:15** Rv 11:1 **21:15** Ezk 40:3 **21:19** Ex 28:15-21; Is 54:11 **21:23** Is 24:23; 30:26; 60:19-20; Zch 14:6-7; Rv 22:5 **21:24** Is 42:6; 49:6; 60:3,5 **21:24** Is 49:7,23; 60:10 **21:25** Neh 7:3 **21:26** Is 60:11 **21:27** Is 35:8; 52:1 **21:27** Rv 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12,15

21:1 The first beast had come out of the sea, which represented the chaotic forces of evil for Israel, a non-seafaring people. The **new heaven** and **new earth** (Is 65:17; 66:22) have no place from which such evil can arise since **the sea was no more.** See also "The Apocalyptic and the Environment," *p. 1565.*

21:3-4 That **God's dwelling is with humanity** is the fulfillment of the plan of redemption, the purpose of the tabernacle and temple, and what the prophets foretold (Ezk 37:27; Zch 2:11). What was lost in Eden is now restored and the effects of the fall (**death**, **grief**, **crying**, and **pain**) are **no more.** See "Fall and Redemption," *p. 12.*

21:6 See the note on 1:8.

21:7 This is the only reference to inheritance and sonship in the book, but these are prominent themes elsewhere in the NT (Rm 8:17; Gl 4:76). Inheritance was a matter of great seriousness in the ancient world.

21:8 These sins relate to the moral climate faced by the churches in Asia Minor. Sexual immorality and idolatry were advocated by the Nicolaitans and by Jezebel (2:14,20-21). Some believers may have compromised with their unbelieving community; here they are warned of the consequences.

21:9-11 The **wife of the Lamb**, **arrayed with God's glory**, stands in stark contrast to the great prostitute of chapter 18.

21:12-14 The bride is called a **city** because she represents not one person but a people. The reference to both the **twelve tribes** and the **twelve apostles** indicates that the people of God across both covenants are in view.

21:15-16 The measuring of the city alludes to Ezekiel 40. The city is a cube (equal in **length, width, and height**), thus corresponding to the holy of holies in the temple, where the presence of God dwelt. Now the whole city, the area in which all the people live, will house the full manifest presence of God.

21:19-20 The use of twelve jewels was common in the OT and later Jewish literature for referring to the twelve tribes of Israel (e.g., Ex 28:17-20; 39:10-13). Also, the use of precious stones depicts the majestic glory of the city.

THE SOURCE OF LIFE

22 Then he showed me the river † of the water of life, † clear as
crystal, † flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb † 2 down
the middle of the city's main street. The tree of life was on each side of the river,
bearing twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit every month. † The leaves of
the tree are for healing the nations, † 3 and there will no longer be any curse. †
The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will
worship him. 4 They will see his face, † and his name will be on their
foreheads. † 5 Night will be no more; † people will not need the light of a lamp
or the light of the sun, because the Lord God will give them light, † and they
will reign forever and ever.

THE TIME IS NEAR

6 Then he said to me, "These words are faithful † and true. † The Lord, the
God of the spirits of the prophets, † has sent his angel to show his servants what
must soon take place." †

7 "Look, I am coming soon! † Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the
prophecy of this book." †

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. When I heard and saw
them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had shown them to me.
9 But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you, your
brothers the prophets, and those who keep the words of this book. Worship
God! " †

10 Then he said to me, "Don't seal up the words of the prophecy of this book,
because the time is near. † 11 Let the unrighteous go on in unrighteousness; let
the filthy still be filthy; let the righteous go on in righteousness; let the holy still
be holy." †

12 "Look, I am coming soon, and my reward is with me † to repay each person
according to his work. † 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, † the first and the
last, † the beginning and the end. †

14 "Blessed † are those who wash their robes, † so that they may have the right
to the tree of life and may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs, †

the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood. †

16 "I, Jesus, have sent my angel to attest these things to you for the churches. I am the root † and descendant of David, † the bright morning star." †

17 Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely. †

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book. 19 And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share of the tree of life and the holy city, which are written about in this book. †

20 He who testifies about these things † says, "Yes, I am coming soon."

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! †

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus † be with everyone. † Amen. †

22:1 Other mss read *pure river* **22:6** Or *trustworthy* **22:6** Other mss read *God of the holy prophets* **22:14** Other mss read *who keep his commands* **22:21** Other mss add *Christ* **22:21** Other mss read *with all the saints* **22:21** Other mss omit *Amen.*

22:1 Jr 2:13; 17:13; Jn 4:10 **22:1** Rv 4:6 **22:1** Ps 46:4; Ezk 47:1-2; Jl 3:18; Zch 14:8 **22:2** Gn 2:9; 3:22,24; Pr 13:12 **22:2** Is 19:22; 57:19; 61:1; Jr 51:8-9; Zch 8:22-23; Mal 4:2; Mt 4:24; Jn 4:47; Ac 28:8 **22:3** Gn 3:14-19; Zch 14:11 **22:4** Ex 33:20,23; Ps 17:15; Mt 5:8; 1Jn 3:2 **22:4** Rv 7:3; 9:4; 13:16; 14:1,9; 17:5; 20:4 **22:5** Zch 14:7; Rv 21:25 **22:5** Ps 56:13; 118:27; Is 60:19; 1Jn 1:5 **22:6** Rv 3:14; 19:11; 21:5 **22:6** Dn 2:28-29,45; Rv 1:1 **22:7** Rv 3:11 **22:7** Rv 1:3; 14:13; 19:9; 20:6; 22:14 **22:9** Rv 19:10 **22:10** Is 8:16; Dn 8:26; 9:24; 12:4; Rv 1:3; 10:4 **22:11** Ezk 3:27; Dn 12:10 **22:12** Is 40:10; 62:11 **22:12** Ps 62:12; Is 59:18; Jr 17:10; 25:14; Rm 2:6 **22:13** Rv 1:8 **22:13** Rv 1:17 **22:13** Rv 21:6 **22:14** Rv 1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7 **22:15** Ps 22:16,20; Mt 15:26-27; Php 3:2 **22:15** Rm 1:28-32; 1Co 6:9-10; Rv 21:8 **22:16** Rv 5:5 **22:16** Is 11:1,10; Rm 1:3 **22:16** Nm 24:17; Rv 2:28 **22:17** Is 55:1; Jn 4:10 **22:19** Dt 4:2; 12:32 **22:20** Rv 1:2 **22:20** 1Co 16:22

22:1 The river of the water of life recalls the river that flowed from Eden (Gn 2:10).

22:2 The tree of life was restricted from human access after Adam and Eve sinned in the garden (Gn 3:22), thus preventing eternal life. Now the tree is restored to human access and provides **healing** for **the nations.**

22:3 The **curse** laid on Adam and Even after their sin is now lifted (Gn 3:16-19).

22:10 Sometimes prophetic books were to be sealed so that they could not be read until later (e.g., Dn 12:4,9). However, **this book** is to be made available to all people now.

22:13 See the note on 1:8.

22:14 Those who wash their robes contrast those who defiled their garments (3:14; 14:4). Their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb (7:14).

22:17 This powerful book closes with an evangelistic plea: **Come!** Those who are cleansed have the right to enter into this blessedness, but those who remain outside face judgment (22:14-15). **The water of life** recalls Isaiah 55:1, now symbolizing life for the members of the new covenant.

22:18-19 In an age without copyright laws, warning formulas were common in ancient sacred texts (cp. Dt 12:32).